Match report

Shannonside U12 Boys (Amber team) vs. Rathkeale, Sat 02/09/23 @ 10:30

First game of the season on a dry, mild morning in Rathkeale. The game started slowly, with both teams showing some signs of nerves and the first 20 minutes were very evenly matched. Dale Fitzgibbon and Tomas Greaney with their customary defending and when the opportunity arose, posed an attacking threat down both flanks showing tremendous energy to get up and down the pitch. The game opened up on the 21st minute with a brilliant piece of magic from Darragh Whelan to score the opening goal and Luke Fitzgibbon followed a few minutes later with a glancing header to the bottom corner from a John Hanlon corner. At this stage Adam Lawlor and Cillian O Malley were on the pitch and brought huge energy, closing down defenders and making it difficult for Rathkeale to play from the back. 2-0 at half time and the next goal was crucial.

2nd half started well, with Darragh picking up a loose ball in midfield, drove at the Rathkeale defence and slotted to the bottom corner. Now we were on top, with our defence of Tomas Greaney, Noah O Malley and Dale Fitzgibbon eliminating any threats posed by the Rathkeale attack. A formidable partnership, so well marshalled by Noah O Malley who kept organising throughout. It didn't take long for our fourth to arrive, with John Hanlon scoring a rocket of a free kick from just outside the box. 4-0 and as the game entered the final quarter, Rathkeale started putting together some scoring opportunities and did score, leaving our captain, Jack Fitzgibbon with no chance. At 4-1, Rathkeale were pushing and moments after their goal had another chance but Jack, at full stretch, dived low to his right and parried the ball out for a corner. Allison Becker would have been proud! This was the reset that we needed and some great passing combinations between Dale and Luke Fitzgibbon on the left and Michael Cribbin and Tomas Greaney on the right brought more composure to our play and Luke and Michael looking to play defence splitting passes at every opportunity. Their work rate both in both defence and attack was excellent, closing players down and offering support. John Keane, starting in an attacking role was duly awarded for his play with a calm finish through a body of defenders. Darragh Whelan rounded off a fantastic display with his Hatrick on the 54th minute with another well taken goal to the bottom corner.

It was a great game with some fantastic goals scored and brilliant assists. Full credit to our goalkeeper and defenders that prevented so many Rathkeale attacks. Going forward, the link up play at times between or attacking players was great to see and most encouraging was the work rate and attitude of all players. Thanks to our referee (E. Noonan) today, who allowed the game to flow and offered advice to both sets of players throughout and thanks to Rathkeale AFC for hosting us, in what was a very well-mannered and very clean game between 2 teams that wanted to play football in a fair manner.

Team: Jack Fitzgibbon (C), Tomas Greaney, Noah O Malley, Dale Fitzgibbon, Michael Cribbin, John Hanlon, John Keane, Luke Fitzgibbon, Darragh Whelan, Adam Lawlor, Cillian O Malley. Scorers: Darragh Whelan x3, Luke Fitzgibbon, John Hanlon, John Keane.