



Crusaders 0-0 Ballyclare Comrades

Thursday 4th July 2019 – Pre-season Friendly

Ballyclare Comrades team (4-5-1)

1. Ben McCauley 🇮🇪 (46')
2. Curtis Woods 🇮🇪 (81')
23. Jonathon Doey 🇮🇪 (46') 🇮🇪 (73')
5. Kyle Crawford 🇮🇪 (73')
18. Matthew Henry 🇮🇪 (46') 🇮🇪 (66')
9. Kyle Beggs 🇮🇪 (66')
11. Ciaran Dobbin 🇮🇪 (46') 🇮🇪 (61') 🇮🇪 (83')
4. Gary Donnelly 🇮🇪 (61')
10. Jake McNeill 🇮🇪 (46') 🇮🇪 (83')
7. Thomas Robinson 🇮🇪 (46')
16. Jamie Willighan 🇮🇪 (46')

Substitutes:

19. Tom Hegan 🇮🇪 (46')
6. Michael McQuitty 🇮🇪 (46')
15. Jordan Malone 🇮🇪 (46')
8. JB Dobbin 🇮🇪 (46')
17. Tom Patchett 🇮🇪 (46')
14. Joe Tully 🇮🇪 (46') 🇮🇪 (68')
3. Nathan Sloss 🇮🇪 (46') 🇮🇪 (85')
20. Kurt Cooper 🇮🇪 (81')
12. Ryan Weatherhead 🇮🇪 (85')

Crusaders (starting line up): O'Neill, Burns, Hegarty, Beverland, Lowry, Cushley, Forsythe, O'Rourke, J Owens, Thompson, Heatley.

A much changed Comrades squad opened their pre-season with an encouraging performance in an entertaining scoreless draw against Crusaders at Seaview. As expected the home side dominated possession in the first half, but they did not have things all their own way. Comrades, with seven new signings in the starting line-up, made it difficult for the Irish Cup holders to get chances in front of goal. At the other end, the visitors pressed forward when possible, with Kyle Beggs particularly prominent early on with two rapid runs at the Crusaders defence which led to shots, although these were blocked before they got near the 'keeper. Comrades continued to work hard to close down their classy opponents and were able to frustrate them for large periods. Although they were grateful for a poor

finish and then some alert 'keeping from Ben McCauley which kept the score-line blank on 33 minutes.

The visitors finished the half strongly and created some good chances. On 42 minutes Ciaran Dobbin got his head to a ball in from Jamie Willighan to head on target from 8 yards, but O'Neill made the save. Then, two minutes later, Ciaran Dobbin was also the man with a chance, when he strode on to the ball just outside the box, after good set up play by Matthew Henry, but his powerful shot rose over the bar.

In between these two Ciaran Dobbin efforts, Jamie Willighan came close to a spectacular goal, when he saw the 'keeper off his line and tried an audacious lob from wide near the half-way line. He was unlucky to see his effort fall narrowly wide of the unguarded goal.

The second half saw a rash of substitutions for Comrades, but the side continued to play in the same positive, hard-working way. Whilst Crusaders still had a lot of the ball they struggled to find a way beyond the Comrades defence and on the few occasions when they did 'keeper Tom Hegan wasn't to be beaten.

The visitors continued to attack when possible and looked threatening when they did so. On 52 minutes Joe Tully set up Kyle Beggs for a chance at the far post, but his resulting shot was blasted well over the bar.

However, the best chance for Comrades came in the 87th minute, when Tom Patchett broke through to advance on goal, only to see his resulting effort kept out by a fine save from O'Neill.