



Ballyclare Comrades 2-3 Knockbreda

Saturday 27th January 2018 – Bluefin Sport Championship

Match Sponsors: Eddie McClintock – Club President

Ball Sponsor: Cllr Jim Bingham, Ballyclare DEA, Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council

Ballyclare Comrades team

1. Paddy Flood
2. Curtis Woods
5. Chris Rodgers
23. Dean Youle
16. Matty Parker 🏠 (87')
12. Chris Middleton 🏠 (61')
8. JB Dobbin
10. Eoin Kane
17. Thomas Robinson
24. Stewart Nixon 🏠 (79')
9. Mark Kelly 🏠 (22')

Substitutes:

14. Adam McCart
18. Jason Johnston
7. Joe McWilliams 🏠 (61')
20. Francis Dugan 🏠 (79')
19. Alan Blayney

Knockbreda: Caughwell, Young, Culbert, McVeigh, Arthur, Hamill, Cafolla, Newberry, Watts, Dempster, McBurney. Subs: Murphy, O'Hanlon, Patterson, Pike, Bennett.

Comrades' promotion bid suffered a blow with a disappointing home defeat to Knockbreda.

For this match, manager Clifford Adams had to do without suspended trio, Adam Gray, Samuel McIlveen and Gary Brown, as well as injured Michael McQuitty. Chris Middleton came into the starting line-up.

The home side started the better and had most of the attacking play. The first notable effort on goal came in the 14th minute, when Mark Kelly fed Thomas Robinson, who made space for a shot from 13 yards, which went just wide of the far post.

The opening goal came in the 22nd minute. Chris Middleton sent a beautifully flighted ball in from a free-kick, which was met by a powerful header from 9 yards by Mark Kelly, that flew through the crowded box and into the back of the net.

Comrades had been able to control any threat from Knockbreda comfortably, but on 26 minutes they lost the ball cheaply in their own half, and it was played through to Dempster, who ran free into the box, only to be denied when his effort from 14 yards was superbly blocked by Paddy Flood, who had come out quickly from his line. Knockbreda were now getting a foothold in the game, but when the equaliser came on 33 minutes it was still out of the blue. Cafolla got on the end of a ball knocked down to him 30 yards from goal and struck a wonderful shot, which flew over 'keeper Flood and dipped under the bar.

The home side pressed to regain the lead before the break. On 38 minutes Stewart Nixon played the ball to Mark Kelly in the box and he managed to turn his marker and get in a shot from 8 yards, but it went wide of the target. Then, on 41 minutes, JB Dobbin advanced to get in a shot from just outside the box, which he was unlucky to see come back off the base of the post.

Comrades opened the second half strongly. In the 47th minute, a Matty Parker free-kick was met by a good header from 7 yards by Mark Kelly, which 'keeper Caughwell did very well to turn onto the post and out for a corner.

Two minutes later, the home team had a great chance, when the ball was played through to set Stewart Nixon free in the box, but his effort from 8 yards was too close to Caughwell, who made another good save.

Comrades continued to look the more likely side to get the next goal and on 64 minutes they came close again, when Stewart Nixon fed the ball to Thomas Robinson, whose shot from 12 yards was met again by a save from Caughwell.

In the 71st minute, the home supporters were stunned when Knockbreda hit the front. A free-kick was played to the near post and Arthur got his head to the ball before Paddy Flood, diverting it into the net.

On 76 minutes the visitors' keeper was again called into action, when he was well placed to save from a Mark Kelly header, after he had been picked out by a Thomas Robinson cross.

Knockbreda looked to have sealed the points in the 86th minute, when a penalty was awarded to them for a foul inside the box and Newberry stepped up to confidently convert it.

A minute later, the home side were given hope, when a well-struck low drive from 20 yards by Matty Parker, hit the back of the net. However, the visitors held on for the last few minutes for the victory.