

**TT No.74: Justin Holmes** - Sunday 16th October 2011; **UN Käerjéng 97** v CS Fola Esch; Luxembourg Div Nationale; Venue: Stade Um Dribbel, Bascharage; Score: 2-3; Admn: €8.00; Programme: None; Att: 514; Match Rating: 3.

This would be something of a bonus match for me, which was made possible by a kick off two hours later than my earlier game at Differdange and the relative proximity. So, at the final whistle at Differdange, I hurried to the train station and made the eight-minute train journey northwards to Petange, from which the ground is about a twenty-minute walk.

After earlier enjoying one of the more attractive football grounds at Differdange, the Stade Um Dribbel was something of a disappointment in comparison, a thoroughly unremarkable, modern football ground. That is perhaps not surprising, given that this is a brand-new stadium, this being just the second game played there. In keeping with every ground in Luxembourg I have visited, it is extremely neat and tidy. Straddling the half way line is a large modern grey stand, which has seating in its main part, standing area along a long balcony in front of the clubhouse to one side, and underneath is the tea bar. Along the other length of the pitch and behind one of the goals is just hard standing, and behind the other goal fencing means it is not really possible to watch the game from there. Looking from the main stand, a slight grass incline gives a moderately pleasant view. No programmes or similar publication were produced.

Last season, Käerjéng finished in third place in the league to qualify for the Europa League - their campaign lasting just one tie, although to their credit they drew the first leg against the Swedes BK Hacken. They have got off to a good start this season, in second place in the league going into this game, having won five and drawn one of their eight games so far this season. Fola Esch, the oldest club in Luxembourg, finished as runners-up in the league last season, but have made a poor start to the season, and found themselves second bottom, having won just one and drawn three of their eight games.

By the time I arrived at the ground, Fola Esch were already leading 1-2, having fallen behind on ten minutes through Welter, but they hit back through Dallevedove on 26 minutes and Souto with a penalty on 28 minutes. Soon after I arrived, Fola extended their advantage to 3-1 after a quick counter attack, the ball was played in from wide to Calderi who had a simple finish on 34 minutes. Fola looked in total control of the game, although a couple of minutes before half time, they were reduced to ten men when a second yellow card was shown to Klein. to potentially make the game a little more interesting in the second half.

This certainly seemed to lift the home side as they started to look the more threatening side after the break and did most of the attacking - as one might expect with a man advantage, equally unsurprising was how Fola played with men behind the ball and the occasional counter attack was the limit of their ambition

now. On 62 minutes. the home team were awarded a free-kick just outside the penalty area in a central position, and Andres fired home into the top right corner to give Käerjéng hope of salvaging a point. They looked capable of doing just that, but their task would be hampered with a sending off of their own on 67 minutes, with a straight red card shown to Zewe for a late, high tackle. This did not actually hamper Käerjéng too much, as they continued to look the more threatening side, although Fola really should have put the game to bed on 75 minutes, when a one-on-one opportunity was fluffed by Kitenge, who had only come on as a substitute three minutes earlier, with a weak shot straight at the keeper. The referee was having a very poor game, who saw fit to eventually show eleven yellow cards and a straight red card, most of which were not really necessary in a game that was not dirty by any stretch of the imagination, and it was no surprise at all when Fola Esch were reduced to nine men two minutes from time when they had another player, Alomerovic, sent off for a second yellow card. There was barely enough time left for Käerjéng to take advantage, and so Fola held on for a narrow 2-3 away victory and three much needed points to lift them a couple of places in the table, whilst results going their way meant that Käerjéng remained in second place, although they slipped five points behind leaders Grevenmacher who won 5-0 today.

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