

SPORT ITALIA HELLENIC LEAGUE –PREMIER DIVISION

(Played on Tuesday 19th December 2006)

COLWELL GOAL WINS IT FOR SWANS

CARTERTON 0 , SLIMBRIDGE 1

Robbie Colwell's 30th goal of the season in all competitions secured a valuable three points for Slimbridge at Kilkenny Lane, where the visitors were faced not only by a stubborn Carterton defence but by swirling fog that came and went all the match. Five minutes into the second half the game was dramatically halted and a discussion between the Match Officials about diminishing visibility came close to resulting in an abandonment, but miraculously the fog eased sufficiently to allow the game to proceed shortly after. Infuriatingly the fog disappeared totally, within minutes of the final whistle.

Craig Cole came into the starting line-up for the visitors, replacing the suspended Tim Haddock, with Johnny Meadows taking the Captains armband from the injured Leon Sterling, playing deeper than normal. Cole and Mike Green on the right and Jon Embling and John Cant on the left worked well to keep control of the flanks by and large, although the home side's Steve Avenell and Joe Wood needed some watching on the break. Generally though, Slimbridge had a consistently bigger share of ball possession throughout, but the determined Carterton defence often had nine or ten bodies behind the ball, leaving Avenell all alone up front.

A swift bout of interpassing between the Green Brothers, Mike and Matt nearly opened up the home defence, but the latter snatched a shot wide from eight yards. Shortly after Matt Green rapped the bar, getting on the end of another five pass movement into the box.

Ten minutes before half time, Carterton managed a four minute spell when they looked as if they might get their noses in front when Wood and Avenell in turn, put angled low drives wide of Ryan Chandler in the visitors goal. At the other end Kacey Johnstone put Colwell in with a trademark flick-on, but a low shot from just inside the area went agonisingly past the post.

It was Carterton's Wood that had the final effort of the half, with a delicate chip to the top corner of the visitors net, Chandler having to stretch to take.

On the resumption, and after the fog drama, Slimbridge seemed to be content with passing the ball around the field, probing for an opening, but Carterton were defending admirably, until a couple of corners in quick succession saw Colwell and Johnstone spurn half chances.

Johnstone was replaced by Fred Ward on 66 minutes, the popular mid-fielder making his first appearance after an ankle ligament injury sustained nine weeks ago in the F.A.Cup game against Chippenham Town.

Finally the Carterton defence was breached for what proved to be the winning goal on 75 minutes with a stunning piece of individuality from Colwell. The reliable Embling put in a cross to the hard-grafting forward who turned his man, ran on and slotted past Steve Benbow, the only time in the match that the genial goalkeeper had been exposed.

Danny Dixon did pull a half chance wide on 86 minutes as Carterton threw caution aside and piled forward in search of an equaliser, but with that exception Slimbridge looked comfortable on the ball, and ran out deserving winners on the night.

Carterton; S.Benbow, J.Stalker,C.Blakely, J.Butt, G.Smales, D.King (M.Duerden 85), D.Dixon, M.Threlfall, S.Avenell, G.Cornwall (B.Bryant 57), J.Wood.

Slimbridge: R.Chandler, Mike Green, J.Embling, C.Cole, Ashley Thomas, A.Axton, Matt Green, J.Meadows (E.Ward 66), K.Johnstone (J.Cole 80), R.Colwell, J.Cant (S.Badham).

Referee; Mr.C.Wicks (Reading)