**Allianz NHL Division 1 Round 4- Kilkenny 1-29 Laois 0-22**

(Robert Cribbin, Kilkenny People)

6 Jun 2021

Tommy Walsh of Kilkenny in action against Ross King of Laois during the Allianz Hurling League Division 1 Group B Round 4 match at UPMC Nowlan Park.

Kilkenny assured themselves of top spot in Division 1B of the Allianz National Hurling League after a ten point success over Laois at UPMC Nowlan Park.

Kilkenny were comprehensive winners on the scoreboard in the end but Laois were competitive throughout and gave trouble to the hosts on a number of occasions.

Kilkenny were quick out of the traps and after Laois hit four consecutive wides, the Cats hit four successive points and Cheddar Plunkett's team didn't trouble the scoreboard until the halfway point of the half.

In the end Brian Cody's team led by nine points at half-time with Liam Blanchfield taking advantage of his role in the team at full forward when he found the net in the 21st minute to help the Cats push clear.

Eoin Cody led the scoring for the much changed Cats as he took over the frees from the rested TJ Reid with eleven points throughout and the entire Kilkenny forward line got on the scoresheet over the course of the game.

Laois were much improved in the second half and got the deficit down to six at one stage and if it wasn't for Eoin Murphy saving a couple of attempts from top scorer PJ Scully the game could have been a lot closer.

Kilkenny finished well though with James Bergin who got five points in total, Martin Keoghan, Adrian Mullen, John Donnelly and Tadhg O'Dwyer all scoring late on to give a bit of shine to things from a Kilkenny perspective.

As a result of Saturday's action Kilkenny can't now  be caught at the top of Division 1B with one more league clash to come against Clare next Saturday.

**The Scorers**

**Kilkenny-** Eoin Cody (0-11, 0-8fs, 0-1 65), Liam Blanchfield (1-2), James Bergin (0-5), Conor Fogarty (0-2), Richie Reid (0-2), Adrian Mullen (0-2),  Billy Ryan (0-1), Michael Carey (0-1), Martin Keoghan (0-1), John Donnelly (0-1), Tadhg O'Dwyer (0-1).

**Laois-**PJ Scully (0-11, 0-9fs, 0-1 65), Ross King (0-3), Paddy Purcell (0-2), Jack Kelly (0-2), Stephen Maher (0-1), Enda Rowland (0-1f), Aaron Dunphy (0-1), Lee Cleere (0-1).

**The Teams**

**Kilkenny:**Eoin Murphy; Tommy Walsh, Joey Holden, Paddy Deegan, Darragh Corcoran, Huw Lawlor, Michael Carey, Richie Reid, Conor Fogarty, Adrian Mullen, Martin Keoghan, Billy Ryan, James Bergin, Liam Blanchfield, Eoin Cody.

Subs: Tadhg O'Dwyer for Ryan 43 mins, John Donnelly for Keoghan 48 mins, Michael Cody for Carey 50 mins, Alan Murphy for Mullen 56 mins, Padraig Walsh for T.Walsh 64 mins.

**Laois:**Enda Rowland; Diarmuid Conway, Sean Downey, Donnchadh Harnett, Jack Kelly, Ciaran McEvoy, Stephen Maher, Fiachra Fennell, Paddy Purcell, James Ryan, Aaron Dunphy, Ciaran Collier, PJ Scully, Ross King, Eoin Gaughan.

Subs: Willie Dunphy for Ryan h-t, Ciaran Comerford for Gaughan h-t, Lee Cleere for Conway 36 mins, Eanna Lyons for Collier 53 mins, Ryan Mullaney for Maher 53 mins, James Keyes for Dunphy 57 mins, Stephen Bergin for King 62 mins.

**Ref:**Rory McGann (Clare)