

## Cup Runneth Over For Happy Deisemen



Waterford captain Thomas O'Gorman lifts the McGrath Cup after the presentation by Munster Council Chairman Robert Frost at Fraher Field in Saturday last.

Despite a first success in 34 years for our senior footballers, last Saturday night's win at Fraher Field was greeted more with satisfaction than joy.

This was truly a case of a job well done for Tom McGlinchey's men, who may well savour their victory in this competition all the more should they see off Wicklow and Offaly over the next two weekends as the National Football League gets underway.

Nonetheless, victories over four successive weekends, including a historic win over Cork in the semi-final is something worth noting and extracting some pleasure for with respect to a group of players whose core support base is considerably smaller than that which follows our hurlers.

For the 907 who attended last Saturday's Final, this was certainly a novel occasion, not only to see Waterford competing in a senior decider, but to win and raise a trophy on home soil. Let's hope this is just the start of a positive upturn in the fortunes of a team and panel who have clearly bought into the positive drum being beaten by new manager Tom McGlinchey.

While there's no doubt that UCC, managed by Cork legend Billy Morgan, had an eye, perhaps even an eye and a half trained on today (Tuesday's) Sigerson Cup opener against Cork IT, Waterford, once again, went about their business in an entertaining, engaging manner.

Barely 80 seconds has elapsed before the Deise netted the first of their three goals on the night, as corner-forward Joey Veale slotted the ball beneath UCC goalkeeper Padraig McCarthy from point blank range, after fine approach work by Liam Lawlor and Patrick Hurney.

UCC, despite nine changes from the team listed in the programme and no less than 12 positional switches, soon found their rhythm, with David Harrington, Adrian Spillane Conor Cox and Kevin Davis points edging them ahead by the 12th minute.



Shane Aherne produced another big shift in midfield for Waterford, and chipped in with four points.

Shane Aherne's 14th minute free restored parity and Waterford edged ahead 90 seconds later thanks to a Michael Curry point, with Lawlor again prominent in the build-up.

An end-to-end affair provided fine entertainment for the healthy attendance and UCC went back in front after 17 minutes when Conor Horgan slipped the ball into the net after Waterford goalkeeper Stephen Enright had initially denied the lively Tom Hickey with a superb save.

Points by Patrick Hurney and Liam Lawlor hauled UCC back by the 22nd minute, only for the energetic Harrington to find his range again two minutes later.

But the ding-dong nature of this final was maintained come the 26th minute when Deise centre-back Maurice O'Gorman toe-poked the ball into the UCC net to register only the second ever goal in his inter-county career. The hosts were to retain their advantage between then and full-time.

Lawlor, in that playmaking brief he is clearly relishing in, bisected the uprights beautifully on 28 minutes after a patient build-up on behalf of substitute Conor Phelan, while Patrick Hurney's beautifully struck point from wide on the right flank deflected scorewards off the left hand upright. Tom Hickey, a liverwire in attack throughout the opening half, notched a brace before the break to narrow UCC's arrears to two points (2-6 to 1-7).

A raft of early second half changes, including Hickey's removal, undoubtedly disrupted UCC's equally entertaining pattern of play and handed the initiative to the hosts, who outscored the students by 1-6 to 0-3 during the second period.

David Harrington opened the scoring two minutes after the restart to leave just the minimum separating the sides, but the Deisemen effectively killed off the game as contest between then and the 51st minute.

Shane Aherne, who fielded several of Stephen Enright's deep kick-outs brilliantly (there wasn't a single short kick out by either keeper during the 70 minutes), converted a 40th minute free for the hosts. A fallow nine minutes followed; the flow of the game interrupted by three UCC replacements, but the next score proved vital, as Gavin Nugent rifled the ball into the UCC net after excellent assistance from Ballinacourty's Michael O'Halloran.

Two minutes later, Waterford extended their lead to six points and by then they'd one hand on a cup they last lifted back in 1981, the first year the trophy was played for.

Skipper Thomas O'Gorman, perhaps noting his brother's first half offensive foray, powered deep into UCC territory in the 54th minute, feeding substitute David Grey who kicked a fine 25-metre point from the left flank.

Another Ahern free followed on the hour mark before Conor Phelan, full of running and industry as always, got his name on the scoresheet six minutes from time, on a night when no less than eight Waterford players registered scores.

With two minutes remaining, Conor Horgan bridged a 22-minute gap between UCC scores when turning over a free, before Shane Ahern completed the scoring in the first minute of additional time.

A day which had started with dreadful news for St Saviour's Football Club ended on a high at Fraher Field, on a rare but welcome day that Waterford's senior footballers occupied top GAA billing.



Waterford: 2015 McGrath Cup winners.

**Waterford:** Stephen Enright; Dean Crowley, Niall Walsh, Thomas O’Gorman; Tadhg Ó hUallacháin, Maurice O’Gorman, Ray Ó Ceallaigh; Shane Aherne, Tommy Prendergast; Michael Curry (0-1), Michael O’Halloran, Patrick Hurney (0-2); Liam Lawlor (0-2), Gavin Nugent, Joey Veale.

**Substitutes:** Conor Phelan for Niall Walsh (21 mins), David Grey for J Veale (51), Jason Curry for Patrick Hurney (61), Billy Power for Dean Crowley (65), Oran Keevers for Tommy Prendergast (67) and Mark Ferncombe for Michael Curry (70).

**Scorers:** Gavin Nugent (1-1), Shane Aherne (0-4; 0-3f), Joey Veale and Maurice O’Gorman (1-0 each), Patrick Hurney and Liam Lawlor (0-2 each), Michael Curry, Conor Phelan and David Grey (0-1 each).

**UCC:** Pdraig McCarthy; Jamie Davis, Jack McGuire, Kieran Histon; Kevin O’Sullivan, Sean White, Enda Dennehy; Alan O’Donovan, Adrian Spillane; Fintan O’Connor, Kevin Davis, Shaun Keane; Tom Hickey, David Harrington, Conor Horgan.

**Substitutes:** Francis Courtney for Tom Hickey (HT), Kevin Hayes-Curtin for Jamie Davis (42 mins), Conor Hyde for Sean White (42) Pdraig Scanlon for Alan O’Donovan (43) and Shane Power for Eanna O’Conchuir (61).

**Scorers:** Conor Horgan (1-2; 0-2f), David Harrington (0-3), Tom Hickey (0-2; 0-1f), Adrian Spillane and Kevin Davis (0-1 each).

**Referee:** Seamus Mulvihill (Kerry)