

Hellenic League Premier Division

Saturday 14 April 2012

Slimbridge 2-0 Thame United

Goals in each half from Alex Higgs and Jamie Martin earned the Swans victory at Wisloe Road this afternoon, in a game they could have won by a greater margin. After Higgs' early strike put the home side ahead, some poor finishing meant that the only addition to the scoresheet was Jamie Martin's effort halfway through the second period.

The result leaves the Swans anchored in fifth position in the UHlsport Hellenic Premier League, a position they can confirm without the influence of other results on the final week of the season next Saturday. Slimbridge entertain Henley Town for their final game, a clash which could be the swansong for the visitors, who have already announced that they will be resigning from the Hellenic League due to financial pressures, and who may be folding during the close season.

After a quiet start, when Luke Ricketts, who had an impressive outing on the left flank for Thame, fashioned the first chance of the game for the visitors, when his cross-cum-shot drifted out for a goal kick with five minutes on the clock. Slimbridge began to assert themselves. After Marvin Roberts' neat shot which just drifted too high following good work from Lewis Wilton, the home side took the lead on 12 minutes.

Alex Higgs went on a jinking run down the Thame right, and after beating three men, including a neat turn to lose his marker, his shot from the corner of the penalty box gave Thame Keeper Michael Higgs no chance, and the home side were ahead.

Thame responded well to going behind, and had a little spell of pressure of their own, although had their finishing matched their approach play, Slimbridge may have been looking at a different outcome. After 22 minutes, Dan West made room for himself in the Slimbridge box, but his shot went just the wrong side of the post. A series of corners continued to

put pressure on the home side, but a combination of some classy defending by Will Wellon and Shane Anson, together with good punching from Swans Stopper Dave Evans, meant that the home side rarely looked too troubled.

Thame had their best opportunity of the half on 41 minutes, when a neat 1-2 between Adam Rhodes and Ben Connelly saw Connelly dink the ball over Evans, but also over the Slimbridge bar.

The home side had a glorious opportunity to increase their lead as the half approach, when Marv Roberts' neat turn and pass pout Lewis Wilton through on goal. His shot beat Higgs, but again slipped just the wrong side of the post, to ensure the difference remained a single goal at the break.

After a raft of early second half substitutions by the home side, another two great chances should have been taken on the hour mark to put the home side out of sight. Firstly, Roberts made a good opportunity for himself breaking through the Thame midfield, but missed the target, before Jamie Martin, on for Wilton, saw his weak header from a bouncing through ball leave an easy collection for Higgs in the Thame goal.

The Swans were getting closer though, and after Higgs' headers on 65 minutes had bounced over via the crossbar, the home side finally made the second breakthrough.

A superb through ball from Roberts left Martin bearing down on goal, and he held his marker off well to finish in style, giving Higgs no chance, and doubling the Swans' advantage.

Thame continued to look as if they may nick a goal, Louiis Cordice's overhead kick clearing the Swans bar on 73 minutes, but the home side were fairly comfortable as the game entered the final 15 minutes.

Alex Higgs brought a good save from his namesake in the Thame goal on 75 minutes, but Jamie Martin's corner didn't enter the pitch and the opportunity was wasted.

Thame felt they may have had a call for a penalty on 78 minutes, when Cordice's cross was controlled by Andy Sheppard, and the ball bounced up onto his arm. Referee Ballinger decided that it was ball to hand rather than the other way round, and declined the penalty appeals.

The best chances of the final period both went to the visitors, but Connor Hunt and Luke Ricketts failed to take advantage, and the Swans held on for a deserved victory.

Team: Evans, Anson, Cornwall, Sheppard, Wellon, Cole (Wood 56), Bryant (Harding 52), Hine, Roberts, Higgs, Wilton (Martin 48)

Goals: Higgs 12, Martin 67

Supporters Man of the Match: Anson