

TEMPLEOGUE ESCA

Much vaunted visitors take penalty route after tough grilling by unlucky Home Farm

HOME FARM 0
 TEMPLEOGUE UNITED 0
 (TEMPLEOGUE WIN 3-2 ON PENS AFTER EXTRA-TIME)

By Niall Scully

A FULL moon, and the full Monty at Whitehall. The highest of drama in the first round of the SFAI U15 Evans Cup.

The new lights were glistening. So was the football. A large audience huddled in the new stand. They were treated to a fabulous show. The impressive young officials kept the river flowing.

In town were the much vaunted Templeogue, the All-Ireland Menton-Seery and Goodson Cup champs, and one of the most decorated sides in the country.

Yet they almost went out to the heroic hosts and Topflight Cup champs who scraped and battled for every crumb on the carpet of a surface.

It was compelling stuff. Farm didn't allow Templeogue to settle into their distinctive passing pattern.

Frequently, a Templeogue player found himself surrounded by three or four Farmers. They were never given the luxury of time and space.

The tempo was electric from the off. A spectacle short on chances but high on commitment.

And in the end, decided by the dreaded penalties. "It was an unfortunate way to go out. The lads were outstanding," said Farm's Keith Roche, managing the side with Anto Kennedy and Peter Hanrahan.

the season."

As the Hoops left the arena, sustained applause broke out. They certainly deserved the ovation. They had given their all.

They almost won it in the second period of extra-time. Ben Hanrahan's screamer went inches wide at the astro end and then he was foiled by a combination of wonderful defending from Darragh Corcoran and goalkeeping by Conor Kearns.

Minutes earlier, a header from Conor Davis almost landed in the Farm's front porch, but penalties it was, and all eyes were on the astro end.

The Templeogue 'keeper, Kearns, produced the heroics as he saved four penalties in the shoot-out.

Adam White and Simon King converted Templeogue's first two kicks before Jake Reddy, in sudden death, slotted away the winner.

"Conor was magnificent in the shoot-out. In fact, he has an excellent record at spot-kicks," summed up United's Alan Kinsella who runs the side with Eric Stokes and Derek Walsh.

"It was a tremendous tussle. Home Farm are a good side. They played very well. They made it difficult for us.

"We are just happy to get out with the win. It cer-

over. "It's top-class. It was a real pleasure to come here and to enjoy these facilities.

"It's terrific that young players get the chance to play in grounds like this. And I'm sure the venue will see many more crackers like this one in the future."

Both squads emerged together from the tunnel before the kick-off. And the occasion was laced with a refreshing sporting spirit.

If a visiting player got a knock, the nearest Home Farm lad would check if he was alright and visa versa. Both 'keepers shook hands before the penalties.

Eric Donnelly made a super save in the opening half of normal time to deny the pacey and tricky left-winger, Avis Ganioyu, who was through on goal at the astro end. 32 minutes into the second period he saved from Davis after the pass of the night from Steven Kinsella.

Kearns also had to be sharp as Shane Heffernan, Jordan Connell and Hanrahan all had their moments.

But the golden moment belonged to Reddy, who showed the composure of James Bond before being embraced by team-mates and heading for the dressing-room with the cheers still ringing in his ears.

HOME FARM: Eric Donnelly; James Browne, Kevin McRory, Luke Doyle, Jeff Rafter, Adam McMahon, Jordan Connell, Gavin Balfe, Shane Heffernan, Ben Hanrahan, Jason Groves, Dylan Grimes, Danny McSweeney, Ross Coyle, Jack Glanville.

TEMPLEOGUE UNITED: Conor Kearns; Sam Morrison, Daragh Gibbons, Darragh Corcoran, Adam White, Simon King, Ivan

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