

Match Reports

Slimbridge 3-0 Sholing **Southern League Div. One South**

Tuesday 12th April 2022

A superb first half performance saw Slimbridge put three goals past seventh placed Sholing in the first 30 minutes and put to bed any lingering worries about being pulled into the relegation battle at the wrong end of the Southern League South Division. The result lifts the Swans to mid table, and well out of the way of trouble with three games remaining in the season.

A first half full of passion and endeavour saw Jack Spark, Ben McLean and Will Hawes all get on the scoresheet before half an hour had gone, and despite a comeback from Sholing in the second half, the Swans held on to record a well deserved victory.

The teams exchanged corners in the first couple of minutes – McLean was off target after Slimbridge's early corner was cleared to him, while at the other end, Owen Roundell was off target with a header from Sholing's first foray.

Slimbridge were having by far the best of the early exchanges, and on ten minutes, a scramble in the Sholing box saw Mike Ford's effort receive a good block to keep the scores level.

The Swans were not to be denied though, and two goals in two minutes saw them take a massive hold on the game – On 12 minutes, a corner was driven home by Jack Spark as it came into the box, and two minutes later, Will Hawes closed down Sholing Keeper Luke Deacon as he went to clear – the ball ran loose to Ben McLean who notched the second for the home side.

As the clock hit 29 minutes, it was three – Edji Mbunga's shot come cross was met by Hawes, who steered the ball into the net to add to the home side's lead.

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Slimbridge had the opportunity to put another goal on the scoresheet on 36 minutes, but Mbunga's finish was ruled out for offside by Referee Andy Sheppard.

The second half began, as expected with increased pressure from the visitors, but the Swans back line remained firm, but Slimbridge still looked dangerous – Luke Smith was off target with an effort on 52 minutes, and Hawes was just wide on 59 as the home side sought to increase their lead.

Sholing's best chance to get back into the game came on the hour mark, but Lewis Adams pulled off a point blank save from a corner to keep his clean sheet intact.

As the game played out, Smith had another effort off target as the game petered out, but at the final whistle, the Swans players, officials and fans celebrated a huge win for the side.

Speaking after the game, Manager Tom Speers explained how he had motivated his team prior to kick off – 'I'm delighted with the result, I think we were well worth our win, the void was there between the two teams from the start, to be honest.

When It comes to Sholing, I've had this little niggle all year – when we went down there and lost narrowly 2-1 to them, their Manager went on the radio and gave it the old 'We rode our luck, but you could tell there was a massive void between the teams', and it just sat there with me – he is right – there is a big void between the teams – probably 4 or 5 times the budget, their facilities are there, they've been at the top end of this league for a long time, and I think they think they're probably better than what they are.

But I said to the boys, that needs to be the norm, these results need to be the norm if we want to go to the next stage.

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Today, the void was huge, but it was in our favour – you can have all the money in the world, but if you don't have heart and desire, you're going to get nowhere, and that's what we build our foundations on, our boys don't play here for money, and we were well worth our win – they've got some good players, but we kept them all quiet – we worked hard and we wanted it more, and it showed with the result.

He did our team talk for us, we played it before the game – I just looked at them and said 'How big is that void?' We showed it tonight – there is no void – and on our day, we can compete with the best in this league.'

The Swans are back at Thornhill Park on Saturday when promotion Contenders Frome Town are the visitors (3.00pm) – a big crowd is expected, so the club are advising fans to arrive early at the ground. Slimbridge then travel to Mangotsfield United on Easter Monday (3.00pm) before finishing their campaign back at Thornhill on Saturday 23rd, when AFC Totton are the opponents.

On the 16th, the Reserve side travels to Bourton Rovers Reserves (3.00pm), while the Under 18 side travels to Tuffley Rovers on Tuesday (19th, 7.30pm).

Team: Adams, Novakovic, Turner, Ford, Dennis, Spark, Yeo, Ogbeifun (Smith 46), Hawes (Thomas 69), Mclean, Mbunga (Plant 81)

Goalscorers: Spark (12), Mclean (14), Hawes (29)

Supporters Man Of The Match: Jack Spark