

SPORT ITALIA HELLENIC LEAGUE –PREMIER DIVISION
(Played on Thursday 26th April 2007)

SWANS EASE TO ANOTHER VITAL WIN SLIMBRIDGE 3 , CARTERTON 0

Goals from Fred Ward, Johnny Meadows and Kacey Johnstone propelled Slimbridge to just one point behind Hellenic Premier Division Leaders, North Leigh, and now need seven points from their last four games to take the Championship. This is assuming the present League leaders take maximum points from their own last two games, and don't run up a cricket score on the way.

Mid-table Carterton started brightly with home goalkeeper Ryan Chandler having to push a low drive round his far post from a snap-shot on the turn from Danny Dixon. As things turned out, this proved to be the only real threat to Chandler's goal in the whole match, as a strong defensive performance by the home side proved the springboard for later mid-field dominance, and but for brave performances from Carterton skipper and central defender, Jerry Packham and goalkeeper Michael Delaney, the score-line would have been much bigger.

With Meadows, orchestrating some good passing movement from the middle of the pitch, Carterton started to struggle. John Cant crossed on ten minutes from the left with Delaney throwing himself to block Green's point blank shot, the ball re-bouncing out to Joe Tustain who hit the ball sweetly towards the top corner of the goal from the edge of the area. Somehow Delaney recovered and managed a full length tip round his far post for one of the finest saves seen at Wisloe Road in many a day.

A couple more efforts had to be dealt with by Delaney before Slimbridge took the lead on 23 minutes, when a tightly marked Johnstone flicked the ball into space and up popped Ward to run towards the left and place the ball inside Delaney's far post.

Carterton then managed a spell of parity in mid-field with some deft touches from Ady Holder finding their way to a hard-running Gary Cornwall, who had an interesting dual with Swans skipper Leon Sterling all the match, but could never quite manage to win out against the experienced defender.

On 37 minutes, Tustain put in Johnstone down the right, who sent a rising shot down off the rattling bar, but the incoming Cant with the goal at his mercy, fired over.

The last action of the half saw Ward make progress down the right, cut in and bring a good low save from Delaney.

Slimbridge came out for the second half looking determined enough, with Cant's low drive across the damp grass, following some early match light rain, signalling another period of assault on the Carterton goal.

Meadows lifted a cross from the right to Johnstone at the back post, but a firm header was well held by Delaney, with strong subsequent defending keeping out the home side for a while, until on 64 minutes the important second goal arrived. Cant's corner from the right found its way to an incoming Meadows at an awkward height, with the result that the mid-fielder improvised and chested the ball down, one bounce on the lively surface and into the net through a packed goalmouth.

Straight from the re-start, Carterton's David Boscrop weaved his way through, and it took a brilliant recovery tackle from Allton Axton to deny a shot at Chandler.

Back on the attack, Will Morford had replaced Ward and lost out to a good save from Delaney in a one-on-one situation, before heading a good cross, following a run up the right from Sterling, straight at Delaney.

The game was truly wrapped up seven minutes from time when Tustain fed the persistent Johnstone, who drew Delaney from a narrowing angle to push the ball towards the open goal with Packham getting a deflection but unable to keep the ball out of the net.

The game then ran down with the home side happy to pass the ball around after another, hard week's football.

Slimbridge; R.Chandler, L.Sterling, J.Cole (C.Cole 75), Matt Green (T.Haddock 85), Ashley Thomas, A.Axton, E.Ward (W.Morford 69), J.Meadows, K.Johnstone, J.Tustain, J.Cant.

Carterton; M.Delaney, W.Austin, G.Smailes, J.Packham, G.Cornwall, D.Dixon, D.King, A.Holder, P.Wyatt, D.Boscrop (W.Moscrop 68), M.Durow.

Referee; Mr. M. Niemirski (Swindon)