

TT No.115: Ian Hill - Sat 6th November 2010: Belgium Jupiler League - **KV Kortrijk** 4-0 Germinal Beerschot; Attendance: 6000 (h/c); Admission: 12 Euros; Programme: 28 Pages - Free; FGIF Match Rating: 3*.

The Club - KV Kortrijk

KV Kortrijk are based in West Flanders and play at the Goldensporenstadion which is named after the "Battle of the Golden Spurs". Originally formed in 1901, like a lot of Belgian clubs, they have been subject to a few mergers and became KV Kortrijk in 1971. In 2001 the club went bankrupt and were automatically relegated to the Belgian 3rd Division. They eventually returned to the first division for the 2008 - 2009 season. Supposedly there is a fan link up with Swansea City which has resulted in a number of Kortrijk supporters following the Welsh side.

Getting There

I was based in Brussels for the day so travel was by train from Brussels Zuid (Midi) station to Kortrijk which included a change at Gent St Pieters. Unfortunately, the train into Gent was late so I missed my scheduled connection. This led to a delay of 30 minutes. I eventually arrived in Kortrijk at 7.25. To get to the Guldensporenstadion I walked using a map, which, can be downloaded from the KV Kortrijk website. Unfortunately, the dim street lighting and poor street signage (or maybe it's just my poor map reading skills?) led to me walking in the wrong direction to the ground. I eventually got there 10 minutes before kick-off. Walking back to the station after the game took around 15 minutes.

The Stadium

It looks like a bit of old and a bit of new with some terrace conversion thrown in. Three stands are seated with one behind one of the goals reserved for standing. The ground has a capacity of 9,500. Most of the facilities are located behind Tribune 2 KVK which is the standing area. Three club's bars are complemented by a lorry which is the club shop (limited goods on sale) and various burger/chip vans. Turnstiles for three stands are also located here. It should be noted that you need to buy tokens in exchange for drinks.

Programmes

Programmes are usually distributed free of charge. Unfortunately, when I arrived the only copies, I could find were about a dozen that had been discarded on the ground. The club shop staff were unhelpful as were the office staff who eventually parted with a team-sheet. I eventually picked one up in one of the bars which had been left on a table. The programme is a 28-page colour glossy issue which is A5 in height but half the A5 width. An unusual size but a nice souvenir although there was not much content.

The Game

An easy win for Kortrijk who were awarded two first half penalties to take a first half lead. This led to a mass "non-attendance" at the start of the second half by the Germinal supporters who were not impressed by their side's performance.

Overall Impression

This was my second visit to the Goldensporenstadion. Unfortunately, on my first visit the game was cancelled just before kick-off due to snow. I don't know what it is about football grounds in Belgium but I usually find people with an official role are not very helpful on matchdays whereas the supporters are usually really friendly. Maybe because I spoke French in a Flemish speaking area didn't help. Don't let that put you off, there are numerous great grounds in Belgium that are quite unusual and quirky in their own way. It's a great country to visit for football.

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