

TT No.217: *Dean McClean* - Tuesday 10th April 2007. Manchester Premier Division: **Whitworth Valley v Royton Town**; Result: 1-1; Attendance: 30ish; No programme/admission; FGIF Rating: 3*.

If the term 'end-of-season encounter' could be pinned to nay one game, then this tepid encounter would win first prize hands down. Two teams stuck in mid table obscurity certainly had one eye on their holiday to Magaluf, or the end season razz-up in Blackpool.

Rawstron Street Stadium (The term stadium should be used lightly indeed) is home to Whitworth, and used to host North West Counties League football around twenty years ago, until they joined the Manchester League in 1988. Success in this league has been limited, this season being only their third in the top Division, after they won the Premier Division last season-scoring over 100 goals on the way.

Due to a combination of local farmers and learner drivers, I arrived here twenty minutes late of the scheduled 6.15 kick-off but thankfully the match had only just started as I arrived.

If heading to Whitworth from Rochdale, take the A671 out of Rochdale and head North for about four miles toward Whitworth. Turn left onto Tong Lane, then 2nd left onto Rawstron Street. The Ground is on your right-hand side behind Whitworth Football & Cricket Social Club, where you can park easily.

The ground is railed off around three quarters of the pitch, whilst shelter is provided by a small, vandalised concrete stand in the far-right hand corner that has been daubed in graffiti by the local hooded population! On a cold, windswept evening I think I was the only person feeling cold as most of the locals were dressed in T-shirts, whilst I shivered from the elements. As the "stand" was empty, I gave it wide birth and braved the cold wind in the open end. Hard standing is also provided on three quarters of the ground, with the other end completely open and only a yard or so from the steel fence enclosure.

No refreshments in any guise were on sale, no gate money was taken and no programmes were produced. Not quite sure what the programme situation is here, they must have produced some sort of effort in the past?

A dour game only came to life in the final ten minutes, as both teams tried in vain to grab what would have been an undeserved winner. Both goals came about by elementary mistakes in the first half and were it not for those mistakes, I may have been muttering to myself "it's got 0-0 written all over it has this match".