

CORK SINK MAYO'S OPTIMISM

MAYO2-6
CORK4-4

BY JOHN MELVIN

Like the ailing patient that seemed to be on the road to recovery Mayo footballers suffered a major re-lapse at the opening of the magnificent new sports ground at Parke on Sunday where Cork inflicted a morale crushing defeat.

For some of the players it was a case of semi-paralysis and unless major surgery is carried out inside the next ten days their championship hopes seemed doomed to end in failure on this performance which has come from a team that believes itself capable of taking the Connaught title.

Admittedly it was a much changed side from that first picked during the week and one which had to be changed due to injuries which ruled out Peter Forde, Billy Fitzpatrick, Sean Lowry and Padraig Brogan.

But by the same token all of the fifteen that lined out against Cork have been staking their claims to place on the side and for some at least there will be a refund on their championship ticket.

The defence had all along been the pillar of the Mayo side but it all but collapsed on Sunday where the absence of Peter Forde was never more conspicuous and the superb covering work of Martin Carney was largely responsible in denying Cork more goals than four.

And the ease with which Cork scored some of those goals has to be a source of embarrassment to the defence and to goalkeeper Eugene Lavin in particular who must shoulder the greater portion of the blame for three of them.

Lavin has not evoked the kind of confidence that a defence needs in some of his recent outings and is very much lacking in the experience of the man he replaced — Mick Webb.

LACKING IN BITE

However, it would be remiss to single out the Kiltimagh player for particular attention alone for the team generally was lacking in the bite and stamina which are the vital ingredients if success is to come their way this season.

The mid-field which has been a source of much encouragement recently never got into their stride and Willie Joe Padden was a real disappointment while T.J. Kilgallon was well below his usual performance.

Criticising the Mayo attack has of course always been a feature when it come to Mayo football but the half forward line on Sunday was abysmally poor with the foraging powers of Jimmy Burke the only exonerating feature of the entire six.

It was after all a day when players had to prime themselves if they seriously considered themselves eligible for the side to play either Leitrim or Sligo on Sunday week. Alas it is a game few Mayo people will look forward to with any great degree of optimism and looking further afield is a little too painful at the moment to consider.

ENCOURAGING START

Ironically Mayo had an encouraging start against a strong Cork outfit and had clocked up 1-1 inside eleven minutes without a reply.

McStay's only redeeming feature for the hour was the manner in which he took his goal in the 11th minute after a fine through ball from Maughan but for the remainder of the game he was kept well under wraps by Cork.

Nine first half wides were of course eating into Mayo's confidence and the first indication of how lively the Cork attack was came in the 14th minute when Mayo were forced to concede a penalty which Dave Barry expertly finished.

Five minutes before the break Cork's continuous pressure paid off when Colman Corrigan's effort for a point came off the post and into the lap of John Boylan who had no difficulty in putting it away from five yards.

Still Cork led by only 2-2 to 1-1 at the break but midway through the second half they had built up an eight point lead.

Beston was on hand to knock in Corrigan's long ball which shouldn't have troubled Eugene Lavin in the 35th minute and then Boylan was on hand to deflect the ball past the unsuspecting Lavin for Cork's fourth goal.

Mayo did stage a comeback to prevent total embarrassment all round in the crowd of around 1,000 but Jimmy Burke scrambled effort five minutes from time after Tom Byrne's initial effort had been saved only served to ease the pain of watching Mayo's inadequacies in the face of tougher opposition.

Mayo: E. Lavin, M. Carney, D. Flanagan, J. Monaghan, F. Noone, D. Maughan, J. Finn, T. J. Kilgallon (0-1), W. J. Padden, A. Finnerty, L. Nyland (0-2), N. Durcan, K. McStay (1-1), J. Burke (1-0), T. Byrne. Subs.: P. Dixon (0-2), for Finnerty; E. Melvin for Noone.

Cork: J. Kerins, J. Evan, T. O Murchu, N. Cahalane, B. Cleary, C. Counihan (0-1), T. Davis, C. Corrigan, D. Colloty, D. Barry (1-1), G. McCarthy (0-1), J. Boylan (2-0), E. Lyons, M. Easton (1-0), C. O'Reilly (0-1). Subs.: M. Walsh for Cahalane.

Ref.: P. J. McGrath, Mayo.

FULL CREDIT TO PARKE

One has to congratulate the Parke Sportsground Committee on their magnificent new grounds which is in a splendid setting. With floodlights it must now rank as one of the finest grounds in the county and credit is due all round to the efficient manner in which all the proceedings were handled at Sunday's opening. It was unfortunate the result for Mayo football didn't befit the occasion.