

ROINN A THRILLER!

U17 Bord na nÓg Report by Pado O'Flynn

Photos: Willie Dempsey



Minor A

There was a renewed sense of energy towards the Kilkenny Honda Centre Minor A Hurling Championship as all twelve teams went to post with aspirations of landing the title. Last year's finalists Tullogher-Rosbercon exited in the first round where they fell to an excellent display from Graigue-Ballycallan by six points. In Gowran the home side fell to Clara. James Stephens had a little too much for Danesfort whilst Piltown and O'Loughlins played out a cracker down south that saw the Gaels come out on top with late goals.

In the quarter finals Ballycallan showed great form when swatting aside O'Loughlins whilst Erins Own were on fire to eventually get the better of Clara in a 42 score clash. Dicksboro pulled away in the dying embers of their clash with Dunnamaggin whilst James Stephens again were too strong for Bennettsbridge.

The semi finals proved to be high class affairs. James Stephens and Erins Own was a game for the ages before a large crowd in Muckalee with the Brown Mountain overlooking. Erins Own led by five but James Stephens with Noah Minogue on fire got the decision. In John Locke Park it was a similar story with Graigue-Ballycallan getting out in front but Michael Stynes' reallocation to the half forward line was a shrewd placing that helped the Palmerstown boys to UPMC Nowlan Park.

Minor A Final

Dicksboro 3-7 James Stephens 1-12

Sport can be a cruel mistress. These sides played out an epic where neither side deserved to lose but ultimately a 64th minute point from Billy Fitzpatrick gave Dicksboro a stunning one point victory over James Stephens in a thrilling Kilkenny Honda Centre Minor Hurling Championship Final on a fine Saturday afternoon.

The battling Boro success was their fourth minor title on the trot but unlike the previous three victories, this was somewhat against the grain after the Village started as favourites.

Dicksboro were superb all the way through with Fitzpatrick, Ross Doyle and captain Killian Dollard all netting crucial goals, and goalie Tom O'Neill in superb form throughout.

Despite all that though James Stephens still led until the opening minutes of the second half and the



Killian Dollard, Dicksboro Captain with trophy

'Boro got goals at crucial junctures.

Stephen Manogue was the Village's main threat in attack as he scored 1-4 and his goal in the 47th minute looked like it would turn the momentum back in their favour.

Backed by a stiff enough breeze though, the 'Boro finished in style and while James Stephens can have qualms about a late disallowed goal from Ed Lauhoff, they were left disappointed when Fitzpatrick knocked over a stunning winner on the sideline.

The 'Boro full forward had only just missed a scoreable free when he appeared to cramp up when hitting the sliotar, but the youngster showed huge character to knock over a much more difficult attempt a couple of minutes later.

James Stephens flew out of the blocks with the opening four points as Stephen Manogue, Ed McDermott and Sean Casey all found their range.

Ed Lauhoff also had a shot saved in the first attack of the game so when Dicksboro got off the mark in the 8th minute, it was certainly needed.

Michael Stynes got that opening point for the 'Boro and he soon doubled his tally on the back of a Stephen Manogue free for the Village.

James Stephens continued to make the running though and when McDermott and Jacob Breslin both pointed they led 0-7 to 0-2.

Dicksboro then got the game's opening goal in the

15th minute when Killian Dollard brilliantly batted a shot past Daniel Power.

The goal got the 'Boro back within two points but with Manogue, Bill and Ed McDermott all splitting the posts, the Village led 0-10 to 1-3 at the break.

The four point margin moved out to five at the start of the second half when Sean Bergin took advantage of a loose pass in the 'Boro defence.

A Fitzpatrick free from distance kept the 'Boro in the fight and their belief only grew stronger when Ross Doyle flicked a dangerous Fitzpatrick sideline cut to the net.

Fitzpatrick and Brian Moore then combined for quickfire points to edge the 'Boro in front (2-6 to 0-11).

James Stephens had squandered a number of goal scoring opportunities by this point but the net finally rattled when Lauhoff and Ed McDermott linked up before Manogue found the top corner.

The 'Boro didn't lie down though as Fitzpatrick took to the stage with a 55th minute goal.

Extra-time looked a possibility when Andy Murphy equalised but Fitzpatrick had other ideas when hitting the late match winning score.

Dicksboro: Tom O'Neill, Nathan Pollard, Max Doyle, Christy Treacy-Murphy, Louis Raggett, Evan Murphy, David Fitzpatrick; Tom McPhillips, Brian Moore, Killian Dollard (1-0), Ross Doyle (1-0), Michael Stynes (0-3), James Brennan-Smith, Billy Fitzpatrick (1-4, 3f), Donnchadh Hennessy.

Subs: Patrick Lacey for Brennan-Smith (37), Bill O'Shea for Pollard, (50), Mark Cleere for Dollard, (57).

James Stephens: Daniel Power, Noah Manogue, Stephen Power-Kellet, Billy Wall-Young, Joe Greene, Sean Deely, Oisín Bateman, Sean Bergin (0-1), Bill McDermott (0-1), Ed Lauhoff, Stephen Manogue, (1-4, 2f, 1/65), Ed McDermott (0-3), Daniel Ring, Jacob Breslin (0-1), Sean Casey (0-1).

Subs: James Bergin for Deely, (36), Andy Murphy (0-1) for Ring (46), Ruairi Harrison for Greene, (52), Bill Whelan for Breslin, 59 mins; Alan Larkin for Casey 61).

Referee: John Kennedy (Shamrocks)