



Ballyclare Comrades 0-3 Newry City AFC

Friday 16th March 2018 – Bluefin Sport Championship

Match & Ball Sponsor: Cllr Mark Cosgrove, Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council, Glengormley Urban DEA

Ballyclare Comrades team

19. Alan Blayney
5. Chris Rodgers
6. Michael McQuitty
23. Dean Youle
16. Matty Parker
4. Samuel McIlveen
8. JB Dobbin
24. Stewart Nixon
22. Gary Brown
17. Thomas Robinson 🇮🇪 (82')
9. Mark Kelly

Substitutes:

2. Curtis Woods
14. Adam McCart
10. Eoin Kane
7. Joe McWilliams 🇮🇪 (82')
12. Chris Middleton

Newry City AFC: Maguire, Noonan, M Hughes, King, Boyle, McCann, McArdle, Carville, McCabe, Havern, Johnston. Subs: Mullen, S Hughes, McMahan, McCaul, Mackin.

Comrades supporters had little to cheer about on a cold night at Dixon Park, as their team lost out to in-form Newry.

Manager Clifford Adams made a couple of changes to the line-up which had defeated Loughgall in the previous game; Samuel McIlveen and Thomas Robinson coming in for Eoin Kane and Chris Middleton.

The visitors opened the game strongly, gaining the bulk of possession. However, when they hit the front in the 12th minute it was from a Comrades defensive mistake. Dean Youle's header back to 'keeper Alan Blayney was short, allowing Johnston to nip in and lob the ball into the empty net from 12 yards.

The home side were struggling to get any momentum and Newry continued to look the more composed side. It wasn't until the 27th minute that Comrades threatened the visitors goal, when Thomas Robinson picked up the ball in a central position and advanced to strike a shot from 22 yards, which Maguire had to palm around the post rather awkwardly.

The latter stages of the first half were rather scrappy. The only incident of note came in the 40th minute, when Carville struck a fine wind assisted effort from 30 yards, which was heading into the top corner of the net until Alan Blayney tipped it over the bar.

The second half opened with chances at either end. Firstly, on 47 minutes, Carville sent a header from 8 yards into the turf and up and over the bar. Then, two minutes later, Chris Rodgers got on the end of a ball slid into the box by Thomas Robinson, but Maguire did well to come out to block his effort.

With the wind now at their backs, Comrades began to assert a fair degree of pressure, pinning their opponents back into their own half and winning a series of corners.

In the 56th minute, the Newry 'keeper had to produce a fine save to preserve his side's lead, when he tipped the ball over the bar from Matty Parker's fiercely hit 25-yard drive.

The home side looked capable of getting something from the game and in the 75th minute they came close to an equaliser, when Gary Brown's effort from the edge of a crowded box was deflected onto the post.

Seconds later Comrades hopes took a crushing blow, when a break upfield by Newry ended with a last-ditch tackle by Samuel McIlveen on McCabe in the box being adjudged to be a foul. From the resulting penalty Carville slotted the ball home to double his side's lead.

Comrades had a chance to reduce the deficit in the 78th minute, when Gary Brown got on the end of a free-kick played into the box from deep, but his header from 7 yards went over the bar.

Newry sealed an emphatic win in the 85th minute, when a swift counter-attack ended with Mackin sliding the ball through to McCabe and he made no mistake finding the back of the net from just inside the box, past the advancing 'keeper.