

SPORT ITALIA HELLENIC LEAGUE –PREMIER DIVISION

(Played on Tuesday 13th March 2007)

SWANS HIT FOUR TO MOVE INTO SECOND PLACE

SLIMBRIDGE 4 , AFC WALLINGFORD 0

Slimbridge finally subdued a livewire AFC side with three goals in the last thirty minutes after Will Morford had given them a half-time lead. Before second half strikes from Matt Green, Craig Cole and Joe Tustain ensured the valuable three points, the visitors doggedly hung on and could have had a goal or two themselves, but for some rushed finishing.

The game was generally played at quite a fast pace with the home side being thwarted in the early play by a combination of good goalkeeping from John Shea keeping out, on-target efforts from Tim Haddock, John Cant and James Cole in turn, and some profligate finishing after several moves opened up an anxious looking visitors' defence.

On 36 minutes, AFC should have gone ahead through the quicksilver Paul Massaquoi, when he broke free through the middle, but snatched his shot wide from 12 yards with only goalkeeper Ryan Chandler to beat.

This acted as a wake-up call to the home side who took the lead a minute later when James Cole and Cant combined down the left to set up Morford, who toe-poked the ball high into the net, beating Shea at his near post.

Shortly after, Tustain shot over the bar from close range when Cant picked out Matt Green on the right, who set the hard-grafting striker up.

An early second half burst from AFC nearly brought an equaliser, when Slimbridge failed to clear a high ball into their area, the visitors Andy Styles lobbed Chandler, only to see the ball bounce the wrong side of an empty goal.

As had happened in the first period, the miss prompted a backlash, with a Matt Green volley being headed off the AFC line by a defender with Shea beaten. Green was not to be denied for long though, the hard-working Ross Casey setting him on his way to hit an angled dipping shot into the top corner of the net from 20 yards to make it 2-0 on the hour mark.

Craig Cole replaced Morford on 62 minutes and his fresh legs made a couple of driving runs that came to nothing before Tustain put him through on goal to further increase the Slimbridge lead with a deft low shot under the diving Shea on 76 minutes.

By now the home side were in top gear with purposeful running from Haddock and authoritative ball placement from Casey leaving the visitors to rely on the quick break for forward movement.

The final goal of the evening saw Tustain get on the score-sheet seven minutes from time with a hanging header over Shea from a pin-point cross from James Cole, who had done well to get past two defenders before delivering.

AFC to their great credit had played their part in an entertaining game of football which was the first ever meeting between the two sides, after they were granted a sideways move from the Combined Counties League last Summer. From the Slimbridge perspective, the three points took them above Ardley United into second place on goal difference and perhaps more importantly, to only one point behind leaders North Leigh, who have played four games more.

Slimbridge; R.Chandler, L.Sterling, J.Cole, T.Haddock, Ashley Thomas, A.Axton, Matt Green (J.Meadows 76), R.Casey, J.Tustain, W.Morford (C.Cole62), J.Cant (E.Ward 68).

AFC Wallingford; J.Shea, S.Barlow, I.Lovegrove, T.Ingram, I.Fenn, A.Styles, A.Boateng, R.Tyler, G.Darsonni, M.Satop (L.Chimunhonda 62), P.Massaquoi.

Referee; Mr.M.Niemirski (Swindon)