

13/12/05 TT No. 130: *Mike Latham* - Kilmarnock (Scottish Premier League)

Sun 11 Dec 2005, SPL Kilmarnock 2-3 Rangers (attendance: 12,426); Admission: £22; 40pp programme: £2; FGIF Rating: 4*.

Kilmarnock's Rugby Park ground has been extensively renovated and forms a model of a modernised, neat and compact new stadium. Located in a pleasant residential district on the outskirts of the Ayrshire town there is plenty of car parking on nearby streets and it is a pleasant and friendly place to visit.

On a mild December afternoon, the visit of Rangers attracted a crowd of over 12,000 and it was straightforward to secure a prime seat in the main stand for £22. The locals were friendly and failed to comprehend someone had travelled from Bolton to watch their team play. The man on my right had come even further, having come from Zurich as part of a week's holiday watching football in the UK. Kilmarnock Sunday, Droylsden Monday was part of his enviable itinerary.

The playing pitch was in great condition and the two teams put on a rip-roaring game full of entertaining football often played at breakneck speed. A high-class hat-trick by Peter Lovenkrands secured Rangers' first win in 11 games and saw them leapfrog their hosts into fourth place in the SPL. The Rangers fans occupied both ends of the ground and helped create a great atmosphere.

An excellent programme, 40 pages crammed with reading material was a bargain £2 and the refreshments at the ground, including the famous Killie meat pie were good value. There is a good club shop that sold a wide range of merchandise including the excellent Scottish League annual, a bargain at £9.95.

About 25 miles from J8 of the M74 Kilmarnock is an easy place to visit by road and certainly the atmosphere at the ground, warm welcome of the locals and excellent football on view made it a stress-free and enjoyable afternoon, good value for the price. Crammed full of locally produced players on a fraction of the budget of their opponents, Killie certainly contributed to a great game and never stopped trying to play good football though Lovenkrands' class deserved to decide the day. A trip to Rugby Park comes highly recommended.