Match report

Shannonside U12 Boys (Amber team) vs. Askeaton Kilcornan, Sat 30/09/23 @ 14:00, National Cup, Round 1

1st round of the U12 Boys National Cup was played on Saturday 30th September against Askeaton/Kilcornan in Kilcornan, on a windy, but thankfully dry afternoon. The pitch held up after a torrential 24hrs of rain, but it was heavy going making playing conditions tough. But what an exciting game, that was end to end between two evenly matched teams who contested each and every ball, especially in midfield, where Luke Fitzgibbon, John Hanlon excelled in the centre, making their tackles and not allowing the opposition time to settle. Both Luke and John bring tremendous energy and determination in the middle of the pitch, never giving up and fighting for every ball. Michael Cribbin and John Keane provided the width and constant running on the flanks. We didn't have the GPS tracker turned on, but they covered every blade of grass, making runs and tracking runners. Michael was looking to play his customary through balls and 1-2's to open up the defence, but space was tight, making is difficult to set our attackers free. The 1st ½ chance of the game fell to John Keane, but the Askeaton Kilcornan defence scrambled to prevent a certain goal and cleared their lines. On current form, there is not a better striker of the ball than John, having both power and accuracy. Gradually we came into the game, with Darragh Whelan a constant menace in attack but was always well marked by 2-3 defenders. Gaps started to open up and Darragh, dropping deeper, used some trickery to weave into the box and was brought down. Definite penalty and he made no mistake with the finish, off the post and in, without doubt, the best finisher in the league. The bench was used to bring an instant impact and rest tired legs. Adam Lawlor and Josh O Mahoney brought energy in midfield, closing the spaces, tracking runners and looking to spring the offside trap at every opportunity. With Josh's speed, he was always a threat in behind. Huge shift put in by both players and even more impressive is that this is Adams 1st season playing with the team and already, is having an impact and he has such potential for the rest of the season.

2nd half started with Askeaton Kilcornan bringing more of an attacking threat, but our defence of Noah O Malley, Dale Fitzgibbon and our captain Tomas Greaney were fearless and stood firm. Their positioning was excellent, always in the right place at the right time. Dale is so quick and aware of danger that he cleans up any of the long balls and offers an attacking threat down the left. Noah marshals the defence so well, constantly organising and his reading of the game is just natural and Tomas, is a brick wall, nothing gets past him, made 9 tackles, won 9 tackles. There were no chances conceded until the 45th minute, when 2 chances were created within minutes. The first, a long range shot was well saved and smothered by Jack Fitzgibbon in goals and the second led to the equaliser when a long ball forward skidded of the surface in behind, leaving Jack with no chance on a 1v1. All square at full time and the game entered extra time, with penalties looming. Further substitutions were required with Sean Cribbin, Sam Lewis and Charlie Frawley entering the match and again, another huge impact from the bench that really changed the course of the game. These are 3 U11 players, playing up and they did not look out of place and were a constant threat in attack and solid at the back. Charlie is a natural born defender and Sam playing on the wing, offered an outlet on the counter attack with his speed and direct running. Despite all their efforts penalties were the only way to separate these teams. It's a cruel way to finish a match but there had to be a winner on the day.

Our first 4 penalties were taken and expertly dispatched by Darragh, John H., Luke, John K. What brilliant penalties. Jack produced another full stretch diving save to his left on the 3rd penalty allowing Sean to take the decisive last penalty. Pressure was on and he delivered a net buster, giving the keeper no chance and huge celebrations as we progressed to the 2nd round of the NC away to Inter-Kenmare on the 21st of October. Huge thanks to our referee for the day J. Fitzgerald, who refereed an excellent match, to Askeaton / Kilcornan for hosting us and to the ever present Shannonside Ultras supporters group who cheered on the players throughout.

Team: Jack Fitzgibbon, Tomas Greaney (C), Noah O Malley, Dale Fitzgibbon, Michael Cribbin, John Hanlon, John Keane, Luke Fitzgibbon, Darragh Whelan, Adam Lawlor, Sean Cribbin, Josh O Mahoney, Sam Lewis, Charlie Frawley.