

TT No. 16: *Justin Holmes* - Wed 17th August 2011; **HB Tórshavn** v IF Fuglafjørður; Meistaradeildin (Faroes Premier League); Venue: Gundadalur Stadium, Torshavn; Score: 3-1; Admission with programme: 80 DKK; Att: 600; Match Rating: 3.

For my second and final match during my stay on the Faroe Islands, I made my way to the north of the capital, Tórshavn, to visit arguably the best club football ground on the Faroe Islands, and to watch the reigning champions, HB Tórshavn, who I had watched lose at Vikingur Gøta three days previously in rather bizarre conditions.

The Gundadular stadium is located about a 15-minute walk northwards up the hill from Tórshavn town centre, on a sporting complex and adjacent to the Tórsvøllur stadium, where the Faroe Islands national team plays some of their matches. The stadium has an artificial pitch, as at all club grounds on the Faroe Islands, and has some rather interesting stands. Two clubs share this council owned stadium, fierce rivals HB Tórshavn and B36 Tórshavn, and each team has their own identically shaped all-seater stand in their respective club colours on either side of half way line, and it is in either of these stands where the respective hardcore support gathers. Along the whole opposite length is a rather impressive and uniquely designed, fairly narrow white stand, which has many obstructing narrow pillars and is where visiting and neutral fans tend to congregate. Behind one of the stands is a steep grass bank with a scattering of benches to sit on, and behind the other goal is hard standing. A mountainous landscape makes a pleasant background to the main stand, but is less impressive a backdrop compared to most other spectacular Faroese football ground locations. Programmes were again given out on admission and was a much better offering for the locals than the production produced by Vikingur Gøta with less advertising and more articles and stats to digest.

This evening's match would be between two of the strugglers of the Meistaradeildin this season. As described in my previous report, HB Tórshavn are reigning champions but find themselves second bottom going into this game and in the relegation zone. IF Fuglafjørður were two places better off, in seventh place in the ten-team league, but only one point better off than HB Tórshavn. But a sign of how close the lower half of the table was that a win for either side this evening could lift them as high as fifth. This evening's visitors had been in fairly good recent form, claiming seven points from their last four games, following an awful run of gaining just six points from ten games. Two stalwarts of the Faroe Islands national team would be lining up this year, with captain and third most capped player for the Faroe Islands with 66 caps, Fróði Benjaminsen lining up in defence for HB Tórshavn, whilst the second most capped Faroese player of all time with 71 caps, 41 year old Jakup Mikkelsen, lined up in goal for IF Fuglafjørður.

The match started in a lively fashion, and with just six minutes on the clock, the visitors were awarded a penalty following a clumsy tackle from behind, Bogi Løkin scoring with a powerful shot low into the left corner even though the keeper

guessed the right way. However, just four minutes later and HB were back on level terms when a ball was pumped forward and wide of goal which Símun Samuelsen calmly slotted past the keeper after driving towards goal. The rest of the first half, and indeed the second half, was competitive with occasional good chances for both teams, but a 1-1 draw looked a certainty as the game entered injury time at the end of the match, when HB were controversially awarded a soft looking penalty. Jón Krosslák Poulsen saw his penalty saved low to the keeper's left, but he was able to react quickly enough to smash home the loose ball. With virtually the last kick of the game, Poulsen, a second half substitute, scored his second and HB's third when a ball forward was not cut out by a defender and an HB forward showed good composure to play the ball across the box to a much better placed Poulsen, who fired home into an unguarded goal. A slightly harsh score-line on the visitors, but the three points was enough to raise HB into a more comfortable looking sixth place, whilst IF fall to ninth place and second bottom - but with a game in hand and only three points behind fifth placed B68 Toftir.

07/20