

15/11/05 TT No.111: Mike Latham - Droylsden (NCN)

Mon 14 Nov 2005, Droylsden 1-2 Gainsborough Trinity (NCN) (att.- 280 est.).

Monday night football at the Butcher's Arms is one of the pleasures of living close to the Greater Manchester conurbation. An historic town centre ground with a chequered history dating back to the late 1800s Droylsden's home has undergone huge changes in recent years.

A smart elevated main stand straddles the halfway line and gives an excellent vantage point whilst the terrace behind the goal to the left has been covered and re-concreted. There is also a covered shallow terrace on the far side with the other end uncovered and backed by a huge netting to help prevent wayward shots going into neighbouring gardens. Wherever you stand or sit you are close to the action and in recent years particularly entertainment has been virtually guaranteed.

Hemmed in by houses and shops and yards away from the market place, the Butcher's Arms is only five minutes away from J23 of the M60 motorway and on a midweek evening there is plenty of parking on the market car park. If you can avoid the temptations of the Kings Head pub that adjoins the ground (where a hand-pulled pint of Joseph Holts mild costs £1.40 and comes heartily recommended) the club house inside the ground, where the welcome is equally as warm, may draw you in.

Admission was £8 for adults with an additional £1 transfer to stand and a newsy 52-page programme with excellent statistical sections and match reports as its main features and updated for games played over the weekend added to the enjoyment of the evening.

Droylsden sensibly opt for Monday night football in an area with so many counter attractions on other nights with any number of rival football clubs within a ten-mile radius. Surprisingly though, this was the Bloods' first midweek home game of the season. Whenever I have seen them in the last few seasons they can be relied upon to play some excellent and entertaining football and they fail to get the support they deserve, though the fans that turn up are as knowledgeable and passionate about the game as you will find.

In the early stages Droylsden's Gareth Morris threatened to take control of the game with a dominant play-making role but Gainsborough drew first blood when the persistence of their impressive striker Danny Steadman set up Charlie Trout for the opening goal. Though Morris equalised before half-time the visitors went away with the spoils when Steadman skilfully converted Trout's deep cross on the hour-mark.

There is an excellent tea bar at the ground and the chip muffins, pie & peas and hot drinks all at reasonable prices were much sought after on a cold but clear

evening. Manager and chairman Dave Pace, has worked wonders to upgrade the Butcher's Arms ground to its current stature and maintain the team playing at a high level of non-league football in an area with so many rival clubs. A visit to Droylsden, particularly for a Monday evening fixture, comes highly recommended. Match rating: 3*.

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