

UNIBOND FOOTBALL LEAGUE
Premier Division
Saturday 31st January.2009

NANTWICH TOWN 2 v FRICKLEY ATHLETIC 2

Dave Walker. 11.
Michael Lennon. 65.

Danny Clarke. 18.
Charlie O'Loughlin. o/g 57.

Nantwich: Jones. Smith Francis. Tinson. O'Loughlin. Beeston. Carter. Macpherson.
Walker. Lennon. Griggs. Substitutes: Gibson. Blackhurst. Tickle. Hawthorne. Jack.

Referee: Mr Neil Davies.

Attendance: 531

MATCH REPORT

Nantwich were boosted by the return of Charlie O'Loughlin, Rob Hawthorne and Glyn Blackhurst, from injury.

A fine ball down the Frickley left from Griggs in the 3rd minute, aimed for Lennon, gave the home side early promise but despite the Nantwich striker being well placed the ball carried a shade too much pace before going over the bye line for a goal kick.

Nantwich continued to press and took the lead in the 11th minute through Dave Walker. A break started by right back Richard Smith from inside his own half continued deep into the Frickley left, Smith lofting the ball toward the near post from where Walker stole in to glide the ball past Frickley 'keeper Adam Nicklin and score his 20th goal of the season.

Michael Lennon and Walker persistently threatened the Frickley rearguard but in an almost repeat of last weekend's game the opposition packed their defence leaving the 'Dabbers' front two with little or no gaps to exploit.

But whilst Frickley were holding firm in defence it was a Nantwich defensive error that cost them in the 18th minute when Frickley took advantage of slack marking on the Nantwich left hand side to level the match when midfielder Darren Clarke beat Jones from 12 yards.

On the half hour, Nantwich built a head of steam through Lennon, Walker and Dave Macpherson but despite the ball bobbling in and around the 6 yard box the packed Frickley defence managed to clear their lines. Minutes later, Danny Griggs cut in from the left to fire place a well placed shot toward the far post but Nicklin was on hand to claim the ball despite the near presence of Walker and Lennon.

But despite Nantwich's work rate it lacked an edge and at times 'The Dabbers' looked somewhat lethargic. Moments before the break Frickley winger Chris White latched on to a Robert Pell cross before squaring from deep with a dangerous shot across the front of goal but thanks' to the alertness of 'Dabbers' left back Liam Francis he calmly tidied up before sending Nantwich forward again.

Half Time: NANTWICH TOWN 1 v FRICKLEY ATHLETIC 1

Dave Macpherson was handed a great chance from a Griggs pass to test Nicklin in the 48th minute but his shot from just outside the area blazed high over the bar. Francis then set Nantwich on their way again with a well executed pass that led to Griggs securing a corner. Frickley cleared their lines but Ashley Carter's

persistence won a further dead ball kick. However, Frickley broke from defence leaving midfielder Jonathan Groome to shoot from long range – albeit off target.

The game by now had turned into a scrappy affair. Nantwich were displaying little or no rhythm whilst Frickley kept plugging away in an effort to profit from the home side's mistakes. And profit they did in the 57th minute – albeit through an own goal. Frickley's Lee Morris persisted with a move deep along the Nantwich left hand side and after finding Jones some distance out goal lofted the ball toward the near post where despite a brave effort by Charlie O'Loughlin to head the ball clear he inadvertently headed it into the roof of the net to provide Frickley with a somewhat fortuitous lead.

Almost immediately following the Frickley goal Nantwich changed their system to 3 – 5 – 2 with Francis sacrificed and Glyn Blackhurst coming on to add thrust to the midfield. The change provided the missing spark. Blackhurst's eagerness to inject life into the flagging 'Dabbers' paid a huge dividend in the 65th minute when his knock down into the path of Lennon from a Griggs corner was driven into the roof of the net from close range by Lennon who not only brought his side level but reached his 20th goal of the season.

During the final quarter hour Beeston, Walker, Carter and Lennon, all had close range shots repelled by the under siege Frickley defence whilst at the other end, winger Chris White delivered a dangerous cross from the right that fortunately missed the target- albeit by a narrow margin. Both sides made further changes but at the finish Nantwich were relieved to have taken a point whilst Frickley left for home delighted having least expected one.

Steve Davis commented: - "I am afraid we carried 4 – 5 players today and with teams coming here now and simply placing most of their players behind the ball our task is that much greater if we don't operate as a unit from start to finish. The change to 3 – 5 – 2 paid off and 'Blacky's' energetic running was just the spark we needed otherwise we were lethargic for the most part and have to be satisfied with a point".



Founded 1884