

TT No.33: Steve Hardy - Saturday 21st September 2019; **Salford City U18** v Rochdale U18; EFL Youth Alliance U18 North West; Kick-Off: 11.00am; Result: 3-2; Admission: Free; Programme: No; Attendance: 61 h/c

This is the first season in the EFL Youth Alliance for the Salford City lads and they play their home games at the Partington Sports Village in Partington, which is a small village to the south west of Manchester. This is a multi-pitch set up which includes a 3G pitch in a cage, although today's game was played on a grass pitch to the right of the entrance to the ground. Partly roped off, but with spectators directed to the side of the ground that wasn't roped off, for some reason.

In glorious sunshine, the 61 spectators present were treated to a really slow burning match which had a huge sting in the tail. In a nutshell, it was 0-0 at half time after both sides had had plenty of goalscoring opportunities, but hadn't taken any of them. The second half saw Rochdale take the lead on 55 minutes, and then double it from a penalty just 3 minutes later. That seemed to knock the stuffing out of Salford and as we approached the 6 minutes of extra time that had been added on for all the time wasting the Rochdale keeper had done throughout the game, it was still 2-0 to Rochdale. Then all hell broke loose, and Salford scored 3 times in 5 minutes to clinch a very unlikely victory, and one that was very tough on Rochdale.

The lesson to be learned from this, I guess, is that it is OK to slow things down and waste time when you are 2-0 up, but not to the ridiculous extent the Rochdale keeper did and which saw him ultimately booked for his troubles.

04/20