FA Cup First Qualifying Round

Sunday 13 September 2015

Greenwich Borough 2 - 3 Slimbridge AFC

The Swans moved into the Second Qualifying Round of the FA Cup for the first time in nine years with a hard fought, but deserved victory at Princes Park Stadium this afternoon.

Trailing to an early strike from Mohamed Eisa with only four minutes on the clock, it took an own goal on 23 minutes from Greenwich's Connor Heffernan to rouse the visitors from a sluggish start.

Two goals before the break, a magnificent header from Jack Twyman, and a Paul Fahy penalty after Fahy himself had been felled in the box saw the Swans go into the break two goals to the good.

An early second half Greenwich goal from Gary Alexander put the pressure back on Slimbridge, and it took some fine defending, coupled with sterling work from Adam Thomas between the sticks to see out the win, and put the Swans in the hat for tomorrow's draw.

The home side made much the better start, with Slimbridge looking as if they were suffering from the four and a half hour trip from Gloucestershire to Kent in the early stages.

With two minutes on the clock, Eisa took advantage of a cross which fell beyond Rich Thwaite only to see his effort bounce back into play off the base of the Slimbridge post.

Two minutes later though, Eisa made no mistake, finishing well to round off a good passing move involving Jake Britnell and Alexander, to put the home side ahead.

All the Momentum was with the hosts at this point, and first Britnell, then Danny Young saw efforts denied by good save from Thomas.

The visitors' first decent effort came on 15 minutes, but Twyman's effort was blocked on the edge of the box, but on 23 minutes, Slimbridge had a break of luck which brought them back in the game.

Adam Mace's probing Free Kick into the Greenwich box saw two defenders leap for the same ball, and it skipped off Connor Heffernan's head and into the net to bring the visitors level.

To their credit, the goal galvanised Slimbridge, who started to offer more in midfield than the home side, and started to create some decent openings.

After Eisa had gone close again after another powerful run, Freddy Ward's header from Twyman's cross was just as close at the other end.

Two minutes later, the visitors took the lead - Twyman's powerful header from Sam Blackie's cross giving Greenwich Keeper Craig Holloway no chance.

Greenwich still looked dangerous though, and Alexander's header after slack marking should have been the equaliser, but we was wide of the target and the Swans had a let off.

A couple of minutes later, a Paul Fahy run into the Greenwich box was unceremoniously halted, and Referee Lee Brennan pointed to the spot without hesitation. Fahy picked himself to convert the spot kick and give the visitors a two goal cushion at the interval.

The second half started with another good Fahy run being halted, this one outside the box. Blackie's Free Kick brought a superb stop from Holloway, before the hosts clawed themselves back into the tie.

On 53 minutes, Mace was penalised on the edge of the Slimbridge box, and Alexander drilled the ball past the Slimbridge wall to reduce the deficit.

This was the signal for a sustained period of pressure from the home side - on 64 minutes, Thomas made another great stop from Young's effort, and Eisa somehow managed to head over from a couple of feet out, with an equaliser looking inevitable.

But the Swans reorganised, and dug in, playing out time and reducing the hosts to one more dangerous effort - Alexander in a carbon copy of his free kick goal, this time saw Thomas equal to the task and making a vital stop.

There were seven minutes of additional time played from somewhere, before the final whistle saw great scenes as players, officials and fans all celebrated together on the sidelines.

Slimbridge return to League action on Saturday, when they are off on their travels again, this time to Marlow (3.00pm).

Team: Thomas, Turl, Mace (Ry Thwaite 53), Hoyle, Rich Thwaite, Ward, Turner, Twyman, Lawson (Bamford 75), Blackie (Martin 64), Fahy

Supporters Man of the Match: Alex Hoyle