GLOS. F. A. CHALLENGE TROPHY - FIRST ROUND

(Played on Tuesday 24th October 2006)

SWANS WAKE UP TO OVERWHELM HUNTERS

SLIMBRIDGE 9, BERKELEY TOWN 1

An emphatic scoreline as Hellenic Premier Slimbridge overwhelmed Glos. County League Berkeley Town in this G.F.A. Challenge Trophy First Round tie at Wisloe Road on Tuesday evening. Berkeley though, showing spirit, fought hard and had pulled the score back to 1-1 just after the interval, and only subsided after Slimbridge had regained the lead on 54 minutes.

The Hunters were on the back foot after only three minutes when Robbie Colwell put over a left wing cross for Tim Haddock to place his unchallenged header wide of a diving Terry Stephenson to give Slimbridge the lead. Thereafter the first half was almost a continual onslaught on the Hunters goal, but a combination of wayward finishing, stout defending, and an heroic performance from goalkeeper Stephenson kept the scoreline at 1-0 up to the break.

Two minutes into the second half a roar went round the ground from the Berekeley supporters when the speedy ex-Swan, James Firth broke through and drew goalkeeper Ryan Chandler to slot in an equaliser.

The Slimbridge defence then had to work overtime until the lead was regained on 54 minutes when Mike Green put over a cross from the right which Colwell neatly glanced in. Five minutes later Ashley Thomas prodded in after a Matt Green corner saw Stevenson spill a rasping drive from John Cant.

The floodgates that had been threatening to burst in the first half then finally did so, as goals came at regular intervals, the visitors unable to cope with the home side's short passing game.

On 61 minutes, the ball was worked to Colwell to turn and fire into the far corner of an unguarded net.

Kacey Johnstone, back after suspension, had come on for Will Morford by then and made it 5-1, heading in a Matt Green corner from the left on 67 minutes. Johnstone was credited with his second goal of the evening when a fierce Colwell shot took a big deflection off his thigh into the bottom corner of the net five minutes later.

On 76 minutes Haddock got his second by finishing well from a Johnstone flick-on, before arguably the goal of the evening arrived on 81 minutes. John Cant beat three players coming in from the left and hit a rising shot from ten yards that squeezed in off Stevenson's near post.

The scoring was rounded off on 84 minutes when Matt Green delicately lifted the ball over a defender to give Colwell a simple header for his own personal hat-trick, his second in successive games.

It was all so easy for Slimbridge in the end, but credit to Berkeley that they kept going right to the final whistle.

Slimbridge; R.Chandler, Mike Green, J.Inch, T.Haddock, Ashley Thomas, A.Axton, C.Cole, Matt Green, W.Morford (K.Johnstone 59), R.Colwell, J.Cant.

Berkeley Town; T.Stevenson, J.Cain, M.Wilson, M.Reece, J.O'Kane, M.Billett (B.Gillison 74), T.Waldron, P.Lavis J.Firth, T.Beames (L.Palmer 31), A.Hobbs.

Referee; Mr.B.Lovegrove (Gloucester) Att; 137