

## **Hellenic League Premier Division**

**Saturday 15 January 2011**

### **Witney United 3-3 Slimbridge**

For the second week running, Slimbridge had to claw back a two goal deficit to share the points in another thoroughly entertaining encounter at Witney this afternoon. Down early on in the game again, Micky Bryant's equaliser was cancelled out by two Witney goals which saw the game apparently dead and buried after 51 minutes. However, two goals in the last 4 minutes, from Tom Speers and then, deep into stoppage time, an own goal which ended up credited to Leone Cornwall saw the Swans snatch another unlikely point from the jaws of defeat. A goalmouth melee following the equaliser saw Swans Captain Marvin Roberts dismissed as players from both sides tussled in the goalmouth

Manager Leon Sterling admitted that his side were still sluggish after the enforced Winter break, but took a positive view of events - 'If you're going to have a blip, then it's far better to have it in the middle of the season - we're still struggling for form at the moment, but of course, I'd have taken a draw when we were 3-1 down, it was a great fightback by the lads.'

Chairman Keith Sparrow was equally delighted with the point - 'I confidently predicted in the 37th minute that we were not going to lose the game, although when it went to 3-1, I was beginning to have my doubts. But all credit to the boys, they kept going and got their reward in the end.'

Sterling made a single change from the side which shared the points with Ascot the previous week, replacing Paul Carter with Jamie Martin, and must have been hoping there was no repeat of the slow start which cost them against Ascot, and initial signs were good - straight from the kick off, clever work down the right flank saw Micky Bryant make some space for Craig Cole, and his dangerous cross was narrowly missed by Jamie Martin in front of goal.

However, with five minutes on the clock, Witney took the lead. Good work down the left from Lewis Colwell and Sean McKeon, saw McKeon's cross neatly headed home by Eddie Everett to give the home side the advantage.

The next good chance came to for the home side with nine minutes on the clock, following a foul on Swans old Boy Joey Tustain by Ben Wood on the edge of the box. the resulting free kick from Jon Steedman was blocked by the Slimbridge wall.

Witney's lead was not to last though, and with 13 minutes gone, the scores were level. Ward's neat pass to Roberts in the box saw the Swans' Captain turned his man and bring a good save from Witney Keeper Paul Tassell, who could only stand and watch as the ball rebounded out to Micky Bryant, who jubilantly slid the ball home to tie the match up.

As was the case the previous week, the Swans opponents had chances to kill the game off, but failed to take advantage. On 27 minutes, what looked like a tangle of legs between Matt Blenford and Leone Cornwall saw Referee Lee award a penalty to the home side, but justice (from the visitor's perspective) seemed to have been served when Evans turned away Mckeon's penalty for a corner.

The jubilation of the away contingent was not to last though, as a very entertaining half continued to bring up talking points - on 31 minutes, Witney took the lead again, when a Colwell corner was emphatically punched into his own net by Dave Evans, resulting in the Swans' keeper having to make his post-match appearance in the clubhouse neatly attired in a clown costume.

As the match went from end to end, it was the visitors who had the next opportunity, when a foul on Bryant in the 36th minutesaw ward go close with a free kick, and the same player again had another opportunity as the Swans pressed again in a sustained spell of pressure. Colwell had one final chance for Witney before half time, but Ward's tackle brought the end to the last move of a very entertaining encounter.

Although the Swans started the second half brightly - a great run by Martin being halted only be a superb saving tackle from Darren Quegan -

it only took six minutes before the home side stretched their advantage. McKeon was left with room to run by a backtracking Slimbridge defence, and neatly slid the ball past Evans to notch Witney's third goal.

Sterling responded by bringing Paul Carter on to replace Micky Bryant, and Carter created the next good chance for the visitors on 63 minutes, when his pass played in Martin, who brought a good save out of Witney Keeper Tassell. With Ross Langworthy on for Martin, and Lewis Wilton replacing Craig Cole, Slimbridge continued to press, and should have pulled a goal back in the 72<sup>nd</sup> minute. Wilton's good work brought a corner for the Swans, and he slipped and completed missed his kick when well placed from the resulting cross.

With three minutes remaining, it seemed as if Slimbridge had pulled only a consolation goal back, when Speers converted a Carter Free kick to score his second goal in two games, but there was more drama to come deep in stoppage time.

A Carter corner ended up in the Witney net, the goal appearing to be an own goal, but which was eventually credited to Leone Cornwall. As attempts were made to retrieve the ball from the net from the visitors, a fracas developed involving players from both sides, and eventually Referee Lee came to terms with events, dismissing Swans Captain Marvin Roberts for violent conduct.

This Saturday, Slimbridge entertain Oxford City Nomads at Wisloe Road (3.00pm) before making the long trip to Binfield on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> (7.45pm). They then return to Wisloe to entertain Reading Town in the Challenge Cup on January 29<sup>th</sup> (3.00pm).

Team: Evans, Cornwall, T. Cole, Wellon, Speers, Wood, Bryant (Carter 54), Ward, Roberts, C. Cole Wilton 63), Martin (Langworthy 63)

Goals: Bryant 13, Speers 86, Cornwall 90