

Huntington Rovers First Team Match Reports for 2008-2009

Rovers V St John's

Hewer, Fenton, Marshall, Smythe, Martin, Fishy, G Newton, Jackson, Mitchinson, Franks, Scaife.
Subs. Dunn, Johnson, Harry

By the time this game got underway, Hamilton Panthers had sealed the title that we have held for the past 2 seasons. All we were playing for now was pride, and to finish as high as possible in the league. Before winning the league for 2 seasons in a row, we finished second for the previous 2 years, so I was keen to show that we are still one of the top teams in York.

Once again the team was not at full strength, but the under strength team has proved in recent games that it is more than capable of competing, and getting results.

It was clear from an early stage that the game would not be a spectacle, due to the hard ground and I tried to pass on the instruction to play early balls over their back four to allow our front 2 to chase onto. This indeed was the way we scored our first and second goals, with Wayne Scaife hitting a great through ball from Nick Fenton and Danny Franks firing home in a similar fashion.

The students pulled a goal back after creating a number of chances, although we had also created a good number of chances also, and the game should have been out of reach.

We were then awarded a penalty which Gary Newton coolly slotted home, and we went on to win the game 3-1.

After the game, we were left to reflect on what could have been if we had not dropped silly points during the season.

Rovers V Hamilton Panthers

Hewer, Fenton, Marshall, Smythe, Martin, Fishy, Dunn, Jackson, Mitchinson, Franks, Scaife.

We were desperate!! That was the case before the game and that was the case in the opening 15 minutes of the game, when we went 3-0 down. I had at least 6 first choice players unavailable through suspension, injury, holidays, work etc, and in contrast Hamilton Panthers were on the pitch ready for action before the majority of our team had turned up. The signs were very ominous.

The first goal was conceded without us even touching the ball, and it must have been scored within 20 seconds easily. The defence was non-existent, although the 3 passes that led to the goal were quality.

Within another couple of minutes Panthers scored their second, despite them missing from very close range. At this stage Iain Dunn was withdrawn, and Jordan was brought into the action, whilst moving Fishy into a central midfield role.

After this we settled into the game very slightly, but it was clear that any belief that we may have had, had gone.

The third goal simply added to the lack of belief, when Mark Smythe made a rare mistake, and presented a golden opportunity to the Panthers striker, who slotted the ball past Tom Hewer.

Some calm passing from Jordan on the right resulted in a good diagonal ball from Nick Fenton, which Wayne Scaife was able to meet on the volley and divert past the advancing Panthers keeper. This restored a little bit of pride and gave us a chink of belief. Further hope was provided when Gary Mitchinson had a great opportunity to pull another goal back, but his effort was saved by the Panthers keeper.

Soon after that chink of belief was taken away, when Tom Hewer failed to collect a slightly under hit back pass from our defence, which he was 90/10 in favor to win, and Panthers were gifted their 4th goal.

We pulled a goal back before half time when Lee Jackson volleyed home a corner. This gave me the opportunity to praise the team at half time, rather than lay in to them.

We competed much better in the second half, and made it 4-3 when Gary Mitchinson stabbed home

another corner. At this stage it looked like we could get a result despite panthers continuing to make chances.

Disaster struck again for Tom Hewer soon after, when he appeared to pick the ball up then drop it at the feet of the Panther striker who did not need another invite to make it 5-3.

In the final minute of the game, Fishy scored a contender for 'goal of the season' when he saw the keeper off his line, and lofted the ball over him from just inside the opposition half.

The night started in desperate fashion, but ended in a way which gave Dunny and me some pride about not only the team, but the squad of players that we have at Huntington Rovers.

Rovers V Tate & Lyle

Myers, Martin, Smythe, Marshall, Mitchinson, Fenton, Jackson, G Newton, Laidlaw, Franks, Scaife
Subs – Fishy, Dunn, Jordan McGuigan

On paper this should have been an easy 3 points, with T & L at the foot of the table, but we were slightly depleted with Dyson suspended for the rest of the season, Dave Newton missing (again), and Pete Laidlaw potentially injured. Before the game, Pete Laidlaw gave me the boost of declaring himself fit, and I was able to recall Danny Franks after a 6 match lay off through injury. Wayne Scaife was given the encouraging nod to partner Danny up front.

Once the game got underway, it became very clear that we would win the game, and it was a matter of being patient before we broke the deadlock. We played some tidy football, and continued to create chances.

Pete Laidlaw scored the first goal after Danny Franks broke the offside trap and squared to Pete who could not miss from 6 yards.

We soon went 2-0 up when some tidy passing resulted in the ball breaking to Gary Newton, who added to his tally for the season.

In the second half we continued to dominate, and our defence, which has looked much stronger in recent weeks, never looked likely to be breached.

Wayne Scaife coolly rounded the keeper and slotted the ball home to make it 3-0, and this continued our recent good form as the season nears to an end.

Rovers V Poppleton

The match against poppleton provided the team with the opportunity to restore pride after having dropped 2 points to them 2 weeks prior.

The team performed well in the similarly windy conditions of away at Popp and deservedly took all 3 points with an attacking performance winning 4-2. All the goals were well worked and provided the locals with much to enthuse about.

The win just shows how, when we are up for it, we can dispose of such teams quite easily and it just makes it even harder to swallow that we are not challenging for the title.

Indeed we may well kick ourselves for not coming at least second as the teams around us have all dropped silly points too, unfortunately we haven't capitalised, yet! Having said that, a faultless run in could still see us coming second, which would be an achievement in itself.

Some of the points dropped this season have been hard to swallow but on the bright side, if we can keep the nucleus of this squad together I believe we'll challenge again next season. We are on a great run at the moment so hopefully we can continue to the end of the season.

We will be starting the Tuesday night 5 a side tournament imminently so, all players, please register your interest with me, Matty or Force.

Rovers V St John's

Myers, Fenton, Marshall, Smythe, Mitchinson, Fishy, G Newton, Jackson, Laidlaw, Dyson, D Newton
Subs – Dunn, Bell, Scaife

St Johns have always given us a good game in previous years but they can be one of the most

unpredictable teams in the league. The game was an early kick off due to the reserves playing at home afterwards.

Both teams cancelled each other out in the first half, and if I'm honest I cannot remember much about the action as I am writing this 2 weeks after the game.

At half time I confidently predicted that we would score 3 goals, and go on to win the game. Little did I think that it would take St Johns to score first before we got into gear. A corner was swung in which Steve Myers declared was 'keepers ball', but he was left empty handed as the St Johns played nipped in front of him to head home.

Fortunately we were not behind for long, as Mark Smythe managed to get on the end of a precise Dave Newton corner and bulletted a header home.

Fishy impressed, with his 'never say die' attitude, and glimpses of ability.

We went 2-1 up when Dyson slotted the ball home.

A third goal was added when a Gary Newton corner flew straight into the goal, lodging itself in the stanchion.

Another comfortable victory, as we continue our long unbeaten run.

Malton & Norton V Rovers

Myers, Fenton, Marshall, Smythe, Hirst, Johnson (Fishy), Laidlaw, G Newton, Scaife, D Newton, Bell. Subs. Dunn, Jackson,

We took a very inexperienced squad to Malton, with almost ½ of the regular first team missing due to injuries, work commitments and other priorities coming before playing for the current York and District Saturday afternoon Premier League champions.

We did however welcome back Steve Myers in goal following a lengthy lay off.

Thankfully the starting eleven took on board the responsibility and matched a weak Malton team throughout the first half, although we did not look confident when entering their last third. The pitch was difficult to play football on but we worked hard which was encouraging for Iain and I.

Malton and Norton went 1-0 up when they nodded home a well taken free kick, which no keeper could have saved.

At half time it was a case of trying to encourage the lads, and have the belief that they could in fact score.

Soon after the break, a good move down the left resulted in Dave Newton putting in a great cross which Ally Bell nodded home from close range, which was a good reward for his hard work.

We continued to dominate the game, but unfortunately Malton and Norton took the lead once again when a loose pass from Wayne Scaife was launched over our well drilled back four and volleyed home from close range by Cocker who must be pushing 40.

It was time to release our senior player, in the form of Iain Dunn. He livened up proceedings, and following some typical hard graft by Fishy he managed to manoeuvre a delightful volley in to the back of the Malton & Norton net to square things up at 2-2.

In the dying minutes, another good run by fishy presented him with a good opportunity to win the game for us but the ball ran agonisingly wide.

It was a hard earned draw for an inexperienced team, which restored a little bit of faith in the eyes of the management team.

Poppleton V Rovers

Please see Coach's Word

Rovers V Old Malton

Hewer, Martin, Marshall, Smythe, Mitchinson, G Newton, Laidlaw, Jackson, Scaife, Johnson, Dyson.
Subs D Newton, Bell, Dunn.

The only change to the starting 11 for this game was the return of Johnson for Danny Franks who had inspired us to 4 wins in a row. We hoped John would find some of his magic. A couple of players were carrying slight injuries but they battled on. Tom Hewer escaped a red card early on after handling an effort outside the box, ironic that Tom was so advanced...

We had the best of the opening encounters but it was Old Malton who went into the lead when both our defence and keeper stopped in hope of hearing a whistle for offside. A bad mix up.

In the second half we totally dominated and John levelled matters after closing down a loose ball. Chances came and went for Dyson, Gaz Newton, Laidlaw, Dave Newton and John again but we could not convert. Into extra time it went and we continued to dominate although Bell did miss a golden chance to win it. Having defended so well all game, Sam Marshall gave away a free kick on the edge of the box. We failed to organise a suitable wall despite my appeals and the resultant free kick flew in. We created further good chances which Dyson, Laidlaw and Dave Newton were all guilty of missing and missed out on our last chance of silverware this season.

Rovers V Kartiers

Hewer, Martin, Marshall, Smythe, Mitchinson, G Newton, Laidlaw, Jackson, Scaife, Dyson, Franks

Subs – D Newton, Dunn

Kartiers have been a thorn in the side of many teams over recent years, including us, but we managed to get a good win at their place earlier in the season.

Team selection for this one threw up the predicament of whether to keep Nick Fenton in the team at the cost of last season's managers' player of the year – Gary Newton. I opted for Gary Newton, which was unfortunate for Nick, but Gary repaid my faith in him with a goal after 10 minutes. It was a good footballing goal, with Laidlaw playing the through ball to Dyson who squared it to Newton who finished well.

We went 2-0 up soon after when further quality one touch football resulted in Dyson firing home. We were on fire, and Kartiers were being made to look very ordinary.

At half time Dave Newton replaced the injured Wayne Scaife, and within minutes, Mark Smythe had headed home the third from Dave's cultured in-swinging corner from the right.

The defence looked strong, despite Sam Marshall featuring in the press as missing a tackle (which he actually won with ease). Iain Dunn provided another cameo role towards the end and rounded off a fine performance when he showed good reactions (for an old man) to fire a rebound home from close range.

This was our fourth win on the bounce, and it leaves us wishing that we found this kind of form earlier in the season.

Rovers V Dringhouses

Hewer, Martin, Smythe, Marshall, Mitchinson, Fenton, Jackson, Laidlaw, Scaife, Dyson, Franks

Subs G Newton, C Johnson, I Dunn

It seemed like an eternity since our last game, and since then both Dunny and I had taken the opportunity to go on scouting missions abroad.

Team selection was made tricky by the return of Gary Newton and Chris Johnson, but we decided to stick with the same starting 11 that did so well at Dunnington.

I asked for the lads to get out of the traps early as the pitch was unlikely to stand up for the full 90. We did just that and a rare goal from Lee the machine Jackson put us 1-0 up after 10 minutes.

A great through ball from Pete Laidlaw allowed Danny Franks to lob the advancing Dringhouses keeper.

Dringhouses did create a few chances but they were generally snuffed out by our solid defending.

In the second half, we didn't really get started, and it was no surprise when Dringhouses pulled a goal back.

Although their best players have left they do appear to be building for the future. BEWARE.....

All 3 subs were given a good run out, and we managed to hold on for our third win in a row.

Rovers V Haxby

Game Postponed

Rovers V Hamilton Panthers

Game Postponed

Dunnington v Rovers

Tom Hewer, Kev Martin, Mark Smythe, Sam Marshall, Gary Mitchinson, Nick Fenton, Pete Laidlaw, Lee Jackson, Wayne Scaife, Danny Franks, Chris Dyson.
Sub Iain Dunn

Once again, the squad was depleted with injuries, retirements, and holidays, so it was a case of everybody pulling together in the face of adversity. We were left with just Dunny on the bench, and by the time we needed his services he resembled one of the ice sculptures seen outside Oscars during the festival of angels.

Dunnington were one of the form teams in the division, and have added to their squad. We reminded the lads of our past success here before the game and how we expected them to succeed.

We managed to take the lead early on when Dysons cross come shot caught out the Dunno keeper and nestled nicely into the back of the net. The team continued to perform well in every position, showing the kind of spirit that has been sadly lacking this season.

Pete Laidlaw in particular was having a demanding game in the centre of midfield and it was his through ball that picked out Danny Franks, who finished with cool ability, to make it 3 goals in 2 games for the new rovers hit man.

At half time we convinced ourselves that we could hold on to the 2 goal cushion, only for Dunno to pull a goal back after 10 minutes. In fairness, Dunno had some good chances to equalise, but we rode our luck and some great saves were made by Tom Hewer. One of the Dunno crazy gang was sent off late in the game for butting Kev Martin, and Kev was unusually restrained.

Dunny made a late cameo appearance, and we held on for a morale boosting 2-1 victory.

Copmanthorpe v Rovers

Hewer, Pears, Smythe, Marshall, Martin, Fenton, G Newton, Jackson, Scaife, Dyson, Franks.

In the run up to this game, the squad had become rather depleted, with the resignation of Huntington stalwart Jack Wilson, injuries to Pete Laidlaw and Steve Myers, and holidays for Dave Newton and Gary Mitchinson. Thankfully I had managed to process the transfer of Danny Franks from Wigginton. The omissions provided opportunities for Sam Marshall and Tom Hewer to gain a well earned call up from the reserves and also gave Nic Fenton and Wayne Scaife a rare start.

Within 5 minutes we conceded a very soft goal, and our defensive frailties were there for all to see. We responded quickly however, and Danny Franks had us 2-1 up within 20 minutes. A great start to his Huntington career. Unfortunately, we once again failed to pick up a Cop player and he was allowed to nod home from close range.

We were always the better team, and with Mark Smythe and Sam Marshall providing some stability at the back, it was only a matter of time before we took the lead. In the second half, we scored a good goal following a well worked move involving Dyson and Scaife, and it was Wayne Scaife who managed to divert the ball around the advancing Cop keeper.

Shortly after, Dyson got back to goal scoring form when he picked up a loose ball on the edge of the 18 yard box, and drilled home.

Cop pulled a goal back to make it 4-3, but shortly after this Wayne Scaife scored his second goal of the game. Dyson added his second to make it a hat trick of braces in the team.

Cop scored a further goal, which Tom Hewer will be disappointed with, but overall it was a good result (6-4). Danny Franks and Dyson looked like they could form a good partnership, and the fringe players performed well.

Rovers V T&L Selby

Game Postponed!

Ouseburn V Rovers

Lineup:- S Myers, K Martin, B Pears, M Smythe, G Mitchinson, N Fenton, J Wilson, L Jackson, G Newton, W Scaife, C Dyson

Sub:- Dunn, Harry

We went into this game missing D Newton, Bonny, Jonno and Pete Laidlaw. Our plan therefore was to shut up shop and nick a goal.

We started with a 4.5.1 formation and we were in control for much of the game. Mark Smythe shone and was winning everything.

Despite being in control, Ouseburn nearly went ahead when Kev Martin headed clear off the line on the stroke of half time.

It was much the same in the second half. Dunn and Harry were brought on to replace the alcohol affected Fenton and Scaife and both did well.

With only 5 minutes to go G Newton brought down a through ball and placed the ball into net. Job done

Old Malton V Rovers

Myers, Martin, Pears, Smythe, Laidlaw, Scaife, Jackson, G Newton, Mitchinson, Dyson, Bonarius
Subs: - Fenton Dunn

Once again a few changes to the line up were made, for what was sure to be another tough game.

The opening ½ hour of this game was very scrappy, with both teams cancelling each other out. Old Malton did seem to have the better of the chances, and 3 good chances were wasted. Our best chance fell to the feet of Lee Jackson who is not known for his goal scoring, and he showed why.

We kept matching Old Malton for effort, and we went 1-0 up when a good quality free kick was curled in by Wayne Scaife. The ball was knocked back into the danger area by Gary Mitchinson, and this time Jackson fired home from within the six yard box.

Ben Pears got himself booked for a retaliation challenge on Belly who in the previous game conned the ref into awarding a penalty. Dyson also got booked for a challenge, which at least showed desire to win the ball.

In the second half Old Malton were once again offered chances on a plate by our sloppy defending, but they managed to miss them. We then gave away 2 penalties, which we can have very little argument about, and before we knew it we were 2-1 down.

I changed things around, sacrificing Ben Pears for Iain Dunn, and changed the formation to 3-4-3. This led to more chances for Old Malton who were going through us like a hot knife in butter.

We then broke and a Chris Dyson flick on fell nicely to Gary Newton who fired home to make it 2-2. This keeps us in with a shout but we must start winning games.

Rovers V Malton & Norton

Myers, Martin, Cadywold, Smythe, Laidlaw, Fenton, Jackson, G Newton, Mitchinson, Dyson, Bonarius
Subs: D Newton, Scaife, Pears, Dunn

In the week leading up to this game I had many dilemmas over team selection. Caddy got the nod having performed admirably at Kartiers and Dave Newton was unlucky to be edged out by Bonarius.

Within 5 minutes my selections blew up in my face as Caddy lost his balance at a key moment and gifted Malton the lead. Soon after following missed chances by Bonny, our defence lost its shape and Steve Myers was unable to get off his line quick enough to deny Malton a 2-0 lead.

I was still confident that we could win the game, and confidence was further boosted when Pete Laidlaw fired home a free kick.

We then let in a third, due to a lack of closing down up front and nobody picking up the runner who was able to nod home from 6 yards.

At half time Caddy, Fenton and Martin were replaced by Scaife, Dave Newton and Pears and the formation was switched to 3.4.3.

Again good chances were missed by Gary Newton and Chris Dyson but 2 goals from Gary Newton levelled the game. Dyson then headed home a Gary Mitchinson cross to make it 4-3 to us.

In the dying moments Malton were awarded a dubious penalty which they scored making it 4-4 with the last kick of the game. Bugger.

Kartiers V Rovers

Myers, Martin, Cadywold, Bonarius, Laidlaw, Fenton, Jackson, Newton, Mitchinson, Dyson, D Newton,

Subs; Scaife, Johnson, Dunn, Wilson, B Marshall

Knowing that Mark Smythe and Ben Pears were both missing this fixture, I had to dip into the transfer market during the week, and I was very pleased to capture James Bonarius who slipped nicely into the centre back role, although he is equally capable up front. I also gave Caddy a call up from the reserves, and he performed equally as well.

We set off in great style and we were 1-0 up within the first minute. Lee Jackson set up Dave Newton, who was composed enough to bring the ball onto his favoured left foot and place the ball into the back of the net.

Our passing game was the best so far this season, despite the pitch being bumpy and having long grass.

Within 10 minutes we went 2-0 up when Gary Newton volleyed home an effort from the edge of the 18 yard box. The ball appeared to come off the shin but it looped into the top corner for Gary's first goal in open play this season.

We continued to press but were unable to get another before half time. A slight scare came from Kartiers, but Bonny was able to sweep up the danger. Some great passing was being carried out, particularly by Kev and Nick on the right, and Pete and Gaz on the left.

At half time, we requested more of the same, and with recent collapses we were conscious of not letting the game slip.

Early in the second half, a long kick from Steve Myers, fell nicely for Chris Dyson, who was able to force the ball home to make it 3-0.

Kartiers were gifted a consolation when Jackson, played a ball across our box and their striker accepted the gift to make it 3-1. Any thoughts of a comeback were nipped in the bud when Bonny clattered their lively player, which took the sting out of them. We were comfortable winners in the end, and happy with the much needed victory.

Huntington v Old Malton

Myers, Martin, Smythe, Pears, Laidlaw, Fenton, Jackson, Newton, Mitchinson, Dyson, D Newton,

Subs, Scaife, Fishy, Dunn

Once again the squad was depleted, due to various reasons including Chris Johnson been taken on at Harrogate Railway, and a series of injuries keeping players out. Despite this we started the game very well, and took the game to Old Malton, and they were showing signs of frustration. We created a

number of ½ chances and also some clear cut chances, with Ben Pears the pick of the bunch when the ball fell to him just yards from the goal line.

Having put Old Malton under immense pressure, and failing to capitalise, the inevitable happened, when Steve Myers was only able to parry a shot into the path of another Old Malton player, who finished well. Wilford then doubled Old Maltons' lead, and they were almost embarrassed to be 2-0 up.

We managed to scramble home a goal before half time to make it 2-1, giving us the confidence that we could get back into the game.

Within minutes of the second half a cross into the box fell to Nick Fenton, who had cleverly anticipated the clearance falling to him, and with his second touch he fired the ball into the top right hand corner. His celebration left a lot to be desired, running back to the bench and taking a seat.

We continued to push, and got a third goal which Chris Dyson hit into the bottom right hand corner. The shot took a slight deflection on its way into the net.

Old Malton had a goal disallowed prior to us getting our third, for an infringement on Steve Myers, (an incident very similar to the one at Haxby, where we were not given the free kick).

Dave Newton will still be in shock for what followed when he missed a golden opportunity to kill off Old Malton. Dyson shot and his effort bounced back off the post. The ball was at a good height to place home but Dave managed to dink it over the open goal.

A dubious penalty was then awarded to Old Malton for an incident which can only be described as shocking. The OM player swung elbows twice at Ben Pears, before he threw himself to the floor, fooling the referee into giving the penalty.

OM then stole the game with a fourth goal which showed a lack of defensive awareness as the ginger lad from OM went all the way up the pitch, unmarked to fire home the winner.

Another defeat, in a game where we could and should have taken all 3 points.

Huntington v Riccall

Myers, Martin, Smythe, Pears, Laidlaw, Fenton, Jackson, Mitchinson, G Newton, D Newton, Dyson.

Subs: - Ash Hill, Iain Dunn, Tom Hewer

Prior to the game, some home truths were spelled out to the squad by me regarding what I expected in return for the hard work that Iain and I put in off the field, and in recent weeks, we were disappointed with our efforts.

Following this, a good warm up followed, and we seemed up for the game, against a Riccall side who looked very much like a team heading for the Premier league.

There were a few slight changes to the team, with Nick Fenton being given his first start of the season, and Gary Newton returning to a more advanced midfield role. Dave Newton was given the nod ahead of Ash Hill to fill in for Chris Johnson who was plying his trade at Harrogate Railway (reserves). Good luck Jonno.

We were switched on from kick off and looked dangerous. Chris Dyson missed a good headed opportunity but within 10 minutes, we went 1-0 up when Dave Newton curled a great effort into the top corner.

Riccall looked sharp and dangerous, and made Steve Myers pull off some good saves. Steve was unable to prevent Riccall equalising however, when their forward was played on by Pete Laidlaw, and he fired home under the advancing Myers.

At half time it was 1-1, but we stressed that we were playing well, and if this continued we would be rewarded.

Within minutes of the second half, Nick Fenton, brought down a great cross field ball, took a touch and delivered the perfect cross for Dyson to head home.

Riccall continued to compete, but Jackson who has just become a father for the second time (as far as he knows) managed to break down many of the Riccall advances.

Kev Martin claimed the third goal when his free kick eluded everybody and bounced into the net.

Dave Newton and Chris Dyson combined well to set up the fourth goal which Dyson slammed home and ripped out the pegs of the net. (Whoever put up the goal at this end should be ashamed)

We made it 5-1 soon after when a loose ball on the edge of the area fell to Gary Mitchinson, and he skilfully placed the ball in the top left hand corner of the goal.

Riccall scored a late goal to reduce the arrears, which Steve Myers will be disappointed with.

A sound 5-2 victory which should boost our confidence for a tough month ahead.

Hamilton Panthers v Huntington Rovers

Myers, Martin, Pears, Smythe, Laidlaw, Scaife, Jackson, Newton, Mitchinson, Dyson, Johnson

Subs; Fenton, Bell, Dunn.

We went into this game in the knowledge the importance a win was to keep us in with the leading pack in the league, however, prior to the game Iain Dunn picked up on some less than perfect vibes.

The game never seemed to get going, in the first half, and the windy conditions, complimented by a pitch covered in leaves did not help for a good display by either team. Solid displays were however provided by Mark Smythe and Ben Pears in the centre of defence, whilst Steve Myers also looked to be in good form. It was 0-0 at half time.

The half time talk centred on us being a little bit sharper, and taking the game by the scruff of the neck. Within the opening minutes of the second half, Gary Newton played a crazy pass back, which Mark Woodward latched on to. Steve Myers pulled off a great save at the feet of Woodward to Newtons relief.

Throughout the game, we seemed to by-pass the midfield, which left Jacko, chasing around in his own 'headless chicken' style and Gary Newton almost redundant. Gary Newton did however make a good break from midfield to latch onto a through ball, and he will be very disappointed with his finish which neither troubled the keeper or the goal.

Nick Fenton replaced Wayne Scaife, who by his own admission has not hit his best form yet for the rovers. This immediately provided us with some good wing options, however it later lead to an imbalance on the right.

Within 10 minutes of the second half Chris Dyson headed home a cross from Gary Mitchinson which gave us a 1-0 lead.

We then seemed to lose all confidence in our own ability and almost invited Panthers onto us. This was not helped by some panicky defensive work and general poor hold up play throughout the team. Despite the pressure, we had a gilt edged chance to kill the game off when Nick Fenton fed Chris Dyson, who rushed his chance and slipped it wide of the post.

Hamilton Panthers, did as I have done in previous years, and changed things around, by pushing 3 up front. The pressure finally paid, when following a great save by Steve Myers, we failed to get rid of the loose ball and a panther's player slammed home the equaliser.

Shortly before the end of the game, Gary Newton lost the ball in midfield, rather than playing the easy ball, and Mark Woodward took full advantage by firing the ball home for the winner.

Too many of our players put in an under par performance (letting the few who did play well, down), which is simply not good enough, if we have ambitions of retaining the title. On reflection, I feel we missed the likes of Jack Wilson in the middle to give us that extra passion, but time will tell.

Huntington Rovers v Dringhouses

Tom Hewer, Kev Martin, Ben Pears, Mark Smythe, Gary Mitchinson, Wayne Scaife, Lee Jackson, Gary Newton, Dave Newton, Chris Dyson, Chris Johnson

Subs: Ash Hill, Nick Fenton, Pete Laidlaw.

Tom Hewer stepped in to the gloves for this game, which over the years has been a poisoned chalice.

Prior to this game, I had never taken a point away from Dringhouses.

The Dringhouses team that was sent out on this occasion however was far from the teams of past years, and I would have been very disappointed had we not taken all 3 points.

In the game we never really got into top gear, and we relied on some great saves by Tom Hewer to keep us in the game, on the few occasions that Ben Pears and Mark allowed their front men a sight on goal.

An important interception in midfield by Gary Newton led to a through ball by Chris Johnson, which Dyson finished well. Ash Hill, who had earlier replaced the injured Wayne Scaife, showed some pace and was brought down in the box. Gary Newton fired home the penalty.

In the second half it was much the same with Gary Newton scoring another penalty and Chris Dyson firing home a good effort.

Pete Laidlaw made a return following his hamstring injury and Nick Fenton deputised for Kev Martin at right back.

Some slack defensive work towards the end of the game gave Dringhouses 2 consolation goals, which took off the gloss slightly.

It seems that our efforts over recent seasons have removed the superiority that Dringhouses have had for the past decade. We just need to make sure we keep our eyes and hands on where our hard work has put us to ensure we stay as the team that has replaced them.

Huntington Rovers v Copmanthorpe

Lineup: - Myers, Martin, Pears, Smythe, Mitchinson, Johnson, Jackson, G Newton, D Newton, Hill, Dyson

Subs, Scaify, Dunny, P Vince, B Marshall

Jack Wilson had not recovered from his injury picked up against Haxby and Pete Laidlaw picked up a hamstring injury in training. This provided an opportunity for Ben Pears to come straight back into the team after his transfer midweek and it also gave the opportunity for Ash Hill and Dave Newton to show the management team, what they had been missing.

Copmanthorpe had a few new faces, and gave us a few problems in the early encounters.

On what was a very hot day, combined with a heavy pitch, we found it difficult to get into top gear, and it was only when Jonno was switched with Ash Hill that we broke the deadlock. Jonno fired home a good flick on from Dyson.

We doubled our lead after Dyson rode numerous challenges and fired home, making up for his earlier chance which was arguably easier.

In the second half, our defence looked strong, and the game was put out of Cop's reach when Dave Newton scored a great goal from 30 yards.

Iain Dunn later set up Dyson, and Scaify set up Jonno. Jonno then went on to score his third goal leaving a good 6-0 result.

Haxby v Huntington Rovers

Lineup: - Myers, Martin, Smythe, Laidlaw, Scaife, Wilson, Jackson, Mitchinson, G Newton, Dyson, Johnson.

Subs: Ash Hill, Dave Newton, Iain Dunn, Nick Fenton, Jordan McGuigan, Tom Hewer

We were at full strength for this game, and there were plenty of reasons for us to be up for the battle which lay ahead.

Haxby have shuffled their squad over the close season, with Andy McMillan now in charge. Haxby looked dangerous in the early encounters but we opened the scoring when a great cross from Kev Martin was volleyed home by Gary Mitchinson from close range.

Shortly after, Chris Dyson broke clear and was pulled down in the box by Oggy, and a penalty was awarded, which Gary Newton converted.

A dubious free kick was then awarded to Haxby which Thompson fired through our wall which parted like the proverbial red sea.

Thompson then equalised when he out jumped Steve Myers and nodded home a loose ball which resulted from a long throw from Andy Barrass. Smythe was booked for arguing that Myers was fouled.

Shortly before half time, Haxby took the lead when they broke clear and after the first effort was saved by Myers, it fell kindly for the Haxby striker to prod home.

In the second half we created good chances but failed to finish them. Haxby then scored when a defensive mix up combined with the Newton brothers leaving the ball for Thompson to pinch it and fire home his third goal.

A goal was pulled back by Chris Dyson, following a good cross from Johnno, and a further headed goal by Ash Hill was ruled out for offside, which was very dubious.

An entertaining game which we were disappointed to be on the wrong side of a 4-3 defeat.