Match report

Shannonside U12 Boys (Amber team) vs. Askeaton-Kilcornan, Sat 25/11/23 @ 12:30, League Div2

A Dry mild morning in Shanagolden and we welcomed Askeaton Kilcornan for our 3rd league match of the season. An exciting game from the kick off with both teams showcasing their skills, interplay and work rate. John Hanlon, playing as a left wing back took to his new role immediately, looking for the ball from Jack Fitzgibbon and playing 1-2's with Luke Fitzgibbon and James Tobin moving the ball at speed. His energy and game intelligence in his new role was just amazing and he produced his best display of the season. Luke, now bringing the composure to his play in the central areas and combining well with defence and attack by displaying his passing range and tremendous energy. At the back, Jack Fitzgibbon, yet again superb in goal - what a goalkeeper, everything on display, passing long, short, passes with feet, throws, coming off his line, claiming high balls from corners and of course his customary shot stopping. In front of him, Tomas Greaney, John Keane and Dale Fitzgibbon were in great form, limiting the visitors to shots from distance whilst also winning their tackles when 1v1 and Dale sweeping any long balls and using his speed and skills to bring the ball out. Every game John Keane keeps putting in performances better than the last and with his strength, intelligence and passing range, it an asset to any defensive line. Tomas, as always is rock solid, such a natural defender and then with the speed to quickly join the attack.

In midfield, James Tobin, Michael Cribbin and Adam Lawlor (our captain for the day) were each playing their best matches of the season. The work rate from these 3 was tremendous and so encouraging to see all their skills on display, with James producing a drag back, turn and shot that was worthy of any goal, but was just inches wide Michael was full of direct running, passing and showing his strength to hold off opponents and is always a threat with his long throws and Adam, playing the lone striker, was a handful all day for the defenders and was through on goal only to be pulled back for a marginal offside.

Darragh Whelan, came on within 12 minutes of play and immediately was influencing the game with lightning speed and incredible feet, skipping past defenders. Unfortunately, Darragh suffered an injury within 10 minutes when he was brought down and was unable to continue. Cillian O Malley stepped in and played his best performance of the season, getting plenty of tackles in and making clever passes to link defence and attack. With 10 minutes to go to ½ time, John Hanlon stepped up to a free kick 25m out and unleashed an unstoppable drive, leaving the Gk with no chance. Askeaton Kilcornan stepped up the pressure and it took a world class save from Jack to keep the score 1-0 at the break, pushing the ball onto his post.

2nd half and the next goal was crucial. Darragh, was determined to help the team and tried to run off his injury in the opening minutes, but unfortunately, just couldn't carry on. Noah O Malley was now on the pitch to provide some much needed defensive cover as Askeaton Kilcornan pushed for the equaliser. Noah's defensive positioning is just an art, always in the right place at the right time. The visitors got a chance with a penalty. But just as before, Jack pulled off another penalty save, diving high to his left. Still 1-0 and that was the warning the players needed. They regrouped and our 2nd came from another free kick, this time by Luke, who almost broke the net. 2-0 and the lads continued to play to their potential. Luke got his 2nd and our 3rd with a tremendous effort from outside the box that again gave the GK no chance. Askeaton Kilcornan did score with 13 minutes remaining following a finely worked move but the lads, instead of putting their heads down, just drove on and our 4th came from John Hanlon again as he was brought down when through on goal. He doesn't feel pressure and he buried the penalty kick. 4-1 final score. What was most pleasing is how the team played, working and linking well together from defence to attack and all of this considering that one of our most influential players Darragh was injured was even more encouraging. We wish him a speedy recovery as we will need him for our remaining games. Thanks also to all the parents for their continued support and to M. Murphy who refereed an excellent game, explaining his decisions to the players on the pitch and helping them throughout. Next game is away to Granagh Utd on Sat 09/12/23, time TBC.

Team: Jack Fitzgibbon, John Keane, Tomas Greaney, Dale Fitzgibbon, John Hanlon, Michael Cribbin, Luke Fitzgibbon, James Tobin, Adam Lawlor (C), Darragh Whelan, Cillian O Malley, Noah O Malley. Scorers: John Hanlon x2, Luke Fitzgibbon x2