Saturday 30th September 2006 F.A.CUP –Second Qualifying Round

SWANS SHOCK BLUEBIRDS

SUPERB ALL ROUND TEAM PERFORMANCE KEEPS CUP RUN GOING

Slimbridge 3 , Chippenham Town 1

Two second half goals from Robbie Colwell, either side of a strike from Kacey Johnstone,propelled Slimbridge into the Third Qualifying Round of the F.A.Cup at the expense of Southern Premier, Chippenham Town, the game proving out of reach by the time Ross Adams netted their sole reply.

After the final whistle, as the victorious Wisloe Road side celebrated before leaving the pitch, there were literally fireworks in the air, rockets fired from outside the ground, cascading brightly into the early evening shadows as if the Armada had been sighted, such was the euphoria generated in the locality! The win at Yate Town in the previous round provided enough excitement, but that was away and this was at home, for the first time in the competition this year. Yes, yet another intoxicating memory that probably only the F.A.Cup could have generated, and one of those special moments that console when the going gets tough.

The travelling supporters certainly made themselves heard in the early stages of the game, but the first action of note came after 15 minutes, when Dave Gilroy was put in by mid-field skipper Ian Herring, slicing wide from eight yards. Almost immediately at the other end, Fred Ward lifted a ball from the right, Johnny Meadows flicked on, but Colwell was off target at the back post.

Slimbridge then suffered a set-back when Ward had to come off after taking a knock earlier in the proceedings, and not being able to shake it off, was replaced by Steve Badham, swopping wings with John Cant, who was showing some deft touches from the outset of the game.

There was also the welcome re-appearance of the combative Tim Haddock in mid-field, whose last action was in the Preliminary round win at Penryn and has since been out with a back problem, and alongside Meadows, always seemed to be in the thick of the action, with or without the ball, and between them did much to deny Chippenham much time to build up from mid-field and set the stage for the win.

The half progressed, and it was becoming clear that Chippenham were relying too much on set piece play, anything else being gobbled up by an eager Slimbridge back-line, with skipper Leon Sterling leading by example, and Ashley Thomas, Allton Axton and Jon Embling, (who came in for the injured James Cole), all showing exemplary touches when needed.

Colwell did get a 20 yard snap-shot that narrowly missed the scrambling Steve Perrin's far post, relieving a bout of attacking pressure from the visitors, and at the other end, the speedy Sam Allison needed watching, as did Kye Holly who twice went over in the Slimbridge area, once gaining a free-kick on the edge that came to nothing, and once theatrically going down when the ball ran away for a goal kick.

No-score at the break was a fair reflection of the game at that point, and the play remained circumspect, but never dull right up to the point Slimbridge opened the scoring on 58 minutes. Colwell chased a back header from Adams that left Perrin in no-man's land, and although pushed wide, Colwell managed to find the net from a narrow angle.

Alan Griffin had replaced Mark Badman for the visitors by then and shortly after, motored well down the right, but his clear sight of goal did not trouble Adam Thomas who took cleanly.

The first goal gave the home side the confidence to start playing their passing game more, and this noticeably increased the visitors anxiety in defence, when a quick ball found Kacey Johnstone with time and space to chip over the advancing Perrin from 16 yards and doubled the home side's lead on 64 minutes.

Chippenham's game then seemed to fall apart for a spell with only Herring's prompting, and Griffin's energetic running keeping them afloat. It was 3-0 after 71 minutes when Colwell was allowed to run on and worked an opening as the visitors defence backed off, his well-placed low drive nestling in the corner of the net past a despairing dive from Perrin to his right.

The Chippenham 'Drummer' went quiet, but two minutes later he was off again when a long throw into the home area by Herring from the right saw defender Adams jump highest in a packed area to head high across Adam Thomas just inside the far post, for what proved to be only a consolation for the visitors.

It was then shut up shop time for Slimbridge, the closest they came to conceding again was when Griffin found space to glance the outside of a post from a short corner, as the home side were content to wind the clock down.

Immediately after the final whistle Chippenham's Holly was red-carded for a heated comment to the referee, a fact many missed as the Slimbridge celebrations began in earnest.

The large Chippenham following, it has to be said were a credit to their club in a time of great discomfort for them, many offering their best wishes for the next round, as they filed their way out of the ground.

Slimbridge; Adam Thomas, L.Sterling, J.Embling,T.Haddock, Ashley Thomas, A.Axton, E.Ward (S.Badham 16), J.Meadows, K.Johnstone, R.Colwell, J.Cant.

Chippenham Town; S.Perrin, S.Charity (A.Robertson 69), K. Halliday, R.Adams, A.Garner, M.Badman (A.Griffin 49), K.Holly, I.Herring, D.Gilroy, S.Allison, I.Harvey (A.Stanley 80).

Referee; Mr. A. Smith (Bridgwater)
Assistants; Mr. P. Milton (Watchet) and Mr. S. Belluomo (Dulverton)

Attendance 375