

TT No.49: *Keith Aslan* - Saturday 27th October 2018; **WYTHENSHAW AMATEURS** v Stone Old Alwynians; North West Counties First Division South; Kick-Off: 14.59; Result: 3-3; Admission: £2 for the aged; Programme: £2; Attendance: 125 (111 home, 10 away & 4 neutral)

Thirty-one minutes late into Stockport, stuck behind a train waiting a guard at Milton Keynes. But good news for Dickie's "customers", it was a *London Midland* train and not *Virgin's* fault so that makes it all ok then. A half hourly bus service, 11a, from Stockport Bus station drops you outside the ground (If you are the other person in the universe who pays bus fares, I was charged £3 going and £2 coming back, work that one out!). This is a brand-new stadium which was only opened for business earlier this year. Bit of a delay with the lighting, the floodlight opener was due to take place the Tuesday following my visit. There is a stand along the half way line with, I assume, seating to be put in at some stage, but all in all a good-looking ground. The inviting clubhouse was opened by Brian Robson and has many interesting photographs on the wall including one of Wythenshawe's 1956 Whittaker Cup Final winning team which contained Shay Brennan, Wilf McGuinness and Bobby Charlton. That must have been one heck of a team. You can watch the lunchtime football on a big screen, a pleasure that was denied me due to *Virgin* trains tardiness. Food and drinks were readily available.

Stone Old Alwynians are so called as they were formed in 1962 by Dave Bonnet who was a teacher and former pupil of Alwynes Grammer school in Stone while the Amateur moniker in Wythenshawe is self-explanatory. I wouldn't think there are many teams in the North West Counties League that don't pay their players but obviously money isn't everything (in spite of what the Premier League may think) and Wythenshawe currently stand third in the table.

The match was a cracker, but, and it's a very big but, Wythenshawe should be ashamed of their time wasting which they took to levels I've never seen before. 1-0, 2-0, 2-1, 3-1 then 3-2 was the signal for the home side to stop playing football. Every throw in and free kick was taken by the player furthest away and an integral part of their training must be to see how slow a player can walk without actually stopping. Twice they took so long making a substitution that the referee prevented them making the change meaning they could waste more time again just a minute later. This was quite pathetic and as they are not getting paid and only playing for enjoyment one wonders what enjoyment they derived by trying to prevent a football match happening. Bet you can't guess what action the referee took? It was a relief as much as anything else when Stone equalized 5 minutes from the end. This was the signal for Wythenshawe to resort to playing football again and we had an entertaining last 11 minutes. The time wasting hadn't worked, perhaps if they'd tried to get another goal, they could have won the game, but hey ho, what do I know. It's good to see the F.A. have suggested a fool proof plan to speed the game up. They have just discovered that teams are using the three substitutions rule to

waste time (who'd have thought it?) so they aren't going to allow any changes to be made in the time referees add on to the 90 minutes for no reason. Well that'll work, stand by for a shed load of 89th minute substitutions. About as useful as the *Respect* handshakes.

As I've said, overall, this was a very good game and the referee's punctual kick off meaning there was no stress catching the 16.56 bus after the match. *Virgin* ran to the timetable going back to round off a thoroughly enjoyable day. I wish Wythenshawe well, they are a lovely club, but a little tip, if you're 3-2 up with 20 minutes to go, try continuing to play football, you might be pleasantly surprised at the result.

04/20