

# SENTINEL SPORT



# Salthill edged out by crafty Corofin

Corofin .....0-14  
Salthill .....1-9

By Declan Tierney

The old dogs for the hard road is a term that has often been attributed to Corofin footballers over the years and it was this experience combined with their emerging youthful talent which saw them through to another county final when they defeated the rather tame challenge presented by Salthill in the replayed semi-final at Tuam Stadium on Sunday.

*In a tension filled final few minutes, when Corofin just held onto a one point lead, Salthill had a couple of chances of forcing this game into extra time but simply didn't have the accuracy when it counted most and, indeed, this was a problem that plagued them throughout the match.*

In the end, it was Corofin who once again held the upperhand over their city counterparts in what has become relatively one way traffic in recent times between these two sides. Their sheer doggedness and their ability to prevent Salthill from getting any sort of rhythm going has resulted in a final showdown with Tuam Stars for a repeat of last year's final.

But it must be said that Corofin made victory slightly difficult for themselves. They held a four point half time lead and went six points up immediately after the break but had to weather a Salthill storm — with the city side being allowed claw back the deficit to just a single score — with the panic signals clearly evident in the Corofin camp.

Then Salthill had a glorious chance of equalising when full back Ian O'Donoghue embarked on a threatening solo run but left too acute an angle for himself to score but was needlessly fouled by John Lardner. Padraig Gavin had the chance of squaring the match, which surely would have resulted in extra time, but his effort was well off the target and Corofin's Derek Reilly

responded with a point at the other end to confirm victory.

This was a much improved match compared to the drawn game with Corofin, in particular, producing some excellent passages of football — most notably in the first half with outstanding performances from centre forward, Eddie Steede, who scored five of the most tremendous points from play seen in the championship this year, and wing back Aidan Fahy who gave an unflinching display for the full match.

These two displays alone were major contributing factors in Corofin's dominance in the first half while Michael Donnellan also contributed handsomely and the midfield partnership of veterans Padraig Glynn and Gerry Burke, making up a combined total of 77 years between them, having a significant influence.

But it was Corofin who were required to recover from an early setback. Donnellan and James Lardner for Corofin and Neil Finnegan, Salthill's most accomplished forward, had exchanged points before P. J. Kelly and Mark Gibbs had combined to set up Mike Quigley for a seventh minute goal to take a two point lead.

However, the dominance of Fahy, Ray Silke and Lardner in

the Corofin half back line was beginning to tell with the forwards getting a lot of possession and Eddie Steede translating every feasible opportunity into scores.

The introduction of James Cox into the Salthill defence for the injured John Kilraine brought about some stability in this sector and Mike Quigley could consider himself unfortunate not to have scored a second goal after his fisted effort from close range rebounded off the crossbar.

Tommy McDonald had a point from play for Salthill but the usually dependable Padraig Gavin was off form and he missed a rather simple score at a time when the seashiders anxiously needed to keep in touch with Corofin.

It was Corofin's Steede who stole the first half show with some memorable scores, punctuated by a pointed free from Michael Donnellan, while the probing advances from Shane Conlisk, also the scorer of a point, and Trevor Burke which left their side leading by 0-9 to 1-2 at half time.

Eddie Steede again and Derek Reilly extended Corofin's lead to six points before Neil Finnegan, assisted by determined efforts from Cox and Rory Griffin in defence, found the target from play twice in response. P. J. Kelly added another while a pointed Finnegan free left the margin at just two points.

It was around this time that the nippy Derek Reilly began showing his true form as he moved out from his corner forward position to mop up a lot of ball around the midfield area and combined with Donnellan to extend Corofin's lead again.

And even when Donnellan consolidated Corofin's position after Tommy McDonald responded with a point from play, the Salthill challenge was



**CHALLENGE . . .** Renmore's Mike Noone manages to set up another attack despite the attentions of Hibernians' Paul Langan during their weekend Heineken Brod Trill Premier Division clash.

still alive and kicking and two Finnegan frees left the match in the balance as the end drew near.

Salthill then had the glorious chance of equalising but Gavin's left footed free, after Ian O'Donoghue was fouled, from a difficult enough angle went across the goal and wide. Despite this set-back, Salthill still maintained the momentum but were met by stiff resistance most notably from another veteran, Danny Ryder, who had an excellent second and Gerry Burke who was given a relatively free reign around midfield after Mark Gibbs had been substituted.

While Eddie Steede did not see much of the ball in the second half, he did provide the vital pass for Derek Reilly to slot over the point to secure the two point Corofin victory, which certainly dismissed all the doubts about this side being a spent force in championship football.

Salthill never played to their potential. Many of their influential players were not allowed have the impression on proceedings as they would have liked and yet they were in with a definite shout with just a few minutes remaining.

Players like Alan Mulholland and Mark Gibbs were given a torrid time by Corofin's Padraig Glynn, in particular, around midfield. Ian O'Donoghue, Rory Griffin and James Cox were the best of the defenders while the over reliance on Neil Finnegan up front cost them dearly.

The early introduction of Martin McNamara in the Corofin goals for the injured Glenn Comer was significant and especially when it came to his lengthy kick-outs against the wind in the second half. Ryder, Fahy, Silke and Lardner in defence along with Donnellan, Steede, Conlisk and Reilly up front with all heroes in this victory. They will be a side not to be taken for granted in the final.

**Corofin:** Glenn Comer; D. Ryder, T. Greaney, Ger Comer; A. Fahy, R. Silke, J. Lardner (0-1); G. Burke, P. Glynn; M. Donnellan (0-4. 0-3

frees), E. Steede (0-5), T. Burke; S. Conlisk (0-1), M. Kenny, D. Reilly (0-3). Subs.: M. McNamara for Glen Comer, Inj. (7 mins).

**Salthill:** P. Comer; J. Kilraine, I. O'Donoghue, C. Higgins; B. O'Connell, D. Gilmartin, R. Griffin; M. Gibbs, A. Mulholland; M. Quigley (1-0), P. Ryan, T. McDonald (0-2); P. Gavin, P. J. Kelly (0-1), N. Finnegan (0-6, 0-2 frees). Subs.: J. Cox for Kilraine, Inj. (10 mins); F. McDonagh for Higgins (28 mins); F. Darcy for Gibbs (56 mins).

**Referee:** Pat Ferriter (Oughterard).

## Moycullen capture Sacre Coeur Cup!

Moycullen..... 4-16  
Rahoon .....2-13  
Moycullen captured the Sacre Coeur Hotel cup for the second time in four years when they had a nine points win over rivals Rahoon in a thrilling encounter at Moycullen on Sunday.  
Moycullen led by four points at the interval and with goalkeeper Morgan Darcy in excellent form, they held on for a deserved victory.

# A sign of the times SOLD

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