



Linfield 1-0 Ballyclare Comrades

Saturday 5th January 2019 – Tennent's Irish Cup (Fifth Round)

Ballyclare Comrades team (4-2-3-1)

1. Jack Hazard
2. Curtis Woods
5. Adam Wright
23. Dean Youle 🇮🇪 (77')
3. Christopher Crane
4. Samuel McIlveen
8. JB Dobbin 🇮🇪 (82')
4. Samuel McIlveen
22. Gary Brown
24. Gary Donnelly
11. Adam Gray
16. Jamie Willighan 🇮🇪 (89')

Substitutes:

1. Ben Fry
20. Taylor Kirk 🇮🇪 (77')
17. Thomas Robinson
7. Joe McWilliams 🇮🇪 (82')
9. Chris Trussell 🇮🇪 (89')

Linfield: Carroll, Stafford, Callacher, Waterworth, Cooper, Stewart, Clarke, Kearns, Fallon, Mulgrew, Casement. Subs: Deane, O'Connor, Millar, Garrett, Mitchell, Reynolds, Quinn.

Comrades exited the Irish Cup with their heads held high, after a tenacious, disciplined display at Windsor Park against Premiership league leaders Linfield. Manager Stephen Hughes introduced new signing Jack Hazard for his debut in goal, whilst he also brought Gary Donnelly back into the starting line-up.

As expected, Linfield dominated the early possession and on 9 minutes Hazard was called into action, when a ball into the box broke to Waterworth, but the young 'keeper was quick to react, making an excellent block at the edge of the 6-yard box. When they got the ball, Comrades played some decent passing football and tried to get forward. In 16th minute Gary Brown had the first effort for the visitors, when he shot from 25 yards, the ball going a couple of feet over the bar.

Four minutes later, at the other end, excellent defending from Dean Youle saw him cut out a very dangerous ball played into the 6-yard box by Clarke, with Linfield strikers ready to pounce.

As the half progressed, Comrades continued to grow in confidence and were comfortable at the back, restricting Linfield to half chances, one of which saw Casement fire just over from the edge of the box on 25 minutes.

A minute later, Linfield 'keeper Carroll was called into action, when he had to tip away a cross/shot fired in dangerously by Curtis Woods.

The home supporters were becoming increasingly frustrated by their team's inability to break down the hardworking visitors. It wasn't until the 39th minute that Jack Hazard was tested again, when he was well-placed to save a shot hit from distance by Fallon.

Moments later, Comrades had a sniff of a chance, when Gary Brown's cross into the box was met by the head of Jamie Willighan, but his effort went over the bar from 9 yards.

The teams went in at half-time with a blank scoresheet, but it was Comrades who were the first to threaten in the second period. Inside the first minute, a quick break upfield ended with Adam Gray hitting a well struck shot from 25 yards, which Carroll had to save at the second attempt.

Two minutes later, Linfield had claims for a penalty turned down as Waterworth went down in the box, but the referee was having none of it, with the Comrades defenders angry at the Linfield striker for the ease which he fell.

Play continued in much the same pattern as the first half, with Comrades effectively restricting the home sides chances. However, on 65 minutes, the breakthrough eventually came for Linfield. A Casement cross into the box was flicked on by Waterworth and Joel Cooper ghosted in to head the ball home from 6 yards. The ex-Comrades player didn't celebrate his goal out of respect for his former club.

This goal didn't open up the floodgates, as some might have expected. Comrades continued to do the good things that they had done throughout the game and although Linfield had most of the ball, the visitors tried to be progressive when they had possession.

On 71 minutes a good move from Comrades ended with JB Dobbin striking an effort from the edge of the box, but Carroll was in the right place to save comfortably.

Chances for Linfield remained restricted, but, on 85 minutes, Clarke was played in for a chance at the edge of the 6-yard box, but his resulting shot was well saved by Jack Hazard at his near post.

The final moments of the game saw Comrades get a corner and free-kick for which they brought their 'keeper up, sending Linfield nerves jangling, but the home side were able to see off these threats to gain a hard-won victory.