

# **Hellenic League Premier Division**

**Tuesday 25 October 2011**

## **Slimbridge 4-2 Shrivenham**

After Saturdays heavy FA Vase defeat, Slimbridge returned to winning ways with a relatively easy win over Shrivenham. On a very wet pitch due to a heavy down pour in the first half it was home striker Alex Higgs who shone netting himself a hat trick and a Jamie Martin free kick put the home side four goals up before a late fight back from Shrivenham reduced the deficit in a nervy last 10 minutes for the home side..

Both sides had early chances but it was Slimbridge who drew first blood in the 12th minute a Brad Martin cross was met by the head of Alex Higgs who guided the ball past the stranded visitors keeper. Shrivenham then put the swans under pressure from the restart but this did not last long as Higgs rounded the visiting keeper Jack Goodenough only for the ball to be cleared off the line by two Shrivenham defenders. Some neat passing play from the home side followed with a couple of speculative shots from winger Jamie Martin, of which the latter was spilled at the feet of Marv Roberts who was unable to control the ball before losing out to the busy away defence.

With chances a plenty, Tom Cole put the ball over from a Slimbridge corner on 22 minutes followed by a good ball in from Brad Martin which came to nothing in the end. At the other end Shrivenham finally got their first real attack on the home goal on 30 minutes with Shane Davis whipping in a fierce cross that evaded everyone in the home box. 3 minutes later Mickey Bryant was unlucky not to add to the home tally as he lobbed keeper Goodenough only for the ball to sail just the wrong side of the post.

Shrivenham should have equalised on 35 minutes when a cross from Elliot Knight was headed narrowly wide by Blaine Fitzgerald at the back post. Slimbridge then upped their game with a good passage of play down the right from Bryant and Roberts leading to Roberts cross being desperately cleared by Lewis Page inside the 6 yard box for a home corner, from

which Higgs shot was well wide. A short range shot from Higgs hit the back of the net on 41 minutes increasing the swans lead, however just before the halftime whistle the visitors Aaron Maximen's 25 yard shot cannoned off the bar and was cleared for a visitor corner with Roberts having to be on hand at the resulting corner to clear off the line.

Shrivenham started the second half as the brighter side with Paul Sanders shooting wide early in the half. At the other end Bryant had a cross shot tipped over the bar on 49 minutes, with Roberts heading directly at the keeper from the corner. On 53 minutes Jamie Inch pulled off a saving tackle as Maximen steamed into the 18 yard box from a narrow angle on the left. From the corner kick Knight shot wide when he should have done better.

At this point Shrivenham looked dangerous with Will Wellon having to make a last ditch tackle from Fitzgerald on the edge of the box as the visiting striker looked certain to run in on goal. Slimbridge killed off the visitors momentum two minutes later when on 58 minutes a Jamie Martin through ball from the right found Higgs who coolly slotted the ball home to bag a hat trick and put the home side three goals up.

A fourth swans goal came 5 minutes later when Slimbridge were awarded a free kick on the edge of the Shrivenham 18 yard box, up stepped Jamie Martin who placed the ball over the wall and into the top corner.

This did not deter the visitors who continued to press the home defence and on 68 minutes Chris Cox's shot was expertly beaten away by the underworked home keeper Ashley Gayle deputising for the suspended Dave Evans. A minute later Brad Martin fed Higgs for what surly should have been his fourth goal of the night however the striker was ruled to be offside.

Substitute Karl Nash then proceeded to hit the post from 20 yards out with the keeper unsighted. On 73 minutes Shrivenham pegged a goal back with substitute Steve Robertson heading home unopposed at the far post from a pin point cross on the right by Cox. At the other end the swans reacted with Higgs cross shot being saved by the busy visiting keeper however the in rushing Freddy Ward's narrow shot at the far post was cleared off the line.

The home side under a spell of pressure conceded a second on 81 minutes with Robertson netting his second from close range in a crowded penalty box. A couple of late chances by the visitors in the last five minutes required close attention from Gayle to keep the visitors out before a final run from Karl Nash chasing a long through ball almost the entire length of the visitors half only to be caught by a pack of visiting defenders just as he was about to take shot prior to the final whistle.

Slimbridge: A Gayle, L Cornwall, B Martin, J Inch, W Wellon, T Cole (F Ward), M Bryant, R Hine, M Roberts( A Nash, A Higgs, J Martin (K Nash)

Goals: Higgs 12, 41, 58 J Martin 63

Shrivenham: J Goodenough, E Knight, S Davis, A Snook, K Tate, C Flanagan, P Saunders, L Page, B Fitzgerald, A Maximen, C Cox, S Robertson

Goals: Robertson 73, 81

Attendance: 38

Both sides meet again on Saturday at Shrivenham in the Hellenic Challenge Cup