

Basketball

All Stars beaten by U.S. Navy

SLIGO All Stars suffered their first-ever competitive defeat at home last Saturday night when they were outclassed and outplayed by U.S. Navy, Derry, in a thrilling National Cup game at Summerhill College, Sligo.

Navy gained a four-point advantage for the second leg with a well-deserved 63-59 victory and this means that Sligo are as good as out of the contest unless they can take bonus points from the return fixture in Derry on February 28th.

To do this they will have to win by at least five points and after watching their performance at the weekend, there will have to be drastic improvements all round if they are to succeed not alone in Derry but in next Saturday's All-Ireland Championship semi-final against Cork in Sligo.

Rarely have Sligo presented such a disjointed combination as they did against Derry. Their much-renowned defence never came to terms with Navy's lively attack except in the early stages of the game and when the pressure reached peak proportions in the late stages of the second half, Sligo were caught flat-footed time and again.

Gift scores

On offence, All Stars never displayed their flair for precision passing and penetration. Rather was the reverse the case because on too many occasions the ball was sent into the wrong hands and in fact, squandered possession gave the Americans a number of gift scores and these were the points which made the difference at the end.

Navy showed they meant business from the tip-off and they began to edge in front through sharp-shooting from the outside. Sligo levelled off at 10-10 through deadly inside play and with ten minutes gone in the game, All Stars were 19-12 in front.

The Americans were not at all ruffled and by waiting for their opportunities, they picked up the points to equalise at 22-22. It was score for score right up to the interval when Navy were 31-29 in front.

The Derry Team went four points up early in the second half but Sligo levelled and went ahead. Navy equalised again, Sligo went in front again and Navy went four points up once more.

The score was level at 45-45, 47-47, 49-49, 51-51 and 53-53 and with three minutes left, Navy got the extra basket to take a two-point lead. Still the points were swapped until time began to run out for Sligo and they were forced to press for possession.

In their effort to steal the ball for the equalising score, All Stars left a gap at the back and a quick break up court gave Navy the decisive basket in the last minute.

At the end of the game, the score sheet showed that the teams were level fifteen times in all in the forty minutes.

Sligo All Stars:— J. McGowan 20, A. Cronnelly 15, G. Gallagher 8, J. Palmer 7, B. McHugh 5, J. Monaghan 4.

**All-Ireland Senior
Semi-final**

**Sligo's big task
to beat Cork**