

NORTON UNITED 1
NANTWICH TOWN 3 (Beeston 11, Lennon 25, Gibson 27)

Pre-Season Friendly
Saturday 2 August 2008

Former Crewe Alexandra favourite Rodney Jack made a sparkling contribution as a second-half substitute in his first appearance in Nantwich colours. The St. Vincent international showed sharp skills, neat touches and not a little pace as he carved open the home defence on more than one occasion. Alas, the West Indian couldn't find the back of the net as Nantwich failed to add to their 3-1 half time lead.

In fact, Nantwich looked more the part in the first 45. Robin Gibson should have given the Dabbers the lead shortly after kick off but he steered his shot wide with just the keeper to beat. As it was, it was left for Mark Beeston to put the visitors ahead when he scooped home a loose ball on 11 minutes after the Norton defence had failed to clear the danger.

Nantwich were permanently camped in the Norton half so it came as a surprise when the hosts equalised on 20 minutes. A surprise too for keeper Marcus Cooper. The former Crewe Alex under-18s stopper was busy marshalling his wall when Norton clipped a quick free kick into the other side of his net.

The Dabbers responded straight away and good work down the right by Gibson found Michael Lennon in space and he neatly placed the ball past the keeper on 25 minutes. Two minutes later, Lennon returned the compliment for Gibson to fire the ball home off the inside of the post from 20 yards.

Beeston headed over from Nick Linford's cross and Gibson had a shot cleared off the line but Nantwich had to be content with a 3-1 lead at the interval.

Steve Davis made seven substitutions for the second half and almost cashed in straight away when first Danny Griggs and then Dave Tickle rifled long range efforts just off target.

Jack's trickery from a deep midfield role caused Norton problems and from one of his mazy runs and cross, Dave Walker had a shot booted off the line. Griggs almost added a fourth from a curling free-kick but Nantwich struggled to make the same impact in the second half as they had in the first.

Davis summed it up neatly at the final whistle. "Brilliant in the first half – not so brilliant in the second," quipped the Dabbers' Head Coach.

Nantwich: Cooper (trialist, h-t), Taylor (Heler, h-t), Tinson (Tickle, h-t), Beeston, O'Loughlin, Parkinson (Griggs, h-t), Gibson, Linford (Jack h-t), Shotton (Green h-t), Lennon (Walker, h-t), Kiss. Attendance: 70