

TT No.050: 14/03/05 Ground/Club Focus: *Dennis Woods* - Loughall (Irish Premier League) and Dundela (Irish League Division One)

On Friday 11th March I along with four other hoppers travelled to Northern Ireland to see **Loughall** v Newry in the Irish Premier League for their 7:45pm game.

Loughall are new to the Premier Division for this season and have a splendid stadium for a team that has progressed so quickly. The stadium is called Lakeview Park and can be found in Ballygassey Road opposite the Police Station. The nearest large town would be Portadown which is around 7 or 8 miles away.

The club have an excellent club house and on entering it we found four northern based hoppers that we knew.

The stadium has two covered areas, both have strange seating arrangements one having around 20 seats in a line at the back of the cover and the main stand which runs along most of the pitch has two rows of seats, but a lot of space seems to have been wasted as more rows could have been added. The main stand has 5 steps of terracing both to the left and right of the stand. Behind one goal is a two-storey building that contains the changing rooms and club rooms above. To the right of this building is the club house and the turnstiles.

Admission was £6 and a 24-page glossy programme was available for £1.50. Although welcome, the programme could have been better - the date on the front was given as Saturday 12th March and there was no league table. Newry took the lead in the first half but Loughall levelled things in the second half in front of around 250 fans.

An interesting point was that the referee was from the Welsh FA and was over on an exchange programme.

On Saturday 12th March we watched **Dundela** v Donegal Celtic in the Irish League Division One for their 2:30pm kick off. The ground is a lovely old venue with 6 steps of uncovered terracing along one side of the pitch. With an old run-down house in the far corner. Half of the opposite side is taken up by the club house and to the left is an old covered terrace of 8 steps. There are no seats at the ground or floodlights. Behind one goal is a grass bank with two steps of terracing. The ground is called Wilgar Park and is in Wilgar Street, Strandtown and it is a little way out of Belfast. Admission was £4.

The club have an excellent modern clubhouse which seems to be open all week and has SKY Sports. Unfortunately, the club having stopped issuing programmes but, on a visit to look at the ground a couple of years ago we picked up an excellent glossy programme for a £1.

Dundela took the lead in a disappointing first half, but the second half was much better and Donegal Celtic scored twice to win 2-1 in front of around 120 spectators.

An interesting point is that despite their name Donegal Celtic are based in Belfast.

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