

TT No.198: *Justin Holmes* - Sat 20th March 2010; **Spartak Trnava** v FK Dukla Banska Bystrica; Corgon Liga (Slovakian Superliga); Venue: Štadión Antona Malatinského, Trnava; Result: 2-0; Admission: €4.00; Programme: 50 cents; Attendance: 4987; Match Rating: 3.

Having arrived in Bratislava this morning, I soon made my way 30 miles northeastwards by train to the town of Trnava, for the first of my four planned football games during my trip to Slovakia and Austria. After spending a couple of hours touring the town, which was pleasant enough if nothing exceptional, I bought my ticket for a seat in the south stand for just 4 euros - such prices are common in Slovakia, which wouldn't even gain admission to a County League game in the UK! On entering the stadium, I also bought an attractive programme for just 50 cents, obviously I couldn't understand a word but was interesting to see the league stats and action shots of recent games.

The all-seater 18,000 capacity stadium has two large banks of uncovered seating behind both goals (one of the ends I sat in), and along one side was a newly built shallow covered stand, whilst on the opposite side there was a smaller stand which had a temporary look about it, with the rest of the side providing uncovered seating. You couldn't ask for a much more central location than this stadium, just a couple of minutes-walk from the town centre, and a couple more to the train station. This central location also ensured a pleasant backdrop to the stadium looking from the South Stand, with Trnava's taller monuments in the background and the city wall which runs along the back of the North Stand.

Going into this game, the visitors would have appeared to have been the favourites to take the points, up in third place in the league and having lost only three of their 22 games played so far, and well on course to qualify for Europe next season. Trnava would surely be no pushovers though, who went into the game in sixth place and had won their previous game 7-0. The game itself was competitive enough, although seeming to lack real skill or incisive play for the most part. Trnava always looked to be the better team during the game, with Banska Bystrica only occasionally truly threatening the Trnava goal. Indeed, goalscoring opportunities were at a premium in the first half, apart from Trnava hitting the post, but the goalless scoreline at half time adequately reflected the game.

However, just a couple of minutes into the second half, a Trnava forward embarked on a mazy long run into the penalty area and was eventually brought down for a clear penalty, which was dispatched coolly by Peter Dolezaj sending the keeper the wrong way. This didn't seem to spark the visitors into life, as the home side continued to dominate, and they extended their lead with 13 minutes to go, when Koro Kone finished well when played in with a slide-rule pass. 2-0 was how it stayed, a thoroughly deserved victory for the home team which lifted them up a place into fifth in the league. Dukla Banska Bystrica remain comfortably in

third place and still within close touch of the top two, but today, on the whole, they didn't look like a team flying high in the league.

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