

TT No.155: Bob Davies - Sat 15th January 2011; **Royston Town (0) 2***, Stotfold (0) 0; South Midlands League Prem; Admission: £5; Programme: £1; Coffee: 80p; Attendance: 130+ estimated; Match Rating: ##.

With the Royston Town website confirming that "the game would definitely be going ahead", my mind was made up from the list I'd prepared during the previous week.

There has been a lot of ground improvement at Royston Town in the last few seasons with the addition of the turnstile block, a "veranda" for standing accommodation behind the goal and the refurbishment of the seated stand. The latest improvement was having the finishing touches applied as I entered the ground - with covered standing accommodation being erected on the side opposite the seated stand. This wooden construction had a certain character about it and was well in keeping with the rest of this interesting ground.

I had been hoping for an entertaining game today. Despite Stotfold's lowly position I had seen enough of them this season to see that they could play a bit if they wanted to. Unfortunately, today was not to be one those days! There was a heavy challenge on Royston's full back Lewis Endacott within the first few minutes of the game that saw him take no further part in the proceedings. This was the beginning of a niggly contest that continued throughout the game that resulted in eight bookings (5 to Royston and 3 to Stotfold).

If Stotfold's game plan was to play a physical contest and not let Royston settle, it certainly worked in the first half and most of the second as well. Not much goalmouth action at either end until the end of the half when the home side were unlucky not to go in a goal ahead with Brad Gilham and some desperate defending denying them the lead.

The second half saw Royston in a more attacking light despite the efforts of the visitors. It still took 70 minutes before John McGrandles broke the deadlock with a powerful header for the Crows. Stotfold became a little more adventurous even forcing a couple of corners. Royston sealed the game in stoppage time when Tom Malins found himself clear of the Stotfold defence and made no mistake in scoring a second for a final score-line of 2-0.

The win keeps Royston in the top three but they are 14pts behind leaders Chalfont St Peter and have played a game more. It may be at least another season before the improvements off the field can be matched with the desired promotion on the field.

*Scorers: (H) Standen (70), Malins (90+1) and (A) N/A

Website: www.roystontownfc.co.uk