

TT1011-255

TT No.255: Rob Champion - Sat 23rd April 2011; **SUTTON BONINGTON ACADEMICALS** 4-3 GREENHILL YC; North Leicestershire League Div. 2; Venue: University of Nottingham (Sutton Bonington Campus); Admn/Programme: none; Att: 27 (head count); Match rating: 4 out of 5.

My first game of the day sees me head into South Nottinghamshire for a potential title decider in the third tier of the North Leicestershire League (NLL). The two teams are currently separated by goal difference though Greenhill will still have one game to play.

1st Greenhill - P18 W14 D4 L0 GD73 Pts46 and 2nd S Bonington - P19 W15 D1 L3 GD55 Pts46

Sutton Bonington is a small village (population 1,600 approx.) some five miles north of Loughborough and twelve miles south of Nottingham. It is home to two football teams (Sutton Bonington FC and Sutton Bonington Academicals) that both play in the NLL. Despite the village being located in Nottinghamshire both teams are registered with the Leicestershire & Rutland County FA and play in that county's cup competitions.

The University of Nottingham has a 4.2km² site to the north of the village and is home to the School of Biosciences and School of Veterinary Medicine and Science - this opened in 2006 and was the first veterinary school to open in the UK for 50 years. The campus was originally the Midlands Agricultural & Dairy College before it merged with the University of Nottingham in 1947. The campus is also home to (among others) research buildings and teaching facilities. The hall of residence accommodates 650 students. More information on the site can be found on its Wikipedia page at:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sutton_Bonington_Campus#Sutton_Bonington_Campus.

This is the fifth season that the Academicals have competed in the NLL, joining division two in 2006. They finished their debut season in 3rd place and achieved promotion to division 1. The next three seasons spent in division 1 saw them finish in 5th, 9th and 10th place respectively. Unfortunately, though the 10th place finish last season saw them relegated to division 2. Their stay in division 2 will be short lived as they have already secured promotion back to division 1 at the first attempt. This season they also reached the final of the Leicestershire Trophy but came up short losing 2-1 to Leicester & District League side Kingsway Celtic. Opponents Greenhill YC come from Coalville and joined the NLL at the same time as their hosts today but were placed in division 4. The two teams have played each other twice this season, once in the league and other in the 2nd round of the Leicestershire Trophy. Both games were played at Greenhill's ground and they have one win apiece. Greenhill won the league encounter on the 16th October 5-2

but the outcome reversed just two weeks later when the Academicals recorded a 4-3 victory.

The drive up to Sutton Bonington was made in glorious sunshine and took around 30 minutes and I arrived with about ten minutes to kick-off, with the temperature on my car thermometer was hovering around the 26-degree Celsius mark. The home of the Accies is set in a very pleasant setting and along with the grass football pitch (which was neither railed nor roped off), there is a floodlit artificial pitch, tennis courts and brand-new sports centre. (Note: Google maps is currently out of date and only shows the football pitch and tennis courts). Behind the far goal is the main Midland (Railway) Line that runs between London and Yorkshire.

SBA did what they had to do to give themselves a chance of winning the division title, and came out on top by the odd goal in seven in an entertaining and enjoyable game of football to watch. The home side settled quicker and had the better of the opening exchanges but on ten minutes conceded a penalty. James Armstrong stepped up and gave Greenhill the lead. The lead only lasted a couple of minutes before SBA were level. A free kick could only be parried by the Greenhill keeper into the path Vio Matei who finished at the far post from a few yards out. Midway through the half and the home side deservedly took the lead when (in my opinion) man of the match Matt Anderson lobbed the ball over the advancing keeper. The third (and what could be crucial) third goal came around the forty-minute mark when the ball came off the knee of Dean Hawkridge following a free kick.

Greenhill started the second half with more purpose and within seven minutes of the restart got a goal back when a cross field ball was controlled and finished well by Danny Morris. SBA then took control again and following two near misses and a goal disallowed for offside, Greenhill equalised against the run of play when Brett Morris bundled the ball home on 63 minutes. With around twenty minutes to go the referee made a very sensible decision when he allowed the players a couple of minutes break to take on fluids. This was brought about because the awarding of a free kick to SBA resulted in a break in play. The winner came on 72 minutes when Matt Anderson got his second when he hit a superb and unstoppable free kick into the top left-hand corner - beat that David Beckham!!!! Just five minutes later and Greenhill came so close to equalising but a volley smashed against the corner of the crossbar and post with the keeper stranded. In the end that was their best chance and they now have to win their final game of the season at home to Castle Donington on April 30th to win the title ahead of SBA.

Game 1 over and now an 80-minute drive to Ancaster for my second game of the day.

Note - the scorers were taken from the official North Leicestershire League website.

07/20