

TT No.118: *Richard Panter* - 16.01.07; Coalville Town v Barwell; Midland Football Alliance; Res: 3 - 4; Att.137; Programme: 28 pages, £1; FGIF Match Rating: 4*.

Another wet and anxious Tuesday. Thankfully we eventually found a match which was on. A 'phone call to Carlton Town proved negative but one to Long Eaton United seemed more positive so off we trotted just over the border. Approaching the ground, we saw the heart sinking sight of darkness, a quick visit to the clubhouse confirmed the cancellation. So, we had a short quick dash down the M1 to Loughborough Dynamo. Certain of the club's fans boast that they never lose a match to rain, confidently we arrived at the NSG to find...darkness. The fourth and final chance was at nearby Coalville Town, a blinding bit of planning saw none of we merry three in possession of the Ravens number but what the hell...it was only eight miles to Owen Street. Over Charnwood Forest we hit a large fog bank which covered the metropolis which is Coaville, but the lights were on as indeed was the fixture and magically by kick off it was as clear as something very clear!

Owen Street is a bit of a so and so to find. The easiest directions I can offer are to make for the town centre, at the war memorial turn towards the shops/Ellistown then look for the Emporium club and turn right and keep heading in that westerly direction. The pitch lies in a dip so floodlights can't be seen from any significant distance so you will really need to ask someone. There is plenty of cover and seats, a decent snack bar with hot food and a well-stocked club shop. For AA route planner use post code LE67 3DA.

This was the fourth attempt to stage this match and what an absolute cracker it turned out to be. Three goals in the first half including one stunner from the hugely impressive Coalville forward Jordan Lee, and the first of a brace by visiting striker Reece Lester. For much of the half Barwell ran the home defence ragged but a combination of fine goal-keeping, luck and wastefulness stemmed their advantage. Newly appointed Town manager Brendon Phillips did his stuff at halftime and for around half an hour his boys did him proud as they nosed in front. However, they were unable to maintain this advantage and eventually went behind when the lively Lester completed the scoring. Barwell deserved the points but their cynical tactic of chopping down the fast and dangerous Danum Russell saw them pick up two bookings for blatant fouls on the diminutive winger. A word of praise must be said about the referee who offered Russell protection from such thuggery. It is heartening to see an official acting in such a way as we all love to see skilful and exciting players like Danum in action.

Five pounds for seven goals was great value for money. Praise must also be given to the home club for producing a fresh programme for the match rather than opt for the cheap-skates way of issuing an out of date one with an insert.

The only disappointment on the evening was a lowly crowd of just 137 given that Barwell is literally just up the road. The stayaways missed a treat.

