

**TT No.73: Steve Hardy** - Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2019; **AFC Alsager** v Congleton Vale; Crewe District FA Cup 1<sup>st</sup> Round; Result: 2-0; Admission: Free; Programme: No; Attendance: 31 H/C

AFC Alsager have left their home at Alsager Leisure Centre, and moved in to this brand-new Sports Complex on the site of the now demolished MMU Alsager complex. The new site is impressive. 2 x 3G pitches in cages, and several grass football pitches are laid out around a shiny new changing room/clubhouse building. My only problem was to work out if I had been there before! Many years ago, I went to watch the MMU Alsager team in the BUCS leagues, and the photos that I took there that day seem to show the pitch used then is now under a new housing development. Phew, another case of ARS avoided.

On paper the match today promised to be a cracker. AFC are top of the Staffs County league with a 100% win-record, with Congleton Vale being top of the Cheshire league at the start of play today. For once, the game lived up to the hype, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Both teams played excellent football, with AFC taking the lead on 21 minutes following a lack of communication between the Vale keeper and his defender. The defender thought his keeper was coming out to collect a high goal kick, so he ducked under the ball. The keeper wasn't coming out at all, so the AFC forward just ran behind the defender and headed the bouncing ball over the keeper.

It was 2-0 4 minutes later, when some slick passing sent the AFC forward clean through from the half way line, and he made no mistake at all. 2-0 at half time then, and that is how it stayed, although Vale had a lot of the play in the second half, but just couldn't score.

AFC Alsager are so far ahead in the Staffs League that they could probably hand them the title now. What happens then is less clear though. There are absolutely no facilities at all on the pitch they use, so promotion to the NWCL is probably not an option unless to look to groundshare somewhere better.

Bright sunshine, an excellent tea hut and a clear M6. What more could I ask for?

04/20