



KILMACUD CROKES SNATCH "LATE LATE" VICTORY OVER LUCAN IN MINOR A FINAL! MINOR A FINAL: KILMACUD CROKES 3-13 LUCAN SARSFIELDS 1-16

Crokes Scorers: R.Walsh 0-5(5 f), O.O'Keefe 1-2,D.Purcell 0-3, C.Donovan, T.Butler 1-0 each, B.Kenny 0-2(2 f), C.Ó Riain 0-1.

Match Report by Diarmuid Coogan.

Today (Halloween 2022) in O'Toole Park, Kilmacud Crokes U17A's showed that they've learnt a few lessons from their illustrious Senior team when they "snatched victory from the jaws of defeat" in injury time against a very good Lucan Sarsfields team.

Although they had beaten Lucan easily in an earlier group game, the Lucan side tore into Crokes from the start and went 3 points up in the 1st 5 minutes thanks to the accuracy of freetaker and centre forward Dara Lyons. (KC 0 LS 0-3)

In the 8th minute, Crokes corner forward Gavin Egan won a free and left half forward Ruairi Walsh settled his sides' nerves with a very good shot from 45 metres on the left sideline. (KC 0-1 LS 0-3)

2 minutes later, influential Crokes centre back David Lucey drove out of defence before feeding centre forward and captain Tommy Butler who played a ball into U16 & Dublin Minor David Purcell in the left corner. Purcell used his pace to get inside the defence and drew a great save from Lucan Goalkeeper Freddie Haran who also was alert enough to save again from a Crokes player who followed up. Lucan scrambled the ball out but Crokes were awarded a free on the 20 metre line which Walsh despatched to make it a 1 point game. (KC 0-2 LS 0-3)

On the 11th minute, hardworking midfielder Niall O'Mahony hit a shot which dropped just inside the square and as the defence desperately tried to clear it, Crokes full forward and Dublin Minor Ciaran Donovan showed his "poachers instinct" by pulling on it 1st time into the net to give Crokes an unlikely 2 point lead! (KC 1-2 LS 0-3)

Lucan were a bit rattled by this and were turned over from the puck out where Crokes won another free. Walsh stepped up to stretch the lead to 3. (KC 1-3 LS 0-3)

Lucan weren't for lying down however and following a great catch in the right corner by No.15 Cormac Coffey, wing back Seán Langhton hit a great point from 45 metres into the wind for the 1st point from play. (KC 1-3 LS 0-4)

On 15 minutes, Walsh added a superb free from the 45 metre line on the left touchline but Lyons replied with a great effort from 65 metres 2 minutes later. (KC 1-4 LS 0-5)

Worryingly for Crokes they only managed one more score in the 1st half (a free from Walsh after a "clothes line" tackle on wing back Joe Quigley) despite playing with the wind and the slight hill. Admittedly they were a bit unlucky as Donovan's shot from the left looked over and midfielder Conall O'Riain hit the post with another effort. (KC 1-5 LS 0-5)

In the last minute of normal time, Purcell got the ball in space on the 20 metre line and was winding up for a shot on goal only to be hit by the most perfectly timed shoulder by Lucan fullback Jamie Smith.

This was a major psychological boost for Lucan as Lyons added another free in the 2nd minute of 1st half injury time and the free from the puck out, midfielders Ryan Clancy & Patrick Ryan did great work to prevent the ball from going out on the right before working it up to full forward Charlie Mulqueen who hit the best point thus far!

The ½ time whistle sounded just after and the Lucan lads definitely looked energised as they were only a point down with the wind and the hill to come.

H/T KC 1-5 LS 0-7

Knowing that they were facing a very tough 30 minutes, Crokes began the 2nd period in determined fashion and Donovan did well to win possession and feed Purcell who hit a nice point from 20 metres on the left. (KC 1-6 LS 0-7)

Crokes had an anxious moment when Lucey was shown a yellow card after he had unintentionally hit Lyons on the head. Lyons converted the free from 45 metres and then right corner forward David Mulqueen hit a wonderful point from the left to draw his side level. (KC 1-6 LS 0-9)

With the aid of the wind, Lucan were now testing the Crokes defence with a lot of long ball. From one such effort sent into the Square, Crokes goalie Ciallan Scallan did well to bat it out where thankfully, tireless wing back (& Dublin Minor) Brendan Kenny was on hand to gather and clear to safety. Lyons hit another free on 35 minutes before Purcell hit a great point from the 45 on the left touchline into the wind. (KC 1-7 LS 0-10)

On 36 minutes, Crokes made what turned out to be a master stroke with the introduction of U16 Oran O'Keefe; following a good move where Walsh played the ball into Butler (now at full forward), he fed O'Keefe to the right and he jinked before hitting a point with his first touch of the game. (KC 1-8 LS 0-10)

Haran pucked out long to the right where Mulqueen (D) drew the sides' level once more. (KC 1-8 LS 0-11) With 20 minutes left, O'Keefe once again was in possession on the 45 metre line and hit another lovely score with minimum fuss before Mulqueen (D) levelled almost from the puck out. (KC 1-9 LS 0-12)

On 45 minutes, Mulqueen gathered on the 20 metre line and was about to head for goal only to be tackled (too vigorously in the ref's opinion) by full back Ben Lynch and Lyons put his side back into the lead. (KC 1-9 LS 0-13)

Crokes had a great chance of a goal a minute later following a great exchange of passes between Quigley, Donovan and Ó Riain but Ó Riain seemed to stumble just as he was about to pull the trigger and the Lucan defence managed to deflect his shot out.

In the 50th minute, Lucan got the opportunity which should have won them the game. A long ball was played into David Mulqueen who made a great catch on the right of the square and as he tried to evade the defence to get his shot in the referee blew for a penalty. Lyons drove it to the right and although Scallan got his hurl to it, the shot was too powerful and now Lucan were 4 points up. (KC 1-9 LS 1-13)

At this stage Lucan seemed to have all the momentum and 2 minutes later, Lyons landed another free to stretch it to 5 points. (KC 1-9 LS 1-14)

For the Crokes mentors, they must have had reminders of the 2019 Féile Division 1 Final when an unfancied Lucan team beat them by 1 point.

However the Crokes players didn't have any such thoughts as they continued to fight for every ball and following the breakdown of a short passing move by Lucan, Kenny nailed a great free from 65 metres against the wind and on 55 minutes, Ó Riain sent over a rasper from 45 metres. (KC 1-11 LS 1-14)

A minute later Purcell hit his 3rd point from the left touchline after being fed by Donovan. (KC 1-12 LS 1-14)

On the 59th minute, Lyons restored Lucan's 3 point advantage with another monster free. (KC 1-12 LS 1-15)

As the game went into injury time, Crokes had a free just inside their own 65 and whether Kenny meant to drop it into the square or not, it was a mighty shot into the wind which just carried over the bar to reduce the gap to 2 with plenty on injury time. (KC 1-13 LS 1-15)

Lucan continued to use the strong wind to send the ball long but Lucey and Kenny were making great defensive catches and relaunching attacks and in the 3rd minute of injury time, a strong running move which involved Lucey, Ó Riain and Donovan, found Butler on the right of the square and he buried it in the left corner. (KC 2-13 LS 1-15)

Lucan rallied in search of an equaliser but following another great catch by Kenny and a clearance to O'Keefe, his shot dropped short but Haran, in trying to control the sliothar on his stick, much to his horror saw it glance off and into the net to give Crokes a most unexpected 4 point lead. (KC 3-13 LS 1-15)

Haran to his credit maintained his composure and found Lyons from the puck out who hit another massive point to make it a one score game. (KC 3-13 LS 1-16)

As the game was now in the 7th minute of injury time, the final whistle sounded just after the puck out much to the jubilation of the Crokes players and despair of their Lucan counterparts.

KILMACUD CROKES: C.Scallan,C.McClean,B.Lynch,F.Walsh,J.Quigley,D.Lucey,B.Kenny,C.Ó Riain,N.O'Mahony,J.Clancy,T.Butler,R.Walsh,D.Purcell,C.Donovan,G.Egan. Sub O.O'Keefe f J.Clancy 36 mins.

Subs: G.Flannery,P.Whelan,M.Dempsey,J.Dunphy,B.Mellon,C.CreanT.Maher.

DÚIRT SIAD:

KILMACUD CROKES Ard Báinisteoir Diarmuid Walsh: I'm both delighted and relieved. I'm so grateful to the players for the fact that they never gave up when the game looked lost.

Was he worried at half time that they were just 1 point up facing into a strong wind and the hill: "Of course, but I had faith in the ability and resilience of the players to raise their game and keep themselves in contention which they did right to the end. All of the players stood up but I couldn't believe some of the catches which Brendan Kenny was making in defence in those last 10 minutes. This is a great reward for all the long hours this group has put in since 2010!"

Kilmacud Crokes Technical Coach Fergus Armstrong: "We were lucky in the end, the day didn't suit us, we never really got going but in fairness to the lads, they never gave up. They haven't had many tough games over the years but this was a tough one and it was down to the lads never giving up, that was the only reason we dug it out."

When asked if he thought it was lost in the last 5 minutes: “I wouldn’t say that but I was losing hope but with hurling, all it takes is one or 2 pucks of a ball even when you’re 3 or 4 points down – I think Brendan(Kenny) at the end was trying to drop the ball into the square but it went over for a point and was crucial as the lads worked the ball the length of the pitch to set up the goal for Tommy which put us into the lead. Ah, it’s hard to take it all in!”

Dublin County Board Member and Kilmacud Crokes stalwart Tom Rock presented the trophy to Crokes and said: “ I want to pay tribute to both sides on producing such a great final. The result was in doubt right to the end and with such quality on display, Dublin hurling is in a very healthy place. The Lucan players are a credit to their club and your day will come again. As a Crokes man, I’m delighted that our players never gave up and just about managed to win. To both teams, this isn’t the start or finish but an important milestone on the way to adult hurling.”