Match report

Shannonside U12 Boys (Amber team) vs. Cloughjordan, Sat 11/11/23 @ 12:00, National Cup

Round 3 of the National Cup brought us to Cloughjordan Co. Tipperary on Saturday 06th of November. Pitch conditions weren't great to say the least following the recent heavy rain. Nevertheless, from the 1st minute the lads were determined and full of running. It was a midfield battle throughout, with Michael Cribbin, Luke Fitzgibbon and our captain for the day, Darragh Whelan well on top in their midfield battles. The back four of John Keane, Noah O Malley, Tomas Greaney and Dale Fitzgibbon were solid throughout, limiting CJ to long range shots from distance that were just bread and butter saves for the ever present and ever reliable Jack Fitzgibbon in goals. Tomas Greaney was a standout performer, winning his duel with CJ's most dangerous player on every occasion. It was a brilliant defensive display from Tomas and easy to see why he is regarded as one of the best defenders in the club. James Tobin was asked to play the lone striker role and typical of James, was always the one pressing and defending from the front, keeping the CJ defenders busy. On the 13th minute, that man again, Darragh Whelan produced another piece of magic dancing his way around 2 defenders before calmly slotting to the bottom corner, well taken goal in tough conditions. Our captain, leading by example. Within minutes, Darragh was through again, but off balance, shot just wide. We didn't have it all our own way, with CJ looking to play diagonal through balls between the CB's and full backs and they were certainly a team that could play and were dangerous on the counter attack. But full credit to John, Noah, Dale and Tomas, they were absolutely brilliant throughout, both in terms of defending, tackling, interceptions and John showing great awareness and strength in shielding the ball out of play on 2 occasions. Before ½ time, another chance to Shannonside as neat interplay between James and Luke released Michael for a shot, that was not far off the right hand side post, as the ball sat up at the wrong time. Josh O Mahoney and Sam Lewis were introduced before the break and brought renewed energy and forward running that kept the CJ defenders pinned back in their own half. But the pitch conditions hampered any passes from getting forward on the ground. Half time and it was 1-0 in a very evenly contested and tough game.

2nd half began as the 1st half ended, Cillian O Malley now on the pitch to provide some extra cover in Midfield and he covered the spaces well, tracking his runners and with some great play with James, almost released Michael down the right. CJ were pressing and we were under pressure and then Luke, Dale and Noah doubled their efforts and started to impose themselves more and more on the game. CJ main threat came from set plays and they had a no. of corners in quick succession and eventually scored from a deflected shot at the near post with 12 minutes to go. With all the momentum now with CJ, they looked for the 2nd and it duly came within 6 minutes and unfortunately another deflected shot that Jack could do nothing about. The lads pushed forward, Sean Cribbin now on the pitch was driving forward at every chance. We did have the ball in the net to make it 2-2 with only 2 minutes remaining, but was called offside and a high foot, that was harsh to say the least. If only there was VAR at U12 National Cup games!! Despite their valiant efforts, we just ran out of time with the game finishing 2-1 to CJ. Our treble dreams are done, but we can still do the double! Well done to CJ and we wish them all the best in R4 and thanks to our referee on the day who refereed a very even game allowing players to play in tough conditions. Thanks also to all the parents who made the journey to support our team. Next game is away to Granagh Utd on Sat 25/11/23, time TBC.

Team: Jack Fitzgibbon, John Keane, Noah O Malley, Tomas Greaney, Dale Fitzgibbon, Michael Cribbin, Luke Fitzgibbon, Darragh Whelan (C), James Tobin, Josh O Mahoney, Sam Lewis, Sean Cribbin.