



Institute 1-1 Ballyclare Comrades

Saturday 3rd December 2016 – NIFL Championship

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

1. Paddy Flood
2. Curtis Woods
5. Michael McQuitty
23. Dean Youle
3. Adam Gray
4. Jason Johnston
8. JB Dobbin
10. Denver Taggart
7. Michael O'Hanlon
11. Thomas Robinson
9. Chris Trussell 🏴󠁧󠁢󠁥󠁮󠁧󠁿 (56')

Substitutes:

12. Mark Shannon
14. Michael Haskins
15. Kyle McCauley
16. Joel Haggan
17. Scott Cummings

Institute: Gallagher, Morrow, Muldoon, O'Donnell, McDermott, A Harkin, Curry, C Harkin, Brown, McCrudden, McIntyre. Subs: McCarron, Doherty, Roddy, Jarvis.

Comrades secured a deserved point at fellow title challengers Institute with another impressive performance.

The squad was fully stretched for this game, with top scorer Corey McMullan and last season's player of the year Gary Brown suspended, and some fringe players no longer available for selection. Into the side for a first start this season came Denver Taggart, and a few players were promoted from the under 20 side to form a mostly youthful bench.

The visitors made a decent start to the game, looking bright and inventive. However, the first real chance of the game came in the 13th minute to the home side, when the ball was fed through to Brown, whose resulting effort from just inside the box was slid past the advancing 'keeper, but just past the far post.

In the 16th minute Comrades came close when, from a corner played into the crowded 6-yard box, the ball came off the shoulder of Michael McQuitty and went just over the bar.

Both sides were showing why they are in the top part of the league table, with good quality play. On 23 minutes a good move from the visitors ended with Chris Trussell getting in a shot from 7 yards, which looked goal-bound, only to be deflected wide off a defender. Then, on the half hour, some good blocks from Institute defenders kept out a number of Comrades efforts as the ball flew about the home side's box.

The first goal of the game came in the 34th minute. Institute played the ball into the box from a free-kick, just a couple of yards inside the Comrades half, and a flick on found Brown, who made no mistake from 8 yards.

Subsequently Institute had the better of the rest of the first half. On 43 minutes a well-struck shot from 30 yards from McCrudden fizzed just wide of the target.

Comrades might have equalised seconds before the half-time whistle, when a great ball, played at head height across the 6-yard box by Denver Taggart, looked set to be headed in by Thomas Robinson, only for Institute defender Morrow to get a vital touch to divert the ball away from danger.

The men in red came out for the second half with all guns blazing and pressed strongly for an equaliser. In the 53rd minute they had a good chance when Thomas Robinson's ball in from the left found Jason Johnston in a great position 12 yards out, but his shot didn't have enough power to seriously trouble 'keeper Gallagher.

Three minutes later, Comrades got a deserved equaliser. A corner was cleared out of the Institute box, but Chris Trussell got first to the loose ball and turned to strike an effort from 22 yards, which deceived the unsighted 'keeper and flew into the net low just inside the far post.

The visitors continued to look dangerous and the more likely side to grab the winner. In the 71st minute a surge down the left from Thomas Robinson ended with the ball rebounding off a defender and into the box where it was picked up by Michael O'Hanlon. He made room for a shot from 11 yards and his effort looked on target, but it was deflected wide off defender Harkin.

In the latter stages of the game the home side perhaps had more of the attacking possession, but the Comrades defence held firm to keep the scores level at the final whistle.