

TT No.33: *Steve Hardy* - Saturday 23rd September 2017; **AVRO Reserves** v Stockport Georgians Reserves; Manchester League Division Three; Result: 2-0; Admission: Free; Programme: No; Attendance: 18 h/c

At the end of last season, AVRO moved out of their Lancaster club set up in Failsworth, Manchester, and have now pitched up at White Bank Road in Oldham. Rugby league enthusiasts might be familiar with that address, as it is the former home of the Oldham Roughyeds RL club, as well as Oldham Dew/Town and Borough football clubs. The Roughyeds had to move out of the Whitebank Stadium in 2016 as it had failed to meet minimum standard requirements, and it now looks as if they will never return as AVRO completed the purchase of the ground this summer.

Talking to locals who were watching the game yesterday, it seems AVRO have done a great deal of work at the renamed Vestacare Stadium, in a very short time. By all accounts, the place was a dump before, but AVRO have installed a shiny new 3G pitch, and built a new stand half the length of one side of the ground. Floodlights were already in place and the former Roughyeds social club has now been rebranded as the new Lancaster Club, although this is still a work in progress and builders are still on site refurbishing the place. On the pitch yesterday I watched a very competitive Reserve team fixture between AVRO and Stockport Georgians which the home team won 2-0 thanks to a last-minute goal sealing the points. This match was a 1.00pm ko, so that ground-sharers Mostonians of the Lancashire Amateur league could start their match at 3.15pm.

AVRO are aiming for the NWCL. With their first team top of the league after 8 straight wins, and with the facilities they now have, they would seem a shoe-in. I really enjoyed my visit there and wish them luck in their venture to better themselves.