Match report

Shannonside U12 Boys (Amber team) vs. Rathkeale, Sat 13/01/24 @ 12:30, League Div2

Our 5th league game of season and we welcomed Rathkeale to Shanagolden. From the very start, it was a tense battle throughout with chances at a premium as defences were on top. Dale Fitzgibbon was outstanding playing the sweeper role and stopped numerous Rathkeale attacks through well timed tackles and fantastic positional sense. The team, led by our captain for the day, James Tobin, were full of running and work rate, but space was at a premium and James was unlucky not to get on the end of a fabulous through ball within the first 5 minutes from Darragh Whelan. Darragh had our 1st real chance of the day with a glancing header from a corner. Rathkeale had 2 shots on target, but Jack Fitzgibbon was up for it, making a fantastic point blank save pushing the ball onto the crossbar. Another through ball, laid on by Michael Cribbin, playing his best game of the season split the Rathkeale defence, but again they stood firm. Noah O Malley was well positioned to make vital interceptions in defence and there was little if anything between the teams and the half ended 0-0.

Unfortunate injuries to both Adam Lawlor and John Keane in the 1st half meant we were stretched for numbers and the lads had to dig deep. How we could have done with their energy throughout the game. Cillian O Malley was everywhere closing down the space and working tirelessly for the team. We lost count on how many tackles and interceptions Luke Fitzgibbon made in midfield. As always, Luke covered every blade of grass on the pitch, supporting our attack and helping out our defence. We were always a threat with Darragh lively throughout but was very well marshalled by the Rathkeale defence. Finally, our persistence paid off and in the 48th minute, we were duly awarded a penalty. There was no doubt who was taking it as Darragh took the ball and placed the perfect penalty, low, hard to the bottom corner. Cool as ice he never misses!

Within 3 minutes of the restart, Rathkeale were level following brilliant attacking play, winning the ball in midfield, driving down the left and playing a square ball across the box that was well placed giving Jack absolutely no chance. 1-1 with 5 minutes remaining and it was heart attack football! as both teams went for the 3 points. The only way that the game was going to be settled was a piece of individual brilliance and up stepped John Hanlon with a trademark freekick from 25 yards out, powering his free kick past the Rathkeale GK. Only injury time remained and Rathkeale pressed forward and had 2 corners in quick succession, but our defence and in particular Tomas Greaney held firm and M. Murphy blew the full time whistle to the joy of the watching supporters. It was a tough game between two very evenly matched teams, with battles throughout out the pitch. We didn't play our best, but it's the sign of a great team that they can still win despite not playing well.

Thanks to the parents for their continued support and to M. Murphy who refereed an excellent game, allowing the game to flow throughout and explaining his decisions to the players. Next game is at home to Dromore on Saturday 20/01/24, time 10:00. Team: Jack Fitzgibbon, Tomas Greaney, Dale Fitzgibbon, Noah O Malley, John Hanlon, Michael Cribbin, Luke Fitzgibbon, James Tobin (C), Cillian O Malley, Adam Lawlor, John Keane. Scorers: Darragh Whelan, John Hanlon