

TT No. 104: *Brian Buck* - Saturday 16th February 2019; **Old Rutlishians** v Battersea Ironsides; Surrey Intermediate Cup Quarter Final; Result: 1-1 (Battersea Ironsides won 4-2 on penalties); Attendance: 30 approx.

This was a rather easy game for me to get to as the ground was a flat ten-minute walk from Morden tube station. I was there early enough to quaff a few pints and partake of a hot sausage roll from the bar. Had the rugby team been at home today then free food would have been provided as well, but then again, I might not have got a seat!

Before we got underway the ref gave both club lino's their instructions but then ran off back to the dressing rooms. He had forgotten his whistle! The match was a keenly contested one, even though the hosts started with ten men for the first four minutes because one of their players hadn't arrived. Then when he did, he threw a tantrum because all of his kit wasn't laid out perfectly for him. Perhaps he should have brought his mother with him! Another player, a second half sub arrived even later. Rutlishians were the holders of this cup and are also top of the Surrey South Eastern Combination. Their visitors are in the Surrey Elite Intermediate League and if things go well for them then they might win it.

The first half was fairly even without there being much likelihood of a goal. The visitors though seemed to have the better strikers, a fact which seemed to be supported by a home fan, not quite sure if he was sober or not, who told me that his sides front two don't work hard enough. Soon after half time proceedings finally got a bit of bite to them when Ironsides took the lead on 56 minutes when the scorer was left unmarked at the far post. Gradually the tension mounted up and on 74 minutes the hosts had a player sent off for retaliating to a hard tackle. It took some time to get him off the pitch, but finally he went. I was also pleased that he went as just after half time, when he was in another of his angry moods, he nearly decapitated me when he booted the ball out of play with some venom, when a decision didn't go his way. Then five minutes later a visiting player was sent off for getting a second yellow. Two minutes later the Ruts were given and missed a penalty for handball, with the resultant shot being saved. Then on 88 minutes play was briefly halted because the ref had a nose bleed. But finally, in the 90th minute the Ruts did equalise, with a 20-yard direct free kick. After at least 8 minutes of stoppage time we went into penalties. Ironsides scored with all the four efforts they needed to take, but perhaps the hosts undoing was when they came to take their last spot kick. The taker trotted up to take his kick. However, the ref noticed that he wasn't wearing his shin pads. So, he had to find a pair before being allowed to take his kick. This must had bemused him as he missed!