

7th June 2008

FINN MacCUHAL'S TAUPO RECORD UNBEATEN RUN OF 44 GAMES

The Finn MacCuhals Taupo football team maintained its two point lead in the Waikato Bay of Plenty Federation League with a hard earned 4 – 2 win over Hamilton's Melville United at Crown Park last Saturday.

The visitors came out of the blocks really fired up and mounted a stern physical challenge early on in the game. The home side responded in kind as the match official struggled to maintain control. Taupo began to take control but Melville were always dangerous on the break and tested stand in goalkeeper Bevan Woltersdorf on a few occasions.

It was Taupo though that was creating all of the chances but they found the Melville custodian in inspired form and he with some help from his fellow defenders managed to hold out until the dying moments of the half.

Mark Jones first of all looked to have broken the deadlock just four minutes from the break with a Beckham-esque free kick only to have it chalked off as it was indirect. However he was celebrating again this time for real three minutes later when he curled a tremendous corner directly into the net at the far post.

Taupo's joy was short-lived however with two errors by the match official leading to Melville scoring at the other end. The first error resulted in a corner to the visitors and then keeper Woltersdorf was impeded as the corner was headed home for the equalizer two minutes into stoppage time.

Taupo resumed the attack from the re-start and Paul Brazier firstly went close and then had a goal disallowed for a marginal offside. With the home side hot on attack, Melville made one of their brief sorties forward and were rewarded when Woltersdorf pulled off a good save but the rebound fell kindly and was well finished by the visitors midfielder in the 55th minute.

Home team coach Simon Foy began to ring the changes sacrificing a defender for another attacker in Chris Roberts and he combined firstly with Ben Westerman and then with Brazier before setting up the latter for a well-taken goal just two minutes later.

The Taupo team spread the ball around the park at every opportunity creating chances but continued to find the visitors keeper the stumbling block. Two further substitutions were made with Steve Painter and Gaetano Dedual coming on and freshening the attacking options.

The defence finally cracked and a two goals in a minute salvo finished the game as a contest. In the 77th minute Brazier latched onto a mis-directed clearance to run on and coolly slot past the keeper for the go-ahead goal and then he turned provider with a run down the right and a well-timed ball into the path of Westerman who volleyed home just a minute later.

Taupo were unfortunate not to add to the score on a number of occasions as the game ran to its conclusion.

Another hard fought win saw the team record its 44th league game in a row without defeat stretching back to May 2006 and thus established a new club record.

The game was also notable as it was Robbie Williams' 100th first team game and yet another that he dominated defensively. Other standouts in the game were defender Raymond How, skipper

Westerman and striker Brazier, the latter earning the Finn MacCuhal's man of the match award for his overall contribution to the win.

There is however a bit of a goalkeeping crisis at the Club with first choice keeper Ryan Paumier still away overseas and the experienced Brendon Feck having fractured ribs following Monday's Chatham Cup victory. This position is a big concern for the team with a trip to Auckland coming up this Saturday to play Premier League Metro in the third round of the Chatham Cup. The game at Phyllis Street Mount Albert will kick off at 2pm.

Team: Bevan Woltersdorf, Ray How, Robbie Williams, Cam McGrath, Paul Drake, Sam Brown (Chris Roberts 55mins), Ben Westerman, Mark Jones, Jeremy Robertson (Steve Painter 65mins), Paul Brazier, Jesse Smith (Gaetano Dedual 75mins).

Other Federation League results : Huntly 2 Rotorua Utd 5, Matamata 2 Claudelands 0, Ngaruawahia 3 Tauranga City Utd 0, Ngongataha 1 Whakatane 7, Otumoetai 1 Hamilton Wanderers 1, Te Awamutu 1 Otorohanga 3.

WAIKATO/BOP FEDERATION	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Finn MacCuhal's TAUPO	9	7	2	0	35	13	23
Whakatane Town	10	7	0	3	30	18	21
Matamata	9	7	0	2	21	9	21
Rotorua United	9	6	0	3	26	15	18
Hamilton Wanderers	9	5	2	2	11	10	17
Otumoetai	10	4	2	4	18	14	14
Ngaruawahia	9	4	1	4	17	10	13
Melville	9	4	0	5	17	17	12
Tauranga City United	9	4	0	5	16	18	12
Claudelands Rovers	9	3	2	4	11	15	11
Otorohanga	8	2	1	5	15	15	7
Te Awamutu	9	2	1	6	13	24	7
Ngongataha	8	2	0	6	8	33	6
Huntly Thistle	9	0	1	8	8	35	1

Next Saturday the Finn MacCuhal's Taupo team try to make the last 16 of the Chatham Cup when they travel to Phyllis Street in Auckland to play Metro AFC. The cup-tie will kick off at 2pm.

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