

MUNSTER CLUB IHC FINAL



History makers: Effin's starting team that beat Ballyduff to win the Munster intermediate title on Sunday

Magic day as brilliant Effin claim historic Munster title

Effin	0-14
Ballyduff	0-11

Jerome O'Connell
In Newcastle West

THE scenes of celebration at the final whistle told the story as the Effin journey reached another milestone.

Everything that is great about the GAA was rolled into one memorable occasion as the small south Limerick parish again defied the odds.

Close to 6,000 packed into a superbly organised Newcastle West venue for a pulsating final, full of thrills and spills.

It was a day for honesty and determination, skill and motivation, pride and purpose and all were to be found in abundance in the Effin men.

It's hard to fathom that just two years ago they were left shattered after a second county junior final defeat in three years.

But that pain has spurred the men from the Cork border to heights they could never have imagined.

County junior honours was the dream.

At the fourth attempt they finally collected that silverware and the confidence gained from finally breaking their duck has propelled them to greater heights.

Stretching their unbeaten run in Limerick to 15 games saw them crowned intermediate champions at the first attempt and then they felled the Waterford and Tipperary champions to secure a Munster final spot.

The bookies made Effin the 5-2 outsiders against the Kerry senior kingpins. But Effin are getting used to bucking the trend. Munster intermediate club hurling champions has a nice ring to it but already Effin are dreaming of Croke Park appearance next February.

Just like South Liberties in 2009, this Munster crown was hard earned.

Perhaps it was nerves but the Limerick side were slow to settle and were three points in arrears after six minutes.

All three came from Pat Joe Connolly as Jerry Wallis (former Limerick senior coach) set up Ballyduff with a two-man full forward line and an extra man in defence.

But Ger Power and Peter Finn altered their team with captain John P O'Donnell putting the shackles on the dangerman and the extra man out the field was nullified.

By the 21st minute the sides were level 0-4 each with one man dragging Effin back into contention - Nickie Quaid. Three times he stood over placed balls from distance and all three found the range to settle his

team-mates.

And, wow, did they respond in style with John Dillon, Damien Moloney, Patrick Carroll and James O'Donnell thundering into the contest.

Timmy Rea almost saw a shot sneak into the net but it was to be another teenager Darren Sheehy that had their opening score from play in the 16th minute. But any chance to snatch the lead was ruined by a run of wides and balls dropping into the goalkeeper.

Back came Ballyduff and three unanswered points regained the initiative for the Kerry men.

Indeed a long delivery from Ally O'Connor came back off the upright and caused consternation in the Effin goalmouth before being scrambled clear. Up the field went Effin and a superb individual score from Damien Moloney brought the large support to life.

Thomas Quaid landed two frees and the sides went to the dressing room with just the minimum to divide them. Effin have displayed their best in most second halves this season and again this proved true. Key was a switch to bring Timmy Rea to wing forward and he notched three points in the half from play.

With Ballyduff suffering with inaccuracy, Effin stole a march with Quaid (free), Rea and sub Enda Kelly getting points in the opening 10 minutes.

With Nickie Quaid and his defence now dominant, Effin continued to press forward and perhaps should have had more scores but another free from Thomas Quaid increased the lead to three entering the final quarter.

With the winning line in sight, Effin could have been guilty of retreating into defence and Mikey and Aidan Boyle hit points to renew Ballyduff hopes.

At 0-11 to 0-10 with under 10 minutes to play, next score was key. It came from Rea and Damien Moloney added another to leave Ballyduff chasing a goal. They had to be content with a point but Rea then sealed the famous win with an injury time point.

SCORERS - Effin: Thomas Quaid 0-4 (all frees), Timmy Rea and Nickie Quaid (two frees, one '65) 0-3 each, Damien Moloney 0-2, Darren Sheehy and Enda Kelly 0-1 each. **Ballyduff:** Pat Joe Connolly and Mikey Boyle 0-3 each, Aidan Boyle and Bobby O'Sullivan (two frees) 0-2 each, Barry O'Grady 0-1.

EFFIN - Danny O'Donoghue; John P O'Donnell (capt), John Dillon, Andrew Dillon; Michael O'Donnell, Nickie Quaid, Michael Rea; James O'Donnell, Patrick Carroll; Piersie O'Kelly, Damien Moloney, Conor Kearney; Thomas Quaid, Timmy Rea, Darren Sheehy. **Subs:** Enda Kelly for Piersie O'Kelly (29mins), Hugh O'Neill for Darren Sheehy (44mins). **BALLYDUFF** - PJ O'Gorman; Jason Bowler, Paud Costello, David O'Grady; Ally O'Connor (capt), Padraig O'Grady, Liam Boyle; Bobby O'Sullivan, Barry O'Grady; Gary O'Brien, Aidan Boyle, Padraig Boyle; Pat Joe Connolly, Mikey Boyle, Anthony O'Carroll. **Subs:** John Paul Leahy for Anthony O'Carroll (42mins), David Goulding for David O'Grady (57mins), Thomas O'Rourke for Padraig Boyle (59mins). **REFEREE** - Michael Wadding (Waterford).



Supporting act: Samantha O'Keeffe, Shauna Treacy and Paul Treacy (left) and Lily Barrett (right)



No job too small: Joan Moloney is on water duty (left) while right Effin chairman Ger Power is congratulated by photographer John Mortell



PICTURES: OWEN SOUTH

'Dream stuff' as Effin fairytale continues

Jerome O'Connell

"THIS is only fairytale stuff," beamed winning coach Peter Finn as the celebrations got under way in earnest.

"When you see the amount of people here - there are not that many people in Effin!" said Finn as the Effin support invaded the pitch.

"These guys have caught the imagination of everyone. When I went to Effin, Mike Kelly was manager and I met the boys and said I would give them two years and hopefully we would be good enough to win the Limerick junior championship in the two years - now winning the Munster intermediate championship is dream stuff," said Bruree native Finn.

"It's all down to the players - you can't do anything unless the players want to do it. There is character in the team from number one to number 27 - different fellas stand up to the plate everyday," outlined the coach, who

works with manager Ger Power and selectors Denis O'Donovan and Jim Byrnes.

"They have desperate heart - I said to the boys at half time that we had a chance. We were poor in the first half and lucky we were only a point down - Ballyduff had a good few wides. In the second half we put the shoulder to the wheel and once we got on top I was confident because we haven't conceded too much this season and once we didn't concede a goal I knew we would win."

Winning captain John P O'Donnell was loud in praise of the entire panel.

"It's a fantastic team effort - Nickie, John, Tommy, Damien are all fantastic players down the middle but it's a team effort and it always has been over the last couple of years and thanks be to the god it is starting to pay off," said O'Donnell.

"We are a fantastic bunch of hurlers and the effort and heart that these fellas have shown is unbelievable,"

said the corner back.

"Over the last couple of weeks in all the matches we were able to claw out these kinds of results from tight matches - a lot of that is down to the training with Peter Finn. It's always fierce intensity and hard and that's after standing to us in tight games because we are able to pull it out."

O'Donnell has now lifted the county and Munster intermediate trophies.

"I'm a bit surprised but to tell you the truth I always knew we had this in us." He continued: "In fairness a great habit we are after developing is to win these tight matches and its standing to us."

"We knew coming down here that this was going to be the toughest battle of the last couple of years. I think for the first five or 10 minutes we were a bit nervous. I know Peter was telling us that it was just another game but definitely they tried to blitz us in the first few minutes but we never panicked."