

SPORT ITALIA HELLENIC LEAGUE –PREMIER DIVISION
(Played on Saturday 17th March 2007)

SLIMBRIDGE HIT THE SUMMIT WINDY CONDITIONS MAKE FOR LACKLUSTRE GAME SLIMBRIDGE 3 , THAME UNITED 0

First half goals from Craig Cole, Matt Green and Joe Tustain helped Slimbridge to a comfortable win over struggling Thame United at a blustery Wisloe Road. At the same time, overnight leaders North Leigh were being held by Almondsbury Town, putting the Swans into pole position, at least until Monday evening when North Leigh are due to visit Milton United.

The first half was virtually all one-way traffic as the home side took full advantage of a strong following wind to stamp their presence on the game, but it was the visitors who created the first chance, when a Nathan Jack, long diagonal free-kick into the box, saw Robbie Eason head over the bar.

Thame pressed again, but a huge wind-assisted Ryan Chandler clearance took one bounce over the visitors back-line, Craig Cole anticipating well to gently lob on-rushing goalkeeper Milan Barasic, recently signed from Oxford Quarry Nomads, and the home side were ahead on seven minutes.

The goalscorer then enjoyed a purple patch, busying himself, fetching and carrying until putting in a cross from the right that resulted in Tustain heading over from close range. John Cant was also displaying some deft touches on the left, but found difficulty in finding a good cross-ball in the swirling wind, but did manage to lift a free-kick into the box that saw the flight deceive Barasic, who managed a clearance with an out-stretched leg on 22 minutes.

With 31 minutes gone, Cant again caused confusion in the visitors box with a corner from the right and Matt Green was on hand to get a touch over the goal-line to double the Slimbridge lead, after the ball ran loose.

Green then worked his way into the box to set up Tustain, the ball seeming to get a bobble, shinning off Tustain the wrong side of the post.

This let-off seemed to inspire Thame, but good build-up play often foundered with the eighteen yard line in sight.

Just before the half-time whistle, Slimbridge took advantage of an unfortunate error from Barasic, who seemed to wait an age for a harmless looking ball to go dead for a goal-kick, but the alert Tim Haddock stole the ball away and quickly flicked the ball back across the open goal for Tustain to drive into the roof of an empty net to give the home side a three goal lead at the break.

The boot was on the other foot in the second half with Chandler also having trouble getting his clearances to the half way line, but made a couple of important saves to deny Ben Connelly and Matt Graves in turn, before seeing a lob come back off the post. Slimbridge did create a couple of good chances themselves with Craig Cole heading a Matt Green cross wide from close-in, and Fred Ward having a clear strike past a grounded Barasic, only to see the ball hacked off the goal-line by a retreating defender.

The game finished with Chandler saving from substitute Luke Ricketts, before the visitors Connelly saw a needless second yellow in added-on time, having to leave the pitch, and as it turned out, only seconds before the final whistle.

Slimbridge; R.Chandler, Mike Green, J.Cole (W.Morford 72), T.Haddock (J.Meadows 67), Ashley Thomas, A.Axton, Matt Green (E.Ward 59), R.Casey, J.Tustain, C. Cole, J.Cant.

Thame United; M.Barasic, M.Ansell, D.Hocking, G.Boult, R.Eason, M.Higgs, B.Connelly, A.Rhodes,N.Jack, J.DaSilva, M.Graves (L.Ricketts 66).

Referee; Mr.K.Howick (Oxford)