

TT No.117: Steve Hardy - Saturday 16th March 2019; **Wellington KB United** v Red Star; Midland Junior Premier League U18 Division; Kick-Off: 10.30am; Result: 2-2; Admission: Free; Programme: No; Attendance: 13 h/c

This wasn't supposed to be my match of choice this morning. Sadly, that was called off on Friday evening, giving me plenty of time to find an alternative, preferably on a 4G pitch due to all the rain we have had here.

Ticking all the boxes was this match. The venue was a brand new floodlit 4G pitch in a cage at the Telford Ski Centre in Madeley, a venue I didn't even know existed until yesterday. Spectators are allowed inside the cage, but limited to one side only, so that is where the 13 attendees huddled for warmth in a howling gale.

The wind turned out to be the deciding factor in the match itself. Wellington kicked off with the wind at their backs and completely bossed the first half with Red Star barely able to kick the ball over half way. Wellington scored twice in the 35th and 44th minutes, and could have had many more with a bit more composure in front of goal. 2-0 at half time then, but now the roles were reversed and it was Red Star who had the wind at their backs.

They wasted no time in squaring the score up, scoring immediately after half time and again on 59 minutes. Once again, they had loads of opportunities to win the game, but just didn't have much luck, actually, as shots rained in only to be deflected wide by the keeper and his defenders. I reckoned a draw was a fair enough result in the circumstances, but the Wellington Manager was furious. He spent the entire game haranguing his players and shouting abuse at them, to the extent that when they scored their first goal, nobody celebrated, as he was still shouting instructions of what to do next. Not a single word of encouragement or praise left his lips, and you have to wonder how on earth he thinks his team will prosper if they are scared stiff of him.