

Hellenic League Premier Division

Tuesday 12 April 2011

Fairford Town 1-5 Slimbridge AFC

A thoroughly professional performance saw Slimbridge leapfrog Ardley United to regain top spot in the Hellenic Premier League, and set up an intriguing run in to the end of the season, which sees both sides with four fixtures remaining. Slimbridge travel to Ardley in their penultimate game which could prove crucial in deciding the championship. Ross Langworthy headed the scoresheet with another brace of goals, while Rob Hine, Micky Bryant and Marvin Roberts all chipped in to record an emphatic victory for the Swans.

The game was only 12 seconds old when the visitors could have taken the lead - a superb run down the left flank by Langworthy saw the youngster tackled just before he could shoot, and the resulting corner was cleared. Langworthy was involved in much of the early pressure for Slimbridge, and his cross on 6 minutes saw Roberts presented with a chance, but his header drifted just wide of the Fairford goal. However, Slimbridge didn't have to wait long for the first goal, and with 8 minutes on the clock, a clearance from the Fairford box fell to Rob Hine, whose rocket shot gave Fairford Keeper Lee Clatworthy no chance.

All the pressure was coming from the visiting side, and Roberts was next to be set up for a shot on goal, however, as he tried to round Clatworthy following Craig Cole's through ball, the Swans Captain saw the ball roll out for a goal kick. On 18 minutes, Slimbridge doubled their advantage - a Leon Cornwall cross from the right flank was bundled home by Ross Langworthy.

It looked as if the evening was going to be completely one way traffic, however Fairford got themselves back in the game on 24 minutes with their first attack of the game. The nippy Shannan Pocock went on a mazy run down the left flank, and his progress into the Slimbridge box was halted by a clumsy tackle from Ben Wood, which saw referee Steve Glyde award a spot kick to the home side. Evans got his hands to James

Skinner's powerful penalty, but was unable to prevent the ball going in and reducing the deficit.

Fairford's relief was short lived though - two minutes later, Roberts and Cole combined to set Langworthy through on goal, and he held his nerve to slide the ball under Clatworthy and restore the Swans' two goal advantage. Langworthy nearly grabbed his first hat trick for the club four minutes later on the half hour, when his thunderbolt shot cannoned back off the bar with Clatworthy clutching air - Micky Bryant was on hand to net the rebound and grab Slimbridge's fourth goal. Pocock was still proving a tricky customer for the home side, but the half time whistle saw Manager Leon Sterling reflecting on an impressive performance from his side.

The second half was the Swans maintain their momentum, and it only took them four minutes to increase the lead further - a game of head tennis between Langworthy, Craig Cole and Roberts saw the Slimbridge captain nod home for his side's fifth of the evening. Bryant was next to try his luck, and his effort on 55 minutes beat Clatworthy, but was cleared off the line as Slimbridge continued to boss the game.

Lewis Wilton, who had replaced Roberts in the 56th minute played a through ball to Langworthy which brought a superb save from Clatworthy three minutes later, and Wilton himself brought an even more impressive save from the Fairford Stopper with a superb shot on the hour.

The final third of the game descended into stalemate as the game was played out, not helped by Wilton's withdrawal after picking up an ankle injury which left Slimbridge playing for the last ten minutes with ten men, as all their substitutes had been used up.

The Swans now have a week off, before they travel to Highworth on Tuesday 19th (7.45pm)

Team: Evans, Cornwall, T. Cole, Sterling, Inch, Wood (Carter 49), Bryant, Hine, Roberts (Wilton 56), C. Cole, Langworthy (Martin 75)

Goals: Hine 8, Langworthy 18, 26, Bryant 30, Roberts 49