

## Programme Notes v Colchester

Good evening and welcome to tonight's game against Colchester United and a special welcome to the supporters of the U's who have a 400 mile round trip on a Tuesday night and indeed Town fans are faced with the same journey for the return fixture in February. Surely the EFL can plan mid-week fixtures in a more considerate manner.

The other interesting aspect of mid-week matches is that they are available to view on Ifollow in the UK for £10. Whilst this allows a number of fans to view the game who wouldn't normally be able to attend it also provides an alternative for those who would normally attend and anything that encourages people away from attending live football in our view is dangerous and needs very close monitoring. The evidence on any impact is not yet clear, and the EFL will point to increased revenues to the clubs, but this needs very careful management and the first sign of a move away from attending matches in favour of viewing on a tablet needs to be jumped on quickly. Kids in particular need to be persuaded that the best way to watch football is not at home on a computer.

With that in mind we are very pleased with the early signs of success of the improved pre match and half time activities for kids and we are working very closely with the new family co-ordinator, Kelly Billings, to continually improve. All ideas are welcome and if there is anything in particular you think would be a good addition to the match day experience for our young supporters then please get in touch. We are also looking at more activities outside of matchdays and many of these will involve interaction between the players and supporters. You will have also noticed that Mighty Mariner is more prominent this season which has been very popular not just with kids but also with adults as well, it is surprising how many want selfies with our famous mascot.

It was very pleasing to get through to the next round of the Carabao cup in a very entertaining game against league one Doncaster Rovers. With the draw for the next round providing another home game, against Macclesfield, we have worked with club to arrive at a pricing structure for the game that reflects three home games in a week. At £15 for all stands for adults and free for kids we think this is the right level and it will be interesting to see the level of the home crowd compared to the Doncaster game, which was full price, although still free for kids. There was a total of 420 free kids at that game out of a crowd of 2470 (19%). Interestingly, the net benefit to the club from the game was very low given that the gate receipts, after expenses of putting on the game, are split 45% to each club and 10% to the EFL. Also bear in mind that 20% of the gate receipts goes to the government in the form of VAT. The cost of putting on a game at Blundell Park is a minimum of £8k and can be as high as £20k depending on the fixture.

Also, there are no win rewards in the early rounds of the Carabao cup with the benefit of gate receipts and TV being the only incentive but once again the draw has not been particularly kind to either ourselves or Macclesfield in that respect. Unlike our friends down the road at Lincoln who once again got a home draw against a premiership club which guarantees a full house which together with TV money will provide a windfall of circa £200K, oh for some "football fortune".

At the time of writing we are just back from the long trip to Forest Green Rovers and reflecting on our first defeat of the season. It was a very tight, cagey, affair which could have gone either way and probably a draw would have been a fair result but, unfortunately, they scored with one of only two shots on target. Nevertheless, there were positives from the game and hopefully we can bounce

back and get back to winning ways tonight in what will be another tough game against good opponents. As ever your support can make the difference. Enjoy the game.

Up the Mariners

Mariners Trust Board