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1985 Minor Championship Final

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Killoe Survive Late Colmcille Rally

Killoe Region 1-7

Colmcille 1-5

The Killoe Region, a Killoe and Shroid Slashers amalgamation, survived a tremendous late rally by Colmcille to win a somewhat scrappy Minor Championship Final replay at Pearse Park on Sunday evening last.

Killoe were apparently coasting to an convincing victory when they led by five points with just eight minutes of the game remaining but were put under fierce pressure in the closing stages as their very determined opponents threw everything into attack in a last gasp bid to salvage the game.

Colmcille managed to narrow the gap to just two points with only a few minutes left to play and then came desperately close to taking the lead when a rasping close-range shot by Andy McGahern – which seemed destined for the back of the net – was brilliantly saved by Killoe goalkeeper Aidan McGoey, with the bladder of the ball coming through the covering as it was deflected for a '45'.

A new ball came into play and Colmcille succeeded in reducing the leeway to a simple point and blasted another shot at goal wide, but Andy Hughes, somewhat against the run of play, then notched the insurance point for the Killoe Region, who must have been relieved to hear the final whistle moments later.

It was indeed fitting that Andy Hughes should get the final score as he notched 1-2 earlier in the game but was then forced to retire after receiving a bad knock after courageously finishing to the net in the 24th minute of the first half. He came back on, however, in the closing stages of the game.

Terry Fitzpatrick also played a major part in this Killoe victory, producing a fine performance at midfield, where he gave his side a decided edge.

Generally, this was a good all-round performance by the winners, who recovered from a bad start to stamp their authority on the game. However, had they lost the initiative in those dramatic and exciting closing stages, they would only have themselves to blame as they had enough chances in the first twenty minutes of the second half to put the issue beyond all doubt.

Colmcille's late comeback was mainly due to some fine work by Andy McGahern, who had earlier switched from full-back to midfield (it was surprising that they did not start him there) but his best efforts were all to no avail as the Killoe Region held out for a somewhat fortunate victory in the end, although over the hour they were clearly the better team and deserved to win.

With the exception of that exciting finish, this wasn't a great game of football, spoiled somewhat by far too many unnecessary fouls. Colmcille got off to a dream start with a goal by Bernard Murtagh after just six minutes of play but failed to extend that early lead when they had a few golden opportunities to do so. Killoe gradually settled down and Andy Hughes opened their account in the 13th minute when landing a good point.

Further points by Jimmy O'Neill (free) and A. Hughes put them on level terms and they took the lead in the 24th minute when Hughes finished the ball to the net at the expense of a nasty knock, which forced him to retire.

Colmcille replied with a point by Francie Mulligan to trail 1-3 to 1-1 at the break but Killoe continued to dominate on the resumption and points by James Gilna, John Hughes and Willie Duggan – in the space of a few minutes – left them in a fairly comfortable 1-6 to 1-1 lead.

Killoe missed a number of good scoring chances at this stage but looked to be in a safe position when five points clear with only eight minutes left to play.

Colmcille rallied strongly, however, with points by Andy McGahern (free), Johnny Mulligan and Joe Dowling to liven up the game considerably, and then Aidan McGoey produced that marvelous save to deny McGahern what would undoubtedly have proved the match-winning goal.

McGahern had another great goal opportunity moments later but he over anxiously shot wide from right in front of the posts, although tightly marked by the Killoe back, but made amends somewhat when pointing a free moments later.

Only a single point separated the sides but Killoe replied almost immediately with a point by Andy Hughes to clinch a hard-earned victory.

Colmcille were unfortunate that they left it far too late to produce their best form and generally failed to play as well as they did in the drawn game.

But for that late collapse, the Killoe Region were an improved side from the drawn encounter, with Terry Fitzpatrick in particular producing something like his full potential and was probably his team's best player. Others to impress for the visitors were Michael Bracken, Paul Rowley (who was carrying an injury into the game), Gerard Gilna, Michael Keogh, John Hughes (who was good in spells), Willie Duggan, Jimmyn O'Neill and sharpshooter Andy Hughes.