



Warrenpoint Town 4-0 Ballyclare Comrades

Saturday 18th February 2017 – NIFL Championship

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

1. Paddy Flood
2. Curtis Woods
5. Adam McCart 🟢🔴 (18')
23. Dean Youle
3. Adam Gray
4. Corey McMullan 🟡 (48') 🟢🔴 (51')
8. JB Dobbin
7. Michael O'Hanlon
10. Jason Johnston
11. Thomas Robinson 🟢🔴 (61')
9. Chris Trussell

Substitutes:

12. Gary Brown 🟢🔴 (51')
14. Kevin Lynch 🟢🔴 (61')
15. Denver Taggart
16. Owen Thompson
17. Samuel McIlveen 🟢🔴 (18')

Warrenpoint Town: Parr, King, McVeigh, McGuigan, McMenamin, Murray, Lynch, Dane, Bagnall, Moan, Croskery. Subs: Maguire, Traynor, Dempster, Donnelly, McKenna.

Comrades chances of overhauling Warrenpoint Town at the top of the Championship appear to be over, after the league leaders handed out a first half drubbing to Stephen Hughes' men. Apart from long-term absentees Michael McQuitty and Mark Shannon, there was a full squad to choose from for the trip to Milltown. Thomas Robinson and Curtis Woods returned to the side after missing the trip to Armagh City. Adam McCart came in at centre-back, with Jason Johnston moving forward to a more advanced position.

After a promising opening for the visitors, things soon started to unravel, with another spell of quick-fire goals conceded, in the manner of the previous game at Armagh.

In the 11th minute an uncharacteristic mistake from Curtis Woods saw him badly scuff a back-pass, which allowed the ball to be picked up by a Town player and played into the box, from where it was only cleared to McGuigan at the edge of the area. He then fired in a shot, which took a wicked deflection and the ball flew into the net, past the wrong-footed 'keeper. On 15 minutes the home side doubled their lead. Comrades failed to clear their lines, allowing the dangerous Murray the chance to fire in a low shot from 14 yards, which once again gave Paddy Flood no chance.

Two minutes later, the shell-shocked visitors were three down. A shot was fired in from the left side of the box, which 'keeper Flood had stretch to keep out, but the ball fell kindly to Murray, who had the simple task of tapping the ball into the net from close range.

Shortly after this Adam McCart limped off with an injury to be replaced by Samuel McIlveen, with Jason Johnston dropping back to central defence.

Town continued to dominate, looking very effective on the ball and making good use of high balls to discomfort the Comrades defence.

At the other end, the first shot to test the home 'keeper didn't come until the 43rd minute, when a good move ended with a Thomas Robinson effort from 20 yards, but Parr was well-placed to keep it out.

The travelling fans would have taken their side going in 3-0 down and hoped for them to be able to regroup at the break. However, a minute from the break another goal was conceded. A mix-up between 'keeper and defence saw McGuigan nip in to slot the ball home from 13 yards and effectively secure the points for his side before half-time.

Now the Comrades supporters were fearing a cricket score and the early signs in the second half weren't good, as the home team started with intensity, not looking to sit on their substantial lead.

However, as the half progressed the visitors began to show some pride and take the game to their opponents.

Home 'keeper Parr had to make a couple of decent saves, in the 53rd and 70th minutes from good free-kick efforts, hit from just outside the box by Samuel McIlveen.

From the latter of these a corner was conceded and the ball was played into the box, breaking to Dean Youle, whose stabbed effort from the edge of the 6-yard box came back off the angle of bar and post.

Then, on 76 minutes, a surging run into the box by Chris Trussell ended with his laying the ball to Gary Brown, whose curling shot from 16 yards out on the right-side of the box came back off the far post, with the 'keeper beaten.

Comrades continued to make chances and deserved a consolation goal for their second half efforts, but it wouldn't come.

On 81 minutes, a good run from the effective Gary Brown ended with him setting up fellow substitute Kevin Lynch for a shot from 12 yards, but Parr made a comfortable save.

At the other end Town had still posed a threat in the second half, but perhaps some of the urgency had gone out of their game. However, in the 88th minute Murray forced a good save from Paddy Flood, who kept out his rasping effort, after the striker had outmuscled Jason Johnston to get on the end of a high ball into the box.

Three minutes into injury-time Comrades were awarded a penalty, after Michael O'Hanlon was clearly tripped as he took on a defender in the box. Samuel McIlveen stepped up to take the spot-kick, but his side's day was summed up as he blasted the ball well over the bar.