

**28/12/05 TT No. 147: *Paul Roth - Herne Bay (Kent League Premier Division)***

Herne Bay vs. Whitstable Town; KL Premier Div.; Tues 27/12/05; Res: 1-1;  
Admission: £5; Programme: £1 (32 pages); Attendance: 330.

With heavy snow settling further up the line in the west of the county a trip just along the coast from my Margate base to take in this local derby at Herne Bay's Winches field seemed an ideal choice. Arriving just after 2 o'clock, the first problem was gaining entry as the ref was still inspecting the pitch; luckily for me he deemed it playable.

Herne Bay have a super stadium that would not be out of place further up the pyramid with covered terracing behind both goals and an old-fashioned cantilevered seating area on the far side of the playing area. The clubhouse...a warm haven today, lies opposite. The only downside to the whole place is the tiny car park which, if wet, becomes a morass of water and mud filled potholes. Sitting in the warmth of the clubroom for half an hour before the start, I read the reliably good 32-page programme, full of statistics and interesting comment adorned on the front cover by a super action photo.

As the game started so down came the snow and, at one point, midway through the first half, there was a real danger the match would be abandoned, so thick the white stuff was that the linesmen were having a job seeing across the field. Credit to the ref and he stuck at it and the 330 fans present were treated to an excellent game of end to end soccer. Whitstable opened the scoring after 20 mins only for Bay to hit back 10 mins later with a well taken half chance that squeezed into the bottom of the net. Half-time offered respite from the weather and to a man every supporter present crammed into the clubhouse for soup and tea. Some hardy souls even plumped for ice cold beer!!

The restart saw the visitors piling on the pressure but woeful finishing let them down and they had to be content with a draw, when in truth they should have extended their winning run to eight games. By the time the final whistle had blown everybody was glad to scurry off into the warmth as the darkness was inducing the temperature to plummet, despite the snow having abated.

All in all, a very enjoyable if somewhat chilly afternoon, but a great opportunity for me to premier my new thermal bobble hat left by Santa on Christmas eve.  
FGIF: 4\*.