

# **Hellenic League Premier Division**

**Tuesday 19 April 2011**

## **Highworth Town 2-0 Slimbridge**

Almost a year to the day, Leon Sterling and Fred Ward were making preparations for the climax of a season in the Hellenic League West where the title was only going to be decided on the very last day - and, of course, Will Wellon's crucial goal against Headington at Wisloe saw The Swans promoted to the Premier League on goal difference. The fact that the team find themselves in a similar position at the next level is a testament to the way that the Slimbridge Management team have brought the players with them, and how the team has responded.

Five teams can still clinch the top spot, and with Slimbridge travelling to Ardley (3.00pm) on Saturday before entertaining Carterton at Wisloe Road on Bank Holiday Monday (3.00 pm), it's all to play for at the summit.

Highworth started the game at a very fast pace, and, for the second week in a row, there were only twelve seconds on the clock when the first opportunity came - a lofted ball was misdirected back towards his own goal by Tom Speers, and Teddy Bohane was on the ball in a flash, lofting his shot over Swans' stopper Dave Evans, but also just over the bar.

This galvanised the home side, and within three minutes, they had taken the lead as the Swans struggled to settle. Bohane was involved in a lovely passing move involving Tony Joyce and Matty Bennett, which saw Bohane played through on goal, and he gave Evans no chance to put Highworth a goal to the good.

The early stages of the game were characterised by home pressure - Bennett was the next to try his luck, with a chip which just drifted over the bar on eight minutes. The Swans could offer little in response, Jamie Martin being crowded out chasing a through ball from Micky Bryant, and a Bryant volley which was well wide being their only real attacking

contributions to the first quarter of the match as they were pinned back in their own half.

With 20 minutes on the clock, it could have been game over for Slimbridge, were it not for two superb saves from Dave Evans - firstly from Bohane's point blank header, and then from Bennett's rasping drive, as the home side continued to press.

The best chance for the visitors came on 25 minutes, when Carter's corner was dropped behind him by Highworth Keeper Adam Miller as he came to collect, and had to be cleared off the line, with no-one in blue in a position to take advantage.

Evans was again called into action on 39 minutes, when Danny Hilder made some space for himself in the box, and brought another neat save from the Slimbridge Stopper.

As the game edged towards Half time, Roberts thought he had a good shout for a penalty, when he was played through on goal by Ben Wood, and clattered to the ground by Highworth keeper Miller. Unfortunately for the visitors, Roberts was deemed to have been offside as the ball was played.

There was still time for Highworth to work Evans again, Bohane bringing another good save after neat work down the right flank by Bennett on 45 minutes.

The second half was a slightly more even affair, as play ebbed from end to end - Bryant's volley high over the bar after Paul Carter's long throw being the earliest chance for Slimbridge, but Highworth continued to press and created chance after chance - Ritchie Saunders headed wide when it seemed easier to score on 52 minutes, Hilder shot just wide after a great run a minute later, and Evans was forced to make another excellent save after Joyce had played in Bohane one on one with the Keeper on 54 minutes.

Still the pressure built again, and Evans was yet again called into action on 56 minutes, making a superb stop from Hilder's header.

The introduction of Rob Hine and Craig Cole did little to stem the tide of attacks from Highworth, Bohane thought he had a shout for a penalty on 66 minutes when his shot was blocked by Jamie Inch, but the referee turned him down.

Leon Sterling played his last card, introducing Ross Langworthy into the fray for Carter, but a minute later, Highworth finally got their second goal to send the large home contingent into raptures - Bennett's run down the right flank created space in the box, and his pinpoint cross found Hilder who gleefully netted.

To their credit, Slimbridge continued to press, but headers from Langworthy, Speers and Hine which didn't trouble Miller were the sum total of their chances, and Highworth held on for a deserved victory which keeps them in the mix at the top of the League as well as Slimbridge, wantage, Ardley and Binfield. It promises to be a very exciting few days...

Team: Evans, Cornwall, Wellon, Speers, Inch, Wood (Hine 59), Bryant C. Cole 64), Ward, Roberts, Martin, Carter (Langworthy 69)