

TT No.109: Rob Champion - Sat 6th November 2010; **Cross Border 'Double'** - **Cardiff City Under-18's** 2-1 Coventry City Under-18's; FA Premier Academy League Group B and **Chippenham Town** 2-2 Windsor & Eton; Southern League Premier Division.

I think at the end of it, this was plan D for the four of us (myself, Gary Spooner with Pete and Alan from Liverpool) with youth teams at Eastleigh and Cirencester going by the wayside due to the games not being played on the respective clubs' main stadium. Before anyone comments about Cardiff City's Under-18's they actually play on a stadium over the road from the main Cardiff City Stadium used by the football club (City) and rugby team (Blues).

The day started with Gary picking up yours truly at 6.30am for firstly the short drive to Nuneaton railway station to pick up the afore mentioned Pete and Alan. We then made our way across the M6 and M42 to Bromsgrove for what is now becoming the customary breakfast at the Pit Stop Cafe on the A38. We arrived in Cardiff in good time and despite a detour around the city going past the Sophia Gardens cricket ground and Millennium Stadium, we arrived at the Cardiff International Stadium around an hour before kick-off. This gave us time to have a wander over the road to McDonalds for a coffee and have a look in the club shop shared by both City and the Blues. A retail park is also adjacent to both stadiums which includes Asda amongst other large outlets. The Cardiff International Stadium is in a nutshell a multisport stadium which is home to the Cardiff City FC youth teams, Cardiff Grange Harlequins FC and Cardiff Amateur Athletic Club. All the facilities are on one side with a large seated stand housing the changing rooms, offices etc.

Game 1 - Cardiff City Under-18's 2-1 Coventry City Under-18's; FA Premier Academy League Group B; Cardiff International Sports Stadium; Admission/team sheet: none; Attendance: around the 50 mark; Match rating: 2½/5.

This was to be my first youth team game for a number of years and first not involving a side representing Oadby Town. No admission was charged or programme / team sheet issued. The game was fairly entertaining which despite the result I thought the visitors from Coventry were the better side on the whole. Cardiff took the lead inside the first ten minutes from a penalty kick with Coventry deservedly equalising before the end of the half. The second period saw the home side score the only goal, though despite creating a number of chances Coventry could not find a deserved equaliser.

The only annoyance was that the referee kicked off the game late which did not give us enough time to make our first choice second game in the Welsh Valleys. A decision was made to head across the River Severn to Wiltshire for a 3pm kick-off in the Southern League at Chippenham. The journey primarily across the M4 took around an hour and we arrived with around twenty minutes to kick-off.

Game 2 - **Chippenham Town** 2-2 Windsor & Eton; Southern League Premier Division; Hardenhuish Park; Admission: £8; Programme: £2; Team sheet: free; Badge: £3; Hot Dog: £1.50 - a complete rip off; Attendance: 369 (official); Match rating: 3½/5.

Chippenham is a market town in Wiltshire located a few miles south of the M4 motorway (which runs across the country from west London to south west Wales) between Bath (13 miles to the west) and Swindon (20 miles east). The ground is located to the west of the town centre on the A420 Bristol Road and is a compact affair.

The club were formed in 1873 and joined the Western League (WL) in 1904. Just two seasons were spent in the WL finishing in 9th and 8th position respectively before they resigned and joined the more local Wiltshire League. Two league titles quickly followed in 1908 and 1909. In 1930 they re-joined the WL and won their first league championship in 1952. In 1964 they made a return to the Wiltshire League for four seasons before making the step up again, this time to the Hellenic League. Five seasons were spent in the Hellenic League and they recorded three 5th place finishes before returning again to the WL in 1973. The Western League title was won for a second time in 1981 and they spent another twenty years in the WL before a runners-up spot secured promoted to the western division of the Southern League. Chippenham found their new surroundings to their liking and another runners-up finish allowed them to take their place in the premier division. The club have been ever present in the premier division ever since, recording a 3rd place finish last season.

A narrow drive leads you up to the entrance with programmes being sold before you enter the ground. You enter the ground in one corner with the catering hut immediately in front of you on the left, followed by the main stand and club shop. There is further cover on the opposite stand and another covered stand behind the near goal. Finally, behind the far goal are two or three steps of uncovered terracing. To be honest there is very little room at the ground and it did have a cramped feel about it. The club shop is a little gold mine with plenty of old programmes, badges and Chippenham Town merchandise for sale.

The game started with the home side doing all the running and they won a penalty after around 15 minutes but the resulting kick was put horribly wide. A few minutes later and the home side had the ball in the W & E net only for the referee to disallow the goal. The visitors gradually got into the game and started to create chances of their own with David Pearce looking particularly dangerous. Six minutes from the end of the half W & E took the lead when Michael Chennels made up a couple of yards on a Chippenham defender, rounded keeper Chris Snoddy and rolled the ball into an empty net. Ten minutes into the second half and the home got a deserved equaliser when a free kick was put back into the box first time and this allowed Marvin Brown to bring the ball down and slot the ball underneath Delroy Preddie. Almost immediately W & E re-took the lead when Chennels got his second when he turned in a cross at the far post. Both sides continued to push forward with the visitors looking for a killer third goal and Chippenham for another

equaliser. Adam Bernard should have given the visitors a two-goal cushion but headed over from a few yards out when it seemed easier to score. This proved costly as with just twelve minutes left Alan Griffin smashed the ball home from a narrow angle to make the game all square for a second time. Bernard missed his second sitter of the game when he put the ball over from a few yards out, and like the first miss it seemed a lot easier to score than what he actually did. This was his final fling as he was substituted shortly after!!! The game saw no further drama and it ended in a 2-2 draw which in my neutral unbiased opinion was a fair result.

07/20