



Ballyclare Comrades 0-1 Larne (after extra-time)

Saturday 1st February 2020 – Sadler's Peaky Blinder Irish Cup (Sixth Round)

Match Sponsor: City Auction Group

Ball Sponsor: Anonymous

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

1. Ben McCauley
2. Curtis Woods
20. Adam McCart
15. Jordan Malone  (27')  (59')
3. Lee McCune  (69')
4. Samuel McIlveen
11. Ciaran Dobbin
24. Gary Donnelly
8. JB Dobbin
21. Adam Gray  (51')  (90+3')
9. Fra Nolan  (97')

Substitutes:

5. Kyle Crawford
14. Dale McCreery
18. Kevin Hagan
22. Kurt Cooper
17. Tom Mathieson  (90+3')
7. Thomas Robinson  (97')
16. Nathan O'Neill  (59')

Larne: Devlin, Tilney, Kelly, Watson, Cosgrove, Randall, Hughes, Sule, Herron, Donnelly, McDaid. Subs: Mitchell, Flowers, Ramsey, Lynch, Andrade, Jarvis, Gilmour.

Comrades pushed the full-time big guns of Larne all the way with a gallant performance before falling to a controversial injury time goal in front of a big derby crowd at Dixon Park.

With the shock move of top striker, Joe Tully, to Larne the previous evening, there was extra spice to this game, but Comrades supporters may have been apprehensive

of what was to come. However, the players and management team reacted superbly to give a great account of themselves.

Comrades manager Paul Harbinson made two changes to his in-form side. With the loss of Tully, Fra Nolan came into the starting line-up. The other change saw JB Dobbin come in for Tom Mathieson.

The early stages of the game saw the visitors establish a pattern of possession, but there was no real goalmouth action until the 9th minute when McDaid volleyed wide from a ball played in by Cosgrove.

On 12 minutes Comrades threatened for the first time when Adam Gray produced a good thrust down the middle before shooting from the edge of the box, but his effort lacked the power to trouble 'keeper Devlin.

The hosts continued to work hard and largely frustrated the efforts of the visitors. Indeed on 24 minutes they gave them a scare when Fra Nolan latched onto a through ball and slotted the ball past Devlin, but the effort was ruled out for offside. The rest of the half saw the pattern of play continue, with Larne dominating possession but not making much headway against a well drilled and committed Comrades side.

The second half opened with the best chance of the game so far when inside the first minute Herron was found by a ball played into the box by Cosgrove, but his effort from 8 yards was stabbed just wide of the post.

On 51 minutes Larne threatened again when a free kick swung into the box was met by a header from Randall, but Ben McCauley was well placed to save.

Four minutes later a great through ball from Randall set McDaid free in the box and he looked set to score, only to be denied by a superb last-ditch tackle from Adam McCart.

Comrades managed to survive this flurry early in the half from Larne and kept working hard, closing space and defending resolutely, marshalled by the excellent Adam McCart, whilst trying to get forward themselves when possible. It wasn't until the 74th minute when the visitors threatened again when a ball fired into the box struck the post and Samuel McIlveen cleared from in front of the goal line with McDaid about to pounce.

In the 84th minute Comrades won a free-kick 27 yards out and Samuel McIlveen stepped up to drill an effort just wide.

In the 87th minute the visitors had a chance when a corner played to the back post was headed into the side netting by Gilmour. Then a minute later Cosgrove drove into the box and fired in a shot from 12 yards which Ben McCauley saved at his near post.

Normal time ended scoreless and the game went to extra time. The first period was uneventful until Larne won a series of corners, the last of which was rather controversially awarded and from which they scored in the 98th minute, with Jarvis powering in a header from Donnelly's ball in.

The rest of extra time passed with Comrades endeavouring to get back on level terms. They tried their hardest, but the closest they came was in the 114th minute when a ball played into the box by Lee McCune broke to Adam McCart who got in a shot from 10 yards, but a block from a defender took the sting off the strike allowing Devlin to save comfortably.