



Mervue United retain Premier League crown

NOW while Mervue United didn't exactly blossom in Spring time, the club put a sticky patch behind them to regroup in recent weeks and on Thursday evening last, a season's hard graft bore fruit when a single goal victory over mid-table Athenry ensured that they had retained the Brod Trill Premier League title.

Renmore were the only side to pose a real threat to the end and when they went down to their only defeat of the season against Salthill Devon recently, the advantage went to their near neighbours and Mervue never looked like they would lose their grip in recent weeks.

So the efforts of Tommy Lally, Ollie Neary and Stephen Lally were rewarded as they now go chasing a league/cup double with the Michael Byrne Cup in their sights.

PREMIER LEAGUE

ATHENRY0
MERVUE UNITED A1

A must win situation for Mervue while for the home side more quality opposition to bring out the best in a young mid-table side.

The champions achieved their aim but only just. A Colie Ridge free-kick was driven into the area. The rebound fell kindly for big defender Ger McGrath and from two yards he was deadly. The outcome was enough to give Mervue a four point cushion with just a single series of games left.

Meanwhile Athenry were making life difficult for the city side. Jonathan Mernagh was denied an equaliser when his free kick clattered the crossbar, while a bad bounce ended Micky Quinn's best chance when he got free behind the visitors defence.

Indeed Mervue retreated into a defensive mode in the closing stages as they protected their lead, but they still comfortably held on for the three points that confirmed them as Premier League Champions for the second year in succession.

Also in midweek West United ensured their Premier Survival following their scoreless draw with a Bohemians side that now must look over their shoulder as second from bottom Mervue United B try to play catch up.

On Sunday Athenry and Sathill Devon shared the spoils in a 1-1 draw in what was a good open contest. After Devon took the lead just after the break, Athenry equalised through Jonathan Mernagh.

	P	W	D	L	Pts
Mervue United A	17	12	4	1	40
Renmore	17	10	6	1	36
West United	17	4	6	7	18
Bohemians	16	5	2	9	17
Mervue United B	17	4	2	9	14
Kiltullagh	17	2	2	13	8

FIRST DIVISION

Unbeaten Crescent United kept their First Division title ambitions on track when they came from behind to defeat fellow promotion candidates N.U.I. Galway by 4-3.

John Keogh (2), Ned Keogh and Mike Tierney scored for the home side with Chris Monaghan (2) and Kevin Monaghan replying for the students.

For NUIG it brought an impressive nine match winning streak to an end and, in the process, the side who came from the lower regions of the table to put themselves within a shout of promotion, are now depending on results elsewhere to go in their favour in order for them to outrank current leaders Corrib Rangers. Mind

you the sides do go head to head at Westside this evening (Tuesday) at 6.30 p.m. with everything to play for.

In mid-week N.U.I. Galway beat Corrib Celtic 3-2 with Kevin Monaghan, Shane Stenson and Shane McManus all finding the net, while Michael O'Malley and Gary Scully replied for Celtic.

	P	W	D	L	Pts
Corrib Rangers	15	11	2	2	35
N.U.I. Galway	16	11	0	5	33
Colmanstown	16	10	1	5	31
Crescent United	11	9	2	0	29
Corrib Celtic	15	5	1	9	16
Corofin United	15	5	0	10	15
Colga	15	4	0	11	12
St. Ellens	17	1	0	16	3

MICHAEL BYRNE CUP

The opening round of the Michael Byrne Cup was as remarkable for a number of high profile casualties as for giantkilling cats for while wins for Crescent United B and Colga were noteworthy, the high profile defeats of Premier sides Bohemians, Hibernians and Mervue United B left some sides with egg on their faces.

Saturday side Crescent United B with goals from Tony Kelly, Tony Fahy (pen) and Gary Scully were easy 3-0 winners over a Bohs side who play in a league five Divisions higher than Crescent B. Mind you as one side's season peters to a timid end in a relegation battle (Bohs), the other is in contention for promotion from Division 2C.

Mervue United B are also threatened by relegation and inspite of goals by Pat Comer and Pat Gibli, they were beaten 4-2 by a Colga side struggling to stay in the First Division.

For Hibs it's been a disaster of a season. One of the Premier Divisions most celebrated sides, they were never in contention for league honours and Sunday's 7-2 dribbling at home to Renmore ensures another trophyless campaign.

Great players like John Tierney, Jimmy Laffey, Colm Naughton and John Cleary have graced the black and white jersey in times past, but the current side just aren't up to the challenge as an ordinary selection winds the season down, with just two league games remaining.

West United sides registered a Michael Byrne Cup double. The A team had little difficulty in recording a 4-0 win over Moylough with John Colter (2), Mark O'Toole and MacDara Clancy all hitting the net.

Jodie Curran's B side didn't have matters as easy for they required a Dean Grant equaliser in order for them to finish level at 1-1 away to Kiltullagh United. In the penalty shoot-out goalkeeper Ross Fagan made the perfect start when saving the home side's opener and with Martin Golden, Chris O'Reilly, Shane Flaherty and Laurence O'Reilly all hitting the net, West United B ran out 4-2 winners.

In contrast it was a disappointing day for Corrib Rangers. Last season the A side were beaten finalists but on this occasion they shipped a first round defeat away to MacDara by 2-1.



Attending the launch of the Renmore AFC Lotto Draw in the Huntsman Inn were: Liam McDonagh, Sponsor, of McDonagh's Fish Shop; Galway United Captain, Mark Herrick; Bernard Shapiro, President, Renmore AFC; Michael Crowe and John Power.

Caoimhe O'Ceallaigh and Máirtín O'Conghaile gave the home side the advantage while just John O'Brien could get a late consolation for Rangers A. The club's B side went to Castleblakney with no lofty ambitions but in a competitive performance only the excellence of Adrian Cronin in the CB Trotters goal prevented a huge cup upset. Eamonn Grady got Trotters lone goal just before the break to give them a 1-0 win.

Knocknacarra were always in command away to Claregalway Celtic and goals from Stephen Foy and Chris O'Connell gave them a 2-1 win at Cloon. A hat-trick by Andy Irvine added to by Ian Folen gave Na Forbeacha a 4-3 win over O.L.B.C. Simon Murray, Brian O'Halloran and Emmett O'Halloran scored for the city side.

Meanwhile Moyne Villa were less than impressive 1-0 winners away to Salthill Devon B. In spite of Reg Turner putting Medtronic in front in extra-time St. Patricks responded well at Caherlistrance to win 2-1.

Holders Mervue United A had no problems in dismissing Kiltullagh B 8-0 with Bob Balaban (4), Damien Brennan and Henry Loughnane amongst the goals.

Nortel defeated Gort 2-1, while there were wins elsewhere for Oranmore, Colmanstown, Loughrea, Dynamo Blues and Tuam Celtic who incidentally will go head to head in a Tuam derby in the next round.

DIVISION 2C

Medtronic qualified for a home cup semi-final against Lakeside Celtic when a Dara O'Donnell extra-time goal gave them a 1-0 win over Athenry B in mid-week.

In league action N.U.I. Galway B moved into sixth spot following their 3-0 win over Corrib Celtic B as Paudie Murray (2) and James Byrne got the goals.

CONNACHT YOUTH CUP

Galway maintains a major interest in the Connacht Youth Cup as the leagues strongest sides remain in contention.

On Saturday Athenry left it late before drawing 1-1 with Shiven Rovers. However victory was achieved by a 4-2 margin in the shoot-out. After the home side led from the early stages, Athenry rescued the contest when Martin Gaffney side-footed home a Cathal Fahy delivery.

Jonathan Mernagh was twice denied by the timberwork before penalty success was achieved. Mernagh, Micky Quinn, Pakie Byrne and Stephen Rabbittie were all on the mark with the spot kicks, while goalkeeper Kieran Kilkelly played his part in making one vital save.

Their likely semi-final opponents will be either Mervue United or Corofin United while Galway United and Ballyglass will contest the other half of the draw.

* COMPILED BY MIKE RAFFERTY *



Pictured at the launch of the Renmore AFC Soccer Club Lotto were: Committee members Dermot Coll, Treasurer; Kevin McCaffrey, Tony Newell of the Huntsman Inn, main sponsors; Bernard Shapiro, President; Michael Crowe, Chairman.