

TT No.152: *Richard Panter* - Saturday 17th February 2007; **Dosthill Colts v Droitwich Spa Reserves**; Midland Combination Division 3; Result: 1 - 1; Att. 22 (head count); Entry £1; Programme: 40 pages £1; Match rating: **.

The plan for today was to meet my daughter and her boyfriend, who live in Birmingham, at Studley to see them play Oadby Town in an MFA league fixture. However, a phone call to the Bees resulted in a rapid change of plan as their pitch was unplayable.

Last December I rolled up at Bolehall Swifts on a wet and horrible evening only to be told the match was off, so I decided to give it another go. The Non-League Paper had the Swifts at home to Pilkington XXX and a call to the club confirmed that the match was on. We pulled up at the ground and buy a programme only to find that Bolehall were elsewhere and Dosthill Colts, who I confess I had never heard, of were at home, or to be more precise at Bolehall Swifts' Tamworth home, where they are tenants.

The two-clubs' Rene Road home is basic, very basic. There are the mandatory level seven floodlights and pitch rails, but no hard standing apart from inside one of two covers. The stand behind the east goal has plenty of bench seating and would comfortably house well over a hundred punters. The solid brick-built cover opposite the dug-outs has flat standing and is full of wood, wire and all manner of rubbish. Both structures saw but one occupant all afternoon, me. That said, the facilities are light years ahead of the requirements of Mid Comb D3.

Dosthill Colts are a community club and have teams from under 8's to senior level. Their magnificent 40-page advert-free programme has detailed results and match reports for all of its teams along with plenty of stats and Mid Comb news. In his welcome, Chairman Paul Billing muses on the season so far and asks if success is measured by '...results...(or) the happiness of the players'. As I said Dosthill Colts (Dosthill is a district of Tamworth) are very much a community club and look to be going from strength to strength.

Colts stand ninth in a fourteen-team league and Droitwich two places, higher having played three more fixtures. The teams squelched onto the pitch and the home side were in front within the blink of an eye. The ball stopped dead in the mud in front of the Spa 'keeper and a Colt attacker reacted quickest to prod the ball home. The fastest goal of the season for me and I looked forward to a fast flowing, free scoring match, one of those serendipitous events. Needless to say, this is precisely what didn't happen! Chances came and went with alarming regularity, poor finishing spurning most of these coupled with some good if, erratic goalkeeping and a bog of a pitch. The finest move of the match saw a Droitwich sub score with his first kick of the match very late on. Not the best of matches, but I found the experience at Dosthill Colts refreshing at a time when professional football seems to consider youth football as simply a situation forced upon the by

the FA. Formed in 1990 it will be interesting to see if the first team scale the heights of the Mid Comb and further, I for one feel they would be an asset to the lower levels of the football pyramid.

06/20