

Larne 6(3) v. Limavady United 0(0)

Bluefin Sports Championship, Saturday 17th November, Inver Park

Limavady United fell to their heaviest league defeat in eleven years as they were predictably outclassed by runaway league leaders Larne, in so doing falling to their record defeat in the Championship, and joint record defeat to the Inver Park side. But while there was never any doubt as to the outcome, United's youthful side kept trying to play football, and for spells asked questions of their hosts, for scant reward.

Connor Brown was drafted into goal by Sean Friars for his first league start in five years, and straight from the kick off McCarron broke up the park to get a shot on target, as the visitors sought to make a statement of intent. But their plans were undone in the seventh minute, as Hughes was allowed space in the edge of the box to turn and steer the ball into the top of the net for the opener.

On 14 minutes Brown failed to deal with a corner, but a glancing header was put wide of the post. However, United regrouped, and for the next fifteen minutes were a match for their hosts, and indeed might have equalised on 27 minutes when Gary McFadden's corner caused panic in the Larne defence before being cleared.

A regular line of attack for Larne was a ball to Tilney on the left, and it paid dividends in the next minute, as he got to the bye line and put over a cross that the unfortunate Boyle turned into his own net while attempting to block.

United's only response was a 31st minute free kick from Doherty on the edge of the box which beat the wall but was easily saved by Devlin. However Larne assumes total control of the midfield, and Tilney put another pinpoint cross into the box, only for McDaid to head into Brown's arms.

Brown earned his pay with two fine saves with his legs inside three minutes, foiling first Donnelly on 36 minutes, and then repeating the feat to foil the impish winger. In between he was a spectator as a 25 yard free kick by McNally hit the post.

United were on the ropes now, hanging on for the whistle, but on 42 minutes Gareth McFadden conceded a penalty, which McDaid stepped up to score with aplomb.

With no way back for United, the game became one of damage limitation, but straight from the restart the pressure was resumed, as Donnelly played in Cosgrove, who crossed to McDaid inside the box, but he miscued his shot.

United had a brief spell of respite, as Hume went on a trademark run in 53 minutes but fired over, and three minutes later a rare United corner dropped invitingly for McMullan in the six yard box, but he did not connect cleanly, and the ball trickled wide of the post.

On 63 minutes, Donnelly collected the ball after a give-and-go outside the box, and hit the bar with a stinging shot. But the fourth goal was not long delayed, as McDaid shook off a challenge to run into the box and chip the ball to Tilney lurking at the back post, and he headed in from close range.

Larne started to play expansive football, and Hughes ending a flowing move with a shot that went wide on 75 minutes. However, his second duly arrived four minutes later as he was again allowed far too much time to collect the ball inside the box, before twisting and turning and then stabbing the ball home at Brown's near post.

By now all United resistance was broken, and it was no surprise when Donnelly got his customary goal in the 86th minute to complete the rout. Better sides than United have been humbled by Larne, and it is to their credit that they tried to play football rather than stifle the game, but once again mistakes have proved hugely expensive in a match, and United will have to cut these out quickly if they are to pull away from the foot of the table.

Larne: Conor Devlin (c.), Fuad Sule, Shane McEleney, Graeme Kelly (Christopher Ramsey 46), David McDaid (David Scullion 75), Martin Donnelly, Darren Stuart (Liam Hassin 64), Ben Tilley, Patrick McNally, Tomas Cosgrove, Jeff Hughes
Substitutes not used: Michael Dougherty,
Cautioned: Ramsey (56). Andrew Osei-Bonsu.

Limavady United: Connor Brown, Marcus O' Kane (Ryan Devine 80), Gareth McFadden, Stuart McMullan, Shane Boyle, Hugh Carlin (c.), Aidan McCauley, Gary McFadden, Sean McCarron, Robbie Hume (Stephen Duffy 80), Ryan Doherty (Oran McConnell 54).
Substitutes not used: Paul Wells, Emmet Friars.
Cautioned: Gary McFadden (21)

Referee: Mr. Christopher Morrison
Roesider Man of the match: Hugh Carlin.