

TT No. 189: Ian Hill - Sun 11 March 2012: German Liga 3: **Chemnitzer FC 2-0** Werder Bremen II; Attendance: 4,800; Admission 20 euros; Programme 1.50 euros.

Getting There: From Chemnitz Railway Station - turn right out of the main entrance, right again keep walking till you come to the Straße der Nationen. You can then catch bus 51, direction Zeisigwald to the stop "Stadion Gellertstraße" which is right outside the stadium. The cost is 1.40 euros.

The Ground: A first impression of Chemnitz is that it is a dump. A large chimney dominates the skyline as it continuously belches out smoke. The railway station is undergoing refurbishment and is a building site. A number of streets leading to the ground are either derelict or unoccupied.

I'm pleased to say that after the game I walked in the opposite direction along Straße der Nationen into the city centre. It looks like a lot of regeneration work has taken place and it is quite modern.

Opposite the stadium is a large derelict block of flats which appears to be used as an impromptu toilet. There is a bar opposite the ground and a petrol station where some people stood in the car wash to keep out of the rain as they drank their beer.

As I arrived two hours before the game there was nothing to do or see except get a beer in the Ultra's/Men in Black bar. To say this looked dodgy is an understatement. Imagine your local car tyre repair garage, empty of anything mechanical with a roller door entry. Inside is a wooden bar selling bottles of beer, a few picnic tables and about 10 old sofas. Displayed on the walls are various signs etc that have been "obtained" at away grounds.

The Stadion an der Gellertstraße is a classic old style East German Ground which has probably changed very little since the re unification. A covered seated stand dominates the ground with the other 3 sides uncovered terracing. There is a scoreboard at one end and that's about it. At the scoreboard end is another large derelict building. Facilities for food and toilets are housed in small portacabin type buildings.

There is a campaign to have the stadium re developed. It looks like some work may take place soon as a large building has been demolished at the front of the ground along with a number of trees cut down. Currently the club has dispensation to stay in this league but they have got to cover it on three sides to maintain their license.

The ground was opened in 1934 and has a capacity of 16,061.

Programmes: Two were available. The Men in Black issue their own 4-page A5 black and white issue. It is available free of charge in the garage. The official issue is available from the ticket booths; it is an A4 issue consisting of 32 pages in full colour. The price is 1.50 euros.

The Game: Chemnitzer started off at a frantic pace and it looked like they were going to rack up a large score against the bottom of the table side. Unfortunately, after taking a two goal lead the game petered out.

Unusual: A lot of the supporters still refer to the club by its old name of Karl-Marx-Stadt FC. You can still buy Karl- Marx - Stadt scarves in the club shop.

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