



Ballyclare Comrades 2-1 Knockbreda

Tuesday 4th December 2018 – Bluefin Sport Championship

Match Sponsor: WJ Blair Accident Repairs

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Ballyclare Comrades team (4-4-2)

- 19. Ben Fry
- 22. Gary Brown
- 2. Curtis Woods
- 20. Taylor Kirk 🟡 (50') 🔴 (53')
- 3. Christopher Crane
- 7. Joe McWilliams 🔴 (84')
- 10. Eoin Kane
- 4. Samuel McIlveen
- 11. Adam Gray
- 16. Jamie Willighan ⚫ (57')
- 9. Chris Trussell ⚫ (51') 🔴 (90+1')

Substitutes:

- 15. Thomas Campbell
- 12. Jason Johnston 🟢 (53')
- 8. JB Dobbin 🟢 (84')
- 24. Gary Donnelly
- 14. Joe Tully 🟢 (90+1')

Knockbreda: Windrum, Johnston, Dobbin, Patterson, Doran, Fearon, Newberry, Roohi, Bennett, Cafolla, McNicholl. Subs: McKenna, Rice, Baker, McNulty, McVarnock.

Comrades secured back-to-back wins in the Championship with a hard-fought victory over Knockbreda under the lights at Dixon Park.

Yet again manager Stephen Hughes was faced with issues at the back, with Adam Wright's suspension adding to the list of missing defenders. Taylor Kirk came into the side. After their impact as substitutes three days earlier, Chris Trussell and Samuel McIlveen were also in the starting line-up.

The home side started in lively fashion. In the 5th minute Adam Gray produced a good run into the box before playing the ball in to Chris Trussell, but the striker's resulting shot from 7 yards was blocked by a defender

Four minutes later Gray was on the end of good move, but his strike from 11 yards went just wide of the far post.

The visitors soon began to get a foothold in the game and gain a lot of attacking possession. In the 14th minute they were unfortunate to see a free-kick, struck from 25 yards by Newberry, hit the post. The ball was almost immediately played back into the box, where Roohi got his foot to it with a volley from 12 yards, but his effort was off target.

On 17 minutes Comrades had an opportunity, when Joe McWilliams played the ball into the box to Chris Trussell, who then set it up for Eoin Kane to have a strike from 8 yards, but his effort was deflected wide off a defender.

From the resulting corner Knockbreda cleared and broke upfield quickly, ending with Fearon getting in a shot from the edge of the box, which Ben Fry did well to turn low wide of the post.

The visitors were on top by the middle of the first half and on 22 minutes another dangerous thrust forward saw them come close, with Roohi shooting narrowly wide from just outside the box. Then, on the half hour, the ball broke to Patterson from a corner, but he sliced his shot wide from 13 yards when well placed.

In the latter stages of the half Comrades began to get back into things more. In the 35th minute Jamie Willighan got to the by-line and laid the ball back to Eoin Kane in a good position 9 yards out, but once again a defender was in the right place to block. On 39 minutes, the home side came close to opening the scoring, when Joe McWilliams found the head of Chris Trussell with a cross from the right, but the striker's effort from 8 yards went inches wide.

The second half opened with a flurry of attacking from Knockbreda, but Comrades weather this and it was they who scored the first goal of the game. In the 51st minute Eoin Kane broke free into the right side of the box and played the ball in to Chris Trussell, who made no mistake from 12 yards, drilling the ball past 'keeper Windrum. This goal settled the home side and they started to play with real confidence. They soon had their second goal on 57 minutes. A surging Adam Gray run down the middle ended with him playing Joe McWilliams in for a chance, but his effort from 10 yards was parried out by Windrum. However, the ball broke to Jamie Willighan and from a similar distance he picked his spot to double the lead.

For a good period after this Comrades looked comfortable, but a goal back for the visitors on 71 minutes changed the pattern of the game. Another free-kick from Newberry, this time struck from 22 yards, came back off the bar, but the ball fell to Bennett, who struck a low shot into the net through a crowded box from 15 yards. The visitors now had the scent of a comeback in their nostrils and pressed forward. On 77 minutes Ben Fry had to make a smart save low on his line, to keep out a shot from 16 yards from Baker after a free-kick had been played into the box.

Comrades still looked a threat at the other end. In the 81st minute a low ball into the near post, played in by Christopher Crane, saw Chris Trussell get a touch 5 yards from goal, but the 'keeper was able to bundle it wide of the post.

Two minutes later the home side had a great chance to seal the points, when a fine move saw Jamie Willighan get into a great position in the box. Instead of shooting he played the ball to the even better placed Joe McWilliams, who finished with ease, only for the goal to be ruled out for offside.

The final minutes of the match were tense for the home supporters as Knockbreda threw everything they had at getting an equaliser, but Comrades showed grit to see the game out and gain three vital points.