

TT No.230: Mike Latham - Wed 26 Apr 2006. South of Scotland League. **Annan Athletic** 4-0 Mid Annandale. Attendance: 100 head-count; Admission: by donation; No Programme; FGIF Match Rating: 3*.

Annan Athletic plays at Galabank Park, on North Road just outside the centre of the town in a pleasant residential area. They are clearly a club deeply rooted in the local community, with 53 volunteer coaches on their youth programme and 350 children participating in the sport. They also run two senior teams, the 'first' playing in the East of Scotland League alongside the likes of Spartans and Edinburgh City while the other competes in the South of Scotland League. This game kicked off at 7pm as Annan have no floodlights but apparently there are plans to install some in the pipeline.

A vast amount of work has been done to Galabank in the last few years and a smart new stand, with five rows of black and yellow seats is the focal point of a ground that is surely not far from Scottish League standard. The club house is splendidly appointed and a warm welcome awaited the traveller. The club secretary explained that no programmes were issued for midweek games but happily furnished team line-ups and dispensed copies of recent programmes- a rather good 24-page effort with a stunning colour cover depicting the main stand. The rest of the ground is open standing with a dug-outs and a small terrace on the North Road side. Behind the far goal is an impressive all-weather pitch facility.

Mid Annandale, who hail from nearby Lockerbie, arrived with only eleven men and no substitutes and a big score appeared on the cards as Annan scored two early goals. But a combination of excellent goalkeeping, doughty defending and profligate finishing restricted Annan to just two more goals, the last with the last kick of the match. Second placed Annan trail leaders Threave Rovers in the South of Scotland League but are still in with a real shout of the East of Scotland League championship and their upcoming game against fellow title contenders Edinburgh City should be well worth watching.

Situated about seven miles from Gretna along the Solway coast, Annan is a pleasant place to visit and the club officials and supporters were all really friendly and helpful. The standard of play was quite good and the match was well contested and played in a good spirit and excellently refereed. Club officials manned the lines and merely raised their flags to show the ball had gone out of play with the referee deciding on offsides. It sounds dodgy but it seemed to work, certainly on this occasion and there were very few contentious decisions. But it is hard work for referees when the home goalkeeper continually appealed for offside from opposing goal-kicks, clearly not being aware of the laws of the game.

Annan holds a four-team tournament in July which is popular with travellers and have a number of remaining games this season. A visit to Galabank comes highly recommended.

