



Ballyclare Comrades 0-1 Knockbreda

Tuesday 25th February 2020 – Bluefin Sport Championship

Match Sponsor: Agnew Mitchell & Cairns, Chartered Accountants

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

1. Ben McCauley
2. Curtis Woods
6. Adam McCart
15. Jordan Malone 🟡 (89')
21. Adam Gray
8. JB Dobbin 🔴 (66')
4. Samuel McIlveen
16. Nathan O'Neill
11. Ciaran Dobbin 🔴 (72')
17. Tom Mathieson
24. Gary Donnelly

Substitutes:

5. Kyle Crawford
12. Kurt Cooper
18. Kevin Hagan
22. Oisin Barr 🟢 (66')
9. Fra Nolan 🟢 (72')

Knockbreda: Deane, McCauley, McGreevy, Hamill, McDermott, Rice, McNeill, Irwin, Smith, Storey, Cafolla. Subs: Smyth, Halfpenny, Burns, Best, Short.

Comrades slumped to a damaging defeat at home to bottom club Knockbreda, a result which leaves their top-six hopes hanging by a thread.

For this match manager Paul Harbinson had to make one change to his starting lineup. With Lee McCune suspended Nathan O'Neill came into the side and Adam Gray moved to the left back position.

Good play was difficult on a sticky pitch and both teams struggled early on.

The first effort of the game came in the 15th minute when Gary Donnelly got in a shot from an acute angle inside the 6 yard box, but 'keeper Deane blocked at the near post.

On 19 minutes the home side created a better chance. A great ball was played forward into the box by Jordan Malone and sets Ciaran Dobbin up for a good opportunity but the keeper blocked from 10 yards. The ball then came back out to Samuel McIlveen who fired it towards the goal from 20 yards. However, his effort was deflected just wide.

Two minutes later the hosts had another chance when from a corner the ball broke to Tom Mathieson 5 yards out but Deane was quick to smother his effort.

On 26 minutes a swift break up the field by Knockbreda ended with a well struck shot from 30 yards from Storey, but Ben McCauley well placed to save.

At other end, on 28 minutes, Samuel McIlveen saw his well-struck shot from 25 yards saved by Deane under his bar. Then, two minutes later, Knockbreda had an effort, when Storey struck from an angle 14 yards out, but Ben McCauley blocked at the near post.

Five minutes into the second half the visitors had a great chance to open the scoring when the ball was played across the box to Rice in space 10 yards out, but he scuffed his effort allowing Ben McCauley to make a comfortable save.

Play became increasingly scrappy during the second half, with neither side able to create much, although on 57 minutes Nathan O'Neill did come close with a fine first-time effort from the edge of the box which went narrowly wide.

In the 72nd minute the home supporters were concerned to see Ciaran Dobbin leave the game on a stretcher having picked up a nasty injury.

The mood of the home crowd however worsened three minutes from the end of normal time when Knockbreda snatched what was to be the winner. The ball was slotted through the Comrades defence to find the run of Smyth who slotted past the 'keeper from 10 yards.

A minute later, the unsettled Comrades defence almost gifted the visitors a second goal when a loose ball played out from the back went straight to Halfpenny but his effort from the edge of the box was kept out by a good save from Ben McCauley.