

TT No.62: *Keith Aslan* - Saturday 16th December 2017; **SPORTING 87** v Ipswich Athletic; Suffolk & Ipswich League Division 1; Result: 5-2; Kick-Off: 14.00 (to the second, well done ref); Admission/Programme: Free; Attendance: 19 (18 home, 0 away & 1 neutral)

Dodgy weather meant we were down to about plan F today before I plumped for another Anglian adventure with Sporting 87 (I betcha' can't guess what year they were formed?). If this had kicked off a few hours earlier it wouldn't have kicked off but a Saturday morning battle between Mr. Sunshine and Mr. Frost resulted in a win for the great ball of fire, and the fact both teams wanted to play helped, not always the case around this time of year.

Sporting 87 play in Bury St. Edmunds a town I last visited many moons ago when I was young and beautiful as oppose to being old and beautiful now! Of course, I can't remember a thing about it so it was just like visiting a town for the first time, a precursor for when the Alzheimers kicks in. It joins a long list of places that are great to visit but I wouldn't want to live there, but it does have two Greggs which is two more than Broadstairs has got. Home of 'Green King', I could have gone for a tour of the brewery (if I'd wanted to make myself sick) and I was very surprised to see they had a marquee in the town-centre, displaying the banner "Green King IPA official beer of England cricket" In view of recent events I would have thought they would have wanted to keep quiet about that one. The ground is a grueling, 50-minute walk from the station in the southernmost extremities of the town, and although there are buses, a change is required, and it takes even longer than walking.

Pre-match you can warm up in the clubhouse although it doesn't officially open until after the game, but hot drinks are served at half time. The first-floor covered veranda would offer respite from any rain, and while a perfectly acceptable vantage point, it is just a tad far away from the pitch for the optimum viewing experience. Plenty of action today with the home side only needing 70 seconds to take the lead, Ipswich then went 2-1 up before Sporting hit the break 3-2 ahead and followed it up with a dominant second half. The Ipswich number 3 made a hideous tackle that Hannibal Lecter would have been proud of and the fact that the recipient carried on playing after lengthy treatment was down purely to luck. The referee only booked the miscreant, if I'd been in charge, he'd have been off, no messing. When the injured party was finally able to continue the ref. made him leave the pitch. Presumably he didn't get the email from the FA about the change of rules that if you receive treatment from a tackle that results in a booking you don't have to leave the field afterwards. Justice was done when Sporting scored from the resulting free kick, which would have been no consolation whatsoever if the player had broken his leg.

Sporting 87 are a Christian team which was reflected in the superb programme. The club chaplain had his own page in which he admitted that his favourite

Christmas song was 'Stop the Cavalry' by Jona Lewie which is a bit sad. Keeping on the religious theme was an article culled from the Times on former professional footballer Phillip Mulryne who has become a Catholic Priest. He found his life was empty away from football, although given he spent most of his career at Norwich City, I would have thought the same could be said about when he was playing. With money, nightclubs, flash cars and flashier women he thought there must be more to life. Haven't we all been there? Just one brilliant read of many in a 12-page glossy gem of a programme that the club steadfastly refused to take any money for. With some Southern League clubs no longer issuing, shame on them and a bigger shame on the league, it's good to come to smaller teams like Sporting 87 where paper production is still a matter of pride.

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