

Hellenic League Premier Division

Saturday 3 November 2012

Lambourn Sports 1-0 Slimbridge

The Swans were dumped out of the Bluefin Sports Challenge Cup by Division One West Side Lambourn Sports, who never allowed Slimbridge to settle into any sort of rhythm. and deserved their victory on the day. A defensive mix up in the first half saw Alex Toley gifted what proved to be the winner, and the second half dismissal of Sean Bennett topped off what proved a bad day at the office for Slimbridge, on an afternoon when nothing seemed to go right for them.

With Marv Roberts assuming the Manager's role in the absence of both Leon Sterling and Freddy Ward, and in a bitterly cold wind, the game started uneventfully, with the Swans having the only two efforts on goal in the first 15 minutes - A Chris Fower header from Liam Harding's corner which was high, and a Bennett turn and shot which provided an easy save for Lambourn Keeper Steve Howe.

The first opportunity for the home side came with 20 minutes on the clock, after Dominique Njoya was dispossessed down the Swans' left flank - Toley brought the ball down the wing, but then directed his cross way to close to Keeper Tom Betts, who had come into the side for Dave Evans, and the chance went begging.

Njoya and Fower then combined to set up Liam Harding, but his shot drifted just past the post as the visitors pressed.

It was typical of the afternoon as a whole that what proved to be the winning goal came from an error rather than through a good piece of play - with 24 minutes gone, a Lambourn through ball was not dealt with by Swans Captain Shane Anson, with his header falling to Toley, who gave Betts no chance when he eventually managed to get his shot away.

The Swans responded, and Fower created a goalmouth scramble when his header from Harding's corner was not gathered by Howe, but again the chance went begging.

With less than half an hour on the clock, Slimbridge were pushed into an unwanted reshuffle, when Dan Robinson was taken ill and had to be replaced by Dan Holloway, forcing a rearrangement of the back four to accommodate the change.

Adrian Mooney's free kick which came out to Chris Collin saw the last chance of the half go to the home side, but his effort was blocked, and Lambourn took their goal advantage into the break.

Whatever was said by Roberts and Assistant for the Day Dave Evans at half time looked as if it was going to pay dividends, as the start of the second period saw the best chances of the game for Slimbridge - Anson, Holloway and Alex Higgs all saw efforts go close, before Fower blasted over after a cross came to him on the edge of the Lambourn box.

As Slimbridge pressed, a Will Wellon Free Kick found it's way to Stuart Gates on the hour mark, but Gates shot wide when well placed.

The momentum changed shortly after that though, as the visitors were reduced to ten men after a flare up on the edge of their penalty box. Bennett and Toley came together after a tackle by the Swans' man, and a scuffle ensued. Bennett was dismissed and Toley booked by Referee Matthews.

As the game entered the last ten minutes, there were chances for both sides, with Harding and Gates going close for Slimbridge, and Collin somehow missing a shot after Betts has miscued a clearance - his shot on 84 minutes cleared Betts, but also the goal by a large margin.

The last chances of the afternoon went to Slimbridge, with Roberts' header deep into stoppage time being headed off the line, but Lambourn held on for a victory.

Slimbridge are back at Wisloe Road for their next two games - next Saturday when they entertain Highmoor Ibis (3.00pm), and then Newbury in the next round of the Floodlit Cup the following Tuesday (7.45

Team: Betts, Robinson (Holloway 30), Njoya, Anson, Wellon, Bennett, Williams, Harding, Higgs (Gates 56), Fower (Roberts 71), Coombes

Supporters Man of the Match: Liam Harding