

FOOTBALL  Intermediate Semi-Finals

Battling Ballyvaughan keep on rolling

 Ballyvaughan 0-13 - Clondegad 2-5 

at Hennessy Memorial Park, Miltown Malbay



Jerome Hogan

BALLYVAUGHAN'S meteoric rise took another step forward on Sunday when they took the scalp of favourites Clondegad. Since winning the junior A title in 2003, they have taken huge strides forward in preparing themselves for the next level and all that good work paid off on Sunday as they qualified for the intermediate final in emphatic style.

Battling wins over Clooney-Quin and Naomh Eoin got them to this stage but on Sunday they came up against a team which had got to two intermediate finals in three years and were confident of getting to yet another.

But in truth nothing went right for Clondegad. They were stuck to the ground from the opening whistle and they didn't look a patch of the side which were unbeaten prior to this encounter with impressive displays against Kilmihil, Michael Cusack's and Kilmurry Ibrickane.

However, Ballyvaughan stood up well to the task and it was their blistering start which propelled them to victory. Leading by 0-8 to 1-0 at half time, Ballyvaughan could practically smell a upset but knew that a Clondegad comeback was imminent.

In contrast, Clondegad struggled to find any scoring form and only for a Brian Chambers goal midway through the first half, the half-time score could have been a lot more embarrassing.

The second half proved a far more competitive contest and Clondegad came into the game with a renewed determination in the second period. The introduction of Colm Quinlivan added strength to their flagging forward line and the growing influence of county player Garry Brennan dragged them right back into the match. Ballyvaughan's stern defence was well tested as the half wore on but after getting a further goal through Garry Brennan added

to points by Eoin Griffin, Kieran Browne and two from Colm Quinlivan, Clondegad just couldn't bridge the gap and get anything out of the game.

Indeed they missed more chances to win two games and as their frustration in front of the posts increased, Ballyvaughan remained calm and continued to convert their chances without much fuss. John Martin, Cillian Mahon and James Hynes all had their scoring boots on with Martin in particular a constant thorn in Clondegad's side.

They also used their substitutions well with both Kevin Carrucan and Diarmuid Greene getting on the scoreboard to eventually give the north Clare side a deserved victory.

Left: Clondegad's Garry Brennan challenges Ballyvaughan's Mark O'Loughlin and James Hynes in the Clare Intermediate championship semi final at Miltown Malbay on Sunday.

Don Moloney/Press 22



Match Details

Ballyvaughan Damien McNamara (7), Mark Walsh (7), Phillip Monks (7), Sean McNamara (7), Mark O'Loughlin (8), Kieran Casey (7), Setanta Moran (7), James Hynes (7) (0-2), Raymond Casey (7), Phelim Kyne (7), Stevie Hynes (7), Cian Walsh (7), Cillian Mahon (8) (0-3), John Martin (8) (0-6 3f), Jack Queally (7) Subs Kevin Carrucan (7) (0-1) for Walsh, Diarmuid Greene (7) (0-1) for Moran, Jason McDonagh for Mahon

Clondegad Declan Flynn (7), Flan Enright (6), Cormac Murphy (6), Eddie Murphy (6), Flan King (6), John Griffin (7), Francis Neylon (7), Garry Brennan (7) (1-1), Brian Carrig (7), Shane O'Neill (6), Kieran Browne (7) (0-1), Brian Chambers (7) (1-0), Ken Kelly (6), Eoin Griffin (7) (0-1), Padraig McMahon (7) Subs Colm Quinlivan (7) (0-2) for O'Neill, Kevin Sheehan for Murphy, Paddy O'Connell for King, John Hayes for Sheehan, Michael Lynch for Kelly

Man of the Match
John Martin (Ballyvaughan)

Hunger and desire the key for Cusack's

 Michael Cusacks 0-12 - Cratloe 1-4 

at Cusack Park, Ennis

Eoin Brennan

IT CAME down to sheer hunger. Michael Cusack's simply wanted it more and they oozed that desire and determination in everything they did. This quality has been absent from Cusack's in recent years but after knocking out pre-competition favourites Kilmihil in the last of their group games, they knew that with no outstanding team in the championship that this was their best chance in years to return to the top flight of Clare football.

In contrast Cratloe could not cope which the physical presence of Michael Cusack's and although their

defence coped admirably, from midfield up they were outplayed and out-muscled. Cusack's dominance centred around midfield where their strength and distribution crippled Cratloe's challenge.

Cusacks' focus was clear from the start as they comfortably got on top and by the 20th minute, they had opened up a 0-6 to 0-1 lead, three of which came from Michéal Jordan frees. Cratloe main problem was their distribution as they repeatedly failed to find a man despite winning clear possession. Cusacks were much more efficient with the ball and by half-time, they led by 0-7 to 0-2.

Cratloe's senior experience was

simply not showing and surprisingly their expectant fightback never materialised. In its absence, Cusacks took over again after the restart and controlled the game. The first score of the second half took a while in coming but it inevitably came from Jordan in the 42nd minute. Kenneth Hynes added a point two minutes later and Jordan converted another free in the 45th to stretch Cusacks' lead to eight.

Cruising at this stage, they then took their foot off the gas and let Cratloe back into the game. A free from Padraig Chaplin started the fightback and when Liam Markham converted a penalty in the 53rd minute, the

Michael Cusack's supporters in the main stand began to look uneasy.

But Cusacks reply was almost immediate and it was Jordan again who stepped up their challenge again, securing two late points in the 55th and 56th. Cratloe's only answer was a Chaplin point in injury time but by that stage it was a mere consolation.

At the final whistle, Michael Cusacks delight and relief was very evident but after losing three finals this decade, it is certain that they won't be getting carried away just yet. Added to this is the prospect of playing their fierce rivals Ballyvaughan which should make for a very intriguing derby match in the final.

Match Details

Michael Cusack's Eoin Farrell (7), Gerry Conway (7), Oliver Conway (7), John Conroy (7), Michael O'Connor (8), Fintan Conway (7), Patrick O'Connor (7), Michael Hynes (7), James Hynes (7), Shane Lee (0-2), Patrick Hynes (0-1), Kenneth Hynes (0-2), Michéal Jordan (0-7 4f), Patrick Davoren (7), Neil Quinn (7) Subs Clive Earley for Quinn, Tomás Kerin for Patrick Hynes

Cratloe Pierce DeLoughery (7), Barry Gleeson (6), Barry Duggan, Michael Carey (6), Martin Murphy (7), Michael Hawes (7), Liam Markham (7) (1-1), Kevin Browne (7), Sean Chaplin (7), Sean Hynan (7) (0-1), Sean Collins (7), Aidan Browne (7), Padraig Chaplin (7) (0-2 1f), Joseph O'Connor (6), Damien Browne (7)

Man of the Match
Michéal Jordan (Michael Cusacks)