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2008 U:14 Championship Final

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Last gasp goal for Killoe snatches the title away from St. James

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Killoe 2–8, St. James 0-12

In a dramatic finish to a most entertaining encounter at Pearse Park on Saturday last, the Killoe U-14 footballers grabbed a last gasp goal in the fourth minute of stoppage time to snatch the 'A' championship title away from St. James in the county final.

Drawn games have been a regular occurrence between the same teams in the schools football competitions in recent years and another cliff-hanger materialised on this occasion with Damien Bennett emerging as the Killoe matchwinner.

Bennett got the vital touch to finish the ball to the net after a free from Cian Farrelly had dropped short in front of the posts and there was no time for a stunned St. James side to recover after they held a slender one point lead with time running out.

While it was a shattering setback for the Ardagh/Moydow outfit, it must be said that Killoe were guilty of missing several scoring chances during the course of the game and appeared to have pressed the self destruct button after kicking seven wides in the second half.

When Rory Sullivan fired over a first-time shot for the lead point a minute into additional time after Killian Farrell had hit the crossbar, St. James looked to have done enough to capture the U-14 'A' crown but the gutsy Killoe side just refused to accept defeat and were rewarded for their perseverance.

They thus completed the championship and Division 1 league double and it was a fine all-round team performance by Killoe with the powerful Damien Bennett (who scored 1-3) a real driving force in attack. Paddy Kiernan opened the scoring when landing a long range point in the 5th minute but St. James were back on level terms in the 8th minute when Polish lad Kryspin Pliszdzynski shot over the bar.

Back came Killoe with a brace of points from Seamus McCormack – the first from a free and the second from play after the opposing keeper Leanne Keegan had done well to keep out a shot from Conor Conway in the 11th minute.

But St. James gradually got on top with influential substitute Killian Farrell (who did not start for some reason or another) making a big difference when brought on in the 17th minute.

At this same stage of the game Sean Farrell landed a well struck point for the Ardagh/Moydow side and Killian Farrell made an immediate impact when weaving his way through to fire over a couple of good scores.

A further point followed from Daryl Carrigy in the 23rd minute as St. James took the lead and while Seamus McCormack (free) quickly replied for Killoe to leave the sides all square, Kevin Finnan fired over a point when a goal was on.

Thus St. James were 0-6 to 0-4 ahead before the gap was narrowed to the minimum of margins when a cracking shot from Damien Bennett clipped the crossbar in the 28th minute.

With five minutes gone on the changeover, Sean Farrell landed a great point for St. James and after Damien Bennett converted a free for Killoe the eventual winners had a lucky escape in the 39th minute when Sean Farrell almost scored a goal when his shot was saved.

The same player then fisted a point but Killoe grabbed their first goal midway through the second half when Conor Conway planted a well struck shot in the back of the net to leave his side in a slender 1-6 to 0-8 lead.

The ding-dong battle continued throughout the final quarter of this gripping contest as St. James added four more points to their tally through Dan Sullivan, Killian Farrell (2) and Rory Sullivan while Damien Bennett (free) and Conor Conway were on target for Killoe.

But the dramatic late, late goal deep into stoppage time swung the issue in favour of Killoe and it was hard luck on St. James who were hanging on to a narrow advantage before Damien Bennett struck the killer blow.

KILLOE: Shane Fitzpatrick; Darragh Gilna, Shane Clarke, Shane Conway; Liam Hughes, Cian Farrelly, Fergal O'Donnell; Paddy Kiernan (0-1), Brian Finnerty; Larry Moran, Damien Bennett (1-3, two points from frees), Stephen Duke; Shane Tully, Conor Conway (1-1), Seamus McCormack (0-3, two frees).

Subs:- Jamie King for S Duke (35 mins); John Lynch for S Tully (59 mins).

ST. JAMES: Leanne Keegan; Gareth Dennigan, Chad Costello, Ronan Mac AnBeatha; Fergal Keenan, Niall Keenan, John Keegan; Kevin Finnan (0-1), Emmet Donlon; Dan Sullivan (0-1), Kryspin Pliszczynski (0-1), Daryl Carrigy (0-1); Finn Hartman, Sean Farrell (0-3), Rory Sullivan (0-1).

Subs:- Killian Farrell (0-4) for K Pliszczynski (17 mins); K Pliszczynski for F Hartman (60 mins).

Referee: Tommy Donohoe (Rathcline).