

TT No.66: Steve Hardy - Saturday 29th April 2017; Accrington Stanley U18 v Walsall U18; Football league Youth Alliance North West Division; Venue: Nelson FC; Kick-Off: 12.00pm start; Result: 2-4; Admission: Free; Programme/team sheet: No; Attendance 25.

Stanley usually play their youth team fixtures at either their main stadium or at QE Grammar School in Blackburn. When I contacted them by email to find out where this match was taking place, I got no reply at all. I then rang them and was told the person on reception had no idea where the match was being played, but she would find out and ring me back. She didn't. Luckily, I discovered their Academy has a superb twitter account, where details of all the games being played by their various age group teams are listed well in advance. It was a bonus for me to discover that my game was being played at Nelson FC, of the North West Counties league, as I hadn't been there.

Nelson have only been at their Victoria Park ground since 1971, but it is already looking very run down. There is a very low stand down one side but no other spectator facilities at all. The bar was open throughout this morning's match although only selling teas and coffees that early in the day!

I was told that AS play as many of their youth team games at Nelson as possible, and that this was the 4th or 5th match played there this season.

On the pitch, it was an excellent game all round. Walsall went 1-0 up then 2-1 down by half time. They equalised on the hour and then won the match with a penalty on 82 minutes. My headcount was 25, mostly parents of the AS lads.

Kick off was 12 noon, which put a damper on my second match of the day, which was supposed to be the Accrington Stanley first team match with Luton Town. Talking to Accrington officials at the match they thought I would make the Crown Ground easily enough, but I decided against it and instead made the 6-mile trip down the road to Padiham for my next game. See TT No.67 above for more.