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Limerick Chronicle

THURSDAY, APRIL 29, 1965.

Gallant Limerick... "Died with their boots on" F.A.I. CUP FOR ROVERS

Re-play honours to losers

By DES HANRAHAN

SHAMROCK ROVERS 1 : LIMERICK 0
(Fullam)

ATTENDANCE, 20,000 : RECEIPTS, £3,050

GIVEN the luck of the draw in the European Cup Winners' Competition, Limerick will pack Dalymount Park. At least that was the impression gained from the reception given the Shannonsiders at the venue on Wednesday night when they thrilled their huge following with as gallant and skilful a showing as one could wish to see—a display that should have yielded victory instead of a 1-0 beating in the F.A.I. Cup final re-play.

Shamrock Rovers stepped up considerably on the form revealed in last Sunday's 1-1 draw, but Limerick, too, improved their game immeasurably, and the result was one of the greatest finals in the history of the competition.

There can hardly be any one in the big attendance who was not sorry for Ewan Fenton and his playing colleagues. To a man they rose after the match chanting "we want Ewan, we want Ewan". Fenton's tone after the game speech was simple—"We promised Rovers a good game, and I think we gave them just that."

Seconds earlier we heard Rovers' captain for the evening—Ronnie Nolan—"Limerick deserved at least a draw". And he meant it.

CRUEL LUCK

Twice in the first half the winners goalkeeper, Mick Smyth, was seen to bless himself as Al Finucane and Eddie Mulvey, in turn, had the cruellest of luck with golden chances. In the second half, Smyth was relieved to see a goal disallowed and again when his faulty kick-out rebounded off centre-half Tom Farrell's back end—just wide. Probably his closest call was a borderline case whether or not he was over the goal-line when Limericks were fighting desperately for an equaliser.

Do not run away with the idea that it was all Limerick. No, indeed, Rovers goal was a beauty, and unlike last Sunday, Limerick goalkeeper Kevin Fitzpatrick, was fully occupied. His was a majestic performance—a towering display with class written all over it.

"What does the future hold for Ewan Fenton, whose contract is due to expire on August 1st? Witness cannot, but whatever the ultimate decision, the Limerick player-manager can look back on Wednesday's performance as one of the greatest of his career. To say he never put a foot wrong is putting it mildly. He was in towering form."

A GEM

While Fenton's all round display gave full proof of his worthiness to possess an English Cup medal, his indirect free in the 32nd minute of the first half gave us the "inside" on the magnificent planning that he put into piloting Limerick's first appearance in the F.A.I. Cup final.

Rovers had a wall of players ten yards from the ball. Al Finucane gave the impression that he was taking the kick, but left it to Fenton instead. The player-manager ran as if he was going to have a bash at blasting Smyth into the life. Unsuspecting Rovers were caught flat-footed when the ball was slipped over so neatly to Mulvey, who tapped it on behind Rovers' backs. With Finucane running on to it, we had visions of a wonder goal, but he failed to reach the ball by only inches and it trickled outside.

Fenton was also in the lime-light 20 minutes from the end when he had a goal disallowed for offside.

"Ginger" O'Rourke, and Eddie Mulvey had near misses for Limerick.

Smyth had to go full length to save from Denis Linnane. This further emphasised Limerick's bad luck.

O'CONNELL BRILLIANT

Compare with the drawn game in which Limerick also had a goal disallowed, Rovers had one change, Tony O'Connell on the left wing for Liam Tuohy. O'Connell was on top of his form, and with Frank O'Neill on the other side again having an excellent game, the "Troops" were strongest on the wings.

Limerick played the eleven who finished the drawn game but there was a positional change. Dick O'Connor going the left wing and Denis Linnane crossing to the right.

O'Connor maintained last Sunday's sparkling form and Linnane showed marked improvement, but the number 7 spot is not his best position and one has to regret the absence of Michael Doyle—in hospital with a fractured leg sustained last Sunday. Had the amateur international left-winger been available, I have little doubt but that Limerick would have won.

The half-back line of Al Finucane, Ewan Fenton and Des McNamara made ribbons of Rovers inside trio. Finucane, at 22, one of the greatest prospects in the country, was again in thundering form; we have never seen a better Ewan Fenton and Des McNamara, too, was invaluable, blotting Jackie Mooney right out of the picture.

Add Kevin Fitzpatrick and Dick O'Connor and you have five players who shared the top honours.

Centre-forward Peter Mitchell was not as effective as he was in the first match, but he did not have the necessary support from the inside pair, "Ginger" O'Rourke and Eddie Mulvey. The latter's heading was first-rate, but he left the form shown against Drumcondra far behind and "Ginger" O'Rourke, apart from a second-half shot that topped the crossbar, has not by any means a happy evening.

The Limerick fulls, Joe Casey and Vincent Quinn, were unlucky to meet Frank O'Neill and Tony O'Connell on a night that the wings would have given the best fulls in the game the run-around. The youthful Quinn and seasoned hand Joe Casey stuck manfully to their tasks and, while playing second fiddle, they were not losing caste. None could have given more in the face of tremendous odds.

BREAK-NECK SPEED

The first half was contested at break-neck speed. We expected that there would be a slackening with the switching on of the lights, but the pace never flagged and Limerick fairly covered themselves in glory.

Referees supporters agreed that they had that measure of luck which is necessary to win a Cup final, and there the difference lay.

While Rovers could lay claim to the edge on the wings, their inside-men seldom counted. Dick O'Connor was Limerick's

best forward, but, in fairness to Mitchell, he had not anything like the support that he might have expected. However, he tried all the way and cannot be said to have played for defeat.

Tom Farrell, at centre-half, was Rovers best back, but Ronnie Nolan and Paddy Mulligan were not far behind. Farrell did make a slip that almost yielded a goal. His back-pass was intercepted by Eddie Mulvey, but the inside-right's shot was smothered before he could connect properly, and the ball went outside for a corner.

GAME TO THE LAST

It was a tribute to Limerick that no spectator left the ground before referee Sammy Spillane of Cork signalled full-time. And they were there with a great fighting chance all the way.

I doubt that any losers were given a greater reception than that accorded Limerick. The way the Dublin public rose to Fenton and his colleagues left no one in doubt that they had given first-class value.

On this reckoning, Limerick, provided they are lucky enough to draw one of the top teams in Europe for the Cup winners' bid, must give serious thought to playing the home leg at Dalymount Park. Close on 45,000 watched Limerick and Rovers in their Cup battles and they enjoyed every minute of the games.

For Shamrock Rovers it was their 16th time winning the F.A.I. Cup. Limerick can take heart from the fact that they could not have been beaten by a better League of Ireland side.

A MATCH FOR BEST

And so it is again a case of so near and yet so far for Limerick. However, they have proved that the break-through cannot be long delayed and that they are a match for any side in the League of Ireland.

To have beaten the League champions, Drumcondra, on their way to the final and to have forced Shamrock Rovers—Shield and Cup winners—to a back-to-the-wall stand before triumphing by the only goal, takes all the sting out of defeat.

Rovers goal resulted from Frank O'Neill's cross, which was returned by Tony O'Connell and headed home by Johnny Fullam, who had to dive grass high to do so.

Shamrock Rovers—Smyth; Keogh, Courtney, Nolan, Farrell, Mulligan; O'Neill, Mooney, Danne, Fullam, O'Connell.

Limerick—Fitzpatrick; Quinn, Casey; Finucane, Fenton, McNamara, Linnane, Mulvey, Mitchell, O'Rourke, O'Connor.

Referee—S. Spillane (Cork).

What could have "made" the night for Limerick, a goal by heart manager Ewan Fenton, had an unhappy ending. Fenton, who with Al Finucane had moved into the attack in an effort to pull the game out of the fire, was adjudged offside as goalkeeper Mick Smyth beaten all ends.

Assistance officers' election

Mr. Pat Walsh, A.O. Ballyhabill, was re-elected to the Executive Committee of the Irish Assistance Officers' Association, at the annual meeting of the association in Dublin on Saturday.

Mr. Walsh has been a prominent member of the association for many years, and played a big part in the organisation of the Limerick and other branch offices.

The Association are anxious for a change of title for Assistance Officers, and are to ask the Minister to give consideration to changing the name.

NEWMARKET	PERTH
2.00—	2.00—
RIOT ACT (4/6 f.) ... 1	SULTAN'S TURRET (5/2) ... *
Butomus (100/6) ... 2	ANGLE (9/2) ... 3
Wimpole Street (3/1) ... 3	Vernate (1/1 fav.) ... 3
All 6 ran.	Dead-heat for 1st.
	All 4 ran.
2.30—	2.30—
SKIPPON (5/2) ... 1	BAIE NOIR (2/5 f.) ... 1
King of Greece (11/10f.) ... 2	Kilrie Sunset (3/1) ... 2
Spearhead (20/1) ... 3	3 ran—only 2 finished.
All 7 ran.	
3.10—	3.10—
NIGHT OFF (9/2 fav.) ... 1	MORELAND JACK (10/11 f.) 1
Yant (9/1) ... 2	Betty Lou (7/2) ... 2
Mabel (22/1) ... 3	Angus M. (5/1) ... 3
All 16 ran.	All 5 ran.
	3.30—
	SAUNDY (7/2) ... 1
	Touch Line (5/2) ... 2
	Curry's Kin (10/1) ... 3
	All 6 ran.

LUDLOW	PUNCHESTOWN
2.00—	2.50—
GAY STUART (25/1) ... 1	MR. PHOENIX (100/8) ... 1
Shambles (15/2) ... 2	Flying Chariot (8/1) ... 2
High Venture (6/1) ... 3	Artie Find (10/1) ... 3
10 ran. No Return (5/2 f.).	Solly 3/1 fav. 12 ran.
2.30—	
MERRY KNIGHT (7/2) ... 1	
Nothing (9/2) ... 2	
Ulster Dale (10/11 fav.) ... 3	
All 5 ran.	
3.00—	
JOHNS-WORT (4/7 fav.) ... 1	
Lady In Waiting (10/1) ... 2	
Jamie Stuart (9/1) ... 3	
All 8 ran.	
3.30—	
LEYTON ORIENT (100/7) ... 1	
Royal Fioche (9/4f.) ... 2	
Valbus (4/1) ... 3	
All 12 ran.	

Victory—so near and yet so far

—But glory came with defeat

by TONY PURCELL

SO near and yet so far... That just about sums up Limerick's gallant but unsuccessful bid to capture their first F.A.I. Cup when they lost by the only goal to Shamrock Rovers in the re-play at Dalymount Park last night.

Over 4,000 sporting enthusiasts from many districts in Limerick City saw their representatives cover themselves in glory with a fighting display against the star-studded Rovers side, in a tremendously exciting cup struggle.

For the 20,000 crowd (gate receipts, £3,000) last night's replay was a real thriller, producing plenty of thrills, excitement and good football.

Shamrock Rovers just about deserved their 16th F.A.I. Cup success, but the players will be the first to admit that this was their toughest Cup decider in their illustrious history.

In defeat, Limerick were far from disheartened. The players, officials, and their most ardent supporters had every reason to feel proud. No wonder the team gave a wonderful display against their highly reputed opponents and contributed largely to a memorable game. Indeed, they brought honour to the City of Limerick.

LUCK THE DECIDER

Player-coach, Ewan Fenton, the man responsible for their great efforts, was delighted with his side's display, and said "with a wee bit of luck? they would have triumphed. This statement was perfectly true as the game was so closely contested that only "luck" decided the issue.

For Ewan Fenton, in particular, it was so near and yet so far. Having won an F.A.I. Cup medal with Blackpool in 1955, he just failed narrowly to add the F.A.I. Cup medal.

Nevertheless, he felt very proud of Limerick's great performance and wished the club the best of luck for the years ahead. He paid tribute to Rovers for their fine success and expressed the hope that it would be Limerick's turn next year.

Many local sporting enthusiasts showed their appreciation of Limerick's gallant bid by their glowing tributes to the players in the dressingroom after the game. Among them were Mr. Donogh O'Malley, Minister for Health, Mr. Tom O'Donnell, T.D., and well-known comedians Tom and Paschal.

FINE GESTURE

It is interesting to note that Mr. O'Malley paid a courtesy call on Mick Doyle at the Mater Hospital, Dublin, last night. Mick, who broke a leg for the fourth time in Sunday's drawn game, was very dejected because he missed last night's great tie. Efforts to have the 23-year-old amateur international left-winger present at the game failed.

We learn that he is making steady progress and is in a "comfortable" condition.

Some of his playing colleagues, too, visited the hospital and there was a very nice gesture on the part of Ewan Fenton, who flew out from Dublin Airport to Sardinia in Italy this morning with the Dublin Selection (including Limerick centre-forward Peter Mitchell). He made a presentation of his well-earned runners-up medal to this talented player, whose playing career has been badly hampered by this unfortunate injury.

Before Limerick followers departed from Kingsbridge Rail-Station late last night, they wished Ewan Fenton, the master-tactician, "bon voyage" to Italy and carried him shoulder high along the platform singing "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow" ... a tribute to his great efforts for soccer in Limerick.

REWARD

Local enthusiasts were proud of their representatives in defeat and feel sure that Limerick's efforts have given the game a great boost in the city and surrounding districts.

They certainly can take pride in the fact that they have made the most courageous bid ever by any League of Ireland side bidding for cup glory. Their gallant but unavailing efforts