

**TT No.19: *Rob Champion*** - Monday 31st August 2009; **Bulwell** v Basford United; Notts Senior League Senior Division; Score: 1-3; Attendance: 70 (h/c); Admission: £1 incl. programme; Match rating: 4\*.

A rare chance for me to get to a game on a Bank Holiday, this being the first since Easter Monday 2008 when I saw two games in the Central Midlands League. One of my contracted nights at work is a Sunday but having done three previous bank holidays this year already I opted out of this one and took full advantage.

An early kick off in the Notts Senior League (NSL) saw me make the 45-minute journey north on the M1, then the few miles towards Nottingham and specifically Greenwich Avenue which is home to both of these clubs with Basford being the landlords and Bulwell the tenants. When arriving at the ground I was surprised to find a programme had been issued for this game and cost £1 which included admission.

The main pitch which is to the left of the entrance is part of a complex with at least three other pitches and is enclosed and fully railed off. A tea hut is located within the setup of the main pitch. I believe the only requirement that would be needed for Central Midlands League (CML) football is some hard standing, though on a today like today is was certainly not needed.

Bulwell, not to be confused with Bulwell Town of the CML were only formed in 2006 and played their first two seasons in the Notts Amateur Alliance (NAA), winning the Premier Division title two seasons running. After promotion to Division 1 of the NSL the club won the league title at the first attempt. Promotion was granted to the Senior Division but only after Basford United allowed them use of the main pitch at Greenwich Avenue as the other pitches did not meet the required standard of the Senior Division.

Basford United meanwhile are currently in their fourth campaign in the NSL having been invited to join the league in 2006 following Calverton MW's promotion to the CML. Previously Basford were in the NAA and won the league championship in the 2005/06 season along with the Nottinghamshire Intermediate Cup. In their three campaigns to date they have finished 3rd, 5th and 3rd respectively.

At the start of play both sides had begun the season in a positive fashion - Bulwell collecting six points from their opening four games while Basford were sitting at the top of the table unbeaten from their opening five games, and conceded only once. The game was a typical local derby with no quarter given or even expected and played at a good pace throughout with some good football from both sides. It was the visitors who scored the opening goal on 13 minutes when Austin Wallace forced a save from home keeper Matt Singleton only for the ball to fall kindly to John Manders who tapped in from a couple of yards. Bulwell protested for an offside decision and it was their captain Jay Knight who protested too much and was sent off three minutes later for foul and abusive language to one of the

referee's assistants. To be honest I didn't even notice that Bulwell were down to ten men and only noticed it later on in the half. Bulwell were not fazed by the disadvantage and continued to give Basford a game of it. A crucial second goal for the visitors came on 34 minutes when following another shot from Wallace it was Manders again that was in the right place to tap home his second goal. Three minutes before half time and it was 3-0 when Manders proved he is more than a goal poacher when he drilled in a low powerful shot from a narrow angle on the right-hand side which gave Matt Singleton no chance. The second half saw Basford guilty of missing numerous chances and Bulwell gave the game a much-needed boost when Dave Warden struck home on 65 minutes. Ten minutes later and it could have been a one goal game only for an offside flag to disallow the goal. Basford had further chances to wrap up the game but could and did not take them.

Overall an enjoyable game in a league I am becoming to like a lot. The attendance was around the 70 mark which was boosted by a number of ground hoppers taking advantage of the early kick-off, which gave the chance to take in another game with a 3pm kick-off. I myself headed off to Kirkby Town in the Central Midlands League while others made their way towards Melton Mowbray and Sileby Town in the Leicestershire Senior League.

06/20