



Ballyclare Comrades 4-5 Loughgall

Friday 30th August 2019 – Bluefin NIFL Championship

Match Sponsor: CA Jamison Building Contractor

Ball Sponsor: SM Plumbing & Heating

Ballyclare Comrades team (4-5-1)

- 19. Tom Hegan
- 22. Matthew Henry ■ (67')
- 23. Jonathon Doey
- 6. Michael McQuitty
- 3. Lee McCune
- 11. Ciaran Dobbin
- 24. Gary Donnelly
- 4. Samuel McIlveen
- 15. Jordan Malone ● (31') ↘ (70')
- 7. Thomas Robinson ↘ (70')
- 14. Joe Tully ● (15') ● (26') ● (33')

Substitutes:

- 18. Kevin Hagan
- 8. JB Dobbin
- 10. Jake McNeill ↗ (70')
- 9. Fra Nolan ↗ (70')
- 16. Jamie Willighan

Loughgall: Buchanan, Kerr, Rea, Brenna, Copeland, S McCullough, Malone, Dallas, Ferris, Gibson, Campbell. Subs: D McCullough, Hoey, Neill, Gallagher, Cartwright.

Comrades suffered the humiliation of losing after holding a four-goal lead at half time, with a spectacular second half collapse stunning the home crowd.

Early on there was little sign of what was to come later in the first half as the visitors started strongly.

In the 4th minute they came close to an opener, when Copeland met a corner played to the far post with a firm header that needed to be cleared from in front of the

goal-line. Then, a minute later, Tom Hegan had to make an excellent save to keep out a fierce drive from Campbell struck from 16 yards.

Loughgall continued to boss possession, looking very confident on the ball. However, in the 15th minute, they were caught out when Ciaran Dobbin got free up the right wing before playing the ball in to Joe Tully, who from the edge of the box struck a brilliant first-time effort into the top corner of the net.

This goal was very much against the run of play and the visitors continued to have most of the ball for a period after it. However, another devastating break up the field by Comrades in the 26th minute made it 2-0. A Loughgall attack was broken up and the ball cleared long for Joe Tully to run onto, outstrip the covering defenders and execute a lovely chipped finish over the advancing 'keeper from 20 yards.

The home side now began to look threatening with every attack and understandably the visitors were somewhat deflated. In the 31st minute the lead was increased further when a great move ended with Thomas Robinson playing the ball in for Jordan Malone to strike a controlled finish past the 'keeper from 16 yards.

Two minutes later the home supporters were in dreamland as their side went four ahead. Again, Joe Tully was the man of the moment, completing his hat-trick when he ran onto a ball played through a square defensive line, advanced to outstrip the defence and set the keeper on his backside, before producing a cheeky chipped finish from inside the box.

Comrades went in at half-time in command of the game, but what a change there was to be in the second half.

Within two minutes Loughgall pulled a goal back. Jonathon Doey was penalised for a tackle in the box, with the referee awarding a penalty. Campbell stepped up to score, despite Hegan making a good effort to save.

Three minutes later the deficit was reduced to two, when a corner saw the ball punched into his own net by Tom Hegan.

The dynamic of the game was now completely changed. Comrades looked panicky, particularly when high balls were played into the box, and the visitors had their tails up. In the 54th minute the home side's lead was further reduced when from a corner the ball was only cleared out to Scott McCullough who fired a great strike into the net through a crowd of players from 20 yards.

Comrades were in such disarray at this stage that an equaliser looked inevitable and sure enough it came in the 62nd minute when Loughgall waltzed through the shell-shocked home defences allowing Scott McCullough to finish with another well stuck shot from just outside the box.

Two minutes later Dale Malone forced a fine save from Tom Hegan, with the 'keeper having to acrobatically tip the ball over the bar from a good 20-yard strike.

It remained mostly one-way traffic, with Comrades struggling to create anything; Joe Tully now being very isolated in attack.

The misery of the home crowd was completed in the 83rd minute when Loughgall completed a remarkable comeback with what was to prove the winner. Hoey was the man on the spot, drilling a shot into the roof of the net from 15 yards.

There was nothing Comrades could do to react and they succumbed to a demoralising defeat. Credit however must go to Loughgall for an epic fightback.