

U-14 A Football Champions 2012/13

Good Counsel 4-5 / Scoil Mhuire Clane 2-7

Nine points down at half-time, and with at least ten of our players fighting illness in the run up to this U-14 Leinster Schools football 'A' final at Dr Cullen park, Carlow on Feb 8th, the odds of capturing this title for the third time in four years looked remote. True, we had the aid of a strong breeze to come, but not having scored in the first half we were somewhat dispirited. Scoil Mhuire(Kildare) had at times taken us apart in the opening period. Their chief tormentor was left corner forward, Ciarán Kelly. He scored the game's first two points and this was followed by an Adam Lynch goal on 17 minutes. Although we has some chances ourselves in that period, a combination of poor finishing into a stiff breeze and the quick reactions of the Clane 'keeper Liam Kennedy left us frustrated with no score at the end of the first half. Although our backs continued to battle admirably into the second quarter, a rather fortuitous goal by Kelly left the score at half time at 2-3 to 0-0 in Clane's favour.

Good Counsel had a mountain to climb not only on the scoreboard but in motivating our players at half time with a combination of fatigue and sickness taking its toll. It was a massive boost within 30 seconds of the restart however, when Luke Sinnott latched onto a long delivery, beat his marker and rifled the ball to the back of the net. It was a perfect tonic for our side at a vital stage in the game. Our Midfielder Andrew Walsh and half forward Jack Walsh who couldn't start the game due to sickness were to be seen on the sideline

cheering on their team-mates. Clane hit back and brought their lead out to seven points. But it was game on when our corner forward Sam Wall volleyed a loose ball home. However, despite exerting considerable pressure, it was all of nine minutes before Darragh Lyons raised our first white flag. Darragh truly played a captain's role on the day while driving his team on with an inspirational performance while struggling with bronchitis and a broken finger. Despite numerous requests from the referee to be substituted Darragh 'dug deep' for the Counsel and really did his school proud. Two points from Luke Sinnott and one from Sam Wall levelled matters with ten minutes left.

The odds had now turned in our favour but Clane fought like terriers and the midlanders got a run on us to edge into a three point lead with time almost up. Incredibly and to our animated supporters' delight, we managed to rescue the day. Thomas O' Connor has scored many vital goals in this campaign but his equaliser was priceless. He took possession out on the left at a narrow angle and had a number of options, but he backed himself and let rip. The unfortunate Clane keeper never had a chance. It got worse for the Kildare side as almost from the resultant kick-out Kennedy was picking the ball out of the net again as Luke Sinnott found the net once more. It was game over. Thomas O' Connor embellished a fine team performance with an insurance point which wasn't required. Perhaps, after a narrow semi-final defeat last year, our name was on the Cup this time round. True Champions.

GOOD COUNSEL COLLEGE

Fionn Slattery(Rathgarogue-Cushinstown), James O' Shea (Adamstown), Mark O' Neill(Gusserane), Rory Higgins(Rathnure), Richard Gill(Tullogher-Rosbercon), Eoin Porter(Rathgarogue-Cushinstown), Phillip Foley(St Fintan's), Darragh Lyons(St James, 0-1), Sean Kehoe(Rathgarogue-Cushinstown), Emmett Coakley(Graiguenamanagh), Thomas O' Connor(Tullogher-Rosbercon, 1-1), Jack Byrne-Doyle(Mullinavat), Jamie Meyler(St

James), Luke Sinnott, 2-2), Sam Wall(Gusseranae, 1-1)

Subs: Eric Cummins(Cloughbawn) for Sean Kehoe.

Rest of Panel:

Andrew Walsh, Morgan White (Ramsgrange), Jack Culleton, Gavin Sheehan(Gusserane), Darragh O' Connor(Cloughbawn), Jimmy Sutton, Morgan Purcell((Fethard), Darren Hayden(Taghmon), Adam O' Sullivan(Clongeen), Cathal O' Connor(Rathnure) , Sean Nolan, Cyril Prendergast, Aaron Mythen (Horeswood), Oisín Knox(Mullinavat), Jack Walsh(Rower Inistiogue), Liam Hennessey (Mullinavat), Jim Ryan (Rower-Inistiogue)