

TT No.48: *Steve Hardy* - Saturday 27th October 2018; **Armada** v Bluepool; Birmingham & District League Division Six; Result: 4-3; Admission: Free; Programme: No; Attendance; 3 h/c

When I left home to drive to this match, it was snowing. When I arrived, the snow had stopped and had been replaced by driving rain. Now it is well known in my family, that I don't 'do' rain, so I did contemplate watching the match from my car. However, ever the professional, and not wanting to let down my adoring readers, I donned my galoshes, sou'wester and camera and set off.

The action took place in Balsall Heath in south Birmingham at Calthorpe Park. As my photos show, this park is very close to Edgbaston Cricket ground with its very distinctive floodlights a wonderful backdrop. Armada are a relatively new club and decided to try their luck in the Birmingham & District league after a spell as a Sunday club. They have been placed in Division Six (the bottom division) for their debut season, and today's match was an absolute belter.

Visitors Bluepool started much the better side, and took the lead with a cheeky backheel on just 10 minutes. Armada equalised six minutes later when a shot was parried, giving the home forward a simple tap in, but after that it was all Bluepool with an Armada corner being pumped upfield and the very quick Bluepool forward racing the length of the pitch to shoot home from a tight angle on 42 minutes. This was then followed by another breakaway goal on 44 minutes, and a very deserved 3-1 halftime lead for Bluepool.

After the break, Armada stopped their internal bickering and started to play as a team again. They were rewarded with 2 penalties on 49 and 58 minutes and found themselves back in the game at 3-3. The first penalty actually hit the bar and bounced out, but in the ensuing scramble, the same chap who had taken the penalty managed to toe poke the ball in to the corner.

Credit to Bluepool after this though, as they really gave it a go, but they were finally undone on 82 minutes when Armada scored their 4th, and, winning goal.

All in all, another top, if a tad soggy, afternoon in my favourite league in the world. Armada were a very welcoming club and I felt sorry for them that their changing room block was being used for drug dealing throughout the match.