

FOOTBALL >> Intermediate Championship Final

Ballyvaughan's bragging rights



Ballyvaughan 0-10 - Michael Cusack's 0-8



at Cusack Park, Ennis

Joe O Muircheartaigh

BALLYVAUGHAN'S greatest day – the day that will never grow old, just grow better with every passing day whenever anyone from Clare football's most northerly outpost reflects on this famous victory.

It carried with it the Talty Cup, but also senior football 90 years after Ballyvaughan/Fanore football was first put on the map with Paddy O'Donoghue's appearance for Clare in the All-Ireland senior final.

And they deserved it, if only because of their heart for battle. They worked harder than Michael Cusack's, who added another chapter to their long-running county final night-

mare. Three final losses on the trot in 2001, '02 and '03 were bad enough, but losing a fourth in six years to their near neighbours was the worst of all, especially as they contributed to their own downfall.

Yet again, in the hour of greatest need Michael Cusack's shooting failed them. They hit 15 wides and with those missed opportunities went their hopes of winning a first intermediate title in 24 years.

It gave Ballyvaughan the greatest opportunity of their football lives, but they still had to go on and win the game. They did that thanks to a combination of raw courage, dogged defence and the performance of John Martyn up front.

The full-forward was the man apart, kicking seven points over the hour and having a lead part in two more scores that carried his side over the line with a couple of points to spare. Martyn was the great conductor – the marquee performer whose performance will forever be indelibly linked to this storied success.

This local derby contest quickly settled into a pattern – Michael Cusack's had plenty of possession and did all day, but it was Ballyvaughan who used their possession to much greater advantage. They got scores from limited ball, Michael Cusack's didn't with plenty of ball.

Cusack's had four wides inside ten minutes, a malaise that haunted them

all through. Contrast this to Ballyvaughan who weathered the early storm to settle with two John Martyn points inside 13 minutes.

Michael Cusack's best period of the half came between the 14th and 18th minutes when Michael Jordan, Michael Hynes and Pat Davoren pointed to put them 0-4 to 0-2 clear. This is when they could have kicked on, but instead the kick came from Ballyvaughan with four more John Martyn points before half-time.

It was the foundation of Ballyvaughan's day – they had the scent of victory and never lost it for the hour. They led 0-6 to 0-4 at half-time, then John Martyn robbed John Conroy of possession and teed up Jack Quagley

for the opening point of the second half.

Cusack's were in dire straits, a situation that finally roused them to life. They started dominating midfield and as a result chance after chance presented itself. And, though the wides mounted, points by Michael Jordan, Clive Earley and Pat Davoren had the game delicately poised at 0-7 each entering the last 15 minutes.

Ballyvaughan looked as if they'd be swamped in the rising blue and gold tide, but somehow they stood defiant in defence and raided up the field to land two precious points. John Martyn lofted over a 45 yard free in the 46th minute. Two minutes later Kevin Carrucan scored a booming point from play.

These were the defining scores, giving Ballyvaughan a two-point cushion as they faced the siege of the last ten minutes. It was lifted in the 57th minute when a brilliant run by Phelim Coyne teed up corner-back Sean McNamara who finished the move with the outside of his boot.

There was no denying Ballyvaughan now, even though Michael Hynes pegged a point back in the 62nd minute, a minute after his brother Kenneth saw his goal effort blaze just inches wide.

Ballyvaughan had finally come of age and the champagne corks soon popped.

Left: Ballyvaughan's Kevin Carrucan is challenged by Michael Cusack's Tomás Kerin in action.

Eamon Ward

Match Details

Ballyvaughan

Damian McNamara (7), Mark Walsh (7), Philip Morris (7), Sean McNamara (7) (0-1), Mark O'Laughlin (7) Capt, Dermot Greene (7), Setanta Moran (6), James Hynes (5), Raymond Casey (7), Kevin Carrucan (7) (0-1), Slavie Hynes (6), Phelim Coyne (6), Jack Quagley (7) (0-1), John Martyn (5) (0-1, 5), Cillian Mahon (6) **Subs** Jason McDonagh (7) for Moran, Cam Walsh (6) for Slavie Hynes, Paul McDonagh (6) for Coyne.

Michael Cusack's

Eoin Farrell (7), John Conroy (7), Oliver Conway (6), Patrick O'Connor (6), Gerry Conway (6), Frinan Conway (7), Michael O'Connor (6), James Hynes (7), Michael Hynes (7) (0-2, 1), Shane Lee (6), Patrick Hynes (7), Kenneth Hynes (6), Michael Jordan (7) (0-2), Patrick Davoren (7) (0-2), Niall Quinn (7) (0-1), **Subs** Clive Earley (6) (0-1) for Michael O'Connor, Tomás Kerin (6) for Patrick Hynes.

Match Official

Rory Hickey (Enniscorthy)

Man Of The Match

John Martyn (Ballyvaughan)

John Martyn the musician is a cult figure and played Led Zeppelin in his day – similar cult status awaits John Martyn the footballer after his magnificent contribution to Ballyvaughan's greatest day. With him and his seven points they won the title, without him they'd have won nothing.

Why They Won

Ballyvaughan were way more direct when going forward, especially in the first half when they ran straight at the Michael Cusack's defence. It gave them the platform to go on and win their first ever title. Then their backs dug very deep to weather the Michael Cusack's storm in the second half. The rest is Ballyvaughan history.

