

Eire Og regain title with second half scoring burst

Eire Og 4-9, Silvermines 2-5

Parading their skills with purpose and brilliance in a nine minute spell in the second half that brought them three goals, Eire Og sent Silvermines plunging to a 4-9 to 2-5 defeat in the final of the North Tipperary minor hurling championship at Nenagh on Saturday evening.

Eire Og achieved their success on merit, with greater fitness, superb determination and some really significant individual contribution. But, there is sure to be an amount of soul searching in the Nenagh camp, principally over the wastage of hard won possession in the first half, when they shot no fewer than ten wides.

The Nenagh side made victory secure in that nine minute spell in the second half. Cloaking themselves in a mantle of glory they inflicted nine minutes of torment on the 'Mines. Hunting relentlessly to preserve their unbeaten record, they dictated every facet of play and clinched their first title in eight years.

Silvermines hurled with a heart and determination that won the admiration of the 'enemies' but in crucial moments they lacked that all essential guile and craft that only experience will bring.

All the trappings of the great occasion were in evidence for the showpiece of the minor championship, with the rival young supporters roaring themselves hoarse, as those on the field of play battled valiantly for the honour of their club.

It was a heady triumph for the Nenagh team and there was scenes of great excitement and back-slapping as Michael Kennedy went forward to receive the Dean Hamilton Cup from Mr. Martin O'Connor, Chairman of the North Tipperary Board. There was a touch of originality about the setting, as enthusiastic supporters borrowed that part of the scoreboard reading Eire Og to form the background for the presentation.

There was a fair sized attendance present for the game which produced an amount of good hurling but also had its dull passages. It really sparked in that nine minute spell in the second half when Eire Og fired on all cylinders to forge ahead by 4-3 to 1-4. It promised an epic finish as the 'Mines pulled back four points but the Nenagh team proved their fitness and physical superiority to

add six points without reply in the closing stages.

EARLY RUNNING

Silvermines had first use of a fairly stiff wind that blew into the Annbrook goals but it was Eire Og who made the early running. As the Nenagh team probed for the opening they found that John Egan, Donal Forde, Willie Ryan and goalkeeper, Gerry Barrett, were not that easy beaten. Eire Og's first flag came after five minutes when Sean Minogue found the gap and clipped the ball to the 'Mines net. Hardly had the Nenagh supporters sat down when it was the turn of the 'Mines, as they swept straight up the field and Michael O'Brien cracked home a goal.

Eire Og edged out in front with a point by Michael Kennedy, but the 'Mines came back for a similar score from Brendan Timmons. The Nenagh side were dominating territorially but were failing to capitalise on their chances and it was the 'Mines who moved ahead when John Quinlan pointed a long range free. The sides were level for the third time in this half when Sean Minogue got through for an Eire Og point, but another long range point by Quinlan left Silvermines ahead at half time by 1-3 to 1-2.

IN FULL CRY

Eire Og were again on top at the start of the second half and got on level terms when Philip Kennedy took a pass from Michael Griffen to shoot the equalising point. The 'Mines hit the front again with a point from Martin Maher and suddenly the Eire Og scoring machine erupted. Denis Griffen grabbed the first of the three goals, Sean Minogue took the second after a fine combined movement and Michael Griffen was on hand to bang home the third after Gerry Barrett had saved well in the 'Mines goal and

At this stage Silvermines

the light blues were in full cry, showed plenty of fighting spirit and Michael O'Brien had a point. The game was wide open once more, when Martin Maher had the ball in the Eire Og net after a hectic attack on the winners goal. For a time it was the turn of Eire Og to defend vigorously and Conor Ryan and Denis Finnerty were seen to advantage as they brought the ball away from the danger area. Eire Og raised the siege and struck for points by Sean Minogue and Michael Kennedy. The Nenagh team increased their lead when Philip Kennedy pointed following a good combined effort by Minogue and Roger Coffey to lead 4-6 to 2-5 after twenty-six minutes of the second half. Roger Coffey tacked on two more points for the winners and Sean Minogue finished the scoring with a point.

OUTSTANDING PERFORMER

Brian Heffernan was the outstanding performer on the Eire Og team with a display of power hurling for the full sixty minutes. Sean Minogue was another to leave his mark on the game, while Roger Coffey and Eugene Hackett stormed into action in the second-half. These got most assistance from Denis Finnerty, Conor Ryan, Philip Kennedy, Michael Griffen and Michael Kennedy.

Silvermines had great performers in Donal Forde, John Egan, Gerry Barrett, John Quinlan and Michael O'Brien. This quintet did their utmost for the 'Mines along with Willie Ryan, Maurice Leamy, Brendan Timmons and Martin Maher.

Scorers, Eire Og: S. Minogue (2-3), M. Griffen (1-0), D. Griffen (1-0), M. Kennedy (0-2), R. Coffey (0-2), P. Kennedy (0-2). Silvermines: M. O'Brien (1-1), M. Leamy (1-0), J. Quinlan (0-2), B. Timmons (0-1), N. O'Brien (0-1)

Eire Og: M. McGrath, Denis Finnerty, Conor Ryan, Ger Grace, Ger O'Brien, Eugene Hackett, Johnny O'Gorman, M. Kennedy, Brian Heffernan, Philip Kennedy, Roger Coffey, Jim O'Sullivan, Sean Minogue, Michael Griffen, Denis Griffen.

Silvermines: Gerry Barrett, John Egan, Donal Forde, Willie Ryan, Kieran Dooley, John Quinlan, M. Keane, Anthony Timmons, Maurice Leamy, Alan Kinsella, Pat Maher, Brendan Timmons, M. O'Brien, Martin Maher, Noel O'Brien.

Referee: Sean O'Meara, Lorrha.