

December decider pits Mayobridge against Kilcoo

Down Division One League semi-final
Mayobridge 2-11 Burren 0-7

THE Down Division One final is at last clear for take off. Mayobridge thumped Burren in Monday evening's semi-final at Newry and will face Kilcoo in the title decider at Pairc Esler on Friday (7.30pm).

All the drama took place before Monday's match when a light failure delayed the start for almost half an hour on a wet, windy and bitterly cold December night. Once the action eventually got under way the reigning champions had the result in the bag as early as the 10th minute. By that stage they led 1-3 to 0-2 and Burren had James McGovern red carded for an off the ball incident.

Burren began brightly enough with 13 of their Ulster final team on show and Kevin McKernan pointed them in front with the first of only two points from play that they scored all night. The Bridge were on terms at 0-2 apiece, with Kevin O'Rourke on target for both their scores, before a long ball into the goalmouth from Conleth O'Hare somehow eluded Cathal Murdock and ended up in the Burren net.

The Bridge pressed on with Cathal Magee scoring some spectacular efforts from distance before, in the last play of the half, Ryan Brady jinked his way inside to fire to the roof of the net and give Mayobridge a 2-9 to 0-4 interval lead.

It was up to wind-assisted Burren to take the game to Mayobridge on the restart and they failed miserably. Frees from Donal O'Hare (2) and Kevin McKernan were all they could manage despite making five early changes.

At the other end, Cathal Magee and Ryan Brady took the Bridge's tally from play to 2-11 and near the end they had the luxury of giving game time to Benny Coulter, Noel Sexton and Eoghan Woods ahead of Friday's final.

Bridge scorers: Ryan Brady 1-2, Conleth O'Hare 1-0, Kevin O'Rourke 0-3, Cathal Magee 0-3, Jamie Barr 0-2, Ronan Sexton 0-1.

Burren scorers: Donal O'Hare 0-4, Kevin McKernan 0-2, Tommy Farrell 0-1.

St Malachy's through in the Markey Cup

ST MALACHY'S, Castlewellan, beat St Patrick's, Dungannon, 4-10 to 1-5 in Newry on Monday to secure a place in the quarter-finals of the Ulster Bank U-18 Markey Cup.

The Dungannon boys needed only a draw to go through but they never recovered after St Malachy's Peter Brannigan and Cathal Rodgers fired in goals in the opening 12 minutes. Rodgers added five points to leave the Castlewellan lads comfortably ahead 2-9 to 0-4 at the break.

Matthew Stratton and Conal Crilly added further Castlewellan goals as they eased through to face Virginia College, Cavan, in the quarter-final.

* In other schools' action, Assumption Grammar, Ballynahinch, were beaten 2-6 to 0-6 by Our Lady's and St Patrick's, Knock, in the Senior Medallion Shield camogie final.

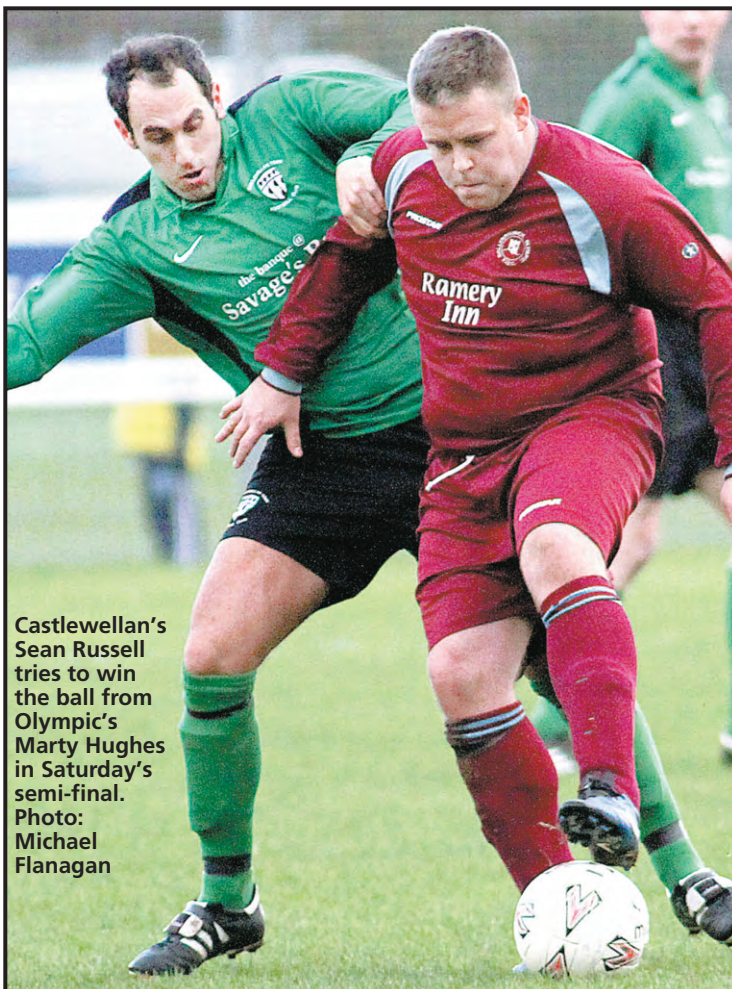


Kilclief's title

Kilclief player Kieran Polly emerges from the team huddle with the Division Three cup after his side beat Carryduff in the title decider. See pages 72-73. Photo: Chris Halpin.

TOWN v WHO IN FINAL?

More Dalzell Cup controversy as Vange come under investigation



Castlewellan's Sean Russell tries to win the ball from Olympic's Marty Hughes in Saturday's semi-final. Photo: Michael Flanagan

Bobby Dalzell Cup soccer
By Raymond Stewart

HOLDERS Castlewellan are through to the Bobby Dalzell Cup final but the Christmas decider is very much in doubt as the other half of the draw continues to be shrouded in controversy.

It transpires that Newcastle Seconds were not the only team to come under investigation after the Newcastle League carried out an audit of all four quarter-final match cards. Ballyvange could also be thrown out of the competition after allegedly fielding an unsigned player when beating Killough 4-0 on November 12.

The League committee will meet tomorrow (Thursday) to try to sort out the mess and unless Ballyvange hold their hands up and admit their mistake or provide evidence to counter the allegation, the second semi-final will not be played this weekend.

Should the verdict go against Ballyvange on Thursday they would still have four days from the time they are informed of the decision to decide whether to appeal to the IFA Appeals Board, thus ruling out the possibility of a semi being played on Saturday.

The following Saturday is set aside for the Junior Shield and Annalong Swifts, who were reinstated in the competition

after Newcastle Seconds' dismissal for fielding an unregistered player, must give preference to their fourth round tie with Shore Wanderers that day. Further to that, the League is not scheduling any games on Christmas Eve, due to the Steel and Sons Cup final that morning.

The final was due to be played on Tuesday, December 27, but that now seems unlikely although there could still be an option of playing the second semi under lights in midweek.

If the final has to be put back it will be the third successive year that it has missed its Christmas week slot, the previous two falling foul of the weather. Up to 2009 only two finals in the competition's history dating back to 1976 were not played on Boxing Day or December 27.

Ballyvange's dismissal, if it comes to that, would mean that Killough are reinstated in the competition to face Annalong Swifts, providing a semi-final pairing that between them shipped seven goals in the quarter-finals and failed to score!

Meanwhile, finalists Castlewellan, who beat Ballynahinch Olympic Seconds 2-0 on Saturday in the uncomplicated side of the draw, await the outcome.

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