



Portadown 0-2 Ballyclare Comrades

Friday 28th February 2020 – Bluefin Sport Championship

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

1. Ben McCauley 🟡 (90+3')
2. Curtis Woods 🟡 (82')
6. Adam McCart
15. Jordan Malone 🟡 (35')
3. Lee McCune
8. JB Dobbin
4. Samuel McIlveen
7. Thomas Robinson 🔴 (73')
10. Gary Donnelly 🔴 (90+2')
11. Adam Gray ⚫ (1')
16. Nathan O'Neill ⚫ (14') 🔴 (84')

Substitutes:

5. Louis Wilson
19. Kurt Cooper
18. Kevin Hagan 🟢 (90+2')
17. Tom Mathieson 🟢 (73')
9. Oisin Barr 🟢 (84')

Portadown: Pierce, Crane, Finnegan, Lavery, Salley, Murray, Tipton, Wilson, Carmichael, McNally, Teggart. Subs: McAdams, McCallum, McGrandles, Ferris, McVeigh.

Comrades produced an excellent display to achieve a stunning victory at league leaders Portadown, only three days after losing to bottom side Knockbreda. Manager Paul Harbinson made a couple of changes to his starting line-up. He welcomed back Lee McCune from suspension, but Ciaran Dobbin was unavailable with an injury that is likely to keep him out for the rest of the season. Thomas Robinson who was missing for the previous game came back in, with Tom Mathieson dropping to the bench.

The match couldn't have started better for the visitors as they went ahead inside 30 seconds. Thomas Robinson did very well, darting into the box to set up a chance for Adam Gray who finished confidently from 6 yards.

The hosts tried to react to this early setback and in the 6th minute Ben McCauley had to be alert to make a save after Teggart fired in a shot from 20 yards through a crowded box.

In the 14th minute the large home crowd were stunned as Comrades grabbed a second goal. Again Thomas Robinson was the creator, surging down the right and cutting inside the box, outmuscling a defender and playing a perfect ball across to Nathan O'Neill who was in space to fire the ball into the net from 9 yards.

The visitors were playing with confidence, dealing comfortably Portadown's attacks and proving a real threat when they went forward themselves. On 33 minutes, in one such attack, Gary Donnelly fed the ball through to JB Dobbin who had ran into the box and he struck a shot from 16 yards which looked to be on target before being well blocked by a defender.

At the other end, on 38 minutes, Ben McCauley did well to turn the ball wide after Teggart had driven the ball fiercely in from the edge of the box. Then, two minutes later, a rare mistake at the back let Ferris in for a good chance, but his shot from just outside the box was blocked by Ben McCauley who had advanced to make a fine save.

In the 42nd minute Comrades had a chance to add to their lead when a corner broke to Adam McCart, who drove the ball back across the box towards Nathan O'Neill, but he couldn't get enough on his resulting effort from 7 yards and a defender was able to block.

The travelling supporters would have been anticipating an onslaught on their team in the second half, but the first chance after the break fell to Thomas Robinson inside the first minute, when he received the ball in space with the home defence stretched, however his shot from the edge of the box was kept out by 'keeper Pierce who has advanced from his line.

In the 51st minute the hosts threatened when a free-kick played into the box was headed over by Salley from 8 yards. However, the pressure from the hosts wasn't as intense as might have been feared and Comrades were dealing very well with what was thrown at them.

Midway through the half however Portadown had a couple of very good chances which were only denied by superb goalkeeping and defending. Firstly, on 66 minutes, a ball played into the box allowed Teggart to round the advancing 'keeper, but has denied by a great saving tackle from Curtis Woods. Then, two minutes later, Ferris broke free and looked set to score from 10 yards, only for the flawless Ben McCauley to dive across the mucky surface to tip the ball wide of the post.

In the 74th minute the home side came close when Murray fired a shot wide of the 'keeper from 13 yards, but the effort went inches wide of the far post.

This was however to be the hosts' last real chance of the game and Comrades saw the remaining time out in a very composed manner, giving their opponents nothing and securing a fully deserved win.