

TT No.105: Mike Latham - Sunday 27 November 2011; **Prestatyn Town 1-0**
Aberystwyth Town; Corbettsports.com Welsh Premier League; Att: 187; Admn: £7;
Programme: £1.50, 40pp; FGIF Match Rating: 3*.

Many of us have our own favourite clubs, one that we may not support as such but where we follow their results and aim to visit say once a season to keep in touch.

I have several: Annan Athletic, Padiham, Bacup Borough, Ellesmere Rangers are all ones that spring to mind. To that list you can add Prestatyn Town.

I first visited Prestatyn in their Welsh Alliance days and was struck by the friendliness and ambition to make the club one of the most prominent in Wales. At that time neighbours Rhyl were prominent in the WPL and playing regularly in Europe, but Prestatyn have succeeded in becoming an established club in the top flight while Rhyl are regrouping after much publicised financial problems in the Cymru Alliance.

Town's Bastion Gardens ground is landlocked between the cricket club, next to the sea front and a smart housing estate. But the ground itself has been transformed in recent years with a shallow seated stand, covering the entire far touchline that backs on to the cricket ground the main feature.

The television gantry and dug-outs dominate the near-side and a smart club house and bar, with tea room adjoins the dressing rooms. This is a popular place to meet pre-match and obviously well frequented.

Above all, Prestatyn are a friendly club with officials, stewards and everyone connected with the club eager to help and offer a ready smile. The ground is neatly painted and the wide range of advertising boards is testimony to the support of the local business community.

With the WPL set to split into two groups of six soon after Christmas this was an important game for Prestatyn, lying in sixth place in the league. The impressive 40pp programme had even been updated to include the results from Saturday's matches. The visitors are suffering a bad run of form, not helped by disciplinary issues with a raft of red cards, and went into the game lying second bottom of the table.

On a bright but windy afternoon the game was overshadowed by the death of the Wales team manager Gary Speed that had been announced a few hours previously. The sense of shock, disbelief and sorrow among the players and supporters at the game was tangible.

The conditions ensured that the game would be no classic. But Aber failed to make the most of the conditions in the first-half and Prestatyn sealed the game with a well-taken goal by their experienced striker Steve Rogers in the second half. It seemed strange to be watching Prestatyn without their regular 'keeper Jon Hill-

Dunt who was on the bench having lost his place to David Roberts. Roberts made two superb saves, one in each half to leave the visitors frustrated.

Prestatyn are involved closely in the local community and offered a special admission rate of £2 for under16s to the game. Communications director Mark Jones does a great job raising the profile of the club and they are very receptive to groundhoppers. It goes without saying that a visit to Prestatyn Town comes with my warmest recommendation.

07/20