

TT No.58: Keith Aslan - Saturday 27th October 2019; **Needham Market Reserves** v Wisbech St. Mary; Eastern Counties League Division One North; Kick Off: 15.00; Result: 2-2; Admission: £3 for the elderly; Programme: one of those awful e - programmes, that you need a degree in computer science to run off; Attendance: 66 (52 home, 12 away & 2 neutral).

Second attempt to do Garstang this season, second failure, stymied once again by ark building weather in Lancashire. I know God moves in mysterious ways but I don't understand why he doesn't want me to go to Garstang. Plenty of plan B's all going to be off due to the rain so it was plan Z for me and a trip to Needham Market Reserves to tidy up the Eastern Counties League. I've always refused to go to clubs that do e - programmes on a matter of principal, but like our politicians' self-interest is going to trump principals every time. My decision was helped by a fellow hopper volunteering to print the programme out for me although a certain amount of coercion was involved. The programme would have been very good if it actually had been one and not a website. Just because you have the technology to do something doesn't necessarily mean you should do it (phones that take photographs and the family filter on computers are two other examples).

I was very impressed with the set up here. The reserves play on an adjacent ground to the first team but an entirely separate entity, a bit like Haverhill. It has the necessary *Atcost* furniture but most people, including myself, watched the match from the superb viewpoint of the first-floor clubhouse balcony with the roof offering protection from the constant drizzle. The clubhouse had a full range of hot and cold drinks plus a full food menu to satisfy even the most-greedy of hoppers. The lunchtime footie was showing on a big screen and the windows offered a panoramic view of both grounds. The reserves ground is 3g so there's the added bonus of a green fence round part of it. The first team ground meant nothing to me, I remembered not it, or the walk from the station or anything about the town. Somewhere there is a box with a programme for my visit and I once again promised myself to try and get my collection in some semblance of order but I just don't think I'm going to live long enough to complete the task. The ground is only a six-minute walk from the station with a footpath taking you virtually door to door.

Wisbech's record prior to this match was played 12 lost 12 which didn't bode well but in an entertaining game they managed to get a point, which was nearly three, and on this display a first win can't be far away. It only took the visitors 45 seconds to go ahead, they were 2-0 up at the break and in a frenetic second half the 'Market' equalized 5 minutes from the end. Needham had a player sent off and at one stage Wisbech had two players in the 'sinbin' I guess the pre match Respect handshakes didn't work. This was the first game I've seen where a side started to waste time in the second minute and no amount of cajoling from the referee made any difference. A stern talking to the goalkeeper and one yellow card was the sum

total of the punishment for their dilatoriness (and yes that is a word). Good job they only had one substitute or the match could still be going on now. In spite of this I thoroughly enjoyed the game.

I had a long wait for my train home but languishing in a local hostelry supping the Amber Nectar and watching the Chelsea match on a big screen wasn't the worst hour I've ever spent. I had such a good day out that I can almost forgive Needham Market for doing e - programmes. Almost.

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