

Hellenic League Premier Division

Saturday 8 September 2012

Slimbridge 1-1 Wokingham & Emmbrook

It would be difficult for anyone to argue that the end result of this game was unfair, as the Swans were held by an impressive Wokingham & Emmbrook side, but the manner of the way the game unfolded was a source of great frustration to the home side. Leading by a tenth minute Dan Holloway penalty, Slimbridge saw a Dean Turner header which would have sealed the game controversially ruled out ten minutes from time.

Inevitably, it felt, three minutes into stoppage time, a defensive mix up saw Will Wellon put the ball into his own net to level the scores and delight the visitors at the final whistle. The result sees Slimbridge slip to fifth in the UHlsport Hellenic Premier League, albeit with games in hand on all but one of their rivals.

In a cagey start from both sides, the first 20 minutes only produced two incidents of note - with ten minutes on the clock, a smart turn by Chris Fower saw the Swans' man felled in the Wokingham box, and Dan Holloway drilled home the penalty to put the home side ahead. The advantage was nearly doubled on 18 minutes, when Jack Gibbs' attempted clearance header from Liam Harding's cross drifted far to close to the corner of his own post and bar for the comfort of the visitors.

On the half hour, Wokingham had their two best chances of the half in quick succession - firstly Elliott Rosforty volleyed wide as he met a good cross from Chris Newlove, and then Newlove himself saw his own effort drift just wide of the Swans' post in a good period of pressure for the visitors.

Slimbridge were creating their own chances though, and play had to be stopped when a clearance rifled into Dan Holloway's face after a good run and cross down the right flank from Fower on 36 minutes.

In the last few minutes of the half, tempers flared as Nick Bateman was caught by a clumsy challenge from Tom Speers, but the resulting free kick was cleared by Will Wellon. As Shane Anson completed the clearance, a late challenge by Bateman earned the Wokingham man a booking, as temperatures rose.

Just on half time, Wokingham had an optimistic shout for a penalty turned down by Referee Neil Templey, who blew for half time as Speers and Dave Bellis tussled in the Swans' box., and the home side went into the break still ahead.

Slimbridge showed more purpose at the start of the second period, and Harding nearly doubled the advantage on 49 minutes, with a superb run and shot down the Wokingham left flank. Unfortunately, the ball hit the outside of the post and went behind for a goal kick.

Fower missed a good opportunity to create something on 53 minutes, when he elected to shoot rather than play in Harding on the edge of the Wokingham box, and saw his effort blocked by a good tackle.

After Wokingham had created their best chance of the game on 67 minutes - Tom Williams' header drifting just wide with Dave Evans beaten - a mistake by Evans saw the ball scrambled away after he failed to collect a through ball properly, and the home side survived.

Harding saw another shot drift just wide after the ball was cleared to him from a corner on 72 minutes, before a neat 1-2 between Tywman and Fower saw Twyman shoot straight into the arms of Wokingham Keeper Garry Aulsberry as another good chance went begging.

Slimbridge thought that they had clinched the game on 80 minutes, when Jamie Martin's mazy run and cross saw Dean Turner nod home emphatically, but, after initially awarding the goal, Referee Templey reversed his decision after consulting his linesman, and brought play back for a Wokingham Free Kick in the Slimbridge half of the pitch.

As the game entered what was to become five additional minutes, Wokingham finally got their equaliser. Chasing a through ball, neither Speers or Wellon dealt with the ball as they were put under pressure, and a mix up saw the ball bounce past Evans off Wellon's knee to level the scores.

It could have been worse for the home side, as Wellon was penalised for pulling back his man as Wokingham pressed for an unlikely winner, but Evans saved the resulting free kick to maintain parity at the final whistle.

The Swans are back at Wisloe Road for the next two Saturdays, entertaining Flackwell Heath, who are well in the mix at the top of the League next weekend, before Kidlington pay a visit the following weekend.

Team: Evans, Anson, Robinson, Wellon, Speers, Ward (Paterson 58), Tywman, Harding, Fower, Nash (Martin 61), Holloway (Turner 76)

Goals: Holloway (Pen) 10

Supporters Man Of The Match: Liam Harding