



H&W Welders 2-1 Ballyclare Comrades

Saturday 14th April 2018 – Bluefin Sport Championship

Ballyclare Comrades team

1. Paddy Flood
2. Curtis Woods
6. Michael McQuitty
23. Dean Youle
3. CJ McQuillan 🏴 (46')
12. Chris Middleton
14. Adam McCart
4. Samuel McIlveen 🏴 (66')
22. Gary Brown
10. Eoin Kane
9. Mark Kelly 🏴 (5')

Substitutes:

5. Chris Rodgers
8. Jack Walshe
24. Adam Neilly
17. Thomas Robinson 🏴 (46')
20. Reece Gilmore 🏴 (66')

Welders ended any realistic hopes Comrades had off making the promotion play-offs, after a closely fought game at Tillysburn Park.

Comrades manager Clifford Adams was again faced with the absence of a number of players. Added to long term absentee Adam Gray, Matty Parker was suspended and JB Dobbin and Joe McWilliams unavailable. Thomas Robinson and Chris Rodgers, recovering from illness, were only able to take places on the bench. CJ McQuillan made his first start for the club after a lengthy injury absence.

The visitors had an ideal start to the game, taking the lead in the 5th minute. A free-kick played into the box by Samuel McIlveen wasn't cleared and the ball broke to Mark Kelly, who rifled the ball through a crowd and into the net from 9 yards.

The lead, however, only lasted for six minutes. From a corner, veteran striker Rainey was poorly marked and got his head to the ball to send it into the back of the net from 8 yards.

Despite this setback Comrades continue to look dangerous. In the 13th minute a free-kick played low into the box was met first time on the turn by Michael McQuitty, but his effort from 15 yards was kept out by a fine save by McCauley.

In the 23rd minute McCauley again had to make a save, this time more comfortably, when he was well-placed to collect a shot from Gary Brown, after the Comrades man had robbed an opponent on the left and cut in to shoot from just outside the box. Despite looking good going forward Comrades were vulnerable at the other end and on 29 minutes poor marking again cost them, when a cross from Spence was headed in from 9 yards by Ross Arthurs.

In the 38th minute Comrades were denied an equaliser, when McCauley again produced a fine save, turning a well struck strike from Eoin Kane from just outside the box wide of the post.

Manager Adams made a change at half-time, with Thomas Robinson coming on for CJ McQuillan and the formation changing to three at the back.

The early signs in the second half were promising for Comrades as they started brightly. In the 49th minute Eoin Kane hit a shot from 16 yards, which looked destined to sneak inside the far post, only to be tipped wide by McCauley.

The visitors' good spell didn't last too long, however, and Welders began to look more capable of adding to their lead. In the 57th minute, a ball played low into the box saw Rainey flick a fine effort from 7 yards, which was only kept out by a fine save from Paddy Flood.

Six minutes later, Ross Arthurs got into position for a dangerous strike from 14 yards, but his fierce effort rose over the bar.

Comrades were struggling to create chances. Despite doing a fair deal of pressing they found it difficult to get the better of a strong Welders defence. At the other end, the home side were able to create a couple of decent chances to seal the win. In the 80th minute, Ross Arthurs weaved his way past a couple of challenges in a central position before getting in a shot from the edge of the box, which went narrowly wide of the base of the post. Then, four minutes later, Rainey got free on the left by-line, and was able to get in a shot from 7 yards, which Flood had to block at his near post.

The closest the visitors came close to salvaging a possible deserved point came in the 88th minute, when Dean Youle got on the end of a Thomas Robinson corner to send a firm header towards the goal from 7 yards. However, his effort was blocked just in front of the line by a defender.