

## FOOTBALL ▶ JUNIOR A CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP 1 ROUND 3

## Late goals seal wholehearted derby

Ballyvaughan 2-11 Michael Cusack's 0-12

At Pairc Finne, Corofin

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IT SHOULDN'T have mattered as much as it clearly did as Ballyvaughan and Michael Cusack's played out the quintessential derby encounter on Saturday evening.

Despite both been already through to the quarter-finals, it was certainly no place for the faint of heart or soft of shoulder either for that matter as this teak tough neighbourly bout was level on four occasions before Jamie Hynes irrevocably altered the narrative with a brace of final quarter goals in the space of seven minutes to hand Ballyvaughan the local bragging rights.

And in truth, goals aside, Ballyvaughan just about deserved victory as they were the far more efficient side in front of goal, had more options from the bench and could rely on the freetaking expertise of Jonah Culligan while wholehearted midfielder Hynes proved an inspirational figure throughout.

James Howard, Phelim Coyne and Raymond Casey also battled admirably as crucially Ballyvaughan never let their opponents to get ahead at any stage of the contest.

Shane Lee led the Michael Cusack's charge alongside Hugh Kelly, Pat Connors, Aidan McNamara and Mark Earley. Essentially however, with the wind behind them entering the second half and backed by two points in the opening minute to reclaim parity, they failed to capitalise on their patent momentum.

That frustration would also surface just after Jamie Hynes' opening goal as Lee set up Eoin Kelly for a glorious goal chance that would canon off the crossbar and over.

They weren't to know at the time but that would be Cusack's final opportunity at redemption as only four minutes later Hynes raided for his second goal to effectively seal top spot in Group 1.

While the second half was a more open end-to-end contest, the opening period proved a hard-hitting battle of attrition that Ballyvaughan always seemed to edge, thanks in the main to the quality of Culligan's freetak-

ing.

Indeed, following a foul on Hynes, the county senior would convert his first placed ball from 40 metres after only 45 seconds of the throw-in. It took Michael Cusack's four minutes to answer through Shane Lee but they could have added a goal soon afterwards following a flowing move involving Hugh Kelly, Mark Earley, Lee and Aidan McNamara whose handpass across the square was flicked by Eoin Kelly, only for goalkeeper Damien McNamara to somehow palm it away.

It was a let-off that Ballyvaughan quickly learned from as they kicked four of the next five points through Culligan (2), Donnchadh Mahon and Phelim Coyne to move 0-5 to 0-2

clear by the 19th minute.

Shane Lee conjured up a point while Pat Hynes arrowed over a 35 metre free but Ballyvaughan would resist once more just in time for the break as Jonah Culligan earned and then curled over a superb 40 metre free from the right wing to hand his side a 0-6 to 0-4 advantage.

With a chance to regroup and the wind to come, Michael Cusack's stormed into the new half with points from Lee and Aidan McNamara within a minute of the throw-in while the latter also dragged a goal chance just wide of the far post only minutes later.

Indeed, as tensions heightened, both sides passed up scoring opportunities but Ballyvaughan refused to

yield and after a pacy counter-attack involving Sean McNamara and Philip Queally, Culligan was fouled for a 20 metre free that he gladly scored to nudge his side back in front by the two-thirds mark.

From the kick-out, an Aidan McNamara delivery broke for Ruaidhri McMahon to equalise and that pattern would be repeated when McNamara matched a sixth Culligan free at 0-8 to 0-8 by the 43rd minute.

However, Ballyvaughan would grab the decisive first goal in the next passage of play when Raymond Casey gathered a Coyne delivery to tee up the onrushing Hynes to nestle a shot into the right corner of the net.

To their credit, a determined Cusack's hit back almost immediate-

ly once more but after Eoin Kelly played a one-two with captain Lee, his powerful effort agonisingly crashed off the crossbar and over at 1-8 to 0-9.

A relieved Ballyvaughan would never look back, with Culligan denied by a superb Eoin Farrell save before taking a free, with the final nail in Cusack's coffin coming in the 51st minute when an ill-advised handpass across goal was intercepted by the relentless Hynes who punished with a second goal to power his side six clear.

Again Michael Cusack's would rally predominantly through Lee who earned a free for Pat Hynes to point, kicked a second himself to tee up Hugh Kelly while nailing a third free to halve the arrears to just three by the 56th minute.

However, they would not get the opportunity to make a full reprieve as Culligan and James Howard converted two late placed balls amidst a heated finale to protect their perfect start to the championship.

**BALLYVAUGHAN** Damien McNamara; Adam Walsh, Kieran Casey, John Mooney Hynes; Mark Walsh, Sean McNamara, Philip Queally; James Howard (0-1 '45), Jamie Hynes (2-0); Jonah Culligan (0-8), Donnchadh Mahon (0-1), Phelim Coyne (0-1); Neil Walsh, Raymond Casey, Scion Flanagan  
**Subs** Ronan Fahy for Mooney Hynes (24), Cormac McGann for N. Walsh (HT), Joe O'Loughlen for Flanagan (HT), William McGann for Mahon (48), Martin Howard for R. Casey (54), Thomas Francis for O'Loughlen (61, inj)

**MICHAEL CUSACK'S** Eoin Farrell; Seaghan Brosnan, Patrick Connors, Robert Hunt; Taidh Geoghegan, Lorcan O'Grady, Mark Earley; Hugh Kelly (0-1), John Fawle (0-1); Ruaidhri McMahon (0-1), Pat Hynes (0-2), Aidan McNamara (0-2); Eoin Kelly (0-1), Colm Davoren, Shane Lee (0-4, 1f)  
**Subs** Fergal O'Grady for Brosnan (39), Gerard Flaherty for Fawle (49)

**Man of the Match**  
Jamie Hynes (Ballyvaughan)

**Referee** Pat Cosgrove (Corofin)

**Left:** Michael Cusack's Mark Early tackles Ballyvaughan's Jonah Culligan  
Photograph Willie O'Reilly



## FOOTBALL ▶ JUNIOR A ROUND UP

With six of the quarter-finalists already known before the weekend's final round, all eyes were on Group 4 on Saturday evening as the Banner, Kiltrush and St Joseph's Miltown were all vying for second spot behind St Joseph's Doora/Barefield. In the end, it lived up to expectations as both games went against the odds as the Banner saw off the group winners by four points while Kiltrush also prevailed by 2-09 to 1-10, only to miss out on a last eight place by means of a two point score difference.

It was much more straight-forward in Group 3 as Lissycasey maintained their

perfect start to the championship thanks to Cian Meaney's clinching goal with a 1-9 to 2-3 victory over injury-ravaged neighbours Clondegad on Wednesday evening who eventually had to concede second best after losing three players from their already threadbare squad.

It left Monday's tie between Ennistymon and Killimer as a shoot-out for the second quarter-final place, one which Killimer took literally as they fired five goals, four in the first half alone to overcome the North Clare side by 5-07 to 1-10.

The remaining ties were merely relegation avoiders as Clooney-Quin raided for a

brace of first half goals through Michael Corry and Adrian Fleming to consolidate their Junior A status with a 2-10 to 1-02 victory over Meelick on Saturday evening. And it was a similar story for Cratloe who survived a late scare from Cooraclare. Cratloe appeared to cruising to their first points following a third quarter goal from Padraigh Chaplin, only for Cooraclare to grab two late goals and only miss out by two at 1-14 to 2-09.

It means that Cooraclare, Meelick, Clondegad and St Joseph's Miltown will contest the Junior A relegation play-offs in a fortnight's time.

## JUNIOR A CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP 1

Team	P	W	D	L	SD	Pts
Ballyvaughan	3	3	0	0	+23	6
Michael Cusack's	3	2	0	1	+10	4
Cratloe	3	1	0	2	-17	2
Cooraclare	3	0	0	3	-16	0

## JUNIOR A CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP 2

Eire Og	3	3	0	0	+35	6
Kilmurry Ibrickane3	2	0	1	+40	4	
Clooney-Quin	3	1	0	2	-11	2
Meelick	3	0	0	3	-64	0

## JUNIOR A CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP 3

Lissycasey	3	3	0	0	+5	6
Killimer	3	2	0	1	+18	4
Ennistymon	3	1	0	2	+1	2
Clondegad	3	0	0	3	-24	0

## JUNIOR A CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP 4

St Joseph's D/B	3	2	0	1	+13	6
Banner	3	1	1	1	-10	3
Kiltrush Shamrocks	3	1	1	1	-12	3
St Joseph's Miltown	3	1	0	2	+9	2