

2nd August 2008

FINN MacCUHAL'S TAUPO – BACK TO THEIR BEST

The Finn MacCuhals Taupo football team have been doing it hard in recent weeks as the goals have dried up somewhat but on Saturday the semi-drought was put to rest in the incessant rain as Rotorua United were blasted off their own park by 4 goals to nil in the Waikato Bay of Plenty Federation League.

It was a significant victory as the Rotorua team had designs on the championship and were the leading goalscorers (just ahead of Taupo) in the first round before the top eight split. Also significant was the fact that this was the fiftieth league game without defeat for the Lakesiders, a record that any sports team would find very hard to match and one that the team thoroughly deserves.

Though the pitch was very wet it was not as heavy as the Waikato pitches of recent weeks and Taupo were able to play their brand of flowing football and literally tore Rotorua apart. The slippery conditions made things difficult for the big defenders but the Taupo defence superbly marshaled by Robbie Williams and with Sam Brown and Ray How in top form backed up by an impeccable display of handling from veteran keeper Brendon Feck set the platform for the win.

The opening ten or so minutes were relatively even, but once Taupo took the lead in the 13th minute they proceeded from there to dominate the contest. The goal arrived when Paul Drake's corner to the near post was headed on over the advancing keeper by Alan Lamb and Chris Roberts had the easiest task, hooking the ball home from close range.

Taupo had a perfectly good second goal which was headed over his own keeper by a Rotorua defender chalked off for a mistaken offside just a minute later and both Roberts again and the lively Gaetano Dedual had chances kept out by home keeper Andrew Gibbs.

It was just a matter of time as Taupo spread the ball wide at every opportunity and stretched the home defence to breaking point. The second finally arrived a minute from the break when Jesse Smith cut across the box from the right wing before shooting over Gibbs and into the top corner.

It was much of the same in the second spell as Taupo kept creating the chances while Rotorua were confined to a few long range efforts.

The visitors finally secured the goal that killed the contest in the 67th minute and Lamb was involved again with a slide-rule pass that split the defence and Smith ran on to show great composure to sidefoot past the big keeper.

It was Smith's turn to be provider in the 75th minute as he once again ran onto a pass from Lamb but this time he unselfishly squared the ball across the box and Cam McGrath, ranging forward from left back for the umpteenth, time smashed an unstoppable shot past Gibbs.

All of the fight had gone out of the Rotorua team by then and if it hadn't been for keeper Gibbs it would have been a rout as he denied Dedual, Steve Painter, Ben Westerman and Lamb as Taupo poured forward and it was some considerable relief to them when the final whistle went.

It was a top performance all round with skipper Westerman dictating things in the centre of the park and young Dedual causing the Rotorua defence problems all day long with his unselfish running. Lamb may not have got on the score-sheet himself but although being man-marked throughout was instrumental in two of the goals and had a hand in another.

Coach Simon Foy singled out right back Sam Brown for the Finn MacCuhal's man of the match award with a top display in the wet up against the Rotorua danger-man.

The win was also vital as Matamata won 3 – 1 in the mud at Claudelands and Whakatane snuck home 1 – nil against Hamilton Wanderers which keeps Taupo one point off the pace. Next week's opponents Tauranga City United also got home by a single goal at Otumoetai. The game against the Tauranga team at Crown Park will kick off at 2.45pm

Team: Brendon Feck, Sam Brown, Robbie Williams, Ray How, Cam McGrath, Jesse Smith, Paul Drake (Rex Mincher 75mins), Ben Westerman, Chris Roberts (Steve Painter 69mins), Gaetano Dedual, Alan Lamb.

Other Federation League results:

Bottom 6: Ngaruawahia 6 Ngongataha 2. Other games postponed.

Top Eight Table :

WAIKATO/BOP FEDERATION	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Matamata	14	12	0	2	38	13	36
Finn MacCuhal's TAUPO	15	10	5	0	45	16	35
Whakatane Town	15	10	2	3	38	22	32
Rotorua United	14	9	0	5	43	25	27
Tauranga City United	14	8	1	5	37	25	25
Hamilton Wanderers	15	6	4	5	27	20	22
Claudelands Rovers	16	5	5	6	23	25	20
Otumoetai	15	5	4	6	22	23	19

For the record the 50 games without defeat are as follows:

BAY of PLENTY DIVISION 1			2006
Otumoetai	13-May	a	3 - 2
Rotorua Suburbs	20-May	h	3 - 2
Tauranga City United	27-May	h	9 - 1
Ngongataha	3-Jun	a	1 - 0
Whakatane Town	10-Jun	h	5 - 2
Rotorua Suburbs	24-Jun	a	5 - 0
Otumoetai	1-Jul	h	1 - 0
Tauranga City United	8-Jul	a	3 - 1
Ngongataha	15-Jul	h	2 - 1
Whakatane Town	29-Jul	a	1 - 1
Rotorua Suburbs	12-Aug	h	1 - 1
FEDERATION CAPER SUPERLEAGUE			2006
Claudelands Rovers	19-Aug	a	3 - 1
Otorohanga	26-Aug	h	2 - 1
Matamata	9-Sep	h	1 - 1
Te Awamutu	16-Sep	a	5 - 0
FEDERATION LEAGUE			2007
Matamata	14-Apr	h	3 - 0

Huntly Thistle	21-Apr	a	3 - 1
Te Awamutu	28-Apr	a	2 - 2
Whakatane	5-May	h	1 - 1
Ngongataha	12-May	a	5 - 1
Cambridge	2-Jun	h	5 - 0
Tauranga City United	9-Jun	h	3 - 0
Otorohanga	16-Jun	a	5 - 3
Claudelands Rovers	23-Jun	h	2 - 1
Rotorua United	30-Jun	a	5 - 1
Matamata	7-Jul	a	4 - 2
Huntly Thistle	14-Jul	h	8 - 1
Te Awamutu	21-Jul	h	5 - 1
Whakatane	28-Jul	a	4 - 3
Ngongataha	4-Aug	h	10 - 1
Cambridge	18-Aug	a	2 - 0
Tauranga City United	25-Aug	a	7 - 3
Otorohanga	1-Sep	h	3 - 0
Claudelands Rovers	8-Sep	a	4 - 0
Rotorua United	15-Sep	h	4 - 0
FEDERATION LEAGUE			2008
Hamilton Wanderers	5-Apr	h	2 - 0
Otumoetai	12-Apr	a	1 - 1
Matamata	19-Apr	h	4 - 3
Huntly Thistle	26-Apr	a	5 - 1
Ngongataha	3-May	h	8 - 0
Otorohanga	10-May	a	2 - 2
Te Awamutu	24-May	h	6 - 3
Tauranga City United	31-May	a	3 - 1
Melville	7-Jun	h	4 - 2
Rotorua United	21-Jun	h	3 - 1
Claudelands Rovers	28-Jun	a	1 - 1
Ngaruawahia	5-Jul	a	1 - 1
Whakatane	12-Jul	a	0 - 0
Claudelands Rovers	12-Jul	h	1 - 0
Rotorua United	2-Aug	a	4 - 0

unbeaten run: **50** 175-51

winning streak: **17** Won 40

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