

Hampstead 3 St Albans 1

Saturday 11th December 1999

With immense satisfaction, Hampstead defeated their nearest League rivals with a convincing display of fast open hockey and severely dented their opponent's title aspirations. Rob Thompson scored a brilliant hat trick to build on last week's milestone as the fifth player ever to reach 150 National League goals.

Hampstead opened well in the driving rain but St Albans fought back and opened the scoring in the 13th minute when their player coach Craig Keegan made space in the Hampstead circle after a one-two and roofed the ball into the net spectacularly past Steve Dodson.

Hampstead did not panic and began to find space up front. Simon Moffat made room well in the 33rd minute and crossed from the left to Craig Carolan, whose fierce centre earned a short corner. On hand was Thompson standing wide, who pushed it in for the equaliser.

In the second half, two chances were missed by St Albans, one fairly easy fell to South African international Anderson, which he failed to convert. As St Albans began to get irritated and lose their composure, Rob Thompson somehow managed to latch on to a long ball up the inside right channel in the 49th minute and steered the ball at great pace past Yull for a classic goal.

With Mike Williamson prominent in midfield, despite a leg injury picked up in the week with the England U21 squad, Hampstead took control. St Albans' Hammond was yellow carded after aiming a stick at an opponent and this affected their pursuit of the equaliser. However, it was all academic as Thompson once again floated into space at the top of the circle in the 59th minute and calmly slotted the ball in, with a move reminiscent of the second goal and which killed the game off.

This win opens up a 6-point gap at the top of the League, which now takes a rest until resumption on 30th January

TEAM: Dodson; von Mayer, Meakin, Watts, Williams; Williamson, Singh, Moffat; Hetherington
Thompson, Carolan

SUBS: (not used) Hall, Troy, Garbe, Turner