

Ecstasy & Agony

Controversial goal denies Waterford a massive win

Full-time at Waterford's adopted home ground beneath Gallows Hill. The atmosphere is as hot as the June air and an outbreak of anarchy reigns, admittedly for no more than a few seconds, as match stewards dash to circle referee Alan Kelly akin to angry US Secret Service men during an unscheduled Presidential walkabout.

Dan Shanahan isn't happy, nor was anyone wearing white and blue after Tipperary were gifted a 62nd minute goal one suspects even Tofik Bakhranov of 1966 World Cup Final fame wouldn't have awarded.

"They're young men, they're young players," says Deise manager Derek McGrath, who did his best to remain stoical when questioned about Tipperary's phantom three pointer.

"They're going to question the decision, which is the natural kind of emotion of any guy when he's in a state of genuine sincerity about the decision, whether he thinks it's the right or wrong decision and he's going to debate it, if you like. But we just imparted the message straight away to move on and that's what we'll do. We did it well after the League Final replay a couple of years ago when there were probably mistakes made and we'll do the same again, and that's the nature of what we try to do: behave ourselves correctly on and off the field and try and move on to the next challenge."

Minutes earlier, Dan Shanahan offers his initial comment to the Waterford media, still on the pitch, his brow beaded in sweat, his face awash with indignation.

"You always go by the response of the goalkeeper to these things," the Lismore clubman began. "And 'Sokky' (Stephen O'Keefe) is adamant and he still is adamant that the ball didn't go over the line. It looked like one umpire gave it and the other umpire didn't and then the referee decided to give it. We're five years in this job, we've eight months put into preparing for this year and coming up here with a depleted team, and to have stuff like that going against us...but look, we didn't lose the game. That's the plus side of it, we got a good point out of it. A lot of the lads were outstanding today in this weather, there was fair heat out there and the thing now is to get them ready for next week; it's very unfair but look, that's the way it is at the moment."



Waterford's Tommy Ryan gives Tipperary's Joe O'Dwyer the slip during Sunday's pulsating Munster Senior Hurling Championship clash in Limerick. See inside for report, reaction and analysis. | Photo: Maurice Hennebery

Given that Hawkeye (were it present in Limerick) would have had no role to play in the awarding of that phantom goal, one

wonders should goal-line technology be deployed across the board in the Championship? To this suggestion, Dan Shanahan replied: "But if you're going to do that, then you'd have to do it across all the venues, including Walsh Park, and they're not going to do that, to be honest with you. But it's just after costing us probably a victory and they're hard to come by against Tipperary. It was an exciting game, we were well in control, we'd an extra man but Tipp showed a lot of bottle by coming back but I'll leave the public judge things on the TV tonight and see what they say about it."

For Tipperary, still without a win but with two points on the board, their Championship dream still remains alive. "I was immensely proud of our boys," said a relieved Premier boss Michael Ryan in a sweltering tunnel outside his team's dressing room. "They stayed fighting and fighting and refused to give in, even though it looked dire. But look, they always back themselves. They're well capable of putting up a very fast turnaround of scores. I just wish they wouldn't keep doing it week after week!" The Hurling Championship which reaches heights others struggle to reach keeps on delivering. And Waterford shall return to this ground next Sunday as the away side, when nothing other than victory will do if their summer dream is to remain alive.