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1995 Senior Championship Final

Killoe the Kings once again!

Longford New match report

Killoe Young Emmets 0-11 St Patricks 1-5

“Two out of three aint bad”. The words of Emmet Og captain Mark Mimmagh on holding the Sean Connolly Cup aloft on Sunday afternoon following his team’s characteristically gutsy and gritty display in overcoming Ardagh.

The two of course was an obvious reference to his side’s second championship success in three years. Not only that but the bogey, the jinx, call it what you like, had been exorcised in most emphatic fashion. And like so many other Killoe performances this year, it was the team’s character, drive and overall team work that ensured they overhauled a disappointing Ardagh side.

When Ardagh look back on this match, they will be inclined to look back only on the first 30 minutes before swiftly fast-forwarding to the finish. It was a game in which their carefully executed game plan evaporated in a most disappointing manner. Everything they touch, it seemed, turned into base lead.

But there’s no doubting this Killoe achievement, they truly are worthy champions. And they did it the hard way, meeting and beating the best, however protracted the struggle. The team had an abundance of team spirit, particularly in the second half, when the game turned decisively in their favour. There were many fine performances, in particular John Toher, voted man of the match.

Toher, competent unspectacular in the first half gave a stirring display in the second and in those early minutes cut out five Ardagh sorties with decisive effect. He epitomised the spirit of his team best of all, but was one of several players on the team.

For the winners, all finals are finals to remember. But from a purely neutral’s point of view this was not a county final to remember. It was in many ways everything which was expected of this match, hard but never cynical. But there can be no denying the quality left a lot to be desired.

Both sides did produce some good passages of play ; Killoe crucially in that second period, Ardagh in the second quarter with a blistering five minute spell that raised serious questions about the Killoe challenge.

Killoe took the early advantage yet Ardagh were playing the better football linking up well as a unit. By the quarter of an hour mark, Killoe held a slender one point advantage, leading by three points to two.

Those three points had been scored by three different players; John Coyle, Michael Kiernan and John McCormack. Ardagh’s efforts had both come from Paul Victory. Already Victory was making his presence felt; his second point in

particular a fine effort from a difficult angle. He soon added a third despite the best efforts of Michael Fitzpatrick.

Killoe despite the parity they held were being stretched by Ardagh's swift counter-attack, which by-passed midfield; a case in point being Dermot Farrell's excellent goal chance superbly blocked by Sean Clarke on 16 minutes. Amends were made a minute later. It all began with James Keegan whose long ball picked out Ray Baxter. Baxter out on the left, transferred inside to Paul Finnan. Three against two, the Killoe defence had been completely unhinged. With Dermot Farrell to his right, Finnan decided to go on his own to plant the ball into the net.

Four minutes later, Finnan added another point before opposite number John McCormack responded in kind. Three points the margin at the break and the large crowd, close to 5,000 expected more when the second half began.

Within the opening six minutes of the second half, Killoe trailed Ardagh by a single point. The purpose of intent was obvious, midfield of Duggan and Lennon were now firmly in control of centrefield, their forwards had at last begun to play more cohesively.

Ardagh looked a team out of control, out of sorts. What and how to do with the Killoe challenge was a question they never looked like answering. A quarter of an hour gone, the side's lead had been overhauled. There was no way back.

The decisive score for Killoe was arguably Kevin Dooner's point giving his side the lead. With Michael Kiernan also pointing his second score, the Ardagh cause looked very bleak. And the side knew as much. Desperately, the side made changes to salvage this contest. Adrian Greene and Padraig Keegan were both sent into battle but the team had only a Paul Finnan free from '14 yards. But that point was only an isolated incident, St Patricks were to score no more and when John McCormack converted a massive 45 yard free, the contest was over.

Desperately Paul Victory looked for an equaliser, fed by Eddie Farrell, he twisted turned and shot – but more in desperation than defiance. The game was up and if Clare had banished the ghost of Bidy Earley, then Killoe had broken their Ardagh hoodoo.

Emmet Og: Sean Clarke, John Bracken, John Toher, Mark Mimmagh, Michael Fitzpatrick, Michael Keogh, Ciaran Keogh, Brendan Lennon, Matt Duggan, Michael Bracken, Declan Rowley, Kevin Dooner (0-2), John Coyle (0-2), Michael Kiernan (0-2), John McCormack (0-5, 0-4 frees)