

TT No.44: *Mike Latham* - Sat 9 January 2016: West Lancs. League Div. One; **Burscough Richmond** 2-1 Dalton Utd; Attendance: 20; Venue: JMO Sports Park, Skelmersdale.

The continuing very wet weather again decimated the football programme and the West Lancashire League saw just two fixtures being fulfilled with Milnthorpe Corinthians remarkably playing at home just a couple of weeks after their ground was ravaged by floods- a wonderful effort. Even more remarkably they beat visitors CMB 8-4!

I took the 3G option and ventured to the JMO Sports Park at Blaguegate Playing Fields, Liverpool Road, Skelmersdale where Division One leaders Burscough Richmond had transferred their game in view of the weather.

Their enterprise was rewarded with a 2-1 victory, albeit a very hard fought one against their Cumbrian visitors. Dalton United were bottom of the league with just four points, all gained at home but it's a tribute to this excellent league that the game was so full of interest and competitive. Burscough Richmond just about shaded the game, their winning goal coming in the latter stages but I felt sorry for Dalton who tried their utmost and could have easily gone away with something.

I'd never been to JMO Sports Park before and I was most impressed. It's a state-of-the-art football centre just off the M58 motorway on the Lathom side of Skelmersdale. Less than ten miles from Liverpool, Wigan, and St Helens it has a huge catchment area and it was great to see its facilities so widely used by all ages on a day when the weather again led to many postponements.

The development was completed by J Mallinson (Ormskirk) Limited, hence the JMO name and comprises two full-size, 11-a-side pitches and nine fully enclosed training pitches made up of one 9-a-side pitch, three 7-a-side pitches and five 5-a-side pitches.

The facility is open seven days per week and boasts a brand-new clubhouse building with modern changing rooms, conference facilities, and a function room. There is a fully licensed bar serving hot and cold food and drinks with multi-screen TVs and a busy children's party was taking place inside while many games and training sessions were taking place outside.

Also boasting plenty of free car parking onsite the facility is a wonderful community asset and is the base for so many activities including weekly coaching and holiday schools, adult 6-a-side leagues, junior summer leagues and many other events. It's also floodlighted and on a day like today its worth was really underlined.

This game took place on the furthest full-size pitch and spectators were able to watch from inside the cage with one side railed off with plenty of standing room.

As a bonus the 1pm kick-off allowed me a double header and within a few minutes of the final whistle I was watching Burscough's home game against Witton Albion in the Evo-Stik Northern Premier League First Division North.

04/20