



Ballyclare Comrades 2-0 Armagh City

Saturday 17th September 2016 – NIFL Championship

Match Sponsor: Simpson Developments

Ball Sponsor: Fleming Chemists, Ballyclare

Ballyclare Comrades team (4-2-3-1)

1. Paddy Flood
2. Gary Brown 🟢🔴 (65')
5. Michael McQuitty ⚫ (23')
23. Dean Youle
3. Mark Shannon
4. Corey McMullan 🟡 (45+1')
8. JB Dobbin
7. Michael O'Hanlon ⚫ (90+2')
10. Jason Johnston
11. Thomas Robinson 🟢🔴 (74')
9. Chris Trussell 🟢🔴 (88')

Substitutes:

12. Denver Taggart 🟢🔴 (65')
14. Adam Irwin 🟢🔴 (88')
15. Bobbie Crowe
16. Kyle Dillon
17. Adam Gray 🟢🔴 (74')

Armagh City: Connolly, Montgomery, Lennon, Noonan, Toal, Bell, Mallon, Hoey, Murray, Donnelly, Carvill. Subs: Campbell, McSorley, McGlone, Rice, McCarten.

Comrades produced a gritty performance to win all three points in a tight encounter against Armagh City at a sunny Dixon Park.

There was a defensive reshuffle for the home side for this game. Stuart McCullough was unavailable and this allowed Dean Youle to move to his preferred centre-back position. With Gary Brown available again, he came in to the right-back position in the continued absence of Curtis Woods.

The opening stages of the game were evenly contested, but it was the visitors who had the early chances. In the 3rd minute a clearance out of the Comrades defence was blocked and the ball fell kindly to Donnelly, but Paddy Flood did well to come out to smother his effort from the corner of the 6-yard box. Then, on 14 minutes, a good shot from the edge of the box from Hoey forced a fine save from Paddy Flood. However, the loose ball broke to Murray, but his effort from an angle 5 yards from goal flew over the bar.

The home side began to settle into the game and, in the 19th minute, they came close to the opening goal when Thomas Robinson ran at the Armagh defence and made space for a shot from 17 yards, which came back off the post.

A minute later, it was Comrades who were saved by the woodwork when a crisp shot from 14 yards, struck by Murray, hit the upright.

The opening goal came in the 23rd minute. Comrades had a corner which was cleared, but the ball was played back into the box, where Michael McQuitty headed a fine effort past 'keeper Connolly from 6 yards out.

The rest of the first half saw little in the way of goalmouth action as both sides struggled to breach well organised defences.

The first chance of the second half fell to Comrades on 49 minutes. Chris Trussell created it for himself by surging in from the left, beating a defender and then getting in a shot from a difficult angle, 16 yards out. However, his effort was met by a fairly comfortable save from Connolly at his near post.

Armagh were having a good deal of the possession, but found the Comrades defence in dominant form and consequently struggled to create chances.

At the other end, Comrades looked somewhat more incisive, when they could avoid the well-drilled Armagh offside trap. In the 59th minute, left-back Mark Shannon went on a marauding run forward down the wing and played a neat one-two with Thomas Robinson, before surging into the box and firing a fierce shot from an angle 15 yards out, which flew inches wide of the angle of bar and near post.

In the 68th minute a quickly taken free-kick found substitute Denver Taggart in space just outside the box on the right and he played in a cross for Chris Trussell, who headed a difficult chance over from 7 yards.

Then, four minutes later, Taggart was again involved, this time doing well to pick out Thomas Robinson with a ball into the box, but the winger's resulting effort from 8 yards was uncharacteristically weak, allowing the 'keeper to make an easy save.

Comrades continued to look the more likely side going forward. In the 76th minute, good play from Michael O'Hanlon and substitute Adam Gray on the left set up a chance from Chris Trussell, but his well struck effort from 10 yards was met by a fine save from Connolly to tip the ball over the bar.

On 81 minutes, the lively Denver Taggart, who was making a good impact after coming on midway through the half, got on the end of a long goal-kick from Paddy Flood and hit a good effort from the right edge of the box, which forced a smart save from the 'keeper.

Comrades lead however remained precarious and in the 89th minute it could very well have been wiped out, when Montgomery fired a good chance wide from 6 yards.

The points were finally sealed two minutes into injury-time. An excellent run from Adam Gray saw him skip past two opponents and then feed the ball to fellow substitute Adam Irwin at the edge of the box. He then squared the ball to Michael O'Hanlon, who advanced and made space to finish neatly from 9 yards.