

TT No.79: *Richard Panter* - Friday 4th October 2007; **Leek CSOB** v Coleshill Town; FA Vase 1st Round; Score: 0-2; Entry: £4; Attendance: 34; Programme: not issued; FGIF Match Rating 2 stars.

As Leek CSOB (County School Old Boys) ground share with their more senior counterparts, Leek Town of the NPL Premier Division, home cup-ties can provide a problem. Both teams can't play at home on the same day so someone has to move. Naturally, this is the lodger, hence an extra Friday evening fixture.

The Harrison Park venue is a traditional non-league ground. Three sides have tightly packed covered terraces and the final side is overlooked by a tall stand and a few yards of steep terracing. Squeezed in between Macclesfield Road and Grace Street on two sides, a pub and a steeply built up hillside on the fourth. Add a few factories and distant moorland views and the scene is complete. To be scrupulously accurate Harrison Park is a traditional Northern non-league ground with a superb atmosphere, even with a handful of spectators inside. As such it is one of my top ten favourite grounds.

This FA Vase tie was no epic. Looking at the respective league tables it went to form. CSOB were lying a lowly fifteenth in the NWCL division two and Town were proudly atop the Midland Combination League Premier Division, both level six leagues.

The first ten minutes saw both teams rushing at each other like headless pheasants with each of them having good chances to open their accounts. In the twelfth minute the gangly Neil Kitching accurately placed the ball beyond the home goalie after a scramble in the box to give the advantage to the West Midlanders. A little later James Dance, Coleshill's number seven, hit a shot so high and handsome that it cleared the main road and the high roof of a factory on the other side of there. I doubt this ball will find its way home until Monday, if at all! Dance's evening went further downhill before the break as he was booked for a foul. I am not one who likes to see yellow and red cards flashed around, on the other hand I am one who likes to see the rules of the game enforced. Deliberate handball is a bookable offence yet I believe Town's Richard Kavanagh committed this particular offence twice in the half. Once when he lunged for the ball when on the floor and again in an attempt to reach a corner in the Staffordshiremen's box. The first attempt saw the referee consult his assistant but not talk to the offender, the second was never considered in-fractional, at all. Things like this can cause resentment in the 'sinned against' ranks if left un-checked. This was probably the spark which caused the home teams increasing trend to tackle in a more rugged fashion in the second half.

A private party was going on in the clubhouse during the match and it was either full of 'celebrities' or was in fact in the dress code of fancy. Johnny Depp/Keith Richard, Cat Woman, Bob the Builder, two sumo wrestlers. Darth Vader and Ace Ventura were all there. My professional curiosity was engaged with the non-

appearance of Postman Pat, I was told that he was on strike! The thirty-year dead Memphian, Elvis Presley asked me the score, I answered 0-1 and he drawled 'Thanguvurrymurch' I asked if he was enjoying the party to which he politely mumbled 'uh-hu'.

Leek started the second half with the attitude that it was now or never. Furthermore, they had two pops at the Town goalie (Chris Butler) which saw Darren Baker booked for obstructing him and Paul Rutter for a foul on the unfortunate custodian. Leek continued to create the better chances but a combination of poor finishing and good 'keeping kept them at bay. In the seventy-third minute Matt Robinson beat the CSOB offside trap to run on and lob the onrushing 'keeper to put the tie to bed. I was virtually level with him and thought him offside, he looked to be caught in a trap, but what do I know, I put it down to my suspicious mind.

06/20