

Hellenic League Premier Division

Sunday 6 January 2013

Thame United 1-2 Slimbridge

An own goal and a hotly disputed penalty secured three more important points for Slimbridge after their visit to Thame United which keeps the Swans firmly in second place in the Hellenic League Premier Division.

Thame, who had previously only lost one home game at the Impressive ASM Stadium, nearly took a second minute lead when Ben Gray's shot was cleared off the line by Shane Anson following a corner kick.

Five minutes later Swans Keeper Adam Clatworthy had to be quick off his line to deny Gray a second opportunity.

As the Swans settled, the first controversial incident of the afternoon arose when Thame skipper Adam West slipped in the centre circle and was dispossessed of the ball by Liam Harding who seemed to be clear but referee Simon Parbery amazingly awarded a free kick against Harding which upset the Swans bench and let the hosts off the hook.

A right wing cross by Stuart Gates after 18 minutes looked destined for Hardings head but the latter failed to connect, however just 2 minutes later the Swans were in front.

Fred Ward's free kick into the Thame penalty area was headed on by Marvyn Roberts and then by Tom Speers and as the unfortunate Nick Rhodes stuck his leg out the ball shot off his knee and past the helpless Lee Farrow in the home goal.

Roberts nearly increased their lead two minutes later when his low shot was pushed round the post by Farrow.

Harding had a good shot go just over the bar as slimbridge piled pressure on the home goal and a good move involving Roberts and Harding ended with Speers firing over.

At the other end Connor Hayes and Ben Gray combined well setting up Daniel West who shot just over.

Clatworthy did well in the visitor's goal to get down low and hold an excellent shot from Nial Hodgkiss.

Slimbridge finished the half well as Jack Rutter's free kick was chested down by Roberts who's resulting shot was pushed round the post for a corner kick by Farrow.

Stuart Gate's corner was headed against the crossbar by Speers as the referee blew the half time whistle.

Thame came out fighting straight from the start of the second period as the Swans defence were put to the sword.

First Ben Connelly's impressive strike from 18 yards rebounded back from the crossbar and then West's shot went just over.

Luke Ricketts was next to test the swans as his rasping drive was well held by Clatworthy.

Thame got the reward for all their pressure and equalised when in the 66th minute Ben Gray shot high into the Swans net from 6 yards following a corner kick.

Five minutes later the Swans regained the lead when Gates ran into the penalty area and was adjudged to have been tripped by Matt Willett, referee Parberry pointed to the spot, a decision which was furiously contested by Thame's player's and officials but Gates kept his cool and got back on his feet to smash the spot kick low past Farrow.

Thame's frustration started to show as they tried in vain to get back into the game and referee Parbery had to separate a melee right in front of the Dug-outs after a dust up between Gates and Connelly which resulted in cautions for the pair.

Manager Leon Sterling introduced all 3 subs during the last 25 mins in a bid to bring some fresh legs on the heavy surface, Chris Fower, Dean Barnard, and Alex Parrott replacing Holloway, Roberts and Cole.

As the game went into stoppage time Thame really should have equalised when substitute Matt Johnston was faced with an open goal but he somehow managed to head the ball over the bar.

Three valuable points for the Swans and with two home games coming up against Oxford City Nomads on Saturday and Abingdon Town on Tuesday Evening, manager Sterling will be looking to further cement their place in second spot.