

TT No. 168: Mark Farnell - Sat 5th February 2011; **Ashby Ivanhoe** v Sileby Town; Leicestershire Senior League Prem Division; Venue: Hood Park, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leics; Result: 4-3; Admn: £3 incl. programme.

Saturday saw me make the local trip to Ashby Ivanhoe of the Everards Brewery Leicestershire Senior League, Premier Division. Ashby play their games at Hood Park, adjacent to the leisure centre and local school on what is very much a park pitch with the addition of a burger van. The welcoming committee members charge £3 which includes parking in a mandatory pay and display car park and an excellent matchday programme almost worth the three quid on its own. This is my first visit to watch football in this league and takes place in blustery conditions which make the occasion interesting to say the least.

Ashby currently sit in third place in the league with games in hand over the teams above them. They entertain Sileby Town who lie in twelfth place out of fourteen. But it is the visitors who take the lead as early as the fifth minute when Tom Marriot flicked the ball over the keeper from a free kick to make it 1-0. Within three minutes Ashby had levelled the score through Phil Gibson and ten minutes later they took the lead through Ben Pollard getting a last touch on the ball as it was heading over the line. At half time it was Ashby 2 Sileby 1 and gave me a chance to visit the leisure centre toilets and grab a coffee and Kit Kat from the van.

With the wind now blowing in their faces Ashby took only three minutes of the second half to make it 3-1 as Chris Nettel fired home through a crowd of players from eight yards out to give the hosts a worthy lead. In an attempt to get back into the game Sileby brought on Chris Wilson but soon fell behind 4-1 after Pollard scored his second taking a cross from the lively Steve Hart on his chest before turning and volleying home past keeper Perry. But far from admitting defeat Sileby continued to press for a goal and were unlucky when Marriot hit the crossbar from close range before having a goal disallowed for hand ball. The visitors then made their second substitution with Coggan on for Foxwell and at last the changes began to take effect when Wilson was brought down for a penalty which Bettles calmly slotted home. Ashby still dominated the game but couldn't find the final touch. As time began to fade Sileby made their final substitution and having conceded a penalty which was turned around the post by Perry managed to score a third goal by Wells. Despite their best efforts they could not find an equaliser. Ashby march on with a deserved 4-3 win which keeps alive their hopes for promotion and a chance to continue to build the clubs facilities and perhaps relocate.

It was back home fifteen minutes later to reflect on an enjoyable game with friendly supporters and an excellent programme and pin badge (both rare at this level) - and a future return visit with my groundhopping daughter.

