

19th April 2008

FINN MacCUHAL'S TAUPO WIN INCIDENT PACKED GAME

The Finn MacCuhals Taupo football team almost let a comfortable win over last year's Federation League runners-up Matamata slip away at Crown Park last Saturday, having to rely on a late penalty from Alan Lamb to secure all three points.

The visiting Matamata team failed to get out of first gear in the first half of the game and Taupo took full advantage as they cantered to a 3 – nil lead at the break.

Cam McGrath netted the first after 12 minutes with a sweetly struck drive from the edge of the box following a partially cleared corner. The home side had already come close on two other occasions as they totally dominated proceedings.

The home team wide-men Steve Painter and Gaetano Dedual were creating plenty of problems for the visitors, who conceded a number of free-kicks around the box. From one of these on 22 minutes Mark Jones delivered perfectly for Raymond How to plant a towering header into the back of the net to double the advantage.

Jones got the ball in the net again but was adjudged offside and then another goal-bound effort was cleared off the line as Taupo continued to pour forward. The skilful Pablo Garcia found himself free on the left and squeezed the ball home from an acute angle to extend the lead even further in the 32nd minute.

Dedual was then thwarted with a good save by the visiting keeper, just before Matamata registered their first attempt on goal just three minutes from the break.

The visitors did come out with a bit more purpose about them in the second spell, but created very little, while Taupo were content to settle on the ball and slow the game down, but were always dangerous when going forward.

Dedual looked to have made the game safe when he held off a challenge from a defender before coolly steering the ball past the keeper with an hour of the game gone. It was difficult to see how he could have been offside, but this decision appeared to tip the game the way of the visitors.

Slack defending just moments later, with the ball not cleared and the runner not picked up, was punished by the man left free at the far post and the visitors effort visibly lifted.

Taupo still had the opportunity to make it safe from the penalty spot following a foul on Jesse Smith, but Garcia's shot was well-saved by the Matamata keeper. Again this miss served to spur the visitors on and they received a penalty of their own for a wild challenge at the other end and this gift was converted to make the score 3 – 2 after 72 minutes

Taupo were still on top, but could not seal the win and amazingly found themselves all square in the 78th minute in bizarre circumstances. The Matamata attacker broke through and fell on the ball in a tackle. While the Taupo defenders stood waiting for the whistle for the obvious hand-ball, the striker stood up and rolled the ball into the net. Unfortunately for the home side, both the referee and his linesman failed to see the incident clearly and allowed the goal to stand, to the delight of the visitors.

Taupo regained control and within two minutes were awarded another penalty for a blatant push on Alan Lamb as the visitors defended desperately. Lamb, who had been on the pitch for just

eight minutes for his first appearance of the season, stepped up to slot the ball past the keeper for what turned out to be the winner.

All this activity took place amidst a flurry of yellow cards as the match official struggled to retain his authority. There was still time for Jesse Smith to strike the post with a snap shot with the keeper well beaten but it was with some relief that the final whistle sounded with no more damage. The visiting team was further punished with a red card following the final whistle, to add to a total of eight yellow cards during the game, which was far from the rugged encounter that the card tally would suggest.

The game should not have even been close such was the home team's dominance and they created more than enough chances to have won two games. Matamata to their credit kept battling away but were second in everything and only a shadow of last year's side.

16 year old midfielder Mark Jones put in a tremendous combative display in the midfield and was coach Simon Foy's pick for the Finn MacCuhals man of the match. Another 16 year old Gaetano Dedual also had a very strong game against some very experienced former professionals and stood up to everything they could throw at him in just his second start for the senior team. There were also good displays by the other teenagers, How at the back and Smith up front, while the skilful Garcia also copped plenty, both fair and foul, up front but played a big part in the win.

Team: Ryan Paumier, Sam Brown (Mike McGrath 72mins), Robbie Williams, Raymond How, Cam McGrath, Gaetano Dedual, Paul Drake, Mark Jones, Steve Painter (Alan Lamb 72mins), Jesse Smith, Pablo Garcia. Subs (not used) Rex Mincher, Jason Edmonds.

Other results: Melville 1 Rotorua United 3, Ngaruawahia 0 Otumoetai 3, Ngongataha 2 Huntly Thistle 1, Tauranga City United 3 Claudelands Rovers 1, Te Awamutu 1 Hamilton Wanderers 2, Whakatane Town 3 Otorohanga 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Otumoetai	3	2	1	0	7	1	7
Finn MacCuhals TAUPO	3	2	1	0	7	4	7
Matamata	3	2	0	1	10	4	6
Tauranga City United	3	2	0	1	8	5	6
Melville	3	2	0	1	7	5	6
Rotorua United	3	2	0	1	6	4	6
Hamilton Wanderers	3	2	0	1	3	3	6
Claudelands Rovers	3	1	1	1	5	6	4
Otorohanga	3	1	0	2	8	6	3
Te Awamutu	3	1	0	2	5	6	3
Whakatane Town	3	1	0	2	6	8	3
Ngongataha	3	1	0	2	2	8	3
Ngaruawahia	3	0	1	2	1	5	1
Huntly Thistle	3	0	0	3	1	11	0

The Westerman Property Solutions Taupo Reserves made it three wins from three with a hard-earned 3 – 1 win over Old Blues Reserves in the Bay of Plenty Division 2 game in Tauranga last Saturday.

Old Blues took an early lead, but Dennis Brown equalised for the visitors before half-time. A snorter from Simon Gourley gave Taupo the lead early in the second half before Brown's second of the game sealed the win. Brown also hit the post and went close with another attempt in a good display up front. The Finn MacCuhals man of the match however was vintage goalkeeper Brendon Feck who's fine display between the sticks kept Taupo in the game.

The Taupo Lock & Alarm Centre Lakers social team kicked off their season in the Rotorua Business House League with a 7 – 3 loss to Datz Us in Rotorua last Sunday. Goalscorers for the Taupo side were Paul Bricklebank, Steve Clarkson and Kyle Chatterton, while the Finn MacCuhals man of the match was Zach Haderbache.

Next Saturday, the Finn MacCuhals Federation League team travel to play the team at the bottom of the table Huntly Thistle. The game, at Huntly Domain, which Taupo are expected to win comfortably, will kick off at 2.45pm.

The Westerman Property Solutions Reserve team returns to Crown Park to play Otumoetai 2 and will be looking to maintain their unbeaten start to the Bay of Plenty Division 2 campaign. The game will kick off at 2pm.

The Taupo Lock & Alarm Lakers social team play their second game of the season on Sunday when they host MLC Surfers at Crown Park. The game in the Rotorua Businesshouse competition will kick off at 2pm.

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