

Pettitt's SHC - August 31, 2013

Ferns St. Aidans 2-16, Rapparees 2-10

THE LOCAL derby to determine first and second spots in Group A of the Pettitt's Senior hurling championship presented Ferns St. Aidan's with their toughest test yet in St. Patrick's Park, Enniscorthy, on Saturday last, but they came through with flying colours after absorbing plenty of Rapparees pressure.

The victors' shooting from distance was lethal for a long stretch of the opening half, with every ball struck from the 12th to the 26th minute going over the bar as they extended a 0-3 to 0-2 lead to 0-12 to 1-3. Tommy Dwyer, John Breen, Johnny Dwyer, Ian Byrne, Christopher O'Connor and Paul Morris all contributed to that tally with a brand of crisp hurling that was very easy on the eye, and Rapparees were grateful to Minor attacker Kevin Foley for keeping them in the hunt with that goal.

While it came against the run of play it was a well-taken score, as the teenager ignored a few slaps from an opposing hurl as he soloed in from the left flank and beat Mick Walsh with a low shot in the 20th minute.

The town team narrowed the gap to four by the break (0-12 to 1-5) with late points from Declan Ruth (free) and Eoin Quigley, and they contributed a great deal to a keenly-fought second-half without being able to edge their noses in front. After an exchange of points, Christopher O'Connor's goal from a Paul Morris cross was correctly ruled out in the 42nd minute as he was standing in the square beforehand.

A couple of frees from Tomás Mahon then got the Rapps to within two of their rivals (0-13 to 1-8), but a stroke of good fortune worked in Ferns' favour with just over ten minutes left. Poor distribution from a Rapps back was punished on the double as Tommy Dwyer's long-range shot seemed to deceive netminder Aaron Sinnott as he looked into the sun and it ended up in the net (1-14 to 1-9).

The Enniscorthy men didn't lie down though, and they were back in with a shout with just over six minutes left when Ferns couldn't clear the ball out of their left corner. Kevin Foley's cross was flicked on cleverly by Eoin Quigley into the path of Tomás Mahon, and he made no mistake (1-15 to 2-10).

That good vibe only lasted 60 seconds for the Rapps though as a Tommy Dwyer delivery at the other end was gathered by substitute Jamie Whelan who initially tried to off-load with a handpass. However, the sliothar broke back to him and he twisted and turned before finding the net for the clinching goal.

Ferns St. Aidans: Mick Walsh; Declan Byrne, Niall Maguire, Colin Leacy; Gavin Bailey, James Tonks, Ciarán Roberts; Brendan Jordan (0-1), Tommy Dwyer (1-4, 0-3 frees); Ian Byrne (0-3), Paul Morris (capt., 0-3), Johnny Dwyer (0-2); John Breen (0-2), Patrick Farrell, Christopher O'Connor (0-1). **Subs:** Jamie Whelan (1-0) for Farrell (43), Edward Walsh for Maguire (46), Eddie Cullen for J. Dwyer (58).

Rapparees: Aaron Sinnott; Tom Wall, Liam Ryan, John Ryan; Peter O'Sullivan, Declan Ruth (0-2, 1 free), Eoin Quigley (0-2); Kevin Courtney, Anthony Russell; Kevin Ryan (0-1), Tomás Mahon (1-3, 0-2 frees), Cathal Murphy; Ed Tobin (0-1), Eamonn Furlong (0-1), Kevin Foley (1-0). **Subs:** Jack Kelly for Murphy (43), Ricky Fox for K. Ryan (49), Mel Doyle for J. Ryan (51).

Referee: Barry Redmond (Clonard).