



Ballyclare Comrades 2-1 Loughall

Saturday 12th August 2017 – Bluefin Sport Championship

Ballyclare Comrades team

(4-4-2)

1. Paddy Flood
2. Curtis Woods
5. Chris Rodgers
6. Dean Youle
11. Adam Gray
22. Gary Brown
4. Samuel McIlveen ⚽ (11')
8. JB Dobbin
17. Thomas Robinson
10. Paul Maguire 🚩 (85')
9. Mark Kelly ⚽ (46') 🚩 (67')

Substitutes:

12. Josh Corry
14. Adam McCart
18. Jason Johnston 🚩 (85')
19. Kyle Mackie 🚩 (67')
26. Geoff McKinty

Loughall: Buchanan, Montgomery, Stretton, Copeland, J Campbell, Dallas, P Campbell, Ferguson, Baker, Douglas, McConnell. Subs: Mullen, Rea, Taylor, Hoey, McMaster.

Comrades got their Championship campaign off to a winning start with a deserved victory over Loughall at Dixon Park.

For this match manager Clifford Adams had to do without a number of his squad, including the suspended Michael O'Hanlon and Stewart Nixon. However, he was still able to select a strong looking team.

After a fairly even opening, the home side hit the front in the 11th minute. A free-kick was awarded 25 yards from goal and Samuel McIlveen stepped up to strike a fine effort, which flew in just inside the post, past the stranded 'keeper.

Comrades now looked to be on top, causing a threat to the Loughall defence and looking in control at the other end. However, on 19 minutes, they conceded a goal rather too easily from a ball pumped into the box from deep from a free-kick.

Douglas was given too much space to get on the end of the ball and head into the net from 6 yards.

Despite this setback Comrades continued to look the more threatening side. In the 22nd minute Paul Maguire and Gary Brown linked up well in the box, giving Brown the chance for a strike from an angle 6 yards from goal, but 'keeper Buchanan was able to make the block.

The home side were doubly unfortunate in the 37th minute, when they were twice denied by the crossbar in quick succession. Paul Maguire beautifully took down a ball played to the far post and struck a rising effort from 6 yards that rifled off the bar. The ball rebounded out to Gary Brown, who made space for an effort from 8 yards, but it suffered the same fate.

Comrades went in at half-time without the lead their play had probably deserved, but this was rectified inside the first minute of the second half. Striker Mark Kelly, on his competitive debut for the club, did well to get free on the right side of the box, before driving towards goal and drilling a shot past the 'keeper from 5 yards.

The home side proceeded to control much of the second half. They coped well with Loughgall's threat going forward and in particular their deployment of long throw-ins launched into the box. At the other end the men in red always looked the more likely to add to the scoreline and it took a decent defensive display from the visitors to keep them at bay.

The lead could easily have been added to in the 84th minute, when an Adam Gray free-kick broke off a defender and into the path of Paul Maguire, 5 yards from goal, but his effort was blocked by the 'keeper. Then, on 89 minutes, Thomas Robinson, cut in from the left leaving a defender in his wake, before striking a shot from 14 yards, which flew inches wide of the near post and into the side netting.

Despite the narrow margin of the final score, there was no doubt that Comrades had fully merited their win against a strong Loughgall side, tipped to do well this season.

