

TT No.256: Rob Champion - Saturday 23rd April 2011; **CK DONS 0-3 HECKINGTON MILLERS**; Grantham & District League Junior Cup Final; Venue: Ermine Street, Ancaster; Admission: £1 including 4-page prog; Raffle tickets: £1; Attendance: 110 (official); Match rating: 3 out of 5.

My second game of the day sees me head across country into Lincolnshire for this tea time kick-off in the final of the Grantham & District League Junior Cup. The 13 teams in Division 1 compete in the Junior Cup, while the Senior Cup is competed for by the teams in the Premier division.

The drive took around 80 minutes and included a stop for petrol. My route was simple taking me along the A6006, then onto the A46 to the island with the A52 and then headed towards Grantham. Going through Grantham I then turned onto the B6403 towards Ancaster. The drive along the A52 was very light in terms of traffic, with the smell of the rape seed crop to my left and the impressive Belvoir Castle sitting majestically to the south.

The Grantham & District League as the name suggests is centred around the Grantham area and includes clubs from three different counties: Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire. Leicestershire is represented by Bottesford (+ reserves), Buckminster United and Croxton Kerrial sides Croxton AFC and CK Dons.

The final this year is to be played at Ermine Street, Ancaster which is home to Premier division side Ancaster Rovers. The venue is roughly equidistant between the two teams with it being 15 miles north east of Croxton Kerrial and 13 miles west of Heckington.

This season's competition:

Round 1 - Baston 4-1 Baston Athletic; Cranmer Arms 4-8 Bottesford Reserves; Morton 5-3 Rippingale & Folkingham; Newark Flowserve v Harrowby Athletic (Home win awarded) and Skillington 3-4 Heckington Millers.

Round 2 - Heckington Millers 2-1 Baston; Lord Harrowby 4-6 Caythorpe and Morton 3-2 Newark Flowserve.

Quarter Final - CK Dons 5-2 Bottesford Reserves.

Semi Finals - Caythorpe 1-8 Heckington Millers and Morton 2-3 CK Dons.

Recent finals:

2008: RHP Newark 3-0 Balderton Old Boys;

2009: Bottesford Res 5-3 Caythorpe and

2010: Beehive United 5-1 Grantham United.

The following information on the two sides is taken from the programme:

CK Dons

Based in Croxton Kerrial, CK Dons were established in 2009 and managed a respectable sixth position finish in their maiden season. This season saw a slow start in the league but a recent upturn in results should see a similar top six finish, the same as last season. Having failed to make any semi-finals last season, a cup final and at least another cup semi-final represents a successful season of development at The Dons.

Heckington Millers

Heckington Millers Football Club, more commonly known as 'Millers', started in 2006 and in their first season won the League Cup. Since the team's inception three players have represented the club every season: Jay Carrington, Chris Doherty and Sean Jenkinson. Sean is also the club's oldest player at 44 years old and the club's youngest is Luke Townsend at 19.

On arriving at the ground around 45 minutes I made acquaintance with the CK Dons secretary Jeremy Hill who I had exchanged e-mails with prior to the game. The ground is a basic affair with the facilities shared with Ancaster Cricket Club. The pitch was roped off along the two touchlines and there is (along with changing rooms) a clubhouse / social club.

The game was very competitive and in the end the score line was harsh on the Dons. It was they who started better creating several chances in the opening couple of minutes and generally had the better of things in the opening ten minutes or so. The opening goal for the Millers came from a corner when the ball was bundled home on 14 minutes. This inability to defend at corners ultimately cost the Dons dearly. The goal knocked the Dons back a bit as for the next five or ten minutes Heckington had their best spell of the half. The Dons then got back in control and dominated the proceedings for the remainder of the half putting pressure on the Millers defence. Several good chances came in the last five minutes of the half: 1) a good move on the left saw the ball struck the side netting, 2) a header from a corner was headed over and 3) the ball being cleared from underside of the bar from another corner. At this moment in time the last thing that the Dons wanted was the half to end. Two goals in the space of three minutes around the hour mark ended the game as a contest. Both came from set pieces with the second of the two coming from the Millers number 14 who headed home unmarked from three yards out. Both sides continued to go forward with the Dons trying to salvage some pride but alas to no avail.

Overall a good game of football and I was impressed with the standard on offer with this being my first ever Grantham League game. Like previously stated it was the Dons inability to defend at corners along with them not taking the numerous chances that came their way that was their undoing. This is not meant to take anything away from Heckington and congratulations go out to them.

Five minutes after getting in my car the rain came to this part of Lincolnshire - good timing eh!!!

After a 75-minute journey I was back home at around 9pm seven and a half hours after leaving home.

Another busy today tomorrow (Easter Sunday) with a first visit to Donington Park for the British Truck Grand Prix.

07/20