

TT No.52: *Ian Hill* - Fri 2nd July 2010; **St Patrick's Athletic v Galway United**; Airtricity League; Res: 4-2; Att: 1150; Admission: 15 Euros; Programme: 3 Euros (32pp); FGIF Match Rating: **.

A Derek Doyle hat-trick helped St Patrick's Athletic to a vital win over Galway United at Richmond Park in a game which Galway will feel aggrieved at not getting something out of it. A reasonably priced Ryanair flight was the order of the day to the busy Dublin Airport. Despite the economic problems in Ireland work continues to build a new airport terminal and there are numerous building sites throughout the city.

Richmond Park was the venue for my Friday evening game. The easiest way to get to the ground is to catch the Luas (Tram) in the city centre to the Drimnagh or Goldenbridge stop. The ground or floodlights are not visible from the Goldenbridge stop even though it is only a 10-minute walk away. The problem is you have to walk down a street which has extremely dodgy run-down flats on one side and rough housing on the other. It is one of the few times I have felt like I would get mugged on the way to a football ground. Dodgy route negotiated Richmond Park is Emmet Road, even when you are on this road you still cannot see the ground as it is tucked away behind a row of terraced houses. The ground is below street level and hemmed in on all sides.

The main feature from the outside is a club owned pub (whose name I have forgotten). It was quite busy with supporters enjoying pre match drinks. There is no bar within the ground. The old club shop was previously located in a terraced house on Emmet Road with a new purpose built new one opened recently further along. Entrance is through a block of turnstiles with programmes sold just as you get through the turnstiles. The ground is basic but does have some character. The far side is open terraced with a small river backing onto it. With the warm summer evening you can get plagued by flies. Behind one goal is a temporary build seated stand. The other has terracing and a small scratching shed, this part of the ground was closed for the game but it is quite distinctive. Finally, there is the basic main stand which is adequate for the ground.

The game was a bit unusual as I expected a comfortable win for St Pats. This seemed to be confirmed as they took a second minute lead before Galway hit back to take a half time lead. The second half was more comfortable for the Dublin side as a hat-trick from Doyle and a Vinny Flaherty goal secured the points

St Patrick's Athletic F.C. was founded in 1929. Before gaining league membership, St Pats dominated Leinster League football and they finally took their place in the League of Ireland in 1951 - winning the championship at their first attempt. Two more championship successes were to follow in 1954/55 and 1955/56. It was 1959 before the first FAI Cup success for "Pat's" and this cup triumph was repeated in 1961. The team had a long history of turmoil, changing grounds and instability in

the early years and among the venues used for the club were Milltown, Chapelizod and Dalymount Park. The club spent four years in Harold's Cross and returned to a revamped Richmond Park in 1993. Richmond Park is a great old ground to visit and the programme is one of the better ones in the League of Ireland. Dublin is becoming one of my favourite cities for a football trip but be warned it is very expensive.

07/20