

TT No.90: Chris Freer - Tuesday November 8th 2011; **Radford** v Barrow Town; East Midland Counties League; Score: 0-1; Crowd: 73; Entertainment: 4/5.

X-Box games are all the rage in our house. Well, they are in the lad's bedroom anyway, into which he disappears after arriving home from school each day, only emerging to eat his tea before returning to the carnage unfolding on-screen. Today I have had to enter into negotiations with several local retail stores to see who is offering the best deal for something called Modern Warfare 3, which apparently, he has to have. I deposit it on his bed and he whoops with glee. So, it is something of a surprise when he readily agrees to accompany me to an evening footy match, as I am thinking it is nailed on that - with a war to win - he'll be stuck to his 360 for the rest of the day.

I must confess to being something of a gaming addict myself at one time in my life, obsessed to the point of becoming nightmare-ish about advancing Space Invader creatures. I could also usually be found loitering with intent in the Globe in Leicester most Saturday mornings, where I would regularly beat up the Galaxians machine. When such devices morphed into version 2 and got a bit more complicated, I lost much of my interest.

Tuesday nights have suddenly become freed up for me, the lad's football team having taken the decision to train only on Thursdays. That being the case, I am elated to see that Barrow Town, my 'village' team, are in Nottingham tonight, taking on Radford in an East Midlands Counties League fixture, so the two of us head off to the western suburbs of the city - a cosmopolitan area known as Hyson Green - to see if the Riversiders can continue their spell of good form which has included an FA Cup run netting the Leicestershire club several thousand pounds.

Ideally, I should have taken this ground in on a Saturday. Then I could have visited any one of the excellent hostelries to the west of Nottingham city centre, including the new 'tap' for Blue Monkey Brewery, and made a day of it. But the prospect of a mild, albeit slightly damp, night and an empty schedule is too much of an attraction, and we arrive at Selhurst Street about 20 minutes from kick-off. Just time to check-out one of the cosiest clubhouses I've come across, although regrettably with no cask ale or a bottled alternative. Things also look thin on the hot food front, and it seems punters are free to bring in their own from the many fast-food shops on the adjacent Radford Road.

The ground itself is not bad for this level, boasting a couple of areas of covered hard standing, and a reasonably sized seated stand behind one goal. The pitch looks like it has been mown whilst sopping wet, and might present one or two barriers to fancy football.

Since I last saw Barrow Town earlier in the season, they have ditched that abysmal green and white striped away kit and gone for a more sombre yellow and blue strip. With both teams looking to break out from the wrong end of the table, the

game starts at a terrific pace and it's not long before the deadlock is broken, a sweeping Barrow move leading to the opening goal. The youthful-looking referee is constantly in the thick of the action, sometimes when he doesn't need to be, and both sets of players seem to want to explain their interpretations of the rules to him.

It's end-to-end stuff as mistakes creep in and the ball consistently flies from one end to the other. Barrow have the better of the goalmouth action, and on several occasions lay siege to the Radford penalty area as the ball pings and pongs off defensive leg, head and butt before reaching relative safety, and there's no further score. It hasn't been a game for the football purist, but I have to concede that I have been entertained, nevertheless.

A little bit like video games really. You can have the 'Premier League' of the clever stuff like Halo, or Call of Duty, or Gears of War if you want, but I'm happy enough with a frantic game of good old-fashioned 'non-league' pinball. Which is perhaps how you could best describe tonight's match.

There's more on my blog at <http://flynn123.wordpress.com/>

Game for anything...

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