

TT No.143: *Richard Panter* - Saturday 10th February 2007; **Barrow Town v Stapenhill**; Leicestershire Senior League; Result: 2 - 1; Att: 150; Programme: 28 pages, free with £3 entry; FGIF Match Rating: * * *.

Today's match between league leaders Stapenhill and Barrow Town was one of only two senior football fixtures in Leicestershire.

Barrow-on-Soar lies two miles south of Loughborough and Town's Riverside Park is next to the A6 as it speeds between Barrow and Quorn. There is hard standing on three sides and the dug-out-side offers two small breeze block covers which are rarely occupied as the view from within is at best restricted. The ground boasts a large warm and friendly clubhouse and has one of the finest snack bars in the area, a juicy burger with onions is good value at £1.50. Standing on the clubhouse side affords a view of the distant Beacon Hill which today was capped with snow. The Soar valley had very little snow recently but endured a large amount of rain which caused the many postponements on the day. The pitch was in magnificent condition with no wet areas whatsoever.

By kick off a season's high crowd of 150 had mustered at the ground, the previous best being 135. Early on a pattern emerged whereby the visitors played with two pacey frontmen and eight defenders. They looked a workman-like outfit content to take a point from their hosts. Stalemate ensued and we reached the break at nil-nil. In the second half both teams seemed more inclined to attack. Stapenhill took the lead with a deftly placed shot from the edge of the area which had their bench shouting as soon as it left their man's foot. This was the first time the visitors managed to escape the shackles of man of the match Town's mighty defender Chris McCathie. The home side were soon level through Matt Boyles' run and fine finish.

A moment of surrealism was soon to follow. Boyles was hacked down when he was through on goal, he was clearly the last man and equally clearly, he was fouled. Stapenhill accepted their fate and were expecting a red card to be shown, the only problem being that neither the referee nor his assistant, were able to agree on the miscreant, a choice of only two players. Therefore, the man in black decided that no further sanctions were required. Barrow's Jason Knight asked, and was given clarification of the situation by the assistant. Frankly, if it were my decision, I would have despatched both Stapenhill players and Knighty for good measure! Incidentally, Barrow slotted the spot kick home and went on to continue their recent revival of form.

League leaders Stapenhill had dropped only seven points so far and were unbeaten away from home. Barrow Town are in a period of transition with new manager Lee Harriman (ex-Coalville Town) in the process of rebuilding his squad, they currently lie in fifth position in the Senior League, Stapenhill were a worthy scalp for their impressive clubhouse walls.

