

**TT No.145: Rob Champion** - Sat 14th January 2012; **Eye Sports** 4-0 Oakham Utd; Peterborough & District League Premier Division; Venue: Lindisfarne Road, PE6 7XH; Admission: None; Programme: None; Attendance: mid 20's; Entertainment rating: 7 out of 10.

After last week's trip to the land of Satan that is a "Premier League" football ground, I need to cleanse my soul as it were and get back to watching the grass roots form of the game. The main stipulation for us today was that we wanted a 2pm kick-off and with dad living in the eastern suburbs of Leicester, we headed across eastwards for a very rare venture into the Peterborough & District League (PDL). I had only previously seen one game in the PDL and that was nearly two years ago when I saw Uppingham Town record a 2-0 victory over Leverington Sports.

With an overnight frost covering much of England doubt set in as to whether any particular game would still go ahead. Armed with about a dozen fixtures and club secretaries I set off about 11am. First port of call was to pick my dad and then make the one-hour drive along the A47 to Eye. We pulled into a petrol station on the edge of the village and made several calls, all of which went unanswered - very helpful indeed!!! With the sun being high in the sky and the temperature about four or five degrees above freezing we were reasonably confident that the game would go ahead, added to this was that Eye's ground was south facing which allowed enough time for the sun to thaw out the frost. After a quick visit to the ground which confirmed that the game was going ahead, we made our way to the Blue Boar, one of the two pubs in the village for some lunch. We both had the same - a ham, egg and chip lunch washed down with a pint of Elgood's Feelgood Festive which is a 3.7% seasonal ale.

The footprint of the PDL covers an area that goes from Rutland in the west to Wisbech in the east, with Spalding at its northerly perimeter and Alconbury to the south. It was founded in 1902 and Fletton United were the first champions. Currently there are six divisions and they all contain a mixture of 1st, reserve and 'A' teams.

Eye is a large village in the unitary authority area of Peterborough and has a population in the region of 4,000 inhabitants. Until 1963 Eye was part of Northamptonshire as the county diocese is focused upon Peterborough Cathedral. However, Peterborough had its own county council since 1888 and in 1965 was merged with neighbouring Huntingdonshire. Under the Local Government Act 1972 Eye along with Peterborough and Huntingdonshire became part of Cambridgeshire.

I believe the club were founded in 2002 and joined the Peterborough & District League the same year. A full playing record is as follows:

2002/03 - PETER-5 - 2nd; 2003/04 - PETER-4 - 3rd; 2004/05 - PETER-3 - 5th;  
2005/06 - PETER-2 - 14th; 2006/07 - PETER-2 - 12th; 2007/08 - PETER-2 - 2nd;  
2008/09 - PETER-1 - 2nd; 2009/10 - PETER-1 - 1st and 2010/11 - PETER-P - 6th.

This season Eye currently sit in fifth place in the Premier Division, recording eight wins from their fourteen games played. They are currently on a five-match unbeaten run recording a 6-2 victory against Uppingham Town a week ago. The last time they tasted defeat was in November when title favourites Pinchbeck United left Lindisfarne Road with a 1-0 victory. The reverse fixture against today's opponents was on the 26th November that saw Eye record a 2-0 victory.

Oakham United were only formed in the summer of 2011 when two local clubs Rutland Rangers (Peterborough League) and Oakham Imperial (Leicester & District League) merged. Oakham themselves come into this game on a decent run of form recording three successive victories.

The ground on Lindisfarne Road is on the southern edge of the village and the entrance is between two houses. It opens up and there is a small car park to the right and a breeze block building to the left which houses the changing rooms and club room. The pitch is railed off along the two sides and there are dug outs on the far side.

My thoughts before the game were that this could be an entertaining match between two in-form sides and this proved to be the case. Don't let the score at the top of the report mislead you as this was not was one sided as it suggests. It was an end to end game in which the visitors from Rutland more than matched their hosts at times. To put it another way - Eye took their chances and Oakham did not. The opening goal came with five minutes before the half time interval as Ryan Francis created some space for himself inside the Oakham penalty area and slotted the ball across the keeper into the far corner of the goal. Two goals in the space of five minutes around the hour mark put the outcome of the game to bed. The second goal of the afternoon came on fifty-eight minutes when Steve Shore finished with aplomb following excellent work down the left. The third and killer goal of the game came just five minutes later when Francis got his second of the afternoon. The ball fell kindly to him inside the Oakham penalty area and his first time shot found the back of the net. With around fifteen minutes remaining Francis completed his hat-trick in some style. Oakham were caught on the counter attack and from around thirty yards out Francis let fly with a shot that beat the Oakham keeper all ends up.

An enjoyable but chilly afternoon with some good football being played. When I will be back for another game in the PDL is another matter but it won't be due to the football on offer.

07/20