

16th August 2008

FINN MacCUHAL'S TAUPO – BACK ON TOP OF FEDERATION LEAGUE

The Finn MacCuhals Taupo football team moved to the top of the Waikato Bay of Plenty Federation League table courtesy of a comfortable 4 – 2 win over Otumoetai at Crown Park and Hamilton Wanderers unexpected hammering of Matamata by 4 goals to one on their own pitch. The combination of results now puts the retention of their Federation title back in Taupo's hands with three games remaining to wrap up the season.

It was extremely cold and wet at Crown Park on Saturday but the home side took control from the outset. However, they found former Taupo keeper Tony Chegwidan in inspired form as he pulled off three top-drawer saves in the opening quarter of the game to keep Otumoetai in the match. He was given no chance however when Alan Lamb sent him the wrong way from the penalty spot in the 22nd minute after being felled from behind in an ill-timed tackle.

It was due to Chegwidan, his hard-pressed defenders and more than an ounce of luck that it took until the last minute of the first half for Taupo to extend their lead. Cam McGrath finally finding the back of the net with a powerful header from one of the many Paul Drake corners won during the opening spell.

The second half began in much the same vein with Taupo pouring forward at every opportunity and Chris Roberts purposeful run into the box ended with him finding the net from an acute angle through the keeper's legs in the 52nd minute.

At 3- nil up Taupo poured forward at every opportunity and were punished for being over-adventurous in the 78th minute when they were caught out on the break and the visitors pulled one back.

Within four minutes a sweeping move which involved the industrious Gaetano Dedual, Ben Westerman and Jesse Smith finally set Lamb up on the edge of the box and he scored his second of the game with a sublime strike into the top left hand corner of the net.

The Taupo defenders had failed to take heed of the first Otumoetai goal and were again guilty of another lapse in concentration in the closing minutes as they once again let the visitors in for a second which really took the icing off the win.

It was a good performance going forward but looking towards the last three games they can ill-afford being so generous to their opponents defensively.

There were outstanding performances from Mark Jones, Ben Westerman and Paul Drake in the middle of the park and by Dedual up front alongside Lamb. The Finn MacCuhals' man of the match was Jeremy Robertson returning after a spell out with injury who had a superb game on the left flank.

The game next week against Hamilton Wanderers will be very important to the title aspirations. It will be played at Porrit Stadium in Hamilton with an earlier 12.30pm kick off.

Team: Brendon Feck, Cam McGrath, Ray How, Jeremy Robertson, Paul Drake, Jesse Smith, Ben Westerman, Mark Jones (Rex Mincher 75mins), Chris Roberts, Gaetano Dedual, Alan Lamb. Subs not used: Steve Painter, Simon Gourley.

Other Federation League results:

Top 8: Claudelands 0 Tauranga City United 2, Matamata 1 Hamilton Wanderers 4, Whakatane 5 Rotorua Utd 1.

Bottom 6: all games postponed

Top Eight Table :

WAIKATO/BOP FEDERATION	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Finn MacCuhals TAUPO	17	12	5	0	51	18	41
Matamata	16	13	0	3	41	17	39
Whakatane Town	17	11	2	4	43	25	35
Rotorua United	16	10	0	6	48	32	30
Tauranga City United	16	9	1	6	39	27	28
Hamilton Wanderers	17	7	5	5	32	22	26
Claudelands Rovers	18	5	6	7	24	28	21
Otumoetai	17	5	4	8	26	31	19

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