

TT No.077: 11/04/05 Ground/Club Focus: *Mike Latham* - LDV Vans Trophy Final 2005 (Millenium Stadium Cardiff)

10 Apr 2005, LDV Vans Trophy Final.

Wrexham 2-0 Southend United (after extra time) att. - 36,216

Your intrepid reporter was one of the few neutral supporters at the Millennium Stadium on a warm and sunny spring afternoon in Cardiff as Wrexham temporarily cast aside their fears of relegation and question marks over their future with a deserved trophy success. They needed extra-time when they emerged as the stronger side, sealing their win with goals by Ugarte and Ferguson to end Southend's long unbeaten run.

The Millennium is a great place to watch football - great sightlines and architecture and friendly stewards and there was a terrific atmosphere generated by both sets of supporters. A ticket for the north stand upper tier was £34 with an outstanding 76-page programme on sale for £5. The compilers had made a great effort to ensure the programme was full of interesting and unusual articles and of great relevance to the game and it added greatly to the enjoyment of the day.

With the stadium about half-full entry in and out of Cardiff was easier than normal and there was a friendly and relaxed pre-match atmosphere on the streets around the ground. The view of the game was superb and the long trek up the steps afforded great views at various points of the Cardiff RU ground that runs behind the north stand. Southend impressed with the quality of their build up play but Wrexham seemed to have the extra cutting edge and proved that in extra time.

With the roof open many of the Wrexham fans in the east stand had to battle with the sun streaming through at them and part of the pitch was bathed in sunshine. The huge television screens high up behind each goal in the stadium roof gave continuous feed of the action.

It was a hugely enjoyable and interesting day out and a great occasion.

03/20