



Lurgan Celtic 3-1 Ballyclare Comrades

Saturday 10th September 2016 – NIFL Championship

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

1. Paddy Flood
2. Dean Youle
6. Stuart McCullough 🟢🔴 (89')
5. Michael McQuitty
3. Mark Shannon
8. JB Dobbin 🟢🔴 (76')
4. Corey McMullan
7. Michael O'Hanlon
10. Jason Johnston
11. Thomas Robinson 🟢🔴 (66')
9. Chris Trussell

Substitutes:

12. Denver Taggart 🟢🔴 (73') 🟡 (76')
14. Adam Gray
15. Adam Irwin
16. Bobbie Crowe 🟢🔴 (89')
17. Kyle Dillon 🟢🔴 (66') ⚫ (83')

Lurgan Celtic: McCorry, Rodgers, McCabe, McAnallan, McVeigh, O'Hara, Malone, Barton, Gibson, D Ryan, C Ryan. Subs: Seeley, Hutchinson, McCarron, Devlin, Thompson.

Comrades' unbeaten run in the league, which stretched back to 27 February and amounted to 12 games, came to an end, when a poor defensive display cost them the points at Lurgan Celtic.

Manager Stephen Hughes had to do without right-back Curtis Woods and winger Gary Brown for this game. Stuart McCullough returned to the defence and Jason Johnston started after his super substitute display the previous week.

The visitors opened the game strongly and could have had the lead inside the opening minute, when Chris Trussell ran onto a ball into the box and beat a defender before hitting a shot on the stretch, which went just wide from 8 yards.

Comrades continued to look the more dangerous side in the first quarter of the game. In the 17th minute they thought they had taken the lead, when from a throw-in into the box the ball broke towards Jason Johnston, who proceeded to hit the back of the net from 10 yards with a great overhead kick. Unfortunately, the goal was chalked off as Mark Shannon was adjudged to have had his foot over the line when taking the throw-in.

On 21 minutes the men in red came close again, with a Michael McQuitty header from 7 yards from a corner forcing a smart save from 'keeper McCorry. A minute later the home side took the lead against the run of play. A long ball forward found Daniel Ryan, who showed the strength to muscle his way through and then play the ball to Ciaran Ryan, who avoided the despairing dive of the out-rushing Paddy Flood and knocked the ball into the empty net from 9 yards.

In the 28th minute Chris Trussell had a good effort, when he made space for a shot from the right edge of the box, which went low just wide of the far post. The home side were now regularly discomforting the Comrades defence with dangerous high balls. On 32 minutes, one such ball set Gibson free, but with Paddy Flood rushing out to the edge of the box, the Celtic man knocked it past him but wide of the target.

Then, on 38 minutes, a comedy of errors at the back presented Ciaran Ryan with a great chance, but he dragged his shot wide from 16 yards.

A minute later, at the other end, Comrades came close, when Thomas Robinson beat a defender on the left and played the ball to the near post area where it was met by a decent volley from 5 yards, which went just wide of the post and into the side-netting. In the 42nd minute the visitors were very unlucky not to be on level terms, when a Mark Shannon free-kick from 22 yards came back off the post. However, seconds later, they were grateful to 'keeper Paddy Flood, who raced from his line to block an effort from Daniel Ryan at the edge of the box, after Celtic had broken through far too easily.

Comrades should have drawn level inside the first minute of the second half. Great play from Michael O'Hanlon set up the chance for Jason Johnston, who looked set to score from 6 yards, but his effort was too close to the 'keeper who made the save. The visitors were looking strong going forward. On 50 minutes the Celtic 'keeper was forced into action, when he grabbed the ball at the second attempt, from a well-struck 20 yard free-kick effort.

However, despite their threat going forward, Comrades were looking very vulnerable at the other end and on 53 minutes they conceded a second goal. A corner was not cleared and Daniel Ryan pounced to fire home through a crowd from 8 yards.

On 57 minutes Comrades were thwarted when 'keeper McCorry made fine save to turn a 5 yard Michael O'Hanlon header wide of the post. Then, a minute later, the visitors' defensive frailties were exposed again, when a swift counter-attack ended with the ball being played across to Daniel Ryan, completely in the free, and he slotted home from 7 yards.

Comrades didn't give up, but they were again unlucky with the woodwork in the 64th minute, when Chris Trussell did well to make space for a shot just inside the box, but his effort struck the post.

Then, two minutes later, Trussell had another chance after being set up by good play from Thomas Robinson, but this time his effort from 9 yards went disappointingly wide of the target.

In the 71st minute Celtic really should have made it four, when another incisive move opened up the Comrades defence and allowed Gibson to run free on goal, but he shot wide from 16 yards with only the 'keeper to beat.

It was ironic that after all Comrades good play going forward, they were to get a goal back from a miss-hit. It came in the 83rd minute, when Corey McMullan got the ball into the box towards Kyle Dillon, who did not connect with the ball well, but this wrong-footed the 'keeper and the effort bobbed into the net from 5 yards.

There was however to be no dramatic comeback this week and indeed the home side might have restored a three-goal lead in the 87th minute, when a header from 8 yards from Ciaran Ryan came back off the bar.