

08/08/05 TT No.13: Stephen Harris - Trip to Berlin

Friday 5th & Saturday 6th August 2005; Berlin, Germany.

The main reason for being in Berlin was to attend the annual International Bierfestival, but obviously we were going to take in some football as well. Friday night offered four fixtures in the Berlin area in the Oberliga. We opted for **SV Yesilyurt** against BFC Dynamo as this game had been switched to the Jahn Sportpark, a venue none of us had visited before. Yesilyurt are a small club from the north-west suburbs representing the Turkish community. BFC Dynamo were the stasi-backed, ten-times winners of the DDR Championship and former European Champions Cup contenders. So, something of a difference in background and traditions. Dynamo retain a rather un-reconstructed east German skinhead following and the police didn't fancy the game being played on Yesilyurt's tiny ground - hence the venue switch. An extra twist is that the Jahn Sportpark is in the east of the city and was often used as the home ground for Dynamo back in the DDR days.

The stadium has been much refurbished and now has a 25,000 all-seated capacity, covered on both sides and with bands of brightly coloured seats in yellow, blue and red. All this, but it does not have a regular home club to play there. We were in the two-tier main stand, along with a couple of hundred Yesilyurt fans, whilst the visiting hoards were kept well away of the far side, from which they provided a huge volume of support for their team.

The first half was actually rather dull on the pitch but things got going in the second half with Yesilyurt emerging 2-1 winners in a bruising encounter - no green wristbands in this league. The result did not seem to have gone down well with the vast majority of the crowd and we made a swift exit on the U-bahn back to the beer festival. The attendance was given as 1,418 and a rather thin, free programme was issued.

Saturday afternoon saw us at another Oberliga Nord-Ost Nord game, this time in the southern suburbs. **BFC Preussen** are newly promoted and this was their first home game in the league against TSG Neustelitz. The Preussen Stadion has a capacity variously stated as 5,000 or 8,000 and is clearly of a venerable age. Spectator facilities consist of 11 steps of uncovered terracing arranged around three sides of a running track. Some of this terracing is in rather poor condition. On the main side, there are seven rows of uncovered bench seats in front of a beer tent, barbeque tent and the plush clubhouse. As we got there early, we managed to get a table and chairs right in front of the clubhouse with a good view of the pitch and waitress service from the bar - very nice, an enjoyable place to watch a game (except when the rain came down and everyone retreated to the beer tent).

A very basic free programme was given out on entry and the attendance was stated as 223 - although there were well over 300 in attendance, including 50 or so

away fans. All very relaxed and low-key after yesterday evening. The game was a good one, Preussen unexpectedly winning 4-2 to put them top of the table after one game.

Sunday turned out to be a disaster for me. I opted for a day out of Berlin to see a game at Halle, but never got there due to railway delays. I was left stranded in Dessau at kick-off time, with no game to go to. My friends took in **Lichtenburg 47** vs Reinickendorf Fuchse in the Berlin Verbandsliga, which they reported as a very enjoyable 2-0 away win in front of a crowd of around 350 in Lichtenburg's big old ground. A colourful free programme from that match was the best of the weekend's haul.

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