

23rd August 2008

FINN MacCUHAL'S TAUPO – CRASH TO BIG DEFEAT

The Finn MacCuhals Taupo football team crashed to their first league defeat for almost three years and have severely jeopardized their chances of being Federation champions again following a 5 – 3 reversal at Hamilton Wanderers on Saturday.

The home side had presented Taupo with a decent shot at the title when they defeated Matamata last week but then proceeded to shoot Taupo down in flames with a fine display of counter-attacking football aided by an inept performance by the visitors.

Taupo proceeded to present the young Wanderers team with a two goal lead within the first twenty minutes courtesy of a defence caught ball-watching on both occasions, midfielders not back-tracking and a failure to take even one of a number of chances created up front.

The visitors dragged themselves back into the game with two excellent goals in the 36th and 37th minutes. Firstly Mark Jones combined with Jesse Smith and Alan Lamb to provide Chris Roberts with an opportunity to beat the home keeper from close-range. Just a minute later Gaetano Dedual worked hard to set up a chance for Smith and he drilled a low shot across the keeper and into the far corner.

Instead of spurring the visitors on, yet another piece of poor defending left a man with a free header from six metres just another minute later and the home side were back in front and never relinquished the lead from that point on.

The second half was much of the same, with Taupo hammering away up front but poor finishing combined with a sterling defensive effort by the home side blunted the attack. The visitors still hadn't learned the lessons of the first half and on yet another breakaway a Wanderers player was left free at the far-post and extended the lead in the 68th minute.

Ray How pulled a goal back just two minutes later with a powerful header from a Roberts free kick but the home team picked up the defensive effort and managed to prevent any more damage.

With players committing themselves forward in an effort to catch up, the Taupo defence was caught out itself with on yet another fast break in the 76th minute and with a two goal cushion the home team defended stoutly to the end.

There were just too many players off their game on Saturday against a very good Wanderers team. The defeat ended a tremendous run of 52 league games without defeat, stretching back to May 2006 and more importantly severely impacts the club's chances of a fifth Federation Championship in succession. Taupo now need to defeat leaders Matamata next weekend and require someone else to pinch points of Matamata in their final two games.

The all-important penultimate game of the season next week at Matamata will kick off at 2.45pm.

Team: Brendon Feck, Sam Brown (Steve Painter 70mins), Robbie Williams, Ray How, Cam McGrath, Jesse Smith, Ben Westerman, Mark Jones, Chris Roberts, Gaetano Dedual, Alan Lamb.

Other Federation League results:

Top 8: Otumoetai 0 Matamata 1, Rotorua Utd 1 Claudelands 2, Whakatane 2 Tauranga City Utd 3

Top Eight Table :

WAIKATO/BOP FEDERATION	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Matamata	17	14	0	3	42	17	42
Finn MacCuhals TAUPO	18	12	5	1	54	23	41
Whakatane Town	18	11	2	5	45	28	35
Tauranga City United	17	10	1	6	42	29	31
Rotorua United	17	10	0	7	49	34	30
Hamilton Wanderers	18	8	5	5	37	25	29
Claudelands Rovers	19	6	6	7	26	29	24
Otumoetai	18	5	4	9	26	32	19

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