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English Premiership Football 2006–07 - Aston Villa 2:0 Newcastle

By **Steven Cronin**

Aston Villa's renaissance under the guidance of Martin O'Neill continued at Villa Park as the home team put Newcastle to the sword.

New owner Randy Lerner made his first appearance in the directors' box sat next to outgoing chairman Doug Ellis.

And it was smiles all round as Villa sustained their impressive start to the season against Glen Roeder's Toon.

With major transfer activity not expected until the January transfer window, O'Neill's initial assault on the Premiership will be undertaken with much the same squad David O'Leary failed so miserably with.

The match began in explosive fashion, Luke Moore firing a low shot into the corner of the net from the edge of the penalty area.

The young Villa striker shows great promise and is starting to endear himself to the Villa Park faithful.

Newcastle fought back and enjoyed spells of possession, though it was Villa who doubled their lead on the half hour when Juan Pablo Angel danced his way past Shay Given and stroked the ball into an empty net.

The Columbian took his goal well and is relishing his opportunity as main striker in the absence of Czech hit man Milan Baros.

Newcastle started brightly after the break, but things took a turn for the worse when front man star signing Martins went down clutching his knee.

Having used his three substitutes the unfortunate Roeder could only sit and watch as United played the remainder of the match with only ten men.

The extra man made life easier for Villa and Moore almost took advantage in the final minutes with a vicious strike that cannoned off the crossbar.

A happy Martin O'Neill said after the match "I've done absolutely nothing at all.

"These players have done it themselves and, in fact, they keep me going to be perfectly honest.

"There is a good spirit within them and they want to play."

Steven Cronin writes the hottest English Premiership Football news, results and opinion at

http://www.sargas.co.uk/english_premiership_football

I'm A Villa Fan And I'm Scared!

By Steven Cronin

It's fair to say that the past twenty–five years of following Aston Villa Football Club has come with its fair share of ups and downs.

But I can honestly say I have never looked forward to a new football season with such an overwhelming feeling of pessimism.

I was fortunate enough to be born just in time to appreciate the glory years of the early eighties. The team built by Ron Saunders and then nurtured by Tony Barton brought much joy and happiness to at least half the city of Birmingham.

Unfortunately those days now seem an eternity ago and things are much different. I'm still trying to work out how Doug Ellis bought the champions of Europe in the summer of 1982 and then proceeded to guide them to relegation in just five years. That must surely be some kind of record.

These days things are only slightly better. The continual decline under David O'Leary's guidance is causing serious cause for concern amongst the Villa faithful.

The final third of last season produced some of the worst football seen at Villa Park for some time and relegation fears were only dispelled in the final week of the season.

The only team worse than Villa at the end was Sunderland and they finished with the lowest points tally since the Premiership started.

The only highlight of a dreadful season was the derby victories over Birmingham, ultimately crucial in the battle for survival points.

The lack of transfer activity due to the never–ending take–over saga is a serious problem and one that could haunt the club come the end of the season.

But for now, we Villa fans can only cross our fingers and hope. O'Leary's promise that last season's dismal position was a one off has bought him extra time from Ellis, but many fans remain distinctly unconvinced.

Steven Cronin owns the City Breaks website featuring city break special offers from luxury hotels to budget accommodations. For more information please visit

<http://www.sargas.co.uk>

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