

TT No.201: *Justin Holmes* - Wed 24th March 2010; **FK DAC 1904 Dunajska Streda** v **MFK Ružomberok**; Slovakian (Corgon) Superliga; Venue: Mestský Stadion, Dunajska Streda; Admission: €4.00; Prog: N/A; Attendance: 1598; Match Rating: 2.

After one of the best games from an all-round perspective I have witnessed in years the previous evening at Rapid Vienna, I headed back over the border into Slovakia and then quickly headed on the hour long train ride south-west from Bratislava to the small, unremarkable town of Dunajska Streda for another game in the Slovakian Superliga, and the ground is about a fifteen minute walk from the train station via the town centre. I was quite interested to visit this town and football club, as it has a strong Hungarian population, 80% are ethnic Hungarians, and so the club is a focal point for football supporters of Hungarian descent in western Slovakia.

With a return to Slovakia meant a return to very cheap ticket prices, and the Mestsky Stadion, whilst very much looking old fashioned with very few mod-cons or luxuries that English fans are used to these days, certainly has some unusual characteristics and plenty of character. The ground consists of two covered all-seater stands along either length of the pitch, but what was more unusual was six separate banks of terracing, three behind each goal, which were some of the steepest I have ever encountered and certainly wouldn't be recommended for anyone with a fear of heights. They do however offer excellent views of the pitch. A kick off time of 5.30pm for a midweek kick-off was a curious one and certainly doesn't allow much time at the end of the working day to get to the game. This midweek kick-off time appears to be standard in Slovakia, however. No programmes were available for this game.

The game promised to be quite an even affair, with the home side struggling recently, having lost their previous four league games, one of those being a 0-7 hammering at Spartak Trnava, and have not won in the league since October (although it should be borne in mind that two and a half of months of that time consisted of the winter break). Indeed, only on entering the ground did I discover that many Dunajska Streda fans had decided to boycott this fixture in protest at their team's poor recent performances. Today's visitors, Ružomberok, were in relatively good form, having won their previous two games but were only in seventh place in the twelve-team league. The only familiar face on either side was Dunajska Streda's Samuel Koejoe, who had a brief and not particularly successful spell at Queen's Park Rangers at the turn of the millennium.

What was to follow was a truly abysmal game of football. To be fair, Ružomberok played what football there was and fashioned some good chances to score, but it was clear to see why the home side are in such a poor run of form, with players showing poor touch, control and cohesion, and as the game wore on, resorted more and more to aimless long punts upfield. From early on, the crowd were on the backs of the home team, and into the second half, this turned into ridiculing,

which seemed quite a bizarre way to "support" their team. I can understand (but not necessarily agree with) booing out of frustration with the efforts of players, but ridiculing them with heavily ironic cheering seems a bizarre way to inspire the players fans follow. So, a very disappointing final game of my tour of the Bratislava and Vienna areas, with an unpleasant atmosphere and a dull game lacking in any real quality.

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