

Championship FOCUS

By SYLVESTER HENNESSY

As Kerry prepare for their Munster SFC semi-final clash with Limerick on Saturday evening it is hard to believe that the first month of Championship action has already taken place and already some patterns are beginning to emerge.

After 11 games so far the only real championship upset came in Connacht when Leitrim defeated Sligo.

You could also argue that Armagh's five-point defeat of Down on Saturday evening was unexpected but Ulster football is always a minefield and Down are sure to regroup and make a run through the Qualifiers.

Armagh, alongside Derry, Donegal, Wexford and Kildare, have all impressed early in the campaign but there is a lot of Championship football yet to be played before any serious contenders emerge.

In that regard this weekend's clashes will see 4 of the pre-tournament favourites take to the field.

Cork, Kerry, Dublin and Tyrone all get a run out in what promises to be an interesting weekend of football. Over the coming weeks and months we will monitor the Championship each week, previewing and reviewing the action, as well as highlighting the topics that engage GAA supporters around the country.

Championship Match Previews

LIMERICK V KERRY

The big question coming into this game is whether Limerick can be as effective in the absence of John Galvin and under new management.

Kerry should prove too good for the Treaty men. They already have a game under their belts and while not overly impressing against Tipperary, Kerry's potent attack should power them to victory.

Verdict Kerry

CORK V WATERFORD

This should be a stroll in the park for Cork.

Verdict Cork

TYRONE V MONAGHAN

Tyrone are going for a hat-trick of Ulster titles; in fact Armagh and Tyrone have won every Ulster title between them since 1998.

They will also feel, like Kerry, that they left a 'soft' All-Ireland behind them last year. Time will tell whether they were right!

Verdict Tyrone

MEATH V KILDARE

This should be a cracker. Meath are in disarray but still have the talent while Kildare will want to build on last year's All-Ireland semi-final appearance.

Verdict Kildare

LAOIS V DUBLIN

Laois looked poor against Longford and should find the prospect of Dublin in Croke Park a bridge too far.

Verdict Dublin

Championship Top Scorers

- 1 Ciarán Lyng (Wexford) . . . 1-6
- 2 Daniel Goulding (Cork) . . . 0-8
- 3 Bryan Sheehan (Kerry) . . . 2-1
- 4 Eoin Bradley (Derry) . . . 1-4
- 5 Donncha O'Connor (Cork) . . . 1-4
- 6 Ben Brosnan (Wexford) . . . 0-7
- 7 Andy Moran (Mayo) . . . 0-7



Topic of the Week

The performance by the various umpires around the country this weekend was shocking.

In the live game on TV on Sunday, Dublin's first point was clearly 5 metres wide of the post and then in Thurles an umpire waved the ball wide when Brendan Cummins clearly made a brilliant point blank save deflecting the ball out for a '65.

Both these instances were so clear cut it was laughable.

Hopefully, decisions like these won't have a bearing on the outcome of any major games this season.

CREDIT UNION COUNTY LEAGUE DIVISION FOUR

SAINTS TAKE TOP HONOURS

Ballymac's Aidan Breen is blocked by St Senans' Philip Twomey.



BALLYMACCELLIGOTT 1-7 ST SENANS 0-12

IN THIS TOP OF THE TABLE clash at the newly refurbished Ballymacelligott Grounds on Sunday last two late points from the boot of substitute Paudie Quille fashioned a well-deserved win for St Senans.

By JOHN WHITE

The visitors should not have had to depend on these two late scores as they dominated the first half proceedings but they also kicked 10 wides some from scoreable positions.

The north Kerry side led 0-3 to 0-1 at the end of the first quarter but a Shane Dowling goal in the 18th minute gave the home side a lead they did not deserve. However, it was Senans who reacted better to the goal and added five unanswered points before the break to lead 0-8 to 1-1 at the short whistle.

The early second half exchanges were evenly contested and the margin was still four points by the end of the third quarter.

St Senans then lost their way somewhat while the introduction of Gene O'Keefe injected new life into the home side and they drew level with two minutes remaining. With the game delicately poised substitute Paudie Quille popped up with two points in as many minutes to put daylight between the sides once more.

Three minutes of injury time was

played and Ballymac nearly stole the points at the end when a William O'Connell shot just shaved the post with the St Senans keeper scurrying across his goal.

The game had been a thriller.

Aidan Breen opened the scoring from a 45 within 90 seconds of the throw-in.

CONTROL

St Senans had four wides before Darragh Kennelly pointed a 10th minute free. Seán O'Connell and Benny Somers added further points to increase the lead but Shane Dowling goaled against the run of play following a good ball in by Matthew Galvin.

St Senans took control and Points by Jonny Daughton, Jason Browne and three points from Kennelly sent them in four ahead at the interval.

Both sides swapped points early in the second half and at the three quarter stage Saints led 0-10 to 1

-3. Ballymac then hit a purple patch and fired over four points from Aidan Breen, substitute Gene O'Keefe two and a point from play by Cathal de Lacey. The drama was not over and Senans sub Paudie Quille sent over two fine points to seal victory for the visitors.

O'Connor; William O'Connell, Kevin O'Shea, Matthew Galvin; Dermot Casey, Mossie Shanahan; Aidan Breen 0-1f, Gene O'Keefe 0-1 (45'), Pádraig McCarthy 0-1; Cathal de Lacey 0-1, Shane Dowling 1-0, Daniel O'Shea 0-1. Subs: Gene O'Keefe 0-2 (11) for D. Casey; Adam Jones for J. O'Connor; Ruairi Raftery for D. O'Shea.

St Senans John Somers; Paudie Whelan, Philip Twomey, Seán Dowling; Richard Nolan, Brendan O'Connell, Paudie Somers; Brendan Whelan, Jason Browne 0-1; Johnny Daughton 0-2, James Dillon, Benny Somers 0-1; Darragh Kennelly 0-5f, Seán Weir, Seán O'Connell 0-1. Sub: Paudie Quille 0-2 for J. Dillon. Referee: Mike Brosnan, Spila, Killarney.

Teams and Scorers
Ballymacelligott: Pádraig Laide, Seán Brosnan, TJ Carey, Johnny

MENTIONED IN DISPATCHES

- Duagh lost their way in the final 20 minutes of their game against Lispole after the substitution of county player Anthony Maher
- Daniel Murphy with 0-4 was top scorer for Scartaglin in their victory over Listry
- Michael Griffin was to the fore for Na Gaeil as they went down at home to Brosna
- St Senans' full forward Seán Weir was a constant threat to the Ballymac defence whenever he got on the ball

DIVISION FOUR TABLE

Team	P	W	L	D	P+	P-	P+/-	Pts
St Senans	5	5	0	0	65	52	13	10
Ballymacelligott	5	4	1	0	73	54	19	8
Duagh	5	4	1	0	86	69	17	8
Scartaglin	5	4	1	0	65	57	8	8
Churchill	4	2	1	1	49	46	3	5
Lispole	5	2	3	0	61	58	3	4
Na Gaeil	5	2	3	0	67	70	-3	4
Listry	5	2	3	0	58	64	-6	4
Beale	5	1	3	1	58	69	-11	3
Fossa	5	1	4	0	60	71	-11	2
Brosna	5	1	4	0	54	69	-15	2
Ballyduff	4	0	4	0	35	52	-17	0

CREDIT UNION COUNTY LEAGUE DIVISION FOUR ROUND-UP

DUAGH 2-16 LISPOLE 3-11

Duagh were quickly into their stride and the points came from play.

Duagh had three clear chances of goals in the first half but were denied by the goalposts and by the goalkeeper but with Anthony Maher dominating midfield, Duagh were 0-11 to 0-4 ahead at half time. Duagh opened the second half with a point from play from Duffy and a goal from Carmody.

Lispole broke down field and scored a good goal from Declan O'Sullivan. Duagh then scored two points from play before Duffy again goaled to put some daylight between the sides. County player Maher was replaced with the game in the bag.

However, Lispole came storming back with goals from Dempsey and O'Sullivan and the home side were in panic stations. With three minutes to go there was only three points between the sides but Duagh held on for victory.

NA GAEL 0-13 BROSNA 2-13

Na Gaeil, playing at home, came a cropper against a lively Brosna side, collecting their first points on Saturday evening last.

Playing with a strong breeze in the first half Na Gaeil still went in a point down, 0-9 to 1-7.

The second half was ding-dong affair with neither side really managing to pull away but with Brosna keeping their noses in front. A second goal with just a few minutes to go sealed a well deserved win for the visitors.

SCARTAGLIN 0-12 LISTRY 0-11

Scartaglin collected two valuable points in this local derby on Sunday with a one-point victory over Listry.

The first half was evenly contested and the sides retired level at 0-4 each at the end of the first quarter. The home side fired over six unanswered points before Listry rallied at the end of the half with two scores. It read Scartaglin 0-10 Listry 0-6 at the break. Both sides added two points each in the opening period of the second half and Scartaglin were hanging on. The visitors then took control and with time almost up they had the margin down to the minimum. However, the home side held on for victory and are tied in second place in this division.

FOSSA 0-9 BEALE 0-13

Beale racked up their first win in the League with this deserved win away to Fossa on Saturday evening last.