

**TT No.186: Paul Roth** - Saturday 24th March 2007; Essex Olympian League Prem Division; **Manford Way** vs. Harold Wood Athletic. Res: 0-0; Att: 27; Programme: 20 pages with £1 entry.

When I was gainfully employed by Lloyds Bank PLC, I knew a lady in the office who rejoiced in reciting, from time to time, her favourite phrase:

*"Women's faults are many, but men have only two, everything they say and everything they do."*

I have many faults and fully accept that, but one I am not guilty of is "Parsimony". Yes, I feel I am a generous person, reflected every week in the FGIF star rating I accredit to each game I watch. I judge the day as a whole, rather than just the match and accordingly my ratings are perhaps more forgiving than others. 4\* & 5\* often feature at the bottom of my 'TT' reports. I always prefer to see the good rather than the bad.

I arrived at Manford Way's Marathon Fields ground, located in Forest Road and 10 minutes-walk from Fairlop Tube station, some 30minutes before kick-off; this was after an awful journey around the M25 due to a terrible accident involving several lorries. Having obtained the club's superb 20 page, all colour programme--the best in the league I am told--from the dressing rooms I headed upstairs to the clubhouse above. The wait was so long for service I gave up and positioned myself on the ground for the 1.30pm kick off. It wasn't until 1.50 before a ball was kicked in anger!

The pitch is fully railed off with a smattering of advertising boards positioned around and has a pleasant feel to it.

After watching football in 25-degree heat last Sunday lunchtime in Fuerteventura the bitter chill this afternoon was a hideous reminder of what the weather can be like here at this time of year - in Spring! A swirling wind, rock hard pitch, bitter cold and two teams of implausible ineptitude, offered me a game that I would rate one of the worst I have ever watched. There was one, yes ONE, chance throughout the entire afternoon and that was put 20 yards wide by the Harold Wood Athletic No.9, standing 6 yards from and in the middle of goal with just a few minutes to go! The red and white Underground Trains in the distance offered some colourful respite from the gloom that was the action today.

I was due a bad one I suppose. FGIF Rating 1\*----- There, I told you I was a generous fella!