



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1975



No. 4 for Limerick... Tony Meaney shoots home from the penalty spot.



The Limerick team that built up a commanding 4-0 lead in yesterday's League-Cup final, first leg. Standing, l. to r.: Des Kennedy, Tony Fitzgerald, Kevin Fitzpatrick, Joe O'Mahony, Denis Lymer, Tommy Irwin (12th man). In front: George Quinlivan, Gerry Duggan, Mick O'Mahony, Mick Ryan, Pat Nolan, Tony Meaney.

A GER DUGGAN DAZZLER

Super Limerick click and demolish Sligo 4-0

Photographs by: A. F. FOLEY

SPORTING VIEW

THE MUNGRET PROJECT - TIME FOR POSITIVE ACTION

Nobody disputes or doubts that Mick Crowe's ambition to purchase Mungret College and run it as a recreational and sporting complex for the people of Ireland is a very worthy one indeed.

But what is equally obvious is that one task facing Mr. Crowe and his committee is of mammoth proportions. As Dr. Jim Oliver, boss at N.C.F.E. said at last week's luncheon, "It is an enormous task because the place is so big".

The first difficulty is raising the kind of money that would buy Mungret, its buildings and its vast acreage. It could amount to as much as half a million pounds. Mick Crowe feels that he needs £3,000 urgently to get the project going and if he is right in this surely some firm could come up with the money. After all, many are still spending vast sums on promoting their products in various ways and there could be a few worthier than the ambition to retain Mungret for the youth of Ireland.

Last week's excellently organised visit to Mungret and the interesting discussion that followed threw up many interesting facts.

And Mick Crowe said subsequently "... I have no money left to continue the campaign. We are on the threshold of a great breakthrough for sport this country has ever known and it would be a disgrace if all was lost for the sake of an initial working capital of £3,000". Many were the tributes paid to Mr. Crowe and the remark "... if anyone can do it, then Mick Crowe's the man to do it". That's all very fine, but even Mick himself can only do so much of go so far and unless financial assistance of a worthwhile amount by 1975 standards is forthcoming, the Mungret project could well be stillborn.

One must agree... that it would be a disgrace if the time for talking has passed. It is now time for positive action.

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Fitzpatrick an inspiration

LIMERICK 4; (Duggan, 6, 42; Kennedy, 51; Meaney, 54) SLIGO ROVERS 0

BY JOHN O'SHAUGHNESSY

WHILE SLIGO ROVERS supporters rioted on the terraces at the Markets Field yesterday, the Limerick front runners went riot on the pitch with four immaculate goals in the first leg of their Bass League-Cup final. What a pity though that the off-the-field incidents should overshadow what was a truly remarkable performance by the winners, who must now be odds-on favourites to lift the title for the first time... and the £750 prizemoney.

Not even the 30 minutes of absence by one hundred and one idiot from Sligo could mar the spectacle that we witnessed from a eager-beaver much vaunted visitors apart with one of the finest displays of football seen at headquarters in a long time. It is not my intention to dwell on what happened on the terraces in my report, so from now on it's football all the way.

The biggest crowd of the season turned up at the Markets Field to see this new-look Limerick brigade and the 11 players showed their appreciation by turning on the style from the opening whistle.

And they hadn't to wait long for action. Within six minutes ace-midfielder, Gerry Duggan, had the Blues one ahead. To a man Limerick fans roared their approval as Joe O'Mahony, Tony Meaney, Pat Nolan and Tony Fitzgerald swept Sligo aside in a blistering 20 minute spell of all-out attack, and they were further rewarded in the 42nd minute with yet another spectacular effort from Duggan.

Fort from Duggan, Tony Fitzgerald and Tony Meaney of the rest-start that man Duggan was in the limelight again as he paved the way for the lanky Des Kennedy to open his account.

And just when the red and white shirted men from Connemara looked like pulling one back with a series of attacks, Limerick rose to the occasion and Tony Meaney to slot the ball past Patterson from the penalty spot, after Kennedy had been upended in the box.

SCINTILLATING It was all scintillating stuff, and Sligo, reported to be the highest paid team in the League of Ireland, just didn't have any answers.

All through the game Limerick stormed around the Sligo defence like bees, and if it were not for the fact that they were being most let, it would be mentioned that George Quinlivan and Michael Ryan were the launching pads of many Limerick attacks.

The local heroes had the scent of success in their nostrils from the first whistle. They peeted up, down, and across the park like demons and their work-rate just had to be seen to be believed. With a mixture of courage, enthusiasm and not a little skill, they mesmerised their supposedly more knowledgeable opponents and, unless there is a complete reversal in form over the next three weeks, it is safe to assume that Limerick will be crowned champions on November 30th when they play the second-leg at the Showgrounds.

Certainly what they lacked in some positions in experience was amply compensated for by their immense drive and great heartedness. Rarely did a Limerick player lose possession, and when he did there was always someone to cover-up for him.

Sligo started off looking very ordinary, and though they improved in the second period when they were unlucky with a couple of good scoring efforts - they never matched the teamwork and precision shown by the Blues.

Their biggest torment was Ger Duggan. The chunky ex-Fairview Rangers striker hammered home his sixth goal in four matches. Poor Sligo could make nothing of him at all.

DECAY Nor could they cope with the long-striding Des Kennedy, who was the perfect decoy for Duggan. The warning signs that Limerick were in goal-scoring mood came early, and while a demoralised Sligo team chafed at tactics in mid-stream the damage was done before manager, a Sinclear could sort out their many problems.

Yes, Limerick were really tremendous. They were the great dictators and it was teamwork which took them to the heights they achieved.

The most satisfying aspect of yesterday's game was Limerick's man-to-man passing, something which they have often been criticised for in the past. Very few passes went astray, and it was a delight to watch the way that the half-backs teamed up with their forwards.

George Quinlivan on the right wing, got through a vast amount of work with a minimum fuss, and he has struck up a perfect partnership with Ger Duggan. Twenty-one-year-old Michael Ryan ran himself into the ground and was a great success, while Pat Nolan even if his shooting is not on par with his approach work, must also share in the credits for his grafting and impeccable ball control.

Only a week ago they were described as the team to watch out for in 1975. In my preview on Wednesday I mentioned that I had my reservations about their early season performance. Not alone were they torn apart by rampant Limerick - they were annihilated.

DEFICIT Their task in pulling back a four-goal deficit in the second half was an impossible look about it, and manager, Billy Sinclear, certainly has his problems if he is to mould them into a worthwhile unit. They lacked what Limerick had in abundance - courage, teamwork and a willingness to work for each other.

Manager Ewan Fenton must have been every bit as surprised as we were supporters with his team's display. And how the cool despite the happenings off the field, and in fairness to Sligo, let it be said that they at least tried to make a match of it.

The Westerners will long remember their visit to the Markets Field, and following on their 3-0 defeat by Cork Hibernians in the league last Sunday, their directors will have a re-think on their present set up, geared as it is to an all professional team.

Limerick were in full stride from the first minute when Ger Duggan forced a corner. One minute later a set-piece between O'Mahoney and Duggan ended with the latter stretching every bone in keeper Patterson's body. Fitzpatrick was then called upon to make a save from Leonard, but within seconds the blues went ahead.

The ball was lobbed into the Sligo penalty area by Joe O'Mahony; Des Kennedy backed-headed to Gerry Duggan, and from an acute angle the Garry-born teenager, squeezed the ball between Patterson and a post.

Then followed that fantastic save by Fitzpatrick. With Limerick in full flight the Westerners soon ran out of ideas, as the homesters launched attack after attack. Quinlivan, Ryan and Nolan gave Fox & Robertson the run around; O'Mahony and Meaney had the game by the scruff of the neck in midfield, and Duggan and Kennedy were enjoying themselves as goal-strikers.

That vital second goal arrived in the 24th minute. Appropriately, it was Duggan who was responsible for the lead and the execution. He forced David Pugh into conceding a corner kick. George Quinlivan was entrusted with responsibility for the kick and out of nowhere came Duggan to head one of the best goals seen at the venue in years.

Sligo were dumbfounded. There was another shock in store for them in the 41st minute. This time Duggan gained possession about 30 yards out and he sprayed a through ball to Des Kennedy.

The number 10 was confronted by two players but it mattered little to him as he made the score 3-0 with a low shot. Goal hungry Limerick were back on the attack again in the 54th minute from a breakaway. The ball was put in front of Des Kennedy and he ran with it for about 25 yards before being tripped inside the eighteen yard line. Meaney walked up casually to take the spot kick, and with all the ease in the world he left the keeper helpless.

The cheer was deafening and while that was the end of the scoring Limerick continued to give value for money. Billy Sinclear replaced Scannell in the 56th minute. Sligo put a little more pep into their play and they were unfortunate to see Mick O'Mahony clear off the goal line with Fitz beaten.

Boyle and Pugh also came close but there was no stopping of Limerick, who gave the impression that they always had something in reserve.

Near time, Kevin Fitzpatrick showed his class with a full length save from a Pagan free kick.

Limerick now take a comfortable lead into the second leg and they should command large support for the long trip to the Showgrounds.

Limerick-Fitzpatrick, O'Mahony, Lymer, Nolan, Fitzpatrick, O'Mahony (J.), Quinlivan, Ryan, Duggan, Kennedy, Meaney.

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MAGNIFICENT Tony Fitzgerald and his colleagues were simply magnificent in defence, and none more so than Gerry Duggan, who made three courageous saves at a time when Sligo showed promise.

One sign in particular deserves special mention. With Limerick leading only 1-0 after 14 minutes, Paul McGee set up an attack inside the Limerick half. The ball eventually found its way to an unmarked Ian Boyle on the wing, and his plectivever seemed destined for the net, until the crafty Kevin stuck out a leg and deflected it to Frickleton, who shot wildly over the crossbar.

That was a save in a million, and it seemed to give even greater inspiration to the younger members of the team.

Full backs Denis Lymer and Mick O'Mahony showed a great sense of timing in their tackles and they never allowed Boyle and Scannell to even sniff the ball. Lymer's tackling was immaculate and his darting runs along the wing initiated several Limerick attacks.

Fitzgerald was master of his own domain at centre half, and he had able lieutenants in Tony Meaney and Joe O'Mahony, both of whom dealt capably with former Glasgow Celtic trialist Mick Leonard, said to be the danger man in the Sligo front line.

The one player who did trouble the locals, however, was inside-left Sam Frickleton. He was always on the prowl for work, and at a stage when Sligo were beaten to the ropes, Frickleton tried to spark them to life with his intelligent ball play and strong running.

At this juncture it is worth pointing out that in their last five matches the Limerick defence has conceded but a solitary goal - no mean achievement when one realises that they have conceded some of the most brilliant goals in the league in recent weeks.

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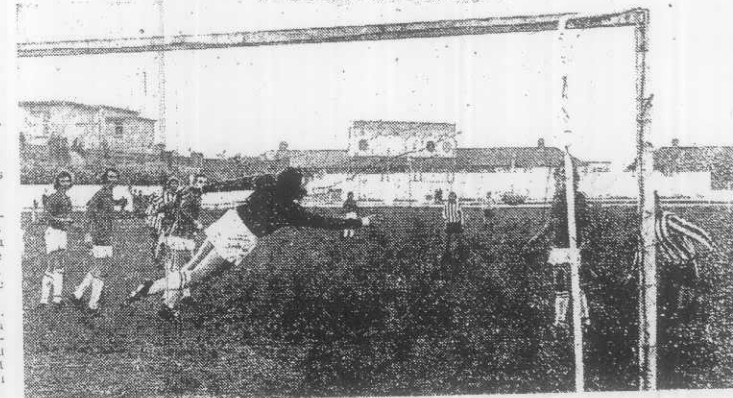
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Kevin Fitzpatrick, one of the heroes of Limerick's victory, makes one of his great saves seconds from the finish of the League-Cup final.

A look back at Limerick's first major triumph

BY CHARLIE MULQUEEN

TWENTY-TWO years ago, Limerick scored their first success in senior soccer when they went to Dundalk, beat the local side in a dramatic match by 3-2 and so broke a "bogey" that had dogged them since their foundation in 1936/37.

They had won the now defunct Shield with a total of 17 points from 11 games, one more than Drumcondra and Shamrock Rovers.

That victory was greeted far and wide and was the prelude to a period of twenty years during which the "blues" won the League of Ireland Championship in 1959/60; the F.A.I. Cup in 1972 and the Dublin City Cup on a few occasions.

Now they seek the breakthrough in the League Cup, an event launched only last year and won by Bohemians in 1974. Limerick had reached the semi-finals.

The League Cup was introduced to replace the Shield, and it is interesting to note that the man who scored the vital goal in Limerick's first major success 22 years ago, "Beaver" Cronin, has a son-in-law, Michael Ryan, in the home side at present.

I happened to come upon cuttings of Limerick's 1953 triumphs in an old scrapbook yesterday, and have pleasure in printing a portion of the report of that game in Dundalk by William P. (Bill) Murphy of the "Irish Independent", probably Ireland's finest writer on soccer, but unhappily no longer with us.

Ambition achieved

Bill wrote: "... Limerick, striving since 1936/37 to win their first award in senior soccer, achieved his ambition in four minutes at Dundalk yesterday.

Repeated

"A minute later the move was repeated. Bradley switched the ball to Lyman, and the ex-Shamrock man, coolly waiting for the defenders to take the wrong turning, sent it square across goal for Cronin to tip it into the net for the winning goal.

"Afterwards, Willie Keane, their trainer-coach, and the man behind their success, showed me a telegram from his brother, Rory Keane, of Swansea Town, wishing Limerick success. The Keanes, who starred in rugby, both Willie and a younger brother earning Munster League honours with Young Munster, and Mr. B. Torney's whistle sounded for a penalty. Cusack banged the ball into the net from the spot to reduce the arrears.

"Two minutes later, Bradley, a bundle of energy and enthusiasm as usual, swept the ball out to Lyman, who had switched to the right wing, and the latter, as in his last two games, proceeded to produce the match-winning flashes. He took the pass, veered in and hit the ball hard, but Darcy would have got it but for the fact that it struck Clarke and took a new angle into the net.

DUNDALK HERE ON SUNDAY

Following their exciting win over Sligo Rovers on Thursday, Limerick must now be favourites to stretch their unbeaten run to seven games on next Sunday when they entertain Dundalk in the League.

Whether the Markets Field will be available to Limerick will be made known this Friday afternoon. Bord na gConaill are meeting at the time of going to press to discuss the situation.

It's Squash time again! JONAH BARRINGTON RACQUETS, ALL NEW 1975 MODELS AVAILABLE. Everything for the Sportsman. NESTOR BROS., 28 & 33 O'CONNELL STREET. MOORKENS :: MOORKENS :: MOORKENS :: MOORKENS. Moorkens - Fox's Bow (off William St.) Limerick. * Full range of Squash Racquets. * Full range of Tennis Racquets. * All types of "Ammo" in stock. * New types of Rods and Reels.



Jubilation after Gerry Duggan scored Limerick's second goal. Duggan, second from right, is congratulated by Joe O'Mahony, Mick Ryan, Tony Meaney and Denis Lymer.

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