Intermediate Football Championship

Clarets win a cracker

BY JOHN COLLINS

St Clarets 2-16 Moindearg 2-13

THERE HAVE been rumours circulating for the past few weeks in London, that football in the Intermediate grade was good. This game between Moindearg and St Clarets was proof that it really is the case.

In fact, at present, on the evidence of Sunday at least, the football being played in the Intermediate ranks is considerably better than that being played at Senior.

Both sets of players were a credit to the game and their clubs. The football was end to end with a total of thirty three scores proving just how open the game was.

St Clarets had the better of the first period and despite the absence of the hugely influential Paddy Quinn at midfield, they still managed to go into the break three points ahead.

Moindearg also had their difficulties with Christy Finnegan and Pat Quirke both missing through injury, but to watch the game one would never have guessed that either team was at less than full strength.

The opening exchanges [illegible] was point for point and at that stage scores were level at three each. Derek McMahon and veteran Tony Murphy were winning the midfield battle for the Hayes men and when they got the ball forward Martin Falvey and Tony Coughlan were both showing well.

The close exchanges continued over the next ten minutes with Moindearg having the best chance when Paul Tierney had his point blank shot saved by Paul Myers at the expense of a point.

As the half drew to a close, Tony Murphy buried the ball to the back of the Moindearg net after a great run from midfield, only to see the score disallowed for over-carrying with the scores at 8-5 to Murphy's team.

However the green and whites dusted themselves down from that disappointment and Patrick Lynott knocked over his first of the game to put his team four up before Anthony McCarthy pointed for Moindearg. Points were again exchanged just before the break and Clarets retired 0-10 to 0-7 ahead.

Throughout the day, the team shooting into the bottom goals had held a huge advantage and with that in mind, most felt that St Clarets lead of three was never going to be enough to hold off an excellent [illegible] second period.

An opening point from Tierney after just seconds added further evidence to that theory and Moindearg would have been justified to feel that they were about to take control of events,

However, two quick points from Lynott and Falvey were added to by a goal from Martin Hession and suddenly Clarets looked like turning the day's trend on its head.

However, the early midfield dominance enjoyed by St Clarets was starting to disappear and the Moindearg duo of McCarthy and Ribben were getting the better of proceedings.

Tierney scored a goal to drag his team back into contention, when his shot for a point deceived Paul Myers and looped into the net. Suddenly it was game on again.

Five minutes later Paul Mannion blasted superbly to the back of the Clarets net after being set up by Tierney and from being a comfortable seven points ahead Clarets found themselves an uneasy one point in the lead.

With the scores sitting at 1-16 to 2-12 and less than five minutes remaining a free from Patrick Lynott was fumbled under the crossbar for Moindearg and Tony Coughlan was on hand to poke the ball [illegible] tle breathing space.

A late point from Mannion was not enough to alter the outcome of the game and Clarets maintained their somewhat fragile 100% record in the group stages of this Championship.

Over the past number of years the Intermediate competition hasn't exactly set the world on fire, with much of the football being of the forgettable variety.

This year though, there is a real quality to many of the team at that grade and certainly of the games that I have seen this year, none have disappointed.

Both these teams are showing the sort of quality needed to survive at Senior level and on top of that they are also displaying that most vital of ingredients, the hunger to succeed and get back into that top group.

Undoubtedly, Intermediate football is well worth spending an afternoon watching at the moment.

Scorers:

ST CLARETS: T Coughlan 1-2, M Hession 1-1, D McMahon 0-3, P Lynott 0-3, M Falvey 0-3, B McNiece 0-2, E Kinlon 0-2.

MOINDEARG: P Mannion 1-4, P Tierney 1-3, A McCarthy 0-4, N [illegible]