



## Loughgall 4-2 Ballyclare Comrades

Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2017 – NIFL Championship

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

1. Paddy Flood
2. Owen Thompson
5. Curtis Woods 🟦 (20')
23. Dean Youle
3. Adam Gray
6. Samuel McIlveen
8. Jason Johnston
7. Kyle Robinson
10. Gary Brown 🟢 (71')
11. Denver Taggart 🟦 (58')
9. Kevin Lynch 🟢 (63')

### Substitutes:

12. Kyle McCauley
14. Corey McMullan 🟢 (71')
15. JB Dobbin 🟢 (63')

**Loughgall:** Buchanan, McDonald, Rea, Elliot, Taylor, Upritchard, Dallas, McMaster, McConnell, Upritchard, Baker. Subs: Stewart, McCullough, Stretton, Gould, Blair.

Comrades suffered their fourth defeat on the trot, to continue a worrying slump in form, as they came away from Loughgall with nothing.

For this match manager Stephen Hughes had serious selection problems with a number of players missing. Added to long term absentees Michael McQuitty, Mark Shannon and Adam McCart were Michael O'Hanlon, Thomas Robinson and Chris Trussell. Into the starting line-up from the Under 20s came winger Kyle Robinson for his first team debut. Also brought in to start were Denver Taggart, Kevin Lynch and Owen Thompson.

After heavy overnight rain, which had led to doubts over the game going ahead, the pitch was heavy but playable.

The first chance of the game fell to Comrades. Inside the 2<sup>nd</sup> minute a corner was headed on to Kevin Lynch, whose downward header from 4 yards forced a good save from Buchanan low just inside the post.

The visitors had started in lively fashion, but were rocked in the 4<sup>th</sup> minute when they conceded the first goal. A hopeful effort from just inside the box, struck by John Upritchard, didn't look to be capable of causing any problems, but went through 'keeper Paddy Flood and into the net.

Comrades continued to look threatening going forward, but susceptible at the back. In the 17<sup>th</sup> minute they fell further behind. A corner played into the Comrades box was cleared, but

picked up by Dallas 25 yards out. He then fired a superb, unstoppable effort into the top corner of the net to put his side two up.

Three minutes later however, the margin was reduced to one, when Curtis Woods powered and header into the net from 5 yards, after getting on the end of a Samuel McIlveen corner. Comrades then proceeded to have the better of the rest of the half, playing with spirit, backed by a vocal travelling support.

In the 31<sup>st</sup> minute Denver Taggart picked up the ball 20 yards out, after a free-kick had been cleared from the box. He then hit a very well hit shot, which forced a fine save from 'keeper Buchanan.

On 45 minutes the home side had a chance to restore a two goal cushion just before the break, when a cross from the left was met by the head of Baker, whose effort from 7 yards flashed just wide of the post.

Six minutes into the second half the home side got their third goal. A dangerous ball into the box from McDonald was met by a header from 5 yards from McConnell, which was kept out by a great save from Paddy Flood. However, the ball fell kindly to Uprichard who had the easy task of knocking the ball home from close range.

Again though Comrades came back and on 58 minutes they reduced the deficit to one. Good play in the box from Kyle Robinson saw him set up Denver Taggart for the chance 6 yards out and he was able to firmly poke the ball wide of the 'keeper and into the net.

The visitors looked as if they may now have the momentum to get something from the game, but although they continued to press and got into a number of good positions, they couldn't fashion a clear chance in what time remained.

Indeed the home side looked equally capable of increasing their lead. In the 78<sup>th</sup> minute they came close, when good play on the left from McConnell ended with him firing a shot in from a difficult angle 9 yards out, which forced a smart save from Paddy Flood.

Four minutes into injury-time the destination of the points was put beyond doubt, when the home side got their fourth goal, a long punt up-field from Buchanan caused a mix-up between 'keeper and defence and McCullough took advantage to advance on goal and score from 5 yards.