

TT1819-10

TT No. 10: *Brian Buck* - Thursday 16th August 2018; **Watford Ladies** v Stevenage Ladies; Friendly Match; Venue: played at Kings Langley FC; Result: 3-1; Attendance: 243.

The first time I saw a Kings Langley home match it was at their old Buncefield Road ground in Hemel Hempstead. They are now at Gaywood Park, Hempstead Road and my only other visit here occurred on 19 August 1997 when I watched Kings Langley lose 3-2 to Chipperfield Corinthians in a Herts Senior County League Premier Division match (attendance- 65 approx.). Since then the club have moved through the ranks and, in recent years, they have been promoted several times and now play Step 3 football in the Southern League. Unsurprisingly the ground has changed a lot since then, although I later found some older pictures on the internet which jogged my memory a bit.

The attendance here was surprisingly big and I was unable to park in the club car park, despite arriving very early for the game. However, it seems that a lot of the spaces were taken up by the Kings Langley men's side who were here training. So, I decamped to a nearby layby instead. We sat in the sizeable main stand and just before kick-off what seemed to be the club's academy side turned up with notepads and their mentor/coach. For one moment I thought we were going to get a running commentary on the match. But although Watford and Stevenage for that matter, were decent sides, they didn't do that much worth trying to imitate!

On a lush pitch there was early drama when on about ten minutes the Stevenage keeper suffered an injury, possibly to her hand, which prevented her taking any further part in the game. She was replaced by a sub off the bench, who clearly wasn't a keeper. Within two minutes she had conceded a goal and was beaten again two minutes after that. Then a third one went in four minutes later. At this point double figures seemed likely. But once the new keeper had settled, she handled the ball well and hers and the team's confidence grew, to the point where Stevenage pulled a goal back on 45(+2) minutes. After the break Stevenage seemed to change their keeper again with their captain taking over. Later during the half, she too was replaced. In this period Stevenage saw as much of the ball as Watford, although I think that the hosts were still just the better side. But we left the game thinking that Watford might not have scored all of those three goals in quick succession had the original keeper been able to stay on the pitch! Overall a good night out and with all the inter changing of goalkeepers it was also a good even for connoisseurs of sports bras!

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