



Loughgall 4-2 Ballyclare Comrades

Saturday 27th October 2018 – Bluefin Sport Championship

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

1. Paddy Flood
2. Curtis Woods
5. Adam Wright 🍁 (71')
23. Dean Youle
3. Christopher Crane 🟡 (53')
4. Samuel McIlveen 🟡 (3')
8. JB Dobbin
7. Joe McWilliams 🍁 (68')
12. Jason Johnston 🍁 (68')
17. Thomas Robinson
9. Jamie Willighan

Substitutes:

10. Taylor Kirk 🟢 (71')
15. Scott Gault
6. Gary Donnelly 🟢 (68')
14. Joe Tully 🟢 (68') 🟡 (83')

Loughgall: Buchanan, McVeigh, Rea, Bell, Taylor, Dallas, McCullough, Ferguson, Ferris, McConnell, Campbell. Subs: Hoey, Gibson, Liggett, Stewart, Kearney.

Comrades slumped to a very disappointing defeat at Loughgall, despite getting off to a perfect start.

For this match manager Stephen Hughes was again faced with a number of absentees; Adam Gray, Gary Brown, Eoin Kane, Michael McQuitty and Kyle Rowe all missing for a variety of reasons. Paddy Flood remained in goals. Curtis Woods and JB Dobbin returned for their first starts after injury, perhaps earlier than had been planned.

Things looked good for the visitors early in the game when they hit the front inside three minutes. A free-kick was won 25 yards out and Samuel McIlveen stepped up to strike a lovely effort over the wall and low inside the near post.

This should have provided the platform for a successful afternoon, but that was not to be the case, as Loughgall went on to dominate much of the rest of the game.

After the early goal, the home side bossed the play for most of the rest of the first half, but the next big threat on goal came from Comrades. In the 19th minute, Jason Johnston got his head to a ball played into the box by Joe McWilliams and his effort from 11 yards forced 'keeper Buchanan into a good save, turning the ball past the base of the post.

The flow of play however was generally towards the visitors' goal. On 25 minutes a swift break upfield caught Comrades out and McCullough got free into the box. Only a very well-timed challenge from the advancing Paddy Flood stopped him getting a shot on goal.

Three minutes later, the 'keeper did enough as he went for a high ball played in for a free-kick, which found Ferris otherwise unmarked in the box. Flood's intervention forced the Loughgall striker to head over from 11 yards.

In the 30th minute however there was nothing Flood could do to prevent the home side getting a deserved equaliser. A ball played into the box wasn't cleared effectively and fell to McCullough at the edge of the area, who hit a crisp shot into the net through a crowd.

A minute later, in a rare Comrades threat, Jason Johnston hit a crisp volley from 16 yards which went on target, but Buchanan was well-placed to save.

Loughgall continued to look very dangerous and in the 37th minute they should have taken the lead, when a short back-pass forced Paddy Flood into a desperate attempt to clear, which was charged down. The ball fell to McConnell, who looked set to score into the unguarded net, but he screwed his effort wide from 6 yards.

Two minutes later, Comrades were grateful for a superb save from Flood, when he flew across his goal to claw the ball away, after a header from Ferguson looked destined for the back of the net.

A minute before the break, the home side came close again, when a header from Ferris went narrowly wide from 8 yards.

Comrades started the second half with a brief flurry of attacking, but this soon fizzled out and Loughgall took over again.

It was no surprise when they took the lead on 50 minutes. Poor tackling from Comrades allowed the ball to be played to be played across the box, where it fell to McConnell, who this time made no mistake, slamming into the net from 10 yards.

The home side were now very much on top and Comrades couldn't put anything together to react. In the 57th minute the home side should have increased their lead, when a low ball played across the box fell perfectly to Ferris, but he fired wastefully over from 6 yards.

On 65 minutes a mistake at the back from Comrades led to the home side's third goal. A ball played across the box should have been cleared, but was missed, allowing Ferris to receive it and then loft over the advancing Paddy Flood from 16 yards.

The visitors were now all at sea defensively and two minutes later conceded another goal.

Loughgall exposed them with an attack down the left and got in all too easily, with Campbell firing a shot wide of the 'keeper and inside the far post.

It looked at this stage as if the score-line could become more embarrassing for Comrades, but they managed to avoid shipping any more goals.

At the other end they came close to getting a goal back on 81 minutes, when substitute Gary Donnelly saw his effort from 6 yards deflected wide, after a last-ditch intervention from a Loughgall defender.

Two minute later, the visitors did manage to put some gloss on a fairly abject performance, when they pulled a goal back in the 83rd minute. Substitute Joe Tully ran at the Loughgall defence, being brought down just inside the box as he attempted to force his way through. A penalty was awarded and Tully picked himself up to calmly dispatch the spot-kick.