

TT1819-101

TT No.101: Steve Hardy - Saturday 16th February 2019; **Swindon Town U18** v Portsmouth U18; Football League Youth Alliance Merit League 1; Kick-Off: 11.00am; Result: 3-2; Admission: Free; Programme: No; Attendance: 33 h/c

Once their league fixtures are finished, the top 6 clubs in the two southern based divisions of the Youth Alliance go in to a 12 team Merit League 1, with the remaining 10 clubs forming Merit League 2. Both Swindon and Portsmouth squeaked into the top 6, and today they met in the first match of the Merit League 1.

Swindon Youth don't play in Swindon, but at the Stanley Park Sports Ground in nearby Chippenham. This is an absolutely massive complex with several 3G pitches in cages and tons of grass pitches too. Today's match was played on pitch 10, with the corresponding match between the two club's U16 sides next door on pitch 9.

The home team started really well and scored after just 2 minutes, but Portsmouth came back into it, and deservedly equalised on 44 minutes. Two goals in a minute on 52 and 53 respectively got us to 2-2, before Swindon scored what proved to be the winner on 71 minutes. Portsmouth pushed hard for another equaliser, which they probably deserved, but none of their pressure in the last 10 minutes was to any avail.

My pre-match prediction of a 5-6 score-line didn't quite happen, but we were soon back on the road again driving the 8 miles to our afternoon fix at Melksham Town FC.

04/20