



# St. NICOLAS FOOTBALL CLUB


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### **23rd May 2007 - Stockingford A.A. (H) 1 - 0 (W)**

Scorer: Winn

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### **20th May 2007 - Leamington Brakes (H) 4 - 3 (W)**

Scorers: Gill (3): Winn.

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### **16th May 2007 - Christ the King (A) 5 - 2 (L)**

Scorers: Rowse: Pritchard (Pen).

This game was going to have a major say on the destination of the championship. CTK had a number of games in hand on us but we had the points in the bag. The weather did it's best to spoil the game, a strong diagonal wind caused havoc & we struggled more to deal with it.

Both sides had early chances before we opened the scoring on 5 minutes. Rowsey had the ball on the left wing, he came inside onto his right foot and fired a low shot inside the post.

Within 3 mins. CTK were level. Lewis E. conceded a free kick about 25 yards out and the wind-assisted shot flew home. Again both sides had chances, Rowsey tried a spectacular overhead kick which went wide & Leckie did some good work but missed his shot. Winnie had to make a good tackle in our penalty area to deny CTK a scoring opportunity.

We fell behind on 14 mins. when CTK all too easily played the ball through our defence. They increased their lead to 3-1 with just two minutes of the half left. Winnie mis-hit a clearance and the rest of the defence ball-watched as CTK knocked the ball home.

Half-time 1-3.

We started the second half well. Winnie hit long, low shot which was well saved and we had another half-chance but the ball flew across the goal. On 55 minutes we were back in the game. Sharpy had the ball inside their area and as he knocked it passed their keeper he was brought down. As usual, Danny converted the penalty.

Disappointingly, we allowed CTK to open the gag again. Just 3 minutes later we cleared an attack but the ball quickly pinged back and they made it 2-4. The game was all over soon after. Their centre-forward broke down our left and shot. Jordan saved well but could only parry the ball away. Once again, we didn't react quickly and the rebound was tapped home.

This was a disappointing result. Whilst CTK deserved to win we didn't play as well as we can. We seemed to lack urgency at times and struggled to combat the conditions.

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### **13th May 2007 - Coventry Jaguar Youth (A) 1 - 9 (W)**

Scorers: Rowse (4): Leckie (3): Edwards: Sharpe.

I had to leave at half time so can only report on the first period. Jags manager felt confident he could take us this time following our earlier 5-2 win. Sometimes it's better to say nought.

We opened the scoring on 4 mins. Winnie made a great run down the right into their box, holding off two challenges, before crossing for Rowsey to slide the ball home. A minute later Cov Jag had a half-chance but their shot was pulled wide. Rowsey then headed a corner over the bar.

Our lead was doubled on 11 mins. Rowsey turned provider this time, he crossed from the right for Leckie to poke the ball through the keeper's legs. Two minutes later Rowsey hit a long shot which was deflected for a corner. Winnie's in-swinger was nicely headed home by Rowsey himself.

We continued to apply pressure without creating much in the way of chances and it took until the 32nd minute for the next goal to come. Rowsey clinched his hat-trick with a good shot following a strong run.

Half-time 4-0.

All I can say about the second half is that Rowsey scored his fourth goal of the match, Leckie bagged a couple more and Lewis E. and Sharpy grabbed one each. Cov Jag managed a consolation goal.

Full-time 9-1.

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#### **11th May 2007 - Finham Park Rangers (A) (W) Walk-over**

Match forfeited.

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#### **1st May 2007 - Chapelfields Colts (H) 1 - 3 (L)**

Scorer: Gill

I'd obviously upset Chapelfields by having the audacity to suggest that they had been lucky to get away with a draw when we last played them. I sincerely apologise for the gross inaccuracy of my report, I must have been watching a different game.

Things started pretty well in this encounter. We kicked off, the ball was played back to Winnie who chipped it towards Chaps' penalty area. Rowsey won the header and Aaron stuck the ball home. This took all of 7-8 seconds and I missed all of it.

Well that was that. Game over. That's what we seemed to think, anyway. From then on it all went downhill. Fair play to Chapelfields, they felt they had a point to prove & set about doing it. They played pretty well, put us under a fair bit of pressure & we just weren't in the game.

I've lost my notes so I can't go into much detail. Chaps' struck three goals & I don't think we ever looked like getting back in the match.

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#### **27th April 2007 - Ernesford Dynamo (H) 3 - 0 (W)**

Scorers: Edwards: OG: Gill

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### **24th April 2007 - Athletic United (H) 1 - 0 (W)**

Scorer: McElvenney.

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### **18th April 2007 - Stockingford A.A. (A) 1 - 2 (W)**

Scorers: Hall, Edwards

This was it then. The first meeting between what were arguably Nuneaton's best two sides. It goes without saying that bragging rights depended on the outcome and this game meant so much to the players and managers of both teams.

We opened with a tame shot from Aaron inside the first couple of minutes then a corner on the 10th minute was half cleared by SAA but Chris put his shot wide.

There wasn't a great deal of goal mouth action as the half progressed, Rowsey put a couple of shots wide and a free-kick to us from just outside the box was headed over for a corner. On the half-hour Alex worked his way into SAA's penalty area but his shot was blocked for a corner. Aaron did some great work to manufacture a shot but it was well blocked.

The break-through came after 32 minutes when Alex side footed a cross from the right home. His delight in scoring against his old club was clear for all to see.

SAA came back strongly. Winnie seemed to be in control of a long ball deep into our half but he slipped as he turned. This left their centre forward clear on goal but Ben came in with a great clearance to avert the danger. 'Ford then brought a good save from Jordan low down to his right.

The half finished with a free kick to us. Winnie launched it into their box and Alex's flick was well saved by their keeper.

Half-time 1-0.

The second half began with shots from Rowsey (two) and Liam but all were pulled wide.

Rowsey tried his luck again from distance with 9 minutes of play gone but once more shot wide.. SAA had their first chance a few minutes later when they were awarded a free kick but Jordan saved. From the resulting corner SAA nearly equalised but the post came to our rescue.

Rowsey had two more shots in quick succession, the first was easily saved and the much better second one, flew wide of the right post. This was followed by Lewis E. having a shot but his effort went wide of the left post.

After 20 mins. we were awarded a free kick for shirt-pulling but Rowsey pulled the chance wide. With only four minutes left to play Sharpy had a half-chance as he chased the ball into their penalty area but the pass had forced him wide and he was unable to get a shot in.

Within seconds of that missed opportunity we scored the crucial second goal. Winnie played Lewis E. in and our centre-back made the most of his move to striker. He danced passed three players and rifled a shot low into the goal.

We might have thought that was that but Stockingford had other ideas. We failed to clear their attack a minute later and they struck the loose ball home. This made the last three minutes tense but we held out claim first blood and a deserved win.

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### **15th April 2007 - Leamington Brakes (A) 0 - 2 (W)**

Scorers: McElvenney, Gill

Without doubt this was going to be our toughest test of the season so far. Leamington were riding high at the top of the table having been unbeaten and winning twelve of their thirteen games.

The conditions were not helpful to either side, it was baking hot & the pitch was like concrete with a sparse covering of grass. We started well, Leckie putting their keeper under early pressure. We forced a corner within 2 mins., Liam shooting wide from it.

Things took a turn for worse, though. Lewis E. pulled up with a recurrence of a groin injury & Sharpey (our only sub) came on. The reshuffle saw Winnie drop to centre back & Aaron took over in midfield. Despite this set-back, the Boys seemed undeterred & produced some of their best football of the season. Winnie, by unanimous agreement, produced a man of the match performance in his new found position & never gave their prolific striker a look in. He was superbly assisted by Ben in the centre of defence and, between them, restricted Leamington's attack to a couple of speculative efforts on goal all game.

Goal-scoring chances were always going to be at a premium, the major battle was being fought out in mid-field & neither keeper was being tested. Rowsey had one effort but pulled his shot wide.

On 22 mins. we had a free-kick but the strike went over the bar. Four minutes later Leckie was put clear from Winnie's long ball, as their keeper raced out he managed to knock it to his left & into the penalty area. Sharpey chased with an open goal beckoning but the pace of the ball beat him & he was unable to apply the finishing touch.

The final opportunity of the half fell to Leckie. He put their keeper under pressure but could only shoot over the bar.

Half-time 0-0.

Each side had an effort on goal inside the first three minutes of the second half. Rowsey had a shot deflected into their keepers arms & Leamington shot wide.

Liam then hit a shot on the turn but it lacked power & was easily saved. Leamington forced a save from Jordan from a free-kick.

After 44 mins. it looked like the deadlock may be broken. Leckie found himself one-on-one with their keeper but pulled his shot wide of the left post.

St. Nics were awarded a free-kick on 50 mins. The ball went over the area to Jack Mac on the left. He flicked a harmless looking lob high into the area which the keeper seemed certain to gather. For some inexplicable reason the goalie allowed the ball to bounce & he could only look on in shock as it cleared him & dropped into the net.

This stunned Leamington & their heads visibly dropped. They were finding it difficult to get any foothold in the game & most of the pressure was coming from St. Nics. Winnie & Ben were looking more & more comfortable in defence & this allowed Jack Mac & Chris to support the attack more.

There were still few chances being created by either side, Aaron had a dangerous run down the right but his cross went over the line, he then hit a shot way over the bar. Since his save from the earlier free-kick Jordan had virtually nothing to do such was our dominance in midfield and defence.

The killer blow came with just two minutes to go. Rowsey linked with Leckie down the right & Aaron knocked in the latters cross to make it 2-0.

This was a cracking game between two good sides, the heat made it extra hard for both teams. St. Nics showed great determination with every player giving their all. This was typified by Sharpey who soldiered on with a painful knee. He was up against a huge defender but he chased & harried him throughout.

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### 13th April 2007 - Ernesford Dynamos (A) 1 - 3 (W)

Scorers: Gill: Rowse (2)

The Boys finally got the show back on the road with a hard fought win over second placed Ernesford

It was nearly three weeks since the below par performance against Kenilworth & it was vital we got back to winning ways.

On the 3rd minute Ernesford hit a long ball over our defence & their centre forward was racing dangerously towards goal. Despite having given him five yards start Ben showed great powers of recovery & made a fine tackle.

We had a corner after 8 mins. & it looked like Winnie had opened the scoring. He headed down towards the inside of the post & from where we were standing it looked goalbound. Our celebrations were quickly muted, though, as their keeper grasped the ball. A couple of minutes later Leckie produced a great cut-back in their area and Sharpey swivelled & shot but their keeper was on hand to save.

Winnie then had a shot but it went straight at the keeper. From that Ernesford attacked & forced a corner. We made a complete hash of clearing the ball & Ernesford fired a strong shot over the bar. Shortly afterwards Ernesford hit a free kick into our penalty area and, once again, we struggled to clear. They shot again once more over the bar.

After 20 mins. Jordan had to make a fine save low down to his left, the resulting corner was cleared.

Sub: Aaron for Sharpey (21 mins).

Sub: Danny for Liam (23 mins).

Gary's substitution quickly brought their reward. On 25 mins. Winnie sent a fine corner into Ernesford's box & Aaron headed home to make it 1-0.

Sub: Sharpey for Alex (28 mins).

Just before half-time Aaron was put through on goal but his shot was deflected for a corner. We forced a second one but this was cleared.

Half-time 1-0.

After only 2 mins. of the second-half Lewis E. had to go off with a groin injury. Danny dropped into the centre back position & Liam came on for Lewis.

Ernesford shot just wide of our left post but then Winnie nearly doubled our lead with a strong run deep into their penalty area, his shot / cross hit the side-netting, unfortunately.

Ernesford were given another chance, they had a free-kick to left side of our area and although the effort was well struck it flew high over the bar.

Sub: Alex for Sharpey (47 mins)

We were starting to exert pressure & dominate play but a second goal was needed as Ernesford still looked capable of scoring. Winnie lobbed a ball into Ernesford's box but it was headed wide.

The second goal did eventually come. On 54 mins. Winnie hit a pass through to Aaron who dribbled his way into the box before Rowsie fired home.

Sub: Sharpey for Leckie (57 mins).

We were looking fairly comfortable by now, Ernesford hadn't created a chance of note during

the half but we gave them a life-line with 10 mins. to go. A foul lead to a free kick some 23 yards out & it was struck home.

Ernesford's jubilation lasted only one minute, however. Rowsie picked the ball up down the right just outside their penalty area. He shifted the ball onto his left foot & fired a superb shot high into the corner of the goal.

Aaron nearly carved out another goal with a fine run into the area but his effort was cleared for a corner.

We safely saw the remaining couple of minutes out to claim the win.

After a moderate first half we played pretty well in the second, knocking the ball around quite neatly at times. This was the first of three games in six days with two of the opposing teams occupying the top two places in the league and the third against local rival Stockingford AA. Could this win prove to be the springboard we needed to get our season going again? Read on to find out.

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### **25th March 2007 - Kenilworth Wardens (H) 1 - 3 (L)**

Scorer: Sharpe.

Every now and then all teams have one of those bad days and this was ours. As has happened many times this season we went several weeks without a game and whilst this can be used as an excuse we simply did not play well.

Kenilworth seemed sharper from the start and inside the first minute they came close to scoring from a cross but the header was put over the bar. Almost immediately we had our first chance, Rowsie trying a long range shot but it went wide.

After 11 mins. Aaron hit a tame shot following a free-kick.

Leckie then fired a shot straight at their keeper. The game was pretty scrappy, we were finding it very difficult to pass the ball accurately and Kenilworth were battling hard, no doubt keen to avenge their defeat against us earlier in the season.

Kenilworth sent in a cross from the left wing which Alex headed away for a corner. As the kick came over Jordan caught the ball but was surrounded by players from both sides. There may have been contact, its hard to tell, but unfortunately he dropped the ball and it was tapped home for the opening score with 20 mins. gone.

Sub: Danny for Liam. (21 mins)

A defensive mix-up between Ben & Jordan nearly gifted Kenilworth a second goal but they shot wide.

Sub: Sharpey for Aaron. (34 mins)

Sharpey was quickly into the action. He made a good run down the left & worked his way into the penalty area along the goal-line, he pulled the ball back invitingly but no one was there to supply the finish.

Two minutes after this Kenilworth did finally extend their lead. They worked the ball down the left and one of their players ran into our penalty area only to be brought down by Lewis E. The spot kick was duly converted.

Half-time 0-2

The second-half was only two minutes old when we broke out of defence, Rowsie hit a shot which was blocked & Leckie fired over the top. Kenilworth then took a frre-kick quickly but shot straight at Jordan.

Subs: Shaz for George  
Liam for Alex

Aaron for Sharpey.

Leckie nearly created a chance for himself with a good run into the area but he was well tackled, the ensuing corner came to nothing. Rowsie tried his luck again but shot wide.

Kenilworth headed wide from a corner 18 minutes into the half & shortly afterwards Rowsie picked up a yellow card.

The Boys were still struggling for any fluidity and you could sense it was not going to be our day. Whilst we were still having shots on goal they were mostly from distance and lacked accuracy. Apart from the effort from the corner Kenilworth created nothing. The final nail in the coffin came with 8 minutes to go. Kenilworth were awarded a free kick some 25 yards from our goal in a central position. A fine shot sailed over Jordan's outstretched arm & we knew the game was up.

Sharpey pulled one back with a nice finish but it was too little, too late.

Fair play to Kenilworth, they worked hard and didn't allow us to play. We fell to three goals all from set pieces. We had more efforts on goal by quite a long way but few of any great quality.

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### **11th March 2007 - Coventry Jaguar Youth (H) 5 - 2 (W)**

Scorers: Rowse (2): Hall: Pritchard: Leckie.

The appalling weather has turned our season into a stop-start affair & each game we've played of late has seemed like our first match of the season. This was not a great performance, at times it looked like we'd never played together. Still, it was nice just to play again & hopefully we can string some games together from now on and find some fluidity to our play.

For once we had a full compliment of substitutes (4), a luxury we have seldom had this season. May we also extend a welcome to debutante Liam Potter who has joined us from Nuneaton Boys Club. Liam fitted in straight away from the off and showed some nice touches on the right wing.

Whilst it was bright & sunny the players had to contend with a very strong cross wind which made life a bit difficult at times. Cov Jag were given the first opportunity to shoot after they were awarded a free kick within the first minute but it was cleared for a corner.

Aaron then had our first shot, a high, looping effort which their keeper safely gathered. Cov Jag then had another effort but that went wide.

We took the lead in dramatic fashion with ten minutes gone. We won the ball from a Cov Jag throw-in and the ball fell to Rowsie. He was about thirty yards out in the centre of the pitch, there being no apparent danger to the opposition. He then unleashed a booming left foot shot which screamed passed their keeper to make it 1 - 0.

We only had to wait 3 more minutes to double our lead. Liam and Leckie combined well down the right wing, the cross came in and Alex was on hand to fire low into the goal.

Leckie was tripped in the area & a penalty was awarded. Winnie stepped up but 'topped' the ball & it rolled tamely passed the left hand post. I think our skipper felt embarrassed more than anything else, never mind, Paul, better players than you have done similar.

With half-time only five minutes away we were caught on the hop by a long, through-ball which split our defence. Cov Jag capitalised on this lapse and finished with a well taken goal.

Half-time 2 - 1.

Our lead was extended five minutes into the second half, Rowsie took a good ball from Leckie and fired home. We were struggling to get any rhythm to our game and Cov Jag were battling well.

Leckie was then handed a simple chance after 51 mins. but, with only the keeper to beat, he

pulled his shot wide. A minute after that miss Cov Jag pulled another goal back. Our defence seemed hesitant in clearing the ball & they struck a good shot into the net.

From the kick-off Danny almost scored but the keeper saved with his legs. Our two goal lead was restored, however, by the same player with eight minutes remaining. Winnie then hit a high shot from some thirty yards out which just sailed over the bar.

In the final minute Leckie seized on a scuffed goal kick to crack home our fifth.

Full-time 5 - 2.

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### **18th February 2007 - Chapelfield Colts (A) 0- 0 (D)**

This match against last years champions was a good yardstick by which to measure our progress. At the final whistle only one team could have been satisfied with one point from the draw and certainly wasn't St. Nics.

The pitch was big but the ground was heavy and The Boys knew they would have to work hard, especially as they had no subs. & had played very little football over several weeks. Both sets of forwards found it difficult to create chances, both sides defending well. Chapelfield played with one main striker & five in midfield, we played our usual 4-4-2.

With five minutes gone Chaps' made a break but Ben covered well as the ball went into our penalty area. The first shot on goal came six minutes later, Jack Mac's effort going wide, unfortunately.

Things were pretty even, neither side being able to fashion a goal scoring opportunity worth mentioning. Our best chance came after 26 mins. when we were awarded a free-kick wide left & some 40 odd yards out. Winnie launched the ball high into Chap's penalty area, as their keeper came to collect Rowsie challenged but missed his attempted flick which would have put the ball into the net.

Half-Time 0-0

The second half was almost entirely dominated by St.Nics. However, chances were still few and far between. Aaron set up a shot for Rowsie but his effort went straight to their keeper & Aaron had one himself a little later but shot wide.

So much were we on top that Jordan T. didn't touch the ball until 21 minutes into the half when he saved Chap's one and only effort on goal.

There was very little else to report on. We huffed and puffed and Chap's defence held firm. We can take encouragement from the result, though. I don't think they will be relishing the return game.

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### **4th February 2007 - Athletic United (A) 1 - 2 (W)**

Scorers: Gill; OG.

After a mere eight weeks of kicking their heels the Boys finally got the chance to kick a football. Our season has certainly been disrupted , this was only our fourth game in 15 weeks. There was a fair layer of rust to be chipped away and it took the first half of this game to do it.

Athletic may be near the bottom of the table with just two wins but they were a better team than their position indicated. They had a couple of abrasive players who seemed intent on getting in our faces & riling some of our more hotheaded players (no names Winnie & Rowsie!!).

We were missing Jack Mac & George Goodman so were down to just the eleven who took the field. Lewis E. was nursing a bad back & was struggling throughout, fair play to him he soldiered on despite being in a lot of pain. The small pitch (& goals) made it harder to play the wide game the way we like & we struggled to get our passing going, also. The pitch had quite a

noticeable slope & Athletic chose to play downhill first half.

With just 3 mins. gone we had the first strike on goal, Winnie tried a shot from distance but it went wide. Athletic launched an attack which had danger written all over it but Shaz worked hard to cover back & make a tackle. The ball still went loose and Jordan was forced to make a fine save low down to his left.

Following an Athletic corner we broke out but Alex's shot didn't trouble their keeper. The home team then had an excellent chance. Their striker was one-on-one with Jordan but pushed the ball too far ahead. As Jordan came out the ball slipped from his grasp but before they could get a shot in Ben came to the rescue by making a timely block.

After 17 mins. Athletic were given a free-kick but the shot on goal went over the bar. Shortly after Athletic were attacking down our right & Winnie conceded a free-kick in the corner, nothing came of it, however. We then launched a good move down our left wing, Rowsie & Alex working well but the keeper saved the resulting shot.

On 22 mins. Jordan was forced to make a scrambling save & a minute later Athletic took the lead. Their right winger, who had been causing us some problems with his tricky foot-work, dribbled into the box. He stepped to his left & went down under pressure from Shaz (I think). It may have been questionable but with the vociferous appealing from the home 'fans' the spot-kick was awarded & successfully converted.

If the Boys didn't know they were in a tough game they certainly did now. We didn't have to wait long, though, to get back on level terms. We were awarded a free-kick in our half. Leckie flicked it on and their defence was split. Aaron latched onto the ball and found himself in the clear with just the keeper to beat. He shot but the ball struck the foot of the post but, fortunately, he kept his composure and tapped the rebound home.

A minute before half-time Aaron had another chance but he shot high after the ball seemed to hit a bobble.

Half-time 1 -1

With the slope in their favour the Boys took the initiative in the second half. Both teams had corners within the first 3 mins but it took until 10 mins. later for the first shot on goal to come, Sharpey's effort going just wide. We were being far more competitive now & Athletic were finding it more & more difficult to get out of their own half.

The deciding moment came on 58 mins., following some neat inter-play Leckie burst into their penalty area on the right hand side. He blasted the ball diagonally across the box & an excellent finish saw the ball fly high into the goal. This superb strike came from an Athletic defender, however, but we weren't worried how the ball ended up in the net. Gary credited the goal to Leckie on the official sheet but as the original shot was going wide I think he's being somewhat generous. Sorry Lecks, it's got to go down as an OG.

We had another opportunity to extend our lead a minute later. We were awarded a free-kick just outside their penalty box but Rowsie hit the wall & put his second attempt over the bar. Leckie then put a shot wide of the left post.

With only five minutes remaining Athletic were awarded a free-kick wide out to their right wing but Jordan safely gathered. Leckie then brought out a good save from their keeper. As the game neared it's end Winnie hit a high lob towards goal. The ball bounced near the line but was cleared. Some of our players claim it did actually cross the goal-line but, thankfully, it did not prove crucial.

Full-time 2 -1 to St. Nics.

This was a good result against a pretty tough side who had some decent players. The second half display was closer to how we know we can play & the lads showed some good determination & resilience to win a game that could quite easily have been lost.

Unfortunately, we now have another break for half term, the next match is on the 18th February, Chapelfield Colts (A).

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### 3rd December 2006 Southam United Juniors (A) 1 - 11 (W)

Scorers: Edwards (2);Sharpe (2);Rowse (3);Hall (2);McElvenny;Winn

This was only our seventh game in thirteen weeks and it certainly blew a few cobwebs away. It was probably a good thing that our opposition were the league's bottom side, it gave us a good opportunity to play some football and, hopefully score a few goals.

As the scoreline suggests, this was a bit of a rout. In fact, had it not been for some great goalkeeping and profligate finishing the final score would have been far more.

Gary made a few positional changes. Lewis E. was moved up front partnered by Sharpey, Danny filled in at the back, Aaron moved to midfield and Chris slotted in at right back. .

This piece of tactical genius obviously worked. We opened the scoring with just one minute gone on the clock, Lewis flicking home Alex's cross. We continued to pile the pressure on but their keeper was refusing to be beaten and made some spectacular saves. It looked like it might be one of those frustrating days.

It took until the 18th minute for us to double our lead. Sharpey notched his first goal for the team with a nice turn and shot. Chances were coming at regular intervals as Southam endured non-stop attack from us but we had to wait until 31 minutes before the pressure told. Rowsie shooting home to make it 3 - 0.

We had one more effort on goal as the first half petered out and Southam finally had their first shot on goal just before the whistle but Jordan saved easily.

Half-Time 3 - 0.

Any thoughts Southam may have harboured of a comeback were quickly dashed when we took only a minute of the second half to make it 4 - 0. Sharpey dribbled into the penalty box & crossed it for Alex to tap home.

The 47th minute signalled the start of four goals in a four minute period. Sharpey got his second, Rowsie virtually headed the ball out of their keeper's hands for the sixth, Lewis E. made it 7 - 0, flicking in Aaron's cross & Rowsie claimed his hat-trick after playing a nice one-two with Sharpey.

For once we scored from one of Winnie's excellent corners. Jack Mac thumping a header home to make it 9 - 0. Alex then latched onto a great through ball from Winnie, dribbled round the keeper and stroked the tenth home.

For some reason this seemed to jolt Southam into action. They suddenly went on the offensive having suffered a non-stop battering. Our defence had obviously lapsed into a coma & were totally unprepared for this brief onslaught and Southam were rewarded with a goal.

The final score, however, came from us. Winnie had been trying like hell to get in the scoring act all game & he finally got his chance. Picking the ball up outside the box he went on a mazy dribble before side footing the ball past their despondent keeper. That was it, 11 - 1.

What was more pleasing than the scoreline was the style of play. Obviously we could relax in this match but we knocked the ball around really well & some of our play was very pleasing on the eye. Considering the game was played on a very muddy, wet pitch with an extremely strong wind blowing this was a great performance.

Southam showed some good spirit, it's not very nice getting hammered on a cold, windy day but they kept plugging away, nevertheless. Special mention to their keeper who had a superb game.

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Just a bit of news about players coming & going. Jordan Cole has left the club and returned to

Frank Parkers. We are sorry to see you go, mate. We wish you the best for the future. Matthew Leckie has rejoined us from Chapelfield Colts. It's good to have our all-time leading scorer back, his return is a great boost to the team. Welcome back.

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### **19th November 2006 - Dosthill Colts (H) 0 - 1 (L) Tamworth Invitation Trophy**

Our interest in the Tamworth Invitation Trophy ended with defeat to one of our bogey sides. This was an even contest throughout with St. Nics dominating the first half and Dosthill having the better of the second. Had we taken any of the three good chances we had in the first period we could have put the game beyond the visitors. However, it was not to be and Dosthill's strike with just five minutes left was the difference between the sides.

Both sides had chances on six minutes, Winnie shooting just wide & Jordan T. making a good save to deny Dosthill.

Two minutes later Dosthill forced three corners in succession which we eventually cleared, the resulting break had Winnie again shooting wide with a long range effort.

Lewis E. had the next opportunity, his strong shot being well saved by their keeper. The ensuing corner kick resulted in a bit of a goal mouth scramble but it was cleared.

On twenty minutes we nearly took the lead. Winnie hit a belter of a shot from outside the box but it went straight into their keepers arms. Five minutes later Jack Mac had a shot which was deflected for a corner. Winnie had yet another go from distance but this time his effort was well wide.

The first half ended with neither side troubling the keeper. Just before the whistle Jordan C. came on for Aaron.

Half-Time 0 - 0.

The second half was only a minute old when Rowsie shot on goal but the keeper saved. He had another effort four minutes later but didn't threaten their goal. Almost straight away Dosthill had a good chance but Jordan T. dived at their players feet to thwart the danger.

On 46 mins. Dosthill came closest to scoring, They moved the ball down the left then crossed it over to the right. Our defence was stretched and they hit the woodwork twice within seconds.

Dosthill were getting on top by now. We looked like we were flagging somewhat, this could probably be put down to the fact that this was only our fifth game in eleven weeks. It had been a pretty physical game from the start but we were starting to let our visitors get the better of us in this area. Most of their moves were starting on the left wing with our defence coming under pressure from long, diagonal balls.

We were struggling to string many passes together and only had a Rowsie effort which went wide to show for our efforts.

We were handicapped when Winnie got bad cramp in his calf & he almost became a passenger for the last 15 minutes.

We had a chance with a free kick on 57 mins. Danny P. stepped up but couldn't replicate some of his famous strikes this time and his accurate but tame shot went straight to their keeper.

Extra time was looming but Dosthill broke the deadlock with five minutes remaining. Again the ball came down their left. The ball rolled close to our goal line and, according to our players, went out. However, whilst they stood appealing for a goal kick Dosthill carried on. The ball was passed across our penalty area and a shot was struck low into the corner of the goal. The ball may or may not have gone out but the moral, boys, is you keep playing until the whistle blows.

There was no way back for us, we tried to force an equaliser but Dosthill held firm. This was a pretty good game, played by two well matched sides, either of whom could have won. Congratulations to Dosthill & good luck for the remainder of the Tournament.

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### **5th November 2006 - Bilton Ajax (H) 2 - 3 (L) Coventry League Cup**

Scorers: Pritchard (Pen); Coles.

Despite the absence of Winnie, Lewis E. & Jack Mac the Boys should have had enough quality to see off lower league opponents in the first round of the League Cup.

Having taken a two goal lead that should have been even more the case. Perhaps complacency set in but Bilton battled back to take the tie, capitalising on some individual errors.

I was not at the game so cannot give a full account. As and when I get more details I'll update the report.

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### **15th October 2006 - Polesworth Swifts (H) 3 - 0 (W) Tamworth Invitation Trophy**

Scorers: Winn; Pritchard; Wainwright.

After last week's fine performance the Boys seemed a little flat for this game. They played reasonably & were never in any danger of losing but the zip they showed in the win over Finham just wasn't there.

Still, we're through to the next round where we face Dosthill Colts, a side that beat us three times in our last season in the Tamworth League two years ago so we'll have a score to settle.

The first ten minutes were pretty uneventful but the deadlock was broken by Winnie. He picked the ball up outside the box & ran powerfully to his right deep into the area before shooting low across the goal into the far corner of the net.

Perhaps the Boys were lulled into a false sense of security by Polesworth's lowly league position but the game was not turning into the easy rout they thought it would be. Swifts were battling hard & Jordan T. probably had more shots to deal with in this match than he has all season.

On 17 mins. Alex found himself free in the penalty area with the ball at his feet but he pulled his shot wide. Polesworth then had their first effort on goal, a long, speculative shot which Jordan T. let slip under his body for a corner. A few seconds later this was followed up by another shot which Jordan had to tip over the bar.

Sub: Danny on for Sharpey (23 mins).

We nearly doubled our lead on 25 mins. Chris put Alex away down the left wing, his cross was met by Jordan C. but his shot struck the crossbar. A minute later Alex put in some more good work down the left. Again he crossed, Swifts cleared but only to Winnie, he shot, the keeper fumbled but the danger was cleared.

Polesworth then had a good chance but the effort was well blocked by Ben & the follow up shot went for a corner. The corner came in, Rowsie missed an attempted clearance & Swifts shot over the bar.

Play quickly moved down to the other end, we forced a corner which resulted in a goalmouth scramble but there was no addition to the score.

Half-time 1-0.

The second half was only just over a minute old when Danny made it 2 - 0. From here you'd have thought we would have taken the game by the scruff of the neck & gone on to win handsomely but Polesworth were not prepared to lay down and die & continued to make life anything but easy for us.

After 41 mins. Winnie layed off a good ball to Danny down the right wing, he hit a low shot which was pushed wide for a corner. From this Lewis E. headed over the bar. Further pressure came following play between Winnie & Danny again. Danny's cross resulted in a goal mouth scramble which ended in Rowsie shooting over the bar.

Sub: Sharpey on for Jordan C. (45 mins)

The result was finally put beyond doubt in the 50th minute. Swifts had a corner but we broke quickly out of defence. The ball was played out wide to Alex on the left wing, He ran into the penalty area & cut the ball back for Chris to side foot home.

Sub: Jordan C. on for Winnie (52 mins).

Alex had another effort on goal, his shot was better this time but the keeper saved.

Sub: Winnie on for Rowsie (60 mins)

Some more good work from Alex put Sharpey in on goal, he shot from about 20 yards but unluckily struck the crossbar. Danny latched onto the rebound, pulled the ball back to Winnie but he pulled his shot wide.

Sub: Rowsie on for George (65 mins).

As the game moved into the last five minutes Jordan C. had a couple of attempts on goal. One was a header from a corner, the other a shot but both were just wide. The final fling was a long shot by Lewis E. which flicked off someone's head but the keeper made a save.

Not our greatest performance of the season but there were notable displays from Ben in defence & Alex put in some good work on the left wing.

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### **8th October 2006 - Finham Park Rangers (H) 5 - 0 (W)**

Scorers: Gill (3); Rowse; Coles.

Finham came to Ambleside boasting a 100% record having won their opening three league games. This was felt to be our first real test and would give an indication as to how our season might go.

I think the lads must have been eating raw meat all week because they came out of the traps battling & snarling from the kick-off. They had been told Finham were a physical side but the visitors were soon feeling the force of some strong tackling. Winnie seemed determined to leave his mark & received his second yellow card of the season following a foul after only 9 mins. To be fair, it was more of a mistimed challenge & the booking was a little harsh. This didn't deter him, however, & he continued to crunch into anything that moved all afternoon.

All the early pressure was coming from the Boys. There were efforts on goal from Winnie, Rowsie, Danny & Lewis E. inside the opening quarter of an hour but Finham were defending resolutely.

Sub: Sharpey on for Chris (23 mins).

Such was our dominance that Finham's first shot on goal did not come until the 23rd minute. Two minutes later Jordan C. hit the cross bar & just after Danny hit a shot over the bar.

Sub: Gill for Jordan C. (28 mins)

Finham had one more effort on goal just before half-time but it was well wide. The Boys forced a corner which came to nought before the break. HALF-TIME 0 - 0.

It was vital we made all the pressure count & credit to the lads that they remained patient. The breakthrough finally came with four minutes of the second half gone. We had a throw-in, there was a scramble in the goal-mouth and debutante Aaron Gill found the net off the post.

Less than a minute later Aaron headed a corner straight into the keeper's hands. Sharpey nearly scored the second but his shot was saved, Danny hit the rebound but it was blocked. Winnie then followed this up with a shot which was saved & scrambled away.

The killer blow came on 40 minutes. The ball was bouncing around about thirty yards out & Rowsie lashed a shot which flew high towards the goal & over the keeper's head.

This seemed to knock the stuffing out of Finham & from the delayed kick-off the game was definitely over. They played the ball back, Aaron seized on the sloppy pass, ran strongly into the area and placed the ball home. 3 - 0.

St.Nics were now playing some lovely football, knocking the ball about neatly & making Finham chase shadows.

Subs: Chris on for George; Jordan C. on for Alex. (42 mins)

With 45 minutes gone Jordan C. was put clear on goal but was denied by a good last tackle, the ball going out for a corner. The cross came over and Sharpey headed against the bar. There was a bit of a scramble & the ball seemed to have been cleared but as the spectators were turning away in disappointment the lads started jogging back to their half. The ball had actually been forced over the line by Aaron to clinch his hat-trick & make it 4 - 0.

With the Boys pressing for more goals Finham had a break & had their best opportunity to score but Jordan T., who had largely been a spectator during the second half, made a fine double save to keep his goal intact.

Sub: Alex on for Danny (51 mins.)

With just five minutes to go Finham won their first corner, it was well met with a header but went straight into Jordan's hands. We then went up the other end & forced a corner. Finham managed a break away from this, however, but once again, Jordan thwarted the attack.

Jordan C. finally got his reward for some hard work up front when he finished off a neat passing move. 5 - 0.

A fine performance & a great result. It's hard to single out individuals in what was a superb team performance. Whilst our midfield & attack were well on top I'd like to give special praise to our defence for once. Lewis E. & Ben in the centre gave their strikers nothing all day with full backs George & Jack Mac giving them great support. Keeper Jordan T. was not our busiest player but when needed was on top form. Finally, our new boy Aaron certainly made an impact with a hat-trick on debut.

Well done boys!

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### **17th September - Kenilworth Wardens (A) 0 - 2 (W)**

Scorers: Rowsie, McElvenny.

This was a hard-fought win against a pretty decent Kenilworth Wardens side. The game was spoilt, however, by some questionable decisions from the referee ( a parent of one of the opposition) and the lack of control from some of our players. Their frustrations were understandable but you have to learn to accept any decisions and get on with the game.

Any way, I don't want to detract from a good performance. With Lewis E. still out injured Danny dropped into the centre of defence & proceeded to put on an imperious display. Chris moved back to his usual right wing position & Alex swapped sides to left wing. Again, we had just the one sub.

Clear cut chances were few and far between, both defences were pretty much on top and the midfielders were engaged in a battle to dominate. Jordan C. had an early opportunity but his shot was blocked. Winnie then fizzed a dangerous ball across Kenilworth's goal mouth but no

one could get a touch.

The breakthrough came on 27 minutes, Danny played a nice ball out of defence to Rowsie. He went on a run into their penalty area before stroking home a right-foot shot into the net.

The first moment of real controversy came on 30 minutes. Winnie made a half block / tackle which resulted in the ball rolling twenty odd yards back to Jordan T. in goal. The referee decided this was a back pass & as our keeper had picked the ball up an indirect free-kick was awarded just 6 or 7 yards from the goal line. Protestations fell on deaf ears but, thankfully, the shot was well blocked.

Substitution (34 mins) - Shaz on for Winnie.

Rowsie made a good run which resulted in Alex hitting a shot wide. Kenilworth then launched a dangerous attack but Shaz ensured it came to nought.

HALF-TIME 0 - 1.

Substitution - Winnie on for Chris

We started well, early efforts came from Rowsie & Joe. On 50 mins Jordan C. found himself to the right of Kenilworth's penalty area, he pulled the ball back but their keeper managed to push it out but only as far as Winnie but he hit his shot over the bar.

Substitution - Chris on for George.

On 52 minutes, Joe & Winnie combined well to put Jordan C. in but his shot went straight to the keeper. Three minutes later Kenilworth headed over the bar from a corner.

Two chances fell in quick succession to Joe, firstly he had a shot blocked then his header was pushed over for a corner.

Winnie, who had shown more frustration towards the referee than most, was finally given the yellow card he seemed destined to get..

On 67 minutes Kenilworth had their best chance. A player was allowed to get a shot in but Jordan T. saved well low down to his left.

Substitution - George on for Shaz.

The second controversial moment then happened. Ben had a coming together with one of the opposition. The boys exchanged what you could only describe as 'playground verbals' but the ref. felt Ben's were so bad as to warrant a red card & off he went. Winnie dropped into centre back as we sought to play out the last 3 or 4 minutes.

Kenilworth were pushing for an equaliser, they had a corner but Jordan T. plucked it out of the air. As Kenilworth launched another attack Winnie intercepted the ball and went on a run. He then slid a pass out to Jack on the left. Jack then hit a shot which the keeper seemed to have saved but he only succeeded in pushing the ball up onto the crossbar and into the net. That was the best response possible and killed off any Kenilworth comeback.

A good all round performance by the whole team. Special praise should go to Danny who was majestic in defence. Others meriting a mention in despatches were Rowsie & Winnie who ensured we won the midfield battle, Jack Mac who probably had his best game for a long time, Jordan T. in goal, he didn't have a lot to do but showed great handling when called upon, The two lads up front, Joe & Jordan C. kept plugging away all morning & gave their defenders a pretty hard time.

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**10th September - Southam United Juniors (H) 3 - 1 (W)**

Squad: Jordan THOMPSON, Chris WAINWRIGHT, Jack McELVENNY, Ben DAVIES, Lewis EDWARDS, Paul WINN, Joe SHARPE, Lewis ROWSE, Jordan COLES, Danny PRITCHARD, Alex HALL, George GOODMAN, Tom SHARROCK.

SCORERS: Hall, Winn, Pritchard.

A new season and a new adventure. After last season's glorious treble in the Nuneaton League the Boys are now testing themselves in, what should be, the far harder Coventry League.

This report will not be as detailed as I would like as I had to run the line (come back Gary P., all is forgiven).

Up first for us were Southam, promoted from the 'B' league. Our paper thin squad was reduced even further following injury to defensive rock, Lewis Edwards, so we had only 12 players available.

We took the early initiative & started piling on the pressure from the word go. Winnie hit a cross which deflected off one of their defenders, the ball looped towards the goal but just went over the bar. Danny then latched onto a flick from Jordan C. but his shot hit the right hand post. We were creating several chances but could not get in too many clean shots & Southam were defending well.

The away side were providing very little attacking threat, indeed, they only ventured into our half a couple of times. As the first half progressed it looked inevitable that the Boys would soon score but the opening goal was not forthcoming.

With about 20 mins. gone Southam were awarded a free kick to the left of our penalty area. In came the ball, a goal mouth scramble ensued & they poked the ball home to go one-up totally against the run of play. It just goes to show that you have to take your chances when they come. The half ended without too much more happening.

It took just one minute for the Boys to get back onto level terms. From the kick off we swept down the left wing, Jack Mac & Rowsie linking up well. The cross came in and debutante, Alex Hall, stroked the ball home. Southam now came under constant pressure. Alex nearly made it two but hit the post. Winnie then drove forward into the penalty area, played a nice one-two with Jordan C. and side footed the ball into the left corner to make it 2-1.

Southam were hardly able to get out of their own half. They had a couple of forays forward but the defence were coping well with all they had to offer. Keeper, Jordan T., only had to deal with a couple of long range efforts but our lead never looked like being threatened. Still, a third goal was needed but despite our best efforts Southam held out. Their keeper made some good saves, shots went just wide & the bar was struck.

Following a foul on Winnie out on the right wing Danny fired in one of his trade-mark free kicks which soared over the keeper into the net. That gave us breathing space & it looked like more goals would follow. However, despite several more shots raining in there was no further addition to the score.

We made hard work of this but at least it's a win to start with. To be honest we should have scored 6 or 7 but it gives room for improvement.

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