



Ballyclare Comrades 1-1 Knockbreda

Saturday 23rd February 2019 – Bluefin Sport Championship

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Comrades team (4-2-3-1)

1. Ben Fry ■ (90+7')
2. Curtis Woods
6. Michael McQuitty
23. Dean Youle ↩ (54')
3. Christopher Crane ■ (90+2')
15. Andy Long ↩ (87')
4. Samuel McIlveen ■ (67')
22. Gary Brown
24. Gary Donnelly
11. Adam Gray
9. Chris Trussell ↩ (50')

Substitutes:

18. Chris Getty ↕ (54')
5. Adam Wright ↕ (87')
17. Thomas Robinson
16. Jamie Willighan ↕ (50')
14. Joe Tully

Knockbreda: Smyth, Hamill, Culbert, Brennan, McNulty, Copeland, Roohi, Newberry, Gilmour, McDonald, Cafolla. Subs: Rice, Henry, Patterso, Burns, McVeigh.

Comrades produced a forgettable display, after being gifted a very early lead, to draw at home with Knockbreda.

Manager Stephen Hughes had to make a couple of changes to his starting line-up for this game, with 'keeper Jack Hazard and captain JB Dobbin both out injured. In came Ben Fry and Andy Long. However, Gary Brown was available again and returned to the team, replacing Jamie Willighan.

The match couldn't have started any better for the home side, as they took the lead inside 20 seconds. Gary Brown sent in a cross from the right and defender Richard Copeland got his head to it, directing it past his own 'keeper.

Comrades failed to build on this early good fortune and the visitors began to gain most of the possession. In the 16th minute they threatened, when a free-kick played into the box saw the ball break to Culbert and he flashed a shot through a crowd of bodies and just wide of the target.

The home side were frustratingly wayward with their passing too often and made little headway going forward. However, in the 30th minute they did put together a good move, which ended with Gary Donnelly getting in a strike from 14 yards, but 'keeper Smyth produced a good block to deny him.

The teams went in a half-time with Comrades one goal to the good, but looking far from comfortable.

The early stages of the second half were disrupted by a couple of injuries for the home side. First, on 50 minutes Chris Trussell had to limp off and then four minutes later Dean Youle left the game on a stretcher with a rather more serious looking injury.

The game itself continued to be a scrappy frustrating affair, with Comrades particularly looking very out of sorts. They were however doing well defensively to stifle the Knockbreda attacking threat.

However, the latter stages of the match saw the visitors get some very good chances. On 79 minutes, Hamill was played free into the box and looked set to score, having taken the ball around 'keeper Ben Fry. However, rather off balance, he skewed his effort wide of the unguarded goal from 10 yards.

A minute later, Hamill had another great chance as he was again played into a great position inside the box, but his resulting effort, knocked over the advancing 'keeper, went wide of the post.

It looked as if Comrades would hold on for a rather fortunate victory, but in the 88th minute Knockbreda grabbed a deserved equaliser. The ball broke from a corner to Francis Rice and he drilled the ball into the net from 9 yards.

The visitors now looked the more likely, if anyone, to snatch all three points, as Comrades had produced nothing in an attacking sense in the second half.

Seven minutes into injury-time Knockbreda broke quickly forward, with a through ball sending Cafolla free. However, Ben Fry had raced out of his box and brought the Breda man down, earning a red card, but probably saving his side a point from the game.