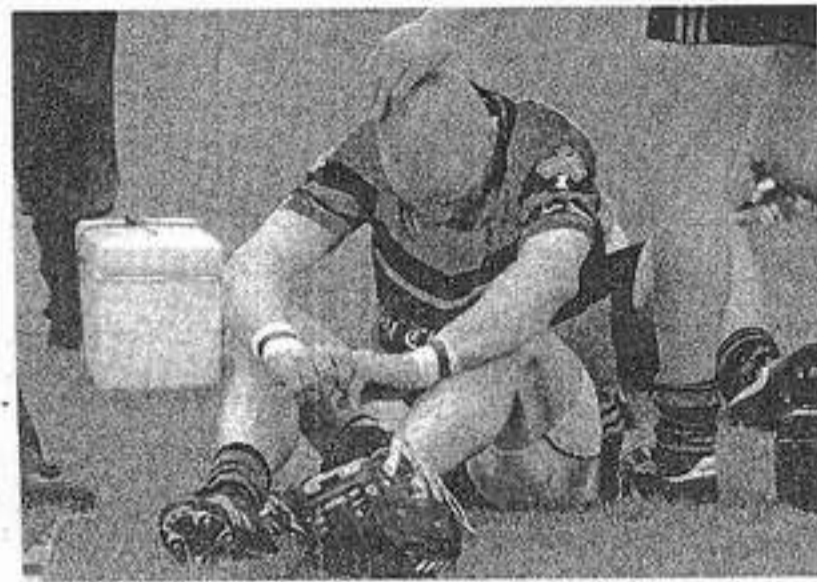


GAA LIMERICK SENIOR HURLING CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

County Final Diary

Kilmallock crowned



There was county final disappointment for Adare's Wayne McNamara last Sunday

Kenneally is lucky 13th for The Balbec

■ IT was lucky 13th for Kilmallock when sub Kieran Kenneally pointed their insurance score in injury-time in Sunday's final.

With the final score of the game, Kenneally became their 13th player to score in their six games in the championship.

Free-taker Eoin Ryan ends the year as their top scorer with 0-31 (10 from play).

He just held off Graeme

Mulcahy, who failed to score for the first time in Sunday's final.

Jake Mulcahy, Paudie O'Brien and Kevin O'Donnell scored from play in all six games.

Kilmallock's combined scoring for the championship was 11-116, while they conceded 9-63.

In total Kilmallock used 24 players enroute to the title out of their panel of 27.

Kilmallock to host Munster club game

■ Kilmallock will have home advantage for their Munster club championship quarter-final on October 28. Club secretary John O'Donnell confirmed that it will be their intention to play the game in Fitzgerald Park, just as they did in 2010 when they lost narrowly to Thurles Sarsfields.

And, Thurles it could be again as they play Drom & Inch in the Tipperary final next Sunday.

If Kilmallock were to progress to the semi-final they would have to travel to Cork to play Sarsfields in the provincial semi-final on November 11.

In the other side of the draw, the Clare champions (Inagh-Kilnamona, Newmarket-on-Fergus, Clonlara or Cratloe will have home advantage against either Dungarvan or De La Salle (Waterford).

Kilmallock will defend a new-look championship

■ When Kilmallock set out on the defence of their Limerick SHC title next year it will be a changed championship.

It has been confirmed that there will be a number of proposals from clubs to restructure the championship. Indeed Lifting The Treaty 2 is coming down

the pipeline from the County Board Executive and that calls for a 12-team championship.

What appears almost certain is that there won't be any divisional team in the 2013 championship. There will be groups with no one calling for a return to straight knockout.

No joy for O'Connell twins

■ There was no joy for Adare's O'Connell twins last Sunday.

Andy was introduced as a first half substitute for Adare but couldn't help them to overcome Kilmallock in the Limerick SHC final.

Across the water in Ruislip, Steven lined out at corner back for Kilburn Gaels in the London SHC final. They were beaten by a last minute goal from St Gabriels, 1-14 to 2-8.

Former Hospital-Herbertstown attacker Donie Reale lined out at corner forward and scored 1-2 (0-2frees) for Kilburn Gaels.



Jerome O'Connell
In the Gaelic Grounds

Kilmallock	1-15
Adare	0-15

FROM the outset of the Limerick's Live 95FM sponsored county senior hurling championship Kilmallock were a short price to claim their 10th title.

As the season progressed their odds only got shorter.

An impressive semi-final victory over defending champions Na Piarsaigh made Tony Considine's side the hottest of favourites in last Sunday's final against Adare.

But at half time all was not going according to plan for The Balbec.

But they came to life in the second half and a 46th minute goal from Jake Mulcahy proved the crucial score as they regained the title they won back in 2010.

Throughout 2012 the men in green displayed a fierce hunger to return to the top of the pile in Limerick club hurling.

They were simply awesome in wins over Knockainey, Murroe-Boher, Croom and Na Piarsaigh.

The only blip was against Ahane in their final group game, but Kilmallock were already pretty much assured their quarter-final place.

Last Sunday, the opening half was a worry for Kilmallock because they display was akin to that Ahane game and their usual intensity and drive was absent.

Indeed it was underdogs Adare that set the temp, belying any worries about the five county final debutantes in their team.

Kilmallock won the toss and opted to play against the wind in the hope of containing Adare and then pushing towards victory in the second half.

But Kilmallock appeared unsure of themselves in the early minutes.

Perhaps it was the tactical moves of Ger O'Loughlin that unsettled Kilmallock as Adare had clearly worked on switches to nullify the influence of Gavin O'Mahony, Paudie O'Brien and Graeme Mulcahy with the positioning of Declan Hannon, Wayne McNamara and Stephen Lavin.

In front of 4,800 Hannon set the ball rolling with a huge free from his own half.

Eoin Ryan (fee) replied but then Hannon snapped up possession and effortlessly pointed.

Paudie O'Dwyer was making early inroads at the other end of the field and replied to level the game for the second of four times in the half.

Frees from Hannon and Willie Griffin opened the first meaningful lead.

This brought Kilmallock to life and O'Dwyer, O'Brien, Shane O'Donnell and Robbie Egan were to point inside the next nine minutes.

That actually had Kilmallock 0-6 to 0-5 ahead with just over five minutes to half time, but aside from O'Dwyer and the excellent fielding of Egan, they weren't winning too many individual battles.

It was Adare that were to finish the half on top with three succession scores.

This period also saw them introduce two subs with Diarmuid Sexton and Andy O'Connell

IN BRIEF

MAIN MAN - DECLAN HANNON (ADARE)

Kilmallock had heroes in Robbie Egan, Gavin O'Mahony, Liam Hurley, Bryan O'Sullivan, Paudie O'Dwyer, Eoin Ryan and Paudie O'Brien, but none dominated for the entire hour.

The standout performer was Declan Hannon.

Himself, Wayne McNamara and Stephen Lavin put down a marker in the opening half winning key duels but it was Hannon that again stepped forward with two fine points after Kilmallock had goaled.

TURNING POINT

About 10-minutes into the second half when Adare were 0-11 to 0-8 ahead, Tony Considine made a crucial switch.

Graeme Mulcahy had hardly hurled a ball off Stephen Lavin in the opening 40-minutes but his withdrawal into midfield offered a new lease of life and the supply lines to the attack were re-opened.

Eoin Ryan was switched to full forward in the positional realignment and he revelled inside, scoring and assisting others in the final 20-minutes.

TALKING POINT

There was always going to be a fascinating tactical battle between Tony Considine and Ger O'Loughlin.

O'Loughlin appears to come out on top in the opening half when switching Wayne McNamara to midfield to nullify Paudie O'Brien and targeting Declan Hannon against Gavin O'Mahony and Stephen Lavin on Graeme Mulcahy.

But Considine cajoled his stars into action at half time and then in the second half trumped O'Loughlin when bring Mulcahy to midfield.

joining the attack.

The switches released John Fitzgibbon to wing forward and almost immediately he pointed to end 10-minutes without an Adare score.

Hannon followed up with two more frees to give them a 0-8 to 0-6 interval lead.

Although Adare led at the break five of their eight points came from frees and ultimately they never made serious inroads into the Kilmallock defence.

Although winning on the possession stakes Adare never managed to shake off Kilmallock and the teams were level on four occasions in the first half until the Ger O'Loughlin managed side hit the final three points of the half.

While playing second fiddle to Adare in the opening half, Kilmallock still managed to produce six different scorers and the last of those was Robbie Egan, who was their star performer in the first half in midfield.

Kilmallock were only two points down and had to wind to their backs in the second half but it was performance levels that was a worry for Tony Considine and his management team in the dressing room beneath the City End Terrace.

But on the resumption the inter-county men of Kilmallock came to the fore with captain Paudie O'Brien, Gavin O'Mahony and Graeme Mulcahy all inspiring their team.

The set out on the road to victory inside 60-seconds of the restart when Jake Mulcahy cut over a delightful line-ball between the posts from a narrow angle in front of the Open Stand.

Paudie O'Brien and Conor Fitzgerald then exchanged points to maintain the Adare lead 0-9 to 0-8 with five minutes played.

It was clear that a goal was going to make the difference and the first chance fell to Adare when Diarmuid Sexton was through on goal just five minutes into the second half.

But Barry Hennessy did well to block the close-range shot out for a '65.

Hannon pointed that '65 and when Wayne McNamara caught a puckout and fired over they were 0-11 to 0-8 clear with 20-minutes to play.

But when it came to the crunch, Kilmallock came to life and they hit the next five scores, including the crucial goal.

Their half back line was now on top and ball was constant into attack where Eoin Ryan was now at full forward after the withdrawal to



Happy days: Kilmallock celebrate their Limerick SHC final win over Adare in the Gaelic Grounds last Sunday.

midfield of Graeme Mulcahy.

The switch worked and Ryan scored from play and created one for Paudie O'Dwyer, who in turn set up Kevin O'Donnell.

That tied up the game 0-11 each as the stopwatch ticked into the final quarter.

A perfect time for a match-winning goal and it came the way of Kilmallock.

It wasn't a thing of beauty but in a crowded goalmouth, Ryan did well to flick the sliothar back across the goal into the path of Jake Mulcahy and he had time to steady himself but coolly finishing to the net along the ground for his first goal of the championship.

The scoring sequence was started by Ryan and when he pointed again a minute later there were 13-minutes to play and the favourites were now 1-12 to 0-11 clear.

Most would have expected them to push-on and copper-fasten the win but credit to Adare they dug into their resolve.

And, it was no surprise that it was Hannon that led the fight back.

Inter-county man Hannon was to end with 11-points (four from play) and despite finishing on the losing side; picked up the man of the match from championship sponsors, Limerick's Live 95FM.

They were almost 15-minutes without a score when he pointed in reply to the Kilmallock scoring spree.

Moments later he collected direct from a puckout and fired over again.

Now it was back to two points, 1-12 to 0-13.

LIMERICK LEADER Saturday, October 13, 2012

GAA LIMERICK SENIOR HURLING CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

champions again

'Sweet' victory buries the ghosts of 2011 for O'Dwyer

Jerome O'Connell
In the Gaelic Grounds

KILMALLOCK centre forward Paudie O'Dwyer believes that last Sunday's Limerick SHC success was "sweeter" than their 2010 win.

Two years ago The Balbec ended a 16-year wait to return the Daly Cup to the south Limerick town.

They were instantly the hot favorites to retain the title in 2011.

But all came a cropper at the quarter-final stage.

So all returned this year with much to prove. "This year is much sweeter than 2010. We were put down last year with people saying that we had won the county without beating the top teams - this year they were put up against us and we answered any critics," he said as the celebrations kicked off in the Gaelic Grounds.

"Last year we were disappointed when Patrickswell beat us. We weren't happy with that, that was us the players not management that lost that," he explained.

This year Kilmallock swept aside champions Na Piersaigh with a superb semi-final display.

But then had to contend with a 1/3 favorites tag to play Adare/

"It wasn't hard to refocus because if your in a county final your going to be focused," said O'Dwyer.

"It was a hard fought game but we knew that after the semi-final that to play Adare it would. They are at it four or five years and we knew that they were going to come out and go at it hell for leather. We fought hard and it was point for point for ages and luckily we got the goal."

He continued: "We would know a lot of the boys in the Adare team and they are strong boys. It was a strong physical game and we knew that

"This year is much sweeter than 2010. We were put down last year with people saying that we had won the county without beating the top teams"

comig in but there was no dirty stroke or pull. It was low scoring compared to the semi-final but there was a lot of hurling and some great scores".

The arrival of Tony Considine in Kilmallock ahead of the 2010 season brought Kilmallock along the final steps to glory after tasting defeat in the 2005 final.

For O'Dwyer it also brought about a switch from defence to attack.

"Two years ago we had got new management in and the rejig put confidence in us and we all train and all fight for 1-15. I am enjoying the hurling. They moved me up forwards for the last three years and it's all about training hard and making the team. We have a serious panel and in my book anyone could start," he explained.

Next up will be the Tipperary champions on October 28.

"Hopefully we can go on and represent Limerick well in the Munster championship," said O'Dwyer, who could be departing for Australia in the weeks after the Munster quarter-final.

He hopes that home advantage can play a part against the Tipperary winners.

"At least we can relax now and then regroup and I can't see why we can't give it a go. In 2010 we had a great turnout for the Thurles Sarsfields game with great support and hopefully it can be like that again in three week."



Captain Paudie O'Brien steadied the Kilmallock ship with a point but Adare weren't lying down and Hannon pointed from a '65 to again leave two between them.

Robbie Egan again relied and now it was clear Adare needed a goal.

The closest they came was an injury time free from Hannon but Hennessy diverted over. The centre forward stood over the free about 35-metres out and while a goal appeared unlikely he had no other choice with the game in injury-time. He blasted goalwards and despite a plethora of bodies the shot appeared destined for the roof of the net until Hennessy got a hurley to divert over.

Up the field went Kilmallock and with his first touch, sub Kieran Kenneally sealed their 10th county title.

SCORERS - Kilmallock: Jake Mulcahy 1-1, Paudie O'Brien, Paudie O'Dwyer, Eoin Ryan (lfree) 0-3 each, Robbie Egan 0-2, Kevin O'Donnell, Shane O'Donnell, Kieran Kenneally 0-1 each. **Adare:** Declan Hannon 0-11 (5frees, 2'65), Willie Griffin (free), John Fitzgibbon, Conor Fitzgerald, Wayne McNamara 0-1 each.**KILMALLOCK** - Barry Hennessy; Liam Hurley, Mark O'Loughlin, Kevin O'Mahony; Liam Walsh, Gavin O'Mahony, Bryan O'Sullivan; Robbie Egan, Paudie O'Brien, Jake Mulcahy; Paudie O'Dwyer, Eoin Ryan; Graeme Mulcahy, Kevin O'Donnell, Shane O'Donnell. Sub: Kieran Kenneally for Kevin O'Donnell (59mins).**ADARE** - Shane O'Donoghue; Jeff Lohan, Mike Clifford, Stephen Lavin; Paul Keane, Ross Kennedy, David Dillon; Jodie Hannon, Wayne McNamara; Conor Fitzgerald, Declan Hannon, Aidan O'Rahilly; Willie Griffin, John Fitzgibbon, Donnacha Sheehan. Sub: Diarmuid Sexton for O'Rahilly (24mins), Andrew O'Connell for Sheehan (32mins), Donnacha Sheehan for Fitzgerald (60mins).**REFEREE** - Declan O'Driscoll (Ballinacurra Gaels)

O'Brien dedicates latest title to the memory of U-14 hurler James Long

Jerome O'Connell

KILMALLOCK captain Paudie O'Brien dedicated their Limerick SHC to the memory of James Long.

The 13-year-old died of a suspected asthma attack in June just hours after scoring the winning goal in Kilmallock's U-14 win over Patrickswell.

"For me to have the opportunity to dedicate it to James Long was a huge honour and I have no doubt he looked down on us today and gave us a little push when we needed it," said O'Brien after collecting the Daly Cup.

"It was emotional for the whole town around that time - it wasn't easy back then and still isn't easy," explained O'Brien.

He said that Kilmallock's 10th county win might, somehow, lift the spirits in the town.

"It's not good economically and there are a lot of blues around the town. If you drove through the town the past week and see all the colour it was a big lift for everyone. Even look around here today its great for families to come in together," said the captain.

O'Brien revealed that some harsh words were

needed at half time to kick-start their victory.

"We weren't up to scratch in the first half - me more so than anyone. We all had to have a look at ourselves at half time and there were a few harsh words said," he explained.

Adare were 0-8 to 0-6 clear at the break.

"When we won the toss we always play against the wind because if you come in at half time and are a point or two down, I always feel we can pull through," he outlined.

"There wasn't much need to panic apart from the fact that some of our bigger players hadn't got going, me included but at the end of the day we are very very happy."

He agrees that the goal was vital.

"I felt when we got the goal that they wouldn't be able to eat into the three points," he said.

He paid tribute to their defence to hold out the Adare attack.

"When the ground comes softer you know that if you are giving away goals it will cost you and Adare conceded a goal and it won't be for us. We have come great lads in our full back line, even though we lost Philip O'Loughlin five minutes before the throw-in. But we had lads to come in and that's what you train for all year."