

O'Sullivan Cup

The group stages of the O'Sullivan Cup have drawn to a close, with the top two finishers in each section qualifying for a semi-final.

The tightly-contested A section was won on 22.5 points by an extremely strong **Kilkenny A** side boasting the likes of Donal Fennelly and Jack Lowry, both of whom have serious pedigree and history in the Leinster Leagues. Runners-up, on 21.5, were **Bray/Greystones**, who had some excellent results against the likes of Ballinasloe and St. Benildus.

Gonzaga have their captain (!) to blame after a mix-up regarding dates saw them concede the Bray match 5-0 and consequently finish in third on 19.5 points, missing out on the chance to catch their opponents in the table. **Skerries A**, who finished 4th on 16 points, will look at their draw against Bray as the highlight of a reasonably good season which saw them lose only to Kilkenny and Gonzaga. **Blanchardstown** started strongly with a 5-0 defeat of Ballinasloe only to come a little bit unstuck later on, ultimately scoring 9 points, while **St. Benildus** came 6th on 7 points. Ballinasloe finished bottom on 4.5 points, but can take pride in a fine 2.5-2.5 draw against Gonzaga.

The B section saw a straight shoot out between Rathmines and Malahide for top spot. Despite losing the head-to-head match, **Rathmines** good enough to win out by a single point, finishing on 26. Despite **Malahide** winning more games, they were forced to settle for the runner-up spot and a tricky semi-final clash away to Kilkenny A.

Kilkenny B, considering they were their club's second team, did extremely well to break the 20 point barrier and finish 3rd on 21 points. The **Curragh** will be disappointed that they were hamstrung with player availability and could only manage 4th place on 17 points, but can take heart in some strong junior talents emerging, most notably **James Murphy**. They will certainly be a team to watch next year.

Two more teams stacked with new players, **Naomh Barrog** and **Gorey**, will be content with their maiden performances, scoring 16.5 and 16 points respectively. A more experienced looking **Dublin** team came a half point behind that on 15.5. Bottom of the table were **Skerries B**, who showed great tenacity for a young side, eventually picking up their first point of the season through Owen Johnston on the final day.

Often, the teams near the top of the table at the season's end tend to have players near the top of the individual scorer's table, and Section A neatly followed this rule, Kilkenny A and Bray/Greystones monopolising the board prizes. **Jasvinderpal Singh** (Kilkenny A) topped the table on 5.5/6, while Bray's **Allen Gaughan** finished second with 5/6. Kilkenny stalwart **Donal Fennelly** and **Patrick Quill** of Bray (both 4.5/6) were also amongst the winners.

Four players in the B section also won board prizes, three of whom finished on 6 points: **Jimmy Deneher** (Malahide), **Utkarsh Gupta** (Rathmines) and Murphy of Curragh. The final winner was **Matt Burke** of Malahide, who scored 5.5/6.

The semi-finals will be between Kilkenny A and Malahide on one side and Rathmines and Bray/Greystones on the other. The matches may be played on any date between now and 17th April,

when the two winning teams will join players from all of the other leagues to play each other in a play-off for the trophy and title of O'Sullivan Cup champions 2016.

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