

Hellenic League Premier Division

Saturday 25 September 2010

Kidlington 2-1 Slimbridge

Slimbridge Manager Leon Sterling said that a second half period of twenty minutes when his team 'switched off' was behind their defeat by the odd goal in three in a thoroughly entertaining afternoon at Yarnton Road today.

Leading at the interval courtesy of a Danny Chandler free kick, the Swans' slow start to the second half again cost them, with Ben Willoughby equalising, and then Jordan Parker scoring what proved to be the winning goal for the home side.

Sterling was unhappy that the team seemed to lose momentum after the interval, and eventually paid the price for not being able to match their opponents in the second half, but was philosophical about what was only the Swans' second League defeat from their first ten games. 'It's disappointing', said Sterling, 'but nothing is won at this stage of the season. I'm sure both teams will be up there at the end of it, so we need to continue to push on from here.'

The result sees Slimbridge deposed from their midweek position of top spot, and dropping to 5th in the UHlsport Hellenic Premier League. They now travel to Shortwood United on Tuesday night for another League fixture, before a trip to Trowbridge Town next Saturday in the Bluefin Insurance Challenge Cup.

With Keeper Dave Evans leaving this week to attend College, Ashley Gayle took his position between the sticks, and both Sterling and Assistant Manager Freddy Ward dropped to the bench, making way for Ben Wood and Lewis Wilton. In a frantic opening few minutes, both teams made solid starts - Chandler played in Wilton down the Slimbridge left after 7 minutes, but his shot was saved by Kidlington Keeper Tom

McNamara. Kidlington retaliated with a good through ball which gave Andrew Styles in for the home side, but Gayle gathered safely.

After 12 minutes, Micky Bryant was fouled on the edge of the Kidlington box by Styles, and the defensive wall could only watch as Chandler threaded his shot into the far corner of McNamara's net to put Slimbridge ahead. The home side immediately hit back, and were given a sniff of a chance when Gayle fumbled a corner, but the Swans' keeper recovered to fall on the ball and the chance slipped by.

Kidlington had their best chance of the game on 20 minutes, when a probing run from Christian Perkins saw him create a good opening for himself. Rather than shooting himself, Perkins elected to pass the ball to Willoughby to his left, but overhit the pass, and the ball went out for a goal kick.

As the game swung from end to end, Slimbridge were the next to create on 23 minutes- Carter's free kick into the box was headed by Speers to Chandler, whose volley drifted just wide of the post.

Finally, the tempo slowed a little, but there were still good chances at both ends before the interval - Chandler was played in by Wilton for the visitors on 42 minutes, but his cross went behind Craig Cole, who was well placed in the box had the ball reached him. Again, Kidlington came back, and Jack Quainton had a great lob pushed over for a corner by Gayle. Gayle had difficulties dealing with the resultant corner, and it was left to Wood to clear and maintain the Swans' advantage at the interval.

Although Kidlington started the second half at the same pace as the first, the Swans seemed to have moved down a gear, and had to deal with wave upon wave of attacks from the hosts, who had Slimbridge pinned back in their own half for long periods. A shot from Styles just two minutes into the half which just went over gave notice of Kidlington's intentions, and following a corner, Mark Baker tried a clever overhead kick on 48 minutes which brought a good save from Gayle.

Tom Speers and Rob Hine were both having superb games in the centre of the Slimbridge back four, but the Swans' inability to keep the ball when they broke from their own box piled pressure time and time again on the defence, as they had no respite from the Kidlington attacks. Still the chances came for the home side - on 56 minutes, Speers was penalised just outside the Slimbridge box, and Parker's free kick saw a good chance wiped off as Danny Leggett fouled his man as the ball came over.

Eventually, the pressure told, and on 60 minutes, Kidlington got the goal their play deserved - a move down the Slimbridge left saw Quainton play in the increasingly influential Lance Williams, who beat Speers, and crossed for Willoughby to slide home past Gayle and restore parity.

Slimbridge responded by introducing Assistant Manager Freddy Ward into the game replacing Paul Carter, but Ward could only stand and watch as, just four minutes after the equaliser, the home side took the lead. Williams crossed again from the Slimbridge left, and Speers header clear found Jordan Parker waiting on the edge of the box. Parker controlled the ball, and shot through a crowd of players into the corner of the net, giving Gayle no chance in the Swans' goal.

Still Kidlington kept up the pressure, and Gayle was forced into another good save on 72 minutes after Williams played in Ben Flannagan in another neat move from the home side. The replacement of Bryant with Langworthy with eight minutes left came too late to influence the outcome of the game, and a clearly delighted Kidlington team and crowd celebrated their victory with great enthusiasm at the final whistle.

Team: Gayle, Cornwall, Wellon, Hine, Speers, Wood, Carter (Ward 63), Bryant (Langworthy 82), Chandler, Cole, Wilton

Goal; Chandler 12