#### **DOWN GAA CHAMPIONSHIPS 2020**

Cumann Lúthchleas Gael Coiste Chontae An Dún







MORGAN FUELS DOWN GAA
SENIOR HURLING CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL (REPLAY)

# **BAILE CRANN**

# Vs PORT AN PHÉIRE

Referee: Colin Murray

BALLYGALGET

4.00PM SATURDAY 26TH SEPTEMBER 2020



RUNAI: Seán Óg Mac an tSaoir







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#### **TODAYS REFEREES**

Referee:
Colin Murray

Darragh Cross

**Stand By Referee:** Peter Owens

Liatroim

Linesman:

Denis Mc Kay

**RGU Downpatrick** 

Sideline Official

**Kieran Rice** 

Cumann Pheadair Naofa

#### CLÁR AN LAE

2.30pm Turnstiles Open

3.57pm Amhrán na BhFiann

4.00pm Morgan Fuels Down 2020

Senior Hurling Championship Final (Replay) Commences

4.45pm Commencement of the Second Half

5.20pm End of Match Presentation of the Jeremiah McVeagh Cup

(Senior Hurling Championship Cup) to the Winning Captain.

The Presentation of the Trophy will take place on the Pitch after the Game, no supporters are allowed on the Pitch during the presentation.

The Presentation will not proceed if supporters are on the Pitch.

#### Amhrán na bhFiann

Sinne Fianna Fáil, atá faoi gheall ag Éirinn, Buíon dár slua thar toinn do ráinig chugainn, Faoi mhóid bheith saor, Seantír ár sinsear feasta, Ní fhágfar faoin tíorán ná faoin tráill.

Anocht a théam sa bhearna bhaoil, Le gean ar Ghaeil, chun báis nó saoil, Le gunna-scréach faoi lámhach na bpiléar, Seo libh canaig' amhrán na bhFiann.

Layout and Design of Programme by Diarmuid Cahill
All photos by Dermot Donnelly

# EPIC DECIDER BETWEEN PORTAFERRY AND BALLYCRAN ENDS IN STALEMATE

From Brendan Crossan, Irish News



Morgan Fuels Down Senior Hurling Championship final:

Ballycran 2-18 Portaferry 2-18

Saturday 19th September 2020 in Ballygalget

GROWN women and little children screamed and hollered - and the men roared from behind the wire every time the sloithar slipped from someone's grasp or was planted between the posts or in the net.

Two proud parishes of the peninsula colliding.

This love affair between ash and stitched leather never felt as strong than under gorgeous sunshine in Ballygalget on a late Saturday afternoon in September.

Every yelp, every scream and roar, every sweet thud of the sloithar and the unyielding smashes of rival hurls were the sounds of living.

Hurling will never die on the peninsula.

Not with this sort of passion.

Thoughts of Covid19 didn't get beyond the green gates on Saturday as the warriors of Portaferry and Ballycran wrestled mercilessly for 80 awe-inspiring minutes for the Down Senior Hurling Championship crown — only for this memorable final to end all square.



When referee Peter Owens blew his final whistle after two periods of extratime, everyone was able to breathe normally again.

Portaferry boss and force of nature Gary Smyth lived every second of Saturday's final like it was his last ever hurley match.

Here was a man rampaging up and down the sideline - and yet he'd just buried his father a couple of days earlier.

Paddy Smyth, who had Alzheimher's Disease, suffered a stroke last Friday and passed away a few days later.

"It's been an emotional week," the Portaferry manager said. "You just put it to the back of your mind. I never thought about the hurley much.

"But that's what we live for. You had extra-time, 2-18 to 2-18, we are two evenly matched teams, there's never anything between us."

Ballycran were aiming for three-in-arow while Portaferry were hoping to end a six-year famine.

Both sides produced schizophrenic performances.

Just as you thought one of these historic rivals would break free, the

other came firing back.

Portaferry, though, will probably feel that they let the title slip through their fingers a couple of times.

After all, it was Ballycran who needed equalisers at the end of normal time and extra-time to deny Portaferry. With the last puck of normal time, the brilliant Scott Nicholson fired over to level the game 1-14 apiece.

And with just seconds remaining in extra-time and trailing by three, county ace Conor Woods lobbed his last-gasp free into the edge of the square and the ball somehow ended up in the Portaferry net.

"I think we should have blocked it out as they were needing the goal," acknowledged Smyth.

"There were maybe 50 seconds to go and the ball hit the crossbar and came off the back of Caolan Taggart's helmet and into the net.

"If you'd want that kind of ball to fall to anybody it is actually Caolan."

One thing is true about Ballycran: they are moulded in the image of their manager Gary Savage.

In his playing days, 'Gazza' never knew when he was beaten – and Ballycran had that same quality on Saturday.

They started this final better than

favourites Portaferry but a defensive mix-up allowed the mercurial Daithi Sands to pounce for the first major of the day just before the interval.

By half-time 'Cran's commanding lead had been cut to two points [1-9 to 1-7] after full-forward Colum McManus helped Conor Woods' long free into the net midway through the opening half.

But in the early stages of the second half, the Ballycran defence had no answer to the movement of Daithi Sands.

By the 44th minute a Padraig Doran free put Portaferry 1-12 to 1-9 in front. But, to their eternal credit and with exceptional bravery, Ballycran rattled off the next four points with midfielders Scott Nicholson and Phelim Savage leading the charge.

And just as the men in black and amber looked like pulling away, back came Portaferry with a pair of Doran frees edging them in front again before Scott Nicholson retrieved the game for Ballycran with a cool equaliser despite being hounded by a pack of Portaferry men.

Ballycran outscored their rivals 0-4 to 0-1 in the opening exchanges of the first period of extra-time with substitute Christopher Egan getting his name on the score-sheet but Portaferry somehow found another spurt of energy with Doran, Conor O'Prey and Niall Fitzsimmons splitting their opponents' posts.

And after a quiet spell, Daithi Sands sprung into life again, hammering the ball into the Ballycran net from a tight angle with three minutes remaining.

But there was still time for one more dramatic swing of the championship pendulum when Woods' hopeful lob into the danger area hit the crossbar and the back of Taggart's helmet and landed into the net to level things up.

"You always think you're gone when you're three points down with the last puck of the match," said 'Cran boss Gary Savage.

"Conor took a chance, just put it in there, and lucky enough it went in. But I thought it would have been harsh on us if we'd lost as a lot of their scores were frees and we were scoring from play. I suppose everyone can make their own mind up.

"We never gave up... For some reason everybody had written us off before this final. We had an indifferent campaign but the character shone through in the end."

Try getting a ticket for this replay.

If your heart can take it...

Ballycran: S Keith; M Hughes, S Ennis, G Hughes; B Nicholson, M Ennis (0-1), P Hughes; S Nicholson (0-5, 0-3 frees), P Savage (0-4); L Savage, C Woods (1-0, free), B Arthurs; J Coyle (0-3, 0-1 free), C McManus (1-2), S Martin (0-2) Subs: A Dorrian for P Hughes (44), C Egan (0-1) for B Arthurs (46), N Breen for J Coyle (55), C Dorrian for N Breen (67), J Coyle for C Dorrian (73)

Yellow card: P Hughes (34)

Portaferry: P McNally; D Mallon, C Taggart, T Murray; B Trainor, C O'Neill, C Smyth; M Conlan, E Sands; C Faye (0-2), C Mageean (0-1), A O'Prey; P Doran (0-10 frees), D Sands (2-2), C O'Prey (0-2 frees) Subs: N Milligan for A O'Prey (18), R Smyth T Murray (60), S Conlan for C O'Neill (65), N Fitzsimmons (0-1) for E Sands (65), R Blair for P Doran (70)

Yellow card: M Conlan (80)

Referee: Peter Owens





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# NOTHING SEPARATES BALLYCRAN AND PORTAFERRY AHEAD OF DOWN SHC FINAL REPLAY

#### **BRENDAN CROSSAN, IRISH NEWS**

http://www.irishnews.com/sport/hurlingandcamogie/2020/09/26/news/nothing-separates-ballycran-and-portaferry-ahead-of-down-shc-final-replay-2078705/



#### Morgan Fuels Down Senior Hurling Championship final replay: Portaferry v Ballycran (today, Ballygalget, 4pm)

NO better day on the Ards peninsula than last week's epic Down final that finished all-square after 80 breathless minutes of hurling.

Warriors with helmets and sticks, club colours black and amber and blue and yellow painted onto their souls and nobody giving an inch under gorgeous blue Ballygalget skies.

If you don't get a ticket for this afternoon's intriguing replay, there's

always the side of the road and peering over the hedge to watch another battle of wills and boundless skill between two old rivals.

Last Saturday evening's duel between champions Ballycran and Portaferry had everything.

Great scores, great individual displays, hard but fair hits, brilliant defending and dramatic equalisers in stoppagetime of normal time and extra-time.

You could make a compelling case for either side last weekend, but it was Ballycran – aiming for three-in-a-row –

who needed late equalisers on two occasions to stay in the game.

If today's replay reaches anywhere near the heights of the first game, both sets of players and management teams will be doing well.

Indeed, the silverware could be decided by who doesn't play rather than who does.

Numerous players from either team limped out of the trenches last Saturday evening with the physios in both camps earning their crust ahead of today's second meeting.

Both managers wanted an extra week's rest but given the spectre of Covid19, the county board couldn't cede to their request.

Portaferry manager Gary Smyth said: "We've got about four on the injury list - and I know 'Gazza' [Ballycran manager Gary Savage] is under pressure too.

"Daithi [Sands] hasn't trained this week at all. Callum Smyth is struggling and Darragh Mallon is 50-50. Tom Murray is struggling. Eoghan Sands has had a calf strain going into last week's match and it didn't help he was cramping up."

Ballycran have their own walking wounded. Liam Savage, the manager's son who had a super game at midfield, and Christopher Egan have been ruled out and wing-back Paddy Hughes is struggling to make it.

"As 'Gazza' said, if we had another week to prepare we could have gone toe to toe again. So I don't know if this will be as bruising. I know 'Gazza' will be keeping his cards close to his chest but people could see the boys who were injured."

While Portaferry can justifiably claim they were unlucky not to seal the deal and land their first senior title since 2014, 'Cran had dominant periods in the game too.

They hit a purple patch in both halves with Scott Nicholson's penetrating runs from the middle of the field causing the Portaferry defence all sorts of problems in those periods of ascendancy.

If Nicholson was hard to handle so, too, was Daithi Sands of Portaferry who was unmarkable in the second half and emerged in extra-time after a quiet spell to find the net for a second time in the game.

The younger Sands has been on a course of antibiotics in the build-up after a hand wound re-opened in the first game.

Portaferry's long early ball into the corners nullified Conor Woods in the sweeper's role which probably accounted for the high number of fouls

#### **DOWN GAA CHAMPIONSHIPS 2020**

the Ballycran defence gave away, with free-taker Padraig Doran taking full advantage.

Keeping the foul count down is one of Gary Savage's key objectives in this replay.

Throughout the game Portaferry amassed 16 wides – a figure Gary Smyth will be equally keen in lowering.

"We knew what to expect from Ballycran," said Smyth.

"We need to bring the same levels of intensity again. I thought we'd done enough to get over the line. We'd 16 wides. Conor Mageean put his hand up on Tuesday night and said he was culpable for four of them. If those had gone over the bar we wouldn't have been talking about Conor Woods' late equaliser, we would have been talking about Conor Mageean.

"Eoghan Sands, who is deadly in front of goal, missed four. On another day we could have won by 10 points and yet we could easily have lost the match too."

Caolan Taggart has been a rock at the edge of the square for Portaferry but he took responsibility for allowing Woods' last-gasp free to end up in the net after the ball hit the crossbar and bounced off the back of his helmet and into the goal.

"Caolan has been down on himself all week," revealed Smyth.

"He put an apology into the group. We're all in this together. Caolan is one of the best players in Ulster. Between him and John McManus [Ballygalget] you wouldn't find two better defenders. If there's a ball dropping into the square you want it to be dropping to Caolan.

Smyth added: "To be honest, we can't wait for the game. We want to right the wrongs of the first match. We've won two championships in 10 years – that can't be right."

If the Sands brothers are passed fit,
Portaferry will be quietly confident they
can take home the Jeremiah McVeagh
Cup for the first time in six years.

But Ballycran have Scott Nicholson, Woods, James Coyle – and a manager who roared in the face of defeat during his playing days and now as manager.

It could be breathless in Ballygalget again, with Portaferry falling over the finish line.















#### **RESULTS SO FAR:**

# The 2020 Down GAA Senior Hurling Championship Sponsored by Morgan Fuels



	_			
Round	1 - (	በ7-በጸ	-2020	(Fri)

Portaferry	2-18	V	Ballycran	0-25
Ballygalget GAC	1-23	V	Bredagh	1-12

#### Round 2 - 12-08-2020 (Wed)

Bredagh	0-13	V	Portaferry	4-19
Ballycran	0-24	V	Rallygalget GAC	2-12

#### Round 3 - 16-08-2020 (Sun)

Ballygalget GAC	0-14	V	Portaferry	1-15
Ballycran	2-30	V	Bredagh	1-12

#### Round 4 - 23-08-2020 (Sun)

Bredagh	1-19	V	Ballygalget GAC	1-20
Ballycran	0-13	V	Portaferry	1-18

#### Round 5 - 30-08-2020 (Sun)

Portaferry	3-25	V	Bredagh	1-17
Ballygalget GAC	3-13	V	Ballycran	0-17

#### Round 6 - 06-09-2020 (Sun)

Bredagh	2-17	V	Ballycran	0-16
Portaferry	2-19	V	Ballygalget GAC	0-17

#### Final - 26-09-2020 (Sat)

Ballycran	2-18	V	Portaferry	2-18





#### **BALLYCRAN SENIOR FINALISTS**

#### Welcome from Ballycran GAC Club Chairperson

On behalf of CLG Naomh Iosáf, Baile Crann, I welcome all fellow Gaels to the Down Senior Hurling Championship Final Replay today, whether attending in person or watching the live stream.

This has been a difficult year for everyone and I would like to pay tribute to the Ballycran players and management, for their hard work and commitment under such trying circumstances. Everyone in the club wishes you well today against a Portaferry team who will, as always, be difficult opponents.

I would like to thank all Ballycran supporters for your ongoing loyalty and encouragement to all our teams. I have no doubt you will continue to get behind Ballycran today whilst maintaining respect for all players and officials.

Finally, good luck to the referee and his officials today, thanks to Ballygalget for once again hosting the Senior Hurling Final and to the County Board for running this year's competition.

Is Mise

Sean Mac Giolla Mhuire

#### Welcome from Ballycran Senior Management Team

On behalf of Naomh Seosamh CLG, Baile Crann, I would like to welcome all fellow Gaels to the Down Senior Hurling Championship Final Replay for what is always a day to remember. I have no doubt that our senior team are fully prepared for this competitive game.

This year has been particularly difficult, and I would like to thank not only all our players but also our supporters for their faultless encouragement. Unfortunately due to the current restrictions some of these supporters will be unable to attend, but I know they will join us via the live stream and will be fully behind us.

I know we have a tough battle on our hands today against a very good Portaferry team and we will need to be at our very best to achieve a victory.

To the club's Executive Committee I would like to thank you all sincerely for the support you have shown my management team and players over the course of this year.

Is Mise

Gearárd Sabhaois.



#### Welcome from Ballycran Senior Team Captain

It is a great honour and a privilege to lead Naomh Seosamh CLG, Baile Crann senior hurlers in to the 2020 Senior Championship Hurling Final. Given the events of this year, Down County board must be commended for their success in running a full programme of competitive action across all codes and age groups. A return to sporting action has given people hope and a sense of normality in these uncertain times.

I would like to thank all our management and background team for their continued hard work with the senior hurlers, the committee of Ballycran GAC who have supported us unwaveringly with any requests and the players themselves for their commitment and

dedication shown this year.

Many thanks must go to the family and friends of the senior hurlers for their support all year and to our faithful supporters. I hope we have something to show for it today!

Finally, to our opponents Portaferry. We have had many close encounters in recent years, and I expect no less from today's final. Let us hope it is played in a good sporting and competitive manner and may the best team win!

Is Mise

Seán Ó hAonais

#### Ballycran Path to the 2020 Final

Round 1	Portaferry	2-18	V	Ballycran	0-25
Round 2	Ballycran	0-24	V	Ballygalget GAC	2-12
Round 3	Ballycran	2-30	V	Bredagh	1-12
Round 4	Ballycran	0-13	V	Portaferry	1-18
Round 5	Ballygalget GAC	3-13	V	Ballycran	0-17
Round 6	Bredagh	2-17	V	Ballycran	0-16
Final	Ballycran	2-18	V	Portaferry	2-18

## **BALLYCRAN**

1 Stiofán Ó Caoilt **Stephen Keith** 



2 Michéal Ó hAodha Michael Hughes

3 Seán Ó hAonais Sean Ennis (c) 4
Gearoid Ó hAodha
Gerard Hughes

5 Brett Mac Niocaill Brett Nicholson 6 Michéal Ó hAonais Michael Ennis 7 Padraig Ó hAodha Patrick Hughes

8
Scott Mac Niocaill
Scott Nicholson

Féilim Sabhaois
Phelim Savage

10 Liam Sabhaois **Liam Savage**  11
Conchur Mac Conchoille
Conor Woods

12 Niall Mac Braoin **Niall Breen** 

13 Criostoir Mac Aogáin **Christopher Egan** 

Colm Mac Mánais Colum McManus

14

Seamart Ó Máirtín **Stuart Martin** 

15

#### Fir Ionaid:

16. Declan Ennis

17. Ben Arthurs

18. Conor Gilmore

19. Huw Flynn

20. Thomas McManus

21. Lukas Boyd

22. Brad Watson

23. James Coyle

24. Daniel Hughes

25. Aaron Dorrian

26. Michael Taylor

27. Conor Dorrian

28. Cormac McAlister

#### **Management:**

Michael Braniff
Gary Savage
Jamie Fowler
Gregory Hughes
James H Hughes
Anthony Bell
Leighton Bradgate

20

## **PORTAFERRY**

1 Padraíg Mac an Fhailghigh **Padraig McNally** 



2 Darrach Ó Mealláin **Darragh Mallon** 

3 Caolán Mac an tSagairt **Caolan Taggart**  4 Tomás Ó Muirí **Tom Murray** 

5 Barra Mac Thréinfhear **Barry Trainor** 

6 Conchubhar Ó Néill Conor O'Neill 7 Callum Mac Gabhann **Callum Smyth** 

8 Maitíu Ó Conalláin **Matt Conlan** 

Eoghan Ó Seachnasaigh

Eoghan Sands

10 Conchubhar Faye Conor Faye 11 Conchubhar Mag Aedhín Conor Mageean (c) 12 Árón Ó Preith **Aaron O'Prey** 

13
Padráig Ó Deoráin
Padraig Doran

14
Daíthí Ó Seachnasaigh **Daithí Sands** 

15 Cochubhar Ó Preith **Conor O'Prey** 

#### Fir Ionaid:

16. Peter Mason

17. Ronan Smyth

18. Shane Conlan

19. Fergal Rogers

20. Ryan Convery

21. Ronan Blair

22. Niall Milligan

23. Conal Fitzsimmons

24. Brendan Coleman

25. Eoin Savage

26. Niall Fitzsimmons

27. Eoin Magee

28. Callum McNamara

#### Management:

Gary Smyth

Maor Fóirne: Peter Mallon,

Selectors: Paul Smyth,

Maor Camán: Paul Braniff,

Ciaran Coulter,

Medic; Grainne Murray,

Club Official Column

Conlon



#### **PORTAFERRY SENIOR FINALISTS**

#### Welcome from Portaferry GAC Club Chairperson

I would like to congratulate both teams on making it to the final today and to Ballygalget for once again hosting the final. It has been a very strange year indeed and I suppose we are lucky to be given the opportunity to be playing any hurling this year. To that end I would thank the County Board on keeping alive are games which have been a source of great comfort to not only our players but our supporters as well.

Times have been tough for everyone and to our supporters especially to those of whom cannot make it today thank you for your continued support it is much appreciated somethings are just beyond Portaferry's control, if your standing in a field looking over a hedge or watching on PaircTV enjoy and cheer our boys home to victory, to our management team/selectors thank you for

your patience, guidance and understanding. When you took on this role no one envisaged the obstacles that would challenge you but well done in overcoming those obstacles and making it to the final.

Finally to our players, there is great satisfaction in making it to a final but there is even greater joy in winning it. All you can do is give 100% enjoy the occasion be humble in victory and gracious in defeat. To quote my mentor.

"Life's battles don't always go to the stronger or faster man. But sooner or later the man who wins, is the man who thinks he can"

I know you can win up the Ports

**Noel Sands** 

#### Welcome from Portaferry Senior Management Team

On behalf of the Portaferry Senior Hurling team I would like to welcome you all here to today's Championship Final.

The previous rounds of the championship have been closely fought encounters and we would expect nothing less today ,our squad have worked extremely hard this year and I thank them for their dedication and commitment they have given.

To our supporters I thank you for getting behind us this season and I encourage you

to be our 16<sup>th</sup> man today and cheer our players to push over the line.

We wish the match officials our best without whom our games couldn't happen.

We look forward to a highly competitive game.

Gary Smyth Bainisteoir





#### Welcome from Portaferry Senior Team Captain

'It is an honour for Caolan and myself to Captain and represent Portaferry GAC in the Down Senior Hurling Championship final and would like to thank our management team for giving us this opportunity. 2020 certainly has not been an easy year and a few months ago this day didn't seem possible, but the 2020 hurling championship has definitely given people a lift during difficult times.

The round robin format with home and away has provided each team with 6 games and this has been critical to its success, with no league competitions this year teams have been able to get these competitive games throughout the championship.

The traditional 3 ards teams battling it out and also the introduction of Bredagh has breathed new life into the championship and well done to them, hopefully this will encourage other clubs to step up who are on the brink of senior hurling and enter the championship in the future as this can only be a boost for Down Hurling.

Portaferry and Ballycran are getting the chance to represent our clubs in the final for the third successive year and we will play a hard fair game to give both sets of supporters something to cheer about for the last time in the 2020 championship.'

Eoghan/Caolan

#### Portaferry Path to the 2020 Final

Round 1	Portaferry	2-18	V	Ballycran	0-25
Round 2	Bredagh	0-13	V	Portaferry	4-19
Round 3	Ballygalget GAC	0-14	V	Portaferry	1-15
Round 4	Ballycran	0-13	V	Portaferry	1-18
Round 5	Portaferry	3-25	V	Bredagh	1-17
Round 6	Portaferry	2-19	V	Ballygalget GAC	0-17
Final	Ballycran	2-18	V	Portaferry	2-18

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Breandán Mac Giolla Phádraig Brendan Fitzpatrick Áth Bhriain



Conchúr Mac Uait Conor Watson Baile Mhic Uileagoid



Fióna Ó Murchú Fiona Murphy An Ghleann



PJ Ó Coinne PJ Quinn





Sabhall



Liam Ó Gribín Willie Gribben Clann na Banna



Gearoid O Connaire Ger Connery Ceathrú Aodha Dhuibh



#### **BALLYCRAN WIN BETSY GRAY FINAL**

Sunday 20th September 2020

Betsy Gray Shield Final: Ballycran 4-16 v Portaferry 1-22



Four first half goals from Conor Dorrian (twice), Paul Miskimmon & Mark Egan was enough to give Ballycran a fifteen point half time lead, as they made the most of a strong wind advantage.

Portaferry staged a great comeback in the second half and a last minute Eamon Coleman goal for Portaferry just wasn't enough to close the gap, as the 'Crans held out for a three point victory.

Conor Watson presented the shield to Ballycran captain Huw Flynn



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Down GAA wishes to acknowledge the generous financial support provided towards its County Teams and the Association in Down for 2020 from all of its sponsors

# Stay local. Stay safe. Protect each other. Continue to:



#### Wash your hands well and often to avoid contamination.



Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing and discard used tissue



Distance yourself at least 2 metres (6 feet) away from other people, especially those who might be unwell



Avoid crowds and crowded places



Know the symptoms. If you have them self isolate and contact your GP immediately

COVID-19 symptoms include

- high temperature

- cough

- breathing difficulty

- sudden loss of sense of smell or baste

- file life synctoms

safely



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