

24th May 2008

FINN MacCUHAL'S TAUPO GO TWO POINTS CLEAR

The Finn MacCuhals Taupo football team went back to the head of the Waikato Bay of Plenty Federation League with an emphatic 6 – 3 win over a game Te Awamutu side at Crown Park last Saturday.

Taupo were on top from the start and had a number of chances to take the lead but squandered all of them as the visitors took a surprise lead in the 11th minute totally against the run of play. The home defence was caught out pushing forward and veteran keeper Brendon Feck was given no chance with the power of the finish.

Taupo resumed the offensive and were repeatedly denied by a staunch defence which managed to hold out until the 19th minute when Cam McGrath picked up a loose ball just outside the box and threaded a great low shot just inside the post for the equalizer.

Following the equalizer Te Awamutu began to get back into the game by using their pace to turn defence onto attack at every opportunity. There were a few scares for the home defence but the visitors were unable to capitalize on a handful of free kicks awarded around the box.

Taupo were playing some tremendous football using the width of the field and the power of Brian Radebe and the guile of Alan Lamb to create opportunities up front. One powerful run by Radebe was halted by a push in the back in the box in the 32nd minute and Lamb comfortably converted the resultant penalty.

Just three minutes later it looked all over as McGrath foraging forward from defence once again hit one from long range. This time the ball thundered in off the underside of the crossbar from all of 20 metres to give the home team a 3 – 1 halftime lead.

Within three minutes of the re-start it was four when Rex Mincher's pin-point cross was headed in from point-blank range at the far post by Lamb. Any other team would have conceded at this stage of proceedings but the visitors are well known for their refusal to give in and they began to claw their way back into the game.

Feck pulled off a terrific save and was then left exposed by an under-hit back pass in the 66th minute which led to Te Awamutu pulling a goal back and just four minutes later the visitors notched a third with a bizarre lob over Feck from some distance.

With the lead cut to just a single goal Taupo dug deep and increased the effort and were rewarded when second half substitute Bevan Woltersdorf headed a free-kick down for Lamb to drill home and complete yet another hat-trick from close range.

The scoring was completed five minutes from time when Lamb reacted quickly to a loose ball returned into the goal area following a partially cleared corner and swiveled to stab it past the goalkeeper for his fourth and goal number six for Taupo.

Six goals and three points was an excellent result for Taupo but it is still disappointing that they are leaking goals and they must work hard on this facet of the game particularly for the Queen's Birthday Monday Chatham Cup clash with Northern Premier League Tauranga City United coming up next weekend.

There were good performances from Raymond How at the back and Jeremy Robertson in the unfamiliar defensive midfielder role and from Radebe and Lamb up front. The Finn MacCuhals

man of the match however was combative midfielder Ben Westerman who worked very hard box to box. It was also great to see the influential Woltersdorf back for only his second appearance of the season following a head injury.

Team: Brendon Feck, Ray How, Robbie Williams, Cam McGrath, Jeremy Robertson, Jesse Smith, Ben Westerman, Mark Jones (Sam Brown 85mins), Rex Mincher (Bevan Woltersdorf 56mins), Alan Lamb, Brian Radebe.

Other results involving Federation teams: Hamilton Wanderers 1 Claudelands 1, Huntly 0 Melville 2, Matamata 0 Whakatane 1, Ngaruawahia 2 Otorohanga 0, Ngongataha 1 Tauranga City Utd 3, Otumoetai 1 Rotorua Utd 5.

WAIKATO/BOP FEDERATION	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Finn MacCuhals TAUPO	7	5	2	0	28	10	17
Rotorua United	7	5	0	2	19	10	15
Matamata	7	5	0	2	16	7	15
Whakatane Town	8	5	0	3	17	15	15
Hamilton Wanderers	7	4	1	2	9	9	13
Tauranga City United	7	4	0	3	15	12	12
Claudelands Rovers	7	3	2	2	11	11	11
Otumoetai	8	3	1	4	15	13	10
Melville	7	3	0	4	10	12	9
Ngaruawahia	7	2	1	4	10	10	7
Te Awamutu	7	2	1	4	12	17	7
Ngongataha	6	2	0	4	6	21	6
Otorohanga	6	1	1	4	12	13	4
Huntly Thistle	7	0	1	6	4	24	1

Next Saturday the Finn MacCuhals Taupo team travel to play Tauranga City United Reserves at Links Ave Mount Maunganui with an early kick off time of 12.30pm. The team will then have a chance of watching the Tauranga club's first team in action in their Northern Premier League game against Metro AFC. This should prove useful as Taupo host the Tauranga Northern League team at Crown Park on Queen's Birthday Monday in the second round of the Chatham Cup which is scheduled to kick off at the earlier time of 2 o'clock.

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