

DEFEAT OF THE BLACKROCK MEN

The finals for the hurling and football championships of Munster in connection with the All-Ireland Gaelic Championships for 1897 took place at Tipperary on Sunday. The hurling champions of Cork County, the famous Blackrock team, encountered a hitherto little known combination in the persons of the Kilfinane hurlers, who this year defeated the Cappamore team in the Limerick County contests and the Tulla men in the Inter-County match between Limerick and Clare.

The special train which left Cork at 10.30 in the morning carried an exceedingly large contingent to the field of play, and the crowd which accompanied the opposing teams from Limerick was not one bit smaller. When the two crowds had gathered around the field of play, together with a large number from Tipperary and neighbouring districts, the scene presented was a striking one. There has seldom been gathered together so large a concourse of Gaelic followers in Munster, and certainly, there has never been so numerous an attendance on the Tipperary ground.

Thanks to the Tipperary County Board the field was well protected all round by destructive looking barbed wire, which had the satisfactory effect of keeping an absolutely fair field throughout both matches. A finer day could not be desired. There was a full burst of sunshine from a slightly clouded sky, and a pleasant breeze across the valley lent a coolness and crispness to the atmosphere which proved most invigorating and enjoyable. A delay of nearly three quarters of an hour took place before the hurling match commenced, and this was due, we are told, to the fact that the referee, Mr D Woods, of Dublin, not being able to be on the field in time. Referees when appointed to act in an important match of this kind should arrange to be punctually in attendance, and the Central Council should see that a substitute should be promptly found with the consent of the competing teams. The display of hurling between the Blackrock and Kilfinane men was as fine an exhibition of the game as has been seen in the South of Ireland for many years. It was stated that Blackrock had one or two substitutes on, but even apart from

this they were pitted against a team, who on Sunday's showing were, for the time being at all events, superior in method of attack, in combination, and in speed. The Kilfinane men were a lighter lot than the Rockies, who appeared to lack their usual dash, and when any passing tactics were indulged in the Cork men seemed to forget the very essentials of such a game—the men were not in their places. If we were to search for an excuse for so indifferent an exhibition by our champions we think we would not be far wrong in saying that the Blackrock boys relied too much on their prestige rather than on real hard and continuous practice. One thing, however, redounds to their credit, and that is that they accepted their defeat like true and thorough sportsmen that they are. This has ever and always been a characteristic of this team. Though their reverse was not altogether unexpected, still one would have scarcely imagined seeing so large a score piled up against them. If we know anything of the Blackrock men we can rely on their retrieving their reputation as champions of all Ireland at an early date, and perhaps no one more than themselves will

sooner recognise the lesson in the result of Sunday's match. To the victors every praise is due. They won their match fairly and squarely. They won it because they were a better trained lot, and knew each other's play better than was the case with their opponents. No better proof of this could be afforded than by their being able to score four goals and nine points against the one goal and six points recorded for the Cork County men. As already indicated the utmost good-fellowship and order prevailed during the afternoon; notwithstanding the immense number of persons in the town everything passed off quietly.

The final in the hurling was—

Kilfinane—4 goals and 9 points.

Blackrock—1 goal and 6 points.