

All Stars held off late U.C.G. rally

SLIIGO All Stars held off a late rally to take the honours in their annual prestige challenge game against U.C.G. in Galway last Sunday but they were defending hectically in the final stages when the College players desperately fought to force the game into extra time.

All Stars held off the rally to win 52-50 but they should never have found themselves in trouble because they were eight points up with only three minutes remaining. Within a minute, however, U.C.G.'s powerful come-back had recued the gap to a single basket and they had five shots at the ring to tie the game but missed them all.

Sligo nearly paid the penalty for their momentary lapse yet it would have been an injustice to their performance had U.C.G. shot the equaliser. In command from the start, All Stars played effective, controlled basketball which kept them in front all the way. Though U.C.G. were in the top of their form and were hungry for a victory to inspire them for this week-end's Inter-Varsity Championship they had no answer to the sharp shooting and hustling defence of the Sligo boys who dictated the play all through.

And though All Stars were short three of their first-team panel, the O'Hara brothers and Anthony Cronnelly, they made their task even harder by employing a man-to-man defence instead of their usual zone just for the exercise.

Into greater efforts

The experiment spurred the Sligo boys into greater effort and though the tactics made greater demands on strength and endurance, it was worth the risk to have gambled and won.

All Stars employed the change of pace with great effect—Galway were always prone to the slow build-up followed by the quick break and it was this type of play which gave Sligo a nine-point lead (21-12) after twelve minutes.

U.C.G. were having difficulty in finding their big pivot, Matt O'Sullivan, under the basket due to the

effective defence work of the Sligo players and they had more success when they switched the emphasis to outside play. Good distance shooting by Casley narrowed the gap to three points with three minutes to go but Sligo put on a finishing spurt to lead 28-22 at the break.

Tempers began to fray in the second half when the refs. were unable to cope with the play and U.C.G. began to rush their game while All Stars coolly picked up the points to lead 44-34 entering the final quarter.

At this stage, enthusiasm boiled over and by the time play was resumed, both teams were showing signs of strain. All Stars maintained their lead but the pressure began to tell when the Sligo boys were forced into errors which gave U.C.G. just the chance they sought. Three quick baskets cut Sligo's lead to 50-48 but the All Stars held on grimly though with the backs to the wall in the final seconds.

Sligo All Stars:— J Palmer 22, J. McGowan 18, B. McHugh 5, R. Burns 4, T. Mulligan 3, G. Monaghan, C. Carty, C. Dykes.