

**TT No.26: *Ian Hill*** - Sat 24th March 2012; **Carl Zeiss Jena** v Werder Bremen II; 3. Liga; Score: 4-3; Admission: 25.50 Euros; Programme: 1.50 Euros; Att: 4,814; Match rating: 4.

This was a ground I'd wanted to visit for a very long time. I travelled by train from Leipzig which took around 1 hour. A very relaxed day out in the country was to be had. The warm weather made this a very pleasant place to visit. The stadium is a 10-15 -minute stroll through a park down by the river. The Ernst-Abbe-Sportfeld is part of sports complex with numerous football pitches surrounding the main stadium. It may not be as nice to visit when it is raining as the only cover is in the large main stand. Despite the pitch being surrounded by a running track the design of the stand makes viewing really good.

No cash cards here for your refreshments and food. Cash only with a varied selection of food and beer outlets available. The supporter's groups are currently helping to raise money for the development of the stadium. It needs to be covered on four sides and the pictures of the plans show that there will be no athletics track. The supporters group have their own bar on the site, BBQ stalls and two shop sheds.

Programmes are A5 in size 40 pages on colour glossy paper. It's not the best programme and is on par with Conference North issues but half the price! You did though get a free black and white poster from a Motor Jena v Grazer AK game in 1961. There's a large market stall style club shop outside the ground and a smaller official one inside. There was also a man selling away programmes on a stone outside as well. All issues were available from Jena's away games this season.

A good win for Jena but as this was against the bottom of the table side you could see why they are both struggling.

It's interesting to note that the Carl Zeiss company no longer sponsor the club. Their logo on the famous tower on top of the clubhouse has been replaced. There is also no reference to the company in the programme or on the advertisement boards.

A very good day out in a relaxed environment. Highly recommended.