

# Knockbreda 1(0) v. Limavady United 3(0)

Bluefin Sports Championship, Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> March, Breda Park.

Limavady United snatched a well-deserved Breda Park on Saturday to breathe life into their survival struggle. And the hero was Alex Pomeroy, with a ten minute hat trick, although this was a team performance from front to back.

The game was played in bright sunshine, and bitterly cold, blustery wind. The visitors were in confident form after last week's cup victory, and started brightly, with a good chance in the seventh minute, when Pomeroy collected Wells' long ball, shook off his marker and crossed into the box, but just behind the unmarked Logue. Three minutes later, Gilmour pivoted before shooting over the bar.

United's 20th minute corner was cleared and Breda broke up the field but the attack -fortunately for United- petered out. Three minutes later, Logue took a free kick on the left, and the wind caught the ball, taking it over the wall, but Smyth was alive to the danger. The next attack by the visitors, on 24 minutes, saw Pomeroy break away, and cut the ball back for Logue, who shot wide. But the chance of the half came from a corner a minute later, as Carlin flighted a free header inside the box to the bottom corner, only to see it cleared by a defender, in spite of vociferous protests that the ball had crossed the line.

United's corners were proving hard to defend in the swirling wind, but they were still not stretching Smyth, and Breda were threatening on the counter, with only a great block from Friars preventing a near certain goal after two attackers broke upfield. The visitors finished the half the stronger, as a fine flowing move involving Carlin and Pomeroy ended with Gary McFadden shooting straight at Smyth. The last attack saw Pomeroy again collect a Carlin clearance, but fire over the bar.

The second half saw a sensational United performance, after a fairly quiet opening quarter of an hour. The opening goal came on the hour mark, and was controversial. Logue put over a deep, hanging cross from wide on the right, which Smyth seemed to have caught under a challenge from Pomeroy, but the ball was knocked from his grasp, and as both players lay prone on the goal line, Pomeroy forced the ball over the line at the second attempt. long and loud protests were dismissed by the referee.

If there were grounds for complaint about the first goal, there could be none about Pomeroy's second three minutes later, as he was allowed far too much space to advance, look up, and volley an unstoppable effort past Smyth's dive.

Looking to hit back, the hosts drew a fine diving save from Wells a minute after the restart, but the next action was Pomeroy's hat trick goal on 69 minutes. All afternoon he had been playing on the shoulder of the centre halves, and using his pace to get in behind the defence, and on this occasion he was first to a ball out of defence, to break the hosts' high line and then courageously ride Smyth's heavy challenge to stroke the ball into the net from outside the box.

The only negative aspect of the day for United was their failure to keep a clean sheet, as Fearon was able to lash the ball home in the 73rd minute after a poor clearance. United momentarily looked vulnerable, but they steadied the ship, and saw the game out with the type of gritty defending that had not often been on display this season, and was typified by an excellent performance from McCauley, whose tenacity on 84 minutes drew a crude challenge from an opponent which flared into a brawl that produced four yellow cards.

With other results allowing United to narrow the gap to safety, for the first time in weeks the team has a bit of swagger about it, and next week's trip to Dergview can be looked at with genuine optimism, provided this form can be maintained.

**Knockbreda:** Dean Smyth, Karl Hamill, Daniel Culbert, Fra Brennan, James Patterson (c.), Patrick Burns, Ryan Newberry, Cillin Gilmour (David Fearon half-time), Ciaran Dobbin, Patrick Cafolla, Jordan Baker.

Substitutes not used: Darkis Roohi, Matthew Henry, Adam McDonald, Nathan McVeigh.

Cautioned: Culbert (42), Gilmour (84), Patterson (84).

**Limavady United:** Paul Wells, Marcus O'Kane, Gareth McFadden, Hugh Carlin (c.), Emmet Friars, Ryan Devine, Ryan Logue (Caoimhin McCallion 88), Aidan McCauley, Gary McFadden (Nathan Harkin 78) Ryan Doherty, Alex Pomeroy (Stephen Duffy 70).

Substitutes not used: Connor Brown, Ryan McCreadie.

Cautioned: Wells (80), McCauley (84), Friars (84)

Referee: Mr. Diarmuid Hartigan (Londonderry).

Roesider Man of the Match: Alex Pomeroy.