

Match Reports

Slimbridge 1-3 Plymouth Parkway

Southern League Div. One South

Saturday 26th March 2022

Swans Manager Tom Speers declared himself 'frustrated and proud' after his side matched promotion favourites Plymouth Parkway for the best part of an hour - After taking the lead in the first half through a well worked Will Hawes Free Kick, Parkway found themselves back in the game thanks to a disputed penalty. A second spot kick, with both converted by Will Palfrey and a late third from Matt Andrews sealed the points for the visitors.

The Swans made a very spirited start, and were by far the more effective team in the early exchanges. After a couple of corners though, Parkway had their own first opportunity when Jack Crago and Gabriel Rogers' break was snuffed out by Slimbridge Keeper Lewis Adams, who was making his hundredth appearance for the club.

On 23 minutes, Mike Ford was fouled on the edge of the Parkway box, and Will Hawes stepped up to drill the ball past the wall and into the bottom corner to put the Swans ahead.

Ten minutes later, it was nearly two when Jack Spark's header from Jordan Yeo's cross was just wide, but Parkway held firm, and started to create their own period of pressure, however Slimbridge defended well, and went in at the break a goal to the good.

The second period started much the same as the first, with Slimbridge more than matching their opponents all across the park.

With just under an hour played, though, the critical moment of the game occurred. Crago found space in the Slimbridge box, and was too high with his effort, before being caught by the challenge of Adams. Despite the ball being out of play at the time of the collision, Referee Graham Pearce awarded a spot kick to the visitors, and Will Palfrey stepped up to level the scores.

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Parkway finally began to take the initiative, buoyed by their goal, and with 17 minutes on the clock remaining, Myron Turner was penalised for a foul on Finley Craske, and a second penalty was awarded, there being no doubt about the validity of this one. Palfrey again stepped up, went to the other corner this time, and put the visitors into the lead.

In the final ten minutes, Slimbridge allowed Matt Andrew too much space, and his run and shot gave Adams no chance, and sealed the points for the Visitors.

Speaking after the game, Manager Tom Speers admitted the game had turned on the award of the first spot kick. 'I'm frustrated and proud. I thought we were excellent today, we matched the best team in this League for a massive period of the game, even up until they went 2-1 up, and I genuinely couldn't see them scoring a goal. They had a little flutter at the end of the first half, but we were just so good – we outworked them, we pressed them in the right areas, which was something we talked about during the game, we didn't allow their full backs to get on, we literally nailed everything.

At half time there wasn't much to say in terms of tactics because everything was going right – we knew they'd come out and we beat that first ten minutes of pressure, and then came the penalty. In my day, that's never been a penalty, today the younger ones would probably say it is a penalty, and then the second one is stonewall, but again, I though we were brilliant and definitely deserved a point. I don't think many would argue that we were the better team today.

The game turns on moments, it's a cliché but very true, and the penalty turned the game. It gave them that impetus. Just about five minutes minutes before that, they brought on three superb football players – Micky Williams, Tom Bath and Will Palfrey. That's the sign of a team that I think is going to win the League, they are the best team we've played – they've come away, a long journey, not played very well, and picked up three points, so fair play to them.'

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The Swans' first team now have five games remaining in the season, and travel to Highworth Town next Saturday (3.00pm). Meanwhile, on the same day, the Reserves make the trip to Tuffley Rovers Development (3.00pm).

The Under 18's are at Thornhill Park this coming Tuesday (29th March, 7.30pm) when they take on Hereford Pegasus Under 18's. The reverse fixture a couple of days ago ended with a 6-4 victory for Hereford, so the rematch is highly anticipated.

Team: Adams, Novakovic, Turner, Ford, Dennis, Spark, Yeo, Ogbeifun (PLant 79), Hawes, McLean, Mbunga (Thomas 45)

Supporters Man of the Match; Mike Ford