

TT No.075: 10/04/05 Ground/Club Focus: *Mike Latham* - Spennymoor United (Unibond Premier)

Thursday 7 April, Unibond Premier: Spennymoor United 2-3 Blyth Spartans (att. - 131)

With Spennymoor United giving an undertaking they would be able to raise a team for this north-east derby after so many postponements of late, the Thursday night clash at the Brewery Field was a must-see.

Situated just off the Tudhoe road out of town, the Brewery Field has clearly seen better days. The burnt-out shell of the old club house greets the visitor on arrival and £5 secured admission with a further 50p transfer to stand. Sadly, there were no programmes for the game.

Spennymoor United have played at the venue since 1904, following the amalgamation of two local clubs, but the ground was previously used for a number of sporting events, including rugby. The ground has changed considerably in appearance from twenty years ago with the demolition of the lamented Cow Shed covered terrace and the Catterick Stand on the opposite side. Hemmed in by housing and with no car park the main entrance is reached down a small road.

A smart cantilevered main stand with five rows of black and white plastic seating offered the best view on a cold and windy evening with the players almost within touching distance from the front row. In this stand the dressing rooms, committee room and a small bar are located. There is a covered end to the right of the main stand with excellent terracing but the other two sides are uncovered standing, with huge netting erected behind the goal. The only refreshment facilities were provided by a mobile catering van by the side of the main stand.

With Bishop Auckland also playing at the Brewery Field the playing area gets some hammer and two youngsters were to be seen pushing a big roller around the pitch before the game.

Spennymoor took a 2-0 lead, both goals coming from headers by defenders up the field for corners. But Blyth, backed by a noisy travelling support pulled a goal back with a screaming cross shot before half-time. With the elements in their favour in the second half Blyth sealed a much-needed victory in their battle against relegation with two late goals, the equaliser being much disputed following claims for a foul on the home 'keeper.

With Newcastle United's European tie live on television the attendance was only 131 and the home club are clearly facing a battle for survival with the Unibond League set to rule soon on their glut of recent postponements for being unable to raise a team. It is to be hoped for the sake of the club stalwarts that Spennymoor survive- they have a long and rich history and their Brewery Field ground oozes character.

