

**TT No.141: *Rob Champion*** - 16th January 2010; **Caterpillar** v Blaby United; Leicestershire Intermediate Cup QF; Result: 1-2; Admission/Programme: none; Attendance: 14 (h/c); Rating: 2\*.

After five weeks without a game due to the weather and Christmas I am desperate to get out of the house today and take in a game, though after the snow a lot of pitches in the East Midlands are unplayable. Thankfully a check on the North Leicestershire League (NLL) website confirms that premier division leaders Caterpillars home game in the Leicestershire Intermediate Cup against Leicester & District League (LDL) side Blaby United is definitely going ahead. The tie (along with other county cup quarter finals) was originally scheduled for last Saturday.

Caterpillar Football Club (unsurprisingly) uses the sports & social club inside the compound of Caterpillar itself on the outskirts of Desford in Leicestershire. If travelling from Leicester to Hinckley along the A47 do not turn right at the junction with the B582 but travel another mile or two towards Hinckley and turn right. This takes you towards the Caterpillar site and the sports ground car park is accessed via entrance number 1. The main pitch is already up to Leicestershire Senior standards with it being fully railed off and dugouts in place. A smart social club is adjacent to the main pitch and serves hot and cold drinks. It looks like either a recent addition or a refurbishment, with Suffolk brewers Greene King getting involved with another local non-league club some 100 miles from their base. This following ground naming rights at fellow Leicestershire sides Hinckley United and Oadby Town.

Records I have for Caterpillar only go back as far as 2001 when they joined division 1 of the NLL and finished in 10th place in the 11-team division. Relegation followed but they only spent one year in division 2 as they won promotion back to division 1 as runners-up winning fourteen of the eighteen league matches played. Five years were spent in division 1 before winning the division in 2008 and promotion to the premier division for the first time. In their debut season in the NLL's top flight they finished in a creditable fourth place but this season they have hit the ground running, currently unbeaten and recording ten wins out of eleven games played. As it stands they are five points ahead of Loughborough based Genesis having played a game less. Opponents Blaby currently sit in mid-table in the premier division of the Leicester & District League having only played seven league games so far which is the lowest in the division at the present time.

The game itself was not the best but it was underdogs Blaby United who came through a competitive encounter with a last-minute winner. Caterpillar probably had the great percentage of possession but were not clinical with the chances created. The first talking point came around the twenty-minute mark when a Blaby player was brought down by the home keeper in the penalty area only for the referee to wave play on. From this a different player from Blaby was booked for protesting too much to the official. The opening goal came just five minutes

before half time when the visitors broke on the counter attack to make in 0-1 and give the game a much-needed kick up the backside. Fifteen minutes into the second half and Blaby were down to ten men when the player who was previously booked was sent off for lunging into one of the home players. Caterpillar did not waste much time in making the numerical advantage count when just five minutes later they equalised when the ball was volleyed home from the right-hand side. Further chances were created by the hosts with the Blaby keeper pulling off one excellent save of note, but with extra time looming it was Blaby who stunned the hosts with a last-minute goal to put them into the semi-finals.

06/20