Evo Stik Southern League South & West

Tuesday 1 November 2016

Taunton Town 0-0 Slimbridge

Slimbridge arrived at The Viridor Stadium to be greeted by the BBC who were there to do some filming ahead of Taunton Towns big FA Cup tie with Barrow on Sunday.

However, the limelight was slightly taken away from the home side as the Swans returned home with a surprise draw and another precious point in their bid to stay clear of the relegation zone.

Take nothing away from the home side, they certainly looked like a team who will be there or there abouts come next April but they came up against a very stubborn Swans defence and an incredible goalkeeping display from Adrian Kowalski who time and time again denied the Taunton Strikeforce with a string of fine saves.

Add to that the fact that the Peacocks managed to rattle Kowalski's woodwork on no fewer than six occasions then you can appreciate why it was the Swans who were the most pleased to hear referee Sean Rothwells final Whistle rather than the home side.

Slimbridge started with Forest Green Rovers loanee Joe Stokes on the bench and with Chairman Barry Gay and assistant manager Freddy Ward in charge in the absence of Leon Sterling who became a Dad earlier in the day.

Archie Haskayne was penalised for a foul 18 yards out after 15 minutes and Kowalksi's bar was shaken for the first time from the resulting free kick, but that was just the start of things to come.

Slimbridge had chances of their own during the first period, Lee Smith's delightful cross found Jamie Martin alone six yards out but he somehow failed to make contact with the ball when it looked easier to score.

Swans Full back Nick Grimes,made a superb tackle on Callum Martindale who broke clear after 25 mins and five minutes later a vicious volley from Matt Wright once again rattled the visitors crossbar.

A great run up the left on 30 minutes by Marley Thomas ended with Martins cross being headed inches wide by Smith.

Smith himself rolled back the years by leaving the Taunton defence for dead but his final shot went too high.

Just before half time Slimbridge's Post was shaken by a good shot from Matt Wright as an exciting half came to an end.

The second half was just one minute old when astonishingly Wright hit the post yet again with a neat strike from 18yards.

Kowalski then made a series of fine saves, the best being when he dived low to his right to push round what looked like a certain goal from Ollie Chamberlain.

Taunton upped the pace now and a series of corner kicks were all well defended by a dogged swans defence.

On 65 minutes the home side should have been in front when Adam Mace made a rash challenge in the penalty area but Shane Whites resulting penalty was beaten away by Kowalski.

The Swans were now defending for their lives as Taunton pushed forward and substitute Freddy Ward made a couple of good goal line clearances as more corners were won by the home side and Kowalski made further reflex saves from Wright and Craig Veal.

With just a couple of minutes left the home fans could not believe it when their full back Pierce Mitchell once again struck the woodwork with a cross stroke shot and then Kowalski made another stunning one hand save as Craig Duff powered a rasping drive at him.

Three minutes into stoppage time Marley Thomas went down in the penalty area after a challenge by former Swan Alex Hoyle but it would have taken a brave decision by any referee to give that one, considering the dominance that Taunton had showed in the second half.

The final whistle was greeted with jubilant enthusiasm from the Swans faithful and as Slimbridge now turn their attentions to an important home league fixture with Didcot Town on Saturday they would like to wish Taunton Town good luck with their FA Cup Tie on Sunday.

Team: Kowalkski, Grimes (61) Mace, Ryan Thwaite, Rich Thwaite, Turner (Mason 76), Twyman, Haskayne (Stokes 65) Smith, Martin, Thomas.

Man of the match...Adrian Kowalski.

Attendance...233