

**THE HARPS GAA: *Championship loss to Ballinakill:*** The Harps Senior Hurlers suffered a defeat in their first round championship game against local rivals Ballinakill on Sunday last. Played in O Moore Park in perfect hurling conditions, The Harps were unable to break down a tight Ballinakill rear-guard for much of this game and their half time tally of two pointed free's had our hurlers under fierce pressure at the break. After a slow start Ballinakill hit a string of scores to take up a three point lead. A pointed free by Mick Lanigan got The Harps off the mark, and he converted a second three minutes later, but a series of efforts from play would sail wide time and again. With six points now between the sides with half time approaching, disaster struck when Ballinakill struck for a goal to leave the gap at nine points at half time on a score line of The Harps 0-02 to Ballinakill 1-08.

To their credit, The Harps were a more competitive team in the second half, as they threw everything at Ballinakill in search of an avenue to get back into this game. Richie Saunders, John Brophy and Brian Dunne all pointed from play as Mick Lanigan remained steady on the free's. Cha Dwyer was proving impressive from placed balls however, and The Harps were really going to need goals to really push Ballinakill. With the gap narrowed to five points with ten minutes to go there was still hope, but The Harps did not score for the remainder of the game as Ballinakill hit some fine scores to win out on a score line of Ballinakill 1-15 to The Harps 0-08.

This was a disappointing day out for our hurlers, but they will go back to the drawing board and try to devise a way to beat Portlaoise who they will play in the second round on Saturday 6th August. (6pm in O Moore Park). All support for this game would be greatly appreciated.

The Harps: 1. Peter Walsh; 2. Gavin Dunne; 3. Pakie Flynn; 4. Tommy Moore; 5. Barry Dunne; 6. John Prior; 7. Conor Dunne; 8. Kieran Freeman; 9. Shane Phelan; 10. Richie Saunders; 11. John Brophy; 12. Conor Brophy; 13. Michael Lanigan; 14. Brian Dunne; 15. Eoin Clancy. Subs used: Aaron Dunne, Brian Clancy.

***Junior Hurlers get a fine win to open their Championship:*** The Harps Junior hurlers got their championship off to a great start with a hard fought win over Ballypickas last Saturday. Mountrath GAA hosted this game and had their pitch in fine condition, and with a perfect evening for hurling this game got off to a flying start. The Harps were deserving winners on the night with a scoreline of The Harps 1-21 Ballypickas 1-13.

This was a really encouraging display from our Juniors who were missing a number of key players on the day. With other good hurlers to come back into the mix competition for places will be heating up over the coming weeks as The Harps Junior Hurlers progress to the next round. Please watch our website and Facebook + Twitter feeds for upcoming fixtures.

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