



Anstey Nomads FC

The Extraordinary Story of an English Village Football Club

~The 2000's~

The 2000s for Anstey Nomads were a tale of two halves, much. Following the turn of the millennium, Anstey found themselves in a period of stark decline in the Leicestershire Senior League. They hit rock bottom for seasons, the lowest in their history, struggling to find wins and often conceding heavily. This lean spell mirrored the broader challenges faced by many grassroots clubs in an era increasingly dominated by top-tier football.

However, a dramatic revival kicked off mid-decade. After consecutive seasons propping up the league, Anstey embarked on an extraordinary ascent, culminating in the 2008-09 season under manager Stu Deeley. This was their "Invincibles" moment, as they not only secured the Leicestershire Senior League Premier Division title but also astonishingly clinched three local cup competitions, a true "quadruple." This phenomenal success, driven by prolific striker Joe Moran's goal-scoring feats, earned them promotion, pushing them up the non-league pyramid.

The decade concluded with a challenging 2009-10 campaign in the higher East Midlands Counties League, where they faced a steeper learning curve, experiencing a significant number of defeats.

2000-01

Quorn were the champions of the Premier Division and were promoted to the Midland Football Alliance. Their record comprised 25 wins, 7 draws, and 2 losses accumulating 72 points. Six behind were in second place were Holwell Sports, and Highfield Rangers took third place with 67 points. At the bottom of the table, Cottesmore Amateurs were relegated, having accumulated -2 points due to a 6-point deduction, alongside their record of just 1 win, 1 draw, and 31 losses. This was first instance of a team actually finishing with a negative points total in Leicestershire Senior League Senior League history.

The Nomads league campaign was non-descript in many respects, ending the season with 45 points in tenth. They travelled to the Rene Road Ground in Tamworth for a FA Vase First Qualifying Round tie against Bolehall Swifts. The ground, which opened in 1961, is known for its distinct stands, including the "Welcome to Bolehall Swifts Stand" and the "Founded 1953 Stand," which was reportedly converted from an old pig pen. The tie ended in favour of the home side by a single goal.

Nomads however did reach the final of the Beacon Bitter Cup, losing out to Quorn.

2001-02

Under the management of Lee Harriman, who arrived in 2001, Coalville won their second consecutive Leicestershire Senior League Premier Division title league title and were promoted to the Midland League. They finished with 75 points, recording 23 wins, 6 draws, and only 5 losses. Friar Lane Old Boys were the strong runners-up, finishing with 72 points, closely followed by Thurnby Rangers in third place with 66 points.

The Nomads continued their downward spiral finishing in a disappointing 15th place out of 18 teams, with 28 points, just 4 points above the relegation zone.

Cheslyn Hay FC of Staffordshire secured their first-ever FA Vase cup tie victory, defeating Anstey Nomads 4-1 at Cropston Road in September. This win came on their third attempt in the competition, having previously fallen to Pelsall Villa (0-2) in 2000 and Shifnal Town (2-4) in 2002.

2002-03

Coalville Town dominated the Leicestershire Senior League, finishing ten points clear of Barrow Town in second place. This was in sharp contrast to Anstey, who were in the doldrums, this season marking the lowest point in their fifty year history. With just two league wins all season Nomads finished rock bottom, eleven points behind the next lowest side, Friar Lane Old Boys and managed to score just 24 times in 34 goals and a goal difference of -77.

Lye Town of the West Midlands Premier League entertained the Nomads in the First Qualifying round of the FA Vase. The cup tie staged at the Sports Ground on Stourbridge Road, shared with the local cricket club, was rather one-sided with the home team comfortably winning 5-0.

2003-04

Although there was some improvement, winning two more games than in the previous Leicestershire Senior league campaign, Anstey still finished bottom with just 15 points out of 34 games. Champions Loughborough Dynamo were promoted to the Midland Football Alliance. Friar Lane finished third behind Kirby Muxloe.

Anstey Nomads' FA Vase campaign concluded at the first hurdle, falling 2-4 to Rugby Town in an exciting, high-scoring encounter at Butlin Road. Rugby Town's home ground, unlike many in non-league football, boasts covering on all four sides and seating on two.

2004-05

Thurnby Rangers claimed the Premier Division title for their first and only time. Friar Lane Old Boys and Epworth merged to form Friar Lane & Epworth, with the newly formed club immediately joining the Premier Division. Ravenstone, Ashby Ivanhoe, and Lutterworth Athletic joined Division One. H.M. Houghton Rangers merged with Desford Sports to become H.M. Desford Sports. Ibstock Welfare merged with Ibstock Youth to form Ibstock United. It is also worth noting that three years later Thurnby Rangers amalgamated with Leicester Nirvana to form Thurnby Nirvana FC, only to and reverted to Leicester Nirvana FC in 2015, following ground developments.

Anstey Nomads' FA Vase journey once again involved an away fixture, where they faced a formidable Tipton Town side in the Second Qualifying Round. Tipton, who were dominating the West Midlands League at the time, handed the Nomads a decisive 6-2 defeat. The Black Country team continued their strong cup run, reaching Round 5 before finally being eliminated by Jarrow Roofing Boldon, a team that went on to reach the semi-finals of the competition.

2005-06

For the third consecutive season Anstey Nomads not only finished bottom of the Leicestershire Premier League but also conceded more than 100 goals. Their record was remarkably similar to 2004-05, winning 4, drawing 3, losing 27 and accumulating just 15 points. However, they did concede 2 more and scored 7 less goals than the previous season. Meanwhile, Friar Lane & Epworth were crowned Premier Division champions. In Division One, Anstey Town continued their strong form, successfully defending their title to win it for the second consecutive year.

Anstey travelled to the Black Country on the first Sunday in October to face Dudley Town in the Second Qualifying Round of the FA Vase at the Sports Ground and were eliminated by a single goal.

2006-07

Stapenhill emerged as champions of the Premier Division. This was The Swans fifth overall league championship, resulting in a promotion to the Midland Alliance. However, the club faced a significant setback in 2008 when a fire ravaged their home stadium, forcing them to temporarily cease operations. Demonstrating resilience, Stapenhill reformed in 2009 and rejoined the Leicestershire Senior League. The battle for the runner-up spot in 2006-07 was incredibly tight, with Kirby Muxloe and Barrow Town both finishing at 75 points. Kirby Muxloe edged into second place due to a superior goal difference. Ibstock United also performed strongly, securing fourth place with 70 points, while Thurnby Rangers finished fifth despite a 3-point deduction, showcasing their attacking firepower with 95 goals. The league's mid-table was closely contested, reflecting a good level of competition throughout. At the other end of the spectrum, Rothley Imperial struggled significantly, finishing last with a mere 6 points.

Stapenhill consistently held their lead, often grinding out vital wins, while the chasing pack kept the pressure on. Individual brilliance also shone through, with Matt Moore of Ibstock United earning the Golden Boot for his 29 goals. After finishing bottom of the Leicestershire Premier League for three consecutive years they ended the season in a creditable 11th place. From their 34 matches, the Nomads managed 13 wins and 4 draws, but also absorbed 17 losses, which placed them squarely in the mid-table, well clear of the relegation scramble. The season was a bit of a rollercoaster for Anstey. At one point, they hit a rough patch, enduring a run of seven consecutive league defeats, which certainly tested their mettle. However, they demonstrated a commendable resilience, bouncing back to secure two consecutive victories by March, pulling themselves away from the lower reaches of the table. A true standout for the Nomads was Anthony Ward, whose prolific scoring saw him bag 23 goals, making him the joint second-highest scorer in the entire league and a vital attacking force for the team. The season concluded on a high note for Anstey, as they decisively defeated Downes Sports 5-1 in late April, a game where Ward once again starred with a hat-trick, cementing their improved position in the league.

The Nomads had a short run in the FA Vase,. Their journey began in the First Qualifying Round, where they secured a 2-0 home victory against Leek County Schools Old Boys. Unfortunately they lost a home 0-1 to Brierley & Hagley in the next round. The West Midlands club folded in the following year primarily due to the resignation of their main founder and chairman.

2007-08

The 2007-2008 Leicestershire Senior League Premier Division season was a pivotal year, largely defined by the upcoming formation of the new East Midlands Counties League (EMCL) at Step 6 of the non-league system. This transition saw eight of the league's top clubs moving to the new competition, fundamentally reshaping the Leicestershire Senior League.

Kirby Muxloe emerged as the undisputed champions, dominating the season with 76 points and an impressive goal difference of 77. Their strong performance, scoring 105 goals while conceding only 28, secured their place in the inaugural EMCL season. Barrow Town finished as runners-up with 70 points (after a 3-point deduction), also earning a spot in the new league. Hinckley Downes (66 points) and Holwell Sports (61 points) rounded out the top four, all of whom transitioned to the EMCL. The battle for the remaining EMCL spots was fierce, with teams like Bardon Hill Sports, Saffron Dynamo, St. Andrews SC, Birstall United, Ellistown, and Ibstock United all making the cut. The mid-season updates highlight the intense competition and crucial results, as teams jockeyed for position to secure their place in the new league.

The Nomads concluded the 2007-2008 Leicestershire Senior League Premier Division season in a respectable 12th place out of 18 teams. Their season record was 14 wins, 6 draws, and 14 losses from 34 matches played. They scored 49 goals and conceded 57, accumulating a total of 48 points. While they were not among the teams that transferred to the new East Midlands Counties League this season, their performance marked an improvement from their 14th-place finish in the 1999-2000 season. A notable

moment the brief appearance of former professional footballer Matt Piper (ex-Leicester City and Sunderland) in March 2008, who even scored on his debut against St. Andrews. Piper averaged goal per game for the Nomads. Sadly he only played three games. Their 1-2 home defeat to Bardon Hill Sports in the final week of the season, which helped Bardon Hill secure their EMCL spot, underscored the competitive nature of the league even towards the end of the campaign.

Nomads travelled to Shropshire to face Shifnall Town, reigning West Midlands (Regional) League in the Vase. Unfortunately losing by the odd goal in seven after an exciting end to end encounter.

2008-09

The 2008-09 football season etched itself into the annals of Anstey Nomads' history as a period of unprecedented success. Under the stewardship of manager Stu Deeley, the club embarked on a remarkable journey that culminated in securing the Leicestershire Senior League Premier Division title and an astonishing three local cup competitions. This extraordinary "quadruple" not only marked Anstey Nomads as a dominant force in regional football but also paved their way for promotion to the East Midlands Counties League, signifying a pivotal moment in their development.

The early whispers of success for Anstey came in the cup arena. Mid-August saw them kick off with a 2-0 away victory against Blaby & Whetstone Athletic in The Battle of Britain Cup, Luke Winfield and Lee Connolly finding the net, a triumph underscored by Carl Muggleton's crucial penalty save. This early success set a winning precedent. Their Beacon Bitter Cup journey also began brightly with a 4-0 away dismantling of Thurnby Rangers. By early September, The Battle of Britain Cup was firmly in their grasp as they dispatched Birstall United 4-0 at home before lifting the trophy with a commanding 6-0 victory over Barrow Town, a team from a higher league. Lee Connolly, Joe Moran, and a Michael Reeve brace were instrumental in securing this early silverware. The Beacon Bitter Cup saw continued progress too, with a hard-fought 2-1 home win against Ashby Ivanhoe. However, not all cup dreams bore fruit. Their FA Vase adventure was a brief one, ending in a 0-1 home defeat to Shifnall Town, a side two levels above them, a valuable but tough lesson in the echelons of non-league football. The County FA Jelson Homes Senior Cup campaign started positively with a 4-1 home victory over Oadby Town Reserves, and they continued this momentum with a 6-1 home thrashing of Uppingham Town, where Captain Scott James remarkably bagged a hat-trick. The Rolleston Charity Cup also saw an initial 3-1 away win against Ibstock United.

Meanwhile, the league campaign unfolded with an almost unstoppable momentum. The 3-0 home win over Birstall United in mid-August signalled their intent, with goals from Luke Winfield, Scott James, and Joe Moran. A week later, Blaby & Whetstone Athletic felt the full force of the Nomads' attack in a 6-1 home rout, a match etched in memory for Joe Moran's sensational five-goal haul. The league's first real test came in a top-of-the-table clash against Saffron Dynamo, a thrilling 2-2 home draw where Joe Moran's dramatic late equalizer, even after Craig Hands' red card, showcased their unwavering spirit. September brought an astonishing 12-0 home victory over Asfordby Amateurs – a truly relentless display where Lee Connolly scored four, Luke Padmore and Jake Duffy two each, and Sam McMahon, Michael Reeve (two), and Ashley Morris also joined the scoring spree. Though they stumbled to their first league defeat, a 0-2 away loss to Leicestershire Constabulary, despite dominating possession, they quickly regrouped. October saw a 5-1 home win against Cottesmore Amateurs, and then a dramatic 3-0 home victory over Aylestone Park, where Joe Moran's hat-trick shone brightest even as the Nomads played much of the second half with nine men. November continued the goal rush, with Joe Moran's hat-trick leading a 4-0 away win against Thurmaston Town, though again, a red card for Eddie Appleton hinted at disciplinary challenges. The month climaxed with an extraordinary 9-3 home demolition of Ashby Ivanhoe, a major statement against a direct rival, with Lee Connolly bagging four and Joe Moran adding two more to his impressive tally. A frustrating 0-0 home draw against Leicestershire Constabulary ended November, but a crucial 1-0 home win against Rothley Imperial in early December ensured Anstey finished 2008 atop the league.

As the new year, 2009, dawned, the Nomads showed no signs of slowing their relentless pursuit of the league title. January began with a 4-0 away victory over Cottesmore Amateurs, followed by another 4-0 home win against Thurmaston Town, solidifying their position at the summit. An 8-0 away win against

Asfordby Amateurs saw Joe Moran notch another hat-trick. Away wins against Aylestone Park (2-1) and Birstall United (3-1) in February, alongside a 2-0 home win over Ratby Sports, kept the pressure on. Crucial away victories in February and March, a narrow 1-0 win against Rothley Imperial and a 2-1 triumph over Ashby Ivanhoe (both secured by Joe Moran's goals), underscored their title credentials. A 2-0 home league win against Ibstock United in late March further cemented their dominance.

The cup competitions in 2009 also saw Anstey Nomads rise to the occasion. Their Rolleston Charity Cup journey advanced with a tough 3-2 away win against Blackstones in January. March brought further cup progression, with a 2-0 home win over Ibstock United in The Beacon Bitter Cup and a strong 3-1 away victory against Holwell Sports in the County FA Jelson Homes Senior Cup. April was a whirlwind of success, leading to multiple finals. They secured a 2-1 away win in the Rolleston Charity Cup semi-final against Barlestone St. Giles (both goals from Joe Moran). Just days later, they clinched The Beacon Bitter Cup final with a vital 1-0 win over Friar Gate, thanks to another Joe Moran goal.

As the league season drew to a close in April and May, Anstey Nomads maintained their momentum, with convincing wins such as 6-0 against Countesthorpe at home, 2-1 away against Ibstock United, and two dominant victories over Friar Gate (4-0 home, 5-0 away). The final league match for which data is available, a 3-0 away win against Countesthorpe, highlighted their sustained excellence. Notably, Anstey Nomads were crowned champions of the Leicestershire Senior League Premier Division for the 2008-09 season, a testament to their unwavering performance throughout the demanding league schedule.

With the league title secured, the focus shifted entirely to their remaining cup finals. The crowning glory of their cup exploits came in May: a resounding 4-1 victory over Kirby Muxloe in The Rolleston Charity Cup Final, with Joe Moran netting a hat-trick and Lee Connolly also scoring, securing their third trophy. Just days later, they completed a magnificent quadruple, winning the County FA Jelson Homes Senior Cup Final with a hard-fought 3-2 victory over Holwell Sports, with Joe Moran scoring twice and Lee Connolly once.

2009-10

The 2009-2010 season unfolded as a testing and disappointing chapter in the history of Anstey Nomads Football Club. Competing in the East Midlands Counties League alongside various cup competitions including The Battle of Britain Cup, the FA Vase, the EMCL League Cup, the County FA Jelson Homes Senior Cup, and the Westerby Challenge Cup, the Nomads struggled to find consistent form and secure positive results. The season was marked by a significant number of defeats in the league, early exits from cup tournaments, and fleeting moments of promise that ultimately failed to translate into sustained success.

The league campaign in the East Midlands Counties League commenced on a jarring note with a humbling 0-8 home defeat at the hands of Heanor Town. This heavy loss set a difficult precedent for the season, immediately placing the team on the back foot and raising concerns about their competitiveness. The subsequent league fixtures offered little immediate solace. An away trip to Graham St Prims resulted in a narrow 0-1 loss, further deepening the early sense of struggle.

A brief flicker of optimism emerged on August 22nd when the Nomads secured their first and only league victory of the season, a hard-fought 3-2 win against Ellistown at home. This match was a microcosm of their season – a slow start followed by resilience and moments of quality. Despite conceding early pressure, the team composed themselves, and goals from Warren Yorke and Jamie Munday provided a 2-0 halftime lead. Ellistown mounted a second-half comeback, scoring twice, but a well-taken goal from substitute Antony Ward ultimately clinched the three points for Anstey. However, this victory proved to be an isolated high point in a largely challenging league journey.

The remainder of their league fixtures in the first half of the season yielded little in the way of positive results. A 1-2 home defeat to Blackwell Miners Welfare, despite a late goal from Jamie Munday, was followed by a comprehensive 1-4 away loss to St Andrews, where Antony Ward managed to get on the scoresheet for the Nomads. Their home form continued to be inconsistent, with a 1-2 loss to Greenwood Meadows, Declan Sutton providing Anstey's goal. An away trip to Barrow Town resulted in a heavy 1-5 defeat. October brought a glimmer of resilience with a 1-1 home draw against a strong Radcliffe Olympic

side, Warren York scoring a late equalizer after a significant injury stoppage. Despite an encouraging start where new signing Abraham Conteh assisted Antony Ward for the opening goal, the team subsequently suffered a 1-2 away defeat to Ibstock United. Further defeats against Holbrook Miners Welfare (0-4 away) and Borrowash Victoria (1-2 home, Wes York scorer) compounded their league struggles. The month concluded with a chastening 0-11 home loss to Bardon Hill Sports, a result that undoubtedly shook the team's confidence.

November offered a brief respite with a spirited 3-3 away draw against Radford. In a game where both teams were struggling at the bottom of the table, Anstey twice came from behind, with goals from Wes York and a brace from Antony Ward securing a point. However, this resilience proved short-lived, as they were soundly defeated 0-5 away by Radcliffe Olympic and 1-3 at home by Gedling Miners Welfare, Antony Ward again finding the net. The month ended with a heavy 0-5 away loss to Gresley FC, highlighting the gulf in quality against some of the league's stronger sides.

The winter months brought no significant change in Anstey's fortunes in the league. January saw a 0-3 away defeat to Greenwood Meadows, a game where they felt they matched their opponents for large periods but lacked the cutting edge. This was followed by another heavy away loss to Bardon Hill Sports (0-5), although the team felt the scoreline did not accurately reflect their overall performance. February was a particularly bleak month, with consecutive defeats against Radford (1-3 home), Blackwell Miners Welfare (0-1 away), Dunkirk (0-9 away), and Borrowash Victoria (0-7 away), underscoring the team's struggles at both ends of the pitch.

March continued the trend of heavy defeats, with a 0-6 home loss to Gresley FC and a 0-7 away dubbing by Gedling Town. A rearranged away fixture against Ellistown provided a rare point with a 3-3 draw, but this was followed by a 0-4 home defeat to Graham St Prims and a demoralizing 0-8 away loss to Holwell Sports. The month concluded with a catastrophic 1-10 home defeat to Dunkirk, a result that undoubtedly represented the nadir of their league campaign.

April offered little in the way of improvement. A string of defeats followed: 0-9 at home to Hinckley Downes, 1-6 at home to Ibstock United, 0-2 away to Gedling Miners Welfare, 0-3 at home to Barrow Town, 0-1 at home to Gedling Town, and a narrow 2-3 home loss to St Andrews, with substitutes scoring Anstey's goals. The league season concluded in early May with two further home defeats: 0-1 to Holbrook Miners Welfare and a comprehensive 0-6 loss to Holwell Sports.

Parallel to their arduous league campaign, Anstey Nomads also participated in several cup competitions, none of which yielded significant success. Their journey in The Battle of Britain Cup was brief, ending with a 0-3 home defeat to Saffron Dynamo in their opening match. Their FA Vase campaign was similarly short-lived, concluding with a 1-2 home loss against Coleshill Town in the first round. The EMCL League Cup also saw an early exit, with a 1-2 home defeat to Graham St Prims. In the prestigious County FA Jelson Homes Senior Cup, their participation was limited to a single match, resulting in a 1-4 home defeat at the hands of Harborough Town. Finally, their involvement in the Westerby Challenge Cup ended with a 1-3 away loss to Friar Lane & Epworth.