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One Halfpenny

WEXFORD WIN. ALL-IRELAND FOOTBALL FINAL. PLUCKY FIGHT BY CLARE. WEXFORD, 9 PTS.; CLARE 5 PTS.

Between 7,000 and 8,000 people at Croke Park yesterday saw Wexford defeat Clare and win the final of the All-Ireland Football Championship for the third year in succession. The weather was ideal for outdoor games, the sun shining brilliantly.

From an hour before the appointed time large crowds were heading for the venue, the Munstermen resident in the city being largely represented. The "Model County" had also an immense following, while large numbers came by car and bicycle from the North and South portions of the capital. Wexford were first to take the field, followed a little later by the Clare players, who, headed by a Republican flag, were loudly cheered.

FREES SPOIL CONTEST.

As to the game it was for the most part uninteresting and was far removed from similar contests witnessed between Kerry and Wexford. No doubt an occasional good burst of football took place, but the play was freely punctuated throughout by fouls and consequent free kicks, which tended to distract from the interest the contest would have otherwise occasioned. The Claremen gave their best display in the opening period when playing against the breeze, being only 2 points in arrears at the interval. Their supporters at that stage entertained strong hopes for their success, but in the second half Clare's display was disappointing. The work of their forwards was most erratic.

Wexford, while not reaching the standard of recent years, gave a good display, their experience standing to them on many occasions. Throughout the greater portion of the second half they were a much superior team, and they were easily winners at the end.

The arrangements, in the hands of Mr. L. J. O'Toole, were carried out most satisfactorily. Mr. J. Dunphy was a painstaking referee.

THE GAME.

FIRST HALF – WEXFORD, 6 PTS.;

CLARE, 4 PTS.

Wexford started against the sun for the city goal, and from a free in the first half-minute Byrne kicked over the Clare crossbar. Play was at the centre when a foul gave Clare a free. A score looked likely, but the sphere rolled wide. Wexford, getting away with the goal delivery, P. Furlong had a grand try for a score. The ball was driven out, and a grand run by Clare ended in their sending wide. However, in the next minute, McNamara kicked a point, from a free close in. Frees were now frequent and “Quinn”, for Wexford, drove the ball to Gus O’Kennedy, who missed the scoring area. Another free, this time to Clare, put play in the Wexford ground. Byrne returned, but Clare came again and shot wide. A great run by Wexford and Foran held them up. He kicked to the centre, where Byrne put in a huge punt, and Hodgins, getting possession, got the champions’ second point.

Wexford continued to have the better of the exchanges, and Furlong crossed to Gus O’Kennedy, who forced a “50” free, which was cleared. In the next minute T. Doyle sent in for Hodgins to score another point. McNamara now broke through for Clare, and after Donohoe had bested Doyle an injury to a Clare player stopped play. Resuming, the “Banner County” got possession, and from a free O’Brien kicked a grand point for them. Against a good breeze Clare were just now doing well and forced two “50” frees in quick succession, neither of which, however, materialised. The best bout of play so far took place at this period. After some fast exchanges Mackey beat

off the Munstermen, and a good passing movement between Hodgins and the O’Kennedys ended in the ball going wide. Immediately afterwards Wexford forced a “50” free, and Byrne shot a point. Clare came away with the goal-kick, and McNamara, with a great shot, sent over the crossbar.

The champions were attacking when a foul spoiled, and Clare came away from a free when “Quinn” beat them off. Wexford made three successive moves which ended with the ball going wide. This was bad form for a championship game. However, A. Doyle added on a minor. Clare got along the right wing in taking style, and Carroll boxed the ball to Malone, who shot over the crossbar. Just on the interval Wexford returned to the attack, and Reynolds added a point, leaving them leading by 6 points to 4 at half-time.

CHAMPIONS FINISH STRONG.

Resuming, Wexford got away, and Gus O’Kennedy kicked to John O’Kennedy, who boxed over the crossbar. The Munstermen got away, but were beaten off, and after the Clare custodian had made a great clearance Tom Doyle, with a great effort from almost half-way, was inches wide. A left wing move by Clare failed in the scoring area. For a final the play at this period was not at all up to the standard. The Clare forwards were weak, but the referee was very fair. From a free Byrne (Wexford) sent to his forwards, Gus O’Kennedy putting in a classy run. The Clare backs cleared. Byrne repelled a Clare attack, and John O’Kennedy again sent them back.

A free to Wexford was grandly placed by Byrne, but McNamara staved off danger. From another free Byrne shot a point, and the champions were holding the upper hand. After A. Doyle had struck the upright they forced a “50” free, which was cleared, and Clare put in a great run, when a foul gave them additional advantage, but the ball eventually rolled inches wide. At the other end Wexford were busy shortly afterwards, and when Byrne had sent in from a free John O’Kennedy gave them another minor.

Hennessy (Clare) was now forced to retire, Haugh taking his place. Resuming, the Munstermen worked some distance, and McNamara scored a point from a free. The Claremen were not yet done with, and another free going to McNamara, Roche sent in a grand shot which registered a goal, but the score was ruled off-side by the goal umpires. The “Banner County” continued in possession, and Roche shot inches wide just before the final whistle, the game resulting as above.

THE TEAMS.

Clare:- M. Connole (goal), J. Foran (capt), P. Hennessy, H. McNamara, P. O’Brien, M. McMahon, J. Fitzgerald, M. McNamara, P. O’Donoghue, B. Carroll, J. Marrinan, J. Spellissey, T. Considine, M. Malone, E. Rourke.

Wexford:- J. O’Kennedy (capt), T. McGrath (goal), G. O’Kennedy, P.J. Mackey, T. Mernagh, A. Doyle, T. Doyle, T. Murphy, F. Furlong, J. Crowley, R. Reynolds, J. Byrne, M. Howlett, W. Hodgins, J. Quinn.