

GLOS. F. A. CHALLENGE TROPHY - SECOND ROUND

(Played on Saturday 23rd December 2006)

SEVEN UP FOR RAMPANT SLIMBRIDGE

KINGS STANLEY 1 , SLIMBRIDGE 7

With the goals shared around, Slimbridge began their Festive Season programme by thumping a battling Kings Stanley for seven, to earn themselves a G.F.A Trophy Quarter-Final visit to fellow Hellenic Premier rivals, Fairford Town. The Glos. County League side's only response was a converted second half penalty from Tony Francis.

The result did not do justice to a good first half hour for the home side, who bravely clung on to their dream of a cup upset.

On 15 minutes, Kacey Johnstone drove wide after Fred Ward had opened up the home defence, and then headed wide at the back post after Ward again had made progress down the right. Making his first start after his long-term injury problems, Ward managed a full ninety minutes, and if that wasn't enough to please manager, Doug Foxwell, he opened the scoring on 33 minutes, heading over committed goalkeeper Richard King, following a flick-on from Johnstone after a mazy run down the left by John Cant.

The goal settled the visitors as, just prior to that, Stanley had spurned a golden opportunity to take the lead when a well-placed Mike Beckingham headed over the bar from a pull-back by Scott Cumberlin.

Once that first goal had gone in though, Stanley survived a couple more scares before 'skipper for the day', Tim Haddock made it 2-0, two minutes before the break, guiding an acute-angled glanced header into the net following a Matt Green corner from the left.

Six minutes into the second half another Matt Green corner saw Kacey Johnstone help on the ball to present Robbie Colwell with a simple close range header for goal number three.

Colwell then retired from the fray to be replaced by Craig Cole.

On the hour, Cant crossed for Johnstone to connect with a rasping volley that King did well to turn round the post, but two minutes later, with the Stanley defence creaking, Haddock drove in low through a crowded penalty area to help himself to his second goal, and the visitors' fourth.

On 64 minutes, a rare Stanley attack down the right saw Beckingham go over in the Slimbridge area after contact with Jamie Inch. The referee decided it was a penalty, but even hardened Stanley fans had a job to believe it. Anyway, that aside, Francis put his spot-kick comfortably past Chandler to get his side on the score-sheet.

Defender James Cole then came into his own, making valuable assists through runs and crosses from the left in the three goals Slimbridge added in the final sixteen minutes. On 74 minutes, Johnstone netted at the second attempt after his initial effort had not been held.

On 84 minutes, Matt Green benefited from a cut back to drive in across King, and then, two minutes from time, set up Craig Cole to head over the goalkeeper who grabbed it back from behind himself, but the alert Assistant Referee signalled that the ball had gone over the line, for goal number seven.

The good-natured banter among a healthy crowd of 165, many wearing festive headgear from Santa hats to reindeer antlers, was a sight to behold, but summed up a game played in good spirit even if the game didn't finish up being quite as competitive as some would have obviously liked!

Kings Stanley; R.King, A.Smith, A.Francis, D.Stephens, R.Tritton, P.Webster (M. Grenfell-Williams 66), S.Potter, M.McDermott, A.Mercer (L.Pritchard 45), S.Cumberlin (S.Prior 79), M.Beckingham.

Slimbridge; R.Chandler, Mike Green, J.Cole, T.Haddock, Ashley Thomas, J.Inch (M.Foxwell 82), E.Ward, Matt Green, K.Johnstone, R.Colwell (C.Cole 60), J.Cant (J.Embling 75).

Referee; Mr. C Young (Bristol)