

TT No.198: *Richard Panter* - Sat 12th March 2011: **Scunthorpe United** v Leicester City; Football League Championship; Result: 0-3; Admission: By ticket £25; Programme: 76pp, £3; Attendance: 6, 258 (2,151 away); Match rating: 4.

Scunny's web site said that Glanford Park was one of the easiest football league grounds to find, they were not kidding! After a brief detour to Nottingham to pick up my brother-in-law we made the uplifting trek through the eastern edge of Sherwood Forest to the A1. Then took the M18 to the M180 leaving this sparsely populated strip of tarmac at the M181 at the end of this briefest of motorways the ground is on the right. Very easy to find indeed.

Glanford Park was opened in 1988 and has the honour of being the first new football ground to be built since World War Two. It can best be described as functional being fully enclosed, one level all around and all under cover. Capacity is 9,183 so the crowd on the day didn't test this, although being in the away end with 2,150 others things were a little cramped. The away end along with the two sides are seated, although we were allowed to stand up during the match. The noisier of the Iron's support currently enjoys that most atmospheric of things, terracing, although much to their consternation this is having to go at seasons end in order to comply with ground regulations. Very sad for the supporters and even sadder for the club as this will further reduce capacity. As new-builds go I quite liked the place.

My visit to the stadium in north Lincolnshire (or was it in south Humberside?) came about for various reasons. Firstly, I am still chasing the 92. Secondly, I am a Leicester City supporter of some forty-five years standing, and the last new ground I did with the Foxes was Goodison Park in 1987. Thirdly, and most importantly, it was a Saturday so I had to go to a match somewhere.

After an indifferent run of form the visitors needed to get their push for a play-off place back on track. The Iron on the other hand needed the points to stave off relegation. As we took our places the away support, as always seems the case with visitors, was noisy and boisterous, the home fans, which pleasingly consisted of mostly families, did their part in creating a good atmosphere.

As the panel above shows Leicester City ran out comfortable winners, but this as ever does not tell the full story. That most evanescent of properties, luck did not flow for the struggling home boys.

On a less than perfect pitch both sides had trouble with the uneven sandy surface but they soon adapted to this. A thirty-yard shot from Japanese international Yuki Abe forced an acrobatic response from home custodian Josh Lillis, one of a number of excellent saves from him. From the resulting corner Benfica loanee Miguel Vitor tapped home to give the visitors a hard-earned lead come the break. Immediately in the second half United came at their visitors with some purpose but as is often the case with a struggling team events transpired against them. The referee

awarded a penalty to them, the linesman however had already ruled their attack offside. Then Joe Garner, on loan from Nottingham Forest, thought he had equalised, but the referee adjudged him to have handled the ball before netting.

Having weathered the onslaught, the Blues came back into the game, Darius Vassell being ever more influential. It was the former England international's refusal to give up a long ball which generated the corner from which Vitor nodded home his second in front of the delighted visiting hoard. Spurs youngster, the impressive Kyle Naughton, saved the best until last. Naughton does not score tap ins and today was no exception. The fleet footed young man latched on to a loose ball from a free kick and blasted home from the edge of the box, a crowd of players in front of Lillis assisting the Leicester man's effort. The reaction from the Leicester City bench told the story of the afternoon, Sven shot forward to register his approval of his, and I mean his, side and their battling performance to finally put the match beyond their scrapping hosts. This was a fine way to spend an early spring afternoon, particularly if you are a City fan.

With ten games to go for the Iron and four points from safety things look a tad precarious, but by no means impossible given their obvious appetite for the struggle. As for the Foxes, with nine games left things are in the balance. For all concerned with both clubs the next couple of months will be nerve wracking, tense, exciting and ultimately either fulfilling or disappointing. I for one would like to see the two teams not meeting next year due to being in different divisions, the Iron remaining where they are now, and the Foxes playing once more at the highest level.

For the match the club sold issue 24 of The Iron their 'multi award-winning club magazine' for £3. This was 76 pages crammed with articles on club and league news, interviews, reports, history, statistics, visitor's details and Fan-zone, this offered excellent value for money. Strangely though, this was the fourth different sized league programme I have purchased in the last five games I have been to. As for my quest for the 92 I still have a whopping 38 to do.

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