

Intermediate Football Championship

Stalemate in battle of favourites

Clarets 2-4 Round Towers 2-4

WE EXPECTED SO MUCH from this game and in many ways I suppose it delivered, if not in scores, then certainly in the closeness of the contest.

Both these teams are well fancied to make it to the final of this competition. So far the Clarets have lived up to their billing, although the same can not be said of the Towers, who have spluttered and stuttered a little so far.

For them this game was a real chance to send out the message that they are very

much up for the fight of regaining Senior status and to that end they were not prepared to let the Clarets have their own way.

Probably the near three quarter of an hour delay before the start of this match effected its quality somewhat, as we had to go through the all too familiar scenario of watching the referee play "hide and seek" with umpires around Ruislip, as most candidates were understandably more interested in watching the climax of Clare v Kilkenny than the beginning, middle or end of Round Towers v St Clarets.

Anyway, we finally got going and the delay had obvi-

ously cost the players their focus.

The simplest one- two became a real challenge for far too many of the players and as these annoying break downs of play continued, we began to adjust our expectation of the game.

After quarter of an hour the Hayes team were 3-1 ahead with Martin Falvey contributing two of those scores.

Referee Ger O'Shea awarded a penalty to Round Towers following an unnecessary mix up in the Clarets back line, which Danny Cormack blasted past Paul Myers.

Minutes later a similar showdown was being played

out at the other end of the field as Alex McIndoo faced Niall Dillon and although the Clarets centre back, with an aversion to the number six, hit the post with the kick, it rebounded favourably to him to allow him to finish past the luckless Dillon.

With ten minutes still to play in the half, we hoped that these two goals would spark one or other or even both teams into life, but alas it didn't and over the closing period all that was delivered was a scrappy goal from Falvey right on half time.

Falvey kicked into action again at the start of the second half, with a point to make the scores 2-4 to 1-1 and Towers were looking a team uneasy with their situation.

However, they did have the wind at their backs and a strong wind at that and slowly they began to make use of it.

Clarets helped their opponent's cause somewhat by pushing too deep looking for ball and often both full for-

ward Martin Hession and centre forward Paddy Quinn could be found in the midfield area, with just Eamon Colleran and Paddy Lynott covering the attacking half of the field.

With little threat on their goal, Towers could concentrate on getting the scores they needed.

That opening point from Falvey on 38 minutes proved to be the Clarets last of the game and such a statistic demonstrates just what a frustrating afternoon it turned out to be for all concerned, spectators included. Four times they landed ball into the capable arms of Niall Dillon in the Towers goal and with each of those misses the belief drained out of John Kelly's' team.

Towers began to eat into the six point advantage and three points in five minutes from Gus O'Brien, Robert Campbell and sub Mark Payne brought them to within a goal of their opponents.

That goal was duly deliv-

ered in the fiftieth minute from full forward Kevin Heaney and it also proved to be the final score of the match.

Frustration was the key element of the final ten minutes and in truth with the number of mistakes that were made neither team deserved victory.

The draw will re-affirm the Towers' belief in themselves as contenders for the Intermediate crown, whereas it will throw question marks over the Clarets standing as favourites for the title.

Certainly any team that is as wasteful as they were in this game will do well to lift any title.

Scorers:

ST CLARETS: M Falvey 1-3, A McIndoo 1-0, P Quinn 0-1.

ROUND TOWERS: D Cormack 1-1, K Heaney 1-0, G O'Brien 0-1, R Campbell 0-1, M Payne 0-1.

Senior Hurling Championship

Not so easy for champions

En Murray 2-14

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