

Hellenic League Premier Division

Thursday 9 August 2012

Shrivenham 0-2 Slimbridge

Two goals in a five minute second half spell ensured the Swans made a solid start to their UHlsport Hellenic Premier League campaign last night at Barrington Park. Following a goalless first period, strikes from Alex Higgs on 55 minutes, and Shaun O'Connor five minutes later, ensured the start Leon Sterling wanted for his side ahead of their FA Cup trip to Cove on Saturday. With several new signings on display, the new starters as well as the subs can all be pleased with their performances in their first competitive game for the club.

The season very nearly started in sensational style for the visitors - with only 14 seconds on the clock, a Shrivenham clearance from their own box found it's way to Shane Anson, whose piledriver shot was wide by no more than the width of a post.

The home side responded, with Greg Higgs' header playing in Michael Silvanus who shot over the bar, and Bradley Gill's turn and shot presenting a simple stop for Swans' Keeper Dave Evans.

As the game settled down, good interplay between Dean Turner and Chris Fower were beginning to cause problems for the hosts, and it was only an overplayed pass which led to the breakdown of a good move on 16 minutes. As the Swans upped the tempo, the chances began to come their way - in the space of five minutes Fred Ward, Alex Higgs, Fower and Shaun O'Conner all were involved in chances, but were unable to take advantage.

Slimbridge didn't have things all their way, though, and it took a superb blocking tackle from Jamie Inch to block Gill's shot, after he had been played in by Higgs, as the game hit the half hour mark.

The Swans came back, and Fower's header following Ward's cross drifted just past the post on 31 minutes, before Alex Higgs turned his man nicely in the Shrivenham box, but Garry Eggleton in the home goal sneaked the ball off his toe as he shaped to shoot.

The final decent chance of the first period came on 41 minutes for the home side, when Andrew Lynham found himself in space on the edge of the Slimbridge box, but blasted his shot high and wide to leave the game even at the Half.

With the Swans now playing down the slope, they were caught by surprise early on, and it took another well timed block from Inch to block Greg Higgs' effort with just 24 seconds on the second half clock. The home side continued to apply some pressure, and Taylor Gill's free kick, awarded after a foul by Will Wellon, drifted just over the bar on 49 minutes.

Leon Sterling made his first change five minutes into the second period, with Liam Harding, who had taken a heavy knock just before Half-time, being replaced by Tom Paterson.

Five minutes later, the deadlock was broken as Slimbridge took the lead - O'Connor's shot was blocked in the Shrivenham box, but not cleared, Fower's follow up effort was also blocked, and the ball fell eventually to Alex Higgs, who rammed the ball past Eggleton to give the visitors the lead. It was Higgs' last action of the game, as he was replaced by Stuart Gates, and spent the rest of the game with an ice pack on his leg in the dugout.

The Swans doubled their advantage in the 60th minute in their next serious attack - Fred Ward's probing cross was met by Fower, whose header cannoned back into play off the Shrivenham bar. O'Connor was on hand to drill home the Swans' second of the night.

With the replacement of O'Connor with Dan Robinson on 67 minutes, the last period of the game was dominated by Fower, who, despite numerous attempts which seems to be getting closer and closer, could not get the goal that his performance deserved. Gates and Robinson were creating

some decent chances with their runs, and both can be pleased with their contributions.

With three minutes remaining, Tom Speers put in a towering header from Ward's corner, only to see the bar again deny the visitors - the ball fell down in the box to Tom Paterson, but he couldn't keep his effort down and the chance was lost.

Team: Evans, Anson, Wellon, Inch, Speers, Ward, Turner, Harding (Paterson 50), Fower, Higgs (Gates 55), O'Connor (Robinson 67)

Goals: Higgs 55, O'Connor 60

Supporters Man Of The Match: Shane Anson