

**TT No.3: *Rob Champion*** - Saturday 8th August; **Oadby Town** 1-1 Studley; Midland Football Alliance; Admission: £5 / £3; Programme: £1.50; Attendance: 95; Match rating: 3.

Today sees me attend my first competitive game of the new season at my spiritual home in football terms as it were, Oadby Town FC, at their newly sponsored ground "Greene King Park" for their Midland Football Alliance (MFA) encounter with Worcestershire side Studley. The two sides first ever meeting was in the 2001/02 season when they played out a nil-nil draw @ Studley on the 14th August.

The name change means that, since I first watched Oadby Town during the 1997/98 season, their ground on Wigston Road is under its fourth sponsored name, and follows the park prefixes of Invicta, Events & Leisure and Topps. Oadby have undergone a transformation on the field with a host of players leaving and joining the club during the close season along with former Leicester City and Scotland defender Matt Elliott becoming joint manager alongside Mick Holmes. Holmes was in sole charge last season in what to be fair was one of the worst in the club's history winning only nine, of forty-two league games, and finished in 19th place in the 22 team MFA.

Since the club joined senior football in 1951, they have lost less than nine league game only once, which came in the 1955/56 season when the club won eight league games but they only played 26 matches. Hopefully this season will see a much-improved showing from Oadby in both and league and cup competitions. Very little has changed off the field in terms of ground improvements but the club are currently laying a couple of steps of terracing on the grass bank to the left of the clubhouse.

The journey to Oadby takes around twenty minutes from my home in the Braunstone area of Leicester and when arriving at the ground I am charged the concession rate of £3 and £1.50 for a full coloured glossy programme. The programme is 32 pages and has 13 pages of adverts, though there is very little reading material. Let's hope as the season progresses this will improve. A value for money rating would in the region of six out of ten.

The first half was dominated by Oadby from the off, playing some good football and they created at least half a dozen good chances during this period but they all lacked the clinical finish. The closest they actually came was when Brian Quailey hit the bar on thirty-five minutes. Studley themselves refused to allow Oadby to have things all their own way and they had a goal ruled out when Craig Poutney was correctly judged to be offside. Oadby did make the deserved breakthrough on fifty-two minutes when Nick Pollard scored from three yards out when the ball rebounded nicely too him following a Quailey shot. Just three minutes later and it was 1-1 when the visitors were awarded a penalty for a handball offence. Steven Ruck stepped up and scored with ease. This seemed to rattle Oadby a bit and the

game became scrappy with neither side taking control. Oadby had their best chance of the half when Quailey forced an excellent save from visiting keeper Steve Grogan with three minutes left, but Studley themselves nearly won the match with in stoppage time when home keeper Damion Quailey made two equally excellent saves.

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