

Pre Season Friendly

Sunday 12th July.2009

@ The Weaver Stadium. Kick off 2.30pm

NANTWICH TOWN 2 v STOKE CITY 0

Ashley Carter.26.
Michael Lennon.57.

Attendance.784

NANTWICH TOWN: Lee Jones. Jake Sedgemore. Chris Shaw. Chris Flynn. Richard Sutton. Dave McPherson. Omar Mahmood. Glyn Blackhurst. Ashley Carter. Michael Lennon ©. Dave Tickle. Substitutes: Nathan Southern. Dave Robinson. Dominic Brownsword.

STOKE CITY: Steve Simonsen. Andy Griffin ©. Danny Higginbottom. Danny Pugh. Ibrahima Sonko. Ryan Shawcross. Liam Lawrence. Andrew Davies. Richard Cresswell. Michael Tonge. Nathaniel Wedderburn. Substitutes: Tom Urwin. Rodney McDonald. Alex Hedley. Salif Diao. Ryan Connor. Adam Vickers. Dave Parton (g/k)

MATCH REPORT

Nantwich were playing their first ever match against a Premiership side and got their pre season friendly matches underway with an impressive display against a Stoke City side that contained eight players with first team experience. Meanwhile, Nantwich were forced to make changes to their line up less than half an hour before kick off after central defender Darren Tinson was forced to pull out with a back injury leaving midfielder Chris Flynn to join Richard Sutton at the heart of defence and substitute Omar Mahmood moving from the bench to start on the right of midfield. With overnight rain eventually clearing, The Weaver Stadium pitch was in excellent condition and throughout the 90 minutes the well prepared surface provided for an afternoon of some very entertaining football.

And it was the home side who were first to show with Ashley Carter, Michael Lennon and Omar Mahmood making good runs that kept the Stoke defence on their toes for the majority of the game. Meanwhile, at the other end, an unfamiliar 'Dabbers' back four were eager to show their qualities with Sutton in particular producing some timely interventions to keep out Lawrence, Cresswell and Tonge. However, the deadlock was broken in the 26th minute when Ashley Carter's persistence with a ball that fell between Sonko and Shawcross, and despite Simonsen's late effort to claim it Carter deftly lifted the ball to the left of the Stoke 'keeper in to the back of the net from inside the six yard box to deservedly give Nantwich the lead. Nine minutes later Carter went close to extending the lead when he chased a through ball to the bye line and in a one on one with Simonsen, who had left his area in an attempt to claim it, Carter meanwhile calmly teed the ball up and swung it in toward the near post only to witness his effort strike the side netting with the Stoke defence absent. For Stoke, the only real effort of note was in the 38th minute when the almost redundant Jones saved a close range shot from Lawrence.

Half Time: NANTWICH TOWN 1 v STOKE CITY 0

The second half by and large was a repeat of the first period but in the 50th minute 'Dabbers' midfielder Glyn Blackhurst fluffed a great opportunity to make it 2 – 0 when, in a one on one with Simonsen, shot wide from close range. On 54 minutes, a well taken Stoke free kick by Tonge flashed wide of Jones left hand post before Cresswell then ruined a great chance to get back on level terms when he lofted the ball over the angle of post and bar with only Jones to beat. But it was the home side that once again went close to capitalising on a Stoke defensive error after Simonsen was slow to react to a high ball in the 6 yard box leaving Lennon to reach for a header that agonizingly finished narrowly wide of the left hand post. However, the persistent Lennon, who looks surprisingly fit following his recent swine flu scare, latched on to a through ball 8 yards out in the 57th minute and

despite Simonsen's effort to cover, Lennon provided a clinical finish to double the score line in favour of the hosts.

With around 20 minutes remaining both sides range changes but it was Nantwich who were still asking the questions and in the 76th minute Blackhurst went close with a free header at Simonsen's left hand post that just eased over the angle of post and bar whilst a minute later Lennon tested the Stoke 'keeper with a crisp shot from just inside the area. With 10 minutes of normal time remaining Stoke stepped up the pace with Cresswell then getting in with a ground shot that forced Jones into a diving save whilst in the 87th minute Blackhurst rose above the left hand side of the Stoke defence to plant a bullet header from an inch perfect free kick by 'Dabbers' left back Chris Shaw firmly on target but Simonsen on this occasion spread himself far enough across the face of goal to deny the Nantwich No.8.

Nantwich Assistant Head Coach Peter Hall commented: "A well deserved result against a strong Premiership side. Kevin (Street) and I gave the lads pre match instructions to go out there and play with confidence and desire. To their credit they followed our instructions to the letter and despite the late changes we were forced to make, it worked well for us in the end. Both on, and off the ball, our movement was almost faultless but we mustn't allow our heads to reach the clouds on the back of this excellent result. We are looking sharp at the moment but the discipline will have to remain constant throughout the whole of the season if we are to go that one step further and move to the next level".

