

Tuesday 18th April 2017

Sport & Leisure Swifts 1 v Lisburn Distillery 4

With the Whites going into this game only one point ahead of bottom placed Sport & Leisure Swifts and with the home sides reputation of physical football seeming to be by far going into the game the master of the Whites youthful expressive approach, the visitors went into this match as clear underdogs and, with the very clear possibility of relegation now breathing on their necks, it was a game that many reckoned would end with the Whites sitting at the bottom of the pile in terms of league placings.

Of course as ever things are never straight forward with regards to things Distillery and as it turned out the Whites turned on one of their most impressive performances of the season to comfortably run home 4-1 winners from the massive relegation battle.

The shock news pre-kick off was the inclusion of journeyman midfielder Phil Gordon who was brought into the club in January as player / coach for the Under 20's mainly to add some senior experience that the boys could learn from.. Given that he had never played Irish league football before his inclusion was a risk by the management team but one which was paid many times over as the work rate of the debutant was incredible breaking up wave after wave of Sport & Leisure attack and ensuring their midfield had no time to settle on the ball whatsoever.

This of course freed up the Whites more skilful players the freedom they required to drive the game and it was no surprise when they took the lead on 16 minutes when a slip by home keeper Magill was punished by Aaron Harris to put the Whites into the lead. 32 minutes and the lead was doubled as, after the impressive Beta was upended in the home penalty box, McMurtry was on hand to drill the ball into the corner of the net from the penalty spot.

The visiting Distillery support were in raptures and they had then cause for further elation on 40 minutes when home 'keeper Magill was deceived by a bouncing back pass and completely mis-kicked his clearance allowing the alert Paul "Sid" Young to take full advantage by picking up the loose ball, rounding the home keeper and placing the ball into the net.

3-0 then to Distillery although it wouldn't be the Whites if they didn't give their support something to worry to worry about and they duly did this right on the stroke of half time allowing a well drilled shot into the corner of the net by Anthony McConneil to give the hosts hope in what must surely have been an otherwise soul destroying half for them.

3-1 then to Distillery and there was little question that the second half would bring a serious bombardment on the Whites defences as the home side tried to force their way back into the game, and indeed that is exactly what happened – wave after wave of Sport and Leisure attacks and yet to their credit every member of the Whites defence stood tall with Curley, Wharry, McParland & Doherty all proving more than capable of handling everything that was thrown at them and even when they were penetrated the impeccable Jack McCrea in goals ensured there would be no way past.

Then on 75 minutes the Whites broke and there was that man Harris again to convert his second of the night and to increase the Whites lead to 4-1 on the night. After this it was a matter of seeing the game out and although the Whites contingent was reduced to ten men on 78 minutes following a second yellow card being issued to battling debutant Gordon they held firm for what was a memorable victory.

Well played Distillery but we now need to put this game to bed and move on and concentrate on winning our next game as well ... this battle may have been won but the war against relegation is far from over.

Match report by Colin Hopkins @chopstix158

LDFC Team v Sport & Leisure:

McCrae, McParland, Doherty, Wharry, Curley, Gordon, McMurtry, Harris, Young, Bata, Simpson

Subs: Galbriath, Boyd, Clarke (for Young), Peoples (for Beta), McCaw (for McMurtry)