

TT No.91: Keith Aslan - Sat 14 November 2009 (kick-off: 13.59); **Eversley v Staines Lammas**; Combined Counties League Div. 1; Result: 2-3; Admission with programme £3; Attendance: 23 (16 home, 3 away, 4 neutral).

For my Saturday entertainment the rain reigned. The proposed trip to North Wales had long since been a non-starter and Friday night was spent on the phone. With the most positive vibes emanating from the secretary of Eversley. He fitted the word "perfect" into his state of the pitch address which was good enough for me.

With a longish wait for my connection at Wokingham I was happily sitting in a cafe with a ham sandwich and cup of Earl Grey without a care in the world when it happened. Rain. Not any old rain, this was a monsoon, and within five minutes the cars outside were aquaplaning down the high street. I got soaked walking back to the station, and on arrival at Crowthorne the rain continued.

The three-mile walk from station to ground would be very pleasant on a nice afternoon. Today it was horrible with the why am I doing this feeling as strong as it's ever been. Arrived at the ground in a state of rancid wetness not expecting the match to have survived and lo! The pitch unbelievably still matched up to the secretary's description. It was perfect. No mud in the goal mouths, no surface water, and no doubt the game would go ahead. In no time at all I had a sexy 28 pager tucked away in my waterproof folder and the why am I doing this feeling had been replaced with a this is the only place to be feeling.

The ground is still fairly basic, but is being built up. There is hard standing down the nearside which also contains a small stand which affords a magnificent view of the dugouts but not much else. Next season the stand is being transferred to the other side of the ground for an unobstructed view. I had three other hoppers for company whose witty banter and chirpy malevolence greatly enhanced the afternoon.

The game befitted the conditions, top quality entertainment, three woodwork strikes, plenty of goalmouth action, and on ninety minutes, four goals equally shared. This would have been the right result, but of course Mr. Referee insisted on carrying the game on for no reason and after three and a half minutes of totally spurious injury time, Staines Lammas got a stunningly undeserved winner. The referee realised the iniquity of his timekeeping and amazingly then kept the game going for a further six minutes to give Everseley the chance to equalize (I think at certain Premiership games these are known as "Fergie Minutes"). He stopped his watch every time the ball went out of play and just kept the game going on and on and on but to no avail. Memo to Mr. Beeney, if you'd stopped the game after 90 minutes everybody would have been much happier, apart from Staines of course.

When the game finally finished the pitch was still in pristine condition including the goalmouths, and I kid you not, never mind playing another football match on it, you could honestly have had a few ends of Crown Green Bowling. I can only say

this was the best pitch any of the hoppers present had ever seen and in wet weather, Eversley is the place to head for.

A kind hopper gave me a lift back to Bracknell where predictably everything went belly up. No trains, tree on the line. You've got to laugh. The delay in getting home meant I missed the England v Brazil game so it wasn't all bad news. Also gave me time to soak up the superb programme. I'd always thought that Rangers was a fairly common addition to a club's name but thanks to the quiz I now know there is only one in the entire league. Life is full of surprises.

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