



Anstey Nomads FC

The Extraordinary Story of an English Village Football Club

Brief History

The club was established in 1946 by a merger of Anstey Methodists and St Mary's under the name Anstey Meths and Mary's. They joined the Central Division of the Leicestershire Senior League, Anstey Methodists having been members of the league prior to World War II, and were Central Division runners-up in their first season. In January 1947, following a vote the club changed their name to Anstey Nomads FC, and when the league was reorganised in 1948, they were placed in Division One.

In 1951–52 Anstey won Division One, a feat they repeated in 1953–54. In 1955 the club also started playing in Division One of the Central Alliance. For 1956–57 the club were placed in Division One South of the Central Alliance, where they remained until being transferred to Division One North in 1958. The Nomads exploits in the Amateur Cup attracted the attention of the national press in the mid to late 1950s, when Hayes stopped them from reaching the last 16 in an explosive round two tie at Cropston Road. In one of the most exciting games in the annals of the club they were eliminated 2-1 in a match that had it all – three penalties, two disallowed goals, end to end excitement and a record crowd. In 1959 they were moved back to Division One South. The club finished bottom of the division in 1960–61, but with several clubs leaving the league, they were placed in the new Premier Division. In 1967 the club switched to the Premier Division of the East Midlands Regional League, finishing 3rd in 1972.

In 1973 Anstey rejoined the Leicestershire Senior League and were placed in Division Two. They won the division at the first attempt, earning promotion to Division One. After finishing as runners-up for three successive seasons from 1979 to 1981, the club won back-to-back titles in 1981–82 and 1982–83. They were runners-up again in the renamed Premier Division in 1985–86 and 1990–91, with their next title coming in 2008–09, resulting in promotion to the East Midlands Counties League. In addition to promotion, the Nomads also won the Battle of Britain Cup, the Rolleston Charity Cup and the Beacon Bitter League Cup, making 2008-09 one their most successful seasons in their history. The Reserve team also won their League in the Leicestershire Combination and were promoted to Division 1.

Nomad's first season 2009-2010 in the East Midland Counties League (EMCL) saw them finish last. Luckily, the high reputation of the club kept them from being relegated. The following season, with a new manager in charge, Andy Miller, they finished a respectable 12th position. During the 9 seasons spent in the EMCL, the Nomads finished mostly in the lower half of the table, the highlight of this era being their entry into the FA Cup in 2011 and finishing as runners-up in 2017-18. At the end of that season, the club were transferred to Division One of the United Counties League.

Anstey's first season in the United Counties League saw them finish as runners-up in Division One, earning promotion to the Premier Division. When the league's top division was split in two in 2021, the club were placed in the Premier Division North. In 2022–23 they were Premier Division North champions, resulting in promotion to Division One Midlands of the Northern Premier League, as well as winning the League Cup with a 3–0 win over Deeping Rangers in the final.

The BBC live broadcast of the FA cup fourth qualifying round 3-1 defeat against former Football League club and FA Chesterfield in October 2023 firmly placed Anstey Nomads on the football map. There was much debate in the national press at the time over whether they are the first club from their step - the ninth in the English football league pyramid - to achieve that feat. In 2023-34 the Nomads finished as runners-up in the Midland division of the Northern Premier League and narrowly missed out on promotion to the Northern Premier League Premier Division, losing out to Market Harborough in the play-off final in front of 1,200 spectator. Just days later they claimed a consolation prize by winning the Westerby Cup.