

MATCH REPORTS

SFCJ U11 9 v 0 HESKETH COLTS RED

Southport FCJ sitting at the top of the table had a difficult encounter with Hesketh Colts Red, in the early stages both teams cancelled each other out with both defences standing firm. Southport had key players missing and struggled to get their passing game going. It was midfield maestro Tom Rogers playing in his regular number 8 shirt who eventually put his foot on the ball and started spraying passes to the wings, this did the trick when one such pass let in Sam Johnson to cross into the box for James Smith to score from close range. Southport moved Owen Drummond upfront and he replied with two goals in quick succession, another move just before half time saw Will Wilson dribble past two defenders and hit a great shot into the net from the edge of the box.

The second half continued as the first ended with Southport penning Hesketh Colts into their own box and Jorge Jones was in no mood to let them off scoring a hat trick in the space of 15 minutes the third a spectacular right foot shot from just outside the box that gave the unlucky keeper no chance. Southport kept it tight at the back with Callum Jones, Rob Handsford, Oliver Cunningham, Sam Johnson and Robson Baldwin in great form. Arron Ken made some dangerous runs down the right wing for Southport setting up goals for Will Wilson and Ryan Pytel to seal a great victory for Southport but they owed much of their success to Tom Rogers who turned in another Man of the Match performance.

Town Green 4 v 6 SFCJ U11 Trisconi Cup

The tie of the round brought together two teams who have ambitions of making the Final and a close game was expected. In the past the odd goal has decided many encounters between the two teams so it was a major surprise when in the early stages Town Green drew first blood by taking the lead. Southport showing nerves could not get their passing game going but the thought of being a goal down brought them to life, it was the invincible Anthony Brown who latched on to a ball and ran at the Town Green goal with defenders closing him down he unleashed a right foot rocket that flew into the roof of the net and out of the reach of the keeper. This started a session of dominance for Southport and further goals from Ryan Pytel and James Smith who both ran clear from the half way line to shoot past the on coming keeper, Town Green were on the ropes at this stage but hit Southport on the break to score from a scramble in the Southport box to make it 2 v 3. Southport rallied together and Sam Johnson sent an inch perfect pass over for Owen Drummond to flash a header in to the net. Straight from the kick off Dan Thompson found himself clear and with his cultured left foot sent the ball over everyone to find Drummond unmarked at the far post to hammer home his second header in as many minutes. Just before half time James Smith put the game beyond Town Green with a solo effort that saw him glide past the Town Green defence and chip the ball over the keeper to make the score 2 v 6 to Southport.

The second half was a formality and Southport took their foot of the gas but Rob Handsford and Oliver Cunningham were superb at the centre of defence, Robson Baldwin was in commanding form and had the left side of the pitch tied up as Town Green tried to get back into the game. Southport made changes bringing on Jorge Jones and Mat Peterson on both went close to extending the lead but were denied by great saves from the Town Green keeper, Tom Rogers had an effort shave the post. In the latter stages Town Green pushed on and pulled a goal back, with minutes left George Newell converted a penalty to make the score 4 v 6 but the damage had been done in the first half.

Redgate Yellow 0 v 2 SFCJ U11

Southport returned to league action after last weeks victory at Town Green in the cup. Redgate who have had a great start to the season and are unbeaten this term came up against a strong Southport side that have conceded very few goals so a tight game was on the cards. Southport have been slow starters to games this season and this game was no exception as Redgate created the early chances, from one chance the Redgate striker broke free and was about to shoot from the edge of the 6 yard box when SFCJ defender Rob Handsford somehow got a foot to the ball to deflect the ball wide of its target and deny Redgate the lead. Southport struggled to put any sort of pass together and it was Tom Rodgers and Anthony Brown in the centre of midfield to try and stem the pressure. Rogers who has been an inspiration for Southport this term twisted and turned to break the Redgate defence, with Brown growing in stature it was not long before Southport took charge of the game and imposed some pressure on the Redgate defence. Towards the end of the half a Southport attack was stopped by a Redgate defender who's clearance fell to Robson Baldwin 25 yards out who hit a thunderbolt of a shot that flew into the net despite the brave efforts of the keeper to keep it out. This was Baldwin's first goal of the season and just rewards for one of the leagues most outstanding defenders.

The second half was just as tight but Southport always had the edge in strength with Oliver Cunningham in commanding form at the back for Southport. The game became stretched and Southport took advantage and penned Redgate back Owen Drummond James Smith and Sam Johnson all had chances to extend their lead but were denied by some great defending by Redgate. Arron Ken and Jorge Jones came off the bench to make an immediate impact on the game, a move on the right saw Smith beat two defenders to slide the ball across the 6 yard box to find Jones to hammer home his shot. Redgate never gave up but could not pierce the Southport defence which has been the foundation of their success this season but when teams have Callum Jones in goal has come to their rescue with some great saves. Southport and Redgate played out the final stages of the game cancelling each other out as both teams had given all they had on a wet and difficult pitch, the players showing respect for one another's efforts. In the end only one team could win but make no mistake Redgate were more than a match and will give other teams in the league a tough game, unfortunately today Southport passed that test and were worthy winners with Tom Rogers putting in his normal Man of the match Performance.

SFCJ U11 2 v 4 Formby A

This top of the table clash brought together two teams who are undefeated, bang in form and firing on all cylinders so an entertaining game was on the cards. Southport who have a habit of starting slowly to games needed to get their attacking game going from the start but Formby had other ideas and penned Southport back into their own half in the early stages, Formby were first to every ball and with the amount of mistakes they forced upon Southport it was not long before they took the lead. Southport pulled everyone back for a corner but when the ball came into the 6 yard box Curtis Webster met it on the volley to place his shot between two defenders and into the net. Minutes later Formby struck twice in a minute with goals from Daniel Winkle and Michael Panes, Southport struggled to contain Formby but a move down the right saw James Smith on the right who's cross into the box eluded everyone and found Dan Thompson to strike a shot wide of the impressive Formby keeper Liam Hamilton and into the net. Southport had it all to do and a mistake just outside their box let in Cameron Rimmer to rifle a shot low into the corner of the net to give Formby a 4 v 1 half time lead. Southport had it all to do after a disastrous first half performance, they soon got their composure back and started to pass the ball about. This resulted in immense pressure on the Formby back four to contain Southport's attacks. Southport had the chances to score through Owen Drummond and Ryan Pytel but Formby keeper Liam Hamilton was equal to everything they threw at him. Southport forced a corner and Sam Johnson inch perfect cross was met by Captain Courageous Oliver Cunningham to thunder a header home from 6 yards out. This set the game alight and Southport had the bit between their teeth and went for the all out attack as they had nothing to lose. Chance after chance went begging with Mathew Peterson, Will Wilson and Oliver Cunningham all missing chances, James Smith hit a shot against the far post when a goal seemed certain but Liam Hamilton stood firm to keep Southport out. Southport forced another corner upon Formby and Johnson drove the ball over for Mathew Peterson to power a header which had goal written all over it only for Liam Hamilton to pull off a tremendous save and inevitably break Southport's hopes of anything from the game. The game ended 4 v 2 to Formby but it could have ended 6 v 6, both teams played to their full potential through out the match but Formby took their chances and Southport didn't, the game was played in a very sporting manner and the Man of the Match had to be Formby Keeper Liam Hamilton who commanded his area and gave a faultless performance in goalkeeping.

S FCJ U11 13 v 0 Ainsdale B U 11

Southport returned to action after last weeks defeat to Formby A and with their confidence dented they had a point to prove to manager Rick Bainbridge. Southport set about Ainsdale with Anthony Brown in commanding form in the centre of midfield. Ainsdale set their stall out and made it difficult for Southport with some stern defending but Southport passed the ball about the pitch with Cunningham, Baldwin, Rogers, Brown and Peterson in the thick of the action. Southport broke the deadlock midway through the half when James Smith broke down the left to send a cross that fell to the feet of Ryan Pytel to tap home from close range. This set the ball rolling and Southport took control with Owen Drummond and Will Wilson netting before the interval.

Ainsdale had their chances but Rob Handsford made vital interceptions to halt any threat upon Callum Jones's goal, Tom Rogers linked up well with Dan Thompson who hit a long range effort high into the Ainsdale net. Mathew Peterson shone on the wing for Southport and he to had a long range effort that rattled the back of the net to extend their lead, Southport moved up a gear as Ainsdale defended with great determination but Southport added further goals from Tom Rogers, and Jorge Jones who hit a hat trick in the space of 10 minutes. The Man of the Match award went to Anthony Brown for a outstanding display in the middle of the park, he was always available to take a pass and never stopped tackling setting up many a move for Southport.

Redgate Yellow U11 1 v 5 SFCJ U11

This quarter final of the Trisconi Trophy had it all and both teams played their part in an action packed thriller. Southport conquerors of Town Green in the previous round came up against a very well organised Redgate Yellow team who made it difficult for Southport in their league encounter last month, Southport had injuries and made changes in key positions with Anthony Brown moving into defence and Captaining the team. It was Brown who lead by example and commanded the Southport defence from any threat Redgate had to offer, Southport settled the quicker and Tom Rogers was at the centre of everything as Southport pushed for the opening. The early chances fell to Jorge Jones who was denied by Redgate keeper Ben Heap who was superb all game making numerous outstanding saves, but Southport surged forward and it was Jorge Jones who rattled a shot into the net from close range to give Southport a narrow but deservingly half time lead.

The second half exploded with goals when Owen Drummond broke free inside the area he was about to shoot but a miss timed tackle by a Redgate defender resulted in a penalty, up came Sam Johnson who was on top form to place a shot inside the post. Redgate hit back but Southport hit them on the break with James Smith racing free and lobbing the keeper from the edge of the box, before they could compose themselves Redgate conceded again with Smith on target again to ram an effort home inside the 6 yard box. Rob Handsford and Robson Baldwin combined to set Owen Drummond in on a one on one with the keeper, Drummond lifted the ball out of the reach of the keeper but it rattled the top of the bar when a goal seemed certain. Southport forced Redgate back and from a corner from Dan Thompson it found Will Willson unmarked at the back to rifle a thunderous shot into the Redgate net in the closing stages. Redgate battled back and scored a great goal just before the end of the game plus had a long range effort rattle the Southport bar only to bounce back into the safe hands of Callum Jones the Southport keeper. There were many candidates for Man of the Match with Rogers, Brown, Drummond all staking a claim but for sheer commitment throughout the game Sam Johnson was superb and gave a faultless display and was well worthy of the MotM award.

Formby "B" 0 v 3 Southport Juniors

Formby B came up against Southport a team they have always been more than a match for and this game was no exception, over the last few seasons Southport have struggled in key games against Formby who have a spell over the visitors. Southport had the majority of possession throughout the game but some stern defending and great last ditch tackles kept Southport at bay to break the deadlock. Owen Drummond and Arron Ken tested the Formby back four with numerous raids down the flanks but Formby dealt with everything they threw at them and could have taken the lead themselves when they hit Southport on the Counter attack, only the brave goalkeeping of Callum Jones prevented them from taking the lead. Just before half time Southport stalwart Oliver Cunningham returned a header from inside his own half that eluded the Formby defence and Jorge Jones took advantage by racing free to lob the ball over the oncoming keeper and into the net. Shortly after the restart Southport lost two key players in Oliver Cunningham and Robson Baldwin to injury to pile more pressure on the team as they had to regroup with Dan Thompson and Anthony Brown filling in at the back.

Southport's half time team talk from Manager Richard Bainbridge worked wonders and a different team took to the field, Tom Rogers and Will Wilson commanded the midfield from the start and it was Wilson who won the ball on the half way line to send James Smith clear with only the keeper beat, Smith kept his composure to clinically strike his effort into the corner of the net from the edge of the area. Formby would not lie down and came back at Southport with a vengeance, it was only some outstanding defending by Robbie Handsford that denied them a goal their effort deserved but Southport pushed forward and a cross from Sam Johnson found Jorge Jones to clip an effort inside the far post for his second goal of the game. The game ended as it started with Formby tackling as if their lives depended on it, they gave their all and were a credit to their club but Southport had the strength in depth and deserved the win. The Man of the Match had to be the ever dependable Robbie Handsford who was in outstanding form at the back for Southport in difficult weather conditions.

Southport Juniors 6 v 4 Redgate Rovers Green

Redgate came to Southport with a point to prove as their previous encounter Southport ran riot and were worthy winners. The weather played a big part in the game as howling winds and rain tested both teams on a soggy pitch, Southport started the better and Anthony Brown making his mark early on by controlling the centre of the park. He set up the first goal by sending Jorge Jones free inside the box who shot wide of the oncoming keeper and into the net. The next Southport attack saw a move involving Robson Baldwin and Brown to link up with Jones who rifled a shot into the net from the edge of the box for his second in as many minutes. Redgate struggled to contain Southport at this point and Dan Thompson latched on to a loose ball wide on the left wing he cut in and lobbed a shot over the keeper and into the net for a truly outstanding goal, minutes later Thompson found himself free and he unleashed trade mark thunderbolt that flew into the net giving the keeper no chance. Redgate rallied round and against the run of play they broke free and Dan Adobous shot was palmed away by Callum Jones only for a Redgate striker to net from close range. The half time break was due but from a goal kick Arron Ken beat the defender to the ball and drew the keeper before placing his shot high into the roof of the net.

The second half was much closer and Redgate the more threatening throughout but Southport missed chances to extend their lead when Owen Drummond, Ryan Pytel and James Smith were denied by great saves by the Redgate Keeper who was superb in the second half. Oliver Cunningham sent a deep cross from a free kick into the area which eluded everyone and found Will Wilson unmarked to smash a shot inside the far post and evidently seal the game for Southport. Redgate dead and buried came back with a vengeance and showed a lot of character by pushing Southport back into their own half, this paid dividends and the impressive Dan Adobous netted a hat trick in ten minutes the third being the pick of the bunch when he hit a bullet of a shot into the top left hand corner of the net from way outside the box. Both teams gave their all and credit to them all as the football played was in a very honest and sporting manner, the man of the match for Southport was Oliver Cunningham for giving a brilliant display of defending and winning every header that came his way.

Birkdale Utd. 2 v 3 Southport FC Juniors

The last league fixture of the year brought together two teams with strength in depth, the weather was crisp and conditions perfect for football. Southport set about Birkdale in the early stages and penned them into their own half but Birkdale responded with some outstanding defending the main threat coming down the right hand side for Southport with Sam Johnson and Owen Drummond combining to set up chances for Ryan Pytel, Dan Thompson and James Smith but the chances were well saved by the Birkdale keeper. Half way through the half Birkdale caught Southport napping at the when a ball over the top let in Birkdale who's striker beat the oncoming Callum Jones to slide the ball into the empty net. Southport stunned by this hit back immediately with Anthony Brown and Tom Rogers taking control of the midfield, it was Rogers who darted into the box and was just about to shoot when he was upended and a penalty kick awarded to Southport. Sam Johnson stepped up to place his kick to the right of the keeper who got a hand to the ball but could not stop it hitting the back of the net as half time was called.

Southport came out for the second half with a point to prove and Gary Grier came on to make his debut on the left side of midfield, this had a positive reaction and Birkdale struggled to contain Southport who forced a series of corners. Sam Johnson hit one such corner deep into the box and was met by Oliver Cunningham who shot from close range only to see the keeper get a touch to the ball but could not stop it rolling over the line for Southport's second goal of the game. Birkdale came back at Southport again and a superb move saw the Birkdale striker with a one on one with Callum Jones the Southport keeper and he placed his shot inside the post from outside the box to get his second goal of the game and bring the scores level. The game was on a knife edge at this stage and both teams battled for the advantage Robson Baldwin sent a long ball forward only for a foul to be given on Arron Ken in the centre of the Birkdale half, from well over 25 yards out Sam Johnson placed his shot wide of the keeper and into the net to give Southport the lead. Further chances from Mat Peterson and Jorge Jones went begging, Rob Handsford kept it tight at the back for Southport as Birkdale pushed forward again but time ran out as the final whistle blew. The Man of the Match had to be Anthony Brown for his never say die attitude and battling for every ball that came his way

Southport Trinity 1 v 5 Southport FC Juniors

A New Year brought together Southport's top two teams who over the years have produced some great games and hard fought battles with very little in the score lines. The Rookery pitch was in superb condition for the time of year and only a swirling wind hampered the football both teams served up. Southport FCJ started the brighter and had the early chances. Sam Johnson, Rob Handsford, Oliver Cunningham and Robson Baldwin were outstanding at the back for SFCJ and cut out any threat Trinity tried to put on their goal, this strength from a truly outstanding defence allowed their midfield to push forward and Tom Rogers, Anthony Brown, Gary Grier and Owen Drummond took advantage to set up numerous chances for James Smith and Ryan Pytel. It was a matter of time before the deadlock was broken when Grier cut in from the left to find Smith who slid a pass to Drummond to hammer a shot into the roof of the net from close range. Trinity responded in a positive manner with Nathan Thistlewaite combining with Christy Devlin who's shot rattled the side netting although Callum Jones the SFCJ keeper had it covered. Scott Walkerdine marshalled things at the back for Trinity but SFCJ always had a the advantage and only some fine goalkeeping by Mathew Gautry kept the score at 0 v 1 at the interval.

SFCJ made two forced changes at the interval with Ryan Rytel and Oliver Cunningham taking knocks in the first half but SFCJ have strength in depth and Mat Peterson and Zack Evans who came on to make his debut. It was Peterson who pushed forward and again some slick passing saw the ball fall to Drummond to rifle home his second goal of the game. SFCJ had the bit between their teeth and the fox in the box James Smith went on a solo run and eluded two defenders to hit a shot into the far side of the net from a tight angle. Shortly after a free kick to SFCJ midway in the Trinity half saw Sam Johnson step up and place a shot into the net to extend SFCJ's lead. Trinity hit back with Scott Walkerdine hammering a right foot shot into the corner of the net which was just rewards for Trinity who on another day will get the rewards their effort deserved. The climax of the game saw a goal of sheer class from Dan Thompson from well over 25 yards out he hit a thunderbolt of a shot that flew into the top corner of the net to make things worse for Trinity just as a fight back seemed on the cards. Jorge Jones came on as a late sub and nearly added to his total for the season but shot narrowly wide. Anthony Brown and Tom Rogers bossed the middle of the park overpowering Trinity's midfield but for all round commitment and endeavour it had to be Owen Drummond to be awarded the Man of the Match

SFCJ U11 5 v 1 Formby B

Southport and Formby B had their hands full with the gales that threatened to spoil the match, it was a case of which team could master the conditions would have the advantage. Southport had the wind in the first half and created numerous chances but some great defending and goalkeeping denied them the breakthrough. Southport built up from the back with Sam Johnson, Rob Handsford, Oliver Cunningham and the impressive Robson Baldwin in commanding form in defence. Formby had a game plan to defend against the wind and hit Southport on the break but Southport had other idea's, Tom Rogers and Anthony Brown linked up to set up a chance for Owen Drummond who's shot ricochet of a Formby defender to Sam Johnson on the right side of the box who unleashed a shot high into the far side of the net midway through the half. This put a spring into Southport's game and Anthony Brown had a 25 yarder that rattled the bar and Ryan Pytel went close with an effort just before the interval.

The roles were reversed and Southport had the wind in their faces so manager Richard Bainbridge made a tactical change and this did the trick. Southport reverted to their passing game and kept the ball on the floor, within minutes the chances began to appear one after the other. Zack Evans scored his first goal for his club when he latched on to a loose ball in the box and fired a shot past the on coming keeper. Formby had their chances but with Southport's defence in sparkling form it was a mistake that let in Formby when no one reacted to a ball in the box and a Formby striker shot wide of Callum Jones for a well deserved goal. Straight from the kick off Southport pushed forward and Baldwin sent a cross into the box to find Owen Drummond to lob the ball over the keeper and into the net. The game was ending when Southport created two more goals from Jorge Jones and James Smith, in particular Smith's goal was typical of the "fox in the box" when he coolly raced on to a long ball and chipped the keeper from the edge of the box. There were many contenders for the Man of the Match from both teams but for his work rate and strength on and off the ball it was Robson Baldwin who stole the show with an outstanding performance.

SFCJ 10 v 1 Hesketh Colts Red TRISCONI CUP SEMI FINAL

Cup fever hit Southport FCJ and Hesketh Colts Red with the prize for the winners a date in the final in April. Southport started the brighter and forced numerous chances in the early stages but some great defending by Tim Moore and Dominic Callahan kept Southport at bay. It was a matter of time before the deadlock was broken and a corner from Sam Johnson found SFCJ Captain Oliver Cunningham to rifle a left foot shot high into the net, this was well deserved and Jorge Jones and a Sam Johnson penalty extended SFCJ's lead. Hesketh Colts made a game of it and with a bit of luck they could have netted themselves but Callum Jones the SFCJ keeper produced some fine saves. Anthony Brown and Tom Rogers were outstanding in midfield for Southport and with Robson Baldwin and Dan Thompson equally outstanding on the left flank Hesketh Colts did well to keep them out before the interval.

Southport started the second half in top gear and the goals came in quick succession with James Smith, Mat Peterson, Owen Drummond and Ryan Pytel all netting to put the game beyond Hesketh Colts. Southport kept the ball and some sleek passing throughout the side produced some fantastic football but credit to Hesketh Colts they kept going and got the reward their efforts deserved when Tom Howard latched on to a ball and ran from the halfway line to slide the ball wide of Callum Jones and into the net. Southport hit back straight away when Dan Thompson produced his trade mark goal when he rattled a long range left foot shot into the net. Robbie Handsford and Will Wilson both had near misses towards the end of the game but were denied by some great saves by the Hesketh Colts keeper. The man of the match award goes to Oliver Cunningham who lead his team by example and was a dominant force throughout the game and scoring twice.

SFCJ 3 v 4 Town Green

This game was a credit to every player who participated on a very difficult pitch which was suffering from the effects of an overnight frost. The teams adapted to this and produced some outstanding football with Town Green starting the brighter and getting the early break through when their forward broke free from the half way line to slide the ball past the on coming Callum Jones. This set the game alight and chances for both teams went begging until Owen Drummond latched on to a long ball out of the Southport box and ran the length of the pitch to place his shot wide of the Town Green keeper to level the scores. The midfield became the focus as both teams looked to take control but neither gave each other an inch, from a corner Town Green took the lead again when Southport failed to clear and Theo Christiocou hammered the ball through a crowd of players and into the net just before half time.

The early stages of the second saw Southport push Town Green back but George Newell was superb at the back and made numerous interceptions, Town Green took advantage of the space and hit Southport with two counter attacks and stretched their lead to make the score 1 vs. 4. Southport had it all to do and brought Ryan Pytel on up front, the extra man made the difference and Owen Drummond got a break inside the box to wrong foot the keeper and smash a shot into the corner of the net. This brought the inevitable late surge for Southport who forced a couple of corners, Sam Johnson sent a cross into the box to find Oliver Cunningham who slipped two challenges and placed his shot inside the far post. This came in injury time and unfortunately too late as the referee blew shortly after the restart. There were many contenders for Man of the Match with Anthony Brown, Tom Rogers and Oliver Cunningham all giving their usual 110% but for an all round performance Tom Rogers deserved the award for Southport. A great game for all to watch and credit to Town Green who stood firm and got their reward in an eventful match.

SFCJ U11 6 v 0 Birkdale Utd. "J"

Southport returned to the scene of last weeks unlucky defeat to Town Green to face another difficult encounter against Birkdale J who more than matched them a few weeks ago when Southport were fortunate to win the game 3 vs. 2. Southport got off to a flier and pegged Birkdale back in the early stages with some outstanding wing play on both flanks from Robson Baldwin and Gary Grier on the left and Sam Johnson and Owen Drummond on the right, to help this Tom Rogers and Anthony Brown were instrumental in dictating play in the centre of the park it was not long before a goal came when Johnson sent Drummond free on the right his cross was inch perfect for Jorge Jones to place a shot into the net. Birkdale came back at Southport but Robbie Handsford and Oliver Cunningham kept it tight at the back and never missed a tackle or header all game, with this strength in the side Southport pushed forward at every opportunity and wing wizard Owen Drummond raced past two defenders and smashed his shot high into the net to add to Southport's lead just before the interval.

Southport started the second half as they finished the first on the front foot and added two goals in as many minutes from midfielder Gary Grier the first the pick of the two with a 25 yarder that flew into the net like an exocet missile and gave the keeper no chance. Birkdale still came out all guns blazing and had chances to score but were unlucky on several occasions. The clock was ticking and Southport moved up a gear and punished Birkdale further with Zack Evans and James Smith both adding to Southport's goal tally just before the final whistle. It was a game played in a very sporting manner in fairness to Birkdale they had two key players out and this effected their team enormously but Southport got their season back on track with a very important win to move into second place, there could only be one Man of the Match and that went to Gary Grier who's two goals tipped the scales just ahead of Owen Drummond who ran Birkdale ragged all day.

Formby "B" 1 v 3 SFCJ U11

HARRY COPE Cup Semi Final

Southport and Formby locked horns again in a very competitive cup encounter. Southport came out all guns blazing and had the early chances but were denied by some great defending as chance after chance went begging, Anthony Brown, Owen Drummond and Tom Rogers were all instrumental in everything that Southport put together. The deadlock was broken when James Smith found Ryan Pytel who rode a challenge and placed his shot wide of the keeper and into the net. This was just reward for all the pressure they had put on Formby and from the kick off further chances fell to Drummond and Smith who were denied by the keeper. Southport kept it tight at the back as Formby hit them on the break but Rob Handsford, Gary Grier, Robson Baldwin and Oliver Cunningham denied them the chance to level the scores with some outstanding defending in the closing stages of the half.

The second half started with a bang when Zack Johnson slipped a pass to Gary Grier who smashed an unstoppable shot into the top left hand corner of the net from outside the area to extend Southport's lead. Formby hit back straight away when a cross into the box evaded everyone and somehow crept inside the far post to give Formby some hope. Southport were on their heel's for a few minutes as Formby went for the equaliser but as they pushed forward it left gaps at the back, James Smith used it to his advantage when he slipped two tackles and lobbed the on coming keeper to nestle his effort into the empty net. Arron Ken came on for Anthony Brown to stretch Formby on the right wing and was unlucky not to add to the score line. Formby ran out of steam towards the end of this very sporting game which was always going to be hard fought by both teams but Southport deserved the win Southport's Man of the Match had to be midfield maestro Anthony Brown who put in another quality all round performance.

Birkdale "B" 0 v 7 SFCJ U11

This game was the first of an Easter double header and with gale force winds the condition's hampered both teams. Birkdale fielded a depleted team but were more than a match for Southport and battled for every ball as if their lives depended on it, with the wind at their

backs they hit Southport on the break but could not force a way through a well organised defence. Southport got their passing game into gear and pushed Birkdale into their own half gaining numerous corners, from one such corner Owen Drummond flicked the ball on to Oliver Cunningham to power a header into the net. Southport took control and it was Drummond again who latched on to a pass and with a one on one with the keeper he neatly slid the ball inside the near post for a well deserved goal. Birkdale had Joe Cooper up front as a lone striker and his never say die attitude was a credit to Birkdale as they came back at Southport but Robbie Handsford and Robson Baldwin defended sternly. Ryan Pytel hit his first of two goals just before the interval when unlucky Nathan Sutton the Birkdale keeper deflected a shot into his path for Pytel to ram the ball home from close range.

Southport used the wind to their advantage and hit the front men early Anthony Brown, Dan Thompson and Tom Rogers looked for every ball that was headed back to them to shoot from long range but Nathan Sutton made some great saves as the wind played havoc with the ball. Southport put on the pressure and Mat Peterson netted for Southport with two long range efforts that gave the keeper no chance. James Smith and Will Wilson combined to set up a shot for Gary Grier who rifled his shot into the top of the net for his trade mark goal. Birkdale played some great football and deserved more than what they got out of this game the return game hopefully will be in better conditions and will give both teams to a chance to perform to their true ability. Man of the Match for Southport who had many contenders went to Robbie Handsford who never put a foot wrong and dealt with everything Birkdale threw at him.

Hesketh Colts Blue 0 v 15 SFCJ U11

Southport took to the field knowing that they could not afford to slip up in their pursuit of the league title after Saturday's emphatic 6 vs. 0 win over league leaders Town Green. Manager Richard Bainbridge had a full squad to choose from but made changes to give players a rest as they have a tough run in towards the end of the season. The first 10 minutes were even as Hesketh Colts defended well and were first to most balls and hit Southport on the break but they could not force their way through. The deadlock was broken when Southport Captain Oliver Cunningham got on the end of a corner from Sam Johnson to rifle home his 10th goal of the season from close range. This settled the nerves and Southport tried to get their passing game going but the pitch was firm and very bumpy which made things difficult for both teams, Anthony Brown was at the centre of every move for Southport and linked up well with James Smith, Ryan Pytel and Owen Drummond who were constant threats to Hesketh Colts.

Southport had the bit between their teeth and Jorge Jones came on as a second half substitute for Pytel to make an instant impact when a ball into the box from Dan Thompson was met with a thunderous right foot shot from Jones who gave the unlucky keeper no chance from 10 yards out. Callum Jones came out of the net to play most of the second half up front and was unlucky not to score but linked up well with Robson Baldwin who himself was through on goal only to be beaten by the pitch when a goal seemed certain. Tom Rogers again put in another outstanding performance and got his rewards with two fine second half goals the second a peach of a half volley that flew into the net on the half volley. Arron Ken made numerous right wing raids down the flank and fed the ball to Dan Thompson who rattled the net with a sweet left foot shot, Zack Evans added to his tally for the season with a class near post header from another great Sam Johnson corner. Robbie Handsford who has been superb in the centre of defence for Southport this season pushed forward and a great solo run saw him beat two defenders and slip his shot past the oncoming keeper and into the net for his first goal of the season. Straight from the kick off he latched on to a ball on the edge of the Hesketh Colts box to drive a low shot into the net to double his seasons tally. Credit to Hesketh Colts who battled for every ball and played some great football but on the day Southport always had the edge and strength which will be tested to the full before the season ends.

Redgate Green 1 v 9 SFCJ U11 - Harry Cope Cup ¼ Final

Redgate and Southport have had some great encounters this season with Southport winning both league games the latter a 6 vs. 4 game, so a tight game was expected as Redgate have had some good results against some of the top of the table sides. Southport started the game with a determination that has shone through all season and within the first few minutes it was Owen Drummond on the right wing that beat the full back to the line to send a pinpoint cross into the box for James Smith to volley home, Redgate came back but Southport's defence stood strong with Robson Baldwin and Sam Johnson turning in another superb display on either flank as both never missed a tackle all game. The pressure on Redgate started to pile up and Ryan Pytel, Gary Grier and Owen Drummond (double) all scored before the interval Drummond's second the pick of the bunch when he raced clear from his own half after Oliver Cunningham's pass out of defence. Anthony Brown and Tom Rogers put in another outstanding performance in the centre of midfield for Southport and as the half came to an end it was Southport who failed to clear a corner and Redgate's central defender hammered a superb shot across Callum Jones and into the far side of the net.

Southport made numerous changes in the second half but not until James Smith completed his hat trick with some clinical finishing, Mat Peterson replaced Smith and it was not long before he added to the score line when his strength and pace terrified the Redgate defence to race clear and round the keeper to place his shot into an empty net. Arron Ken found space on the right wing and played a pass to Rogers who returned the ball to Ken to place his shot out of the reach of the Redgate keeper and into the net. Robbie Handsford and Dan Thompson combined to set up a chance for Zack Evans but the Redgate keeper produced another fantastic save. Credit to Redgate who battled all game and played some great football but unfortunately Southport were too strong in every department and ran out easy winners.

The Man of the Match award went to Tom Rogers who put in another all round performance and covered every inch of the pitch.

The two most consistent teams in the league came up against each other having already played each other twice this season and each team having one win under their belts, so with the league title within reach of both teams it was a must win game. Town Green started by forcing Southport into their own box and numerous corners in the first few minutes, it looked bad for Southport who defended sternly with Sam Johnson, Robson Baldwin, Oliver Cunningham and Rob Handsford all combining to put up a defensive wall that could not be penetrated all game. Callum Jones in goal for Southport put in another commanding display and made numerous clearances out of defence as Town Green used the long ball to try and break Southport down. This inspired Southport and swung the pendulum their way with Gary Grier, Tom Rogers, Anthony Brown and Owen Drummond taking control of the midfield and as Town Green tried to push out of their own half Ryan Pytel and James Smith used the space behind to punish Town Green. The first goal of the game came when Anthony Brown threaded an inch perfect pass through the Town Green defence for Owen Drummond who drew the keeper before sliding his shot into the net. This was just rewards as Southport had missed numerous chances earlier, Town Green rallied but another pass over their defence fell to Ryan Pytel who raced clear and shot at the oncoming keeper Anthony Counce who made a great save only for the rebound to fall to Pytel who made no mistake with his second effort. James Smith was dragging the Town Green defence all over the pitch and was unlucky to have an effort rattle the bar from outside the box before he got his reward with a great one two with Drummond and unleashed a right foot shot into the net from inside the six yard box to extend Southport's lead 0 vs. 3 at the interval.

Town Green made changes in the second half to try and combat Southport's supremacy and credit to them as they put together some impressive passes trying to break Southport down but this left gaps at the back and only some outstanding goalkeeping by Anthony Counce the Town Green keeper who made two finger tip saves from Owen Drummond when a goal seemed certain. James Smith added to his goal tally when he bent a shot round the keeper and inside the near post, Ryan Pytel again raced clear to feed a pass to Drummond who converted for Southport. The game was very one sided at this point and a move from defence to attack saw Oliver Cunningham put Owen Drummond free inside his own half to race clear and complete his hat trick with a magnificent solo effort to make the final score Town Green 0 vs. 6 Southport FCJ.

There were some outstanding performances on both sides with Town Green's Danny Pugh and Anthony Counce in great form, Southport put in their best performance of the season and a Man of the Match award could not be narrowed down to any one player as it was an outstanding team performance all round. Southport Manager Richard Bainbridge has worked hard with his squad over the past few weeks and looks to be getting the rewards for all the effort that has been put in.

Southport returned to league action and came up against a Redgate Yellow side still buzzing after Saturday's cup win against Town Green. Southport with this in mind started brightly and should have taken the lead in the first few minutes but were denied by some fantastic goalkeeping from the Redgate keeper who was outstanding all game. Southport took the lead from a Sam Johnson corner which was met by Oliver Cunningham to place his header through a crowd of players and into the net. Ryan Pytel forced the issue with some strong runs and on another day might have got a double hat trick but had to settle for a double, his first goal came after James Smith controlled a ball on the edge of the box and hit a great shot on the turn only for the keeper to parry the ball and Pytel was in like lightning to hammer home from close range. Redgate came back at Southport but got little change out of Southport's defence of Robson Baldwin, Rob Handsford, Sam Johnson and Oliver Cunningham who have been the backbone of their success this season, Tom Rogers, Anthony Brown and Gary Grier worked their socks off in the middle of the pitch as Redgate pushed forward but with James Smith and Owen Drummond always on hand to take a pass as Southport played most of the first period in the Redgate half.

Southport needing the win to take their place at the top of the league started brightly and could have extended their lead when Owen Drummond beat two defenders and placed a great pass to James Smith who netted but was narrowly flagged offside by the referee. Southport made numerous changes and second half substitute Mathew Peterson ended a great run by slamming home his shot past the Redgate keeper. This settled Southport down and they moved the ball about the pitch with great confidence. Redgate though were awarded a free kick on the bi-line and Redgate's own James Smith put in a superb cross that stand-in Southport keeper Jorge Jones did well to push away only for a Redgate player to get a touch on the ball and divert it into the empty net for a well deserved goal. The game was all but over but Southport went down the other end and an Arron Ken pass across the edge of the Redgate box was met by Anthony Brown who hit a thunderous right foot shot into the corner of the net to end any hope Redgate had of a fight back. There were two contenders for Man of the match but it was shared between Robson Baldwin and Oliver Cunningham who both put in strong and composed performances throughout a tight game.

TRISCONI CUP FINAL

Played at Burscough FC

SFCJ U11 4 v 1 Formby JSC "A"

Southport and Formby came together in the Trisconi Cup final at Burscough FC and put on a very entertaining game of football for the large crowd that came to support both teams. Southport playing so soon after their Monday evening win over Redgate had the upper hand in the early stages and could have taken the lead in the first minute when Ryan Pytel latched on to a pass from Anthony Brown to race clear and was unfortunate that his chip was tipped away by Liam Hamilton. Southport were first to every ball and Owen Drummond and Sam Johnson gave the Formby left side a torrid time with some outstanding raids that created further chances for Southport.

It was only a matter of time before Southport took the lead and it was from the penalty spot when Pytel was up ended in the box, Sam Johnson stepped up to clinically convert the penalty and give Southport the lead. Formby came back strong and were unlucky not to equalise but Callum Jones raced out of his area to clear the danger and turn defence into attack, Drummond let in Johnson who sent in a cross that landed at James Smith feet and he placed his shot high into the net and give Southport a well deserved half time lead.

Formby came out all guns blazing and tried to get the goal that would get them back into the game but came up against a wall of steel as Robson Baldwin, Rob Handsford and Oliver Cunningham battled to keep them out, this let their midfield duo of Anthony Brown and Tom Rogers to use the space to get in behind and set up further chances for Southport.

Mathew Peterson latched on to a Drummond shot to tap the ball over the line from close range. Formby's never say die attitude was rewarded with goal when Southport failed to clear and the Formby winger hit a screamer from 25 yards out the flew into the net, Southport rallied soon after and a Brown pass found Owen Drummond who hit a left foot shot inside the far post to extend their lead.

It was a great game played in a very sporting manner and credit to both sets of players who showed a lot of respect for one another during and after the game. On the night Southport always had the upper hand and ran out worthy winners but special mention to Formby keeper Liam Hamilton who put in a faultless display of goalkeeping. Southport had many contenders for Man of the Match but Sam Johnson was in outstanding form and never put a foot wrong all night and deserved his award and winners medal.

Ainsdale "B" 0 v 8 SFCJ U11

Southport are edging closer to pole position in the league and after clinching a place in the Harry Cope Cup Final on Saturday they just need to win their remaining games to have any chance of winning the competition. In the early stages manager Rick Bainbridge made numerous changes with Arron Ken, Jorge Jones, Dan Thompson, Will Wilson and Zack Evans all starting. It was not long before Southport got off the mark with Ryan Pytel scoring after a one on one with the keeper, he rapped his shot inside the far post from the edge of the area. Ainsdale hit back straight away and only some strong defending from Oliver Cunningham at the back for Southport prevented them from getting a shot on goal, this allowed Robson Baldwin and Sam Johnson to try and get behind the Ainsdale back four and it was Baldwin who whipped a cross into the box which Zack Evans flicked the ball into the net to get the first of his two goals on the night. Ainsdale again pushed on as the half came to an end but a last gasp tackle from Rob Handsford put an end to any threat that may have developed.

Southport brought on Tom Rogers, Owen Drummond, Anthony Brown and James Smith after the interval to try and finish the game off as Ainsdale had grown in confidence by their impressive first half display but Southport got into their passing game and the goals started to flow with Smith, Jones, Grier and Ken all netting in quick succession as Southport piled on the pressure. Anthony Brown reverted to the centre of defence to shore things up for Southport as a determined Ainsdale still came back at Southport, Owen Drummond moved on to his familiar right wing role and became a hand full for Ainsdale and from one of his runs he was up ended in the box when he was through on goal. Callum Jones the Southport keeper stepped up to place his penalty to the Ainsdale keepers left to take his goal tally to two for this season. Southport had made the game safe and their Man of the Match award went to Arron Ken who put in a great performance on the right side of midfield.

Southport have lost count the number of games they have competed in over the last three weeks but after Wednesday's Cup triumph there is no better venue to play than a semi final at the Rookery against an inform Trinity side who always give you a match and this encounter was no different. The pitch was wet but in superb condition and both teams used it to play some great football and in the early stages it was even as both defences were tested to the full, it was Southport who took the lead when Ryan Pytel hustled his way past the Trinity defence to nip the ball past Mathew Gautry in goal for the home side. Trinity hit straight back when Christy Devlin sent a right wing cross to the far post that Southport failed to deal with and a Trinity striker rammed home from close range. Southport came straight back and a Sam Johnson cross found the head of Pytel to glance his header inside the near post, again Trinity came back and from a goal kick from Callum Jones it was headed over the Southport defence and Christy Devlin latched on to the ball to place his shot into the net. The honours were even and as half time approached it was "the fox in the box" James Smith who capitalised on panic in the Trinity box to hit an instinctive shot that had goal on it as it left his foot. This had an immediate effect on both teams, it gave Southport the edge and broke Trinity as the interval arrived.

Southport with their tail's up dominated much of the second half and had Anthony Brown to thank as he took control of the midfield area and this enabled Southport to push forward and play some outstanding football with Owen Drummond and Robson Baldwin hitting Trinity on either flank to create further chances that fell to Pytel and Rogers but both chances were denied by some great goalkeeping from Mathew Gautry who had a superb game. Southport made the pressure pay when a free kick just outside the area was sent crashing into the net by Sam Johnson, soon after a Gary Grier cross into the area was met by Zack Evans who showed his courage by putting his head where others had their feet to divert the ball into the Trinity net to make the game safe for Southport and a place in the Final at Haig Avenue in May. There were many contenders for the Man of the Match award for Southport with Robson Baldwin having a great second half but the award went to Anthony Brown who shone all game and covered every blade of grass on the pitch making some fantastic tackles that kept his team in this game and into another Final. Southport Trinity may have lost the game but were very sporting in the manner that they took the defeat and every player congratulated their opponents on their achievement's not only in this game but over the season.

Hesketh Colts Red 1 v 10 SFCJ U11

Southport started their final league game of the season and needed the win to clinch the League title and came up against a very well organised Hesketh Colts side who have had some great results against the top teams in the division. With that in mind Southport wasted no time in scoring in the first minute when Ryan Pytel scored from close range after Robson Baldwin sent an inch perfect cross into the box that Pytel forced over the line. Straight from the kick off Southport went further ahead when Zack Evans took advantage of some hesitant defending and slotted his shot inside the near post. Hesketh were finding the conditions difficult as the wind was blowing into their half which made passing difficult, Southport used this to their advantage and further goals from James Smith, Jorge Jones, Robson Baldwin, Gary Grier and Owen Drummond sealed the victory for Southport. Hesketh Colts replied mid way through the second half when their striker raced clear to shoot past Callum Jones in the Southport goal, Ryan Pytel finished the season the way he started it by completing his hat trick. Anthony Brown was unlucky to have two shots cleared off the line when a goal seemed certain and Rob Handsford, Sam Johnson, Robson Baldwin and Oliver Cunningham were superb at the back for Southport in the second half dominating the Hesketh Colts forward line. Arron Ken and Dan Thompson had lively games on either flank and both were unlucky not to score, Ken in particular showing great determination to try and break through the Colts defence.

Southport won the match and the League and deserved to be crowned Champions for producing some fantastic displays throughout a long and hard season having won 21 games drawn 1 and lost 2. They are top scorers with 140 goals and have the best defensive record, conceding 24 goals all year. Add to that they won the Trisconi Trophy and are in the final of the Harry Cope, Manager Richard Bainbridge and assistant Steve Baldwin are extremely proud of the team they have nurtured from the age of 7. The Man of the Match award today went to Callum Jones, Robson Baldwin, Sam Johnson, Rob Handsford, Oliver Cunningham, Anthony Brown, Tom Rogers, James Smith, Owen Drummond, Ryan Pytel, Zack Evans, Jorge Jones, Arron Ken, Dan Thompson, Gary Grier, Mathew Peterson and Will Wilson.