

TT No.158: Mike Latham - Sat 11 February 2012; CPD Pwllheli 4-1 Ton & Gelli BCFC; FAW Trophy Quarter-Final; Admission: £2.50; Programme: £1.00; Attendance: 95 (h/c); FGIF Match Rating: 4*.

The FAW Trophy is a competition for teams in Wales from level three and below in the pyramid; in my experience it provides great entertainment and a chance for teams from opposite ends of the country to play one another.

With North-West Wales again escaping much of the wintry weather, a trip to Pwllheli was in order with the visitors, from Ton Pentre having a reputation as a good footballing side having reached the last four of this competition last season.

Pwllheli was basking in a balmy four degrees as I arrived, the narrow streets of this small town on the Llyn Peninsula thronging with visitors at the start of the half-term holiday. Much of the well-heeled population of Cheshire decamps to nearby Abersoch at times like this and large Range Rovers with personalised number plates were much in evidence at lunchtime around the centre.

Pwllheli is largely Welsh-speaking and the town's football club, which produces a superb 40-page bi-lingual programme, had a reputation from other clubs I had visited in the Welsh Alliance of being friendly to visitors and playing good football. I can vouch for the accuracy of these observations on both counts.

Though the club's venue sounds unpromising, located adjoining a leisure centre I really enjoyed my visit here and the game was excellently contested and played in a good spirit. Pwllheli's ground is known as The Rec, situated on Recreation Road just a few hundred yards out of the town centre. There is a large car park and entrance to the football pitch is by two separate gates, either side of the leisure centre.

On the entrance side is a small cover straddling the halfway line and there is also a well-equipped tea bar. There is good elevated viewing from this side and the pitch, well grassed and with a post and rail fence surround had clearly stood up well to the ravages of winter. On the far side are the dug-outs and spectators can stand behind the fence though behind both goals there is no spectator viewing. Backing onto housing along the far side and with glorious views to distant mountains this is a really pleasant place to watch football.

By kick-off time around 60 spectators had gathered to watch the game, the numbers swelling when the Manchester United- Liverpool lunch-time kick-off game ended. Pwllheli, who have a neat white and black kit, played some neat and constructive football but the visitors looked more than their match in a well-contested opening. Gradually the home side built the pressure and took the lead midway through the first-half when their classy no10 scored with a header from a left-wing corner. He added a after a defensive mistake just before the break. A third goal just after the resumption appeared to settle things but the visitors

pulled back a goal from a free-kick on the hour. Pwllheli clinched their place in the last four with a fourth goal moments later.

This was a really good occasion with the visitors giving a good account of themselves despite the final score-line. With Llanwrst and Holyhead also winning their respective ties the Welsh Alliance boasted three sides in the last four for the second year in a row.

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