

FOOTBALL > JUNIOR A CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP 1 ROUND 2

Early scores push Cusack's past Cratloe

Michael Cusack's 3-12 Cratloe 2-05

At Pairc Finne, Corofin

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WITH neighbours Ballyvaughan maintaining their perfect start to advance to the last eight on Saturday, the gauntlet was thrown down for Michael Cusack's to follow suit 24 hours later to set up a derby group decider in a fortnight's time.

And in truth, the result was never really in any doubt once Ruaidhri McMahon flicked to the net in the third minute to wipe out Damien Browne's opening point as by the time the wing-forward snatched Cratloe's second in the 25th minute, Michael Cusack's would be out of sight thanks to a 2-7 unanswered rally.

In contrast to a lacklustre display in their last visit to Corofin for the Division 4 League Final three weeks previously, this time Cusack's were a far slicker side, with their movement and support play a clear step ahead of their younger opponents.

In particular, playmaker Pat Hynes, Hugh Kelly, Shane Lee and Colm Davoren were pivotal to their relentless attacking waves and while there was a considerable dip in intensity and discipline in the second period, that was perhaps inevitable after leading by 16 points just after the break.

On the flip side, Cratloe were without a third of the side that began the championship against Ballyvaughan but having hit the woodwork three times including what seemed a certain goal, the interval lead did slightly flatter their North Clare opponents.

Michael Cusack's were the more clinical side throughout though, with McMahon's opening goal quickly followed by points for Hynes (2), Davoren and Lorcan O'Grady while also seeing a second McMahon chance flash just wide of the right post.

A comedy of errors should have resulted in a Cratloe goal in the tenth minute only for Jack Danaher to canon his effort off the post with the goal at his mercy.

A succession of wides at either end was soon forgotten when John Fawle weaved his way through to find the net in the 17th minute, with Hynes, Davoren and a superb interception, counter-attacking point from Taidh Geoghegan powering their side to a 2-7 to 0-1 advantage by the 23rd minute.

Wing-back Sean O'Gorman was the only real source of defiance for Cratloe through his relentless runs upfield, one of which ended with Pdraigh Chaplin somehow denied by an excellent full length save by goalkeeper Eoin Farrell.

They did finally hone their radar to break a 23 minute barren period with late points from Browne and Daithi Collins but even that was surpassed by a rampant Cusack's as Hynes (2) and Davoren carved out an untouchable 2-10 to 0-03 half-time lead.

So when Ruaidhri McMahon soloed through for his second goal in the opening minute of the new half, Michael Cusack's were expected to rack up a handsome tally. However, it didn't exactly work out that way as an inevitable Cratloe backlash with the conditions allied to fatigue ensured that they would only score two more points for the remainder.

Instead, Cratloe were boosted by driving runs from O'Gorman and Daithi Collins, the latter bursting through in the 35th minute before setting up Pdraigh Chaplin to pass across the square for Danaher to touch to the net.

Five minutes later, an almost identical move initiated by Collins saw Chaplin just clear the crossbar at 3-10 to 1-04 but they were far too profligate to ever trouble Cusack's.

Hugh Kelly and Browne traded points before Hynes capped off an excellent, controlling display with his sixth point in the 51st minute.

Cratloe did get a late consolation when Collins flicked the ball past Farrell for Jamie Arthur to finish to the net but while their championship hopes have faded, they still need to rally against Cooraclare in the final round just to avoid entering the relegation play-offs.

Michael Cusack's

Eoin Farrell; Robbie Hunt, Paddy Connors, Fergal O'Grady; Taidh Geoghegan (0-1), Shane Lee, Mark Earley; John Fawle (0-1), Hugh Kelly (0-1); Ruaidhri McMahon (2-0), Patrick Hynes (0-6, 3f), Lorcan O'Grady (0-1); Eoin Kelly, Colm Davoren (0-3), Gerard Flaherty
Subs Cathal Murray for Flaherty (40), Conor Fahy for L O'Grady (49), Pdraigh Fahy for McMahon (52), Tomas Fahy for Hunt (54)

Cratloe

Eoin O'Kelly; Richie Murray, Killian Arthur, Emmet Costigan; Evan Keogh, Pakie O'Gorman, Sean O'Gorman; Daithi Collins (0-1), Ciaran O'Connor; Enda O'Connor; Jamie Arthur (1-0), Damien Browne (0-3, 2f); Pdraigh Chaplin (0-1), Jack Danaher (1-0), Sean Ryan
Subs Mark O'Brien for Costigan (48), Keith Murray for E. O'Connor (52)

Man of the Match

Patrick Hynes (Michael Cusack's)

Referee Pat Cosgrove (Corofin)

Right: Man of the Match, Michael Cusack's Patrick Hynes. Willie O'Reilly



Walsh fires Ballyvaughan to victory over Cooraclare

Ballyvaughan 2-14 Cooraclare 1-08

At Ennistymon

BALLYVAUGHAN are quarter-final bound after a determined start to the second period saw them overturn a stubborn Cooraclare challenge on Saturday evening.

Backed by a brace of goals from wing-back Marc Walsh and big scoring contributions from Adrian Nilan (5), midfielders James Hynes (3) and James Howard along with Donncha Mahon, the North Clare side would welcome the conditions to reverse a 0-7 to 0-6 half-time deficit and move

1-12 to 0-07 clear. And yet they can be also grateful to Damien McNamara for keeping Cooraclare at bay as the goalkeeper prevented a goal just before half-time before repeating the dose twice more in the new half.

Indeed, Cooraclare can count themselves unlucky not to be further ahead by the break as despite points from Sean O'Neill and Damien Roche along with an impressive showings from Dermot Tubridy, Kieran Hassett and Ciaran Chambers,

they only led by the minimum at the break.

Ballyvaughan took over on the restart though and while Tubridy did pull back a goal, it would be answered by the raiding Marc Walsh as Ballyvaughan teed up a juicy final round showdown with Michael Cusack's for top spot in Group 1 in two week's time.

Meanwhile, Cooraclare face a must-win relegation avoider against Cratloe.

Ballyvaughan

Damien McNamara; Adam Walsh, Kieran Casey, John Mooney; Hynes; Philip Quailly, Sean McNamara, Marc Walsh; James Hynes, James Howard; Neil Walsh, Donncha Mahon, Phelim Kyne; Adnan Nilan, Raymond Casey, Martin Howard
Subs Ronan Fahy for M. Howard, Cormac McGann for N. Walsh, Tomás Francis for Mahon, John Linnane for Kyne, William McGann for Nilan

Cooraclare

Mark Lillis; Colm Morrissey, Kieran Hassett, Gearoid Kelly; Davy Martin, Jason Lillis.

Ciaran Chambers; James Chambers, Dermot Tubridy; Sean O'Neill, Caoimhin Donnellan, Tadhg Lillis; Kevin Hedigan, Donal O'Grady, Damien Roche
Subs Senan O'Sullivan for Roche, John Consideine for O'Neill, Ronan Carroll for Kelly

Man of the Match

Marc Walsh (Ballyvaughan)

Referee Pat Cosgrove (Corofin)