

TT No.169: Keith Aslan - Sat 5th February 2011 (KO 14:07); **Broadfields** v Sloane; Middlesex County League Prem Division; Result: 1-0; Admission & Programme: Free; Attendance: 7 (3 home, 0 away and 4 neutral).

The Hive is Barnet's brand-new state of the art training complex. It was opened 14 months ago by the legendary Italian manager that took England so close to World Cup glory last year. It compares favourably with that of some Premier League clubs but the big difference here is that it is in general use by the public. If coming by tube the nearest station is Cannons Park' To get there turn left and the back entrance is 200 yards on the right.

This afternoon the Hive was buzzing with at least six games taking place and that's not including what was happening on the numerous Astroturf pitches. In the middle of this vast complex are the changing rooms, gym and cafe. The latter is a very pleasant place to chill out pre match and watch the footie on a big screen, but be aware, the prices are most definitely Premier League. Outside the changing rooms is a large board stating which team is on which pitch, accompanied by a map so you can't go wrong, although somebody managed to, more of which anon.

Behind the building are the remains of Wealdstone's half-built ground. There are two very large covered stands and that's about it. I would have thought there must be some enterprising non-league club who could finish the job off.

First job on my arrival is to locate the programmes. The soul outlet is Chris Webster the secretary-cum-manager-cum- editor. Find him and you've found your only source of paper. Obviously, a man of few words, the column in the programme headed 'Secretary's Notes' is left blank! It was from the programme that I learnt the sad news that Sloane have been evicted from their wonderful ground at Burton Court. This was truly a gem and will be sadly missed.

Broadfields have also been expelled from their ground, hence they're playing home games here. This was obviously an amicable split as they still have an advertisement, relating to Broadfields Country Club, in their programme. The chairman is bankrolling a new ground just 400 yards away from their current home and they expect to move in next season. When I asked what was wrong with the excellent facilities, they enjoy at the Hive, I was told there was no bar. The new ground sounds like a bar with a football ground tacked on!

You can get some very good games in the Middlesex League but this wasn't one of them. The home side won a wind-blown scrappy match with a second half goal that the Sloane keeper will be disappointed with. Sloane did get the ball in the net with a long range shot that completely deceived the goalie, but the referee correctly disallowed it as the goal it trickled into was on the adjacent pitch, illustrating the pinpoint inaccuracy of some of the shooting!!

The attendance in the second half increased by one with the arrival of a hopper who had spent the first 45 minutes watching the wrong match! Clearly the map outside the changing rooms had passed him by. With a large slice of the underground on its regular weekend shutdown my homeward journey was enlightened with a recorded announcement over the tannoy at Cannons Park Station: "Apart from the lines closed by planned engineering work, London Underground is operating a good service". Well that certainly tells the "customer" everything he wants to know!

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