

Melksham Town 6-3 Slimbridge

Saturday 17th August 2019

Slimbridge open season with defeat in nine goal thriller

Injuries and defensive mistakes proved costly as Slimbridge fell to defeat on the opening day of the season away to Melksham Town in a thrilling game of football. Conceding three goals in two ten minutes spells in each half proved fatal after the Swans got off to a flying start scoring early on. Slimbridge lined up with one change from last week's FA Cup victory with Aaron Nesbeth coming in to replace Will Peck, Christien Turner and Rhys Sarson passed late fitness tests to keep their places in the team.

It was the Swans that started the game the better team, Leighton Tuodolo with the ball on the right playing it in to Rhys Sarson in the middle he chested the ball down, pulling it back into the path of Myron Turner who fired home from 15 yards out to give the visitors a 2nd minute lead. Slimbridge continued to play the ball well frustrating the home side at times, Lewis Adams making couple of easy stops in the Slimbridge goal.

A mistake on 18 minutes brought the home side back in the game, Mike Ford tripping on the ball 25 yards out allowing the wiley Luke Ballinger to take the ball run through the defence and slot home into the bottom right corner. Two minutes later a mix up in the Slimbridge defence lead to a poor clearance that fell to Jack Ball who presented with an open goal chipped the ball over the bar.

Melksham took the lead on 25 minutes Adams making a great save from Ball's initial shot however Callum Demkiv was on hand to follow up and slam the ball past a stranded Adams. Four minutes later Adams was caught out of his goal and Ball took advantage chipping in from 40 yards to extend the home sides lead.

As half time approached Slimbridge started to get back in the game Jamie Martin forcing a save from home keeper Liam Kingston. The Swans then lost centre half Christien Turner who despite passing a fitness test was struggling with injury so came off to be replaced by Will Peck.

This failed to disrupt the visitors who pulled a goal back in style as Myron Turner held the ball up well laying it off to Tuodolo and his cross fell nicely to Sarson chesting the ball down and volleying it into the net off the crossbar leaving Kingston no chance.

Adams kept Slimbridge in the game at the close of the first half making two decent saves first from Ball and then from Ballinger.

Slimbridge made a tactical change at half time, Ryan Bekinsale coming on to replace Mike Ford in the middle. Tom Handley had a great chance early on putting his shot inches wide of the post after some good linkup play between Sarson and Martin up front.

Adams was quick out claiming the ball at the feet of Demkiv after being played in by Ballinger with a defence splitting pass.

Slimbridge made their final substitution on the hour mark, Sol Wanjau-Smith making his first competitive start for the Swans replacing Aaron Nesbeth who had taken a knock a few minutes earlier.

A free kick to the visitors a few minutes later saw Wanjau-Smith step up and place the ball into the top left corner of the goal however Kingston pulled off an acrobatic dive to palm the ball away to safety. With 15 minutes remaining the Swans were still in the game, Sarson knocking the ball down to Martin but his shot flew over the bar.

On 80 minutes the home side extended their lead as the Swans started to tire, Adams palming away Ballinger's shot to concede a corner. It was from the corner that Tom Warren was able to head into the net from 2 yards out despite Adams getting a hand to the ball.

A minute later Melksham substitute Andy Sandell hit the bar with Adams beaten before the Swans conceded a fifth on 84 minutes. Oscar Latas was allowed to run down the left and cut into the box and past Adams at the near post. Two minutes later Ball played the ball through the middle for Ballinger to fire past Adams for Melksham's sixth goal.

The visitors failed to give up, and in the final minute of the game Martin picked up the ball on the edge of the box racing into the area around the out rushing Kingston and poked the ball into the empty net for a consolation at the finish.

The Swans must now regroup and head to Thornhill Park on Wednesday evening to face Highworth Town at 7:45pm before entertaining Burnham on Saturday at 3pm in the preliminary round of the FA Cup.

Slimbridge: Adams, Handley, Nesbeth (Wanjau-Smith 59), Ford (Bekinsale 46), C Turner (Peck 35), White, Martin, D Turner, Sarson, M Turner, Tuodolo

Unused subs: Chambers, Bloomfield

Melksham: Kingston, Bennett, Jeffery, Warren, Bailey, Hurley, Chris Allen, Ballinger, Ball, Demkiv (Andy Sandell), Cameron Allen

Attendance: 423

Supporter's man of the match: Myron Turner