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FGIF PR RATINGS STANDARDS



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the FGIF Programme Review Pages! Firstly, I would like to say a big thankyou to all the dedicated club editors and readers out there who contribute their superbly produced programmes for use on the site every season. Without your help none of this would be at all possible. Hopefully as the season progresses, we will be able to add further programmes which will showcase a wide range of clubs from all levels of football pyramid.

As you scroll down our list of programmes you will be able to view a front cover (photo or scan) of each club on review as well as some notes about the match itself (date and competition), the number of pages (where known) and the price charged per issue.

We use a comprehensive checklist to help us rank every club programme on a five-star rating system (see below). This gives some idea of the standard of the programme published. It takes into account things like the amount of content and reading material devoted to the match, club articles, news and reviews, stats, adverts etc as well as general presentation and layout. It also weighs up whether the publication goes the extra mile and is value for money considering the level the club is playing at in the overall football pyramid system.

Please note that this is not intended to be critical in any way as we all know the time, effort and resources it takes to produce a programme (both electronically and on paper) these days, whether a club plays in the Football League or at a step much lower down the pecking order. It certainly is a 'labour of love' and we acknowledge that the majority of editors are unpaid volunteers who give up their free time willingly. It is a real joy to share their work in this review.

So, if you come across any programme on your travels which you think is worthy of praise or of interest to fellow paper-chasers, do let us know. You can send a scan as an attachment to an E-Mail or send a copy by post (please contact me for a forwarding address). We hope you find the FGIF Programme Review both valuable and something that adds to your enjoyment of watching football.

THE FGIF PROGRAMME REVIEW CHECKLIST

In order to review each programme thoroughly and fairly we use our FGIF Football Programme Checklist (see the link on the main PoY page) which covers all the key factors we feel that are important in producing and issuing a matchday magazine. It is divided into FOUR main sections which broadly consider (A) Content; (B) Layout and Presentation; (C) Value for Money and (D) Additional Extras – those little things which show that the editor/s has/have 'gone the extra mile' in producing their club programme. The overall combined score (out of 100marks) is reflected by a rating category or star rating as explained below.

NOTES ON RATINGS

There are five basic ratings which we use:

5 - Excellent; 4 ★ - Very Good; 3 ★- Good; 2 ★ - Fair and 1 ★ - at least it's an issue!*

SPECIAL 5 ★ AWARD

NOTE- where a programme is deemed to be exceptional, it will be recognised by FGIF with a 5 ★ SPECIAL AWARD.

SO, WHAT MAKES A GOOD PROGRAMME?

Rather than looking through a long checklist, as a reader we thought it would be better to highlight the main differences between each ★ rating category for you instead. They range from what you might expect to find in a basic issue up to one which is regarded as excellent. The main points covered for each category are not listed in any particular order of importance.

THE 1 ★ AWARD - THE BASIC ISSUE

- (1) A very basic programme - something like an A4 folded photocopied sheet of paper;*
- (2) May include the club name/logo on the front with some reference to the game;*
- (3) Minimal editorial with some very basic content inside;*
- (4) Possibly some reference to club match stats such as fixtures, results and a table and*
- (5) Little attention to layout – mostly/nearly all printed in black and white with very little or no colour.*

THE 2 ★ RATING - A FAIR EFFORT

AS ABOVE (for 1 ★ award) with the addition of some/all of: the following:

- (1) Improved layout (possibly inside an outer advertising shell) with better use of graphics;*
- (2) Increased content (more pages) clearly devoted to the game;*
- (3) Additional content with extra match details included, possibly an introduction or editorial/welcome.*
- (4) Further reading material expected inside this issue;*
- (5) More attention to basic match stats (possible reference to club fixtures, results and the inclusion of a table) with a list showing the team line ups/squads and*
- (6) Not completely printed in black with white but with some added touches of colour.*

THE 3 ★ RATING - A GOOD OVERALL PROGRAMME

AS ABOVE (for 2 ★ award) with the addition of some/all of the following:

- (1) Overall improvement in quality, layout and presentation;*
- (2) Printed on better quality standard of paper with improved print graphics;*
- (3) Far more content/reading material covering the game including editor's notes, added welcome pages (from the manager/committee etc); a basic club history; some focus on the visitors and match reports from previous games);*
- (4) Full match details shown on the cover, team line ups/squads and a recent table expected;*
- (5) May be professionally produced with a decent balance of advertising content.*

THE 4 ★ RATING - A VERY GOOD STANDARD OF PROGRAMME

AS ABOVE (for 3 ★ award) with the addition of some/all of the following:

- (1) Very good design and graphics with great attention paid to overall layout, presentation and quality;*
- (2) Content greatly increased with additional pages covering welcome, relevance to the game; more/in depth material on the home club and the visitors playing today; inclusion of match photos – action from previous games on the front cover and inside; player focus/profiles; directory of personnel at the club and a league round up;*
- (3) Comprehensive round up of match statistics with some analysis of fixtures, results and players. A full up-to-date league table as standard;*
- (4) Round up of the club's reserve, women's and junior sides;*
- (5) Extra non-match related articles and features covering general football in the pyramid; on this day in history; a quiz, puzzle or miscellaneous interesting football facts and*
- (6) Value for money based on content, advertising and number of pages.*

THE 5 ★ RATING - AN EXCELLENT PROGRAMME

AS ABOVE (for 4 ★ award) with the addition of some/all of the following:

- (1) Excellent layout, presentation and printed on a good quality (glossy) paper with greater attention to detail throughout.*
- (2) Mostly full colour with outstanding content and additional (regular) features/pages devoted to: different cover photo each game; a full comprehensive directory and list of club personnel; a list of contents inside today's programme; looking through the archives at previous meetings between the clubs; interviews with manager and players ahead of the game; more detailed match reports and a greater number of photos from previous games; a league round up and maybe some press and social media coverage.*
- (3) Vast number of match stats presented in greater detail and colour - full match data and analysis of season's fixtures, results, tables and players' performances over the season. Up to date league table with some indication of club form.*
- (4) Coverage of the club's other teams - reports and photos from Reserve, Women's and Junior sides/teams;*

(5) News from around the club - latest developments; football in the community; charity work and fund-raising initiatives and projects;

(6) Larger number of pages devoted to football articles from around the pyramid, examples might include: an interview with a fan, extended groundhopper page, programme pages; some football league or overseas coverage; the half-time quiz, crossword or wordsearch etc. and

(7) Very good value for money with more content over advertising and higher number of pages.

SO, TELL ME WHAT MAKES A 5 ★ STAR SPECIAL

PROGRAMME DIFFERENT?

AS ABOVE (for 5 ★ award) with the addition of some/all of the following:

(1) Going that extra mile! The sheer amount of time, effort and devotion that the club editor(s) has gone into making the programme such a terrific matchday publication;

(2) Attention to extra detail, facts or in depth-analysis which has been used in compiling the well-researched articles;

(3) The beautiful layout, type set, graphics and presentation involved in producing each and every page (numbered);

(4) The vast amount of content, articles and interesting material (including colour photos) that captivates the reader and sets this apart from all other programmes (not necessarily a lot of pages which could be filled with endless advertising or otherwise copied from the web etc but holds interest)

(5) The large number of pages that are up to date and relevant to the match (and visitors) for which the programme has been issued for;

(6) Spectator-friendly - the programme is published with the fans in mind, it's about their club and the community which the club belongs to. Player pen pictures and, sponsorship forthcoming matches (how to get there) etc. Bigger clubs take note!

(7) Represents superb value for money - a cracking balance between adverts, reading material, stats and interesting articles.

(8) Not a one-off publication - it is consistently and highly regarded as being of an exceptionally high standard (by readers and fans) throughout the season and is definitely one of the best in your collection. It is thoroughly deserving of an FGIF Special Rating Award as judged by the fans and readers.

AND FINALLY...

Please note that we value EVERY SINGLE programme that is contributed to FGIF for review, no matter how big or small. It is not an easy job producing a programme and can take many hours of research and hard work to get it done. At FGIF we realise that not every club has access to a professional print company which can produce programmes in vast quantities at relatively short notice and at some considerable expense. Our judgement takes into account many other factors such as the size of the club (and potential budget and income stream), place in the football pyramid, variations in the number of pages, cost price and overall balance of content to advertising (which as we know brings in that all important and much needed revenue).

It is an overall assessment – what one club may lack in one area might make for it in another and vice versa. For example, there may be many pages of stats but really very little reading content. Very often it can be the amount of love, care and dedication that has gone into making a programme (in other words, what we call a true 'labour of love') that can make it really stand out from the rest of the crowd!

Edited by MW - updated on 20/09/23.