



Institute 3-1 Ballyclare Comrades

(Institute won 3-2 on aggregate)

Tuesday 5th May 2017 – NIFL Championship Play-Off (Second leg)

Ballyclare Comrades team

(4-4-2)

1. Paddy Flood
24. Gary Brown
5. Curtis Woods
23. Dean Youle
3. Adam Gray
7. Michael O'Hanlon (76')
4. Corey McMullan
8. JB Dobbin
11. Thomas Robinson (72')
10. Kevin Lynch (46')
9. Chris Trussell

Substitutes:

12. Jason Johnston (46') (85')
14. Samuel McIlveen (76')
15. Adam McCart
16. Denver Taggart (72')
- Gk. Ross McKnight

Institute: Gallagher, Roddy, D Curry, O'Donnell, Scoltock, Foy, S Curry, Grace, Morrow, McCrudden, McIntyre. Subs: Brown, Devlin, Jarvis, McDermott, Muldoon.

Comrades suffered play-off heartache as they lost out on aggregate to Institute after the Drumahoe side had the better of the second leg.

Manager Clifford Adams made no changes to the team which had secured a first leg lead to take to the North-West.

As in the Tuesday evening game at Dixon Park, the game was played in lovely spring sunshine, in front of a sizeable crowd, which included a vocal Comrades contingent.

The opening minutes of the game were encouraging for the visiting supporters, as their team took the game to their opponents with some lively attacking play.

However, this couldn't be converted into clear-cut chances against a well-drilled Institute defence. In the 12th minute, Thomas Robinson showed good footwork to make space for a shot from just inside the angle of the box, but his effort went straight at 'keeper Gallagher.

The home side soon settled and they grabbed the lead in the 16th minute, when a swift move down the left ended with McIntyre hitting a fine finish wide of 'keeper Paddy Flood and inside the post from 12 yards.

The rest of the first half saw the home side dominant, with Comrades struggling to keep them at bay. They achieved this pretty well, with some good defending.

However they were fortunate in the 38th minute, when after a Comrades goal-kick the ball was won in the air by Institute on the half-way line and headed forward into the path of striker Morrow. He got himself into a great position, with the visitor's defence struggling, and attempted lob over the advancing 'keeper from 25 yards, but his effort drifted just wide of the target.

The second half saw Comrades have a fair share of possession, but it was the Institute who continued to look the more dangerous side. In the 55th minute they came close, when a good move ended with McCrudden firing just over from 10 yards.

On 62 minutes, the home side hit the lead on aggregate with their second goal of the night. A long ball down the middle set Stephen Curry free of the Comrades defence and he then neatly lobbed 'keeper Flood from the edge of the box.

Comrades had struggled to test the home 'keeper all night, but on 66 minutes Gallagher's palms were stung by a fiercely hit volley from 10 yards from lively half-time substitute Jason Johnston, after he had showed great skill to create the chance. However, the 'keeper was able to turn the effort round the post.

In the 71st minute Institute strengthened their position in the tie with a third goal. A very uncharacteristic error at the back from Dean Youle saw him hook an attempted clearance high in the air and the ball fell kindly for Stephen Curry. He still had a lot to do, but was able to finish smartly from 13 yards.

Comrades ensured a nervy finish for the home side by pulling a goal back in the 85th minute. JB Dobbin hit a shot from the edge of the box, which came back off the post, but Jason Johnston was well-placed to convert the rebound from 6 yards.

Comrades now had hope and they strove to get a second goal which would have sent them through on away goals, but the dogged home side held out for what was, in the end, a deserved win over the two-legs of the tie.