

14th June 2008

FINN MacCUHAL'S TAUPO - BRAVE FIGHT ENDS IN CUP DEFEAT

The Finn MacCuhals Taupo football team fought bravely against Northern Premier League Metro in Auckland last Saturday before going down 2 – nil and thus exiting this year's Chatham Cup contest in the 3rd round.

Taupo started strongly and rocked their illustrious hosts early on with a couple of chances in the opening quarter of an hour. However they were caught out in the 17th minute, not for the first time this season, committing players forward for an attacking corner and were found with insufficient cover as the home team broke quickly and prolific striker Chris Mason used his pace to effect before scoring with an angled drive.

Despite this setback the game was very evenly contested with both defences to the fore. Taupo keeper Ryan Paumier pulled off a good save towards the end of the half while at the other end the Metro keeper did well to keep out and close range effort from Alan Lamb.

It did look as though Taupo had equalized in the 38th minute when the home keeper spilled the ball at a corner and Lamb poked it home but the referee saw otherwise and harshly ruled it out. Not the first time that Taupo suffered from somewhat mystifying decisions of the Auckland based officials during the afternoon and certainly not the last.

Though 1 – nil down at the interval Taupo were working hard, competing well and were well in the game.

The visitors were on top again in the early minutes of the second half and the home team's frustration boiled over in the 52nd minute. A scuffle broke out following a tackle, with the Metro player grabbing hold of Jeremy Robertson and throwing a few punches. Players from both sides rushed to defuse the situation and when the dust settled the protagonist and Robertson were both cautioned while Taupo skipper Ben Westerman to the amazement of everyone was sent from the field.

This understandably was the turning point of the game with Taupo left to battle for almost 40 minutes against quality opposition with just ten men and without their most influential midfielder. To their credit the rest of the team did not let their heads drop and battled every inch of the way to stay in the game.

Taupo needed to score and still pushed forward at every opportunity. This gave their opponents opportunities at the other end but Paumier was in tremendous form pulling off three top drawer saves while Bevan Woltersdorf and Robbie Williams in front of him never yielded an inch.

Coach Simon Foy began to ring the changes to see if the brave Taupo effort could produce a goal and throwing caution to the wind as the clock ran down understandably ended up getting caught short at the back just nine minutes from time and former NZ Knights striker Sean Devine put the game beyond doubt with a well-taken goal.

It was a brave effort from a bitterly disappointed Taupo team as they were well in with a chance of progressing until officialdom intervened. The Metro side, in contrast, were very relieved to have overcome the unexpected challenge from a team two divisions lower who matched them in every area of the park except for their two outstanding strikers arguably the best partnership in the Premier League. Significantly Metro's man of the match was defender Matt Cunneen while the Finn MacCuhals Taupo man of the match was big keeper Ryan Paumier with an outstanding display.

Paumier had flown back from Canada four weeks early to answer a desperate call from the Club for a keeper with injury ruling out his stand-in Brendon Feck. It was all the more painful for his team-mates having gone down knowing the sacrifice Paumier made to get back for the game.

The team cannot afford to dwell on the loss with Rotorua United the visitors to Crown Park in the Federation League next Saturday. Taupo were knocked off the top of the table on the weekend as they were involved in the cup game and will need to keep winning to go into the top eight of the Federation League with the advantage.

Team: Ryan Paumier, Ray How, Bevan Woltersdorf, Robbie Williams, Cam McGrath (Steve Painter 84mins), Mark Jones (Rex Mincher 81mins), Paul Drake, Ben Westerman, Jeremy Robertson (Chris Roberts 61mins), Alan Lamb, Jesse Smith.

Federation League results : Claudelands 3 Huntly 0, Hamilton Wanderers 1 Matamata 2, Melville 2 Ngaruawahia 1, Otorohanga 2 Otumoetai 2, Rotorua Utd 7 Ngongataha 1, Tauranga City Utd 6 Te Awamutu 3, Whakatane v Taupo postponed.

WAIKATO/BOP FEDERATION	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Matamata	10	8	0	2	23	10	24
Finn MacCuhals TAUPO	9	7	2	0	35	13	23
Rotorua United	10	7	0	3	33	16	21
Whakatane Town	10	7	0	3	30	18	21
Hamilton Wanderers	10	5	2	3	12	12	17
Otumoetai	11	4	3	4	20	16	15
Tauranga City United	10	5	0	5	22	21	15
Melville	10	5	0	5	19	18	15
Claudelands Rovers	10	4	2	4	14	15	14
Ngaruawahia	10	4	1	5	18	12	13
Otorohanga	9	2	2	5	17	17	8
Te Awamutu	10	2	1	7	16	30	7
Ngongataha	9	2	0	7	9	40	6
Huntly Thistle	10	0	1	9	8	38	1

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