

Knockbreda. 0(0) v. Limavady United 1(0)

Bluefin Sports Championship, Saturday 19th January, Breda Park.

Limavady United bounced back from their Irish Cup exit with a hugely encouraging win at Upper Braniel on Saturday, in a disciplined performance which produced only their third clean sheet of the season. Paul Wells and Marcus O'Kane were restored to a new look back four with Brian McClean at centre half, while Ryan Logue made his third debut for the Roesiders. And United certainly had a much more solid look in the early exchanges, carving open the first chance on seven minutes, after neat football presented McFadden with a half chance, but his shot lacked power.

Dobbin was the focus for the home attack, and on twelve minutes he connected with a cross at the back post which Wells claimed at the second attempt. United soaked up the home side's pressure, with Pomeroy the outlet for counter attacks. On 25 minutes he broke free of his marker before finding Carlin, whose stinging drive was blocked inside the box. Four minutes later, Duffy had a free kick on the left, which found Friars unmarked in the box, but he headed wide.

United were the better side at this point, with Logue revelling in space on the flanks, but they were not making the most of their dominance, and they went in at the break slightly frustrated by their failure to make a breakthrough. It did not help matters that their rivals in the relegation dogfight- Dergview- had taken a lead in their match.

Breda were much better after the restart, and on 51 minutes Baker was guilty of a glaring miss as he put Cafolla's cross over the bar as Wells dashed out to meet the danger. Shortly afterwards, a loose ball in the box was pounced on by Cafolla, but Wells was equal to his snapshot, diving to parry the ball, and in a frantic passage of play Doherty cleared the ball off the visitors' goal line.

The importance of that clearance became only too clear on 62 minutes when United hit the front. Good work by the inventive Duffy saw him cut the ball back inside the box, and Pomeroy forced a defender into a hurried clearance, which fell perfectly for McFadden, lurking just outside the box, and he lobbed the ball over Smith into the net. United tails were up, and three minutes later they might have doubled their lead, but Carlin forced Smith into a fine save from his drive.

Breda were still dangerous, and Hamill headed just wide from point blank range at the near post on 67 minutes. Three minutes later substitute Gilmour was guilty of a glaring miss, as he nipped in between the centre halves to lob Wells, but his effort cleared the bar. The ball was in the net in the 75th minute, but the "goal" was disallowed after a clear foul on Wells.

With nine minutes remaining, there were loud appeals for a penalty after the ball hit Friars as he went to ground, but the referee was not interested. The last effort of note was a shot from Baker which flew over, and United managed the final five minutes with relative ease. The celebrations at full time were not just for a victory, but for a display of composure and character of the type that had been missing in recent weeks. If this form can be repeated in the coming weeks, United have every chance of surviving the drop.

Knockbreda: Dean Smith, Francis Brennan, Ciaran Dobbin (Richard Copeland 65), Nathan McVeigh, James Paterson (c.), Karl Hamill, Adam McDonald (Cillin Gilmour 69), Ryan Newberry, Matthew Henry, (Eddie Shaw 74), Paddy Cafolla, Jordan Baker.

Substitutes not used: Lee Windrum, Marc McKenna.

Cautioned: Cafolla (32), McVeigh (61)

Limavady United: Paul Wells, Marcus O'Kane, Ryan Doherty, Brian McClean, Emmet Friars, Hugh Carlin (c.), Ryan Logue, Gary McFadden, Stephen Duffy, Caoimhin McCallion, Alex Pomeroy (Oran McConnell).

Substitutes not used: Connor Brown, Aidan McCauley, Shane Boyle, Nathan Harkin.

Cautioned: Doherty (44)

Referee: Mr. Mark Dillon (Belfast).

Roesider Man of the match: Hugh Carlin.