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TT No.191: Gary Spooner - Sat 9 February; **Atletic Vilassanes 2-2 Arenys De Mar**; Primera Catalunya Group 2; Admission: 2 Euros (allegedly!); Att: 100 (est.); Weather: Warm and sunny; Match Rating: 5* excellent entertainment.

Arrived at Barcelona Sants at around midday and took the Cercanias train to Vilassar De Mar. The journey takes about 35 minutes and costs 4.10 Euros return. It is an extremely pleasant trip with the seafront just yards away from the train for most of the journey. Cabrera De Mar is actually the nearest station to the ground but getting off at the stop before allows you to stroll along the front and the chance to grab some food and drink en route. We stopped at the Tres Leones (Three Lions) and had a cracking meal washed down with wine and beer. The seafood platter comes highly recommended by Mrs S! Continuing along the front, a left turn at the roundabout next to Cabrera De Mar station takes you up to the ground.

We arrived at the ground just before 4 for a 5 kick off and caught the last few minutes of a juvenile game taking place. The sign at the gate said admission was 2 Euros but after several attempts to find someone to pay we gave up and walked in for nothing. There were no programmes but there was a board which had the team line ups listed. By now it was very warm and another beer was needed after the walk to the ground. No problem as behind one goal is an elevated terrace with tables and chairs and a large bar. I would have been quite happy to sit and watch the game from this vantage point but unfortunately this meant viewing through a net so I finished my beer for kick off and wandered round to the main stand. Opposite the main stand was tree lined flat standing and behind the far goal were three steps of terracing. The view behind this goal was stunning with green mountains rising high.

The game kicked off and Arenys were by far the better side. Vilassanes looked very poor. Despite this, it was Vilassanes who took the lead with a header from a corner. There was very little reaction to the goal as the majority of the 100 or so present were Arenys fans. Arenys then dominated proceedings for the rest of the half and finally got an equaliser that they richly deserved. There was a much greater reaction to this goal as the majority of the crowd celebrated with great gusto!

Half time 1-1 and back to the terrace for a coffee this time. As the sun had nearly set it was now getting decidedly chilly!

The second half started with a bang! Vilassanes who had barely been out of their own half, punted a long ball forward. Their centre-forward (who had been a defensive midfielder for most of the game) chased hard. Bang - a crude challenge from behind sent him sprawling in the area. Result - red card for the Arenys stopper and a goal from the spot for Vilassanes.

The next 40 minutes or so were heart stopping stuff for the tiny number of home fans present. Supporters who have watched any of Ian Atkins teams over the years will know exactly what they were going through. 2-1 up, against 10 men and Vilassanes decide to hold on and defend in their own area for the rest of the game! Wave after wave of Arenys attacks, the Arenys fans getting more and more animated as another HOOFF forward relieved the pressure for just a few more seconds. And then, as happens so many times to a team defending a lead, Arenys plucked an equaliser in the 88th minute. Forget that this was just a regional league game, the goal was greeted like a Champions League winner from the Arenys fans and players.

The last 2 minutes were equally dramatic. Firstly, Vilassanes launched their second attack of the half straight from the kick-off only to be denied by some fine goalkeeping and then Arenys had a couple of chances to snatch a winner before the ref blew for time. As we meandered slowly out of the ground the Veterans started warming up for their game which kicked off at 7.

It had been a cracking day out. Even Mrs S had enjoyed her trip to the seaside though she had been disappointed that the ground wasn't on the seafront! The game was great entertainment, we had been well fed and watered and we had an extremely enjoyable stroll along the seafront in warm and pleasant climes.

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