



Ballyclare Comrades 2-1 Dergview

Saturday 11th March 2017 – NIFL Championship

Match sponsors: Agnew, Mitchell & Cairns Accountants

Ball sponsor: Over The Wall Gang (Michael Hughes, Robert Johnston, Gary Longstaff, Ian McKinney & Tom Streight)

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

1. Paddy Flood
2. Curtis Woods  (71')
5. Jason Johnston
23. Dean Youle  (89')
3. Adam Gray
4. Samuel McIlveen  (83')
8. JB Dobbin
7. Michael O'Hanlon  (82')
10. Corey McMullan  (60')
11. Denver Taggart  (45')  (61')
9. Kevin Lynch  (73')

Substitutes:

14. Gary Brown  (73')
15. Kyle Robinson
24. Owen Thompson  (61')

Dergview: McCusker, Walsh, Falconer, Wray, Burns, Ballard, Cashel, Arkinson, Porter, Sproule, Campbell. Subs: Buchanan, Lynch, Lecky, Wallace.

Comrades ended a poor run of form with a stirring late comeback, to snatch all three points against Dergview.

For this match Chris Trussell and Thomas Robinson were still unavailable, in addition to a number of longer term absentees. However, manager Stephen Hughes could welcome back Michael O'Hanlon from injury. He came back into the starting line-up along with JB Dobbin and Corey McMullan.

Comrades started the game strongly and were on top for the first 20 minutes or so. However, despite getting into good positions, they couldn't find the final ball to create clear chances. Consequently the Dergview 'keeper was relatively untroubled, although on 9 minutes he should perhaps have been tested more, after Kevin Lynch did well to set up JB Dobbin for an effort from 7 yards, but the resulting shot was scuffed and saved comfortably.

In the 28th minute, McCusker was required to make another save, when he positioned himself well to gather the ball just under the bar from Curtis Woods' looping 12 yard header from a free-kick.

As the half progressed the visitors began to look more threatening and on 39 minutes they grabbed the lead. The ball was played from the left into the 6-yard box to Campbell, who then produced a neat turn and finish, giving the 'keeper no chance. The early stages of the second half didn't give much encouragement to the home supporters as their side toiled to make any impact. Indeed Dergview came close to increasing their lead in the 53rd minute, when a free-kick played into the box found Cashel at the back post and his shot from 6 yards looked goal bound, only to be deflected just wide.

Just after the hour manager Hughes shuffled his pack, changing to three at the back and pushing Jason Johnston forward. This improved things and the team now looked more threatening.

In the 61st minute, Adam Gray, also now in a more advanced position, battled his way into the box, but 'keeper McCusker did well to come out and block his resulting effort from 8 yards.

Despite Comrades' improved efforts going forward, it didn't look as if they would make the breakthrough, as they struggled to find the right ball to unlock the Dergview defence. However, the game was to be turned on its head inside the final ten minutes. In the 82nd minute the equaliser came. Corey McMullan lofted the ball across the box to pick out Michael O'Hanlon. He then controlled it perfectly and set himself to hit a superb curling effort inside the far post from 9 yards out.

Comrades now had their tails up and had the visitors rocking. In the 88th minute a great run by Adam Gray ended with him firing in a rising shot from 10 yards, but McCusker was well-placed to save.

A minute later, however, there was nothing the 'keeper could do, when Dean Youle powered a super header from 10 yards into the back of the net, after he got on the end of a Samuel McIlveen corner.

The jubilation amongst the players and supporters after this goal and at the final whistle, spoke volumes about the spirit at the Club and the relief at ending a bad run of results.