

22<sup>nd</sup> April 2017

Lisburn Distillery FC 3-1 Bangor FC

Lisburn Distillery secured safety from relegation to the amateur ranks of the football league with a hard-fought victory over Bangor at New Grosvenor Stadium. A first half brace from Paul Young had put the Whites in control but Bangor's Jordan Baxter gave the visitors some hope with a second half penalty. But Distillery made the points safe when Jonny McCaw scored a penalty off his own after defender Michael Edgar had handled inside the Bangor box.

The game was very open to start, with both teams knowing that defeat was not an option for their battle to avoid the drop. The first chance of the day fell the way of the home side when Jamie Peoples was brought down just outside the box. Jonny McCaw stepped to take the free kick but he saw his effort go just over Bangor keeper Darren Gibbons' bar.

Bangor had a flurry of chances soon after, with Nicholas Napier firstly bursting through the Distillery defence only to be closed down quickly by Jack McCrea, and then through Mark Hillen, who had found himself free inside the box but his eventual shot was scuffed and McCrea was again able to make the save.

Distillery were beginning to look more comfortable on the ball and they broke the deadlock on the 29<sup>th</sup> minute through Paul Young. A Jonny McCaw corner wasn't dealt with by the Bangor defence and the ball fell at the feet of Young for him to drift the ball beyond the reach of Gibbons and into the back of the net from a narrow angle.

The home side nearly got their second just two minutes later when Andrew Simpson got to a cross first but was unlucky to see his header crash off the frame of the goal and then cleared.

However, Distillery did manage to double their lead on the 39<sup>th</sup> minute when another McCaw corner to the back post caused confusion amongst the Bangor defence and Young was on hand to fire the ball into the roof of the net from close range for his second of the day.

The half time whistle went with Distillery looking comfortable but being cautious of the fact that Bangor had come back from a two-nil deficit against them on the opening day of the season.

The first half started brightly for the hosts with McCaw shimmying through the Bangor defence to make space for a shot but his eventual effort was comfortably saved by Gibbons. Simpson then saw an effort from 25 yards just evade the cross bar.

Distillery were made to pay for their missed chances shortly after when Aaron Harris was adjudged to have brought down Adam Calvert inside the box and the referee awarded the penalty, much to the frustration of the home-side. Jordan Baxter stepped up to take the spot kick and sent the ball into the left-hand side of the goal with McCrea going the wrong way.

With the lead cut to just one goal, the game became slightly 'start-stop' with a number of fouls committed by each side. McCaw was booked for Distillery while Michael Edgar had his name taken for pulling back Paul Young when through on goal.

Things went from bad to worse for Edgar on the 67<sup>th</sup> minute when he handled the ball inside his own box resulting in the referee awarding another penalty, this time for the home side, and giving Edgar his second yellow. Jonny McCaw took hold of the ball this time and slotted the ball low into the bottom left hand corner of the goal, putting his side 3-1 in the lead.

With a two-goal advantage against 10-men, it looked as though the points were safe, but McCrea still had to be alert when Baxter sent a thumping effort goal-wards from just inside the box.

Distillery could have extended their lead further when Harris got onto the end of McCaw's low free kick inside the box but his shot was deflected wide. Then, from the resulting corner, Simpson had an effort cleared off the line by defender Adam Calvert.

When the final whistle went, it was greeted by a real sense of relief from around the ground. With Distillery in serious danger of going down just a couple of weeks ago, it really is remarkable that they are now safe with two

games to spare. The players and supporters applauded each other as both have had a part to play in gaining safety for the club. The Whites can now look ahead to Tuesday night's game with Newington YFC without the threat of relegation.

Match report by Lydia Campbell

LDFC Team v Bangor:

McCrae, Clarke, Doherty, Wharry, Curley, Peoples, McCaw, Harris, Young, Beta, Simpson

Subs: Galbraith, Boyd, Grainger (for Peoples), Croft (for McCaw), Bell