

# Crossmolina keep the home fires burning

## **Crossmolina 1-10 Corofin 0-5**

20/11/00: "That put no pressure on the heart at all, no contest," declared a Crossmolina supporter with obvious pleasure outside the jubilant home dressing-room. The Mayo champions, down to 14 players from early in the second half, had just polished off a Corofin challenge with an authoritative display of controlled football to retain the Connacht club football title in real style on home ground yesterday.

Crossmolina's ability to spread eagle their over-worked and jaded looking opponents became even more pronounced after wing back Patrick McAndrew was sent off by Roscommon referee Bob McCormack eight minutes into the second half. McAndrew's sending-off seemed a possible threat to Crossmolina's composure in defence, but it quickly became apparent for the 6,000 crowd that the home side didn't really need a full complement of players to deal with a disappointing Corofin challenge.

"We didn't feel we had to counter the sending-off by taking somebody back because our players were really up for it, running here, there and everywhere," said outstanding left wing back Francis Costelloe.

Confidence oozed from the hugely committed Crossmolina side from the start. By comparison, Corofin looked as though their confidence was cut off at the mains. "They are a well balanced focused and fit team," admitted Corofin selector Pat McHugh. "Nothing went right for us. Maybe it was simply a case of our concentrated run of matches in heavy conditions over the past five weeks catching up on us," he added.

Corofin's troubles began as early as the second minute when Derek Reilly emerged from a crushing challenge with a broken collar bone and was removed to hospital. The first of five yellow cards in a generally cleanly contested game followed.

Then, within a few minutes, Crossmolina, who were not matching their dominance with scores on the board, suddenly struck with a goal after a string of wayward shots.

The moment was one to cherish for big Liam Moffatt, a player who has been plagued with injury all season but who was sprung from the bench to huge effect as a replacement for the injured Kieran McDonald.

Moffatt had barely warmed up when he made the best use of a little Garryowen, popped up by Peadar Gardiner, by boxing the ball to the net. The score was badly needed at a time when Crossmolina seemed intent on wasting good possession.

"We had been playing typically precision Mayo football until it came to putting our chances away," was the analysis of captain Tom Nallen.

Crossmolina's dominance of possession was inspired by half backs Damien Mulligan, Francis Costelloe and McAndrew, before he was dismissed. Midfielders James Nallen and Michael Moyles were in control and Moffatt's goal pushed the home side to a 1-3 to 0-2 interval lead.

They did, however, have some anxious moments, particularly when David Morris's low shot came back off an upright moments after Moffatt's goal. Corofin goalkeeper Martin McNamara was also asked to stop a cracking shot from Peadar Gardiner. Established Corofin players like Ray Silke were notably failing to provide the necessary inspiration.

Within four minutes of the restart, Crossmolina showed that they had rid themselves of their wasteful shooting when Paul McGuinness, Peadar Gardiner (at the end of a great move), and Michael Moyles sent over points in rapid succession.

This exhibition of rapid point-scoring stretched Crossmolina's lead to seven points, 1-6 to 0-2. From that point onwards,

there was a clear sense of inevitability about the whole exercise.

Corofin had only three points on the board by the 60th minute before substitutes Michael Kenny and Michael Donnellan popped over points of mere academic interest. As the Corofin challenge wilted long before the end, the game opened up for Crossmolina. The impression given was that they had a few extra men on the pitch rather than being one short.

**CROSSMOLINA:** B Heffernan; S Rochford, T Nallen, C Reilly; P McAndrew, D Mulligan (0-1), F Costelloe; J Nallen, M Moyles (0-4); T Loftus, K McDonald, P Gardiner (0-1); P McGuinness (0-2), E Lavelle, J Leonard (0-2). Subs: L Moffatt (1-0) for McDonald (7 mins), G Walsh for Loftus (43 mins), N Convey for Leonard (54 mins), D O'Donnell for Mulligan (58 mins), P Whittaker for Rochford (61 mins).

**COROFIN:** M McNamara; B Silke, K Newell, J Lardner; M Comer, R Silke, J Lardiner; A Donnellan, C Fitzgerald; S Conlisk, D Morris, T Burke; D Reilly, K Comer (0-1, free), A O'Donovan (0-1, free). Subs: M Donnellan (0-2) for Reilly (2 mins), M Kenny (0-1) for Morris (40 mins).

**Referee:** B McCormack (Roscommon)