

TT REPORTS 2021-22

updated on 19/07/21

TT No.3: Steve Hardy - Saturday 17th July 2021; **Berks County** v Yateley United; Pre-Season Friendly; Result: 3-0; Admission: Free; Programme: No; Attendance: 21 h/c.

On the hottest day since Hades was built a few thousand years ago, where is the one setting you should never consider watching a game? Yup, a 3G pitch in a cage. No surprise then that that was exactly where I ended up today for only my second game in the whole of 2021.

The plan originally was to watch Slough Town v Hayes & Yeading, but that was called off on the Friday evening for 'a reason'. So Ryish Green Leisure Centre it was. The Leisure Centre is based in Shinfield, where the facilities consisted of said plastic pitch in a cage, and possibly two grass pitches as well. There is the usual spectator area along one side in the cage but apart from a very brave walk up and down it to get some photos, I and most of the other spectators headed for a very small area of shade behind one goal. As the sun moved along, we shuffled with it until some of us found ourselves back in the sunshine again.

Berks County are new to the Co-Co league this season with visitors Yateley being in the Hellenic league. I learned that this was Yateley's first game of the season, whereas BC had played several, all at this same venue. The first half was all Yateley, but they began to flag in the searing heat and conceded the first goal right on the stroke of half time from a header at a corner.

After the break BC took control and with both sides wilting, they scored a couple more and could have had a few others with a bit of luck.

So, another season unfolds. Don't think I will be going to quite as many games as I usually do this season, as my depression is making that very difficult. We will see.

contributed on 19/07/21

TT No.2: Mark Jones - Wednesday 8th July; **Prestatyn Sports FC** - new ground review of The Meadows.

The North Wales resort town of Prestatyn hasn't seen a new football ground (or any kind of major sports facility for that matter) since 1969 when Prestatyn Town moved a couple of hundred yards from their old Bastion Road ground, tucked away behind a large and imposing nursing home, to their present site on Bastion Gardens.

But 2020 saw Prestatyn Sports - relative newcomers to the scene having only been formed in 2010 - move into their long-awaited new facility on The Meadows, a project that has been some seven years in the making and seen a lot of blood, sweat and tears shed along the way.

Sports had previously played their games in nearby Gronant village, but the public pitch and infrastructure left much to be desired with matters coming to a head in October 2017 when Caersws refused to play a Welsh Cup tie there claiming the facilities were 'inadequate and dangerous' forcing Sports to withdraw from the competition.

The club then launched a major series of improvements which saw them rail off the pitch, radically overhaul the dressing rooms and generally tidy the area up. A couple of years later, the political restructuring of Welsh football dealt them another blow when Gronant, which is geographically in Flintshire, was deemed to fall under the jurisdiction of the North-East Wales FA meaning Sports would have to quit the North Wales Coast FA and join one of NEWFA's leagues which would have trebled their travelling distances and also their costs.

Thankfully, sense was seen, and Sports were allowed to remain in the Coastal set up and the decision spurred them on to find a new home in Denbighshire where they had already identified the Meadows as a preferred option.

After years of wrangling with planners, local residents, grant funding authorities and the like, permission to go ahead and develop the site was given in 2019 and 12 months later the Meadows was ready to host games (until the pandemic stuck its oar in and scuppered everything for everybody),

The ground is very rural and very verdant being surrounded by open land and lying in the shadow of the hills that provide a backdrop to the town.

Fully railed off with dugouts, the main structure at the ground is a large vandal-proof cabin housing impressive dressing rooms and showers for players and officials, an equipment store and Davey's Tea Bar which provides matchday refreshments.

Everything is painted dark green which blends in with the surroundings nicely and contrast is provided by signage in Sports' red and white colours.

There is no hard standing or cover at the moment, (though both are planned for the future), so this is one of those grounds best visited in early or late season when the Welsh weather is better.

Reaching The Meadows is a bit of a trek from the town's railway station (a good 45-minute walk at least presuming you know where you are heading) so the best option for non-motorists is to pick up a bus for Meliden from the central bus station and alight near the Miners Arms pub from where The Meadows can be reached in five minutes via Roundwood Avenue. A taxi from Prestatyn station to the ground will set you back around £5 or so.

Both the Miners Arms and the nearby Red Lion serve excellent pub grub and have a choice of real ales while Meliden village itself has a very decent Chinese chippy

and a large Spar convenience store - these are the nearest facilities to the ground so fill up or stock up before the match is my advice!

If you are driving to The Meadows, please be aware that parking is very limited and Roundwood Avenue doesn't offer much in the way of places to pull up, being quite rural with no pavements for much of its length.

I am happy to offer help with any advice or local information to hoppers wanting to visit Sports so feel free to drop me a text or call me on 07753 966805. Diolch yn fawr iawn pawb! Mwynhau!

contributed on 08/07/21

TT No.1: Brian Buck - Thursday 1st June 2021; **Duxford United** v Histon Hornets U18; Friendly Match; Result: 2-11; Attendance: 60 approx.

So, with the end of my season being 24 hours earlier, the start of my new season commenced the next day. This was my first visit here since 2nd May 1997, when I saw Duxford United lose 2-1 at home to Sawston United in the Bambridge Invitation Cup Semi Final (attendance: 65 approx).

Since then, although there has been no change to the Hunts side road of the ground, a large Community Centre, complete with sizeable car park, has been recently built and it opened around a year ago. I reckon that if there was an emergency the whole population of the village could fill this building, with room to spare.

Anyway, from the hosts point of view, this was rather a strange evening in that their *Twitter* feed stated that their pre-season training wasn't due to start until 6th July. But despite this I still expected them to see off a genuine youth team. But soon it was obvious that this was not going to happen, and they shipped their first goal on 7 minutes. But it was all square on 16 minutes. Then Hornets were back in the lead three minutes later, from the spot. We were expecting a free kick the other way following an injury, but we weren't watching properly! By the break, the score was 1-4 with the fourth goal being another spot kick, following a foul. The score then became 1-5 and then 2-5 by the 57th minute, when the ball was nodded home despite the visiting keeper for some reason trying a scissor kick to prevent this happening. A minute later it was 2-6 and then starting on 73 minutes Hornets scored four times in four minutes. Meanwhile in the Community Centre a brass band was practicing, but playing funeral music was perhaps a step too far! A final goal arrived on 85 minutes and soon the ref brought an end to proceedings a few minutes early. It seems that Duxford must have blamed their excellent pitch for their defeat tonight as next day they revealed that they had been accepted for a £10,000 grant for a pitch maintenance programme over the next 6 years from the Football Foundation!

contributed on 07/07/21

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