



**Report courtesy of Newtownabbey Times**

**Dundela 4-2 Ballyclare Comrades**

**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2020 – Bluefin NIFL Championship**

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

1. Ben McCauley
2. Curtis Woods
6. Adam McCart
15. Jordan Malone 📌 (69')
3. Lee McCune
4. Samuel McIlveen 📌 (80')
17. Tom Mathieson
24. Gary Donnelly 📌 (28') 🟡 (90')
11. Ciaran Dobbin
21. Adam Gray
9. Fra Nolan 📌 (65')

**Substitutes:**

18. Kevin Hagan
8. JB Dobbin 📌 (69')
22. Oisin Barr 📌 (80')
7. Thomas Robinson
16. Nathan O'Neill 📌 (65') 📌 (84')

**Dundela:** McBride, Tommons, Kerr, McCawl, Morrison Magee, McMaster, Kane, McComb, Watts, Holden. Subs: Devine, King, Beggs, McNicholl, Doey.

After earning superlatives in the Irish Cup against hot favourites, Larne, on their previous outing, Ballyclare Comrades were a pale shadow against Dundela in a Championship League fixture.

"We weren't at the races," was the scathing comment by manager Paul Harbinson. "Dundela should have won more convincingly than the winning 4-2 scoreline suggests. They were out of the blocks quickly, and after taking an early lead proceeded to boss the first half.

"When we were trailing 2-1 approaching the interval, I was hoping that we could hold out until half time without further damage, but when they scored a third just before the break the writing was clearly on the wall.

“A fourth was added around the hour mark, and we only came to life during the closing stages following the introduction of all three substitutes and were rewarded with a second goal. It was a most disappointing performance – one of our worst of the season. It’s difficult to explain how we could be so brilliant last week when taking on Premiership opponents to extra time in the Irish Cup, and then be so flat seven days later.

“In training we had worked on our game plan for the compact Wilgar Park pitch, but we never managed to put it in to practice. Dundela were on top throughout, winning all the first balls and the second ones as well, and but for another commanding performance by Adam McCart at centre half it could have been even more embarrassing.

“Our only passage of play of note in the first half produced a quality goal. Ciaran Dobbin made ground down the right flank and then rolled the ball to Gary Donnelly; he took a touch and dispatched the ball into the top corner of the net. A fantastic strike.

“The second half wasn’t much better. Dundela continued to cause us all sorts of problems and were good value for their 4-1 lead with half an hour remaining. Only then did we play with some spirit, and Nathan O’Neill doubled our tally when he stabbed the ball into the net from close range, after Oisin Barr’s initial effort had been parried by the keeper.

“Much improvement needed would be the summing up on the report card,” he stated..

Home striker David McMaster opened the scoring in the 8<sup>th</sup> minute, when he fired into the bottom corner from the edge of the box, and there were further scares at the visiting end, before Gary Donnelly pulled one back in the 28<sup>th</sup> minute following good play by Ciaran Dobbin.

The Duns continued to impress and Ben McCauley did well to keep out a Holden shot, but later was beaten by a Carl McComb header from a McMaster cross. Comrades were now firmly on the back foot, with McCauley saving from McComb and Jordan Morrison, before Chris Watts made it 3-1 on the stroke of half time. Both teams deserve credit for battling against horrendous wet and windy conditions, but the home side continued to have the edge, and McMaster netted his second of the afternoon when he neatly chipped over McCauley as he dashed off his line. Six minutes from time Comrades got a consolation strike, when new signing Nathan O’Neill netted his first goal for the club since transferring from PSNI.