

Hellenic League Premier Division

Saturday 18 September 2010

Slimbridge 1-1 Witney United

The Swans were frustrated this afternoon by a well organised Witney United side, who thoroughly deserved their point after an afternoon of largely uninspiring football at Wisloe Road today. Danny Chandler's 43rd minute goal should have been the springboard for Slimbridge to control the game, but yet again, a slow start to the second half saw the visitors back on terms after 51 minutes, courtesy of Jon Steedman's penalty.

In the dying minutes, The Swans had two fantastic chances to nick the points in the final minutes of the game, but fell short of the target. Slimbridge remain in third place in the Hellenic Premier League, and now face three very testing encounters, at home to Wantage Town on Wednesday, before trips to Kidlington next Saturday, and Shortwood United a week on Tuesday.

With Keeper Dave Evans suspended following his recent sending off, Manager Leon Sterling gave a debut to Ashley Gayle, who joined the club from Gala Wilton, and played in the reserve side last season. Leading goalscorer Joe Tustain was still sidelined following his injury last weekend, so Lewis Wilton returned to the side, with Tom Cole replacing Assistant Manager Fred Ward, who dropped to the bench. Paul Carter also returned to the side, with Sterling also reverting to the subs bench.

In a disappointing first half, Slimbridge were the first to create a chance, with Wilton failing to capitalise on a sloppy back pass on seven minutes, slicing his shot wide. The Swans continued to press, and Speers was the next to miss a good opportunity, heading wide from a Carter Free Kick on 13 minutes. The momentum continued to stay with the home side - Carter played Chandler through with a glorious pass on 20 minutes, only to see the striker make a glaring miss with only Witney Keeper Paul Tassell to beat.

Witney started to gain a hold in the game, and had their first real opportunity after 21 minutes when Lewis Cornwell played in Conor Allmond with a neat cross, but Cornwell scuffed his shot and allowed Gayle to collect easily.

With seven minutes remaining before the interval, Slimbridge wasted another chance when Chandler played in Micky Bryant, who fired wide when well placed. However, on 43 minutes Chandler latched onto a fine through ball and finished confidently past Tassell to put the Swans ahead.

If the Swans are to launch a serious challenge to the League Leaders this season, they need to overcome their tendency to start the second half slowly, and they were punished yet again on 51 minutes, when Tom Speers was penalised for holding in the box, and Jon Steedman thumped the resulting penalty home past Gayle to level the scores.

Both Chandler for the home side, and Sean Mckeon and Lewis Colwell for the visitors had chances to break the deadlock in the second period, but the game remained level. In the last 5 minutes, Slimbridge had two glorious chances to nick the points - On 87 minutes, Ward, on as sub for Langworthy, played Chandler in. His shot beat Witney Keeper Tassell, but cannoned back into play off the crossbar.

With the last kick of the match, Ward played in Wellon on the left, and his glorious shot saw Tassell make a superb save to earn a point for his side, in a game that neither team probably deserved to win.

Team: Gayle, Cornwall, Wellon, Hine, Speers (Sterling 60), Cole, Carter, Bryant, Chandler, Langworthy (Ward 52) Wilton

Goals: Chandler 43