

**TT No.224: Mike Latham** - Sat 14 April 2012: Gwynedd League - Cwpan Gwynedd Semi-Final; **CPD Llanllyfni** 1-2 Trearddur Bay United; Attendance: 80 (h/c); No admission or programme; FGIF Match Rating: 4\*.

On a sunny, dry but blustery April afternoon I decided to head west to my first taste of the Gwynedd League and a semi-final between CPD Llanllyfni and their visitors from Anglesey, Trearddur Bay United.

This was the second semi-final between the sides in the last five days, Llanllyfni prevailing 4-3 after coming back from 3-1 down in the league's Safeflue Cup on Easter Monday.

Llanllyfni is a small village located just after Penygroes on the A487 road that leads from Caernarfon to Porthmadog. Nantlle Vale FC who compete in the Welsh Alliance are based in Penygroes. I'd been told that Llanllyfni is a largely Welsh speaking, close-knit village with the vast majority of the locals speaking Welsh as their first language. The village grew around the slate quarrying industry though its roots date back much longer- the village church was founded in the fourth century.

The football ground is based at the King George V's playing fields behind the village hall close to the centre and as I arrived half an hour before kick-off the place was a hive of activity. An excellent tea bar was already up and running in the village hall and a barbeque was set up outside. Many of the locals had already gathered, eagerly anticipating the game while the children were kept busy on the adjoining playground or by kicking a ball around on the field. The two teams were going through their warm-ups and I had a chat with one of the visiting players while he did his stretching exercises.

The views inland from the ground are simply stunning, spoilt only by electricity pylons, with snow covered mountains and green fields dotted with sheep. The sun was shining brightly and though the wind was chilly the conditions were ideal for football.

The pitch was firm though bobbly in parts and the game began at 100 miles an hour, the visitors clearly anxious to revenge their defeat of five days earlier. They took the lead on 19 minutes when their lively centre-forward cleverly lobbed the home goalkeeper before ramming the ball into the empty net. But the home side were level within ten minutes and it was obvious there was little to separate the sides. With extra-time looming Bay snatched what proved to be the winning goal 19 minutes from the end, their experienced-looking striker converting a right-wing cross.

Well controlled by an experienced referee whose man-management skills were excellent this was a highly entertaining, passionate game that reflected well on the league. The home secretary gave me a warm welcome and patiently gave me a lot of background on the league and his club, who are building a locally-based side

with an accent on youth. A tremendous afternoon in a scenic location amongst friendly and passionate football people- it goes without saying that a visit to Llanllfyni comes with my warmest recommendation.

07/20