

**TT No.96: *Brian Buck*** - Saturday 18th January 2020; **Casterton v Kings Cliffe United**; ChromaSport Peterborough & District League Cup 3rd Round; Kick-Off: 1.30pm; Venue: played at Casterton College Rutland, Great Casterton; Result: 2-1; Attendance: 14.

Today didn't go quite according to plan. Although I'd found myself a game on a pitch which I was told, doesn't waterlog, I received a message at 9.15am telling me that it was still off, because the visitors couldn't raise a side! This gave me plenty of time to find an alternative game, but being a fussy 'big' devil, I didn't want to resort to a 3G cage unless I really had to. I also wanted a game at a place which was on grass and had some identity. But I struggled to find somewhere which I hadn't been to before and which was on. I was not helped by Mrs Buck who wanted me out of the house because I was invading the space; she normally has to herself at this time of the day. But eventually I found this fixture and I was on my way by about noon. If there was a good thing about driving today was that it gave me a chance to use the new A14 Huntingdon by-pass, which worked well for me.

I arrived at the ground just over an hour later. The slight down side to this was that it was in a school, just off the A1, north of Stamford. But where else locally could Casterton play? Anyway, I had limited time for a quick slurp in a nearby pub, before returning for the game, which kicked off a few minutes late. They played on the pitch furthest pitch away from the dressing rooms, which was very bumpy, even though it had been landscaped a bit. But because it was slightly raised you could get some good scenic views of the local country side and to make it even more appealing there were some flowering daisies by the hedge where I was standing. The hedge also served to keep me out of the wind. This was a Division 4 versus Division 1 match and so the visitors were expected to win it with something to spare. Perhaps that's why they just strolled out of the dressing rooms at the last minute, whilst the hosts, top of their division, had warmed up for some time beforehand. Just a note on Kings Cliffe at this point. They are actually called Kings Cliffe United and always have been and their correct name appears on their shirts, but the leagues website has 'dropped' the 'United' bit.

Anyway, Casterton started the game with the sun on their backs and by the 17th minute they were winning 2-0, firstly through a 30 yarder and then two minutes later by a 25 yarder. Not sure if the visiting keeper was wearing a hat or not as the bright sun slowly started to sink. For the remainder of the half the visitors were probably the better side, but could only pull one goal back, on 34 minutes, when the ball was pulled back for the scorer to shoot home. In the second half the sun was now so low, Kings Cliffe struggled to see where the actual goal was, especially as another goal frame, for an adjoining pitch, was close to it. The hosts seemed to sense victory, as the visitors seemed to accept that this wasn't going to be their day today far too early!

After this match had finished, as it was too early to go home, I went on to Bourne Town, a 20-minute drive away, and watched the second half of their UCL match against Burton Park Wanderers. This wasn't much better than the previous match, if at all. It was 0-1 on my arrival. Bourne looked unenthusiastic and missed two good chances to score. BPW weren't much better, but when they weren't giving the ref a hard time, they looked the more solid side. Overall a decent day out, given my late change of plan.

04/20