Western League Premier Division

Sunday 1 December 2013

Sherborne Town 0-3 Slimbridge

The Slimbridge revival continued with a confident and clinical performance against fellow strugglers Sherborne Town at Raleigh Grove yesterday. The victory expends the Swans' unbeaten run to six games, with this win recording their third victory on the bounce. Two clinical goals from Danny Chandler and a late clincher from Dan Holloway did the damage, although the defensive contribution to the victory should not be underestimated - a tightening up at the back has seen the side concede just three goals in the this run which has lifted the Swans to 16th in the Western Premier League, and was the fourth clean sheet in the last six. That fact that there were at least half a dozen good contenders for Swans' man of the match indicated how strong a team performance this was.

Assistant Manager Freddy Ward was naturally pleased with the outcome - 'It was a decent result', he said after the game. 'It shows what listening, doing the basics well and hard work does for confidence. We can still get better, but we're getting there.'

The Visitors started the game well, and although they were playing into a very low setting sun, took the game to their opponents who were on their own mini-revival. Adam Hughes had two efforts in the first few minutes, one blocked for a corner and the other going wide, after good link up play from Callum Brown.

At the other end, Marc Caines' cross somehow reached Steve Burton, and he may have done better to go for goal rather than head the ball back across goal, but the move was halted by an offside flag. As Sherborne lifted their game, it took a good clearance from Dan Robinson to break up a dangerous move involving Matt Day and Hayden Binding, clearing the ball for a corner, which was inexplicably given as a goal kick by Referee Goad.

The running of Danny Chandler was beginning to cause Sherborne problems, and the width from Dean Turner and Dan Holloway was stretching the home side - Chandler went close after Turner set him up with 12 minutes on the clock.

Sherborne has their best period of pressure around the quarter hour mark, but their strikers looked low on confidence and hesitant, and the Swans back line held firm as first , dam Barrett was foiled by a good stop at his feet from Dave Evans, and Caines, and then Day, were well off target when they would have expected to do better.

Still the home side were pressing at this point, and the chances continued to come - only Sam Farthing will know how he managed to miss with a free header from Binding's cross in probably the home side's best chance of the match, and Robinson, who had a superb game at the back, was again instrumental in tidying up after Binding and Caines had combined well.

Having survived the pressure, Slimbridge regrouped well, and started to create their own chances - Liam Harding's header was only inches wide as he got onto the end of Chandler's corner on 29 minutes, although the visiting side still had to be careful - Dominique Njoya's misplaced back pass saw Binding through on goal, but again, his effort was skewed wide.

When the opening goal came, it was an object lesson in simplicity on 37 minutes - Holloway picked up the ball in midfield and ran at the Sherborne defence. As he approached goal and drew the last defender, he slid the ball right to Chandler in acres of space, giving Chandler plenty of time to pick his spot and beat Sherborne Keeper James Smith to give the visitors the lead.

Sherborne had a chance to pull the game back before the break, but again, poor finishing let them down - Ollie Wake's free kick reached Cochrane in space, but again his header was off target and didn't trouble Evans.

Slimbridge continued to create opportunities to increase their lead in the second period, although again they had to withstand another period of pressure from the home side. Harding chased down a poor back pass, and

his neat ball set up Holloway, but his shot was wide. A minute later, returning the favour Holloway's cross saw Harding's header go close, but just the wrong side of the post.

Jamie Martin nearly got in the scoresheet with 55 minutes gone, getting a superb header after Holloway had flicked on Chandler's Free Kick, but the move was again halted by an offside flag.

With 64 minutes gone, Slimbridge increased their lead. Another misplaced back pass from the Sherborne back line was sized on by Chandler, who beat the last defender and neatly chipped the ball over Smith to notch his second of the match.

The second goal knocked the fight out of Sherborne, and the majority of chances then belonged to the visiting team - A superb backheel from Chandler set up Martin, who saw his effort saved on 69 minutes, while Holloway and Harding combined well again to create an opportunity for Harding,. which was again saved by Smith.

Sherborne's last decent opportunity of the game came on 75 minutes, when no-one could connect with a dangerous ball across the box from Harry Montacute.

As the game approached stoppage time, Slimbridge recorded their third. Joe Kinnear dispossessed a defender on the edge of the Sherborne box, and set up Holloway, who slid the ball past Smith to seal an impressive performance and a confidence building win ahead of a trip to Radstock Town next Saturday for another League encounter (3.00)

Team: Evans, Brown, Njoya, Sterling, Robinson, Hughes (Ward 65), Turner, Harding, Chandler, (Kinnear 81) Martin, Holloway

Goals: Chandler 37, 64 Holloway 90

Supporters Man of the Match: Danny Chandler