



RTPI

mediation of space · making of place

RTPI Northern Branch Football Tournament, for the Fabian Gray Memorial Shield, held at Soccarena, Durham, 16th January 2012

They came, they thaw, they conquered

The RTPI's return to Soccarena, the north east's only deep refrigerated football venue, coincided with the traditional drop in temperature and saw players struggling to cope with the frozen indoor conditions. Controlling the ball on permafrost is never the easiest skill to master.

Despite this, Ward Hadaway arrived as pre-tournament favourites after last year's tournament victory and lived up to their billing early on with impressive wins over England and Lyle and Scottish Borders in Group C. Scottish Borders themselves had attracted a flurry of activity from bookmakers, based on the theory that, just like a canny racehorse trainer, no team would travel such a long distance for nothing. Punters were proved wrong as all tournament records were broken for the fewest points per mile travelled.

We all know that it only takes a second to score a goal. But we now know that it only takes 3 seconds to score 2 goals. We learned this when Easington, looking to preserve a one goal lead and with the referee's whistle in his mouth, had a defensive calamity which handed South Durham an amazing 2-1 victory. South Durham never looked back and continued to set the pace with some impressive performances, led by the goals of Chris Baxter, the eventual Player of the Tournament (sponsored by David Stovell & Millwater) and who, with Russell Ward (Ward Hadaway), jointly lifted the NLP "Top Goalscorer" trophy.

Meanwhile the URS sponsored trophy for "Fastest Goal" went to Steven Farrell (URS) who netted in 5 seconds against Scottish Borders.

Chaos reigned after the group stages with a Stewards' Inquiry taking place in the bar area to decide which team should join the 3 group winners in the semi finals. A 'no show' from Sunderland added to the complex mathematics. Stockton took full advantage of the decision to award them the fourth semi final place, with Ward Hadaway missing out in controversial circumstances. Stockton went on to tournament glory, defeating the newly named URS, under the ageing, but still track-suited, stewardship of Robin Newlove, sadly missing playing in the tournament for the first time in many years, due to injury.

It was a year for sponsored shirts with many consultancies taking the opportunity to drum up some business through this unique advertising opportunity. This trend clearly is yet to spread to local authorities; North Durham took to the field looking like a team of darts players. Even in these challenging economic times, Newcastle City still apparently managed to find the means to take on consultants to fill those difficult positions that local authority staff are unable to do. However, having eased through to the semi final stage, Newcastle came up against a dogged South Durham team who themselves had been semi finalists for the previous two years. The consultants' bill will be in the post.

The final was played out in an eerie silence as most spectators had gone outside to warm up. Having gone a goal up, South Durham could not capitalise and conceded a goal late on to send the match into extra time. Stockton finished the stronger and scored twice more in the dying seconds to secure victory to lift the coveted Fabian Gray Memorial Shield, for the second time. The trophy was presented to them by Joe Ridgeon, RTPI North East Regional Chair.

For those new to planning, the RTPI or the north east, the trophy is named in memory of Fabian Gray, the much respected planner and RTPI long-serving regional activist and footballer, who tragically died at Easter 2006 whilst diving in the Sound of Mull.

**Fabian Gray
1948-2006**



Semi - Finals

Newcastle	1	South Durham	2
URS	0	Stockton	1

Final

South Durham	1	Stockton	3 (after extra time)
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More photographs below



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Shield Winners



Player of the Tournament



Highest Goal Scorer



Fastest Goal Scorer

