

**TT No.271: *Richard Panter*** - Sunday 27th May 2007; Blackpool v Yeovil Town; League One Play-Off Final; Venue: Wembley Stadium; Result: 2 - 0; Attendance: 59,313; Admission: £48; Programme: £5, 100 A4 pages; FGIF Match Rating: 3\*.

Last week I had tickets for the Conference Play-Off Final, £25 ones near the press box, I also had a severe case of flu. Therefore, my wife and son trekked off to the Capital instead. Later that evening one of her footballing mates rang her (she is a Forest home and away supporter) asking how she got on; fantastically by the way, and asked if I'd be interested in taking in the Blackpool/ Yeovil Town encounter the following week...

So that is how I found myself in the pouring rain on the M1 seven days later, with three Forest fans making my first visit to the 'New' Wembley later than I anticipated. In all honesty I am no fan of the 'professional' game, this was in fact my first league match for three years, but needs must when the devil drives - well, to be scrupulously accurate, Nathan drove. We arrived at Stanmore underground station at 11.40am, only just in time to secure a parking spot. The police were turning cars away by the time we had reached the end of the car park. £4.50 secured us a return ticket to Wembley Park, five stops down the line. A ten-minute over-ground journey. At the top of the exit stairs we chose to ignore the safety warnings and took the now traditional snap of the arch at the earliest opportunity, we then scuttled downstairs in a state of child-like excitement.

A fiver secured a copy of the glossy, well designed, yet predictable A4 programme, which we were kindly given a plastic bag for. (One particular gripe with this type of perfect bound programme is the blank spine, which could easily have been printed with match details.) Then it was off to do a couple of Hamilton quick laps around the perimeter, take the obligatory pics of the Bobby Moore statue and the arch and then go inside. After treading up hundreds of steps we found block 524 row 16 seats 206-209 and sat down. There seems little point in describing the stadium as it has and will be done in more detail by those more articulate and educated than me, all I will say is, it is rather good!

From our place in the Gods we could see all of the action and in addition, all of us, six-foot plus fans, had more than enough leg space as the match kicked-off. The Seasiders had the better of the first half and it was just that Robbie Williams said take that, as his free kick eluded the Town defence and found the net. Keigan Parker curved a real beauty for the second early in the second half and that was to all intents and purposes that. Blackpool are a surprisingly, cultured side, surprising, for a third division outfit that is, and they seem well set for life in the second tier for the first time since 1978, good luck to them. Yeovil Town can hold their heads high after a magnificent achievement of reaching this level in such a short space of time. We sat in the Town end and it was a treat to see so many happy-faced families in the crowd; their day will come no doubt.

One moment of anxiety was quickly countered by one of the boys when I mentioned that there seemed to be orange clad Blackpool fans everywhere, thousands of 'em, particularly at the entrances. Segregation proved adequate however, these on further inspection were Wembley stewards!

It has been mentioned that the cost of food is rather high at Wembley, it is, but fear not the designers were far sighted enough to put cash machines near to these outlets, of which there are many. My advice is, fill your face before you go in. As to the question would I go again? Too right I would, FA Vase, FA Trophy or Conference play-offs here I come, next season.

Oh, can someone also tell the builders that the roof leaks a bit!

06/20