

TT No. 1: Steve Hardy - Saturday 6th July 2019; **Birmingham Tigers** v Bolehall Swifts; Pre-Season Friendly; Result: 1-6; Admission: Free; Programme: No; Attendance: 5 (h/c)

The good thing about early season PSFs, is that they are often played at grounds that don't host regular football matches. This was the case today and I was delighted to find out that Birmingham Tigers are playing all their PSFs at Heartlands Academy in the Heartlands area of Birmingham.

Unfortunately, this turned out to be yet another 3G pitch in a cage, but none the worse for that. The crowd of 5 were able to watch the match from a balcony overlooking the pitch, or, in my case, were allowed to go inside the cage and wander to all four sides to take photos.

I wasn't expecting much of a game, in all honesty, as Tigers had finished bottom of the bottom division in the Midland League last season, with Swifts next to bottom in Division 2. In that respect I was pleasantly surprised, at least by Bolehall, who have a new management team in place for this season, and an entirely new squad of players as well. They looked pretty sharp I thought, even though this was their first PSF of the season.

Tigers, on the other hand continue to look very poor. They conceded a penalty after just 4 minutes and 3 more goals before the break saw them 4-0 down. After half-time they seemed really fired up and managed to pull a goal back on 49 minutes. Several chances followed and were wasted, before normality was restored when Swifts scored their 5th on 70 minutes and a sixth followed just before the end.

Also present at the game was an elderly hopper from Leicester. He had come by train, and had gone to Tigers normal ground at Hadley Stadium first, being unaware of the switch of ground. A very expensive taxi ride from Smethwick to Heartlands saw him arrive only ten minutes late and we spent the rest of the game putting the non-league world to rights.