

TT No.228: Ian Hill - Saturday 7th March 2009; Dutch Hoofdklasse A; DOTO 0-3 Barendrecht; Att: 300 (approx.); Admission: ??; Programme: 8-pages.

I booked a tight schedule for this trip by Eurostar to Brussels. The plan was to arrive in Brussels on Saturday morning which gave me 10 minutes to catch a connecting train to Rotterdam. Despite an unhelpful person (I couldn't actually tell if it was a man or a woman) in the ticket office I managed to catch the train and relaxed. A big mistake as my understanding of Flemish is minimal. If I could have read the sign it would have told me there were problems with the train service in the Netherlands due to engineering works. Luckily, they made the announcement in English on the train or I don't know where I would have ended up.

There was drama on the train as we left Antwerp station as a woman had her rucksack stolen. A word of warning if you are travelling in Belgium by train - this is supposedly a regular occurrence.

We left the train at Roosendal and were taken by bus to a railway station in the middle of nowhere. Unfortunately, there was no way I was going to make the kick off time at Rotterdam suburban club DOTO who are located in the Pernis area.

I decided to plough on and after arriving in Rotterdam caught the metro to Pernis station. From here the ground is a 15-minute walk. DOTO's ground is a typical Dutch Hoofdklasse ground. A small main stand dominates the ground with terracing on a further two sides and flat-standing behind one goal. As I arrived late, I walked in for free. Programmes were not available even in the clubhouse but a letter to the club provided me with one 2 months later.

The game was poor - in fact, very poor and became a comedy of errors as Barendrecht coasted to a comfortable win.

When travelling on the Metro it is quite remarkable the amount of water around the city. Even so it was quite a surprise when a Super Tanker sailed past very close to the ground.

This was a rushed trip but it was different and enjoyable. Not sure that I would ever make a return trip though.