

## **Hellenic League Premier Division**

**Saturday 14 January 2012**

### **Slimbridge 5-2 Abingdon Town**

Normally, a Hat Trick would guarantee you the 'Man of the Match' nomination at the final whistle, but it was a measure of the strange nature of this game that Daniel Holloway's treble was eclipsed by Swans Keeper Dave Evans' crucial saves, on an afternoon where the visitors must have travelled back home wondering how they managed to come away on the wrong end of a three goal deficit.

After Alex Higgs put the home side ahead, Abingdon pulled themselves level through Jamie Munday, and looked the side more likely to add to the scores. But goals by Daniel Holloway and a superb strike from Swans Skipper Marvin Roberts saw the home side go into the break 3-1 up.

Two quick goals from Holloway, the second a penalty, completed his hat trick with only 55 minutes on the clock, and it was only an exceptional display from Evans that kept Abingdon from getting back into the game. Adam Lovegrove finally beat Evans in the final minute, but by then it was far too late to affect the outcome. The result sees Slimbridge maintain their position in fifth spot in the UHlsport Hellenic Premier League, staying ahead of Binfield and Highworth Town.

On a bumpy pitch which passed a lunchtime inspection to allow the game to proceed, it was the visitors who made the early running, with Lance Williams testing Evans with two minutes on the clock, and then Lewis Gabbidon's free kick being cleared following some good defensive work by Will Wellon.

The next early chance, however, came for Slimbridge with 11 minutes gone, when Alex Higgs charged down a clearance and followed the ball back towards the Abingdon goal. Keeper Harry Hobbs did well to force the youngster wide, and his attempt to cross the ball back towards the goal went behind for a goal kick.

Abingdon were beginning to play some neat football, and created a decent chance on 14 minutes, when Mark Janes' cross found Rocky Witting, who blazed over when well placed.

Slimbridge took the lead on 20 minutes, after a misplaced clearance from Hobbs found Alex Higgs on the edge of the Abingdon box. He neatly lobbed the stranded keeper to open the scores.

The Visitors continued to look dangerous, and it took less than a minute for their response to going behind - Jamie Munday's shot bringing an excellent save from Dave Evans to keep the home side's advantage. From the resulting corner, Janes swivelled in the box and scored, but he had already been ruled offside by Referee Neal Templey.

Abingdon were continuing to play some lovely passing football on the difficult surface, and a move involving 5 players saw them carve open the Slimbridge defence on 25 minutes, but Evans was again up to the task, making another impressive stop from Janes.

Two minutes later, the equaliser arrived - more neat passing from the visitors left Jamie Munday in space, and he levelled the scores with a good finish.

Slimbridge steadied themselves, and regained the lead on 37 minutes - after good work by Higgs down the right flank, Daniel Holloway's deft footwork created some space for himself in the Abingdon box, and he beat Hobbs with ease to put the home side in front again.

In a game that was already filled with impressive finishes, the next goal was a peach. With two minutes remaining in the half, the ball fell to Marvin Roberts outside the Abingdon box, and his classy lob cleared the desperately backtracking Hobbs to make the score 3-1 at the interval.

As expected, Abingdon were stung into action and started the second period at a high tempo as they looked to claw their way back into the match, with Will Wellon making a significant stop to halt a good chance for Whitting on 48 minutes.

However, the game was effectively over following a quick fire double from Holloway which completed his Hat Trick. On 52 minutes he picked up a cross from the left flank, beat his marker and drilled the ball home to put the Swans 4-1 up. Three minutes later, Jamie Martin was bundled over in the box by Keeper Hobbs, and Holloway coolly dispatched the penalty to register his treble.

Slimbridge could have added to their tally on 69 minutes, when Ryan Seville broke down the Slimbridge right, and played in Danny Chandler, who failed to keep his feet when bearing down on goal.

In the last ten minutes, Swans Keeper Dave Evans was again called into action, making three crucial stops as Abingdon looked to add to their score. He was finally beaten in the last minute, when an absolutely superb piledriver from Adam Lovegrove gave him no chance, but in the end the home side got the win they deserved.

The Swans entertain Ascot United next Saturday at Wisloe Road, 3.00pm Kick Off.

Team: Evans, Cornwall, T. Cole, Hine, Wellon (Sterling 67), Wood, Martin (Seville 58), Ward, Roberts, Higgs (Channing 58), Holloway

Goals: Higgs 20, Holloway 37, 52, 55 (Pen), Roberts 43