

PETERS WINS LOCAL DERBY FOR ALMONDS ALMONDSBURY TOWN 1 , SLIMBRIDGE 0

A typical Bank Holiday local derby saw the Almonds shade the game with a first goal of the season, in the 21st minute, from Steve Peters. As a result, Slimbridge lost ground on Hellenic Premier Division leaders North Leigh who won at home to Carterton. The gap is now five points, but Slimbridge do have five games in hand still, so the fight for the title goes on.

Town made the brighter start and for the first five minutes were pressing without fashioning a clear sight of goal, although Paul McKelvaney went close with a cheeky chip on the volley from the edge of the Slimbridge box.

It was the visitors though who spurned the first real chance of the game when Martin Booth caught up with a short back pass to home 'keeper Dave Rice but put his rolled shot fractionally wide of the far post of the wide open goal on 13 minutes.

Shortly after, good work down the right from Fred Ward put in Booth again, but his strong shot was blocked.

Town then had a period of pressure on the visitors goal themselves, and from the second of two successive corners slung over from the right by Brad Andrews, defender Peters rose to head towards goal, the ball taking a deflection off Ward into the net. Having not previously scored this season, he was definitely claiming it!

The play thereafter for the rest of the first half was fairly even, with most of it confined to a congested mid-field area, with some tasty tackles going in, but thankfully nothing illegal.

Three minutes before the break the home side's Justin Bishop went on a run from the half-way line, rode three tackles and hit a 20 yard shot that had goalkeeper Ryan Chandler stretching to take just under his bar.

Will Morford turned and shot over the home bar on the resumption, before McKelvaney made a good run down the right in response, but his cross drifted just over the Slimbridge bar with an unmarked Bishop lurking dangerously.

For all the huffing and puffing, there was still very little creativity coming from either side as both defences remained in the ascendancy. Just past the hour mark Johnstone entered the fray and soon flicked-on for Booth, shown daylight on goal and bringing a good save from Rice, albeit at the second attempt, falling to his right.

The Almonds man-of-the-match, mid-fielder Paul Fowler, then put in a free-kick that saw a back-header from Adam Cole just skim the top of the Slimbridge bar, before John Cant had some overdue success down the left for the visitors, lost his marker and saw his bullet drive on goal diverted away for a corner by a stretching defender.

After a 74th minute long diagonal free-kick from Town's Steve Winter was headed wide by Cole, at the other end, Johnny Meadows free-kick went through the defensive wall but was cleanly held by Rice.

Slimbridge should have got an equaliser with six minutes remaining but Joe Tustain's free-kick saw Jamie Inch leap for a free-header and put the ball the wrong side of the post from six yards out. This escape saw Town decide to shut up shop and the game ran down without further incident. Slimbridge felt frustrated at the end, but could not disagree that over the game, Town had stifled them in mid-field and edged the game accordingly.

These two teams meet again on Tuesday 1st May in the G.F.A. Challenge Trophy Final, but on the evidence of this match, it would be difficult to say who will start the match as favourites, although, the fact that it will be staged at Almondsbury Town's home ground here at Oaklands Park, will probably tip the odds in their favour against the Holders.

Almondsbury Town; D.Rice, S.Winter, B.Pope, M. Emery, S.Peters, P.Fowler, M.Mapstone, B.Andrews, J.Bishop (D.Bailey 80), A.Cole, P.Mckelvaney.

Slimbridge; R.Chandler,L.Sterling, J.Cole T.Haddock, Ashley Thomas, A.Axton, E.Ward (K.Johnstone 61), J.Meadows, M.Booth (J.Inch 79), W.Morford, J.Cant (J.Tustain 71)

Referee; Mr.D.Edwards (Abingdon)