

## **Hellenic League Premier Division**

**Saturday 12 February 2011**

### **Slimbridge 2-0 Fairford Town**

It took 79 minutes to break the deadlock, but Slimbridge eventually triumphed at Wisloe Road against a Fairford Town side who belied their league position with a determined display. Indeed, before Ross Langworthy and Tom Cole's penalty secured the points for the home side, it was only a magnificent display of goalkeeping by the Swans' Dave Evans which had prevented the visitors getting the scoresheet themselves. However, another very confident display from Ross Langworthy proved crucial in the three points going to Slimbridge, although Fairford could argue they were worth at least a point from their afternoon.

Manager Leon Sterling made three changes from the side that beat Maidenhead in their epic midweek battle, recalling Tom Cole, Ben Wood and Jamie Martin for Freddy Ward, Jamie Inch and Lewis Wilton respectively. Ryan Chandler, who joined the club on loan a week ago from Cirencester, made his second appearance for the club, his first at Wisloe Road.

In a largely uninspired first half, it took until the 34th minute for a decent chance to be created by either side. It went to Slimbridge, when Langworthy played in Micky Bryant, but he blasted his shot high and wide when he really should have done better. A minute later, Jamie Martin seemed to be felled in the Fairford Box, and the linesman indicated a penalty, however Referee Glyde, who had a very impressive afternoon, overruled his assistant and play continued.

As the game started to liven up, Fairford should have taken the lead with the very last kick of the first half, when Jack Williams' piledriver from just outside the penalty box cannoned off the Slimbridge post with Evans stranded. As the players came off at half time, Sterling's expression suggested that there were going to be some stern words in the dressing room after a generally lacklustre display from the home side.

Slimbridge came out playing at a much higher tempo as the second half began, and began to create chances for themselves. On 49 minutes, Ward's diagonal ball split the Fairford defence and set Craig Cole through on goal. His attempt to lob Keeper Lee Clatworthy brought a fine save from the Fairford stopper. After 52 minutes, Sterling made a double substitution, replacing Micky Bryant and Jamie Martin with Rob Hine and Freddy Ward. Hine immediately went into a forward position, and nearly broke the deadlock just two minutes after coming on, when his header was well saved by Clatworthy after good work on the left flank by Langworthy and Craig Cole.

However, it was certainly not all one way traffic, and Fairford went straight down the other end, with Evans making the first of a series of great saves, this one from a good effort from Jack Tetoir which Evans turned away for a corner.

The game began to open up as play went from end to end, and it was the home side who created the next good chance - After Langworthy's effort was cleared for a corner, good interplay between Hine and Paul Carter resulted in a great cross for Craig Cole. His header was well saved by Clatworthy to keep the game goalless. With 60 minutes on the clock, another great chance went begging - Langworthy, who was proving more and more influential in the Swans' approach play, slid a sweet pass to Hine in space, but he hurried his shot, and the ball went over the Fairford bar. Sterling then made his final substitution, replacing Carter with Leon Cornwall.

Slimbridge had a let off in the 70th minute, when Luke Hambridge broke the Swans' back line, and found himself through on goal. He drew Evans, but somehow the Slimbridge Keeper made another marvellous save with the Fairford man seemingly facing an open goal. Still the game swung back again, and Cole was again guilty of not making the most of his chance when he headed wide after a good cross from Ward found him in space. Amazingly, play went back up the other end in a very entertaining period of play, and Hambridge again brought a superb save from Evans.

Eventually, the deadlock was broken in the 79th minute. Ward played a pinpoint diagonal behind the last Fairford defender, and Langworthy showed pace and strength to muscle him off the ball as they tracked back

towards goal, before sliding the ball past Clatowrthy to give the home side the advantage.

Langworthy was again involved in the Swans' second goal, scored in the final minute of normal time. His pass into space playing in Craig Cole, who was tripped in the penalty area by Pete Griffiths. Cole nearly regained his footing, but Referee Glyde deemed that there was no advantage to the home side, and awarded the spot kick. Tom Cole confidently placed the ball inside Clatworthy's right hand post to double the Swans' lead, and secure the points for Slimbridge, who remain fourth in the UHlsport Hellenic Premier League.

The Swans travel to Shrivenham on Wednesday (February 16th, 7.45pm) and anre on the road again next Saturday, with a trip to Highworth Town (3.00pm). They then have two homes games, entertaining Wokingham & Emmbrook on February 23rd (7.45pm) and Kidlington on February 26th (3.00pm).

The Swans have been drawn at home to Holyport in the next round of the Floodlit Cup. The tie will be played at Wisloe Road on Wednesday March 2nd, with a 7.45pm Kick Off.

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

Goals: Langworthy 79, T. Cole (Pen) 90