Evo Stik Southern League South & West

Saturday 28 November 2015

Slimbridge 1-2 Wantage Town

Wantage gained revenge for their opening day defeat at the hands of the Swans with a victory at Wisloe Road in a game that was effectively turned into a lottery by the weather conditions, and credit is due to both sides for producing any sort of spectacle given the conditions.

The visitors opened the scoring in the first minute, and as they pressed for a second, Swans Keeper Adam Thomas picked up an injury that has since been diagnosed as a broken fibula. Thomas lasted until half time, but was replaced at the interval - Midfielder Jack Twyman taking over the gloves in the place of the suspended Jamie Martin, who is the usual 'outfield player going in goal' go-to guy. Ironically, the suspended Martin was in goal himself in a half time penalty shoot out with members of the Slimbridge Youth Team. A second goal conceded as Twyman was still adjusting to the wind and rain that was sweeping across the ground gave Wantage a greater advantage, and despite Paul Fahy's late penalty conversion, the visitors held on to collect the points.

The game was subject to a series of inspections before it was finally declared that it could go ahead, but Wantage started the game far better than the hosts - within the first minute, Ben Whitehead was left in too much space on the edge of the Swans' box, and wrongfooted Thomas to slide the ball home in the opposite corner to out Wantage ahead. The visitors continued to press, and a series of corners followed, one of which saw Thomas pick up a knock which eventually saw him replaced at half time as he struggled to play on with his injury.

After Sam Turl had seen a decent effort turned over by Wantage Keeper Eddie Cavanagh, Slimbridge hit the woodwork twice within a minute - on eleven minutes, Sam Blackie's corner caught the wind and was unlucky to rebound back into play off the far post, and then Rich Thwaite slipped in the mud as he tried to convert a superb chance after Sean Lawson's effort had rebounded off the Wantage crossbar.

Lawson then brought another good save from Cavanagh, turning the striker's effort past the post for the corner as the home side pressed.

Wantage were very much under the cosh at this point, with Carl Even's effort on 20 minutes providing an easy save for Thomas as the hosts tried to get back on level terms.

Slimbridge had opportunities to get back on terms, but first Alex Hoyle, then Paul Fahy, and then Sam Babatunde were all off target. For Wantage, their best chance of the half by far came when Nick Thorne played in Whitehead, who beat Thomas with his effort, but saw it drift just wide of the post as the game headed towards the break.

Slimbridge made changes at half time - Thomas was replaced by Adam Mace and Jack Twyman went in goal as it became obvious that Thomas could not continue, and Twyman was caught out five minutes into the half, when a corner from Whitehead caught the wind and sailed over his head inside the far post to double the advantage for the visitors.

As the rain turned torrential, Mace began to exert his influence on the game - firstly, Babatunde was unlucky to see his header go just the wrong side of the post from Mace's cross, and then Mace's corner saw a Hoyle header stopped on the line. As Slimbridge continued to apply pressure, Mace's cross found Sam Turl in space, but he lost his footing as he shaped to shoot in what was now a quagmire of a pitch and the chance was lost.

With a minute remaining, Babatunde was brought down in the Wantage box, and Paul Fahy stepped up to convert the resulting penalty, but Wantage hung on to pick up three points, which saw the Swans drop one place to 14th in the League.

The Swans face two away trips on the bounce this week - they travel to Evesham United on Tuesday night (7.45pm) before making the trip to Banbury United on Saturday (3.00pm)

Team: Thomas (Mace 45), Turl, Ry Thwaite, Hoyle, Rich Thwaite, Turner, Twyman, Blackie (Cornock 58), Lawson, Fahy, Babatunde

Slimbridge YFC Man of the Match: Sean Lawson