

Blues Munster champions for first time in 20 years

Waterford United 2

Passage United 0

Report by Matt Keane

Waterford United were crowned Munster Senior Cup champions for the first time since 1987 when they defeated Passage United from the Munster Senior League in Turners Cross on Friday night last.

Passage United, who come from the Cork Harbour area of Leaside, did remarkably well to reach the final considering this was their first season in senior football. Waterford did not compete in the competition in recent years but from the outset the current manager Gareth Cronin made no secret of the fact that he wanted to win the Munster Cup this term.

When the Blues players took home the trophy it was their first piece of silverware since their First Division title win in season 2002-03. Speaking after the game, Cronin admitted he was happy to have watched his side win the 85th Munster Cup Final.

'I won this cup seven times as a player and I wanted to win it again as a manager. Cork City always wanted to be the top team in Munster and then kick on from there to national competitions and thankfully my players now know what it is like to win a trophy.

'Some of the guys who have been playing on a regular basis in the league and the FAI Cup were left out this evening but nevertheless this is a good night for a club starved of silverware,' concluded the Waterford manager.

This was Waterford's 12th Munster Cup triumph. The first time the trophy came to Waterford was in 1935. Top man for the Blues on the night was Alan Mulcahy. He was involved in everything that was positive from a Waterford point of view and was Man of the Match by a country mile.

Penalty

Gareth Cronin made a number of changes from the team that defeated Tolka Rover the previous Tuesday in the FAI Cup. In came Pakie Holden, John Hayes, Stephen Cooling, Conor McDonald, Ray Scully and Daryl Kavanagh, replacing Dean Delaney, Kenny Browne, Paul McCarthy, Dave Warren, Shane Harte and Vinny Sullivan.

Alan Mulcahy picked out Robert Brosnan and Daryl Kavanagh during the opening minutes but neither could hit the target with headers. Conor McDonald then made the Passage goalkeeper Daniel O'Leary work with a shot from inside the penalty area.

More pressure followed from Waterford but their opening goal came from the penalty spot on 31 minutes. The Passage defender Larry Lee took down Alan Mulcahy inside the box and referee Graham Kelly pointed to the penalty spot.

The Passage goalkeeper Daniel O'Leary got his hands to Mulcahy's penalty but he could not prevent the ball entering the net. Pakie Holden in the Waterford goal saved a weak effort from Pat Coakely shortly afterwards.

Daniel O'Leary tipped an effort from Ray Scully over the crossbar on 40 minutes and then John Hayes was denied by O'Leary.

Sullivan scores

Gareth Cronin shuffled his pack during the course of the second half and one of the players he brought on, Vinny Sullivan wrapped up the game on 73 minutes. Alan Mulcahy got time and space down the right and when he picked out Sullivan, the Dungarvan-born striker fired home from close range.

Pakie Holden produced a magnificent save from Jason Mullen afterwards before John Hayes missed a good chance following goos work by Ray Scully and Vinny Sullivan. Passage did enjoy a nice little period in the second third of the game but overall it was Waterford night, and now they must buckle down to the league and FAI Cup games that lie ahead.

Waterford United: Pakie Holden, Patrick Flynn, Robbie Hedderman, John Hayes, Alan Keely, Stephen Cooling, Ray Scully, Daryl Kavanagh (Kenny Browne, 85 mins) Conor McDonald (Vinny Sullivan, 56 mins), Alan Mulcahy, Robert Brosnan (Shane Harte, 50 mins).

Passage United: Daniel O'Leary, Gavin O'Flaherty, Gavin O'Connor, Paul Coughlan, Gary Prout, Eric Burke, Jason Mullen, Larry Lee, Aidan Whitty (William McGarry, 78 mins), Pat Coakley (Mervyn O'Connor, 85 mins).

Referee: Graham Kelly (Cork).

Brilliant individual goal sinks BluesHeartbreak for United in Dalymount Park

Report by Matt Keane

In Dalymount Park on Monday night, Waterford United manager Gareth Croinin reverted to the starting eleven that defeated Tolka Rovers in the FAI Cup the previous week. That decision meant that there were six changes from the team which lined out against Passage United in the Munster Senior Cup final the previous Friday.

This game was the Blues first league game since June 1st, a game they lost at home to UCD. Waterford's away league record now reads two draws and three defeats. Their last away game saw them earn a point against Derry City. On this occasion, there was not to be a first away win for Waterford because Darren Mansarem scored the only goal of the game late in the first half. The Blues deserved at least a point from the fixture but, not for the first time this season, their luck was out.

Mansarem classic

Mansarem set up Glen Crowe after 5 minutes and the former Irish international player saw his low shot from the edge of the box superbly tipped away by Dean Delaney in the Blues goal. Waterford put together a nice move after 17 minutes which saw Vinny Sullivan play the ball back to Robert Brosnan but the Cork based Garda hammered the ball over the crossbar from outside the penalty area. Three minutes later Alan Mulcahy got in a fine cross from the right to the far post but Shane Harte

headed weakly wide when he should have tested the Waterford born goalkeeper Brian Murphy.

Sullivan then had a chance but he shot straight at Murphy from a great position after he had caught the home defence square. Waterford were enjoying a good spell at this stage and Harte cut in from the left on 31 minutes but he shot wide of the near upright. Bohemians lost the service of Chris Kingsbury moments later and he was replaced by Fergal Harkin. Bohs launched an attack on 37 minutes with Glen Crowe back-heeling the ball to the substitute but he blazed the ball high and wide from inside the penalty area. Waterford almost fell behind on 41 minutes when Kevin Hunt played in Mansarem but the player, who scored the winning goal earlier in the season at the RSC, struck the outside of the post from the right.

However, right on the blow of half time, he made no mistake with a brilliant overhead kick from 7 yards. John Paul Kelly played the ball out left to Dessie Byrne who was given far too much time and Mansarem found the net despite having his back to goal. It was a goal that brought back memories of Denis Law at his best. This was a real sucker punch for a Waterford team who should have been leading and not losing at half time. Mansarem marked his birthday by scoring that late, late first half goal.

More Blues pressure

Despite that sickening goal, the Blues came out fighting in the early moments of the second half and Hunt was forced to take down Paul McCarthy on 48 minutes which saw him receive a yellow card but Harte fired the free over the bar from 20 yards. Kelly split the Waterford defence on 58 minutes but Delaney came charging from his goal to deny Mansarem. The Blues goalkeeper required treatment but, thankfully, he recovered because, 2 minutes later, he saved brilliantly from Thomas Heary from close range after Heary was played in by Mansarem. Delaney's left hand prevented Heary's shot from entering the net.

Cronin withdrew Harte from the action after 71 minutes and brought on Daryl Kavanagh in an attempt to beef up an attack that was beginning to fade somewhat and the Carrick born player had half a chance 4 minutes later following a corner kick but there was too many defenders in his way to get a clear header on target inside a crowded Bohemians six yards box. The Blues pressed on following that half chance as the home side began to lose their grip in the middle of the park but Brian Murphy was at ease picking long balls out of the air, a tactic favoured by Waterford as the sands of time ran out.

In time added on, Delaney produced two more brilliant saves from Fergal Harkin as the Blues threw caution to the wind. Waterford deserved a point from the game but, alas, it was not to be and now they must turn their attention to another difficult away game against Bray Wanderers this Sunday.

Bohemians. Brian Murphy, Eoin Heary, Dessie Byrne, Kevin Hunt, Liam Burns, Thomas Heary, Glen Crowe, John Paul Kelly, Darren Mansaram, Chris Kingsbury, Dean Pooley. Subs. Fergal Harkin for Kingsbury 31 mins. Conor Powell for Kelly 64 mins. Neale Fenn for Crowe 76 mins

Waterford United. Dean Delaney, Pat Flynn, Robbie Hedderman, Kenny Browne, Alan Keely, Dave Warren, Alan Mulcahy, Paul McCarthy, Vinny Sullivan, Shane Harte, Robert Brosnan. Sub. Daryl Kavanagh for Harte 71 mins.

Referee. Anthony Buttimer (Cork)