



## Ballyclare Comrades 2-0 Ballinamallard United

Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2019 – Bluefin NIFL Championship

Match Sponsor: Terry Coulter Cars

Ball Sponsor: Anonymous

### Ballyclare Comrades team (4-5-1)

1. Ben McCauley
22. Matthew Henry
23. Jonathon Doey
6. Michael McQuitty 📌 (82')
3. Lee McCune
7. Thomas Robinson 📌 (89')
24. Gary Donnelly
8. JB Dobbin
11. Ciaran Dobbin
21. Adam Gray 🟡 (59')
26. Lukasz Adamczyk 📌 (68') 📌 (90+4')

### Substitutes:

19. Tom Hegan
15. Jordan Malone 🟢 (82')
4. Samuel McIlveen
18. Kevin Hagan
10. Jake McNeill 🟢 (90+4')

**Ballinamallard United:** Connolly, McEvoy, Taheny, Smyth, McManus, Campbell, McCartney, Kelly, Edgar, O'Reilly, Moorehead. Subs: McCann, McIlwaine, Cashel, Currie, Morris.

Comrades produced a very good performance to record a win against Ballinamallard at Dixon Park.

With the team having performed well in scoreless draw at Dundela the previous Saturday manager Paul Harbinson would likely have wanted to stick with the same starting line-up. However, he was forced to make changes. Curtis Woods and Kyle Crawford were injured and Joe Tully suspended, so in came Matthew Henry, Michael McQuitty and Lukasz Adamczyk.

The home side looked up for the task against their in-form opponent right from the off and were the first to threaten. In the 10<sup>th</sup> minute Adam Gray, who was to be a danger throughout the game, did well to cut in from the left and make space for a shot from an angle 7 yards out, but his effort went just wide of the near post and into the side-netting.

Ten minutes later, as the home side continue to look the more likely, Gary Donnelly produced a good jinking run into the box before shooting from 9 yards, his effort curling just wide of the far post.

At the other end Comrades were continuing the welcome defensive solidity shown in the previous game and dealing in a very controlled and effective way with the Mallards attacks.

In the 37<sup>th</sup> minute the hosts had another chance, when Adam Gray surged into the box again before unleashing a shot from 9 yards which again went narrowly wide of the target and into the side-netting.

Four minutes later the best chance of the half fell to Gary Donnelly. With the visitors defence claiming for offside against two other players who made themselves inactive, Donnelly ran onto the ball in the penalty area before hitting an effort from the edge of the 6-yard box, which he sent just wide of the far post.

The teams went in at half-time with the no score on the board, but with the home supporters feeling that their side should have been ahead.

Inside the second minute of the second half, Comrades were grateful to their 'keeper for an excellent save to prevent them from falling behind. A free-kick was lofted into the box finding the head of Campbell 5 yards out. His effort looked bound for the back of the net, only for Ben McCauley to dive and turn the ball wide of the post. This was a pivotal moment in the game and the only time the Comrades goal was seriously threatened. After this the early stages of the second half saw was devoid of any real chances although Comrades were still largely on the front foot.

The breakthrough came midway through the half on 68 minutes. Ciaran Dobbin, who was a continuous influence throughout the game, did very well to get into the box from the right before winning a tackle and sending the ball towards Lukasz Adamczyk. The big striker then produced an excellent turn and shot in one movement, sending the ball into the bottom corner of the net from 11 yards.

After this Comrades maintained their lead comfortably with no real scares, whilst continuing to look for another goal to cement the advantage. On 89 minutes they got their reward with a second goal. Thomas Robinson unleashed a curling effort from 20 yards, which deceived Connolly in the Mallards goal, who couldn't keep it out despite getting a hand to it.

Things might have got even better for the home side four minutes into injury-time when Adam Gray produced a mesmerising run into the box, which gave him the chance to strike from 5 yards, but Connolly was able to save.