

# Limavady United 1(0) v. PSNI 1(1)

Bluefin Sports Championship, Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> February, The Showgrounds.

This was a real relegation six-pointer, at the end of which neither side can have been really satisfied. However, for United, with games running out, it provided a crucial opportunity against the team they will have targeted. For all the good football played by the Roesiders in this match- and it was their best performance for weeks- they could not convert a host of chances into a precious victory.

United started purposefully, but had to wait until the 14th minute for the first chance- a rasping drive from outside the box which went narrowly wide. Four minutes later, McCarron took a free kick from almost the same spot, but although he beat the wall, his effort went straight into McCauley's midriff. The keeper was kept busy throughout the half, though most of his saves were routine, and although the hosts were much the better side, both teams seemed to be playing within themselves as they were determined not to concede first.

Predictably, United were made to pay for this profligacy, falling behind in the 36th minute. They lost the ball in midfield, and Moody was able to drive to the by line before cutting the ball across the box to Tumelty, who was able to slam it into the net from close range.

United were much more direct after the break, and we're back on level terms with an excellent goal in the 51st minute, when McCarron collected the ball on the left, and powered his way through two ineffectual challenges before shooting home with a superlative strike which had McCauley beaten all ends up.

However their good work was nearly undone twin two minutes, as only Friars' fine clearing header turned a dangerous ball behind from a cross into the box. The corner was pushed out by Wells from under the bar. On 56 minutes McCarron lost possession, and Aidan McCauley nearly sliced a back pass into his own net.

United weathered the storm, and were the better side, but could not create an opening, and could well have fallen behind again on 71 minutes, after another corners as not properly cleared, and McCauley blocked the first of three chances in rapid succession, before Wells brilliantly stuck out an arm for a reaction save from point blank range.

On 74 minutes a McCarron free kick from wide left seemed goal bound but clipped off the head of a defender to fizz past the post. Two minutes later Friars watched in disbelief as his close range header flew over the bar.

With the clock running down, United pushed hard for a vital winner. Logue put over a tantalising cross as Pomeroy slid in at the back post, but somehow McCauley blocked his effort. In the last name, McCarron bisected the centre halves and was free and in on goal, but he snatched the chance and screwed the ball wide. The last chance of the game saw Friars head the ball back across goal, but Ben McCauley saved easily.

Had this result occurred two months ago, then United would be able to take the positives from a much improved performance. However, at this stage of the season, it seems that a point is too little and too late. Still, there will be more twists in this season, and the Roesiders have proved that they are capable of playing good football. Whether they can kick on, or whether this is a glimmer of false hope, only time will tell.

Limavady United: Paul Wells, Aidan McCauley, Ryan Doherty (Marcus O'Kane 85), Brian McClean, Emmet Friars, Hugh Carlin (c.), Ryan Logue, Gary McFadden, Sean McCarron, Caoimhin McCallion, Stephen Duffy (Alex Pomeroy 71).

Substitutes not used: Connor Brown, Ryan Devine, Gareth McFadden.

Cautioned: McCallion (58), McClean (90).

P.S.N.I.: Ben McCauley, Sam Stewart, Nathan Riddle, John Cochrane, Nathan O'Neill, Aaron Cochrane, Dylan Wilson, Jake Moore (Jonathan Wilson 79), Tony Tumelty, Owen Moody (Mark Anderson 67), Dale Malone (c.)

Substitutes not used: Kyle Crawford, James Wright, Orman Okinaiya.

Cautioned: Wilson (67), Stewart (73).

Referee: Mr. Peter McGrath

Roesiders Man of the match: Hugh Carlin