

## **Ballyclare Comrades 5-2 Loughgall**

**Saturday 22nd October 2016 – NIFL Championship**

**Match Sponsor: Valentino's Pizzeria, Ballyclare**

**Ball Sponsor: Cornerstone Café, Doagh**

### **Ballyclare Comrades team**

Paddy Flood – Curtis Woods, Michael McQuitty, Dean Youle, Adam Gray – JB Dobbin, Gary Brown – Michael O'Hanlon, Corey McMullan, Thomas Robinson – Jason Johnston.

Subs: Chris Trussell (56 minutes for Brown), Denver Taggart (63 minutes for Johnston), Bobbie Crowe (88 minutes for McMullan), Stuart McCullough (not used), Adam Irwin (not used).

Comrades produced a scintillating attacking display to gain a deserved win over Loughgall at Dixon Park

For this game manager Stephen Hughes had to make one change. Mark Shannon dislocated his shoulder during the week, so Adam Gray came into the starting line-up in an unfamiliar left-back position. Jason Johnston retained the striker role, with Chris Trussell, back from injury, on the bench.

The early minutes were evenly matched. Loughgall had the first effort of note in the 6<sup>th</sup> minute, when a neat passing move ended with Mullen firing in a shot from the edge of the box that forced a smart save from Paddy Flood.

The home side soon began to get into their attacking stride and on 8 minutes they had a chance, when Michael O'Hanlon slipped the ball through to Jason Johnston, who shot just wide from 10 yards under a challenge.

Two minutes later an O'Hanlon corner caused problems and the visitors were relieved to see a Johnston effort from 6 yards deflected wide for a corner.

However, it wasn't long before the first goal came. In the 11<sup>th</sup> minute a ball into the box broke to Thomas Robinson and he made space to rifle a great shot into the roof of the net from 16 yards.

Comrades were giving the Loughgall defence a torrid time and in the 17<sup>th</sup> minute a super move down the left produced the second goal, with Thomas Robinson putting in a super cross for Jason Johnston to power home a header from 5 yards.

A couple of minutes later the visitors were grateful for a fine save from 'keeper Buchanan, who turned a Thomas Robinson effort low past the post, after the winger has shot from 13 yards at the end of a fine move.

Despite being two down Loughgall looked dangerous going forward, particularly from set-pieces. In the 23<sup>rd</sup> minute they were unfortunate not to pull a goal back, when a long throw-in, launched into the box by Devlin, saw the ball headed against the post by Canning from 7 yards.

In the 34<sup>th</sup> minute Comrades looked to be cruising to victory when they added a third goal. Adam Gray won the ball on halfway and advanced past two opponents to strike a super shot from 25 yards, low into the back of the net.

However, four minutes later, the visitors grabbed a goal back. A corner was flighted to the near post area where Devlin was there to glance a header in from 4 yards.

In the 43<sup>rd</sup> minute the comeback really looked to be on, when from another corner Comrades 'keeper Paddy Flood misjudged the flight of the ball and clawed it into his own net.

It might have been expected that Comrades would be nervous after seeing their lead reduced to one goal at half-time, but they came out and dominated the second half.

In the 59<sup>th</sup> minute they came close, when a good move ended with Michael O'Hanlon's shot from 17 yards being acrobatically tipped over the bar by 'keeper Buchanan. Then, from the resulting corner, Michael McQuitty head just over from 7 yards.

On 67 minutes Michael O'Hanlon was again denied the goal his performance deserved, when his shot through a crowd from 14 yards was turned over the bar by another fine save from the 'keeper.

Comrades needed another goal to give themselves a cushion and it came in the 69<sup>th</sup> minute. Thomas Robinson, who was unplayable at times during the game, ran from inside his own half, leaving opponents in his wake, before playing a lovely one-two with Chris Trussell and then stabbing the ball on the stretch past the advancing 'keeper from 7 yards.

The vibrant home side continued to create chances. In the 75<sup>th</sup> minute an excellent cross from Denver Taggart found the head of Thomas Robinson inside the 6-yard box, but he was denied a hat-trick when his downward effort was brilliantly kept out by Buchanan. Then, five minutes later, Chris Trussell cut in from the left and unleashed a shot from 16 yards that he was unlucky to see come back off the post.

At the other end Comrades had been able to cope better in the second half with the Loughgall threat from set-pieces. However, in the 83<sup>rd</sup> minute, a corner caused problems and when the ball fell to Taylor, it took a super point-blank save from Paddy Flood to deny his effort from 4 yards.

On 89 minutes Comrades got the fifth goal which their play deserved. Thomas Robinson was again involved, sliding the ball through to Michael O'Hanlon, who again saw an effort kept out by Buchanan, this time after he shot from 10 yards. However, the ball ran loose across the 6-yard box and Chris Trussell was there to finish into the empty net.

Two minutes into injury-time Thomas Robinson created a chance to seal a hat-trick when he danced past two defenders and shot from 14 yards, but his effort went inches wide of the post.