

Hellenic League Premier Division

Saturday 22 October 2011

Larkhall Athletic 4-0 Slimbridge

The Swans were dumped out of the FA Vase at the First Round Proper stage courtesy of a ten minute, four goal spree early in the second half by Larkhall Athletic at Plain Ham this afternoon. Four goals conceded between the 50th and 60th minutes finished the game as a contest, and left the visitors on the wrong end of a very one sided second half.

After a relatively even first period, the second half saw the hosts four goals to the good by the hour, with the Bath outfit taking full advantage of the profligacy of freedom and space they were offered in the Slimbridge penalty box, and there can be no complaints about the outcome of the tie from the visitors who were as well beaten as the score line suggested on the day.

Larkhall made the brighter start to the tie, and, after Tyler Sibbick's cross should have picked out Ryan Bath early on, it took a confident Rob Hine tackle to stop a dangerous opportunity for Bath with less than five minutes on the clock. Jamie Martin had the visitors' first shot on target after eight minutes, but saw his shot easily gathered by Chris Snody in the Larkhall goal.

Both teams looked dangerous going forward, and Thomas Welch will probably think he should have done better after a defensive mix at the back of the Slimbridge back four let him in on 13 minutes, but Slimbridge answered this with a good shot from Karl Nash which worked Snody and forced him to make a sharp stop low to his right.

Will Wellon and Ron Hine were being worked hard by the Larkhall strikers, and Wellon's great tackle which broke up a clever move between Bath and Nathaniel Auckland, with Bath poised to shoot in a very dangerous position on 19 minutes.

After 21 minutes, Nash was injured in a collision with Snoddy attempting to finish off a clever set of passes between Roberts, Nash and Jamie Martin, and which eventually resulted in his substitution before half time. In a completely accidental collision, the striker received a blow to his head which resulted in a very impressive headache as he recovered after the game.

After 25 minutes, the home side could have taken the lead in controversial circumstances - a ball was played down the Larkhall right flank to Tyler Sibbick, who looked a good couple of yards offside as he closed in on goal. As he entered the penalty, he seemed to be tripped by Jamie Inch, but Referee Ben James allowed play to continue, and the Swans escaped.

Larkhall continued to press, and Rob Hine was instrumental in blocking a couple of great opportunities for the home side - clearing away from Sibbick and then getting in the way of a Simeon Allison shot as the game approached half time.

Momentum seemed to be swinging towards the hosts, and Dave Evans was called into action to make a saves from both Allison and Auckland, before Bath inexplicably managed to miss from three yards out after a neat cross from Thomas Welch had presented him with an open goal.

Nash was still struggling following his collision earlier, and was substituted on 42 minutes, with Brad Martin replacing him, and the Swans reorganising to adapt to the loss.

Larkhall came out of the traps for the second half and upped their game, and, aided by some slack defending, had managed to kill the game off before the hour mark had been reached - On 50 minutes, Gary Thorne was left completely unmarked to head home a free kick, two minutes later a cross cum shot from Bath eluded everyone to find the far corner of Evans' net, Nick Hudson was afforded acres of space to head home a corner on 57 minutes, and Auckland's pass which played in Allison saw the striker notch a well worked and well deserved goal on 60 minutes.

Shell shocked Slimbridge were left to try and salvage some pride from the game, and both Alex Higgs, who had replaced Jamie Martin, and Rob Hine managed to hit the side netting, before Micky Bryant's miss proved their last opportunity to get on the scoresheet before the final whistle brought the end to a very disappointing afternoon for the Swans.

Team: Evans, Cornwall, Wellon, Hine, Inch, Wood (Bryant 60), Ward, T Cole, Roberts, Nash (B Martin 42), J Martin (Higgs 62)

Goals: None