

Gallant Glynn display seals four-in-a-row for Glenealy

GLENEALY	0-17
BRAY EMMETS	0-14

WICKLOW SHC FINAL

CLUB history was written by Glenealy hurlers as they totted up their fourth senior championship title in a row at Aughrim.

Only one other team have achieved that feat and now Glenealy have equalled the record four-in-a-row set by arch-rivals Carnew back in 1978-1981.

The game was marked by a truly magnificent hurling display by dual club and county star Leighton Glynn, who worked his socks off, in defence and attack, and ended up with a splendid haul of 11 points, nine of them from frees.

Glynn has now amassed 16 senior championship medals in Wicklow; eight for football and eight for hurling. He opened for the champions with two early points from frees but Christy Moorehouse and Mikey Lee responded for Bray.

Stephen Nolan tried to blast a goal for Glenealy from a 20-metre free, but Bray held firm and the ball was blocked out for a '65, but there was not time to take the free and Glenealy held a slender 0-9 to 0-7 lead at the interval.

Glynn again led the scoring for Glenealy after the break and shortly afterwards five players were entered in the referee's book as the battle heated up.

With seven minutes left on the clock, Bray were down to 14 men but they still kept pounding at Glenealy, keeping it a one-score game right to the finish.

SCORERS - Glenealy: L Glynn 0-11 (9fs), J O'Neill 0-2, W O'Gorman, T Doyle, G Byrne, R Byrne 0-1 each. Bray Emmets: M Lee 0-7 (4fs), C Moorehouse 0-3, E Mason, L Maloney, M Browne, J Doyle 0-1 each.
GLENEALY - J Driver, W Kavanagh, MA O'Neill, R Byrne, G Byrne, S Nolan, MJ O'Neill, J O'Neill, N Driver, L Glynn, W O'Gorman, T Doyle, J Manley, E Glynn, D Staunton. **Subs:** C O'Neill for W Kavanagh, G Weir for J Manley, G Byrne for N Driver, N Driver for G Byrne.
BRAY EMMETS - P O'Reilly, R O'Brien, P Kiely, P Lee, M Lennon, J Henderson, K Lacey, G O'Murchu, L Maloney, E Mason, P Cunningham, W Keane, M Lee, B Duggan, C Moorehouse. **Subs:** J Doyle for M Lennon, M Browne for K Lacey, N Sweeney for G O'Murchu, A Murphy for B Duggan, L Kenny for R O'Brien.
REF - J Keenan (Aughrim)

Roche joy as resolute Oulart seal famous five

VINCENT HOGAN



OULART	3-12
FERNS	1-16

WEXFORD SHC FINAL

GAA history has been known to turn quests for five-in-a-row into doomed high-wire acts and Oulart's hurlers did well not to topple into the pit of a rain-darkened Wexford Park yesterday.

"We're going down in history now, it'll be a long time before that's done again," beamed veteran corner-back Paul Roche after the champions held off the ferocious challenge of a young Ferns team to climb to a height no Wexford side has ever done before.

Their fifth consecutive title thus broke the hearts of men featuring in St Aidan's first county senior final since 1969. That was the year man first landed on the moon, as the match programme giddily informed us. But the taking of a giant step for Ferns was rendered instantly improbable by their concession of a ruinous 2-2 in the opening four minutes of what would evolve into an epic contest.

Actually, an embarrassing rout seemed to loom after those early Oulart goals by Rory Jacob and Nicky Kirwan, only for St Aidan's to come thundering back, outscoring Martin Storey's men by 0-9 to 0-2 between the fourth and 29th minutes.

True the weather was at its most callous in this period, torrential rain

whipping into the Oulart faces as they struggled to codify a high-energy game that looked to be taking its toll on some of the more seasoned bodies in black.

The impressive Jonathan Dwyer took advantage of the conditions, floating over two sublime sideline cuts as well as taking two scores from play as Ferns - seven points adrift after that opening four minutes - got to the break a scarcely credible two to the good.

Ian Byrne was having a stormer at right half-forward, while the free-taking of Tommy Dwyer had been flawless. There was, you suspected, but one small ghost chasing their attention as they went to tea - Oulart would be resuming with the wind.

CRUEL

What followed was wonderful and in its own way impossibly cruel. Ferns were like fishermen seeing their cordage jerk in the water, only to reel in an old boot. They would hurl magnificently but the lavishly decorated old warriors of Oulart were just not ready to acquiesce.

Eleven minutes after the resumption, Roche's delivery broke off David Redmond - operating temporarily at full-forward - and Kirwan finished high and decisively for his second goal. That put Oulart two to the good, only for quick points from Paul Morris and Jonathan Dwyer to level matters for only the second time all day.

Soon after, Oulart goalkeeper Ben O'Connor spilled an unremarkable Morris delivery into his own net and the din from the 5,300 attendance spoke of looming revolution.

Yet, Oulart were not about to go timidly. "We were ready for that, we knew exactly what we were coming up against," smiled Roche afterwards, his fifth medal safely secured. "We knew



Oulart-The Ballagh goalkeeper Ben O'Connor celebrates his team's victory in the Wexford SHC final along with his team-mates MATT BROWNE/SPORTSFIDE

there'd be nothing between us."

Points from Rory Jacob and Redmond (two) eased Oulart ahead only for Morris to level again in the last minute of normal time, Eoin Moore now in a heap on the far side of the pitch having crumpled to the ground with no opponent near. Moore's knee just seemed to collapse under him and, with Darren Stamp already in the infirmary for something similar, Oulart slipped into injury-time looking like old champions just one, last haymaker from oblivion.

But that punch never landed. Des Mythen might have had an Oulart goal before setting up Michael Jacob for a 61st-minute lead point and we were three minutes into added-time when Garrett Sinnott fouled Gavin Bailey on the half-way line.

Tommy Dwyer's hands and hurley were wet as he faced into a stiffening wind. The crowd hushed. Dwyer struck the ball well, but it never had sufficient legs and was quickly transported down the field to Rory Jacob, who swept over Oulart's security point.

Ferns did get one last throw of the dice, Brendan Jordan floored after a sweeping move between Tommy Dwyer and Morris. Referee Sean Whelan

signalled for a 20-metre free and when Tommy Dwyer's effort rebounded to Morris, his shot leaked apologetically left and wide. All around the field, Ferns men slumped to their knees.

Oulart had their fifth title in a row and, for Roche particularly, none had ever been sweeter. Earlier this year, two torn abductor muscles and a pair of Gilmore groins looked to be easing the 31-year-old towards retirement.

"I was told in February I'd never hurl again, told I'd never sprint again," he said. "I had a big operation and only got back hurling in July. I was just trying to get myself ready to, hopefully, go full stride next year. So for me, there was always motivation there, whether it was every day going to do rehab, whatever it took, to get back."

Proof the underdog doesn't always have sole custody of romance.

SCORERS - Oulart: N Kirwan 2-3 (2fs), R Jacob 1-2, D Redmond 0-3, M Jacob, D Nolan, G Sinnott, D Mythen 0-1 each. Ferns: J Dwyer (2 lcs), T Dwyer (4fs) 0-4 each, I Byrne, P Morris 0-3 each, B Jordan, J Breen 0-1 each, B O'Connor 1-0 (og).
OULART - B O'Connor, P Roche, K Rossiter, B Kehoe, L Prendergast, D Stamp, E Moore, M Jacob, S Murphy, D Nolan, D Mythen, D Redmond, R Jacob, G Sinnott, N Kirwan. **Subs:** D Morton for Stamp (40), C O'Leary for Murphy (53), C Goff for Moore (60).
FERNS - M Walsh, C Whelan, N Maguire, D Byrne, G Bailey, J Tonks, C Roberts, B Jordan, T Dwyer, I Byrne, P Morris, J Dwyer, P Farrell, J Breen, C O'Connor. **Subs:** C Leacy for Byrne (23), D Thorpe for Farrell (57).
REF - S Whelan (St Martin's).

Clarke gets the party started early

CASTLET'N-GEOGH'N	1-12
ST OLIVER PLUNKETTS	0-11

WESTMEATH SHC FINAL

PRE-MATCH favourites Castletown-Geoghegan had to work hard to win their first senior hurling title in nine years when they defeated first-time finalists St Oliver Plunketts in a scrappy final in Mullingar.

The outstanding player on view, Aonghus Clarke gave Castletown-Geoghegan a huge boost in the third minute with a great goal.

Overall, however, the fare on offer in the first half was particularly poor, with unforced errors abounding and weak shooting from both sides.

The challengers only

managed one score from play in the opening half-hour, albeit a great point in the 12th minute from hard-working midfielder Greg Gavin.

However, despite their marquee forward Niall O'Brien being way short of his best, Castletown-Geoghegan still kept the scoreboard ticking over and they were full value for their six-point lead at the interval (1-6 to 0-3).

When the wind-assisted champions-elect rattled over a brace of points in the opening 70 seconds of the second half, a rout looked a possibility.

However, the Mullingar outfit showed that their shock semi-final win over holders Clonkill was no fluke and they fought tigerishly to stay in touch, with Davy Gavin leading their attack with

great determination.

Midway through the second half, a superb point from play by their main scoring threat Govinda Geoghegan left St Oliver Plunketts just four points in arrears (1-9 to 0-8).

Tit-for-tat scoring in the closing quarter saw the 11-times champions hold on for a deserved win in what was a niggly finale.

SCORERS - Castletown-Geoghegan: A Clarke 1-2, N O'Brien 0-5 (4f), J Clarke, D Fennell, A Clarke, C Glennon, N Kirby 0-1 each. St Oliver Plunketts: G Geoghegan 0-6 (4f), G Gavin 0-2, N Gavin (f), D Gavin, D Kiernan 0-1 each.
CASTLETOWN-GEOGHEGAN - P Maloney, P Fennell, E Dalton, E O'Gavin, L Varley, R Whelan, D McDermott, J Clarke, D Fennell, A Clarke, N O'Brien, D Lynch, B Lehart, A Mangan, C Glennon. **Subs:** N Kirby for Lynch (34), D Gallagher for Glennon (47), P Clarke for Mangan (51).
ST OLIVER PLUNKETTS - P Collins, S Conway, A Craig, S McManus, P Layde, N Gavin, R Ryland, G Gavin, J Duggan, C Curley, D Gavin, O Clinton, C O'Leary, K Gavin, G Geoghegan. **Subs:** C Flanagan for Clinton (16), D Kiernan for Duggan (h-t), J Doyle for O'Leary (43).
REF - F Brennan (Crookedwood).

Murphy strike seals Rangers' title hat-trick

MT LEINSTER RGRS	1-20
ST MULLINS	0-11

CARLOW SHC FINAL

MOUNT Leinster completed a three-in-a-row as they led neighbours St Mullins from trap to line to claim the club's sixth championship at Dr Cullen Park.

In their ninth successive senior final, Rangers proved too good for St Mullins, who were seeking a 24th crown.

Rangers led 0-5 to 0-3 at the end of the opening quarter. In the 16th minute, fine interplay between forwards Eddie Byrne, John Coady and Denis Murphy saw the latter score the game's only goal.

By half-time, Rangers were well on their way to retaining

their title, leading 1-10 to 0-7.

St Mullins were over-reliant on county star Marty Kavanagh, who scored a total of 0-9. Kavanagh scored the opening point of the second half from a free but two points from Diarmuid Byrne saw the men from the Borris/Ballymurphy/Rathanna area go seven points clear.

The Saints' challenge evaporated in the final 20 minutes. John Coady, a late call-up at full-forward for Rangers, fully justified his inclusion with a tremendous display, contributing 0-5 from play in a man-of-the-match display, while Paddy Coady, Byrne, Hugh Paddy O'Byrne and Willie Hickey all made the scoresheet for the holders.

Besides Marty Kavanagh's

scores, the only other players to raise flags for the challengers were midfielder Jack Kavanagh, with 0-2 while left full-forward Gary Bennett scored a point.

Rangers, whose superiority was rarely threatened over the hour, now advance to a Leinster club meeting away to the Westmeath champions.

SCORERS - Rangers: D Murphy 1-7 (5fs), J Coady 0-5, P Coady, D Byrne, H P O'Byrne 0-2 each, E Byrne, W Hickey 0-1 each. St Mullins: M Kavanagh 0-8 (6fs, 1'65'), J Kavanagh 0-2, G Bennett 0-1.
MT LEINSTER RANGERS - F Foley, M Doyle, G Doyle, G Kelly, Diarmuid Byrne, R Coady, B Nolan, Derek Byrne, P Nolan, P Coady, E Byrne, D Phelan, D Murphy, J Coady, H P O'Byrne. **Subs:** E Doyle for O'Byrne (45); E Coady for Derek Byrne (52); W Hickey for Phelan (55); J Murphy for Diarmuid Byrne (57); D Grennan for P Coady (58).
ST MULLINS - K Kehoe, M Dreehan, T Doyle, M Kehoe, J Doran, D Whelan, P Doyle, J Kavanagh, P Kehoe, J Murphy, P Kehoe, O Boland, M Kavanagh, J Doyle, G Bennett. **Subs:** J Walsh for Boland (31); P Walsh for Bennett (53); S Murphy for P Doyle; M Walsh for J Doyle (58).
REF - P Murphy (Ballinacorney)