

AFC Totton 1-2 Slimbridge

Saturday 26th August 2017

Swans' Manager Freddy Ward said this week that he thought that his young side would surprise a few teams this season, and so it proved, as Slimbridge came away from the Testwood Stadium with three precious points snatched from a Totton side who had won all of their League and Cup games this season. The Swans got two goals on the board early, although Totton pulled one back with the last kick of the first half. The second period saw Slimbridge defend resolutely and bravely, and see out a feisty clash which saw both sides end the game with ten men.

Totton created the first decent opportunity with four minutes on the clock, when Nathaniel Sherborne's dangerous shot was well dealt with by Swans' Keeper Ollie Hall, and the hosts continued to press, with Winger Curtis Young, who had a great afternoon for Totton, just off target in the ninth minute.

However, any thoughts that Totton had of a straightforward afternoon were shattered in the tenth minute - Henry Birkett lofted a superb ball into Dean Turner, and he saw his effort well saved by Stags Keeper Shane Murphy. However, Sam Turl found acres of space in the box, to meet Joe Stokes' corner with a bullet header and put the visitors into the lead.

Eight minutes later it was two - this time the corner taker was Adam Mace and the head belonged to Swans Skipper Alex Hoyle, but, again, the Totton back line allowed far too much room as the corner came over and Hoyle made no mistake to double the advantage.

Slimbridge were doing well to keep ace goalscorer Craig Feeney quiet, but he nearly made his mark on 21 minutes, when a foul by Hoyle brought his run to an end. However, Totton failed to take advantage of a free kick in a good position, and the ball was cleared.

As the game approached the half hour mark, Totton finally seemed to settle, and Young was just off target with another effort following a mazy run that saw him beat three Swans defenders.

Sherborne was next to try his luck, but was way too high with ten minutes remaining in the half.

Slimbridge hit back, and Nathan Payne was unlucky with a strike just off target after good work by Turl and Stokes. A minute later, Stokes took a nasty looking knock on his ankle and was replayed by Max Harper-Emerson.

Totton scored with the very last kick of the half, when a free kick was allowed to go too far into the Swans' box, Stuart Mott beat Hall to bring the home side back into the game.

As expected, Totton came out of the blocks at the start of the second period, as they pressed for an equaliser, and the Slimbridge performance as a consequence was a lot more disjointed - Sherborne's third decent effort was again just wide, before Hall made another superb stop from Feeney. The resulting corner saw the ball end up in the Slimbridge net, but Hall had been fouled as he went to collect the cross, and Referee Colin Hubbard rightly ruled the goal out.

On 62 minutes, a scuffle between Totton's Curtis Young and Dean Turner saw handbags in the Slimbridge penalty area, but the Referee, who appeared unsighted, settled for speaking to both Captains before allowing play to continue without punishment for either player.

Seven minutes later, another Totton effort was ruled out for offside, and the home supporters began to take their frustrations out on the officials, as temperatures continued to rise on the pitch.

With 72 minutes played, Harper-Emerson was felled by Charlie Gunson as he broke clear. Gunson picked up his second yellow card and the hosts were down to ten men.

Totton's closest effort in the final stages of the game saw Alex Hoyle clear a Oluwatobi Adekunle effort off the line with just over ten minute remaining.

As the game hit ninety minutes, Harrison Reeves picked up a second yellow card, and so both sides ended the game with ten men.

After four agonising minutes, the final whistle saw scenes of great celebration both on and off the pitch as the Swans celebrated their first ever victory at Totton.

Slimbridge return to Thornhill Park on Monday, when Shortwood United are the visitors (3.00pm)

Team: Hall, Turl, Mace, Thwaite, Hoyle, Twyman, Turner, Birkett, Stokes (Harper-Emerson 44), Nathan Payne (Reeves 58), Thomas (Luke Payne 73)

Supporters Man of the Match: Sam Turl