

The Great Escape

(Ballisodare v Boyle Celtic 13-09-09)

Boyle Celtic collected another 3 points away to Ballisodare and deserve great credit for a battling performance. The game was a poor, scrappy affair, helped undoubtedly by the “miniaturised pitch”, but Celtic did what was needed and took maximum points to move to 3rd place in the league and unbeaten after 4 games.

There is an old saying in football, that the sign of a good team, is one that can scramble a win having played poorly. Hopefully that’s true because Boyle scarcely deserved all 3 points here. Having started brightly, Celtic looked comfortable in the early exchanges. They pressured the Ballisodare defence and a weak clearance was picked up by McCrann who squeezed it wide to captain John Connolly and he unleashed an unstoppable shot to the top left corner. Most observers would expect Boyle to settle after this early bonus and press home their advantage. Unfortunately the opposite occurred and Boyle were guilty of slack marking, slack passing and a general lethargic effort for the remainder of the first half. Goalkeeper Johnathon Conroy was kept busy as Ballisodare tested him several times from range. 2 goal line clearances from Purcell and McKenna were also needed to keep Boyle’s narrow advantage at the interval.

Early in the second half, Ballisodare were level with a good attack down the left wing and a pinpoint cross to the head of Anthony Fallon, on the edge of the 6 yard box. He finished with aplomb, with Conroy in goal having no chance from that close of range. Minutes later, Ballisodare almost took the lead when a driven free-kick was turned away by Johnathon Conroy. This crucial save proved to be the catalyst for Boyle Celtic’s awakening and they finally started to play. Aaron Calpin and Michael Corrigan were introduced and this coincided with the central pairing of McCrann and Conboy getting on top in midfield. The hardworking Lee McKillen was finally provided with some quality service and he did not shirk the challenge. McCrann threaded a ball through to McKillen and he applied the finish. There were 15 minutes remaining and Celtic continued to pile forward as the fresh legs of Corrigan and Calpin caused severe problems for the Ballisodare defence. A host of chances followed but none were taken. Final score 2-1 to Boyle.

Lee McKillen and Johnathon Conroy had really good performances on the day. Conroy making crucial saves at crucial times but McKillens work rate for 90 minutes and cool finish, shading man of the match for him. The end result was all that mattered to Boyle at this early stage of the season and hopefully this very young team will continue to gel and develop. Next week they are at home to Manor Rangers and 3 points there would put them in a great position going into the Junior Cup break from league duty.

Team: Jonathon Conroy, Alan Duffy, Owen O Donohoe, Noel McKenna, Sean Purcell, Paul Flanagan, John Connolly (capt), Brian McCrann, Lochlainn Conboy, Lee McKillen, James Carty. With Johnny Dwyer, Chris Richardson, Thomas Conroy, Aaron Calpin, Karl Kelly, Michael Corrigan

Man of the Match: Lee McKillen Referee: Ray Flynn