

Western League Premier Division

Sunday 8 February 2015

Street 1-0 Slimbridge AFC

Harry Baker's header ten minutes into the second half may have been the first goal that the Swans have conceded in 2015, but it proved enough to settle a fiery and combative battle between two sides pushing hard at the top of the Toolstation Western league table. The result sees Slimbridge drop to fifth position, with Street just behind them on goal difference, although the Somerset side have played six games more than the Swans.

The tone of the game was set within the first quarter of an hour, which saw Dale Hunt and Harry Foster both in Referee Richard Corp's book, for crunching tackles on Sam Turl and Paul Fahy respectively. In addition, Ben Amothar and the Street Bench also received warnings at the home side came out of the traps at speed. The best chances on the pitch however, had gone to the visitors at this point - Adam Mace's shot which brought a save from Street Keeper Ben Dancey, and then Jamie Hammond's neat strike after being put through by Jamie Martin, which was ruled out for offside.

Martin went close on 23 minutes with a header from Sam Turl's cross, and Jamie Hammond shot wide after picking up Fahy's through ball as the visitors made the best of their possession.

Street had the chance of the half just after the half hour mark, when Baker somehow managed to slide the ball the wrong side of the post as he pounced on Jack Malone's header back across the box.

The Swans were making progress down the flanks, but too often their crosses were too close to Dancey and good chances were not capitalised on.

Just before the break, Ryan Thwaite was penalised for obstruction on the edge of the Slimbridge box, but Mark Salter's Free Kick was again the wrong side of the post to see the sides go in goalless at the half.

The hosts started the second period at a higher tempo, and started to create some good chances. Ryan Thwaite was forced into an early goalline clearance, and Dave Evans make a great point blank save to deny Tom Hill, while at the other end, Hammond shot wide when through on goal after beating the Street offside trap.

The crucial goal came on 55 minutes - Slimbridge failed to clear a Free Kick, and Baker finished off a game of head tennis to put the home side ahead.

Street continued to press, and Hill had two good opportunities in the five minutes after the goal, missing the target with both efforts.

With the tension being cranked up higher, the Slimbridge bench were next to receive words from Mr Corp, as the tackles continued to fly in on opponents. In between, there were some good chances created by both sides - Malone brought another good save from Evans on 76 minutes, while Sean Lawson was off target as Slimbridge looked to get on the scoresheet.

The last ten minutes saw two good chances for the visitors, but Freddy Ward's efforts on both occasions were just wide of the Street left hand post.

As the battles continued all over the pitch, Dave Evans talked his way into the book before a flare up in the second minute of stoppage time saw Street's Rob Ashdown and Slimbridge's Dean Turner see red after a clash which saw players from both sides involved as tempers boiled over. It was a disappointing end to the afternoon for the visitors, who travel to Willand Rovers next Saturday (3.00pm) for another League encounter.

Prior to that, Second Place Bristol Manor Farm come to Wisloe Road this Tuesday (10th February, 7.30pm) for a highly anticipated league clash.

Team: Evans, Turl, Ryan Thwaite, Freeman, Rich Thwaite, Turner, Fahy, Parrott, Martin (Odiero 74), Hammond (Lawson 58), Mace (Ward 62)

Supporters Man of the Match: Alex Parrott