

TT No.30: Keith Aslan - Saturday 15th September 2018; COVENTRY PLUMBING v Bartestree; Midland League Division 3; Result: 2-1; Kick-Off: 15.00; Admission: £2; Programme (24pages, colour): £1; Attendance: 20 (13 home, 3 away & 4 neutral)

The Plumbers, no idea where that nickname comes from, play at the Coventry Sporting Ground which is not the ground Coventry Sporting used to play at. There is an hourly bus service from the city centre but I opted for the half hour stroll from the nearest station, Tile Hill. The walk goes through a very rich area, and judging by much of the architecture the Luftwaffe gave this part of Coventry a miss when they made a flying visit a few years back. There are three adjacent pitches, all part, or completely, enclosed with the match being played on the furthest away. The first one has a rather dinky bus shelter type cover but that pitch is too small for Midland League football. The dressing rooms are in the same building as the tea room with hot drinks and cold snacks available throughout the afternoon. Worth visiting the toilets to see the Coventry Plumbing mirrors.

The match was thoroughly enjoyable for all the wrong reasons, malevolent sums it up. The scoring was all over in the first half hour, but the action was just beginning. A violent first half culminated 5 minutes before half time with as good a mass punch up as you're ever likely to see. The Bartestree supporter next to me was shouting at the ref. "It's all your fault, you've lost it" I did ask what he thought the referee had actually done wrong but he was a bit vague on the matter. I even suggested that maybe the players might take some responsibility for their actions but no, it was definitely all the refs. fault. Two home and one away were sent off with one of the home miscreants not leaving without a fight and as his teammates led him away, he was threatening sort out one of the away players at interval. Alas the half time entertainment never materialised. The second half began with the referee getting the two captains together and suggesting they calm their players down. He might as well have been speaking Latin for all the good it did. Bartestree laid siege to the Plumbers' goal and the fouls (from both sides) kept coming. Near the end Coventry went down to eight players as another one bit the dust, this one for dissent. I didn't count the bookings but they must have hit double figures. Two Bartestree players share the honours for the stupidest yellow cards, one player managed to get himself booked for dissent directly after his team had scored a goal, while with five minutes remaining and Coventry desperately time wasting, the young Bartestree substitute was booked for kicking the ball away. Footballers eh?

I quote from the programme on the previous weeks win over Birmingham Tigers '...a convincing away win but 2 sent off isn't the way we do things' I think it is boys, 5 off in two games, can you spot a pattern emerging here? Coventry Plumbing are flying high with 5 wins from 5 but the big question is will they have enough players that aren't suspended to field a full team every week. I thoroughly enjoyed this match even though I know I shouldn't have done. I doubt the ref. walked off the

pitch thinking 'This is what I became a referee for' Don't worry mate, we both know it wasn't your fault in spite of what Sun reading Barlestree supporters might think.

04/20