

Slimbridge 4-0 Barnstaple Town

Saturday 25th January 2020

Swans victory maintains play-off hopes

A brace of penalties from Sol Wanjau-Smith and a brace from Rhys Sarson in a dominant first half performance from the Swans as they remain in sight of the play-off positions in seventh. Slimbridge manager Lee Driver-Dickerson kept faith with the starting eleven that secured a point last week on the road, promoting Under-18 defender Owen Giles to the bench.

The home side looked in dominant mood from the start, Wanjau-Smith getting behind the Barnstaple full back on the left and cutting in on the by-line only to be tripped just outside the box earning a free kick that was cleared by the visitors defence. Michael Hunphreys tried his luck from range for the visitors but his shot floated wide.

The Swans gained another early free kick on the edge of the box when James Spruce was tripped as he cut in from the right wing. Wanjau-Smith took the kick and failed to make it past the wall, Mike Ford picked up the clearance and his effort sailed wide from 30 yards.

Barnstaple had a small pocket of pressure gaining a corner which the home defence dealt with; Javan Wright hit a long range shot wide as the visitors appeared to have left their shooting boots at home.

A good piece of defending by Town denied the Swans an opening goal when Sarson beat keeper Steven Oliver but Frazer Clark did well to slide in and clear the goal bound effort.

The opening goal arrived a couple of minutes later when Slimbridge were awarded a penalty on 14 minutes. Adam Price was pulled down inside the box by Oliver and Wanjau-Smith stepped up to score.

Five minutes later the home side were awarded a second penalty when Wanjau-Smith was pushed over inside the box having cut in from the left wing. He coolly stepped up and scored his fifth penalty in the last three games and extending Slimbridge's lead.

The home side continue to dominate the game in midfield and it wasn't too long before they got onto the score sheet again. Myron Turner passed the ball to Sarson on the edge of the box and with his back to goal turned and slotted the ball past Oliver into the far corner of the net with just over 30 minutes of the game played.

A fourth goal came on 36 minutes Spruce layed the ball off to Aaron Nesbeth just inside the box who forced a good save from Oliver but the rebound fell into the path of Sarson making no mistake to score from 10 yards out.

Despite a four goal lead the Swans continued to look for more goals, Spruce's curling effort from the right drifting just wide of the top corner. Spruce was then denied by a last gasp tackle from Liam Gregory as he was about to shoot.

The second half saw the home side sit back on their lead without the urgency in their game compared to the first half. Sarson close range shot was saved by Oliver when through on goal while at the other end Lewis Adams a spectator for much of the first period pulled off a good stop from former Slimbridge striker Saddam Bello from 20 yards.

Despite taking their foot of the gas, Slimbridge still created a few chances Sarson hit an effort wide then Nesbeth cleared the bar from 15 yards after latching onto Spruce's cross from the right.

On 73 minutes Swans captain Joel White pulled off a great tackle on Stuart Bowker inside the box to deny a goal scoring opportunity. A couple of minutes later Barnstaple found their task much harder when Humphreys picked up his second yellow card leaving the visitors down to 10 men.

Will Peck had a couple of half chances late on, his cross from the left being cut out by Oliver and a few moments later a header sailed wide of the visitors goal.

A professional performance overall from the Swans who consolidate seventh place in the league only three points outside the play-offs to continue their best season so far in the Southern League. Next week sees a long trip down to Devon to face Bideford before hosting second placed Frome Town the following weekend in what is expected to be an entertaining encounter.

Slimbridge: Adams, Nesbeth, Peck, Ford, White, Jones (Giles 79), Spruce, Price, Sarson, Turner (Horrell 75), Wanjau-Smith (Martin 68)

Subs not used: Chambers

Attendance: 82

Supporters man of the match: Rhys Sarson