

SENIOR SOCCER: Storan's goal brings glory

Super Blues hit jackpot

BY JOHN O'SHAUGHNESSY

Bohemians 0 Limerick United 1
Storan (34th min.)

A supremely well organised and highly disciplined Limerick United won the FAI Cup for only the second time in their 44 year history at Dalymount Park, on Sunday, when they piped Bohemians 1-0 in a game that seldom rose above the ordinary in the opening half, but which provided nail-biting fare on the resumption as the Dubliners tried to cancel out Brendan Storan's well-executed 34th minute lead goal.

As things turned out that one flash of incision was enough to bring the trophy to Shannonside and if Storan's name will always be associated with this famous triumph, so too will that of Eoin Hand's who once again demonstrated what a master tactician he can be.

Hand, who will go into the history books as the first Limerick manager to win two major trophies, gambled by giving the number eleven shirt to rugby international Tony Ward, a decision which may not have had general approval but one which reaped handsome dividends.

If it was Storan who engineered the goal, it was set up by Ward from a corner kick. Bohemians probably anticipated an inswinging ball but instead he sent the ball low and hard into the penalty area and Storan, running in like an express train, flashed it past an unglazed Dermot O'Neill.

O'Neill, it was a well-rehearsed move and one which divided the sides at the final whistle.

This was basically a game of tactics, with United taking all the kudos in the first half and Bohemians reversing roles afterwards.

To the strains of "There Is An Isle", Kevin Fitzpatrick led the 3,000 strong chorus at the presentation ceremony, and while it was "Fitzzy's" own song he retired officially yesterday - those same fans are now looking forward to the European Cup Winners Cup draw in Zurich in July, and the prospect of another Real Madrid or Southampton coming out of the hat.

Fitting

What a fitting finale to a glorious career for the 40-year-old keeper, but the celebrations may have been delayed a few more days were it not for captain Joe O'Mahony, who prevented a possible replay at the same venue with a "face" saving rescue act a mere four minutes from time.

The situation arose as Bohs staged a desperate late rally to break down a United rearguard that looked vulnerable following Hand's departure after 71 minutes. They made progress down the right and when the ball was floated into the penalty area, it by-passed a couple of defenders and found its way to winger Mick Shelley.

He had all the time in the world to pick his spot and his shot looked destined for the net - that was until O'Mahony got his face in the way to avert the danger. Yes, it was that close. As Shelley hit his shot, I had visions of making the trip to Dalymount again on Wednesday.

Pity there had to be a spoil sport - the weather. The strong breeze and driving rain made certain that pre-match preparations were thrown to the wind as both sides grappled to compete with the elements.

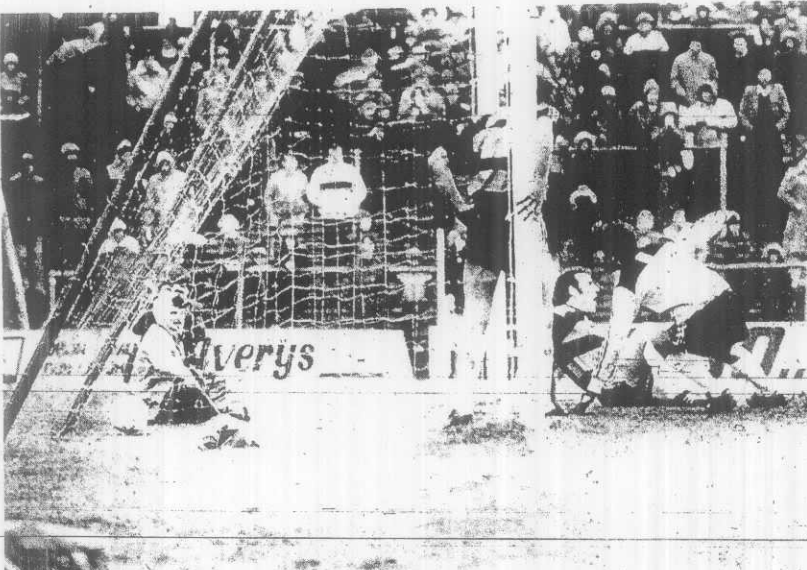
Limerick, playing into the wind and rain in the first half, gave as professional a display as had been seen at Dalymount in many a day. The thoroughbred skills of Finucane, O'Mahony, Hand and Walsh made Bohemians look amateurish in comparison, and when Storan squeezed the ball home in the 34th minute the odds were stacked firmly in their favour.

With Bohs failing to dent the Blues defence in the remaining 11 minutes of this half it was suggested in the team at the break that the powers-that-be might as well wrap up the trophy for its journey to Limerick.

After all, Bohs had not only failed to put the wind to advantage but were entering the second half a goal in arrears. Furthermore, in that first half Limerick were undeniably the better team, playing their part flawlessly with a performance oozing in style and conviction.

But, as so often happens on such occasions the wheel of fortune smiled for the underdogs and they came out fighting like demons in the second half. They were no longer Limerick's punching partners and with King, Kelly and Doolin putting it up to Walsh, Hand and Nodwell, it became apparent that the winners had a real test on their hands.

Instead of trying to slow things down, United allowed themselves to become pressurised by a youthful Bohemians who three caution



O'Neill, Bohs goalkeeper, is well beaten by Storan's shot that won the cup for Limerick.

Cup final pictures by A. F. Foley



The Limerick team that won the F.A.I. Cup by beating Bohemians 1-0 at Dalymount Park on Sunday.



A proud moment for Limerick goalkeeper Kevin Fitzpatrick as he holds the F.A.I. Cup after Limerick's win. It was Fitzpatrick's last game after being with the club for 22 years.

to the wind in their bid to salvage something from a season that showed so much promise a month ago. Suddenly, David O'Brien, Jack Jameson and Mick Shelley began to tease and torment a defence that had earlier looked impenetrable and were it not for the cool head of Brendan Storan - he headed off the goal-line - and the experience of old hands O'Mahony and Finucane, the game could have swung very much in favour of Billy Young's men.

Excitement

Excitement ran high right through that second half, and those on the Limerick bench must have sweated as much as the players on the field before Mr. Kinsella sounded the final whistle.

There were many close calls for the champions, more notably when McDonagh blasted a free over the crossbar and when Fitzpatrick collected at the feet of Jackie Jameson, a player unable to stamp any sort of impression on the game due to the excellence of Brendan Storan.

If Bohemians erred in not making more use of the elements in the first half, then their opponents must be similarly criticised for having no more than two direct hits at 'keeper O'Neill on the changeover. For some unknown reason, the Shamrodders persisted in pumping the ball into the heart of the Bohs defence, and more often than not it was returned with one-hefty kick.

That Limerick managed to hold on to their slender advantage could be attributed to their professionalism and discipline at the back. While those in front of them were going through a troublesome time, the defence held firm under sustained pressure and did not waver on their side on a few occasions, they at least managed to keep their goal intact.

Limerick deserved to win, if only for their first half performance. Bohs, of whom so much was written and expected, were made to look very ordinary by such skilful operators as Johnny Walsh, Gary Hulmes, Tommy Gaynor and Al Finucane, not to mention Tony Ward, who brought fear into Bohs hearts every time he gained possession.

With Ward playing wide, Bohs had to deploy two men to mark him and this gave greater freedom of movement to his colleagues up front.

Revelation

Walsh was a revelation, setting up a series of attacks with all the ease of a Glen Hoddle. He teamed up perfectly with Ward and in the opening eight minutes they had O'Neill on his toes.

Bohemians came closest to scoring however, in the eight minute Fitzpatrick failed to cut out a corner kick and when the ball was returned into the goalmouth, the lion hearted Jimmy Nodwell made a goal-line clearance.

With Limerick playing with great authority and commanding

the midfield exchanges, the Gypsies were left to rely on long range efforts and the feeling was that if Limerick held out to the break they would win.

But they went better than that - Hulmes and Gaynor threatened on a few occasions, but the magic moment was reserved until the 34th minute. A fine move between Ward and Walsh ended with Bohs conceding a corner kick. As Ward prepared to take the kick, Storan took up a position just outside the penalty area, and from a centre that was clearly meant for him, he made no mistake by sidefooting the ball into the net despite McCormack's challenge.

Those who had become accustomed to Limerick's shortcomings feared that another moment or two of this kind would prove disastrous - and there were a few of them in the second half.

When Walsh and Hulmes tested O'Neill on the resumption, it seemed as if United were in for the kill. But Bohs grew in confidence and with Storan clearing a Shelley header, the line in the 51st minute, the distress signals became evident once again. Ward, however, always brought that moment of calm and the prospect of a surprise second goal and some of his runs compensated for near moments of disaster at the back.

Tired

Eoin Hand, looking tired, went off in the 71st minute to be replaced by Ger Duggan and it was a relief to see the line in the 81st minute as the latter tried to settle, they regained stability when Kennedy came in for Hulmes nine minutes later.

The last few minutes were hectic, and while United were left off the books when O'Mahony's face got in the way of Shelley's goal bound shot, the general consensus was that they just about deserved their prize. It was a fiercely competitive but sporting decider.

Supporters danced with joy afterwards, and understandably so. Hand, brought to Limerick by Michael Webb three years ago, had written his name into the history books.

Teams

Bohemians: O'Neill, O'Connell, Lawless, McCormack, McDonagh, King, Kelly, Doolin, Jameson, O'Brien, Shelley, Sub. Raynor for Kelly.

Limerick United: Fitzpatrick, Nolan, Finucane, O'Mahony, Storan, Hand, Nodwell, Hulmes, Gaynor, Walsh, Ward, Sub. Kennedy and Duggan for Hulmes and Hand.

Referee, Mr. Sean Kinsella (Dublin), had an excellent game, though United might argue he denied them a second half penalty.



Colm Tucker tackles Donal Lenihan during the International Selection v President's XV at the opening of the new Thomond RFC pavilion and pitch at Woodview.

Rugby - Club grounds opened

Stars turn out for Thomond

Thomond Presidents XV 24, Invitation XV 11

Sunday was a memorable day for Thomond Rugby Club when the president of the Irish Rugby Football Union, Mr. Joe Moore, officially opened their grounds at Woodview.

After the blessing - performed by Very Rev. Michael Manning - and opening a side representing the President of Thomond, Des Rees, played an Invitation XV - an exhibition game which the former won by 24-10.

Marred by poor weather - the game nevertheless produced some fine scores with international Michael Kiernan putting the President's side in front with a fifth minute try which Terry Fitzgerald

converted. Shay Deering raced 30 yards to score a great try for the Presidents XV but before the interval John Duggan had a try for the Invitation XV to leave it 10-4 at half time.

Moss Finn and Brendan Foley had tries for the President's side before Terry Fitzgerald completed their scoring with a try which he converted himself.

Shortly before that Francis Broome had a try for the Invitation XV which Ralph Keyes converted.

Teams
Thomond President's XV - T. Lenihan (Bohs.), J. Duggan (Garryowen), M. Kiernan (Dolphin), P. Cross (Young Munster), T. Fitzgerald (Shannon), M. J. Ryan (Cons.), D. Cusack (Thomond), G. McLoughlin (Shannon), Broome (Thomond), C. Tidy (do.), D. Smith (do.), B. Fol (Shannon), C. Tucker (do.), G. O'Connell (do.), B. C. nín (Garryowen).
Invitation XV - P. Murray, Hogan (Old Crescent), S. Der son (Roscrea), E. Bruslan (Young Munster), D. Ahern, Keyes (Cons.), J. Moloney (Cent Comp.), P. Orr (Old Wic N. Glyn (Shannon), T. Myle (Bohs.), D. Lenihan (L.U.C.), Keane (Lansdowne), S. Deer (St. Mary's), K. Deering (L.U.C.), F. O'Dea (St. Mary's).
Referee - Mr. G. Joyce.

Wexford - T. Doran 1-1, Buggy 1-1, J. Barron 1-1, O'Connor 0-1, M. Jacob 0-1, Quigley 0-1.
Limerick - J. Flanagan 1-1, Kelly 1-1, D. Murray 0-1, O'Connor 0-1.

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Limerick - T. Quaid, P. mauric, J. Grimes, P. Herber, Herbert, S. Foley, C. Keating, Ryan, P. Kelly, J. Carroll, Fitzmaurice, D. Murray, J. roll, O. O'Connor, C. Broude, Flanagan, Sub. J. McCarthy 6 Fitzmaurice.
Wexford - J. Doyle, B. Mur P. Kenny, L. Bennett, J. Cor M. Jacob, C. Doran, P. Court T. O'Connor, S. Kinsella Houlihan, M. Quigley, M. G. T. Doran, N. Buggy, Subs Higgins for J. Conran; J. Ba for Kinsella.
Referee - N. Duggan (Li ick).

WINTER returned with a vengeance on Sunday and players and spectators at the opening of the magnificent

Seamus Quaid memorial GAA Park at Coolyroe had to endure the hazards of gale force winds and piercing showers of hail and sleet. At the end of a tame hour's hurling Wexford defeated Limerick by 3-6 to 2-4 in a senior challenge to mark the occasion.

In the prevailing conditions, it was more of an endurance test, than a display of hurling skill, as the heavier Wexford team mastered the conditions admirably.

Wexford lined out minus goalie John Nolan, Bank of Ireland All Star George O'Connor, and handed out by John Fleming and showed no ill-effects after their 4½ HOUR bus journey to the venue.

Their defence was exceptionally sound with Liam Bennett, Mick Jacob and Colm Doran in great form while their forwards combined well with Ned Buggy and the agile, Tony Doran in a lethal mood.

Limerick fielded a very experimental side, missing seven of their potential championship side. They never raised their game at any time and the defence was very vulnerable.

Wexford played with the aid of a storm in the first half but did not score until eight minutes had elapsed when Tony Doran set up Ned Buggy for a superb goal.

However, Wexford really forced the initiative on resuming, and the Limerick rearguard succumbed to the precision movements of the Slanymen's attack in the opening ten minutes when substitute John Barron notched 1-1 and Tony Doran sneaked yet another opportunistic goal to lay the foundation for their eventual five point victory.

Limerick tried their hearts out to reduce their deficit, but their best efforts were stymied by a resolute Wexford defence who revelled in the arctic conditions.

In addition to the aforementioned, Paddy Courtney had a blinder at midfield while Martin Quigley, Jim Houlihan and reserve John Barron also impressed for

Wexford
For Limerick, Ollie O'Con Sean Foley, Jimmy Carroll, B Ryan, Paddy Kelly, Pat Her and John McCarthy when it duced at half time, were prominent.

SCORES
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Delegate meeting
The usual monthly delegate meeting of the Limerick Schoolboy Leagues takes place tonight at Jamesboro S.A. 8 p.m. It is imperative that clubs be represented at meeting.

Golf
Limerick top
In the Jimmy Bruen 5 Limerick continued their progress at Lashine with wins Shannon and Castletroy. In morning Limerick beat Sha 3-2 and then went on to Castletroy by the same margin the afternoon after Castletroy beaten Charleville 4-1.

Limerick also did best in Pierce Purcell Shield when beat Charleville 4-1 and then Shannon 3-2 in the final earlier beating Charleville 4 Shannon beat Castletroy the morning.

Purple
Limerick struck a purple two minutes patch between the 23rd and 25th minute of this half scoring 2-1 - helped by goals from Paddy Kelly and John Flanagan.

Wexford held a slender lead - 1-5 to 2-1 at the interval and things certainly looked rosy for a Limerick win at this stage.

However, Wexford really forced the initiative on resuming, and the Limerick rearguard succumbed to the precision movements of the Slanymen's attack in the opening ten minutes when substitute John Barron notched 1-1 and Tony Doran sneaked yet another opportunistic goal to lay the foundation for their eventual five point victory.

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A near miss for Tommy Gaynor as the ball just went over the bar.



The Limerick players gather round to congratulate Brendan Storan after he scored Limerick's winning goal in the FAI Cup final.

Joe O'Mahony, captain lifts the F.A.I. Cup aloft.