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One Halfpenny

WEXFORD BEAT KERRY. THRILLING PLAY IN FOOTBALL FINAL.

WEXFORD, 2 GOALS 4 POINTS; KERRY, 2 GOALS 1 POINT.

Yesterday, at Croke Park, Dublin, Wexford beat Kerry in the All-Ireland football final by two goals and four points to two goals and one point. As Leix won the premier hurling honours by defeating Cork on the same ground a fortnight ago, Leinster have achieved a remarkable championship double event at the expense of Munster.

**WEXFORD
CHAMPIONS.**

**ROUSING CONTEST
AT CROKE PARK.**

**GREAT CROWD –
GATE, £1,044.**

Yesterday at Croke Park the final of the All-Ireland Football Championship was played between Kerry and Wexford, representing Munster and Leinster, when a great game resulted in a victory for Wexford on the score:- Wexford, 2-4 (10 points), Kerry, 2-1 (7 points). The ground was packed, and the gate receipts were £1,044.

This was the third year in succession for teams representing Kerry and Wexford to meet in the final, Kerry winning in 1913 and 1914. But their match yesterday aroused more interest in Gaelic football circles throughout the country than either of the other contests, as it was generally believed that Wexford's turn for championship honours had come at last, as the team showed great form throughout the qualifying contests.

The most elaborate train arrangements had been made by Mr. L. J. O'Toole, Secretary to the Central Council, over 20 specials being run by the G.S. and W.R. from the South and West, while the South Eastern, Midland, and Great Northern also put on a special service. The scene at the different railway termini from 12 o'clock was most animated, as the visitors to the city were met by their relatives or friends. Every available seat was occupied an hour before the time for starting. The turnstiles were too slow to admit the steady influx of visitors, many of whom did not gain admission until the game had well begun. The weather was ideally fine and the sod in splendid condition.

A BRILLIANT GAME.

As to the contest, we have no hesitation in stating that it was the grandest exhibition of football that was ever played since the inception of the Association. Both counties made their very best selection, and each took the field in the fittest condition, and confident of success.

From the time the ball was put into play there was not a dull moment. Every man on each team played as if the result depended on his own individual efforts, with the result that the spectators were practically spellbound from start to finish.

The Kerry men had the better of the first quarter, after which the Wexford team displayed their superiority, and, playing in tip-top style, held a nice lead at the interval. The play of the Model County men after resuming was much better than Kerry, but their efforts at scoring were not rewarded with the success they deserved. After Kerry had resumed the lead, Wexford astonished everybody by again forging ahead, and, although Kerry made a desperate attempt to draw level in the closing minutes, they were kept at bay, and were beaten by a superior team, who deserve much credit for again bringing this championship to Leinster and completing the double event, Leix having won the hurling.

THE GAME.

LEAD CHANGES HANDS TWICE.

The Kerry team came on the ground at 2.40 followed five minutes later by the Wexford men, headed by their captain, John O'Kennedy. Mr. P. Dunphy (Abbeyleix), who was the referee, lost little time, and the game was started about twenty minutes after the advertised time.

FIRST HALF.

Kerry, who won the toss, played for the Clonliffe goal. After an exchange of kicks O'Shea put Kerry into Wexford ground, when an infringement spoiled, the resulting kick by Byrne changing the venue. This time Wexford gave away a free, which was returned by Furlong, and Wexford were in possession. Even thus early the pace was very fast, both teams playing with great determination. Wexford were more than holding their own. Shea got through for Kerry, when Mackey returned. Kerry came again, and were awarded a free twenty yards out, as Murphy was fouled in possession. The Kerry skipper essayed a low kick, which was sent out of danger by E. Doyle. Another free came to the Kingdom lads, which Paddy Healy placed in front of the Wexford posts, when the referee was obliged to hop the ball. Mernagh came to Wexford's rescue, his punt landing near centre field. Kerry were now going strong, and Clifford led up to a grand attack, which was spoiled by a foul. Byrne drove down to Doyle, and then Gus Kennedy missed a grand opportunity of opening the scoring. However, in the next minute he cleverly evaded Tom Rice and kicked the first point for Wexford after six minutes amidst great cheers.

FIRST GOAL TO KERRY.

Wexford returned the goal kick, and Mullins, the Kerry custodian, effected a fine save from a shot by John O'Kennedy. D. Doyle spoiled a second attack for Wexford, and Kerry rushing down the field Clifford tried a ground shot, which went only inches wide. The Kerry men were just now holding the upper hand, and Con Murphy getting possession from a hopped ball sent to D. Doyle, who, with a cross shot, beat McGrath for a goal. Wexford now burst down the field, but were beaten off by the brothers Rice, and Kerry came along in characteristic style, when Donovan sent in a fast shot, which McGrath caught just under the cross-bar, making a fine clearance. With the first quarter expired, Kerry were leading by a goal to a point, and when Con Murphy from a free for Kerry sent to H. Murphy it looked as though Kerry would increase their lead. Byrne jumped into the rescue, but Kerry returned, J. Rice, O'Shea, and Clifford leading a strong attack. The latter kicked the sphere into McGrath's hands, and it was soon down the field. Kerry came again, but Furlong was equal to the occasion. A Wexford rush of the left wing was well stopped by Paddy Healy, who, with a great kick, put play again in Wexford ground. "Furlong" was again to the rescue, and when Wexford rushed down the field Gus O'Kennedy sent to A. Doyle, and the Kerry goalkeeper had to handle a fast shot, which he cleared well.

WEXFORD WAKEN UP.

The Wexford captain was now responsible for Wexford breaking through from about centre-field, when Mullins saved his side, but a foul gave Byrne an opportunity of scoring Wexford's second point from a free. This success buoyed up the Wexford team, and Black, getting possession from the goal-kick, put his side again pressing, and Wall missed a good opening. Wexford were awarded a free, Byrne's kick being nullified by Maurice McCarthy, but Black returned for Tom Rice to beat the opposition, and Reynolds kicked across to J. Kennedy, who shot wide. Wexford were having the better of the argument at this period, and Howlett

passed to Wall, who missed the scoring area by inches. In a Kerry dash, Tom Rice was most conspicuous, but Byrne found safety in touch. Mernagh nullified the throw-in, but Murphy, getting possession, McGrath was severely tested. He came out to a fast shot, and kicked out of danger. Howlett initiated a good Wexford movement, and from fine work by the brothers Kennedy, the Kerry posts were in danger. A free was given against Maurice McCarthy, but Byrne sent wide. Con Murphy got on the goal-kick, but Howlett held him up, and Lawler conceded a "50" free. Byrne's shot went to Frank Furlong, who struck the cross-bar. H. Murphy sent to mid-field, where a grand bout of play between Gus Kennedy and Frank Furlong enabled Aiden Doyle to beat Mullins for the major score, a splendid performance, which once again gave Wexford the lead. The short whistle sounded soon afterwards. Score:—

Wexford, 1-2; Kerry, 1-0.

SECOND HALF.

Kerry attacked on resuming, and looked dangerous until Mackey broke through, and Wexford made a strong attack, when Gus O'Kennedy shot wide. Wexford continued to hold the upper hand, but Maurice McCarthy proved his worth in the Kerry defence. Still Wexford returned, as the result of a grand drive by Byrne, who nullified a kick by H. Murphy. Next, Lawlor, the Kerry full-back, made a marvellous safety-kick. O'Shea also saved his side a moment later.

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES.

The football was again splendid. Wexford were all over their opponents, but their forwards were not putting to advantage favourable opportunities. A. Doyle missed a particularly good opening. Maurice McCarthy proved the obstacle to a likely Wexford success, and T. Rice sent further into Wexford ground, where Kerry were awarded a free. Dick Fitzgerald struck the upright, the ball rebounding for Black to transfer to Kerry ground. Then, after McCarthy and Clifford had saved Kerry, a free came to Wexford, and Byrne sent the ball into the goal-mouth, for Tom Rice to clear. Wexford were still attacking when two further frees were awarded, both of which were nullified. Kerry, per T. Rice, got along the left wing in taking style, and Dick Fitzgerald shooting in, "Furlong" made a grand save, but Clifford got possession and passed to J. Rice, who missed a good chance. In subsequent play, John O'Kennedy was conspicuous, and a pass by him to Reynolds saw Costello intercept. A fierce bout of play ended in Con Murphy kicking into touch.

KERRY AGAIN AHEAD.

The game continued to be stubbornly contested, both teams working like Trojans, and the pace was as fast as in the opening period. Wexford gained a free, and J. O'Kennedy got possession from Byrne's back, when Mullins made a great fare. Wexford were going best, but owing to the sound Kerry defence and their erratic shooting they failed to notch a score. Kerry continued to make a great fight. An interesting struggle between Gus Kennedy and Maurice McCarthy ensued, but an infringement spoiled, and after Healy had pulled up a good rush by Wexford, a grand bit of play by Clifford, Costello and Rice ended in the ball being netted, giving Kerry the lead of a point, much to the delight of their followers. Fifteen minutes yet remained, and still the result was in the balance. Wexford made a great effort, and John O'Kennedy drove to his brother, who shot inches wide. Another attack by Wexford ended in their gaining a "50" free. Byrne directed his effort to the Wexford captain, who levelled up the scores by kicking over the crossbar.

WEXFORD'S WINNING LEAD.

Play continued in favour of Wexford, who were fighting every inch of the ground, and in a fierce attack Mullins conceded a "50" when Byrne, with a splendid shot sent the ball into the net for the major score, a success which met with cheering as loud as it was deserved. This reverse had a rousing effect on Kerry, who dashed down the field from the goal kick, headed by P. Healy. "Furlong" intercepted and kicked to the centre, and Frank Furlong sent further on. A free went to Kerry, but Mackey returned it with interest. Mullins immediately afterwards made a marvellous save from Gus Kennedy. There was no holding Wexford at this period, and they forced another "50" from Kerry, when Byrne sent the ball sailing over the cross-bar for a point. With a lead of four points and eight minutes to go it seemed all right for Wexford, but Kerry were not yet beaten. Murphy pulled up Wexford, and Rice and Healy put Kerry attacking, but McGrath cleared a free from Fitzgerald. "The Kingdom" teams were putting up a great fight, keeping the Wexford defence busy. They got a free close to the Wexford posts, and Furlong again saved his

side. Rice was responsible for Kerry resuming the attack, when T. Doyle kicked clear, and with Maurice McCarthy sending amongst the forwards Dick Fitzgerald reduced the Wexford lead by scoring a point.

AN EXCITING FINISH.

Kerry were just now making efforts for the major score, but the defence beat them off repeatedly. Kerry now got a free, which McCarthy drove to Con Murphy, and Mackey conceded a "50" free, but nothing tangible resulted, and after a great match the final whistle left Wexford well deserved winners by 3 points clear as above.

Mr. P. Dunphy (Abbeyleix) got through his duties as referee in a most satisfactory manner.

The cup, which was a new trophy presented by the G.S. and W. Railway Co. was handed to Sean Kennedy, the Wexford captain, by Mr. E. A. Neale, general manager of the G.S. and W. Railway.

THE GATE RECEIPTS.

The attendance is roughly estimated at 30,000, and the receipts were over £1,044. This is only slightly below the record gate receipts of £1,100, which were taken in at the Kerry v Louth match in the final of the Croke Memorial Tournament.

A GRAND SPECTACLE

SOME IMPRESSIONS OF THE GAME

The crowd was one of enormous dimensions. It formed a deep human frame around the pitch. In the corner opposite the stand entrance the big bank, which is about 150 yards long and mounts fully eighty or ninety feet, was packed closely with people, which must have numbered three or four thousand. The bank below the pavilion was as thickly crowded, while inside the pitch all around the track there were four or five rows of spectators, who witnessed the game under conditions of greater comfort than those outside. The ideal weather prevailing and the thrilling nature of the struggle gave all the utmost enjoyment.

ENTHUSIASTIC SCENES.

The pitch was invaded by the Wexford followers after the match and Sean Kennedy, the captain of the winning team, bearing the new G.S. and W.R. silver cup aloft; Byrne, who scored the best goal of the match from a 50 yards free; Mackey, who by his coolness, speed and cleverness took his side out of difficulties on several occasions – each was raised on the shoulders of admirers and carried to the waiting motor cars. Others of the winning side had to go through the ordeal of hearty shaking of hundreds of hands. Even in the motor cars the players could not escape the excusable demonstrations of enthusiasm by their followers. Cheering was kept up for a considerable time after the long whistle had been blown.

It was a day that will certainly live in the memory of not only the Wexford admirers, but all those who were fortunate enough to witness such a thrilling struggle. Nothing like the pace, tackling, and kicking of the second half have ever been seen. Leaving aside the issue of the struggle, this game served to show the tremendous improvement wrought in the scientific side of football. Mere physical strength was never more at a discount than in yesterday's game.

WEXFORD'S GREAT IMPROVEMENT.

Speed and cleverness, the quick jump, the short dash, the back punch, the short uplifting back-pass, as well as the overhead handpass – these were the factors which told in yesterday's game. Kerry kicked cleaner often, it is true, but they went under to a cleverer lot in Wexford, who never approached yesterday's form in their previous games. Kerry may seek consolation – if they need it after winning the first All-Ireland trophy outright – in the fact that they have helped to lift up the grand game several pegs in the estimation of all true sportsmen, who place skill and dash before everything else. Their worthy skipper, Dick Fitzgerald, has not written a treatise on the game in vain. We saw his admirable lessons all put into practice yesterday, and the sight was edifying. Gaelic football is as clean as any other game, and indisputable evidence is furnished by the fact that in yesterday's struggle, punctuated as it was by thrilling bouts of close play, which are always attended by a certain amount of risk, not a man was injured, nor had the game to be stopped for even the slightest trouble to any of the thirty players engaged in it.

Much credit is due to Mr. P. Dunphy (Abbeyleix) for his refereeing. His decisions were always promptly noted, and none of them gave even the most rabid partisan ground for comment.