

26th April 2008

FINN MacCUHAL'S TAUPO TOP THE TABLE

It has taken just four games into the 2008 season for the Finn MacCuhals Taupo football team to rise to the top of the Waikato Bay of Plenty Federation League a position the team has occupied for the four previous seasons. An emphatic 5 – 1 win in a potentially tricky fixture away at Huntly Thistle last Saturday left the team as the only unbeaten side one point clear at the head of the table.

Taupo took control from the outset on what has to be the worst pitch in the competition. It didn't stop the visitors playing some decent football and they had a couple of near misses before taking the inevitable lead with just 15 minutes gone. It came from an unusual source – Jesse Smith's header at the near post from a Rex Mincher corner, catching the Huntly keeper unawares.

Just three minutes later Smith could've had a second but was beaten to the ball by Mark Jones who hooked a bouncing ball home from the edge of the goal area following another corner which was only partially cleared by the home team.

Despite creating many more chances Taupo were unable to add to the tally before half-time following a stout defensive effort by Huntly. Alan Lamb in particular was having trouble finding much room to maneuver as he was closely man marked, almost losing his shirt on several occasions

It was much of the same in the opening minutes of the second spell and Taupo put the game beyond the home side eleven minutes in when Jones was cut down by two defenders as he burst into the box and Lamb sent the Huntly keeper the wrong way from the resultant penalty.

The fourth and the goal of the game arrived in the 54th minute when a sweeping move started in Taupo's own half continued down the left flank with Steve Painter, Jones, Lamb and Smith all involved before Ben Westerman finished off with a crisp drive into the bottom corner of the net from 15 metres.

Huntly continued to defend stoutly and were guilty of conceding several free kicks around the box. Taupo scored their final goal in the 76th minute from one of these when Jones stepped up to one wide on the left and curled a tremendous effort over the wall and into the top corner, giving the keeper no chance.

Huntly, to their credit refused to lie down and were rewarded for their efforts in the third minute of stoppage time when they were awarded a soft penalty which was duly converted by Tama Hohaia their skipper and outstanding player. From the Taupo perspective it was a disappointing goal to concede and they must learn to be more clinical in these circumstances.

Once again the experienced Westerman and Drake battled it out in midfield giving young Mark Jones the opportunity to be a bit more creative, while Jesse Smith also worked hard up front. It was good also for Alan Lamb to get his first full ninety minutes on the park on his return from injury. Coach Simon Foy was particularly pleased with another youngster Raymond How's marshalling of a solid back four and was his pick for the Finn MacCuhals' man of the match.

Team: Ryan Paumier, Sam Brown, Robbie Williams, Raymond How, Cam McGrath, Steve Painter, Mark Jones, Paul Drake, Ben Westerman, Rex Mincher (Pablo Garcia 64mins), Jesse Smith, Alan Lamb. Sub (not used) Simon Foy.

Other results: Claudelands Rovers 2 Melville 0, Rotorua United 4 Whakatane 1, Matamata 2 Ngaruawahia 1, Otumoetai 1 Te Awamutu 2, Hamilton Wanderers 2 Tauranga City United 0, Otorohanga v Ngongataha postponed.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Finn MacCuhals TAUPO	4	3	1	0	12	5	10
Matamata	4	3	0	1	12	5	9
Rotorua United	4	3	0	1	10	5	9
Hamilton Wanderers	4	3	0	1	5	3	9
Otumoetai	4	2	1	1	8	3	7
Claudelands Rovers	4	2	1	1	7	6	7
Tauranga City United	4	2	0	2	8	7	6
Melville	4	2	0	2	7	7	6
Te Awamutu	4	2	0	2	7	7	6
Otorohanga	3	1	0	2	8	6	3
Whakatane Town	4	1	0	3	7	12	3
Ngongataha	3	1	0	2	2	8	3
Ngaruawahia	4	0	1	3	2	7	1
Huntly Thistle	4	0	0	4	2	16	0

The Finn MacCuhals Taupo football team learned on Anzac Day that they will need to make a trip to Auckland on the 17th May to play Internationale in the first round of the Chatham Cup.

Internationale, the leading team in the Auckland Sunday Football League defeated Edgecumbe Plains Rangers by 2 goals to nil in the qualifying round played at Edgecumbe last Friday.

The Westerman Property Solutions Taupo Reserves continued their 100% start to the season with their fourth win, defeating visiting Otumoetai 2 by 8 goals to one in the Bay of Plenty Division 2 game in Taupo last Saturday and are second in the table on goal difference.

Otumoetai 2 have made a solid start to the season, so the magnitude of the win was very pleasing for coach Wayne Collier. Jeremy Gadd scored twice in the first half while the visitors pulled one back before the break, however the home team ran riot in the second spell.

Finn MacCuhals man of the match Gadd, completed his hat-trick while Chris Roberts 2, Dave Gillies and Matt Vartan from the penalty spot also scored. Andy Southgate completed the scoring with a rocket of a shot for the goal of the game.

The Pitch Bar Taupo Women had a weekend off when their Bay of Plenty competition game away to Tauranga City United 1 was postponed till later in the season.

The Taupo Lock & Alarm Centre Lakers social team had an overwhelming 14 – nil win against MLC Surfers in their first home game of the season in the Rotorua Business House League last Sunday. Goalscorers for the Taupo side were Chris Jackson, Nick Vettori, Jason Edmonds, Kyle Chatterton al with two each plus Paul Bricklebank, Jeremy Gadd, Jimmy Johnson, Mark Venman, Angelo Tredicucci and Nick Simmonds. While newcomer Stu was the Finn MacCuhals man of the match.

Next Saturday, the Finn MacCuhals Federation League team return to Crown Park and will be looking to consolidate their lead in the table when they host struggling Ngongataha in a game that will kick off at 2.45pm.

The Westerman Property Solutions Reserve team will look to maintain their unbeaten record in the Bay of Plenty competition when they travel to play an improving Papamoa team in a game that will kick off at 2pm.

The Taupo Lock & Alarm Lakers social team return to Rotorua to play their third game of the season on Sunday against Opus United in the Rotorua Businesshouse competition. The game will kick off at 2pm and team members are to meet at Finn MacCuhals at 12 midday.

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