

TT No.50: Brian Buck - Saturday 27th October 2018; Newcastle Blue Star v Whitley Bay 'A'; Northern Alliance Bay Plastics Premier Division; Venue: played at Scotswood Sports Centre, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne; Result: 7-0; Attendance: 30 approx.

Today it was time to use up my rail vouchers, gleaned after my last visit up here saw the train arrive back into Peterborough some six hours late, due to overhead wire damage. As I also had a voucher for the precise amount the fare had gone up by since then my public transport travelling expenses were zilch today. Before going to the ground, I spent a bit of time in a pub in the city centre and unwittingly caught site of Glen Hoddle trying to beat Robbie Savage at table football on TV as the credits rolled at the end of a programme. I knew that something was wrong the minute he mis-controlled a ball. Moments later and off screen he had his heart attack from which he is now thankfully recovering.

Anyway, I then caught the number 38 bus from outside the station to near the ground and then walked a short distance to it from there. However, the number 1 bus would have dropped me off right outside the ground. Anyway, I arrived at the ground just as they were putting up the goals and soon the manager appeared and opened up the clubhouse. This until recently housed the boxing club, but has since relocated inside the sports centre and only days earlier it had been opened by the widow of Bobby Robson. Newcastle Blue Star are last year's Hazlerigg Victory but the owner wants to get the club going again as he has fond memories of the original club when he used to play for them. He's pumped a lot of money into the club. I'm guessing that he's paid for the pitch railing and dugouts and also all the sports clothing which appears in the club-shop inside the clubhouse, where there's a bar, teas and coffee's and limited hot food available. The club also issue a glossy four-page programme and today's was issue 8. As the clubhouse was out of sight of the pitch it was handy that they had a webcam inside the clubhouse, so you could see when the players returned to the playing arena at the start of the second half. I too have fond memories of Newcastle Blue Star as they were the only team I have ever 'scouted'! This was when I was living in Cheshunt and they were drawn away to them in the FA Vase Quarter Final. So also, with my Groundhopping hat on, I watched them play Stockton away a week or so before the big match took place on 13 March 1982 and I reported my findings back to the then manager John Drabwell, with whom I became good friends, although I haven't seen him for some time now. Cheshunt did well in the Vase tie and got a creditable draw there, attendance: 605. I spent that day with an extremely attractive reporter from the Newcastle Chronicle and my biggest regret was that I was out when she phoned me at home during the following week. I was out watching football of course and Spurs were at home on the date of the replay, which Cheshunt lost 1-0.

Today on a sunny but very cold day, the hosts won as easily as the score-line suggests. Although Whitley Bay add the suffix 'A' to their name, this was in fact

their reserves, strange in the fact that they don't actually have an official reserve team! Star were winning 4-0 by the 31st minute and their task was made even easier when a visiting player picked up a second yellow just before half time. Highlight of the day? Being nutmegged by a dog at half time. It ran between my legs!

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