

Basketball

Sligo share honours with Galway

Sligo had to be content to share the honours with Galway in Athlone on Sunday last when the two counties met in the Connacht Minor and Senior Basketball Championship finals.

Sligo Minors 62;
Galway Minors 23.

Sligo became holders of the Connacht Minor Cup for the fourth year in succession when they scored a runaway 62-23 victory over Galway in the first final.

They will now go forward to meet Dublin in the All-Ireland semi-final in Dublin on April 9th.

On their first half display on Sunday, Sligo could hold little hope of reaching the final of the championship for the first time for they squandered their chances and allowed themselves to be hustled off the ball time and again by their vastly inferior opponents.

The speed and fluency of the Sligo attack which is a usual feature of their game was completely missing in the opening twenty minutes and for long periods in this half, Galway dictated the trend of play. Nevertheless, Sligo's superiority showed through and in a fast finish, they brought their interval lead to eight points, 20-12.

It was a completely different story after the break, however, for the champions went storming into the attack and after five minutes had the Galway boys reeling at their mercy. Using the fast break with disastrous effect on their opponents, Sligo piled up the scores and were twenty points clear at the three-quarter mark.

Sligo eased off in the final minutes but Galway could not take advantage and still let the Sligo players run through their defence for easy scores.

John McGowan was the star in this victory, showing his expertise with the fast break while his opportunism earned him 23 points.

Sligo:— J. Palmer (8); J. McGowan (23); J. Eccles (7); T. O'Hara (11); B. McHugh (9); F. Gillen (2); J. Dwyer (2) M. Murray.

Galway:— P. Burke (8) C. Mannion (2); B. Preston (2); R. Burke (5); M. Brennan (2); J. King (2); P. O'Donnell (2) J. Murphy, N. O'Toole (2).

Fighting display

Galway 64
Sligo 50.

Sligo put up a tremendous fighting display in the senior final and it was not until the last five minutes that the strain told and Galway got the extra scores.

This was an action-packed thriller all the way. With vocal support almost completely behind Galway, everything was in their favour. And when Sligo lined out with three players who had earlier led the minor team to victory, it seemed that Galway were going to have a pushover but this was far from the case.

Galway played havoc with Sligo's man-to-man defence in the opening minutes and held a fifteen-point lead after ten minutes. At this stage, Sligo switched to a zone defence, bringing Jim Eccles on instead of Tom O'Brien and immediately the change began to take effect. They put in a tremendous burst in the closing stages and pegged Galway back to six points, 31-15 at the interval.

Sligo kept up the good work on the re-start and narrowed the gap to four points. Scores were swapped for a brief period and still Sligo held on and would have got within two points of their opponents only that a score by Palmer was disallowed for a three-second violation.

Galway remained unbelievably calm despite the constant pressure and with five minutes left, the game broke in their favour and they were untroubled from then on.

Galway's victory was engineered by a fantastic display of shooting by American star, John Landers, who nailed Sligo's coffin with twenty eight great points. Fellow-countrymen, Gerry McLoughlin was mainly responsible for keeping Galway from cracking in the first half when he kept their interest alive with crucial scores while Mick O'Sullivan, a 5' 5" pivot, had a field day under both baskets.

Although he failed to score, Jim Eccles played a great game, rebounding under the Sligo basket against much taller players, while Tony O'Hara's fifteen points provided much-needed inspiration to the Sligo players.

Sligo:— S. Burns (6); J. Palmer (14); J. McGowan (12); J. Eccles, T. O'Hara (15); B. McHugh (1); T. O'Brien (Capt.) (2).

Galway:— J. Landers (Capt) (28); G. McLoughlin (14); M. O'Sullivan (14); R. Niland (3); K. Murphy (1); J. O'Donnell (4).

CRAOBH RUA NEWS

All ticket sellers for the monthly draw are requested to return cash on hand and counterfoils not later than 8.30 p.m. to-night (Thursday), at the Cafe Cairo, where a special meeting will be held in connection with the draw.