



Ballyclare Comrades 1-0 Portadown

Saturday 17th February 2018 – Bluefin Sport Championship

Match & Ball Sponsor: Ballyclare Comrades Supporters Club

Ballyclare Comrades team

19. Alan Blayney
2. Curtis Woods
5. Chris Rodgers
23. Dean Youle
16. Matty Parker
12. Chris Middleton
8. JB Dobbin
10. Eoin Kane
17. Thomas Robinson 🇮🇪 (66')
22. Gary Brown 🇮🇪 (58')
9. Mark Kelly 🇮🇪 (90+3')

Substitutes:

6. Michael McQuitty
18. Jason Johnston
4. Samuel McIlveen
20. Francis Dugan 🇮🇪 (90+3')
24. Stewart Nixon 🇮🇪 (66')

Portadown: McGaughey, Hall, Neill, Brennan, McVey, Kilmartin, Wilson, Warwick, Lavery, Salley, McMillen. Subs: George, Henderson, McCullough, Holmes, Larkin.

Comrades got back to winning ways with their fourth victory of the season against pre-season title favourites Portadown.

With Alan Blayney available again, he came back into nets for Paddy Flood who is nursing a finger injury. Otherwise, the side was that which started the previous game at Newry.

There were a couple of early chances for either team. In the 4th minute, the visitors got in an effort from a corner, which saw McVey head over from 6 yards. Then, a minute later, at the other end, Gary Brown got on the end of fine cross from Curtis Woods, only to see his header from 7 yards tipped over the bar by 'keeper McGaughey.

After this the first half settled into a pattern where defences were on top and neither side was able to gain any degree of ascendancy.

Chances were at a premium, but in the 32nd minute Portadown came close. A ball was played forward by Lavery into the box and Warwick got to it before the advancing Blayney, but the 'keeper did enough to make the chance more difficult and the resulting first-time effort was poked wide of the target from 14 yards. Comrades were having a good amount of the attacking play, however they were finding the Portadown rearguard hard to penetrate. A minute into first-half injury-time Chris Rodgers did get a decent strike in from just outside the box, after the ball had only been cleared out to his from a free-kick, but his effort went over the bar. The second half started with the rather scrappy pattern of play continuing and a goal didn't look imminent at either end. However, in the 58th minute, Comrades broke the deadlock. Mark Kelly received the ball in the box, with his back to goal. He managed to keep hold of possession, despite the close attention of a couple of defenders, and laid the ball back the edge of the area to Gary Brown, who then struck a lovely curling effort into the top corner of the net, giving the 'keeper no chance.

Portadown reacted to going behind by pressing forward and had a good deal of the ball in the Comrades half. However, they failed to create any real chances as the home defence dealt confidently with anything thrown at them.

Indeed, there wasn't much of note in the way of chances at either end, as Comrades professionally saw the game out. They did however have a half chance to add to their lead in the 83rd minute, when a Matty Parker corner, played to the far post, was met by the head of Dean Youle, but he hadn't enough room to get his effort on target.

Despite the narrow nature of their lead, the home side were able to hold on relatively comfortably for a welcome three points and cement their status as Portadown's bogey side this season.