**Murphy Cup - Rd 1 (01.04.12) NLS v St Clarets**

Shamrocks first competitive outing of the season took us out to Hayes to play St Clarets. After eight weeks of hard training and a victory over McCurtains in a pre-season the previous week, the panel that made the trip out were hungry for action.

With the sun beating down on their backs shamrocks took the game to Clarets from the throw-in. Superior levels of fitness and management having the tactics spot-on were evident and shamrocks registered three points before Clarets managed to put some play together and get down near the shamrocks goals. Good teamwork was apparent to all spectators with the backs playing well and the ball being transferred up the pitch to the forwards without delay.

Soon after the shamrocks stamped further authority on the game with Ja Glynn lobbing the keeper from out on the right and Colleary and James Power landing some nice points. Minutes later some terrific interplay put McWhinnie through one-on-one with the keeper and he buried it. Shamrocks went in at half-time leading 2-6 to 0-3 points.

Clarets emerged from the half-time break with renewed vigour but shamrocks again went up the field and Shields and Colleary registered points. However, the game then changed and Clarets started to win some ball around the middle of the field. They managed to register a couple of points before breaking shamrocks defence on two occasions and beating McNulty in the shamrocks goal. Overall the second half was a bit of a struggle for shamrocks as we seemed to abandon the tactics which had been so successful in the first half. Nevertheless, after landing another couple of points the result was never in doubt.

Final score was 2-11 to 2-6. Management were happy with a win for the first game of the season and pleased with the performance especially some of the football in the first half. Best for shamrocks on the day were Anthony Langan, James Power and Shane McWhinnie.

**Murphy Cup – Rd 3 (21.04.12) NLS v Moindearg**

A Saturday evening assignment was handed to the shamrocks for the final round of the Murphy Cup qualifiers. After a walkover against Garryowen the previous week shamrocks were already assured of a semi-final place before the game. A panel of 22 and supporters made the trip out to Greenford for the match.

Moindearg started the game in a more positive nature and registered the first two scores before Sweeney got his hands on the ball and opened the shamrocks account for the day. It was obvious that Moindearg were up for the game as they started to exert their authority around the middle of the field winning a lot of breaking ball and using it well. However shamrocks were still creating chances of their own but couldn’t register them on the scoreboard except for one from Ryan Higgins which found the target. Just before half-time the game changed with Moindearg scoring two soft goals which gave them a lead at the break of 2-2 to 0-2.

Shamrocks came out for the second half eager to make up for a poor first half performance. Moindearg kept the scoreboard ticking over before shamrocks managed to get a foothold in the game. Scores from Adam Holden and Ciaran Colleary kept the shamrocks in touch. In the final 15 minutes increased levels of fitness from the shamrocks were evident with Moindearg being increasingly pinned back inside their own 45. All of the men introduced from the bench made a positive contribution to the game with three of them registering on the scoreboard. More ball being won around the middle of the field and some surging runs from the defence allowed shamrocks to close the gap. However, shamrocks never got closer than three points and the final whistle put an end to their gallop and the siege on Moindeargs goals.

Final score was a 2-4 to 0-7 points. Management focused on the positive second half performance and look forward to a semi-final in the near future. Best for shamrocks on the day were Brian Galvin, Paddy Madigan and Pat Tighe.