

Rathgormack Full Of Eastern Promise



Rathgormack: Eastern Under-21 Football Champions 2015. | Photo: Maurice Hennebry

Eastern Under-21 'A' Football Final

Rathgormack 1-19
Gaultier 1-8

A second half scoring blitz saw an impressive Rathgormack claim another Tony Kirwan-sponsored Eastern Under-21 Football title against a young Gaultier side at St Mollerans on Friday evening last.

Leading by 0-9 to 0-7 at the break after an opening half hour of quality football and excellent point taking (featuring only three wides), Rathgormack overpowered Gaultier in the second half, keeping them scoreless in the opening 17 minutes, during which they rifled 10 additional points onto their tally.

The first half's football gave no indication of the tsunami which was to overwhelm Gaultier in the second half hour, as they initially gave as good as they got against a talented, mobile Rathgormack unit.

Man of the match Jason Curry opened the scoring for Rathgormack in the second minute, and fellow half-forward Conor Murray soon added a second.

But Gaultier responded well, and levelled matters by the seventh minute thanks to two excellent Brian Kenny points. Kenny turned provider a minute later as full-forward Luke Nolan sent Gaultier ahead, and the wind was firmly blowing in Barony sails when Tim O'Sullivan pointed on 10 minutes after super approach play from Sean White.

But back came the favourites in the 11th and 12th minutes with fine individual points from Conor Murray and Minor All-Ireland hurling winner Willie Haheesy, much to the delight of the strong Rathgormack support.

Gaultier and Deise Under-21 skipper David Whitty denied Jason Gleeson (wearing 29) a goal when brilliantly blocking in the 16th minute but Jason Curry was to edge Rathgormack ahead with a point just a minute later.

Whitty was on hand again to save Hahessy's 18th minute shot, but the ball broke to the razor sharp Jason Curry who sent Rathgormack two points clear. Sean White converted a 21st minute free from Gaultier before Michael Curry, latching onto Gavin Sheehan's mammoth goal kick, charged forward to kick a tremendous individual score. White added another free in the 24th minute and Gaultier showed their hunger for the fight when White's defence-splitting pass picked out Adam O'Donoghue, only for the wing-forward to send his shot over the crossbar when a goal opportunity has clearly presented itself.

Between then and half-time, some misplaced passing in defence by Gaultier was capitalised upon by Rathgormack, with Michael Curry and Conor Murray adding to their tally.

Thereafter, it was all red and green, and as the mist thickened over Coolnamuck, this Rathgormack side suggested that, come the Senior Championship (forget not how close they ran The Nire in last year's quarter-final), they may prove a most sticky obstacle to negotiate.

Jason Curry, full of invention (though he'll need to keep a lid on his discipline, one suspects) opened their second half account and when Jason Gleeson added another five minutes later, Gaultier's challenge was already on the ropes. Luke Mulligan finished off a superb passing move come the 39th minute before the superb Hahessy, as comfortable with the big ball as he is with the sliothar, finished off a fine move instigated by the equally impressive Michael Curry.

Jason Curry's 41st minute free was soon followed by a further point from Conor Murray, and Curry struck again come the 46th minute after great combination play from Michael and Conor Murray. Gaultier, who didn't get inside the Rathgormack 45-metre line until the 48th minute, finally opened their second half account via Caomhán McGuire, but by then the contest had long since ended.

Seven minutes from time, Jason Gleeson rifled home a powerfully struck shot into the top left hand corner of David Whitty's net, and when Michael Curry added his third point a minute later, Rathgormack were 13 points clear. Sean White provided some consolation for Gaultier when poking the ball into Gavin Sheehan's net in the closing minute but, fittingly, the last word went to the outstanding Jason Curry, whose injury-time point sealed an emphatic win from the men in the Comeraghs' shadow.

Rathgormack will now face Ballinacourty in Friday's County Final (8.30pm) after the Abbeysiders dramatically saw off Saint Olivers in the Western Final Fraher Field on Friday last by 1-12 to 0-13, registering 1-2 of their tally in the closing four minutes.

The 'B' Final between St Mary's and Brickey Rangers is the curtain raiser on Friday night in Dungarvan, and is scheduled for a 7pm throw-in.

Rathgormack: Gavin Sheehan; Brian Connolly, Pádraig Hunt, Jonathan Flynn; David Connolly, Dean Kirwan, Robbie Flynn; Michael Curry, Conor Walsh; Conor Murray, Jason Curry, Willie Hahessy; Daniel Crotty Jason Gleeson, Liam Mulligan.

Substitute: Aaron Power for Daniel Crotty (57 mins).

Scorers: Jason Curry (0-7; 0-2f), Jason Gleeson (1-1), Conor Murray and Michael Curry (0-3 each), Willie Hahessy (0-2), Conor Walsh, Daniel Crotty and Liam Mulligan (0-1 each).

Gaultier: David Whitty; Stephen Lynch, Josh Cunningham, Sean Kelly, Sean Hogan, Aaron Jones, Sean Whitty; Billy O'Keeffe, Adam O'Donoghue; Tim O'Sullivan, Sean White, Caomhán McGuire; Brian Kenny, Luke Nolan, Gary Cullinane.

Substitutes: David Jones for Sean Kelly (19 mins), Sean Barlow for Gary Cullinane (50), Dean Kearns for Tim O'Sullivan and Mike Hutchinson for Luke Nolan (both 53) and Sean Kearns for Brian Kenny (58).

Scorers: Sean White (1-2; 0-2f), Brian Kenny (0-2), Adam O'Donoghue, Tim O'Sullivan, Caomhán McGuire and Luke Nolan (0-1 each).

Man of the Match (sponsored by Tony Kirwan): Jason Curry (Rathgormack)

Referee: Kieran O'Toole (Naomh Pól)

Dermot Keyes at St Mollerans