

05/11/05 TT No.98: Paul Roth - Rusthall (Kent County League)

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Rusthall vs. Tenterden Tigers; Kent Intermediate Shield; Sat 5th November 2005 k o 2pm; Res: 6-0; Monthly Magazine free at the bar.

Originally, I had intended to see Little Common Albion in Sussex today but espying this cup tie in the *Traveller* and a quick glance at the relevant league tables soon persuaded me to opt for this local cup tie.

Rusthall are making a good start to life in the top division of the British Energy Kent County League and after a couple of sunny, drying days I had little fear of a postponement at their Jockey Farm ground in Nellington Lane, a couple of miles to the west of Tunbridge Wells. Before I go any further, I must say Rusthall F C is one of the most rural set ups I have ever had the pleasure to encounter and reminded me a lot of Crockenhill.

Arriving half an hour before kick-off I had time for a chat with the homester's secretary in the club's atmospheric clubhouse where sandwiches and the monthly club review "Rustic" were free to all comers (no programme today but usually there is for all first team games - I was given last week's free of charge). He told me the club were very go-ahead and have floodlighting which only needs the nod from the planning authorities to get installed. £20K is available to have the pitch levelled and there are schemes afoot to demolish the present clubhouse and erect a more modern building with up-to-date changing rooms.

The ground itself is fully railed off with wire netting below it to stop the ball constantly going way off the playing area and amazingly for this level of football hard standing all the way around the perimeter. Green and white goal nets add to the ambience.

The tie looked a mismatch on paper and with Rusthall racing into a 3-0 lead on 8 mins. I expected a cricket score. It didn't materialise and Tenterden were at times the better team and it was only 3 goals in the final quarter that made the score-line so top heavy in the home team's favour.

This place is SUPERB and a dream to all lovers of the old fashioned. They are a go-ahead club so for god's sake go there before they "go-ahead" and spoil it!! If you go, make sure you give the horses a fuss on the way up the short driveway, in their stables and do use the loos.....the old pictures and framed shirts are museum pieces in the passageway. It really is that good.

An early start meant I was home in Margate in time for a pre-prandial Campari and soda, the next round of Strictly Come Dancing and to plug Ben's--our Persian cat--earplugs in before the fireworks really started to upset him...whatever happened to the 'umble sparkler!

FGIF rating 4** just for what the place is.

04/20