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1985 Leader Cup Final Report

Emmet Og Win Leader Cup After Twenty-Four Years

Longford Leader Report

Emmet Og 1-5

Longford Slashers 0-5

Emmet Og won the Leader Cup for the first time since 1961 when they deservedly beat Longford Slashers in a keenly contested Senior League Final in Centenary Park, Newtownforbes on Sunday last. A goal by John McCormack, 17 minutes into the first half, proved to be the decisive score in a game that was generally scrappy but nevertheless provided a few exciting passages of football.

Despite the fact that Slashers had a decided edge at midfield, mainly due to the great efforts of Hal Carey, their relatively weak attack – who badly missed the services of the injured Dessie Barry – failed miserably to turn this superiority into scores.

The Slashers forwards were guilty of some very poor passing which resulted in a number of promising attacks breaking down, and the fact that they only scored two points from play, during the sixty minutes speaks for itself. The Killoe backs marked very tight and even though the Killoe midfield did not gain much good possession, they were quick in on the tackle and as a result the Slashers midfielders did not get too many quick balls to their forwards.

However, Killoe were worthy winners and could even afford the luxury of missing a number of easy scoring chances in the second half on their way to their first major success in 24 year.

Although suffering a few anxious moments in the first half, their defence played soundly throughout, containing the best efforts of the Slashers attack, while Brendan Lennon and John Hughes had their moments at midfield without ever being that impressive.

John “Speedy” McCormack played a real captains part with a fine performance on the ‘40’ and was a constant threat to the Slashers defence as was Mark Mimmagh and substitute Damien Bennett, who strengthened the Killoe attack considerably when introduced early in the second half. Both Mimmagh and Bennett returned home from the United States last week.

Generally, this was a good all-round team performance by the winners and Sunday’s success should prove to be a stepping stone for this very talented Killoe side. Slashers, on the other hand are far from the force they used to be, although it might well have been a different story had Dessie Barry been fit to play on Sunday last.

Killoe, started in promising style and following a couple of near misses, Brendan Lennon opened the scoring when landing a point in the third minute. Slashers then began to settle down and in their first real attack; Dermot Caslin was dispossessed in front of the posts when he seemed certain to score.

Killoe went further in front in the 12th minute when Mark Mimmagh flicked the ball over the bar before J.J. Farrell shot badly wide after being put through by Caslin. The winners had another very lucky let-off minutes later when Gerry Meenaghan was clean through with only the goalkeeper to beat but failed to get the vital touch as the alert Brian Donohoe advances quickly off his line to clear the ball to safety.

John McCormack then squandered an easy chance in front of the posts but made amends in a big way moments later when he weaved his way through the Slashers defence to score a fine goal, although somewhat fortunate not to be penalised for over carrying.

Slashers refused to be rattled, however, and fought back in determined fashion. But despite dominating the closing stages of the half, they made no real impression against the tight marking and quick tackling Killoe defence and a pointed free by Chris Grant just on the stroke of half-time was their only reward from some strong pressure as Killoe led 1-2 to 0-1 at the break.

However, they made a good start to the second half when Grant was on the mark again from a placed ball in the second minute but Michael McCormack then kicked a bad wide when he really should have scored.

In another promising attack, Matthew Farrell won possession of the ball on the edge of the Killoe square but his intended pass to the inrushing Grant went badly astray while substitute Shay O'Malley was dispossessed in front of the posts when he looked set to put his name on the score sheet.

Slashers tale of woe continued when a shot by Michael Duggan came back of the upright and the ball was subsequently cleared by Brendan Bracken, before they eventually scored again in the 39th minute with a point by Matthew Farrell.

Sensing the game was slipping from their grasp, the Killoe mentors then made a very shrewd move when they brought on Damien Bennett and with virtually his first touch of the ball he set up Dessie McGoldrick for a point – a shot that looked marginally wide.

John McCormack then regained his teams four point lead when he successfully converted a long range free – all of forty yards out – and Bennett was then off target before Michael Duggan was on the mark for Slashers to leave three points separating the sides with just ten minutes of the game remaining.

Killoe were then denied a second goal when Bennett put Mimmagh clean through but his shot from point-blank range was brilliantly saved by goalkeeper Hubert Smith. However, Smith was then guilty of a costly blunder when his poor kick-out was intercepted by Dessie McGoldrick who wasted little time in smacking the ball over the bar, and while Slashers tried hard to get the goal they so badly needed in the closing stages, they also managed to score another point - a free-kick by Grant.

Most impressive for the winners were Frank Kennedy, who had a fine game at centre-half; Billy Bratten and Eugene Murphy in defence, while John Toher came through with top honours in curbing the strong Michael Sexton, in his unaccustomed role of full-forward.

Brendan Lennon was good in spells at midfield while most prominent in attack were John McCormack (who was given far too much room by Aidan O'Brien), Mark Mimmagh, Damien Bennett and to a lesser extent Dessie McGoldrick and Declan Rowley, who put in his best when switched to left half-back in the second half.

Slashers were best served by Sean Kilmeade, who had an outstanding game at left full-back; Jimmy Halpin, Liam Clancy, Hal Carey (who had his best game for some time), Michael McCormack, Dermot Caslin, Chris Grant (their best forward) while substitute Michael Duggan tried very hard.