

Slimbridge 1-3 Swindon Supermarine

Saturday 7th April 2018

The Swans had playoff chasing Supermarine on the rack for the first half hour of this game, and took an early lead through an Edji Mbunga penalty kick. However, after missing a raft of chances, three goals in the last nine minutes before the break from the visitors put them in charge of the game, and they comfortably played out the second half to take the points back to Wiltshire.

With Manager Freddy Ward selecting himself in the team and the rare sight of Jack Twyman as a central defender, Slimbridge started very brightly, and had the best of the early play. On three minutes Mbunga played in Marley Thomas, whose effort was too high. Two minutes later, Joe Wilton chased down a misdirected back header, and won a corner. When the ball came out to Ward on the edge of the box, his effort was again off target.

With seven minutes gone, the home side took a deserved lead - Mbunga broke well down the right, and brought two superb stops in sequence from Marine Keeper Josh Hill. As the ball returned to Mbunga for the third time, he was felled by Ryan Morgan and Referee Darren Wilding pointed to the spot. With regular penalty taker Adam Mace on the bench, Mbunga stepped up and drilled the kick home to put the Swans ahead.

On 11 minutes, Mbunga had another effort blocked, and in the scramble to follow up the chance, Joe Wilton picked up a knock and had to be replaced - Jamie Martin took his place.

Still Slimbridge pressed, and Thomas was denied by an offside flag after a pinpoint pass from Henry Birkett as the clock hit 15 minutes.

Mbunga had a couple more chances in this sustained spell of pressure, but the second goal stubbornly refused to arrive, as Marine had their first effort on 22 minutes, when Connor Thompson and Callum Parsons combined for an effort which was deflected for a corner.

Suddenly, Marine looked as if they had woken up, and following a short corner, Joe Selman's header brought a good stop from Ollie Hall as the visitors started to exert some pressure of their own.

Thomas and Mbnuga continued to combine well for the Swans though, and Mbunga was again just off target just before the half hour, while, at the other end, it took a superb tackle from Twyman to stop Brad Gray when he looked to be through on goal.

On 36 minutes, Marine pulled things level - a Selman cross was superbly swept home by Gray to record the equaliser.

As the visitors again upped a gear, it took a magnificent stop from Hall to deny Brad Hooper, but the momentum had definitely swung to the visitors.

With two minutes to go to half time, the Swans conceded twice - firstly, Thompson headed home Callum Parsons' cross, and then Selman was nicked in the box by Sam Turl, with Hooper converting the resulting spot kick.

The second period was a much scrappier affair - Gray and Hooper continued to pressurise Hall and his back line, and chances for the home side were few and far between - Jamie Martin hit the Marine post in the 77th minute, and there was a brief flurry of Slimbridge pressure in stoppage time, but Marine comfortably played out the second period to take the points.

The Swans have three more games to come this week - they visit Champions Taunton Town on Tuesday (7.45pm), before Larkhall Athletic visit Thornhill Park on Thursday (7.45pm). On Saturday, the Swans make the short trip to Lodge Road to visit Yate Town (3.00pm)

Team: Hall, Turl, Payne, Pring, Twyman, Turner, Birkett (Manning 75), Ward, Mbunga (Mace 85), Wilton (Martin 14), Thomas

Supporters Man of the Match: Luke Payne