

ALTHOUGH a large amount of matches were postponed over the weekend, the games played provided a certain clarity regarding the top and bottom of the various divisions.

In the Western Hygiene Supplies Premier Division Hibernians continued on their winning ways with success over Mervue United, while Bohemians with just their third win of the season moved out of the bottom two, with Crescent United and McDara now propping up the table.

N.U.I.G. were emphatic 3-0 winners over West United and moved into pole position with regard to promotion as O.L.B.C. and West look like having to battle it out for the remaining spot.

In Division 2A, Colmanstown were guaranteed promotion following their 6-4 win over AGS Palace, with Mervue United B certain to join them.

The Olympic Sport Division 2B is a three way contest as Colga, Gort and Olde Ground B all vie for the top two places and at the moment only two points separate the sides although some have played more than others.

Kiltullagh maintained their challenge in the Guinness FAI Junior Cup as they qualified for the last eight of the competition for the first time ever.

Mervue United0
Hibernians1

A Mark Keane first half goal set up by Kenny Talbot settled this Premier League contest, but how contrasting the fortunes of both sides in recent weeks.

The sides were neck and neck at the top of the table while also chasing FAI Junior Cup and Connacht Cup glory. Kiltullagh upset the plans of both in the two cups, but while Hibs have maintained their unbeaten challenge for the league honours, Mervue have fallen by the wayside with three defeats and now lie 10 points behind their rivals.

Hibs had the better of the opening half exchanges but they failed to add to their advantage with Talbot missing

their best opportunity following a Colin McHugh delivery.

The second period provided a more balanced encounter as Mervue certainly made a contest of it. However, both sides spurned good opportunities with Gabby Higgins failing to convert following a corner, while Barry Crowley was denied by David Forde when through with just the goalkeeper to beat, at the opposite end custodian Tony Cooke was equally efficient as he foiled a rampaging Anthony Kelly.

The win makes it eleven wins from 12 starts for Kevin Cassidy's side, and barring the most remarkable turn around of events, nothing can prevent Hibs collecting their title in four seasons.

Crescent United2
Renmore4

With Hibs racing away, there's nothing left for defending champions Renmore to do than keep up the chase, but five points in arrears and having two more games played makes the task difficult.

A bright opening to their contest against Crescent saw newcomer Richie Maxwell give them the lead on 14 minutes, with Cieran Conneely cutting in from the flank before finishing with his left past P.J. Norman to make it 2-0.

Right on the break John Corcoran fired home from the spot to bring the home side right back into it. Renmore were paying for becoming complacent as the home side restarted in impressive fashion.

However, it was the visitors who made the next breakthrough as Alan Corcoran made it 3-1, but Eddie S.Ward kept the contest alive for Crescent by pulling one back and was only denied the equaliser by a fine Martin Greaney save at his near post.

It was central defender Noel Greaney who finally killed off the contest as he chased a lost cause before getting possession and squeezing it past Norman.

McDara1
Olde Ground2

Despite having their thoughts more on next Sunday's Connacht Junior Cup semi-final against Ballyglass, Olde Ground maintained their concentration long enough to see off a struggling Carraroe side.

Player/Manager John Carr got the only goal of the opening half firing home from six yards after linking up with Ollie Rafferty. Jonathan Regan made it 2-0 with a close range effort with McDara just pulling one back with the last kick of the game.

N.U.I.G.3
West United0

A crucial save by students keeper Niall Hannon when he denied Shane Flaherty from the penalty spot was the turning point of this First Division promotion clash.

The contest scoreless at the time was soon swung in favour of N.U.I.G. when Breen Geraghty headed home Paudie Murray's cross. Following a mazy dribble from half way Gordan McCann fired the second past Mike O'Toole from the edge of the area.

When Nicky McCudden was fouled in the area, Rob Grealish stepped up to make it 3-0 from the penalty spot. N.U.I.G. are now joint top with O.L.B.C. but have played a game less, while West are nine points off the top following this loss.

Kiltullagh3
Killybegs2

Where Cloonfad and Ballyglass have left off in the past, well Kiltullagh are carrying on the Western flag



Pictured at the launch of the AIB Connacht Senior Cup at the Castlebar Celtic Club House were, left to right, front: Mike Clarke (Connacht Senior League Registrar), Brian MacGlynn (Galway Hibernians). Back: John McSpadden (C.S.L. Vice Chairman and Salthill Devon A.F.C.), John Byrne (Galway United), Pat Quigley (FAI President), Maurice O'Malley (AIB), Mike Long (Mervue United), Dermot Coll (Renmore AFC) and Mike McDonnell (Connacht Senior League Chairman).

as they qualified for the last eight of the Guinness FAI Junior Cup for the first time in their history.

Like the aforementioned Roscommon and Mayo sides, Kiltullagh are a small rural club, but with great organisation and ambition have overcome great obstacles as they continue their quest for cup glory.

A dream start which saw them take a second minute lead through Noel Earls was nullified when Paul Murrin levelled matters for Killybegs after 16 minutes. However the predatory instincts of Liam O'Donoghue saw them regain the initiative on the half hour when the pacey striker ran on to Peter Monaghan's delivery to round keeper Conal

Gallagher and make it 2-1.

A casual drive by Earls from over 20 yards gave him his second of the afternoon on 59 minutes, but the concession of a penalty converted by Manus Boyle to make it 3-2 kept the contest alive until the final whistle.

However, keeper Darren Murphy was very assured in the closing stages as the normally reliable O'Donoghue fluffed a few late opportunities to make matters a little more comfortable.

Olde Ground B3
N.P.B.0

After some indifferent form early in the season Jody Curran's Olde Ground B side have retrieved their Olympic Sports Division 2B promotion push.

Always in control against bottom side N.P.B. they took the lead on 23 minutes when Jason Coyne fired home Pat Fahy's delivery from the edge of the area. They doubled their advantage before the break when Darren Curran linked up with Joe Smith before curling a smashing effort into the top corner.

Little was seen of N.P.B. as an attacking force as Paul McDonagh and Gary Fullard held sway in the Shantalla's side defence and it was no surprise when they made it 3-0 when Ronan Flaherty, just working his way back to fitness after a long injury killed off the contest with the final goal.

Olde Ground B lie in third position just two points behind joint leaders Colga and Gort

but they have games in hand on both.

Leaders Colga threw away a two goal advantage against St. Patricks when efforts by Dermot Finn (pen) and Wayne Finn were cancelled out by the home side in a 2-2 draw. Meanwhile Gort had a 1-0 win over Craughwell.

Schoolboys

Galway United8
St. Francis0

The scoreline speaks for itself as four goals each side of the break saw Galway United advance in the SFAI U16 Barry Cup at Westside on Saturday.

An opening minute goal by Martin O'Connor set them on the way and Simon Walsh (3), David Smith (2), Dara Kinnevey and Kevin Fitzpatrick all added to the tally in an easy win.

Meanwhile, Newcastle ran up four victories at different levels in cup football over the weekend. Donal Mee did his Kennedy Cup chances no harm as he crashed home seven in the clubs 8-0 win over St. Bernards in the U-14 Cup, with Kenneth Burke getting the other.

Matthew Geraghty was the matchwinner as Newcastle defeated Salthill Devon 1-0 in the U-15 Cup, while two more clean sheets saw success in the U-13 Cups. Conor Griffin got the games only goal in the 1-0 win over Mervue at U-13B level while in the A Cup Michael Kennedy scored in Newcastles 1-0 win over St. Bernards.

MIKE RAFFERTY



Pictured at the launch of the AIB Connacht Senior Cup at the Castlebar Celtic Club House were, left to right: Steven McLaughlin (Connacht Senior League Secretary), Michael Keogh (Galway Hibernians), Dermot Coll (Renmore AFC), Benny Fahy (Renmore AFC), John Walsh (Renmore AFC), Brian MacGlynn (Galway Hibs), Anthony Kelly (Galway Hibs) and Patrick Morley (AIB)