

SPORT ITALIA HELLENIC LEAGUE –PREMIER DIVISION

(Played on Tuesday 30th January 2007)

SLIMBRIDGE SUCCESS MARRED BY JOHNSTONE DISMISSAL

HIGHWORTH TOWN 0, SLIMBRIDGE 2

Will Morford gave Slimbridge a half-time lead and Kacey Johnstone ensured the points with a strike mid-way through the second half, but then let himself and his team-mates down by being sent off for the third time this season for needless violent conduct after a clash with Highworth's Andy Minturn six minutes from time.

Although Highworth started brightly enough, it was the visitors who created the first real chance of the game when Johnny Meadows found Fred Ward on the right and a flick in to Johnstone saw a volley go narrowly over the bar.

Morford then put in John Cant to run free, but he put his low shot just wide of an exposed Ian Gill in the home goal.

Highworth looked a confident side going forward with Justin Miller and Jamie Mills to the fore, but in all truth, seemed to lose their way on approaching the 18 yard line, where Ashley Thomas and Allton Axton were in commanding defensive form.

With Meadows and Haddock linking well in the visitors mid-field, Highworth were noticeably in retreat more and more as the first half proceeded. Haddock curled a free-kick over the defensive wall that flashed just wide from the edge of the area, before a long hanging cross from the right by skipper Leon Sterling forced Gill into turning over his own bar.

The breakthrough came a minute before the interval, Morford seizing a chance to break into the area and round the stranded Gill to slot home.

Slimbridge came out for the second half looking purposeful and Meadows brought a great save out of Gill with a rasping low drive after some deft footwork had fashioned the opening.

Highworth seemed to be galvanised for a while after this let-off and nearly managed to get back in the game when a Lee Spalding free-kick was headed wide at the back post by a late-arriving Minturn.

Meadows with a 'man-of-the-match' performance from central mid-field, then bossed the game with driving runs and solid tackling that seemed to inspire his side to raise their game all round, and chances came and went with Highworth grittily hanging on.

Morford put a back-header from a Ward free-kick just over and Johnstone drew another excellent save from Gill after good work from Haddock had created the opening.

Then on 68 minutes the vital second goal arrived when Morford's run and cross from the left was looped over the stretching Gill for Johnstone to neatly head in.

More pressure on the Highworth goal couldn't force another clear opening though, but did lead to the clash on 84 minutes when Johnstone seemed to take a dislike to Minturn's close attentions and resulted in the former being dismissed and the latter seeing yellow.

It has now been confirmed that star striker Robbie Colwell has two broken bones in his foot, sustained in last Saturday's F.A.Vase win, and is likely to be out for the rest of the season.

Highworth Town; I.Gill, R.Sproule, J.Reeves (T.Dingle 57), L.Spalding, A.Levett (M.Harper 76),A.Minturn, T.Joyce, J.Mills, M.Pratley, J.Miller, P.Cooper.

Slimbridge; R.Chandler, L.Sterling, J.Cole, T.Haddock, Ashley Thomas, A.Axton, E.Ward, J.Meadows, K.Johnstone, W.Morford, J.Cant.

Referee; Mr.B.Durie (Tewkesbury)