

Urlingford Crown Unbeaten Campaign with George Leahy Trophy Success

Urlingford etched their names into school hurling history on Monday evening as they claimed the highly contested Roinn C League title with an impressive 3-12 to 2-6 victory over St John's in the George Leahy in UPMC Nowlan Park.

With 15 schools competing in one of the most competitive competitions in the county, this was a final worthy of the occasion. Urlingford arrived unbeaten throughout the campaign and full of confidence following their Tommy O'Brien success the previous week. However, there was an added layer of motivation for the Urlingford group, having suffered a heartbreaking two-point defeat to St John's in the Shield Final twelve months earlier.

Played in glorious sunshine with temperatures reaching 25 degrees, referee John McCormack got proceedings underway as Dylan Carthy won the toss and Urlingford elected to play towards the scoreboard end against the slight breeze.

From the throw-in it was clear that neither side was willing to yield. The tackling was fierce, the intensity relentless and every ball strongly contested. In midfield, the energetic pairing of Eoin Gibbons and Aoibhinn Manton immediately established themselves as the engine room, driving Urlingford forward at every opportunity.

Alex Cashin opened the scoring with a series of superb long-range frees before the lively Conal Lyng lit up the contest. Despite being one of the smallest players on the pitch, Lyng's electric pace and sharp movement caused endless problems for the St John's defence as he fired over two excellent points from underneath the stand.

By the 15-minute mark Urlingford had built a commanding 0-5 to 0-0 lead, thanks largely to a defence that refused to give their opponents an inch. David Maev dominated the skies at full-back, while Robbie Quinlan and Nial Rothwell displayed tremendous determination and bravery in the corner-back positions. Dara Hickey, Padraig Bourke and Oisín Sweetman worked tirelessly across the half-back line, leading by example throughout.

The defining moment of the half arrived in the 16th minute when Alex Cashin struck a sensational long-range free that found its way to the back of the net, extending Urlingford's advantage to eight points. The game ebbed and flowed in the closing stages of the half, but Urlingford remained firmly in control and entered the interval leading 1-7 to 0-1.

Knowing St John's would respond, Urlingford introduced Jayden Elfehli and Laura Minogue at the break for Darragh Joyce and Rian Lawlor who worked extremely hard and had a positive impact on the game. Elfehli and Minogue both made an immediate impact. Cashin opened the second-half scoring with another excellent free before the expected St John's resurgence arrived. Inspired by Jack Hogan and Johnny Delaney, St John's fought their way back into contention, with Delaney blasting a 21-yard free past Cashin.

Yet champions are defined by their response under pressure, and Urlingford showed immense resilience. Tactical adjustments saw the talented Will Bergin move into midfield while Aoibhinn Manton pushed forward. Bergin's work rate and distribution proved invaluable as Urlingford regained control and Padraig Bourke really showed his class and nullified the threat of Delaney.

Cashin once again proved decisive, raising a second green flag from another booming free to bring his personal tally to an astonishing 2-7. The goalkeeper's display was one of authority, confidence and immense promise for the future.

Paudie Power then added two well-taken frees before putting the result beyond doubt when he battled through a ruck of players and rifled Urlingford's third goal to the net. Fresh legs from Sarah Harrington, Dylan Carthy, Tom Hickey and Cillian Tobin ensured the intensity never dropped.

Although Johnny Delaney added late scores and a consolation goal for St John's, Urlingford remained composed to secure a deserved 3-12 to 2-6 victory.

At the final whistle, family members, teachers and friends flooded onto the pitch to celebrate an unforgettable achievement. Captains Dara Hickey and Padraig Bourke proudly lifted the George Leahy Trophy, while Will Bergin, Robbie Quinlan and Jayden Elfehlí spoke eloquently on behalf of a group that displayed remarkable unity all season.

After the heartbreak of losing three finals last year, this triumph felt especially sweet. An unbeaten campaign, silverware secured and memories made forever. For this talented Urlingford team, the future looks incredibly bright as attention now turns towards Roinn A football and Roinn B hurling for the 2026/27 school year.

