

TT No.52: *Ian Hill* - Sat 13th September 2008; **KSV Diksmuide** v RJS - Heppig - Lambussart - Fleurus; Belgian 4de Nationale; Res: 3-0; Att: 350; Admission: 7 Euros; Prog: Free (6 pages); FGIF Match Rating: 4*.

I had passed a road sign for Diksmuide on a few occasions when travelling up to De Panne and Ostende on family trips. After finding out they were a fourth division side I decided that I could probably visit and watch a game on a day trip from Dover. After checking the AA route planner, it estimated that Diksmuide was just over an hour away from Calais. So, a cheap ferry crossing was booked and off I went.

The Diksmuide game had a 7.30pm kick off so I decided to stop off on the way at US Gravelines. Their game kicked off at 6.00pm. It was disappointing to note that Gravelines are not issuing programmes this season. Despite that it's a nice ground with the locals very friendly.

After watching the first half I continued on my journey to Diksmuide. It's a small sleepy country town with a population of about 16,000. During the first World War it was destroyed and later rebuilt in the 1920's. Several military cemeteries are located around the town and a peace monument, the IJzertoren, was built nearby at the end of World War I, then rebuilt after World War II. The tower houses a United-Nations-owned, World War I museum, where you can, among other things, experience the odour of mustard gas.

I had a bit of difficulty locating the ground on Google Earth as it didn't show up very well. It's located in Pluime Straat which is in an area of very nice housing and a new housing development. The ground has a country feel to it. Along one side is a large field, the opposite side has two football pitches, with one being a small ground for a local non-league side. Opposite one goal is an Athletics track and the other end backs onto the main road. The ground is dominated by a large grandstand/clubhouse along one touchline. It can seat around 300 hundred people. At the back of the stand is a clubhouse. You can watch the game from here if you like through the clubhouse windows at the back. A new building was being constructed next to the stand but I'm not sure what this is going to be. Opposite is a small covered standing area which can probably accommodate 200 spectators. The ground has a new feel to it but a team picture in the clubhouse shows that it has been open since at least 2002.

The 7 euros entrance fee is paid at a wooden chalet at the entrance to the ground. Programmes are given away here, free of charge, by some young boys. The programme is A4 in size and consists of a four-page advertisement sheet with the club name on the top. Inside is a A4 team-sheet printed on both sides. Not brilliant but better than nothing.

I didn't know what standard of football to expect but was pleasantly surprised. The game was played like a cup tie as both sides attacked end to end. Diksmuide used

two out and out wingers which was a change. They established an early 3-0 lead in the first half but this did not stop RJS Lambussart (is this one of the longest names in football?) trying to get back into the game.

Overall, this was a really good day out. Slightly spoiled by an over officious "Border Guard" at Dover harbour. Trying to explain "Groundhopping" to her was extremely difficult as I was interrogated for 20 minutes. She came out with a corker of a line "You can't afford to buy alcohol but you can afford to go to the football !!!"

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