

UNIBOND CHESHIRE CONTY FA SENIOR CUP

SEMI FINAL

Tuesday 20th January.2009.

NANTWICH TOWN 2 vs WOODLEY SPORTS 1
Dave Macpherson.84. Danny Queeley.77.
Dave Walker. 89.

Nantwich Town: Roberts. Jarrett. Tickle. Tinson©. Smith. Beeston. Carter (Mahmoud 80).
Macpherson. Whittaker (Walker 69). Lennon (Southern 76). Griggs. Substitutes: Walker.
Gibson. Francis. Mahmoud. Southern.

Referee: Mr N.S.W Davies

Attendance: 255.

MATCH REPORT

'The Dabbers' left it late but goals from Dave MacPherson and substitute Dave Walker proved just enough for Nantwich, as cup holders, to progress to the final for the second season in succession and the right to defend our title against Altrincham in what will be a repeat of last April after the Blue Square Premier club beat Witton Albion 4 – 0 in the other semi final. Meanwhile, 'The Dabbers' introduced 19 year old goal keeper Danny Roberts for his first outing whilst youth team players Nathan Southern and Omar Mahmoud started from the bench.

The tie was but three minutes old when Nantwich went close to snatching the lead. Michael Lennon took possession of the ball on the Woodley left and after seeing Connett off his line placed an angled shot toward an unguarded net only to witness his goal bound looking shot hacked off the line by a defender, who seemed to appear from nowhere. Just before the quarter hour a Mark Beeston close range header was held on the line by the Woodley 'keeper ahead of Dave Whittaker, who looked odds on to score, but his close range effort struck the underside of the bar before cannoning to safety. Meanwhile, Nantwich were holding so much possession that at times Woodley were mere bystanders but, with Woodley placing as many as eight men behind the ball for the most part, 'The Dabbers' were finding it hard to make a break through.

For Woodley, their first break came in the 27th minute after winger Danny Queeley received an angled pass from midfield but despite jinxing around Damion Jarrett and jinxing Queeley's poor finish saw him drag a low shot wide of the target. At the other end, the industrious Michael Lennon struck low from close range into the waiting hands of Connett whilst 8 minutes before the break Dave Whittaker was unlucky with a glancing header from a Lennon cross. On 44 minutes a Danny Griggs shot from distance fizzed wide of the right hand post whilst Roberts enjoyed a most comfortable opening on his debut having not had a shot to save in the first period.

Three minutes into the second period and despite Lennon, Whittaker and Griggs all placing shots from close range a sea of Woodley bodies managed to keep 'The Dabbers' at bay. It took until the 54th minute before Woodley carved out their second opportunity - on this occasion it was Gavin Salmon whose shot from distance fell a mere yard wide of the right hand post. But Nantwich continued to dictate proceedings, albeit without capitalising on their domination although Michael Lennon went close in the 55th minute when his angled shot from the Woodley left flew over the near angle of post and bar. On the hour, a great cross from unmarked Danny Griggs was narrowly held by Connett against his left hand post before 'Griggsy' placed a shot from outside the area that dropped straight into the hands of the Woodley custodian.

A couple of tactical changes in the 68th minute gave Woodley a much needed spark and when substitute Gary Gee found space just outside our 6 yard box his close range effort provided Roberts with his first save of the night. Richard Smith came up to join yet another Nantwich attack with 20 minutes remaining and after collecting the ball from a corner and cutting it back from the bye line, lofted it toward the far post but despite Connett stretching he managed to hold on to the ball. On 75 minutes, Dave MacPherson was well placed to reach a Danny Griggs centre but despite last weekend's signing from Leek Town getting in with a close range glancing header, it crept inches wide of the far post. But, two minutes later, and totally against the run of play, Woodley scored. In the build up to the goal, Woodley made a break along 'The Dabbers' right hand side and despite the close attention of Damion Jarrett and Richard Smith winger Danny Queeley managed to produce a rising shot from just inside the area that dipped past Danny Roberts into the far bottom corner of the net. However, 'The Dabbers' were not to be outdone and the introduction of Dave Walker, followed shortly afterwards by youth team strikers Nathan Southern and Omar Mahmoud, gradually unsettled Woodley. And it was Dave MacPherson's 84th minute goal that set up a very tense finish, it was 'Maccas' second goal in two games. In the build up, the ball was returned from the Woodley defence but there was Macpherson to latch on to the loose ball from the edge of the area and drive it hard and low beyond Connett. With the clock ticking away, a replay looked odds on but Dave Walker cancelled that prospect out when his persistence a minute from normal time allowed him to go past Connett with a close range finish into the bottom left hand corner of the net. However, nerves in the Nantwich camp began to fray a little when, in the second of three minutes of additional time, Woodley produced one last gasp effort and had it not been for Dave Macpherson heading clear whilst standing in the goal mouth, it would have been a replay indeed.

A relieved Steve Davis said: "A great result – and to achieve it against a side that quite clearly came for a draw by placing eight men behind the ball from the start, the lads showed great character. Yes, it was frustrating, and after dominating possession everyone was left wondering just how long was it going to be before we scored. But, despite looking a little tired at times, the lads continued to work away and in the end we got our just reward".

