

**TT No.101:** *Brian Buck* - Saturday 10th March 2018; **Norfolk FA U18 v Gloucestershire FA U18**; FA County Youth Cup Semi Final; Venue: played at Norfolk FDC, Bowthorpe Park, Norwich; Kick-Off: 11.30am; Result: 3-1 (AET); Attendance: 134.

The lure of this early kick off was that it allowed me and other Groundhoppers the chance to get in two matches today. However, bearing in mind that with extra time being needed, this match didn't finish until around 2pm, I wonder just how many of them got to their next game on time, or if they did at all! I saw a match here about five years ago and it hasn't changed at all as far as I can tell. It's a busy venue, with lots of the small 3G pitches in use. Also, Norwich CBS (ex-Spixworth) play their home Thurlow Nunn matches here.

This was a keenly contested game and the visitors, fresh from their overnight stay in the area were just slightly the better side during a tense normal time. However, what the game really needed was a goal and this finally arrived on 58 minutes from the spot after the visiting keeper had a 'lightbulb moment' and brought down an attacker as he moved away from goal. Given that he was unlikely to score anyway, this wasn't the brightest thing to do. However, 3 minutes later Gloucestershire were level by way of a tap in through Bennington - Mannings. I bet that with a name like that he doesn't get booked too often! As the game moved into added on time Norfolk scored what looked like the winner, but it was offside. So, onto extra time and finally we had the defining moment. On 110 minutes the ref and or lino spotted a visiting player lash out at a home player off the ball and he was sent off. With both sides now tiring the extra man helped the hosts a lot and on 111 minutes the ball was hooked home after the keeper parried a cross to the scorer. Then right at the end with Gloucestershire pushing up for the equaliser, Ryan Miles completed his hat-trick by running on to score after he was played in. Overall a fascinating match and one which held one's attention throughout.