

TT No.68: Richard Panter - Monday 13th October 2008; **Burton Albion v Mansfield Town**; Conference Premier; Result 1-0; Attendance 2871; Admission £12; Prog 48 pp £2.50; Match rating 3*.

This was the second Conference match I attended in as many days and the grand total of goals was two! Yesterday it was a distinctly average match (Altrincham v Oxford United), tonight it was on nearer territory (20 miles from home) but in truth this fixture never caught light. The reason, or rather reasons were two-fold. In the first half the Stags had plenty of midfield possession but little penetration and the Brewers simply hoofed the ball upfield for their two forwards to chase. However, the winning goal came after a period of ten minutes when Albion played the ball on the ground in their more typical fashion. A twenty-yard strike from John McGrath emphatically decided the contest. We expected a more attacking spectacle in the second half, sadly, we didn't get one! Secondly, the game simply petered out, Mansfield never looked like scoring and Burton looked firm in defence.

An attendance of 2871 on a Monday evening, for a televised match, even if it is on *Setanta!* is very encouraging. The throng was this size due to a large and noisy away contingent who made the brief trip down the A38, and it was these Stags fans who made the most noise. Perhaps their players could learn from their fans when it comes to showing a bit of passion!

Last Tuesday Burton Albion played away at Barrow. This evening's match was originally set for Saturday afternoon but was moved due to its televising. I notice in the very glossy but vacuous programme that the return home fixture against Barrow is an evening fixture, in January. Conversely, the Mansfield return for the Brewers at Field Mill is on a Sunday, early 2009. This sort of fixture scheduling shows little concern for travelling fans and, in some cases, part time players. Common sense would suggest that mid-week fixtures against teams around thirty miles away are preferable to those against opponents getting on for two hundred or so miles away. Then again, I am only a football fan, why should anyone in authority care what I think?