Tuesday 17th October 2006, HPL Hellenic League Floodlit Cup – First Round

YOUNG SWANS UP TO FLOODLIT CUP TEST

Slimbridge 3, Highworth Town 1

Barrie Dibden, Allton Axton and James Cole scored the goals to enable a youthful looking Slimbridge line-up to overcome Highworth Town in the First Round of the HPL Hellenic League Floodlit Cup, for whom Tom Dingle managed a consolation goal.

Both sides were happy to give youth a chance though, and at the same time, taking an opportunity to rest a few first team regulars after a heavy start to the season. Slimbridge gave defender Shayne Anson his first start, and Mark Pritchett his debut. Dibden who has been knocking in the goals for the Reserves since signing from Kingswood in the summer, scored his first senior goal in a lively start from the home side, putting Slimbridge ahead on ten minutes. Axton playing in an unaccustomed mid-field role, won the ball for Dibden to run on and drive into the top corner of the net from 25yards, giving visiting goalkeeper, Dan Fry no chance.

A keenly fought battle then ensued with Justin Miller and Tom Dingle demonstrating some nifty footwork for Highworth, which certainly kept the Slimbridge defence on the alert.

Miller couldn't get over a good cross to the Slimbridge back post before Will Morford accelerated clear at the other end to bring a good save from Fry, who kept his side in the game with an outstanding save shortly after, from Dibden on the turn.

Three minutes before the interval Slimbridge doubled their lead. A cleverly worked short corner from Steve Badham found its way back to an unmarked Axton, who crashed a 30 yard rising drive across Fry into the top corner of the net for a spectacular strike.

Badham was in high gear in the first part of the second period, firing just past the post after cutting in from the left, and was then unlucky to see his downward header from a Craig Cole cross directed too near Fry from inside the goal area.

Highworth were still looking dangerous on the break with Dingle firing wide after beating the off-side trap before a tremendous move down the left saw him scissor-kick over the bar.

James Cole made a return, having decided to play on while waiting for a knee operation, replacing Pritchett, who limped off on 63 minutes. Two minutes later, he got his first goal of the season to put the game out of reach of the visitors. Finding himself up the left with a packed area before him, he swung in a cross that bounced twice, eluding everyone and ended up just inside the net at the far post.

Highworth were seemingly stung into action then, but although they looked positive going forward, could not find a good opening until scoring on 81 minutes. Substitute Jamie McGahey made progress up the right, rode two attempted tackles, kept his feet and threaded the ball to an inrushing Dingle to sweep into the net from close range.

At the other end Lewis Wilton, and Craig Cole had efforts saved by Fry.

Two minutes from time the visitors missed a chance to make things interesting. Catching the home defence napping from a quickly taken free-kick, Jamie Mills with only Dave Evans in goal to beat, fired a low angled drive just wide.

Slimbridge;D.Evans, S.Anson, M.Pritchett (J.Cole 63), J.Inch, Ashley Thomas, A.Axton, Matt Green, C.Cole, W.Morford (T.Cole 70) B.Dibden, S.Badham (L.Wilton 76).

Highworth Town;D.Fry, N.McCrae (J.McGahey 30), J.Reeves, M.Davies, L.Brown, A.Minturn, T.Dingle, J.Mills, S.Richardson (K. Tate 59), J.Miller, M.Hall.