

U16 A CHAMPIONSHIP HURLING FINAL: PURCELL SHOOTS THE LIGHTS OUT IN MARINO!

St. Vincents 3-22 Kilmacud Crokes 3-28 (After ET, 2-18 each at FT)

CROKES SCORERS: D.Purcell 0-17 (3 frees), G.Flannery 1-3, S.McBarron 1-2, P.Clancy 1-1, D.Dwyer 0-2, O.O'Keefe, F.Donohoe, M.McBreen 0-1 each.

(Match report by Diarmuid Coogan)

The young hurlers of St Vincent's and Kilmacud Crokes served up a magnificent afternoon of hurling yesterday at Pairc Naomh Uinseainn which played out for 93 minutes including injury time and extra time!

Seldom in Gaelic Games does a player equal his number of years in points scored; yesterday Kilmacud Crokes centre forward David Purcell went one better, amassing a total of 17!

Playing with home advantage, St Vincent's got into the pace of the game quicker and had registered 3 points in the 1st 3 minutes before Purcell settled Crokes' nerves with a fine effort from 45 metres. (KC 0-1 SV 0-3)

In a trend that was to recur in the 1st half, almost from the puck out, Vincent's were on the attack and accomplished midfielder Ronan Ó Néill stroked over from 50 metres. (KC 0-1 SV 0-4)

In the 8th minute, Purcell won possession in midfield and ran deep into the Vincent's danger zone; there was the possibility of a goal but he sensibly took his point. (KC 0-2 SV 0-4)

Half forward Sean McBarron almost got in on goal 2 minutes later but the Vincent's defence scrambled it out to the 45 metre line where Crokes roving corner forward Daragh O'Dwyer split the posts. (KC 0-3 SV 0-4)

Again Ó Néill replied for Vincent's from Ben Henry's puck out. Crokes goalie Conor Coogan quickly pucked out to McBarron on the right side line and he used the space in front of him before striking a lovely point from 45 metres. (KC 0-4 SV 0-5)

Ó Néill then sent a long free in which dipped sharply; Coogan took no chances and deflected it out for a 65 which Ó Neill despatched and then followed up with another to restore the 3 point lead. (KC 0-4 SV 0-7)

At times in the 1st half, it seemed as if Crokes were trying to hang onto Vincent's coat tails and their 1st touch wasn't as crisp as their opponents and they were getting blocked & hooked repeatedly. However from 19 – 22 minutes they played their best hurling of the half when wing back Max McBreen, midfielder Gearóid Flannery & Purcell all hit great points to level the match. (KC 0-7 SV 0-7)

Vincent's responded quickly to make it 0-9 to 0-7 and 2 minutes before ½ half came a moment which should have given Vincent's the momentum to push on. After a delay for an injury, Ó Néill drove a free from 65 metres and it dropped into the goal area and was lamely batted out to the edge of the square where a Vincent's forward smashed it into the goal. (KC 0-7 SV 1-9)

Purcell made a great catch from Coogan's puck out before being fouled and he pointed the free which was a good response but Vincent's finished with a point in injury time and as the teams ran into the dressing rooms, it seemed as if Crokes had a mountain to climb in the 2nd half.

HALF TIME KC 0-8 SV 1-8.

2ND HALF.

Crokes introduced u14/15 Rory Óg Flannery in the 2nd half in a “sweeper” type role and he hoovered up a ball in defence before finding Purcell who scored a sublime point from 65 metres on the left side line. Midfielder Oran O’Keefe made a marvellous catch from the puck out before feeding Purcell who stroked over another from 65 metres. On the 33rd minute, Purcell added his 3rd in a row from an acute angle on the 45 metre line and suddenly the gap was down to 3! (KC 0-11 SV 1-11)

Ó Néill hit back with a free before Flannery(the younger) hit a line ball into the left corner; Dwyer carried along the line before floating a high ball across the square and while the defence was watching, corner forward Paddy Clancy leapt into the air and batted the sliothar into the net on the right of the “small square”!

Purcell followed up with a point in the 37th minute and the 6 point deficit was wiped out! (KC 1-12 SV 1-12)

5 minutes later, Purcell was heading for goal but his shot was batted out to the right by Henry and the defence managed to clear it only as far as O’Keefe who put Crokes ahead for the 1st time in the match. (KC 1-13 SV 1-12)

Left half forward Riain Ó Murchú equalised 2 minutes later and then put Vincent’s back into the lead on 48 minutes but the momentum had swung Crokes’ way and following a schmozzle in the Vincent’s goal, McBarron finished to the net to put Crokes 2 up. (KC 2-13 SV 1-14)

Ó Murchú pulled one back for Vincent’s before Purcell gave a clever “pop pass” to Flannery(the elder) around the 65; Flannery intelligently ran into space and hit a lovely point from 50 metres. (KC 2-14 SV 1-15)

Crokes seemed to be in the driving seat now but were turned over while in attack and conceded a free on the 65. Ó Murchu sent a dangerous low trajectory ball into the “red zone” and it completely fooled the defence and goalkeeper and landed in the net. Crokes seemed a bit shell shocked by this and Ó Murchú followed up with free a minute later. (KC 2-14 SV 2-16)

Coogan pucked out quickly to Flannery and he found Purcell who reduced the deficit and then McBarron equalised. (KC 2-16 SV 2-16)

In the final minute of normal time, Purcell “surfed” 2 high tackles before getting the free which he nailed from 50 metres but Ó Néill equalised in the 64th minute. Coogan found Purcell with a quick puck out and he was hit by a few heavy challenges before being harshly penalised for over carrying. Ó Néill put his side ahead from 65 metres and with the game 6 minutes into injury time, it seemed that that harsh call was going to decide the match.

COMETH THE HOUR, COMETH THE “ICEMAN”.

Purcell, however, had other ideas and having gained possession deep into injury time he once more showed great composure to hit the equaliser from play. Of all of his 17 points, this was the most important as the final whistle just after.

FULL TIME KC 2-18 SV 2-18.

At this stage it was raining heavily and dark as the saturated players went to the shelter of the dressing rooms.

EXTRA TIME

Vincent's got the better start with 2 points before Coogan found O'Keefe with a good puck out and he fed Purcell who landed it from 60 metres before following up with yet another equaliser on 5 minutes. (KC 2-20 SV 2-20)

Purcell and Flannery then added 2 more points before Ó Murchú pulled one back. Clancy completed the scoring of the 1st period to leave Crokes 2 up and looking comfortable. (KC 2-23 SV 2-21)

Crokes stretched the lead to 3 when McBarron fed Purcell and he landed another.

At this point Crokes were in complete control but over complicated things while working the sliothar upfield and were turned over in midfield – Vincent's quickly moved the ball to Ó Murchú and he soloed powerfully as if the "Red Sea had opened" in front of him before rifling into the top right corner from 14 metres! (KC 2-24 SV 3-21)

Once more it was on a knife edge and once more Purcell restored the lead for Crokes before Vincent's drew level again. (KC 2-25 SV 3-22)

With less than 5 minutes remaining, Crokes' tigerish wing back Max McBreen did well to gather "dirty ball" before being fouled and Flannery Óg sent a long range free into the box where it was scrambled out to the right but Dwyer gathered and hit a lovely point "over the shoulder" from 35 metres. (KC 2-26 SV 3-22)

At this stage Vincent's were throwing the sink at Crokes in search of an equaliser but the defence in which full back line of Danny O'Sullivan, James Neary, Cathal Crean & centre back James Dunphy were dogged, stood firm.

After repelling an attack, the sliothar was worked up field to Gearóid Flannery who shot from 45 metres; it looked as if it would drop just over the bar and Vincent's goalie Henry made a valiant effort to stop it but was most unfortunate to deflect it over his own line. (KC 3-26 SV 3-22)

Henry tried to find a team mate with a quick puck out but vigilant Crokes u15 sub Finnian Donohoe intercepted and tapped over to make it a 5 point differential. (KC 2-27 SV 3-22)

At this stage the life was sucked out of Vincent's and the game finished minutes later with, (who else), Purcell scoring his 17th point from a free.

As always on these occasions there was elation and desolation in equal measure for winners and losers respectively.

KILMACUD CROKES: C.Coogan, C.Crean, J.Neary, D.O'Sullivan, M.Duncan, J.Dunphy, M.McBreen, O.O'Keefe, G.Flannery(Capt), O.Harnett, D.Purcell, S.McBarron, P.Clancy, B.Walsh, D.Dwyer.

Subs: R.Óg.Flannery f Duncan, S.Ó Riagáin f Harnett, T.Ó Cathasaigh f McBarron.

B.Crowley, J.Dillon, R.Quinn, M.Sheerin, D.Mattimoe.

DUIRT SIAD:

In presenting the medals and trophy, **Referee Danny Harrington & Dublin County Board CCC2 Vice Chair Declan Coulter** paid tribute to both sides who had fought each other to a standstill.

Declan said that both sides were a credit to their clubs and showed what a healthy state Dublin Hurling is in. He also said that there were at least 5 players from each side who were contenders for "Player of the Match/Laoch na hImearthha" but the Referee and umpires had agreed unanimously on David Purcell.

Kilmacud Crokes Bainisteoir Rory Flannery: "It was an epic match. It showed the true spirit of the ancient game of hurling. I'm so proud of the desire of the Crokes hurlers to play for each other and never give up. These traits won the day against a fantastic St.Vincent's team."

Kilmacud Crokes Bainisteoir Dominic O'Keefe: " The boys won an unbelievably challenging match scoring 3-28 in torrential rain. That says a lot about the talent in this group of players. They've trained twice a week since early February to win this County Final in late November. That required commitment and dedication and with some of the boys, it became an obsession. They've developed the full range of skills together with the physical conditioning which was vital to beat a very formidable St.Vincent's team in extra time.

Laoch na hImearthha David Purcell: "It's an honour to be part of this team and I'm just so happy that the team won such a great final. It's nice to get this award but the most important thing is that the cup is going back to Crokes."