



Web Archive Document

1977 Intermediate Championship Final

WWW.KILLOEGAA.IE

Killoe are the Champions

12th August 1977

Killoe Young Emmets: 1 – 6

Dromard: 0 – 6

There are few things about a football game that you cannot argue about, but one of them is statistics. And there is one statistic, which tells the story of last Sunday's county Intermediate football final in a nutshell. It is the wides tally for the game, which reads Killoe = 7, Dromard = 16. That explains why it is Killoe instead of Dromard who take the title and move up into the senior grade for next year's championship.

Dromard could do everything but score and while they can justifiably claim hard luck on some occasions, the hard facts of football are that if you cannot score you cannot win either, and certainly Dromard could not score last Sunday. Three of their points came from frees and another from fullback Dessie Sheridan when he went upfield late in the game, so that leaves only two points from play from the other forwards.

Dromard had the majority of the possession in this final, but they shot wides from literally left, right and centre and generally their forward-line let them down badly. Killoe on the other hand had relatively few chances of scores but made the best of them and took the title as a result. But this was a very different display from the new champions compared to some of their earlier games and they were struggling for a long time to counter the strength, speed and skill of Dromard who really stepped up their performance for this game, when most people expected that Killoe were on to a soft thing.

Probably Killoe were over confident but a more reasonable explanation of the performance might be that they played as well as they were let. At midfield for instance, Dromard were always in control through great work by Jim Murtagh and Pat Jones and indeed Murtagh must have caught the eye of the county selectors present, as he is just the type of strong player that Longford could do with in the league.

But for the great fighting spirit of Frank Kiernan who practically on his own still managed to get a lot of possession for Killoe, things would have been very dodgy for the winners in the middle of the field.

Because Killoe had mastered one of the basics of football – making the best of your scoring chances, they were deserved winners. It is a tribute to them that they still managed though they had to be satisfied to play good football even with minority possession for much of the game. The tackling by the backs on both teams was hard, fast but fair and this certainly accounted for a lot of the wides, but Killoe showed the better ability at withstanding those tackles.

Killoe started the game as if they were going to sweep the Dromard side off the field, but they soon found that this was not going to be the case. They did force two fruitless fifties before getting a handy opening point from a free, after four minutes, for an off-the-ball tackle. And it was another simple Dromard error that let Killoe in for the crucial only goal of the game in the 7th minute.

It started with a free for a careless pick-up by a Dromard midfielder and ended with Kiernans 50-yard free being hustled over the goal-line by a Killoe forward in the resultant melee in the square. It took Dromard all of 17 minutes to open their account with Jim Murtagh receiving a sideline kick

and parting to Gerry Mimmagh for a point. They got two more before half-time but by that stage Killoe had pushed their score to 1-4 and led by four points.

It was Dromard who started the second half with a flourish and they attacked non-stop for five minutes, but the only return they had was two wides and two scoring attempts blocked down by Killoe backs. Killoe full forward Mickey Connell saved his team at the vital stage with some great catching and kicking and when Killoe did manage to mount their first attack of the second half after six minutes they got a point from Eugene Murphy from play, although it seemed that a Dromard defender had been pushed before the ball came near him. Almost unbelievably, it took Dromard the same length of time, 17 minutes, to get a score in the second half, as it had in the first when PJ Reynolds pointed a free and did the same a minute later to cut the deficit to a goal, but that was as near as Dromard ever got to Killoe and the teams finished the game with another point apiece. The final 10 minutes of the game saw Killoe well on top, even if their scoring rate was non-existent, apart from a Kiernan pointed free two minutes from time.

It will always be a matter off speculation what would have happened if Dromards best forward, Vincent Reynolds had been fit to play. An injury kept him out of the game and although he came on after 40 minutes it was only a token gesture as he was obviously unfit.

One feels that Killoe had the measure of their opponents and probably would have pulled out still more if it was needed. Certainly they never panicked even when things were not going well for them and they did set up many good forward movements, which only the vigilance of the Dromard defense prevented from yielding scores. The best of these moves came in the 24th minute when Billy Brattens shot hit the upright after a great bout of passing.

An interesting feature about the match was the enormous number of line balls on the stand side of the pitch. Although there was little or no wind, there were 13 in the first half alone and about ten in the second.

Killoe had a well-balanced team but they may thank a few players in particular for this win notably Mickey Connell, John Doherty, Frank Kiernan, Brendan Bratten, Colm O'Donnell, Eugene Murphy, who was the only player in the match to get more than one score from play.

Dromard will regret the circumstances that led to them having to line out without a few key players, but they can take consolation that next year must be their year for an overdue championship success if they can hold their team together. They had possibly the player of the match in fullback Dessie Sheridan and other notable performances from Michael McKeon, Sean McNerney, Jim Murtagh and Pat Jones at midfield and Noel Jones.

Match figures were... Killoe = 17 frees and 7 wides, Dromard = 14 frees, 16 wides.

Killoe: M McKeon, F. Kennedy, M. Connell, F. Toher, B. Bracken, J. Doherty, K. Lennon, V. Lennon, F. Kiernan, B. Bratten, C. Woods, V. Nerney, S. Nolan, C. O'Donnell, E. Murphy.

Dromard: S. Donoghue, PJ Berry, D. Sheridan, M. McKeon, M. Whitney, S. McNerney, P. Smith, J. Murtagh, P. Jones, PJ Reynolds, N.Jones, PJ McManus, N. Donoghue, G Mimmagh, S. Daly, Subs: V Reynolds for Daly, T Farrell for G Mimmagh.

Ref: JP Reilly.