



PSNI 4-4 Ballyclare Comrades

Saturday 3rd September 2016 – NIFL Championship

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

1. Paddy Flood
2. Curtis Woods 🟡 (51')
6. Dean Youle
5. Michael McQuitty
3. Mark Shannon 🟢🔴 (59')
8. JB Dobbin 🟡 (68')
4. Corey McMullan 🟡 (83')
7. Gary Brown ⚫ (63') 🟢🔴 (69')
10. Michael O'Hanlon
11. Thomas Robinson ⚫ (75') 🟢🔴 (77')
9. Chris Trussell

Substitutes:

12. Stuart McCullough
14. Denver Taggart
15. Adam Irwin 🟢🔴 (69')
16. Adam Gray 🟢🔴 (77')
17. Jason Johnston 🟢🔴 (59') ⚫ (73') ⚫ (80')

PSNI: Harrison, McCullagh, Blackledge, A Wright, Nixon, J Wright, Berry, McDermott, Hutchinson, Adamczyk, McDowell. Subs: Roohi, Kirk, Courtney, McKim, Bates.

A remarkable game at Newforge saw Comrades superbly recover from 3-0 down with less than half an hour to go to lead the game, only to have victory snatched away from them in injury-time.

For this match manager Stephen Hughes made one change to his starting line-up, with central defender Stuart McCullough, who had suffered a minor injury in the midweek cup loss to Carrick Rangers, dropping to the bench. Dean Youle moved to centre-back and Mark Shannon came in for his first start of the season at left-back.

Comrades started very brightly, pressing their opponents high up the pitch. They really should have had the lead in this early spell, with two good chances missed. In the 9th minute Chris Trussell hunted down a poor back-pass, getting there just before the 'keeper who could only block the ball out to Corey McMullan, but his resulting first-time effort went just wide of the post from 6 yards. Then, second later, Chris Trussell burst through the home defence and looked set to score, but his effort from 10 yards flew wide of the target.

After the quarter hour mark the visitors' early dominance faded and PSNI began to look dangerous. In the 16th minute Paddy Flood had to produce a fine save to 'keep out a well struck effort from an angle 8 yards out hit by Adamczyk.

The tide had turned towards the home side and on 21 minutes they grabbed the lead when a diagonal ball played across the field caught out the Comrades defence and found McDowell clear on the right side of the box. He advanced and made no mistake with a powerful shot from 12 yards that Paddy Flood couldn't keep out.

PSNI were now looking the more dangerous side, whilst all of Comrades early confidence had disappeared. On the half hour the visitors' defence was cut open and Berry had a great chance to put his side two up, but he fired wide of the far post from 13 yards out.

Comrades were struggling to create anything at the other end, but on 36 minutes Chris Trussell did well to fashion a volley on the turn, which flew just wide from 13 yards, after a ball into the box from Gary Brown.

The first half was to end in disastrous fashion for Comrades. In the 42nd minute they took a short corner, which broke down badly, allowing PSNI to counter quickly and, with the Comrades' defence outnumbered, Berry played the ball across the six-yard box to the unmarked Adam Wright, who had the simple task of converting from 4 yards.

Then, in the 45th minute, a shot was fired in from the edge of the box and the ball broke sharply off the leg of Dean Youle onto his arm. The referee pointed to the spot and Adamczyk stepped up to convert the penalty and send his team in at the break with a substantial lead.

The early stages of the second half gave no sign of what was to come, as Comrades, although they had a good deal of the ball, failed to trouble the 'keeper. However, a tactical change just before the hour made all the difference. The formation was changed to go three at the back, with Jason Johnston, who had returned to the club just before the transfer deadline, coming on to give an extra man in midfield.

In the 63rd minute the visitors gave themselves hope by grabbing a goal back, with Gary Brown finishing calmly from 10 yards after good work from JB Dobbin.

Three minutes later Brown came close to a second, when he won the ball inside the box and got in a shot under pressure from 9 yards, but his effort flew wide.

Comrades were now looking a different side and making things uncomfortable for the home defence. In the 70th minute Chris Trussell burst onto a through ball and got in a shot from 8 yards, which went just wide.

On 72 minutes it looked as if any chance of a comeback was lost when a penalty wasn't converted. The referee pointed to the spot when Michael O'Hanlon was brought down, but Thomas Robinson's resulting effort was saved by 'keeper Harrison.

However, from the next phase of play the deficit was reduced to one goal when a neat one-two in the box set up Jason Johnston for a chance and he made no mistake from 6 yards.

Two minutes later the travelling supporters were in ecstasy when their side levelled the scores. Thomas Robinson ran at the home defence and the unleashed a super low strike inside the far post from 12 yards.

The action didn't stop there and on 78 minutes only a superb block by a defender prevented Comrades taking the lead, when Michael O'Hanlon fired a dangerous ball across the 6-yard box which looked destined to be turned in by Jason Johnston.

It wasn't long however before the visitors had the lead. Substitute Adam Gray did well on the left and played the ball in perfectly for Jason Johnston who turned it in from 5 yards.

Comrades looked to have sealed an amazing comeback victory, but they were to be denied in the dying moments of the game. PSNI won a corner two minutes into injury-time and the ball played the box was headed towards goal. Paddy Flood blocked the effort, but Adam Wright was on the spot to scramble in the loose ball from close range.

Even then Comrades might have won the game when, a minute later, a JB Dobbin cross to the back post area found the head of Michael O'Hanlon, but his effort from 5 yards out went a couple of feet over the bar.