

**TT No.199: Justin Holmes** - Sun 21st March 2010; **Slovan Bratislava** v FK Senica; Corgon Liga (Slovakian Superliga); Venue: Štadión Pasienky, Bratislava; Result: 2-0; Admission: €3.00; Magazine: €1.50; Att: 2045; Match Rating: 3.

For the second game of my trip to Slovakia and Austria tour, I made the ten-minute tram journey from my base in central Bratislava to the north eastern outskirts of the city, to watch the largest football club in Slovakia and the reigning league champions. I was initially hoping that this game would mean I would be able to visit the national stadium of Slovakia, the Štadión Tehelné pole, however as the stadium is currently closed for renovation, Slovan are currently playing their home games at the Štadión Pasienky, little more than a stone's throw from the national stadium. The Štadión Pasienky used to be the home ground of Inter Bratislava, but they merged with FK Senica - today's visitors - in the summer and now play at their ground.

It is fair to say that the Štadión Pasienky is very much showing its age, seeming to have seen very few improvements or facelifts since the days of communism. The stadium is certainly spacious enough, with large areas for refreshments and club shops just inside the turnstiles before walking up to the stands. As is common with central European grounds, spectators are quite distant from the pitch, as there is a running track in between, and the seating is uncovered for two thirds of the oval of seating, with just a very old-fashioned stand covering one side of the pitch. An old-fashioned electric scoreboard continues the theme of a dated stadium. An interesting and maybe unique feature of the ground are its floodlights, which are very large cylindrical columns with the lights attached towards the top of the columns.

Going into this match, the home side would have had to be considered clear favourites, in second position in the league and had won three of their last four games. Senica were in fifth place in their first season in the top flight, having been elevated directly from the fourth division for this season by taking the place of Inter Bratislava. One name of interest on the visitor's team-sheet was Onome Sodje, one of the many Sodje family members playing professional football and recently plied his trade in non-league English football.

As for the game, Slovan dominated from start to finish, restricting Senica to only occasional attacking ventures, but similar to yesterday's game at Trnava, the game was for the most part competitive, committed but lacking real skill or flair. The game remained goalless at half time, but as the rain started to fall, Slovan scored two good goals that their play deserved, scored by Michal Breznanik on 57 minutes and Karim Guede five minutes later.

A couple of positive points to mention from this game was the passionate support of about a hundred or so Slovan fans behind the goal who almost never stopped chanting throughout a game which was not the most entertaining nor full of

goalscoring opportunities for their side, and also much credit to the Slovan team, every one of which came to those fans for several minutes to acknowledge the support.

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