

Sunday July 25th 1993

Clara 3-12

Daingean 2-7

Brilliant Clara Shatter The Daingean Dream

The Daingean dream came to a death-defying end at O'Connor Park, Tullamore, on Sunday as Clara made sure of their place in this year's Senior Football Championship Final with an eight point win, which made them look all the more like a Championship winning team.

Daingean walked the tightrope for a full 56 minutes and even as the clock ticked into the final five minutes the large crowd present were still contemplating whether they should leave or stay. Then, on line with the two previous occasions, the inevitable happened and Clara bagged a third crunching goal to finally separate the wheat from the chaff.

How Daingean managed to stay in contention for so long in this semi-final is the burning question. One could tell little from watching the first half display which ended with Clara in front by 0-6 to 0-5. But the second half was a completely different story.

Clara surged 1-7 to 0-5 ahead after just four minutes and were on a demolition course until Daingean were awarded a penalty in the seventh minute. Centre-forward, Pat Spollen, scored from the penalty spot and Daingean were still in the running with a two-point deficit.

But their forwards were no match for the revamped forward lines in the Clara camp. So much so that not one component of the Daingean full-forward line consisting of Martin O'Rourke, Ger Galvin and Brendan Donagher, managed to score during the entire sixty minutes. John F. Kennedy failed to alter things when he replaced Martin O'Rourke midway through the second half.

Positional changes during the game have always been a feature of Clara teams. However, Daingean lost out by not counter-acting these changes. Clara moved Mark Daly from full-forward to midfield where he fitted in nicely and filled the vacancy by moving T.J. Deehan from the centre-forward berth. James Stewart made way for Mark Daly at midfield and moved to centre-forward.

Bounced Back

The Changes paid dividends for a second time and in the thirteenth minute Pdraig Moran scored the first of two cracking goals. The deficit stood at five points before Daingean bounced back into contention with a surprise goal from wing-forward, Paul Jordan, in the twenty second minute to leave the scores standing at 2-8 to 2-6.

But the hopes of the faithful followers from Daingean were brought to an end four minutes from time when Pdraig Moran re-opened the five point advantage for Clara with a stunning goal which followed an exchange of points between both sides. It was too much to expect Daingean to reply for a third time and Clara rubbed salt in the wounds of defeat carried by Daingean by notching up a further three points without reply over the closing four minutes.

Clara's far from flying start began after just 40 seconds of play when corner-forward, Mark Scanlon, pointed a free from 30 yards out. Daingean centre-forward, Pat Spollen, replied on the turn of the fourth minute with a point from 21 yards and kicked Daingean ahead with a free from 30 yards in the sixth minute.

Wing-forward, Pdraig Moran, displayed Clara's accuracy up front in the seventh minute when he collected a pass from Tony Egan to point from play. In all Clara

kicked five wides during the half but Daingean were more on target kicking just two wides.

Wing-forward, Paul Jordan, who proved to be Daingean's best forward, pointed from play in the tenth minute. Disaster nearly struck in the sixteenth minute when an alert Mark Daly took a quick free to the right of the Daingean net. Although Daingean keeper, Alan O'Reilly, slipped he quickly regained his balance and a burst of defensive action by the Daingean backs forced Clara's Robert Dunne to point from play.

Pat Spollen almost caught Clara unawares two minutes later. As all waited for him to kick a 21-yard free between the uprights he opted for the goal and almost reaped some reward. Clara regained the advantage by a point in the nineteenth minute when Mark Daly pointed from close range.

Corner-forward, Mark Scanlon, capitalised on one of the few frees Daingean conceded to open a two point lead three minutes later. In all, Daingean only conceded four frees in the first half compared to Clara's twelve.

Pat Spollen made use of a free from the same distance at the opposing end two minutes later and followed it with a point from play two minutes after that to level the scores at 0-5 apiece. His counterpart, T.J. Deehan replied a minute from the interval with a point from 30 metres to close the half's scoring.

Slippery Conditions

The slippery conditions worsened in the second half as torrential showers fell during the interval. Daingean played with the wind advantage but this did little to hinder Clara. They re-opened the scoring after Pdraig Moran pointed from 25 yards after just seventeen seconds.

T.J. Deehan, now playing at full-forward set corner-forward, Mark Scanlon, up for a cracking goal in the fourth minute. Scanlon collected the right-field pass on the 21-yard line and rifled the ball with a first time shot to the bottom left-hand corner of the Daingean goal.

Daingean wing-backs, Richie Galvin and John Joe Hanlon, regained some control but the slippery conditions got the better of them at times. Half-forwards, Paul Jordan and Pat Spollen impressed most in attack and were central to the move which ended with a penalty being awarded to Daingean in the seventh minute. Pat Spollen opted to take the penalty and outfoxed Clara keeper, Darragh Scully, with a shot to the bottom right hand corner. The scores stood at 1-7 to 1-5 for Clara until the thirteenth minute when they stretched it again with another super goal.

Loose marking cost Daingean dearly as Clara wing-forward, Robert Dunne, exposed the gaps and left the rest to Pdraig Moran who rattled the Daingean goals. Daingean should have taken note from their mistake but almost paid the price again when the left wing was exposed two minutes later for Clara corner-forward, Tony Egan, to nip in and point from play.

Daingean scored their first point in almost ten minutes when Pat Spollen pointed a 35-metre free to close the gap to five points in the sixteenth minute. The scores were not altered for another six minutes when Daingean pulled off a surprise goal which brought them right into contention for a spot in this year's final.

Midfielder, Martin Daly, sent a free from 45 metres out into the Clara goalmouth and Paul Jordan proved to be the most alert from the group of eight or so players on the left goalpost connecting to fist the ball to the back of the Clara net. Clara tried to pull away again but Robert Dunne pointed from yards out two minutes later but John Kenny replied within a minute for Daingean.

The nail that finally kept the lid on the Daingean effort came in the twenty sixth minute when Clara put the pressure on. Pdraig Moran took a sweeping shot from 30 yards out on the right of the Daingean goal and struck the net to shatter the dream of his opponents.

Centre-back, Colm Kane, and James Stewart followed it up with points from play before Clara substitute P.J. Cunningham finished the game with a point from yards out.

Scorers:

Clara – P. Moran 2-2, M. Scanlon 1-2 (2 frees), R. Dunne 0-2, C. Kane, J. Stewart, T.J. Deehan, T. Egan, M. Daly & P.J. Cunningham 0-1 each.

Daingean – P. Spollen 1-5 (1 pen, 3 frees), P. Jordan 1-1, J. Kenny 0-1.

Clara: Darragh Scully, Pat Flanagan, Larry Carroll, Tony Dalton, Derek Coyne, Colm Kane, Fergal Moran, Colm Scanlon, James Stewart, Pdraig Moran, T.J. Deehan, Robert Dunne, Tony Egan, Mark Daly, Mark Scanlon. Subs – P.J. Cunningham for T.J. Deehan.

Daingean: Alan O'Reilly, Peadar O'Grady, J.J. Stapleton, Greg Corcoran, Richie Galvin, Sean McEvoy, J.J. Hanlon, John Kenny, Martin Daly, Paul Jordan, Pat Spollen, Tony Kenny, Martin O'Rourke, Ger Galvin, Brendan Donagher. Subs – Camillus Kennedy for J.J. Stapleton, John F. Kennedy for Martin O'Rourke, Peter Greene for Peadar O'Grady.