

TT No.79: Mike Latham - Sat 29 October 2011: **Cambuslang Rangers** 4-2 Yoker Athletic; Scottish Junior Cup Rd 2: Admission: £4; Raffle ticket: £1; 20pp Programme: £1; FGIF Match Rating: 4*.

Cambuslang Rangers are one of the oldest and most famous of Scottish Junior clubs; formed in 1899 they play at Somervell Park, a wonderfully atmospheric old stadium which has seen many famous matches in the past.

Situated about six miles south-east of Glasgow in South Lanarkshire close to the River Clyde Cambuslang's industrial roots lie in coal mining and the iron and steel industries; these days distribution or service industries provide much of the local employment.

The Rangers have a great tradition in the Junior Cup; winners five times in 1938 and 1939 just before the Second World War then three times between 1971 and 1974 they have also been runners-up on six further occasions.

The splendid colour programme, an added bonus at a junior cup-tie reminds spectators that Rangers last met Yoker in this competition at Somervell Park in 1972 when a crowd of 3,000 saw the home side win through 2-1 on their way towards retaining the trophy. 'Almost 3,000 attended that match but the clubs will be lucky to get about a tenth of that support today,' the article continues.

Crowds may be down on days past but the enthusiasm for one of the greatest prizes in the junior game is undiminished; a local derby against a side in the same division in the West juniors has been eagerly awaited and there is a tangible sense of anticipation as the teams make their way onto the field from the pavilion by the nearside corner-flag.

A rough head count shows that around 260 or so spectators have turned up for this game, so the programme's prediction is not far-off. The visitors have brought a fair following and the home side's loyal support are a vocal and humorous lot. Most gather along the terrace on the far side of the ground, its long cover providing welcome shelter from everything that an autumnal afternoon in Glasgow brings; bright sunshine one minute, intense, driving rain from dark scudding skies the next. The last minutes of the game are played out before a magnificent rainbow that seems to stretch from Hamilton in the south across to Cumbernauld to the north, with the distinctive Campsie Fells the backdrop. Behind the far goal, past the rubble of the demolished Hoover factory and beyond is Celtic Park, the electronic scoreboard behind one goal clearly visible for most of the afternoon before disappearing from view as the intense rain and clouds descend during the second half.

The action is fast and furious, no quarter asked or given, players ready to display their skills and not complain if they are cut down by a hard challenge; in other words it's a typical juniors game, controlled, as seems to be the norm, by a superb

referee- why are Scottish referees so superior to their English counterparts with their fitness, decision-making, empathy with the players and control? The first-half is tight and competitive, then the home goalkeeper is flattened in aerial challenge; after five minutes' anxious wait he's carried off on a stretcher to warm applause from home and away fans and players. Rather than acting as a downer, the accidental injury spurs Rangers on and with a superbly worked move they take the lead, doubling their advantage with a rasping 25-yard shot into the far corner.

The second half sees Rangers extend their lead, at 4-0 they're cruising. But Yoker had the better of the last half-hour and pulled back two goals, one from the penalty spot with a home defender red carded. On chances created the visitors could have equalised, may even have won the tie; but Cambuslang hold firm and edge through.

It was another superb afternoon's entertainment in a competition that has become a favourite. It goes without saying that a visit to Cambuslang comes with my warmest recommendation.

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