

Shannonbridge march on to semi-final

Daingean challenge not carried through

Shannonbridge 2-15

Daingean 1-5

By Ian McClure

Shannonbridge coasted to a place in this years Offaly Football Championship semi-finals when they put the pressure on Daingean in a somewhat one sided affair at Clara last Saturday evening.

Although they had a poor first half, Shannonbridge recover in dramatic fashion in the second half and effectively smothered the Daingean challenge which had held firm until the interval.

Daingean's physical advantage proved to be the stumbling block for Shannonbridge. Daingean also had a strong midfield in John & Tony Kenny but the loss of Tony through injury at half time gave Shannonbridge a vital chance to regain lost ground.

Shannonbridge were successful in doing so with John Kenny being one of the few on the Daingean team to maintain his consistency throughout the second half. J.J Stapelton was another in the fullback berth for Daingean , but continued pressure took its toll on the Daingean defence.

Shannonbridge got off to a jumpy start. The strength they had shown to beat St Broughan's in their previous game took time to resurface. Midfielder John Ryan delivered a free from 65 meters into corner forward Anthony Kelly who pointed from the right corner after six minutes.

A free and two efforts from play were each put wide before Anthony Kelly scored again in the 9th minute. Tony Kenny put Daingean on the scoreboard in the 12th minute when he pointed a free from 50 metres which was awarded following a foul on full forward Mick Wright.

Daingean threatened the Shannonbridge goal in the 14th minute when a ball was sent into the goal mouth. Shannonbridge goalkeeper, Patrick Brazil came off his line to cover the ball but it hopped to Sean Farrell who unleashed a shot only to see corner back Joe Duffy block it.

Tony Kenny took the 45 metre free that followed and Sean Farrell made no mistake second time around as he collected on the left post and buried the ball in the bottom corner to put Daingean 1-1 to 0-2 in front.

Replied

Shannonbridge replied and were level within two minutes. John Ryan scored the first point from play in the 17th minute. Full forward, Niall O'Shea scored the second 5 seconds later after Jim Killen supplied him with a pass having gained possession from a Daingean kick-out.

Niall O'Shea kicked them back in front with a score from 21 yards after 21 minutes. The Daingean full back line held out and pressure forced Shannonbridge to kick a string of wides. John Kenny and Tony Kenny continued to hold midfield sway for Daingean with Tony Kenny pointing from 50 metres in the 25th minute. Shannonbridge finished the half strongly but were unable to convert their possession into scores. Wing forward Pat Joe Kelly gave them the psychological advantage going into half time when he scored from 30 yards after a pass from Jim Killen.

The half time pep talk certainly worked on Shannonbridge as they re-emerged as a more determined team. Their passing was more finely tuned and their defence tightened up considerably. Captain Michael Devine was very strong at full back and was ably assisted by a quick moving half back line of Ger Corbett, Vincent Darcy and Laurence Ryan.

Daingean introduced Mark Whittle as a replacement for John Kenny who had taken a knock just before half time. Martin Daly was moved back from wing-forward to midfield to try and maintain Daingean's foothold in that area of the field. Shannonbridge recommenced scoring in the third minute of the half when Anthony Kelly put Pat Joe Kelly through to fist over the bar. They were off target three times before Niall O'Shea broke the spell with a point from play in the fifth minute.

Anthony Kelly maintained his consistency as a forward and put one over from 21 yards on the left wing in the sixth minute. Daingean were awarded a penalty in the 7th minute when Sean T Farrell was hauled down when about to shoot for goal. Centre-forward, Paul Jordan opted to take the penalty but was unfortunate to strike it just to the left of the posts. Shannonbridge hardly took time to draw breath and moved forward again with Danny McEvoy putting them 0-10 to 1-2 ahead.

Good Attacks

Niall O'Shea played a back pass to John Ryan in the 13th minute and Ryan found the range to increase Shannonbridge's lead. Daingean replied within seconds after Sean T Farrell sent a pass to John F Kennedy who scored from 25 yards.

Daingean found their footing and put some good attacks together but off the mark shooting seemed to be their problem. Shannonbridge provisionally booked their passage to the semi-final when Donal Claffey hit the Daingean net in the 19th minute. Claffey's goal came after Jim Kileen sent a ball into the area. Full forward Niall O'Shea tapped the ball onto Claffey who found the net. Thus stretching the lead to 0-9 points.

Pat Joe Kelly picked out Anthony Kelly in the same minute as Shannonbridge broke through for another point. Kelly was at the thick of the action a minute later when he played a short pass to Niall O'Shea who scored from play to leave Daingean further a drift.

John Kenny continued to pressurise for Daingean. But the Shannonbridge defence was cracking in comparison to the first half. The half back line came under more pressure with Shannonbridge full-forwards, Donal Claffey, Niall O'Shea and Anthony Kelly in full flight, the Daingean full-back line were faced with a difficult task.

They were in danger again of conceding a goal in the 23rd minute. Shannonbridges Declan McEvoy put Anthony Kelly through but Kelly ran out of ground and opted to take the point as Daingean John Joe Hanlon closed down the angle on goal.

Fergal McEvoy further strengthened their advantage when he converted a free in the 25th minute. Daingean substitute Martin O'Reilly pointed from play after a pass from Sean T Farrell in the 25th minute. But Shannonbridge finished on a high note as Donal Claffey scored his second goal. Anthony Kelly continued to be the danger man. He delivered the cross field pass to O'Shea who flicked it on to Claffey to strike the target from 30 yards which was more than enough to book their place in the semi final against Rhode.

Scorers

SHANNONBRIDGE: Donal Claffey (2-0), Anthony Kelly (0-5), Niall O'Shea (0-4), John Ryan, Pat Joe Kelly (0-2 each), Declan McEvoy (0-1) Fergal McEvoy (0-1 free)

DAINGEAN: Sean T Farrell (1-0), Tony Kenny (0-2, a free), Martin Daly (0-1), Martin O'Reilly (0-1)

SHANNONBRIDGE:

Patrick Brazil; Joe Duffy; Michael Devine (capt), Alan O'Shea, Ger Corbett, Vincent Darcy; Laurence Ryan; John Ryan; Jim Kileen; Pat Joe Kelly; Declan McEvoy; Fergal McEvoy; Donal Claffey; Niall O'Shea; Anthony Kelly. Subs: Colm Kenny for John Ryan.

DAINGEAN;

Ollie Corcoran; Peadar Grady; JJ Stapelton; John Joe Hanlon; Brendan Donagher; Sean McEvoy; Kieran Carey; John Kenny; Tony Kenny; Seamus McEvoy; Paul Jordan; Martin Daly; John F Kennedy; Mick Wright; Sean T Farrell. Subs: Mark Whittle for Tony Kenny (injured); Martin O'Reilly for Mick Wright

Referee: Carthage Buckley