

## **Hellenic League Premier Division**

**Wednesday 7 September 2011**

### **Cheltenham Saracens 1 - 2 Slimbridge**

After a disappointing exit in the FA Cup Slimbridge bounced back to grind out a good away win at local league rivals Cheltenham Saracens in poor weather conditions the failed to dampen the spirits of either side in a lively game.

Slimbridge manager Leon Sterling made four changes to Saturday's starting line-up which included bringing himself into the team to bolster the defence. The opening five minutes were played at a fast pace with Slimbridge showing early pressure until a Saracens free kick on three minutes broke up the otherwise end to end play.

On seven minutes the first half chance fell to Slimbridge with a neat flick on from Marv Roberts to Ross Langworthy but the ball evaded the striker running through to the home keeper. At the other end Saracens lively striker Joe Donaghue chased a through ball into the box but the alert Dave Evans made an easy stop. Again Roberts and Langworthy linked up on the edge of the Saracens box this time the offside flag was up.

A Paul Carter cross on 15 minutes was cleared from the Cheltenham box just as the dynamic Slimbridge strikers were about to pounce. At the other end Jamie Inch had to make a timely clearance as Cheltenham looked dangerous on the break. The resulting corner brought a great save out of the visiting keeper Evans getting behind a strong header from Luke Tovey. This followed a chance at the other end with Langworthy getting onto the end of a Freddie Ward clearance down field only for the offside flag to be raised again.

On 21 minutes after a spell of pressure from the home side Slimbridge failed to deal with a Jamie Hammond cross only for Donaghue to pop up at the far post and slot the ball past the advancing Evans to give Cheltenham the lead. Conceding a goal appeared to fire Slimbridge back

into life with Langworthy and Roberts causing the visiting defense further trouble although neither getting a sight at goal with an over hit pass running out for a goal kick with Carter giving chase.

At the other end a weak Tovey shot failed to trouble Evans on 27 minutes as the Saracens started to take more control of the game with Donaghue shooting high and wide after some neat passing on the edge of the Slimbridge box. Langworthy at the other end latched onto a Roberts flock but failed to gain full control of the ball while bearing down on goal. This was followed by a long range shot from Ward that sailed over the bar.

It was then the turn of Slimbridge to pressure the opposing defense, Rob Hines shot blocked by the Saracens defense after 36 minutes. A Carter cross from the left was easily dealt with by Ryan Betteridge in the home goal with Langworthy rushing in. The lively Donaghue then had a chance at the other end but hit his shot straight at Evans.

With half time closely approaching Hine slammed an effort against the visiting bar, this was shortly followed up by a great Slimbridge move involving Carter and Brad Martin which was cleared down field by the home side. On the stroke of half-time Langworthy failed to get control of the ball having got past the home keeper after latching onto another Roberts flick on, the ball going out for a goal kick.

Half-time 0-1

The second half started fairly even with Saracens getting an early shot on goal but was easily gathered by Evans. On 49 minutes Lewis Wilton shot straight at Betteridge when through on goal. Sterling made a tactical change on 50 minutes with Paul Carter going off to be replaced by Mickey Bryant, this had an almost immediate impact for the visiting side.

Wilton was fouled on the left and from the resulting free kick the ball was cleared by the home defense to an eager Brad Martin whose shot was deflected into the net by Bryant's first touch to the delight of the away support. A second tactical change on 53 minutes with Lewis Wilton being replaced by Jamie Martin, whose first touch was a 25yard effort however the home keeper was able to make the save.

Barely a minute later the home keeper was forced into action saving from Langworthy when clean through. At the other end Evans did well to push Tovey's effort wide after a through ball evaded the visiting defense. The visitors got the ball in the net courtesy of Langworthy on 57 minutes however he was offside on this occasion. Slimbridge at this point started to dominate the game with a Langworthy header from a Ward cross being saved by the home keeper. A minute later Hine hit the bar for a second time, the resulting clearance down field was controlled by Tovey but his shot was high over Evans bar.

Cheltenham's Tovey had another chance on 65 minutes but his shot from a tight angle on the right was wide again. At the other end Roberts through ball was overrun by Jamie Martin on the left going out for a goal kick. However on 69 minutes Slimbridge took the lead on 69 minutes with Langworthy slotting the ball home after some neat passing play from Roberts and Bryant. Langworthy was replaced by Karl Nash prior to the restart.

Slimbridge clearly had their tails up and were looking to add to their single goal lead, after a delay to attend to an injury to the home sides Simon Slender, Jamie Martin's shot had to be hacked away by the defense on 76 minutes. On 80 minutes Bryant's cross from the right found Jamie Martin whose far post knock down was cleared with Roberts bearing down on goal.

A couple of minutes later Jamie Martin managed another shot this time well wide of the home goal after good work from Roberts. With Slimbridge camped in the home sides half for the last few minutes Bryant played a tentative chip through to Jamie Martin whose timely lob over the keeper was cleared when a goal looked certain. A crunching tackle involving Jamie Martin in the last minute saw the visiting sub require lengthy treatment however thankfully he was able to continue for the closing moments of the game.

Slimbridge: D Evans, W Wellon, B Martin, L Sterling, J Inch, R Hine, P Carter (M Bryant), E Ward, M Roberts, R Langworthy (K Nash), L Wilton (J Martin)

Goals: Bryant 52, Langworthy 69