

Carrick Rangers 3(1) v. Limavady United 1(0)

Bluefin Sports Championship, Wednesday 26th December, Taylors Avenue.

There was no Christmas cheer for Sean Friars' men at the Loughshore Arena, as they suffered yet another defeat in a low key game, the outcome of which was as predictable as the likelihood of turkey sandwiches for lunch after United fell behind after just six minutes.

The visitors have been leaking soft goals in recent weeks, and once again it was an avoidable opener, as United missed three chances to clear their lines as the ball pinged around their box, before Loughran of all people was able to drill the ball through a crowd of players despite Brown's efforts.

United's already fragile confidence was rattled, and they were in danger of being overrun. On twelve minutes the hosts had the ball in the net again, through Rodgers' powerful header, but he was penalised for a push on a defender. Seven minutes later, Brown produced a finer fingertip save to tip Daniel Kelly's header over the bar. United rode out the storm, and gradually came into the game, but without creating any chances.

Rangers had the next chance on the half hour, as Nixon set up Anderson, but Brown held on to his low shot. Three minutes later, the hosts carved open the Roesiders, as Neale's fine cross was met by Smith, but he shot over the bar. With five minutes to the break, Smith had another chance, but he headed McCauley's cross wide. On 45 minutes United finally fashioned an opening, as Carlin's long range strike rippled the side netting with Hogg scrambling.

The contest was ended in the 47th minute, as Rangers went two up. McCauley crossed into the box, and the ball was headed down to Anderson for a close range tap in. United's only response to this reverse was a 50th minute shot from Doherty which Hogg pushed round the post. Three minutes later United won a corner which Friars headed over.

On 62 minutes United were grateful to McCauley, who headed a corner off the line, but the inevitable third was only delayed by three minutes, as Nixon flicked a long ball round Friars, before collecting it and coolly firing past Brown.

United did pull back a consolation on 84 minutes, when they were awarded a free kick twenty yards out, and Doherty placed the ball round the wall and past the static Hogg. This prompted a brief flurry from the visitors, but more in hope than expectation, and the game fizzled out. For United, the result confirmed that they are in a real relegation dogfight, but they remain just ahead of Dergview with a crucial game at home to Ballinamallard on Saturday.

Carrick Rangers: Aaron Hogg, Kyle McCauley, Reece Neele, Mark Surgenor (c.), Christopher Rodgers (Denver Gage 76), Caolan Loughran, Craig McMullan, Lloyd Anderson, Daniel Kelly (Ben Mitchell 81), Stewart Nixon (Dylan Smiley 90), Michael Smith

Substitutes not used: Connor Malcolmson, Jack McAllister.

Limavady United: Connor Brown, Marcus O'Kane, Gareth McFadden, Stuart McMullan, Emmet Friars, Shane O'Boyle, Hugh Carlin (c.), Aidan McCauley, Gary McFadden (Ryan Devine), Ryan Doherty, Alex Pomeroy (Oran McConnell).

Substitutes not used: Paul Wells, Richard Stewart.

Referee: Mr. Diarmuid Harrigan (Londonderry).