

Hellenic League Premier Division

Saturday 21 January 2012

Slimbridge 0-0 Ascot United

An organised and hard working Ascot United came to Wisloe Road and departed with a well deserved point, on an eminently forgettable afternoon where chances were at a premium. The visitors lost Eric Kusi to a straight red card on the stroke of halftime, but reorganised well and frustrated the Swans, who, had they had more of a cutting edge up front, could have nicked the points.

On another bitterly cold afternoon, it was Ascot who fashioned the first opportunity on three minutes - captain John Bennett won a tussle with Jamie Inch down the left flank, and his shot was turned away for a corner by Swans Keeper Dave Evans at the near post. As the resulting corner skidded across the Slimbridge goal, Ascot Centre Back Liam Wozzley, with the empty goal in front of him, somehow contrived to hook the ball clear of the goal line and back into the penalty box, where it was cleared.

Slimbridge responded well to this let off, and Daniel Holloway's surging run down the left flank two minutes later, resulted in a foul on the edge of the Ascot area, but the free kick was wasted. Holloway was beginning to cause problems for the visiting side, and he used his pace to good effect on 14 minutes, with another probing run. His cross found Marvin Roberts well placed, but the Big Man volleyed the ball wide.

Roberts nearly capitalised on a goalmouth scramble on 21 minutes, following Jamie Martin's Free Kick, but again the chance went begging and the ball was cleared.

A good period of pressure from the home side saw Martin's Free Kick lofted over the bar on 22 minutes after a foul on Holloway. Martin continued to feature in the action, and was then booked, along with Ascot's Phil Baddy, after a flare up following a late challenge from Martin.

Dave Hancock saw his shot blocked well by Ben Wood on 36 minutes, while Roberts brought a save from Ascot Keeper Chris Grace with a shot on the turn with 43 minutes on the clock.

On the stroke of half time, Ascot were reduced to ten men, when Eric Kuzi's challenge on Tom Cole was deemed to be two footed by Referee Cunningham, and he brandished a red card for the offence.

As Slimbridge applied pressure at the start of the second period, they had a lucky escape after a quick break from the visitors - Ian Brooks was played through on goal, and was felled outside the Swans Penalty Box by the advancing Dave Evans. After consulting his linesman, the Referee deemed that the Swans Keeper was not the last man, and he escaped with a yellow card. From the resulting free kick, Lee Boon blasted the ball high over.

Ben Wood nearly broke the deadlock as the game approached the hour mark, but scrambled the ball wide after a tussle in the Ascot box saw the ball run free.

Ascot still were not out of it though, and Brooks forced Shane Anson into a good clearance on 77 minutes to keep the scoresheet blank.

The Swans best chance of a goal came with just nine minutes remaining, when Grace was penalised for picking up a backpass, and Slimbridge gained an indirect free kick about ten yards from the Ascot goal. As the visitors contested the decision, the ball was slipped sideways to Holloway, who skied the ball high and wide, in a move which seemed to sum up the afternoon for the home side.

There was still time for Evans to be called into action, making a neat stop after an Ascot corner with seven minutes remaining, and with the game in the third minute of added time, Marvin Roberts failed to convert a chance after Grace dropped the ball under pressure from Micky Bryant.

The Swans travel to Wokingham & Emmbrook next Saturday (3.00pm), before returning to Wisloe Road the following weekend, when they entertain Thame United (February 4th, 3.00pm)

Team: Evans, Anson, Wellon, Hine, Inch, Wood, Ward (Bryant 63), Cole, Roberts, Martin (Nash 53), Holloway