

TT No.96: *Justin Holmes* - Friday 11th November 2011; **Conwy United** v Flint Town United; Cymru Alliance; Venue: Morfa Stadium, Conwy; Score: 1-2; Admission: £5.00; Prog: £1.50; Att: 150 (est.); Match Rating: 3.

For the first game of my long weekend based in Colwyn Bay, I soon made my way westwards along the coast to Conwy for a game in the second tier of Welsh football, between two former Welsh Premier teams in the Cymru Alliance.

The Morfa Stadium is located about a 15 minute walk westwards from Conwy rail station and town centre, and for an evening kick-off in surrounding darkness is quite an unremarkable ground, although when I returned the following day, it turned out that it has a very pleasant, typically rugged Welsh background, with steep large hills close behind one length. There is a fairly small, elevated all-seater stand straddling the half way-line, with half a dozen terrace steps either side stretching to the corner flags. On the opposite side there is a small covered standing area and straddling the half way line is a rather unusual tall and narrow, two story building that looks like it should be a regular stand but actually houses the elevated dugouts on the lower level - the top level is out of use. Behind one of the goals is a modern covered all-seater stand and behind the other goal is the clubhouse, changing rooms and a portacabin on breezeblock stilts housing rubbish such as a mattress and cupboard, all behind hard standing. The ground unsurprisingly reflects the team's fortunes on the pitch - both have had much better days, with the ground decaying very noticeably since it hosted top flight football, with many of the seats broken, the clubhouse needs a fresh lick of paint, and the back wall to the open terrace has fallen down in a couple of places . Although overpriced, the 26-page programme was a reasonable effort, with all the essential stats as well as some interesting articles too.

Having opened their season with three wins following promotion from the Welsh Alliance, Conwy then struggled somewhat, picking up just 5 points from 8 games, culminating in a 0-6 defeat to Rhyl, before winning their last game 6-2 at home to Ruthin Town. They went into this game in ninth place in the 16-team league and already seem to be settling into mid-table obscurity. Flint had a marvellous run in late August/early September, when they won six games on the bounce, but since then have picked up just one point from three games. They were three points and three places better off than Conwy, having played a game less.

On an evening with constant drizzle of varying intensity for the opening hour of the game, and with a pitch that was very bobbly as well as slippery, the first half was a poor affair, with both teams playing ugly brands of football - Flint seeming to just want to hoof the ball forward at every opportunity, whilst Conwy's passing was woeful, far too many times having their passes, easily intercepted. With both defences looking very solid, the goalless score-line at half time was unsurprising, although both teams did have one golden chance to open the scoring, on 35 minutes a long range shot from fully 45 yards by Flint's Johnny Hill hit the post and

a couple of minutes before half time, Conwy forced a smart save from the keeper low at his near post.

Within two minutes of the restart, the deadlock was broken when a looping cross was sent in from close to the by-line, and Shaun Beck powered home a header from close range at the far post. Flint went on to have slightly the better of proceedings, and it was somewhat against the run of play when Conwy equalised, Chris Quinn scoring with a stooping header following a corner. Parity only lasted for two minutes though, as Flint went back into the lead when Jordon Brierley scored with a low shot from 25 yards into the corner. For the remainder of the game, there was plenty of huff and puff from Conwy as they attempted to score their second equaliser, but they never really convinced that they could score, and so it was Flint who claimed the away win.

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