



Vol 11. Issue 3
May/June, 2021

Into the West



The bi-monthly magazine of the Connacht GAA Council



Summer has landed

Mayo and Sligo kick off the championship

We're going up!

Sligo hurlers celebrate promotion



OFFICIAL GAA PUBLICATION

€2.50



Nóta an Uachtaráin

Dear friends,

It is great that everything is finally opening up again after such a long time. The lockdown hit the GAA hard but we can now look forward to a somewhat normal summer, with weekends jam-packed full of GAA action.

There is great excitement in all of the communities and especially among the players. At club level it is kicking off as well but for now the inter-county championship should really capture the imagination.

The players will get the chance to get out and play really competitive championship matches. It's a wonderful time for them too to be able to express themselves again. The summer is always that bit special in Ireland.

But for the supporters, they can watch on whatever social media platform they decide while the TV coverage has really upped it too. You can nearly even watch every club game these days. And that is a tremendous prospect after the terrible 18 months that went before.

All eyes will be on Markievicz Park this weekend when Sligo welcome Mayo to their backyard. The reigning champions appear to be going well. But Galway were going well too until they just slipped up in the last league match against Monaghan. It is quite an open Connacht championship this year. Roscommon, Sligo and Leitrim will be right there too so it will be interesting to see how that unfolds.

The Galway hurlers are in a real rich vein of form and look set to put it up to Limerick this year. Hopefully they will have a long Liam MacCarthy Cup campaign to look forward to while the other Connacht counties will also be competitive across their various competitions.

The Ladies football and camogie has never been so competitive as well while in terms of the underage structure, there were fixture changes and the Connacht U-17 and U-20 championships will be played out across the various venues in the province.

We have a fine facility here at Bekan, it is complete now and that is a testament to our brilliant staff who worked so hard to get this across the line.

The pandemic, if it has done nothing else, has made us appreciate sport even more. We longed for the days when football, hurling, Ladies football and camogie would be back on our screens.

It is going to be an exciting summer. We go straight through to December and I believe the club scene will come out of this very well. They have the latter end of the year. The club scene will grow to be even stronger in that space.

But I just can't wait for this weekend and a huge game, we will know a lot more come Saturday evening!

Is mise, le meas

John Murphy
Uachtarán Chomhairle Connacht



JOHN MURPHY
Connacht GAA President

Nóta an Rúnaí

A chairde,

CHAMPIONSHIP season is well and truly upon us and the excitement is mounting ahead of the throw-in of the Connacht SFC next Saturday afternoon.

It's great to be at this stage, we have had so much hardship over the past year and finally there is a light at the end of the tunnel with the GAA in full flight.

The summer weather is a big help too and we are thrilled to look out on a glistening Connacht GAA Centre of Excellence at Bekan, complete with dome and all.

Good things are certainly coming and for many the attentions will turn to the meeting of Sligo and Mayo at Markievicz Park this weekend. It's an awesome prospect.

There's plenty happening on the field this weekend and Leitrim will look to take home their first piece of silverware this season, when they clash with Louth in the Ladies Football Division 4 final on Sunday.

Looking back on the respective leagues it was a mixed bag for the Connacht counties, especially on the football front, but there was still plenty of promise even though Galway and Roscommon suffered relegation. I have no doubt that they will bounce back in the coming weeks.

Our reigning Connacht champions Mayo are looking to peak again in the championship this season and they had a really solid league campaign, highlighted by their promotion.

Sligo and Leitrim will also have their say and who knows, we could see a few shocks along the way.

In the hurling fields, Galway have laid down their marker early in the season while Mayo, Roscommon, Sligo and Leitrim can all carry through some fresh optimism of making a big impression in the months ahead.

One notable thing during this lockdown was the increase in sports coverage on TV. And it was brilliant to see Ladies football and camogie getting their time to shine too.

Our Connacht counties have done us proud in 2021 and I know they will continue to do so across the summer. And maybe we will have some big dates to look forward to at Croke Park later in the year.

Is mise, le meas

John Prenty
Rúnaí, CLG Cuige Connachta



'Into the West'



Keep yourself in the loop. Sign up today for your free electronic copy of the magazine - emailed directly to your Inbox. To sign up, email magazine@connachtgaa.ie

'Into the West' is produced by the Connacht GAA Council. Editor: John Fallon. Published by: Pádraig Corcoran.

News and photographs for inclusion can be emailed to magazine@connachtgaa.ie. To obtain an electronic copy of the magazine each quarter, free of charge, email: magazine@connachtgaa.ie.

• Deadline for advertising and copy will be announced on the Connacht Council website - www.connachtgaa.ie.

Contents



Mayo hold off Clare surge to book passage back to top flight

- [Galway slump to Division 24](#)
- [Roscommon also bow out after struggle ...5](#)
- [Mayo earn promotion at first time of asking12](#)
- [Sligo fail to get their early season silverware17](#)
- [Leitrim found wanting against Louth19](#)
- [Tribesmen continue to build23](#)
- [Niland looks ahead27](#)
- [Tough defeat for Mayo30](#)
- [Two points the difference35](#)
- [Mayo Ladies miss out on league final38](#)
- [Galway suffer shock heavy loss.....39](#)
- [Derby victory for Mayo43](#)



Sligo promotion dream over



Galway secure top spot.

- [Sligo see off Roscommon44](#)
- [Strange Down goal doesn't derail Roscommon.....45](#)
- [Leitrim in red hot form48](#)
- [Clare almost dismantle Galway.....50](#)
- [Roscommon's campaign picks up pace52](#)
- [Mayo have 13 points to spare53](#)
- [Connacht championship fixtures54](#)
- [Ladies take centre stages55](#)
- [Nationwide club competition56](#)
- [Sligo thank frontline workers60](#)
- [St Nathy's are one good club62](#)
- [Ewing calls time on his career64](#)
- [Cathal Flynn tribute66](#)
- [Huge step in the right direction for Ladies football.....68](#)
- [Mullaney tells a powerful story71](#)
- [Gaelic4Girls sponsorship75](#)
- [O'Connor injury is massive blow76](#)
- [A full Croke Park is the dream...78](#)
- [Future looks bright according to Walsh ...81](#)
- [Turloughmore plans82.](#)

COVER PICTURES – SUMMER HAS LANDED: Mayo's Lee Keegan ahead of their championship opener against Sligo this weekend. Photo: Stephen McCarthy / SPORTSFILE.

Inset – WE'RE GOING UP: Kieran Prior of Sligo fist bumps with selector Donal Tully. Photo: Harry Murphy / SPORTSFILE.

McCarron Galway's tormentor

Monaghan1-21

Galway2-17

(AET)

By RONAN O'NEILL

JACK McCarron was the ace in the pack for Monaghan as he came off the bench to score 0-7 and doom Galway to life in Division 2 of the National Football League.

It was a titanic struggle at St Tienach's Park in Clones and although Galway looked set for a comfortable victory in normal time, Monaghan fought back to tie the game before a sensational ending where they snatched the win.

Shane Walsh scored 0-7 for the Tribesmen but he missed some vital opportunities near the end and Galway were left to rue these chances as Padraic Joyce suffered a heavy blow to his championship plans.

Galway looked in control when they took a 2-6 to 0-9 lead into half-time of normal time, following goals from Paul Kelly and Robert Finnerty.

They then led by three points approaching the end of the 70 minutes but Darren Hughes struck



for a tonic goal before McCarron took charge again in extra-time.

It looked set to finish 2-17 to 1-20 after Matthew Tierney's superb mark and subsequent point but Monaghan had one last chance, and fittingly it was McCarron who scored the

PASS: Seán Kelly of Galway in action against Karl McMenamin of Monaghan.

Photo: Ray McManus / SPORTSFILE.

winner with the scenes of jubilation that followed for the Farney men.

SCORERS - Monaghan: J McCarron (0-7, 2 frees), D Hughes (1-1), C McManus (0-4, 2 frees), D Ward (0-3), R McAnespie (0-2), R Beggan (0-1, 1 45), K O'Connell (0-1), S Carey (0-1), K Duffy (0-1).

Galway: S Walsh (0-7, 6 frees), R Finnerty (1-3, 0-1 mark), P Kelly (1-1), M Tierney (0-2, 1 45, 1m) E Brannigan (0-1), K Molloy (0-1), C Sweeney (0-1), J Duane (0-1).

MONAGHAN: R Beggan; D Ward, K McMenamin, R Wylie; K Duffy, C Boyle, K O'Connell; N Kearns, K Lavelle; R Bannigan, C McCarthy, R McAnespie; S O'Hanlon, A Woods, C McManus. **Subs:** J McCarron for Woods (11); D Hughes for Bannigan (h/t); F Kelly for O'Connell (47); A Mulligan for Lavelle (51); G Mohan for O'Hanlon & S Hanratty for R Wylie (65). S Carey for McCarthy, B McBennett for Kearns & Bannigan for McMenamin (e/t); O'Connell for Boyle (83); McCarthy for Mohan (86), Wylie for Duffy (89).

GALWAY: C Gleeson; S Kelly, J Glynn, S Mul Kerrin; K Molloy, D McHugh, L Silke; P Conroy, M Tierney; E Brannigan, P Cooke, F O Laoi; R Finnerty, S Walsh, P Kelly. **Subs:** J Heaney for Brannigan (32); J Duane for Glynn (h/t); C Sweeney for Molloy & D Connelly for Kelly (51); G O'Donnell for O Laoi (63); T Culhane for Finnerty & M O Bairread for Walsh (68). Walsh for Culhane & Finnerty for Heaney (e/t); Molloy for Silke (83); Culhane for Finnerty & O Laoi for Cooke (88).

REF: D Gough (Meath).



FORWARD: Galway substitute Cathal Sweeney powers past the challenge of Aaron Mulligan during the National Football League relegation play-off against Monaghan.

Photo: Ray McManus / SPORTSFILE.



SHOULDER: Galway attacker Finnian Ó Laoi takes on Monaghan's Aaron Mulligan in Clones, Monaghan.

Photo: Ray McManus / SPORTSFILE.

Roscommon relegated after failing to ignite



SHOVE: Richard Hughes is tackled by Tiernan Kelly in the relegation play-off.
Photo: Ramsey Cardy / SPORTSFILE.

Armagh1-17
Roscommon0-11

By IAN COONEY
Roscommon Herald

Roscommon will be playing Division Two football in 2022 after being comprehensively beaten by Armagh, 1-17 to 0-11, at the Athletic grounds.

Roscommon started with intent, moving into a 0-5 to 0-1 lead after 13 minutes with Diarmuid and Ciarán Murtagh kicking some superb points.

But the water break completely disrupted any momentum the visitors had built up, with two Jemar Hall points on the resumption hinted at a sign of things to come.

When Richard Hughes was overturned, Oisín O'Neill struck for a goal to confirm how decisively the pendulum had swung in Armagh's favour.

Conor Cox and substitute Niall Daly did stem the bleeding before half time to leave Roscommon trailing by 1-7 to 0-7.

With Niall Grimley, Rian O'Neill

and Stefan Campbell running the show in the second half, Armagh comfortably kept Roscommon at arm's length to run out comfortable winners.

SCORERS - Armagh: R O'Neill 0-5 (2f, 1m), O O'Neill 1-1, J Hall (1m) and R Grugan (2f) 0-3 each, A Murnin 0-2 (1m), S Campbell, N Grimley and G McCabe 0-1 each

Roscommon: C Cox 0-5 (2f, 1m), C Murtagh 0-3 (1f 1m), D Murtagh 0-2, N Daly 0-1.

ARMAGH: B Hughes; R Finn, G McCabe, A McKay; A Forker, C Mackin, C O'Hanlon; N

PRESSURE: Armagh players Ross Finn (left) and Oisín O'Neill surround Roscommon's Donie Smith.

Photo:
Ramsey Cardy /
SPORTSFILE.

DIVISION 1 NORTH

Pos	Team	Pld	W	D	L	PF	PA	PD	Pts
1	Donegal	3	1	2	0	38	36	+2	4
2	Tyrone	3	1	1	1	37	34	+3	3
3	Armagh	3	1	1	1	35	36	-1	3
4	Monaghan	3	0	2	1	35	39	-4	2

DIVISION 1 SOUTH

Pos	Team	Pld	W	D	L	PF	PA	PD	Pts
1	Kerry (C)	3	2	1	0	75	47	+28	5
2	Dublin (C)	3	2	1	0	68	55	+13	5
3	Galway (R)	3	1	0	2	51	71	-20	2
4	Roscommon (R)	3	0	0	3	47	68	-21	0

Dublin and Kerry share the 2021 NFL title.

Galway and Roscommon are relegated to Division 2



HIGH: Roscommon's Shane Killoran times his jump right to catch the ball ahead of Connaire Mackin.

Photo: Ramsey Cardy / SPORTSFILE.

Walsh dominates but improved Galway lose

Dublin2-16
Galway1-15

By **JOHN FALLON**
Media West Ireland

DUBLIN qualified for the semi-finals of the Allianz League with a hard-earned 2-16 to 1-15 win over Galway in an entertaining contest at Tuam Stadium.

Goals from Con O'Callaghan and Aaron Byrne proved decisive for the All-Ireland champions, with Galway now set to face a relegation play-off.

The sides were level six times in the opening with Shane Walsh's fifth point of the half drawing them level at 0-08 apiece just before the interval.

Galway won the toss and opted to play against the strong breeze in the opening half and were in a strong position at the break when they went in level.

The sides were level six times in the opening half with Galway captain Walsh leading the way with five points, two which came from 45s and two from frees.

Galway were forced to line out without Damien Comer who picked up a hand injury but they made a good start with points from Peter Cooke and Paul Conroy, while Dublin goalkeeper Michael Shiel and Davy Byrne blocked goal efforts from Matthew Tierney and Sean Kelly.

The All-Ireland champions settled



TURN: Galway captain Shane Walsh spins clear of Dublin's David Byrne in their Division 1 South game. Photo: Ramsey Cardy / SPORTSFILE.

and worked the ball well into attack and got back on level terms through Brian Fenton and Colm Basquel.

The sides then exchanged points three times before Ciaran Kilkenny and Con O'Callaghan edged Dublin 0-07 to 0-05 in front after half an hour.

Walsh hit back with a couple of points for the hosts and when

TURN: Galway captain Shane Walsh spins clear of David Byrne in their Div 1 South game.

Photo:
Ramsey Cardy /
SPORTSFILE.

Cormac Costello edged Dublin back in front with his second point, Walsh tied them at the break with another pointed free.

O'Callaghan gave the Leinster men a great start to the second half when he finished to the net after Bernard Power had saved from Niall Scully and that gave them a cushion for the third quarter.

Joyce left frustrated by relegation play-off venue

GALWAY manager Pádraic Joyce has hit out at them having to travel to Monaghan for their relegation play-off and he doesn't believe Séamus McEnaney's men should have home advantage after breaking Covid rules around training during lockdown.

"I'm just after being told it is away because they had no home games and we had two home games so they are being rewarded for breaking a curfew and I find that unbelievable to be honest," said Joyce.

"It's a joke if you ask me and I don't know how Croke Park came up with that solution to play in Monaghan. We will play wherever it

By **JOHN FALLON** Media West Ireland

is on but I think it disrespects the whole system and the whole Allianz League if you are going rewarding a county to get a home vital game when you broke the rules."

Avoiding the drop became the main priority for Joyce in his second year in charge but, for the third year in a row, Damien Comer was a major doubt for the start of the championship having picked up a hand injury in the win over Roscommon.

"He is one of our better players so it is a

huge injury blow. He is going to be out for three, four, or five weeks. He did his thumb last Sunday against Roscommon, he played on with it in the second half, but he has taken the tendon off the bone. He is in a bit of bother and is in a race against time to be fit for the Championship.

"This is his third year in a row so he needs some sort of break, at least it isn't a muscle injury. He may be able to do some conditioning work. If he comes back in time he will just need the ball handling skills to go with it. Before he had leg injuries which stopped him training," added Joyce.



CLEAR: Galway goalkeeper Bernard Power moves up the field.

Photo: Ramsey Cardy / SPORTSFILE.

Walsh continued to keep Galway in touch with an array of points but they still trailed by 1-14 to 0-12 heading into the final quarter.

But then a delivery from Paul Conroy was flicked to the net by Matthew Tierney to cut the gap to two points after 57 minutes.

However, the Tribesmen never managed to get any closer as Costello took his haul to six points.

Dublin wrapped up the win when Byrne finished superbly after being put through by O'Callaghan in the dying moments of a good game to set up a semi-final meeting with Donegal, while Galway were set to face Monaghan in a relegation play-off.

SCORERS - Dublin: C O'Callaghan 1-3; C Costello 0-6 (0-1f); A Byrne 1-0; C Kilkenny 0-3; B Fenton (1 mark), C Basquel 0-2 each.

Galway: S Walsh 0-10 (0-5f, 0-3 '45); M Tierney 1-0, P Cooke 0-2; Rob Finnerty, P Conroy, D McHugh 0-1 each.

DUBLIN: M Shiel; M Fitzsimons, J Cooper, D Byrne; E Murchan, S McMahon, E Lowndes; B Fenton, P O Cofaigh Byrne; N Scully, C Kilkenny, B Howard; C Basquel, C O'Callaghan, C Costello. **Subs:** S Bugler for O Cofaigh Byrne (51), R McDaid for McMahon (51), D Mullin for Scully (64), A Byrne for Basquel (65), T Lahiff for Cooper (72)

GALWAY: B Power; J Glynn, S Mulkerrin, S Kelly; K Molloy, D McHugh, L Silke; F O Laoi, P Conroy; P Kelly, P Cooke, J Heaney; M Tierney, S Walsh, Rob Finnerty.

Subs: E Brannigan for P Kelly (45), C Potter for Glynn (48), M O Bairead for O Laoi (53), T Culhane for Finnerty (59), T Flynn for Cooke (63), J Duane for Molloy (63).

REF: Brendan Cawley (Kildare).

Glynn looks set to return

By **JOHN FALLON** Media West Ireland

GALWAY manager Padraic Joyce received a timely boost ahead of their relegation showdown with Monaghan with the U-20 Footballer of the Year Jack Glynn set to be fit for the encounter in Clones.

Glynn, who skippered the Tribesmen to success against Dublin in the All-Ireland U-20 final last December, went off in extreme pain in the second-half of their league clash with the Dubs in Tuam Stadium.

Joyce, with former captain Damien Comer doubtful for the start of the championship with a hand injury, feared the worst for the promising corner-back in the aftermath of the 2-16 to 1-15 loss to the All-Ireland champions.

"He hyper extended his elbow. It doesn't look too good," said Joyce.

However, a scan revealed a mild elbow strain and he was expected to be back when Galway would bid to hold on to their top flight status in a game where Joyce had voiced his anger at having to travel to Monaghan to play the game.

Glynn, who won't be 21 until next November, has settled into the senior grade with ease and after a good showing against Dublin until he got injured, his availability would be a big boost for Joyce.

Glynn became the first defender in a decade since Dublin's Rory O'Carroll in 2010 to win the U-20 Footballer of the Year and the Claregalway clubman is the first from Galway since Ian Burke in 2013 to win it.



CLASH: Galway's Kieran Molloy and Ciarán Kilkenny of Dublin challenge for possession at Tuam Stadium.

Photo: Ramsey Cardy / SPORTSFILE.

Three without a win for Roscommon

Kerry2-15
Roscommon1-12

By JAMES MURPHY

THE 14 men of Kerry were still too strong for Roscommon on their home patch as David Clifford scored 1-4 in another win for the Kingdom.

Peter Keane's men remained unbeaten in Division 1 South of the National Football League, following on from their massive win over Galway and the comeback draw with reigning All-Ireland champions Dublin.

For Roscommon, they were already set for a relegation play-off, and their third successive defeat meant they headed into a play-off against Armagh, hoping to regroup and get their season back on track ahead of the championship.

Kerry were 0-10 to 0-7 ahead at half-time and despite Tadhg Morley's sending off, goals from David Clifford and Joe O'Connor were enough to stave off any potential shock when Conor Devaney found the Kerry net.

Kerry only needed a point to seal their place in the final four but it was Roscommon who lead after the opening quarter at Dr Hyde Park.

But Kerry pushed on after the water break with Paudie Clifford and Diarmuid O'Connor scored points as Kerry rushed into a four-point advantage.

At half-time that lead would be three and it would be whittled down further before the game was level, 0-11 to 0-11, by the 45th minute.

Roscommon had showed a marked improvement after their poor showing against Connacht rivals Galway in Pearse Stadium and they had their chance to pull off an unlikely win.

Enda Smith levelled proceedings when he scored from a mark and although Kerry came back to take the lead again Morley was sent-off for a high tackle on Cian McKeon.

But one of the crucial scores came in the 57th minute when the two Clifford brothers combined with David Clifford finishing to the net.

Roscommon couldn't keep tabs with their visitors and despite a late



Devaney goal, O'Connor hit back and ensured Kerry left with their second win of the campaign.

SCORERS - Kerry: D Clifford 1-4 (0-3 frees); P Geaney (1 free, 1 mark), D O'Connor 0-3 each; J O'Connor 1-0; T Brosnan, P Clifford 0-2 each; R Buckley 0-1.

Roscommon: C Murtagh, D Murtagh (1 mark) 0-3 each; C Devaney 1-0; D Smith (1 free), C Cox 0-2 each; R Hughes, E Smith (mark) 0-1 each.

KERRY: K Fitzgibbon; G O'Sullivan, J Foley, T O'Sullivan; B Ó Beaglaioich, G Crowley, M Breen; D Moran, D O'Connor; S O'Brien, R Buckley, P Geaney; D Clifford, T Brosnan, P Clifford. **Subs:** A Spillane for D Moran (blood, 1-3); S O'Shea for R Buckley, P Murphy for G O'Sullivan (both 46); T Walsh for T Brosnan, T Morley for T O'Sullivan (both 52); G White for P Geaney (55); J Sherwood for D Moran (67); J O'Connor for S O'Brien (70+1).

ROSCOMMON: C Lavin; B Stack, C Daly, D Murray; R Daly, C Hussey, R Hughes; E Smith, T O'Rourke; N Kilroy, C Murtagh, S Killoran; D Murtagh, D Smith, C Cox.

Subs: C McKeon for D Smith (50); P Gillooly for C Cox, H Darcy for N Kilroy (both 55); E Nolan for T O'Rourke, S Mullooly for R Daly (both 62); C Devaney for S Killoran (67); D Ruane for D Murtagh (68).

REF: J McQuillan (Cavan).

OPENING: Roscommon's Richard Hughes surveys his options against David Clifford of Kerry in the National Football League.

Photo: Brendan Moran / SPORTSFILE.

Galway2-16
Roscommon1-13

By JOHN FALLON
Media West Ireland

AFTER what happened in Tralee this was a match that Galway simply had to win and they were good value for it on a typically windy day in Salthill but it's doubtful if either side will place much stock on it when they clash in the Connacht semi-final at Hyde Park on July 4.

Recent championship clashes between them have paid scant heed to the formbook and the shortened league campaign with them lumped in with Dublin and Kerry probably set the sights on their Independence Day showdown even more.

"I'm sure the match on the 4th of July will be ten times more intense than what that one was," said Galway manager Padraic Joyce. He got what he wanted from this game, a good recovery after the 22-point hammering in Tralee and a crack at Dublin in Tuam Stadium with something to play for.

"There's another juggernaut coming down the road at us, full tilt, but it is in our own hands. If we beat Dublin we qualify for a league semi-final and that's the approach we are taking towards the game."

The fact that several of his charges tasted success in the All-Ireland U-20 final against Dublin last December would have been no harm as they were set to entertain the six in a row champions at their traditional home in Tuam.

"The U-20 win will help them and a lot of these lads have played Dublin three or four times but we under no illusions. We are probably playing the best team that has played football ever. They have won six All-Irelands in a row and we know well it will be a dogfight in Tuam, a battle, and we have to hope we can come out the right side of it."

This was Galway's first competitive win since trouncing Tyrone in the league back in February last year — nobody in the county can recall them ever going 15 months before without winning a game — and Joyce was pleased with the response to the Kerry collapse.

"They trained hard all week and, in fairness, the only way was up after last week and they produced the goods today, kicking 2-16 and probably not playing as well as they can

Galway take the spoils before Connacht championship renewal

play. You'd have to be proud of the lads. They worked hard and put a bit of pride and passion back in the jersey and got the result they deserved in the end.

"We know Roscommon are a good side and they probably didn't perform to the level they can today, but maybe we stifled that a bit as well.

"The early goal was a huge boost. We are always trying to set the tone of the game and get control of it straight away. Roscommon had a wide and we came up the pitch, worked the ball well and in fairness to Paul, he stuck the goal well."

That goal from Paul Kelly, after being set up by a surge in from the right by Damien Comer, was a big blow to a Roscommon side who opted for wind advantage but found themselves 1-7 to 0-8 adrift after failing to make the most of the elements.

Rob Finnerty was in superb form for Galway, kicking four points before the break and adding a fifth in the



TACKLE: Paul Conroy in action against Cathal Cregg (right) and Eddie Nolan.

Photo: Harry Murphy / SPORTSFILE.

second-half, all of them from play except for the opener which he got from a mark.

Three points from Shane Walsh and another from Finnerty, with Donie Smith and Murtagh responding, left Galway leading by 1-11 to 0-10 after 47 minutes and they took a four-point lead into the second water break after Walsh and Donie Smith exchanged points.

Donie Smith added a free to cut the gap to a goal with 13 minutes remaining but Comer landed a good effort to restore their four-point advantage before Walsh pushed it out to five with a superb point from play.

Ciarain Murtagh gave Roscommon hope when he fisted a Shane Killoran delivery to the net but then Galway found the net when Tomo Culhane fisted home after goalkeeper Lavin failed to deal with a delivery from another sub Dessie Conneely, leaving Roscommon without a point after two games.

"The positive for us is that we played well to get back in the match, to get a great goal, but then to concede a goal straight after is something that can't happen at this level because the game was effectively over then," said Roscommon manager Anthony Cunningham.

"That's disappointing but something we will be working on week on week and hopefully we will be all set for the 4th of July, which is our big day of destiny this year."

SCORERS - Galway: S Walsh 0-7 (5f), R Finnerty 0-5 (1m), T Culhane 1-1, P Kelly 1-0, D Comer 0-2, J Heaney 0-1.

Roscommon: C Murtagh 1-5 (4f), D Smith 0-7 (5f), E Smith 0-1.

GALWAY: B Power; S Kelly, S Mulkerrin, J Glynn; K Molloy, D McHugh, L Silke; M Tierney, P Conroy; P Kelly, D Comer, F O'Laio; R Finnerty, E Brannigan, S Walsh.

Subs: P Cooke for P Kelly (42), J Heaney for Brannigan (49), D Conneely for Finnerty (61), T Culhane for Tierney (61), R Steede for Comer (68), J Duane for McHugh (70), G O'Donnell for Molloy (70).

ROSCOMMON: C Lavin; D Murray, G Patterson, N Daly; B Stack, R Hughes, S Mullooly; E Nolan, T O'Rourke; C Devaney, C Cregg, E Smith; D Smith, C McKeon, C Murtagh. **Subs:** D Neary for Patterson (29), C Hussey for Hughes (h-t), D Murtagh for Devaney (h-t), S Killoran for McKeon (47), C Cox for Cregg (50), N Kilroy for Nolan (50), H Darcy for C Murtagh (67).

REF: David Coldrick (Meath).

Finnerty wants further improvement

By JOHN FALLON Media West Ireland

GALWAY forward Rob Finnerty wanted to back up his best performance yet for the Tribesmen by having a crack at Dublin with a league semi-final spot up for grabs.

The Salthill/Knocknacarra clubman shot five points in their 2-16 to 1-13 win over neighbours Roscommon. The first came from a mark and the other four were sublime efforts from play as Padraic Joyce's men bounced back from their 22-point drubbing by Kerry.

They were set to host All-Ireland champions Dublin in Tuam battling for a semi-final spot or facing a relegation play-off if they lost.

But Finnerty, whose dad Anthony played in the 1989 and '96 All-Ireland finals for Mayo, said the key factor against Roscommon was to post a response to the heavy Kerry loss.

"We just knew in our situation that we had to win this one. It was as simple as that. If we didn't win we would be looking at relegation but we have given ourselves a chance now, I suppose, to aim for the league semi-finals.

"We are delighted and after last week it was great to bounce back and we're looking forward to Dublin now.

"We started off well and, it's funny, we often play better against the wind in Pearse Stadium.

We got a good start, the early goal pushed us on. We were obviously very disappointed after last week and we were just looking to bounce back and now we are just looking forward to Dublin."

Finnerty said that their Connacht semi-final showdown against Roscommon on July 4 wasn't mentioned during the week as they put all their focus on this league meeting with Anthony Cunningham's side.

"Any time you get beaten by 22 points you are going to be disappointed. But it's early in the season yet so we just stuck together for the week and we said we would put in a big shift against Roscommon and I think that showed.

"We will take confidence from the performance, everyone worked hard and hopefully we will get the win against Dublin."

Finnerty, a key member of the Galway minor team which reached the 2016 All-Ireland and the U-21 final the following year, said he was delighted to see the points flying over against Roscommon but feels there is more in the tank.

"I was pleased enough but I left two soft ones behind me so I am not too happy with myself but I suppose five from seven was alright, I'll take it. It is probably my best shooting form with Galway so far, so I'll take and push on next week against Dublin," he added.

Costello blitz ends home hopes



Dublin1-22
Roscommon0-16

By TOM MURPHY

CORMAC Costello was the chief sharpshooter for Dublin as they were too strong for Roscommon in their National Football League Division 1 South opener.

The longest off-season in the history of the GAA finally ended but the six-in-a-row All-Ireland champions came to Dr Hyde Park and left with a nine-point win in a drab affair.

Costello was in outstanding form and the Whitehall Colmcille attacker began his 2021 campaign with a scorching display taking full advantage of the new rule changes.

For Anthony Cunningham and his Roscommon players, they had to regroup ahead of a clash with Connacht rivals Galway in Round 2.

Meanwhile Dublin had to make do without their manager with Dessie Farrell beginning his suspension from the sidelines but it mattered little to the men from the capital who

shone in front of goal.

Dublin were 1-12 to 0-9 in front at half-time after Costello's goal and that would be the difference in the end, ensuring they did not have to worry about a comeback threat from their hosts.

Michael Shiel, Tom Lahiff, Dara Mullin and Sean McMahon all came into the Dublin starting 15 before throw-in and Dublin were especially brilliant before the first water break.

The decisive score came in the 18th minute after Brian Stack fouled the advancing Paddy Small. Costello slotted the resultant penalty, Stack was shown a black card for his involvement and Dublin never looked back.

Dublin continued to push before half-time and even though Niall Daly, Donie Smith and Ciaran Murtagh scored for Roscommon, Costello left the field with 1-8 already to his name.

Dublin piled on the pressure again after half-time and Costello was presented with his second penalty opportunity when Fergal Lennon fouled Dara Mullin. Lennon was sent to the sin-bin but this time Costello missed his spot-kick.



Colm Lavin plays the ball forward.
 Photos: Stephen McCarthy / SPORTSFILE.

A couple of Donie Smith frees kept Roscommon in touch but Dublin saw out the final quarter.

SCORERS - Dublin: C Costello 1-13 (0-8f, 1-1 pen, 0-1m), C Kilkenny 0-4 (0-1m), P Small 0-2, B Fenton, T Lahiff and D Mullin 0-1 each.

Roscommon: D Smith 0-6 (0-5f), C Murtagh 0-6 (0-2f), E Nolan, N Daly, E Smith and D Murtagh 0-1 each.

SOLO:Enda Smith moves past the challenge of Colm Basquel.

DUBLIN: M Shiel; S McMahon, D Byrne, E Murchan; J McCarthy, J Small, R McDaid; B Fenton, T Lahiff; N Scully, C Kilkenny, D Mullin; P Small, C O'Callaghan, C Costello.
Subs: M Fitzsimons for McMahon (50), C Basquel for Mullin (50), C McHugh for P Small (57), P O Cofaigh Byrne for Lahiff (57), E Lowndes for McCarthy (66), R Basquel for O'Callaghan (65), P McMahon for Murchan (68).

ROSCOMMON: C Lavin; F Lennon, G Patterson, D Murray; C Hussey, N Daly, B Stack; E Nolan, S Killoran; N Kilroy, C Cregg, E Smith; D Smith, D Murtagh, C Murtagh. **Subs:** C Devaney for Kilroy (HT), C McKeon for Cregg (41), C Daly for Stack (45), C Cox for D Murtagh (50), D Neary for Lennon (50), R Hughes for C Daly (66).

REF: Derek O'Mahoney (Tipperary).



OPEN: Conor Hussey in action.
 Photo: Stephen McCarthy / SPORTSFILE.

Clifford shines in the rain

Kerry4-21

Galway0-11

By **RONAN O'NEILL**

DAVID Clifford was at his brilliant best as Kerry laid down an early marker with a stunning display against Galway in Tralee.

This was Kerry's first competitive fixture since they were shocked late on against Cork in last year's Munster semi-final, and they didn't disappoint.

Galway couldn't keep up and their return to action following the 2020 Connacht final defeat to Mayo, ended in a whimper. There was much to improve for Padraic Joyce's men.

But Clifford was the star of the show and he scored 3-6 while his brother Paudie chipped in with the other goal in dreadful conditions at Austin Stack Park.

Kerry had a big 2-10 to 0-6 lead at half-time and they didn't relent on the resumption with bigger challenges on the horizon, none more so than Dublin at Semple Stadium in Thurles.

Paudie Clifford and Damien Comer traded points inside the opening two minutes, and it looked as though a classic was set to unfold, the next few minutes quickly quenched that ember.

Kerry were 0-6 to 0-1 in front before the start of the second quarter, and David Clifford had scored 1-6 by the first water break, his goal



CLEAR: Galway forward Eamonn Brannigan moves forward against Kerry in Tralee. Photo: Brendan Moran/SPORTSFILE



was a palmed finish after the pass from Sean O'Shea.

Galway were dismal early on and Paudie Clifford quickly put Kerry into a 2-7 to 0-3 lead. Dara Moynihan gave the assist on this occasion.

Kerry were dominant all over the field while Killian Spillane notched four points from play as the home side went into half-time with a ten-point lead.

David Clifford tagged on a second goal in the 37th minute and the game was up for the tired visitors.

And within five minutes Clifford completed his hat-trick with a stunning finish when he fooled Galway goalkeeper Bernard Power and a couple of diving defenders, to finish low to the net.

Kerry cruised to their win after that while Galway turned their attentions to a must-win clash with Roscommon.

SCORERS - Kerry: D Clifford 3-6 (0-1f, 0-1m), S O'Shea 0-7 (4f, 1m, 2 '45'), P Clifford 1-2, K Spillane 0-4, P O'Shea 0-1, T Walsh 0-1 (m)

Galway: P Conroy 0-2 (1f), D Comer 0-2, S Walsh 0-2 (1f), M Tierney 0-1, D Conneely 0-1, S Kelly 0-1, K Molloy 0-1, R Finnerty 0-1 (f)

KERRY: K Fitzgibbon, B O Beaglaoich, T Morley, J Foley, P Murphy, G Crowley, G White, D Moran, J Barry, D Moynihan, S O'Shea, P Geaney, D Clifford, K Spillane, P Clifford. **Subs:** P O'Shea for P Geaney (41), D O'Connor for D Moran (41), T Walsh for D Clifford (51), A Spillane for B O Beaglaoich (56), G O'Sullivan for G White (56), M Burns

CONTROL: Galway's Damien Comer powers through the challenge of Kerry's Tadhg Morley.

Photo: Brendan Moran / SPORTSFILE.

for D Moynihan (61), M Breen for P Murphy (66).

Galway: B Power, J Glynn, S Ó Maoilchiaráin, L Silke, G O'Donnell, D McHugh, J Heaney, P Cooke, P Conroy, P Kelly, M Tierney, E Brannigan, D Conneely, D Comer, S Walsh. **Subs:** C Sweeney for J Heaney (27), R Steede for P Cooke (27), R Finnerty for P Kelly (HT), S Kelly for G O'Donnell (HT), F O Laoi for P Conroy (49, inj), T Culhane for D Conneely (58), K Molloy for E Brannigan (60).

REF: Conor Lane (Cork).



SKILLS: Galway captain Shane Walsh tries to keep the ball in play despite the attentions of Jason Foley of Kerry in Division 1 South at Austin Stack Park in Tralee.

Photo: Brendan Moran / SPORTSFILE.

Mayo hold off Clare surge to book passage back to top flight

Mayo2-22
Clare2-18

By COLM GANNON
The Mayo Advertiser

MAYO are back in division one for next year - they got the result they needed in Ennis, but left the Munster venue with plenty of questions still to be answered and few more headaches after picking up injuries to two key men.

Cillian O'Connor had kicked 1-4 in his 100th appearance for Mayo before he had to limp out of the action just before the break, following in the footsteps of his younger brother Diramuid who left the fray not long after ten minutes had elapsed.

With Mayo opening up their championship away to Sligo they will be hoping that the injuries to the Ballintubber pair are not serious, with no let up in the hopeful run of games coming up over the next two months.

Mayo looked to have this game done and dusted nine minutes into the second half when Rory Brickenden slotted over Mayo's 17th point of the day after being picked out by Kevin McLoughlin to put his side 10



FOUL: Aidan O'Shea is held back by Gavin Cooney at Cusack Park in Ennis.

Photo: Brendan Moran / SPORTSFILE.

points clear - but what happened after that is something that will have James Horan and his management team, knowing there is still lots that Mayo have to work on if they are

FOUL: Aidan O'Shea is held back by Gavin Cooney at Cusack Park in Ennis.

Photo: Brendan Moran / SPORTSFILE.

going to get to the level they aim to be.

When Mayo were at their best, they were thrilling, free flowing and great to watch. They played with abandon and attacked at every opportunity with powerful runs from deep supplementing quick thinking and intelligent darts from their attacking numbers.

But they have yet to find the right bolt to keep the stable door shut at the back and while they have been running up big scores themselves, they have looked shaky at the back at times and against better opposition, it could cause serious issues.

The first quarter of the game saw Mayo shake off an early Clare surge to go in leading 1-7 to 0-5 at the break. The goal coming from the penalty spot after Cillian O'Connor had dusted himself down after being fouled by Cillian Brennan. Kevin McLoughlin picked off a Stephen Ryan kick-out and moved the ball to O'Connor who was shaping to shoot for goal when he was taken down from behind.

Clare had put themselves into a 0-5 to 0-3 lead nine minutes in thanks to a rash of fine scores from



CHANCE: Mayo forward Ryan O'Donoghue has time to turn on the ball before the challenge of Ciaran Russell in their promotion play-off at Ennis.

Photo: Brendan Moran / SPORTSFILE.

the likes of Eoin Cleary and David Tubridy - but Mayo took control of the game back with Tommy Conroy kicking a brace, Bryan Walsh arcing one over from a tight spot and O'Connor pointing from play along with his goal to put Mayo five clear at the water break.

The really should have had a second goal before the first break called by the referee, but Matthew Ruane was unable to get his shot away with enough power after driving through the heart of the Clare defence.

The second quarter was much of the same as the end of the first, with Mayo moving the ball well at pace through both hands and with the foot as they kicked another 1-6 to Clare's 0-3. Mayo's second goal just on the half hour mark was another demonstration of their power in attack.

Lee Keegan picked up the ball in attack from Oisín Mullin, he made a surging run before laying it off to Tommy Conroy. The Neale man had Mullin keeping up his run on his shoulder and Conroy found him at speed. Mullin kept his nerve and side stepped a Clare defender before finishing from close range to the back of the net.

Points followed from Keegan, O'Connor and Ryan O'Donoghue who put in another good shift for Mayo before the break and they went in leading 2-13 to 0-8. Job done it looked like and all eyes were now firmly focused on Sligo.

The early exchanges in the second half saw Cleary and Ruane exchange points, before the first worry line appeared for Mayo. David Tubridy lined up a free from out on the far side of the field, his effort dropped short and Darren O'Neil ghosted in unmarked at the back post to flick the ball out of the grasp of Robert Hennelly in the Mayo goal to raise the first green flag of the day for Clare.

Mayo looked to have ridden out that storm with Conroy, Paul Towey and Brickenden responding with points for James Horan's side, with Tubridy getting one back for Clare - to leave Mayo leading 2-17 to 1-10 and still looking in control of the game.

But on 45 minutes having just about escaped conceding a second Clare goal, Mayo did just that. Tubridy again was the supplier dropping a long ball in on top of O'Neill, who out jumped Aidan O'Shea at the back post and fed the ball to Gavin Cooney who finished the ball to the net from close range.

Again Mayo looked like the responded well when Paddy Durcan pointed after a big run through the



Clare rearguard, but the Munster men kept coming back and a brace of points from Cleary and one from sub Emmet McMahon who finished the day with three to his name - had just five between the teams at the water break.

The final quarter was all about Mayo trying to control the game and see it out and Clare looking to play the game at a manic pace and catch Mayo out again - they gave it a good go, but the likes of Aidan O'Shea and Lee Keegan in particular stood up to keep control of the ball and work possession around the house to take the sting out of it late one.

Clare did manage to bring the gap back to three points late on and

QUICK: Paul Towey of Mayo gets his shot off despite the attentions of Cillian Brennan and Cian O'Dea.

Photo: Brendan Moran / SPORTSFILE.

leave Mayo open to a sucker punch of a goal that would have sent the game to extra time, but late on Paddy Durcan once again stepped up and showed his leadership to kick the injury time point to put Mayo four clear and back into division one for next season.

SCORERS - Mayo: C O'Connor (1-4, 1-0 Pen, 1f, 1m); T Conroy, P Towey (2f) (0-3 each); R O'Donoghue (1f, 1m), M Ruane, P Durcan (0-2 each); O Mullin (1-0); B Walsh, S Coen, K McLoughlin, L Keegan, R Brickenden, D McHale (0-1 each).

Clare: E Cleary (0-8, 6f); G Cooney (1-1); E McMahon, D Tubridy (0-3 each); D O'Neill (1-0); C O'Connor, P Lillis, P Collins (0-1 each).

MAYO: R Hennelly; O Mullin, L Keegan, E Hession; R Brickenden, P Durcan, S Coen; M Ruane, D O'Connor; K McLoughlin, A O'Shea, B Walsh; T Conroy, C O'Connor, R O'Donoghue. **Subs:** J Flynn for D O'Connor (11), P Towey for C O'Connor (35), D McHale for O'Donoghue (51), E O'Donoghue for Hession (53), C Loftus for Conroy (62), C O'Shea for Brickenden (62).

CLARE: S Ryan; C Russell, C Brennan, E Collins; C O'Dea, S Collins, D Walsh; D O'Neill, C O'Connor; P Lillis, E Cleary, D Bohannon; G Cooney, J McGann, D Tubridy.

Subs: C Ó hAiniféin for Walsh (23), P Collins for McGann (HT), C Jordan for E Collins (HT), A Griffin for Cooney (51), E McMahon for O'Connor (51), C Rouine for Ó hAiniféin (58), K Sexton for Lillis (58).

REF: N Cullen (Fermanagh).

DIVISION 2 NORTH

Pos	Team	Pld	W	D	L	PF	PA	PD	Pts
1	Mayo (P)	3	3	0	0	74	50	+24	6
2	Meath	3	2	0	1	55	55	0	4
3	Down	3	1	0	2	41	60	-19	2
4	Westmeath (R)	3	0	0	3	45	50	-5	0

DIVISION 2 SOUTH

Pos	Team	Pld	W	D	L	PF	PA	PD	Pts
1	Kildare (P)	3	2	0	1	55	41	+14	4
2	Clare	3	2	0	1	56	47	+9	4
3	Cork	3	2	0	1	54	49	+5	4
4	Laois (R)	3	0	0	3	33	61	-28	0

Mayo and Kildare share the Division 2 title. Westmeath and Laois are relegated to Division 3

O'Shea returns in victory over Meath

Mayo3-17
Meath2-12

By **DARAGH SMALL**
Media West Ireland

MAYO manager James Horan was delighted to see Aidan O'Shea back in action as Mayo notched another win en route to a promotion decider with Clare.

The reigning Connacht champions were impressive when they hit fifth gear at home to Meath in MacHale Park, Castlebar.

James Carr scored two goals while Cillian O'Connor also helped himself to one, before being taken off at half-time, with Mayo making it three wins in a row at the start of 2021.

Horan has handed out five league debuts this year but it was the return of O'Shea that really caught the eye in their final Allianz NFL Division 2 North fixture.

The Breaffy clubman suffered a serious knee injury in training earlier in the campaign but he was introduced as a 47th minute sub, before tapping over a point.

"We have a few guys with knocks and bangs so hopefully they will be okay and in contention for two weeks' time," said Horan.

"We have a strong panel and lots of guys that are fighting at a similar level. It's all to play for in the next few weeks and we will see how that goes.

"But Aidan is a very good ball player and we know that for the last decade. His skills on the ball are very good and he reads it very well. He was into the game really quickly."

Mayo and Meath were already guaranteed a spot in the play-offs prior to this clash but it was still an impressive eight-point win for the hosts, ahead of their winner-takes-all game against Clare.

"It's about developing and growing, each game that we play," said Horan.

"That is what we are trying to do, develop a squad and tweak things. Some of it is working and some of it is not but winning games along the way is good as well.



"We played Clare over the years in a lot of challenge games and they are an excellent team, in how they set up and play the game.

"That is going to be a big battle and we are looking forward to it."

Mayo had secured a 1-9 to 2-5 win over Meath when the sides met in Round 3 of the league last year, but the beautiful conditions on Sunday leant to a more high-scoring encounter this time around.

And the teams had already eclipsed that scoreline by half-time, when Mayo took a massive 3-11 to 1-5 lead into the break.

Mayo were 0-3 to 0-0 ahead after six minutes - Cillian O'Connor was on target twice - and the ace marksman added a goal shortly after the water-break.

Mayo held a narrow 0-7 to 1-2 lead at that stage, following Bryan McMahon's finish after Rob Hennelly saved well from Jason Scully in the 15th minute.

But five minutes later Mayo were on their way to victory when the Meath goalscorer, McMahon, hauled down Bryan Walsh and Cillian O'Connor stepped up to score from the penalty spot.

Mayo scored an unanswered 2-1 in this three-minute spell, with Carr

FINISH: Mayo ace forward James Carr scores a brilliant goal despite Conor McGill's best efforts.

Photo:
Sam Barnes /
SPORTSFILE.

scoring the other goal and point, he had been set up by Diarmuid O'Connor for the killer second goal.

And Mayo never looked back from here - Carr fired a third goal before half-time when he won a Matthew Ruane delivery and finished low to the net.

Mayo were 12 points in front at half-time and although Bryan Menton scored a stunning goal in the 42nd minute there would be no comeback.

Horan went to his bench in the closing stages and the Mayo manager watched on as one of his championship hopefuls, Paul Towey, helped himself to three points.

But it was the return of O'Shea from injury, and the subsequent point with his first touch, that really would have pleased the Mayo contingent.

For Meath, promotion back to Division 1 remains the goal despite this big defeat. And the Leinster outfit will face a familiar foe in a fortnight when they line out opposite Kildare in a straight shootout for promotion.

"Promotion is a big aim for us," said McEntee.

"You want to be playing teams like Mayo all the time. It is not the be all and end all but it is important, we want to be playing the top tier teams as much as possible.

"You would hope so (it would bridge the gap to Dublin). That is the plan. The more often you are exposed to quality opposition like we were exposed to here, the better fellas will get from it.

"It is key (to get back to Division 1). You have got to learn from games like this and you want to be playing teams like that all the time.

"For the longer term it is always going to be good to be playing Division 1 teams."

SCORERS - Mayo: J Carr 2-1, C O'Connor 1-4 (1-0 pen, 0-2f, 0-1m), P Towey 0-3 (0-2f), D McHale 0-2, M Ruane 0-2, B Walsh 0-2, M Plunkett 0-1, F Boland 0-1, A O'Shea 0-1. **Meath:** J Conlon 0-4 (0-3f), M Newman 0-4 (0-3f), B McMahon 1-0, B Menton 1-0, E Wallace 0-2, J Flynn 0-1 (0-1f), J O'Connor 0-1.

MAYO: R Hennelly; E O'Donoghue, O Mullin, L Keegan; M Plunkett, S Coen, F Boland; M Ruane, J Carney; D O'Connor, D McHale, B Walsh; R O'Donoghue, C O'Connor, J Carr. **Subs:** C Boyle for Keegan (HT), P Towey for C O'Connor (HT), E McLaughlin for Boland (47), A O'Shea for Carney (47), D Coen for O'Donoghue (61), J Flynn for McHale (63), T Conroy for Carr (65).

MEATH: H Hogan; S Lavin, C McGill, E Harkin; J O'Connor, B McMahon, C Hickey; B Menton, D Dillon; E Wallace, J Scully, J Flynn; J Wallace, D Campion, J Conlon.

Subs: S McEntee for McMahon (half-time), D Keogan for Hickey (half-time), P Harnan for Dillon (half-time), D Dixon for Campion (40), M Newman for Scully (50), R Ryan for Conlon (50), L Byrne for Hogan (50).

REF: Martin McNally (Monaghan).

O'Connor points the way to victory

Mayo0-21
Westmeath2-12

By COLM GANNON
Mayo Advertiser

FOR the second week in a row Mayo kicked 21 points and picked up two points, but it was a far more difficult assignment than the faced seven days previously against Down.

The midlanders hit the front two minutes in when Luke Loughlin hit the back of the net, the Westmeath corner forward reacted quickest when a Ronan O'Toole effort came back off the post, Loughlin collected the ball, rounded Robert Hennelly and finished low to the back of the net.

Westmeath could have been even further ahead, but John Heslin was finding it hard to get his eye in early pulling two efforts the wrong side of the posts early doors.

Mayo got motoring on the scoreboard when Eoghan McLaughlin looped one over the bar after good build up play involving Michael Plunkett and Conor Loftus.

Heslin found his range seven minutes from a place ball for his sides first point of the afternoon before Paddy Durcan, who put in a big showing all day got the first of his points for Mayo to keep them in touch early doors.

Conor Loftus pointed from range and Cillian O'Connor put over his first of the day to send the teams in all square at the water break on a score of 0-4 to 1-1.

Mayo started the second quarter brightest with Matthew Ruane getting two quick points, his first could have ended up in the net as he broke in along the end line and his second coming from distance to edge Mayo two clear.

Ger Egan pointed a fine score on the right for the hosts, before Loftus landed his second of the day from long range, which was replied to in no time by a Heslin free to leave just one between the teams as the half hour mark approached.

The Lakelanders struck for their second goal from the penalty spot on 30 minutes, Heslin converted from the placed ball after Diarmuid O'Connor was shown a black card for a trip on Ronan Wallace who'd got on the end of a flowing vestment move -



that was haunted by the intervention of the Ballintubber man.

Mayo did responded well with Ryan O'Donoghue pointing from a mark and O'Connor converting a free after Oisín Mullin had been fouled.

But Heslin kicked two frees either side of a Jordan Flynn point that could have ended up in the back of the net - to send in Westmeath in leading 2-5 to 0-11 at the break.

Mayo pulled themselves level not long after there restart when Tommy Conroy pointed, but the hosts edged themselves back in front quickly afterwards when Ronan O'Toole pointed a mark.

Diarmuid O'Connor almost hit the back of the net not long after he returned to the fray, when he got on the end of the a move involving Matthew Ruane and Loftus but his effort just flew past the target.

A brace of frees from Cillian O'Connor edged Mayo in front by the slimmest of margins before the second water break and it was all to play for heading into the final quarter of the game.

The Ballintubber marksman edged Mayo further clear with another pointed free after there

resumption and a Paddy Durcan point following a barreling run had Mayo three clear by the 57th minute.

Westmeath weren't going away though and a point from Ray Connelleon had them back in the game. Bryan Walsh showed quick thinking to win a mark and then play a quick one two with Ryan O'Donoghue before putting the ball over the bar.

Cillian O'Connor moved the scoreboard further in Mayo's favour with another pointed placed ball, but Mayo were about to be given a warning Westmeath were intent on staying around in this one.

They worked the ball well down the right flank and it ended up in the hands of Brandon Kelly who shot for goal forcing Hennelly into a fine save. The resulting 45 was pointed by Loughlin who then repeated the trick a minute later to leave the score 0-17 to 2-9 in Mayo's favour.

Kevin McLoughlin who had come on as a half-time sub kicked a reliving score for Mayo - showing all his leadership and experience.

Heslin pointed from a free to keep his men in touch, before Durcan kept Mayo's noses in front - but Westmeath kept coming Kieran Martin hit a fine point and Heslin pointed another free to bring the gap back to just a single point.

The game was there to be won and Mayo showed all their experience to do so, Cillian O'Connor got his only point of the day from play from a tough angle after some patient build up play and he rounded off the day with a pointed free to seal the win and the two points for Mayo.

CHANCE:
Fionn McDonagh of Mayo in action against David Lynch of Westmeath during their National League tie at Cusack Park in Mullingar.

Photo:
Stephen McCarthy
/ SPORTSFILE.

SCORES - Mayo: C O'Connor 0-8 (7f), P Durcan 0-3, M Ruane 0-2, C Loftus 0-2, B Walsh 0-1, E McLaughlin 0-1, K McLoughlin 0-1, R O'Donoghue 0-1 (1m), T Conroy 0-1.
Westmeath: J Heslin 1-6 (4f, 1-0 pen), L Loughlin 1-2 (2 45'), R Connelleon 0-1, G Egan 0-1, R O'Toole 0-1 (1m), K Martin 0-1.

MAYO: R Hennelly; B Doyle, O Mullin, L Keegan; M Plunkett, P Durcan, E McLaughlin; M Ruane, D O'Connor; F McDonagh, C Loftus, J Flynn; T Conroy, C O'Connor, R O'Donoghue. **Subs:** C Boyle for Doyle, K McLoughlin for Flynn, B Walsh for McDonagh (all HT), J Carr for Loftus (51), R Brickenden for McLaughlin (59), A Orme for Conroy (63), J Carney for D O'Connor (66).

WESTMEATH: J Daly; N Mulligan, K Maguire, B Sayeh; J Dolan, R Wallace, J Gonoud; S Duncan, R Connelleon; D Lynch, D Caorroon, G Egan; R O'Toole, J Heslin, L Loughlin. **Subs:** F Ayorinde fro Caorroon (44), B Kelly for Duncan (52), C Slevin for Lynch (63), K Martin for McCartan (65), T McDaniel for Egan (66).

REF: Noel Mooney (Cavan).

Mayo begin season with big win

Mayo2-21
Down1-11

By COLM GANNON
Mayo Advertiser

MAYO got life in division two off to a winning start in MacHale Park, seeing off Down at their ease with a hard-working and at times exciting display.

In a game that was played in alternating sunshine and heavy downpours, Mayo started with nine of the team that went to the post in last December's All Ireland final.

While a number of experienced players made their leave from the inter-county scene earlier this year, two of the next generation really lit up this game - with Tommy Conroy helping himself to 1-3 from play and setting up Mayo's second goal for the Belmullet man. Matthew Ruane put in a top class showing in the middle of the park, until the intensity petered out down the home straight.

Cillian O'Connor who finished up with eight points for his efforts got the scoreboard moving inside the first minute, tapping over a close range free after O'Donoghue was fouled. Down responded three minutes later with a fine score from Daniel Guinness from out on the left to level it up.

Both sides traded three points each over the next ten minutes with Michael Plunkett, Conroy and O'Connor getting the scores for Mayo, with Corey Quinn tapping over a mark, then adding one from play and James Guinness getting their fourth of the day.

The game moved in Mayo's favour 15 minutes when Conroy picked up possession and charged at goal, shirking off the challenge of Patrick Murdock then hammering the ball home on the run under Rory Burns to put Mayo three clear.

Fionn McDonagh edged Mayo further ahead after rising high to fetch a looping poke forward by O'Donoghue, before he fired over from close range. Down did have the



CLEAR: Mayo's Michael Plunkett turns out of the challenge of Liam Middleton from Down in their Division 2 North game at MacHale Park, Castlebar.

Photo: Piaras Ó Midheach / SPORTSFILE.

final say on the first quarter before the water break with a Barry O'Hagan free, but they went in trailing 1-5 to 0-5 to their hosts.

Mayo put their foot to the floor in the second period with Mullin pointing after a lovely turn in behind the cover after finding himself high up the field. Diarmuid O'Connor then saw a pass from a free to his bother Cillian skid off the deck and up and over the bar to put Mayo five clear, O'Donoghue then trapped good point from play.

The scores kept coming for Mayo through Jordan Flynn and Conroy and they went in leading 1-10 to 0-6 and looking good.

It was more of the same after the restart, with Ruane driving through to get things going, then Cillian O'Connor put over a free, just before Mayo's second goal of the day that really killed the game off as a contest.

Conroy cut in from the right after being played in behind his man, he could have taken on the shot himself but he spotted O'Donoghue free across the face of goal and he picked out the Belmullet man who finished to the back of the net, wrapping up the points for Mayo.

Mayo din't let up after that score

either tagging on four more points before the break, with Cillian O'Connor hitting a 45, Bryan Walsh chipping in from play after coming on at the break, Ruane got his second of the day after another strong run and Cillian O'Connor put over another free to send Mayo in leading 2-16 to 0-8 at the second water break.

It was all about seeing it out from then on and Mayo did that at their ease with Stephen McConville getting a goal for Down, but it was too little too late for the Mourne men as Mayo had the points well wrapped up by then.

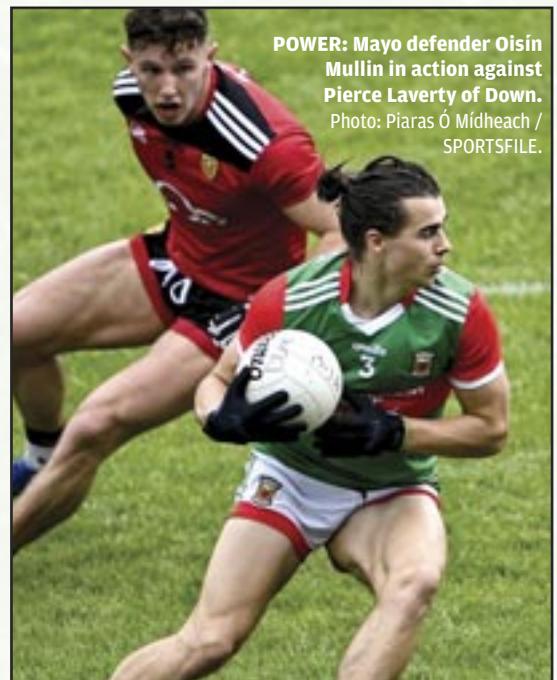
SCORERS - Mayo: C O'Connor 0-8 (0-7f, 0-1 '45), T Conroy 1-3, R O'Donoghue 1-1, M Ruane 0-2, J Flynn, F McDonagh, M Plunkett, D O'Connor (f), B Walsh and E McLaughlin 0-1 each.

Down: B O'Hagan 0-5 (0-4f), S McConville 1-0, C Quinn 0-2 (0-1m), J Guinness, D Guinness, P Devlin (f) and L Kerr 0-1 each.

MAYO: R Hennelly; E Hession, O Mullin, L Keegan; M Plunkett, P Durcan, R Brickenden; M Ruane, D O'Connor; F McDonagh, K McLoughlin, J Flynn; T Conroy, C O'Connor, R O'Donoghue. **Subs:** E McLaughlin for Brickenden (HT), B Walsh for Flynn (HT), C Loftus for McDonagh (47), S Coen for McLoughlin (55), A Orme for O'Donoghue (55), J McCormack for D O'Connor (62), C Boyle for Keegan (67).

DOWN: R Burns; G Collins, G McGovern, P Murdock; J Flynn, P Lavery, K McKernan; R McEvoy, C Poland; J Guinness, C Mooney, D Guinness; C Doherty, C Quinn, B O'Hagan. **Subs:** L Kerr for Doherty (35), E McCabe for Poland (39), D O'Hagan for McKernan (43), P Devlin for Quinn (50), L Middleton for McEvoy (50), S McConville for D Guinness (50), B McArdle for Murdock (54).

REF: Fergal Kelly (Longford).



POWER: Mayo defender Oisín Mullin in action against Pierce Lavery of Down.
Photo: Piaras Ó Midheach / SPORTSFILE.

No luck for Sligo in Shield final

Wexford2-15
Sligo0-9

Sligo GAA

SLIGO travelled to O'Moore Park, Portlaoise to take on Wexford in this NFL division 4 fixture in the baking heat. Unfortunately as it turned out the second half in particular had a challenge game intensity.

John Francis Carr was a late addition to the starting line up and joined Conor McGovern and Peter Naughton getting their first full league start of 2021. Keelan Cawley moved up to the forward line and Seán Carrabine made the journey in reverse. Carrabine was to get the first score of the game when running from his own 45, outpacing two Wexford men and putting Sligo in front in the first minute. Mark Rossiter responded for Wexford with a free and Niall Murphy did likewise for Sligo.

Wexford went in front with three points in two busy minutes, ten minutes into the game. John Turbitt who turned out to be a real thorn in the Sligo defence all day, Kevin O'Grady and wing back Michael Furlong all scored from play. Red Óg Murphy got one in response from play but after the water break Ben Brosnan scored a peach of a goal when at the end of a three man moved starting out at the Sligo subs bench, the finish a lovely inside the right foot finish that curled around Kilgannon into the top right corner of the net. It was to be his last act on the field of play having being injured in the scoring of the goal. Wing back Furlong got his second of the half joined by a Seán Nolan effort. Niall Murphy got Sligo's first score for 17 minutes in additional time from play but a skyscraper of an effort by Turbitt where the referee told the umpire to put up the white flag after he had waved wide left a six point deficit at the break 1-7 to 0-4.

Donal Conlon had come on for Keelan Cawley who was being assessed for a head injury before halftime and he was joined by Sean Power with Gavin Gorman coming on at the break. With Daithí Waters and Liam Coleman dominating in the centre field and Turbitt on fire near the Sligo goal things went from bad



POWER: Sligo's Cian Lally holds onto possession.

Photo: Seb Daly / SPORTSFILE.

to worse as the half wore on. As with the first half Carrabine and Murphy scored early in the half with Carrabine scoring a 45 also but Turbitt had scored four from play before the water break with both feet. Barry Gorman and Liam Gaughan came on and Gorman was fouled when calling the mark scored by Carrabine but he got his own point from

another mark a few minutes later.

Wexford were now in total control and only a Niall Murphy free was added in the last 22 minutes whilst the team from the south east added 1-3 with the goal coming from midfielder Coleman who managed to rifle it into the top corner when letting fly on the ball when he bounced the ball.

SCORERS - Wexford: John Tubritt (0-6); Ben Brosnan (1-0); Liam Coleman (1-0); Kevin O'Grady (0-3); Sean Nolan (0-2); Michael Furlong (0-2); Robbie Brooks (0-1); Mark Rossiter (0-1, 1f).

Sligo: Niall Murphy (0-4, 3f); Sean Carrabine (0-3, 1f, 1'45'); Red Óg Murphy (0-1); Barry Gorman (0-1, 1 mark).

WEXFORD: P Doyle, G Sheehan, M O'Connor, C Carthy, P Hughes, B Malone, M Furlong, L Coleman, D Waters, K O'Grady, B Brosnan, L O'Connor, J Tubritt, M Rossiter, S Nolan. **Subs:** R Brooks for B Brosnan, 21; E Porter for C Carthy, 44; D Brooks for P Doyle, 54; T Byrne for M Rossiter, 54; D Shanley for S Nolan, 61; N Hughes for D Waters, 61; S Ryan for J Tubritt, 70.

SLIGO: E Kilgannon, JF Carr, E McGuinness, E Lyons, C McGovern, P Laffey, S Carrabine, D Cummins, P Kilcoyne, K Cawley, R Og Murphy, M Gordon, P Naughton, N Murphy, C Lally. **Subs:** Sean Power for John F Carr, 33; Donal Conlon for Keelan Cawley, 34; Gavin Gorman for Cian Lally, h-t; Liam Gaughan for Peter Naughton, 50; Barry Gorman (0-1, 1 mark) for Red Óg Murphy, 50; Kyle Cawley for Mikey Gordon, 54; Karl McKenna for Conor McGovern, 54; Nathan Rooney for Sean Carrabine, 70.

REF: D Hickey (Carlow).

DIVISION 4 NORTH

Pos	Team	Pld	W	D	L	PF	PA	PD	Pts
1	Antrim (P)	3	3	0	0	63	60	+3	6
2	Louth (P)	3	2	0	1	63	45	+18	4
3	Sligo	3	1	0	2	63	67	-4	2
4	Leitrim	3	0	0	3	50	67	-17	0

DIVISION 4 SOUTH

Pos	Team	Pld	W	D	L	PF	PA	PD	Pts
1	Carlow	2	2	0	0	43	27	+16	4
2	Waterford	2	1	0	1	29	43	-14	2
3	Wexford	2	0	0	2	35	37	-2	0

**Carlow and Antrim share the Division 4 title.
 Sligo and Wexford advanced to Division 4 Shield Final**

Sligo's promotion dream is over

Louth3-18
Sligo1-14

By **JOHN SAVAGE**
The Sligo Champion

IN a former life there were All-Ireland titles and Anglo-Celt Cups up for grabs when Mickey Harte and Tony McEntee traded blows in Tyrone / Armagh derbies.

The stakes weren't quite that high at a sun-baked McGeough Park, but it was Harte who emerged victorious, as Louth earned a crack at Carlow in a promotion decider.

Sligo's total dominance of the opening quarter proved a false dawn as the game took a 16-point swing between the 18th and 60th minutes.

The first and second half were almost complete role reversals, but Louth made their spell in the ascendancy count with a match-winning third-quarter surge.

Sam Mulroy brought his tally from Louth's three group games to 4-10 and it was his two early second-half goals that swung the momentum so drastically in Louth's favour.

But Sligo will rue not making similar gains during their period of dominance.

They sprinted into a 1-5 to 0-2 lead after 17 minutes with Mikey Gordon's 13th minute strike typifying their ability to cut the Louth defence open almost at will.

Sligo didn't look capable of missing the target during that opening quarter, while at the other end Louth were limited to long-range pot-shots, which almost inevitably yielded six wides inside the opening 12 minutes.

The three points they did manage before the water-break were also from distance from midfielders Bevan Duffy (2) and Ciaran Byrne.

Sligo were much more adept at finding runners in space and between lines and they carved out some well-worked team scores.

The supremacy of Paddy O'Connor, Paul Kilcoyne and Sean Carrabine in the middle third provided that platform, but despite their swash-buckling start, they just couldn't shake Louth off.

Louth's improvement was gradual, but did start to kick in after the water break.

The recovery was somewhat hindered by two black cards in quick succession as Anthony Williams and Bevan Duffy were sent to the sin-bin,



with Williams failing to return due to a hamstring injury.

Sligo had already been reduced to 14 at that stage too as Eddie McGuinness received the first black card of the contest.

All told it was remarkable that Louth made it to the interval just a goal in arrears, 1-9 to 0-9, with Ciaran Byrne landing two superb points in the dying moments of the half.

If that modest lead was a blow to Sligo, Mulroy's first goal was a sucker punch.

It came within 30 seconds of the re-start as Louth broke forward from the throw-in. Mulroy's strike at goal may not have had the power to find the net unaided, but the ball took a wicked deflection to completely wrong-foot Eamonn Kilgallon.

The goal immediately put a spring in Louth's step and while Niall Murphy briefly restored Sligo's lead, the hosts hit the front for the first time with back-to-back points from Bevan Duffy and Conor Grimes.

Sligo were starting to tread water even at that early stage and a kick-out that failed to clear the 30m arc, prompted Sean Laverty to throw the ball up on the 20m line.

Conor Grimes won the throw-up clean and laid off to Sam Mulroy who finished low under Kilgallon, making it 2-11 to 1-10.

Louth were now rampant and Eoghan Callaghan and Mulroy added points before the captain teed up Ciaran Keenan for goal number three.

The Ardee attacker must have been tempted to pop another one over the bar, but went for the jugular and found the far corner with a

SHOULDER:
Sligo's Paddy O'Connor (left) and Paul Kilcoyne take on Conor Grimes (centre) and Ciaran Byrne (left) in their Division 4 North tie at Haggardstown in Louth.

Photo: Seb Daly / SPORTSFILE.

sublime finish, making it 3-13 to 1-10.

Murphy pulled one back from a free before the water break, but a quick brace from Keenan made it a 10-point game with 10 minutes of normal time remaining.

There was no way back for Sligo at that stage and the fact that their only point from play in the second-half arrived in injury-time spoke volumes about their second-half struggles.

Louth finished with three frees from the boot of substitute Declan Byrne and while Andy McDonnell's knee problem and a fresh injury for Williams leaves a bit of a cloud over the campaign thus far, they would head to Carlow as favourites and with plenty of confidence.

SCORERS - Louth: S Mulroy 2-3 (2f), C Keenan 1-2, D Byrne (3f), C Byrne & B Duffy 0-3 each, E Callaghan, L Jackson, C Downey & C Grimes 0-1 each.

Sligo: M Gordon 1-1, S Carrabine & N Murphy 0-4 (2f), P Naughton (1f), E Kilgannon (1f), K Cawley, N Rooney & B Gorman 0-1 each.

LOUTH: C Lynch; D Corcoran, D Campbell, D McKenny; E Carolan, A Williams, E Callaghan; B Duffy, C Byrne; L Jackson, S Mulroy, C Downey; C Keenan, C Grimes, R Burns. **Subs:** N Sharkey for Williams (35+4), S Marry for Burns (HT), D Byrne for Duffy (55), C McKeever for Jackson (62) E Duffy for Downey (65).

SLIGO: E Kilgannon; R Feehily, E McGuinness, E Lyons; K Cawley, D Cummins, P McNamara; P O'Connor, P Kilcoyne; C Griffin, S Carrabine, M Gordon; N Rooney, N Murphy, C Lally. **Subs:** R Óg Murphy for Rooney (19), C Breheny for O'Connor (46), B Gorman for Lally (50), S Power for Gordon (50), P Naughton for Griffin (55), P Laffey for Cummins (65), N Mullen for Feehily (65).

REF: Sean Laverty (Antrim).

Hyland looks for the answers

Louth0-19
Leitrim0-10

Leitrim Observer

IT is safe to say that there will be a lot of internal analysis and hard questions being asked in the Leitrim camp after this demoralising Allianz NFL Division 4 North defeat to Louth. At least that is the strong message Terry Hyland is sending out a loss that ended the slim hopes of a promotion push this year.

Leitrim have a good record against Louth in Avant Money Pairc Sean Mac Diarmada over the years but it was Mickey Harte's team who sent out a message with a dominant display and deserved victory.

Typically, Terry Hyland was not making excuses after the 0-19 to 0-10 defeat, pointing out that he and his management team would have to look at everything, including themselves, in the wake of the defeat: "I didn't really get talking to the lads, obviously you can see they are disappointed, of course they are disappointed, they didn't come here to have a bad performance and they didn't come here to lose a game.

"We have to bear the brunt of that as management. Our job is to give these guys direction and maybe it is a systems failure."

Intriguingly, the Leitrim manager felt that his team were simply out-worked by the visitors in the second half: "We started reasonably well just after halftime and then we just let the game get away from us and once Louth got that four or five point gap, we probably lost our shape that little bit trying to chase the game and we created avenues for them.

"To be fair, they took that and they worked probably harder than we did as well and looked to get the ball back a bit more than we did - you can't take it away from Louth, they were the better team apart from that 15 minute spell before halftime."

Neither did he seek to blame the forwards for the lack of scores, pointing out reasonably that you can't score if you don't have the ball: "We weren't winning the ball in the middle of the park, it was very simple. You can't blame the inside line because

the ball wasn't getting up there so the honest answer is why weren't we getting our hands on the ball around the middle of the park?

"That is what we have to look for going forward next week to see where that system broke down and where we can correct it. We weren't winning primary possession, we were getting caught and turned over and you have to credit Louth for a certain amount of that, they pushed up on us but also we didn't seem to get enough of ball to get it forward and create the opportunities.

"That is what we have to look at in training and it is down to how we coach them and what we can do with them."

Louth also had to get credit for their performance on the day: "You have to allow that, at times today, Louth played better than we did and when they had the upper hand, they got the scores that probably we didn't get in the first half.

"The old adage is that if it goes wrong in the first half, you can try to rectify it but if it goes wrong in the second half, there is nothing you can do about it. Unfortunately it went wrong for us in the second half."

Neither did the former Cavan boss seek to hide behind excuses of compressed preparation time or an intense schedule of games: "We can make excuses and I'm not one to be making excuses, it is no different for anyone else. Certainly the majority of teams only had the same run-in period.

"It is not ideal at the minute, it wouldn't happen in a normal competition but as they say, it is not a normal time. Three or four weeks to get ready to play in competitions, three weeks to see you out to the end of it, to see where you are - we're seeing it with all the teams, it is just probably being seen as a warm-up challenge for the bigger guys for the championship and maybe that is the pity about it.

"There is no recovery time, if a guy picks up a knock, they are back out with it again in seven days so you don't really have time. You can really only have one training session during the week where you can do anything meaningful because you're back into it a couple of days later. But it is what it is."



CONTROL:
Leitrim's Mark Plunkett was one of the stars on show but it wasn't enough as Louth claimed the win in Carrick-on-Shannon.

Photo: Seb Daly / SPORTSFILE.

The return of Ryan O'Rourke to the Leitrim colours was one of the game's few bright spots for Leitrim: "Ryan has been one of the leading lights for the last number of years for Leitrim and it is great to see him back. Nobody wants to see any player from anywhere not being fit to play."

SCORERS - Louth: S Mulroy 0-6 (4f), L Jackson, C Keenan, C Downey & D Byrne 0-2 each, D Corcoran, A Williams, C Byrne, C Grimes (1f) & E Carolan 0-1 each.

Leitrim: K Keegan 0-5 (2f), M Plunkett 0-4 (2f), E Sweeney 0-1.

LOUTH: M McEaney; D Corcoran, D Campbell, D McKenny; L Jackson, A Williams, E Callaghan; B Duffy, C Byrne; C Keenan, S Mulroy, C Downey; M Corcoran, C Grimes, R Burns. **Subs:** C Lynch for McEaney (HT); E Carolan for Corcoran (39); Declan Byrne for D Byrne (42); Neil Sharkey for McKenny (42).

LEITRIM: B Flynn; C Reynolds, P Maguire, D Bruen; O Madden, J Gilheaney, C McGloin; D McGovern; D Wrynn; S Quinn, M Plunkett, K Keegan; D Rooney, K Beirne, C Dolan. **Subs:** E Sweeney (22); R O'Rourke for McGovern (55); T Prior for Rooney (59); O McCaffrey for Wrynn (64).

REF: P Maguire (Longford).

Leitrim hearts broken

Antrim2-17
Leitrim1-19

By **JOHN CONNOLLY**
Leitrim Observer

WHEN they were good in Corrigan Park, Leitrim were very, very good. Unfortunately, when they were bad, it was bad as Antrim pipped Terry Hyland's men in the final Allianz NFL Division 4 North clash.

Leitrim could have won this game, they probably deserved a draw but Antrim, as they have done throughout this campaign, they kept their composure under huge pressure and again hit an injury time winner to go through the Division 4 North campaign unbeaten.

Keith Beirne opened the scoring with a free inside the first minute but a Ruairi McCann mark a minute later tied the scores. Beirne availed of the mark on three minutes, gathering a long ball from Donal Wrynn but Leitrim missed a chance to add to their score when Tom Prior, after making a clever mark, dropped his shot short.

Mark Plunkett did quickly add a point as Leitrim turned over the Antrim defence but from that kickout, a mark at midfield led to a long ball with Ryan Murray scoring a great point from 45 yards.

Plunkett and Murray swapped points again, Plunkett pouncing after a poor delivery into the Antrim corner broke kindly for the Aughawillan man. Murray thumped an absolute monster of a free high over the bar to leave a point in it after seven minutes.

A soft enough free for Leitrim got even better when it was moved in for dissent, Beirne tapping over but Leitrim made the same mistake when Paddy Maguire was penalised for fouling Odhran Eastwood, the ball moved in for dissent with the corner-forward firing over.

Antrim suffered a blow when the lively Ryan Murray was forced from the action on 11 minutes but the home side were beginning to demonstrate danger, Paddy Maguire making a vital interception from a pass across the face of the goal from corner-back James McAuley.

Dean McGovern scored a big point but Antrim broke through on goal again, Brendan Flynn deflecting



Patrick McBride's shot over the bar.

However, just before the first water break, the goal Antrim were threatening did arrive - James McAuley's surging run down the field led to a long ball to Eastwood. With runners charging through, he found Conor Stewart who charged through unmarked to slip the ball past a helpless Flynn in the Leitrim goal.

Ruairi McCann then scored a remarkable fifty that was almost out on the sideline to stretch the Antrim lead to three points and as Leitrim started to hit wide, points from McBride, Conor Murray and two from the deadly Eastwood suddenly had Antrim seven points clear.

Keith Beirne stopped the rot with a free after an off-the-ball foul on Tom Prior but Antrim responded with a Patrick McBride point, set up again by Eastwood.

It wasn't all rosey for Antrim - Marc Jordan was obstructed as

Antrim were seeking a goal and as Leitrim attempted to come out, Dermot McAleese pulled down a defender, ending up in the sin-bin to the home team's displeasure, even as they led 1-11 to 0-7 at halftime.

Both sides made two changes at the break, Keith Keegan and Mark Diffley replacing Shane Moran and Aidan Flynn but Leitrim continued to miss chances. Beirne did put over a free on two minutes but a Donal Wrynn foul after Conor Murray's shot came off the post resulted in an easy Eastwood score.

Incredibly, even with a man down, Antrim came out ahead on the scoreboard as they broke the Leitrim cover, Conor Murray surging through unopposed. His shot was brilliantly saved by Brendan Flynn but the ball looped up and Murray followed in to fist the ball to the net, leaving Leitrim ten points in arrears.

It wasn't all plain sailing as Murray appeared to hurt himself in punching the ball to the net and he was soon replaced. Tom Prior did get his first point, well worked after a long ball to Keith Beirne but Eastwood came back with another free on 44 minutes.

Sub Conor Small stretched the lead to 11 points before sub Evan Sweeney kickstarted a remarkable Leitrim fightback. Perhaps Antrim were getting over-confident but a slack pass was intercepted and Sweeney swept over less than a minute after coming on and the same thing happened just after the water break, a sloppy Antrim pass, a quick ball to Sweeney and over the bar.

Almost straight away, an Antrim attack was broken up and Sweeney hit a monster from 50 yards to lift Leitrim spirits in massive fashion.

Incredibly after three points with his first three shots, he did follow up with a wide, the Glencar/Manor man found the net, Tom Prior finding Sweeney who drove the ball to the net between the keeper and the post go to cut the gap to five points with 15 minutes to go.

Antrim were now having wides and it got worse for the home side when the impressive Marc Jordan was sin-binned for protesting after a decision that should have gone Antrim's way, Keith Beirne pointing after a long ball inside.

Odhran Eastwood steadied Antrim with a free but Tom Prior fisted over the bar, some felt he might have gone for goal but the Antrim defence was closing in rapidly on the youngster.

Keith Keegan was lucky just to be yellow carded with four minutes of normal time left but Leitrim were on a

FORM: Keith Beirne was on target as Leitrim's late comeback came up short against Antrim in their Division 4 North tie at Corrigan Park in Belfast.

Photo: Seb Daly / SPORTSFILE.

roll - Beirne put over another free after a silly foul on Oisín Madden and when Keith Beirne won a throw-ball after the Antrim keeper was penalised for delaying his kickout, Mark Plunkett took his pass to score.

Sweeney then fired over to leave a point in it with three minutes left and when another throw-ball arrived, Niall McGovern got on the end of it to tie the scores with less than two minutes of normal time left.

But Leitrim lost their advantage on the double soon after - Jordan came back on after his ten minutes in the sin-bin ended while Keith Keegan received his second yellow for a high challenge, meaning a two man swing in playing numbers and another brilliant point from veteran Paddy Cunningham.

Antrim looked as if they would hold out but their indiscipline came back to haunt them when a free was moved in and Beirne pointed to tie the scores with just over two minutes of added time played.

With four minutes due to be played, Leitrim put huge pressure on the Antrim defence but in a controversial decision, referee Kevin Faloan judged that Antrim sub Declan Lynch was pulled back by Leitrim sub Niall Brady, the Leitrim bench incensed as they felt the Antrim man had over carried the ball.

There was still lots of time to win the ball back but Antrim expertly kept the ball down one wing, never allowing Leitrim to get close enough to win the ball back and after about 60 seconds of possession, they swept the ball over to the far wing where sub Tomás McCann finished with all the calm assurance of the veteran he is to break Leitrim hearts.

SCORERS - Antrim: O Eastwood 0-6 (4f); C Murray 1-1; P McBride 0-3 (1f); C Stewart 1-0; R McCann (1f, 1 45) & R Murray (1f) 0-2 each; T McCann, C Small & P Cunningham (f) 0-1 each.

Leitrim: K Beirne 0-8 (7f); E Sweeney 1-4; M Plunkett 0-3; D McGovern & N McGovern 0-1 each.

ANTRIM: L Mulholland; J McAuley, R Johnston, P Healy; M Jordan, J Laverty, E Walsh; C Stewart, N McKeever; D McAleese, C Murray, P McBride; O Eastwood, R McCann, R Murray. **Subs:** K Small for R Murray (13), D Lynch & J Crozier for J Laverty & R Johnston (HT), T McCann & C Small for C Murray & McAleese (44), P Cunningham for McKeever (47), N Delargy for Walsh (53).

LEITRIM: B Flynn; C Reynolds, P Maguire, J Mitchell, O Madden; J Gilheany; A Flynn; D Wrynn; S Moran, D McGovern; M Plunkett; P Dolan; S Quinn; K Beirne; T Prior. **Subs:** M Duffley & K Keegan for Moran & Flynn (HT), E Sweeney & N McGovern for D McGovern & Wrynn (49), D Bruen for P Dolan (51), N Brady for S Quinn (53).

REF: K Faloan (Armagh).

Cunningham provides the killer blow

Antrim3-13
Sligo3-12

By DAVID MOHAN
The Sligo Champion

A LAST-GASP point off the left boot of Paddy Cunningham secured victory for Antrim over Sligo in an eventful Division Four clash at Corrigan Park. This result means the match away to Louth would be a crunch promotion battle for Tony McEntee's side, Louth were sitting on two points after their victory over Leitrim.

Antrim made the brighter start with Odhrán Eastwood pointing and then finding the net on seven minutes after Kevin Small's initial shot had been saved by Eamonn Kilgannon in the Sligo net.

A pair of Sean Carrabine frees got Sligo off the mark, but Antrim got their second goal on 13 minutes as Marc Jordan took a pass from Conor Murray on the right wing and bore down on goal before finishing to the net.

The sides traded scores before Sligo enjoyed a good spell and they had their first penalty on 27 minutes when referee Conor Dourneen penalised Antrim goalkeeper Michael Byrne for a push with Murphy stepping up to find the top corner to level.

It remained tied at the half (2-6 to 1-9) as the teams hit a further three points apiece, but Antrim finished the half with 14 as Ryan Murray was black-carded for a body check on Darragh Cummins.

The teams kicked two points each early in the second period before Sligo seemed to take a grip on proceedings when they were awarded a second penalty when Patrick O'Connor was taken down outside the area, but the new rule prompted a penalty award as a goalscoring opportunity had been denied.

Murphy drilled home with another superb finish and when Darragh Cummins kicked a point straight after to leave four in it, it seemed Sligo were on their way (2-12 to 2-8).

However, Antrim chipped away at the gap with a pair of Ryan Murray frees and a fisted effort from Patrick



CLOSE: Sligo forward Red Óg Murphy starred in an agonising defeat to Antrim in Div. 4 North.

Photo: Seb Daly / SPORTSFILE.

McBride leaving the minimum between the teams.

Sligo's Niall Murphy was then shown a second yellow and Antrim made this count as Ryan Murray thumped over the leveller.

The Saffrons were then in front as Eunan Walsh burst in on the right and palmed to the net after initially losing control, but Sligo were awarded a third penalty immediately after courtesy of the new advantage rule. This time it was Nathan Rooney who stepped-up and drilled home the equaliser.

There was still time and Antrim worked the opening for Paddy Cunningham to split the posts from a tight angle on the left to seal the win.

SCORERS - Antrim: O Eastwood 1-3 (0-1 free), R Murray 0-4 (0-3 frees), E Walsh 1-1, M Jordan 1-0, C Murray 0-1, P Cunningham 0-1, R Johnston 0-1, P McBride 0-1

Sligo: N Murphy 2-4 (2-0 penalties, 0-3 frees), S Carrabine 0-5 (0-4 frees), N Rooney 1-1 (1-0 penalty, 0-1 free), C Lally 0-1, D Cummins 0-1.

ANTRIM: M Byrne; R Johnston, D Lynch, P Healy; M Jordan, J Laverty, D McAleese; C Stewart, N McKeever; R Murray, A Loughran, R McCann; O Eastwood, K Small, C Murray. **Subs:** P McBride for A Loughran (29), J McAuley for D Lynch (HT), E Walsh for K Small (HT), T McCann for M Jordan (58), E McCabe for D McAleese (65), P Cunningham for O Eastwood (65).

SLIGO: E Kilgannon; R Feehily, E McGuinness, E Lyons; K Cawley, P McNamara, D Cummins; P O'Connor, P Kilcoyne; D Quinn, C Lally, C Griffin; S Carrabine, N Murphy, R Óg Murphy. **Subs:** N Rooney for C Griffin (29), M Gordon for D Cummins (55), N Mullen for Sean Carrabine (55), C McGovern for E McGuinness (63), D Conlon for R Óg Murphy (65), G Gorman for P O'Connor (67), P Naughton for K Cawley (70+1).

REF: Conor Dourneen (Cavan).

Sligo take the spoils in early season derby

Sligo2-19
Leitrim0-18

By JOHN CONNOLLY
The Leitrim Observer

LEITRIM'S Allianz NFL Division 4 North hopes took a big hit with a defeat to Sligo in Markievicz Park. There haven't been many days when a Leitrim team has scored 18 points and come off the wrong side of a seven-point loss but there was no disputing Sligo deserved to win this exciting and open tie.

In a game where there was little between the teams, Sligo were both more dangerous and more wasteful than the Green & Gold but the game truly turned on the 36th minute dismissal of Leitrim defender Aidan Flynn.

Flynn protested his innocence for what looked like an innocuous challenge from the stand side of the ground but referee Niall Cullen from Fermanagh ruled that the Leitrim man's shoulder had made contact with the Sligo defender's head and a red card followed.

The card had a huge effect on this game although Sligo manager Tony McEntee reckoned it actually hindered his team while Leitrim fans will wonder what might have been when Cillian McGloin broke through the cover with just three points between the teams in the second half only to see his shot parried away.

Yet, in terms of creating chances, particularly goal chances that Brendan Flynn did extremely well to deny, Sligo enjoyed the better of the fray and were deserving winners on the day as their very youthful team look a more formidable outfit that many will expect.

In a division as tight and as competitive as Division 4 North promises to be, the defeat is costly and makes next Sunday's clash against Louth in Avont Money Pairc Sean Mac Diarmada a must win encounter for Terry Hyland's men.

Leitrim started off on the front foot but Paddy Maguire saw a long ball just escape the grasp of Keith Beirne. Red Og Murphy opened the scoring on two minutes but when Sligo corner-back Ryan Feehily lost the ball, Keith Beirne played a one-two with Dean McGovern to open the scoring.

Beirne quickly added another when he was left alone in space but the nature of this game was set when Sligo hit back with two points in as many minutes from Conor Griffin and a Sean Carrabine free.

Back came Leitrim with Darragh Rooney scoring from a mark that was moved in before Beirne swept over a free after a foul on Dean McGovern. Leitrim took advantage of another Sligo turnover, Aidan Flynn setting up Darragh Rooney for the score.

Evan Sweeney's point after good patient play from McGovern saw Leitrim stretch the lead to three but then Sweeney saw a shot blocked. Niall Murphy gave notice of the danger he would pose with a good catch and fine point under pressure.

Donal Wrynn made a fantastic mark from the kickout and released Shane Quinn who set up his Mohill clubmate Beirne for the point on 12 minutes but Cian Lally narrowed the gap once more. The tit for tat continued when Wrynn blasted a monster effort from well out the field over the Sligo bar at the dressing room end.

That scored brought the first water break but it was Sligo who reacted best to the resumption with David Quinn, Carrabine (free) and Niall Murphy each firing over a point in a four minute spell.

Darragh Rooney took a mark to score on 23 minutes before Brendan Flynn made a superb save to deny Sligo's raiding centre-back Paul McNamara, the ball clear. Rooney scored a wonder effort from the dressing room corner and Mark Plunkett obviously decided anything his Melvin Gaels clubmate did, he could do for he swept over a great point from the same corner.

That left Leitrim three to the good with seven minutes left in the half but it was Sligo who would laid the foundations for victory before the break. David Quinn scored a brilliant effort before Brendan Flynn managed to divert Cian Lally's goal bound shot over the bar when the centre-forward got in unmarked behind the defence.

Keith Beirne replied with a free but the turning point came just over a minute into added time when Fermanagh referee Niall Cullen immediately brandished a red card to Aidan Flynn for a collision on a Sligo defender. Flynn protested his innocence but the red stood.

Sligo closed the gap to a point with a Red Og Murphy free just before the break to leave Leitrim with a 0-12 to 0-11 lead but a man down and facing the wind for the second half.

Sligo started on the front foot but had a couple of misses before Carrabine tied the scores five minutes into the second period. He immediately put his team in front from a free before marks from Niall Murphy and Carrabine left Leitrim trailing by three points ten minutes into the second half.

Cillian McGloin almost tied the



CHARGE: Mikey Gordon came off the bench for Sligo against Leitrim in their Divi 4 North tie at Markievicz Park.

Photo: Seb Daly / SPORTSFILE



AIM: Donal Wrynn found his range against Sligo at Markievicz Park.

Photo: Dáire Brennan / SPORTSFILE

scores in dramatic fashion as he broke through the Sligo rearguard at pace but keeper Eamon Kilgannon diverted his shot away for a fifty that Beirne was unable to convert.

Leitrim finally got their first score of the second half just before the second water break when Mark Plunkett scored a fine point while sub Conor Dolan was desperately unlucky to see his effort drift narrowly wide after he beat a hard tackling Sligo defence.

The crucial score came with 14 minutes left - a long ball found Sligo sub Nathan Rooney, son of Leitrim legend Aidan, in the corner. With Niall Murphy calling for the ball in front of the Leitrim goal, a high ball in was brilliantly fielded by the full-forward who beat his man and drove with venom to the net.

It was a huge score that put Sligo in the driving seat, the Yeatsmen extending the lead when their keeper gathered a poor Shane Moran shot and the ball went the length of the field for Red Og Murphy to score.

Mark Plunkett made it a trio of wonder scores from the wing with nine minutes left but Leitrim's faint hopes were shattered two minutes later when Cian Lally got in ahead of the intended recipient of Brendan Flynn's short kick-out, the Sligo man rounding the keeper before rolling the ball to the net.

That effectively ended the game and although Beirne added two more points, one from a free, and Conor Dolan also hit the target, Tony McEntee's men kept Leitrim safely at bay with points from Paddy O'Connor, Peter Naughton and goalkeeper Kilgannon to run out comfortable seven-point winners.

SCORERS - Sligo: S Carrabine 0-6 (5f); N Murphy 1-3 (1M); C Lally 1-2; D Quinn, R Og Murphy 0-2 each; C Griffin, D Conlon, P Naughton, E Kilgannon (f) 0-1 each.

Leitrim: K Beirne 0-8 (3f); D Rooney 0-4 (1f, 1M); M Plunkett 0-3; E Sweeney, Donal Wrynn & C Dolan 0-1 each.

SLIGO: E Kilgannon, R Feehily, E McGuinness, E Lyons, K Cawley, P McNamara, P Laffey, D Cummins, P Kilcoyne, D Quinn, C Lally, C Griffin, S Carrabine, N Murphy, R Og Murphy. **Subs:** P O'Connor for Griffin (36); N Rooney for Carrabine (52); G Gorman, M Gordon, P Naughton & N Mullen for Cummins, Laffey, N Murphy & Lyons (59).

LEITRIM: B Flynn; J Gilheany; P Maguire, C Reynolds; A Flynn; O Madden; C McGloin; D Wrynn; M Plunkett; D McGovern; D Bruen; S Quinn; D Rooney; K Beirne; E Sweeney. **Subs:** C Dolan for Madden, (48); T Prior for Sweeney (56); S Moran for D McGovern (60); K Keegan for McGloin (70); R O'Rourke & N McGovern for S Quinn & Rooney (72).

REF: Niall Cullen (Fermanagh).

Galway secure top spot with win over Cork

Galway3-25
Cork2-23

GAA.ie

GALWAY secured top spot in Division 1 Group A of the Allianz Hurling League as a 12-point second-half turnaround gave them victory over Cork at Páirc Uí Chaoimh.

Trailing by 2-12 to 0-12 at half-time, the Tribesmen fell further behind as Patrick Horgan landed a free for Cork on the resumption but a Conor Whelan goal brought Galway right back into contention and further green flags from Conor Cooney and Cathal Mannion helped them to prevail by five points. The result means that a championship meeting between Galway and Kilkenny this year will double up as the league final.

Cork had a great start, with Conor Cahalane's goal helping them into a 1-2 to 0-1 lead, but Galway found their feet and they scored five of the next seven points while Evan Niland was denied a goal by a Patrick Collins save. Joseph Cooney's point – he was one of 12 scorers for the visitors – left them just two points behind, 1-4 to 0-6, at the first-half



water break. While Horgan had his fourth point when the action resumed, Galway were level by the 25th minute when Brian Concannon scored the first of his four points.

Three in a row from Cork, two

CLOSE:
Galway's
Cathal
Mannion and
Sean
O'Donoghue
of Cork battle
for possession.

Photo:
Eóin Noonan /
SPORTSFILE.



DANGER: Galway forward Conor Whelan evades the cover defencing from Cork's Mark Coleman in the National Hurling League. Photo: Eóin Noonan / SPORTSFILE.

Darragh Fitzgibbon points sandwiching one from Mark Coleman, gave them breathing space again and, just before half-time, they had a fillip as Jack O'Connor scored a point and then intercepted the resultant puck-out to slot home a goal for a six-point lead.

That advantage stretched to seven thanks to Horgan's sixth of the day but Whelan, set up by Cathal Mannion, produced an instant riposte for Galway with a goal and Joseph Cooney followed that with a point.

With Shane Kingston's point Cork's only score from play in the third quarter, Galway were able to eat into the deficit, helped by the relocation of Cathal Mannion to centre-forward. He had two points in quick succession and then Galway were level just before the water-break as Fintan Burke's sideline cut was won by Brian Concannon, who fed Conor Cooney and he fired home.

While Pádraic Mannion put Galway in front after the break, Cork looked to have steadied as Horgan (two frees) and Fitzgibbon pointed, but they didn't lead again after Niland and Fintan Burke levelled for the visitors.

Daithí Burke set up Concannon to put Galway in front and, though Fitzgibbon levelled with his fourth, Cathal Mannion's goal, a batted finish from David Burke's pass, put three points between the sides. Points from Galway subs Niall Burke and Jason Flynn opened up a five-point advantage going into injury time and, after the remaining four points were shared, that was the margin at the end, too.

SCORERS - Galway: E Niland 0-8 (0-4 frees, 0-2 65), C Mannion 1-2, C Cooney 1-2, B Concannon 0-4, C Whelan 1-1, J Cooney 0-2, P Mannion, F Burke, D Burke, N Burke, J Flynn (free), S Loftus 0-1 each.

Cork: P Horgan 0-11 (0-8 frees), J O'Connor 1-2, D Fitzgibbon 0-4, C Cahalane 1-1, S Kingston 0-2, M Coleman, R O'Flynn, B Hennessy 0-1 each.

GALWAY: É Murphy; D Morrissey, G McInerney, TJ Brennan; P Mannion, D Burke, F Burke; S Loftus, C Mannion; A Tuohy, C Whelan, J Cooney; B Concannon, E Niland, C Cooney. **Subs:** J Fitzpatrick for Morrissey (44, injured), D Burke for Tuohy (47), J Flynn for C Cooney (53), N Burke for J Cooney (57), J Mannion for Niland, S Linnane for McInerney (both 64).

CORK: P Collins; E Cadogan, D Cahalane, S O'Donoghue; T O'Mahony, M Coleman, G Millerick; L Meade, D Fitzgibbon; C Cahalane, S Harnedy, S Barrett; S Kingston, P Horgan, J O'Connor. **Subs:** A Cadogan for Barrett (half-time), A Connolly for Harnedy (53), R O'Flynn for C Cahalane (both 53), B Hennessy for Meade (63), D Dalton for O'Connor (64), T Deasy for Kingston (67), S O'Leary Hayes for Millerick (69).

REF: Paud O'Dwyer (Carlow).

Concannon leads the rout

Galway4-28
Waterford3-23

By **JOHN FALLON**
Media West Ireland

TWO goals from Brian Concannon and one apiece from Joe Canning and Adrian Tuohey helped Galway ease past Waterford in a high-scoring encounter at Pearse Stadium.

Waterford led by seven points at one stage in the opening half but turned around trailing by 3-13 to 2-12 after Galway got on top in the second quarter when Cathal Mannion came out to midfield.

Nine players scored for each side and Galway shot 15 wides to eleven for Waterford in a game where it was difficult to keep track of the scores.

Galway opted to play against the wind and Waterford made the most of it initially with Calum Lyons, who finished with five points from play, superb at wing-back and the three Bennett brothers showing up well in attack.

Jack Prendergast gave them a perfect start when he found the net after two minutes, being put through by Shane Bennett, and that helped them lead by 1-9 to 0-5 after 21 minutes.

Galway hit back with a goal from Adrian Tuohey after 24 minutes following a pass from Brian Concannon but then the three Bennetts



POWER: Brian Concannon is tackled by Conor Gleeson during the National Hurling League Division 1A tie at Pearse Stadium.

Photo: Ramsey Cardy / SPORTSFILE.

combined with Shane supplying the finishing touch to the net with a drop shot seven minutes from the break and a point from Dessie Hutchinson pushed them 2-11 to 1-8 ahead.

But Galway finished the half strongly with Joe Canning blasting to the net after being set up by Cathal Mannion and Concannon three minutes from half-time.

And Concannon then found the net after Waterford goalkeeper Shaun O'Brien had done well to save from Conor Cooney to lead for the first time in the game before he quickly landed a point and Canning took his opening half haul to 1-6 to lead by four at the break.

Hutchinson got the score of the game when he blasted to the top right corner after a pass from Montgomery two minutes after the restart but the points kept coming from Galway through the likes of Canning, Cathal Mannion and Conor Whelan to lead by 3-22 to 3-16 after 53 minutes.

Dessie Hutchinson caused the Galway defence a lot of difficulty but they couldn't get in for any other goals and they closest they got was when they reduced the margin to five points after 56 minutes.

Whelan, who finished with six points from play, and Conor Cooney pushed the lead out to seven before Galway, who hadn't found the net in their last two matches against Tipperary and Limerick, struck for their fourth goal when Whelan disposed Austin Gleeson after a short puckout and Canning flicked the ball through for Concannon to get his second goal.

Galway pushed on from there and sub Evan Niland, who scored 14 frees in their last home win against Limerick, struck four from play after coming on as Shane O'Neill's men chalked up their third win of the campaign.

SCORERS - Galway: J Canning 1-8 (0-5 frees); B Concannon 2-2; C. Whelan 0-6; E. Niland 0-4; A Tuohey 1-0; S. Loftus 0-3; C Mannion, C Cooney 0-2 each; Daithí Burke 0-1.

Waterford: Stephen Bennett 0-8 (5 frees, 2 65s); D Hutchinson 1-3; C Lyons 0-5; J Prendergast 1-2; Shane Bennett 1-1; N Montgomery, K Bennett, J Barron, P Curran 0-1 each.

GALWAY: E Murphy; S Cooney, G McNerney, D Morrissey; P Mannion, D Burke, F Burke; S Loftus, J Coen; A Tuohey, C Mannion, J Canning; B Concannon, C Cooney, C Whelan. **Subs:** E Niland for J Coen (inj 30); A Harte for S Cooney (blood, 35+4); J Fitzpatrick for A Harte (inj 39); J Cooney for A Tuohey (49); TJ Brennan for F Burke (61); S Linnane for S Loftus (62); K Cooney for J Canning (64); C Walsh for J Fitzpatrick (blood 70+2).

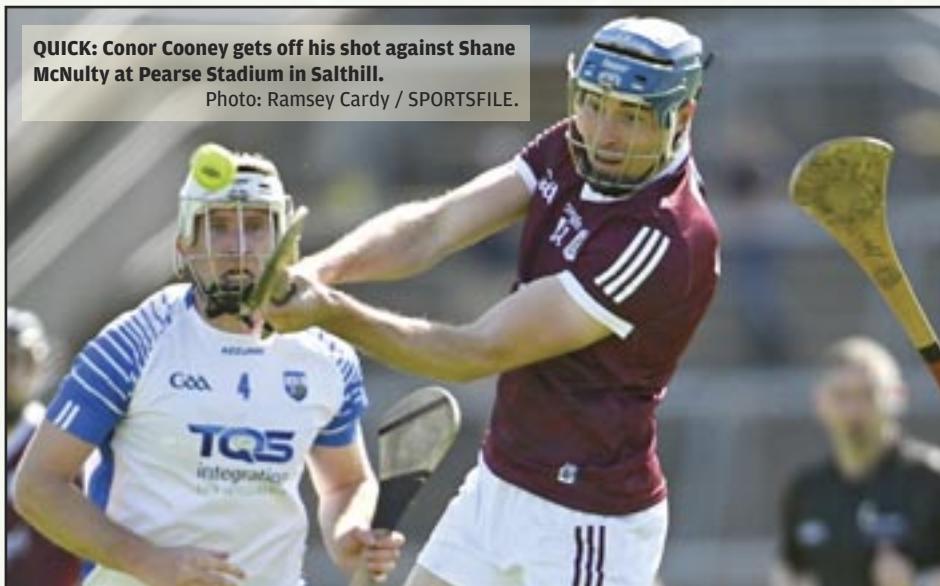
WATERFORD: S O'Brien; C Gleeson, C Prunty, S McNulty; C Lyons, A Gleeson, S Keating; J Barron, J Dillon; N Montgomery, J Prendergast, K Bennett; Shane Bennett, Stephen Bennett, D Hutchinson.

Subs: J Fagan for N Montgomery (51); D Lyons for J Dillon, P Curran for S Bennett (both 54); B Power for K Bennett, K Moran for A Gleeson (both 59); S Fives for S. Keating (67).

REF: Fergal Horgan (Tipperary).

QUICK: Conor Cooney gets off his shot against Shane McNulty at Pearse Stadium in Salthill.

Photo: Ramsey Cardy / SPORTSFILE.



O'Neill continues to experiment in defeat

Tipperary2-19
Galway0-20

By JOHN FALLON
Media West Ireland

GALWAY manager Shane O'Neill may continue with Joe Canning playing in the middle of the field as he continues to experiment heading into his second championship in charge of the Tribesmen.

They suffered their first defeat of the campaign in Semple Stadium but O'Neill is pleased with what he's seeing from his men and will continue to try out things in the league.

"The last day we brought him on just to get a bit of freedom in the park," said O'Neill about Canning's new role. "We said we would do the same today, I thought he did some really good stuff today. Probably not as sharp as you would normally be come championship time, could have got three or four points. Overall, did very well I thought."

Galway, having put five goals past Westmeath on the opening weekend, didn't find the net for the second week in a row and rarely looked like getting one.

"I suppose it always is a concern," added O'Neill. "That is a two in a row now. It will have to be something that we are going to look at."

He made nine changes as he continues to experiment in his second season but they finished with 14 when one of the new players Ja Mannion from Cappataggle was sent off for an off the ball incident with Cathal Barrett. O'Neill said it's vital to use his panel.

"It is at the moment with the five matches in six weeks. We had game minutes in our head for various players so we had to make those changes because you just don't want to risk over-loading injuries so those changes were made.

"Still we would expect to be able to drive on and we didn't quite do it. With the sending off then as well and the short turnaround, you could see they had the better impact off the bench at that stage. Overall, pleased enough with the three weeks."



CLASH: Eanna Murphy of Galway is tackled by Willie Connors of Tipperary.

Photo: Ray McManus / SPORTSFILE.

Tipperary got their first goals of the season when Noel McGrath set up Jason Forde with an overhead pass to rattle the net after six minutes. Forde, who gave Daithi Burke a torrid time in the opening half, then set up McGrath five minutes from the break to lead seven but Galway rattled off five points to leave it 2-7 to 0-11 at the break.

The sides were level three times in the third quarter before two efforts from Forde and a trademark long range effort from Ronan Maher pushed Tipperary 2-13 to 0-16 ahead after 62 minutes and while Galway got it back to a point going into stoppage time, two points from substitute Michael Breen helped Tipperary finish in a flourish.

"It's nice to get a win on the

board," said manager Liam Sheedy, who is backing Patrick 'Bonner' Maher to recover from his second serious injury in three years. The Lorrha man was set to undergo surgery for an Achilles injury and Sheedy will have to plan without him for the summer.

"I thought at 2-7 to 0-6, we had a good flow in the first half. A few chances that we'd normally take, we didn't take. Galway hit us for five just before half-time.

"Then they came out after half-time and struck two more. So it was seven points without reply and they probably had all the wind advantage but we hung in there, we picked off a few scores and I suppose getting the extra man gave us a bit of impetus. There was tired bodies out there, I ended up using seven of the bench but we just picked off some really good scores finishing up and just about shaded it in the finish, I'd say the extra man was probably the difference."

Sheedy knows they need to be sharper in attack but believes that will come right in due course.

"We were 17 last week, 14 today," he said about their wides. "I'd be more concerned if we weren't getting the chances. We created good chances. Sometimes as well I thought we were shooting from outside where one more pass, I thought Jason Forde was free inside, Noel McGrath had a few chances, I thought they should have got the ball and we went for the score.

"We're still a work in progress. We scored 2-19, had 14 wides on top of that, that's not a bad, there's a lot to like about that."

SCORERS - Tipperary: J Forde 1-5, 4 frees; N McGrath 1-2; J O'Dwyer 0-3; R Maher, M Breen 0-2 each; B Maher, N O'Meara, B Heffernan, R Byrne, P Flynn 0-1 each.

Galway: J. Canning 0-8, 1 65, 6 frees; B Concannon, E Niland 2 frees 0-3 each; C Cooney 0-2; C Whelan, K Cooney, J Flynn free, J Coen 0-1 each.

TIPPERARY: B Hogan; C Barrett, P Maher, B Heffernan; R Byrne, S Kennedy, R Maher; A Flynn, P Cadell; D McCormack, N McGrath, D Quirke; J O'Dwyer, J Forde, J McGrath. **Subs:** P Flynn for J McGrath and N O'Meara for Quirke (both HT); B Maher for Cadell and W Connors for A Flynn (47); J. Morris for D McCormack (53); M Breen for N McGrath (60); B McGrath for Kennedy (64).

GALWAY: E Murphy; D Morrissey, D Burke, TJ Brennan; A Tuohy, P Mannion, A Harte; J Canning, J Coen; J Cooney, J Flynn, C Cooney; B Concannon, K Cooney, C Whelan. **Subs:** G McInerney for Burke and N Burke for Flynn (49); J Fitzpatrick for Harte, C Mannion for J Cooney, E Niland for Canning (all 55); J Mannion for K Cooney (58) J Hastings for C Cooney (69).

REF: J. Keenan (Wicklow).

Landmark victory for Tribesmen

Galway0-26
Limerick1-17

By **JOHN FALLON**
Media West Ireland

LIMERICK boss John Kiely has told the GAA that they can get used to matches being played in empty stadiums if they keep tampering with the rules.

The double All-Ireland winning manager didn't hide his displeasure with the way Wexford referee James Owens handled his side's first defeat in over 22 months when they went down to a Galway side who hadn't beaten them since 2017.

"I think having seen two games now that I'd have major concerns as to where we are at in this now. Clearly, we have to take responsibility for our own performance levels and we do, nobody will take it more on the chin as ourselves in our reflections and analysis of the game, and our response to that in training during the week.

"However, it does appear that the game has changed in the last four months whilst we've all been at home, and somebody has decided to take the tackle out of the game. I'd



love to know who they were and when that was decided?

"Because we had nobody here watching the game today and in 12 months' time we are not going to

CLEARANCE: David Burke of Galway in action against Limerick's Diarmaid Byrnes.

Photo: Piaras Ó Mídheach / SPORTSFILE.



FLICK: Galway forward Niall Burke and William O'Donoghue of Limerick clash for possession during the NHL Division 1A game at Pearse Stadium in Salthill.

Photo: Piaras Ó Mídheach / SPORTSFILE.

have anybody here watching it if it's 36 frees they are going to be sitting down to watch, and however number of restarts, maybe 60 restarts and however number of sidelines.

"I think the people at home today were saved €20 because that wasn't a spectacle that anybody would like to be a part of," he fumed.

Kiely had no qualms about Galway's win although he was highly critical of what he saw as their efforts to win soft frees, but aside from an early David Reidy free they were never in front in a game that struggled to come to life.

And it was inevitable that with so many frees that Evan Niland of Galway and Limerick's Reidy would emerge as the key scoring figures in a game which only had flashes of intensity.

Hurler of the Year Gearoid Hegarty caused the Galway defence untold trouble but neither team were penetrative up front.

That won't bother Galway manager Shane O'Neill against his native county and he said afterwards

that they concentrated on their own game rather than try target specific aspects of the All-Ireland and league champions.

“We weren’t out to put a dent in Limerick. We were out to perform. If we got a win fantastic – it is great to get the win. We’ve played two matches. 100 per cent record so far. That’s what we’re going to try and continue next weekend.

“Again, if we perform exceptionally well and we don’t quite get the win we’re not too bothered because it’s preparation for the championship as far as we’re concerned.

“We weren’t looking at Limerick, we were looking at ourselves to see how we would get the most out of our players. I thought some of the movement and the striking of the forwards was excellent and I thought the backs were really tight and defended aggressively, which was great.”



FIRST: Galway ace Conor Whelan gets the ball at Pearse Stadium in Salthill.

Photo: Piaras Ó Mídheach / SPORTSFILÉ.

Galway went in leading by 0-14 to 1-8 at the break having enjoyed more possession but a goal from Seamus Flanagan after he was set up by the superb Hegarty kept Limerick in touch.

Galway led by 0-7 to 0-4 by the first water break without the game coming to life. The sides were level twice in that period, with Reidy and Niland exchanging frees and then when Brian Concannon and Niall Burke pointed for Galway, Reidy and Peter Casey responded for the All-Ireland champions.

Another free from Niland and efforts from Conor Whelan and David Burke pushed Galway 0-6 to 0-3 after 17 minutes before Reidy and Niland again swapped frees.

The sides twice swapped points after that before efforts from Ja Mannion and Whelan opened up a 0-10 to 0-5 lead but then Flanagan found the net after 27 minutes.

The Galway response to the goal was good with three points in succession after Niland and Reidy had again exchanged points but two more frees from Reidy cut the gap to a goal by the break.

There was little between the sides in the third quarter, with Galway, having introduced Joe Canning off the bench, leading by 0-19 to 1-14 at the second water break, while Aaron Gillane hit a couple of superb points after coming on.

But Limerick couldn’t find a way through for the goal they needed to ignite a comeback and the Tribesmen deservedly held on for their second win of the campaign.

SCORERS – Galway: E Niland 0-14 (0-14 frees); C Whelan 0-3; J Canning 0-2 (0-1 free), D Burke, C Mannion 0-2 each; B Concannon, J Mannion, N Burke 0-1 each. **Limerick:** D Reidy 0-8 (0-7 frees); A Gillane 0-4 (0-2 frees); S Flanagan 1-0; G Hegarty, P Casey 0-2 each; D Byrnes (0-1 free).

GALWAY: E Murphy; S Loftus, G McInerney, J Fitzpatrick; A Tuohey, P Mannion, F Burke; D Burke, C Mannion; J Cooney, E Niland, B Concannon; J Mannion, N Burke, C Whelan. **Subs:** J Coen for D Burke (35 +3, inj); D Morrissey for Loftus (47); J Canning for J Cooney, S Cooney for Tuphey (both 49); J Flynn for J Mannion (55).

LIMERICK: N Quaid; A Costello, D Morrissey, R English; D Byrnes, K Hayes, B Nash; W O’Donoghue, B O’Grady; G Hegarty, C Lynch, D Reidy; C O’Neill, S Flanagan, P Casey. **Subs:** D O’Donovan for O’Grady, A Gillane for O’Neill (both HT); B Ryan for English (55); A Breen for Casey (60); T Morrissey for Reidy (63).

REF: J Owens (Wexford).

Niland keeping his feet on the ground

By JOHN FALLON Media West Ireland

NEW Galway sharpshooter Evan Niland said there is no danger of them getting carried away with themselves after ending Limerick’s 14-match unbeaten run and they had already turned their attention to the following Saturday’s lunchtime clash away to Tipperary.

Niland announced his arrival in a brief cameo when he came on in the closing stages of the All-Ireland semi-final against Limerick last year.

And the Clarinbridge clubman, a former All-Ireland minor and Leinster U-21 winner, has been superb in Galway’s opening two wins.

He shot 0-13 against Westmeath, three of them from play, and went one better in the win over Limerick when he landed 14 frees.

“He is a very good striker of the ball and he got some great scores,” said manager Shane O’Neill. “He’s very, very accurate and overall extremely accurate striker of the ball.”

Niland played down his haul, crediting his teammates for winning the frees but with Joe Canning only easing his way back, he has made the most of his chance at centre-forward.

“The lads were working hard winning the frees and I just had the handy job of tapping them over,” said Niland. “It looked great but the lads were working very hard and they put in a great shift and the last 15 minutes especially.

We came out after half-time and we didn’t do great but we finished off very well, which is good. I suppose we are only back in training a few weeks and to finish well is very important.

“When we get a good score ourselves we often it mess it up by letting in a handy score so I suppose when they got the goal it was kind of the opposite and we kicked on, but that’s the way hurling goes. But it’s just great to get the win and we can look forward again.”

It had been a good start to the league in O’Neill’s second season in charge and the 0-26 to 1-17 win against his native Limerick gave them a lot to build on but Niland was under no illusions about what they would face against Tipperary.

“Yeah, a big test. They have two draws so it will be a big game and three weeks in a row is tough going but we will take confidence from this game and look forward to next week and hopefully we will give a good account of ourselves.

“A lot of individual work was put in (during lockdown) but if you look at the panel there are a lot of natural hurlers in the Galway panel and the touch wouldn’t be bad at all. Lads aren’t going to lose their touch on Galway panel, which probably suits us and hopefully it doesn’t go against us as we go along during the year.”

Mannion stars in big win over

Galway5-34
Westmeath 1-16

By JOHN FALLON
Media West Ireland

GALWAY manager Shane O'Neill expected to have big guns such as Joe Canning, Daithi Burke and captain Pdraic Mannion back for the following Sunday's showdown with All-Ireland champions Limerick at Pearse Stadium.

Canning and Burke were among several players rested for the opening game, with Mannion troubled by an ankle injury, but O'Neill expected to be picking from a full hand for the clash with his native county.

"Yeah, they are all fine. We just need to be able to manage, I suppose it's five league games in six weeks so we are looking at game time, where guys are fitness wise etc. We just had to be very conscious of that.

"We have a few niggles over the last three weeks that we have been back but nothing major. You would obviously expect to have some when guys haven't had the contact over such a long period."

The tempo of the season was set to crank up a few levels but O'Neill said they are ready to meet these sort of challenges, particularly as



UP: Galway defender Aidan Harte gets a shot away against Niall O'Brien of Westmeath at Cusack Park in Mullingar.

Photo: Eóin Noonan / SPORTSFILE.

players worked hard on their strength and conditioning over the past few months.

"Well, they were in great form coming back, they were in extremely good condition. Obviously, any guys who are on their own, I assume were using a ball wall, others were in twos and threes depending on who is in the house.

"It was really just to get the expansive, long striking, that kind of thing into it. So, we are relatively happy, absolutely.

"We are looking forward to Limerick now. A lot of the boys will be delighted to get rid of the cobwebs there and have another crack at it next week."

As expected they were able to boss matters at TEG Cusack Park in



TIMING: Galway's Cathal Mannion gets the ball away ahead of Robbie Greville of Westmeath during the NHL Division 1 Group A clash at Cusack Park in Mullingar.

Photo: Eóin Noonan / SPORTSFILE.

"We are looking forward to Limerick now. A lot of the boys will be delighted to get rid of the cobwebs there and have another crack at it next week."

Westmeath

Mullingar without too much fuss, with the sharpness of Cathal Mannion in midfield particularly noticeable. He crowned a magnificent display with a bullet pass to send his cousin Brian Concannon in for Galway's fourth goal just after the restart but by then all that remained to be decided was the margin of the victory.

Only Galway's full-back line and goalkeeper in the starting 15 did not score as points were landed from all angles and distances as Westmeath struggled to contain them. All six Galway forwards scored by the 15th minute and they were out of sight when they led 3-18 to 0-10 at the interval.

Stand-in captain Conor Whelan got the opening goal after a long ball from Cathal Mannion and then Concannon set up Niall Burke for the second after 18 minutes. Evan Niland and Mannion combined to send the unrelated Ja Mannion in before the break.

Westmeath battled gamely. Niall O'Brien hit seven frees and Ciaran Doyle's second point was the score of the day but the one-way traffic continued after the restart.

Galway goalkeeper Eanna Murphy, who put his Croke Park puckout nightmare behind him to execute pinpoint deliveries, was

hooked as he tried to clear and Niall Mitchell tapped home a Westmeath goal.

But Galway finished strongly with Conor Cooney getting their fifth goal before blasting a penalty over the bar in the closing stages as they eased to a 30-point win to get their 2021 season up and running.

SCORERS - Galway: E Niland 0-13 (10f), C Cooney 1-5 (0-1 pen), N Burke 1-4, J Mannion 1-3, B Concannon 1-1, C Whelan 1-0, C Mannion 0-2, F Burke 0-2 (1's), S Cooney 0-2, A Harte 0-1, J Coen 0-1.

Westmeath: N O'Brien 0-11 (10f), N Mitchell 1-0, C Doyle 0-2, S Williams 0-1, J Boyle 0-1, D Glennon 0-1.

GALWAY: E Murphy; J Fitzpatrick, G McInerney, S Loftus; A Harte, S Cooney, F Burke; J Coen, C Mannion; C Cooney, E Niland, B Concannon; C Whelan, N Burke, J Mannion. **Subs:** D Morrissey for Fitzpatrick (21), TJ Brennan for Harte (44), J Cooney for Concannon (44), D Kilcommins for Whelan (54), K Cooney for C Mannion (54), J Flynn for Niland (57), D Cronin for S Loftus (57).

WESTMEATH: E Skelly; D Egerton, T Doyle, C Shaw; A Cox, A Craig, D McNicholas; R Greville, D Glennon; J Galvin, C Doyle, J Boyle; N O'Brien, D Clinton, S Williams. **Subs:** N Mitchell for Galvin (20), T Gallagher for Cox (HT), J Coll for Clinton (42), K Regan for McNicholas (50), P Scally for Gallagher (59-61, blood), S Calvin for Greville (63).

REF: Sean Stack (Dublin).



CHARGE: Jarlath Mannion of Galway in action against Tommy Doyle of Westmeath.

Photo: Eóin Noonan / SPORTSFILE.

There will be bigger tests on horizon

By JOHN FALLON Media West Ireland

CATHAL Mannion produced a man of the match display at midfield as Galway opened their league campaign with a 30-point win over Westmeath but he knew they were going to get a far better idea of where they stood when they hosted All-Ireland champions Limerick.

Mannion was outstanding in the middle of the field and aside from hitting a couple of points from long range he had a hand in several of Galway's five goals, not least the 30-metre pass which put his cousin Brian Concannon in for their fourth just after half-time, as they romped to a 5-34 to 1-16 win in Mullingar.

"We still have loads to work on. I know we got five goals, but we still missed a few. Just tidy up on different things. It's just keep continuing to work on these things in between games. Everyone wanted to get back playing.

"We training on our own but everyone was glad to get back. The games are starting now so it will be week on week. So we are looking forward to the next few weeks," he said.

The Athascragh-Fohenagh clubman welcomes the seven subs rule given the hectic schedule for early weeks of the league, and with manager Shane O'Neill adding seven new players, Mannion says there is good competition for places.

"That's the benefit of having game on game now, five games in the league. It will give a chance to everyone. It's going to get competitive now the next few weeks so once you have a jersey you're trying to hold on to it. It's going to benefit the squad."

An injury to him and Joe Canning cost Galway dearly in the All-Ireland semi-final and Mannion knows both sides will learn a lot from their contest at Pearse Stadium.

"It'll be a challenge, a massive game. We'll see where we are at. It was difficult there at times over the lockdown when we were training on our own, you always want to look forward. We didn't really know when games might be. We are just delighted to be back playing," added Mannion.

Mayo go down fighting after titanic battle

Kildare2-24

Mayo1-19

Mayo GAA

THE Mayo hurlers and management team can hold their heads high after this enormous struggle with Kildare in the final of the Allianz NHL Division 2B. Played in glorious sunshine and on an immaculate surface in Castlebar, Mayo played their hearts out from start to finish.

The opening half produced some magical hurling from Mayo who led from the off with great points from Corey Scahill, Sean Regan, Adrian Phillips, Shane Boland and Keith Higgins. Regan was outstanding in the first half, landing 1-03 from play in the opening thirty-five minutes. His goal coming just before the first sos uisce after some great work by debutant Oisin Greally. Regan was a powerful house on the half-forward line and when Greally put him in on goal his first time pull rattled the back of the net. That score put Mayo 1-07 to 0-04 in front with the ragging favourites rattled and dismayed at the running, stick work and accuracy of the Mayo forwards.

Paul Divilly, Cathal McCabe, Johnny Byrne and the deadly accurate Jack Sheridan responded for Kildare with good scores but the impressive Regan with two more from play and Keith Higgins with two frees kept the home side in the driving seat. Mayo were rocked to the core right on the stroke of half time when Kildare corner forward David Slattery burst onto a pass from James Burke to rattle a pile driver of a shot past Bobby Douglas in the Mayo goal. Douglas was immense in the opening half brilliantly saving an earlier penalty from Jack Sheridan after David Kenny fouled Cathal McCabe as he headed for goal. Kenny was yellow carded and sent to the sin bin for ten minutes. That killer score left only five between the sides at half time Mayo leading 1-14 to 1-09.

The third quarter saw Kildare outscore Mayo by 0-9 to 0-2 with



their manager former Kilkenny All-Ireland winner David Herity rallying his strops at the half time break. James Bourke landed four outstanding points from play during this period with the illustrious Jack Sheridan and wingback Kevin Whelan reeling Mayo in with rapid-fire scores from play. At the second sos uisce Kildare had their noses in front for the first time 1-18 to 1-15 and they never looked back.

Mayo to their credit dug deep in the final quarter with Cathal Freeman, Pearse McCrann and Higgins all scoring but the Lilywhites headed for home with Shane Ryan and Sheridan pushing them over the line. Substitute Conor Dowling put the icing on their victory in the final minute when he blasted past Douglas for their second goal.

Cathal Freeman attacks the sliotar.

SCORERS - Kildare: J Sheridan 0-9, D Slattery 1-2, J Burke 0-5, C Dowling 1-1, C McCabe 0-2, J Byrne 0-2, K Whelan, P Divilly & S Ryan 0-1 each.

Mayo: K Higgins 0-8 (0-8f), S Regan 1-3, C Freeman 0-3, C Scahill, P McCrann, J Cassidy, A Phillips & S Boland 0-1 each.

KILDARE: P McKenna, C Derivan, R Boran, S Leacy, K Whelan, D Flaherty, S Christiansen, K Aherne, P Divilly, C McCabe, J Byrne, J Burke, B Byrne, J Sheridan, D Slattery. **Subs:** T Forde for K Aherne, M Delaney for J Bourke, S Ryan for C McCabe, C Dowling for P Divilly, C Dowling for D Slattery, J Travers for S Christiansen.

MAYO: B Douglas, D Huane, C Daly, C Scahill, G Nolan, P McCrann, D Kenny, J Cassidy, S Regan, A Phillips, C Freeman, S Kenny, O Greally, K Higgins, S Boland. **Subs:** C Henry for C Daly, C Murray for S Kenny, B Morley for S Boland, B Hunt for C Scahill, K Kiely for A Phillips, E Delaney for O Greally.

REF: K Jordan (Tipperary).

Derry dish out big defeat

Derry1-26
Roscommon0-14

By JOHN MCCARTHY

GERALD Bradley's goal rubbed salt into the wounds as Roscommon suffered a 15-point defeat at the hands of Derry at Owenbeg.

The hosts held a comfortable 0-13 to 0-5 lead at half-time and the game was already over as a spectacle before Bradley shot past Enda Lawless in the Roscommon goal.

Cathal Dolan was outstanding once again for the Rossies and he finished with a personal tally of 0-10 before there wasn't enough help from outside as the Connacht county succumbed to this Division 2B defeat.

Derry were 0-10 to 0-3 ahead after just half-an-hour of action with John Mullan leading the charge.

They pushed their lead out to eight points by the half-time interval



and Roscommon couldn't find a way back. **Conor Mulry**
It got worse for Roscommon

when Bradley scored the goal and Cormac O'Doherty helped himself to 0-7 to seal the win for Derry.

SCORERS - Derry: C O'Doherty 0-7; G Bradley 1-2, J Mullan 0-5; O McKeever 0-4; S McGuigan 0-3; D Foley 0-2; M McGuigan, R Mullan & S Cassidy 0-1 each.

Roscommon: C Dolan 0-10; E Costello 0-2; C Kenny 0-1.

DERRY: O O'Doherty; C McAllister, B Óg McGilligan, D McCloskey; S Cassidy, C Kelly, M McGrath; J Mullan, G Bradley, M McGuigan, C O'Doherty, R Mullan, O McKeever, S Cassidy, S McGuigan.

Subs: D Foley for S Cassidy (half-time), B Lavery for R Mullan (52), R McWilliams for C O'Doherty (52), A Grant for S McGuigan (52), C McGilligan for D McCloskey (59).

ROSCOMMON: E Lawless; P Dolan, D Fallon, N Connaughton; E Costello, S Naughton, P Kellehan; B McGahon, E Coyle; C Dolan, J Kilkenny, C Kennelly; M Comerford, C Mulry, M Brennan. **Subs:** C Kenny for C Kennelly (18), C Coyle for M Comerford (18), O Kelly for M Brennan (31), P Nolan for P Dolan (44), D Treacy for C Mulry (52), T Fallon for E Coyle (52), D Heavey for J Kilkenny (54).

REF: Colum Cuning (Antrim).

Promotion chasing Lilywhites win

Kildare4-25
Roscommon0-10

By RONAN O'NEILL

JACK Sheridan top-scored with 2-5 as Kildare marched on towards promotion with a demolition job of Roscommon.

Kildare's third-straight win was another impressive one and this time with 27 points to spare over their hosts at Dr Hyde Park.

David Slattery also banged in two goals for David Herity's men who turned their attentions to a potential promotion decider following this game.

It was a remarkable first half were there was an even opening foray before Kildare blitzed their opponents and took a massive 3-15 to 0-4 lead into half-time.

Paul Divilly (two) and James Burke scored a couple of early points for the visitors but when they were cancelled out by Cathal Dolan,

Cathal Kenny and Ben McGahon it looked as though a competitive game was set to unfold.

That all changed in the coming minutes before half-time when Kildare struck an unanswered 3-11, which included goals from Slattery (two) and Sheridan. Roscommon could live with them after Slattery scored the first goal in the 14th minute.

Kildare's fourth goal sealed the win in the 42nd minute, this time it was Sheridan who fired a 21-metre free to the net. And they eased out to the win after that.

SCORERS - Kildare: J Sheridan 2-5 (s/line, free), D Slattery 2-1, P Divilly 0-5, B Byrne 0-3, J Burke 0-2, G Keegan 0-2, K Aherne 0-2, C Dowling 0-2, J Byrne 0-1, S Leacy 0-1, S Christansen 0-1.

Roscommon: C Dolan 0-5 (4 frees), B McGanon 0-2, P Dolan 0-1, P Kellehan 0-1, C Kenny 0-1.

KILDARE: P McKenna; C Derivan, R Boran, S Leacy; K Whelan, D Flaherty, S Christaneen; K Aherne, P Divilly; S Ryan, J Byrne, J Burke; B Byrne, J Sheridan, D Slattery.

Subs: G Keegan for S Ryan (inj 30); M Doyle for P McKenna (HT); C Dowling for J

UNLUCKY:
Darragh Heavey was in action for Roscommon in their defeat to Kildare.

Photo:
Piaras Ó Midheach /
SPORTSFILE.



Burke (HT); C Forde for C Derivan (HT); C Chan for D Flaherty (38); T Forde for G Keegan (46); J Travers for K Aherne (47).

ROSCOMMON: E Lawless; P Dolan, D Fallon, S Trundle; E Costello, S Naughton, Kellehan; B McGahon, A Lyons; C Mulry; J Kilkenny, C Kennelly; C Kenny, C Dolan, M Comerford. **Subs:** D Kelly for S Trundle (4); N Connaughton (34); C Coyle for D Fallon (43); M Brennan for C Mulry (50); D Heavey for C Kenny (50); E Coyle for J Kilkenny (55).

REF: Kevin Brady (Louth).

Donegal ease to the win

Donegal4-18
Mayo0-13

Mayo GAA

DONEGAL totally outclassed a lacklustre and under par Mayo senior hurling team at O'Donnell Park in Letterkenny.

Mayo were rocked before the start as captain Keith Higgins was unable to travel forcing Derek Walsh to shuffle his attack just before throw-in.

The visitors started brightly and dominated possession, but Mayo were wayward with their shooting hitting six wides inside the first quarter. Donegal on the other hand were clinical in front of goal and took every opportunity that came their way.

Eoin Delaney, Shane Boland, Adrian Phillips and Corey Scahill pointed but Mayo were playing second fiddle for most of the half. Donegal hit three great goals in the first half, Declan Coulter with two and centre forward Richie Ryan kicking to the net after a long dropping pass from Daniel Cullen.

Coulter was outstanding and his move to full forward allowed Donegal target the deadly accurate and skilful hurler on the edge of the square. His pace and handling was immaculate and when the opportunities arose, he had only goal on his mind.

Derek Walsh sent Sean Regan, Brian Hunt and Conor Murray into the fray at half-time but Donegal were 3-12 to 0-07 in front ten minutes into the half.

Coulter was on fire from frees and corner forward Bernard Lafferty was magical at top of the right hitting four points from play. Donegal landed another major just before the sos uisce when Ronan McDermott volleyed to the net after Mayo goalkeeper Bobby Douglas failed to clear his line.

From there to the finish, it was all Donegal. Coulter and substitute Ruairi Campbell hitting excellent points from way out the field.

Mayo to their credit fought to the end with Boland, Adrian, Mark and Cormac Phillips all hitting scores from play. It was too little too late for Mayo who made the long journey



home after a poor performance on the road.

SCORERS - Donegal: D Coulter 2-8 (0-6f), R Ryan 1-2, B Lafferty 0-4, R McDermott 1-0, R Campbell 0-2 (2f), S McVeigh & D Cullen 0-1 each.

Mayo: S Boland 0-4 (2f), A Phillips 0-2, C Freeman, E Delaney, C Scahill, B Morley, B Hunt, C Phillips and M Phillips 0-1 each.

DONEGAL: L White, G Brown, S Gillespie, M Callaghan, C McDermott, S McVeigh, M Donaghue, D Coulter, C Mathewson, D Cullen, R Ryan, J O'Loughlin, B Lafferty, R McDermott, G Gilmore.

Subs: J Connolly for S McVeigh (45) P Doherty for M Donaghue, N Cleary for D Cullen (62) R Campbell for R Ryan, O Grant for D Coulter (65) C Flood for R McDermott (73).

MAYO: B Douglas, D Kenny, M Morley, S Kenny, C Daly, P McCrann, S Coyne, K Kiely, D Huane, A Phillips, C Freeman, E Delaney, C Scahill, B Morley, S Boland.

Subs: S Regan for E Delaney, B Hunt for K Kiely, C Murray for S Kenny (all HT), G Nolan for D Kenny (45), C Philips for D Huane (45), J Gallagher for C Scahill (58), M Phillips for B Morley (63).

REF: Kevin Parke (Antrim).

TARGET: Mayo ace Shane Boland top-scored for his side despite their disappointing defeat against Donegal.

Photo: Piaras Ó Midheach / SPORTSFILE.

Mayo s

Mayo1-20
Roscommon1-9

Mayo Advertiser

MAYO gave their promotion hopes a big boost in Hyde Park when the saw off Roscommon, to make it two wins from two in Division 2B of the National Hurling League.

Keith Higgins finished the day as Mayo's top scorer getting 1-5, while Shane Boland chipped in with four points to lead the scoring charts for Mayo.

Higgins got the scoreboard moving from a pointed free four minutes in, that was cancelled out by a Cathal Dolan effort from play two minutes later.

Both sides traded scores in the next wave of white flag waving, with Adrian Phillips tapping one over the bar after being found by Cathal Freeman - that effort was replied to by a Eoin Costello score from out on the 65 meter line to leave it all square at two points apiece.

Shane Boland got his first of the day from play from out on the right hand side on the 45 meter line to put Mayo back in front, before a Cathal Dolan point levelled the game up at the first water break.

Mayo hit the first two points after the resumption, but they were quickly canceled out before Keith Higgins edged Mayo back in front 28 minutes in.

As the game ticked into injury time, Mayo hit a rich vein of form and reeled off five points before the break to go in leading 0-11 to 0-6. Those scores came from a monster Gerald Kelly free from his own 45, that was the second point in a week for the Mayo goalkeeper.

Kevin Kiely landed the next score, then Shane Boland added another from a free before Cathal Freeman got his first of the day and the run was then finished off by a fine 65 from Higgins.

Roscommon got themselves right back in the gam not long after the break, when Jack Lohan reacted quickest to bat the ball home from close range after a Dolan free dropped short and was parried away by Kelly in the Mayo goal.

Walsh's side reacted brilliantly with Cathal Freeman landing the

howcase their skills



Former Mayo footballer Keith Higgins scored 1-5 for the hurlers' victory over Roscommon.

Photo: Brendan Moran / SPORTSFILE.

next score, before Dolan replied for the hosts with a well taken score.

Mayo were awarded a penalty six minutes into the half, when Shane Boland was taken down just inside the penalty area which saw Sean Trundle get sent to the sin bin for ten minutes.

Freeman stepped up to take the penalty but he blasted his effort over the bar for only a one point return from the clear goal chance. Keith Higgins added on a 65 not long afterwards, before a Oisín Kelly effort made it 0-14 to 1-7 with ten minutes gone in the half.

The next score proved to be the crucial one of the day - Keith Higgins took a swipe for a point but he didn't connect with the sliothar right and Enda Lawless made a mess of his effort to keep it out, with the umpire judging that it had gone over the line.

Shane Boland stretched Mayo's lead out even further with the next score after being brilliantly picked out in space by Jason Coyne and Mayo were 1-15 to 1-7 up and heading for home with the points.

Mayo tagged on five more points before the end with both sub Corey Scahill and centre half back Pearse McCrann helping themselves to a brace each - Scahill's second point could have been a second goal for Mayo when he batted the ball over the bar from close range right at the death.

SCORES - Mayo: K. Higgins 1-5 (0-3 65', 0-1f), S Boland 0-4 (0-3f), C Freeman 0-3, P McCrann (0-2f), C Scahill 0-2, A Phillips, G Kelly 0-1f, B Morley & K Kiely 0-1 each.

Roscommon: C Dolan 0-5 (0-3f), J Lohan 1-0, E Costello, O Coyle, A Finnerty & S Naughton 0-1 each.

MAYO: G Kelly, S Coyne, M Morley, S Kenny, J Cassidy, P McCrann, D Kenny, K Kiely, D Huane, A Phillips, C Freeman, S Regan, J Coyne, K Higgins, S Boland.

Subs: B Morley, C Scahill, C Henry, E Delaney, B Hunt, B Douglas, C Murray.

ROSCOMMON: E Lawless, P Dolan, D Fallon, S Trundle, E Costello, P Kellehan, E Coyle, C Dolan, B McGahon, O Coyle, C Kenny, N Connaughton, A Finnerty, C Mulry, J Lohan. **Subs:** J Kilkenny, A Lyons, D Treacy, C Kennelly, D Heavey, K Egan, S Naughton.

REF: R. McGann (Clare).

Cathal Dolan was one of the star performers for Roscommon on a tough day Connacht against rivals Mayo at Dr Hyde Park.

Photo: Piaras Ó Mídeach / SPORTSFILE.



Off to a winning start

Mayo0-21
Derry1-16

By **COLM GANNON**
Mayo Advertiser

MAYO had to dig deep at the end against Derry in their season opener in MacHale Park, to get their National Hurling League Division 2B season off to a winning start.

Mayo spurned a number of chances in the first half, running up 13 wides in the opening 35 minutes and were almost left to regret those as Derry came strong at the end.

The led by three points at the break and by the second water break they had that lead out to six and then seven not long afterwards, but a goal from Derry corner forward Eoghan Cassidy had the Oak Leaf county back in the game.

With three minutes left on the clock, there was just one between them thanks to a Cormac Doherty 65 - but Mayo went straight down the field and Shane Boland managed to hook the ball over the bar off his wrong side under pressure for a fantastic score.

But Derry kept coming and Gerald Bradly flashed a shot at goal that just cleared the bar to cut the game back to a single point effort. Mayo keep their heads and Brian Hunt took on the sensible option and placed the ball over the bar to push his side further clear when he could have risked playing in a man for a goal chance.

The Mayo defence stood firm and held out Derry's final fling of the dice from a Doherty free that was blocked by the Mayo rearguard and the final whistle went and singled the two points are staying in Mayo.

Mayo led by three points at the first water break, the halt in play was called just as a downpour engulfed MacHale Park, but thankfully the rain soon exited stage left and the game was played out in good conditions.

Derek Walsh's men had five points on the board at that stage and really should have had a few more, hitting six wides in the opening



SOLID: Mayo defender Stephen Coyne in action against Derry in Division 2B of the National Hurling League.

Photo by Piaras Ó Midheach / SPORTSFILE.

exchanges.

Shane Boland opened and closed the scoring for Mayo in the first quarter with a brace of frees, with the other points coming from newly installed captain Keith Higgins, Cahal Freeman and Adrian Phillips.

Derry's scores came from the sticks of Cormac Doherty and Niall Ferry and despite having limited attacks they came close to getting goal early on when Brian Cassidy's shot came back off the post three minutes in.

Mayo remained consistent at least over the second quarter of the game, landing five more points before the break but also keeping the wide tally up, finishing up the first half with 13 missing the target with the breeze behind their backs.

Cormac Doherty pointed a free for Derry not long after the resumption with Adrian Phillips hitting his second of the day not long after, which was quickly followed by Boland free. Sean Regan drove over a long range point after winning the puck-out from Boland's point and the next score was one to remember.

Mayo keeper' Gerald Kelly drove the ball over the bar from inside his

own 21 after a short puck-out routine with Stephen Coyne, for a score that you really had to see to believe and they tried it again a short time later, but it didn't come off that time.

Two more Doherty frees kept Derry in touch on the scoreboard, but the last word on the half was left to Boland who grabbed his fourth point of the day from a free to send Mayo in leading 0-10 to 0-5 at the break.

The second half opened up with Derry getting two points on the bounce from the impressive Doherty to cut the gap back to just two, Boland steadied the ship with a pointed free after Jason Coyne was fouled and Mayo tagged on a few more scores and looked like they were going to drive on to victory - but it was going to be a hard battle to finally get over the line, but they did in the end.

SCORERS - Mayo: S Boland 0-8 (6f), A Phillips 0-3, K Higgins 0-3 (1f), S Regan 0-2, G Kelly 0-1, J Cassidy 0-1, C Freeman 0-1, B Hunt 0-2.

Derry: C O'Doherty 0-11 (9f, 1 65), N Ferris 1-2, P Cleary, B Cassidy & G Bradley 0-1 each.

MAYO: G Kelly, S Coyne, M Morley, S Kenny, J Cassidy, P McCrann, D Kenny; K Kiely, D Huane; A Phillips, C Freeman, S Regan; J Coyne, K Higgins, S Boland.

Subs: E Delaney for J Coyne (47); B Hunt for P McCrann (50); C Phillips for A Phillips (66), S Mulroy for D Huane (37).

DERRY: O O'Doherty, C Kelly, S Cassidy, D Cartin; D McCloskey, P Cleary, M McGrath; R Mullan, G Bradley; M McGuigan, C O'Doherty, E Cassidy; B Cassidy, S McGuigan, N Ferris. **Subs:** R McWilliams for D Cartin (inj) (14); D Foley for M McGuigan (53); T Brady for S McGuigan (60).

REF: Richie Fitzsimons (Offaly).



Gerald Kelly of Mayo during in action against Derry.

Roscommon lose it at the death

Donegal1-13
Roscommon1-11

By **TOM MURPHY**

ROSCOMMON began their 2021 campaign with a disappointing comeback National Hurling League Division 2B defeat away to Donegal.

The visitors were three points

ahead heading into additional time at O'Donnell Park in Letterkenny but ended up losing by two after a Ronan McDermott goal put the seal on it for Donegal.

Roscommon held a 1-7 to 0-7 half-time lead after star midfielder Cathal Dolan found the net from a penalty.

Conor Mulry had been fouled in the 14th minute and Dolan stepped up to blast the ball past Luke White. Dolan had also been on form from frees.

And with Donegal dangerman



Declan Coulter failing from a penalty, Roscommon were gifted a three-point advantage at the change of ends.

Donegal reduced the arrears to the minimum shortly after the resumption but then arrived the third

penalty of the afternoon.

Galvin Browne fouled Dolan, but on this occasion Dolan saw his shot saved brilliantly by White.

Still Roscommon pushed on and they looked to be heading for victory before a late late fightback.

Donegal struck 1-2 at the end of the game and Roscommon couldn't believe their eyes as they failed to even leave with a draw.

SCORERS - Donegal: D Coulter 0-9 (5f), R McDermott 1-1, G Gilmore 0-2, N Cleary 0-1.

Roscommon: C Dolan 1-5 (1-0 pen, 3f), C Kenny 0-3, O Kelly, C Mulry & G Egan 0-1 each.

DONEGAL: L White; G Browne, S Gillespie, M Callaghan; C McDermott, S McVeigh, M O'Donoghue; D Coulter, C Matthewson; D Cullen, R Ryan, J O'Loughlin; B Lafferty, R McDermott, G Gilmore. **Subs:** C O'Grady for Matthewson (55), P Doherty for Donoghue (58), C Grant for Lafferty, N Cleary for Ryan (68).

ROSCOMMON: E Lawless; P Dolan, D Fallon, S Trundle; D Heavey, P Kellehan, E Coyle; B McGahon, C Dolan; O Kelly, C Kenny, N Connaughton; J Lohan, C Mulry, G Egan. **Subs:** C Kennelly for G Egan (35), C Egan for Kelly (44), S Naughton for Coyle (62), T Fallon for Kenny (72).

REF: Colm Cumming (Antrim).

Naos Connaughton was in action against Donegal.

Photo: Matt Browne / SPORTSFILE.

Into the West

– delivered through our own letter box, every time

Ireland: €20 (includes post and packaging)

UK: €25 (£22)

Rest of Europe & Asia: €25

America: €25 (US\$35)

Australia: €25 (Aus\$33)

South America: €25

Subscription service ensures you stay totally on top of GAA news from Connacht

THE IDEAL PRESENT FOR THE GAA FANATIC IN YOUR HOUSE – OR JUST INDULGE YOURSELF

SIGN UP HERE:

Delivery name:.....

Delivery address:.....

Tel No.

Amount enclosed (see details in opposite column)

Send payment to:

**Into the West,
Padraig Corcoran, Toneybane,
Foxford, Co. Mayo, Ireland.**

Make cheques payable to:
Connacht Council

Slick Cavan hold off battling Leitrim

Cavan1-20
Leitrim1-17

By JOHN CONNOLLY
Leitrim Observer

In an eerie echo of the struggles of the county footballers, Leitrim hurlers suffered the sort of mystifying defeat in this Allianz NHL Division 3B clash with Cavan that leaves you wondering exactly what is going wrong.

In a game where Cavan demonstrated clearly better stickwork and far more intensity, Leitrim were level and battling for victory with eight minutes to go when Cavan finally breached Danny Byrne's goal.

That goal gave Cavan the breathing room to hang on to victory but there were spells in this game when they couldn't live with Olcan Conway's side - the problem is that the hurlers couldn't produce those spells for long enough to grab a much needed victory.

For long periods, you sensed that Leitrim simply didn't believe they could get something from this game, sloppy play mirroring their body language but, almost as if a switch was flicked, when they did get going, Cavan couldn't live with them.

Trailing by two points at the break, Leitrim turned that deficit into a three point lead in just 13 minutes in to the second half but they couldn't sustain it against their neighbours who managed to come through a hard hitting and physical encounter.

Whatever the ills that afflict the hurlers, their wildly varying form has to be a concern ahead of the Nicky Rackard Cup where the standard of opposition facing the Green & Gold is much, much tougher.

There is no denying that the hurlers will be desperately disappointed by their League form, they have never got going, but the Rackard Cup gives them an opportunity to show what they are really capable of.

Leitrim got off to a perfect start when Sean O'Riordan's shot fell short but Liam Moreton managed to win it back and his deflected shot dribbled past a defender on the line



Aaron McDermott, Leitrim

for a first minute goal, Moreton scoring a brilliant point almost immediately as he balanced the sliothar on the run before sweeping over in one move.

Cavan looked sharper and more focussed as they fired off three points from Cillian Sheanon (2) and Mark Moffett but, after a few misses, Karl McDermott punished a foul on Diarmuid Kelleher from the free.

Cavan's Diarmaid Carney responded but Leitrim stayed clear with a point from O'Riordan on 20 minutes. Leitrim picking up yellow cards for Stephen Goldrick, Enda & Liam Moreton as Cavan surged ahead with points from Carney (2), Sean Keating and Philip Brady.

Liam Moreton steadied his team with a good point under pressure but

a brilliant save from Danny Byrne just before the break prevented a goal for Caoimhin Carney, the sliothar going over to leave Cavan 0-9 to 1-4 in front.

James McNabola almost opened the second half with a goal as he blasted across the face of the Cavan goal but a foul in the build-up allowed McDermott to tap over another free.

Carney responded with a free before Leitrim started to show what they are capable of with four unanswered points from McNabola, a wonder effort from the wing before Karl McDermott swept over two frees and then a brilliant effort from the wing to put Leitrim two clear.

Cavan fought back with points from Carney (free) and Keating but three McDermott points, one from out almost on the sideline some 21 yards out, put Leitrim three clear after 14 minutes of the second half.

The Breffni blues were not going away and points from Moffett & Jack Barry put them within a point by the second water break. Anthony Sheridan tied the scores after the break before Cathal O'Donovan broke at speed and fired over from distance.

The tit for tat saw Carney (free) and Dave McGovern swap points but Cavan took control with 1-1 in the space of two minutes. Another Carney free was followed by a Sean Keating goal, bowling over a defender in winning the ball before driving it to the net.

Two more Cavan points followed but two good frees from sub Gavin O'Hagan cut the gap back to a goal. Cavan sub Fiachra Hughes hit back and although Liam Moreton pulled one back in added time, Cavan comfortably held on for the victory.

SCORERS - Cavan: D Carney 0-8, 8f; S Keating 1-2; M Moffatt & C Sheanon 0-2 each; A Sheridan, E Shalvey, F Hughes, P Brady & J Barry 0-1 each

Leitrim: K McDermott 0-8, 6f; L Moreton 1-3; G O'Hagan 0-2, 2f; D McGovern, C O'Donovan, J McNabola & S O'Riordan 0-1 each

CAVAN: D Sheridan, N Neary, D Crudden, S Briody, A Sheridan, E Shalvey, M Hynes, M Moffett, F Williams, J Barry, D Carney, P Brady, C Sheanon, S Keating, C Carney.

Subs: D Madden for C Carney (HT), B Nannery for Barry (62), F Hughes & P McCabe for Moffett & Hynes (68)

LEITRIM: D Byrne, P Lenehan, S Goldrick, M Feeney, E Moreton, B Murray, C O'Donovan; A McDermott, C McGuire, K McDermott, J McNabola, D McGovern, S O'Riordan, L Moreton, D Kelleher.

Subs: C Mallon for E Moreton (43); G O'Hagan for O'Riordan (52), J Rooney for McNabola (58), S Crowe for Goldrick (64), C Hackett for K McDermott (67)

REF: Michael Kennedy (Tipperary).



FINISHER: Colm Moreton scored 1-2 for Leitrim even though they lost to Fermanagh.

Photo: Piaras Ó Mídheach / SPORTSFILE.



SHARP: Gavin O'Hagan scored 0-6 but Leitrim fell to a heartbreaking defeat against Louth.

Photo: Matt Browne / SPORTSFILE.

Leitrim GAA and County Hurlers team up to back Migrant Rights Centre Ireland anti-racism message on new jersey

Leitrim Observer

IN an innovative step, Leitrim GAA Senior hurlers will carry the message “No to Racism” on their jerseys for the season after announcing an important partnership with the Migrant Rights Centre of Ireland.

Announcing the news, the MRCI said “Today marks an important day in the fight against racism in Ireland. The Leitrim GAA Hurling team are delighted to partner with Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI) in saying no to racism.”

The Leitrim Hurling team will display ‘No To Racism’ on their new jerseys for this year’s fixtures

as a show of solidarity with all people affected by racism.

Zak Moradi, of Leitrim Hurling team, said “Racism is one of the worst things you can encounter. It creates a huge divide between people and without its existence we would have a more peaceful, welcoming and inclusive society.”

“We want to raise awareness and create a community that sticks together as a whole with no divides. We’re all human and we all deserve a sense of belonging regardless of race. We want the same team spirit of sports: all for one and one for all.”

The Leitrim Hurling team has chosen to partner with MRCI because of its long

history in tackling racism and discrimination in the labour market and fighting for the rights of migrant workers and their families.

Edel McGinley, Director at MRCI said “Racism has no place in our society, communities, workplaces, schools or in sport. It has a devastating impact on people’s lives, affecting individuals, families and the community.”

“Sport plays a very important role in promoting diversity and inclusion. The Leitrim jersey sends a clear message, raises awareness and shows solidarity with everyone impacted by racism. We commend the leadership shown by Leitrim Hurling team, the GAA and Zak Moradi in taking this stand.

“We would like to thank The One Foundation for their support in making this initiative possible.”

The Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI) is a national organisation working to promote the rights of migrant workers and their families at risk of exploitation, social exclusion and discrimination. We believe people should be able to move in safety and work with dignity.

Since 2001, MRCI has been working with migrant workers in unregulated precarious employment - low pay, poor working conditions, and insecure immigration status. Workers have brought into public view exploitation, discrimina-



Leitrim hurler Zak Moradi has led the anti-racism charge in the county.

Photo: Piaras Ó Mídheach / SPORTSFILE.

tion and social exclusion.

MRCI combines frontline support and strategic casework with research, policy, advocacy and campaigning to achieve change. Our focus on collective action and organising with migrant workers aims to build stronger communities, better workplaces, and a fairer society for all.

Mayo come up short



OPEN: Mayo forward Rachel Kearns turns away from the tackle of Dublin's Siobhán McGrath.

Photo: Piaras Ó Mídheach / SPORTSFILE.

Dublin4-15
Mayo0-10

By MICHAEL GALLAGHER

DUBLIN advanced to a Lidl NFL Division 1 showdown with old rivals Cork after seeing off Mayo's challenge at LIT Gaelic Grounds in Limerick.

Mayo enjoyed plenty of possession in the first half, but it was the more decisive and productive Dublin side who deservedly found themselves eight clear at the break on a 3-3 to 0-4 scoreline.

Full-forward Niamh Hetherton caused Mayo all sorts of problems and got them off the mark after five minutes with their opening goal.

She was also heavily involved in

their third goal, with captain Sinead Aherne finishing the ball over the line.

Those scores sandwiched a classy goal from Jennifer Dunne, who strode through onto a well-timed pass from Lyndsey Davey to blast home.

Davey was central to everything positive Dublin did in attack while the tenacious defending of the All-Ireland champions at the other end frustrated Mayo.

Niamh Kelly was Mayo's biggest threat while Sinead Cafferkey, Saoirse Lally and Grace Kelly were also prominent.

Mayo found it almost impossible to locate any gaps in the Dublin back division and Mick Bohan's women soaked up pressure before breaking out decisively.

Dublin began the second half

OPEN: Mayo forward Rachel Kearns turns away from the tackle of Dublin's Siobhán McGrath.

Photo: Piaras Ó Mídheach / SPORTSFILE.

explosively with two points from Hannah Tyrrell as midfielders Lauren Magee and Dunne controlled matters.

Mayo almost found a way back into it after 36 minutes when Rachel Kearns got on the end of a Tamara O'Connor pass only to see her shot crash back off the bar and when the Crossmolina woman was sin-binned moments later, Mayo were in real trouble.

Dublin stretched their lead to 12, 3-10 to 0-7, at the start of the fourth quarter after points from Aherne, Davey and the impressive Tyrrell.

Mayo continued to try hard with Éilís Ronayne and Kathryn Sullivan trying to rally the troops, but Dublin were in complete control.

Ahearne moved the leaders completely out of sight when she slotted home a penalty eight minutes from the end as they booked their place in the final.

SCORERS - Dublin: S Aherne 2-3 (0-1f, 1-0p), H Tyrrell 0-7 (4f), N Hetherton 1-0, J Dunne 1-0, S Killeen 0-2, L Davey 0-2, O Carey 0-1.

Mayo: S Howley 0-4 (3f), R Kearns 0-2 (1f), N Kelly 0-2, S Cafferkey 0-1, G Kelly 0-1.

DUBLIN: A Sheils; H Leahy, N Collins, M Byrne; L Cafferkey, O Carey, O Nolan; L Magee, J Dunne; N Hetherton, L Davey, C O'Connor; S Aherne, S Killeen, H Tyrrell.

Subs: S McGrath for Cafferkey (12), L Collins for O'Connor (ht), N McEvoy for Hetherton (43), L McGinley for Leahy (43), M Davoren for Davey (50).

MAYO: L Brennan; S Lally, C McManamon (capt.), O Conlon; É Ronayne, T O'Connor, K Sullivan; F Doherty, S Cafferkey; N Kelly, F McHale, G Kelly; M Reilly, S Howley, R Kearns. **Subs:** R Durkin for Doherty (ht), E Brennan for McManamon (48), M McHale for F McHale (49), C Needham for O'Connor (50), S Larkin for Reilly (55), A Dowling for Ronayne (56).

REF: Seamus Mulvihill (Kerry).



FREE: Sinéad Cafferkey of Mayo in action against Jennifer Dunne of Dublin at the Gaelic Grounds in Limerick. Photo: Piaras Ó Mídheach / SPORTSFILE.



FOUL: Mayo's Niamh Kelly is challenged high by Leah Cafferkey of Dublin during the Lidl Ladies National Football League Division 1 semi-final.

Photo: Piaras Ó Mídheach / SPORTSFILE.

Seoighe heroics are not enough



STRONG: Charlotte Cooney struggles to hold onto possession with Niamh Hegarty of Donegal for attentions at Tuam Stadium.

Photo: Piaras Ó Mídheach / SPORTSFILE.

scored a goal, but Ward's effort was brilliantly stopped by 'keeper Aoife McColgan, but went over.

Down the other end, Guthrie netted her second following a great pass from Geraldine McLaughlin, while Mairéad Seoighe and Geraldine McLaughlin exchanged scores, as Donegal led 2-4 to 0-5 at the first half water break.

Upon resumption, Galway upped the ante with Siobhán Divilly, Trill (free) and Olivia Divilly scoring, but Geraldine McLaughlin's free in between kept Galway at bay. Seoighe and Geraldine McLaughlin again traded scores, until Donegal effectively put the game to bed as McLaughlin struck a brace of goals before half-time as Donegal led 4-8 to 0-9 at the interval.

Half-time substitute Leanne Coen almost made an instant impact but her effort was saved by McColgan. However, Galway looked to breathe life back into their attempt of a comeback as Seoighe blasted a fantastic goal.

Donegal cancelled Seoighe's goal out with three points on the bounce, although Megan Glynn goaled against for Galway to make it 4-14 to 2-10.

But that was as good as it got for the home side, as Donegal outscored them 0-7 to 0-1 in the final 20 minutes to canter to victory.

SCORERS - Donegal: G McLaughlin 2-7 (3f), K Guthrie 2-4 (1f), K Heron 0-4, Niamh McLaughlin 0-3, N Hegarty 0-2, B McLaughlin 0-1.

Galway: M Seoighe 1-3 (1f), M Glynn 1-0, A Trill 0-2 (2f), N Ward 0-2, K Slevin 0-1, O Divilly 0-1, S Divilly 0-1, Aoife Molloy 0-1.

DONEGAL: A McColgan; N Carr, E McGinley, E Gallagher; A.M. Logue, Nicole McLaughlin, R Rodgers; K Herron, S Twohig; B McLaughlin, Niamh McLaughlin, N Boyle; N Hegarty, K Guthrie, G McLaughlin. **Subs:** T Jenkins for Twohig, inj (7), A Boyle for Jenkins (12), K Keaney for N Boyle (23), T Jenkins for Gallagher (40), K McClenaghan for B McLaughlin (53), R McCafferty for Guthrie (53), S White for Rodgers (55).

GALWAY: D Gower; S Healy, S Lynch, S Gormally; L Ahearne, C Cooney, H Noone; S Divilly, O Divilly; E Reaney, M Glynn, N Ward; M Seoighe, A Trill, K Slevin.

Subs: M Coyne for Gormally (h-t), L Coen for Lynch (h-t), S Conneally for Reaney (h-t), A Davoren for Glynn (45), A Morrissey for Slevin (45), A Molloy for Trill (49), A Thompson for Noone (51), E Power for S Divilly (55), D Keane for Davoren (59).

REF: Garryowen McMahon (Mayo).

Donegal4-21
Galway2-11

By TOMÁS KEATING

GERALDINE McLaughlin and Karen Guthrie were in sublime form as Donegal launched themselves into the Lidl National League Division 1 semi-finals against Cork, with a dominant victory over Galway at Tuam Stadium.

It was the Tribeswomen that got off to a blistering start as right from throw-in, Olivia Divilly found her club-mate Nicola Ward, who fisted over, with Kate Slevin scoring from the resulting kickout to put Galway 0-2 to 0-0 after 45 seconds.

However, Donegal wasted no time in cancelling Galway's advantage and Geraldine McLaughlin and Niamh Hegarty linked up to find Karen Guthrie, who buried to the net. Guthrie clipped over a point soon after, as Maxi Curran's side led 1-1 to 0-3 after a lightening two minutes.

Andrea Trill and Geraldine McLaughlin traded frees, until the latter's brilliant solo-run struck the top of the crossbar but spun over. Galway were unlucky not to have a



CONTROL: Galway forward Mairéad Seoighe gets to the ball ahead of Nicole McLaughlin of Donegal.

Photo: Piaras Ó Mídheach / SPORTSFILE.

Mayo march on

Mayo4-18
Westmeath0-6

By **PAUL DOOLIN**

ON a blisteringly hot afternoon in Lakepoint Park, Mullingar, Mayo booked their place in the Lidl NFL Division 1 semi-final against Dublin with an emphatic and thoroughly deserved win against an out of sorts Westmeath.

Featuring a seasoned Senior Championship side, Mayo, against last year's beaten Intermediate finalist, the gulf between the teams was evident throughout and Mayo ran out convincing winners.

Rachel Kearns, sisters Tara and Ciara Needham and Amy Dowling all hit the net for Michael Moyle's side, who picked up their second win of the competition and second place in Division 1A.

Despite scoring the opening point of the game through a Leona Archibald free, Westmeath's challenge petered out. Mayo dominated the first half and two fine goals from Kearns and Tara Needham rubber stamped their superiority.

Two superb points from wing back Kathryn Sullivan and another two from Grace Kelly saw the west-erners lead by 2-11 to 0-4 at the half-time interval. Fiona Claffey provided token resistance for the home side with two excellent solo efforts in that first 30 minutes.

The second half continued much in the same vein as a relentless



THROUGH: Ella Brennan was brought on during Mayo's comprehensive win over Westmeath.

Photo: Sam Barnes / SPORTSFILE.

Mayo kept the pressure on their hosts. Two more goals from Ciara Needham and Dowling had them well clear as the closing stages approached, but they still didn't relent.

Points from Grace Kelly (two),

and four more from the player of the match Shauna Howley saw Mayo extend their advantage as they emptied their bench completely in the closing stages.

Westmeath only raised two white flags in that second half through an Anna Jones free and a superb long-range strike from Jo-Hanna Maher but they wilted visibly in the heat and against a Mayo side who showed no pity and played some lovely football throughout to stamp their superiority and win handsomely.

Mayo would face their toughest test of the year so far when they played TG4 All-Ireland champions Dublin in the following Saturday's Division 1 semi-final, while Westmeath had to do battle with Tipperary in the relegation play-off.

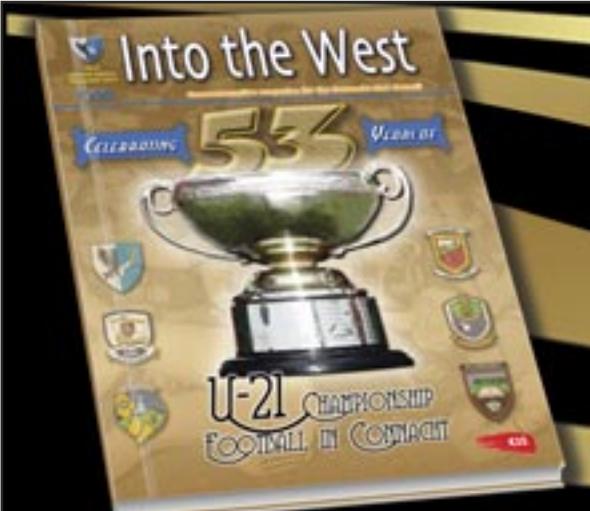
SCORERS - Mayo: S Howley 0-7 (2f), R Kearns 1-2, G Kelly 0-4, T Needham 1-0, C Needham 1-0, A Dowling 1-0, K Sullivan 0-2, T O'Connor 0-1, F McHale 0-1, S Cafferkey 0-1.

Westmeath: F Claffey 0-2, A Jones 0-2 (2f), L Archibald 0-1 (1f), J-H Maher 0-1.

WESTMEATH: L McCormack; N Spellman, J Rogers, E Kelly; F Coyle, L Power, T Fagan; V Carr, T Dillon; F Claffey, L Archibald, A Jones; L McCartan, L Duncan, S Dillon. **Subs:** J-H Maher for Duncan (H-T), C Blundell for McCartan (37), Aoife O'Malley for Kelly (44), Annie Dolan for Archibald (50), S Murtagh for Dillon (51), D Madden for Spellman (53), K Hegarty for Power (57), Aine Lynn for Rogers (60).

MAYO: A Tarpey, A Halligan, C McManamon, F Doherty; E Roynane, M Reilly, K Sullivan, T O'Connor, C Whyte, N Kelly, T Needham, G Kelly, A Dowling, S Howley, R Kearns. **Subs:** S Cafferkey for Whyte (24), F McHale for O'Connor (h-t), R Duncan for Halligan (h-t), E Brennan for Reilly (36), S Walsh for McManamon (42), O Conlon for Doherty (42), C Needham for Kearns (47), S Larkin for Sullivan (48), M Corbett for N Kelly (49), M McHale for T Needham (49), L Brennan for Tarpey (57).

REF: Gus Chapman (Sligo).



ON SALE



Send payment to:
Into the West,
Padraig Corcoran, Toneybane,
Foxford, Co. Mayo, Ireland.

Make cheques payable to:
Connacht Council

Mayo come up just short

Donegal1-11

Mayo0-11

By **CHRIS MCNULTY**

CAPTAIN Niamh McLaughlin netted a decisive penalty as Donegal made it two-from-two in the Lidl Ladies National Football League Division 1A.

The game had been touch-and-go until McLaughlin's penalty in the 48th minute. Karen Guthrie was hauled down and McLaughlin beat Aisling Tarpey with a well-executed penalty.

The goal put Donegal, who had been a point down, into the driving seat and Guthrie – who scored six points – quickly added a brace to seal victory for Maxi Curran's side.

Donegal star Geraldine McLaughlin was ruled out after failing a late fitness test. The Termon sharpshooter was feeling the effects of a dead leg sustained in the early moments of the win over Westmeath.

Frees from Niamh Hegarty and Karen Guthrie steadied the home side, but Shauna Howley and Rachael Kearns responded.

After a superb score by Niamh Kelly, the electric Kearns might have buried a goal after 11 minutes. The Mac Hale Rovers forward, after rounding three Donegal players, saw her shot pushed over the crossbar by home goalkeeper Aoife McColgan.

Kearns had starred when Mayo overcame Connacht rivals Galway and the full-forward arched over to put her side two in front.

Donegal were thankful for McColgan just after the water break as she held onto Sinead Cafferkey's low drive.

Guthrie clipped over Donegal's first score in 14 minutes from a free and they were level again when Hegarty fired over after Niamh McLaughlin, the captain, was fouled.

With the final kick of the half, Kearns punted over a 40m free for a 0-7 to 0-6 interval lead

After Suzanne White, who came on midway through the first period, prodded over for the hosts, McCol-



STAR: Rachel Kearns top-scored for Mayo against Donegal.

Photo: Brendan Moran / SPORTSFILE.

gan's intervention was needed again, this time to deny Kearns with a cracking save.

Hegarty, picked out by a deadly pass from Niamh McLaughlin, put Donegal in front, but wing-back O'Connor curled over a pair of delicious points for Mayo.

The pendulum swing when Niamh McLaughlin fired to the net and Donegal saw out a useful win.

SCORERS - Donegal: Karen Guthrie 0-6 (3f), Niamh Hegarty 0-4 (2f), Niamh McLaughlin 1-0 pen, Suzanne White 0-1. **Mayo:** Rachael Kearns 0-4 (2f), Tamara O'Connor 0-2, Shauna Howley 0-2 (2f), Niamh Kelly 0-1, Grace Kelly 0-1, Fiona Doherty 0-1.

DONEGAL: A McColgan; N Carr, E McGinley, E Gallagher; A Logue, Nicole McLaughlin, R Rodgers; K Herron, S Twohig; B McLaughlin, Niamh McLaughlin, N Boyle; N Hegarty, K Guthrie, G McLaughlin.

Subs: S White for McCafferty (17), K Keaney for Logue (59), R McCafferty for B. McLaughlin (70).

MAYO: A Tarpey; É Ronayne, C McManamon, E Brennan; T O'Connor, O Conlon, M Corbett; N Kelly, S Cafferkey; F McHale, S Howley, K Sullivan; D Doherty, R Kearns, L Cafferkey. **Subs:** G Kelly for Doherty (h-t), M Reilly for Howley (41), C Whyte for Corbett (47), F Doherty for Cafferkey (51), S Walsh for O'Connor (56), M McHale for F. McHale (56).

REF: Brendan Rice (Down).



PRESENCE: Sinéad Cafferkey was in action for Mayo in their narrow defeat to Donegal.

Photo: Sam Barnes / SPORTSFILE.

Trill helps Galway get back on track

Galway6-13
Westmeath2-7

By TOMÁS KEATING

ANDREA Trill's eye for goal saw Galway return to winning ways in Lidl National Football League Division 1A with a ruthless demolition of Westmeath in sunny Pearse Stadium.

Trill was in lethal form as she netted a total of four goals in a stellar attacking performance.

It was the Claregalway trio of Trill, Kate Slevin and Megan Glynn, who did the majority of the damage in the opening half. Gerry Fahy's side led 2-0 to 0-0 after three minutes, courtesy of two brilliant goals from Trill, whose second was created by a great run from Emma Reaney.

Slevin stroked over two frees to add to Galway's advantage until Anna Jones found herself all alone on the edge of the square, and she calmly finished past 'keeper Dearbhla Gower.

However, Galway were in no mood for a comeback as moments later Trill made a searing run, and unselfishly laid it off to her club-mate Glynn, who goaled.

Galway were in complete control for the remainder of the half with Slevin (two), Mairéad Seoighe and



Olivia Divilly all tagging on fine scores, as the Tribeswomen led 3-6 to 1-1 at the interval, with Westmeath's only point coming from a Sarah Dillon free.

Westmeath began the second half brightly as Leona Archibold knocked over a free but Slevin kicked a beauty in response. In the 35th minute, Trill completed her hat-trick, and two minutes later Nicola Ward got on the end of a fantastic team-move to rattle the net as Galway now led 5-7 to 1-2.

Seoighe and substitute Sarah

Conneally kicked scores, while Archibold sent over another free.

But the day belonged to Trill, who rocketed the ball into the left top corner to claim her fourth goal. A minute later, Lucy McCartan raised a green flag for Seán Finnegan's team but there was no chance of a comeback.

Both management teams will be happy with how their sides finished the game as Galway's bench finished strong with subs Ailish Morrissey (two), Ellen Power and Mairéad Ní Loingsigh all impacting the scoresheet, while Westmeath's subs Jo-hanna Maher and Sinéad Murtagh registered points down the home-stretch.

SCORERS - Galway: A Trill 4-0, K Slevin 0-5 (2f), M Glynn 1-0, N Ward 1-0, M Seoighe 0-2 (1f), A Morrissey 0-2, O Divilly 0-1, M Ní Loingsigh 0-1, E Power 0-1, S Conneally 0-1.

Westmeath: A Jones 1-3 (3f), L McCartan 1-0, L Archibald 0-2 (2f), S Dillon 0-1 (1f), S Murtagh 0-1.

GALWAY: D Gower; J Burke, S Ní Loingsigh, S Molloy; K Geraghty, C Cooney, H Noone; S Divilly, O Divilly; E Reaney, M Glynn, N Ward; M Seoighe, A Trill, K Slevin.
Subs: A Donnelly for Ward (39), A Molloy for Slevin (39), S Conneally for Burke (39), L Ahearne for Cooney (43), R Ní Fhlatharta for Noone (43), A Morrissey for O Divilly (44), E Power for Trill (44), M Ní Loingsigh for Reaney (47), L Murphy for Gower (47).

WESTMEATH: L McCormack; L Power, J Rogers, E Kelly; F Claffey, T Dillon, F Coyle; V Carr, T Fagan; L Duncan, L Archibold, A Jones; L McCartan, K Hegarty, S Dillon.
Subs: A Dolan for Hegarty (24), J Maher for Duncan (27), C Bundell for S Dillon (h-t), A O'Malley for Power (40), A Lynn for Rogers (47), S Murtagh for McCartan (47), D Madden for Kelly (48), S Dolan for T Dillon (48).

REF: Mel Kenny (Mayo).

STRENGTH: Mairéad Seoighe hands-off the challenge from Vicky Carr during their Ladies National Football League clash.

Photo: Eóin Noonan / SPORTSFILE.



TURN: Galway star Hannah Noone wriggles free of the attentions of Westmeath forward Anna Jones at Pearse Stadium in Salthill. Photo: Eóin Noonan / SPORTSFILE.



FAST: Ellen Power of Galway gets to the ball ahead of Westmeath's Aoife O'Malley.

Photo: Eóin Noonan / SPORTSFILE.

Late surge downs Galway

Mayo2-15
Galway2-14

By **STEPHEN GLENNON**

AN unanswered 1-4 in the closing five minutes saw Mayo claim the bragging rights over neighbours Galway in this pulsating Lidl National League Division 1 derby at MacHale Park.

Mayo's second goal from a Rachel Kearns 55th minute penalty re-ignited her side's challenge before Kearns and substitute Deirdre Doherty kicked two frees in the final minute to overturn an earlier six-point deficit and secure a dramatic victory for the home side.

It was Mayo, boasted by the return of Fiona McHale and the Carnacon contingent to the squad, that made the better start in the contest, with Maria Reilly netting the opening goal on seven minutes. The score gave Mayo a 1-2 to 0-1 lead.

In the opening quarter, Kearns



LEADER: Mayo midfielder Clodagh McManamon was a towering presence again against Galway in the Ladies NFL.

Photo: Sam Barnes / SPORTSFILE.

(free), Tamara O'Connor and Sinead Cafferkey were also on the score-sheet while a lethargic Galway kept in touch with points from Claregalway duo Andrea Trill and Megan Glynn.

It was a tentative opening from the visitors, but they began to find their feet in the second quarter and in the next ten minutes they outscored Mayo five points to two. The experienced Mairéad Seoighe tallied four of those – three from frees – while Nicola Ward scored the other after Charlotte Cooney stole a Mayo kickout.

However, Mayo finished the first half stronger with centre-half forward Shauna Howley kicking their last three points, two from play, and Michael Moyles' outfit led 1-8 to 0-7 at the break.

A blistering third quarter, in which Galway struck for 2-4 without reply, saw Gerry Fahy's charges race into a 2-13 to 1-10 lead by the 46th minute, with Kate Slevin shooting the Tribeswomen's two goals. The first was a superbly taken penalty on 39 minutes followed by a fisted effort from play seven minutes later.

Also to the fore was Seoighe, captaining the side on the evening. She kicked seven points in all and looked set to guide Galway to an opening day win.

However, Mayo, roused by the

introduction of Grace Kelly, rallied in the final ten minutes and, with Kearns leading the charge, secured new manager Michael Moyles his first victory.

SCORERS - Mayo: S Howley 0-6 (2f), R Kearns 1-3 (1-0 penalty, 0-2 frees), M Reilly 1-0, T O'Connor 0-1, M McHale 0-1, S Cafferkey 0-1, F McHale 0-1, G Kelly 0-1, D Doherty 0-1 (1f).

Galway: M Seoighe 0-7 (3f), K Slevin 2-1 (1-0 penalty), A Trill 0-3 (1f), M Glynn 0-1, N Ward 0-1, E Noone 0-1.

MAYO: L Brennan; O Conlon, K Sullivan, T O'Connor; E Ronayne, C McManamon, E Brennan; F McHale, M McHale; N Kelly, S Howley S Cafferkey; M Reilly, R Kearns, L Cafferkey. **Subs:** C Needham for Reilly (37), D Doherty for M McHale (43), G Kelly for S Cafferkey (44), C Whyte for O'Connor (51), A Lambert for Howley (57).

GALWAY: D Gower; S Brennan, S Lynch, S Molloy; K Geraghty, N Ward, C Cooney; A Davoren, M Glynn; O Divilly, M Seoighe, L Coen; E Noone, A Trill, K Slevin.

Subs: S. Divilly for Davoren (h-t), J Burke for Molloy (37), A Morrissey for Coen (45), A McDonagh for Noone (46), C Crowe for Burke (57).

REF: Siobhan Coyle (Donegal).



SHARP: Leanne Coen was one of the spearheads of the Galway attack against Mayo.

Photo: Eóin Noonan / SPORTSFILE.



WIN: Deirdre Doherty came off the bench against Galway.

Photo: Sam Barnes / SPORTSFILE.

Kildare through at Sligo's expense

Kildare2-14
Sligo1-8

By JOHN FALLON
Media West Ireland

KILDARE will take on Laois in the Lidl Division 3 decider after victory over Sligo at Kiltoom.

Kildare booked their place in the final with a 2-14 to 1-8 win while Laois defeated Roscommon by 4-15 to 5-9 in a thrilling contest in Tang in the other semi-final.

Goals from Neasa Dooley and Hazel McLoughlin were decisive as Kildare pushed

on from an interval 0-5 to 0-3 lead, with a goal from Emma Kevany giving Sligo hope before Kildare pulled away for victory.

KILDARE: M Hulgraine; C Sullivan, L Gilbert, M Doherty; L Murtagh, L Lenehan, H McLoughlin; S O'Sullivan, G Kenneally; O Sullivan, L Curran, G Clifford (capt.); E Dowling, N Dooley, A Rattigan.

SLIGO: L Gaughan; A Morrisroe, M McNamara, J Mulligan; S Cunnie, L Boles, S Regan; N Brennan (capt.), S Reynolds; L.A. Laffey, C Gorman, S Naughton; D McGrath, K Walsh, C Gilroy.

REF: Kevin Corcoran (Mayo).



Sinead Naughton

Despite scoring five goals Roscommon bow out

Laois4-15
Roscommon5-9

By JOHN FALLON
Media West Ireland

JUST like Sligo, Roscommon failed in their bid to reach the Division 3 final as they slipped against Laois in Tang.

Laois led by 3-5 to 2-4 at the interval and the goals continued to fly after the break with efforts from Ashling Hanly,

Natalie McHugh and Laura Fleming pushing Roscommon six points ahead at the end of the third quarter.

But a goal and a point in quick succession from Mo Nerney got Laois back in contention and they finished strongly to outscore Roscommon by five points to one to advance to the final.

SCORERS - Laois: M Nerney 2-4 (two frees), E Fitzgerald 1-3, A Healy 1-0, L Tarpey 0-2, O Hennessy 0-1, E Healy 0-1, L Nerney 0-1, A Kirrane 0-1

Roscommon: L Fleming 2-2, A Hanley 1-1, R Finan 0-3 (two frees), N McHugh 1-0, J Cregg 1-0,

M McHugh 0-1, J Higgins 0-1.

LAOIS: E Barry; C Dunne, A Potts, A Kelly; R Williams, E Healy, L Nerney; J Moore, F Dooley; A Healy, E Galvin, E Fitzpatrick; M Nerney, S A Fitzgerald, L Tarpey.

Subs: O Hennessy for Dooley (38), A Kirrane for Tarpey (43), A Moran for Fitzgerald (49), K Jacob for Dunne (60).

ROSCOMMON: H Cummins; N Feeney, S Kenny, M Kelly; S Wynn, S McVeigh, R Brady; E Irwin, L Fleming; R Wynne, N McHugh, J Cregg; A Hanley, J Higgins, R Finan. **Subs:** R Fitzmaurice for McVeigh (18), A Gavin for Finan (29), M McHugh for Wynne (ht), S Glennon for Higgins (45).

REF: Jonathan Murphy (Carlow).

Walsh takes charge in the closing stages

Sligo0-13
Roscommon0-11

By RONAN O'NEILL

SLIGO kept their marvellous clean sheet record as they moved through to the Lidl National Football League Division 3A semi-finals with a hard-fought victory over Roscommon.

The Connacht rivals met at Markievicz Park and it was Anthony Brennan's side who took the two-point win, and in doing so ensured they were the only team in the Ladies National Football League not to

have conceded a goal to-date.

The hosts held a slender 0-8 to 0-6 half-time lead and it was that same margin when Shane Curley blew his full-time whistle.

The dependable Katie Walsh opened the scoring for Sligo before Rebecca Finan equalised and it would be a tremendously competitive game from there.

Aisling Hanly gave Roscommon a momentary lead but Katie Walsh hit back from another free and Sligo took the lead again through Emma Kevany.

Sligo kept their noses in front from here all the way until half-time with Finan scoring last for Roscommon. But Sligo took the two-point advantage into the break.

Sarah Reynolds scored on the resumption but Sligo couldn't pull away with Hanly continuing to pose a threat up front for Roscommon.

The teams were level when Finan scored another point, and another effort from here gave Roscommon the lead.

But Katie Walsh was outstanding in the closing quarter and three of her successful attempts from frees earned a precious win.

SLIGO: R Quigley; A Morrisroe, M McNamara, J Mulligan; C Dunne, L Boles, S Regan; N Brennan, S Reynolds; A Molloy, C Gorman, S Naughton; S Cunney, K Walsh, D McGrath.

ROSCOMMON: H Cummins; N Feeney, S Kenny, R Wynne; S Wynn, S McVeigh, R Brady; C Conway, L Fleming; E Irwin, R Finan, N McHugh; A Hanly, J Higgins, M McHugh.

Sligo in red hot form

Sligo2-12
Fermanagh0-7

By **ALANNA CUNNANE**
The Sligo Champion

THE weather wasn't the only thing scorching as the Sligo Ladies were also in blazing form for their 2 o'clock kick off away to Fermanagh.

Hoping to carry on their winning ways after their victory against Down, Ciara Gorman got the girls in black and white underway with a point from a free before Tara Walsh scored 1-1 in quick succession.

Supplementing the forwards' momentum was the solid nature of Sligo's back line including Aoife Morrisroe, Michelle McNamara and Jacqui Mulligan, who aided keeper Leoni Gaughan in stamping out Fermanagh's opportunities.

Another Gorman point and a relation mark from Eimear Smyth saw the score 1-

3 to 0-1 at the water-break.

Initiating again after the timeout the Yeats' County ladies showcased their ability to retain possession under pressure and draw frees, which Gorman continuously put to good use.

Tara Walsh and Smyth then added to their tallies, with Clíodhna Martin also picking up a point for The Lakeland County before Sinead Regan powered home her second goal of this league campaign, leaving it 2-6 to 0-3 in Sligo's favour after the opening 30 minutes.

While the second half was harder fought, the away side proceeded to advance their lead even with the changing dynamics of personnel who came in and out as substitutions.

While Gorman continued to rack up her own scores, Sinead Naughton, Katie Walsh and Denise McGrath also ensured Sligo's superiority throughout the game.

More points from Fermanagh's ruthless Smyth proved futile upon the final whistle, as the girls in black and white secured their spot in the league semi-finals, notably

without having conceded a goal thus far in 2021.

Speaking after the match manager Anthony Brennan conveyed his happiness with his side's good performance.

"We left an awful lot of scores behind but in fairness I'd be very pleased with that performance. "The work rate was excellent, and the introduction of the fives subs was excellent too because we got a great response from them.

"I would have been disappointed in the first half we didn't get an awful lot more scores because we actually made the openings, we just left a lot behind us.

"But look-it, beggars can't be choosers, we're quite happy with what we got."

SLIGO: R Quigley; A Morrisroe, M McNamara, J Mulligan; C Dunne, L Boles, S Regan; N Brennan, S Reynolds; A Molloy, C Gorman, S Naughton; S Cunney, K Walsh, D McGrath.

FERMANAGH: S Murphy; C Murphy, M McGloin, E Keenan; S.A. Jones, A Maguire, S McCarville; B Bannon, A Flanagan; S Britton, J Doonan, C Martin; N McManus, S McCausland, A O'Brien.

REF: G Finnegan (Down).

Roscommon claim victory despite strange goal

Roscommon ..5-15
Down3-12

Roscommon Herald

ROSCOMMON intermediate ladies' football manager Diane O'Hora has praised her side for maintaining their composure and discipline, despite conceding a bizarre goal against Down during Sunday's Division Three League game in Kiltoom.

The "Blue and Primrose" made it two wins from two, thanks to a 5-15 to 3-12 victory against the Mourne ladies', but the game will be remembered for one of the strangest goals ever seen at any venue around the county.

Referee Ciarán Groome had blown his whistle for the teams to come back out onto the field after the first-half water break. When Roscommon didn't return with the urgency he desired, the Offaly official allowed Down to resume play unopposed, allowing Natasha Ferris score the easiest



VICTORY: Helena Cummins was in goals for Roscommon again against Down.

Photo: Sam Barnes / SPORTSFILE.

goal she'll ever score.

"You'd have to be really proud of them for holding themselves in the responsible fashion they did. It was hard to figure out what had just happened, I had never seen it before. Maybe this will be the start of a trend," quipped O'Hora.

"Sometimes you have to say to your team if you're not ten points better than the opposition, then you may as well throw your hat at it. We're in Division Three and at this level you just don't know what, in terms of officiating, you might get.

"You have to hand it to the players — they really held themselves well, because it was so unpredictable what way decisions were going to go," she remarked.

ROSCOMMON: H Cummins; R Wynne, S Kenny (capt.), M Kelly; S Wynne, S McVeigh, R Brady; C Conway, J Higgins; N McHugh, L Fleming, E Irwin; A Hanly, R Finan, M McHugh.

DOWN: A Burns; C Cunningham, C Byrne, K White; O Duffy, M Doherty, O Lavery; A Keown, C Fitzpatrick; N Scullion, J Foy, M Kavanagh; A Lavery, N Ferris, S Dougherty.

REF: C Groome (Sligo).

Fleming goals do the business

Roscommon3-10
Fermanagh1-12

By **TOM MURPHY**

LAURA Fleming found the net twice as Roscommon began life under Diane O'Hora with a hard-fought 3-10 to 1-12 victory over Fermanagh.

Natalie McHugh also scored a goal in the Lidl National Football League Division 3A opener at Dr Hyde Park.

The sides were level at half-time, 1-3 to 0-6, but Roscommon excelled again on the resumption and never let up en route to victory.

The hosts dominated the early exchanges but both Aisling Hanly and Rebecca Finan missed chances in front of goal while Fermanagh gained a foothold in the game.

Fermanagh were in front at the first water break before Fleming slotted her first goal of the day, after

some good build-up play involving Jenny Higgins.

Roscommon goaled in the fourth minute of the second half again, with McHugh on target on this occasion, but Fermanagh kept themselves interested.

And Joanne Doonan struck for what looked like a priceless goal in the 55th minute. Fermanagh only trailed by 2-9 to 1-11 at that stage.

But Roscommon held their heads and with just a couple of minutes of normal time remaining Fleming double her goals tally for the day, finishing off the win.

SCORERS - Roscommon: L Fleming 2-3, N McHugh 1-1, R Finan 0-2, J Higgins, E Irwin, A Hanly & C Conway 0-1 each.

ROSCOMMON: H Cummins; N Feeney, S Kenny, R Wynne; J Cregg, S McVeigh, S Wynne; J Higgins, L Fleming; N McHugh, A Hanmore, E Irwin; A Hanly, R Finan, A Gavin. **Subs:** C Beirne for McVeigh, M Kelly for Feeney, C Conway for Hanmore, A O'Connor for Gavin, R Fitzmaurice for McHugh, M McHugh for Finan.

FERMANAGH: S Murphy; M Flynn, M McGloin, E Keenan; S McQuade, E Murphy,



STRIKE: Laura Fleming scored two goals for Roscommon as they built the momentum with a win over Fermanagh.

Photo: Sam Barnes / SPORTSFILE.

S McCarville; R McDonald, A Flanagan; A Maguire, J Doonan, S McCausland; S Britton, E Smyth, A O'Brien.

REF: Kevin Corcoran (Mayo).

Goals are crucial for Sligo's fast start

Sligo3-4
Down0-11

By **ALANNA CUNNANE**
The Sligo Champion

ATIGHT but competitive and exhilarating affair underscored the new Sligo ladies' football manager Anthony Brennan's first game in charge as his team won out by two points against Down.

Returning to the county jersey after a year out previously, Tourlestrane's Katie Walsh marked her come back with the first point of the game from a freekick.

This was quickly followed up by a duplicate score from Ciara Gorman before the water-break, making it two points to Down's nil for the Yeats' County women heading into the first official stoppage.

Jessica Foy and Natasha Ferris were in flying form for the home side and secured five points in the next passage of play between them, but without doubt the talking point of the half was Sinead Regan's stunning finish into the back of the net for the girls in black and white.

Prominently this was Sligo's first goal

since November 1st 2020 (against Laois), suffering heavy defeats to Kildare and Clare respectively at the conclusion of last year's championship.

Having turned things around however that campaign seemed the furthest thing from Sligo's minds as the halftime whistle went, Gorman striking again to supplement the score-line as Sligo finished the opening 30 minutes up 1-3 to the Mounse ladies' 0-5.

The second part of the game saw the tension ramped up as Down came out firing on all cylinders and determined to get back on top.

Ferris, Foy and Regan all slotted over more points in the third quarter and Down's Aoife Keown also bagged herself a score, putting her side one point ahead going into the final 15 minutes of the match.

The last segment saw drama and intensity as scores were deliberated over between the referee and officials, while simultaneously suspense grew between the two teams and hostility was on the rise.

Substitute Tara Walsh's shot on goal collided with the post and trickled in for Sligo, Gorman bagging a second for Anthony Brennan's side, while three points from Down's Foy meant it was all to play

for in the closing stages.

Keeper Leonie Gaughan also majorly contributed to the away team's win, parrying many of Down's efforts to the side and wide to assure they were kept at bay, but it was the game management by Sligo's experienced players such as Sinead Naughton, Claire Dunne and (substitute) Laura-Ann Laffey to retain possession that ultimately saw them triumph.

Speaking after the game Sligo captain Nicola Brennan says the result was extra sweet after last season's woes, and that the team are focused coming into this year's NFL. "We deserved to win for the group we are and the hard-working group the whole panel is," she said.

"We are only back together a few weeks so to score 3-4 for us is brilliant, we're delighted with that.

"Especially it being the winning score and we didn't concede any goals which is even better," she added.

SLIGO: R Quigley; A Morrisroe, M McNamara, J Mulligan; C Dunne, L Boles, S Regan; N Brennan, S Reynolds; A Molloy, C Gorman, S Naughton; S Cunney, K Walsh, D McGrath.

DOWN: A Burns; C Cunningham, C Byrne, K White; O Duffy, M Doherty, O Lavery; A Keown, C Fitzpatrick; N McKibbin, J Foy, L Duffy (capt.); A Lavery, N Ferris, K McKay.

REF: Paul Burke (Louth).

Leitrim eye up final appearance

Leitrim4-12
Limerick2-7

By JOHN CONNOLLY
Leitrim Observer

Leitrim will meet Louth in the Lidl Ladies NFL Division 4 Final on Sunday after they demolished the challenge of an outclassed Limerick in the semi-final in Milltown, Co Galway.

From the moment the first whistle sounded, Leitrim stamped their class on this game as the ball quickly found Ailbhe Clancy and the Glen-car/Manorhamilton woman fired over inside 10 seconds and it was one way traffic after that for the first half.

By the time Limerick registered their first score on 18 minutes, Leitrim had scored 1-7 and they would add further goals from hot shot Michelle Guckian and wing-forward Elise Bruen to leave this game dead in the water at the half-time interval.

Leitrim were simply too powerful, too physical and too slick for the Munster women who almost seemed as if they were caught in the headlines, such was the power and pace of the Leitrim performance.

Limerick actually outscored the Green & Gold in the second half, something that did not please manager Hugh Donnelly but that would give a false impression of this contest for Limerick scored an unanswered 1-4 in the final ten minutes when the game was already over and done.

What Leitrim will learn from this game is impossible to know for the amount of room the Green & Gold got, the lack of pressure and their ease at winning back the ball means the game was poor preparation for facing a team as tenacious and as tough as Louth in the Division 4 Final.

With just one team to go up to Division 3, that increases the stakes enormously for both teams who are in the Intermediate championship this Summer. But if they replicate

only half the form they showed here, Leitrim will be very hard stopped.

The game started as Leitrim meant to continue - ball won from the throw-in, quick pass to Ailbhe Clancy and over the bar. Clancy would add only two more points but her impact was felt on most of Leitrim's scores with her accurate long passing to Michelle Guckian at full-forward causing Limerick no end of problems.

Roisin McHugh had a shot on goal which was blocked but showing great footwork and quick thinking, she flicked the ball up to a waiting Michelle Guckian for the point on three minutes. Laura O'Dowd added a point but the energetic Ballinamore woman would go to have a mixed day with some great surging runs but bad wides, including a shot that crashed off the Limerick crossbar.

Limerick gave a warning that they had a goal threat but Amy Ryan dragged her shot wide of the goal with the keeper beaten. Michelle Guckian responded with a free after a foul on Bronagh O'Rourke while Roisin McHugh tapped over a point on 10 minutes.

Guckian added a quick point after Limerick's kickout was intercepted and after the water break, a foul on Laura O'Dowd as she bore down on goal led to another Guckian free.

Leitrim's direct game against the wind was paying dividends as Bronagh O'Rourke fielded the high ball, turned, beat two players and managed to squeeze her shot past the defenders and keeper on 18 minutes.

Limerick responded with points from Megan Buckley and Katie Heelan but any hopes they had were rudely shattered when Clancy's perceptive cross was fielded by Guckian who buried the ball to the net from close range on 22 minutes.

Laura O'Dowd cracked a rocket off the crossbar, O'Rourke tapping over while another great O'Dowd run ended with a pass across the goal and Elise Bruen fisting the ball to the net to leave Leitrim 3-8 to 0-2 ahead at the half-time break.

If it worked in the first half, Leitrim saw no reason why it shouldn't in the

second as Guckian fed Clancy and the Glenfarnie woman fired over. Guckian added a free before Limerick's Aine Cunningham fired over a good point.

Leitrim were content to sit and hit on the counter-attack, which worked a treat when a long ball found Guckian as she bore down on goal. However, she unselfishly passed across the goal to an unmarked Bronagh O'Rourke and an easy tap-in a la Dean Rock and the Dubs.

Guckian would add another free but Limerick's Iris Kennelly should have goaled just before the water break but she dragged her shot wide.

A poor kickout was pounced upon for Limerick and Kennelly made no mistake this time before Ailbhe Clancy finished the Leitrim scoring with 14 minutes left from 35 yards.

Limerick's next score was a goal but with a hint of fortune as Andrea O'Sullivan's free caused confusion in the Leitrim defence and dipped under the crossbar on 50 minutes.

Limerick finished with four unanswered points from O'Sullivan (2), Heelan and Kennelly but Leitrim were never in any trouble as they cruised into the League Final.

SCORERS - Leitrim: M Guckian 1-6, 4f; B O'Rourke 2-1; A Clancy 0-3; E Bruen 1-0; R McHugh & L O'Dowd 0-1 each.

Limerick: A O'Sullivan (2f) 1-2; I Kennelly 1-1, K Heelan 0-2; M Buckley & A Cunningham 0-1 each.

LEITRIM: M Monaghan, M A Maguire, S Tighe, S McCartan, R Rooney, C Owens, C Le Guen, C Tyrell, A Heslin, L O'Dowd, A Clancy, E Bruen, B O'Rourke, M Guckian; R McHugh. **Subs:** S Quinn for McHugh (HT), A Cornyn & S Ward for Heslin & O'Rourke (42), N Higgins for Rooney (43), V Egan for Clancy (53).

LIMERICK: S Hennessey, K Reidy, M McCarthy, N McCarthy, M Buckley, C Hickey, C Ni Cheallaigh, S Ryan, R Ambrose, K Heelan, A O'Sullivan, R O'Dell, L Ryan, A Ryan, I Kennelly. **Subs:** Y Lee & A Cunningham for O'Dell & Ni Cheallaigh (26); Á Ryan & N Bennett for L Ryan & Buckley (43).

REF: C Groome (Offaly).

Guckian on form for brilliant Leitrim

Leitrim5-9
Antrim1-11

By RONAN O'NEILL

LEITRIM booked their place in a Lidl National Football League Division 4 semi-final against Limerick, following a thumping ten-point win over Antrim.

Bronagh O'Rourke, Michelle Guckian (two), Laura O'Dowd and Roisin McHugh all found the net for the Connacht outfit at Davitt Park in Belfast.

Leitrim were 4-5 to 1-5 ahead at half-

time and already looked well on their way to a third successive victory in Division 4A and the top of the standings.

Hughie Donnelly's side completely dominated the opening half, and went ahead early through a McHugh point.

But Cathy Carey scored the first four points for Antrim and once Caitlin Taggart found the net, and Aoife Taggart tagged on another point, the hosts held an unlikely 1-5 to 0-2 lead.

However, the turning point and crucial score of the half arrived soon after that when Guckian blasted to the net to turn the tide in Leitrim's favour.

Leitrim still trailed by three points at that stage but further goals arrived from Guck-

ian again, O'Dowd and McHugh in the first half.

The Antrim heads had dropped by half-time and although they outscored Leitrim in the second half, O'Rourke scored another goal to put the seal on an impressive win.

LEITRIM: M Monaghan; M.A. Maguire, S Tighe, N Higgins; R Rooney, C Owens, C Tyrell; A Heslin, V Egan; L O'Dowd, M Guckian, E Brun; S Ward, A Clancy, R McHugh.

ANTRIM: A McCann; N Webb, N McIntosh, R Bradley; M Hanna, O Corr, A Tubridy; A McFarland, C Brown; N Enright, C Carey, E Ferran; A Taggart, M McCurdy, C Taggart.

REF: P Conway (Armagh).

Star continues to shine

Leitrim3-14
Louth3-6

By JOHN CONNOLLY
Leitrim Observer

IT may have been a performance that delighted their manager but Hugh Donnelly didn't dwell on the Lidl Ladies NFL victory over Louth for too long, instead setting the sights of Leitrim Ladies on the challenge of Derry.

The 3-14 to 3-6 victory over Louth in Ballinamore was a statement victory for the Leitrim squad but their manager was already thinking ahead to other challenges: "Derry are next, we can't take them for granted so it is going to be another tough shift. We have to mentally prepare again, physically is one thing but we can't allow what happened last year to affect us in any way, shape or form.

"Derry is going to be another tough one, they're under new management, they have a bit of life about them as well but they are going to be a tough cookie to beat. But again we have to apply ourselves, look after ourselves in terms of what we do, control what we can control and then hopefully the result will take care of itself."

Taking care of what they can control was evident against Louth and Hugh admitted the performance pleased him greatly: "I am delighted to get the result first and foremost and then the performance that came with it was excellent so I am



STAR:
Michelle Guckian scored 0-8 for Leitrim in their comprehensive win over Leitrim.

Photo:
Ray McManus /
SPORTSFILE.

delighted to get off the ground running and get the points on the board early so I am very happy."

The game was much tougher than the scoreline might suggest but the Leitrim manager was expecting that: "It was nip and tuck but we expected that because they are very well organised, they're a strong physical team with potential all over the field so we knew we had to mind our own house while going after

them as well.

"It was a case of trying to get the balance right in the first five or ten minutes, we lost our shape a wee bit towards the end of the first half and conceded a softish enough goal in terms of the way it came about.

"Second half, I can't fault them. They dropped two back which left us with a numerical advantage and that is probably something we aren't overly used to, to be perfectly honest with you and it took us a little while to adapt."

Applying pressure up the field was key to the victory said Hugh: "We applied pressure very high up the field, we applied pressure on their kickouts and we turned them over and got the just rewards. Our scores applied pressure on them and every kickout they went to take meant they were conscious of what happened with the one before."

SCORERS - Leitrim: M Guckian 1-8 (4f), M Devaney 1-1, L Fox 1-0, V Egan 0-2, L O'Dowd, A Cornyn & R McHugh 0-1 each.
Louth: L Collins, L Boyle & N Rice 1-1 each, R Carr 0-3 (1f).

LEITRIM: M Monaghan, M A Maguire, S Tighe, N Higgins, R Rooney; C Owens, C Tyrell, A Heslin, V Egan, L O'Dowd; M Guckian, E Bruen, S Ward, L Fox; R McHugh.

LOUTH: U Pearson, E Hand, S Quinn, E Murray, M McMahon, S McLoughlin, C Nolan, A Breen, E Byrne, R Kavanagh, N Rice, R Carr, L Collins, L Boyle, D McKenna.
Subs: S Matthews for Murray (25), A Russell for Collins (26), C Donnelly for Nolan (55).

REF: Kelly Cunningham (Offaly).

Back-to-back wins as campaign picks up pace

Leitrim1-18
Derry0-7

By PJ LEDDY
Leitrim Observer

LEITRIM decisively chalked up win number two over a Derry side whom they certainly subdued in a somewhat one-sided Lidl Ladies NFL Division 4A clash in Ballinamore.

Apart from the early stages of the game, Leitrim were always in command and the more the game wore on, the more Derry were forced to play second fiddle as the game lacked the intensity of Leitrim's previous outing against Louth.

Leitrim were guilty of committing a number of errors in the first half, particularly in regard to turnovers, but Derry was unable to capitalise on any these mistakes. Nevertheless, Leitrim worked well as a cohesive unit throughout, with several of their players standing up and being counted whenever the need for it arose.

Derry started off impressively and more or less camped in the Leitrim half in the opening five minutes but despite all this pressure, the Oak Leaf county women still could not breach the Leitrim rear-guard, thanks to very effective and disciplined defending by the home side's backs.

The early Derry onslaught came to an end after Michelle Guckian landed a point from a sixth minute free following what was Leitrim's first incursion into enemy territory. Leah Fox whipped over a point shortly afterwards for Leitrim and added another on the nine minute mark.

The writing was already on the wall for the visitors and a minute later, Ballinamore's Roisin McHugh finished off a Leitrim move to the Derry net. Laura O'Dowd and Shaylyn Ward then increased Leitrim's advantage further when they whipped over a point each.

After their lively start, Derry were put on the back foot by Leitrim for most of the first quarter and it took the Oak Leaf women until 14th minute to register their first score when their livewire corner forward



Orla McGeough fired over.

Michelle Guckian answered with a point at the other end and Orla McGeough quickly replied with a Derry point that left her side trailing by 0-2 to 1-6 when the first water break arrived.

After the resumption, Michelle Guckian extended Leitrim's lead when she shot over a 21st minute point but Hugh Donnelly's side had a let off at the other end two minutes later when Orla McGeough blazed a

goal chance inches wide.

McGeough, who was fouled while executing her goal attempt, made amends when she converted the resulting 13 metre free.

Derry themselves had a let off when a 24th minute Michelle Guckian piledriver rebounded off the crossbar and was cleared to safety by the visitor's defence.

Before the interval Katie Holly for Derry and Michelle Guckian (free) for Leitrim traded points at opposite ends. When the short whistle was sounded Leitrim enjoyed a 1-8 to 0-4 advantage.

After the restart Laura O'Dowd got the scoreboard ticking over again for Leitrim when she fired over a 34th minute point. Four minutes later Orla McGeough answered for Derry. Michelle Guckian extended Leitrim's lead with two more points from play by the 43rd minute.

Derry centre-back Anne Frizelle answered with a converted free just prior to the game's second water-break at which stage Leitrim enjoyed an eight point lead.

Leitrim completely dominated the final quarter and hit seven points without reply from Derry. Athlone Town soccer star Muireann Devaney, who came on as a sub for the injured Leah Fox just prior to the second water-break, fired over 51st and 56th minutes points.

Michelle Guckian increased Leitrim's lead further by the 57th minute after she pointed two frees. Devaney closed out the scoring for Leitrim with a point from play and then a pointed free, after regular free taker, Michelle Guckian had been substituted.

Derry closed out the scoring in the game with a late consolation point which was put over by Katie Holly from a free.

SCORERS - Leitrim: M Guckian 0-8 (4f); M Devaney 0-3 (1f); R McHugh 1-0; L Fox & L O'Dowd 0-2 each; S Ward 0-1. **Derry:** O McGeough 0-4 (1f); K Holly 0-2 (2f); A Frizelle 0-1 (f).

LEITRIM: M Monaghan; M A Maguire, S Tighe, A Sweeney; R Rooney, C Owens; C Tyrell; A Heslin, V Egan; L O'Dowd, M Guckian, E Bruen; S Ward, L Fox, R McHugh.

Subs: A Cornyn for Egan (27); A Quinn for Heslin (HT); C La Guen for Bruen (36); M Devaney for Fox (42); D Ward for Ward (44); S Quinn for McHugh (47); A Clancy for Guckian (58); K Bruen for O'Dowd (59).

DERRY: N Brown, L Gunn, A McGeough, O McCloskey; E Doherty, A Frizelle, D Kivlehan; D McNicholl, K Holly; K Canavan, E R Sainsbury, A McAllister; O McGeough, C McGurk, G Conway. **Subs:** C McGroggan for McNicholl (HT); B O'Loughlin for McGeough (38); B McMullan for Conway & R McAllister for O'Loughlin (55); C Kirkpatrick for Doherty (59).

REF: David Hurson (Monaghan).

GOALS: Muireann Devaney was one of the stars for Leitrim in their big win over Louth.

Photo:
Barry Cregg /
SPORTSFILE.

Emphatic Tribeswomen march on

Galway3-13
Limerick0-7

By DARAGH Ó CONCHÚIR

IN the evening throw-in at Kilmallock, Galway came out on top of an open and fast-paced affair.

Pat Ryan will have taken plenty of positives from the first half, with Caoimhe Costelloe and dual operator Áine Cunningham threatening, but Galway were stunning at times and two sumptuous goals had them 2-4 to 0-6 in front at half-time.

The teams were level on 0-2 apiece when Carrie Dolan launched a long free in the eighth minute towards Orlaith McGrath, who gathered, left two defenders in her wake and drew one more before hand-passing to Ailish O'Reilly. Enjoying the return to her natural habitat at full-forward, O'Reilly made no mistake, having blasted a shot off the crossbar a little earlier.

Siobhán McGrath was at the end of a brilliant move for the second goal in the 21st minute, which

started with a block by Niamh Kilkenny and also involved Orlaith McGrath and O'Reilly.

It was Kilkenny who weighed in for what will be in the running for goal of the year towards the end of the third quarter, the former player of the year taking a pass from Annmarie Starr in her own half and going on a trademark run that took her deep into opposition territory.

She exchanged passes with O'Reilly, flicked the sliotar over the head of a Limerick defender and finished off the sod for a sensational goal and there was no way back for the home side from that.

SCORERS - Galway: S McGrath 1-3 (0-1 free), A O'Reilly 1-1, C Dolan 0-3 (all frees), N Kilkenny 1-0, O McGrath 0-2, S Spellman, R Hennelly (free), N Coen, C Finnerty 0-1 each.

Limerick: C Costelloe 0-6 (5 frees), Á Cunningham 0-1.

GALWAY: S Healy; S Healy, S Dervan, S Gardiner, R Black, E Helebert, D Higgins, A M Starr, N Kilkenny; C Dolan, S Spellman, C Finnerty; S McGrath, A O'Reilly, O McGrath.

Subs: A Donohue for Dolan, N Coen for O'Reilly (both 43).

LIMERICK: L O'Neill, M Quaid, M Creamer, M Ryan; M O'Mara, J Mulcahy, R Ambrose;



Ailish O'Reilly was among the goals in their big win over Limerick.

Photo: Piaras Ó Midheach / SPORTSFILE.

K O'Leary, A Scanlon; C Lyons, D Murphy, S O'Callaghan; Á Cunningham, R Delee, C Costelloe. **Subs:** N Ryan for Lyons (45), D Egan for O'Callaghan (50), N Curtin for Scanlon (51), L Stack for Cunningham, O Kelliher for Costelloe, L Leonard for Delee (all 55).

REF: Andy Larkin (Cork).

Galway survive scare to down the Banner

Galway3-11
Clare0-15

By DARAGH Ó CONCHÚIR

CLARE offered stern resistance to Galway, the Tribeswomen leaning on their goal threat to overcome a first half in which they were clear second best, to take the spoils by 3-11 to 0-15 against last year's improving All-Ireland quarter-finalists. The opening major arrived after just two minutes and it was a classy finish by Siobhán McGrath, who won possession on the endline before making her way goalwards and from a tight angle, batting the sliotar to the onion sack.

Clare were undeterred however and with Zi Yan Spillane very prominent, accelerated into a four-point lead, Chloe Morey landing a free from a prodigious distance. When Máire McGrath and Áine O'Loughlin also found the target, it was 0-8 to 1-1.

Once more, it was Siobhán McGrath that came up with the vital riposte, grabbing her second goal just before the water break. Ailish O'Reilly raised another green flag in the dying embers of the first half but Eimear Kelly slotted her fourth point, edging Clare ahead by just one, 0-12 to 3-2 at the change of ends, when they should have had much more in hand.

Galway were much improved after the restart, no doubt spurred on by stern words from Cathal Murray. Aoife Donohue and McGrath were multiple point scorers, while Ger O'Connell's charges could only supplement their interval contribution by three and that left them overcome by 3-11 to 0-15.

SCORERS - Galway: S McGrath 2-2, A Donohue 0-4, A O'Reilly 1-1, N Coen, C Dolan (1f), N Kilkenny & C Finnerty 0-1 each.

Clare: C Morey 0-6 (6f), E Kelly 0-4, M McGrath 0-2), O Duggan, A O'Loughlin & A Keane 0-1 each.

GALWAY: S Healy; S Healy, S Dervan, T Kenny; R Black, E Helebert, D Higgins; A Donohue, N McGrath; C Dolan, S Spellman,



CRUCIAL: Siobhan McGrath grabbed her side's first goal against Clare.

Photo: Piaras Ó Midheach / SPORTSFILE

N Hanniffy; S McGrath, A O'Reilly, N Coen. **Subs:** N Kilkenny for Hanniffy (33), O McGrath for Coen (35), H Cooney for Kenny (35), A M Starr for N McGrath (38), S Gardiner for Black (49), C Finnerty for Spellman (49).

CLARE: D Murphy; C Grogan, C Hehir, C Doyle, A Ryan, L McMahon, S Conlon; A Keane, Z Spillane; M McGrath, C Morey, O Duggan; E Kelly, Á O'Loughlin, B Foley. **Subs:** S Daly for Doyle (Inj) (17), R Minogue for Conlan (44), R Conway for Foley (52), C O'Halloran for McGrath (52), G Hickey for Duggan (59).

REF: John Dermody (Westmeath).

Brave Galway fall to defeat on the road

Antrim1-13
Galway1-10

By **RONAN O'NEILL**

MAIRÉAD Dillon's goal turned out to be just a consolation as the Galway intermediates lost away to Antrim in Donaghmore Ashbourne.

The visitors dominated for large periods in the first half but Antrim stayed in contention and after the sides went in level at half-time, the Saffrons came out and established a lead they would not relinquish.

It was 1-5 to 1-5 at the interval thanks to

Maeve Kelly's late sucker-punch from the hosts. She was sent in by Róisín McCormick and made no mistake when the opportunity presented itself.

Galway had a goal of their own earlier in the half, in the ninth minute, when Dillon finished to the Antrim net. But their lack of efficiency and five first half wides would end up costing them.

Antrim were delighted to get to the break all square and they had the wind at their backs coming out in the second half.

Nicole O'Neill and Áine Keane traded points after the break but McCormick, Kelly and O'Neill all found their range to help push Antrim into the three-point lead they would win by.

SCORERS - Antrim: N O'Neill 0-5 (2f), M Kelly 1-2, R McCormick & A Boyle 0-2 each, A Connolly and C Dobbin 0-1 each.

Galway: Á Keane 0-5 (2f), M Dillon 1-0, A Lynskey and C Kenny 0-2 each, E Broderick 0-1.

ANTRIM: C Graham; K McKillop, C Conlon, L McKenna; C Patterson, N Donnelly, M Connolly; L McNaughton, A Boyle, M Kelly, A Connolly, N O'Neill, R McCormick, Ciara Laverty, C Dobbin.

Subs: C McKillop for M Connolly, Christine Laverty for N O'Neill.

GALWAY: L Glynn; K Screeve, S McCartin, R Hanniffy; L Casserly, C Mahon, T Canning; M Burke, N Horan; M Mannion, A Lynskey, E Broderick, C Kenny, M Dillon, Á Keane. **Subs:** K Manning for S McCartin, C Reilly for M Dillon, T Rutledge for E Broderick.

REF: Philip McDonnell (Cavan).

Galway get the win they need

Galway0-15
Cork1-8

By **JASON O'BRIEN**

GALWAY had to win against Cork and they did just that as Niamh Niland, Mairéad Dillon and Cora Kenny starred in a brilliant victory at Gort.

There was a Littlewoods Division 2 League semi-final spot up for grabs and Galway didn't hold back against one of their biggest rivals for the crown.

Yet Cork's scoring difference meant they topped their group ensuring a home venue for their quarter-final tie.

Galway were in charge right from the off, and they took a big 0-8 to 0-3 lead into half-time after playing with the aid of the breeze in the

opening half.

But Cork actually started better and points from Kate Wall and Cliona O'Callaghan meant they were 0-2 to 0-0 in front. O'Callaghan provided the only other Cork score before half-time.

Galway were rampant in the meantime, Molly Mannion found her range to give the Tribeswomen a foothold, and although Ava Lynskey's goalbound effort went just wide, a five-point blitz allowed Galway take the comfortable five-point advantage into the break. Cora (two) and Niamh Kenny both scored on the resumption as Galway's dominance continued despite the efforts of Finola Neville and Ali Smith.

Then Neville ate into the lead further when she converted a penalty after Aoife Hurley had been fouled. But scores from Elisha Broderick, Dillon and Niamh Horan put Galway in the ascendancy again and Cork couldn't find a way back.

SCORERS - Galway: N Niland, M Dillon, C Kenny 0-3 each, A Keane, N Horan (f) 0-2 each, M Mannion, E Broderick 0-1 each. **Cork:** F Neville 1-1 (1-0 pen), A Smith 0-3 f, C O' Callaghan 0-2 f, R Harty, K Wall 0-1 each.

GALWAY: L Glynn; S Mc Cartin, L Ward, R Hanniffy; L Casserly, C Mahon, T Canning; M Burke, N Horan, M Mannion, A Lynskey, A Keane, C Kenny, M Dillon, N Niland. **Subs:** K Screeve for T Canning(43), E Broderick for N Heffernan (47), T Rutledge for N Niland(58), C Reilly for A Lynskey (64).

CORK: S Ahern; E Flanagan, N O'Leary, A Crowley; H Sexton, A Moloney, C Kingston; L Callanan, M Murphy; M Barrett, J O'Leary, K O'Keefe; C O'Callaghan, K Wall, K Walsh. **Subs:** F Neville for J O'Leary (h-t), K Kilcommins for H Sexton (h-t), D Carroll for N O'Leary (h-t), R Harty for M Murphy (h-t), A Smith for M Barrett (43), A Hurley for K Walsh (43), H Ryan for C O'Callaghan (48), A O'Callaghan for C Kingston (55).

REF: Gavin Donegan (Dublin).

Dillon stars again

Galway2-14
Tipperary2-7

By **DAVID MCCARTHY**

MAIRÉAD Dillon scored 1-3 as Galway got back on track in Division 2 Group 2 of the Littlewoods National Camogie League. Galway powered to a seven-point win over rivals Tipperary with Cora Kenny also helping herself to a goal at Kenny Park in Atheryn.

The Tribeswomen knew this was a must win game and they did enough to secure the victory in style.

Jenny Grace struck a fortuitous goal before

half-time as the teams went in level, 1-3 to 0-6, at the break. But Galway showed their dominance in the second half and they couldn't be stopped once they caught flight.

Galway fell on the wrong side of the result against Kerry in their first outing and they knew dreams of reaching the knockout stages were never further away.

Áine Keane and Kenny quickly put those nightmares to bed, when they struck two early points to put the home side in the ascendancy.

A couple of Jenny Grace efforts levelled things up but the Premier County were far too reliant on their most potent threat.

Galway were 0-5 to 0-3 ahead approaching half-time, Grace then sent a long-range free into the Galway net but Elisha Broderick tied things up at the interval.

But Galway had the elements in their favour afterwards and they made full use of them with Dillon and Kenny both slotting important goals.

Galway cruised to the win and turned their attentions to a huge meeting with Cork.

SCORERS - Galway: M Dillon 1-3, C Kenny 1-1, Á Keane 0-3 (2f), N Niland 0-3, E Broderick 0-1, A Lynskey 0-1, M Mannion 0-1, T Rutledge 0-1.

Tipperary: J Grace 2-5 (2-4f), J A Quirke 0-1, S Meagher 0-1 (f).

GALWAY: L Glynn; S McCartin, L Ward, C Donohue; L Casserly, C Mahon, R Hanniffy; M Burke, T Canning; M Mannion, A Lynskey, Á Keane; C Kenny, M Dillon, N Niland. **Subs:** E Broderick for Donohue (30), N Horan for Mahon (39), C Reilly for Kenny (51), K Mannion for Lynskey (52), K Manning for McCartin (55), N Heffernan for Niland (56), T Rutledge for M Mannion (56).

TIPPERARY: S Quigley; L Heffernan, C Brennan, C Ryan; M Quigley, C Ryan, Carey; M Burke, C Browne; R O'Donnell, J Grace, E Morrissey; J A Quirke, S Meagher, C Hogan.

REF: John Horgan (Cork).

Another marvellous victory on the road

Roscommon1-14
Tyrone1-11

By IAN COONEY
Roscommon Herald

THE Roscommon junior camogie team have qualified for the Littlewoods Division Four League final following a hard-earned 1-14 to 1-11 victory against Tyrone at St. Aidan's GAA grounds, Templeport.

A Tyrone goal on the stroke of half time handed the Ulster side a 1-7 to 0-9 advantage

but Leah Rowe's green flag in the third quarter proved to be a major turning point as Frank Browne's side set up a decider against Cavan.

Rowe ended up with a personal tally of 1-7, while Rachel Dolan and Chloe-Whyte Lennon did well in defence as Rachel Fitzmaurice and Rebecca Brennan were far more influential after the break.

Having won their games with a good deal to spare up to this point, Roscommon will be delighted with the manner in which they eked out this victory and they'll be relishing the prospect of playing Cavan who had 13 points to spare when the counties clashed in the All-Ireland Junior Premier Championship semi-final last November.

SCORERS - Roscommon: L Rowe 1-7 (2f); N Crean 0-3; R Fitzmaurice, N Coyle, K Hopkins & S O'Brien 0-1 each.

Tyrone: N McNulty 1-4; R Fay 0-6 (4f, 1 45); C Little 0-1.

ROSCOMMON: M Fallon; C Whyte-Lennon, N Farrell, E McNally; R Dolan, J Beattie, A O'Meara; N Watson, R Fitzmaurice; R Brennan, N Coyle, S Fallon; K Hopkins, L Rowe, N Crean.

Subs: N Conway for Watson (28), S O'Brien for Crean (40), L Gacquin for O'Meara (60).

TYRONE: J Lagan; A Begley, C Muldoon, N McKiver; C McCready, C Jordan, G Rafferty; C Gallagher, N Coyle, C Little; R Fay, E McErlean; K Cuddy, N McNulty, L Casey. **Subs:** A Morgan for McNulty (50).

REF: Paul O'Neill (Antrim).

Rossies book semi-final spot

Roscommon4-21
Louth0-1

By RONAN O'NEILL

SHAUNA Fallon shot a magnificent 1-12 as Roscommon advanced to the final four of the Littlewoods National Camogie League Division 4.

Louth were no match were their visitors at Darver with Lena Gacquin and Nicola Crean also among the goals for Roscommon.

Frank Browne's side started fast and they had already built up an unassailable 1-11 to 0-0 lead at half-time. Crean found the net for Roscommon the first half and Louth capitulated straight away.

Fallon added another after the resumption while Gacquin tagged on two more goals for a resounding 32-point win.

SCORERS - Roscommon: S Fallon 1-12, L

Gacquin 2-3, N Crean 1-2, L Rowe 0-2, N Coyle and A Lenehan 0-1 each.

ROSCOMMON: M Fallon; R Dolan, E McNally, C Whyte-Lennon; N Conway, J Beattie, A O'Meara; R Fitzmaurice, N Watson; S Fallon, N Coyle, A Lenehan; L Gacquin, N Crean, T Naughton.

Subs: C Connaughton for Fallon, L Rowe for Naughton, I Cullen for Fitzmaurice, S Hanly for Dolan, A McDermott for O'Meara, N Farrell for McNally, M Fallon for Watson, N Madden for Crean.

REF: Máirtín McGann (Antrim).

Huge winning margin for dominant Mayo

Mayo7-14
Louth1-1

Mayo GAA

MAYO'S camogie revival continues to gather pace. Mayo came into this Camogie Leagues Division 4 clash with Louth at Tooreen off the back of a fine win over Kildare. They powered to a second victory of the campaign, completely overwhelming their opponents.

Played in cracking summer conditions, this game took a while to get going. There was a long scoreless spell at the start, which lasted close to ten minutes, before full-forward Lisa Scahill drove the sliothar over the bar to break the deadlock.

The home team were two points to the good at the water break, Erin Murray bagging the second one, but at this juncture this was a keenly contested game. Louth were battling hard all over the pitch but weren't able to trouble the Mayo posts. Two '45s - there are no '65s in camogie - yielded no return on the board for the visitors.

Half-time was approaching before Mayo got their next score. Half-forward Emily Kelly galloped forward and shot over but we then

shot wides from a free and from play so, despite getting the upper-hand in the exchanges out the field, our dominance wasn't reflected on the scoreboard.

It was then the home team made its first big breakthrough. Aoife Lilly did well to create a goal chance and although her effort was blocked, Ciara Delaney was on hand to poke the sliothar to the net.

On the stroke of half-time we added a second. Lisa Scahill pulled off a cheeky rob and took off towards the Louth goal before offloading to her Westport clubmate Emily Kelly. The teenager fed Orna Hession who fired over to send us into the break 1-4 to 0-0 in front.

Louth finally got off the mark right from the restart with a point from play from Denise Moyna. We hit back immediately, however, when Erin Murray drove straight down the middle and belted it over.

We then bagged a second goal, once again an opportunistic finish from Ciara Delaney. The score originated from Aine Charlton, full of power and pace around the middle, who burst through and popped a pass to Lisa Scahill whose shot came back off the bar. Ciara Delaney was first to the rebound to drive the sliothar to the net.

The same player added a point straight away afterwards. Executing a great pick up, she shot on the run and over it went.

Our wide count hit double figures soon after but the scores kept coming too. Our next goal was a fortuitous one, with Orna Hession shooting from distance and the Louth 'keeper, blinded by the sun, misjudged the sliothar's flight and it dipped under her crossbar into the net.

The roof really fell in for the visitors after that. Lisa Scahill banged in three goals in seven minutes and although Louth got one back, direct from a close-in free, the home team were now cruising to an easy victory.

With twenty minutes to go we started to empty the bench but the scores kept coming. Lisa Scahill notched her fourth goal, her team's seventh, while a steady flow of frees from Maebh Delaney saw our points tally rise as well.

Mayo also added points from play, with Mairead Charlton and sub Helen O'Malley (twice) finding the target. These scores helped push our winning margin to an outsized 31 points.

MAYO: E Minish; R Cassidy, A Mulkeen, G Delaney; S Golden, A Doherty, M Charlton; M Delaney, A Charlton; E Kelly, E Murray, O Hession; A Lilly, L Scahill, C Delaney.

LOUTH: A Carroll; A McKeon, N McComish, C Fennell; K Matthews, L Sharkey, D Dunne; N Cunningham, A Dunne; G Mackin, J McKeon, D Moynagh; L Young, A McCormack, M Lynch.

REF: Ciaran Groome (Offaly).

Cavan power to the win

Cavan3-12
Mayo0-7

Mayo GAA

THE Mayo camogie team battled hard in the heavy, humid conditions at Sligo's Markievicz Park but Cavan emerged decisive victors from this Camogie Leagues Division 4 semi-final, coming away with a 3-12 to 0-7 win.

Even though they were in arrears by five points at the midway point, Mayo were at that stage far from out of it. Cavan, though, pulled away impressively after the break to win by fourteen points.

The Breffni County were on top in this contest from early on. Once Niamh Reilly had goalered for them early on they were always in front and that goal separated the teams at the first water break.

Orla Smith extended Cavan's lead soon after but Erin Murray replied straight away with a fine effort from distance. When Ciara Delaney pointed soon after, the gap was down to two but a second Cavan goal, this one from Orla Smith, sent the Ulster team into the break five points ahead.

Cavan added three further points without reply on the resumption, taking an eight-point lead into the second water break. It was obvious then that this was a gap that wouldn't be bridged.

Instead it was Cavan who upped the gas further from there to the finish. They bagged several nice points from play before Orla Smith, in stoppage time, saw her effort at a point drop in under the bar for Cavan's third goal.

Cavan were clear winners in this one and, while today's defeat shows Jimmy Lyons' team the standard they need to aspire to, they're also able to look back on what has been, all told, a

very satisfactory return to inter-county camogie action for the county. While today wasn't to be for them, this big-hearted team will surely have plenty of better days in the future.

SCORERS - Cavan: O Smith 1-2, S McKenna 0-4 (2f, 1 45), S Fitzsimmons 0-3, C Keenaghan 1f, J Maguire 0-1 each.

Mayo: M Delaney 0-4 (3f, 1 45), E Murray, L Scahill & C Delaney 0-1 each.

MAYO: E Minish, R Cassidy, A Mulkeen, G Delaney, S Golden, M Charlton, E Kelly, M Delaney, A Charlton, O Hession, E Murray, H O'Malley, A Lilly, L Scahill, C Delaney. **Subs:** R Lyons, M Mooney, H Tener.

CAVAN: L Bambrick, C Clarke, A Coyle, L Ellis, R Crowe McKeever, E Galligan, A O'Reilly, T Reilly, J Maguire, S Fitzsimmons, C Keenaghan, S McKenna, O Smith, E Fitzpatrick, N Reilly.

Subs: H Boylan, A Finnegan, C Fitzpatrick, L O'Rourke, S Clarke, K McQuillan.

REF: A Hogg (Clare).

Roscommon secure another significant win

Roscommon ...4-21
Louth0-1

By RONAN O'NEILL

SHAUNA Fallon shot a magnificent 1-12 as Roscommon advanced to the final four of the Littlewoods National Camogie League Division 4.

Louth were no match were their visitors at Darver with Lena Gacquin and Nicola Crean also among the goals for Roscommon.

Frank Browne's side started fast and they had already built up an unassailable 1-11 to 0-0 lead at half-time. Crean found the net for Roscommon the first half and Louth capitulated straight away.

Fallon added another after the resumption while Gacquin tagged on two more goals for a resounding 32-point win.

SCORERS - Roscommon: S Fallon 1-12, L Gacquin 2-3, N Crean 1-2, L Rowe 0-2, N Coyle and A Lenehan 0-1 each.

ROSCOMMON: M Fallon; R Dolan, E McNally, C Whyte-Lennon; N Conway, J Beattie, A O'Meara; R Fitzmaurice, N Watson; S Fallon, N Coyle, A Lenehan; L Gacquin, N Crean, T Naughton.

Subs: C Connaughton for Fallon, L Rowe for Naughton, I Cullen for Fitzmaurice, S Hanly for Dolan, A McDermott for O'Meara, N Farrell for McNally, M Fallon for Watson, N Madden for Crean.

REF: Máirtín McGann (Antrim).

Delaney inspires Mayo success against Kildare

Mayo1-14
Kildare0-4

By COLM GANNON Mayo Advertiser

MAYO were full of confidence heading into the game with Louth, on the back of their round two win over Kildare, where Jimmy Lyons' side ran out 1-14 to 0-4 winners over the Lilywhites.

The drive to victory was backed by midfielder, Meabh Delaney, who posted seven points during the course of the game, having got 1-2 the previous week against Roscommon.

Aoife Lilly's goal seven minutes

into the second half was the decisive score to put away the challenge of their visitors.

The rest of the scores were shared around the Mayo attack, with Orna Hession getting three points, Erin Murray a brace and Lisa Scahill getting a point from full forward - having got a goal the previous week against Roscommon.

MAYO: A Crawley; R Cassidy, A Mulkeen, G Delaney; S Golden, A Doherty, M Charlton; M Delaney, A Charlton; E Kelly, E Murray, O Hession; A Lilly, L Scahill, C Delaney.

KILDARE: N Doyle; A Corcoran, E Garry, M McNeill; T Thompson, C Harrington, D Martin; R Maguire, K Miley; S Fanning, S O'Brien, S Dolan; A Walsh, A McMullen, J Murphy.

REF: Aaron Hogg (Clare).

Roscommon make winning start

Roscommon2-11
Mayo2-2

By IAN COONEY Roscommon Herald

AMUCH-IMPROVED second-half performance from Roscommon enabled Frank Browne to get his managerial tenure off to winning start against Mayo in Ballyforan.

First-half goals from Lisa Scahill and Meabh Delaney suggested that Mayo, who were making their first appearance at this level for decades, could cause a shock as the visitors edged 2-2 to 1-4 in front.

Roscommon's goal came from a Shauna Fallon free, but the improvement demanded was very much on display in the second half as the home side shook off their pre-season cobwebs.

Lena Gacquin's 44th minute goal turned the game very much in the home side's favour, and with St. Dominic's duo Áine O'Meara and Niamh Watson to the fore, Roscommon sealed the deal with late points from Fallon and substitute Alisha Lenehan.

Manager Frank Browne admitted afterwards that he was worried at half time but the nature of his side's positive second-half performance would give Roscommon confidence for the remainder of the league.

SCORERS - Roscommon: S Fallon 1-5 (1-2f), L

Gacquin 1-0, Á O'Meara 0-1, N Watson 0-1, K Hopkins 0-1, S O'Brien 0-1, A Lenehan 0-1.

Mayo: M Delaney 1-2 (all frees), L Scahill 1-0

ROSCOMMON: M Fallon; R Dolan, E McNally, C Whyte Lennon; N Conway, J Beattie, Á O'Meara; R Fitzmaurice, N Watson; N Coyle, K Hopkins, S Fallon; N Crean, S O'Brien, R Brennan. **Subs:** L Gacquin for Hopkins (35), T Naughton for Crean (43), L Rowe for O'Brien (56), A Lenehan for Conway (60).

MAYO: A Crawley; R Lyons, A Doherty, G Delaney; S Golden, A Lambert, M Charlton; M Delaney, E Murray; M Mooney, O Hession, A Charlton; A Lilly, L Scahill, C Delaney. **Subs:** A Mulkeen for M Charlton (47), E Kelly for Mooney (54), H Tener for Hession (60).

REF: Aaron Hogg (Clare).

Connacht SFC fixtures

THE dates, times and venues for the upcoming Connacht Senior Football Championship will be as follows:

Quarter-final: 26 June 4.30pm. Markievicz Park

Sligo v Mayo

Semi-finals: 4 July 2pm. Dr Hyde Park

Roscommon v Galway

Semi-finals: 11 July 2pm AvantiMoney Pairc Sean Mac Diarmada/ MacHale Park

Leitrim v Mayo/Sligo -

Final: 25 July 1.15pm.

U-17 and U-20 championships

THE 2021 Connacht U-20 and U-17 football championships will be played at different venues after a meeting between the Connacht Management Committee and the Connacht CCC.

The decision has been made in light of the changes in the numbers of patrons allowed to attend games in venues with a capacity of less than 5,000.

Connacht U-20 Football Championship

Extra-time and finish on the day in all games.

Quarter-final, 6 July Dr Hyde Park

A: Roscommon v Leitrim

Semi-final, 13 July Tuam Stadium

Galway v Mayo

Semi-final, 14 July Dr Hyde Park/
AvantiMoney Pairc Sheain

Sligo v A

Final: 22 July

All-Ireland semi-final: 31 July/1 August

All-Ireland final: 14/15 August

Connacht U-17 Football Championship

Extra-time and finish on the day in all games.

Quarter-final, 23 July Dr Hyde Park

A: Mayo v Roscommon

Semi-finals, 30 July Markievicz Park

Sligo v Leitrim

Semi-final, 31 July MacHale Park/Tuam Stadium

Galway v A

Final: 6 August

All-Ireland semi-final: 21/22 August

All-Ireland final: 28/29 August

TG4 increase their Ladies football coverage



Former Galway footballer Máire Ní Bhraonáin was on hand as TG4 announced a major increase in their Ladies football coverage for the Lidl National Football Leagues.

LADIES Gaelic Football Association President Micheál Naughton was delighted to announce that TG4 were upping their coverage of the Lidl National Football League in 2021.

TG4 continue to lead the way with their coverage of Irish sport and the LGFA has really captured the imagination of the onlooking public.

And this year TG4 announced they were set to broadcast 150 percent more games from the LGFA Lidl Ladies National Football Leagues. The increase in coverage went from four to ten games again confirming TG4's dedication to Ladies Gaelic Football, as the station continues to blaze a trail for the broadcast of women's sport.

"The addition of further games in the live TV schedule once again demonstrates TG4's unrivalled commitment to our sport," said President Naughton.

"We are very much looking forward to the commencement of the 2021 Lidl Ladies National Football Leagues and delighted with the announcement of this unprecedented coverage from TG4.

"There are some mouth-watering fixtures to look forward to during the weeks ahead, and TG4's stand-out coverage will be the very best action into viewers' homes at home and abroad."

In addition to the station's extensive coverage and sponsorship of the Peil na mBán championship series, TG4 was delighted to give these games from the Lidl Ladies National Football Leagues the exposure on a broadcast platform that is free to air on national television and via Spórt TG4's YouTube channel, and to also make them available globally via the TG4 Player App.

"For over 20 years TG4 has been the home of live and exclusive television broadcasting of Ladies Gaelic Football," said TG4 Head of Sport, Rónán Ó Coisdealbha.

"With TG4's increased coverage of the 2021 Lidl National Leagues, we continue to lead the way in broadcasting of women's sport in Ireland and ensures that women's sport is front and centre for television audiences.

"TG4 is delighted to make even more games available to the public on free to air television."

Championship fixtures announced

THE 2019 TG4 All-Ireland Ladies Football Championship runners-up, Galway, will face-off against Kerry and Donegal while Mayo take on Armagh, Cavan and Monaghan in this year's championship.

With the Lidl National Football League coming to a conclusion, attention has now turned to the championship. Galway are in Group D while Mayo are in Group A of the senior section.

In the intermediate championship, Sligo take their place in Group A alongside Westmeath, Longford and Wexford. Leitrim are in Group B with Clare and Fermanagh. Roscommon make up Group C with Kildare and Laois.

2021 TG4 All-Ireland Senior Championship Fixtures

Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
Armagh	Cork	Dublin	Galway
Cavan	Tipperary	Tyrone	Kerry
Monaghan	Meath	Waterford	Donegal
Mayo			

Round 1 - 10 July

Group 1:	Armagh v Monaghan Cavan v Mayo
Group 2:	Cork v Meath
Group 3:	Dublin v Tyrone
Group 4:	Galway v Kerry

Round 2 - 17 July

Group 1:	Monaghan v Mayo Armagh v Cavan
Group 2:	Cork v Tipperary
Group 3:	Dublin v Waterford
Group 4:	Donegal v Galway

Round 3 - 24 July

Group 1:	Monaghan v Cavan Armagh v Mayo
Group 2:	Tipperary v Meath
Group 3:	Tyrone v Waterford
Group 4:	Kerry v Donegal

Quarter-finals - 31 July/1 August/2 August

QF 1:	1st Group 1 v 2nd Group 2
QF 2:	1st Group 2 v 2nd Group 3
QF 3:	1st Group 3 v 2nd Group 4
QF 4:	1st Group 4 v 2nd Group 1

Semi-Finals - 14 August

SF 1:	Winner Q/F 1 v Winner Q/F 2
SF 2:	Winner Q/F 3 v Winner Q/F 4

Final - 5 September

2021 TG4 All-Ireland Intermediate Championship Fixtures

Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
Westmeath	Clare	Roscommon	Offaly
Longford	Fermanagh	Kildare	Down
Wexford	Leitrim	Laois	Louth
Sligo			

Round 1 - 11 July

Group 1:	Westmeath v Longford Wexford v Sligo
Group 2:	Fermanagh v Leitrim (To be played on Saturday 10th July)

Group 3:	Roscommon v Kildare
Group 4:	Offaly v Down

Round 2 - 18 July

Group 1:	Longford v Wexford Westmeath v Sligo
Group 2:	Clare v Leitrim
Group 3:	Kildare v Laois
Group 4:	Down v Louth

Round 3 - 25 July

Group 1:	Longford v Sligo Westmeath v Wexford
Group 2:	Clare v Fermanagh
Group 3:	Roscommon v Laois
Group 4:	Louth v Offaly

Quarter-finals - 7/8 August

QF 1:	1st Group 1 v 2nd Group 2
QF 2:	1st Group 2 v 2nd Group 3
QF 3:	1st Group 3 v 2nd Group 4
QF 4:	1st Group 4 v 2nd Group 1

Semi-Finals - 14/15 August

SF 1:	Winner Q/F 1 v Winner Q/F 2
SF 2:	Winner Q/F 3 v Winner Q/F 4

Final - 5 September

2021 TG4 All-Ireland Junior Championship Fixtures

1 Antrim	2 Carlow	3 Derry
4 Limerick	5 Wicklow	

Round 1 - 11 July 2021

Antrim v Derry (To be played on Saturday 10th July)
Limerick v Wicklow
Carlow Bye

Round 2 - 18th July 2021

Antrim v Carlow
Derry v Limerick
Wicklow Bye

Round 3 - 24 July 2021

Antrim v Limerick
Carlow (H) v Wicklow (Wicklow at Home in 2020)
Derry Bye

Round 4 - 8 August 2021

Antrim v Wicklow
Carlow v Derry
Limerick Bye

Round 5 - 15 August 2021

Carlow v Limerick
Derry v Wicklow
Antrim Bye

Semi-Finals - 21/22 August 2021

1 v 4
2 v 3

Final - 5 September 2021

Kellogg launches nationwide competition with prizes worth €40,000

GAA Cúl Camps co-ordinator Charlie Harrison believes people need to plan for a summer full of Cúl memories.

All GAA clubs across the province are in with a chance of winning incredible prizes as part of Kellogg's sponsorship of the Kellogg's GAA Cúl camps.

Kellogg, now in its tenth year sponsoring the GAA Cúl Camps, has launched the nationwide on-pack promotion for all GAA clubs to be in with a chance to win prizes worth €40,000 - a game-changing amount for any GAA club.

At a time when fundraising has proved challenging, this competition provides GAA clubs with an incredible opportunity to claim great prizes through a simple mechanic. In order to nominate your club, all that is required is to pick up a promotional box of Kellogg's Corn Flakes, Rice Krispies or Bran Flakes. Using the unique on-pack code, log on to kelloggsculcamps.gaa.ie/competition and nominate the club of choice. All nominations will be entered into a final draw to win one of three cash prizes - €25,000, €10,000 or €5,000.

Last year saw Skryne GFC of Meath, Wicklow's Rathnew GAA club and Newmarket on Fergus GAA club in County Clare win the prizes. Celebrating the news, last year's winners acknowledged how important the funds were to the local club particularly in terms of maintaining activities for the children and wider community. They also extended a big thanks to club members and local families for entering their clubs into the competition.

"It's time to make Summer plans. Keeping in line with Government guidelines we are thankfully in a position to deliver the camps during the months of July and August 2021 to children living in all 32



Kellogg's GAA Cúl Camps ambassador and Mayo footballer Cillian O'Connor with brothers Paddy, age 13, left, and Tom Nolan, age 10, of St Brigid's GAA Club in Castleknock, Dublin, at the launch of the 2021 Kellogg's GAA Cúl Camps, in Croke Park, Dublin. Photo: Stephen McCarthy / SPORTSFILE.

counties," said Harrison.

"Naturally, after the year we've all had to endure, the idea of finally getting out of the house, being active and seeing other children sounds hugely appealing.

"We are mindful of the reality that Covid 19 will still be with us however, and we will be very much guided by the government and relevant authorities to ensure all reasonable safety measures and protocols are adhered to in the rollout of our camps."

Starting on 28th June and running up to 27th August, the 2021 Kellogg's GAA Cúl Camps will run in line with government guidelines and subject to the advice of the relevant authorities. The number of camps and capacity at this year's camps will increase as we get closer to the summer months with some already on sale, so parents are reminded to book early to avoid disappointment as demand is expected to be higher than ever.

"Kellogg is very proud to be involved in a partnership which involves children the length and breadth of the country, each of whom will get the chance to meet up with their friends and enjoy themselves in a healthy and safe outdoor environment," said Kellogg Ireland General Manager, Sarah Ferguson.

"This is the tenth year of our sponsorship and we are thrilled to watch the Kellogg's GAA Cúl Camps to continue to go from strength to strength and it was particularly pleasing to see how well it worked last year during a difficult year.

"We are also very proud of supporting the grass roots of the GAA and are delighted to once again announce the competition for clubs nationwide."

For more information on the Kellogg's GAA Cúl Camps visit gaa.ie/kelloggsculcamps/competition.

GAA for Dads & Lads

GAA President Larry McCarthy is determined to make the GAA more inclusive as the GAA for Dads & Launch launch took place at St Patrick's GFC in Fermanagh.

'GAA for Dads & Lads' is a social hurling and football programme for those keen to enjoy Gaelic Games outside the traditional competitive structures of the GAA.

The programme hopes to inspire other clubs or groups to join the social hurling and football teams that have started up across the Association in recent years.

A blitz event organised by the GAA's Community & Health department in

November 2019 in the National Games Development Centre in Abbotstown hosted 15 social hurling and 5 social football teams from across Ireland.

The 160 players had an average age of 44 years. In a survey they listed their top three reasons for participating in social Gaelic Games as: keeping fit and remaining active, the social aspect of meeting old and new friends and the fun and enjoyment of playing sport.

The philosophy of GAA for Dads & Lads is all about participation and the camaraderie that only team sports can offer. The small-sided adapted games allow for inci-

dental contact only (to minimise any risk of injury) so skills are to the fore over physicality. The games are self-governed with no referees.

"GAA clubs are focused on creating an opportunity for life-long participation in Gaelic games and cultivating a sense of belonging in the communities they represent," said Uachtarán McCarthy.

"This GAA for Dads & Lads initiative will allow clubs to achieve this. It will help clubs to retain active members and also encourage new people to get involved and for everyone to enjoy playing. I look forward to seeing it go from strength to strength."

GAA's new strategic plan

GAA President Larry McCarthy says all volunteers, members and players will get their chance to help shape the future of the GAA post-pandemic.

Just like every other sporting organisation the GAA was affected badly by the Covid-19 pandemic when it struck last year, and it is still having ramifications with rescheduled leagues and championships at senior inter-county level.

But a group led by Uachtarán McCarthy has begun an extensive programme of research that will engage with every level of the Association.

An opportunity for public consultation and for club members to have an input into shaping the GAA's focus from 2021 until late 2026 will happen during the summer.

Phase One of the plan has commenced and seeks to establish the key issues that face the Association. Phase Two will involve a public survey, tailored for club members, but which will be made available to everyone to contribute.

"Upon taking office I spoke of the opportunity for recalibration and rebuilding that is taking place as a result of our gradual emergence from the harrowing Pandemic," said Uachtarán McCarthy.

"The GAA has already been in a period of intense reflection on matters as diverse as the shape of our season, the formation



GAA President Larry McCarthy is looking for help from all levels of the organisation.

Photo: Brendan Moran / SPORTSFILE.

of competitions and playing rules and the development of young players."

As part of the initial phase, feedback is being sought through surveys and focus groups with a sample of individuals representing players, coaches, officers, and other volunteers at club and county levels.

Feedback is also being sought through workshops with An Coiste Bainistíochta and the GAA's Staff Executive, surveys with GAA staff, written submissions from key groups, such as the central sub-committees, county committees, the sister organisations, schools' bodies, government bodies, the GPA, sponsors and media. There is also interviews taking place with experts.

"We want to ensure that the GAA is perfectly placed in the post-Pandemic world to be the sort of vibrant, supportive and relevant Association that we all want it to be," said Uachtarán McCarthy.

"The proposed strategic plan covering up to 2026 will enable us to put the GAA on that road and every unit of the Association will have an opportunity to have their voice heard.

"I'd encourage all of our volunteers, members and players to take this opportunity to play a part in shaping our future together."



TY students from St Colman's College are pictured with Connacht GAA Secretary John Prenty (left) and Connacht GAA Provincial Games Manager Cathal Cregg, at the Connacht GAA Centre of Excellence. The students took part in the sustainability programme in collaboration with the GAA #Greenclubs initiative, under the guidance of Margie Philips and Teagasc.



Thanks to Ballyhaunis Bee Club, Connacht GAA recently installed four beehives at the Centre of Excellence as part of their Biodiversity Project.



OFFICIAL GAA PLAYING RULES CHANGES 2021

DENYING A GOAL SCORING OPPORTUNITY: HURLING (Senior Inter-County Only)

If any of the following infractions are committed, on an attacking player with a goal-scoring opportunity, either inside the 20-metre line or the semi-circular arc, a penalty kick shall be awarded to the team affected.

- (10) To pull down an opponent or
- (11) To trip an opponent with hands, arms, legs, feet, or hurling or
- (12) To use the hurley in a careless manner.

The following penalties shall apply:

- (13) A penalty kick shall be awarded to the team affected.
- (14) Additional to being awarded a caution (yellow card), the offender shall be sent to the sin bin for 10 minutes.

Exception: If the infraction is a second cautionable infraction, the offender shall be expelled off for the remainder of the game, including extra-time when played.

WHERE WE ALL BELONG

OFFICIAL GAA PLAYING RULES CHANGES 2021

DENYING A GOAL SCORING OPPORTUNITY: FOOTBALL (Senior Inter-County Only)

If a cynical behaviour (black card infraction) is committed, on an attacking player with a goal-scoring opportunity, either inside the 20-metre line or the semi-circular arc, a penalty kick shall be awarded to the team affected.

WHERE WE ALL BELONG

OFFICIAL GAA PLAYING RULES CHANGES 2021

ADVANTAGE RULE FOOTBALL & HURLING

When an aggressive foul is committed, the referee may allow the advantage to run by assessing the potential of a goal-scoring opportunity or another advantage to the team offended by creating or capitalising on the foul.

The referee shall signal that advantage has been awarded by raising an arm upright and shall allow the advantage to run for five seconds after the foul or for less time if it becomes clear that no advantage has accrued.

If the referee is not satisfied that an advantage has accrued, he/she shall subsequently award a free for the foul team where it occurred, except as provided under paragraphs (1) and (2) of Rule 2.2. He shall apply any relevant disciplinary action.

WHERE WE ALL BELONG

OFFICIAL GAA PLAYING RULES CHANGES 2021

TEMPORARY SUBSTITUTION:

A player who sustains a suspected head injury, if instructed by the referee, shall temporarily leave the field of play for further assessment before the player's fitness to return is determined.

WHERE WE ALL BELONG

OFFICIAL GAA PLAYING RULES CHANGES 2021

MISCONDUCT AT GAMES BY TEAM OFFICIALS (Inter-County Only)

The following changes were made to the rules around misconduct at games by team officials and the introduction of the sending off yellow & red cards and match suspensions to penalise team leaders for specific infractions.

Yellow cards can now be issued to team officials for the following infractions:

- To make an unauthorised entrance onto the field of play.
- To challenge the authority of a referee, umpire, linesman or sideline official.
- To threaten or to use abusive or provocative language or gestures to an opposing player or team official.
- To threaten or to use abusive or provocative language or gestures to a player of own team.

Red cards can now be issued to team officials for the following infractions:

- To use abusive language to a referee, umpire, linesman or sideline official.
- To engage in abusive conduct.
- Any type of physical interference with an opposing player or team official.
- To interfere with the playing of the game.
- Minor offences of interference with the playing of the game, such as pushing, shoving or pulling, threatening or abusive conduct towards, or threatening language to, a referee, umpire, linesman or sideline official.
- Any type of assault on a referee, umpire, linesman or sideline official.

WHERE WE ALL BELONG

Be Ready

To Play

In Partnership with **UPMC** LIFE CHANGING MEDICINE



Each webinar will be available to watch on the GAA Learning YouTube channel at 8:30pm.

	DATE	SPEAKERS	TITLE
JUNE	Monday 7 th	Phil Kearney & Molly Dunne	Applying Skill Acquisition: Practical Tips For Coaches working with Children & Adults across the Player Pathway
	Monday 21 st	Seoirse Bulfin	Games Based Approach
JULY	Monday 2 nd	Denise Martin & Brian McClelland	Moving from Insight to Action
	Monday 19 th	Kevin Johnson & Kevin Lally	Creating a Learning Environment
AUGUST	Monday 2 nd	Micky Collins & Anthony Kostos	Concussion & Return to Play
	Monday 16 th	Colm Clear & Kevin McGuigan	Translating the Analysis to the Pitch

 = Sports Science

 = Coaching



UPMC - Official Healthcare Partner of GAA | GPA

Check out the schedule for the “Be Ready to Play” Summer Series of webinars which will premiere live on the GAA Learning YouTube channel every second Monday all summer.

Sligo GAA says thank you to frontline health care staff

AS it takes the first steps back into on field activities for 2021, Sligo's GAA community has this week joined in a nationwide tribute to the outstanding work and commitment of its local healthcare professionals in caring for the community throughout the COVID19 pandemic.

The Your County, Your Colours, Your Support initiative is the brainchild of ex Galway GAA star and well-known Galway Bay FM commentator Tommy Devane. It involves the presentation of a country jersey and framed message of thanks from each of the 32 counties to their local frontline workers.

Sligo GAA Chairman Sean Carroll visited Sligo University Hospital last week to make the presentation to General Manager Grainne McCann and a group of her colleagues.

Mr. Carroll said "we are delighted to join this unique and very thoughtful initiative. The GAA community extends to every parish and village in Sligo and there is no part of the county that has not felt the effects of the pandemic in some way, directly or indirectly.

The greatest ongoing burden however has fallen on those working in the health system. Every day for almost fourteen months now, they have focused solely on caring for those taken ill by the pandemic, and their families, doing everything they can to bring people through to health and to keep us safe and well.

Many of those involved are members of our association and of our sister association the LGFA. We are immensely proud of their work and that of all their



Front row, L to R: Sean Carroll, Chairman Sligo County Board and Grainne McCann, Hospital Manager SUH. Back row, L to R: Enda Kivlehan, Physiotherapist, SUH -Coolaney/Mullinabreena GAA Club; Bernardine McGauran, Secretary Sligo County Board; Shane Gallagher, Senior Physiotherapist, SUH - Eastern Harps GAA Club; Georgina Kilcoyne, Assistant Hospital Manager, SUH.

colleagues. We are therefore honoured to present a small token of acknowledgement and appreciation for their selfless commitment on behalf of all of us in the GAA community. We hope that the sight of this jersey on display in the hospital will remain as a symbol of that appreciation for many years to come."

In response Ms McCann said "These have of course been incredibly challenging times and we are genuinely appreciative

of this initiative. There are many staff who are active participants in gaelic games and many more again that are passionate supporters. This gesture to take the time to say thank you will give a boost to morale and spirits throughout the hospital. The sight of a sports jersey brings a ray of hope and a reminder of better days to come again"

"From Fahy's field to Dangan

By Michael O Connor

ANOTHER link with NUIGalway's long sporting history and Galway city ended as **Peter McDonagh** who worked for 41 years in sport facilities management retired from the role.

He first worked in the famed Fahy's field when NUIGalway sport teams trained there before the pitches and facilities were developed and modernised in what is now known as Dangan sports centre.

Tens of thousands of students covering every field sport known at one time or

another met Peter who went about his duties with a quiet diplomacy and efficiency with Gaelic Games central over the years to all activities.

Many other outside sporting bodies who have used NUIGalway facilities over the years would have met Peter as they came and went about their sporting endeavours. He particularly loved the early morning sessions in which he witnessed the dedication of the students before a long day in college getting in their sporting sessions.

Peter built up a strong relationship with countless mentors of sporting teams throughout the years and noted how respectful all were despite the pressure to



Peter McDonagh, who retired from NUIGalway staff, being presented by Gaelic Games Development Officer, Michael O'Connor with mementos from NUIGalway GAA.



Sligo GAA legends appointed as honorary officers

Sligo GAA is delighted to announce the appointment of the following Honorary Officers following a County Board meeting recently.

The new Uachtarán of Sligo GAA is Mícheál Kearins who succeeds Tommy Kilcoyne who stepped down last December at county convention. "The Maestro" is widely accepted to be one of the greatest forwards to ever play the game of gaelic football. An Allstar recipient in 1971, the inaugural year of these awards, he was also a Cú Chulainn award (pre-cursor to the All-Stars) winner in three consecutive years 1964-'66.

He won a Connacht Championship medal with Sligo in 1975 to crown his 17 years of dedicated service in the black and white. He also represented Connacht with distinction and holds two Railway Cup medals together with seven County Senior titles with his club St Patrick's.

Following his playing career Mícheál took up the whistle and rose to prominence as one of the top referees in the country.

"I am genuinely honoured by this appointment. I know there is a lot of great new young talent coming through Sligo football now. That reminds me of great days we enjoyed as players and I am proud to support them and lend my voice to their efforts" said Mícheál after confirmation of his appointment.

Barnes Murphy has been appointed to the new position of Leas-Uachtarán. Barnes captained and coached Sligo's Connacht championship winning side of 1975 and won Sligo's second All-Star



Sligo legends - Barnes Murphy, new Leas-Uachtarán, and Mícheál Kearins, the new Uachtarán of Sligo GAA.

lights"

prepare a team before action. He accepted that if mentors see the basics available such as dressingrooms, lights and prepared pitches they so much appreciate this effort.

Large sporting events such as Fitzgibbon, Sigerson, Ashbourne, O Connor Cup, Collingwood cup are but just a few of the occasions when thousands of parents, students and sports followers were under his care along with his colleagues Steve Flaherty and Eamonn Joyce.

NUI Galway will be the lesser for the departure of Peter McDonagh and all the memories he possesses of his time from Fahy's fields to Dangan's lights.

award in 1974. A defensive lynchpin, the Castleconnor native first came to prominence through his displays in many successful campaigns for St Nathy's College.

After working together with Gerry Conway and others to combine Craobh Rua and Muire Naofa, he also enjoyed tremendous success at club level winning several five County Senior titles, two Connacht Club titles and a Connacht and All-Ireland 7's with St Mary's. He was instrumental in the formative years of St John's GAA club winning Junior titles with them in the 1980s. Following his playing career, Barnes continued coaching teams throughout Sligo at underage and adult levels.

Accepting his appointment Barnes commented "As a supporter and through my club I have watched the great work done in recent years to build the coaching structures and facilities in Sligo. The GAA

is a real force for good in difficult times and I am delighted to take this appointment and look forward to seeing all that work bring further enjoyment to players and supporters alike. I will help in any way I can".

The position of Patron was held until recently by the late Kieran McDermott, RIP. As a mark of respect, the formal announcement of Kieran's successor will be deferred until a later date.

"We're delighted to be in a position to confirm the appointment of such legends of Sligo GAA to these honorary positions," said Chairperson of Sligo GAA Seán Carroll.

"We felt it was fitting to honour former players for outstanding service and not just the excellent administrators that have contributed at Board level. And who better to start with than our first two All-Star winners as we reach the 50th anniversary of those awards" he added.





Sligo GAA and Sligo LGFA Executive Officers have recently commenced a series of meetings to explore areas of mutual interest. This is a first for Sligo GAA and Sligo LGFA with both Associations having responsibility for the promotion of Gaelic Games within our County. Sligo GAA and Sligo LGFA look forward to having an aligned pathway with a joint approach to a vision for the future, encompassing and discussing all areas of mutual interest. Both Associations are keen to support each other to confront the challenges that will present to their members in these unprecedented times. From left to right – Ryan Feehily, Sligo Senior footballer; Sean Carroll, Chairperson Sligo GAA; Bernardine McGauran, Sligo GAA Secretary; Raymond Cardon, Sligo LGFA Chairperson; Rita Brett, Sligo LGFA Secretary; Nicola Brennan, Sligo Ladies football.

St Nathy's crowned *One Good Club* winners

The Sligo Champion

AFTER ten weeks of creative ideas, and bringing the entire community together, St Nathy's LGFA were crowned the Lidl One Good Club Champions, across every club in Ireland.

Kathleen Coleman, St Nathy's PRO, said the excitement and pride is overwhelming. "As a stand-alone ladies Gaelic football club, we are over the moon. We have worked so hard to embrace the programme and bring some fun and positivity to a very challenging time for sports teams."

"The announcement was made through a live event on Facebook, on Thursday last, which was hosted by Marty Morrissey. We got a look into what each club had done as part of the programme and the different ideas they all had. Marty had visited St Nathy's a week ago to meet us and interview the committee members, which was very exciting. We had so much fun sharing our ideas and introducing him to other members in the club who had benefitted from the programme. We couldn't wait to see the footage on the night, it meant a lot to people to see the club celebrated in such a lovely way.

"This was a big occasion for the club and we were so proud that it was happen-

ing as result of all our hard work. We have engaged in so many activities in the past 10 weeks, from virtual farms, letters to the underage players, The Easter Bunnies, The BOOTique, the Music Showcase, Fittest Family, Davey Nutrition Talk, Skills videos, Art Competitions, Virtual Trip around Ireland and to the USA, Pilates, and Zoom Quiz. The list goes on.

"It has been a real team effort, we could never have imagined how successful it would be. As a small rural club in Sligo we were going up against some of the biggest clubs, but we proved this has no bearing on the strength of a community and the bond we have as a club. The initiative brought people together and highlighted very important messages about mental health in our youth. We had the opportunity to meet players and families for the first time in such an enjoyable way.

"There was so much excitement around the club and on the night, with an outpouring of well-wishes received by the steering committee. We were so nervous and excited, waiting to see the footage of our programme and the reaction it would receive. Not in our wildest dreams did we think we could win the whole competition, which was evident in our reaction to the win. We were so humbled by the praise on the night, with some very funny reactions

to the video clip. That's what it was all about, enjoyment and creating a buzz around the club. There have been lots of laughs, stressful nights and nerves, which have made some world class blooper reels! "We cannot thank Lidl and Jigsaw enough for the way they implemented the initiative and the opportunities it has given us. We never would have done something like this without the programme being put in place."

A special word of congratulations must be extended to the steering committee, a group of senior players from the club, who have been working tirelessly to put this whole thing together, and they are, Una Cafferky, Jenie Creegan, Claire Rooney, Noelle Gormley, Áine McDonagh, Etna Flanagan, Ann-Marie, Kathleen and Carol Coleman, Jacquiline Barrett, and Hannah Walsh.

"Spirits within the club are at an all-time high as we return to play and that is thanks to this whole experience. It's an unbelievable achievement and when the time is right, we look forward to gathering as a club to celebrate together in style, even Marty is looking forward to returning to party with us. But for now, it's back to the football field and few less zoom calls," Kathleen added, as the congratulations keep flowing in on their splendid achievement.



Sligo hurlers and their supporters have been widely praised for their fundraising efforts

The Sligo Champion

DURING the month of March, the Sligo2Sligo fundraiser saw hurlers, their families, friends and work colleagues embark on the virtual challenge from the Centre of Excellence in Scarden to Gaelic Park in New York.

Part of the money raised is also going to two local charities, North West STOP and Sligo Cancer Support Centre, who like so many charities, have been unable to carry out their regular fundraising due to covid.

People from all over the county and further afield helped out during the fundraiser where thousands was raised, money which will go toward hurling facilities and equipment.

The phenomenal response to the Sligo2Sligo fundraiser wasn't that much of a surprise according to Sean Reynolds,

chairperson of Sligo hurling, who said the support the sport has been receiving in recent years has seen a welcome increase.

Sean said: "There was €13,000 raised in total, there was a great response not only from the county but other places such as Sligo GAA in New York, which was great to see.

"It wasn't just hurling followers either that were coming out to support.

"The hurlers have shown an improvement year on year so it's great to see the backing they are getting from around the county.

"There are pockets of hurling now more spread out in the county, north, south, east and west and the more general GAA follower is interested in hurling.

"Outside of the county too, we had a sizeable support in New York in the club there and it's really important to have that relationship there (with Sligo GAA in New York)."

The chairperson said credit too must go to the Sligo senior hurling panel for their efforts at raising money and making sure the two charities were also donated to.

"Credit to the Sligo hurlers themselves, they got their families, friends and work colleagues all involved.

"A large part of the fundraiser too was about being active.

"That was important during lockdown, for people to keep active within their 5km radius while at the same time raising money. Sean said the response too from the charities has been really fantastic.

"The charities from speaking to them were saying they were hugely appreciative, with covid gone is the day of the door to door fundraising so charities have been losing out.

"They were both hugely appreciative of the donations and during lockdown they have busier than ever, so we were happy to help out," he added.



At their first training session, Sligo GAA Senior Hurlers and Management made a presentation to North West Stop and the Sligo Cancer Support Centre. These donations were part of the recent successful #Sligo2Sligo Fundraiser. Pictured with representatives of the Senior Hurlers are Jim Doherty from Sligo Cancer Support Centre and Carmel and Seán Fallon from NW STOP. Also included in Sligo County Board Chairman, Sean Carroll, and Sligo Hurling Board Chairman, Sean Reynolds.

St John's get €20k from Lidl initiative

The Sligo Champion

ST JOHN'S LGFA have been announced as Connacht Provincial winner in Lidl Ireland's hugely popular club fundraising initiative that took place earlier this year.

A total of €33,200 has been awarded to Sligo Ladies Gaelic football clubs.

St. John's LGFA Club were awarded a top prize of €20,000 from the retailer as part of the initiative which called on communities to support their local clubs by scanning their Lidl Plus app at the checkout in their local Lidl. The club is one of four, one from each province, that picked up the top prize. In total, Lidl has rewarded more than 360 LGFA clubs throughout Ireland, benefit-

ting from new jerseys to €20,000 in funding.

The innovative initiative was launched as part of Lidl's new campaign, Level the Playing Field, that called on communities to get behind their local club by scanning their Lidl Plus app to receive a digital stamp on their stamp card.

Once six stamps were collected, users could submit their completed stamp card via the app and their stamps were then added to their chosen club's total.

Each club that achieved a minimum of 50 completed digital stamp cards was guaranteed a reward.

Commenting on the initiative Olivia Flannery, chairperson of St John's LGFA club said; "Words can't express how much this funding will mean to our club. The LGFA section of St John's is still

quite young and this will have a huge impact on the development of all of our players from the nursery up to the u16s who will hopefully go on to represent the club at adult level in the near future. "Huge thanks to all club members and the local community who got behind us and to all the brilliant staff in Lidl Cranmore Road who have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic."

Pawel Siewruk, Store Manager of local store, Lidl Cranmore Road said: "We are delighted to award St. John's with €20,000 in funding. It's been incredible to see the community really get behind the club to raise some much-needed funds at grassroots level, and in doing so raising awareness for women in sport as well as helping to encourage young girls to get involved in sport from a very early age."



After a stellar career with Sligo, Ewing hangs up his boots

The Sligo Champion

SLIGO stalwart Neil Ewing has announced his retirement from inter-county football.

The Drumcliffe/Roses Point man said in a statement on his Twitter account that he had made the decision to retire.

After a phenomenal career in the black and white jersey that spanned 13 years, former captain Ewing has featured in many numerous battles for his county.

Describing playing for Sligo as a 'childhood dream', Ewing also thanked his teammates and his family for their unwavering support over the years and for the sacrifices they have made.

The 33 year old said: "Dodged injury for a long time but luck couldn't last forever.

"At the minute the body is not willing to do what the head is telling it. It was a childhood dream to pull on the Sligo jersey. An honour to have enjoyed the opportunity to do so.

"From 2008 it has been a privilege beyond words to get to play alongside some who were heroes growing up, some who will be future stars and some whose monumental, unseen, commitment to train/travel/prepare didn't get them a regular run in a 1-15 jersey.

"Hugely disappointing not to have a Connacht Championship medal. Will forever regret a free I gave away 2010. Did everything I could, in my limited capabilities, to make up for that moment.

"In the absence of achieving ambitions I have to take solace in the great experiences shared, friends made and support received along the way.

"Sligo can compete. With the right structures in place at every stepping stone. Looking forward to watching the current group do everything in their power to make sure that happens and the kids, players, supporters and older people across our great county get to enjoy plenty of great days out together.

"Thanks to Siobhan for the career, travel and social sacrifices she has made to facilitate chasing my dream. Thanks to my mum for being the best possible example of self-sacrifice for the good of others.

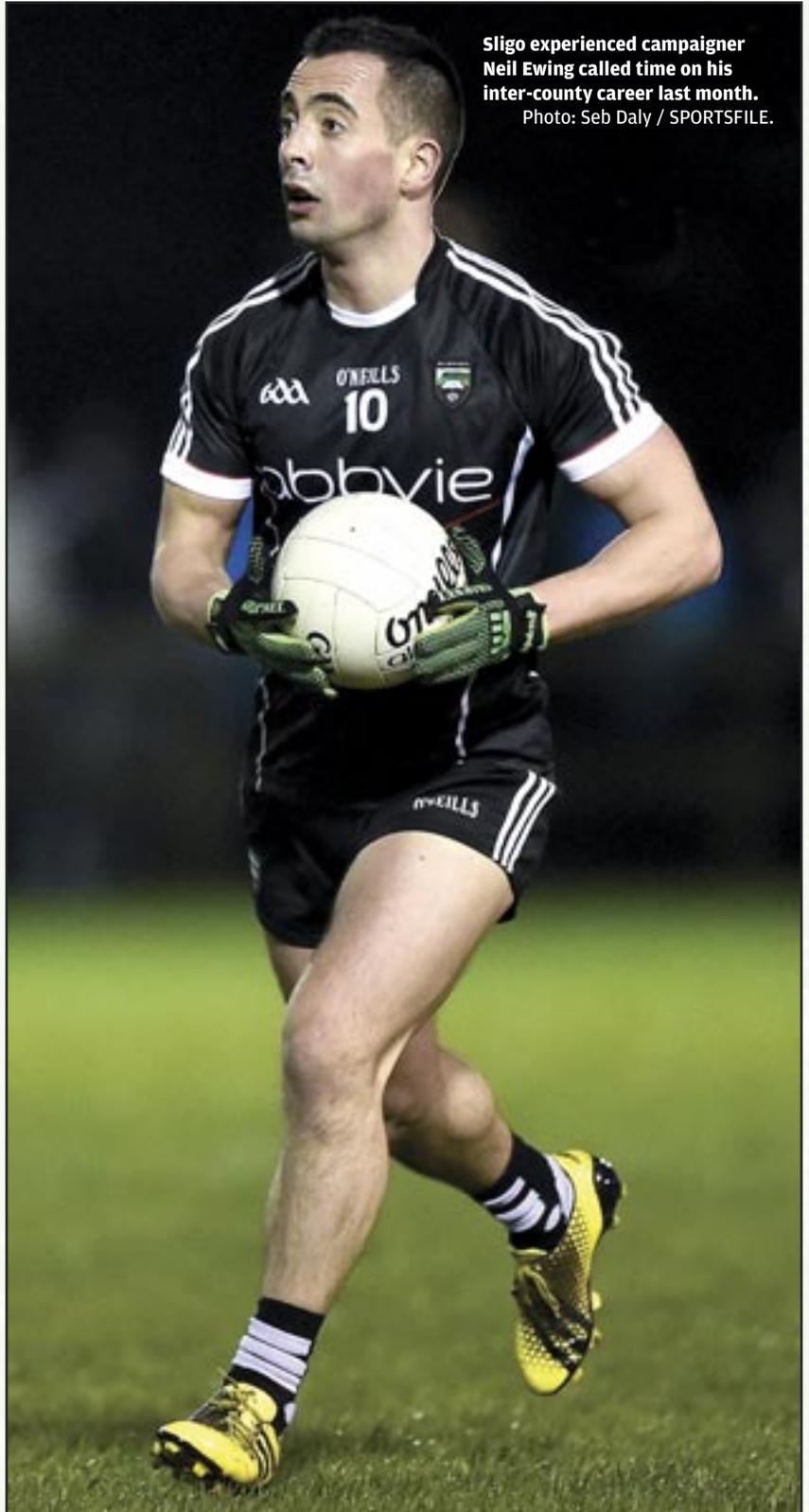
"Thanks to all the Gaels at Rathcormac NS, Summerhill College and NUIG for fostering a love of the game.

"Particular thanks to the people, past and present at Drumcliffe/Rosses Point.

"Peace be the journey!"

After Ewing's announcement that he is to retire, there was a huge outpouring of thanks and well wishes from Sligo and further afield thanking the Drumcliffe/Rosses Point man for his commitment and effort during his time with Sligo.

Sligo experienced campaigner Neil Ewing called time on his inter-county career last month.
Photo: Seb Daly / SPORTSFILE.



AbbVie are proud sponsors of the Sligo county teams

The Sligo Champion

SLIGO GAA unveiled its new 2021 jersey and kit at a photocall at AbbVie's Manorhamilton Road facility in Sligo.

The biopharmaceutical company, which employs more than 400 people across two manufacturing plants near Sligo town, commenced an initial three-year sponsorship deal in 2016 with Sligo GAA.

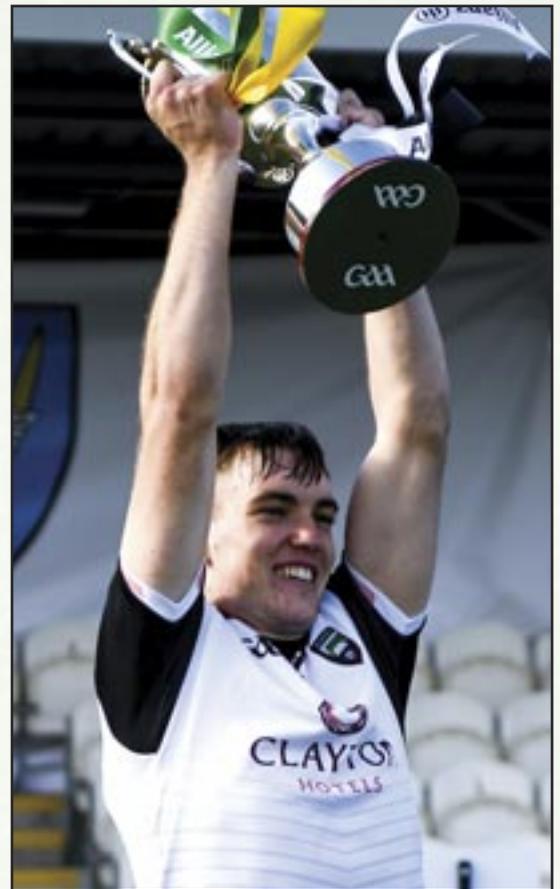
It saw the AbbVie logo appear on all Senior, U-20 and Junior football team jerseys, and this partnership was extended in 2019 until the end of the 2021 season.

AbbVie is also the sponsor of the Sligo LGFA senior ladies' football team.

AbbVie continues to be the only multinational pharmaceutical company in Ireland to sponsor an inter-county team, regardless of gender, underscoring the company's support of local communities and sports organisations.



Peter Laffey of Sligo in action against Louth during the National Football League. Photo: Seb Daly / SPORTSFILE.



Niall Feehily will captain the Sligo senior hurlers this year. The Naomh Eoin clubman will be joined by Easkey's Finnian Cawley as vice-captain.

Photo: Harry Murphy / SPORTSFILE.



Sligo GAA are delighted to announce their continuing partnership with Connolly Motor Group for 2021. Connolly Motor Group are a family-run company operating from state-of-the art showrooms in Sligo and also at Ballina, Letterkenny and Galway. They are a major employer in Sligo, contributing significantly to the local economy and have supported Sligo GAA for over ten years. Sligo GAA are delighted with the continued sponsorship of the Sligo team kit-van for the year ahead. Pictured from (L to R) are John McPartland (Sligo GAA), Stephen Kearns (VW Commercial Manager), Pdraig Clancy (Sligo GAA Kit man), Bernardine McGauran (Sligo GAA Secretary), Cormac Kearns (Sligo GAA Treasurer). Photo: Sligo GAA.



Tributes pour in for Leitrim legend

By **JOHN McGRATH**

EX-LEITRIM Footballer and Leitrim Supporters Club Dublin branch official Eamonn Duignan was one of many to pay tribute to the late great Cathal Flynn, after he passed away in June.

Flynn topped the national league scoring charts for ten successive years and went on to lose Connacht finals in 1957, '58, '59, '60 and '63,

Before that he was captain of Leitrim Minors way back in 1952 and won a Leinster Senior Colleges medal with Franciscan College, Multyfarnham when they beat St Mel's in the final, on a day he scored 1-7 out of 1-8.

Flynn also won two McKeever Cups in 1957 and 1958 and became a legendary figure for the Shannonsiders.

"Leitrim's glorious years were the 1950s and 1960s. It is very hard to appreciate how good the Leitrim



Former Leitrim star Cathal Flynn passed away in June.

teams were in the 50s and 60s, and how much the teams lifted the spirits of the Leitrim people at that time,"

said Duignan.

"In team sports the forwards who get the scores always make the news and Cathal certainly made the headlines."

But perhaps Flynn was best well-known for his combination with Packie McGarty. He and McGarty scored 1-7 out of 1-11 when Connacht beat Leinster in Ballinasloe in the 1958 Railway Cup semi-final.

And what made his death even more poignant was that it happened only a few months after his former Leitrim teammate and footballing twin's passing.

"McGarty drew the fouls and Flynn converted," an obituary said on the Leitrim GAA website.

"They were to Leitrim what Purcell and Stockwell were to Galway. Cathal was deeply upset when his 'footballing twin' died and spoke of him every day since his passing.

"Packie always said there was no better corner forward in the game than Cathal Flynn."

Former Leitrim stars help Fulham Irish to London SFC double

Leitrim Observer

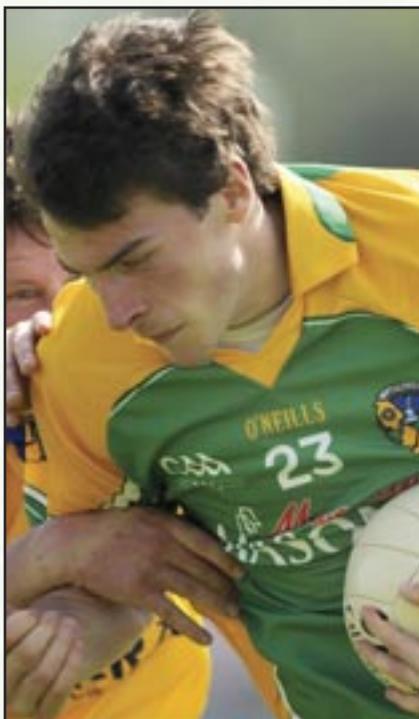
TARA may be the London GAA club most closely associated with Leitrim but for two former Leitrim players, the London SFC final proved a red-letter day for Fulham Irish.

Fulham Irish won the delayed 2020 London GAA senior football championship at McGovern Park, Ruislip, beating Tir Chonaill Gaels 2-17 to 0-16, to give Fulham their third senior London title, and their first since 2017.

Former Leitrim star David O'Connor from Bornacoola started in midfield for Fulham and to add the icing to Fulham's cake, their reserve team, captained by former Leitrim inter-county player Declan Gilhooley of Allen Gaels, beat North London Shamrocks 1-15 to 1-5 in the 2020 reserve championship final.

David O'Connor in action for Leitrim against Roscommon at Carrick-on-Shannon.

Photo: David Maher / SPORTSFILE.



Corrib Oil partners with Leitrim GAA

Leitrim GAA

LEITRIM GAA is delighted to announce that Corrib Oil will be partnering with them during the summer months as they have come on board to sponsor the 2021 Leitrim Junior Football championships.

The company has service stations and oil offices in both Carrick on Shannon and Ballinamore and is delighted to be supporting local jobs and business within county Leitrim.

Corrib Oil would like to wish Leitrim GAA the best of luck with the organisation of the forthcoming championships and look forward to a mutually beneficial partnership.

At this juncture, Leitrim GAA wish to thank outgoing sponsors VistaMed Limited for their generosity towards them for the duration of their association with their most recent championships in 2019 and 2020, which will conclude in July with the playing of the of finals of the 2020 VistaMed Junior A and B Championships.



New name for Avant Money Pairc Seán Mac Diarmada as Leitrim GAA extends sponsorship of County ground



The Leitrim GAA grounds at Carrick-on-Shannon have been renamed Avant Money Pairc Seán Mac Diarmada. Photo: Ramsey Cardy / SPORTSFILE.

Leitrim Observer

LEITRIM GAA got a huge boost with the news of a new name for Avant Money Páirc Seán Mac Diarmada as local lender, Avant Money, has announced that it is extending its sponsorship of the Leitrim county grounds.

Carrick-on-Shannon based consumer finance provider Avant Money is delighted to announce a three-year extension to its primary sponsor agreement with Leitrim GAA from 2022.

It is a timely and welcome boost for Leitrim GAA to secure a valuable extension with Avant Money. The company has been a key partner for Leitrim GAA, becoming the official sponsor of the county grounds in 2018 under its previous trading name, Avantcard.

The company has recently rebranded to Avant Money following its successful launch as Ireland's newest mortgage provider.

The new agreement will see the county grounds renamed Avant Money Páirc Seán MacDiarmada until the end of 2024. Exter-

nal signage in the páirc has been updated to reflect the new Avant Money branding, with work on the internal signage underway in readiness for the new season ahead.

Speaking to the Leitrim Observer, Chris Paul, Avant Money CEO, said "Avant Money is absolutely delighted to be partnering with Leitrim GAA for a further three years. It has been a challenging year for us all, including sports organisations who provide valuable outlets for people of all ages to come together in the shared support of their favourite teams.

"Now, more than ever, we feel it is important to show our support for the people and projects in the region, and we are proud to be in a position where we can continue to do this. Along with Leitrim GAA, we have also extended our partnership with nearby Sligo Rovers FC and continue to support local charities such as North West Hospice.

"One of our five core company values is 'Caring', caring for our colleagues, our customers and our community. Last year, the company and its staff supported over 30 local charities and organisations, with total donations and fundraising in excess of €30,000."

Enda Stenson, Leitrim GAA Chairman, said "We are delighted that Avant Money is continuing to invest in the region and extending its partnership with us for the next three years. The last twelve months have been a challenge for everyone, and now, more than ever, we are grateful for their support. We are looking forward to players from every age and club around the county getting back on the pitch this summer and to opening the gates of the county grounds once again."

Avant Money is Ireland's newest mortgage provider and leading provider of personal loans and credit cards. The company is headquartered in Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim, with a second office in Dublin, employing over 250 staff. Avantcard DAC, trading as Avant Money, is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.

Sport plays a key role in the company's culture and values. Avant Money currently sponsors Leitrim GAA's county grounds, Páirc Seán MacDiarmada, Sligo Rovers FC and was the first financial services company in Ireland to be accredited with the Ibec KeepWell mark in 2018, along with being the first company to be reaccredited with the award during a challenging 2020.



Ladies game set to m



By DECLAN ROONEY

STARTING into her 12th season representing Leitrim ladies footballers, Sinéad Tighe can feel the winds of change blowing through the sport.

Last month's announcement that all branches of Gaelic Games will receive an equal cut of Government funding was the culmination of years of hard work for Ladies Football, and the Kiltubrid defender feels it is a vote of confidence in women's sport in general.

After five months away from her teammates, Tighe (31) was back on the park in May but last month she admits there was an extra spring in her step.

"Ah it's absolutely fantastic. It is really welcome news and I think it will make an incredible difference to the game. It mightn't necessarily be this year, but in years to come you are really going to see the game evolve to the next level," said Tighe, a third-class teacher at St John's

NS in Ballisodare, Co. Sligo.

"The last couple of years, we have had grant funding and even the difference that has made has been incredible. We have had more access to things like nutrition, recovery and psychology. If supports like that can be incorporated into the budget for the year, giving girls access to that can only improve this game.

"We have a lot of girls based away from home, in college or working away. When you are playing inter-county football, you really shouldn't be out of pocket.

"We couldn't believe it there for a minute, it is just absolutely brilliant news. The WGPA have done incredible work behind the scenes over the last few years, campaigning on our behalf. We are really excited to see what this can add and what improvements it can make to the game."

The Tighe name has been synonymous with Leitrim Ladies football for years, and since her debut in 2009, Sinéad has been a dedicated and elite

performer. Her younger sister Áine excelled at the other end of the field, and is currently nursing her way back from a second knee injury in the space of a year while training with AFLW side Fremantle, while Niamh also represented the county in the last decade.

As someone who has worked her way back from two long-term knee injuries, Sinéad understands what Áine is going through, but she is looking forward to the day they line out together again for club or county.

"It has been a tough couple of months for Áine. She has been through the mill injury-wise. She is still taking it week by week. She is still based out in Australia and is just working away on it. The club have been really supportive of her.

"Her rehab probably went a bit slower than she expected, but she'll see where she is at in the next couple of weeks and she'll be able to make a decision then. She is fully focused on making a full recovery.

"I've been through two cruciates so far so I am praying to God I'll get another



ove to the next level



CHARGE: Leitrim centre-back Sinéad Tighe breaks out of defence during a Lidl National Football League Division 4 clash with Derry in 2019.

Photo: Eunan Sweeney Photography.

couple of years out of this. I did the first one in 2014 and I did the second one in 2017.

“I suppose it’s something that you are just so grateful for, being fit and being injury-free. Every time you come off the field or finish a session, it’s great. It’s a hard old journey back. You learn a lot about yourself along the way.

“You just have to get on with it, get through it, just like what Áine is going through at the moment. When you do get back and get out the other side, you are just so grateful for every opportunity. I am delighted at 31 that I am still involved and still playing.”

After a difficult couple of years for the county, Leitrim steadied the ship in 2020 under the management of Hughie Donnelly. Three wins from their four Lidl Division 4 games set them up for a shot at promotion before the competition was shelved, while they registered two strong performances in the TG4 All-Ireland Intermediate Championship against Down and eventual champions Meath.

Away from the game, Tighe says she

is looking forward to featuring in some more big club and county action – as a bagpipe player in the Kiltubrid Pipe Band.

“I started playing the pipes when I was 13 or 14. The band has been a huge part of the tradition of our parish over the years and is over 70 years on the go. It’s enjoyable, it’s not a huge commitment and it doesn’t clash with my football most of the time.

“I don’t know how I ended up getting roped in. I was the first of us, but my two other sisters [Áine and Niamh] played as well, but they went into early retirement. I’m the last one standing.

“We play at the county final every year at Páirc Sean MacDiarmada. We do the Sligo county final sometimes too and the Connacht championship matches any time they are in Páirc Sean.

“I’ll always remember back in 2005, the Kiltubrid lads won the Leitrim Senior Championship and we played that day, that was really special for us. It’s one of the highlights.”

After a dozen years wearing the green

and gold, Tighe still has plenty of ambitions, and she thinks their recent progress ensures the next generation of players have a great chance to succeed in the shirt.

“When you see those younger girls coming in for their first or second year, they are coming in to a really, really good set-up and team. I think that’s a huge positive, that their first experience is a good one.

“You are trying to create that standard and improve all the time, to put those really strong foundations in place so we can continue to bring in new girls year after year and continue to build.”

She continued: “We’re only a week away from games now and we are really looking forward to it. It’s exactly what we wanted. We had a great game against Louth last year and they are one of the top sides in this division. That’s what everything is geared towards at the moment and we can’t wait to get into it.

“It is always a huge honour and privilege any time I play for Leitrim. Please God I’ll get another while out of it.”



Glaveys Rounders are champions



Michael Glavey's are crowned the first ever intermedite Mixed All-Ireland Rounders Champions.

Photo: GAA Rounders.

MICHAEL Glaveys became the first club to be crowned intermediate mixed rounders champions after victory over Na Fianna at the GAA's National Games Development Centre in Abbotstown.

Having topped their group last autumn, the 17-strong panel had been waiting patiently since last October to get the green light to resume training ahead of the 2020 decider against their Dublin opponents.

"It's a social thing. We have great craic in each other's company. It's more like the vibe you'd get from something like tag rugby.

"The majority of us would have played other sports when we were younger. Now this is something that keeps us fit, gives us some competitive action and gives us the chance to win something," explained team member and PRO John Nolan.

Captained by Linda Rogan and coached by Australian native Dylan Trindle, who is also part of the panel, All-Ireland glory represented another feather in the cap of an ambitious club that has been progressing steadily since a ladies' team was formed in 2016. Having gone on to taste national glory in 2018, the ladies' team are now a solid senior outfit.

When subsequent interest spawned about the possibility of setting up a men's team, the only hindrance was numbers. As a result, a mixed side of both men and women were formed in 2019 and they went on to win the All-Ireland junior title later that year, getting the better of Ballinagore from Westmeath in the final at Tymon Park, Dublin.

However, the club hopes to enter a men's team for the first time when the 2021 season gets underway in a few weeks' time, meaning that the club will

have three teams on the national rounders circuit.

Victories against Sean Connollys, Longford (38-8), Ballinagore (17-8) and Saturday's opponents Na Fianna (30-28) with an innings to spare, alongside an 11-11 draw with Kevin's from Dublin saw Michael Glavey's top their group. Their All-Ireland semi-final against Fianna from Carlow resulted in a 40-16 triumph, a game that was played in wet conditions at Clonguish, County Longford, on the first weekend of last October.

GAA Rounders is one of the four official GAA sports included in the original GAA charter back in 1884 along with Gaelic football, hurling and handball.

The rules are similar to baseball, except that we used an underarm pitch and a sliothar as the ball. There are no big gloves like you'd see in baseball. We just use our hands," explained John.

According to the GAA Rounders website, it is generally accepted that baseball is derived from rounders in some form or other, as it has been played on the island for a couple of hundred years and was probably brought over to America by the early settlers.

Ironically, the rounders gospel has been spread in Carrick NS, Ballinlough, since the early eighties and many of the players on the current Glaveys panel would have been introduced to the game there by Peggy Cheevers and Gerry Markham.

"When a couple of ladies came up with the idea of forming a rounders team, a lot of them had played it in primary school. I suppose it was a case of rekindling that interest," highlighted John.

Glaveys is the only club in Roscommon with a rounders team competing on the national circuit, although there were clubs

in St. Croan's and Roscommon Gaels when the West Roscommon club's ladies' team were up and running five years ago.

In Connacht, Breaffy in Mayo are the big hitters and will contest next weekend's senior ladies' final. There are a couple of other clubs dotted across the province, like Athenry in Galway and Easkey in Sligo.

"It can be difficult to get challenge games as you end up going outside your own county and province. You find that you end up playing the same teams quite regularly. There are a number of clubs on the Longford/Cavan border, down in Wexford and in Dublin, which obviously has a big population centre that gives people a choice to take up the game," pointed out John.

While the current panel currently have their eyes fixed on All-Ireland silverware, John points out that there's an interest in passing down the baton to their children to ensure that the game is kept alive by future Michael Glaveys generations.

"While Dylan is our coach at the moment, he'll have to oversee three teams when the 2021 season gets underway. There are a few of us in the current squad that would like to get involved in coaching down the line but, for the moment, the focus is on Saturday. It would be great to bring another All-Ireland title home to Michael Glaveys," he concluded.

As the club's former great Dermot Earley might say, that would only be "mighty".

Panel: Linda Rogan (captain), Dylan Trindle (player/coach), Anna Marie Trindle, John Nolan, Anna Gallagher, Eamonn Carty, Sharon Carty, Gretta Davis, Craig Davis, John Fitzpatrick, Amiee Goulding, Anthony Leach, John James, Fiona Raftery, Seán Bailey, Breda Bailey, Aine Healy.



Mullaney fighting back

By IAN COONEY
Roscommon Herald

ROACHELLE Mullaney didn't feel right. She sat at her desk at work with a hot water bottle for company last November, trying to numb the pain in her side. A few months later, as the pain worsened, she bit the bullet and made an appointment with her GP in mid-January. On February 15th, she received the news that turned her world upside down — she had been diagnosed with Stage 3 Cervical Cancer.

Between March 18th and May 7th, she underwent 35 sessions of radiotherapy and six rounds of chemotherapy at University Hospital Galway. There have been good and bad days, but her positivity and determination haven't wavered.

Now, she must play the waiting game. She admits that her body has been turned upside down by the treatment. In less than three months' time, she's hopeful of being given the all-clear. By the end of the year, she wants to have played for Roscommon and her club Kilbride. It's the biggest challenge of her life but it's one that Rochelle, who turns 28 in September, is intent on overcoming.

"People wonder how this could have happened to me because I'm fit and healthy. But it can literally happen to anyone. Maybe there's a perception out there that cervical cancer is associated with older women but, obviously, that's not my experience.

"My mother would have always said to me about my health being my wealth and, to be honest, that would have passed over me. But I realise now that there is nothing truer. I would have taken life, and football, for granted. You have your county and club football. You have a good job, and then, all of a sudden, it is taken away from you," she outlined.

The end prognosis was difficult to determine. Antibiotics didn't clear up what was originally thought to be a kidney infection. Rochelle needed more clarity, and a subsequent scan revealed the unthinkable news.

"I couldn't believe what I was hearing. It took a while to process. They didn't know if the cancer was really aggressive or whether it could have been there for the last month or so. If I had gone a couple of weeks earlier to the doctor, who knows if it would have been picked up," she wondered.

Life had been good to Rochelle. She captained her club Kilbride — the aristocrats of the senior club championship in the county — in 2019 on their way to completing five-in-a-row last year. Under Michael Finneran, she had represented Roscommon with distinction in 2018 and 2019 as the county stitched successive provincial

championships together.

She took a break from the intercounty scene last season but the call from new manager Diane O'Hora wasn't long in coming following a string of impressive performances for Kilbride during last year's historic campaign.

"At the end of October, Diane rang me and asked me to consider playing this year. She explained her plan and told me that she would like me to be involved. She had been to our county final last year and she was impressed with what she saw.

"I jumped at the chance, as you would with a new manager. There was a bit of a buzz about it. She gave out a plan at the end of November/early December for people to be working on. We were meant to be sending in stuff through Zoom. But I ended up texting Diane to tell her that I didn't really know what was wrong with me.

"In my own head, I was thinking that I wasn't really making a great first impression. But as soon as I mentioned anything that was possibly health related, Diane was so understanding and told me that there was plenty of time for football," she recalled.

On February 15th, when Rochelle received the news that she could scarcely comprehend, the Roscommon panel had arranged a get-together on Zoom. It was a meeting that, understandably, Rochelle opted to miss.

"Diane was texting a few days later wondering why I wasn't on. I hadn't told many people at that stage as I was processing the whole thing myself. But I needed to tell her, and, when I did, she was so good. I have been in contact with her nearly every week since. She wanted me involved from the get-go, even if it wasn't in a playing capacity. It meant a lot.

"While I was going through the treatment, going to training and meeting everyone was something to look forward to. I knew all the girls anyway, and they were delighted to see me. Nothing beats that camaraderie. It refocused my mind and made me more determined to be playing with the team in some capacity by the end of the season," she explained.

The treatment was relentless, however — almost daily journeys to Galway that Rochelle admits she struggled with at the beginning.

"You don't know what to expect. Nothing can really prepare you for what's going to happen. The first round of chemotherapy was extremely hard — it's something going into your body and your body is trying to react to it. I felt quite sick the first week, having already done a week of radiotherapy.

"I would get radiotherapy and chemotherapy every Friday. I remember thinking after the first one (chemotherapy) that I won't be able to do this, but my medi-

cation was adapted. Thankfully, I was fairly okay for the rest of it. There were a couple of really tough days as the radiotherapy made me quite tired," she revealed.

Now, all Rochelle can do it wait and hope that the news is positive down the road. But her reasoning for making a private story very public is very simple. Women, irrespective of their age, have nothing to lose and everything to gain by getting a smear test.

"It's a big deal for women," she acknowledged.

"When I turned 25, I remember getting the letter and thinking that I must do that one of the days. And here I am in the position I find myself in nearly three years later. It shows the importance of getting the test, even though it's a very private thing.

"Since all my friends and family have found out, even people around Roscommon that don't know me, I've heard so many stories about people that rang their doctor the next day. Some of my closest friends had never gone for one. If my story persuades someone to go for a test, then it will be worth it," she highlighted.

With Roscommon's Division Three League campaign now up and running, Rochelle's craving to be involved in the thick of the action has been soothed by the aspiration to make tentative steps in the coming weeks towards returning to action later in the year.

"I was at training the week before the Fermanagh game in Kiltoom and I was collecting the balls afterwards. I was itching to be involved and it killed me to watch the girls preparing for the game in the knowledge that I hadn't put myself in contention for a place on the team.

"But my outlook now is that county football will always be there. I'm just happy to be involved in any capacity at the moment. The club season with Kilbride is coming down the tracks, so the aim is to get back running, and to try to build my body back up again. The comeback will be greater than the setback," she promised.

On and off the field, Rochelle is an inspirational role model for young girls around Kilbride and beyond. Her story will strike a chord with many women, and may even save a life.

"You just don't know what's around the corner. I have always been a very positive person, but this has given me more reasons to be positive. Even the nurses used to comment on how I'd be flying into the hospital in great form.

"I'm young and I have a lot going for me, so you just take it in your stride. You don't have a choice. You either pull the duvet over your head or you just get on with it," she concluded.

By choosing the latter and telling her story, Rochelle Mullaney has become the ultimate team player.



Roscommon's Ó Muirí appointed Chair of Coiste Náisiúnta Scór

By **JAMIE Ó TUAMA**
GAA.ie

It was confirmed that Roscommon man, Tomás Ó Muirí, has been appointed by Uachtarán Chumann Lúthchleas Gael, Labhrás Mac Cárthaigh, as Chair of the next Coiste Náisiúnta Scór 1921-1924. He also confirmed the other committee members which included an overseas representative for the first time, in Jane McCarter O'Dowd.

Ó Muirí who has been involved in Scór for much of his life chatted to GAA.ie and explains how he was honoured to have been asked by Uachtarán Chumann Lúthchleas Gael, Labhrás Mac Cárthaigh, to fill the role.

"It is a fantastic honour to be the newly appointed Cathaoirleach of Coiste Náisiúnta Scór," says Ó Muirí. "An honour not just for me personally but also for my family, local club St Dominic's, Roscommon and indeed Connacht.

"Since my late teens I have been involved in Scór administration at all levels of the Association. My new appointment to lead Scór at national level is one I do not take lightly and I dedicate it to the various people who influenced me since I began.

"Today I remember all these stalwarts. Those locally Eileen Fallon and Donald Feeley at St. Dominic's level and indeed Phonsie Tully at Roscommon county level who christened Scór and formed part of the first Coiste Náisiúnta.

"I also remember some of those who went to their eternal rewards at local level the likes of Mary O'Connor and Éamon Beatty and indeed Pat Dennehy who gave their lives locally to the promotion of our culture.

"As I look across the province of course I follow the footsteps of great Gaels such as Seosamh Mac Donncha as contae na Gaillimhe. He did so



Tomás Ó Muirí speaking at All-Ireland Scór Sinsir Championship Finals in 2015.

Photo: Piaras O Midheach / SPORTSFILE.

much to the promotion of our culture and our language."

The past year has been an incredibly difficult year for all involved in Scór and in the GAA due to the pandemic. Last March when Covid struck most provinces were preparing for their provincial finals and looking forward to the All-Ireland finals in the INEC the following April. Tomás shares his thoughts on the difficulties of the last year and how Scór administrators rose to the challenge of keeping activity alive albeit in a new digital way.

"The past year has been incredibly difficult for everyone and unfortunately, we bid a sad farewell to many great Gaels along the way. Just days before the commencement of the provincial finals in 2020 Covid-19 darkened all our doors and remains with us.

"While official competitions came to a sudden halt, alternatives were quickly put in place to keep our cultural activities to the fore. Virtual Scór, the brainchild of Aodán Ó Braonáin, iar-

Chathaoirleach Choiste Náisiúnta Scór, provided a much needed, non-evasive platform to keep both young and old engaged.

"We also had a number of intercounty and interprovincial performances and it would be remiss of me not to mention the great work of Gareth McCreevey who produced many of these fantastic videos to such a high standard that we can all hold and treasure for many years to come.

"There were many more plans to further develop Scór which unfortunately fell victim to the pandemic. It is my goal to now make these a reality along with a number of additional targets."

Ó Muirí has been charged with the task of leading Scór for the next three years and there is no doubting that he is looking forward to progressing the role of Scór in the GAA and leaving it in a better place come the end of his term.

"It is my strong opinion that Scór play a pivotal role in the

Association. It is the one element that differentiates us from all other sporting bodies - the commitment to the promotion of our language and our culture.

"The opening chapter of An Treoir Oifigiúil outlines 4 broad aims of the Association. The first aim is immediately met through Scór - to actively support the Irish language and culture. These four aims must now be further developed as part of the overall GAA strategic plan from Autumn 2021 to 2026.

"In recent times the GAA has adopted the manifesto 'Tá Áit Dúinn Uilig Ann'. In Cumann Lúthchleas Gael there is a place for everyone and for many this may solely be Scór."

St. Dominic's and Roscommon man, Ó Muirí, is raring to go and is very much looking forward to working with his fellow committee members. He also recognises the significant inclusions on the committee of young Tipperary man Marcus Ó Duinn as well as New York representative, Jane McCarter O'Dowd among others.

"I really look forward to getting straight down to business next week with Coiste Náisiúnta Scór. Each member of An Coiste bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise so there will be no honeymoon period required!

"Two new exciting dimensions to the Coiste will be a representative from overseas to broaden our wings and further develop Scór in places like New York and indeed other units across the world.

"The Uachtarán has also appointed a young man from Tipperary, Marcas Ó Duinn, to help us further develop the views of our younger members compiled at last year's youth forum at Páirc an Chrócaigh.

"The overseas representation and the voice of youth will blend in with the more experienced members to create a more informed Coiste in how best to lead Scór in 2021 and beyond."



Jason Kilkenny profile

By ANNE CONNAUGHTON
Roscommon GAA

Name: **Jason Kilkenny**

Club: **Kiltormer**

Primary School: **St Patrick's NS, Kiltormer**

Secondary School: **Portumna Community School**

Height: **6' 1"** Weight: **100kg**

Profession: **Secondary Teacher Construction and DCG in Holy Rosary Mount-bellew**

How did you get started in playing hurling?

Playing since age of 6 and played for Kiltormer NS in Cumann na mBunscol. Played with Portumna CC. I reached the Connaught Colleges finals but unfortunately never actually won that coveted medal.

What is your earliest memory of playing hurling?

Playing out in the front garden with my Dad Ollie and my older brother Keith when I was about 5 or 6. Keith played hurling for Roscommon as well. I was on the under 14, Under 16 and Under 21 Galway hurling panels. Keith was the captain of the Under 21 Galway hurlers.

Who is the toughest opponent at training?

Naos Connaughton. One tough bucko to mark

How long are you playing hurling for Roscommon?

This is my 6th year playing. I didn't 2 years ago. That was the year I built my house and got married but I've played and have been on the panel for all the other years. I got injured in an accident in school last in school. I hurled for the League but couldn't play in the Christy Ring as I had the accident. I lost the top of my finger but I stayed involved with the panel taking the stats during the training and games.

What is your favourite position to play in hurling?

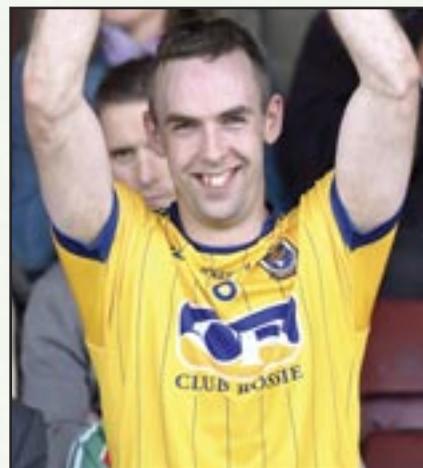
Wing back

Why did you choose to play for Roscommon?

My Mam is from Padraig Pearses, Ard na Glug, Roscommon. My Uncle Tommy lives right beside Pearses pitch. At the time Justin Campbell approached me. He's a fellow Kiltormer man and I was delighted to have the opportunity. My brother Keith came along as well. It was a great year for us.

What is your most memorable moment in the Rossie jersey?

Winning the Nicky Rackard Cup in 2014. I will never forget the excitement when Micheal Kelly scored that penalty in Croke Park. You just couldn't write it. We were really proud to wear the Rossie jersey. That is my first All Ireland medal and I will always treasure it.



Jason Kilkenny celebrates at the end of the Christy Ring Cup promotion/relegation play-off against Mayo in 2015.

Photo: David Maher / SPORTSFILE.

What are your hopes for 2021 as you lead the Rossies into the hurling season?

The goal would be to win the league and the Christy Ring. At the moment there is a great positive atmosphere in training. Everyone is giving great commitment. We have a lot of new young enthusiastic players on board this year so please God all will go well for us. It's very difficult to be able to rate ourselves until we go out on match day as we couldn't play any challenge games due to Covid restrictions. All we can do at the moment is to take it game by game. But our aim is to do well. And hopefully our panel or management won't be affected by Covid.



The new Roscommon Irish Cultural and Scór Committee are working to promote the Irish Language in and around Dr Hyde Park. New signs as Gaelige are now around the grounds to begin the promotion. The Committee will also be working on a few other projects throughout the summer.

Photo: Connacht GAA.



Relishing the prospect of brighter days

By IAN COONEY
Roscommon Herald

WHEN Rachel Dolan took a phonecall from Frank Browne earlier this year, she knew instantly that the fortunes of Roscommon camogie were about to be transformed. Too many seasons consumed by regrets about what might have been would soon be replaced by a more positive camp where, crucially, the best players in the county were available.

For the St. Dominic's player, who qualified as a psychiatric nurse last September, she immediately embraced Browne's vision. Her instinct told her that things would finally be different.

Three games into an unbeaten league campaign where Mayo, Louth and Kildare have been professionally swatted aside, vibrancy courses through the panel. There's still some work to be done, starting with Tyrone in a league semi-final this evening (Saturday), but Roscommon's proud camogie tradition appears to be getting back up on its feet once more.

It's a far cry from the darkness of last November when new kids on the block Cavan embarrassed Roscommon in Athleague, strolling to a 13-point victory in the All-Ireland Premier Junior Championship semi-final. Having been part of a thriving underage set-up within the county alongside some heady days with the Convent of Mercy, a fertile landscape had turned very barren.

"Last year's result against Cavan in the All-Ireland semi-final hit us in the face. Something had to change," reflected Rachel.

Given the demands associated with psychiatric nursing, which often involves heading off to training after a 12-hour shift, to hear Dolan saying that "it's very easy to commit to it" is a reflection on the unity that Browne and his management team have created in a relatively short space of time.

"The tables have turned, definitely," declared the defender who has been a model of consistency in Roscommon's three games so far.

"There has always been a core group there of 12 to 15 girls. But there was never the panel that we have now. The interest and hunger that we have, it's great to be a

part of it.

"Frank (Browne) has brought a lot of that. When he came on board, he pretty much rang anyone that had played for the county. He wanted everyone on board. He has brought an interest and a professionalism; he has brought schedules. You can see it in all of us, we all want to be there. We all want to represent our county. I'm not sure that was there before. We definitely haven't felt as important as we do now," she explained.

Through her work as a psychiatric nurse at Roscommon University Hospital, Rachel derives immense satisfaction from helping people through their darkest hour. She would never equate a championship loss with some of the tragic stories she has come across. But there are some similarities. When the dust settles, life, and sport, are all about moving on.

"I always had an interest in nursing and working with people. It's a very interesting career. Every day is different, you're continuously learning. You never know what you're going to face going in through the doors. It keeps you on your toes.

"To see people getting well is so rewarding. You are seeing people at their darkest, and you're bringing them through the tunnel and seeing them coming out the other side of it.

"I've heard people saying that losing games are a tragedy, but I've seen real tragedies through work. It can be devastating when you lose a match, but you move on in the knowledge that you don't want to experience it again. It's all about that positive mindset. Defeat can be a kick in the shins, but you got to learn to build yourself back up again," she explained.

Alongside players like Rachel Fitzmaurice, Eala Ní Cumhaill, Rachel Fitzmaurice, Niamh Farrell, Leah Rowe, Shauna Fallon, Rachel was part of the Convent of Mercy squad that won an All-Ireland junior title in 2015 when they beat Presentation Waterford 5-9 to 1-5. A year later, the Convent were back in another final under manager Teresa Hession — an All-Ireland Senior C decider against St. Joseph's, Rochfortbridge — where they were beaten by 1-8 to 1-7, a result that "still haunts" that group of players according to Rachel.

There were big days with Roscommon too. A 2-6 to 0-4 victory against Armagh in 2015 procured the county's first All-Ireland minor title under the management of

"Then you'd come into the county set-up, and you only have the bare number of players. It's not that you knew you were going to make the team, but players would be turning up in dribs and drabs.

Shane Curley, Niamh Kilmartin and Meave Healy, a success Rachel describes as the "highlight" of her career.

Twelve months later, they were beaten by Down in the B final, a match Rachel was also involved in. She was overage for the defeat against Carlow in the 2017 decider, but the expectation was that Roscommon would kick on at adult level with such an influx of talent waiting to be unleashed.

"Coming through the school and at minor level with the county, we were used to getting to All-Ireland semi-finals and finals. Success appeared to be within reach all the time. So not to have won anything major at junior level since then has been a huge disappointment.

"I don't think it would be fair to say that we've never felt like intercounty players. But when you look at club camogie in the county, it's so competitive. There are great trainers involved with the different teams. Everyone is hungry and everyone is fighting for positions.

"Then you'd come into the county set-up, and you only have the bare number of players. It's not that you knew you were going to make the team, but players would be turning up in dribs and drabs. There was no real competition for positions because you only had a certain amount of players on the day.

"There are so many good camogie players in Roscommon. There are unbelievable players but some of them would never come to county training. If you were to go to any of the club games and watch the matches, you'd be wondering why Roscommon camogie isn't challenging for All-Ireland titles. Just because Roscommon weren't being successful, people didn't want to play," she explained.



Naturally, an element of doubt took root.

"Sometimes you'd be wondering in the back of your head why am I committing if no one else is committing? But I knew there had to be a turnaround at some stage.

"You think of people like Mary Fleming, she has been the backbone of Roscommon camogie. She has been there the last few years. She has seen the bad times but, hopefully, she'll now see the good ones. She has always encouraged us to stick with it. We do it for here, more than anything," continued Rachel.

Perhaps, Roscommon needed a stint in Division Four to rebuild confidence, but Dolan doesn't accept that playing in a lower division is leading them up the garden path for a spectacular fall from grace against the better teams in the championship later this year.

"Division Four camogie isn't a place for Roscommon camogie, but we are where we are. It's about bringing out the best in us, irrespective of what level we're at.

"Mayo was our first game, and we were still getting to know each other during the first half. We're well fit for whatever is coming down the line. If you compare us to last year's semi-final against Cavan, we're a different team now.

"There's just a different vibe around the group. There are other players looking for your jersey. You want to nail down that position and that makes you hungry. Training is just so competitive — it's a completely different mindset. Everyone is just ready to fight for a position on the team and, in hindsight, probably make up for lost time. Hopefully, we can encourage younger players coming up and give them a reason to be there, building that belief among them that we can get to a higher level.

"We're building something very special. We're definitely going to drive on. We should never be in the position we're in. Going back three or four years ago, we were playing the likes of Westmeath and Kerry. We should be alongside them, but we didn't have the commitment. We have that now, so it's onwards and upwards," she enthused.

Everything is in place for this team to prosper. Rachel highlights the work of "a great background team" that includes a nutritionist and a strength and conditioning coach. The camaraderie among the group continues to grow, aided by recovery sessions in the River Suck at Athleague. It's about tapping into the players' identity, making them feel like elite athletes and exploring that pride that comes from representing the county.

"Frank has talked about building a family and a safe place for everyone to come and play, and do what they love.

"Going forward, I see us winning league and championship titles in Croke Park. I don't see us being in Division Four anyway, that's for sure," she quipped.

Gaelic4Girls receives sponsorship boost

LGFA President Micheál Naughton welcomed the sponsorship from Glenveagh Homes as Gaelic4Girls received backing for years to come.

Roscommon Ladies football Jennifer Higgins was joined by Armagh's Aimee Mackin for the announcement.

Higgins is a long-serving Roscommon player, who recently made her 100th appearance for the county against Offaly during the 2020 Championship.

Higgins and Mackin are both current Gaelic4Girls ambassadors while Mackin's path to the very top of the sport began with her club Shane O'Neills, with the Gaelic4Girls programme as part of the club's start-up.

"We are delighted to welcome on board Glenveagh Homes as sponsors of our Gaelic4Girls programme," said President Micheál Naughton.

"There is a real synergy between the work that we do with the Gaelic4Girls programme, and the impact of Glenveagh Homes in local communities.

"For many young girls, the Gaelic4Girls programme is their first experience of Ladies Gaelic Football,

while Glenveagh Homes/Properties are also heavily invested in the future plans of people, building homes in areas where people want to live, and at more affordable prices."

This exciting new sponsorship will cover a three-year term between 2021 to 2023 with Glenveagh Homes coming on board to sponsor one of the LGFA's most important development programmes.

Gaelic4Girls is an eight-week programme incorporating coaching sessions with fun, non-competitive blitzes aimed at increasing participation in Ladies Gaelic Football.

The programme targets girls aged 8-12 years who are not currently registered with a Ladies Gaelic Football club.

"The Gaelic4Girls programme, just like the work of Glenveagh Homes/Properties, has left an indelible imprint in many local communities across the country," added President Naughton.

"We look forward to working with Glenveagh Homes over the next three years and it is great to welcome them into our family of sponsors."



Roscommon Ladies footballer Jennifer Higgins was in attendance at the announcement of Glenveagh Homes as the new sponsors of the LGFA's Gaelic4Girls programme.

Photo: Harry Murphy / SPORTSFILE.



Cillian O'Connor hobbles off the pitch during Mayo's win over Clare at Cusack Park in Ennis.
Photo: Brendan Moran / SPORTSFILE.

O'Connor sustains Achilles tendon injury

The Connaught Telegraph

MAYO'S prolific scorer Cillian O'Connor has sustained an Achilles tendon injury, it has been confirmed.

It's a major blow for the county ahead of the 2021 championship series.

A statement issued by Mayo County Board this afternoon explained: "Following last Sunday's NFL game versus Clare GAA, all injured players received further assessment with the Mayo medical team.

"Cillian O'Connor sustained an Achilles tendon injury that will require a procedure this week.

"We wish him well and look forward to seeing him on the playing field again as soon as possible."

It is unclear at this point how long he will be out of action but with a condensed season, it seems unlikely that O'Connor will see more inter-county action this year.

Mayo's championship campaign commences on Saturday, June 26 when they get the defence of their Connaught title under way against Sligo in Markievicz Park.

Mindspace teams up with Mayo GAA

MINDSPACE Project Manager Peadar Gardiner says talking about mental on a daily basis can help reduce the stigma associate with it.

Mindspace Mayo used this GAA season to encourage people to think about the small things they can do to support their mental health.

GAA players often make an extra effort to deliver the "one-percenters", those small acts not usually counted in the match statistics, but which can add up to influence a game's outcome. Similarly, "one-percenters" in life can make a big difference to a person's mental health and wellbeing.

"Talking About Mental Health is the game changer" said Gardiner.

"Mindspace Mayo has long recognised the power of sport to help change community attitudes.

"Like those one-percenters in the GAA, simply talking about mental health can make a difference. Making mental health a part of everyday conversations helps eliminate stigma and encourages support-seeking,

"Mindspace Mayo is delighted that our partnership with Mayo GAA helps us highlight the importance of talking

openly about mental health."

This year, Mindspace and Mayo GAA aim to encourage people to think about their mental health "one-percenters". These might include spending time with friends, staying active, getting enough sleep, staying hydrated and knowing the signs and symptoms of mental health issues

Mayo GAA chairperson Liam Moffatt believes the collaboration between Mayo GAA and Mindspace can have long-ranging benefits.

"Our partnership with Mindspace Mayo provides a terrific platform for people to talk openly with their teammates, coaches, friends or family members about their mental health and how they keep well," said Moffatt.

Liam Moffatt said that Mayo GAA was serious about supporting the mental health of its players and supporters.

"At Mayo GAA, we look after the mental and physical health of our players equally because one is just as important as the other," Mr Moffatt said. "We're excited to be working with Mindspace Mayo again and continuing the conversation about how talking about mental health reduces stigma around anxiety and low mood."



Mindspace and Mayo GAA partnership highlight importance of 'one-percenters.'



Ladies funding 'needs to be start of something'

By **EDWIN MCGREAL**
The Mayo News

HER home may be only 50 steps from the Roscommon border, but there isn't a more passionate Mayo woman on the planet than Lisa Cafferky.

Throw in the strong suspicion that she has Kilmovee tattooed on her heart and one begins to understand what drives the woman who earns a living as 'Sports Development Manager' in Trinity College.

She was back home in Kilmovee putting her renowned painting skills to good use in the family home, but she still found time to speak with The Mayo News about her beloved club, growing the support base of ladies football, and the government announcement of increased state funding for female inter-county squads.

In a groundbreaking move, the government declared state funding for female inter-county players will rise from €700,000 last season to €2.4 million in 2021. This is a hugely significant step according to Cafferky, a woman who has lived and played through some of the most dramatic changes in the history of Irish female sport since her senior debut with Mayo in 2007.

"The news was huge. Government funding has been in place since 2017 giving female inter-county teams €9,000 a year, but this is a different level entirely. "None of that money ever came to individual players. The €9,000 was put towards enhancing the team environment and we'd have worked with the county board and the management team to decide how it would be spent.

"It went on S&C and nutrition and that was a massive help to us, but at the same time there was a gaping discrepancy between male and female funding.

"Statistics tell us there was a difference of 77 percent which was hard to fathom. "Therefore, this week's announcement bringing parity to the situation is really significant," explained the dynamic attacker who along with inter-county colleague Eilis Ronayne, has been Mayo's representative on the GPA for the past few years.

Cafferky made her debut as a Mayo senior 14 seasons ago, spent six years in London and returned to the green and red fold two years ago.

She's driven by the pride of wearing the jersey and leaving the sport in a better place when she puts her boots on a nail in the shed.

"Personally, I found it very hard to understand how there was a difference between the funding going to a male compared to a female. Whether you're a



Mayo Ladies footballer Lisa Cafferky things the LGFA need to strike while the iron is hot.

Photo: Seb Daly / SPORTSFILE.

lad playing for Mayo or one of us, we're all in it for the same reason, to represent our people and do our very best for the jersey.

"I think we should all take pride in the fact that there's equity there now and we're leaving the jersey in a better place. This announcement goes some way towards recognising your effort is equal no matter whether you're male or female."

The increase in squad funding is welcomed by all involved but Cafferky says the battle for equality is far from over. The next challenge to be faced is traveling expenses, which are almost non-existent for female footballers.

"The GPA study last year showed that only 7 percent of female footballers got some sort of travel expenses. We don't get any travel expenses to play for Mayo.

"The LGFA are hoping to put a small percentage of this funding towards travel and even that would help greatly, especially the girls in college struggling find the money to get home to play for Mayo," the Kilmovee woman stated before leaving nobody in any doubt about the continuing battle towards a level playing pitch for the genders in GAA.

"The increased funding is great, but it's the start of something, rather than the end."

LISA CAFFERKY ON...

... KILMOVEE

I'm really passionate and proud to represent my home place. Last year during the pandemic, club football was rightly given centre stage and I was fortunate enough to be able to go back and play with Kilmovee. We won the county final and the joy that brought to the parish was unbelievable. That will live long in history as a special moment. Every coach

and manager I've had with Kilmovee over the years have given me the skills and the tools to represent the club in the Mayo jersey.

... MEDIA COVERAGE

It has improved dramatically during my playing career. Live games on TV are a regular occurrence now and some female footballers are widely recognisable. In truth, the LIDL sponsorship over the past few years has taken things to a different level entirely and that deal showed what can be achieved with a little creativity and investment.

Thankfully, from a media point of view we're also at a stage where journalists are critical of poor performances and it's not just 'they did their best.' We're well fit to take credit and criticism.

... SUPPORTING MAYO

I'm a passionate Mayo supporter. I support Mayo teams whether it's James Horan and the lads, the camogie, the Ladies team or all the various underage teams. Sometimes, I think people feel being a 'Mayo supporter' only applies to following the senior lads team. That doesn't wash with me at all. Being a Mayo supporter means supporting Mayo teams as a whole.

I support whatever Mayo team goes out and whoever is in the jersey. We're all one and I think the sooner that attitude becomes widespread the better.

... SUPPORTING THE LADIES

The following for Ladies football has been increasing steadily, but I honestly think people don't know what they're missing. Go to a Ladies match in your local pitch and see the excitement, the free-flowing, attacking nature of the sport and you'll love it.

Playing inter-county double-headers is a great way of attracting supporters. We played Dublin in MacHale Park before the lads game and there were thousands watching the second half. Some of them would never have seen a Ladies game before and suddenly realised what they were missing.

... MERGING THE LGFA AND GAA

I would like to see this occur. There are huge calls for it to happen. Of course, it would need to be carefully planned and implemented so that all the positive progress made in Ladies Football remains. With the GPA merged now it's just the next natural step forward.

Here in Kilmovee, there's a very close relationship between the men's committee and the Ladies committee and things have improved dramatically as regards access to pitches and the likes. We all represent the same jersey, the same parish and everyone contributes.



Conroy dreams of a full Croke Park on All-Ireland day

By DECLAN ROONEY

THE dream of playing an All-Ireland final in front of a packed Croke Park is inspiring Mayo's Tommy Conroy as he faces into his second season representing James Horan's side.

The 21-year old made his championship, Croke Park and All-Ireland final debut in 2020, but none of his close friends and family were there in person to see his achievements.

He says playing an All-Ireland final against Dublin at an empty Croke Park was a surreal but calming experience, and he is excited by the knowledge that the supporters he once stood among will soon be back on the sidelines.

"The whole season was different, I hadn't played in one before, but there was definitely something different about it," said The Neale clubman Conroy.

"I remember sitting on the bus to the All-Ireland final and thinking how different it would be if there was 100,000 people knocking around the streets and everyone looking at you. I thought 'this would be so much different if there were fans around'.

"I didn't treat it as anything different. I didn't feel any different to any other game I played last year. Obviously, it was a disappointing end to a year, and because your season ends and you don't get the silverware, it can take away from it.

"You don't really think of the season as a whole, sometimes you judge yourself on the ending rather than the whole season gone.

"But I suppose, that got me thinking then that rather than judge things on the final, I should look at the season as a whole. Definitely, going forward I got an awful lot of



HOPE: Mayo forward Tommy Conroy is looking forward to the possibility of playing in a packed out Croke Park on All-Ireland final day.

Photo: Piaras Ó Mídheach / SPORTSFILE.

learnings from that. Hopefully for the year ahead I can work on them."

Conroy made his Mayo debut in their round one league draw with Donegal in January 2020. He played all seven and scored in six of Mayo's games in that competition, but really caught the eye with three points in their memorable 3-23 to 0-17 win

over Galway in Tuam.

A goal on his championship debut against Leitrim cemented his place in the starting team for the latter end of the year, while another seven points combined against Galway and Tipperary earned him the All-Star nomination.

The fact that he was nominated alongside teammate Eoghan McLaughlin and his

friend from school in Ballinrobe CS, Oisín Mullin, made it a sweet moment, and seeing Mullin win the award as well as the young football of the year was a real thrill.

"Oisín and I were in the same class in secondary school. We've been best friends all the way up since first year," said Conroy.

"We played school football all the way up, so we were lucky to be successful with the school. We are both in college in Galway too and we live close to each other there too.

"I am pretty proud to see the way he has developed all the way up and to see him win an All-Star too was a proud moment for me as well as him."

Year two as a Mayo starter will be very different for Conroy following the retirements of so many of the county's stars in the off-season. He admits it was a nervy time graduating to the panel with them, but he was determined to leave his days of hero worshipping behind him.

"Initially it was a strange thing. I remember the first few times going down, it is only a couple of years since I was in Croke Park, looking at these lads like heroes. If you met them in the street and they said hello to you it'd make your day.

"Now I'm going down and trying to take their position on the field. It's funny alright, all of a sudden you are in there. But if you stand around there looking at them, keeping looking up to them as if they are heroes, you are not going to get anywhere on that team sheet.

"I know a few of them have retired since, but to learn from them, the experience some of them had, it helped a lot of us in our first year there. Some of them played lads in six or seven All-Ireland finals. To be able to learn from them was really good for us. We have picked up a lot from them."



Kilmeena savour Carney's senior debut

By **EDWIN MCGREAL**
The Mayo News

MAKING his Mayo senior debut was not just a big day for Jack Carney from Carrowholly and his family, but also for everyone in Kilmeena GAA club.

When the 21 year-old replaced Diarmuid O'Connor near the end of the second half, he became the first Kilmeena player to play senior league or championship for Mayo in 34 years.

The last occasion was when Joe O'Grady lined out at full-forward in Mayo's 0-6 to 0-3 win over Meath in their 1987 Division 1 league clash in Fr O'Hara Park in Charlestown.

The last Kilmeena man to play senior for Mayo was James Ryan, who lined out at midfield with Barry Moran in an FBD League clash against IT Sligo under Mickey Moran in 2006.

Of course, the most renowned Kilmeena man to grace the county colours remains Michael Gavin.

The teak-tough defender made 44 appearances for Mayo from 1977-1983, winning a coveted Connacht senior championship medal in 1981 at corner-back, ending a barren run of 12 years without the Nestor Cup coming to Mayo.



Jack Carney made his senior debut for Mayo in the league.
Photo: Piaras Ó Mídheach / SPORTSFILE.

The club have had plenty of fine players over the years, and indeed many of them have had to emigrate. One of them, Danny Ryan, lined out against Mayo in the Connacht championship in the past while wearing the colours of London.

Kilmeena GAA club stalwarts were hoping that Jack Carney, who is training to be a Primary School teacher like his father Peter (who is the principal of Carrowholly NS), would go on to make his first senior championship appearance.

Ben Doyle from Westport, who is a son of Joe Doyle, the head of logistics with the Mayo senior football squad, also made his league debut last weekend.

He started the game against Westmeath at corner-back and was replaced at half-time.

Mayo GAA set for 'significant loss'



By **MIKE
FINNERTY**
The Mayo News

MAYO GAA Treasurer Valerie Murphy expects the County Board's finances to show 'a significant loss in 2021' despite the accounts currently showing a surplus of €59,000 for the last six months.

Ms Murphy told club delegates at last week's online County Board meeting that there were two major factors behind her negative projection — 'two inter-county seasons [2020 and 2021] showing in one financial period' and the fact that the current surplus was 'a result of the fundraising income for the [MacHale Park] pitch [redevelopment] showing without the relevant expenditure being incurred to match it'.

The Charlestown native predicted that, when that expenditure of approximately €300,000 is incurred, 'we will have a significant loss in 2021'.

Delegates were told that the main sources of income for the last six months were commercial revenue (€212,000, which included county sponsorship, gear sponsorship, royalties, advertising income, field rent, and rental income); fundraising activities (€185,000, which included the Laochra Maigh Éo project, a golf classic, Smart Lotto income, club development draw, club levies, Cairde Maigheo and donations); and Government Funding (€155,000, made up of the Wage Subsidy Support Scheme and funding for players' expenses for the league and championship competitions).

On the expenditure side, the largest outgoing was under the heading of 'County Team Adminis-

tration'. This amounted to €227,000 and covered player expenses, meals, catering, nutrition, leisure wear, playing kit, transport, equipment, management and backroom expenses, doctors, physios, hospitals and specialist bills).

"In relation to team expenses, they are high because we had two seasons — 2020 we didn't finish until Christmas week," explained Ms Murphy.

"The senior football [costs], which we didn't finish until Christmas week, would be €611,000 and the senior hurling [costs] for the season 2020 would be €183,000."

There were also significant outgoings in the areas of 'Interest and Bank Charges' - €77,000 (loan interest, bank charges, credit card charges); 'Coaching & Games Development' - €73,000 (coaching staff wages and expenses, course and workshop expenses);

'Administration Expenses' - €58,000 (staff salaries, printing, stationary, telephone, legal, professional fees); 'Upkeep and Maintenance of Grounds' - €49,000 (general repairs, pitch maintenance, water charges, rates, light, heat); and 'Grants/Promotional' — €35,000 (website cost, fundraising cost, and presentation).

The County Board Treasurer also confirmed that the MacHale Park redevelopment loan repayments to Croke Park amount to '€5,000 per month at this moment in time'.

These loan repayments had been in the region of €33,000 per month, but have been 'deferred' for the last 12 months due to the impact of Covid on Mayo GAA's finances.

The Mayo News understands that, under the terms negotiated by Mayo GAA officers with Croke Park officials back in 2015, the loan repayments of €33,000 per month had approximately 24 years left to run when the repayments were 'deferred' last June.



Moynihan calls out for more coaches

By MICHAEL GALLAGHER
The Mayo News

THE stark need for more Games Promotion Officers in Mayo GAA is throwing up some innovative thinking, according to county board vice-chairman Con Moynihan.

The Ballaghaderreen clubman revealed plans are being put in place for six new full-time coaches, with one club, Castlebar Mitchels, already working with the board to see if a plan can be put in place for one of the new officers to work exclusively in their catchment area.

Mayo GAA currently employs five Games Promotion Officers or coaches; four for football and one for hurling.

"Ideally, we're looking for six new GPOs," explained Moynihan.

"Two of them would be in South Mayo, one for Ballinrobe and Claremorris and one for the other six clubs. In East Mayo we'd have one full-time GPO.

"In North Mayo, we'd have three, one in Ballina covering the Stephenites, Knockmore

and Ardnaree; one for the four clubs in Erris, and one for the remainder of North Mayo. In hurling we'd have two - one for the east of the county and one for the west and south and stretching into Ballina and Erris."

According to the former Mayo GAA Bord na nÓg chairman, this opens up a world of possibilities where clubs can work towards acquiring their own GPOs if they can provide the correct requirements and supports.

"We're open to talking to any club or group of clubs who have the business case to look for a GPO in conjunction with the recent demographics report which has been undertaken on club population throughout the county.

"We're hoping to develop these business cases with clubs which will be part funded by the county board and the club and then we'd look for matching funds from Croke Park.

"There is no prospect of Mayo GAA being able to afford six new GPOs, but if we had clubs willing to contribute, and the county board would hopefully be able to match that funding and look for Croke Park to match the other half," he continued before surmising about the possible funding streams available.

"The extra hurling GPO would have to be funded by the county board and Croke Park, but I'd expect the football side of things to be different. I'd hope individual clubs or groups of clubs will look at this seriously in the coming months and work with us.

"We're looking at getting two new GPOs over the line this year, the additional hurling one and Castlebar Mitchels have expressed an interest in working towards having a GPO of their own.

"Plans are being drawn up at the moment and then we will sit down with Mitchels in July and see what their plans are in association with the county board. The business case will then be presented to the county board and we'll work from there. We have numbers of children in all the schools in the area and Billy McNicholas (Mayo GAA Games Manager) and the current coaches will update them if needed because every club has different needs and requirements for coaching and facilities.

"There are some clubs with a lot of facilities and few players and others with lots of players and hardly any facilities so we have to work smarter at everything we do," he concluded.

GAAGO experience goes well

By DANIEL CAREY
The Mayo News

TWO significant events happened on December 19, 2020. Both happened behind closed doors. One you'll almost certainly remember, the other you will not. The famous event involved Mayo playing a football match (the All-Ireland final). The less famous event was my most recent trip to the barbers. Neither would happen again until May of 2021.

"This is not January or February or March or April - this is May 15th", Marty Morrissey told the audience watching proceedings from MacHale Park on GAAGO. The commentator's intention was to emphasise the unexpectedly foul weather, but for this viewer at least, it just underlined how long we've had to make do without football.

And how long it's been since I've had a haircut.

In the first 20 seconds of the game, Marty praised a sweet Kevin McLoughlin pass by noting that the Knockmore man had 'the vision to spray it over' to the left wing. McLoughlin's vision exceeded that of GAAGO viewers, who were themselves affected by 'spray'. Whenever we got camera shots from the top of the MacHale Park media tower, the top half of the screen was covered in raindrops.

But Marty was optimistic. Ten minutes in, he spotted shadows on the pitch and swore that the sun was breaking through the clouds. That assessment proved premature. As half-time approached, the Clare man told us that the rain was 'belting down'. His co-commentator Kevin

GAAGO has been a huge success with no spectators at venues in the league this year.

Photo: Piaras Ó Mídeach / SPORTSFILE.



McStay was in like a flash. "No shadow now, Marty - back to reality," the former Mayo News columnist noted. "I was being an optimist," Marty said by way of mitigation.

Having paid my €5 to watch the game on GAAGO, I took advantage of a rare trip west - my first time leaving Dublin since Christmas - to see some action on the big screen.

A HDMI cable between the laptop and the TV did the trick.

The subscription-based GAAGO is a no-frills affair: no studio, no half-time analysis. It felt like there was a relaxed vibe in the commentary box, as Marty offered birthday wishes to both Cillian O'Connor and Rob Cunnane (son of former Mayo GAA PRO, Paul).

Rob is apparently a big fan of Paddington Bear, and we trust Cillian is too - come on, who doesn't like Paddington?

By now we've become accustomed to little

crowd noise and hearing individual shouts from the sideline. Marty greeted one Down interception with the words 'Touch of hands, as Neil Diamond used [to] say in one of his great songs'.

This seemed like the perfect opportunity for Marty to break into a rendition of either the original 'Sweet Caroline' or Diamond's Covid-inspired rewrite (sample lyrics: 'Hands ... washin' hands, reachin' out, don't touch me, I won't touch you'). Sadly, it was not to be.

But there was lots to like besides. Kevin McStay described Tommy Conroy's goal as 'gorgeous' (he particularly liked what he called the Neale man's 'baby solo'), and felt Ryan O'Donoghue's goal was indicative of 'confidence' and 'extra power' he's acquired in the off-season. He pronounced Mayo's performance 'very impressive' and said they could be 'very confident' ahead of their trip to Mullingar.



Walsh expects youthful exuberance coming through

By **JOHN FALLON**
Media West Ireland

GALWAY captain Shane Walsh says that players coming off the victorious All-Ireland U-20 team will be a huge addition to the Tribesmen this season.

Five members of the side who defeated Dublin in the final last December — Jack Glynn, Paul Kelly, Cathal Sweeney, Mattie Tierney and Tomo Culhane — are now in the senior squad with Jack Kurrane, Cian Monahan, Sean Fitzgerald and Patrick Kelly included in a 'feeder squad' which Paraic Joyce and his selectors will be dipping into during the season.

"They have taken to it like a duck to water," said Walsh, who is in his second season as captain. "Paul Kelly and Mattie Tierney are into their second year and then the other lads coming off the U-20 win are coming in high on confidence so it is a huge boost to the group. They have that winning feeling amongst



TALENT: Galway captain Shane Walsh is delighted to be able to welcome some star youngsters into the panel from last year's U-20 All-Ireland winners.
Photo: Harry Murphy / SPORTSFILE.

them and hopefully they will bring that and the skill level to the table."

The Kilkerrin-Clonberne clubman said he couldn't wait for the start of the league

when they were set to travel to play Kerry.

"We didn't know since the start of the year when the season would kick-off but once the new dates were made for

the league all the focus for us has been getting ready for Kerry and we will worry about the other games after that.

"Everyone was training individually, it can be a lonely place to be but lads put their best foot forward and in fairness to our strength conditioning coaches Cian Breathnach and Mike Comer, they did trojan work linking in with us week in, week out."

Walsh said that teams would find out a lot about themselves on the opening weekend and would need to react quickly with just a handful of league games before heading into the championship.

"It's hard to gauge where anyone is going to be at going into Saturday. We haven't had ideal preparations with regard to no challenge games. That timeframe was out of our hands but we have been training hard and lads have been putting their hands up and just delighted to be back and looking forward to going down to Tralee and having a right good go of it," added Walsh.

Pat Callanan Property Sales Ltd are new Athenry rounders sponsor

ATHERNY Rounders were delighted to announce that Pat Callanan Property Sales Ltd was to be their sponsor for the 2021 season.

The Athenry Rounders were founded in 2012 and have successfully competed winning many accolades along the way. And two years ago they started in adult competitions, taking home silver from a prestigious ladies competition in Dublin.

Following on from their success at adult level, Athenry entered the intermediate ladies and mixed competitions with high hopes for 2020. After a few false starts due to restrictions, a late starting season led to a flurry of games both home and away culminating in being narrowly beaten in the intermediate mixed All-Ireland semi-final by Na Fianna of Dublin in October last year and the delayed intermediate ladies 2020 All-Ireland final against Skyrne of Meath.

Four of the 2020 intermediate ladies team, Aileen Treacy, Caroline Joyce, Kiara Collins and Katelyn MacCullagh, have won All-Ireland gold in U-13, U-14 Féile na nGael, U-15 and minor.



Pictured from (L to R) are the Athenry Rounders who welcomed their new sponsor for 2021 as they go for All-Ireland gold: Lisa Guilfoyle, Aileen Treacy, sponsor Pat Callanan, Katelyn MacCullagh, Kiara Collins and Damien Quinn.



Turloughmore mark their anniversary with Fantasy 2021 and car draw

This year marks the 135th Anniversary of Turloughmore Hurling Club and to acknowledge this, the GAA have decided to allow Galway host the Fantasy 2021 Leinster Senior Hurling Final. And for the first time the Fantasy Leinster Final between Galway & Kilkenny will be hosted in the western county on 2 July (7.30pm).

Given the historical element of the first Fantasy Leinster Final being played in Galway and the ongoing rivalry between the two counties, tickets for this event are already in huge demand. When you buy your ticket you are also entered into a draw for a brand new Volkswagen Polo. For €20 you get your Fantasy Leinster Final ticket and entry into the Car Draw.

Turloughmore hurling and camogie joined forces with the aim of building playing facilities for the future. Phase 1 of the Development in Lackagh has been completed, an Astro pitch and ball wall. Phase 2 will see the purchase of land while further phases will see the creation of new playing floodlit pitches, a walk-way, spectator stand, car park and other facilities.

Log onto www.turloughmore.com and buy your Leinster Final & Car Draw ticket. You can also buy three tickets for €50. Second Prize is €1,000, third is €500 and there is a sellers Prize of €500. While the Volkswagen Polo is supplied by Al Hayes Motors.



Pictured from (L to R) at the launch of the Fantasy 2021 Leinster hurling final and car draw were: Daniel Loftus, Sean Loftus, Daithi Burke and Sean O'Hanlon.



The new Astro pitch and ball wall in Lackagh.

Kiely apology accepted by Galway

JOHN FALLON
Media West Ireland

JOHN Kiely's apology for his comments after the clash with Galway has been welcomed by county chairman Pat Kearney saying that it is now the end of the matter.

Kearney defended Galway's position in the wake of Kiely's claims about players being guilty of simulation looking for frees during the Tribes-

men's 0-26 to 1-17 win, and said that just was not their style.

"I welcome John Kiely's apology wholeheartedly. I'm sure when he had a look back at the game he saw things differently and that's entirely understandable and fair play to him for coming out and clarifying the position.

"I thought his comments at the time were completely out of kilter with the character of the man and it's measure of him that he has come out and sorted it out, and that for us is

the end of the matter.

"We have always had a healthy rivalry with Limerick but we have always had great respect as well. We have had great battles with them in recent years which have always gone down to the wire and it will probably be the same if we meet again this summer.

"We all go out and play under the same rules and do our best to win. There are aspects of the game we would have concerns about as well but at the end of the day the



RESPECT: John Kiely had accused Galway of simulation in the wake of their clash at Pearse Stadium.

Photo: Ray McManus / SPORTSFILE.

two teams that go out do so under the same rules.

"Limerick is a proud hurling county who have enjoyed some great wins in recent years. Off the field, at underage up to senior, we have always had a great relationship with the officers, management and players and that will continue."



Linnane looking for change

By **JOHN FALLON**
Media West Ireland

FORMER Galway defender and triple All-Ireland winner Sylvie Linnane believes that camogie is now more physical than hurling because of the way the game has changed.

A teak-tough corner-back, Linnane said that the modern game is not enjoyable and he reckons the ball needs to be made heavier and more physical contests to be allowed and encouraged.

Linnane, who won three All Stars and a couple of national league titles in a 14-year senior career with Galway, said the game has 'gone too soft' with far too many frees.

"I think the ball is too light, it's going too far," said Linnane. "There should be about two ounces put on to it to make it that bit more heavy and it wouldn't be going as far and you'd have better hurling.

"I'm not enjoying the hurling at the moment, even though it was great to see Galway beating Limerick and to see Joe Canning and all the guys in such good form.

"But I just don't like the pattern of play. There are too



CHANGE: Sylvie Linnane says camogie is more physical than hurling now.

Photo: Damien Eagers / SPORTSFILE.

many frees, it's gone too soft to my liking. I'd like to see an odd good shoulder. I see no hurl being broken. Hurling is a man's game but it's gone too soft. I see camogie now more physical than the hurling."

Linnane, an All-Ireland

winner in 1980, '87 and '88 who suffered defeat in four other finals, said that physical contests were no longer part of the game and that loads of frees and big hauls of points meant that games were not entertaining to watch.

"Maybe it's me but everyone I'm talking to about hurling, they are not enjoying the game the way it's being played now. It's the best game in the world but I'd just like to see a puckout and two lads contest it.

"There's no one allowed now to pull on the ball in the air, you have no ground hurling and it's all bunching above in a heap. I don't know what's going to happen but I just hope it could go back to where it was," he told Galway Bay FM.

Linnane, whose nephew Sean is part of the Galway squad, said the use of sweepers was not working, pointing to last year's All-Ireland semi-final when the Limerick half-forward line of Tom Morrissey, Cian Lynch and Gearoid Hegarty scored 0-11 from play between them in their win over Galway.

"I think it is ruined with the extra man behind the ball. We played Limerick last year in the semi-final and their half-forward line scored loads of points and we having an extra man in the backs. There's something wrong somewhere. I tell you, if Peter Finnerty was there, there wouldn't be four points scored off him. I just think hurling back the years was a better game," added the Gort clubman.



Ladies Gaelic Football Association President Mícheál Naughton was thrilled as Lidl and LGFA announced the live-streaming of 50 games.

"Today's announcement is wonderful news for supporters of Ladies Gaelic Football, here in Ireland and across the globe," said President Naughton.

"It's incredible to think that this is the sixth year of our incredibly successful partnership and Lidl have committed to further investment in our sport, with their support for our plans to live-stream 50 games in the 2021 Lidl National Leagues.

"Our streaming service has helped to elevate our sport to a new level and bring our games to a wider audience.

"With Lidl's assistance, we can now promise even more #SeriousSupport for our National Leagues, and we look forward to some cracking action in the weeks to come. We are really excited by the opportunity to have each and every one of our 60 Lidl National League fixtures available to view live - and free of charge."

Lidl ambassador Nicola Ward of Galway was present at the launch of the 2021 Lidl Ladies National Football Leagues.

Photo: Sam Barnes / SPORTSFILE.



Purcell still represented in maroon

By **DECLAN ROONEY**
Media West Ireland

IN 1956, Galway's 'Terrible Twins', Seán Purcell and Frank Stockwell, led the county to All-Ireland Final victory, and 65 years later, two of Purcell's granddaughters aim to follow in his footsteps and lead Westmeath to TG4 All-Ireland glory.

Four months on from the heartbreak of a TG4 All-Ireland Intermediate Final defeat, the county's Crafty Cousins, Lucy McCartan and Vicky Carr, who lined out at numbers 12 and 13 at Croke Park, were back in the fold for the Midlanders.

McCartan (22) cracked home two goals for Sean Finnegan's side in that loss against Meath, although the talented sports star ended 2020 with an impressive haul of silverware as a double-winning creative midfielder with soccer champions Peamount United.

And while she has returned to competitive training and matches on the soccer fields, this week's announcement of a return to Lidl National League action has McCartan dreaming of glory alongside her St Loman's clubmate and cousin.

"My mam and Vicky's mam are sisters. They are Purcells from Tuam in Galway. Seán Purcell from Galway, that's their dad; he is our grandad," said medical student McCartan.

"My dad claims that our footballing skills comes from the McCartans from Down, but I don't know about that.

"We have seen a couple of clips of our grandad playing. There were documentaries about the famous Galway teams and the Terrible Twins. I have seen a good bit of him playing, which is really nice. It's great to have that."

It was a long three months training for all Ladies football squads, with plenty of individual fitness work taking place away from their teammates. That finished with inter-county teams permitted to assemble once again.

Westmeath got their Lidl NFL Division 1A campaign underway with Galway, Mayo and Donegal their opponents in three consecutive weekends.

But dual player McCartan already had competitive matches under her belt with Peamount, while the bulk of her training also took place with the Dublin-based outfit.

"I have been so glad to have Peamount going. It has been lovely to be able to focus on one sport and not have to be concerned about the clashes just yet. I have only really been training with them and doing some of the running with Westmeath.

"It is always tough playing two different



FORWARD: Westmeath's Lucy McCartan scans the field during the 2020 TG4 All-Ireland Intermediate Championship Final against Meath at Croke Park.

Photo: Brendan Moran / SPORTSFILE.

sports. Rachel Kearns from Mayo is after going back to play soccer with Galway United and she is flying it. She has scored four goals in two matches.

"Chloe Moloney too, she plays for Clare and Galway United. She made the switch from Peamount to Galway in the soccer. It just goes to show you when you get the chance to focus on one you can excel.

"To be honest, last year I was a bit iffy. I thought that maybe I should pick one sport and go with it. Then the pandemic hit and I just realised when you miss them both you don't want to quit either of them.

"There are tough times, there is always going to be clashes, but I feel like I am used to it, and it's all about communicating properly with all management teams, keeping them up to date."

As if playing top grade Ladies football and soccer wasn't enough, McCartan is a fourth-year medicine student at UCD. She began her first four-week work experience stint at the Mater Hospital, where she hoped her recent experience of working in a nursing home during the pandemic would stand to her.

"This year we only have four weeks of placement, so I'm really looking forward to

it. It's just hard to know what we'll be allowed to do. With the pandemic going on they will want to limit contact with patients as much as possible, not to be exposing people unnecessarily.

"I'd say it will be a lot of shadowing, watching and listening to what's going on, trying whenever you get a chance to talk to patients.

"I really enjoyed working in the nursing home. It was tough going because the shifts are either 12 hours or six hours. If you are in for the full day it's a long shift.

"My Mam [Frances] is a paediatric doctor in the Midlands Regional Hospital – she is brilliant. She was saying that doing those nightshifts at the weekend was really good practice for down the line when I'll have to be doing that."

Relegation from the Senior Championship in 2019 brought an end to Westmeath's eight-year spell in the top flight, and December's loss to Meath ended their hopes of an immediate return there. McCartan concedes that Meath were worthy winners, but that they are hellbent on going one better in 2021.

"Oh absolutely, everyone is mad to get up to Senior. We know how lucky we are that nobody came down and we have the chance to try and get up without another Senior team to compete with us.

"I thought Meath were brilliant last year. After we saw their semi-final result against Clare, who I had been expecting to push them hard, we knew it was going to be a very tough final.

"The goals were keeping us in it for the majority of the game. Even when we were level with them, they were still outscoring us. It's hard to come back from that; they were brilliant."

That loss has stoked the fires for Westmeath football again in 2021, and after a year when so many players had to experience defeat and glory without friends and family, Lucy was one of the lucky ones. Her dad Pat is the Westmeath Ladies kitman, another family member she leans on consistently.

"It was great having him here. All the girls love him. He is great, he's always there that bit earlier than the rest of us to set up the pitch and stays a bit longer to lock up afterwards.

"I think he really enjoys it himself, getting the chance to go and watch matches. He and my mam both love going to all the matches and she really missed out last year. Dad was lucky that he was able to go along.

"I think everyone is excited now though. It will be so nice to have a bit of football into us after all the running. I'm sure our first training session will be a match of some sort. We can't wait to get back."

McDaid could miss the season

By JOHN FALLON
Media West Ireland

VERSATILE Galway footballer Cillian McDaid will miss their league campaign and probably most of the championship after picking up a knee injury on the first night back training.

The former Aussie Rules player with Carlton is set to be out for up to twelve weeks and it is the latest injury set-back for the 23-year-old.

He won an All-Ireland minor hurling medal with Galway in 2015 and made his senior football championship debut two years later when drafted into the squad by Kevin Walsh.

A club hurler with Craughwell who plays his football with Monivea-Abbey, he looks set for another spell on the sideline after enduring a torrid time with injuries.

"He was actually only coming back from an injury at



SETBACK: Galway footballer Cillian McDaid could miss the entire season.

Photo: Ramsey Cardy / SPORTSFILE.

the start of the year when he had a little procedure done on his knee," said Galway manager Padraic Joyce.

"And then he stepped into one of the training drills on the first night and are being told he will be out for ten to twelve weeks. We'll see. It's a knee injury."

Joyce will also have to plan without former All Star Ian Burke and the experienced

Michael Daly, both of whom have pulled out due to work commitments, but he is boosted by the return of midfielder Peter Cooke who spent last year working in New York and missed out on Moycullen's first ever Galway SFC title.

"As I said to him, he's probably the first man to come back out of New York in great shape! I think he benefitted from the place being closed down for most of the year. He's settling in, obviously a bit rusty with ball but he has done well. He's a good lad."

Joyce also confirmed that Damien Comer is back to full fitness along with John Daly, and that a number of the U-20 squad who defeated Dublin in the All-Ireland final in December have been drafted in, with Galway waiting on the outcome of a scan on ankle injury picked up by Corofin's Darragh Silke.

Joyce, heading into his

second term in charge of Galway, said that the ban on challenge matches had made the return to play difficult.

"You were told you could go back and you get four weeks to prepare for national league games but you are not allowed play challenge games. And there was a the fiasco last week where you can't play challenge games and they came out the next day and said you can play.

"As it transpired we had games organised, and you talk about player welfare and this kind of stuff. It's a buzz word and I don't know who is saying it up there in Croke Park or do they actually look into it at all because how do you expect lads to come back and be fully match-sharp in four weeks? Challenge games are part of getting a team ready for league and championship and the fact that you only have three league games, I feel we were let down a bit," added Joyce.

Daly returns for early season boost

By JOHN FALLON
Media West Ireland

GALWAY footballers received a timely boost when centre-back John Daly resumed full training ahead of the start of the league after recovering from his second serious knee injury last summer.

Daly, son of former Galway and Roscommon manager and All Star Val, was superb at centre-back last year when Galway made a blistering start of the league in Padraic Joyce's first term but then suffered a dislocated knee cap in a challenge match for his club Mountbellew-Moylough as they prepared for the start of the club championship.

Daly, whose brother Michael opted out of the Galway squad this year due to other commitments, suffered a cruciate ligament injury almost five years ago but battled back from that.

"John has done fantastic work," said Joyce. "A brilliant young fella and a super attitude towards life and towards football in general. He's worked tirelessly since he got injured last August.

"It was a bad knee injury and he has a history because he did a cruciate a few



RETURN: Galway defender John Daly, seen here in action against Mayo's Kevin McLoughlin, has been plagued with injuries in recent years. Photo: Piaras Ó Midheach / SPORTSFILE.

years ago as well.

"But he's coming back now and has worked so hard to get back. He's still a young man, 22-23 years of age, and he still has ten years or so ahead of him so we need to be careful and cautious with John and to make sure we don't rush him

back into it.

"We need to mind him and we will. He'll hopefully see a bit of action on the league, he's back fully training since last week and he has put in savage work, as has Aofáine Walsh and the other physios to get him right.

"It's been serious effort by John and all involved and it's great to have him back."

And another player who needed a good run free of injury was former captain Damien Comer and Joyce said the Annaghdown clubman was fully fit and all were hoping that he could have an uninterrupted season.

"He's doing fine, he's training away but in the last two championships he's played a combined total of about 50 minutes in them. He's trained hard. He pulled a hamstring last year, he never had it before but that may have been down to a little bit of fatigue with the club. He was playing hurling and football every second week which probably wasn't ideal and he then he came back and pulled the hamstring.

"But he's back since January, he's in good shape and hopefully he can get a break and some luck and stay injury-free for the year," said Joyce as he continued his preparations for Saturday's league opener away to Kerry.



CONNACHT CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE



THE DOME

The Dome contains:

Fullsize indoor GAA Field
Running Track
Fully Equipped Gym capable of accommodating 30 people at once
Portable Stand

In addition, the Dome, within 72 hours, can be transformed into fully functional, adaptable conference arena unique on the island of Ireland.

On-Site Dome Capacity:
2,000+ for games
10,000-20,000 (seated and standing) for concerts/ events

FITNESS TESTING

Connacht GAA are continuing to offer our established service of fitness testing and programming for clubs, schools and individuals of all levels and age groups at the Connacht GAA Centre in Began.

Using our fully equipped state of the art gym our experienced Strength and Conditioning team offer a vast array of tests designed to help get the best indicators of strength and weaknesses in your group.

Testing days include:

Body Composition tests
Flexibility Tests
Full Body Movement Analysis
Power Testing
Aerobic Capacity
Speed Testing

We offer a full squad report including normative values that will allow players assess their individual needs compared players playing at the same level. If required we can implement a bespoke Strength and Conditioning program for your team based on results gained from our testing at no extra cost.

This cost-effective service provides clubs and players with a platform of knowledge and information, along with providing a system to implement a program to help develop and improve the conditioning of players.

To book your teams fitness assessment day or for more information contact seamus.burns.connacht@gaa.ie or call 094-9630335.



At the Connacht GAA Centre we have a main building with:

Games Based Facilities:

- Analysis Suite
- Two Physio Rooms
- Six Dressing/Referees Rooms
- Storage facilities

Administrative and Community-Orientated Amenities:

- Administrative Headquarters
- Six offices
- Three meeting rooms
- Lecture Theatre
- Board Room
- Dining Hall, Full Catering Kitchen

Outdoor

- Six pitches – five full size Prunty pitches and one 3G Pitch – of which five are floodlit
- A perimeter walking/running track measuring 2.2 kms
- Parking for up to 400 cars and 20 buses

VIDEO ANALYSIS

We also provide comprehensive video analysis of games using our in-house software. This service applies to games either recorded at the Connacht GAA Centre or elsewhere. Led by our highly trained staff this service can provide:

- Breakdown game play into short manageable clips
- Provides feedback to players and coaches
- Grouping of different aspects of performance e.g.: Kickouts, shots, turnovers

PRICING: €100 for 1 game
 €250 for 3 games
 €350 for 5 games

GYM HIRE

The Connacht GAA gym is available to hire to all teams. This fully equipped area allows teams to work on all aspects of their physical preparation.

The gym area includes:

- 8 squat racks complete with weights
- A vast array of dumbbells/kettlebells
- Benches
- Multi-purpose cable machine
- Battle ropes
- Assault bike
- Rower
- Ski Machine
- Jump Boxes
- Screening area

The option is also available to have a supervised gym session conducted by Connacht GAA strength and conditioning staff.



CONNACHT CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE



 **CONNACHT**
GAA



Cloonacurry, Began, Claremorris, Co. Mayo. EirCode **F12 WF21**

E-mail: reception.connacht@gaa.ie • Phone: **(094) 9630335**