

Hellenic League Premier Division

Saturday 17 March 2012

Shortwood United 1-0 Slimbridge

A lone strike from Shortwood's Chris Mortlock in the 75th was enough to seal the points for the potential league champions and it left the Swans feeling a little dejected after they put in a battling performance for 90 mins, more than holding their own against a strong looking home side.

A torrential downpour for most of the second half left the pitch with lots of surface water on it towards the end and it nearly cost Shortwood the win they desperately needed to maintain their promotion challenge.

Deep into stoppage time Ashley Thomas passed the ball back to Tom King in the home goal and the ball stopped dead in a large pool of water on the edge of the penalty area, Swans skipper Marvyn Roberts acted the quickest and he looked certain to score the equaliser but he shot straight at keeper King who managed to get a foot to it and knock it out for a corner.

The game started fairly evenly, Slimbridge won a free kick when Roberts was fouled but Jamie Martin's kick went well over.

Two minutes later Ashley Thomas, who appeared to be off-side, ran through the visitor's defence but shot tamely at Dave Evans.

Kevin Slack looked dangerous for the home side, using his pace well and delivering some good crosses into the box but Slimbridge defended in numbers and managed to contain their hosts.

In the 22nd minute a Andy Shepherd throw-in was headed on by Roberts to Karl Nash who shot straight at king.

Joe Tustain, the former Slimbridge striker, was starting to get involved now and his darting runs up the left wing were a cause for concern but once again the Swans defence dealt well with the pacy shortwood front line.

A Karl Nash free-kick found Fred Ward in space on the edge of the box but his fierce volley went high over the bar.

On 38 mins the best move of the match so far involving Leon Cornwall, Roberts and Martin saw the latter bearing down on goal but a last ditch tackle denied the Fiery Striker.

The Swans finished the Half well and were gaining in confidence but it was the home side who nearly snatched the lead right on the stroke of half time when a hard and low cross from the left seemed to need just a slight touch from any of the Shortwood strikers looming in the box but the ball eluded them all and went out for a goal kick.

As the two teams entered the pitch for the second half the Heaven's opened and very quickly the pitch started to deteriorate.

Slack and Tustain were dictating the forward play for Shortwood with their pace up both the right and left wings but several dangerous looking crosses came to nothing.

Slimbridge Keeper Dave Evans's fantastic tip over from Tustain's fierce volley in the 64th minute brought loud applause from both sets of supporters as the home side were starting to dictate.

Slimbridge manager Leon Sterling introduced some fresh legs in the 67th minute, replacing Nash with Alex Higgs and Martin with Mike Bryant in an effort to stem the tide and it was Higgs started to take the pressure off the visitor's defence, holding the ball up well and using his pace to run at the home defence.

Slack had a good shot well held by Evans and another hard and low cross by the same player once again eluded everyone.

Sterling replaced Ben Wood with youngster Brad Martin in the 74th minute and just a minute later the Home side took the lead.

Slack got just reward for his constant crosses into the box when Chris Mortlock was left in space to fire a low shot past Evans, the jubilant celebrations was evidence of how important that goal was to Shortwood but the Swans never gave in.

Another brilliant save by Evans in the 84th minute from Tustain's shot denied the home side from increasing their lead.

There were chances for both sides to score in the dying minutes, Mortlock going closest with a shot that skimmed just wide.

Deep into stoppage time Marvyn Roberts should really have equalised, Thomas side footed back to King and as the ball landed in a puddle of water on the edge of the penalty area Roberts nipped in and with the goal at his mercy he shot at King's legs and the ball went out for a corner.

The whistle went and an entertaining match ended with Shortwood taking the points, probably just about deserving them on the day but they certainly did not have things all their own way and the whole Slimbridge team can feel proud of their performance.