



Ballyclare Comrades 1-4 Linfield

Saturday 19th September 2017 – Toals County Antrim Shield (First Round)

Match Sponsor: Paul Girvan MP

Ball Sponsor: Richard Greer Cars, Doagh

Report courtesy of the Newtownabbey Times

Ballyclare Comrades team

(4-4-2)

1. Paddy Flood
2. Curtis Woods
6. Michael McQuitty
23. Dean Youle
16. Matty Parker
24. Stewart Nixon 🚩 (87')
22. Gary Brown 🟡 (74')
8. JB Dobbin
11. Adam Gray 🚩 (78')
18. Jason Johnston
10. Mark Kelly 🧤 (40') 🚩 (86')

Substitutes:

4. Samuel McIlveen
7. Michael O'Hanlon 🟢 (87')
17. Thomas Robinson 🟢 (78')
19. Kyle Mackie 🟢 (86')
26. Geoff McKinty

Linfield: Deane (GK), Casement, Stafford, Callacher, M Clarke, Mitchell, Lowry, Garrett, Millar, Adams, C Stewart. Subs: Strain, Rooney, Mulgrew, J Stewart, R Clarke.

The midweek Ballyclare Comrades – Linfield County Antrim Shield clash attracted the largest crowd of the season to Dixon Park, where the Blues were rather flattered by their 4-1 win.

The visitors came close inside the first minute, when Paddy Flood couldn't collect a cross from Millar and Lowry headed just over from the follow up.

Comrades were able to put some early pressure on the League and Cup holders and in the 6th minute, defender Callacher had to produce a superb block to keep out a goal-bound effort from Matty Parker.

Two minutes later however the visitors took the lead when Lowry picked up the ball on the edge of the box and dribbled his way through before finding the corner of the net.

It wasn't long before Linfield doubled their lead, when in the 12th minute Cameron Stewart lofted a through ball for Millar, who superbly lobbed Paddy Flood from 20 yards.

Although Linfield continued to be the dominant force, Comrades did have a chance on 15 minutes, when Jason Johnston's shot was deflected just wide of the target.

In the 32nd minute Paddy Flood did well to hold a volleyed effort from Millar, who had got on the end of a Callacher flock-on from a free-kick.

The home side continued to give it a real go and in the 33rd minute Mark Kelly came close, firing a shot into the side-netting. Then, two minutes later, Stewart Nixon turned and fired a decent effort just over the bar from distance.

In the 40th minute Comrades got the reward for their enterprise when Mark Kelly out-paced his marker and neatly dinked the ball over the advancing 'keeper.

Comrades came out from the second half and produced a fine display, putting their classy opponents on the back foot.

In the 60th minute only a superb save by Deane, prevented Dean Youle from equalising with a header from a Gary Brown cross.

When Blues skipper Mulgrew came off the bench in the 78th minute he made an immediate impact, and two minutes later, rather against the trend of play, Casement threaded the ball through to Millar who doubled his tally by coolly rounding Paddy Flood.

That was the killer blow, and five minutes from time substitute Rooney added number four to give the final score-sheet a rather unfair lop-sided look.

Commenting Linfield manager Healy praised Comrades' second half performance, but in the end the Blues' clinical finishing proved decisive.

Clifford Adams was full of praise for the Comrades' performance. "I can truly say that we gave it our best shot, and if we had got the rub of the green when we were trailing 2-1 it could have been different, but full credit to Linfield. When we were pushing for an equaliser we got caught with two sucker-punches in the final eight minutes, and that was almost inevitable against a side of the quality of Linfield," he contended.

