

# **Hellenic League Premier Division**

**Tuesday 23 August 2011**

## **Shrivenham 0-1 Slimbridge**

A hard fought and very entertaining game this evening at the Recreation Ground saw the Swans maintain their unbeaten start to the UHlsport Hellenic League Premier season, with a 55th minute Rob Hine header separating the teams.

Hine's goal followed a spectacular piece of skill by Slimbridge Captain Marvin Roberts, which deserved to win any game. The hosts pressed relentlessly during the second period, and it was telling that the Swans' man of the match was defender Will Wellon, and Shrivenham will count themselves unfortunate not to have taken something from the game.

Manager Leon Sterling named himself in a shuffled back four, with Leon Cornwall moving to the bench to accommodate him. His midfield four remained unchanged from the FA Cup win over Bradford Town on Saturday, with Paul Carter. Rob Hine, Freddy Ward and Lewis Wilton taking the field. Alex Higgs partnered Marvin Roberts up front with strikers Karl Nash and Ross Langworthy also on the bench.

The first half belonged to Slimbridge, and they should really have gotten themselves on the scoresheet before half time, but a combination of determined Shrivenham defending and misplaced passes saw the game goalless at half time.

On eight minutes, Slimbridge fashioned the first chance of the game, when Brad Martin picked up a clearance on the edge of the Shrivenham box, beat his man, and shot high over the bar.

The Swans continued to press, and after Wilton's effort was cleared, Roberts went close with a header from a Carter corner with 12 minutes on the clock. Three minutes later, Carter had a chance of his own, when his free kick on the edge of the Shrivenham box was deflected back to

Shrivvy Keeper Jack Goodenough from one of his defenders in the defensive wall.

The first decent chance for the home side came on 19 minutes, when Elliott Knight, who looked dangerous all game, saw his 25 yarder whistle past the Slimbridge post with Dave Evans stranded. This effort gave the home side some momentum, and Steve Robertson would have wanted to do better when he blasted the ball high and wide after Aaron Maximen beat Jamie Inch and put a dangerous cross into the Swans' box on 22 minutes.

As play began to move from end to end, Inch saw his header from Carter's corner land on the roof of the Shrivvy net a minute later. The Swans then had another good spell of pressure, with Roberts having his shot saved after a superb 40 yard crossfield pass from Sterling had put him in space. Just before the half hour, Slimbridge saw another chance slip, as Carter delayed too long on the ball in the Shrivvy box, and saw his shot blocked. In the final fifteen minutes of the first half, it was all Slimbridge.

Hine, and Roberts both went close before the interval, and Hine actually had the ball in the net for the Swans on 40 minutes, but Roberts was penalised for a foul on Goodenough. At the other end, as the half time whistle approached, Bradley Clarke shot wide from distance after a Shrivvenham corner was cleared to him 25 yards out.

Shrivvenham came out of the blocks for the second period, and upped the tempo of the game considerably, putting a lot more pressure on the Slimbridge back four. It was the visitors, however, who made the first decent chance of the second half, when Wellon played in Alex Higgs, who saw his shot blocked, and the resultant corner was cleared. On 50 minutes, the best move of the match so far saw Clarke find himself in space 25 yards out, and his superb shot was met by an equally impressive save by Dave Evans, who pushed the ball round the post to keep the scores level.

Maximen was the next to try his luck a minute later as the hosts pressed, but his effort swept across the Swans' goal, with no Shrivvy striker able to get on the end of his cross.

On 52 minutes Leon Sterling fell awkwardly defending a corner, and was replaced by Leon Cornwall. The deadlock was finally broken on 55 minutes, when a special piece of skill from Marvin Roberts finally unlocked the Shrivenham defence. Roberts held off his man with his back to goal in the Shrivenham box, before turning sweetly, and lofting a superb cross into the danger zone, where Rob Hine was left in acres of space to nod the ball home and put the visitors ahead.

It was Roberts' last contribution of the game, as two minutes later he was replaced by Ross Langworthy, and left the field to a well deserved ovation from the visiting fans. Sterling played his last card on 60 minutes, when Karl Nash replaced the tiring Alex Higgs. Shrivenham again upped the tempo of the game and started to create more chances for themselves - with the tricky Knight looking increasingly influential, Clark, and then Steve Robertson saw chances go begging.

Slimbridge nearly snatched a second goal on 70 minutes, when Carter's piledriver from 20 yards rocketed back into play off the Shrivenham post, before Nash saw his effort slide just wide in the next phase of play.

The final 20 minutes of the game saw the visitors reduced to backs-to-the wall defending, as Shrivenham pressed forward, with Slimbridge unable to keep the ball away from their own box for any period of time. It was during this period that Will Wellon particularly excelled - his tackling and blocking were of magnificent quality, as he fought to control Knight, who looked by far the most dangerous Shrivenham striker, and certainly the most likely to find an equaliser for the home side.

With ten minutes remaining, Nash made a rare foray forward, and brought a very nice save from Goodenough, and as we ticked into added time, a scuffed clearance from Inch fell to Clarke, but he pulled his shot wide for the last real opportunity of a thoroughly entertaining evening.

Slimbridge return to Wisloe for two home games over the Bank Holiday weekend, at home to Binfield (Saturday 3pm) and Highworth Town (Monday 3pm)

Team: Evans, Wellon, B. Martin, Sterling (Cornwall 52), Inch, Hine, Carter, Ward, Roberts (Langworthy 58), Higgs (Nash 60), Wilton

Goal: Hine (55)