

TT No.159: Richard Panter - New Year's Day Double Header.

Match 1 - Kick off 3.00pm; Southern League Midland Division; **Dunstable Town** v Aylesbury United; 3-1; Attendance 226; Entry £7; Programme 20pp £1.50; Match rating: ***.

A gentle run down the M1 to junction 12 from 23 took around an hour, the short cross-country trek on the A5120 taking a further twenty minutes! This cuts through Toddington which had its new year's lights cutting through the January gloom in splendid fashion.

Creasey Park is just over the A5 in the Bedfordshire town. Now if the lights of Toddington shone brightly the ones at Creasey Park did not! That is not to say they were inadequate but there were a handful of bulbs out despite the finest efforts of club officials. The ground itself is a little down at heel but according to a most friendly 'Town' badge wearer it is due for a major refurbishment in the coming months. However, I liked the way it looked, dilapidated but with a hint of the past.

As to the match the 'Ducks' arrived in second place in the table and were followed by at least half of the crowd. That said it was a handful of home boys who made most of the noise, even before their side took the lead. Two fine finishes by Aaron Flood and Chris Marsh gave the blues a good lead by the halfway point of the half. A penalty just before the break looked to have put a different spin on things. For the first fifteen minutes of the second half the visitors were in the ascendency, but just after the hour Neil Perrin deservedly secured the points for Dunstable and propelled them to the edge of the play-off places.

Match 2 - Kick off 7.45pm; Midland Alliance; **Oadby Town** v Loughborough Dynamo; 0 -2; Attendance 209; Entry £5; Programme 44pp £1, Match rating: **.

It was back up the M1 to junction 21 then across the Leicester ring road to Oadby Town's quaint Topps Park home. The visitors were the high flyers from fifteen miles away, second placed Loughborough Dynamo.

Oadby were denied promotion to the Southern League in 2000 as their ground fell-foul of the league's graders. It seems to me that things are the same as they ever were regarding facilities, which in my none too humble opinion are more than adequate for spectators. However, with the passage of time, certain idiosyncrasies, have been overlooked by the Southern League. Specifically, the acceptance that Stourbridge have a fine ground even if it is three sided! and Romulus don't actually have a ground!! sadly, the 'Imps' are way off any chance of promotion this season. Loughborough Dynamo, on the other hand will probably face the Unibond ground graders in the coming months if they continue in this fine run of form.

To put it bluntly the match was over as a competition early in the first half as Noble-C expertly found the diminutive Karl Brennan on the far side of the home box, Brennan drilled the ball home in some style. The mercurial Joe Jonas was brought down by the Oadby goalie at the start of the second half and Noble-C made no mistake with the spot kick and it was game over to all intents and purpose.

Craig Noble's brother, Karl is a first teamer, there are two other brothers in the squad, Ali and Callum Ross. Quite unusual. To make this unique look at the spine of the team, the Nurse brothers. Matt, the dependable and commanding 'keeper. Ricky the strong and hard tackling centre back and the one up front Kris, the Midland Alliance's top scorer. Kris Nurse is one of those players who is totally one dimensional, he wants to score goal after goal after goal, and he does, but to contradict the afore made statement! He weighs in with his fair share of defending and goal making. Loughborough Dynamo are hardly involved in goal less draws, so do yourself a favour and look up the NSG and pay a visit.

The only down side of the day was the quality of both programmes, frankly they were both very poor efforts.

06/20