



Ballyclare Comrades 1-0 Warrenpoint Town

Saturday 25th March 2017 – NIFL Championship

Match and ball sponsor: City Auction Group

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

1. Paddy Flood
2. Curtis Woods
5. Jason Johnston
23. Dean Youle
3. Adam Gray
6. Gary Brown  (49')
8. JB Dobbin
7. Michael O'Hanlon
10. Corey McMullan  (58')
11. Denver Taggart  (66')
9. Kevin Lynch

Substitutes:

12. Joel Haggan
14. Thomas Robinson  (66')  (88')
16. Michael Haskins
24. Owen Thompson
- Gk. Ross McKnight

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

Comrades, with new manager Clifford Adams in charge for the first time, boosted their play-off hopes and prevented Warrenpoint Town winning the Championship at Dixon Park with a committed display and a sensational late winner.

The new boss had to deal with the absence of a couple of regulars in Samuel McIlveen and Chris Trussell, both struck down with illness. Into the side came Gary Brown and Kevin Lynch, whilst Thomas Robinson was fit enough to take a place on the bench after an injury absence.

The game kicked off in beautiful spring sunshine, after a minute's silence observed to mark the tragic death of Derry City captain Ryan McBride.

The early stages of the game saw the visitors doing most of the pressing, without really threatening the home goal and they continued to shade the balance of play for the first half hour, although there was little in the way of goalmouth action at either end, with defences in charge and both teams closing down well when not on the ball.

In the latter stages of the first half, Comrades began to come into the game more in an attacking sense, but there was little to show for it in terms of efforts on goal. Only a 37th minute strike from distance from Adam Gray, which flew comfortably over the bar after a quickly taken free kick, came anywhere near troubling the Parr in the Warrenpoint goal.

The early stages of the second half continued in the manner of the first, with neither side able to penetrate well-drilled defences. However, gradually the game began to open up

In the 57th minute a ball into the box broke towards Corey McMullan in a great position 5 yards from goal, but Parr was quickly out of his goal to block. Then, a minute later, Kevin Lynch curled a decent effort from 14 yards, which Parr was well-placed to save.

At the other end Comrades' defence had dealt well with the potent Warrenpoint strike force, but in the 63rd minute a low ball played in from the right eluded the home back-line and found McMenamin, who then hit well-struck first-time effort from 16 yards that cannoned off the angle of bar and post.

Around the midway point of the half Thomas Robinson was introduced as a substitute for the hard-working Denver Taggart. He had an immediate impact, causing the visitors problems with his dangerous runs.

In the 77th minute Robinson was involved as Comrades came close to grabbing the lead. He ran onto a well-weighted ball, played though by Gary Brown, and then fed JB Dobbin on the left side of the box. He advanced and fired a fierce shot from an angle 9 yards out, which looked destined for the roof of the net at the near post, only to be tipped over by 'keeper Parr.

It looked as if the game was heading for goalless draw, which would be enough for the visitors to seal the title. However, for the second home game in a row, Comrades were to grab a late winner.

On 88 minutes Thomas Robinson picked up the ball just outside the box and advanced to strike a wonderful low shot from 15 yards, which was perfectly placed to beat the 'keeper's dive and go into the net just inside the far post.

The home supporters were overjoyed and their side held out for the remaining minutes without any scares to record an important victory in their quest to seal a promotion play-off place.