

Lodgewood Engineering IFC - September 6, 2014

HWH-Bunclody 2-11, Ferns St Aidans 1-10

Ferns crashed out of the Lodgewood Engineering Intermediate football championship following a final round loss to HWH-Bunclody in Bellefield on Saturday last.

Even a draw would have been enough to see Ferns into the last eight. Yet, just when they looked like pulling off the great escape and snatching a draw from the jaws of defeat, a loose pass in defence in the last minute sent Darren Kehoe away. He fed John Connors, who in turn found John Paul Connors to hit the net from close range.

No doubt a blow to the players, some in Ferns might not see the result as anything to worry about. With the hurling title to play for all distractions, and excuses, are gone and they will head into the final weeks of the season with a single focus, unlike Bunclody who are right in the mix on two fronts.

It's foolhardy to describe the border club as a surprise package having been Senior not that long ago. However, winning all five group games and doing it with style has landed them with a favourite's tag that they might not have expected.

They will give Kilmore plenty of respect but Bunclody will expect to win that quarter-final clash and they will prove a tough nut for anyone who wants to take the title. They proved a little too tough for Ferns, who were playing for their lives.

Ryan Nolan was inspirational for his club throughout, the one real weapon that the victors never came to terms with. He was involved in everything good for Ferns and his play helped them into a 0-5 to 0-4 lead late in the first-half.

Bunclody didn't excel in the early exchanges, despite a resurgent Darren Kehoe. They did get the last two points of the half through the full-forward and Podge Kehoe to lead by 0-6 to 0-5 at the interval. That lead was extended through the third quarter with points from Enda Slevin, Conor Kinsella, Kevin Dunne and Darren Kehoe added to by Podge Kehoe's 40th-minute major.

Ferns looked a spent force trailing by 1-10 to 0-6 but battled all the way back to within a point when Ian Byrne and Nolan combined to leave Ben Cowman with a simple close-range finish with three minutes remaining.

They wouldn't score again as John Paul Connors' breakaway goal killed off their hopes of a quarter-final place and sent Bunclody into the knockout stages as the team to beat.

Ferns St. Aidans: Colin Redmond; Seán Walsh, Pádraig Bolger, Keith Rynhart; Robert Vickers, James Tonks, Tomás Hawkins; Ian Byrne (0-1), Jamie Whelan; Peter Nolan (0-1), John Breen (capt.), Tommy Dwyer (0-1); Ryan Nolan (0-3), Patrick Breen (0-3 frees), Ben Cowman (1-1).

Subs: Derek Thorpe for J. Breen (41), Keith Breen for Walsh (41), Pat Nolan for Rynhart (53), Colin Whelan for J. Whelan, black card (60+1).

HWH-Bunclody: John Byrne; Conor Crean, John Atkinson, Enda Slevin (0-1); Colm Farrell, Paul Atkinson (capt.), Páuric Sinnott; James Moorhead, Conor Kinsella (0-2); Podge Kehoe (1-1), Barry Kehoe, Keith O'Hara; Kevin Dunne (0-1), Darren Kehoe (0-6, 3 frees, 1 '45), Matty Byrne.

Subs: Steven Finn for Farrell, black card (33), John Paul Connors (1-0) for B. Kehoe, inj. (35), John Connors for Dunne (55), Mark Sheehan for M. Byrne (55).

Referee: Noel Stafford (Clongeen)