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2000 Ladies Championship Final

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Rathcline win County Title for first time as Killoe fightback just fails

Rathcline 3-4

Killoe 2-6

Rathcline were crowned Ladies Senior Champions on Sunday last as they managed to hold on to their one point lead at the end of a nail biting final to overcome a very courageous and hearty Killoe side at the Dromard grounds.

Their eight-point lead at half time after playing with the wind the proved to be just enough to win this title as they failed to register a score in the second half.

The Killoe girls deserve full credit for their second half performance and were very unlucky that they could not level the match in the dying minutes. Although they were behind going into the break they held their heads high and showed that they are a team of commitment and determination as they give it all they had on the resumption of play.

It was a game of two halves. Rathcline would appear to have been all over Killoe in the opening half but it was really the fact that they took their chances when they came and it was probably one of the three goals scored in this half that really was the decisive factor at the end of the day. The Killoe girls had their turn in the second half and totally dominated the play. It was not for want of trying that they did not register that equalising point, but unfortunately there was too many missed opportunities and it appeared as if luck just was not on their side.

From the throw up the Killoe girls were on the attack and Aoife Doherty registered the first score of the match from a free within the first minute. Aoife's sister Maria added another point from the kickout and Killoe had a lead of two points at this early stage. Rathcline then settled into the game and Sarah Farrell converted a free to open the scoring for them. The first of their goals came with the next move of play. A ball crossed in by Noelle McGann, in front of the goal line landed in the bottom corner of the net.

During the next ten minutes Killoe were guilty of kicking some wides and short balls into the goalie's hands and although they looked more like scoring, it was Rathcline who added to their tally next. Some fumbling on the Killoe defence line gave them the little opportunity they needed to get the ball into the back of the Killoe net. This was Rathcline's dominant stage of the game and points from Paula Kenny and Sarah Farrell and another goal which came as a result of a misjudgement by the Killoe keeper gave them lead of 3-3 to 0-2 with ten minutes left in the opening half.

Killoe fought back with points from Aoife Doherty and Aileen Devaney. Paula Kenny added another point for her side and just on the stroke of half time Aoife Doherty again brought the difference between the two teams back to eight points at the interval.

The tempo of the game upped in the second half with both teams determined to do what they had to do. Killoe had a mountain to climb while Rathcline had to hold on to make sure they did not allow the Killoe girls reach the peak. It was clear that the Killoe team were not going to lie down and they put the Rathcline defence under tremendous pressure throughout the half.

Likewise the Killoe defence stood solid whenever Rathcline were on the attack and as a result the winners failed to score in the second half. Killoe were by far the dominant team in this half and in fairness to the Rathcline forwards they were not given too many chances with which to score.

Aoife Doherty who gave an outstanding performance and proved what a skilful footballer she is got the Killoe comeback off to a great start when she fired the ball into the Rathcline net with ten minutes gone.

Every ball was hard fought for in this half and although there was not a high level of scoring during this half the match was exciting and there was some great displays of football. Killoe had plenty of chances but failed to register another score until Aoife Doherty somehow found a way into the Rathcline net with a few minutes of normal time remaining.

With just two points between the sides at this stage the game was really alive. It was all to play for and the crowd at the match certainly got value for money as every girl on that field was giving their best to the final minutes.

Aoife again was the one who scored a point to leave nothing but the bare minimum separating the two teams. Killoe had their chances to level the match but unfortunately for them they failed to convert them into scores and that one single point was enough for Rathcline to take the victory. Rathcline did not care that they had not scored in the second half when the final whistle went but it was heartbreak for the Killoe girls who were so close but yet so far.

Their second half performance showed that they are a team of great spirit and being so young there is no doubt that they will be out fighting again next year. After two years of sorrow (having lost to Ballymore in last years final) they will surely be more determined than ever to lift that cup which they have been so close to doing on two occasions.

They can be proud of their performance everyone tried their best but on the day it was Rathcline who had the lead at the end and are champions for this year.

Paula Kenny accepted the cup on behalf of the team from Ladies County Board Chairman Liam Forde as their regular captain Sheila Farrell was not available for selection due to unforeseen circumstances. Rathcline were jubilant winners and were very proud of their achievement and rightly so.

The winning side were best served by Maura Moran, Sarah Farrell, Paula Kenny and Noelle McGann while best for the gallant Killoe team was player of the match Aoife Doherty, who scored a total of 2-4, Laura Doherty, Sharon Tracey, Marie Carrigy and Claire Kiernan.

It was a great final and showed the high level that Ladies Football is at in County Longford.

Killoe: Patricia Lynch, Cathriona McDonnell, Marie Carrigy, Helen Reilly, Lisa Brady, Sharon Tracey (captain), Claire Kiernan, Elizabeth Brady, Laura Doherty, Clara Brady,

Amanda Lennon, Aileen Devaney, Maria Doherty, Aoife Doherty, Kathleen Reilly. Subs: Catherine Carrigy, Lorraine Keogh, Denise Cahill

Rathcline: Karina Mulvihil, Doireann Casey, Regina Carroll, Mairead Hogan, Jennifer Donlon, Maura Moran, Adrianna Melia, Josephine Donlon, Paula Kenny (Vice Captain), Noelle McGann, Alison Smyth, Geraldine Hanley, Sarah Farrell, Kathriona Donlon, Eilish Rhatigan. Sub: Stacey Murray

Referee: Mick Doherty (Legan)