



## Larne 2-3 Ballyclare Comrades

Monday 26<sup>th</sup> December 2016 – NIFL Championship

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

1. Paddy Flood
2. Curtis Woods
6. Jason Johnston
5. Adam McCart
3. Mark Shannon 🇮🇪 (75')
4. Corey McMullan
8. JB Dobbin
11. Thomas Robinson
7. Gary Brown
10. Adam Gray 🇮🇪 (50') 🇮🇪 (59')
9. Chris Trussell

### Substitutes:

12. Michael Haskins 🇮🇪 (75')
14. Kyle McCauley
15. Joel Haggan
- Gk. Ross McKnight

**Larne:** Madison, Bradley, Buckley, Rodgers, McKenna, Templeton, Kane, Dorrian, Smith, O'Neill, Hillen. Subs: Henry, Maguire, McCabe, Thompson, Wilson.

Comrades produced a stirring performance to take the points home from Larne, after a pulsating Boxing Day derby match.

For this match manager Stephen Hughes was faced with the absence of both regular centre-backs; Michael McQuitty (injured) and Dean Youle (suspended); as well as Michael O'Hanlon and Denver Taggart.

Into the team came Adam McCart, who has only just returned to training, having missed the whole season so far due to family circumstances. His partner in the centre of defence was versatile midfielder Jason Johnston. Gary Brown and Mark Shannon also came into the starting line-up.

The early signs for the visitors were not good and Larne should have been one up inside the first minute, when a ball played in from the right found O'Neill unmarked in the middle of the box, but his volley from 7 yards flew over the bar.

In the 8<sup>th</sup> minute Comrades has a decent chance to level the scores, when Jason Johnston got on the end of a Thomas Robinson corner, but his header from just outside the 6-yard box flew over the bar.

The home side however continued to control the early stages of the game. On 10 minutes O'Neill had another chance, when a ball over the top set him free, but he was denied by Paddy Flood, who rushed out to make a very good block 13 yards from goal.

Larne hit the front in the 14<sup>th</sup> minute, although there was big stroke of fortune to it, as a cross from the right came saw the ball loop off the head of the unfortunate Adam McCart and over Paddy Flood to fall into the far corner of the net.

Three minutes later the visitors were unlucky not to equalise, when Adam Gray did well to advance to the edge of the box and strike a great effort, which cannoned back off the post. As the half progressed, Comrades began to get more and more of the attacking possession. In the 23<sup>rd</sup> minute, they probably should have levelled the scores, but Chris Trussell fired over from 7 yards, after getting on the end of a header on from Gary Brown. Then, three minutes later, a free-kick played into the Larne box, was headed on to Adam McCart, but his resulting header from 5 yards went just wide of the far post.

The visitors looked increasing dangerous. On 39 minutes a Thomas Robinson corner caused panic in the Larne 6-yard box and, after an almighty scramble, the ball was turned past for a corner.

The sides went in at half-time with Larne holding a one-goal advantage and it looked as if the next goal would be pivotal to the outcome of the game.

Inside the first minute of the second half, that goal probably should have been scored by the home side, when a cross from the left found Kane unmarked, but his header from 6 yards was too close to Paddy Flood, although the 'keeper still had to make a good save.

Larne had another chance in the 49<sup>th</sup> minute, when a good move down the left ended with Smith hooking the ball towards goal from an angle at the edge of the 6-yard box. However, his effort was kept out by 'keeper Flood.

A minute later, Comrades were back on level terms. Adam Gray harried defender Bradley, robbing him of the ball on the edge of the box, and he then advanced to score from 9 yards, despite 'keeper Madison getting a touch to the ball.

The visitors now had the momentum and were playing with a good deal of confidence.

On 64 minutes, the influential Adam Gray cut in from the left and made space for a shot, but his effort was too close to Madison, who made the save.

Comrades grabbed the lead in the 67<sup>th</sup> minute, much to the delight of the travelling supporters. A free-kick was won near the touchline on the left. Mark Shannon then whipped a dangerous ball into the box, which was turned into his own goal by Templeton.

Two minutes later, the advantage was doubled. Thomas Robinson's corners had caused danger throughout the match, and this time his ball into the box was met by an Adam Gray header, which went just over the line before a defender could clear.

Comrades continued to impress, and on 82 minutes the lively Gary Brown linked up well with substitute Michael Haskins, before striking a shot from 17 yards, which forced a decent save from the Larne 'keeper.

A minute later however, Larne were back in the game. A cross from the right found Maguire in space and his half-volley from 8 yards flew into the net, giving Paddy Flood no chance.

Despite the home side putting on a bit of pressure late on, Comrades managed to keep their lead without any major scares to secure an excellent three points.