

13/12/05 TT No.131: Paul Roth - Weston St. John's (Western League Division 1)

Weston St John's Vs Almondsbury, Western Lge. Div. 1, Sat 10th Dec 2005; Res: 5-1, Entry: £4; 16-page programme free with admission.

Staying down in rural Somerset with my old footballing 'oppo' Bob, I persuaded him he might like to watch some Western league soccer. My old pal really only ever watches league football nowadays, as he is a Palace fan, and even then, it is only once in a blue moon. With that in mind there was no surprise in his comment as our train came into Weston-Super-Mare and passed within 400 yards of the ground. Weston don't have floodlights and you would sail past in the train if you didn't know it was there, so when I pointed out that there was the ground Bob's exclaim was ..."no, surely not, we can't be going f***** there".

The town of Weston has a bit of a run-down feeling but I suppose a seaside town never looks it's best in winter time. I should know, living in Margate! With the GBG pubs polished off I managed to prize my mate out of the excellent pub on the railway station and into a cab for the 10 min trip down to the ground in Coleridge Road, at the southern end of the town.....this would be a good half hour if walking. The ground is situated at the back of a rather depressing council estate but don't be put off by this as it is a pleasant venue. A large car park leads into the ground which is completely surrounded by a 10-foot high slab concrete wall, a gap in this gleans entry. Two tiny bus shelter stands offer a modicum of cover and there is hard standing all around. Outside the "wall" is an excellent clubhouse and is obviously the focal point for the estate behind. In here we read the 16-page programme; not the best I've seen this season but certainly by no means the worst either.

The match was highly entertaining with the visitors from Bristol having much the better of things until Weston took an undeserved lead with a deft header and quickly added a second before half time. After the break and another pint of Guinness...for us, not the players I must stress...the game continued to flow from end to end with the home side eventually running out easy 5-1 winners and Weston's centre forward bagging a hat trick. Some good football was played during this latter 45 mins.

At full time we walked over the railway footbridge that adjoins the club's car park (this offers a super view back across the ground) and walked the 600 yards to Weston-Super-Mare's new stadium to take in the second half of their Conference South fixture against St. Albans City....and no, I don't count this as having been there. The floodlights of this new arena are easily visible from Weston Saint John's pitch.

A bus back into town, a couple more pints in the "Off the Rails" bar on the station and the train back to Taunton. A lovely evening being driven to some cracking country pubs in the Blackdown Hills by Bob's wife rounded off another fun-packed

Saturday. I think even my old mate was impressed by it all. He's off to watch the Palace at Plymouth next Saturday...yuk!!!

FGIF rating: 5*. A truly fabulous day out.

04/20