

After the Lord Mayor's show

Contributed by Kate Thompson
Monday, 08 March 2010
Last Updated Monday, 08 March 2010

Sheffield Wednesday 2 City 0 We could all have predicted this result. After the euphoria of the win against Forest last week, City came down to earth with a bump. The warning signs were all there: Wednesday had got a hiding at Reading last Saturday, Pearson won the manager of the month award for February and Gallagher won the player of the month. All designed to mean City were bound to lose. They did not disappoint in that regard, although they were a huge disappointment in every other way. The same team who beat Forest so comprehensively started the match but the performance was completely different. According to the BBC website we had six attempts on target but I can only remember two – and one of these was obscured by the stanchion in front of me.

They weren't too bad in the first half, considering they went down by a goal in the sixth minute, but they huffed and puffed to little effect. In the second half, they were frankly awful, just punting long balls upfield, which were promptly returned, and for most of the half I thought they were playing head tennis. There was little sign of the passing game they usually play and I don't really think the pitch had much to do with it, as Pearson said....

Those players who are usually so reliable looked vulnerable and ill-at-ease, making one wonder which team was fighting to avoid relegation. The usually impeccable Berner made some uncharacteristic mistakes, and Wayne Brown often failed to find a team-mate to pass to. This has been a criticism for some weeks and I was surprised to see him play the full 90 minutes; I would have liked to have seen Alex Bruce come on, he couldn't have been much worse.

The midfield was ineffectual and after a few good games Oakley was back to his mediocre self. And the three strikers worked hard but for little reward. The injury to Weale, which necessitated his being substituted for the first time, was not a factor; Logan was competent and could not be faulted for the second goal.

Pearson as ever gave an honest assessment of the game but they can't afford many more displays like that if they are to stay in the top six. Wednesday were more robust, in fact some of their tackles were very fierce, but what was so obvious is that they wanted to win more than Leicester appeared to do.

I was very disappointed at the state of Hillsborough. Thirty or so years ago it was one of the top stadiums, and I can remember many FA Cup semi-finals being played there. The last time I was there was for the replay of the Carling Cup final and I don't remember it being so run-down.

As someone (in the queue for the totally inadequate ladies' toilets) said, obviously nothing has been spent on it in the last 30 years. And the refreshment facilities were awful. I thought they were slow at the City but they could teach the Wednesday staff a few things! And they must get some awful away fans, if they need a metal grille to protect them! Although I wouldn't use the same language, I rather echoed the views of some of the City fans about the state of the ground.

So, definitely one to forget but let's hope City are more fired up when Cardiff come to the Walkers next Saturday. I just wish someone could find the magic solution which would enable them to see off teams who they should beat easily.

City: Weale; Morrison, Hobbs, Brown, Berner, Oakley, A King, Wellens, Gallagher, Waghorn, Dyer. Subs: Logan (31 for Weale), Solano, Howard (67 for Berner), Adams, N'Guessan, Kermorgant (67 for Gallagher), Bruce.

Booked: Berner.

Sheffield Wednesday: Grant; Spurr, Purse, Miller, Tudgay, Potter, Beevers, O'Connor, Clarke, Johnson, Nolan. Subs: O'Donnell, McAllister, Jeffers, Varney (67 for Johnson), Simek (46 for Spurr), Soares (81 for Clarke), Gray.

Referee: P Gibbs. Attendance: 21, 647.