

Honours even as both full-forwards dominate



Gaultier's JJ Hutchison salvaged a draw at the death against Ballinameela at Fraher Field.

| Photos: Sean Byrne

A result neither Gaultier nor Ballinameela wanted after opening day reversals, yet given the nature of this fixture, a draw felt about right after full-forwards JJ Hutchinson and Jim Curran dominated the hour's play.

Gaultier stuck first after four minutes through JJ Hutchinson but Ballinameela, with the breeze in their favour, registered two points in the 10th and 11th minutes via two Jim Curran frees.

Cian Culloo's smart pass sent Jason Morrissey in for a 13th minute point, before Gaultier midfielder Conor O'Riordan found his range from 30 metres on the quarter hour.

Eight minutes elapsed before the next score was registered, with Ballinameela's Michael Walsh pointing well after a fine solo run.

Within a minute, the men in blue led by three thanks to full-forward Jim Curran, after another excellent solo run and strike.

Rory Walsh bisected the posts for Gaultier in the 22nd minute, and JJ Hutchinson's free (which led saw Ballinameela's Mícheál Shine black carded) reduced the arrears to a single point after 24.

Tom Curran tagged on his first point of the afternoon five minutes from the break to leave the westerners 0-6 to 0-4 ahead at the interval.

Jim Curran and JJ Hutchinson (a free) traded scores in the 33rd and 35th minutes, with JJ striking again a minute later after some indecision by Ballinameela goalkeeper Paul Curran.

But in the next three minutes, Ballinameela scored more than they had in the entirety of their defeat to The Nire, thanks to a brace of points from Tom Curran and a Jim Curran free.

Yet, not for the first time, JJ Hutchinson stepped up to the plate for the Barony, with four points between the 42nd and 48th minutes to level the fixture once more.

Two Jim Curran frees in the 50th and 53rd minutes sent Ballinameela two points clear, during a stage in the game when their shooting from play really let them down, missing at least four scoreable opportunities.

And they were to rue those misses after another brace of Hutchinson points; with his 57th minute strike from an acute angle on the left proving the score of the day.

And in stoppage time, when he was impeded 13 metres from goal by Kevin Phelan, JJ dusted himself off, converted the free and ensured a share of the spoils.

Gaultier: David Whitty; Aaron Jones, Brad Carroll, Ronan McDonagh; Billy O'Keeffe, Gary Molloy, Mark Wyse; Conor O'Riordan, Ian Power; Johnny Delahunty, Rory Walsh, Sean Whitty; Brendan Fitzgerald, JJ Hutchinson, Robin Croke.

Substitutes: Thomas Connors for Robin Croke (25 mins), Brian Kenny for Johnny Delahunty (HT), Bob O'Doherty for Brendan Fitzgerald (45).

Scorers: JJ Hutchinson (0-9; 0-7f), Conor O'Riordan, Ian Power and Rory Walsh (0-1 each).

Ballinameela: Paul Curran; Keelan Looby, Kevin Phelan, Jason McGrath; Colin Walsh, David Phelan, Michael Walsh; Brian Phelan, Brendan Phelan; Tom Curran, Mícheál Shine, Mike Kiely, Cian Culloo, Jim Curran, Jason Morrissey.

Substitutes: John Harrington for Mike Kiely (19 mins), Mikey Phelan for Mícheál Shine (after Black Card, 24).

Black Card: Mícheál Shine (24).

Scorers: Jim Curran (0-7; 0-4f), Tom Curran (0-3), David Phelan and Jason Morrissey (0-1 each).

Referee: Alan Kissane.

@@@caption

Gaultier's JJ Hutchison salvaged a draw at the death against Ballinameela at Fraher Field.

| **Photos:** Sean Byrne

text: Dermot Keyes