

**TT No.186: Mike Latham** - Sun 11 March 2012: Mid Wales League 1: **Aberystwyth University** 1-2 Montgomery Town; Attendance: 70 (h/c); No admission, tea bar or programme; FGIF Match Rating: 3\*; Postcode: SY23 1HA.

Aberystwyth University FC compete in the third tier of Welsh football, the Spar Mid Wales League. The league arranges its fixtures around term times so the Uni team start late and often have a backlog of fixtures to fit in during March. This was one such occasion, the Uni team having lost 1-0 at home Bow Street on Saturday morning, now facing the league leaders Montgomery Town little more than 24 hours later.

Easily found on the A44 just out of Aber on Llanbadarn Road the Vicarage Fields complex incorporates several sports and has an impressive pavilion on a banking for the cricket and a small stand for the football. But with no programme or tea bar and no-one to take admission the club has a lack of basic infrastructure that is disappointing. Surely there must be some people at the University that could get involved to make the experience of visiting the ground more enjoyable for the spectator.

The playing fields themselves spread over 16 acres and are well maintained. It is clear that the ground staff take a great pride in producing a top-quality playing surface for the football, rugby and cricket teams that are fortunate enough to use the facilities. Glamorgan have twice played List A cricket matches here in the past.

Montgomery brought with them a good following of supporters and around 70 spectators watched the game, some from their cars parked close to the field, some from the grass banking behind one goal. If the league leaders were expecting the students to lie down, they were sadly mistaken; the students gave as good as they got in a fiercely competitive game that the veteran referee, operating just with club linesmen did well to control.

It was a gloriously sunny and mild afternoon and with no wind the conditions were ideal for football. The visitors took the lead when their no8 got goal-side of a defender to stab home a left-wing cross on ten minutes; but Aber equalised with a superb curling shot from their no9 after he cut in from the left seven minutes later.

The home side had the best of the chances early in the second half but the Monty keeper pulled off two tremendous saves to keep his side in the game. The game turned when the home no10 was shown a straight red on 65 for a foul that left a Monty player writhing in agony of the floor. Happily, he soon recovered. The visitors appeared to get more and more frustrated at their inability to prize out openings against a well-marshalled student side. For a top-of-the-table side their lack of quality on the ball was surprising and they seemed unable to string

together more than two or three passes. A couple of visiting supporters I got talking to assured me that they were just having an 'off day'.

Just four minutes remained when the visitors pinched the game; their veteran no4, who had an energetic game in midfield and was their best player capitalised on a defensive mix-up to round the 'keeper and slot home. League titles are won and lost on days like this and the Monty supporters realised the importance of the goal and expressed great relief. The students meanwhile have it all to do in the closing weeks of the season to fight off relegation.

07/20