

SOCCER



The Galway & District League squad, which was beaten in the final of the SFAI U-14 Kennedy Cup last Friday. Back row, from left: Alan Murphy (head coach), Garrett Molloy (Mervue Utd), Charlie Concannon (Mervue Utd), Stephen Iredale (Knocknacarra FC), Joseph Oladunni (Salihill Devon), Donie Halloran (Tuam Celtic), PJ Ward (Galway Hibbs), Patrick Martin (Colga FC), Conan Harkin (Colga FC), Ian Casserly (Renmore AFC), Luke Prendergast (Colga FC), Tresor Sangi (Galway Hibbs), Alex Lee (coach), Franny Keady (physio), and Joachim Lydon (Head of Delegation). Front: Billy Clery (manager), Eoin McSweeney (Berna na Forbacha Aontaithe), Sean Kearney (Oughterard AFC), Ryan Corcoran (Mervue Utd), Colm Cunningham (Oughterard AFC), Matthew Murray (Salihill Devon), Lam Corcoran (Colga FC), Daniel Cox (Salihill Devon), Ben Molloy (Mervue Utd), Ethan Flortlenni (Knocknacarra FC), and John Devlin (kitman). PHOTOS: MALCOLM MOLLOY.

Heartbreak in Kennedy Cup

■ Side miss out on title for first time in 40-year history of tournament on penalties

THERE was heartbreak for the Galway & District League U-14 squad in Limerick last week when they came up just short in their bid to land the SFAI Kennedy Cup for the first time in the league's history.

The side - under the management team of former Galway United stars Alan Murphy and Billy Clery, and Mervue United's Alex Lee - knocked out defending champions, Kerry league, in the quarter-finals; and then defeated a free-scoring Cork League in the semi-final; but the dream ended when they were beaten on penalties by Kennedy Cup kingpins, the Dublin & District Schoolboy League (DDSL) in the final, the Leinster side claiming the title for the 30th time in what was the 40th staging of the competition.

Galway were drawn in Group 4 of the 32-team, five-day competition, which was played at the University of Limerick, and got off to the best possible start on Monday June 13 with a 1-0 win over Longford thanks to a Tresor Sangi goal.

They followed that up on Tuesday with a 2-1 win over the Inishowen League from Donegal with goals from Daniel Cox and Colm Cunningham, meaning they needed just a draw in their final group game against Athlone to qualify for the Cup quarter-finals.

'Every single lad on the squad should be very proud of himself'

They got just that, though they had to sweat for it, needing a late Luke Prendergast equaliser to secure a 1-1 draw to see them finish the group stages on 7 points, and a last-eight meeting with the defending champions, the Kerry League, who had opened their 2016 campaign by hitting 12 goals



The Galway & District League Kennedy Cup management team of Billy Clery, Alex Lee, and Alan Murphy.

in their first two games - a 6-2 win over Wicklow, and a 6-0 win over Carlow.

The defending champions looked to be on their way to the semi-finals when taking a first-half lead, but a brilliant display from the Galway lads saw them overturn that half-time deficit to stun the holders. Charlie Concannon scored the equaliser seven minutes into the second-half, and just as extra-time looked to be on the cards, Luke Prendergast popped up with what proved to be the winner.

The reward was a semi-final

meeting with a Cork side that was just one of two teams to have a 100% record in the group stages - the DDSL was the other - scoring 11 goals in the process, before recording a routine 2-0 win over SDFL in the quarter-finals.

It turned out to be a cracking semi-final, with both defences on top as the game finished scoreless after normal time in torrid conditions. Extra-time also failed to produce a goal, so the tie went down to the lottery of penalty kicks, and even then the standard five apiece failed to sepa-

rate the sides, with both missing two kicks apiece.

However, Cork missed their seventh spot-kick, leaving Sanghi with the task of firing Galway into the decider, and he showed great composure to do just that, setting up a meeting with a DDSL side that came from behind to defeat local rivals NDSL 2-1 in their semi-final.

The Leinster outfit did create the better scoring chances in the first-half, including seeing a header come back off the post, but Galway grew more into the game in the second period and Colm Cunningham almost grabbed a winner four minutes from time, only to be denied by the DDSL goalkeeper who had only been beaten once in five games.

Extra-time also failed to separate the sides, so Galway faced shoot-out drama for the second successive game, but this time there was to be no joy as they missed two of their five spot-kicks, and while DDSL also missed a penalty, Troy Parrot scored their fifth kick to claim the

title 4-3 on penalties.

"The lads did brilliant, but it is absolutely heart-breaking not to have won it. I can't really argue with the result, you have to say they [DDSL] were the better side, and to be honest we sneaked through against both Kerry and Cork, but at the same time, we were so close.

"We had a late chance to win it, but it wasn't to be. It's not much consolation saying 'well done for getting that far' - you don't want to hear that, but the lads can be very proud of themselves. Obviously, there is disappointment there, but every single lad on the squad should be very proud of himself.

"They trained really well, they worked very hard, and they will always have the memory of playing with a great bunch of lads. Hopefully they will learn from it, from the good and the bad, and continue to develop as players. We came close, it wasn't our year, but it wasn't from a lack of effort by the lads - they were a pleasure to work with," Clery told Tribune Sport.

SNOOKER

Foran claims his second County Galway title

ATHENRY'S Donal Foran claimed his second County Galway snooker title recently to join a small group that has won the title more than once.

He had a long wait to join the list, having first lifted the title in 2009, but there was no denying his quality in this year's competition, coming from 2-0 down to win his semi-final 3-2, before capturing the title with a 3-0 success.

The preliminary stages of the

competition took place at the Eglinton Snooker Hall in Galway City, before moving to the Emerald Snooker Club in Ballinasloe for the semi-finals and final, with the Tuam duo of James Corbett and James Higgins joined in the semi-finals by Foran, and Jack Culligan of the Commercial Club in the city.

The first semi-final promised to be a thrilling game, with top seed Corbett going up against Culligan, who had won the Gal-

way City title a fortnight earlier, but the city man had a surprisingly comfortable win as Corbett failed to reach his own high standards.

The second semi-final was a much tighter affair, and it looked like there would be a Tuam man in the final as Higgins played fantastic all-round snooker to race into a 2-0 lead including a fantastic double into the yellow pocket from a spotted black in the second

frame.

However, Foran fought back to level after long bouts of safety to take it to a deciding frame, and the Athenry man just prevailed with two nice breaks to clinch his spot in the final.

Culligan went into the final as favourite, and things looked to be going to script when he hit a break of 42 in the first frame, but Foran got back to the table and cleared to pinch the opener.

He made it 2-0 after a scrappy second frame, taking it on the pink; and a break of 38 saw him take the third frame, and the title, to join a handful of elite players to have won the title more than once.

RIGHT:-
Donal Foran after claiming his second County Galway snooker title.

