

TT No.32: Steve Hardy - Saturday 22nd September 2018; **Manchester City U23** v Derby County U23; Elite Football Development League; Kick-Off: 1.00pm; Result: 3-2; Admission: £1; Programme: Free; Attendance: 65 H/C

Match two today was at the Manchester City Academy stadium. For those that don't know the layout of the various City grounds, the Academy is on the opposite side of the Ashton New Road from the Etihad Stadium. Having seen the U18s playing on one of the numerous grass pitches in the Academy, I had long wanted to see a match at the main Academy stadium, so today, with its 1.00pm start was just perfect.

The Academy stadium is massive. It has a 7500 capacity, and is also home to the Women's team, the City U19 team in the European Youth League as well as this side which I think might be the Reserves in old money.

Admission is by ticket only, with my OAP ticket for just £1 being bought from a portacabin ticket office on the other side of the ground. Team-sheets are handed out freely at the electronic turnstiles and everybody seems very friendly and relaxed. The crowd are restricted to just one of the massive stands though, and I was politely told I couldn't wander around the ground to take photos, as I am wont to do.

The football itself was more like a training exercise in all honesty but I was really impressed by the City team. Slowly passing the ball across the defence, back to the keeper, more slow passing in the defence, and then bang. Four really quick passes later and they have scored. In summary they were 3-0 up by the 80th minutes, having missed umpteen chances, before an unlikely Derby revival netted them 2 goals in the last five minutes. If Derby had got anything out of the game it would have been a travesty, but their rally came just too late really.

Another super day out in Manchester and two very different levels of football watched.