



Ballyclare Comrades 2-1 Limavady United

Saturday 2nd December 2017 – Bluefin Sport Championship

Match Sponsor: Abbey Real Estate, Ballyclare

Ball Sponsor: The Mortgage Shop, Ballyclare

Ballyclare Comrades team

1. Paddy Flood
6. Michael McQuitty
14. Adam McCart
23. Dean Youle
17. Thomas Robinson
4. Samuel McIlveen 🏠 (38')
22. Gary Brown 🏠 (46')
8. JB Dobbin
11. Adam Gray 🏠 (80')
18. Jason Johnston
24. Stewart Nixon 🏠 (33')

Substitutes:

19. Jack Chalmers
5. Chris Rodgers
16. Matty Parker 🏠 (46')
7. Michael O'Hanlon
20. Zach Barr 🏠 (80')

Limavady United: Wells, McKeever, Watt, Crown, Devlin, Law, Gillan, McFadden, Owens, Hume, Bradley. Subs: Mullan, Harkin, Murray, King, Carlin.

Comrades maintained their lead at the top of the Championship table with a narrow win over Limavady United at Dixon Park.

With striker Mark Kelly still missing with a hamstring injury, manager Clifford Adams unsurprisingly stuck with the team which had performed well against Portadown the previous Saturday.

The home side started very strongly and came close to opening the scoring in the 3rd minute, when Thomas Robinson did very well to get in a cross from the right and find the head of Jason Johnston, in a central position 6 yards out, but his glancing effort went just wide of the post.

Five minutes later, a corner played in by Samuel McIlveen caused danger in the box and the ball broke to Dean Youle inside the 6-yards box. He tried to stab the ball home, but 'keeper Wells was quick to block, turning the ball wide of the target. The first ten minutes had seen Comrades giving their opponents a torrid time, but subsequently the visitors began to get a foothold in the game, as the home side's early fire began to fade.

Limavady began to threaten. In the 24th minute a long throw-in launched into the box caused problems for the home side and the ball fell to Owens, who fired a fierce rising shot over the angle of bar and post from 13 yards. Then, on 29 minutes, the same player got free on the by-line inside the box and tried a shot from a difficult angle 7 yards out, which forced Paddy Flood into a save at his near post.

Comrades had endured a quieter period going forward, but in the 32nd minute Thomas Robinson's shot from just outside the box forced 'keeper Wells to punch the ball clear.

A minute later, the home side took the lead. A long ball down the middle saw Stewart Nixon elude the Limavady defence and run clear, before lofting over the advancing 'keeper and into the net from 16 yards.

Comrades were now back on the front foot. In the 38th minute Adam McCart came close, heading just over from 4 yards after getting on the end of a corner. Then, seconds later, the lead was doubled. Thomas Robinson played a dangerous low ball in from the right side of the box, which broke to Samuel McIlveen, who drilled a composed finish past the 'keeper from 12 yards.

Two minutes from the break and the lively Owens had a chance to pull a goal back for his side, when he made space for a shot from just inside the box, but his effort went wide of the target.

The home side were forced into a change at the break, with Gary Brown replaced by Matty Parker.

The first effort of note of the second half came from the men in red, in the 49th minute, when Thomas Robinson set up Stewart Nixon for chance from a central position 16 yards from goal, but he failed to get enough on his effort to trouble the 'keeper.

Play in the second half was rather scrappy, with both sides struggling to make chances.

Comrades did have a couple of efforts in the 66th and 68th minutes, which at least tested the visitors' 'keeper. Firstly, Jason Johnston got in a header from 6 yards, having got on the end of a free-kick played into the box by Samuel McIlveen. However, Wells was well-placed to make the save. Then Matty Parker hit a well-struck shot from 20 yards, but it was rather too close to Wells to cause him any real difficulty.

Limavady had enjoyed a fair amount of possession in the second half, but Comrades defence had denied them any real chances. However, in the 76th minute, the visitors won a penalty, when Adam McCart was adjudged to have fouled an opponent inside the box. Hume stepped up and confidently converted from the spot to set up a nervy finish for the home side.

The visitors now tried to pile on the pressure, but Comrades defended stoutly to keep them out. Indeed, it was Clifford Adams' side who came close to another goal

in the 82nd minute, when a Dean Youle header from a corner looked to be heading inside the far post, before being headed off the line by a defender.

In the 84th minute Comrades were grateful for a good save at his near post by Paddy Flood, who blocked a well struck shot from an angle 7 yards out, hit by Hume.

The home side managed to see the rest of the game out and gain three points, which were in the end hard fought.