

SENTINEL SPORT

Sligo compound United's misery

By JOHN FALLON

Sligo Rovers 3

::

Galway United 1

IN many ways the Showgrounds in Sligo and its incumbents, Sligo Rovers, represent the best example of a League of Ireland club striving to provide an equivalent to the glamour of the English League, which has more followers in this country than the Bord Gais competition.

The absence of any other major sport in the Sligo area — it never had a hurling tradition and its Gaelic football one is dying a slow death — paves the way for the promotion and development of soccer in the former garrison town.

The three stands around the pitch in the Showgrounds were built following various successes in former days and every effort is made to provide facilities to encourage people to follow their local side.

Sligo is a town steeped in soccer tradition and it is one of the few venues in this country where mature men wear scarfs and hats in the colours of their side and where the soccer side are held in the esteem almost exclusively reserved for hurling and Gaelic football sides in other counties.

But that sort of homage demands success and the past few seasons have not been very rewarding for Sligo Rovers. The Sligo faithful turned to Dermot Keely, a man who has been through it all in the League of Ireland, to restore former glory at the Showgrounds.

Keely's arrival in Sligo was something akin to Jack Charlton's arrival in Ireland a few years ago. An outsider used to success and a soccer fraternity craving for it.

The comparison between Keely and Charlton does not end there. Keely also had to bring in players from his own base and now Dublin accents, which are as alien to the Showgrounds

as Andy Townsend's accent is to Landsdowne Road, are to be heard in the red and white shirts.

The style of play now produced by Sligo is also similar to the Republic of Ireland's. They chase everything, never allow an opponent to settle on the ball even in his own half and they play with such intense vigour that the opposition just cannot get into the match.

It was against this backdrop that Joey Malone brought Galway United to the Showgrounds on Sunday on a day when he was looking for their second win in the league and Sligo were going for their first.

Galway United did not expect to get things easy on Sunday. But neither did they expect to get the hammering which the Sligo players dished out to them.

In the end United were fortunate to escape with just a two goal defeat on a day when they just had no answer to the power and determination of a Sligo side who at times seemed possessed of unlimited energy.

The sheer willingness of the Sligo players to get their first win of the season was all too evident after just three minutes when Sligo orchestrated a goal out of nothing.

It developed when Noel Mernagh hit a harmless looking pass back to Declan McIntyre but suddenly Phillip Power appeared from nowhere to intercept and the United goalkeeper



ON THE BREAK . . . Gerry O'Connor of Mervue Utd. skips past a tackle in the AIB Premier League game against Renmore at Mervue on Sunday.

had no choice but to pull him down as he rounded him.

Former United player Martin McDonnell stepped up to drive the resultant penalty to the back of the net as a day of glory beckoned for Sligo.

United, in fairness, managed to regroup before any further damage could be incurred and got back on terms after Stephen Lally and Johnny Glynn had both come close.

It was left, however, to Tommy Keane to construct the goal when he was taken down by John Nolan after taking on three defenders in the box. Glynn's penalty lacked conviction but while Nick Brujos managed to block it, Jimmy Nolan reacted smartly to finish the rebound to the net for his second goal of the season.

But United, who were badly beaten in the middle of the field, failed to build on that score and Sligo gained an upper hand which they never surrendered.

Consequently it was no surprise when they went back in front. McIntyre did well to stop a close range shot from Damien Dunleavy but his attempts to punch clear the resultant corner from McDonnell were unsuccessful and Power was on hand to drive the ball through a crowd of players to the back of the United net.

Sligo, with another former United player Denis Bonner cutting out the aerial threat of Glynn, dominated a second-half which was just eight minutes old when a dormant United defence offered only token resistance to a movement which saw Raymond Rooney slip the ball across from the right for Power to finish an easy task from close range for the insurance score.

The United defence were badly caught again nine minutes from the end when McIntyre again had to fall a player in the box after his defence had been prised open with only the minimum of effort.

This time it was Dunleavy who was upended after rounding the Galway keeper but it turned out to be a wise move as McDonnell cannoned the penalty off the crossbar.

Sligo Rovers: Brujos, Keegan, Nolan, Dykes, Bonner, O'Brien, Dunleavy, Byrne, Power, Rooney, McDonnell. Reserve: Strappe for Dykes, inj. 21 mins.

Galway United: McIntyre, Mernagh, Nolan, Malone, Matthews, Deacy, Keane, Wyse, Glynn, Lally, Morris-Burke. Reserves: Cassidy and Rogers for Malone and Morris-Burke, both 59 mins.

Referee: M. Tommey (Dublin).

Derry drawn in League Cup

Galway United, who were the only team to emerge from the League Cup qualifying groups with a one hundred per cent record, have been drawn against Derry City in the quarter-finals of the competition at Terryland Park on the Bank Holiday Monday, October 29.

United supporters can get a preview of the League Cup quarter-final when Galway United take on Derry City in the league on Saturday at Terryland Park (5 p.m.).

The game has been brought forward from Sunday to facilitate Derry City who are flying out on Sunday to Holland for their UEFA Cup first round second leg clash against Amheim.



BREAKING AWAY . . . Donie Farragher of Mervue Utd. about to launch an attack despite the presence of two Renmore players in the AIB Premier League game at Mervue on Sunday.