



An Australia Under-16/Under-17 Schoolboys side produced some slick football to defeat an Irish FA JD Academy U15/U16 team 5-2 at the home of Harland and Wolff Welders this evening. It was all square at half-time, and Northern Ireland went ahead just after the break, however Australia turned up the heat in the second half and ran out comfortable winners.

Competition

Youth international friendly

Scoreline

Irish FA JD Academy U15/U16 2-5 Australia U16/U17 Schoolboys

Scorers

JD Academy: Dylan Stitt (13'), Braiden Graham (47')

Australia: Mark Leonard (2'), Oscar Fryer (65', 68'), Luka Knezevic (82'), Ali El Sabah (87')

Venue

Blanchflower Stadium, Belfast

Date

Monday 23 January 2023

Team News

All the players in the 19-strong squad for the friendly in east Belfast currently attend the Irish FA JD Academy. Based at Ulster University's Jordanstown campus, it is Northern Ireland's only full-time residential academy for young footballers.

Midfielder Callum Burnside had to withdraw from the squad earlier today due to illness. He was replaced by George Feeney. And another midfielder, Oilibhar McCart, had to withdraw over the weekend after damaging his shoulder last week.

The game provided a rare opportunity for players at the two age groups within the Irish FA JD Academy to come together as a team. Kris Lindsay was in charge.

How it happened

Australia scored with their first attack of the game. Mark Leonard got on the end of a low cross into the area and steered the ball past keeper Dara McAuley with just two minutes on the clock.

Captain Ryan Donnelly shot straight at Australian keeper Sam Flannery and Cole Brannigan curled a free-kick over the bar before the JD Academy team conjured up an equaliser. Dylan Stitt applied the finishing touch after some good build-up play.

Australia's Charles Saul stung the palms of Northern Ireland keeper Dara McAuley before Gabriel Aldieri smashed a shot against the post. McAuley saved efforts from Ekumbir Sekhon in quick succession as the visitors pushed forward.

A swift attack ended with Aldieri testing McAuley once again and Sekhon fired the rebound wide. Then Aldieri found Sekhon 10 yards out and his low shot was saved by McAuley.

Towards the end of the half another sweeping Australia move saw Justin Mayo get in down the left, however he curled his shot wide of the upright.

Half-time: Irish FA JD Academy U15/U16 1-1 Australia U16/U17 Schoolboys

Just after the break substitute Kenzie Beattie sped down the right flank and crossed to the back post where Braiden Graham guided the ball in from close range to make it 2-1 to the home side.

Australia substitute Oscar Fryer drew the sides level on 65 minutes with a neat finish. And three minutes later Fryer tucked the ball home from close range to make it 3-2 to the visitors.

Fryer and fellow sub Luka Knezevic combined well but substitute goalkeeper Joshua Gracey saved Fryer's attempt on goal. And Fryer missed a good opportunity just minutes later.

Northern Ireland pushed forward in search of an equaliser, however Australia scored again. This time Knezevic was on target with a shot from the edge of the area.

Another penetrating move brought Australia's fifth. Substitute Ali El Sabah found the back of the net.

Full-time: Irish FA JD Academy U15/U16 2-5 Australia U16/U17 Schoolboys



Line-ups

Irish FA JD Academy U15/U16: Dara McAuley, Theo McToal, Callum Cowan, Logan Graham, Calum Moreland, Ryan Donnelly (captain), Cole Brannigan, Jack Doherty, Braiden Graham, Dylan Stitt, Rhys Walsh.

Substitutes: (used) Conor Haughey, Kenzie Beattie, Blaine McClure, Joshua Gracey (GK), Nikhil McFaul, Jude Johnson, George Feeney; (unused) Conor McVeigh.

Australia U16/U17 Schoolboys: Sam Flannery, Kayne White, Aden Green (captain), Justin Moya, Wataru Kamijo, Oliver Randazzo, Mark Leonard, Charles Saul, Gabriel Adlieri, Ekumbir Sekhon, Jacob Nasso.

Substitutes: (used) Ali El Sabeh, Kallan Utan, Bailey O'Neil, Oscar Fryer, Eisay Adhanom, Bailey O'Neil, Luka Knezevic; (unused) Oscar Page (GK).



[Australia prove too strong for Northern Ireland U18 Schoolboys](#)

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