

SATURDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 2008

## TIVERTON TOWN 1-0 CHIPPENHAM TOWN

British Gas Business Southern League Premier Division

In complete contrast to the meeting between the two sides last October Chippenham Town's visit to Ladysmead was a tight affair with goalscoring chances at a premium. The Bluebirds arrived in Devon on a fine run of form that had seen them unbeaten in eight league matches but they struggled to settle into a game that was scrappy in the first half and intense after the change of ends. A poachers goal from Simon Bochenski eventually separated the sides, but it was Tiverton's defence that truly won the day with former Chippenham player Nathan Rudge delivering a captain's innings and goalkeeper Ray Johnston making the headlines by saving a twice taken penalty with fifteen minutes remaining.

The Wiltshire side entered the game ravaged by injury and were missing a host of first team players which meant that Kye Holly was forced to deputise at right back with Iain Carr patrolling the area in front of the back four, and the changes allowed Tiverton to get the initial upper hand with James Fraser going close early on. The game was scrappy and neither set of midfielders were able to show the inventiveness needed to break down two stoic defences and Scott Lye's swerving effort from distance was typical of the game as a whole - the ball sailed wide of Johnston's upright, and one of several hopeful efforts ended with the ball on the terraces behind the goal.

Matt Villis took it upon himself to bypass the congested central third of the pitch when he launched a long ball for Bochenski to chase, but the striker was stopped in his tracks when Kes Metitiri handled the ball whilst challenging, but the resultant free kick amounted to nothing as Will Gardner saw his shot deflected away. Carr became the first player to work his way into the referee's notebook when he was dubiously adjudged to have sliced down Bochenski on the edge of the area, but again a free kick from Chris Vinnicombe proved ineffectual as Gardner headed wide of the mark. Luke Gullick and Glenn Gould were also cautioned, and the Chippenham player helped round of the first half by firing wide from 30 yards.

Chippenham, who were already stretched in terms of personnel were forced into a further reshuffle at the interval with Carr being replaced by the pacey Sean Seavill, meaning that Dave Pratt, the Bluebirds danger man who had seen little of the ball was dropped to the right side of midfield but the changes had little positive effect on the attacking prowess of the visitors, and it was Tiverton that looked more likely to break the deadlock. Chris Snoddy, to this point under-worked in the visitors' goal showed some rustiness by twice slicing simple clearances, the second of which he made such a hash of that he was forced to scramble in retreat to see the ball out for a corner under pressure from Bochenski.

Two minutes later the breakthrough finally came; Gould played a smart through-ball to find Fraser, and although Snoddy did well to rush out and block the midfielders shot the ball landed at the feet of Phil Walsh and he layed the ball off to Bochenski to steal in at the far post and tap into an unguarded net. Tivvy deserved the lead, just about, and Snoddy denied Bochenski a second five minutes later after Vinnicombe had pierced the Chippenham defence. Seavill looped a shot onto the roof of the net at the other end and Lye had a shot blocked as the Bluebirds looked for the equaliser, but Tiverton were denied a good penalty shout as the game opened up and came to life.

The defining moment of the match came when Pratt cut in from the right, skipped past a half-hearted challenge from Radley Veale and was then unceremoniously upended by Gardner inside the penalty area. Mr. Philpott immediately pointed at the spot and Chippenham had a lifeline. Holly stepped up and side-footed the kick low towards Johnston's bottom right corner but the 'keeper dived, saved and held. However, the Assistant referee wasn't happy having spotted Johnston move off his line and ordered a retake, much to the chagrin on Rudge, whose protestations saw him add his name to the ever increasing collection the referee had developed. Holly went again, the same run up, the same penalty, and the same result. Johnston this time parried the penalty kick away and Vinnicombe reacted the quickest to scramble the ball behind for a corner.

The away side piled on the pressure in the closing stages but their chances were limited as Johnston held everything that came at him, and Matt Villis clumsily earned himself a yellow card for a late challenge after Holly had already been felled by Fraser. Martin Paul replaced the poor Sam Allison late on for Chippenham and Seavill fired a low effort than was comfortably saved as the Yellows saw out the last moments of the game. In the fourth minute of added time Villis picked up a second pointless booking, and with it a dismissal after kicking the ball away with the whistle having already sounded, and Veale was replaced by new signing Adam Faux, but there was no time for Chippenham to mount a further assault, so Tiverton held on for their first win over their long-standing rivals in almost two years.

**Tiverton Town:** Ray Johnston; Danny O'Brien, Chris Vinnicombe, Matt Villis, Nathan Rudge, Will Gardner, Glenn Gould, Phil Walsh, Simon Bochenski, James Fraser, Radley Veale (Adam Faux)

Goals: Bochenski 58

Booked: Gould 41, O'Brien 53, Walsh 66, Rudge 77, Villis 81, 90

Sent Off: Villis 90

**Chippenham Town:** Chris Snoddy; Iain Carr (Sean Seavill 46), Kevin Halliday, Kes Metitiri, Matthew McEntegart, Iain Harvey, Scott Lye, Kye Holly, Dave Pratt, Samuel Allison (Martin Paul 87), Luke Gullick

Booked: Carr 28, Gullick 35

Sent Off: None

Attendance: 412