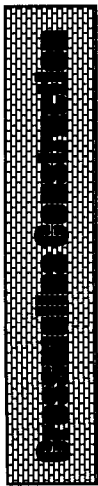


Bert's Brief

As we approach the half way point in the season the story so far reminds me a bit of Marlon Brando in "On The Waterfront". We "coulda had class, coulda been somebody, coulda been contenders." I am never a man to blame luck but it would have to be said that we have had very little of the good variety so far whether it be with injuries, chances converted or goals against. In the course of a season everything should balance out if a team is good enough so we must be due a few poxy results over the next few weeks. Whether this will be enough to push us into the top two or three is debatable but we should preserve our status in the Premier Division without too much difficulty. There have up to this point been some erratic performances not least from our right winger who will win a Pulitzer before he scores a goal. Our defence hasn't been entirely blameless either and all things considered perhaps it is a miracle that we are in the Premier Division at all.

Our sponsors



Robert Marsh TV & Video

Are you Kachloul in disguise?

Are you the sort of person who would pull a stunt like Hassan? Find out if you are Cash-loul with this quiz...

- 1) After a long and passionate courtship, your beloved asks you to marry them. Do you:**
- a) Say yes - you're thrilled.
 - b) Let them down gently and say no - the time just isn't right.
 - c) Say yes - but then run off with their dad.
- 2) Your grandmother has fallen ill, and the treatment is going to cost a fortune. Do you:**
- a) Promise her you'll remortgage the house and plough everything into saving her.
 - b) Tearfully tell her that you just can't afford it and you'll have to trust the NHS.
 - c) Promise you'll do everything in your power to raise the cash, while actually making arrangements to sell the old hag to the local pie factory.
- 3) You're enjoying a leisurely bath when the doorbell rings. Peering out of the window, you see it's the Jehovah's Witnesses. Do you:**
- a) Answer the door and get rid of them quickly.
 - b) Pretend you're not in.
 - c) Shout out the window that you'll be down in a second for a chat, before heating up the boiling oil and releasing the hounds.
- 4) Your aunt is going away and you've promised to look after her cat. Do you:**
- a) Pop round to feed Tiddles every day before work and again on your way home.
 - b) Leave the critter a massive bowl of food every other day.
 - c) Save yourself the trouble by running it over and blaming joyriders when the heart-broken relative returns.
- 5) A tramp asks you for 20 pence. Do you:**
- a) Give it to him.
 - b) Refuse - he'll only spend it on drink.
 - c) Give it to him, but return seconds later to mug him at knife-point.
- 6) A little old lady asks you to help her across the road because her eyesight isn't what it was. Do you:**
- a) Guide her gently across the nearest Pelican Crossing, holding her arm and chatting about jam.
 - b) Perfunctorily press the 'Wait' button for her and wander off.
 - c) Lead her halfway across the main road before spinning her round ten times, nicking her white stick and shouting: "get dodging, grandma".
- Results**
- Mostly As:** You are a loyal, considerate person who takes time to think about the effect of your actions on others and tries to do the right thing.
- Mostly Bs:** You are a bit of a dirty dog who is prepared to cut the odd corner, but you're a basically alright person.
- Mostly Cs:** You'll stop at nothing to get what you want: you're greedy and devious and you'd sell your granny for the price of a drink. Haven't just signed for the Villa, have you?

At the outset of this season manager Bert Carolan proclaimed that we would be in a new division next year, whether it was the utopia of the Super League or the hell of Division Two. Well as we approach the midpoint of the season with 8 games gone and 10 more to play the prediction seems very unlikely. Crossmolina hover in fifth place, having won 4 and lost 4. We have beaten 4 of the 5 teams below us and lost to all 4 sides above us. We are consistently average; neither good enough to get promoted or bad enough to get relegated. But don't presume that all this mediocrity has manifested itself in hum-drum 0-0 draws. It has been quite the opposite as the rollercoaster of a season has witnessed us winning three games and losing two by a solitary goal. Recent results have gone very much to form with the three games against bottom-feeders Glenisland, Straide and Foxford United B and Bangor Hibs all resulting in wins for us.

The 2-1 win against Glenisland was a vital boost to the club after a disappointing Cup exit to Ballinrobe. The victory was only secured after Glenisland hit the crossbar in the final minute. We followed this with a trip to Foxford to play S & F United in a pulsating relegation battle which we won 3-2. When our opponents had a man sent off in the 15th minute victory seemed assured, and a 2-0 lead at half-time should have settled the match. However a stunning late comeback by S & F levelled the game at 2-2 and only a late Derek Greham strike saved us from an embarrassing draw. The result was in doubt until the final minute when John McGuinness cleared the ball off the goal line as another United equaliser looked inevitable.

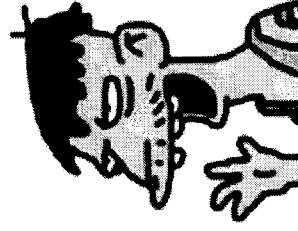
After winning two games in which we didn't perform too well we then lost 3-1 at Glenheest despite matching them throughout the game. We conceded three goals from corner kicks, one of which was our own, and wasted a good performance against a very tough team.

Last Sunday we hosted Bangor Hibs in the first of our two games against them in a fortnight, and it was essential that we beat them, so that they would remain at the bottom and we could maintain our lofty placing in midtable. You can read the details of the game inside. With two games against Killala and Hibs next on the schedule we could possibly force ourselves into the promotion picture but realistically we aren't playing well enough at the moment to sustain that challenge for the remainder of the season. But in a division as tight as the Premier a couple of wins and any semblance of form could catapult us into the upper echelons where we could use our momentum to gatecrash the Super League. But first things first; the next two games have to be won.

Lookalikes



Luke Chadwick



Cleatus (The Simpsons)

Crossmolina 3-2 Bangor, Hibs

Roll up, roll up to the greatest show on earth. For guaranteed entertainment this season there might be no place better than Abbeytown. Crossmolina nearly snatched defeat from the jaws of victory for the umpteenth time this season, but eventually held on to beat Bangor Hibs 3-2 at Abbeytown on Sunday afternoon. Crossmolina personify mediocrity this season as they have won four and lost four, while being comfortably situated in midtable. Bangor are struggling near the foot of the table and it took the two teams a while to find themselves in the game during an unremarkable opening 15 minutes. The best chances saw Derek Graham hit the crossbar for the home side after cutting in from the left wing and Bangor failed to convert a goalmouth scramble into a quality shot at goal. It was Graham who roused his colleagues from their malaise when he scored a fine individual goal in the 20th minute for Crossmolina. After collecting the ball in midfield he decided to take the shortest possible route to goal as he galloped past the static Bangor defence before slotting the ball into the net from 10 yards out. Five minutes later two left wing corners yielded good efforts at goal for Crossmolina. The latter earned a right wing corner which Paul Flaherty delivered beautifully for Eoin Syron to head the second goal of the game from six yards out. Syron threatened to extend the lead later when he fortuitously curled a left foot cross just by the top left corner of the goal. A passionate half time oration by goalkeeper Declan Carey provoked the desired response from his teammates as Hibs raised their efforts in the second half. In the first minute of the second half Crossmolina winger John Duggan hit a right wing cross too close to Carey but the ball nearly snuck in over the keeper before he punched it clear. For the rest of the half Bangor battled gamely and tested the home defence which had begun to showboat a bit prematurely. This accusation could not be levelled at centre-back Damien Syron who played with an authority which belied his inexperience at this level. When the going got tough in the second half, Syron got going as he turned in a colossal defensive performance which led the home team to a precious three points. Crossmolina appeared to rubber stamp their win on the hour mark when Graham, from a standing position, leapt to head Mark Loftus' left wing cross over goalie Carey for a 3-0 lead. Bangor's substitutes made impacts after being introduced when Mark Curffe nearly reduced the deficit for Hibs by lashing an 18 yard shot just over the bar after a corner kick. Another set piece did earn Hibs a goal in the 70th minute, when an inswinging left wing free kick was nodded into the net from 15 yards out by substitute Pat Ruddy. Ruddy tried his luck again five minutes later when he rifled a 25 yard free kick just wide. The Hibs

comeback received a helping hand, literally, when Duggan was adjudged to have pushed a Bangor striker as he awaited a cross in the 18 yard box within ten minutes remaining. Brian Carey stroked the spot kick into the bottom right corner to resuscitate his team's hopes of a point. A tense closing ten minutes seemed like the longest day of the year all over again for Crossmolina but they were relieved to hear the blast of the referee's whistle to signal the end of an exciting game. Bangor will get an immediate chance to avenge their defeat when they host Crossmolina in two weeks time. It promises to be a cracker.

Crossmolina - J Heffernan, J McGuinness, J Hegarty, D Syron, J Canavan, E Syron, J Duggan, P Flaherty (M Canavan 72), P Whittaker, D Greham, M Loftus

Quote of the Week

"And you still couldn't win it!" - Referee Michael Walsh mocks captain John Hegarty after he lost the opening coin toss - with none of the opposition present to challenge the call.

The good, the bad and the downright awful As we reach the midpoint of the season it is perhaps a good time to review the season so far and assess some of the things we've seen. **The Good** - The club underwent a facelift this year as a bumper crop of recruits yielded some much-needed new talent for the team. The supply line seems to be trickling back into action as last season produced Eoin Syron and Jason Canavan. This year has provided us with striker Simon Rowland and more importantly centre back Damien Syron. Syron has been a fixture at the back from Day One and he might be the finest prospect to ever play at the club. His combination of size and commitment is a fearsome package for any opposing striker.

The Bad - We were quickly dismissed from both Cup competitions in the first rounds. Despite both exits coming at the hands of the top two teams in the division (Ballina Town, Ballinrobe) it is a disappointing return from two competitions. **The Pits** - Either of the two Ballina Town games when we were absolutely annihilated by the impressive table-toppers. While it was wonderful to witness such fine performances at this level it was demoralising to be on the receiving end. We beat the Mayo champions, Manulla, last year so we know we can improve and hopefully beat Ballina later on this year at Abbeytown.

The Find - Every cloud has a silver lining they say. When Johnny O'Hora collapsed in a crumpled heap after cutting his knee on a stone our season flashed

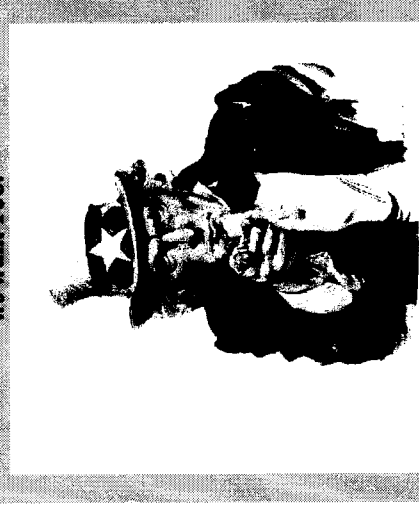
before our eyes. But the goalie's jersey was entrusted to John Heffernan a few weeks later and he hasn't put a foot (or hand) wrong so far.

The Historic - After nine years the three founding members of the club finally started a game together. Against Glenisland John Heffernan, Paul Flaherty and Adrian Conway were united on the field after somehow avoiding each other for a long time.

The Kit - After a brief flirtation with green the club returned to its roots and revived the maroon home jersey, much to the delight of the traditionalists on the team. And our fanzine was forced to undergo a name change after seven issues! No consideration!

The Strikers - Two of the top strikers in Crossmolina's history were paired together this season when Adrian Conway returned to partner Derek Greham up front. Greham has been on a tear this season with 6 goals in 8 league games, twice as many as his nearest challenger, Conway, who has 3.

We Want YOU!



On Saturday, August 4th, we are holding a soccer marathon in Kilmurry Community pitch. We will be playing soccer for 24 hours non-stop and we want you to help us. If you have any soccer ability at all we would welcome your participation in this fun event for whatever length of time you can contribute. We are looking for people to take part from 7 o'clock onwards. If you need any more information you can contact any member of the club or visit our website

Multi-Media

I am sure that if I did a survey of how long people thought the Mayo FA was in existence I would get a lot of wrong guesses due to people thinking that soccer is a relatively recent phenomenon in this country. The actual year of the organisation's founding is 1953 but I will forgive my interviewees for

underestimating the longevity of it's existence. The greatest cause of the Mayo FA's anonymity is a gross lack of publicity. Mayo soccer has suffered in the shadow of the GAA since it's inception and it will take an amazing turnaround before we are the more celebrated sportsmen, especially in this town. This soccer club toiled in vain for years without any acknowledgement from the town or other outside sources. Things done changed. For the benefit of you, our public, we relaunched our website at the beginning of last season and so far the response has been good. For the cyber-challenged we started producing this fanzine at monthly intervals. It saddened us last March when we saw how poor the media coverage was of our game and understood that it was hard to interest casual punters when the league itself was so apathetic. I am happy to report that, over a year later, the situation has improved dramatically. The Western People, which was always at the forefront of soccer coverage, has distinguished itself since Crossmolina native Brian Gillespie recently assumed control. Soccer fans can now pore over a two page bonanza of reports, pictures and league tables which comprehensively covers all the divisions. The Mayo News has well presented coverage too in an appealing tabloid format. The Connaught Telegraph, with Mayo FA treasurer Tom Kelly at the helm, has some work to do with it's messy looking page of coverage every week which sometimes includes pictorial content. On a national scale The Star produces an excellent Tuesday pullout section called "Target" which has featured Crossmolina on a few occasions. MidWest Radio does a fine job of keeping soccer fans up to date with it's scores on a Sunday evening and often sends reporters to the big games for extended coverage. If you miss the results there you can always click onto Aertel Page 550 for the complete results service on a Sunday evening. Having covered all the traditional media we now visit cyberspace only to be hugely disappointed by the lack of club websites for perusal. Considering all the young people playing the game these days it is surprising how few websites cater for Mayo soccer. Our own website is by far the most comprehensive and only Achill Rovers can claim to even have made an effort out of the other 29 clubs but their site has been inactive for two years. The greatest villain of all is the Mayo FA whose home page offers a series of match reports from February 1999! Thankfully this is becoming the exception rather than the norm as Mayo soccer has finally joined the Information Age and now takes it's rightful place amongst all the other sports of the land.

Click on this

For all the latest AFC news go to
www.augherne.com/av/crossmolinafc