

**TT No.216: *Dean McClean*** - Wednesday April 12th 2006. United Counties League: **Wootton Blue Cross 0-0 St. Neots Town**. Attendance: 100est. Admission: £4; Programme 16pp; 50p. FGIF Match Rating: 1\*.

What is it with end of the season football? Around this time of year, it doesn't matter what part of country I head too, it always seems to be the same awful football. Is it the long hard season taking its toll? Maybe it's the hard, un-even bounce in the pitches? Or maybe it's just my bad fortune.

The village of Wootton is situated 2miles west of Bedford and is easily found from the A421.

Wootton Blue Cross is one the oldest football clubs in Bedfordshire having been founded in 1887. After playing in the Bedford & District League for the majority of their early existence, a switch to the UCL was made in 1955. The club have spent every season in the UCL Premier Division since 1969. In the early seventies the club moved to their present site at Weston Park.

The club boasts a large club house building, with a bar for football supporters and an extra function room further down the corridor. Green King IPA is served on pump. Also, there is a big screen which shows all the usual Premiership and FL stuff, although considering the quality of the "proper" match, the people who decided to watch Portsmouth v Arsenal match in bar probably made a wise decision. Along the corridor of the building a large number of fantastic old photographs are hung on the wall, with some dating back to 1894 and 1903. Certainly, the best feature of this venue.

There are two places on the ground from where to shelter from the elements, the first being an extended roof from the club house. This side being heavily populated. On the far side there is a very peculiar cover in the form of a piece of wood linking each dug-out. The rest of the ground was un-covered and hard standing was provided along three sides. Beside the entrance to the ground a small, spotlessly clean tea bar which cheerfully, yet very slowly dispensed only hot drinks. A rather basic programme was sold at 50p on the gate. But at least a programme was issued (unlike at some other games of football I have recently attended).

The match itself was a truly awful affair, with constructive football at a premium. The best the two managers could offer in terms of tactical advice was to shout "go long" to their respective full backs. The best chance of the match was blazed high over the bar from 6 yards out. The most irritating aspect of this match was the continual time wasted (as a result of the ref insisting any ball going out of play must be retrieved by the players). It was almost unbelievable when the St. Neots left back ambled almost 50 yards to the corner flag and another 20 behind the goal to get the ball. The amount of time added on was just two minutes.

A dire match spoiling an otherwise excellent day! It is best to apply the expectation rule here.

04/20