SPORT ITALIA HELLENIC LEAGUE –PREMIER DIVISION

(Played on Tuesday 26th September 2006)

SLIMBRIDGE WINNING RUN ENDS

WITNEY COME BACK TWICE TO TAKE A POINT

SLIMBRIDGE 2 , WITNEY UNITED 2

Slimbridge were held to a draw by Witney United who twice came from a goal down in an enthralling Premier Division encounter.

Kacey Johnstone put Slimbridge ahead but an equaliser from Jamie Cook saw the teams level by the break. Fred Ward restored the home lead early in the second half, but Danny Wise secured a point for the visitors with a strike just past the hour mark.

Neither side could claim any domination of the game as the ball was going end to end for much of the time in a hard fought encounter with plenty of good football on show, between two sides going into the match unbeaten in the league to date.

Slimbridge went ahead on 24 minutes, following good build-up play involving Johnny Meadows, Robbie Colwell and Fred Ward put in Johnstone for a clear shot from an acute angle from the right, the ball driven with pace going in off the underside of the bar giving custodian Paul Tassell no chance.

Shortly after Adam Thomas in the home goal had to get down sharply to save off a wayward back header from brother Ashley, before at the other end, a Colwell run and shot saw Tassell back-peddling to tip over his own bar.

Adam Thomas then parried out as Witney broke through the middle but could do nothing about the follow-up drive from Jamie Cook that sped into the open net on 34 minutes to level the score.

Just before half-time Witney had a lucky escape as Tassell parried from Colwell with the ball, via Ward reaching Johnstone who hit a rasping skidder that thudded against the base of the post from just inside the area.

Three minutes into the second half and Slimbridge regained the lead, when a weaving run and low cross into the box saw Ward divert into the net from close range.

After Danny Wise had powered a strong header straight at Thomas, the flow of the game was momentarily disrupted with an emphatic appeal for a penalty for handball as Witney attacked into the Slimbridge area, and although initially the referee played on, the assistant kept flagging. The game stopped amidst confusion, but eventually re-started up the other end of the field, much to the particular annoyance of the Witney bench.

The incident was soon forgotten however when Witney took advantage of hesitancy in the Slimbridge area on 61 minutes to draw level again, Wise putting the ball into the roof of the net from close range.

Both sides creditably stayed in attacking mode and near the end spurned the chance of a winner. Will Morford on for Johnstone, went round Tassell and with only a defender on the Witney goal-line, managed to skew his shot wide of a post. At the other end Mark Odom, on for Christian Perkins, managed to misdirect a header from a cross by Tom Butler, wide of a post.

It takes both sides in a match to provide a spectacle for fans to enjoy, and this was it! At the final whistle, both sides had retained their unbeaten league record, although Slimbridge lost their 100% win record of ten matches at the start of a season, which has comfortably beaten their previous record of eight matches at the start of the 2004-05 season.

Slimbridge; Adam Thomas, L.Sterling, J.Cole (J.Embling 85), Mike Green (J.Inch 69), Ashley Thomas, A.Axton, E.Ward, J.Meadows, K.Johnstone (W.Morford 64), R.Colwell, J.Cant.

Witney United; P.Tassell, R.Cruse, M.Shelton, J.McMahon, C.Perkins(T.Smith 82), S.Douglas, J.Cook, R.Wyatt (M.Odom 73), D.Wise, C.Johnson, T.Butler.

Referee; Mr. S.Wales (Tewkesbury)