

15/10/05 TT No.69: Mike Latham - Airbus UK (Welsh Premier League)

Fri 14 Oct 2005, Welsh Premier League, Airbus UK 0-5 TNS (att-240).

Airbus UK completed a rapid rise through the Welsh pyramid system by reaching the Welsh Premier League in 2004 and are now in their second season in the top flight.

But their promising start to the season was severely tested against leaders TNS who strolled to a 5-0 victory courtesy of some ruthless finishing. Marc Lloyd-Williams, a prolific scorer at this level, led the way with a hat-trick as TNS played a high standard of passing football, particularly impressing with their methodical and skilful build-up play from the back.

The Airbus ground is named the Airfield and is situated in Broughton, just off the A55 road that links Chester with North Wales. After passing a huge retail park the Airbus factory looms into view and a couple of stewards helpfully pointed the way to a well-lit and concreted car park.

The football ground is situated just inside the works entrance and the floodlights, four towers on each side of the ground, which are retractable due to the close proximity to the airfield, were shining brightly.

Admission was £5 and a 28-page programme with liberal use of colour and good pen pictures and club histories of both teams was a bargain £1. Pen pictures of the home side are particularly of value to neutral spectators and this is a concept that should be used more widely. Several of the home team's players are employed at the Airbus works.

The Airfield ground boasts an excellent playing surface, though slightly undulating in parts. The ground itself is rather basic though immaculately kept. There is a small pavilion on the far side of the ground housing the committee rooms and dressing rooms and with a small seated area in front. On the near side, closest to the turnstiles, is a small temporary seated stand. The rest of the ground is hard standing behind the perimeter boards though there is a grass-banking behind the far goal, backing onto the runway that gives an excellent view.

There is a small refreshment facility in a temporary building in the far corner that did a roaring trade on a clear and still evening and the 'tannoy' system was very distinct as the announcer gave out the two line-ups and later the names of the scorers.

The club officials were very friendly and a number of travellers were in attendance, including one gentleman from Warwick who was completing his set of Welsh Premier League grounds.

The standard of the Airbus warm-up was extremely high and very impressive, certainly on a par with some English Premier League clubs, but once the play got

underway the home players seemed somewhat overawed by the standard of opposition. Settling into their neat passing style with some good movement and use of wide players, TNS established a 3-0 lead by the interval and could have won even more convincingly, though to their credit the home side always tried to play constructive football.

It was an enjoyable and stress-free evening's entertainment and a visit to the unusual setting of the Airfield comes recommended. Match rating: 4*.

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