

Hellenic League Premier Division

Saturday 23 April 2011

Ardley United 4-2 Slimbridge

In a lacklustre encounter which only caught fire during the second period, The Swans succumbed to their third defeat this season at the hand of Ardley United in game which, a few weeks previously, may have decided the title, but ended up as a scrap for consolation prizes at the tail end of the season.

Slimbridge didn't come out of the traps with any great speed, and were soon behind to their opponents on a blistering day in Oxfordshire -on eight minutes, after Swans' stopper Dave Evans had missed a lofted corner, Adam Garner's cross was swept home by Carl Standen to put the home side ahead.

Slimbridge were lucky not to fall further behind on 12 minutes, when Scott Bridges found himself with acres of space in the box, only to hit his shot over the bar. However, with only 18 minutes on the clock, Ardley doubled their advantage, Standen scoring his second after getting on the end of Scott Bridges' cross with Slimbridge in disarray at the back.

The visitors pulled a goal back on 29 minutes, when Jamie Martin went on a mazy run and slid the ball past Ardley Keeper Kurt Fox. This goal seems to have been missed by the official report at present, and does not seem to be reflected in the official scoreline. No doubt the issue will be resolved in due course.

On 57 minutes, Slimbridge equalised with a towering Rob Hine header from Substitute Paul Carter's free kick.

On 69 minutes, a hotly disputed penalty was awarded to the home side. Dave Evans appeared to be impeded coming for an Ardley Corner, and Leon Cornwall was subsequently penalised for a tackle in the area as play was allowed to continue by Referee Paul Humphrey.

Despite Evans being left on the floor needing treatment in the Slimbridge box, the Referee then awarded the penalty to Ardley. In the circumstances, it seemed appropriate that Evans made a good save from the spot kick to keep the scores even.

Two goals in the final five minutes gave the game to the home side - Evans cancelling out his penalty save by scuffing a clearance to Troy Bryan with five minutes remaining, leaving the Ardley striker with a simple chance, and the home side then rubbed salt in the Slimbridge wounds with a further goal on 87 minutes - Scott Bridges converting a neat diagonal pass past the helpless Evans.

With a fifth place spot confirmed, The Swans entertain Carterton on Bank Holiday Monday (3.00pm), in their final game of the season.

Team: Evans, Cornwall, Wellon, Sterling, Speers, Hine, Bryant, (Langworthy 52) Ward (Wood 60), Roberts, Martin, C. Cole (Carter 52)

Goals: Martin 29, Hine 57