



Ballyclare Comrades 7-1 Knockbreda

Saturday 10th August 2019 – Bet McLean League Cup (First Round)

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Ballyclare Comrades team (4-3-3)

1. Ben McCauley
2. Curtis Woods
5. Kyle Crawford 📌 (66')
23. Jonathon Doey ⚽ (22')
22. Matthew Henry
24. Gary Donnelly 📌 (77')
4. Samuel McIlveen ⚽ (37') ⚽ (76') ⚽ (87')
10. Jake McNeill
21. Kyle Beggs ⚽ (22')
16. Jamie Willighan 📌 (74')
9. Fra Nolan ⚽ (45')

Substitutes:

19. Tom Hegan
6. Michael McQuitty 📌 (66')
3. Lee McCune 📌 (77')
18. Kevin Hagan
8. JB Dobbin
7. Thomas Robinson 📌 (74') ⚽ (83')
14. Joe Tully

Knockbreda: Hazard, McCauley, Johnston, Hamill, Spence, Culbert, Fearon, Mallin, Pomeroy, Bennett, Cafolla. Subs: Rice, Whiteway, Simpson, Shaw, Burns.

Comrades made the perfect response to their heavy midweek Championship defeat at Portadown, with a superb performance to blow away Knockbreda and advance to a tie at Glentoran in the next round of the League Cup.

Manager Stephen Hughes resisted the temptation to make wholesale changes to his starting line-up, but three players did come in: Jonathon Doey (for his competitive debut for the club), Jake McNeill and Jamie Willighan.

After a minute's silence for long-serving club committee man Drew Horner, right from the off the home side looked sharp and motivated. In the 6th minute Fra Nolan got in a decent effort from outside the box, which forced a decent save from Hazard. Then, two minutes later, following a corner, Kyle Crawford curled a shot from 13 yards which came off the cross bar

In the 20th minute the visitors threatened, when a free kick was played into the box and met by the head of Hamill, but he couldn't get the right connection from 4 yards and the ball went wide of the target.

Comrades continued however to look much the more potent side; strong at the back, tenacious and creative in midfield and dangerous in attack. On 22 minutes they got their reward when Kyle Beggs sent a fine dipping effort inside the near post from just outside the box, despite Hazard getting a hand to it.

Four minutes later the home side doubled their lead when, from a corner played in by Gary Donnelly, Jonathon Doey leapt highest to power a header into the back of the net from 9 yards.

On the half hour there was almost a third goal for Hughes' men. Samuel McIlveen fired in a fine strike from a free kick from 25 yards out, which took a deflection and looked to be heading into the net only to be kept out by a wonder save from Hazard. McIlveen didn't have long however to wait to get his name on the scoresheet. In the 37th minute a corner was only cleared out to him at the edge of the box and he drilled the ball low through a crowd of bodies into the net.

Just before the break, in the 45th minute, it was 4-0. Hazard came out to punch a cross away under pressure, but the ball then fell to Fra Nolan, who calmly chipped it into the unguarded net from 20 yards.

After a relatively quiet start to the second half, Comrades began to dominate again. On 58 minutes Matthew Henry produced a scintillating run forward before striking an effort from 20 yards which he was unlucky to see come back of the post.

The home side continued to look like they had more goals in them. In the 72nd minute Jamie Willighan tested the 'keeper when he ran on to a ball played into the box and struck a fierce effort from 14 yards, which had to be parried around the post.

On 76 minutes Comrades emphasised their dominance with a fifth goal. Substitute Thomas Robinson ran at the Knockbreda defence and laid the ball to Fra Nolan, who then slipped it perfectly through to the run of Samuel McIlveen and he confidently slotted it past the advancing 'keeper from 7 yards.

The rampant Comrades added to the visitors' agony in the 83rd minute. Kyle Beggs got to the by-line and dug out a cross to the far post, which was met by an acrobatic bicycle-kick from Fra Nolan which put the ball right into the danger area. Thomas Robinson was there to produce a cheeky back flick into the bet from close range.

Samuel McIlveen capped a superb performance, one of many amongst the Comrades team, with his hat-trick goal in the 87th minute. Kyle Beggs was brought down running through the Knockbreda defence when he would have been clear on goal. Johnston consequently received a red card. McIlveen then stepped up to take the free kick on the edge of the box. His initial effort hit the defensive wall, but the ball fell back to the Comrades midfielder, who struck a sweet shot into the net past the unsighted 'keeper.

In the 89th minute the visitors got a very small consolation from the game when a trip in the box led to a penalty. Bennett stepped up to score from the spot, despite Ben McCauley coming close to keeping it out.