



COUNTY FINAL SPECIAL

LEO GRAY
PREVIEWS THE BIG MATCH

Paddy Coen, Doocastle, proudly displaying the county championship medal won by his grandfather, "Long" Pat Coen, in 1891

Bunninadden's key backroom team

A HARD working backroom team and a thriving under-age policy have paved the way for Bunninadden's big breakthrough this year.

While joint-managers, James Kearins and Richard Brennan, and the players fashion the results on the pitch, the people behind the scenes, the unsung heroes of the club, play an equally important role.

People like Chairman,

Bunninadden's five decade footballer

ONE OF Bunninadden's legendary servants is Pat Hunt, who could be described as the club's five decade footballer.

Pat represented Bunninadden with distinction in the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and 1980s and also featured regularly on the Sligo senior team in the 1960s.

One of his best displays in the county jersey came in the Connacht Championship in 1960 when he played at midfield on the Sligo team which gave the reigning Connacht champions and defeated All-Ireland finalists of the previous year, Galway, a great run for their money in Tuam. Galway emerged with a hard-earned 1-8 to 1-3 but Hunt was one of the stars of the match.

On the club scene, Pat won county junior titles with Bunninadden in 1953, 1963, 1973 and 1979.

He is regarded as one of the greatest ever players to don the famous green and white colours of Bunninadden and is an ardent fan of the team to this day.

His contribution to the club was recognised when he was honoured with the Club's Person of the Century award at the GAA Millennium Banquet last year.

DUNES TAVERN

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Coolera/Strandhill GAA
(Manager Declan, selectors John & Michael and all the players)

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Congratulations to Strandhill/Coolera Team

on reaching the final and best wishes on the day

recent years. Paddy Kearins, Sean Anderson and Sean Durcan, who guided the club's U-16s to two Championships in the last two years, are among the men actively involved in the under-age section of the club.

Every club needs strong financial back-up to keep the show on the road and in this regard Bunninadden held a very successful fund-raising effort earlier this year. Gerry Perry, Brendan Gallagher, Dermot Gormley, Michael Finn and David Killoran were key figures in the success of this venture.

Another key man in the Bunninadden success story is groundsman, Sean Cunningham, who has the playing pitch in impeccable condition every week.

"It's a real team effort, on and off the pitch", says joint manager, Richard Brennan. "Everybody, from club officials down to the players, has made important contributions to the club and we are fortunate to have a great sponsor in Peter Gallagher."

On the club scene, Pat won county junior titles with

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He is regarded as one of the greatest ever players to don the famous green and white colours of Bunninadden and is an ardent fan of the team to this day.

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Paddy's unique medal provides historic link with past glories

UNTIL THE conclusion of Sunday's game at least, this is the most famous medal on County Sligo. Paddy Coen from Doocastle proudly displays the medal won by his grandfather, "Long" Pat Coen, as a member of the Bunninadden Emmets team who were crowned county champions 109 years ago.

BY JIM GRAY

The historic medal, the only one remaining from Bunninadden's last championship success in 1891, was actually lost for over thirty years until Paddy uncovered it while digging in his garden about twenty years ago.

"It came out of the ground as a lump of rust, but I wouldn't part with it for all

the money in Sligo", Paddy declared as he looked forward to more county medals coming to the Bunninadden parish this weekend.

"The medal is a family heirloom. My grandfather, who was the local postman, carried it with him everywhere, and it was a sad day when we thought it was lost. Fortunately, I came across it again while digging the garden, and I immediately realised what it was."

"It's always been of precious sentimental value to us, but with Bunninadden back in a county final after such a long time, there's been a lot of public interest in it over the past few weeks", he said.

"There is a direct link with the famous medal in the

current Bunninadden team, as defender, Paul Kerins, is a great grandson of the man who won it all those years ago.

"It would be a lovely family double if Paul were to win the first county medal of the new Millennium to place alongside the old medal", says Paddy.

Like all Bunninadden supporters, Paddy is anticipating a glorious end to the story on Sunday.

"If the occasion doesn't get to the lads, I think they can do it", he says. "There's been a lot of hype in the build-up, so the players will be under a bit of pressure, but they've shown in earlier rounds that they can handle it, and, hopefully, they won't be overawed on Sunday", he says.



Bunninadden's Joint Managers, Richard Brennan and James Kearins

One hundred and nine years since Bunninadden's last title

SOME OF those at the match probably lived through the Great Famine and many of those who were to perish on the Titanic hadn't even been born. That puts into some sort of context the timespan dividing the present day and Bunninadden's last and only senior championship triumph in 1891.

The Gaelic Athletic Association was still in its infancy when Bunninadden Emmets beat Strandhill Young Irelanders O-5 to O-2 in the final at Phillips' field, Collooney, one hundred and nine years ago.

According to the Sligo GAA Centenary History, edited by John C McTernan, eighteen clubs entered the Championship that year. These included two teams from Achonry, Red Hugh's and Davitts, and two from Ballymote, Round Towers and Father Matthews. Strandhill was the only entry

from North Sligo while Dromard were the sole representatives from Tireragh.

The Strandhill team comprised players from then defunct Knocknarea and Sligo clubs and the final took place in Collooney on May 3rd with Mr. James A Flanagan of Ballinote as referee.

By all accounts, the final captured the imagination of the sporting public as a record crowd turned up for the match. It was, according to the Sligo Centenary History, a keenly contested and very sporting contest with Bunninadden taking the honours with three points to spare.

The game did not go off without a touch of controversy, however. Strandhill had what they felt was a legitimate goal disallowed but subsequent demands for a replay were

unsuccessful.

The winning Bunninadden team was as follows: A. Marron (captain), J. O'Dowd, P. Cowan, T. Killoran, A. Doyle, M. Marron, J. Gildea, J. Wynne, P. Leonard, T. Leonard, J. Davis, M. Preston, E. Healy, M. Davey, M. Marron.

The triumphant team

celebrated their victory at a banquet in the village and the occasion was marked by the rendering of a specially composed long ballad by local bard, Fergal McHugh, entitled 'The Bunninadden Gaels'.

Thanks to the Sligo Centenary History, we can reproduce the opening two stanzas which went as follows:

Hurrah for Bunninadden And its gallant football team Of our Sligo athletes The very pink and cream

They style themselves the Emmets

From the hero true and brave

Who died upon the gallows high

His native land to save Their captain, Andrew Marron,

Is a sprinter stout and bold,

The way he tips the leather most charming to behold.

Their goal man is Jim Davis

From Bunninadden town Who on many well-fought

battlefields Right nobly won renown'

Bunninadden made their first appearance in the County Championship the previous season. They didn't reach the final that year but the decider between Tubbercurry and Sweeney was played in Bunninadden with John O'Dowd as referee.



Andrew Marron (Capt) and John O'Dowd, members of the Bunninadden Emmets team that won S. F. Championship of 1891.

-Picture Courtesy, Sligo GAA Centenary History

LEO GRAY
PREVIEWS THE BIG MATCHTHIS WEEK'S Specials
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Best wishes to Bunninadden Team in the County Final



COUNTY FINAL SPECIAL



BUNNINADDEN, COUNTY FINALISTS 2000. Back Row (l/r): Kieran Brett, Stephen Roddy, Emmett Gilhooley, Mark Gormley, Shane Gormley, Padraig Doohan, Mick Finn. Front Row, (l/r): John O'Flaherty, Francie O'Dowd, Paul Kearns, Fergal O'Flaherty, Aidan Killoran, Willie Gormley, Derek Gormley, Liam Og Gormley.

COOLERA'S
LAST TITLE
1907

BUNNINADDEN'S
LAST TITLE
1891



COOLERA, COUNTY SENIOR FINALISTS 2000. Back Row, (l/r): John McPartland, Kieran Quinn, Stephen Carty, Aidan Carty, Barry Doyle, Tony Watters, Terry Mahon. Front row (l/r): Gavin Foley, Karl Gilligan, Neil Carew, Paul Hegarty, Shane O'Neill (captain), Tommy Cronin, Karl O'Neill, Liam Healy.

LEO GRAY
PREVIEWS THE BIG MATCH



From the mists of history for a date with destiny

A PAIRING fashioned by the mists of history promises to produce a match of vintage quality as Bunninadden and Coolera battle it out for the right to become the first senior Champions of the Millennium at Markievicz Park on Sunday next. (throw-in 4pm).

Bunninadden last won the coveted title way back in 1891 while Coolera are seeking their first senior championship crown since 1907. The last time any of these teams appeared in a senior final was 1946 when Coolera lost to Tubbercurry.

Interest

There has been a county final evoked such interest and there is every reason to expect that, for once, the occasion will match the hype.

Neither Bunninadden nor Coolera were regarded as genuine contenders for the

An added touch of nostalgia comes in the fact that when Bunninadden won their only senior title one hundred and nine years ago, the opposition was provided by Strandhill.

All of this will hardly be of much relevance to the respective managers as they prepare their teams for what promises to be an emotional and passionate occasion yet there is no escaping the echoes of the past in the build-up to Sunday's final.

The sides have met on three occasions already this season. One game ended all square and Coolera won the other two, most notably an earlier Championship meeting when the North Sligo side had three points to spare, 0-9 to 0-6.

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Motivated

It was Coolera's first outing in the Championship and they were probably more highly motivated on the day than Bunninadden who already had one win under their belts and were well on the way to qualification for the quarter-finals.

There was little between the teams for much of the match but a late scoring burst by Coolera proved decisive.

It could be argued that the result gives Coolera an important psychological advantage for the final but the manner in which Bunninadden bounced back from that defeat suggests that they have got the setback well and truly out of their system.

The South Sligo club produced one of their best displays of the season when

accounting for Easkey in the quarter-finals and then went out to fashion a memorable win over St. Mary's in the semi-finals.

Energy

They trailed the Sligo town club by seven points early in the second half but dug deep into their reserves of character and energy to pull off a dramatic victory.

If the performance against

Easkey underlined the quality of the team, the win over St. Mary's reflected the never-say-die attitude of the players, a quality which will be vital on Sunday.

Coolera's march to the final has been no less impressive. They toppled last year's Champions, Tourlestrane, in impressive style in the

quarter-finals before

accounting for title favourites, Eastern Harps, in the semi-final.

Like Bunninadden, Coolera had to pull out all the stops to claim a place in the final. After drawing with Harps in the first instalment of the semi-final, there were many who believed they had lost their chance. However, the team came up trumps in a low-scoring replay to clinch a deserved win.

Desire

It wasn't a free-flowing display by Coolera but there was much to admire about the way they set about their task and the hunger and desire of the side was clearly evident.

Neither of the two finalists

is prolific in front of goal

and depend to a large extent on frees for their scores.

Fergal O'Flaherty and Aidan Killoran are the top marksmen for Bunninadden while John McPartland and Karl Gilligan are the chief scorers for Coolera.

Around midfield, the teams would appear to be evenly matched. Fergal O'Flaherty and Padraig Doohan form a very solid partnership in this area for Bunninadden while Coolera are more flexible, using any two from Kieran Quinn, Stephen Carty and Terry McMahon in midfield, and sometimes all three. They tend to alter their formation during the course of matches and a feature of their best displays this season has been that their level of performance improved when Carty moved to midfield.

Coolera's only doubt

surrounds the availability of

resourceful defenceman James Joyce. He emigrated to

America two weeks ago but

the club are hoping will be able to make arrangements to return for the final.

Predictably, both teams are approaching the final in an upbeat mood.

"There's a terrific atmosphere in the locality and everybody is looking forward to a wonderful occasion. Having come so far, it would be great to complete the journey by winning the Championship for the first time in one hundred and nine years," said Bunninadden joint manager, James Kearns.

In Coolera, manager Declan McCabe, is equally optimistic.

"We know we need to play well all over the pitch for the entire match but if we hit our best form we'll be in with a great chance," he says.

Novel County Final in prospect

THE STAGE is now set for the eagerly awaited first county final of the new Millennium which will feature two teams who last met in a final over one hundred years ago in 1891.

Both clubs were founded in 1886, two years after the G.A.A. was founded.

Bunninadden Emmets won their only title in 1891. Ironically, they defeated Strandhill in the final. Strandhill, by this time renamed Knocknarea or the "Knocks" won an "unofficial" county title in 1893 but it isn't recognised. As there were no official competitions in the county between 1893 and 1904 some clubs remained active by playing challenge and tournament games. Ballymote Round Towers, who had won the title in 1892, were most anxious to defend their crown against any challengers in an unofficial championship for a set of medals. The "Knocks" challenged them to a contest and the offer was readily accepted.

The game was played in Collooney on March 3rd, 1894 and Knocknarea were leading by 0-3 to 0-2 when the game was abandoned

seven minutes from the end because of failing light. The teams met at the same venue on 8th April. Although the game commenced at 4pm., for reasons unexplained, it did not conclude until 6.30pm. at which stage the "Knocks" were in front again by 1-1 to 0-1. They declared themselves the unofficial champions of the county. That title is not recorded in the records of Sligo football, so, like their opponents on Sunday next, Coolera have to settle for one title which they won in 1907.

Sports editor, Leo Gray has prepared a comprehensive preview of the big game. The interest this final has generated shows how much getting to a county final means to a parish and a community. Many neutrals feel that it is a pity that two 'new' teams should be in the final. It is a pity that there should be a loser. Most people would be delighted with either a Bunninadden or Coolera win. But there can be only one winner. Unless, of course, the game ends in a draw which wouldn't surprise me.

I have had a long and happy association with the Coolera Club. I saw players

like Shane O'Neill, James Joyce, Stephen Carty, Karl Gilligan, Liam Healy, and many more of the present panel come up through the ranks of under-age football. I know how much a senior championship would mean to them. I also know that it would mean a lot to Bunninadden. I will be diplomatic and wish both teams the best of luck on Sunday. I hope it will be a great game and a fitting showpiece for Sligo football.

One thing is certain, there will be great excitement after the final whistle when either Fergal O'Flaherty or Shane O'Neill lift the Owen B. Hunt Cup.

All-Ireland Final.

I didn't get to the All-Ireland final on Sunday last. I thoroughly enjoyed the television coverage, particularly the second half of a great game. It was a strange final in many ways. I sat and wondered what was happening to Galway in the first twenty minutes. They were destroyed at midfield where Kerry were winning almost every ball and were picking up the breaks. The Kerry forwards were finding

gaps in the Galway defence that weren't exploited so far this year. The Galway full back line in particular was under fierce pressure and Martin McNamara behind them didn't inspire confidence. I had felt all year that Ray Silke would be roasted before the end of the championship and certainly on Sunday, Mike Frank Russell exploited his lack of pace in a big way. The Kerry forwards cut lanes through the Galway defence and as they piled on the points I wondered where the Galway hunger and flair had gone. Nothing seemed to be going right for the Tribesmen. When the score stood at 0-8 to 0-1, I felt that it was like the Galway v Sligo game in reverse. This time Galway were at the receiving end. If Kerry had got another score at that stage it would be hard for Galway to come back.

Kerry people will argue that they should have won. It would be hard to imagine a Kerry team of the 1970's and '80's losing a seven point

GAA DIGEST

by the County Board PRO

Then John O'Mahony produced his trump card, Kevin Walsh. The big garda won the first ball and Galway hearts lifted. Pádraig Joyce was now operating on the 'forty and the tide began to flow in the other direction. Amazingly, the Kerry midfield pair seemed to disappear and Galway began to gain control. Ironically, Galway could have won the game in the end. Three or four good chances were landed on Declan O'Keefe's chest and Derek Savage could have made more of a good chance when Pádraig Joyce was running ahead of him for a pass. Instead, Savage kicked with his weaker right foot and the Kerry goalkeeper gratefully accepted the pass.

Kerry people will argue that they should have won. It would be hard to imagine a Kerry team of the 1970's and '80's losing a seven point

lead. This has been the pattern of Kerry's play all year. They start as if they are in a hurry to get the game over and then, for some reason, their form drops and they let their opponents back into the game. It happened against Cork, against Clare and against Armagh.

I had a strange feeling coming up to the game that it would be a draw. In the end of the day, a draw was probably a fair result. It will be hard for both teams to lift themselves again for the replay but it should be a great game again. I doubt if Kerry will race into a seven point lead next time round. I think Galway are now in the driving seat and I think they will just about do it the next time. It wouldn't surprise me though if it goes to extra time.

Ladies Gaelic

Football.
Cloonacool juniors who won the county championship will play either the Galway or Mayo champions in the Connacht club championship on Sunday two weeks, 15th. October. If their opponents are the Mayo champions the game will be at home but they will have to travel to play the galway champions.

Roscommon Final.

The Roscommon county final will be played on Sunday. Like Sligo, a new team features that hasn't appeared in a county final in ages. Kilbride, which is the area around Four-Mile-House, were a force at the beginning of the century and won three titles in a row from 1907 to 1909. They won their last county title in 1914.

October. If their opponents are the Mayo champions the game will be at home but they will have to travel to play the galway champions.

Second replayed semi-final

by 3-13 to 1-9. Their opponents, St. Brigid's (Kiltoom) last won the championship in 1997 when John O'Mahony was their manager. Their best known player is Frankie Dolan.

Mention of Roscommon football, I hear that former Galway star, John Tobin has just been appointed manager of the senior team. Many names were mentioned including Val Daly, Matt Kerrigan, Tommy Lyons and inevitably, Martin McHugh.

Tobin will have his work cut out but he has had a good track record in colleges' football.

Ladies' Final.
The Ladies' All-Ireland final will be played on Sunday next between champions, Mayo and Waterford. Mayo had a surprise win last year over the more experienced Decies girls, but they will find it more difficult this year. Waterford seem to be really up for this final and will be anxious to avenge last year's defeat. It should be a great final. Certainly, if Cora Staunton is in the same

shooting form as he displayed in the semi-final, the Waterford backs will have a busy afternoon.

County Final Programme

It is early on Tuesday morning as I write this. I have to tie up the loose end of the county final programme. I would like once again to record my very grateful thanks to the officials of both Bunninadden and Coolera/Strandhill for all their help and co-operation. Both P.R.O.'s, Wilfred Brennan of Bunninadden and John McTernan, Coolera, have been absolutely brilliant and it was a pleasure working with them. Thanks also to the officials of St. Mary's and Ballisodare who play in the junior final as a curtain raiser to the senior decider.

By the time you read this the programme will be with the printers, much to my relief. I opted for a sixty-four page programme this year but I am sorry that I didn't go for seventy-two pages. I hope it turns out alright.

Best wishes to all teams in Sunday's GAA action

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Best of luck to the four teams in next Sunday's County Finals from

County Sligo Board GAA



Best wishes to Coolera/Strandhill GAA in the County Final on Sunday from

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The County final: highs and lows

By **Anthony Hennigan** North West Radio

■ The highs and the lows

IS it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's just a football that's approaching the 'square'. So why all the confusion?

The same kind of ball has probably arrived into the Coolera-Strandhill full-back line at least 50 times in the past season.

OK. So I'm probably being a bit sarcastic and simplistic about the whole situation.

But, isn't it amazing how after 60 minutes (sorry, 67 minutes - including time added for stoppages and injuries) of what was a pulsating, energy-sapping County Senior Championship final at Markievicz Park, it is only 10 seconds of play that everyone is talking about.

And, that is not in anyway intended to take away from what was one of the most entertaining and exciting deciders of recent times.

Depending on what flag you were flying on Sunday last, Bunnanadden's winning score in the depths of stoppage time had a touch of almost anything and everything about it.

But the most important touch, was from midfield star Padraig Doohan, who made sufficient contact with Fergal O'Flaherty's 'free' to direct the O'Neill's into the back of Coolera-Strandhill's net.

Luck, bad luck, opportunism and indecision all contributed to a goal that will surely stand out in the annals of Bunnanadden and Sligo G.A.A. history.

And, a goal that will always be described to many future generations of Bunnanadden folk.

Luck, in the sense that captain O'Flaherty had his intentions (as he told the North West Radio listeners) firmly set on a point when taking the free that led to the goal.

Bad luck on Coolera-Strandhill's behalf, considering that had the full-forward done as intended, they would now be preparing for another crack at James Kearns' and Richard Brennan's men in a County final replay.

The opportunism and indecision I mentioned could be seen in the alertness of Doohan to react to a ball that could have possibly been caught by the 'keeper, but should have been 'mopped-up' by his back line.

It ain't over until the fat lady sings, so the saying goes.

She took a while to clear her throat on Sunday, and where she was after the final whistle, I'm not quite sure.

But, the Bunnanadden supporters certainly didn't need a hand singing the praises of their heroes as the Owen B. Hunt Cup was presented to captain Fergal O'Flaherty, as darkness descended - and the party began.

My heart-felt commiserations go out to Declan McCabe, his management team and most of all, the Coolera-Strandhill players, who put a 'trojan' amount of work into this Championship campaign.

To describe them as being bitterly disappointed at the sound of referee Thomas Walsh's final whistle would be the understatement of the century.

The only piece of humble advice I can offer you is to use this defeat as a motivational factor for next year - and build on the excellent underage success you have worked so hard to achieve in the past number of years.

To the Bunnanadden squad, officials, members, supporters, 'hangers-on', dogs, cats and whoever else made the trip to Markievicz on Sunday last - enjoy your victory.

109 years is a long stretch to have to serve, but with the group of players at your dispersal, it's doubtful it will be as long again - touch wood.

I can't sign off without congratulating the Junior 'A' squad of St. Mary's, who defeated brave Ballisodare.

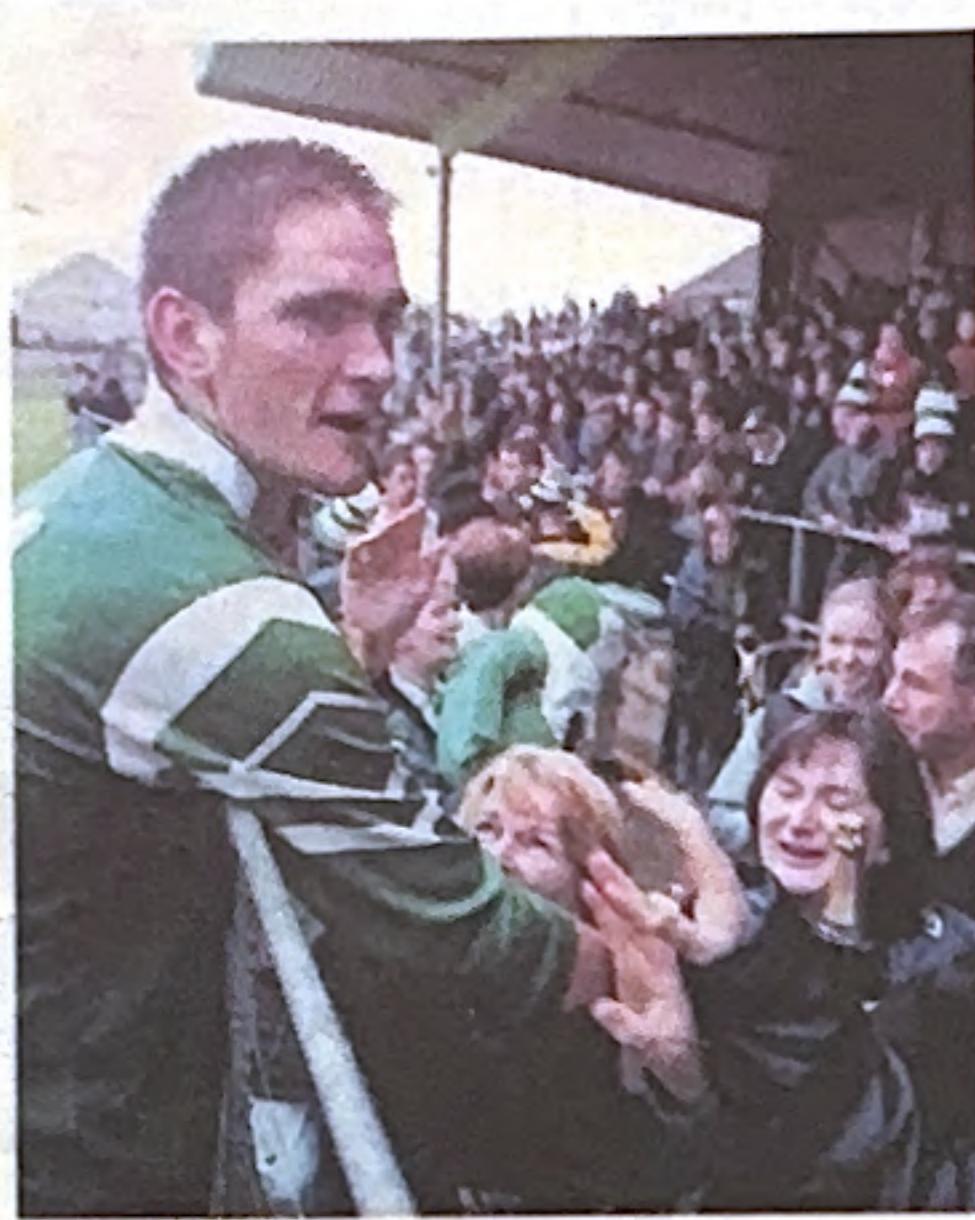
They turned a half-time deficit of two points into a one point winning margin, in what was a highly entertaining 'curtain-raiser' to the main event.

Not the 'favourites' according to many, the likes of John Kent, Paul Newton, Hubert Gilvarry, Tommy Breheny and Padraig Oates (guiding from the sideline along with Gerry Connolly) all showed that experience will often prevail in the heat of battle.

It might not have been the County title that the club was hoping for this season, but I'm told you would not have known that by the way they celebrated on Sunday night.

Ah, the joys of success.

Bunnanadden County Senior Champions 2000



■ Popular Bunnanadden's captain Fergal O'Flaherty.



■ Flying leap Bunnanadden's Paul Kerins seeks to tackle John McPartland (No. 11).



■ Committed Bunnanadden's David Killoran.

Winner of three Senior Championship medals, and captain of Tourlestrane in the 1999 County final, Sligo player **Eamon O'Hara** gives his verdict on last Sunday's drama at Markievicz Park

A unique final and a unique ending

LAST weekend we saw the unusual pairing of Bunnanadden and Coolera-Strandhill in this year's County Senior Championship final.

I say unusual, because when the Championship draw was made earlier this year most people would not have predicted that these two teams would reach the final.

In fairness to both clubs, they have been building a panel of players over the past five or six years.

And, during this time they have often been unfortunate to have come up against the eventual County champions in the early stages of the Championship.

Because of time spent in the USA, I didn't see any of this year's campaign apart from the semi-final replay involving Coolera-Strandhill and Eastern Harps.

Not a classic by any means - but no semi-final is - as all that matters is the victory, and to qualify for the final.

My opinion of Coolera-Strandhill was that they looked very determined, and each of their players was prepared to work hard.

Having not seen Bunnanadden, I couldn't judge them - and I didn't know what to expect in last Sunday's game.

Conditions were wet and windy, so good football was going to be ruled out.

With conditions as they were, it would be the team who showed the least nerves who would have the best chance of winning.

Bunnanadden were the quickest to settle, and raced into the lead (0-6 to 0-1) in the opening quarter.

They had penalty claims rejected - Emmett Gilhooley seemed to be impeded - and then Bunnanadden lost a second defender due to injury, as Shane Gormley followed Francis O'Dowd to the sideline.

That was when Coolera-Strandhill turned on the style; in a matter of 10 minutes they had drawn level, and they were one point ahead at half-time.

The second-half started slowly for Coolera-Strandhill - despite a lot of possession they were unable to score.

Then Derek Gormley scored a goal for Bunnanadden to put them two points ahead.

They held onto this lead for some time due to the fact that Coolera-Strandhill failed to properly use the advantage of the breeze.

Coolera-Strandhill persisted to play the ball either short or out towards the corners.

But they managed to score some excellent points, and took a one point lead with five minutes of normal time remaining.

Coolera-Strandhill were in complete control at this stage, but they were unable to capitalise on the score-board.

For the remaining minutes both teams conceded possession on a number of occasions - due to Coolera-Strandhill's nerves and Bunnanadden's desperation.



■ Jump for joy Bunnanadden players celebrate on the final whistle after beating Coolera-Strandhill in the Sligo SFC final.

Picture by Keith Heneghan/Phocus

Then came the largest piece of drama - a free for Bunnanadden, 45 metres out, in the fourth minute of stoppage time.

Their captain Fergal O'Flaherty had the chance to be a 'hero', and give his side the opportunity of a replay.

Instead of an equalising point, the strong breeze meant the ball dropped short - right into the Coolera-Strandhill goal mouth.

The Coolera-Strandhill defence, attempting to clear the danger, made a complete mess of it - and Bunnanadden midfielder Padraig Doohan was there to fist the ball to the net.

Analysing the game as a whole, I would have to feel sorry for Coolera-Strandhill as they played as well as they had to, and they controlled most of the game.

But they can only blame themselves for not putting away Bunnanadden when they had the chances.

Defensively, Coolera-Strandhill were excellent, with captain Shane O'Neill, Neil Carew,

Barry Doyle and James Joyce all doing well.

Kieran Quinn performed heroics at midfield, and, in attack, Karl Gilligan and Karol O'Neill caused the most problems for Bunnanadden.

If Coolera-Strandhill played more ball to these two players they would have won, as Bunnanadden had no answer to Karol O'Neill especially.

On the other hand, Bunnanadden, at times, rode their luck. In a final when luck is on your side, you are half-way to success.

Bunnanadden kept working when things were going against them, due to a huge effort from midfielder Padraig Doohan.

He was Bunnanadden's undisputed 'Man of the Match', and it was a fitting reward that he was to score the winning goal.

In defence, Bunnanadden were stretched when they had to replace Francis O'Dowd and Shane Gormley - the two players they would usually rely on for big performances.

In saying that, Willie Gormley was Bunnanadden's best defender.

Of their forwards, the two Killorans - Aidan and David - were very prominent, especially David (who came on as a substitute in the first-half).

Everytime David Killoran got on the ball he was either fouled, or he set-up someone else for a scoring chance.

Derek Gormley also did extremely well when he was in possession, and he showed great bravery to punch the ball to the net for his side's opening goal.

Bunnanadden have now bridged a gap which stretches back to 1891 - praise and congratulations should be given to all who were involved in this year's success, both on and off the field.

Finally, I would like to wish Bunnanadden the best of luck in their Connacht Club SFC game - against either Mayo's Crossmolina or Kilbride (Roscommon) next month.

Shige Senior Football Championship Final

Sunday 1st October 2000.

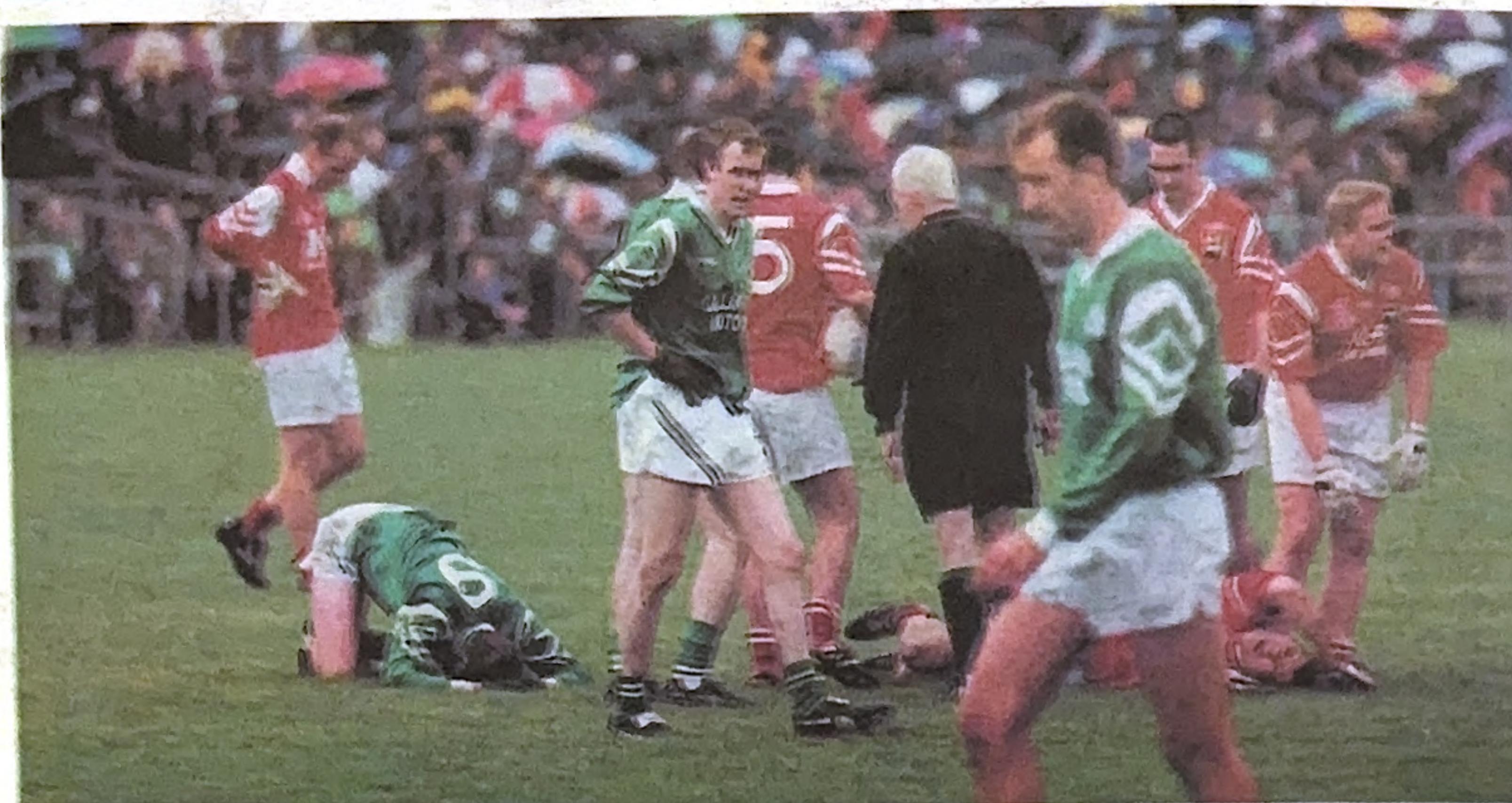
Bunninadden 29pts 7pts Coolera/Strandhill 11pts.

Celebrate
your special day, Sunday,
5th October
2000
in style!

To Padraig.

Heartiest congratulations on a
magnificent victory. I'm so proud. I knew
you could do it - and you did. Padraig
where you came out of for that all
important winning goal I don't know, but
certainly you were in the right place at the
right time. A million thanks. It's the goal of
the millennium. *T. Cagney*

Bunnanadden County Senior Champions 2000



Scenes from a Sunday afternoon A moment of respite for the gladiators at Markievicz Park, as play is halted due to an injury.

Picture by Charlie Brady

KILLORAN MOTORS

DOOCastle,
BALLYMOTE,
Co. SLIGO

Congratulations to Bunnanadden
on winning the
County Senior Championship,
from Killoran Motors

GAA fanatic **Martin Seery** watched the County Senior final last Sunday as South Sligo club Bunnanadden celebrated their first Senior Championship success since 1891

The 109 year hoodoo is finally over

WE now know the address of the Owen B. Hunt Cup for the next 12 months following last Sunday's dramatic finish.

To describe what happened would be impossible, you would need to have been there to have truly experienced it.

Not since Manchester United stole the European Cup from under the nose of Bayern Munich in 1999 has there been such an unbelievable finish to a game.

As far as this writer was concerned, it was a most enjoyable weekend given that the County final was the highlight of the GAA action in Sligo.

Before I start, a simple question: Which of the following categories do Bunnanadden fit into: 'Beg', 'Borrow' or 'Steal'?

The answer is simple, it's the third one - the other two make no sense following Sunday's show.

Now to begin.

Four minutes into stoppage time in last Sunday afternoon's game, it looked like the this writer's prediction - that the winners party would be in Perry's Tavern - was going up in smoke.

Then bang, something unreal happened!

No, Willie Gormley didn't score a point from Doonbeg.

The score that changed the game was even better. A Fergal O'Flaherty free that appeared destined for a point dropped at the 11th hour, goalkeeper Aidan Carty somehow managed to 'scoop' it out - but in a crowded goal mouth Padraig Doohan punched the ball to the net for a fairytale victory.

While everyone awaited a conference involving the referee and umpires, the goalscorer was heading back to midfield at a pace that would remind you that he had just missed the last bus to Doocastle - a bus that had departed when normal time was up.

The Doohan goal did one thing to satisfy this writer, it silenced many 'supporters' who occupied the Markievicz Park stand for the duration of the game.

When I say 'supporters', I don't mean to insult genuine GAA supporters. Why some of these so called 'supporters' give out about a referee's decisions (when they know nothing about the game) is beyond me.

As for awards and ratings from last Sunday's County final? Both teams receive rating of '9' each.



Champions Members of the Bunnanadden squad enjoy the victorious atmosphere at Markievicz Park.

Picture by Charlie Brady

The award of how to go on a solo run - an example for all defenders, midfielders and forwards - goes to Bunnanadden goalkeeper Michael Finn. Referee Thomas Walsh also receives a rating of '9'.

As for the 'First Aid' crew, what can one say? I wasn't particularly impressed.

From the time referee Thomas Walsh called for the stretcher, until it arrived at the injured Shane Gormley, some ninety seconds had passed.

Finally on the County final, congratulations to Bunnanadden on winning the County title - or should it be robbing it from Coolera-Strandhill - for the first time in 109 years.

Midfielder Padraig Doohan should receive a knighthood, not for scoring the winning goal, but for putting a smile on the face of joint-manager Richard Brennan!



Cutting across ... Coolera-Strandhill's Kev Gilligan evades the tackles in the County final.

Picture by Charlie Brady

High drama as Bunninadden clinch historic victory

Injury-time goal ends one hundred and nine year wait for championship glory

LEO GRAY REPORTS

BUNNINADDEN 2-7
COOLERA 0-11

BRAVE Bunninadden captured their first senior county Championship title since 1891 when a dramatic injury-time goal gave them a sensational victory over luckless Coolera at Markievicz Park on Sunday last.

In the one hundred and nine years since Bunninadden last won the title, there have been many better finals but I doubt if there has ever been a more dramatic one.

Coolera, who hadn't won the coveted crown since 1907, looked destined to end their famine when they led by a point as the game slipped deep into injury time. But their dreams were shattered in the most cruel fashion possible as Bunninadden snatched the title with a freak goal four minutes into stoppage time.

A 40 yard free by Bunninadden captain, Fergal O'Flaherty, dropped into a crowded goalmouth and as the ball bobbed about in a frenzied fashion, via the crossbar and the fingertips of the Coolera keeper, Padraig Doohan got the vital touch which deflected it to the back of the net.

Jubilation

Coolera protested that there had been a square infringement but after consulting with his umpires, referee, Thomas Walsh, allowed the score to stand and Bunninadden had completed a classic 'smash and grab' victory.

In the mayhem which followed, the South Sligo club's wild jubilation was matched only by Coolera's

John O'Flaherty and goalkeeper, Michael Finn, also made important contributions.

Padraig Doohan was never far from the heart of the action at midfield and he got solid support from Mark Gormley.

Fergal O'Flaherty's switch to the half-forward line towards the end of the first half gave an added dimension to the Bunninadden attack and the excellent free-taking of Aidan Killoran was crucial in keeping the South Sligo club in the game. Derek Gormley, Liam Og Gormley, Emmet Gilhooley and impressive substitute, David Killoran, all played their part in a famous victory.

Despite playing against the wind in the first half, Coolera created the game's first opening as James Joyce and Liam Healy combined to put Kieran Quinn in the clear.

Alert

However, the midfielder's effort flew wide of the target. At the other end, Coolera keeper Aidan Carty, had to be alert to race off his line to clear the danger as Emmet Gilhooley close in on goal.

A brisk opening produced the first score in the fourth minute. Padraig Doohan gained possession in midfield and set off on a penetrating run before dispatching the ball over the bar to give Bunninadden the lead.

The quality of that score was matched by Coolera's equaliser a minute later as Karol O'Neill completed a magnificent solo run with a great point.

Aidan Killoran edged the South Sligo side back in front with a pointed free in the 7th minute and that signalled the start of a period of Bunninadden dominance.

Brilliant point

Another free by Killoran made it 0-3 to 0-1 after 12 minutes and Bunninadden went further ahead two minutes later with a cleverly worked score. Padraig Doohan and Fergal O'Flaherty combined in a swift interchange of passes to release David Killoran who popped the ball over the bar.

A brilliant point from a '45' by Aidan Killoran put Bunninadden four points clear in the 16th minute and they extended their lead three minutes later with another text-book score, this time from a sideline kick way out on the left by Fergal O'Flaherty.

Coolera were looking a bit ragged at this stage but they suddenly clicked into top gear and finished the half with a scoring burst, which yielded six unanswered points in a ten minute spell.

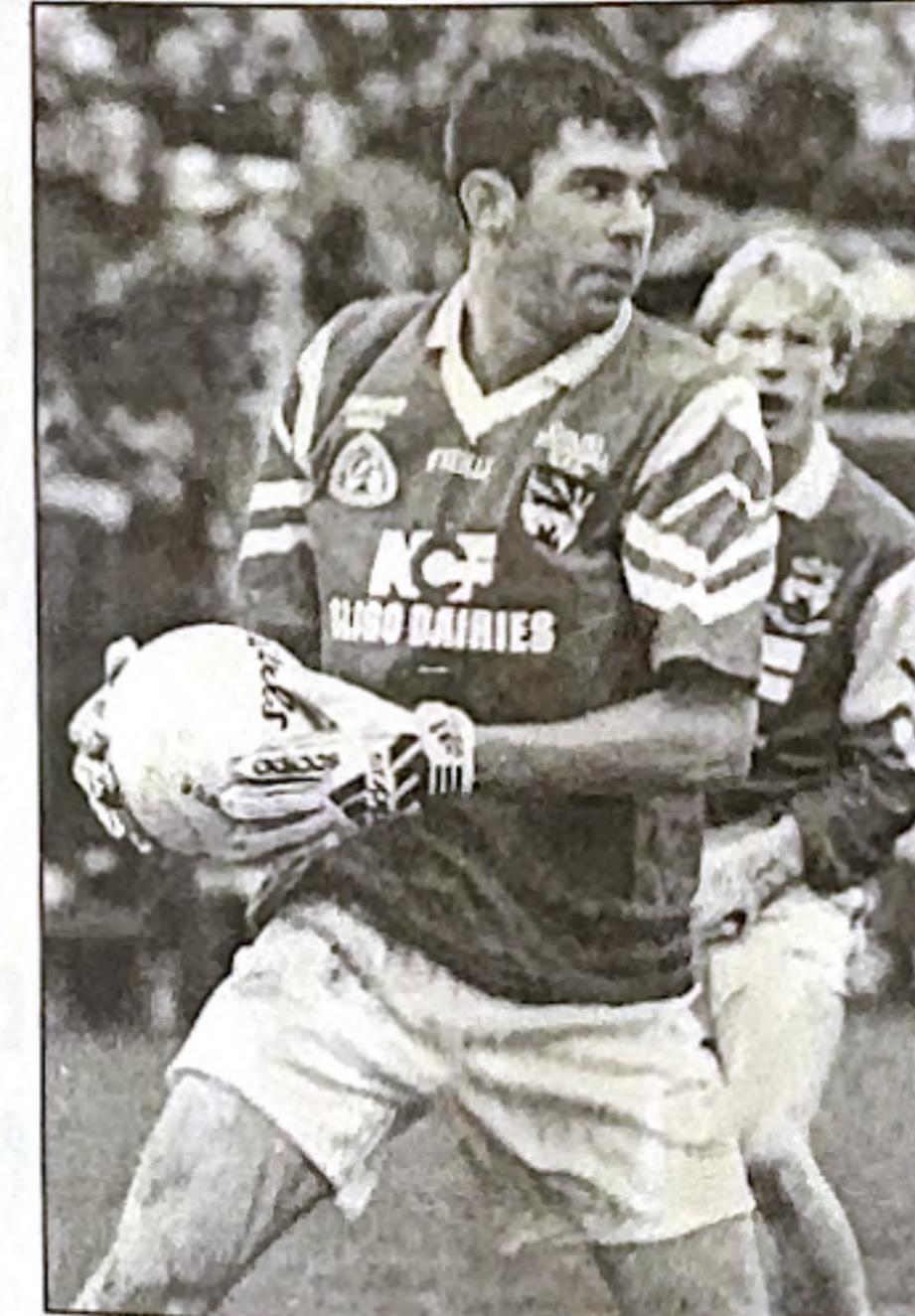
Karl Gilligan got their revival under way with a point from a free in the 20th minute and Paul Hegarty followed up with a delightful point from play after good approach work by Kieran Quinn and John McPartland.

Then in the 24th minute, a sweeping Coolera move earned a free from which John McPartland reduced the gap to just two points. Some stubborn defending was required to keep the rampant North Sligo side at bay but there was nothing Bunninadden could do to prevent Karol O'Neill from claiming his side's fifth point after 27 minutes.

Equaliser

John McPartland shot over the equaliser from a free two minutes later and the same player edged Coolera in front for the first time with a pointed free just before the interval.

Bunninadden needed a positive start to the second period and that is exactly what they got as Padraig Doohan, making the most of slack marking in the Coolera defence, put the sides back on level terms after a quickly taken free by Aidan Killoran.



Kieran Quinn sets up a Coolera attack during the County Final at Markievicz Park.

Kieran Quinn restored Coolera's lead in the 34th minute but Bunninadden got a vital break a minute later. Willie Gormley's long pass caught the Coolera defence out of position and Derek Gormley reacted quickly to slide the ball past the advancing Aidan Carty.

The North Sligo side responded swiftly with Karol O'Neill ripping through the heart of the Bunninadden defence for a terrific point to leave just the minimum between the sides.

Coolera were now winning the greater share of



Coolera midfielder, Stephen Carty, charges through the heart of the Bunninadden defence during the County Senior final at markievicz Park on Sunday last.

possession but there was a touch of desperation creeping into their play. Eventually, John McPartland settled their nerves with the equalising point from a free in the 48th minute.

Six minutes from time, Liam Healy got possession from a McPartland free and whipped the ball over the bar in great style to give Coolera the lead.

It looked as if that would be sufficient to claim the club's first title since 1946 but Bunninadden snatched the title with an incredible 'Houdini' act right at the finish.

BUNNINADDEN: M. Finn, S. Roddy, F. O'Dowd, E. Gormley; J. O'Flaherty, K. Brett, W. Gormley; P. Doohan (1-2), M. Gormley; D. Gormley (1-0), L. Og Gormley, P. Kearns; A. Killoran (0-3), F. O'Flaherty (0-1), E. Gilhooley Subs: D. Killoran (0-1) for O'Dowd (10 mins); J. Scanlon for S. Gormley (26 mins); K. Kearns for E. Gilhooley (52 mins); B. Gilhooley for A. Killoran (58 mins).

COOLERA: A. Carty, G. Foley, N. Carew, S. O'Neill, T. Waters, J. Joyce, B. Doyle, K. Quinn (0-1), S. Carty, T. McMahon, K. O'Neill (0-3), L. Healy (0-1), P. Hegarty (0-1), J. McPartland (0-4), K. Gilligan (0-1).

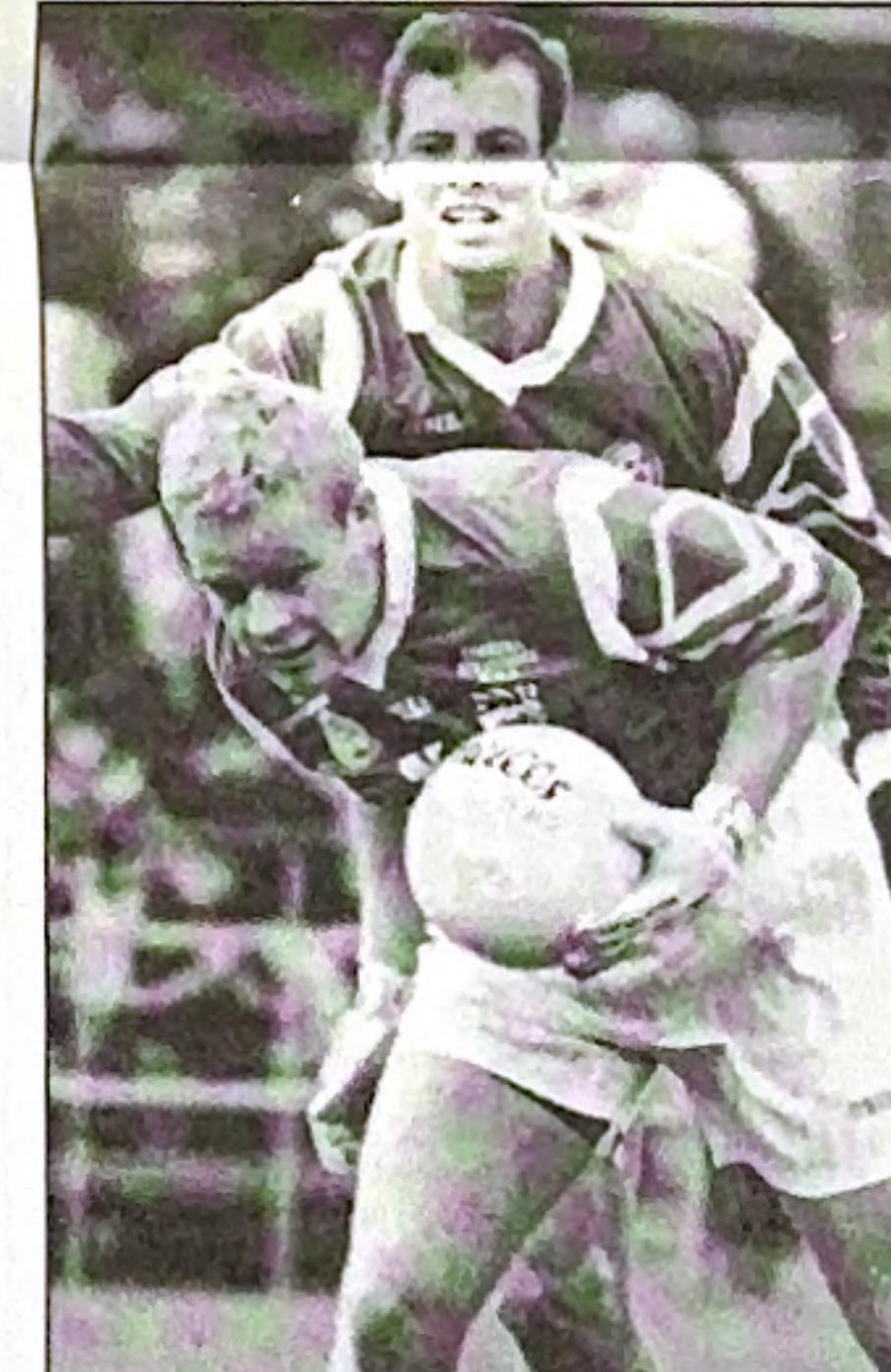
REFEREE: T. Walsh.



Richard Brennan, Bunninadden's joint Manager, celebrates his side's historic victory in the County Championship Final.



Bunninadden's Emmet Gilhooley finds his path blocked by Coolera keeper, Aidan Carty, during the County Championship final at Markievicz Park.



Coolera's Gavin Foley holds off the challenge of Bunninadden's Willie Gormley in the County Final at Markievicz Park.



We've done it, Cllr Margaret Gormley joins in the celebrations after Bunninadden's victory



Bunnanadden's Derek Gormley looks goalwards, just seconds after he punched the ball to the net for his side's first goal in last Sunday's County Senior final. Beside him is Aidan Carty, Coolera-Strandhill's disappointed goalkeeper. Picture by Charlie Brady

Never give up!

Sligo Senior Football Championship Final
Bunnanadden 2-7 Coolera-Strandhill 0-11

By Liam Maloney

THE sickening irony of it. Coolera-Strandhill's captain Shane O'Neill, in his 'profile', said it all.

Words that, as events transpired, would become tellingly prophetic. O'Neill's advice to young players? "Never give up a game isn't over until the final whistle."

Bunnanadden's players, young and old, must surely have read the informative match programme - a product of Fr. Liam Devine's endeavour - prior to last Sunday's County Senior final.

Midfielder Padraig Doohan - one of Bunnanadden's most consistent performers - pounced for a sensational goal in almost the fourth minute of second-half stoppage time.

From a situation where they trailed by a point (Liam Healy's score had given Coolera-Strandhill a fragile lead in the 25th minute of the second-half), Bunnanadden were suddenly two points clear.

Referee Thomas Walsh's full-time whistle (72 seconds after Doohan's intervention) signalled an end to Coolera-Strandhill's dreams, but Bunnanadden's delirious celebrations were ignited.

Winners by two points (2-7 to 0-11), Bunnanadden hadn't given up. Champions at Senior level for the first time since 1891. Well deserved? Definitely.

Few could argue that either team wouldn't have been worthy winners.

Coolera-Strandhill's last final was 1946; their last title 39 years before that year.

Bunnanadden were searching for the main prize not embraced in 109 years.

That's what made the build-up to this spectacle so unique, so special.

The game's ending at Markievicz Park - dramatic and wonderful from a Bunnanadden

perspective - left Coolera-Strandhill shocked, stunned, and angry.

When Bunnanadden captain Fergal O'Flaherty aimed at the Coolera-Strandhill posts, it is claimed that this free was to be the end. The last kick of the game.

Only a score - directly from O'Flaherty's boot - would have sufficed.

The ball - which dropped short - was fumbled by Coolera-Strandhill's defence, and broke kindly for the alert Doohan. The rest is history.

Should referee Thomas Walsh - not everyone's choice for the most important job in Markievicz Park - have halted play once the trajectory of the ball wasn't that of an equalising point?

Coolera-Strandhill would argue thus.

Doohan wasn't in the 'square' either, as the umpires confirmed.

And, the stoppage time was justified, too.

Although the game's second goal - shrouded in controversy - was the moment of truth for both finalists, nothing should be taken from Bunnanadden's amazing achievement.

When faced awkward situations, the Senior League champions - well-drilled by joint-managers James Kearns and Richard Brennan - answered honestly.

By the 17th minute of a contest, spoiled by inclement weather and slippery ground conditions, Bunnanadden had done almost everything right.

Leading by five points (0-6 to 0-1), Aidan Killoran had contributed three scores; his trickery was equalled by captain Fergal O'Flaherty, whose point, from a side-line kick, was brilliantly measured.

Doohan's neat point provided the game's opening score.

However, fate had conspired against the eventual winners, as two vital defensive ele-

ments - Francis O'Dowd and Shane Gormley - succumbed to the curse of injury, and had to be replaced.

Of the four subs Bunnanadden were to employ, David Killoran (he replaced Francis O'Dowd) contributed a useful point; Kenneth Kearns - who saw action in the second-half - has already worn the Sligo jersey at U-16 level and captained Bunnanadden's All-Ireland winning Rounders team.

Bunnanadden had few goal chances - apart from the obvious second-half scores plundered by Derek Gormley and Padraig Doohan - but Emmett Gilhooley appeared to be unfairly tackled by Neil Carew in the 15th minute.

A penalty, perhaps? Not awarded.

Trailing by five points, Coolera-Strandhill just sprang to life. Urged by the brilliant promptings of Karl O'Neill - who operated in a centre-forward position - the Declan McCabe managed side did particularly well to establish a one point lead by half-time (0-7 to 0-6).

John McPartland - later hampered by a leg injury - converted three frees with his usual fluency; Karl Gilligan was also industrious.

Coolera-Strandhill's defence, also, showed their steel through Neil Carew, captain Shane O'Neill and James Joyce (who effectively stifled Liam Og Gormley for 95 per cent of the contest).

Following Doohan's crisp point - kicked against the breeze - in the first minute of the second-half, the sides were level.

Derek Gormley's fisted goal - where he pounced on a ball directed goalwards by Liam Og Gormley - gave Bunnanadden a two points lead (1-7 to 0-8).

This was the sixth minute of the second-half. They weren't to score again until THAT goal, almost 30 minutes later.

Until then, Coolera-Strandhill began to play like a team who would look comfortable hold-

ing the Owen B. Hunt Cup.

Kieran Quinn's midfield industry was a feature, as points from O'Neill and McPartland levelled matters, once again, with 12 minutes of normal time remaining.

With no-one able to predict what would evolve, Coolera-Strandhill - when they ponder where it all went wrong - shouldn't question the referee.

They might, in fact, ask how did Bunnanadden goalkeeper Michael Finn make such an important save from Karl Gilligan's effort, just a minute after Gormley had scored at the other end. Moments like that often decide games, especially County finals.

In the minutes leading up to the lengthy period of stoppage time, it was noticeable that Liam Og Gormley began to hunt for possession more forcefully.

His energy, and that of so many other Bunnanadden players - including the aforementioned net-minder Finn, who went on a mazy solo run - kept the dream intact.

Goal hero Doohan merely confirmed an intense belief that had been there since 1891.

Last kick of the game or not, Bunnanadden listened to Shane O'Neill's advice. Never give up. Ever.

Player of the Match Padraig Doohan

Coolera-Strandhill Aidan Carty, Gavin Foley, Neil Carew, James Joyce, Tony Waters, Barry Doyle, Shane O'Neill (c), Kieran Quinn (0-1), Terry McMahon, Karl O'Neill (0-3), John O'Dowd, Shane Gormley, John O'Flaherty, Kieran Brett, Mark Gormley, Padraig Doohan (1-2), Mark Gormley, Derek Gormley (1-0), Liam Og Gormley, Paul Kerins, Aidan Killoran (0-3, 21, 1 '45'), Fergal O'Flaherty (c) (0-1, 11), Emmet Gilhooley

Subs used David Killoran (0-1), Joe Scanlon, Kenneth Kearns, Barry Gilhooley

Referee Thomas Walsh (St. Michael's)

Bunninadden's long wait is over!

WHEN Bunninadden recently won the Sligo senior football title for the first time in 109 years, it was the signal for major celebrations back home in the Bunninadden area. Brendan Swords from St. Mary's Terrace, Taylor's Hill, Galway, and a native of Sandyhill, Charlestown, decided to honour the historic occasion with a few suitable verses. During the week, he forwarded the following poem to us in honour of the Bunninadden side that made their own piece of sporting history.

*October clouds hung heavily
over Markievicz rich sod,
As the teams came on the pitch,
excited as they trod;
Strandhill/Coolera were ready
now to play,
The men from Bunninadden on
this County Final Day.*

*The pride of the parishes was
very much to the fore,
Neither team had won this cup
for ninety years or more;
Bunninadden hadn't taken it
since eighteen ninety one,
For their north Sligo opponents
it was almost just as long.*

*Straight from the throw-in Cool-
era launched an attack,
But determined opposition held
firm at the back;
Despite playing against the
breeze, Doohan was the first
to score,
Then O'Neill equalised, from a
solo run what's more.*

*At one stage in the first half,
Bunninadden were five up,
And must have felt they had the
winning of the cup;
But McPartland and co., didn't
just look on,
And at the halftime whistle,
Coolera led by one.*

*After the interval, and playing
against the wind,
The South Sligo men really had
to defend;
Play swung to and fro and ten-
sion got so high,
Not an inch was given in this
history making tie.*

*Now Aidan Killoran is a free-tak-
ing shark,
He struck a quick one to Doohan
who was right on the mark.;
Kieran Quinn was on hand to
restore Coolera's lead,
But O'Gormley scored a goal
with flash
lightening speed.*

*The Karol O'Neill got through
the Bunninadden defence,
And scored a wonderful point;
oh boy, was it tense;
Now came the turn of the Sligo
county star,
Yes, McPartland once again sent
over the bar.*

*Liam Healy scored another in
the style that he knew,
Coolera must have felt 'surely
we are through';
What a brilliant run it was for the
men in red,
But I doubt if they were prepared
for what lay ahead.*

*Deep into injury, the game 'it
was won',
But for the Bunninadden heroes,
this day was not done;
O'Flaherty took a quick free, the
keeper thought he had it
met,*

*When up popped Doohan and
finished it to the net.*

*What a shattering blow for the
team from Knocknarea,
They were in a state of shock, it
was obvious to see;
The fans too were gutted and
didn't make a sound,
As they slowly went in mourning
from the 'battle ground'.*

*The winners were elated as they
left old Sligo town,
What a long time in coming, this
most elusive crown;
One hundred and nine years
generations had to wait,
For the men in green and white
it's a time to
celebrate.*

- BRENDAN SWORDS.

Triumphant manager praises heroic players

By LEO GRAY

BUNNINADDEN joint manager, James Kearns, praised the never-say-die attitude of his players after their astonishing victory over Coolera in the county senior championship final at Markievicz Park on Sunday last.

"These lads just never give in", he said. "Everything seemed to be going against us but the lads kept battling away and got their reward in the end".

Bunninadden lost two defenders, Shane Gormley and Francis O'Dowd, in the first half and trailed by a point at the interval. Their task of getting back into the game was made all the more difficult by the fact that they had to play against the wind in the second half.

"We had three different full-backs during the

game but all the lads responded magnificently. Kieran Brett ended up playing at full-back and he had a tremendous game. I was delighted for him because he is one of our most committed players, travelling from Dublin every week-end for games.

"It didn't look too good for us at half-time but I just told the lads to keep getting the ball in around the Coolera goal.

"I knew that Coolera wouldn't score too much from play and that we could keep close to them if we defended well without giving away too many free kicks. That is exactly what happened and the early goal in the second half was a great boost to us.

"Coolera came back and got one point ahead of us but we were always in with a chance and

the players never stopped believing that they could win it", said the Bunninadden manager.

He described the victory as a wonderful achievement by the club and said everybody in the Parish was thrilled with the success.

"I have never seen such celebrations after a county final. Bunninadden were a long time fully entitled to celebrate in style which they did", Kearns added.

Reflecting on the game, the manager said that although Bunninadden got a few early scores, they didn't play particularly well in the first

"We got better as the game went on and we put in a strong finish. The overall determination was perfectly illustrated near the end when our

goalkeeper, Michael Finn, made a fifty yard run up the field to start a move which eventually led to the free from which we got the winning goal.

"All the players deserve great credit and I was particularly pleased that it was Padraig Doohan who emerged as the matchwinner. He's a tremendous servant to the club and his attitude is first class", said the manager.

He paid tribute to his joint manager, Richard Brennan, and the officers of the club.

"The club is extremely well organised and our success on the field of play owes much to the people who do so much work at official level", Kearns pointed out.

The manager had words of consolation for Coolera and expressed his appreciation of the fact that the club's manager, Declan McCabe,

and Executive member, Tony McLoughlin, travelled to Bunninadden to share in the celebrations on Sunday evening.

"I fully understand how Coolera felt after losing the final in such circumstances. They were devastated but it was great to see Declan McCabe and Tony McLoughlin in Bunninadden on Sunday evening. Hopefully, Coolera will make the breakthrough soon", added Kearns.

Bunninadden are back in action on Sunday when they take on Eastern Harps in the semi-final of the senior league, a competition they won for the first time last season. However, they will be without Shane Gormley, Francis O'Dowd and Aidan Killoran, all of whom were injured in last week's final.



Iam Healy (Coolera) is challenged by Fergal O'Flaherty (Bunninadden) during the County Championship Final at Markievicz Park.

Champions back in action on Sunday

Newly crowned county Champions, Bunninadden, make a quick return to action this week-end when they take on neighbours, Eastern Harps, in the semi-final of the senior league at Ballymote on Sunday.

Bunninadden won the senior league last year for the first time in their history and will be

anxious to defend their title. However, they will have to plan without defenders, Francis O'Dowd and Shane Gormley, and ace forward, Aidan Killoran, all of whom were injured in last week's county final.

In the other semi-final at Easkey, South Sligo rivals, Toulestrane and

Curry come face to face in what promises to be a cracking encounter.

In the Intermediate League, St. John's will be hoping to stay on course for a third consecutive title, a Championship/League double when they meet Shamrock Gaels in the semi-final at Kent Park.

The Gaels were relegated from the senior

ranks last season and the league represents their last chance of a quick return to the top flight. They will not lack motivation for what should be an interesting match.

The other semi-final between Grange and Mullinabreena takes place at Castleconnor.

"We were a long time in the wilderness but now we have reached the promised land and it is a victory for every man who has ever pulled on a Bunninadden jersey as much as it is for the players of today", the captain added.

He paid tribute to every member of the squad for the commitment they had given over the last couple of years. The victory would be particularly sweet for the two players

COOLERA manager, Declan McCabe, struggled to conceal his disappointment after his side's heartbreaking defeat to Bunninadden in Sunday's dramatic county final at Markievicz Park.

"We thought we had it and then it was snatched away from us in the very last second. It's extremely hard to take", he admitted.

McCabe, a former Bunninadden manager, was quick to

congratulate the new county champions but said he felt his own team were desperately unlucky on the day.

"You need to get a few breaks in games like this and just didn't get them", he said.

"The referee played about five minutes injury time which I felt was a bit excessive and I also felt most of the 50/50 decisions went against us. That is not sour grapes, it's just the way we saw things", McCabe added.

"Having said that, you have to

give credit to Bunninadden. They never gave up. We had a fair bit of possession near the end but we couldn't finish them off. At the end of the day, we were undone by two soft goals."

"Hopefully, we'll be able to bounce back from this. We have a very young team who can, I believe, win a county title in the next few years. We need to learn a few lessons and they don't come much harsher than the one we got today", added the Coolera manager.

The agony and the ecstasy of sport

GAA DIGEST

by the County Board PRO

JUNIOR FINAL:

The junior final played as a curtain raiser to the senior game was a very enjoyable game of football. Like their neighbours Coolera in the senior final, Ballisodare must feel very disappointed at losing a game that they looked like winning for long periods.

A Paul Newton goal four minutes from the end followed by a point by the same player two minutes later edged St. Mary's in front for the first time since the sixth minute of the game.

Ballisodare were leading 1-9 to 1-6 and looked set for victory when the towering full forward struck his second goal of the game.

It was a splendid goal from fifteen yards out, the best goal of the day. Many would argue that he had fouled the full back before he got possession, but he took full advantage of the situation and buried the ball in the back of the net.

Thomas Walsh kept a tight reign on the game which ensured that it was played in a sporting manner all through. It was tough but fair.

Sadly, the final was robbed of a sense of occasion by the absence of a band and a parade before the game. The band pulled out on Thursday night and the replacement band withdrew late on Saturday night.

The inclement weather conditions meant that the traditional Irish dancing planned for the break between the two finals by Seamus McCormack couldn't go ahead. However, I am sure that won't worry the supporters of Bunninadden who had their most memorable day ever in Markievicz Park.

No doubt their day will come. This is a very young team. They have outstanding young players in Karl O'Neill, surely a star of the future, Tony Waters, Barry Doyle, Kieran Quinn, Karl Gilligan, Stephen Carty, Paul Hegarty. They also have some rising young

target man Paul Newton to good effect. Yet Ballisodare seemed to have done just about enough to win when the full forward struck for his second goal.

The losers had some outstanding footballers in Dessie Benson at midfield, team captain, Martin Bradley, Paul Hannon at left half back, Kildare man, the skillful Joey Nevin at left half forward; Anthony Fallon, Thomas Dooner and Justin Corrigan. On the evidence of this display their day in the sun cannot be far away.

St. Mary's had more experienced players and it told in the end. John Kent showed that he can still score a point, while Hubert Gilvarry, Tommy Brehy, Michael Bree and Paul Newton were a constant threat to Ballisodare.

He played his first senior championship game for St. Mary's in 1973 and only a few weeks ago he lined out at full back on the junior team.

During his career, he played hurling for Easkey and later Craobh Rua. He refereed the recent U-16 A county final between St. John's and Coolera at Strandhill in Markievicz Park.

I was privileged to attend the St. Mary's function in 1997 when then G.A.A. President, Joe McDonagh presented him with the Clubman of the Year Award.

Stephen's tragic death puts everything else into perspective. I regret that I was unable to attend his funeral because I had a funeral in my own parish. I would like to extend deepest sympathies to Stephen's wife, Joan; daughters, Kelley and Stephanie; and son, Declan. Sympathies also to his parents, Stephen and Nancy; sister, Nicholas; and brothers, Aidan, Michael and Martin. May he rest in peace.

shown. The gremlins will always be a factor and the printers have asked me to convey their apologies to all who were disappointed because of the omissions.

STEPHEN TEMPANY, R.I.P.

The whole county was shocked and stunned when the news of the tragic death of Stephen Tempany in a road traffic accident filtered through from parish to parish on Monday week. Stephen was a true G.A.A. man, a loyal St. Farnan's player and supporter. I actually played on the same hurling team as him with Craobh Rua when we won the senior championship and Molloy Cup in 1979.

I must hasten to add that Stephen was much younger than I am.

He played his first senior championship game for St. Farnan's in 1973 and only a few weeks ago he lined out at full back on the junior team.

During his career, he played hurling for Easkey and later Craobh Rua. He refereed the recent U-16 A county final between St. John's and Coolera at Strandhill in Markievicz Park.

I was privileged to attend the St. Farnan's function in 1997 when then G.A.A. President, Joe McDonagh presented him with the Clubman of the Year Award.

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Bunninadden's Super Sunday



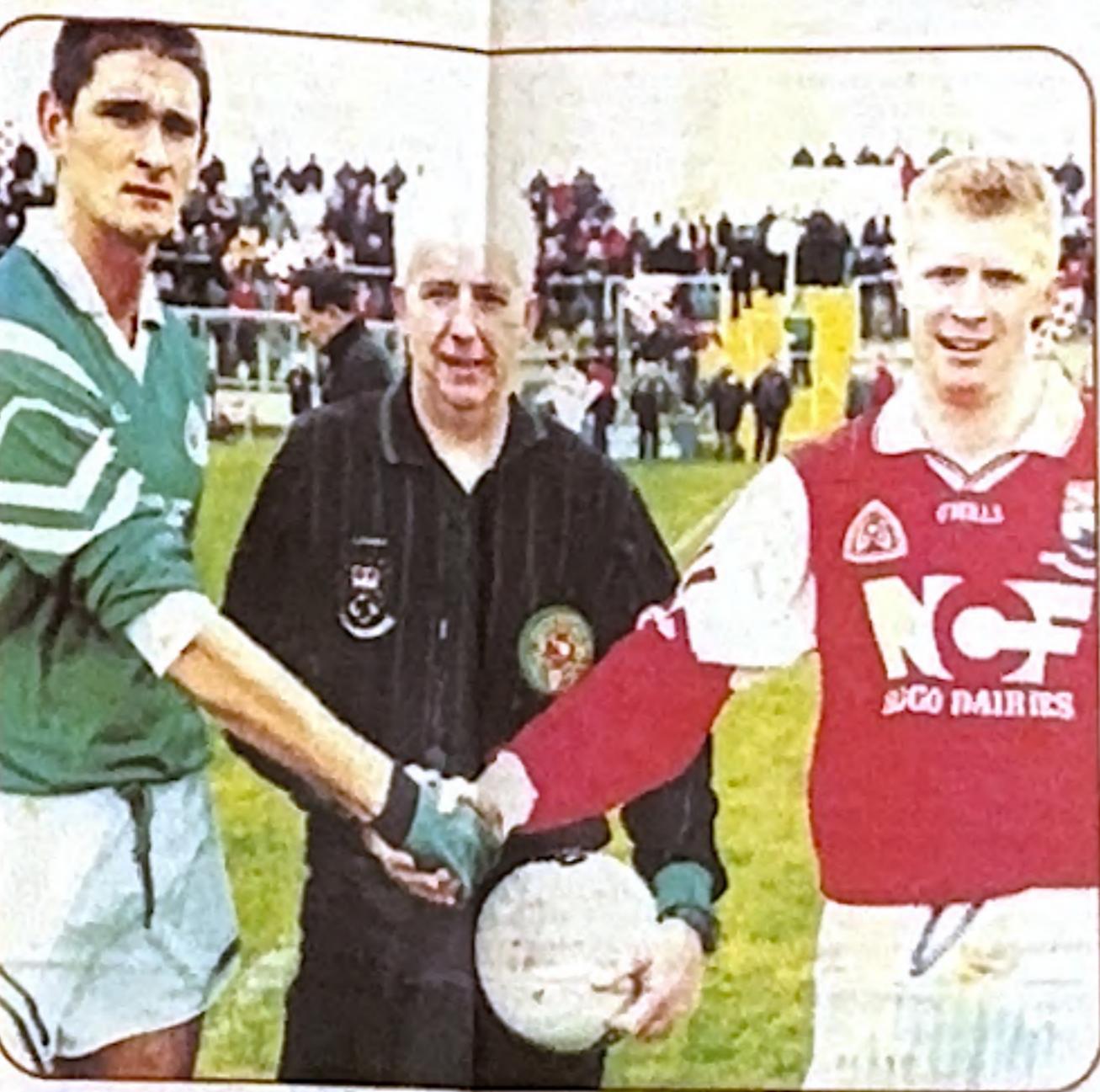
BUNNINADDEN, SLIGO COUNTY SENIOR CHAMPIONS 2000. Back Row (l/r): Kieran Brett, Stephen Roddy, Mark Gormley, Willie Gormley, Michael Finn, Shane Gormley, Francie O'Dowd, Emmet Gilhooley. Back row (l/r): John O'Flaherty, Liam Og Gormley, Paul Kearns, Fergal O'Flaherty (Captain), Aidan Killoran, Derek Gormley, Padraig Doohan.



County Board Chairman, Joe Queenan, presents the Owen R. Hunt Cup to Bunninadden captain, Fergal O'Flaherty, after the South Sligo Club had won the Sligo Senior Championship for the first time since 1891.



WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS: Barry Gilhooley, Francie O'Dowd, Liam Og Gormley, Mark Gormley and Joe Scanlon in jubilant mood after Bunninadden's victory.



Team Captains, Fergal O'Flaherty, Bunninadden and Shane O'Neill, Coolera, pictured with Referee, Thomas Walsh, before Sunday's County Senior Championship final at Markievicz Park.



TRIUMPHANT THREE: James McDonagh, Stephen Roddy and Francie O'Dowd of Bunninadden.



Joining in the Bunninadden celebrations are Willie Gormley, Margaret Gormley, Brendan Gormley and Muriel Gormley.



Coolera defender, Tony Watters, breaks up a Bunninadden attack



Barry Doyle and Neil Carew of Coolera combined to win possession during the County Championship final at Markievicz Park.



COOLERA, RUNNERS-UP IN THE SENIOR COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL. Back Row (l/r): Declan McCabe (manager), John McPartland, Karl Gilligan, Stephen Carty, Aidan Carty, Barry Doyle, Kieran Quinn, Terry McMahon, John McPartland, Sur.(selector), James Joyce. Front Row (l/r): Gavin Foley, Tony Watters, Neil Carew, Paul Hegarty, Shane O'Neill (Captain), Karel O'Neill, Liam Healy, Michael Harte (selector).



John McPartland, the Coolera full-forward, escapes the attention of two Bunninadden defenders



PREPARA
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Sligo side ready for big guns

THEY'VE been overcoming the odds all year, but tomorrow they face the biggest challenge in their 110-plus year history.

Little Bunninadden from Sligo begin their first ever Connacht club championship campaign against the aristocrats from Crossmolina, who also happen to be reigning provincial champions.

It's a parish of 300 houses halfway along the Tubbercurry-Ballymote road with a tiny panel of footballers and hardly a player recognisable to anyone from outside the area.

The tiny village on the Mayo-Sligo border started out well, winning their first senior county title back in 1891 but it wasn't long afterwards that the lean times came.

Years of obscurity followed, punctuated by a brief spell out of business in the fifties — they spent most of their time playing junior grade football, hoping one day to relive their glorious past.

In 1981 they won their way to intermediate and then early in the last decade they moved back up to senior.

Training

But even then things weren't all rosy — first round championship exits were the norm and it was a good night anytime the turnout at training was more than five or six.

A man called Richard Brennan took over the running of the first team in 1991 — he saw serious potential in this small club with a superior underage section in place and decided to stick with it.

Attitudes began to change around Bunninadden, training became more serious and winning matches started to become the norm rather than a necessity to avoid relegation.

This year, after 109 years trying, they finally won back the Senior Football Championship by beating Koolera-Strandhill, who were chasing their first title in 93 years.

"We won the senior league last year and that was our stepping stone," said John O'Flaherty — at

29-years-old one of the older players in the side.

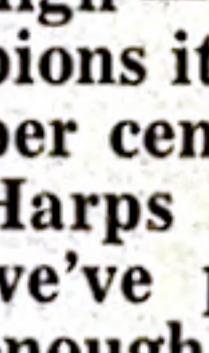
O'Flaherty has been playing for his parish side for the past 12 years, but was living in London for the past two meaning that he missed out on the start of their resurgence — in fact the first round against Easky this year was his first ever senior championship win.

Afraid

"It was all in the head previous to that, we were afraid of the bigger teams, especially Eastern Harps, our neighbours. But once we won something it gave us the confidence to go on."

"You can feel it in the team, the confidence is high — when you're champions it gives that extra 10 per cent. Other teams like Harps have it and now we've proved we're good enough."

Good enough for Sligo perhaps, but for Connacht and Crossmolina, we'll have to wait and see.


Peter Sweeney
reports

BRENNAN'S BOYS: Some of Bunninadden's

football team with manager Richard Brennan

CONNACHT CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP:

Newly crowned Sligo champions Bunninadden travel to Crossmolina on Sunday next to take on the local Deel Rovers in the Connacht Club semi-final. They could hardly have a more difficult assignment. Deel Rovers haven't lost a game in Mayo since October 4th, 1998. They are a super fit and well drilled outfit. They move the ball very quickly and they can up go up a gear and up the pace when the occasion demands. In their last outing they had a convincing win over Kilbride, the Roscommon champions. Young and inexperienced, the Kilbride men found the step up to this level of football too much for them. They managed to stay with the Connacht champions until ten minutes into the second half but then Deel Rovers picked up the tempo and ran out easy winners in the end.

Bunninadden will be under no illusions about the mountain they have to climb on Sunday. It will take a

super effort to match a team that has very realistic ambitions for All-Ireland honours this year. The loss of Shane and William Gormley since the county final will not help Bunninadden's cause. Francis O'Dowd must also be considered doubtful. Home advantage will also be a considerable asset to the Mayo champions. It all suggests that Bunninadden have an enormous task ahead of them on Sunday. Still, they are worthy champions and will carry the Sligo flag to Tierman Park with pride. It would be expecting too much to win but I believe that they will give a very good account of themselves, far better than many people expect. The experience of playing at this level will be a great benefit to the club in the long run. I am sure all followers in the county will join with me in wishing them the best of luck on Sunday.

Meanwhile, there is a bizarre situation in the other semi-final where Aughas are due to play the Galway champions in Carrick. The only problem is that the Galway county final will be going on at the same time in Tuam. It is a tricky situation for the Connacht Council. The latest news is that the Connacht club semi-final has now been fixed for Tuam also. It looks as if Galway will be thrown out of the competition which is really a pity. No team likes winning a game on a walk over.

Bunnanadden's quest

AIB Connacht Club Senior Football Championship Semi-final
Bunnanadden v Crossmolina

Do you remember the introduction to 'Star Trek'? "To boldly go where no-one has gone before"

It's an apt description of Bunnanadden's Connacht Club Senior Football Championship adventure which commences, at the semi-final stage, this Sunday.

The South Sligo side travel to Crossmolina's St. Tiernan's Park, not only to encounter the Connacht champions, but to also participate in the provincial competition for the first time ever.

Last month's County Senior final victory against Coolera-Strandhill ended a 'hoodoo' lasting 109 years.

Having claimed their first Senior Championship since 1891, Bunnanadden are now just one game away from a Connacht final.

Apart from St. Mary's, who won three Connacht Senior titles (1977, 1980 and 1983), this competition has proved a veritable 'wasteland' for Sligo's representatives.

In recent years, both Eastern Harps and Tourlestrane have been unlucky not to progress beyond the semi-final. Now it's Bunnanadden's turn.

Crossmolina, though, are a quality side. They retained their Mayo title this year, and their Connacht semi-final performance against Roscommon's Kilbride was awesome.

A winning margin of 11 points, Crossmolina also kicked 16 wides, while talisman Kieran McDonald typically struck 1-6.

Apart from McDonald, the Mayo side boast exceptional players like James Nallen, Barry Heffernan, Michael Moyle, Stephen Rochford, Johnny Leonard and Enda Lavelle.

Bunnanadden's task, that of dismissing the champions, seems frightening. Impossible, almost.

James Kearns, Bunnanadden's joint-manager alongside Richard Brennan, and selector John Spellman, is realistic about this weekend's Connacht semi-final.

The ex-St. Patrick's player stated: "The game represents, in

many ways, a step into the unknown for us."

"We're unfortunate to be up against Crossmolina, who are not only the Connacht champions, but one of the best teams in the country."

"Having to contain Kieran McDonald will also be difficult, although he can't win the game on his own."

"I was impressed with Crossmolina's quarter-final victory, but Kilbride were very much in contention and they didn't use their full-forward, who was quite useful," added Kearns, a Connacht Senior winner with Sligo 25 years ago.

In the five Championship games Bunnanadden played to capture the Sligo crown, seldom

was any one player exclusively relied upon.

However, the influence of midfielders Padraig Doohan and Mark Gormley has been vital, so too the performances of forwards Liam Og Gormley, Aidan Killoran and captain Fergal O'Flaherty.

Elsewhere, Derek Gormley has supplied useful scores, including crucial goals in the quarter-final and County final, while John O'Flaherty, Michael Finn, Kieran Brett and Paul Kearns have also featured prominently.

Preparations have been undermined, though, with the possible absence of three important defenders.

Wing-back Willie Gormley is definitely ruled out, having since departed for Australia; with

Francis O'Dowd and Shane Gormley - both injured in the County final - struggling to be ready.

The best news is regarding experienced full-back O'Dowd, who has recommenced training, with County Minor Gormley not expected to play again until the New Year.

Replacements include Joe Scanlon and David Killoran, with the viable option of Paul Kearns switching from wing-back to a defensive role.

"Missing these players would be a significant loss," commented Kearns. "While the late goal will be remembered for winning the County final, it was the consistent work of our defence during the campaign which made a huge difference."

"Despite being regarded as the 'underdogs', the incentive of playing in a Connacht final, if we win, will encourage everyone to give 100 per cent."

"We're representing the parish of Bunnanadden, and we are the champions of Sligo. We don't want to let ourselves down, and the pressure is on Crossmolina, who will be expected to win," he added.

Whatever happens, it has been a fantastic year for Bunnanadden's Senior squad, who have added to last year's Senior League success.

The club's U-16 and U-18 teams also won County titles this year, and Sligo's new Senior manager Peter Forde has drafted several of Bunnanadden's Senior heroes into his squad, including Padraig Doohan, Mark Gormley and Fergal O'Flaherty.

"It's a totally new experience for us to be playing at this level," said Kearns. "But every team that has ambitions of making progress has to expect greater challenges when they are successful."

"Although winning the County title was our main ambition this year, now that we're in a Connacht Club semi-final we are determined to give it our best effort."



Thinking ahead a quiet moment for Bunnanadden's midfielder Padraig Doohan during last month's County Senior final at Markievicz Park.

Doohan reflects on progress

JOHNNY Logan sang it. Back in 1980. "What's another year?" wondered the Eurovision singer. South Sligo's Bunnanadden would probably know the answer.

In December 1999 Bunnanadden clinched their first ever Senior League title, almost 12 months later they prepare for a Connacht Club SFC semi-final, having secured their first Senior Championship crown in 109 years.

"It's been incredible the way things have happened since we won the Senior League last year," explained Bunnanadden's influential midfielder Padraig Doohan.

"We lost two players from that team when John Lavin returned to Ballymote and Thomas Davey went to Australia."

"But, we knew that winning the Senior League meant we had the potential to be amongst the contenders for the Championship."

And, as if fate intervened, it all happened so wonderfully in last month's County Senior final.

In front of their loyal supporters, Bunnanadden won their first Senior Championship since 1891.

Doohan, who played such a prominent role throughout Bunnanadden's successful campaign, will never forget the final at Markievicz Park.

It was his dramatic goal, in the fourth minute of second-half stoppage time, which proved the crucial score. Shades of Ole Gunnar Solskjær, and Manchester United's European Cup win, in 1999.

Coolera-Strandhill, who last won the Owen B. Hunt Cup in 1907, were completely devastated.

"Winning the County title meant so much for the parish and everyone involved in the club. For the players it is a great incentive to try and do it again next year," said Doohan.

And, the ex-Banada Abbey player added: "It's only when you win something like a Senior Championship that you realise all the effort is worth it. There is a reward if things go right."

"We still feel sorry for Coolera-Strandhill - it was an awful way to lose a final. It would have been the same for us if we had lost."

Doohan - who captained Sligo when they won the Connacht Junior

title two years ago - now prepares for Sunday's challenge of Crossmolina.

The Mayo side, the reigning provincial champions, include such high profile players like James Nallen and Kieran McDonald, both of whom have played for Mayo in two All-Ireland finals.

"We are definitely up against it," admitted Doohan. "Crossmolina are the Connacht champions, and must be a strong side to have retained their Mayo title."

"If we get a good start, and some early scores, anything is possible. It is also important that everyone gives a good performance."

"An opportunity like this doesn't come along too often - and we mustn't waste it," he stated.

AIB CONNACHT CLUB SFC SEMI-FINAL

McDonald goal

helps champs

Cross hurdle

CROSSMOLINA 1-12 BUNNINADDEN 1-6

REIGNING Connacht football champions Crossmolina safely booked their place in another provincial final when they had six points to spare over Sligo champions Bunninadden in yesterday's semi-final at Crossmolina.

Despite winning comfortably in the end, the champions had to work much harder than expected against a Sligo side who had won their first county title in over 100 years.

In a match played in atrocious conditions, the Sligo men led by four points at one stage when they had the advantage of a strong wind in the first half.

However, they failed to score during the entire second half as Crossmolina rattled off seven points, most of those coming in the final quarter when they shrugged off their dogged opponents.

A goal from Fergal O'Flaherty in the 17th minute gave Bunninadden a four point lead, 1-3 to 0-2, with Paul McGuinness accounting for Crossmolina's two opening scores.

However, the Mayo men made a vital breakthrough five minutes before the break when Kieran McDonald netted a magnificent left-footed goal.

That goal brought Crossmolina level and although Bunninadden edged a point ahead to lead by 1-6 to 1-5 at half-time, there was only going to be only one winner from the moment Michael Moyles levelled matters for Crossmolina early in the second half.

It was all Crossmolina in the second half as they made their greater experience and strength count in very testing conditions, rattling off points from McGuinness, corner-back Francis Costello, wing-back Gerard O'Malley, Peader Gardiner, McGuinness again, and county star Kieran McDonald.

SCORERS – Crossmolina: K McDonald 1-2, P McGuinness 0-4, P Gardiner 0-2, M Moyles 0-2, G O'Malley 0-1, F Costello 0-1. Bunninadden: F O'Flaherty 1-3, M Gormley, A Killoran, L Óg Gormley 0-1 each.

CROSSMOLINA – B Heffernan; F Costello, T Mallon, C Reilly; P McAndrew, D Mulligan, G O'Malley; J Mallon, M Moyles; T Loftus, K McDonald, P Gardiner; P McGuinness, E Lavelle, J Leonard. **Subs:** N Convey for Leonard, S Moffatt for Loftus.

BUNNINADDEN – M Finn; S Roddy, F O'Dowd, D Flannery; J O'Flaherty, K Brett, P Kerins; P Doohan, M Gormley; D Gormley, A Killoran, D Killoran; E Gilhooley, L Óg Gormley, F O'Flaherty. **Subs:** J Scanlon for D Flannery, K Kerins for Gilhooley.

REF – E Stanton (Leitrim)

CONNACHT CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP SEMI-FINAL

Brave Bunninadden bow out after heroic display

Crossmolina.....1-12 Bunninadden.....1-6

HEROIC Bunninadden, ravaged by injuries and burdened with inexperience, salvaged enormous pride for their small club and the county with a courageous performance against reigning champions, Crossmolina, in a fascinating Connaught Club Championship semi-final at storm-lashed St. Tiernan's Park, Crossmolina, on Sunday last.

BY JIM GRAY

In atrocious conditions of incessant rain and near storm-force gales, the Sligo champions were expected to be outclassed and overwhelmed by their highly-rated opponents. Instead, they tore the pre-match script to shreds with a passionate display which pushed Crossmolina all the way, providing a much more tricky obstacle than had been anticipated.

After a magnificent first half performance, which saw them turn over a point to the good — 1-6 to 1-5 — the young Bunninadden team simply ran out of steam when playing against the elements in the second period.

Bunninadden's failure to register a single score in the second half graphically illustrates the depth of the problems they faced in the latter stages of the match, as the heavy pitch began to sap energy from weary limbs. Crossmolina's greater physical strength and superior technical ability began to tell, and yet it took them nearly forty minutes to gain the upper hand.

Emphatic style

Once they established that lead, however, they were never to surrender it as they finished in emphatic style, decorating their growing domination with some text book scores.

In the end, the six points margin was probably about right, as once the Kieran McDonald inspired Crossmolina forwards hit top gear they had far too much cut and dash for the Sligomen.

But Bunninadden had nothing to be ashamed of on a day when they played plenty of inventive football, particularly in the first half, and galvanised it with wholehearted commitment and passion which reflected great credit on the players and their managers.

In the circumstances, the occasion demanded huge performances all over the pitch — and Bunninadden were not found wanting. They had heroes in abundance.

Great goalkeeping

Goalkeeper, Michael Finn, had the game of his life, producing at least three miraculous saves in the first twenty minutes. In front of him, veteran full-back, Francie O'Dowd, playing through the pain barrier, had a stormer, while wing-backs, John O'Flaherty and Paul Kerins covered practically every blade of grass on the

pitch in a tireless contribution. Up against former All-Star, James Nallen and Michael Moyles, the Bunninadden midfield pair of Padraig Doohan and Mark Gormley probably had the most difficult task of all, but they stuck to it manfully, dominating in the first half before finally being ground down in the mud, wind and rain as the game wore on.

The Bunninadden forwards were particularly impressive in the first half, when their clever, flowing football often caused havoc in the Crossmolina defence. Fergal O'Flaherty, who contributed 1-3 of his team's total, Liam Og Gormley, and the lively Aidan Killoran, who at times looked like the best player on the pitch, were the pick of a very potent attack.

Blistering start

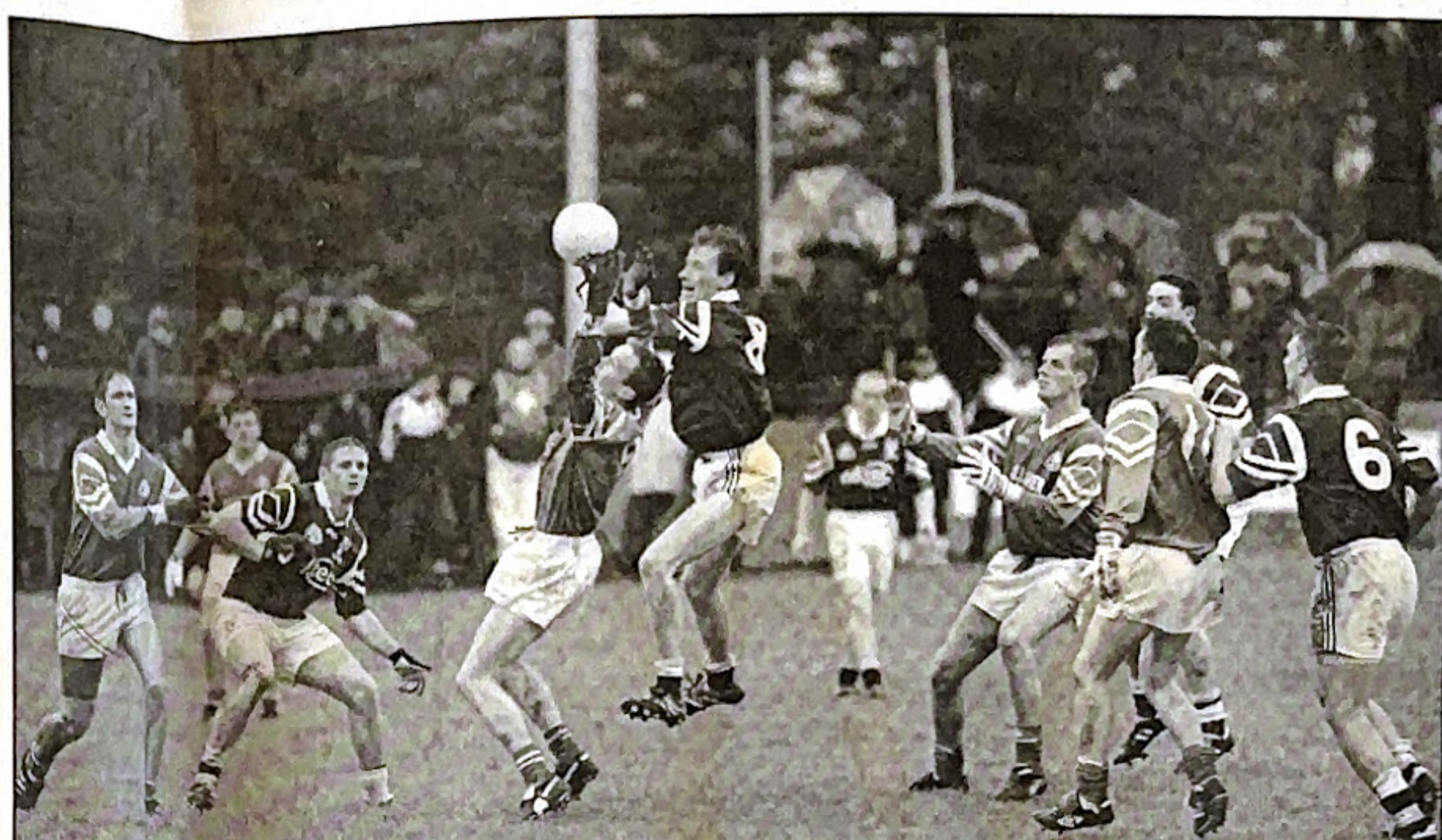
Playing with the considerable aid of the elements in the opening half, Bunninadden started at a blistering pace. O'Flaherty was narrowly off target with a long range effort in the 3rd minute and shortly afterwards his looping shot was dropped under pressure by Crossmolina's keeper, Barry Heffernan, with no Sligo forward on hand to take advantage.

Michael Finn produced the first of a string of top class saves in the 6th minute when he beat out Enda Lavelle's shot at point blank range, after a swift four man move had carved open the defence.

A superbly taken long range point by Mark Gormley finally opened the scoring in the 7th minute before Aidan Killoran doubled the advantage with a well-taken free a minute later, after Padraig Doohan's tenacity had earned the chance.

As expected, Crossmolina's response was emphatic — two points in as many minutes from the impressive Paul McGuinness, the first product of a quickly taken free by Lavelle which caught the Bunninadden defence napping, and the second at the end of a lovely three man move through the heart of the defence. But Bunninadden showed their character by quickly regaining the lead with another marvellous score, Paul Kerins breaking up a Crossmolina attack and advancing 30 yards before feeding O'Flaherty, who found the range from a difficult angle on the right flank.

Their big break came in the 17th minute. Doohan started the move with a penetrating run from deep, and when Killoran and Emmet Gilhooley both had shots



Midfield action from Sunday's Connacht Club Championship semi-final between Bunninadden and Crossmolina

blocked in a crowded goalmouth, the ball fell invitingly for O'Flaherty who showed great composure in drilling it to the bottom corner, to leave the visitors ahead by 1-3 to 0-2.

As Crossmolina came storming back, Michael Finn was soon in the thick of the action again, producing two wonder saves in the space of a minute.

Enda Lavelle and Thomas Loftus combined on the right to set up Michael Moyle in front of goal, but he could only wait in disbelief as his close range punched effort was safe gathered by the well-positioned Finn, and the same trio were involved again a minute later, but this time Lavelle's goal-bound shot was deflected away by the outstretched legs of the advancing keeper, with the forward sending the rebound shot just inches past an upright.

Breathing space

However, unanswered points by McDonald, Peader Gardiner and Moyle narrowed the gap to the minimum with six minutes left in the half, before Liam Og Gormley's lively point from an acute angle gave the Sligomen one breathing space.

Crossmolina jumped into the lead for the first time in the 27th minute James Nallen's quickly taken free was helped on by Lavelle to McDonald, who charged unchallenged towards goal before rifling the ball into the top corner. But again Bunninadden refused to yield, with

O'Flaherty curling over two frees from almost identical positions on the left in the closing minutes of the half to leave them 1-6 to 1-5 in front at the break.

With the elements now against them, they knew they were in for a torrid test in the second period, and Crossmolina emphasised the size of the task by sending over an equaliser within 12 seconds of the restart, Moyle firing over a superb point from 55 yards range.

One-way traffic

It was practically all one way traffic from then on. McDonald took advantage of a tiring defence to produce his undoubted magic, splitting the defence time and again with a stunning array of passes, and he had the perfect ally in the speedy Paul McGuinness, who tormented an overworked Bunninadden defence.

By the three-quarters stage, the home side had built up a 1-9 to 1-6 advantage, and as the game visibly slipped away from the gallant Bunninadden team they could offer only slim resistance as three further points were registered against them in the final ten minutes.

Although well beaten by a superior team in the end, Bunninadden's maiden voyage into provincial club football was not without merit, and team manager, James Kearins, was fully justified in his post-match assertion that the players had every reason to be proud of their performance.

SCORERS: Crossmolina, K. McDonald (1-2), P. McGuinness (0-4), M. Moyle, P. Gardiner (0-2 each), G. O'Malley, F. Costello (0-1 each); Bunninadden, F. O'Flaherty (1-3), L. Og Gormley, M. Gormley, A. Killoran (0-1 each).

Crossmolina - B. Heffernan, F. Costello, T. Nallen, C. Reilly; P. McAndrew, D. Mulligan, G. O'Malley; J. Nallen, M. Moyle, T. Loftus, K. McDonald, P. Gardiner, P. McGuinness, E. Lavelle, J. Leonard. Subs, N. Convey and L. Moffatt for Leonard and Loftus (56 mins).

Bunninadden — M. Finn, S. Roddy, F. O'Dowd, D. Flannery, J. O'Flaherty, K. Brett, P. Kerins, P. Doohan, M. Gormley, D. Gormley, A. Killoran, D. Killoran, E. Gilhooley, L. Og Gormley, F. O'Flaherty. Subs, K. Kerins for Gilhooley (46 mins), J. Scanlon for Flannery (55 mins).

Referee, Mr E. Stenson, Leitrim.



Michael Finn, Man of the Match display.

DRURY appointed manager of minor team

JOE DRURY of the Eastern Harps club has been appointed as the new manager of the county minor team.

He was a selector with former minor managers, Leo Boland and Anthony Brennan, in recent years and has also been actively involved with under-age teams at his own club.

Michael Hannon from Eastern Harps, Declan Rouse from Enniscrona and Michael Regan from Calry St. Joseph's have been appointed as selectors.

Managers for the county and town U16 teams will be appointed in the near future.



The Bunninadden team, subs, and mentors pictured before the start of Sunday's Connacht Club championship semi-final against Crossmolina



Aidan Killoran, had a great game for Bunninadden

surrounding counties and is produced by author John McDwyer. It is a play with tragedy, intrigue and comedy and is a revival of the Beezneez production, which sold out in the Hawk's Well Theatre, Sligo in 1998 / '99.

Following the support we enjoyed for 'You'll Never Walk Alone' by the same author earlier this year we expect a bumper crowd. Last time tickets were sold out in advance of the night.

Tickets priced £12.50 are available from Vincent Brett at (01) 2782735 after 6.30 p.m. or (086) 8114095 or email breddy@willis.com.

To ensure booking send cheques to Vincent Brett, 21 Avondale Court, Blackrock, Co. Dublin or contact any Committee Member. Come along and support Sligo drama, Sligo talent, Sligo football and above all enjoy a good night.

CO. BOARD BANQUET: Readers are reminded of the Co. Board Jubilee Awards Banquet which will take place in the Sligo Park Hotel on Saturday night, 25th November. This will be a gala occasion in which the 1975 Connacht Champion team will be honoured. The trophies are sponsored by the Friends of Sligo Football in Dublin and the special guest on the night will be Micheál Ó Muircheartaigh, RTE Music is by Brose Walsh.

Clubs not represented at the recent Co. Board meeting are reminded that tickets, which cost £20 each, are available from Marie Fowley, 42856; Margaret Toolan, 30250 or Rory O'Brien, 096-47010.

YEAR BOOK: Sligo Co. Board has decided to publish a Year Book to mark the Millennium. The publisher will be Seamus Casey of North West Xtra who is based in Markievicz Road, Sligo. Seamus, who is a native of Offaly and a staunch G.A.A. follower, previously worked with the Gaelic World and has vast experience in producing G.A.A. magazines and publications.

It is hoped to have the

Yearbook in the shops for the Christmas market. Club P.R.O.'s should have their material with Seamus by the end of November at the latest. I will be contacting each club individually and I will have more details later.

SLIGO SUPPORTERS CLUB LOTTO:

October 30th: Winning No. 1, 2, 12, 16, Jackpot: £2,600. No winner.

5 X Match Winners: £20 each: 1 Michael Hannon, Riverstown, 2. May Kilkenney, Sooey, 3. Ann O'Brien, Collooney, 4. Joan McGoldrick, Calry, 5. Martin Healy, E.S.B., Sligo.

Next Draw: Monday, November 13th. Venue: Laura's Bar, Carney. Jackpot: £2,700.00.

NEXT WEEK:

There will be no Digest next week. Seminars and 'think-ins' are now very much part of clerical life these days and I will be attending one such seminar in Westport from Sunday evening until Wednesday. The Digest will be back the following week.

Trip to Navan for National Football League

SLIGO senior footballers, encouraged by the recent good display against Fermanagh in the first round of the Allianz National Football League, travel to Navan on Sunday next to take on the mighty Royals.

Navan, 'only an hour from Dublin' as the ad. man says, is a popular venue and it is certain that a large Sligo following will make the journey. That is the great thing about the league, it enables supporters to get away to another county and province and affords people an enjoyable day out. That is provided that the weather is favourable of course. Recent weather has not been very encouraging and playing surfaces are now very heavy.

Set at home on Sunday last looking forward to watching the Galway County Final on TG4. Alas, the transmission was 'curtailed because of the weather. Hopefully, Sunday next will be an exceptional day and supporters will enjoy a good game of football.

A feature of Sligo's display the last day was the

encouraging performances of the newcomers like Philip Gallagher, Karol O'Neill, Conor O'Grady and Mark Brehy when introduced. The established players like Paul Taylor, Eamon O'Hara, Nigel Clancy and David Durkin didn't let the side down.

Peter Ford and his management team had an encouraging start and the ice cool former Mayo star is set to have a successful tenure in charge of Sligo's football fortunes. Next Sunday's game will provide a stiff test. Meath were struggling in the early stages of the league and the Sligo defeat was followed by defeat at the hands of Fermanagh in Enniskillen. Ironically, it was Meath who pipped Sligo for a place in the league play-offs when by a fraction of a point they nosed in front on the results of the last round games. Sligo players and followers will want to forget the trip to Clare. It was there that the chance of a play off in the quarter finals was lost. However, that is all water under the bridge now and Sligo can look forward to a good league run. It will not be easy but at least the two points gained against Fermanagh has provided a very encouraging start.

A feature of Sligo's display the last day was the

GAA DIGEST

by the County Board PRO

the wind in the first half and took the game to the champions straight away. At one stage they were four points ahead and were a point ahead at the interval. They failed to score in the second half but then Corofin won the Galway county final without losing a flag in the second half. With a bit of luck Bunninadden might have had a goal in the second half but the more experienced Deel Rovers were the better team on the day. Michael Finn was in excellent form in goals for Bunninadden and he was the unanimous choice for the 'Man of the Match' award. His opposite number Barry Heffernan was in splendid form also and denied Bunninadden certain goals. This was a very creditable

performance from Bunninadden when you consider that they were short some regulars from the county final line out. They carried the Sligo flag with pride and proved if proof was necessary that they are worthy champions of this county. This young team has a bright future.

FRIENDS OF SLIGO FOOTBALL:

Friends of Sligo Football host 'Lovey Leitrim', a play by Sligo man, John McDwyer on Thursday, 16th November at the O'Reilly Theatre, Belvedere College near Barry's Hotel and off Parnell Street.

This is a modern theatre with wine bar and car park and is an ideal venue. The play will be performed by a cast from Sligo and

surrounding counties and is produced by author John McDwyer. It is a play with tragedy, intrigue and comedy and is a revival of the Beezneez production, which sold out in the Hawk's Well Theatre, Sligo in 1998 / '99. Following the support we enjoyed for 'You'll Never Walk Alone' by the same author earlier this year we expect a bumper crowd. Last time tickets were sold out in advance of the night. Tickets priced £12.50 are available from Vincent Brett at (01) 2782735 after 6.30 p.m. or (086) 8114095 or email breddy@willis.com.

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CO. BOARD BANQUET:

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SPORT

& SECTION 2

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November 8th, 2000



▲ Knockmore victorious in Under-17 League page 23.



▲ Up for grabs in the middle of the park, at Crossmolina, on Sunday.

Crossmolina advance after a few scary moments

ANYTHING from a ten to a fifteen points' victory for the defending champions had been widely predicted, but at wet and windy St. Tiernan's Park, Crossmolina, on Sunday, the no-hoppers, Bunninadden, brought their own script with them and made the Deel Rovers battle for survival for over fifty minutes.

CROSSMOLINA 1-12

BUNNINADDEN 1-6

Fine saves

No question about it, Finn did bring off a couple of fine saves in the first half to keep his side ahead but, for his excellent contributions in general play and for four great points, the honour should have gone to Crossmolina corner-forward Paul McGuinness.

A place in the provincial final hung in the balance for over forty-five minutes, but then the Deel Rovers began to stamp their full authority on the trend and a plethora of points left them six points clear at the end.

Kieran McDonald's goal for the Deel Rovers four minutes from the break proved the spur Crossmolina needed and a score Bunninadden could not afford to have conceded so close to the break.

The champions will now have to wait until Saturday evening next to learn who their final opponents will be.

The Galway final was eventually played on Sunday with the 1998 All-Ireland champions, Corofin, emerging 1-3 to 0-3 win over Killanin to set up a semi-final meeting with Leitrim champions, Aughavas, at Carrick-on-Shannon on Saturday.

If Corofin qualify the final will be in Crossmolina, and if Aughavas emerge victorious the final on November 19 will be at Carrick-on-Shannon.

The real surprise on Sunday, to this observer anyway, was the awarding of the 'Man of the Match' accolade to Bunninadden goalkeeper Michael Finn.



▲ Kieran McDonald breaking clear before blasting in a goal for the Deel Rovers. Left: Paul McGuinness celebrates as the ball lands in the back of the net.

could capitalise of the error. Overall, the Deel Rovers defence played well, particularly the half-back line of Patrick McAndrew, Damien Mulligan and Gerald Lavelle who contributed one point to the scoreboard.

More workmanlike

James Nallen and Michael Moyle turned in a more workmanlike performance in the middle of the field than that against Kilbride in the preliminary round.

All six Crossmolina attackers were very much involved in the play but McGuinness, McDonald, Gardiner and Enda Lavelle must come in for special mention.

Sligo team manager, Peter Ford, would have been encouraged with the performances of a number of Bunninadden players, particularly Paul Kerins, Padraig Doohan, Liam O'Flaherty and Fergal O'Flaherty,

and all four must have earned a chance in the county jersey at some stage during the current National League campaign.

Bunninadden, although failing to

Connacht Club Football Championship Semi-Final

Report by Ivan Neill

Photos Henry Wills

raise a flag against the elements over the final thirty minutes, caused a few Crossmolina hearts to flutter on a number of occasions and five minutes from the end Barry Heffernan was called on to make a fine save at the foot of the left upright.

A goal at that stage for the visitors would have put the homesters under a lot of pressure to hold out.

The Sligo champions, their first time competing in the championship, proved more than a match for the favourites when wind-assisted in the opening half, and they certainly raised a few eyebrows when slipping into a four points advantage after eighteen

minutes, thanks to a goal by scorer-in-chief Fergal O'Flaherty who accounted for 1-3 of the side's total.

All through that opening twenty minutes, however, Crossmolina were guilty of so many errors, particularly having intended passes intercepted by alert Bunninadden players, and might well have proved the downfall of the champions.

Interceptions

The errors were mostly confined to the defence, where Francis Costello, Damien Mulligan and Tom Nallen all had intended passes intercepted.

For instance, the Sligo champi-

ons' goal was as a direct result of a Damien Mulligan pass blocked down by Padraig Doohan and in a sweeping breakaway the ball ended up in the Deel Rovers net.

An earlier interception by Bunninadden half-back, Paul Kerins, resulted in a point by O'Flaherty.

In fairness, the conditions were absolutely terrible and mistakes were inevitable when playing the short passing game into the wind.

Bunninadden started confidently enough and were two point clear after eight minutes through Michael Gormley and Aiden Killoran.

Two points by McGuinness had the sides level by the 11th minute and all the signs were that Bunninadden were going to be swamped by the champions.

Incidents at both ends of the field quickly changed the intended script and by the end of the first quarter Crossmolina were facing a four points' deficit.

Paul Kerins interception put Fergal O'Flaherty through for the lead score and three minutes later

Gold for Mayo Racquetballers

MAYO junior Racquetball players landed four gold and two silver medals at the All-Ireland finals at Arklow over the weekend.

In the boys under-11 it was a clean sweep for Mayo players, with Stephen Healy (Holloway) taking the title with a 2-1 win over Martin Clarke (Castlebar).

Raymond O'Malley (Castlebar) won a bronze medal.

In the girls under-11, Katie Walsh continued her dominance at this age level with a 2-nil win.

Tara Feerick (Ballinrobe) landed the girls under-13 title with a 2-0 win over her Meath opponent.

Michelle Haverty (Castlebar) had a great win over old rival Mairead Hickey (Waterford) to take her first National title.

Mike Haverty (Castlebar) won a silver in the Boys under-13 singles, while Gerry Keane (Ballinrobe) won a bronze medal in the Boys under-15 singles.

Sarah Hogan (Ballinrobe) and Orla Kavanagh (Ballinrobe) also won bronze in girls under-15.

Third Grand Prix for Claremorris rider, Cameron Hanley



Mayo face Maughan's Fermanagh

Mayo senior footballers touched down at Shannon Airport earlier this morning (Tuesday) after a successful trip to the States, particularly the win over New York in the FBD final proper last Sunday week at Gaelic Park, writes Ivan Neill.

A stern test now awaits the Mayo team next Sunday when they face John Maughan-managed Fermanagh in a National League Division One "B" tie at Irvinestown.

John Maughan's team has already dropped two points, losing to Peter Ford's Sligo the previous Sunday, and he will be anxious to avoid a second successive league setback.

The Mayo panel includes several new names and many of the 'old guard' for the league campaign, but it won't be known until Thursday night what the formation of the team will be.

Fermanagh, all-Ireland senior B finalist, are extremely fit and have been together much longer than Pat Holmes new panel only announced early in October.

It's to Mayo's advantage that several of the regular players did not make the trip to the States.

However, there was some doubt last night whether the Crossmolina players would be travelling to Fermanagh on Sunday, as they are playing either Corofin of Aughavaz the following Sunday in the Connacht Club final.

an attempted clearance by Damien Mulligan was aborted by Padraig Doohan before Emmett Gilhooley put the impressive O'Flaherty in for a goal to leave them 1-3 to 0-2 ahead.

That stung the champions into quick retaliation and some fine moves resulted in points by McDonald, Peadar Gardiner and Michael Moyle to narrow gap to one point again.

No mood

McDonald's goal six minutes from the interval put the homeside ahead by a point, but battling Bunninadden were in no mood the drop further behind. Instead they regained to the advantage from two frees by O'Flaherty.

Quick on the draw, Michael Moyle had the sides level again within seconds of the restart.

Bunninadden failed to score in the final thirty minutes but came close to scoring two further goals, the first in the 34th minute and the second five minutes from the end.

Paul McGuinness restored the advantage for the champions in the 37th minute and further points were added by defenders Francis Costello and Gerard Lavelle before Gardiner, McGuinness and McDonald completed the scoring and a place in the final on Sunday week.

Crossmolina: Barry Heffernan; Francis Costello (0-1); Tom Nallen (capt), Colm Reilly; Patrick McAndrew, Damien Mulligan, Gerard O'Malley (0-1); James Nallen, Michael Moyle (0-2); Thomas Loftus, Kieran McDonald (1-2); Peadar Gardiner (0-2); Subs: Joseph Scanlon and Kenneth Kerins.

Bunninadden: Michael Finn, Stephen Roddy, Francis O'Dowd, David Flannery, John O'Flaherty, Kieran Brett, Paul Kerins, Padraig Doohan, Mark McCormay (0-1); Derek Gormley, Aiden Killoran (0-1), David Killoran; Emmett Gilhooley, Liam Og Gormley (0-1); Fergal O'Flaherty (1-2); Subs: Joseph Scanlon and Kenneth Kerins.

Referee: E. Stenson (Leitrim).

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Gaelic Games correspondent **Liam Maloney** selects his Sligo Senior football club team of 2000, based on this year's Senior Championship

team 2000

aidan carty

1

coolera-s'hill

james rolston

2

easkey

neil carew

3

coolera-s'hill

shane o'neill

4

coolera-s'hill

vincent cuffe

5

easkey

david durkin

6

tourlestrane

willie gormley

7

bunnanadden

padraic doohan

8

bunnanadden

kieran quinn

9

coolera-s'hill

karol o'neill

10

coolera-s'hill

john mcpartland

11

coolera-s'hill

liam og gormley

12

bunnanadden

mark breheny

13

st. mary's

dessie sloyan

14

easkey

paul taylor

15

eastern harps



■ Chosen John McPartland of Coolera-Strandhill.



■ Selected Bunnanadden's Liam Og Gormley.

the **endline** view

it's time to ask santa

By Martin Seery

Dear Santa,

I find it hard to believe that it's 12 months since my last letter. Let me start by thanking you for some of the gifts you delivered last time. Whatever was in the recipe you delivered to Bunnanadden, it did the trick.

Not only did they win one Senior Championship game, they won the lot - with the Owen B. Hunt Cup now sitting proudly in the South Sligo village.

For 2001 the club require a recipe on how to retain the title, something they have never done.

County final referee Thomas Walsh is looking for a bicycle to help him keep up with the pace of a fast game (on the odd occasion that he might be caught out).

Apart from that, he's okay - having had an excellent County final last October.

For 2001 Tubbercurry require two teams who will hand them 'walk-overs' at the start of the Senior League.

Earlier this year Bunnanadden handed them a 'walk-over' on the opening day of the season.

These two points turned out to be priceless, keeping Tubber in Senior football, as Cloonacool were relegated.

To make matters worse Cloonacool defeated Tubbercurry in the Senior League. Santa, if you can manage this for Tubbercurry, they would be grateful.

Finally, another recipe is needed. This one is for all of the Ladies Gaelic football clubs in Sligo who wish to prevent St. Nathy's from winning their sixth consecutive Senior title.

Until Christmas 2001, Santa, I hope you can oblige.
Yours sincerely,

The Endline View

Bunnanadden shake the Connacht champs

AIB Connacht Club SFC Semi-final
Crossmolina 1-12 Bunnanadden 1-6



In possession Bunnanadden's No. 11 Aidan Killoran is tackled by Crossmolina's centre-back Damien Mulligan.

Picture by Henry Wills Western People

AT half-time in last Sunday's Connacht Club SFC semi-final, Bunnanadden had defied so many pre-match predictions.

While both teams battled tremendously against the ferocious breeze and stinging rain, it was the South Sligo club who had set Crossmolina's nerves jangling.

By full-time, though, their brave efforts had evaporated. Without a score in the second-half, Bunnanadden - their pride still intact - lost by six points (1-12 to 1-6).

Against opponents who had recently won their first Senior title in 109 years, the Mayo representatives were initially lured, perhaps, into thinking ahead.

Contemplating a defence of their provincial trophy against either Corofin (who won a wind-swept Galway decider) or Leitrim's Aughasas.

In their own pitch (a weather lashed St. Tiernan's Park), and in front of 1,000 spectators (where only the foolish were without water-proof jackets), Crossmolina were facing a deficit, even if it was only a single point (1-6 to 1-5).

Bunnanadden's management (James Kearns, Richard Brennan and John Spellman) would have been satisfied.

With the advantage of the sturdy breeze, the Sligo side - making their debut at this level - had seriously questioned Crossmolina's lofty reputation.

Michael Finn, Paul Kerins, Padraig Doohan, Aidan Killoran, Fergal O'Flaherty and Liam Og Gormley were making a considerable impact.

Mark Gormley's splendid point, the game's opening score, revealed Bunnanadden's intent. They wanted to win.

The moment which prompted Bunnanadden roars, and jolted Crossmolina hearts, came in the 16th minute of the first-half.

A move, which began with Padraig Doohan's determined interception, ended with David Killoran's attempt on goal.

Killoran's effort was blocked, but the ball reached Fergal O'Flaherty, who swept a low shot past Crossmolina's goalkeeper Barry Heffernan.

Leading by three points (1-3 to 0-3), Bunnanadden's advantage was well deserved.

Doohan's midfield endeavour was adequate, and Bunnanadden's attack - where Aidan Killoran was quite effective - continually made the home defence seem ordinary.

Apart from his goal, team captain O'Flaherty contributed three points, including two neatly converted frees, and a crisp effort from play (following work from excellent wing-back Paul Kerins).

Aidan Killoran converted a free, and was involved - along with Derek Gormley - in the point superbly kicked by Liam Og Gormley.

Goalkeeper Michael Finn, however, was the one player who kept Bunnanadden's interest alive for much longer than most observers expected.

Voted 'Man of the Match', Finn made three glorious saves in the opening 19 minutes.

He twice denied Enda Lavelle, and, with something to equal Gordon Banks' agility against Brazil in 1970, Finn also thwarted Michael Moyles.

The regularity with which Crossmolina breached the Bunnanadden defence, only to take the wrong option or to find Michael Finn in such awesome form, hinted at severe problems for the visitors.

Despite the presence of experienced full-back Francis Dowd, an injury doubt before the game, Bunnanadden missed the vital influence of Shane Gormley - still injured since the County final - and Willie Gormley, who had departed for Australia following his side's epic title win.

Kieran McDonald's stunning goal, in the 26th minute of the first-half, reinforced the belief that Crossmolina would inevitably progress.

Crossmolina added seven points during a wind-swept second-half, and corner-forward McGuinness was impressive, scoring a total of 0-4.

McDonald, however, was the catalyst. Without dominating the game, his astute passes made a difference.

When in possession, a deft turn or composed sliotar left opponents floundering.

Alongside his sublime goal, the Mayo Senior sigma added two points, both from frees. One was struck, casually almost, from at least 50 metres.

That Bunnanadden failed to score in the entire second-half explains so much, as Crossmolina, at times, scored points with relative ease.

Bunnanadden tried, yes, and introduced 16-year-old attacker Kenneth Kearns with 15 minutes remaining.

Unlike the drama which sensationally captured last month's Sligo title, there was no late gal for Bunnanadden.

There were chances for Derek Gormley and his brother Mark, but net-minder Barry Heffernan - inspired by his opposite number produced two brilliant saves.

Bunnanadden had performed better than many imagined, and exposed Crossmolina, particularly in the first-half.

Their greatest act this year, though, was in winning the Sligo Senior Championship, and the competition has been thankfully invigorated as a result.

With an attack that includes McDonald, Crossmolina seem destined for, at least, another Connacht title.

Player of the Match Michael Finn

Bunnanadden Michael Finn, Stephen Roddy, Francis O'Dowd, David Flannery, John O'Flaherty, Kieran Brett, Paul Kerins, Padraig Doohan, Mark Gormley (0-1), Derek Gormley, Aidan Killoran (0-1), David Killoran, Emmett Gilhooley, Liam Og Gormley (0-1) Fergal O'Flaherty (c) (1-3, 2f)

Subs used Kenneth Kearns, Joe Scanlon, Crossmolina Deel Rovers Barry Heffernan, Francis Costello (0-1), Tom Nallen (c), Colm Reilly, Patrick McAndrew, Damien Mulligan, Gerard O'Malley (0-1), James Nallen, Michael Moyles (0-2), Thomas Lottus, Kieran McDonald (1-2, 2f), Peadar Gardiner (0-2), Paul McGuinness (0-4), Enda Lavelle, Johnny Leonard

Subs used Neil Convey, Liam Moffatt, Referee Enda Stenson (Leitrim)