

Hellenic League Premier Division

Saturday 9 March 2013

Slimbridge 3-5 Marlow

it will be little consolation to Slimbridge that both teams contributed to, by common agreement, by far the best football match seen at Wisloe Road this season, or that they had more than matched the runaway Hellenic Premier League leaders for the majority of this highly entertaining encounter. After Slimbridge rallied from falling behind and then clawing their way into the lead, three late goals from the visitors and Champions-Elect saw Marlow firstly level the scores and then take the points at Wisloe Road this afternoon, with the Swans coming away with nothing to show for their efforts.

An even first half had seen Ian Davies' strike cancelled out by Marv Roberts' equaliser with the sides level at the break. Marlow regained the lead early on in the second period through Marcus Mealing, but two more strikes from Roberts saw the Swans leading with just over ten minutes remaining. Danny Lingwood, Louis Cordice and Ray Spence then all netted for Marlow, with the penalty incident which led to Spence's goal seeing the dismissal of Will Wellon to cap a miserable finish to the game for Slimbridge, who remain in fifth spot.

Marlow started the game well, and nearly took the lead with just two minutes on the clock - Chris Ovenden went on a run which took him across the Slimbridge box, and he played in Spence, whose shot hit Lee Martin's near post and went behind for a goal kick.

Marlow had the best of the early exchanges, with some neat passing moves, but they were matched by the home side, who worked hard to close their opponents down, and the game settled into a battle of midfield attrition, with chances few and far between.

Slimbridge's best opportunity came on 13 minutes, when Roberts turned his man, but was unable to get any power into his effort and Iain McCulley made an easy save at the foot of his post.

Marlow took the lead a minute later, when the ball fell to Ian Davies, who was given far too much room in the Slimbridge box, and he drilled the ball past Martin to put the visitors ahead.

Their lead only lasted six minutes, however, as Slimbridge struck back. Jamie Martin may have a case that his cross after a run down the right flank was going to drift into the net as it sailed over McCulley, but Roberts was on hand to make sure from a couple of inches out to level things up.

The goal saw a change in momentum in the game, as the home side took the game to Marlow, and Tom Speers was unlucky on two occasions with headers from corners, the second one drifting agonisingly the wrong side of the post as Slimbridge created a stream of good chances for themselves.

The game opened up, and chances were beginning to come for both sides - Mealing saw his free kick, awarded after he was fouled by Jamie Martin slide past Martin's post, while at the other end, Roberts held off his marker, but was unable to find the target after making space for himself to have a shot on goal.

The nearest this period of play came to a further score was at the Slimbridge end of the pitch on 39 minutes, when Spence's tricky run saw him hammer the ball against the Swans' crossbar, but the half ended with the scoreline even, after a very entertaining 45 minutes of football from both sides.

Marlow again made a snappy start to the second period, and were swiftly ahead again. Marcus Mealing picked up the ball on the edge of the Slimbridge box as Marlow pressed, and his shot gave Martin no chance, to regain the lead for the visitors.

A minute later, Marlow should have added to their tally when a run and cross from Spence caused no end of problems in the Slimbridge penalty

area, the play finally breaking down when James Suarez shot just over as the ball broke to him in the box.

On 53 minutes, the sides were level again. McCulley scuffed a clearance which fell to Dan Holloway half way in the Marlow half. He slid the ball past the last defender for Roberts to run onto, and the Swans' skipper netted to notch his second of the game.

Less than ten minutes later, Slimbridge were ahead for the first time in the game. Holloway and Roberts combining again in a carbon copy of the Swans' second goal, which again saw Roberts hold his nerve and finish sweetly past McCulley, after being played in by Holloway's sliderule pass.

As was to be expected, Marlow continued to push the home side hard, and nearly equalised when Spence forced a good save from Martin after a run down the left flank. Spence went to ground as the ball was loose following the save, but despite loud Marlow appeals, Referee Hunt waved play on.

As Marlow continued to press, a series of corners saw them draw level on 79 minutes - Martin went to claim the ball as it came across, but fumbled the catch, and Danny Lingwood was on hand to mop up and score Marlow's third of the afternoon.

The last ten minutes saw constant pressure from the visitors, and they nicked the points with two further scores - Spence's pinpoint cross was nodded home by Louis Cordice on 84 minutes to put Marlow back in front, before the game ended in miserable fashion for Slimbridge.

Davies was chasing a through ball with Will Wellon, and went to ground as the two tussled in the penalty box. The Referee awarded a penalty to Marlow, with Wellon receiving an inevitable red card as the last defender. Spence took the kick and placed the ball to Martin's left, giving him no chance to notch Marlow's fifth.

There was still time for Marlow to create another chance in stoppage time, but Simieon Howell saw his effort come back into play off the Slimbridge post, and Marlow played out time comfortably to take the points.

The Swans travel to Abingdon on Tuesday night (7.45pm) before making the trip to Ardley United next Saturday 3.00pm)

Team: L. Martin, Rutter, Njoya, Wellon, Speers, Cole, Maderner, Ward, Roberts, J. Martin (Higgs 70), Holloway (Bernard 77)

Goals: Roberts 20, 53, 62

Supporters' Man Of The Match: Marv Roberts