

TT No.85: Steve Hardy - Saturday 4th January 2020; **Willington** v Burton United; Midlands Regional Alliance Division One; Result: 5-0; Admission: Free; Programme: No; Attendance: 2 H/C

This season has seen MRA side Willington leave their home at the Marston Brewery Sports club in Burton, and move 5 miles out of Burton to the small village of Hatton. Not wanting to drive too far for my fix today made this an easy choice, and once the game was confirmed as still on, off I set.

The venue was the Hatton Sports and Social club, where behind the super looking social club there is a bowling green, a kiddie's play area and two football pitches. After all the recent rain the pitch was extremely heavy, with the ball not bouncing at all, and not travelling very far either as the grass hadn't been cut for months.

The match itself featured two mid-table teams in Division One of the MRA, but only one club actually turned up this afternoon, and it wasn't Burton United, who were really poor. After a slow start, Willington finally took the lead on 22 minutes and scored a second on 28 minutes. In between those two goals the Burton number 9 got himself sent off for a two footed lunge at an opponent who was very lucky he didn't have his ankle broken. That was the end of any serious challenge from Burton who I don't think had a shot on goal during the entire 90 minutes.

The Willington bench had a long running dispute with the Burton linesman, who also happened to be their Manager. His interpretation of the offside rule meant flagging for offside before a through ball had even been kicked. The ref was asked to change him several times, but as Burton only had a bare 11 players and no subs, that was out of the question. Ironically in the second half when Willington scored their 4th goal on 65 minutes, the player who scored it was yards offside, but the chastened Lino kept his flag down! Willington scored their 5th on 79 minutes, and then played the game out for the easiest 3 points they will get this season.

So, a good start to 2020 for me, and at a venue only 40 miles from home too. Sarah *Satnav* and I have called a New Year truce in our ongoing dispute, and she behaved immaculately for once. Wonder how long that will last for?