

Lodgewood Engineering IFC - April 19, 2014

Ferns St Aidans 2-7, St James' (Ramsgrange) 2-6

St. James' suffered an early setback in their quest to make it third time lucky in the Lodgewood Engineering Intermediate football championship when they were surprised by an under-prepared Ferns St. Aidan's in this Group B contest in Bree on Saturday last.

The victors were removed from the All-County League after conceding two walkovers and have paid scant attention to the big ball in training, but their off the cuff approach paid rich dividends in the form of an unexpected win over the beaten finalists of 2012 and 2013.

Team captain Christopher 'Bitsy' O'Connor gave them the ideal start with a third-minute goal from a superb Paul Morris delivery, and they were on their way. Their accurate crossfield passing posed repeated problems for the Emmet Doherty-managed Ramsgrange men, with another inch-perfect cross from the left wing by Patrick Codd picking out John Breen for goal number two in the 24th minute (2-3 to 0-3).

St. James' lost substitute Emmett Dunning to a black card less than two minutes after his introduction, but they enjoyed a late lifeline when Kevin O'Grady tucked away a penalty in added time after being fouled following a one-two with Brian Molloy.

A remarkable feature of that opening half was the free count of 19 to Ferns and just two to St. James', and it ended up 31-12. The favourites should have pushed on after Matthew O'Hanlon rattled the net from close range a mere 33 seconds into the new half and Brian Molloy followed up with the lead point (2-4 to 2-3), although the loss of David Doyle to a black card didn't help their cause.

Ferns didn't give them an inch though and looked dangerous on the break, with the next three points coming from Patrick Breen (free), Ryan Nolan and Patrick Codd.

O'Hanlon brought the gap down to one but just two more points would be scored in a last quarter which featured a black card for Ferns defender Robert Vickers.

Patrick Breen made it 2-7 to 2-5 for the red and whites in the 48th minute and they held out defiantly as St. James' were restricted to one last point with the penultimate kick of the game from Mark Molloy.

Ferns St. Aidans: Colin Redmond; Declan Byrne, Pádraig Bolger, Keith Rynhart; Robert Vickers, Colm Whelan, Keith Breen; Jamie Whelan (0-1), John Breen (1-0); Tommy Dwyer, Paul Morris, Patrick Breen (0-3, 2 frees); Christopher O'Connor (capt., 1-1), Patrick Codd (0-1 free), Ryan Nolan (0-1). **Subs:** Derek Thorpe for Bolger, inj. (52), Peter Nolan for Codd, Seán Walsh for Vickers (black card, 58).

St. James': John Ryan; Greg Doyle, Graeme Molloy (capt.), Brian Kennedy; Robert Barron, Daniel Keating, David Doyle; Matthew O'Hanlon (1-1), Brendan Doyle; Kevin O'Grady (1-1, 1-0 pen.), Mark Molloy (0-1), Brian Molloy (0-2); Donal Barron, Liam Murphy (0-1), Shane Murphy. **Subs:** Emmett Dunning for Kennedy (27), Adam Parle for Dunning (black card, 29), Willie Murphy for D. Doyle (black card, 33), Peadar Murphy for L. Murphy (43).

Referee: Brendan Martin (Ballyhogue)