

TT No.183: Rob Champion - Sat 10th March 2012; **Belper United** v Newark T; Central Midlands League Division - South; Venue: Alton Manor, Nailers Way, DE56 0UT; Result: 3-1; Admn: None; Programme: £1; Badge: £3; Attendance: c.40.

To be honest I had no plans to go anywhere particular this week but by midweek I was trawling through the fixtures of league websites that cover the East Midlands. When I came across this one it became plan A. There are two reasons for this - (1) It will mean that I have seen a game of football at all the grounds currently used in this division, and (2) There are reports that United's ground will be covered by the ever-expanding housing estate in the not too distant future.

United's ground from my home is around forty miles away and took around an hour to make the journey. It is located on the north-eastern edge of the town and is a basic affair. There is a small car park and octagonal changing room block, while the pitch is fully railed and has dugouts on the right-hand side. Finally, there is a small structure on the far side which would at a guess keep no more than ten people sheltered from the elements. Catering at present is in the form of a mobile van which was selling the usual stuff - burgers, hot dogs, tea, coffee etc...etc. The reports regarding United's ground are a case of yes and no. Yes - the ground will be covered by the adjacent housing estate, and no - it will not be anytime soon, as according to a club official it will be a good four to five years away from happening.

This is Belpers' first season in the CML having transferred from the Midlands Regional Alliance in the summer. There was a divided opinion whether the move had been a good one. They currently sit in mid table with thirty-five points from their twenty four games played. Last time out a week ago they record a 4-1 victory @ Nottingham United. Opponents Newark Town have been members of the CML since 2004 when they transferred from the now defunct Notts Alliance. They find themselves five points and three places better off than Belper at the start of play. The two teams met back in October when United recorded a 2-1 victory at Towns' Station Road ground in Collingham.

The first half was to put it bluntly as dull as the grey clouds in the sky. I can only recall both keepers making one save between them and that was when the Newark keeper turned a goal bound effort round the post. With around five minutes remaining of the first period Kyle Wadsworth found himself alone on the edge of the penalty area and hit a speculative shot across Garry Attwood that found its way into the bottom corner. A couple of minutes later and the hosts were down to ten men when Eddie Bridges was sent off for kicking out at Ian Hillier in front of the referee.

At the start of the second half Newark were caught napping by Belper, as the hosts doubled their lead within three minutes of the restart. The ball was played down the inside left channel and Jordan McRobie hit a superb volley that flew past

Attwood. Despite being a man down Belper comfortably dealt with the Newark attack with Adam Jablonski in the home goal being rarely troubled. On the hour mark and it was pretty much game over as Belper got their third goal of the afternoon. Tony Hemmings flicked the ball onto McRobie and he hit another volley past Attwood. With ten minutes remaining Newark got a consolation goal as Ginelly headed in a Mark Ellison cross at the far post from a tight angle. In truth I believe it was Newark's only effort that was on target during the whole of the second half. Then again, they had very few that were off target as well and Belper ran out deserved winners in this mid table battle.

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