



Newry City AFC 4-1 Ballyclare Comrades

Saturday 18th November 2017 – Bluefin Sport Championship

Ballyclare Comrades team

1. Paddy Flood
5. Chris Rodgers
14. Adam McCart
23. Dean Youle
2. Curtis Woods 🟡 (86')
4. Samuel McIlveen 🟡 (75')
22. Gary Brown 🟡 (89')
8. JB Dobbin
17. Thomas Robinson 🟡 (71')
24. Stewart Nixon 🟡 (56')
9. Mark Kelly 🟡 (4')

Substitutes:

16. Matty Parker
18. Jason Johnston
11. Adam Gray 🟢 (71')
7. Michael O'Hanlon 🟢 (56')
20. Zach Barr 🟢 (4') 🟡 (33')

Newry City AFC: Maguire, McArdle, Boyle, King, M Hughes, Walker, McKeown, McCann, S Hughes, McCabe, Johnston. Subs: Richmond, Havern, Hutchinson, Mullen, Cuningham.

Comrades endured a very difficult day at Newry, as they fell to a comprehensive defeat and in the process lost their two main goal-scorers with what looked like serious injuries.

After the midweek League Cup game at Dungannon, manager Clifford Adams reverted to a more familiar line-up. One of the players returning to the starting eleven was striker Mark Kelly. However his role in the game was to be short-lived as, in the 4th minute, he pulled up with a hamstring injury whilst chasing a ball towards the corner flag.

Despite this set-back Comrades looked the more dangerous side for much of the first half. In the 14th minute they came close, when a great pass from Stewart Nixon created a chance for substitute Zach Barr to shoot from 16 yards, but his effort went just wide of the target.

Six minutes later, Barr tested the home keeper, when he got a good header in from 8 yards from a fine cross into the box by Gary Brown. However, Maguire did well to tip the ball over the bar.

Comrades continued to have the bulk of the attacking play, but were perhaps trying to be too deliberate with their final ball, when a shot might have been a better option.

Somewhat against the run of play, the home side took the lead in the 34th minute, when Walker tried a shot from just outside the box, which snuck in at the bottom corner, eluding the dive of Paddy Flood.

Comrades had a chance to equalise on 42 minutes, when a Samuel McIlveen corner found the head of Dean Youle 6 yards from goal, but his effort was well saved by Maguire.

Although going in at half-time behind, the travelling Comrades fans would have been optimistic that their team could get something from the game. However, the second half was to be something of a disaster for the men in red.

The bad stuff started when Stewart Nixon went down after a fairly innocuous looking challenge in the corner. It immediately became apparent that he was in a great deal of pain, suffering from a knee injury, and he was stretchered off in the 56th minute. Whilst Comrades were shell-shocked by the loss of a second key player in the game, Newry at the same time had stepped up their performance considerably and were looking very dangerous. Seconds after Nixon's departure, at the other end Walker hit a curling effort from the edge of the box which clipped the top of the crossbar.

The home side continued to exert pressure and on 64 minutes Paddy Flood had to make a good double save, firstly getting his hand to a looping effort and then reacting quickly to block a follow-up effort.

Comrades were struggling to make inroads going forward, but on 68 minutes they came close, when Zach Barr took the ball down and swivelled to volley an effort from 28 yards, which went narrowly wide of the goal with the 'keeper beaten.

A minute later the home side cemented their advantage with a second goal. A dangerous ball was played in from the right and McKeown sent a diving header into the net from 6 yards.

Newry now definitely had their tails up and it wasn't a surprise when they added to their tally in the 77th minute, when King slammed the ball home from 8 yards, after it had fallen to him from a corner.

Three minutes later Comrades' misery was completed when they conceded a fourth goal. Havern was given too much space in the box and made no mistake with an effort sent wide of the 'keeper from 9 yards.

On 89 minutes the visitors got a consolation goal when Adam Gray's ball across the 6-yard box was met by Gary Brown, who arrived to finish from close range.