

U-21 Roinn 1 Championship county semi final - August 6, 2013

Ferns St. Aidans 0-24, Davidsgate 1-11

FIFTEEN POINTS from Ian Byrne proved the key as Ferns St. Aidans stormed to an impressive ten-point victory over Davidsgate in this Under-21 hurling Roinn 1 championship semi-final at St. Patrick's Park on Tuesday last.

Davidsgate, a combination of Oylegate-Glenbrien and Davidstown-Courtnacuddy, put in a brave display, but in truth they had no answer to the power and skill of Byrne. Along with his scoring exploits, from frees, play, a semi-penalty and a sideline cut, he demonstrated all the arts of hurling, and this eventually separated the sides at the finish.

Ferns were strong in defence and excellent in midfield where Pádraig O'Leary dominated, while along with Byrne, Andy Cash, Ben Cowman and Jason Collier looked impressive in attack.

Davidsgate started well, but really they had little answer to the more composed Ferns outfit despite the best efforts of Peadar O'Mahoney, Darragh Freeman, Conor Heffernan, Walter Furlong and David Dunne.

Ian Byrne with two pointed frees inside the opening three minutes set the tone for what was to follow, with Davidsgate having to wait until the 13th minute for their opening score, a Conor Heffernan pointed free.

A further Byrne pointed free left the eventual winners leading by 0-3 to 0-1 at the end of the opening quarter, while points from Heffernan frees and Walter Furlong left the minimum separating the sides (0-5 to 0-4) after 20 minutes.

Approaching the break Byrne had an effort for goal from a semi-penalty deflected over for a point, but still his side looked comfortable as they led by 0-10 to 0-5 at the interval.

With Byrne adding four early second-half points along with a Ben Cowman effort, Ferns had stretched into a 0-16 to 0-5 lead by the 37th minute. One minute later Davidsgate forced a 25-metre free, and Conor Heffernan had his effort for goal deflected into the path of John Reck who crashed the ball first-time to the net.

Heffernan (two) and David Dunne with pointed frees reduced the deficit to 0-16 to 1-8 after 40 minutes, but the final quarter belonged to Ferns and Byrne in particular as they cruised to a comfortable enough victory in the end.

Ferns St. Aidans: Gavin Bailey; Pádraig Bolger, Aaron Bailey, Brian O'Neill; Declan Byrne, Patrick Breen, Pádraig Walsh; Pádraig O'Leary (0-3), Gavin Collier (0-1); Jason Collier (0-1), Ian Byrne (0-15, 9 frees, 1 '65, 1 line ball), Peter Codd; Andy Cash (0-2), Oisín McPartlin, Ben Cowman (0-2). **Subs.** - P.J. O'Neill for McPartlin, Ger Turner for Codd, Gearóid Bennett for Cowman.

Davidsgate: James Doyle; Shane Lambert, Darragh Freeman, James Greene; Cathal Mernagh, Peadar O'Mahoney, Paul Sheridan; Conor Heffernan (0-7 frees), Brian Doran (0-1); Mark Kavanagh (0-1), John McCormack, Walter Furlong (0-1 free); David Dunne (0-1 free), John Reck (1-0), Ciarán McCabe. **Subs.** - Kevin Reck for Mernagh, John Lambert for McCormack.

Referee: Philip Murphy (Faythe Harriers).