



Sunday, January 19, 2020

Republic of Ireland defeat Australia

UNDER 18 BOYS' INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLY

Republic of Ireland 2-1 Australia

Brian Ahern (61, 68)

Sasha Kuzevski (56)

HAZELWOOD COLLEGE star Brian Ahern was the match winner with two brilliant second half goals as the Republic of Ireland Under 18 boys came from a goal down to edge out the Australia Schools for a 2-1 win in a friendly international at Home Farm FC yesterday (January 18).

Ahern was one of several players that Ireland head coach William O'Connor introduced at the break as he juggled his squad in an effort to break the deadlock after a scoreless opening half.

The Limerick United forward a pupil at Hazelwood College Dromcollogher made his mark in fine style on the hour by powering home the equaliser with a 30 yard screamer that sailed past a helpless Thomas Rozman in the visitors goal.

That goal got Ireland right back into a game that looked to be slipping away from them after Sasha Kuzevski had earlier put Australia in front beating goalkeeper Patrick McGarvey from the penalty spot after he was taken down in the box by Mark Hanratty.

Ahern wasn't finished and minutes after he struck the equaliser he went on to crown a top class show by climbing above the Australia defenders to head home what proved to be the winner.

The goal was created by Lucan CBS scholar Kyle Robinson's precise pass that gave Hanratty the chance to whip in a high cross from the left and Ahern managed to get his head on the ball and guide it home for a superb double.

Both sides had chances to get on top in the first half but neither could manage to make the breakthrough.

Ireland might have taken a 20 minute lead when Robinson was unlucky to see the ball go just past the post after he charged down goalkeeper Luke Genua's hurried clearance.

While later the deadlock looked likely to be broken with two further Irish chances.

The first came from Rob Walsh's well struck free kick that zipped across the Australia goalmouth without any Irish boot getting a touch on it.

Another opportunity quickly followed when Daniel Cox (St. Joseph's College, Galway) might have opened the scoring but he placed his finish wide after Adam Verdon and Kyle Robinson had combined to create the opening.

Rhys Osmond had the best chance for Australia coming up to the break but after doing well to get past defenders Rob Walsh and Andrew Quinn on the right but he dragged his finish just outside the far post.

The penalty coolly converted by Kuzevski on 56 minutes put Australia in the driving seat although a fantastic double save from goalkeeper Rozman who kept out close range efforts from Robinson and Ahern might have seen Ireland get back on terms.

However minutes later Ahern got another opportunity to make amends and this time he made no mistake with his superb finish from distance.

That equaliser shook the visitors and when Ahern quickly headed home his second there was no way back as the Irish grew in confidence with Eoin Farrell and Adam Verdon dominating the midfield and Kyle Robinson and Brian Ahern always lively up front.

A deserved win that delighted head coach O'Connor, *'Games against Australia are always difficult as our side are all Under 18 while they are Under 19 but we responded well after conceding the early second half penalty.*

'Brian (Ahern) did really well to get us back on top with two great goals. The first one in particular was some strike.

'Overall all the squad did brilliantly and there were some fine individual performances too which bodes well for our bid to regain the Centenary Shield with the first of our four games a home fixture against Scotland coming up on March 19'.

Australia now travel to Belfast as they entertain Northern Ireland Schools on Monday. This will be their fourth game in a ten match schedule.

The Aussies enjoyed a 2-1 win over the English Independent Schools while drawing 3 apiece with Welsh Colleges as well as a scoreless draw to Welsh Schools before their arrival to Dublin.

The Irish students will have a trial game against Colin O'Brien's Under 17 select in a few weeks time as O'Connor attempts to whittle the squad down to 16 players for the Centenary Shield fixture at the end of March.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND: Eoghan O'Sullivan (Coláiste Cois Life, Lucan); Cillian Heaney (Rice College, Westport), Adam McCarron (Scoil Mhuire, Buncrana), Andrew Quinn (Dunshaughlin Community College), Rob Walsh (Glanmire Community College); Eoin Farrell (Ardcoil na Tríonóide, Athy) Adam Vernon (Gaelcholáiste Reachrann, Donaghmede); Adam Lennon (Athlone Community School), Daniel Cox (St. Joseph's College, Galway), Charlie Concannon (Yeats College, Galway); Kyle Robinson (Coláiste Phadráig, Lucan CBS).

SUBS: Patrick Ferry (Pobalscoil Ghaoth Dobhair) for Walsh h-t, Brian Ahern (Hazelwood College, Dromcollogher) for Cox h-t, Patrick McGarvey (Rosses Community School, Dungloe) for O'Sullivan h-t, Joe Power (Presentation College, Bray) for Heaney h-t, Mark Hanratty (Lusk Community College) for Concannon h-t, Luke Rudden (Carndonagh Community School) for Lennon 86.

AUSTRALIA: Luke Genua (Edmund Rice College); Sasha Kuzevski (St. Edward's College), Nathan Grimaldi (The Hills Sports High School), William Pearce (William Clarke College), Jack McLoughlin (Cranbrook School); Dimitri Kostopoulos (Westfields Sports High School), Alexander Bonetig (Edmund Rice College); Connor Rose (St. Leo's Catholic College), Lachlan Sepping (Emmaus Catholic College), Jordan Metcalfe (Epping Boys High School); Rhys Osmond (Westfields Sports High School).

SUBS: Thomas Rozman (Champagnat Catholic College) for Genua h-t, Jack Berte (St. Pius Cross College) for Osmond h-t, Caleb Jackson Brown (Westfields Sports High School) for Pearce h-t, Jay McGowan (Sylvania High School) for Metcalfe h-t, Will Hodgson (St Aloysius College) for Kostopoulos 62, Bailey Ratcliff (Matthew Flinders Anglican College) for McLoughlin 62.

REFEREE: Ian O'Keeffe (Waterford)

ROLL OF HONOUR

2020 Republic of Ireland 2-1 Australia (W)
2019 Republic of Ireland 3-0 Australia (W)
2017 Republic of Ireland 0-2 Australia (L)
2015 Republic of Ireland 1-1 Australia (D)
2012 Republic of Ireland 2-3 Australia (L)
2010 Republic of Ireland 3-1 Australia (W)
2008 Republic of Ireland 1-1 Australia (D)
2006 Republic of Ireland 0-1 Australia (L)
2000 Republic of Ireland 3-4 Australia (L)