



## Ballyclare Comrades 0-2 Larne

Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> December 2017 – Bluefin Sport Championship

### Match Sponsors:

Agnew Michell & Cairns Accountants

Ballyclare Radiator Services

Ballyclare Coal & Gas

The Cottonmount Arms

### Ballyclare Comrades team

1. Paddy Flood
5. Chris Rodgers 🟡 (27')
14. Adam McCart
23. Dean Youle
17. Thomas Robinson
8. JB Dobbin
18. Jason Johnston 🟠 (86')
16. Matty Parker
11. Adam Gray
24. Stewart Nixon
9. Mark Kelly

### Substitutes:

2. Curtis Woods
15. Jack Chalmers
20. Zach Barr 🟢 (86')
7. Jonny Coulter
26. Ross McKnight

**Larne:** Devlin, Henry, Thompson, Bradley, Holland, Fornah, Georgaklis, Kottoy, Abe, Stuart, Downey. Subs: Reynolds, McConnell, Scullion, Chisanga, Tolan.

Comrades slumped to a disappointing derby defeat in front of a big Boxing Day crowd at Dixon Park.

Manager Clifford Adams was faced with going into this game without three key players; Gary Brown and Samuel McIlveen, through suspension, and Michael McQuitty who was injured. Into the starting line-up came Chris Rodgers, Mark Kelly and Matty Parker.

From the off it was the visitors who set the tempo, forcing the home side back with their energetic attacking play. Again, as has been the case in recent games, Comrades conceded an early goal. A cross into the box was not dealt with and, after an initial clearance off the line, Darren Stuart was there to fire the ball in from 6 yards.

Comrades were struggling to get into the game in the first half and seemed out of sorts, whilst Larne were playing with confidence, controlling the play, sparked by the influential Kottoy in midfield.

Most of the action was in the Comrades half. Larne might have increased their lead in the 23<sup>rd</sup> minute, when a ball played over the defence found Abe free in the box, but Paddy Flood did very well to take the ball off his foot with a well-timed challenge. In the 40<sup>th</sup> minute Flood again had to make a good save, this time flying out of his goal quickly to block an effort from Stuart, after he had been set free on the left side of the box.

Comrades were fortunate to go in at half-time only one behind, after a torrid first 45 minutes. The second half saw the men in red get a foothold in the game, as they began to mount some dangerous attacks. However, they found the visitors' defence in no mood to give anything up easily and chances were at a premium.

In the 51<sup>st</sup> minute a free-kick played into the box found the head of Mark Kelly, but his glancing effort from 10 yards flew wide of the target, but this was the only effort of note that the home side could muster in the early stages of the second half.

As the half progressed, Comrades started to crank up their efforts to find an equaliser. On 64 minutes a long throw propelled into the box saw the ball break to Jason Johnston, who managed to get in a strike on target from 9 yards, which 'keeper Devlin did well to clear with his feet.

Adam Gray looked Comrades biggest threat, with his surging runs, and in the 74<sup>th</sup> minute he weaved past a couple of opponents before getting in a shot from 15 yards which went just over the bar.

The closest the home side came to levelling the scores came in the 79<sup>th</sup> minute, when they managed to keep hold of the ball in the box, before Stewart Nixon was able to get in a strike, through a crowd from 9 yards out, which was only kept out by a fine save from Devlin.

Larne's attacks had been less frequent than in the first half and generally dealt with well by the home defence, but the danger was still there. In the 85<sup>th</sup> minute, Larne sealed the points with an incisive move that ended with Kottoy getting free on the right side of the box and firing the ball wide of the advancing 'keeper and inside the far post from 7 yards.

The final whistle brought a pitch invasion from some of the big travelling support, as the Larne players celebrated a deserved win.

