Western League Premier Division

Saturday 10 August 2013

Gillingham Town 2-0 Slimbridge AFC

The Swans paid the price for not converting a spell of early pressure into goals at Hardings Lane, and were picked off by an impressive looking Gillingham side who have set their sights on promotion to the Southern League this season. After a good start for the visitors, the home side took the lead on 25 minutes, with Harry Baker finishing off a neat passing move. Just after the break, Lee Gale doubled the Gills advantage, and they controlled the game from then on to take the points.

On the occasion of their first game in the Western Premier League, Slimbridge made a good start as they played down the slope, putting Gillingham on the back foot from the start. Jamie Martin forced a good save from Gills' Keeper Jamie Beale with five minutes on the clock, and two minutes later, Paul Carter and Dean Turner combined well to free up Martin down the right side, but his cross was placed too close to Beale, and the chance went begging.

Slimbridge were still making the running, and Marv Roberts created the next decent opportunity for the visitors, but Carter miscontrolled the ball at the crucial time, and it was cleared.

It was 15 minutes before Gillingham created their first opportunities - firstly Ryan Murray, who had a very effective game at Right Back, shot wide from outside the box, and the same player set up Gale, who forced Dave Evans into his first save of the afternoon.

It was against the run of play when the home side took the lead on 25 minutes - the ball fell to Harry Baker on the edge of the Slimbridge box as the Gills' pressed, and he threaded his shot past Evans and into the corner to put Gillingham ahead.

The momentum of the game changed, and Gillingham pushed for a second goal - Baker forced Evans into action again, and the Ben Thompson dispossessed Tom Cole, firing in a good shot which Evans pushed out for a corner.

As the game approached the half, the home side were dominant, and playing some very attractive football, but were unable to add to their score - Aaron Rodriguez had a good shot from a free kick cleared, Thompson and Gale combined well with Gale's shot just skimming past the post, and Rodriguez and Baker both had efforst go close, but the Swans held on to go in one down at the break.

The second half picked up exactly where the first had finished, this time with Gollingham playing down the slope, and it only too them a minute to notch their second goal. Rodriguez, who was causing all sorts of problems for the visitors played in Thompson, who fed Gale. Gale slid the ball home to finish off a classy move.

Gillingham continued to press, and Rodriguez nearly got on the end of a Thompson cross, and it took a brave header from Dan Robinson to put the ball out for a corner.

Slimbridge were penned back in their own half, and after Manager Leon Sterling had been booked for a clumsy tackle, Gary Bowle forced Evans into action again with the resulting Free Kick with 53 minutes on the clock.

As Slimbridge tried to regroup, Thompson and Gale were causing all sorts of problems as the home side had the game well in control.

Nicholas Compton was the next Gills' player to test Evans, but his shot was partially blocked and the Swans keeper was able to collect.

It took until the 73rd minute for Slimbridge to fashion a second half opportunity, and when it arrived, Johhny Cant's shot was wide, after he'd played a good 1-2 with Carter to find some space.

With Daniel Thompson and Nicholas Thompson both going close for the Gills', the final chance of the game fell to Slimbridge, but Freddy Ward's effort following a Carter corner drifted just wide, to see the home side record a comfortable victory.

Team: Evans, Robinson, Cole, Sterling, Wellon, Turner, Carter, Ward, Roberts (Bernard 69), Martin (A. Nash 57), Cant

Supporters Man of the Match: Dan Robinson