

Anstey Nomad Story

The 1990s

The 1990s were a turbulent yet transformative decade for Anstey Nomads, mirroring the UK's journey from economic recession to "Cool Britannia" and the rise of the internet. The club experienced its own rollercoaster of near misses, historic cup runs, and challenging slumps. Early in the 1990s, the Nomads came agonizingly close to clinching the Senior League title and later made a historic FA Vase run, culminating in an impressive Senior and Junior Cup double in 1994-95. Despite these highs, Anstey also endured tough periods, even finding themselves at the bottom of the Leicestershire Senior League. Yet, their remarkable resilience consistently saw them rebound with strong performances in various cup competitions, including another notable FA Vase charge as the decade drew to a close. For Anstey Nomads, just like the rest of the world, the 90s concluded with a blend of challenges and a hopeful transition into the new millennium.

1990-91

In the closest Senior League title race since Friar Lane Old Boys pipped Oadby Town in 1974, Lutterworth needed to win their last four games by an aggregate of 19 clear goals to snatch the championship from Anstey on goal difference. They beat Thringstone 8-0, Barwell 7-2 and Newfoundpool by one goal. Lutterworth thus arrived at Friar Lane Old Boys needing four goals and went into the last 45 minutes of the season only one up through a spectacular Anton Thomas free kick on the half hour. But six minutes into the second half Simms forced home Lutterworth's second, eight minutes later Simms again shot on the turn and the ball crossed the line via the post. As Lutterworth battled away with time running out, Dave Thacker's through ball found Simms unmarked to slot home the clincher and make Lutterworth champions by just one goal. With hindsight Anstey were unlucky, dropping points in games they should have won. The first home league game of the season resulted in a memorable 5-1 victory against rivals Birstall United. In a close and exciting encounter at Lutterworth in mid-September, the home team took the lead after 10 minutes when Steve Smith rounded the goalkeeper and shot home from the narrowest of angles. Allen equalised for Nomads just before half-time, but Lutterworth were not to be denied and five minutes from time, Smith scored the winner. A week later Anstey inflicted Holwell Sports first defeat of the season at Cropston Road, winning by the odd goal in five. Goddard opened the scoring for the home side and immediately after the break added a second with a close-range effort. Dawson reduced the deficit, but Goddard completed his hat-trick on the hour. Ian Hunter added Holwell's second ten minutes from time. After dropping a point at Narborough, Anstey went on a winning run that included a 9-1 destruction of Thringstone at Cropston Road in November. Thringstone's defence had nightmare conceding six goals in the first 45 minutes. In the second period Anstey scored another three, with the visitors breaking away to add one to their tally. A fortnight later, a thrilling encounter at Barwell ended in a 2-2 draw. Roberts put Nomads ahead in the 19th minute and Wardell added a second two minutes onto the second period, John Steane reduced the deficit, rounding off a good move down the right and beat Carr to deservedly equalise in the 71st minute. Both goals had narrow escapes in the closing minutes. Anstey also drew with Barwell in the reverse fixture in March. After trailing by three goals at the interval, Nomads came storming back in the second half to snatch a deserved point. Barwell took the lead in the second minute through Steane and before the break added further goals through Bennett and Seane again. It was not until the 70th minute that the fightback started when Vilcins netted with a near-post header and two goals by Tansley and Roberts in the final seven minutes bought its deserved rewards. Vilcins netted a brace against Friar Lane four days after Christmas. Both sides missed early chances before a Goddard corner was headed home by Vilcins. Anstey went further ahead when Vilcins headed another goal in the 65th minute. Ten minutes from time Friar Lane reduced the deficit when Andy Greaves had a simple tap in at the far post. Nomads dropped a point against Oadby in January, after losing odds on favourites to claim all the points. Taylor opened the scoring for Anstey, but Dave Pounds equalised with a near post header in the 18th minute. Seven minutes from time Lee Normans put Anstey ahead again, but Nick Glover stole the equaliser with almost the last kick of the game. In one of the most eagerly anticipated games of the season at Cropston Road, both Anstey and Lutterworth missed good chances in the first half but when a draw seemed certain, Anstey

were awarded a free kick on the edge of the area and Fawcett's shot found its way through a packed Lutterworth defence, to give them all the points. Defeats away against Rolls Royce (1-2) away and at Pedigree Petfoods (1-2) and draws against Barwell, Friar Lane and Oadby towards the end of season proved costly.

Nomads were drawn against Stapenhill at Edge Hill in the extra preliminary round of the FA Vase. The tie was settled in favour of the home side ten minutes from the interval after a moment of uncertainty by Neil Deeping miscued a back pass leaving Tony Coppinger to hump the ball past Anstey's advancing goalkeeper Paul Easom.

Following a first round bye, Nomads won the 'Battle of Anstey', beating the Town 2-1 and overcame Leicester Constabulary 1-0 after extra time to reach the quarter-final of the Senior Cup where they faced Shepshed Charterhouse Reserves at home. In a close and exciting cup tie, a two yard miss by Taylor cost Anstey the chance of taking Shepshed into extra time. Anstey trailed to early second half goals from Watts and Kaula, before Robert's far post header made it 2-1.

Nomads were eliminated from the Coalville Charity Cup in August, losing 4-2 at Knighton Lane East against Friar Lane Old Boys.

Two goals from Rob Battison gave Houghton Rangers the Tebbutt Brown Cup with a 2-0 win over Oadby Town in May at Cropston Road. The victory gave Rangers a Cup and Senior League Division One double.

1991-92

Nomads reached round 4 of the FA Vase for the first time in their history. Their Vase adventure began on 7 September in the West Midlands, where a defensive mix up kept Nomads in the competition. They had travelled to play West Bromwich Town in the extra preliminary round. After a rousing contest with both teams committed to playing attacking football, Anstey levelled after 75 minutes through Culpin following a misunderstanding between keeper Walliams and the home defence. West Bromwich had rallied strongly to gain a half-time lead with goals from Beasmore and Johnson cancelling out Warren's seventh minute opener. Nomads made no mistake in the replay the following weekend. After a goalless first half, the turning point came 11 minutes into the second period when Tansley put Anstey ahead with a smart header. Culpin increased Anstey's lead in the 76th minute after latching on to a pass to notch his second goal. Kings Heath took the lead after only 6 minutes at Cropston Rad in the next round but failed to take full advantage of their good start. Five minutes later Kings Heath suffered a setback when Simpson scored with a diving header to put the ball into his own net following a cross from Allen. Six minutes from time Anstey went ahead through Wardle. Anstey scored a run-away victory when Oldbury collapsed in the last 3 minutes at Cropston Road the xxx round. Although well on top throughout, it was not until 28th minute that Anstey went ahead through Roberts. He added a second in the 61st minute which triggered the demise of Oldbury. Allen who had a fine game on the right flank tormenting the Oldbury defence scored a well-deserved goal and Vilcins completed the scoring four minutes from time. On the Saturday before Christmas Nomads became the first Leicestershire Senior League club to reach the last 32 of the Vase for more than a decade when they beat Felixstowe Town at home. Dean Culpin put Anstey ahead in the 6th minute when keeper Neil Stanbridge failed to hold Phil Ford's shot. But the visitors poured forward with the wind and slope in their favour and levelled through Graham Fuller's strike only for Tansley's solo effort nine minute later to give Anstey the lead again. Sadly they were unable to emulate the late-1970s successes of Friar Lane, Wigston Fields and Shepshed Charterhouse by reaching the last eight. They were drawn a home against Diss Town. The Eastern Counties side were a division lower than Felixstowe but were clearly leading at the top of the table. Nomads went into the clash as favourites, being unbeaten at home all season and had not lost anywhere since mid-November anywhere. Sadly, a goal after just two minutes ended Nomads FA Vase run when the visitors former Norwich City player Peter Mendham fired in the winner as the home side were caught cold at the start. Anstey hit back well and dominated the second half but went close to an equaliser only in the last 10 minutes when keeper Trevor Saunders saved well from Darren Roberts and Mark Lindt.

In the Senior League Anstey suffered two defeats in August. The first at Meadow Lane, Birstall (1-0) and the second, a 5-1 trashing at Houghton Rangers. In between these games, Nomads beat Leicestershire Constabulary 5-1 at Cropston Road. Then followed successive home draws against Ibstock Welfare and

Lutterworth Town and wins against Narborough (4-0) away and Newfoundpool (1-0) at home. In a thrilling finish St Andrews scored three goals in the last 20 minutes to snatch victory over Nomads in mid-November. After Sean Woods had given the Saints the lead, Roberts and Vilcins scored twice to put the visitors ahead at the break. Allen added a third at the start of the second half, but Goddard reduced the deficit. Craig Howarth levelled the scores from the penalty spot and then scored the winner for St Andrews with a header. Nomads then went on a long unbeaten run which ended with their elimination from the FA Vase. League form was maintained after their Vase exit, as they won three consecutive matches before suffering a 4-0 defeat at home against Narborough. After trailing by two goals at the break Anstey stormed back to blitz Syston St Peter's on with five second half goals. Mark Durrant and Richard Kerr gave Syston a dream start, but Goddard and Roberts levelled the scores on the hour. Goddard put Anstey ahead in the 69th minute and two further goals from Roberts completed the scoring. By the end of March, the Senior League title was Holwell Sports to lose. St Andrews had finished their fixtures with 61 points. Anstey were the only club who could have taken the title from Holwell, who if they had won their final 8 games would have ended the season with 63 points. Holwell, with 57 points, needed two wins and a draw from their final matches, including a visit to Anstey to settle the issue once and for all. By the time of the fixture with Holwell on 18 April, they had already been crowned champions, Anstey having lost consecutive league games at the start of the month. Holwell took revenge for their home defeat by the Nomads earlier in the season with an emphatic 3-1 win. Marksman Ian Hunter put them ahead on the hour and despite a Bud Roberts equaliser, Hunter and Mark Spencer added a couple more to ensure victory over the only side they had not beaten all season. Finishing as runners-up was nevertheless a creditable performance,

Nomads were left to reflect on missed chances as they went out of the Westerby County Cup at United Park. Leicester United stamped their early authority on the game with an eighth-minute David Tonge goal and a Les Webster header from Stuart Bond's 16th-minute corner. Nomads had a chance to get back into the game, but Phil Ford ballooned a 22nd-minute penalty high over the bar. On the half hour Jason Weafer threaded a shot through a forest of legs to make it 3-0. Bud Roberts fluffed a close-range attempt for Anstey after a bad back-pass but made amends glancing in a 58th-minute near-post corner from Ford.

Although Bud Roberts put Anstey ahead in the tenth minute of the Senior Cup second round tie at Cropston Road, Oadby Town played much the better football and McCullum and Cook gave the visitors a slender half-time lead. Richard Johns and Cook put Oadby 4-1 ahead before Roberts got his second. Hinckley Town winger Lee Harriman's temporary return to his old club Houghton Rangers ended in controversy. Harriman was "borrowed" by Rangers' boss Peter Welsh for the Tebbutt Brown semi-final with Anstey in May and scored the winner in a 3-2 victory. But then it was discovered he was contracted to Town and should not have played for another club. The match was replayed, with Anstey beating Rangers, the holders, 2-1. Dean Culpin scored winning goal in the minute as Nomads twice came from behind to win Battle of Britain Charity Cup final on the evening of Monday 9 September. Andy Howarth and Chris Whitmore twice put Lutterworth ahead, but Darren Roberts and Daz Warns put Nomads back on terms before Culpin's late winner.

Barwell knocked Nomads of the Tebbutt-Brown Cup 4-2 in the first round. After beating Kirby Muxloe in August and Friar Lane Old Boys on Boxing Day, Nomads claimed the Coalville Charity Cup for the seventh time at Thringstone, with a 2-1 win against Barlestone St Giles.

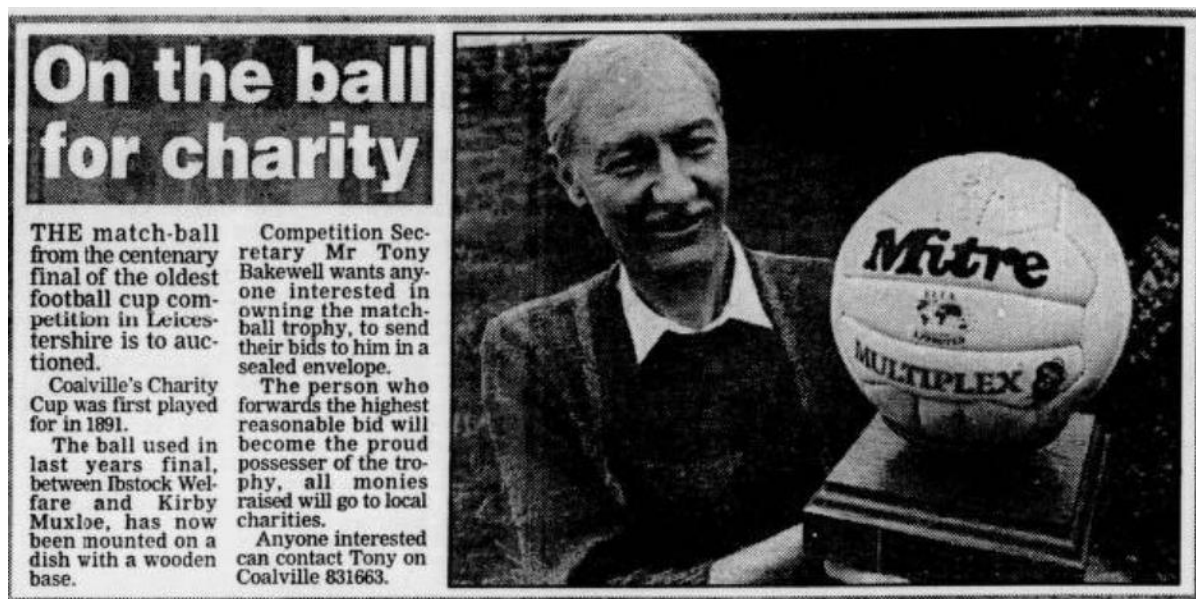


Figure 1 Coalville Mail - 16 April 1992

1992-93

Despite losing three league games before the end of September, Nomads finished fourth in the Senior League Premier Division, the same position as in 1991-92 and in the process scored 100 goals for the first time in a league competition since xxxxx. Averaging three goals per game, they thrashed Ibstock (8-1), North Kilworth (7-1) at home and scored six at Narborough. On three consecutive Saturdays in March, they scored a total of 15 goals, conceding just one as they beat Petfoods (5-1), Newfoundpool (5-0) and Houghton Rangers (5-0). Holwell Sports, who also scored 115 league goals retained the Premier Senior League title with 75 points from their 34 matches, two points ahead of Friar Lane in second. Nomads finished on 68 points.

The champions were Anstey's bogey side, knocking them out of no less than four cup competitions – the Battle of Britain Cup (R1), the Tebbutt Brown Cup competition (R2), the Senior Cup (RX) and the Westerby Challenge Cup (RX).

The Nomads were behind after just three minutes away against Coleshill Town in the extra preliminary round of the FA Vase, when a long ball from Everton found Casey who raced on the beat the keeper. Two minutes later Anstey went further behind when Casey headed home at the far post. Nomads reduced the arrears after 8 minutes when McManus drove in a shot from 20 yard and after just 15 minutes play Anstey levelled when along ball went off a Coleshill player into the net. On the half hour Coleshill retook the lead when Randle went on his own to finish with a low drive into the bottom corner. It was 3-3 by half-time when McManus scored his second with a dipping shot. No further goals were scored after extra time. Back at Cropston Road, Nomads dominated Coleshill winning the replay 5-2.

It was only Daryl Page's last-ditch block on the line that saved Rushden & Diamonds from extreme FA Vase embarrassment against Nomads in the next round. Rushden scraped through their preliminary round tie 3-2 at Nene Park - yet Anstey could and perhaps should have equalised right at the death had it not been for Page's block. They had battled back from three down with just 16 minutes left after being all but dead and buried. Paul York (17 mins), Aidy Mann (40) and Glen Donegal (74) had put Roger's Ashby's side in a commanding position. But McManus levelled following breakaway shortly after Donegal's strike and, with ten minutes left, York turned villain when he headed past Kevin Shoemake. And Anstey could well have earned a shock draw at the death as they pressed again - had it not been for Page's alertness.

However, Nomads did lift silverware, retaining the Coalville Cup, winning the competition for a record eight time. The final at Thringstone against Ibstock Welfare, was the first in the competitions long and illustrious history to be decided by a penalty shootout (4-3) after the game ended 3-3. Underdogs Ibstock hit back

from a goal down after two minutes to lead 3-1, but Dean Culpin equalised eight minutes from time and Paul Eason saved twice in the shootout to clinch it.

A minute's silence in memory of Nigel Perkins who died suddenly at the age of 41 on 11 March was held prior to the start of the Rolleston Cup semi-final between Anstey Nomads and Leicester United at United Park, Blaby. The writing was on the wall for Nomads as early as the fourth minute when Rob Potter put United ahead Alan Liquorish made it 2-0 latching on to a 35th-minute clearance from keeper Ian Marsden. Despite Daryl Brown and Andy y McManus drawing saves from Marsden United's pace was too hot and Liquorish rounded off the scoring after 65 minutes. Leicester United's opponents in the Rolleston Cup final, the now traditional May Day Holiday game at Cropston Road, was Andrews ad Leicester United were Leicester United

1993-94

St Andrews won the Premier Senior League title for only the second time in their history, accumulating an impressive 81 points from 32 games. Friar Lane Old Boys and Oadby Town in second and third both finished with 76 points, 19 points clear of Holwell Sports in fourth. Anstey finished in sixth with 54 points, their lowest position for xxxxx years. Although never outclassed, Nomads never looked as if they would be able to make a sustained challenge for honours.

Nomads were drawn against Senior League rivals in the FA Vase in September. The match was Oadby's fourth game in 7 days. Ian Jackson set the pattern of the game early as the third minute. Racing down the left he fired a shot from 35 yards against the Oadby bar. Smith was found by MacDonald with a 40-yard pass. He strolled into the box only to blaze over. A free kick on the edge of the box allowed Steve Kee to come forward and strike at goal. His shot was deflected, and it looked goal bound only for Paul Fawcett to head off the line at the last moment. Goode missed from 6 yards to prolong Oadby's frustration, Smith twice went close, and MacDonald missed the header from a Tuff free kick. Oadby found extra time more suited to their game and stayed in control. After 110 minutes Terry Kee scored, Anstey threw caution to t hind and with a minute left Andy MacManus equalised. The replay also went to extra time, where Oadby scored twice. Five days after knocking Nomads out of the Vase, Oadby Town lifted the Battle of Britain Cup after netting four goals in the second half to wash away Anstey 6-1 at a rain-soaked Lutterworth. The torrential rain twice caught out goalkeeper Paul Eason as first Rob Goode put Oadby ahead after 5 minutes before half-time and then a shot by Tont MacDonald took a wicked deflection and left the keeper stranded 5 minutes after the break. Deal Culpin and Goode put Oadby further ahead before Dean Smith pulled one back for Anstey and Terry Kee hit Oadby's fifth.

The first round Senior Cup tie against Earl Shilton Albion in October was switched to Albion's Ne Street ground after the Nomad's pitch as for the second consecutive Saturday was ruled unfit. Earl Shilton set out to use this to their advantage by pushing men up and taking the gam to Nomads. However, Anstey struck firs with a goal from 25 yards despite protests for offside. But it did not take long for Albion to respond when Nick Leis fired home after finding space in the Nomad's penalty area. Anstey regained he lad with a fine header only for Albion to equalise. Ten minutes after the break Shilton went ahead, Lewis scored his second as the Anstey defence again failed to clear. A contender for goal of the season, a 20 yard volley. Ten minute later Nomads regained the lead with a lobbed shot and then added a fifth late on. Fownes Sports surprisingly beat Nomads at Cropston Road in the second round of the competition. Nomads failed to win the Coalville Charity Cup for the third consecutive season. Ibstock Welfare avenged their defeat at the hands of Anstey the previous season with a 3-1 victory in the final at Thringstone.

1994-95

Anstey Nomads achieved a rare double, securing both the Senior and Junior Cups in a season heavily influenced by their clashes with reigning Senior League double champions, Oadby Town. After receiving a bye in the first round in the Senior Cup, Anstey hammered North Kilworth 9-2 at home to reach the quarter-finals, where they overcame Aylestone Park 2-1 at Cropston Road. Nomads reached the Jelson Homes Senior Cup final for only the second time in their history when they beat treble chasers Oadby at Leicester United. The runaway Senior League leaders were bidding to become only the second club after Friar Lane Old Boys 20 years ago to win the Senior League double Senior Cup. But they went behind to Ade

Capell's 13th-minute strike from 25 yards and had their fate sealed when Loriston Chambers hit Nomads' second nine minutes from time. In between Nomads looked by far the stronger side particularly mid-field where Capell Mick Goddard and Dave Tansley were outstanding and might have gone further ahead when Goddard volleyed wide and Terry' Kee had a shot cleared off the line by his former Hol-well team-mate Jarrod Collington Oadby's top-scorer Dean Culpin's best work was limited to outside the box their best effort coming from a spectacular run and drive Steve Jordan which flew over the top and a close-range header from Rob Goode which was also too high.

Nomads lifted the Jelson Homes Senior Cup for the first time in their 48-year history but was not much to brighten the first final in the dark. The Holmes Park show piece was played on Spring equinox, the earliest in calendar since 1930 and was settled by two first-half goals by Dave Tansley and Joel Walker. But Anstey's night dimmed when veteran striker Steve Carr was off for a second booking in the second-half perhaps the first in a Senior Cup final and Holwell's gloom heightened when they had defender Les King stretchered off to hospital with a knee injury Nomads broke the deadlock after 10 minutes when Ade Cappell's ball over the top was tucked away by Tansley and nine minutes before half-time Walker tapped in from a yard after Carr had been denied at close range by keeper Jon Perkins Apart from that genuine chances were kept to minimum Perkins barely had a save to make and at the other end Holwell lacked the punch needed to get back into his game Their biggest threat was the of Joe Mogg at comers one effort just before half-time hit Walker on the line and in the second period Simon Hill's shot hit bar. But Carr's dismissal 15 minutes from time only deepened Nomads' action they held on to win by a length.



Figure 2UP FOR THE CUP - Anstey Nomads skipper Drew Wardle gets a lift from is jubilant teammates and supporters after Jelson Homes Senior Cup victory over Holwell Sports

Nomads lost on penalties to last season's Senior League double winners Oadby Town after a 2-2 draw in their first round Beacon Bitter Cup tie in late August. Goalkeeper Richard Clay was Oadby's villain and hero. Dean Herrod and Steve Jordan put Oadby two-up inside 10 minutes but Mark Jackson's penalty got Nomads back in the tie and then Clay spilled Tony Robinson's fierce free kick at the feet of Mark Lee for Nomads equaliser Clay's save at the feet of Loriston Chambers denied Nomads the winner and the keeper brilliantly kept out Lee's win the shootout.

Oadby also beat the Nomads 1-0 to lift the Battle of Britain Cup for the second season running at Lutterworth. Defender Jarrod Collington netted the only goal after 63 minutes. Jason Trinder in the Oadby goal made a tremendous save to deny Terry Kee five minutes before half-time, finishing the match limping heavily. Nomads influential midfielder Mark Lee limped off after collecting a knock on the ankle/ Nomads top scorer Kee lasted an hour after returning from holiday. Three days later at Invicta Park, Oadby won 3-1 to strengthen their position at the top of the Senior League.

The Senior League campaign opened with a 5-0 home win against North Kilworth. After a 2-1 away win against Leicester Constabulary, Nomads suffered a humiliating 4-1 defeat at Cropston Road to Cottesmore. They bounced back winning at Asfordby, dropped points at home to St Andrew's. The following Saturday they were well beaten by Oadby Town. After a close fought victory at Cropston Road against Newfoundpool they left it late at Lutterworth on the second Saturday in October, with Dave Tansley scoring the only goal of the game in injury time. A couple of weeks later after dropping points at home to Highfield Rangers, Simon Cook scored a spectacular first half hat-trick to spark Nomads win although they had to survive torrid second-half as Burbage struck back twice. A 2-1 home defeat against Birstall United in late November, their third of the season, badly hampered their title chances and resulted in them losing third place in the Senior League – Friar Lane moving back into the top three on goal difference after beating North Kilworth 4- 1. Oadby meanwhile were running away with the league. Nomads hit back from two goals down to beat Cottesmore Amateurs 3-2 in a thriller at Limmah Park in early December. Ian Kilgour and John Morton put the Rutlanders two-up at the break, but Steve Carr and Darryl Warren pulled Anstey back on terms before stan-in striker Carr bagged the winner. This was the beginning of a two-month winning run, which included a 5-3 away win at Knighton Rod East in January. Scott Kempin was sent off in the ill-tempered encounter after a challenge on Nomads keeper, with the Lane leading 2-1. Nomads made the most of their one man advantage, scoring four through Steve Carr, Joel walker, Simon Cook and an own goal to add to the Drew Wardle's first half strike. Anstey also beat Thringstone (2-1), New Kilworth (2-0), Newfoundpool (1-0), Lutterworth (3-0) and Holwell (3-2). Three defeats, against Barrow Tow (2-0), Burbage (3-0) and Highfield Rangers (1-0) followed. Champion-elect Oadby lost 2-0 at Cropston Road in late April. Steve Calvert and Lol Chambers netted for Anstey's makeshift line up as they matched their Senior Cup semi-final win over Oadby earlier in the season. Anstey who accounted for two of just four defeats Oadby suffered in all competitions throughout the season, ended the season in fourth, a whooping 17 points behind Oadby and 14 less than Barrow town in second place. This was the xxx time Nomads had finished fourth in xxx seasons.

1995-96

Anstey Nomads experienced a season of stark contrasts, with a poor start that left them bottom of the Senior League by late September. However, a remarkable recovery, overseen by three different managers, culminated in a memorable FA Vase run and Battle of Britain Cup triumph. Mark Jackson marked his Nomads debut with four goals at Llimah Park slaughtering North Kilworth 8-0. Jackson netted twice in each half, Lorison Chambers also scored twice, and Dave Tedds and Tony Robinson rounded up the haul. This proved to be a false dawn as Anstey went on a just six game losing streak. Just when Nomads' boss Phil Ford thought Anstey's season couldn't get any worse – it did! Defender Neil Deeping fractured a cheekbone during a 3-2 home defeat by Ibstock Welfare, Nomads 5th defeat in 6 league starts. Ford's problems piled up along with goals conceded due in part to the makeshift back four fielded in the absence of Drew Wardle, Kev Jordan, Lee Morris, Steve Carr, and Mark Walker.



Mark Lee took temporary charge of Anstey as player-manager in October, following the departure of Phil Ford,. Under his leadership Nomads strung together five wins in six games – though they lost their grip on the Senior Cup when they crashed 4-1 to Oadby Town. The run lifted Nomads out of the bottom to up to near midtable respectability. To the surprise of many, Steve Carr got the nod ahead of caretaker boss Lee as successor to Phil Ford. He celebrated his first game with a 5-1 win over third-placed Burbage Old Boys in November with goals from Chris Armeni, Tony Robinson, Mark Jackson, Dave Tedds and Dave Tansley. The win lifted the Nomads into the top half of the table for the first time since the opening day of the season and were only six points adrift of new third placed side Friar Lane Old Boys. "It should never have been played", said Asfordby Amateurs manager John Manship following his side's 4-1 defeat at Cropston Road on Boxing Day. "The pitch was badly rutted and frozen solid, the players found it impossible to keep their feet and the match turned into a complete farce. And we were lucky no-one got seriously hurt." However, it was the pitch that played a major part in Asfordby taking the lead, Ian Veazey's shot hitting a frozen lump of mud in the penalty area and wrongfooting the Nomads "keeper. The treacherous surface also led to Anstey's equaliser when Hughes slipped while taking a goal kick and hit the ball straight to a Nomads forward who gratefully tapped it back into the empty net. With the Asfordby defence struggling to keep their feet, Anstey scored again before half-time and then a mistake by Wayne Harris after the break put the game out of the visitors' reach. Harris was first to reach a long ball over the top and in attempting to pass it back to Hughes slipped at the vital second and only succeeded in planting it past his own 'keeper. Nomads never say die attitude was on evidence throughout the second half of the season. With five regulars missing and manager Steve Carr in goal, Anstey scored four times inside 15 minutes, all of them from set pieces to destroy Asfordby Amateurs at Hoby Road. After going two down at Holwell Sports, in February, Anstey scored twice inside a minute to grab a point. They also fought back in the reverse fixture to win 3-2. Given Nomads' horrific start to the season, a 9th place was a more than acceptable.

After overcoming Radford in the second qualifying round of the FA Vase, Anstey faced Oldbury Town at Cropston Road. Nomads went behind to Neil Hesson's 10th minute goal for Oldbury, but stunned the Interlink Express side with Tony Robinson's reply seven minutes before half-time and then Armeni's winner 15 minutes from the end leaving them as the Senior League's sole survivors in the competition. Substitute Dave Postlethwaite was the toast of Anstey after scoring all four goals in the Senior League side's stunning FA Vase win against Shepshed Dynamo in the second round. Postlethwaite scored within two minutes of coming on for his first game of the season and then struck three times in the final half hour to oust the Interlink Midland Alliance outfit. Shepshed created the better chances in the first half but were kept out by keeper John Wright who also denied Ian Pitt a 55th-minute equaliser with the best save of an impressive bunch. Postlethwaite struck five minutes after half-time with a shot from the edge of the box but Paul

Standring finally beat Wright with a long-range effort on the hour Postlethwaite restored Anstey's lead within two minutes however and netted again in 77th and 89th minute to complete a famous victory

Dave Tansley capped Anstey Nomads' second-half revival as the Senior league side snatched a place in the last 32 in County Durham. Nomads travelled up on Friday prepare for the game but were still caught cold as the home side made a flying start. Easington led 2-0 early on and were still 2-1 up going into the final minute despite Loriston Chambers' strike putting Nomads back in the hunt. But man-of-the-match Tansley snatched a dramatic equaliser to keep the tie alive in the dying seconds. And then the Nomads' powerhouse, one of four survivors from the Anstey side which reached the last 32 four years ago struck again in the second period of extra time to kill off the Northern League side.

Captain Drew Wardle capped a remarkable Nomads comeback with an extra-time winner in the fourth round at North Ferriby. Wardle fired home a loose ball from a corner with four minutes left. But it had looked bleak when they trailed 2-0 with only seven minutes of normal time remaining a double strike from Darren Wilson doing the damage. And it took a string of brilliant saves from keeper John Wright and a goal-line clearance from Lee Morris to keep Nomads in the game. In the 83rd minute slack marking at a corner allowed Nomads' Lori Chambers to fire home And with the last kick of normal time Dave Tansley capitalised on some poor Ferriby defending to lob Keeper Mike Heath from 20 yards. With Sammy Patel and Tony Robinson running the midfield in injury time Nomads always looked likely to snatch a winner. It was fitting that captain Wardle, one of four survivors from the Anstey side which reached the last 32 four years ago was the hero to give the travelling Nomads' fans plenty to celebrate Ferriby, who were second in Northern Counties East League, who were well backed and ambitious. Nomads ran a supporters coach that left the Nook at 9.15 am.

It had been 16 years since a Leicestershire Senior League side graced the last eight of the FA Vase, but nobody would want to stick their mortgage on Anstey Nomads not making it Nomads face what looks a daunting trip to ICIS League Division Two promotion-chasers Collier Row in the fifth round. But Nomads have already overturned the odds twice to get this far, and Steve Carr stuck to his policy of knowing as little as possible about the opposition as Carr had watched neither Easington Colliery nor North Ferriby.

Carr reckoned that the Romford side's spying mission at Nomad's draw with Kirby Muxloe 14 days ago might backfire "They came to watch us and I hope they learned a lot" said Carr "But it won't do them any good if they did we'll have a different team and probably a different formation when we play them "Ferriby watched us and the same thing happened That's the trouble with watching sides at this level so much can change in a week." Collier Row were one of six sides chasing the ICIS Division Two title four of them still in the Vase Their record is impressive with just two meaningful defeats all season and they have former West Ham and Chelsea star Alan Dickens as their guiding light in midfield But even that is not as impressive as Northern Counties East League leaders North Ferriby's record and a quick hop down the M1 is almost a derby compared to the third round trip to County Durham where Nomads beat Easington "I can't see them being any better than Ferriby so it's all down to what we do" said Carr Squad: Wright, Morris, M Walker, Lee, Taylor, Wardle, J Walker, Patel, Tedds, Robinson, Tansley, Warren, Jackson, Chambers, Postlethwaite.

It was third time lucky for Anstey in the Battle of Britain Charity Cup. Nomads who lost to Oadby Town in the last two finals, both at Lutterworth, having seen off Oadby in the first round of this season's competition went into the 1995-96 final against Newfoundpool at Llimah Park as favourites. Former Birstall striker Mark Jackson took his tally to seven goals in three games after scoring twice in Nomads 3-2 defeat of Oadby. It was Newfoundpool's first major final in five years having surprised both Friar Lane Old Boys and Holwell Sports. Goals in the first 20 minutes by Tony Robinson and Loriston Chambers set up the win, although Nomads had to survive a torrid second half after Shaun Hill pulled a goal back from the penalty spot, to lift the cup.

Goalkeeper Richard Clay was villain and hero as Oadby eliminated Nomads from the Beacon Bitter Cup following a penalty shoot-out after a 2-2 draw after extra time in August. Dean Herrod and Steve Joran put Oadby 2-0 up inside 10 minutes, but Mark Jackson's penalty got Nomads back in the tie and then Clay spilled Tony Robinson's fierce free kick to the feet of Mark Lee for Nomads' equaliser. Clay's save at the feet

of Loriston Chambers denied Nomads the winner and the keeper brilliantly kept out Lee's spot kick to on the shoot-out 5-3.

Shepshed Dynamo with two second half strikes from Ian Pitt knocked Nomads out of the Westerby County Challenge Cup at Cropston Road at the first hurdle. Pitt broke through, side-stepped a defender and rifled the ball past John Wright, in the 68th minute, as the Anstey keeper moved out to challenge. Either side of the goal Shepshed keeper Dave Bolton produced two excellent saves to deny Dave Tansley and another from substitute Loriston Chambers. Vince Duffy in the 76th minute burst down the right flank, pulled the ball back low across the face of the Anstey goal for Pitt to lash it deep into the Nomad's net to clinch the cup tie. During the final minutes of the entertaining tie a David Tedd's free kick cannoned off the Shepshed post and Lee McGlinchey twice went close to a third.

1996-97

Anstey's season with new boss Steve Saxby began with a bang, as they secured a commanding 7-1 away win against Newfoundpool at Llimah Park, Tony Robinson scoring four of the goals. They racked up 20 goals in their first four league matches. However, their winning streak was broken in early October when Asfordby Amateurs, a team on the brink of collapse just before the season began, handed them their first defeat. Asfordby, revitalised under the leadership of manager Joe Johnson and his coaching staff, secured a 1-0 victory with a goal from Jason White. Despite Anstey hitting the woodwork four times, this unexpected loss marked a turning point, as their league form dipped with subsequent defeats to Kirby Muxloe, Cottesmore Amateurs, Birstall United, and Aylestone, leading to a season of mid-table mediocrity. Despite their inconsistent league form, Anstey found some positive moments. They clinched a 2-1 away victory against St Andrews. Nomads took the lead when the home goalkeeper failed to hold a Tony Robinson free kick and Andy Postlewaite sneaked in to score from close range. The second half saw St Andrews dominate but Anstey broke away with 15 minutes remaining for Tony Hollis to shoot home from the edge of the box. St Andrews broke through Anstey's well organised defence for John Tullis to reduce the deficit seven minutes from time.

A thrilling home match against Holwell Sports saw Anstey secure all three points in a crazy five-minute spell in the second half. With the score tied at 2-2, Postlewaite remarkably scored a hat-trick of headers, all from corners, to seal the win. Anstey finished the season in seventh place in the Senior League with 47 points from 32 games. Oadby Town dominated the league, winning the championship by over 20 points and boasting an impressive defensive record, conceding only 21 goals.

Anstey's cup runs, however, were disappointing. They were eliminated from the FA Vase by Arnold T Stewart & Lloyds in a high-scoring match that saw them battle back from a two-goal deficit twice, only to concede two late goals and lose. In the Leicestershire Senior Cup, they suffered a 2-1 defeat to Holwell FC in front of over 200 travelling supporters from Melton. Early exits also plagued their campaigns in the Beacon Bitter Cup, where Cottesmore Amateurs beat them 5-3 despite Anstey holding a 3-1 lead early in the second half, and the Rolleston and Westerby Cups, losing 5-0 to Hinckley Town and 2-1 to Oadby Town respectively.

1997-98

Oadby Town secured their second consecutive Premier Division title and their seventh Premier Division title overall. Anstey Nomads finished in 13th securing 10 wins, 5 draws, and 19 losses. They scored 49 goals while conceding 69, resulting in a goal difference of -20. They accumulated a total of 35 points.

Bloxwich Town dramatically defeated Anstey 7-2 at Abbey Park to cruise into the Third Qualifying Round. Despite Bloxwich's dominant victory, Anstey initially caused a scare by taking a 20th-minute lead through Tedds. The Kestrels deservedly levelled on 39 minutes with an unstoppable shot from Field. Just before half-time, Holdcroft gave Bloxwich the lead with a superb skill and curled shot. In the second half, Bloxwich quickly extended their lead to 3-1 when Povey set up Holdcroft. Two minutes later, Holdcroft completed his hat-trick. Anstey immediately pulled one back through Tansey, but any hopes of a revival were dashed when Anstey's Patel was dismissed in the 57th minute for a second bookable offence. This allowed Holdcroft to grab his fourth goal in the 79th minute, easily rounding the keeper. Ronnie Walker made it 6-2

four minutes from time, and with Anstey's defence in disarray, Cartwright completed the rout with the last kick of the game, sealing a magnificent seven goals for Bloxwich.

1998-99

Leicestershire Senior League Premier Division season saw Oadby Town cement their dominance, securing their third consecutive league title with 79 points. This remarkable achievement paved the way for their promotion to the Midland Football Alliance for the subsequent 1999-2000 season. Birstall United finished a close second, also on 79 points, but Oadby's superior goal difference earned them the championship. Holwell Sports rounded out the top three, highlighting a competitive top tier. Anstey Nomads enjoyed a solid mid-table finish in the Leicestershire Senior League Premier Division during the 1998-1999 season, ending in 8th place out of 18 teams. Their season record was: 34 matches played, 14 wins, 6 draws, and 14 losses. They scored 57 goals while conceding 54, resulting in a positive goal difference of +3. Anstey Nomads accumulated 48 points, an improvement from their 13th-place finish in the 1997-98 season.

Stapenhill, despite producing one of their most disjointed performances of the season progressed through to the Third Qualifying round of the FA Vase against Anstey Nomads in October by a single goal. The Swans were also hit by two bad injuries with Adrian Doughty having to leave the field with pulled hamstring in the 25th minute and then keeper John Haywood picked up a broken finger on the half-hour. Playing on in pain he was finally replaced in goal by Neil Akers 20 minutes later. The first half was a drab affair with little action in either penalty area. Stapenhill got the breakthrough with less than ten minutes remaining as Nomads tired Rutter's break on the left ending with a ball through to Eaton who seeing Curry free at the far post laid the ball into his path for the player-manager to notch his first goal of the season.

Hinckley United obtained their first piece of silverware in their two year history at Nomads' expense in the Rolleston Cup. The knitters had to wait until the second half of the final to open the scoring, when Brian Horseman's long range effort was parried into the path of Dave King on the hour. Anstey capitulate. Substitute extended Hinckley's lead with a header in the 73rd minute and moments later Richard Deweping was dismissed for a bad foul. Drewitt rounded off the rout in the closing minutes with a brace which included a penalty when goalkeeper Robert Stone felled Sadler.

1999-00

This season marked a transitional period for the league, as new champions emerged after a long era of dominance by Oadby Town. Highfield Rangers won the Leicestershire Premier League for the first and only time in their history. The club based at Gleneagles Avenue, lost just four games and finished with 76 points, four points ahead of runners-up. A further eight points behind were Quorn in third.

The Nomads finishing in 14th place, marked a decline from their 8th-place finish in the previous 1998-99 season. This period foreshadowed a more challenging spell for the club in the subsequent seasons. Early in the season, on August 21st, they suffered a heavy 1-4 away defeat to Quorn, followed by a narrow 1-2 loss to Friar Lane a week later. Their first league win came on September 4th with an impressive 5-2 home victory against Ellistown. A memorable encounter occurred on October 30th at home against high-flying Downes Sports. Anstey Nomads took an unexpected lead against the run of play as the first half concluded. Despite Downes' dominance in possession and numerous chances, Anstey's determined defensive line held firm until the final 10 minutes. Downes eventually levelled through Kevin Budge in the 80th minute and secured a 2-1 victory six minutes later with a spectacular shot from Jimmy Gray, set up by Lami Sanola and Jason Bindley. Another challenging away fixture in November saw Anstey fall 3-0 to Highfield Rangers, with goals from Richard Gerard, Chris Tonge, and Julius Ndukwu. The Nomads also experienced significant home defeats, including a 1-5 loss to Birstall United on December 11th. However, the team showed some resilience, particularly in the new year. On January 15th, they delivered a commanding 6-1 victory at home

against Friar Lane. This was followed by back-to-back home wins against Lutterworth (2-0) and an away win against Ellistown (2-1) later that month. Towards the end of the season, a strong 4-0 home win against Cottesmore in April highlighted their capability.

The Nomads kicked off their FA Vase campaign on October 25th with an away trip to Tividale in the Second Qualifying Round. This match proved to be an absolute rollercoaster. Tividale, despite recent disappointing defeats, delivered a vastly improved performance and took an early lead in the fourth minute. However, they soon found themselves 3-2 up thanks to a hat-trick from Luke Reynolds and a goal from Dean Smith. Just when it seemed Tividale might progress, and with only ten minutes remaining, Anstey snatched an equalizer to force the game into extra-time. The drama continued into the additional period; as Tividale pushed for a winner, Anstey broke away twice to score, taking a commanding lead. Although Smith managed to pull one back for Tividale at the death, it wasn't enough, and Anstey Nomads emerged victorious in a pulsating 5-4 encounter. Following their dramatic win, Anstey faced local rivals Friar Lane Old Boys in the First Round. The first leg, played away, ended in a goalless draw (0-0), setting up a tense replay at home. In the return fixture, Anstey Nomads demonstrated their superiority, securing a comfortable 2-0 victory to advance to the next stage of the competition. On November 13th, Anstey Nomads travelled to face Gedling Town in the Second Round. The Nomads continued their impressive run, securing a convincing 3-0 away win. This victory was particularly notable as it extended their streak of not conceding a goal in the previous rounds of the competition, showcasing their defensive solidity. Anstey Nomads' impressive FA Vase run came to an end in the Third Round on Saturday, December 4th, when they faced Ossett Albion away from home. Ossett Albion proved to be a formidable opponent, cruising into the fourth round with an emphatic 5-1 victory. The East Midlands, who had previously maintained an unblemished defensive record in the Vase, found themselves undone by the attacking prowess of Craig Gomersal, who netted a hat-trick and assisted two other goals. Lee Calvert and central defender Simon Trevitt also put in towering displays for Ossett. Gomersal opened the scoring after good build-up play by Calvert and Trevitt, and added his second in the 35th minute, set up by Shaun Joyce. Anstey Nomads did manage to pull a goal back immediately after the break through Connolly, but Ossett Albion quickly extinguished any hopes of a comeback. Lee Bradley's shot rebounded off the post directly into Gomersal's path for his third goal. In the dying minutes, Gomersal turned provider, setting up Bradley for a goal. Just a minute later, Gomersal was fouled in the area, and Jon Braime converted the resulting penalty, sealing a comprehensive 5-1 defeat for Anstey Nomads.

In the Jelson Home Senior Cup, Anstey advanced to the Quarter Finals, securing a 3-0 away win against Thurmaston Town in the 3rd Round before their campaign concluded in early January with a humiliating 0-7 home defeat to Coalville.

Furthermore, the Nomads entered the Beacon Bitter Cup, starting with a Preliminary Round home fixture against Highfield Rangers on August 17th.