



UNDER-12 Skechers National Cup



ICTORS AND VANQUISHED: the Shamrock Rovers Under 12s who defeated Castleview of Cork in the SFAI Skechers quarter-final at Roadstone

Pics: Ed Scann

Rampant Rovers kings of the Castle!

SHAMROCK ROVERS.....9
CASTLEVIEW.....0

By NIAL SCULLY

ROVERS continue to build blocks at Roadstone. This was a most assured performance.

It saw the young Hoops move smoothly into the quarter-final of the SFAI Skechers Under-12 Norton Cup.

On the final whistle, the applause rang out for the Cork side. They had been on the road since 9.am.

"Every single one of our lads did their best," said Castleview's Keith O'Callaghan. "We came up against a very good side in Rovers."

And so they did. From the first minutes, Rovers were finding their rhythm. And finding feet.

They moved the ball sweetly across the all-weather. The Cork team were quickly on the back-foot, but they didn't lack spirit.

"Yes, they are a decent side. You don't get to the last 16 of a national competition if you are not a good team," remarked Tony O'Dowd of Rovers at the end.

"We were very pleased with our own display. The boys have a good attitude. They work hard in training and that shows out on the pitch."

Tony was a top goalkeeper. And he was among those that admired the contribution of the Castleview number one, Jamie O'Connor.

He made a deep basket of saves. And he was brave. And agile too. Like all the great 'keepers, he did all that he could to make the target smaller for the in-coming striker. A page from the book of Gordon Banks.

Jamie's best save came early on when he managed to tip

a scorching shot from Ike Olazi over the bar.

There were many more where that came from. Including two more superb stops from Cian Meleady and Max McLoughlin.

Rocco Byrne, in the home goal, had a quiet afternoon. A solid defence made sure of that. But whatever Rocco had to do, he did well. Rocco's Dad, Nicky, was a fine goalie himself before the Westlife call.

Castleview's Jamie Kelly also earned the praise, while the tackle of the day came from Luke Hurley in the centre-circle. It was a tackle that Charlie Hurley would have been proud of.

A fresh breeze blew down from the Dublin Mountains, but that didn't put the hosts off their stride. Olaf Boruc guided the ball inside the right-hand post at the pavilion end on six minutes for the opening goal.

In the home engine-room, Zac Reddy was pulling more strings than a concert harpist. Striking some pretty passes all over the stage. Mervin Chan and two goals from Cian Meleady made it four before the tea.

Rovers kept up their high standards, and further goals came McLoughlin, Seba Fravega, McLoughlin again, and two from Chan for his hat-trick.

SHAMROCK ROVERS: Rocco Byrne; Conor Loughheed, Tadhg Jegbefume, Seba Fravega, Dani Mare, Cian Meleady, Zac Reddy, Ike Olazi, Cillian Petcher, Max McLoughlin, Mervin Chan, Olaf Boruc, Todd Bazynu.

CASTLEVIEW: Jamie O'Connor; Kyle O'Callaghan, Evan Lynch, Evan Crowley, Jamie Kelly, Luke Hurley, Scott Hallissey, James O'Sullivan, Scott O'Sullivan, Alan Falat, Mark Ngengebula, Jamie McCarthy, Scott Cronin.

Referee: John Shevlin (opposite).



STRIKERONLINE...STRIKERONLINE...STRIKERONLINE...