

THIRTY six Galway sides entered the fray for the opening round of the Connacht Junior Cup on Sunday last and while some local sides faced one another, a total of twenty sides advanced to round two.

The Premier League big guns all advanced with Mervue, Renmore, Hibernians, Kiltullagh, Old Ground and Crescent all making progress.

However the days biggest shock was the success of Division 2A side Oranbay who fashioned a 3 - 2 win over Sligo Super League side, Abbey Utd.

OLBC 1
West Utd. 1

(West won 7 - 6 on pens)
How gratifying it is to see a player play to the height of his ability and then receive the ultimate reward with success at the end.

On Sunday morning at the Jesuits West goalkeeper Mark Philbin was master of all he surveyed as his control of the area, goal line and his superb save in the penalty shoot out left him with the reward of victory for a West side that scarcely deserved the success.

For the majority of time they played second fiddle to a Boys Club side that enjoyed loads of possession, but like their opponents didn't know how to breach a strong defence.

Philbin was by far the busier of the two keepers as his opposite number Martin McDonagh was more or less used in a part-time capacity.

The pre match build up of these two First Division sides

centred around strikers Tommy Keane and Jason Curran. They didn't disappoint as both fired home classic strikes to cancel one another out in the scoring stakes, before both left the fray near the end with injuries.

It was Keane who broke the deadlock in the opening half with a stunning volley, while Curran was equally classic as his 25 yard drive eluded even the magnetic Philbin after the break

With penalty claims dismissed at both ends the action was fast and impressive. Despite the bite and urgency no breakthrough was imminent and West who introduced eighties veteran - Noel Flaherty were presented with a penalty shoot out opportunity they hardly deserved.

Club fired first and Martin McDonagh, Kieran Daly, Brian O'Halloran and Martin Golden all found the net as Anthony Curran skied over.

West's Eoin Shaughnessy, Mark O'Toole, Thomas Griffin and Alan Beatty all scored as McDonagh stayed put and foiled Alan Grant's drive down the middle to leave it tied at 4 - 4.

Emmett O'Halloran, Tony Ward, Brendan Shaughnessy and Joe O'Toole all found the target as it rested at 6 - 6.

West's Philbin then came to the fore as his full length finger tip stop denied Nigel Corbett and Stephen Harlowe completed the job to send West through by 7 - 6.

Mervue Utd. 7
Conn Rangers 1

For 55 minutes Mayo visitors Conn Rangers kept this game alive with some stout defending.

Mervue had just a solitary Gabby Higgins header courtesy of a Liam Hession cross on 24 minutes to show for all their efforts. Mike Cooke and Sos O'Connell dictated midfield as Tony Cooke's goal was seldom threatened.

Hession was the provider once more as the floodgates opened with Higgins adding his second. James Carr slotted a penalty past a hapless John Brogan after Hession was fouled and the blonde bombshell was finally rewarded for his promptings as he fired home via a post to make it 4 - 0.

Mike Cooke ventured forward to drive one home from the edge of the area and goalkeeper turned poacher, Gabby Higgins, completed a satisfactory afternoon for himself as he added two more to bring his tally to four as Mervue enjoyed an easy success.

Renmore 5
Skyvalley Rovers 1

While it was Ciaran Conneely and Eoin Keane who provided the flair for Renmore, two other participants who deserve special mention for their workman-like performances, Kevin Carr and Alan Corcoran, were all part of the success story as the home side came from a goal down to win convincingly.

Following a Fintan Moore corner, Alan Grant scrambled home the opener on 11 minutes. However when Keane was fouled on 24 minutes, Conneely dispatched the spot kick past Kelly to tie it at 1 - 1.

The crossbar foiled a Corcoran header and a Noel Greaney free kick within a minute of the interval. However, a second penalty on 49 minutes, once more converted by Conneely, put Renmore in the driving seat.

Newcomers Bart Folan, revelling down the right along with Benny Fahy, had played a part in the next two goals as Corcoran crashed home the third on 63 minutes with Keane



TUSSLE ... Brendan O'Connor (Galway United) takes on Darren O'Keefe of Drogheda during Friday night's First Division tie at Terryland.

making it 4 - 1 on 76 minutes.

Conneely completed his hat trick on 82 minutes blasting the fifth past a goalkeeper Mark Kelly who kept Renmore at bay for long periods with some stunning reflex saves.

Hibernians 2
Shiven Rovers 1

Following their hard earned success, Hibs manager Kevin Cassidy was grateful that his side's worst performance of the season was rewarded with a win.

"We were sluggish today and both mentally and physically we never achieved the levels we set for our selves earlier in the season. Complacency can be a deadly enemy and we almost paid for it today," said Cassidy afterwards.

Shiven Rovers from the Newbridge area of North Galway stung the home side by taking the lead on 17 minutes when Thomas Finneran rounded David Forde for the opener.

However a first half header from Michael Keogh and a drive from Dermot McSweeney sealed it for the Bohermore side who created loads but just couldn't finish.

Salthill Devon 2
Quayside Rovers 0

Two first half goals clinched Devon's first win of the season as they dismissed a poor Sligo side a Millers Lane.

It was Mark O'Leary who fired home the opener following a free kick and Alan McGee atoned for many previous misses by firing home from close range following a Steve Hynes corner.

With goalkeeper Noel Holland a virtual passenger and central defenders Ronan Rooney and Rossa Mullins dictating the pace at the back, they were seldom tested as the biggest problem was the amount of chances that went begging up front.

Crescent Utd. 3
Ahascragh Utd. 0

A-Has-Cra made famous by the ramblings of Network Two jester Sean Moncreiff weren't exactly renowned for anything at Crescent on Sunday as they exited the Connacht Cup to last year's runners-up.

The home side in command throughout led 1 - 0 at the break courtesy of a Noel O'Hara tap in from 8 yards. A fine run by John Sweeney saw him finish well to put some distance between the sides with Mike Corcoran matching the third with a smashing drive.

Castlebar Utd. 2
Olde Ground 4

The impressive early season form of Olde Ground continues to gain momentum and a dream start when Ollie Rafferty fired them ahead was just what they needed away from home.

While they failed to add to their tally before the break, Mike Kelly made it 2 - 0 finishing off a Mike Keating pass before Johnny Regan increased it with the third.

The home side then reduced the lead to 3 - 2 before a late Jason Coyne goal ensured there would be no late Castlebar revival.

Strokestown 0
Kiltullagh 10

One way traffic as the scoreline indicates. However, Kiltullagh weren't to be blamed for that as Liam Donoghue (4), Clement Earls (2), Tony Shaughnessy (2), Noel Cooney and Paul Keane all found the target in a non event.

NUIG 4
Corofin Utd. 0

An understrength Corofin side were hanging in there until two goals each side of the interval paved the way for a success for Dick Dunne's college side.

Breen Geraghty (2), Paudie Murray and Finnish student Matie all scored in a comfortable success for the students at Dangan.

Moyno Villa 5
St. Colmans 0

A contest looked on the cards as Villa led 1 - 0 at the break following a Joe Doherty goal, but the more experienced Headford side dictated after the interval as Doherty added a second, with some of the younger players Alan Molloy, Niall Egan and John Ger Gibsey completing the tally.

Elsewhere Bohemians were left with no opponents at West Park when Sligo side Aughannagh Celtic failed to show.

There were good wins also for Corrib Celtic, St. Patricks, West Coast Utd., Craughwell, Oranmore, Colmanstown, Oranbay 90, Na Forbeacha and Dunmore Town who all advanced to the second round.

Tonight (Tuesday) at Terryland Park, Tony Samuels Oscar Traynor squad get their first chance to stake a claim for selection, when kicking off at 7.30 they face the Clare league in a friendly outing.

While the 18 selected are all city based, one assumes a wider spread will be cast out for the next friendly.

PANEL: Joseph Reilly, Dermot McSweeney, Mark Keane, Kenneth Talbot, James Delargey (all Hibernians).

Ciaran Conneely, Eoin Keane, Alan Corcoran, Dave Samuels, Noel Greaney, Martin Greaney (all Renmore).

Tony Cooke, David S. O'Connell, Dominick Burke, Mike Cooke (all Mervue Utd.).

Jason Curran, Nigel Corbett (OLBC).

John Keogh (Crescent).

— Mike Rafferty.



ON THE BALL ... Mervue's Barry O'Sullivan, who has Ger McGrath in support, in action against Salthill Devon on Saturday.