

## Deise Hang Tough in Thriller



GOT your breath back yet? The Hurling Championship is literally only a few (albeit wet) weekends old but already the prospect of a summer series to suitably companion last year's astonishing campaign cannot be ruled out. While Waterford will question how they didn't capitalise on a nine-point advantage after 47 minutes, Cork, in equal measure will query why they rose so slowly from the blocks. But both Derek McGrath and Jimmy Barry Murphy must be pleased with the quality of their respective sides' hurling during phases of last Sunday's Munster Quarter Final, along with the doggedness their charges demonstrated when so required. It was ding-dong stuff, particularly during a nerve-shredding second half when Cork threatened to over-run a Deise side deprived several experienced players due to injury and, in Shane O'Sullivan's case, suspension. While the travelling support from Waterford was undoubtedly disappointing given the preponderance of red around the stadium, the Deise were ahead after 47 seconds through a Pauric Mahony free. Thirty seconds later, after Aidan Cadogan was fouled by Barry Coughlan, Patrick Horgan levelled matters - the sides wouldn't be level again for another hour. A brilliant Liam Lawlor blocked Aidan Walsh a clear strike on goal in the fourth minute, which was capitalised on by a Mahony free at the opposite end just seconds later. Brian O'Halloran, Jamie Nagle and the rampaging Tadhg de Búrca sent Waterford 0-5 to 0-1 clear by the 10th minute. The lively Cadogan (just 19) got the better of Coughlan in the 13th minute to register Cork's second point, before Mahony struck a 15th minute free. Two minutes later, Seamus Harnedy superbly caught an Anthony Nash puck-out and pulled it between the uprights, only for Waterford to find an immediate reply through Jake Dillon after fine work by Michael Walsh. Mahony tagged on another free in the 19th minute, but De La Salle's Eddie Barrett's afternoon was cut short when he dislocated his knee, which looks set to end his competitive summer. Six minutes later, Walsh sent a tremendous sideline cut between the posts to leave four points between the sides, and the dangerous Cadogan sent over another point in the 28th minute. But back came Waterford, with Nagle again finding his range from the halfway line before Cadogan was fouled again, with Horgan again pointing via a free. Dermot Keyes at Semple Stadium On the half hour, Austin Gleeson did what Walsh had done with equal aplomb, when brilliantly curving a sideline cut over Anthony Nash's crossbar, and after Brian O'Sullivan was illegally impeded on the 34th minute, Mahony pointed again. Completing a most impressive opening half from a Waterford perspective, Austin Gleeson struck his second point to leave the pre-match underdogs 0-13 to 0-7 up at the break. Patrick Horgan got the second half scoring underway after a scrappy passage of play in the 36th minute, but Mahony replied for the Deisemen within 90 seconds after fine interplay by Colin Dunford and Kevin Moran. Conor Lehane struck his only point of the afternoon in the 39th minute before 'Brick' Walsh's pass picked out Brian O'Sullivan with an excellent point from the next play. The excellent Cadogan and the ever-reliable Horgan added to Cork's tally in the 40th and 42nd minutes to leave just four points between the sides, before Austin Gleeson struck the score of the match - and probably the goal of the season. Latching onto a sideline, the Mount Sion man set off from the 65-metre line, leaving no less than five Cork men in his wake, before slamming the ball beyond Anthony Nash and the top left-hand corner of the net. It was a stunning moment, one of the greatest goals ever scored in hurling's greatest arena. And the white and blue tide looked unrelenting after Shane Walsh and another Mahony free sent them 1-17 to 0-11 clear by the 47th minute. But back came Cork, and critically their next score was a goal, despite Stephen O'Keeffe's custodial brilliance, substitute Bill Cooper scooped the ball into the net from mere inches out. Mahony and Aidan Walsh traded points before Mahony and Horgan exchanged frees, leaving the Deise still five points clear by the 55th minute. But the sense that the momentum by then was all with Cork was difficult to avoid, with O'Keeffe again at his brilliant best when batting away Cadogan's goal-bound strike, with Horgan sending over the resulting 65. After Conor Lehane had missed a gilt-edged opportunity, Horgan made no mistake when assisted by Cooper in the 58th minute to leave just three points between the sides. Deise knuckles were being chewed on heavily as Cork charged forward again, and substitute Stephen Moylan released Horgan for another point in the 59th minute left the Waterford support sweating heavily. Horgan struck again a minute later to reduce the arrears to the minimum, but Waterford regained a foothold four minutes from time thanks to a Pauric Mahony free to edge back in front. Yet back came Cork again in an absorbing finale, with Patrick Horgan's free and the impressive Bill Cooper restoring parity with just two minutes left on the clock. Moments later, Brian O'Sullivan set off on a goal-bound surge and when a score appeared at his mercy, the Ballygunner clubman opted to hand pass towards Seamus Prendergast, only for corner-back Shane O'Neill to make a critical interception.

Just when one thought Waterford's chance of victory was gone, more superb spadework by Michael Walsh released Prendergast, whose shot dinked off Nash's right hand post and over the bar. The Deise led once more. But there was still time for even more drama. Austin Gleeson's coming together with Anthony Nash just moments after he cleared upfield led to a free from where the goalkeeper's shot landed, from which Patrick Horgan made no mistake in the 72 minute. Seconds later, Brian Gavin's whistle sounded for the last time, meaning these two provincial rivals shall have to do it all again at the same venue on Sunday, June 8th. More of the same would do nicely.

WATERFORD: Stephen O'Keeffe; Tadhg de Búrca, Liam Lawlor, Noel Connors; Jamie Nagle, Michael Walsh, Barry Coughlan; Kevin Moran, Eddie Barrett; Colin Dunford, Pauric Mahony, Austin Gleeson; Brian O'Sullivan, Shane Walsh, Jake Dillon. SUBSTITUTES: Richie Foley for Eddie Barrett (22 mins), Shane Fives for Barry Coughlan (42), Ray Barry for Colin Dunford (48), Donie Breathnach for Jake Dillon (53) and Seamus Prendergast for Shane Walsh (59) SCORERS: Pauric Mahony (0-11; 0-9f), Austin Gleeson (1-2; 0-1SI), Brian O'Sullivan and Jamie Nagle (0-2 each), Tadhg de Búrca, Shane Walsh, Jake Dillon and Seamus Prendergast (0-1 each). CORK: Anthony Nash; Shane O'Neill, Damien Cahalane, Stephen McDonnell; Christopher Joyce, Mark Ellis, Lorcan McLoughlin; Daniel Kearney, Aidan Walsh; Conor Lehane, Cian McCarthy, Patrick Cronin; Alan Cadogan, Seamus Harnedy, Patrick Horgan. SUBSTITUTES: Bill Cooper for Cian McCarthy (HT), Brian Lawton for Daniel Kearney (49), Stephen Moylan for Patrick Cronin (53) and Jamie Coughlan for Seamus Harnedy (65). SCORERS: Patrick Horgan (0-12; 0-8f, 0-1 65), Alan Cadogan (0-4), Bill Cooper (1-1), Aidan Walsh (0-2; 0-1 SI), Seamus Harnedy and Conor Lehane (0-1 each). REFEREE: Brian Gavin (Offaly).