

After the fine performance at Lossiemouth, the SUFC lads travelled East to play current Highland League Champions Cove Rangers at Allan Park. The players were very pleased with their performance on Wednesday night on a massive pitch, a stark contrast to Allan Park's tight lines. This didn't seem to bother the 'Clyde one bit, as their 1 and 2 touch passing matched and exceeded Cove's excellent movement and directness for long periods of the game. Having lost Legends Birse and Shade and current left footed magician Calum MacIve who had tormented Lossie on Wednesday with their guile and drive, the lads were boosted by the arrival of four top level performers... Last seasons Cappocannioneri Scott McLennan, 2nd Team Captain Mark Shanta, banter-merchant Max Walker and Imperious Skipper Nicky Heggie all made the journey north to bolster the 'Clyde ranks. The starting XI had a formidable look to it..

Hamilton; Hill, McBride, Rae (Robertson 70), Heggie (c) ; Duff, Murison (Walker 48), Shanta, Fotheringham; McLennan, Hornell.

'Clyde kicked off and straight away took the game to Cove, who were probably more used to teams playing a containing game but that isn't the 'Clyde style. The front pairing of Hornell and McLennan were causing no end of grief to the Cove back 4, particularly in the air and their ability to snatch the second ball also saw Murison and Duff on the flanks get into the game and challenge their markers early. However Cove are not Champions by accident, and got themselves on the ball through grit and determination and kept it with deft touches and a direct style that saw them take an early 2-0 lead via some beautifully executed finishes. 'Clyde were not dispirited and immediately rolled the sleeves up and got McBride and Murison working together on the left to cause Cove some problems. Within minutes of Coves second goal, 'Clyde had nabbed one back after Calum Murison got hold of a Sean McBride through ball and ripped past his marker, who badly mistimed his tackle to send Murison to the floor. The ref had no option but to point to the spot and McLennan dispatched the kick with aplomb. This signalled the beginning of a really positive period for 'Clyde who began to assert themselves more and more on the game. Fotheringham and Shanta added even more steel and determination to win the ball, then showed fleet-of-foot with some feathered touches to send Murison and Duff flying down the flanks. A couple of half-chances for Hornell and McLennan went begging but Cove were always dangerous and looking to build on their lead with counterattacks on Pete Hamiltons goal. The big goalie did well to block 2 efforts from Webster but 'Clyde received a sucker punch 7 seconds before the half-time whistle. Having really asserted themselves for 20 minutes the lads from Glasgow fell prey to a brilliantly delivered corner right on the halftime whistle, making it 3-1 to the home side.

The 'Clyde did not let their heads fall at this setback, and positive words of encouragement from Skipper Heggie and frontman McLennan were the order of the day in the away changing room. 'Clyde knew they could get back into this game and make it a contest, and straight from the kickoff they went straight for Cove with a wonderful passing move ending up with Scott McLennan putting the ball just past the post. Unfortunately a long punt to a suspiciously offside looking Cove striker was allowed to continue by the referee and linesman and the score was a rather unjustified 4-1.

Lesser teams would simply have caved in, but key players McBride, Duff and Fotheringham drove straight at Cove from the whistle, urging their teammates to get an effort in on target. Max Walker had come on for injured flyer Calum Murison, which meant a role change for Scott McLennan to the right hand side. This suited McLennan perfectly as he was now able to use his poise and athleticism to drive at the left fullback directly. After a back-to-front flowing passing move reached Andrew Hornell, he guided the ball beautifully into McLennans path. The striker turned winger faked to shoot and dummied his opponent perfectly by turning inside and curling a beautiful finish around the goalkeeper with his left foot. The capacity crowd of 125 stood and applauded as one as 'Clyde laid bare their intentions for the second half. More was to come, especially from the left hand side as McBride made run after run, scything through the Cove defence as decoys runners Duff and Fotheringham cleared the path for him to penetrate through to their 18 yard box. Yet again more chances were created, but Cove are a proud and very capable side, and they fought to weather the 'Clyde storm, meaning this was a pulsating game to watch from the sidelines. With the score still at 4-2, 'Clyde's left side picked up the baton again, this time through Murray Duff who used McBride by not using him on the overlap and drove in towards the 18 yard box buccaneering several tackles. With the Cove centre-backs bearing down on him, "Duffer" stood resolute and lashed his shot low from 18 yards which the keeper touched but couldn't prevent going into the bottom left corner. Bryson in the dugout beamed with pride as the boys had really deserved these 3 goals through some brilliant football and a show of tremendous guts and character against formidable opponents. With 20 minutes to go and Louis Robertson on for Scott Rae, could 'Clyde get an equaliser...?

It looked on the cards as for the next 10 minutes 'Clyde took the game to Cove again, who seemed happy to weather the storm and hit powerfully on the break which they were more than capable of doing. After his resolute show against Lossiemouth, Pete Hamilton was called into action at least 4 times from long range efforts that swirled and dipped in the sea winds but the key 'Clyde moment came when a free kick was awarded on the right hand side. Right back Davie Hill had been magnificent all night in the tackle, but his distribution was equally effective and his pass to Andrew Hornell from the free kick bamboozled the Cove rearguard as they had been expecting the high ball to the back post. Hornell had ghosted sceptre-like across the back four and moved into the space created by Scott McLennans movement towards the touchline, leaving him inside the penalty spot but with his back to goal. "Capp" tried to twist and turn under pressure to get the ball on target but a block from the goalkeeper saw a goalmouth scramble. Duff lunged for the ball to knock it in for an equaliser, but Cove remained resolute and the chance went begging.

Last moment of quality in the game belonged to Cove, who got a dangerous ball whipped in by their flying left winger that was brilliantly finished on the volley from 25 yards by David Smith. Cove were winners by 5 goals to 3, but the 'Clyde boys made sure their presence was felt, and they had shown they could compete with opponents playing at a high level.