

SPORT ITALIA HELLENIC LEAGUE –PREMIER DIVISION

(Played on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2007)

**DOWN TO ONE WIN FROM LAST TWO GAMES**

**SLIMBRIDGE 1 , KIDLINGTON 1**

**Tim Haddock gave Slimbridge a first half lead, but an excellent performance from the promising young Kidlington side, earned them a point when Jermaine McSporrان found the net two minutes from time. This leaves the home side needing to beat Wantage Town at home on Saturday or win at AFC Wallingford on Monday to claim the Hellenic Premier Division Championship.**

After some early jousting , the visitors McSporrان , who was to prove a handful all evening for the home defence, tested Adam Thomas in the Slimbridge goal, in place of Ryan Chandler, serving a one match ban.

With Swans Manager Doug Foxwell making four changes from the starting line-up from Tuesday's match at Almondsbury Town, there was some uncertainty about the early Slimbridge play, but that didn't stop them from taking a 12<sup>th</sup> minute lead.

Fred Ward was set free down the right and drew goalkeeper Des Buckingham before unselfishly rolling the ball into the path of the incoming Haddock to side foot into the net.

Shortly after, Haddock fired just over the bar after being set up by Craig Cole, but by mid-half Kidlington had gained some forward momentum and only a couple of good saves from Adam Thomas kept the home side ahead. Chris Gilkes was first up, with a rising shot, well taken, before a corner from the right by McSporrان found its way to Michael Alexis to drive and Thomas did well to parry, but Morgan Williams blasted the rebound well over from ten yards.

Slimbridge came back but spurned a couple of opportunities, with Will Morford off target and Craig Cole losing the ball after working his way into space.

Just before the interval Adam Thomas was forced into a full stretch save from a strong low drive by Gilkes.

There was some tantalising, instinctive passing emanating throughout the attractive football-playing Kidlington side and the whole Slimbridge defence had to dig deep at times, with acting skipper and defender, Ashley Thomas in particularly good form leading by example. Mike Green took up the challenge and made a well-timed dis-possessing tackle on Alexis who was about to shoot from eight yards on 53 minutes.

The play was quick to say the least, with both sides playing good passing, often one touch football. John Cant took a return pass up the left and made ground, before a scooped ball in to the on-rushing Haddock, only narrowly went over the bar on the volley.

Back at the other end, Adam Thomas clung on to another forceful Gilkes effort, before Ross Casey, on for Matt Green, chipped just too long over the unguarded visitors net after winning the ball and seeing Buckingham off his line.

Four minutes from time, Kidlington's McSporrان rapped the bar with an inswinging corner that bounced away, but scored a deserved equaliser two minutes later when he burst through an off-side appealing home back line to round Thomas and net from an acute angle.

With time running out, there was just one opportunity for Slimbridge to make a concerted effort on the visitors goal, but Buckingham pulled off a good save in a congested area following a Cant corner.

Slimbridge will feel disappointed to have been pegged back with only two minutes left on the clock, but they competed well against a side, as Doug Foxwell said afterwards, 'have improved considerably as the season has gone on, and if they can keep up the improvement next season, will be up challenging themselves'.

**Slimbridge; Adam Thomas, Mike Green, J.Cole, T.Haddock, Ashley Thomas, A.Axton, E.Ward (J.Tustain 72), Matt Green (R.Casey 67), C.Cole, W.Morford, J.Cant.**

**Kidlington; D.Buckingham, T.Njogu, T.Hulbert-Thomas, D.Clare, L.Bolton, M.Alexis, J.McSporrان, D.Thomas, C.Gilkes (J.Kapral 90), M.Baker, M.Williams**

**Referee; Mr. J. Lyon (Oxford)**