

LADIES FOOTBALL CONNACHT POST PRIMARY SENIOR B CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

February 2016

Miskell magic fires Holy Rosary to Connacht title

HRC Mountbellew 6-13

St Joseph's 6-5

By Billy Coss

At the Connacht GAA Centre

THE SCORING power of Kilkerrin-Clonberne youngster Chloe Miskell was the highlight as Holy Rosary College, Mountbellew, piled on the scores in capturing the Connacht Post Primary Senior B Championship final at a bitterly cold Connacht GAA Centre on Friday afternoon.

Eight points was the final margin over a St Joseph's, Foxford, side that battled gamely to the bitter end and chipped away at a 17-point interval deficit but were unable to bridge the gap opened up by the winners during a devastating second quarter.

Miskell was star turn in what was a fluid and pacy Holy Rosary attack, finishing with an incredible 5-8 of her team's total. There may have been an element of fortune about her first goal, coming directly from a free, but there was none whatsoever about her second, a beautifully placed finish to the corner of the net. Holy Rosary had their opponents penned in for much of the opening quarter, creating chance after chance only for their shooting to repeatedly let St Joseph's off the hook. The Foxford school were more economical with their rare forays forward into the teeth of the strong wind and had edged ahead, 2-1 to 2-0, by the 16th minute after quickfire goals from Natasha Gaughan (penalty) and Shauna Howley.

It was one-way traffic from there to half-time, however, as Holy Rosary reeled off 2-12 without reply in a blistering 14-minute spell with finishing was close to flawless. Dunleavy, Aoife Thompson (two), Molly Mannion and Galway camogie star Catherine Finnerty all pointed; Aileen Warde cracked home an unstoppable shot to the net while the remainder of the scores came from Miskell, who caused the Foxford defence all sorts of problems with her pace and high skill level. She finished the half with 3-5 to her name and Holy Rosary, after played with the elements on the AstroTurf surface, appeared out of sight with a 4-12 to 2-1 lead.

Back came St Joseph's though with most of the damage done by attackers Shauna Howley and Amy O'Connor, who ended the afternoon with 5-3 between them. The comeback generated real momentum late on and the scoreline stood at 5-12 to 6-4 with little over five minutes remaining. Miskell had fired their fifth goal and with the pressure starting to be applied by Foxford, the Kilkerrin-Clonberne forward eased her team's worries, converted a penalty she had won to put the result beyond all doubt.

Best for Holy Rosary were Kate Screene, Sarah Flattery and Emma Flanagan in defence; midfielders Chloe McHugh and Molly Mannion while Claire Dunleavy, Aoife Thompson and Catherine Finnerty, who played an effective sweeping role in the second half, provided the most support to the outstanding Miskell.

Ailish Breheny and Riona Holohan's side now advance to the All-Ireland semi-final where they will face Leinster champions Moate Community School in late February.

HOLY ROSARY, MOUNTBELLEW (Mountbellew-Moylough unless stated): K. Fleming (Kilkerrin-Clonberne); Y. Yelbasi (Kilkerrin-Clonberne), K. Screene (Menlough-Skehana), S. Flattery (Menlough-Skehana); M. McDonagh, E. Flanagan (Kilkerrin-Clonberne), S. Keaveney; C. McHugh, M. Mannion (0-1); C. Dunleavy (captain, Kilkerrin-Clonberne, 0-1), A. Thompson (0-2), A. Murray; C. Finnerty (0-1), C. Miskell (Kilkerrin-Clonberne, 5-8, 1-0 penalty, 1-2 frees), A. Warde (Menlough-Skehana, 1-0). Subs used: L. Booth (St Brendan's), S. Fahy (Kilkerrin-Clonberne).

ST JOSEPH'S, FOXFORD: G. Reape; N. Canning, C. Ormsby, R. Langan; L. Coleman, C. McTague, C. McHale; L. Sweeney, N. Gaughan (1-1, 1-0 penalty); R. Gaughan, L. Reid, O. McHale; A. O'Connor (2-2, 0-1 free), M. McHale (0-1), S. Howley (3-1). Subs used: M. O'Hara.

REFEREE: John Niland (Sligo).

HERALD SPORT PLAYER OF THE MATCH: Chloe Miskell (Holy Rosary College, Mountbellew)