

TT No.119: 18/05/05 Club/Ground Focus: *Dennis Woods* - Paris Saint Germain (Championnat 1)

My wife said she wanted to see the bright lights of Paris, so we travelled by Eurostar to Paris for 4 nights and I took her to Paris Saint Germain v Sochaux on Saturday for their 8pm kick off under their bright floodlights.

We had no trouble purchasing our 26-euro (£18) match tickets on the Thursday afternoon. The nearest metro station Porte d'Auteuil, which is near to the end of line 10 is around a 10-minute walk to the stadium. On the evening of the game there was a very large police presence. On arriving close to the stadium, a large crowd had built up behind some police barriers as bags were being searched. As we had a bottle of coke, we decided to drink it, rather than lose it. On finishing it I place the bottle on the floor close to the police check entrance, as everyone else was doing so. On having my bag searched the policeman soon realised I was English and asked if I had any bottles, or answering no, he asked am I sure. Thinking that he must have seen me with the bottle I pointed to the fact that I had placed it on the floor. He then ordered me to pick it up and place it in a bin, despite the fact that everyone else was placing the empty bottles on the floor. I decided not to question this as I fancied watching the game rather than being placed in the back of a police wagon.

After that we were free to walk around the outside of the stadium, although police lined the whole of the stadium outside. You would have thought that we were at a high-risk game as many had full riot gear on.

On entered the stadium we were once again searched which I do not have a problem with, but as you will see from the pictures, flares somehow manage to find their way past all of the checks. It is funny but the Parc des Princes reminds me of a small version of Wembley. I think it was a combination of things, perhaps the huge area behind the goals to the stands, or perhaps the colour scheme of red seats in the lower tier and blue in the upper, the tightness of seats or the fact the toilets were way too small. Still at least there were no posts to spoil the view of the pitch. Programmes were free, but hard to get hold off and consisted of 8 glossy colour pages.

PSG were poor and conceded 2 second half goals to Sochaux, despite this the atmosphere from the PSG fans was excellent with singing, banging of drums and lighting of flares throughout the game. With 8 minutes remain some PSG fans started to leave the stadium having seen enough of a poor PSG performance. They should have stayed as PSG waited until stoppage time to get back of level terms with goals in the 92nd and 94th minutes. Sending the 39,926 fans wild, well those that had stayed, apart from the 200 or so Sochaux fans.

