



Ballyclare Comrades 4-0 Lurgan Celtic

Saturday 30th September 2017 – Bluefin Sport Championship

Match Sponsor: Jackie Murdock

Ball Sponsor: Kelso Ritchie

Ballyclare Comrades team

(3-5-2)

1. Paddy Flood
18. Jason Johnston
14. Adam McCart
23. Dean Youle
17. Thomas Robinson
4. Samuel McIlveen 🟡 (90+3')
8. JB Dobbin
22. Gary Brown 🟡 (66')
11. Adam Gray
10. Mark Kelly 🟡 (50') 🟡 (62') 🟡 (66')
24. Stewart Nixon 🟡 (33') 🟡 (76')

Substitutes:

3. CJ McQuillan
7. Michael O'Hanlon 🟢 (66')
10. Paul Maguire 🟢 (66')
20. Zach Barr 🟢 (76') 🟡 (81')
26. Geoff McKinty

Lurgan Celtic: McPartland, Fitzpatrick, Noonan, Rodgers, Gibson, B Shannon, McAnallen, Bell, McAlinden, Campbell, Mullen. Subs: J Rogers, A Rogers, M Shannon.

Comrades ended a run of four league games without a win with a dominant display to blow away Lurgan Celtic at a sunny Dixon Park.

For this match manager Clifford Adams changed his team's formation, going for three at the back. This was possibly to cope with the physical threat up front from the visitors, but also possibly due to the unavailability of four defenders: Curtis Woods, Chris Rodgers, Michael McQuitty and Matty Parker.

The home side started the game on the front foot, dominating the attacking play. In the 5th minute Thomas Robinson did well to win the ball just inside the Celtic half and surge forward to strike a shot from just outside the box, which flew just over the bar.

On 11 minutes Comrades came close when a Mark Kelly shot from 7 yards was blocked and then his attempt from the rebound flew into the side netting. In a rare moment of danger at the other end, on 14 minutes, McAlinden saw his scissor-kick effort from 11 yards fly just wide of the target. The home side continued to control the game, but it was not until the 33rd minute that they took a well-deserved lead. Thomas Robinson did very well to put in a lovely ball from the right edge of the box to find the head of Stewart Nixon at the far post. He sent his initial effort against the post from 6 yards, but was there from the rebound to scramble in past a defender and 'keeper on the line. Comrades continued to look comfortable for the rest of the half and went in with a merited, but narrow lead at the break. Five minutes into the second half the lead was doubled, when Mark Kelly got the better of a defender and broke free from the left side of the box to coolly slot the ball past 'keeper McPartland from 7 yards. Comrades, continued to impress, looking very solid at the back, dominant in midfield and inventive going forward. They were fully in control and any threat from the visitors was superbly nullified, with Adam McCart, who hasn't played much so far this season, particularly impressive in dominating the dangerous physical presence of Celtic striker Mullan. In the 62nd minute the home side grabbed a third goal, when a great flowing move ended with Mark Kelly getting a header in from 6 yards from a Stewart Nixon cross, the ball dropping into the net, despite the 'keeper getting a good hand to it. Comrades were now rampant and in complete control of the game. Chances for more goals came. In the 65th minute Stewart Nixon got in behind the beleaguered Celtic defence, but his resulting effort from 16 yards was too weak to trouble McPartland. Then, on 70 minutes, Nixon had another chance, when he was set up for a shot by Thomas Robinson, who had done well to burst through a couple of tackles, but the young striker's effort from 11 yards went a couple of feet over the bar. At the other end Paddy Flood had been rarely troubled during the game, but he had to make a smart save on 71 minutes, coming out to block well after McAnallen had turned and shot from 10 yards. On 74 minutes Comrades were inches away from another goal, when Stewart Nixon ran free on the right and played a ball low across the box to Thomas Robinson, who got his foot to the ball, but saw his effort from 8 yards go agonisingly wide of the far post. The chances kept coming and on 79 minutes Dean Youle headed over from 4 yards from a cross whipped in by Samuel McIlveen. Comrades did get a fourth goal to seal a superb performance in the 81st minute. A great crisp passing move left the Celtic defence bamboozled and ended with substitute Zach Barr firing in his first goal for the club, with a drilled finish inside the far post from 9 yards.