



Vol 13. Issue 1
January/
February, 2023

Into the West



The bi-monthly magazine of the Connacht GAA Council

Game On



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY CONNACHT GAA AIR DOME

OFFICIAL GAA PUBLICATION

€2.50



Nóta an Uachtaráin

Dear friends,

THE Leagues have landed and with Mayo and Galway giving us a festival of football in MacHale Park, we know it won't be long before the Connacht Championship throws up some fascinating ties.

But for now it's time to bask in the successes of the clubs from our province and two in particular, Kilkerrin-Clonberne and Sarsfields. Both teams fought hard to emerge from Galway before going on sensational runs to Croke Park success.

What makes their wins all the more incredible is the fact that they have both gone back-to-back in their respective codes. It's astonishing to go all the way in successive seasons and they need to be proud of their achievements.

The people who also deserve the praise is the volunteers on the ground, the unseen people helping to make those amazing results possible. These two clubs have definitely got it right and reached the pinnacle in Ladies football and Camogie.

Tooreen and Easkey were so unlucky not to join them as All-Ireland champions this year but they will have learned plenty from their visits to Croke Park and I expect those clubs to grow even further with that experience.

But now, it's the turn of the inter-county season and I think it's important to let the players flourish. Again there has been talk about too much activity, too many games, but having matches week-on-week means for less training and in turn less risk of these players suffering from burn out or injury.

I really think the players are getting on board with the split-season now and we need to give them a few seasons to bed in with the new format before we go looking to amend it. We tweaked a format that has been there for 140 years so let's give it a bit of time before we go looking to make more changes.

And after their win in the FBD League you could see that Mayo were thriving with the early start to the National League. That game against Galway was an epic, and neither side deserved to lose.

In the hurling, the Connacht Hurling League was a fantastic success too. It's important to acknowledge the role of the University of Galway Connacht GAA Air Dome in the success of the tournaments like that and the FBD League, the quality of the games are fantastic.

It's so exciting to see the Leagues taking shape now and I cannot wait until the Connacht championship but let's enjoy the wonderful action every weekend up until then.

Is mise, le meas

John Murphy
Uachtarán Chomhairle Connacht



JOHN MURPHY
Connacht GAA President

Nóta an Rúnaí

A chairde,

A COUPLE of All-Ireland champions were welcomed back to Connacht with open arms in the past few months and the signs are bright as we head towards the summer that there could be plenty more silverware coming west.

Kilkerrin-Clonberne and Sarsfields are the standard bearers right now, dominating from their bases in Galway before taking over the rest of the country in the Ladies football and camogie spheres.

What an honour it is to have back-to-back All-Ireland champions in two codes, and both at senior levels. Bravo to those clubs and Galway for producing such talent.

It's that time of the year again when we look ahead to the National Leagues and Championship full of hope and wonder and there is no reason to expect the various Connacht counties cannot challenge in some form or another.

We don't need to look any further than the show Mayo and Galway served up at MacHale Park in Castlebar. The weather mightn't have been favourable but just a few weeks after they clashed in the FBD League, but it lived up to the billing again and this time Mayo rescued a draw at the death - you get the feeling these two have plenty of unfinished business.

That FBD League was another major success with our wonderful University of Galway Connacht GAA Air Dome hosting some fantastic matches played out across a few week-ends. We are so grateful to have a venue like that to call upon and it helped the players from each county to display their best skills even though it was so early in the season.

We also got to see hurling there, with the Connacht Hurling League providing a great outlet for counties like Roscommon to show what they are made of. The development squad from Galway were an exciting addition while New York played their part too.

It's all systems go for the Leagues now before we can even comprehend what the summer might have in store, but let's spare a thought for the teams like Tooreen and Easkey.

Both clubs played phenomenal hurling to get to Croke Park on All-Ireland final day and although those results didn't go to plan, they will be back with experience you just can't buy.

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 and Galway early-season thriller4

Tooreen valiant in defeat6

Easkey power through9

Dunloy a bridge too far10

Moycullen fall to Derry opponents12

John Cosgrove RIP15

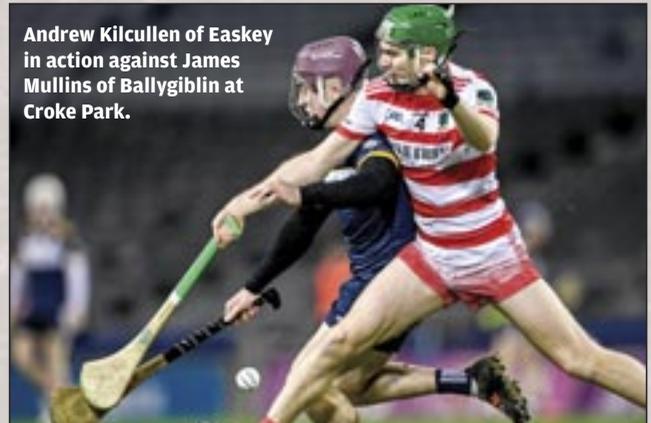
Kilkerrin-Clonberne double up at Croke.....16

Sarsfields impress yet again20

Mayo are FBD champions22

Galway bounce back after All-Ireland
final defeat27

Tribesmen land Walsh Cup29



Andrew Kilcullen of Easkey in action against James Mullins of Ballygiblin at Croke Park.

Connacht hurling league goes to Galway33

Rossies go with new captaincy34

Leitrim looking to excel in league36

Garrity eager to get going37

Glencar Manorhamilton celebrate39

Sligo announce their league squad40

St Nathy's mark 30th anniversary42

Lee Keegan bows out44

Danielle Caldwell feature.....46

Tooreen expect to return to the summit.....49

Evan Talty feature.....52

Joyce looking to grow Galway squad55

Busy times in Began58

O'Shea finds new lease of life.....61



Tooreen players after their side's defeat in the AIB GAA Hurling All-Ireland Intermediate Championship Final.

LEAD - Mayo manager Kevin McStay (left) and Galway manager Padraic Joyce after the drawn National League game in MacHale Park, Castlebar.
Photo: Piaras Ó Midheach / SPORTSFILE.

OFF-LEAD - Mayo captain Stephen Coen lifts the cup after his side's FBD League final victory.
Photo: Piaras Ó Midheach / SPORTSFILE.

Galway captain Conor Whelan lifts the Walsh Cup after his side's victory in the Allianz Hurling League Division 1 Group A match, which doubled up as the Walsh Cup Final.
Photo by Piaras Ó Midheach/Sportsfile

Kilkerrin-Clonberne captain Louise Ward lifts the cup after the 2022 current-account.ie LGFA All-Ireland Senior Club Football Championship Final.
Photo: Ben McShane / SPORTSFILE.

Sarsfields captain Niamh McGrath lifts the Bill and Agnes Carroll Cup after the AIB All-Ireland Senior Camogie Club Championship Final.
Photo: Piaras Ó Midheach / SPORTSFILE.



Moycullen's Michéal O'Reilly wriggles free of the tackle from Tiernán Flanagan of Glen during the All-Ireland semi-final.



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY CONNACHT GAA AIR DOME

Mayo strike late in thriller

National Football League - Div 1 - Rnd 1

Mayo1-11
Galway2-8

By COLM GANNON
Mayo Advertiser

A LAST-GASP point from Ryan O'Donoghue saw Mayo share the spoils with Galway on the opening night of the National Football League in front of 13,654 spectators in Castlebar.

Both sides will feel they could have won this game, but will ultimately be happy with getting a point of the board to kick start their campaigns.

A James Carr thunderbolt of a goal illuminated the opening stages of the game, the Ardagh man giving Conor Gleeson no chance as he let fly with a powerful drive from the 21 meter line.

That score put Mayo into a 1-1 to 0-2 lead, with Damien Comer and Cillian McDaid pointing for Galway and O'Donoghue for Mayo before that.

The crowd didn't have to wait long for the next major of the night, with Galway having the ball in the back of the Mayo net two minutes later. Matthew Tierney found himself isolated in a miss match with Mayo forward Aidan Orme in front of the Mayo goal, and he rose high to flick the ball to the back of the net after Johnny Heaney sent in a probing ball.

Galway were able to hold on to a two point lead until the half time break thanks to points



HOLD: Galway forward Johnny Heaney holds onto possession despite the tackles from Jordan Flynn, Diarmuid O'Connor and Ryan O'Donoghue at MacHale Park in Castlebar.

Photo: Piaras Ó Midheach / SPORTSFILE.

from Robert Finnerty and a mark from Comer. Mayo hit points from O'Donoghue and Orme – but will have been disap-

pointed to only register a single point in a ten minute period they had a man advantage after Eoghan Kelly was black-carded.



SPEED: Mayo youngster Bob Tuohy in action against Galway's Neil Mulcahy.

Photo: Piaras Ó Midheach / SPORTSFILE.



TARGET: James Carr powers home Mayo's goal ahead of the hapless Galway defence at MacHale Park in Castlebar.

Photo: Piaras Ó Mídheach / SPORTSFILE.

Quick fire points from Matthew Ruane and O'Donoghue had Mayo level not long after the resumption of play and when Diarmuid O'Connor saw his effort just scrape over the bar on 42 minutes they were leading for the first time since their goal.

The lead didn't last long as Galway plundered their second goal on 45 minutes when Seán Kelly found himself well up the field and in open country after he was picked out by a Cillian McDaid pass and he made no mistake stroking the ball to the back of the net.

Paul Conroy landed a point from distance not long after and Galway were 2-6 to 1-6 up with 20 minutes left on the clock. O'Donoghue and Bob Tuohy cut the gap back to a single point, but Mayo were left shorted handed for the next ten minutes after Matthew Ruane was shown a black card.

McDaid joined him in the sin bin not long after and it was all square thanks to a O'Donoghue free, but Galway edged back in front thanks to a super long range free from Peter Cooke. But there was time for plenty more drama, Cillian O'Connor fisted over a leveller after some good inter-play with O'Donoghue a minute into injury time.

Galway looked to have won it, when Damien Comer held his nerve to tap over a close range free four minutes into

added time. There was still time for one more Mayo attack, they won a sideline 35 meters out on the MacHale Road side of the ground, O'Donoghue took a crack at it – the ball dropped short but was only cleared back out as far as him and he made no mistake the second time around to the delight of the home support.

SCORERS - Mayo: R O'Donoghue 0-6 (4f), J Carr 1-0, J Flynn 0-1, M Ruane 0-1, D O'Connor 0-1, B Tuohy 0-1, C O'Connor 0-1.

Galway: M Tierney 1-0, S Kelly 1-0, D Comer 0-3 (1m, 1f), C McDaid 0-1, P Kelly 0-1, R Finnerty 0-1, P Conroy 0-1, P Cooke 0-1 (1f).

MAYO: C Reape; J Coyne, D McBrien, R Brickenden; E Hession; C Loftus, S Coen (C); M Ruane, D O'Connor; B Tuohy, J Carney, J Flynn; A Orme, J Carr, R O'Donoghue. **Subs:** A O'Shea for Orme (51), E McLaughlin for O'Connor (51), K McLaughlin for Carney (54), C O'Connor for Carr (64), P Towe for Tuohy (75).

GALWAY: C Gleeson; E Kelly, S Kelly (C), N Mulcahy; D McHugh, J Daly, D O'Flaherty; P Conroy, C McDaid; P Kelly, M Tierney, J Heaney; R Finnerty, D Comer, D Conneely. **Subs:** P Cooke for Finnerty (25), C Sweeney for P Kelly (43), E Finnerty for Conneely (49), J Glynn for O'Flaherty (59) G Davoren for Tierney (64).

REF: Joe McQuillan (Cavan).



POWER: Peter Cooke shrugs off the challenge from defender Conor Loftus in their NFL opener.

Photo: Piaras Ó Midheach / SPORTSFILE.

Limerick's Monaleen deliver final flourish to beat Tooreen

All-Ireland Intermediate Club Hurling
Championship - Final

Monaleen1-17
Tooreen1-15

By **COLM GANNON**

Monaleen had the strongest gallop down the final furlong of a fantastic AIB All-Ireland Intermediate Club Championship Hurling Final in Croke Park to overtake Tooreen in the final ten minutes.

The Limerick side hadn't led the game all evening until the 53rd minute when Donnacha Ó'Dálaigh hit their 14th point of the evening and while Cathal Freeman did level the game up not long after that score, the wind was behind the Limerick men.

The first half saw Tooreen go into an early four-point lead but Monaleen stuck with them, and with 15 minutes gone, it was 0-6 to 0-3 to the Mayo men. However the first goal of the evening from Dan Power, who found himself free in behind the Tooreen defence, had the game all square on 18 minutes.

Liam Lavin netted for the Mayo side three minutes before the break and a point from Shane Boland had Tooreen four to the good heading towards half-time, but Monaleen weren't going away and points



TOUCH: Tooreen's Eoin Delaney attempts to control the ball ahead of Bryan Canny of Monaleen at Croke Park.

Photo: Piaras Ó Mídheach / SPORTSFILE.

from the imperious Mark O'Dwyer and Andrew La Touche Cosgrave left their side trailing by just two at the turn around on a score of 1-9 to 1-7.

Tooreen hit two early second-half points to go four clear, but Monaleen through O'Dwyer and Donnacha Ó Dálaigh kept their cool and went about

reeling in their opponents, which they finally did when Ó Dálaigh put the in front for the first time.

Freeman, who gave his all for the beaten Mayo side, did level it up with an inspirational score, but points from Ó Dálaigh and Joseph Fitzgerald pushed their side two clear as injury time approached.

Fergal Boland cut the gap back to a single point again and while Tooreen laid siege looking for a levelling score, the final say on the day was left to Ó Dálaigh who put his team two to the good with the last shot of the day.



CONTROL: Liam Lavin of Tooreen keeps his eye on the ball despite the close attentions of Monaleen's Simon Griffin in the All-Ireland intermediate final.

Photo: Piaras Ó Mídheach / SPORTSFILE.

SCORERS - Monaleen: M O'Dwyer 0-7 (4f), D Ó Dálaigh 0-5, D Power 1-0, A La Touche Cosgrave 0-2, J Fitzgerald, E Doyle and S Griffin 0-1 each.

Tooreen: L Lavin 1-1, S Boland 0-4 (2f), C Freeman 0-3, F Boland, S Regan and E Delaney 0-2 each, D Kenny 0-1.

MONALEEN: J Power; S Griffin, B Canny, J Porter; L Morrison, L Lyons, R Lyons; J Fitzgerald, L McHale; D Ó Dálaigh, M O'Dwyer, A La Touche Cosgrave; D Power, E Doyle, L Murphy.
Subs: D Maloney for D Power (54), E O'Driscoll for O'Dwyer (60).

TOOREEN: B Douglas; C Henry, M Morley, O Greally; D Kenny, S Coyne, J Boyle; S Kenny, F Boland; L Lavin, D Huane, C Freeman; S Regan; S Boland, E Delaney. **Subs:** K Feeney for Huane (51), G Nolan for C Henry (59).

REF: C Cunning (Dunloy Cúchullains).

Tooreen reach final frontier

All-Ireland Intermediate Club Hurling
Championship - Semi-final

Tooreen1-18
Liatroim Fontenoy's1-14

By MICHAEL COMMINS
Mayo News

THE Blue Hills of Breffni may not have been shining in the sun, but the hearts of all the Tooreen team and followers were radiating beams of season joy as they celebrated a famous win over Liatroim Fontenoy's in Cavan.

The Tooreen lads had just cleared the final hurdle between them and an appearance in the All-Ireland Intermediate Club Final in Croke in mid-January.

No-one was in a hurry leaving Kingspan Breffni Park as this was a truly a time to savour.

Breffni Park, deep sunk in the drumlins around Cavan town, is a picturesque park at any time of the year. It is also home to one of the most welcoming committees in the country.

The nature of the hospitality would give the red card to Niall Tóibín's portrayal of the Cavan people in his famous 'take-off' of the regional accents.

The Mayo champions got off to a dream start and were never fully pegged back by the Down lads though it was not for lack of effort and courage. Cathal Freeman had the opening point of the match and, less than two minutes later, Cathal availed of a sublime pass from Eoin Delaney to race through and strike home a superb goal that laid the foundations for this deserved victory.

Fergal Boland, carrying on from his superb display in the Connacht Final against Killimor, picked off a fine point from play before Seán Kenny, showing great alertness, hit a sideline cut direct to Cathal Freeman and Tooreen led by 1-3 to 0-1 after eight minutes with the Liatroim score coming from Conor McCrickard.

Gradually, the Ulster lads edged their way back into the game, powered on by the excellent Oisín Duggan, the McCrickard brothers and William McCartan, as they came to terms with the early onslaught and one could sense the stalling of the Tooreen momentum as the Down lads closed the gap to four with points from Ruairí and Pearse Óg McCrickard.

Eoin Delaney, who maintained fine form all through the game, got a timely score for Tooreen after a lapse of eleven minutes when they left the scoreboard



NET: Cathal Freeman scored the crucial goal for Tooreen in their brilliant win over Liatroim Fontenoy's.

Photo: Ray McManus / SPORTSFILE.

keeper idle.

Pearse Óg McCrickard, who was outstanding for the Down team, converted a free as play swung from end to end.

In the closing fifteen minutes of the first half, patrons were treated to a real contest with both sides trading four points apiece. Lively and dashing, Fergal Boland shipped a few heavy tackles that were borderline when it came to the colour of the cards issued by the referee.

It was clear that he came in for special attention probably brought on by the impact he had in the Connacht Final.

Two well-taken points from frees by Seán Kenny, and a fine score from Liam Lavin, steadied things for Tooreen again but Tiarnan Murphy and Pearse Óg fired up the Liatroim supporters with two exceptional scores from play.

Others from frees by Pearse Óg had the margin down to three.

Eoin Delaney, not for the first time, showed instinctive skills by clipping over a fine score on the stroke of half-time to leave the Mayo champions ahead by 1-8 to 0-7.

When Pearse Óg McCrickard converted two frees early in the second half, the margin was down to two. Cometh the hour, cometh the man and it was Fergal Boland who delivered one of the scores of the day after a scorching run through the Liatroim defence.

Ronan McCrickard and Liam Lavin swapped fine scores at either end before Tooreen again took a firm hold on the game. Brian Morley set up Seán Regan for a wonderful point from distance, Seán Kenny landed three long range frees,

Fergal Boland provided a class delivery to Eoin Delaney for another superb point and young Eoin completed a fine display with another from play to stretch the Tooreen lead to nine points

The game appeared to be petering out to an inevitable conclusion when Seán Duggan blasted the ball to the Tooreen net with a superb strike.

Further points from Pearse Óg McCrickard cut the margin to four and the game was alive again. However, late scores from Fergal Boland and Seán Kenny saw Tooreen in the winner's enclosure and Croke Park bound in January.

This was a steady performance by Tooreen but one below the high quality of their superb display against Killimor in the Connacht Final.

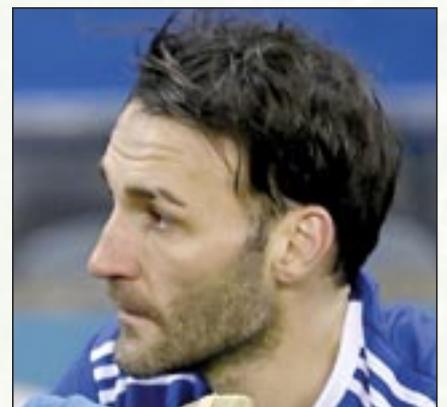
The rearguard coped admirably with the threat from the Down lads with Oisín Greally giving a solid display against the highly accomplished Pearse Óg McCrickard. Joe Boyle, Stephen Coyne and David Kenny were solid all through with Conor Henry and Michael Morley secure in the fullback line in front of Bobby Douglas.

Fergal Boland and Eoin Delaney excelled in the attack with Liam Lavin, Seán Regan and Cathal Freeman making major contributions to this special day for hurling in Tooreen.

TOOREEN: B Douglas; C Henry, M Morley, O Greally; J Boyle, S Coyne, D Kenny; S Kenny (0-6f), D Huane; L Lavin (0-2), F Boland (0-3), B Morley; S Regan (0-1), C Freeman (1-2), E Delaney (0-4). **Subs:** J Cassidy for B Morley, G Nolan for D Huane, D Harrison for E Delaney, S Leneghan for L Lavin.

LIATROIM: M McCartan; R McCrickard (0-1), O Duggan, R O'Hare; C Lynch, W McCartan, P Davidson; R McCrickard (0-1), C McCrickard (0-1); PJ McComiskey, PJ Davidson, P Óg McCrickard (0-9, 8fs); T Murphy (0-2), J McAleenan, S Duggan (1-0). **Subs:** D McCann for C Lynch, M Leneghan for R McCrickard, A Laverty for PJ McComiskey.

REF: C Mooney (Dublin).



The Tooreen rearguard coped admirably with the threat with Joe Boyle solid all through.



Brave Easkey fall short

All-Ireland Junior Club Hurling
Championship - Final

Ballygiblin1-16
Easkey0-11

TALK about setting the tone. Ballygiblin's Darragh Flynn fired home after just nine seconds on the clock to send the Cork men on their way to an emphatic nine point win against Easkey to become AIB All-Ireland junior club champions.

Having lost the final last season, Cork hurling star Mark Keane charged right from the throw-in and drove right through the heart of the Sligo side's defence to lay off to Flynn to fire to the net.

Flynn with ten on his back moved from the wing to the forty was an inspired decision. The switch, the start, the finish. It all accumulated in the victory for the Cork men, the sixth side from their county to do so at this level.

Named on the GAA Champion 15 last year Sligo's Andrew Kilcullen showed exactly why for his club. Easkey responded through the full forward and stayed in touch through his marksmanship.

However, the goal would prove to be the difference and would remain the closest margin between the two sides. In their best spell with three successive scores Kilcullen (brace) and Joe McHugh pulled it back to 1-4 to 0-4.

Joe O'Sullivan was in excellent form for Ballygiblin though and finished with 10



TEAMWORK: Eoghan Rua McGowan and James Weir (3) of Easkey battle for possession with Ballygiblin's Seán O'Sullivan.

Photo: Piaras Ó Midheach / SPORTSFILE.

points to his name. His free taking and leadership saw his side pull ahead just at half time and especially upon the resumption.

Cork football panelist Cathail O'Mahony made it 1-8 to 0-6 at the turn, the first of his three points but there was more to come and an air of inevitability surrounding Croke Park such was the

Cork side's control and experience.

Kilcullen and impressive Dónall Hanley pulled scores back but Easkey needed goals and with Ballygiblin only conceding one goal throughout their All-Ireland winning run, that kickstart never looked likely.

O'Sullivan took control with three points in a row midway through the half and O'Mahony enjoyed himself after missing last season with injury. The sixth side to win an All-Ireland junior from Cork full back Fionn Herlihy gladly climbed the Hogan Stand steps to receive silverware.

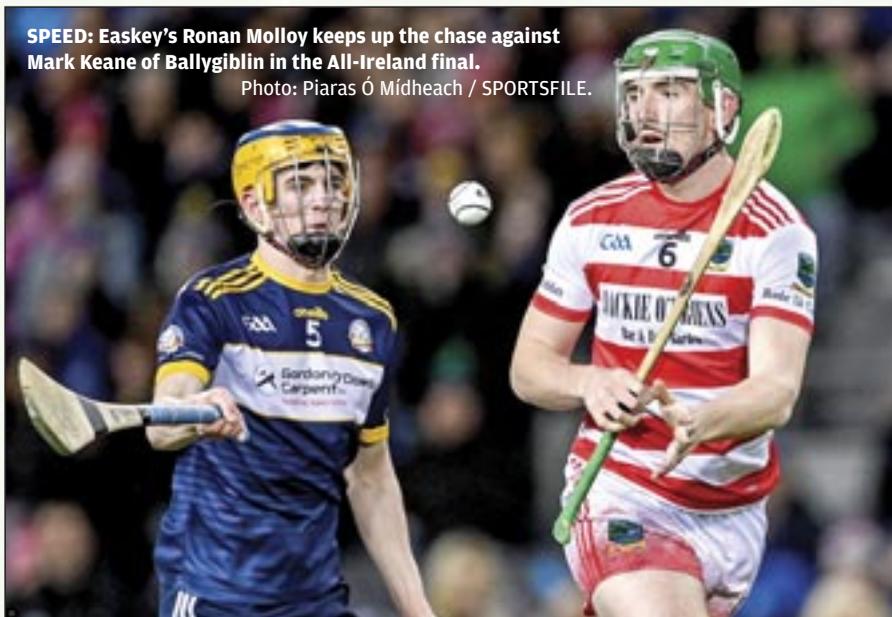
SCORERS - Ballygiblin: J O'Sullivan 0-10 (0-6 f, 0-1 65), C O'Mahony 0-3, D Flynn 1-0, S Beston 0-2, D Barry 0-1.

Easkey: A Kilcullen 0-5 (0-3 f), J McHugh 0-2, R McHugh, M Gordon, D Hanley, T Cawley 0-1 each.

BALLYGIBLIN: C Noonan; J Mullins, F Herlihy, L Finn; M Lewis, M Keane, B Coffey; R Donegan, K Roche; J O'Sullivan, D Flynn, S Beston; D Barry, S O'Sullivan, C O'Mahony. **Subs:** K Duggan for Barry (34), D Sheehan for S O'Sullivan (54), P Molloy for Beston, A O'Brien for Roche, C O'Brien for Finn (all 60).

EASKEY: J Gordon; S Molloy, E Rua McGowan, J Weir; R Molloy, N Kilcullen, F Connolly; D Hanley, F Cawley; T Cawley, R McHugh, F Moylan; M Gordon, J McHugh, A Kilcullen. **Subs:** G Connolly for Hanley (46), E Moylan for F Moylan (52), B Feeney for S Molloy (54), L Reddy for R Molloy, T Rolston for Cawley (60).

REF: C Flynn (Westmeath).



SPEED: Easkey's Ronan Molloy keeps up the chase against Mark Keane of Ballygiblin in the All-Ireland final.

Photo: Piaras Ó Midheach / SPORTSFILE.

Easkey reach All-Ireland Junior final after epic battle

All-Ireland Junior Club Hurling
Championship - Semi-final

Easkey3-15
Kilburn Gaels4-6

The Sligo Champion

THE Easkey hurling fairytale continued in the unlikely surroundings of Darver in County Louth as Michael Gordon's charges booked a dream date in Croke Park with this impressive semi-final victory over London opposition.

Just four years after the small-ball game was revived at adult level in the club, the three-in-a-row Sligo senior champions can now look forward to an All-Ireland Junior decider against Ballygiblin of Cork in the coming weeks.

That will likely represent a step up in class compared to the challenge posed by Kilburn Gaels, but Easkey's confidence levels will be high after they overturned a seven-point deficit to send the All-Britain Junior champions crashing out at the penultimate stage.

The semi-final had been moved from Pairc Tailteann in Navan during the week due to weather concerns following the big freeze, but the temperature was a balmy 8 degrees come the 1pm start time at the Louth GAA Centre of Excellence. However, it felt more like zero as a gale-force wind blew straight across the pitch, making life extremely difficult for players and spectators alike.

Nevertheless, it was soon evident that there would be no repeat of the dour Connacht decider where Easkey prevailed 0-5 to 0-4 against Galway's Ballygar in even tougher conditions.

After Andrew Kilcullen pointed the Sligo men in front, Kilburn quickly replied with their first score - a goal - when Mark O'Dwyer's long, wind-assisted delivery from the left wing dropped over keeper Jimmy Gordon into the net.

Colin Nelson then converted a free for the London side, only for Easkey to haul themselves level on 11 minutes when Eoghan Rua McGowan arrowed a high ball in towards Andrew Kilcullen who made a great catch before driving low past Conor McNally in the Kilburn goal - 1-1 apiece.

Half back Ronan Molloy came up the field to point Easkey ahead, but fortunes turned Kilburn's way after Nelson restored parity with a point from an acute angle.



STAR: Andrew Kilcullen scored an amazing 2-9 for Easkey.

Photo: Harry Murphy / SPORTSFILE.

Easkey full back Gavin Connolly pulled his hamstring in that incident, to be replaced by Bernard Feeney, and O'Dwyer immediately added a second goal for Kilburn, with Nelson adding a '65 to put his side 2-3 to 1-2 ahead on the quarter-hour mark.

Easkey had lost their way in front of the posts as one wide, one short into the keeper's hands and a Finnian Cawley point attempt off the upright were followed by a third Kilburn goal in the 22nd minute. Donal Reale it was who raised the green flag, expertly scooping the ball to the net despite being under pressure from two defenders.

Andrew Kilcullen and Nelson exchanged frees to leave seven points between the sides, but Easkey made inroads in the five minutes coming up to half-time as Kilcullen converted a free and added a point from play - Kilburn argued the latter score should have been signalled wide - before Mikey Gordon plundered a fine score to leave Easkey trailing by only 3-4 to 1-6 at the break.

Goalscorer Kilcullen wasted two scoring opportunities straight after the restart, however, and the momentum was back with Kilburn when substitute Anthony Hands fired home yet another goal to leave seven between the teams once more - 4-4 to 1-6 on 33 minutes

Crucially, though, Easkey delivered an emphatic and immediate response as the fleet-footed Rory McHugh soloed impressively towards goal before unselfishly teeing up Andrew Kilcullen who found the net once more.

Easkey hit top gear after that as Kilcullen and Finnian Cawley added points and Kilcullen had two further goal

chances snuffed out before the full forward was dragged down for a clear-cut penalty. Rory McHugh duly shot past McNally and suddenly Easkey had the lead - 3-8 to 4-4 after 40 minutes.

Sensing a chance to put this semi-final to bed, Easkey pushed on and Kilcullen converted a long-range free before Thomas Cawley got in on the act, nonchalantly making it a three-point game - 3-10 to 4-4. Joe McHugh added another beautifully struck point into the teeth of the wind from the right touchline.

Kilburn looked like they might still make a game of it when Nelson hit their first two points of the second half, but Kilcullen replied with another fantastic score from distance that again was disputed by the Kilburn management on the sideline - 3-12 to 4-6.

The London side had a goal chance to draw level on 56 minutes, but Nelson's shot was kept out by keeper Gordon and Easkey sealed victory with further scores from the outstanding Kilcullen (2) and Rory McHugh.

EASKEY: Jimmy Gordon; Shane Molloy, Gavin Connolly, James Weir; Ronan Molloy 0-1, Eoghan Rua McGowan, Donáll Hanley; Finnian Cawley 0-1, Niall Kilcullen; Fionn Connolly, Mikey Gordon 0-1, Rory McHugh 1-1 (1-0p); Thomas Cawley 0-1, Andrew Kilcullen 2-9 (0-4f), Joe McHugh 0-1.
Subs: Bernard Feeney (C) for G Connolly (13), Fionn Moylan for Cawley (61).

KILBURN GAELS: Conor McNally; Ian Byrne, Matthew Lambert, Brian McCarthy; Christopher McAlinden, Conor Byrne, Evan Kelly; Patrick Earley, Fergal Collins; Jack Kirwin, Mark O'Dwyer 2-0, Darragh O'Sullivan; Ryan O'Donnell, Colin Nelson 0-6 (3f, 1'65), Donal Reale 1-0.

Subs: Anthony Hands 1-0, Cillian McSweeney, Conor Murphy.

REF: Kevin Brady (Louth).



St Thomas' walk into a Dunloy haymaker

All-Ireland Senior Club Hurling Championship- Semi-final

Dunloy1-14
St Thomas'0-13

It wasn't so much the result that spread shock and awe. It was more the manner of the win. Dunloy didn't just down St Thomas', they dominated them.

The same as Athenry in 1995 and Portumna in 2004, St Thomas' walked unsuspectingly into an All-Ireland semi-final haymaker from Dunloy. Here is where we should write that Thomas' never recovered from said haymaker. But in truth, the Galway champions never got going to have anything to recover from.

We'll deal further down with the full extent of Thomas' toothlessness. We must first pay tribute to Dunloy's complete disregard for the conventional wisdom that said Thomas' would reach a third All-Ireland club final in 10 seasons and Dunloy would come up short in a seventh All-Ireland semi-final.



CLASH: St Thomas' Brendan Farrell has a shot blocked by Phelim Duffin of Dunloy Cuchullains.

Photo: Eóin Noonan / SPORTSFILE.



POWER: Oisín Flannery of St Thomas in action against Dunloy's Ryan McGarry at Croke Park.

Photo: Sam Barnes / SPORTSFILE.

For a club that hadn't hurled outside of Ulster in 13 years, Gregory O'Kane's charges were supremely comfortable on the All-Ireland semi-final stage. There was no inferiority complex. No hang ups.

What there was plenty of was belief. Confidence too. A bullish confidence you don't typically associate with Antrim hurling teams on a stage such as this.

They took the game to their opponents as early as the 18th second when Nigel Elliott threw over their opener and never took a backward step thereafter. They never once found themselves behind during an authoritative second-half display.

It was almost unnecessary the amount of Thomas' goal opportunities they had to foil at game's end. It shouldn't have come to that. Dunloy had enough chances in the preceding hour to have long wrapped up the club's progression to a fifth All-Ireland final and first since 2004.

The first All-Ireland club hurling semi-finals were played in 1971. In the 51 years of the competition, an Antrim club team had reached the final on nine occasions. That figure rose to double digits on Sunday. Antrim involvement in the decider has been so infrequent that a big deal can't but be made when one of their proud hurling fraternities weaves a path to the



CONTROL: Damien McGlynn of St Thomas holds off the challenge from Ryan McGarry of Dunloy in the All-Ireland semi-final.

Photo: Sam Barnes / SPORTSFILE.

concluding day of the club championship.

What stood out about Sunday's upset - for it was an upset - was how Dunloy kept their opponents on the backfoot for so much of the hour.

Proceedings were deadlocked at 0-6 apiece at half-time. Dunloy should have been below in their boots at the break. They had registered nine first half wides, one of which was a Nigel Elliott goal chance whipped wide. Add onto that an 18th-minute Conal Cunning penalty saved by Thomas' keeper Gerald Kelly and you're looking at 2-8 that Dunloy left behind them.

Now, not all of that tally were gimmes. But you get the gist of the point that Dunloy's interval total should have been much more than 0-6.

The Ulster winners had been beyond wasteful. In this year of soaring energy costs, Dunloy had headed south for the day with the immersion and every light in the community left on.

But this first half prolificacy unsettled them not a jot. Three from the stick of Conal Cunning pushed them 0-9 to 0-6 in front on 43 minutes.

Conor Cooney's 44th minute free was Thomas' first score of the second period. It was a footnote in Dunloy's third quarter dominance. There followed 1-1 from the underdogs to move their lead out to six.

The goal was a thing of a beauty, as was the Anton McGrath point that followed it. The green flag was instigated by a fine Nigel Elliott fetch. He promptly offloaded to Keelan Molloy, who left four red shirts trailing in his wake before slamming the sliotar past Kelly.

The 1-1 stirred Thomas' belatedly into action. Conor Cooney (0-2, one free), Mark Caulfield, and Damien McGlynn struck four-in-a-row to reduce the gap to two. The gap was still two on 56 minutes. But then arrived a Dunloy three-in-a-row from Nigel Elliott, top-scorer Cuning, and Eamon Smyth to finally take the result

beyond their fancied opponents.

St Thomas' will have plenty of regrets. The result can't be one of them. Sure, they had their injuries. Neither Shane Cooney nor Darragh Burke were deemed fit enough to start. Two more first-team regulars James Regan and David Sherry were absent. But you're going nowhere when failing to score from play between the 16th and 48th minute. A wides tally of 15 will haunt them.

If last January's semi-final defeat to Ballyhale was heartbreak, this was a horror show.

In a year where Antrim secured a return to hurling's top tier, Sunday's result is another step in the right direction for the county. After four All-Ireland final defeats, can Dunloy now go and take that last step on the fourth weekend of January.

SCORERS - Dunloy: C Cuning (0-7, 0-3 frees, 0-1 '65); Keelan Molloy (1-2); N Elliott (0-2); E Smyth, S Elliott, A McGrath (0-1 each).

St Thomas': C Cooney (0-6, 0-4 frees); M Caulfield, D McGlynn (0-2 each); E Duggan, O Flannery, É Burke (0-1 each).

DUNLOY: R Elliott; P Duffin, R McGarry, O Quinn; E Smyth, Kevin Molloy, A Crawford; E McFerran, C Kinsella; N Elliott, Keelan Molloy, R Molloy; S Elliott, C Cuning, D Smith. **Subs:** A McGrath for Smith (29 mins); P Shiels for Crawford (33, inj); N McKeague for N Elliott (58); G McTaggart for R Molloy (63).

ST THOMAS': G Kelly; C Mahony, F Burke, J Headd; E Duggan, David Burke, C Burke; B Burke, C Cooney; M Caulfield, O Flannery, D McGlynn; V Manso, B Farrell, É Burke. **Subs:** C Headd for Farrell (HT); S Cooney for Manso (42); Darragh Burke for Caulfield (53).

REF: J Keenan (Wicklow).



SHOT: St Thomas' forward Conor Cooney shoots for goal.

Photo: Sam Barnes / SPORTSFILE.

Glen reach historic first All-Ireland final



OPEN: Moycullen's Michéal O'Reilly wriggles free of the tackle from Tiernán Flannagan of Glen during the All-Ireland semi-final.

Photo: Ray McManus / SPORTSFILE.

All-Ireland Senior Club Football Championship - Semi-final

Glen1-11
Moycullen0-12

ANOTHER semi-final where a goal proved of critical importance, another semi-final where the winners survived a late onslaught to triumph.

There were plenty parallels between the second All-Ireland club football semi-final and the game that preceded it, with

Derry's Watty Grahams Glen ultimately fashioning success to join Kilmacud Crokes in the decider.

It will be the first Derry-Dublin clash at this level since 1995 when Kilmacud overcame Bellaghy. This is a time of incomparable joy for the Glen club, their maiden All-Ireland decider coming fast on the heels of last month's Ulster breakthrough. They were left grateful to Tiernán Flannagan's crucial goal early in the second half, while midfielders Emmet Bradley and Conor Glass landed valuable points when their team needed them most.

Malachy O'Rourke continues to shine in the managerial stakes, an All-Ireland club decider now awaits in a fresh chapter in his career.

It was a day where Galway's Moycullen were also entering uncharted territory. Champions locally for the first time in 2020, when Covid prevented any provincial or national club competitions occurring, they had flourished when rounding out 2022 with Galway and Connacht titles.

Two points was an agonising margin to fall short by. They attempted to work a goal from a late free, Dessie Conneely playing it short to Peter Cooke but he was crowded out and his shot repelled as the

SOLO: Eoghan Kelly of Moycullen in action against Glen's Conleth McGuckian of Glen at Croke Park.

Photo: Ray McManus / SPORTSFILE.





FOUL: Owen Gallagher of Moycullen gets held back by Conor Glass of Glen.

Photo: Daire Brennan / SPORTSFILE.

Glen rearguard remained defiant.

In a way it was fitting that it fell to Conneely, the team captain, and Cooke to try to conjure up a piece of magic to save the day for the Galway outfit. From the entire team tally of 0-12, they notched 0-10.

Conneely's free-taking was measured and important in landing eight scores, while on an afternoon where space was hard to find in a frenetic game, Cooke clipped over a stylish point from play in each half.

The standards are exacting at this level though and both players were left frustrated at point attempts in the finale tailing wide into the Davin End, Conneely from a free when they were two adrift and Cooke from play when there was three in it.

Moycullen deserved admiration for hauling themselves back into contention. When they switched to man-to-man combat, they prospered. Their pressing of the Glen knockout was wonderful and their feverish tackling yielded several turnovers

as they made life hard for the Derry player in possession.

And yet they were always chasing this game, primarily because Glen were the superior team at the start of either half. They began the match with a blend of pace and intensity that overwhelmed Moycullen, snapping over four points without reply in the first ten minutes. The pick of the bunch came from Ethan Doherty after an eye-catching, marauding run.

It was 0-6 to 0-4 at the interval, Moycullen may not have scored until the 18th minute but they were firmly in contention at the break. But significantly Glen pounced again after half-time, Flanagan tacking home the rebound after Eunan Mulholland's initial shot was blocked.

That proved the only goal of the game and Glen were flying when they went five points up with 20 minutes left. The finale would test their resilience though.

Vital scores were needed at different junctures. Conor Glass supplied one, a fine kick as he profited from Emmet

Bradley's leap to catch and deliver a pass. The first half had seen Bradley weight in with two vital points.

Then in the closing moments Michael Warnock fisted over one point and Cathal Mulholland kicked another, both scores registered after patient, probing team moves.

It was sufficient to keep them ahead until the close of this encounter.

SCORERS - Glen: D Tallon 0-3 (0-1f), E Bradley 0-3 (0-1f), T Flannagan 1-0, E Doherty 0-2, C Glass 0-1, C Mulholland 0-1, M Warnock 0-1.

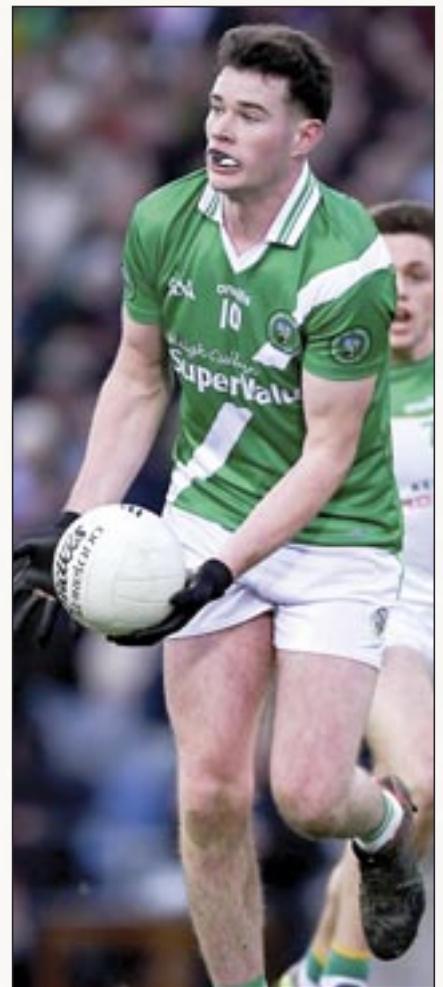
Moycullen: D Conneely 0-8 (0-8f), P Cooke 0-2, O Gallagher 0-1, N Walsh 0-1.

GLEN: C Bradley; C Carville, R Dougan, C Mulholland; T Flanagan, M Warnock, E Doherty; C Glass, E Bradley; E Mulholland, J Doherty, C Convery; C McGuckian, D Tallon, A Doherty.

Subs: C McCabe for Convery (38), S O'Hara for A Doherty (53).

MOYCULLEN: A Power; C Corcoran, E Kelly, N Mulcahy; M O'Reilly, D Wynne, A Claffey; P Kelly, G Davoren; T Clarke, N Walsh, P Cooke; S Kelly, O Gallagher, D Conneely. **Subs:** F McDonagh for Walsh (53), C Bohan for P Kelly (58), D Cox for O'Reilly (60).

REF: David Gough (Meath).



CHANCE: Moycullen's Gerard Davoren in action at Croke Park.

Photo: Ray McManus / SPORTSFILE.

Nugent hat-trick helps Galbally past Dunmore MacHales

All-Ireland Intermediate Club Football Championship - Semi-final

Galbally Pearses4-4
Dunmore MacHales1-9

A first half hat-trick from Ronan Nugent sucked the life out of Dunmore MacHales at St Loman's GAA club in Mullingar, as Galbally Pearses ensured that both the intermediate and junior club finals at Croke Park would see Kerry clubs taking on Tyrone opposition.

Playing against a stiff breeze, Nugent's first goal came in the third minute, as he showed a nice first touch to slot the ball past Gleeson, soccer-style.

Dunmore responded three minutes with a goal of their own when Damien Redington finished an excellent team move. Shane McGrath and Dylan Brady quickly added points, and with eight minutes gone, the North Galway side were three points to the good.

They didn't build as they would have wished however and in the 16th minute, Nugent and Cormac Donnelly played a one-two with one another, with Nugent collecting the return to place a ball into the top corner of the net.

The centre forward didn't wait around to grab his hat-trick either. A Pádraig Costello free restored Dunmore MacHales' lead, and in minute 20, Nugent and Donnelly were again the catalysts for the Ulster champions' third goal, Nugent using his left foot to finish to the net on this occasion.

That lead became 3-1 to 1-5 by the end of the half, as Liam Rafferty and Costello exchanged scores.

The bitter breeze favoured Galbally after half time but they struggled to get to grips with it, racking up seven wides in the third quarter, while Costello scoring the only point of that spell from a free.

Daniel Kerr ended Galbally's scoring drought in the 46th minute, but the ensuing 10 minutes belonged to the Connacht champions as they inched a point in front with three minutes to play.

Donnelly made a fantastic mark from the restart following Costello's lead point however, and immediately used the wind to his aid. He sent a raking diagonal pass the way of Kerr, who caught it, and slid the ball into the net, breaking Dunmore hearts and setting Galbally up to close out their win with the last two points of the game.

SCORERS - Galbally Pearses: R Nugent 3-1, D Kerr 1-1, L Rafferty 0-1, C Donaghy 0-1f.

Dunmore MacHales: P Costello 0-6f, D Redington 1-0, S McGrath 0-1, D Brady 0-1, T Gleeson 0-1.

GALBALLY PEARSEs: R McGeary; L Rafferty, C Quinn, Connor Donnelly; M Lennon, C Morris, J Hetherington; E McGarrity, Cormac Donnelly; S Wylie, R Nugent, B Carberry; S Murphy, C Donaghy, D Kerr. **Subs:** A Carberry for B Carberry (49), F McGarrity for Lennon (58), M Donnelly for Kerr (60+2), P McCaughy for Murphy (64).

DUNMORE MACHALES: C Gleeson; C Lyons, D Rattigan, L Murray; D Forde, C Mitchell, S Murray; M Redington, S McGrath; T Gleeson, J Coen, D Brady; D Redington, P Costello, J Slattery. **Subs:** B Carr for Coen (42), M Cleary for Slattery (62).

REF: B Cawley (Kildare).

Veterans rise to help Stewartstown past Clifden in extra-time

All-Ireland Junior Club Football Championship - Semi-final

Stewartstown Harps1-14
Clifden1-9
(after extra-time)

By **KEVIN EGAN**

VETERANS Gareth Devlin, Anton Coyle and Greg Kelly came up with big plays in extra-time to settle a thrilling junior club championship semi-final at Dr. Hyde Park, as Stewartstown Harps eventually found a way past Naomh Feichin of Clifden despite trailing for the vast majority of the contest.

The Tyrone club enjoyed the lion's share of possession throughout the game and looked physically stronger than their youthful Connemara opponents, but they struggled to turn their chances into scores,

and trailed at half-time thanks to a really well-taken goal by John O'Brien after 20 minutes.

1-2 to 0-4 was a narrow interval lead, but with a strong wind at their backs for the second half, Clifden looked poised to advance to next Sunday's Croke Park decider, all the more so after Ger Gibbons sent over a string of excellent frees.

Dylan McElhatton, Gareth Devlin and Macauley Quinn all failed to convert goal chances for Stewartstown while their wide count mounted too, but corner back Jason Park proved to be the unlikely hero as his score sent the game into overtime.

A wonderful pass from Anton Coyle into Gareth Devlin set up what looked like a match-winning goal for the Harps in the first half of stoppage time as they led by 1-11 to 1-9 with the wind to come for the closing ten minutes, but a black card for Jason Campbell at the start of stoppage time threatened to derail their chances.

Darragh Kennedy came up trumps for Clifden with a powerful run that won a penalty with five minutes to play, but Greg

Kelly saved Gibbons' spot kick, and three late points from Devlin and Coyle confirmed the Tyrone club's win which secures a showdown with Fossa next weekend.

SCORERS - Stewartstown Harps: G Devlin 1-6 (0-4f); G O'Neill, T Rush, D McElhatton, S Talbot, J Park, M Quinn, T Lowe (m), A Coyle (f) 0-1 each.

Clifden: G Gibbons 0-9 (0-8f), J O'Brien 1-0.

STEWARTSTOWN HARPS: G Kelly; J Park, D Devlin, C Quinn; K Robinson, M Rooney, G O'Neill; S Talbot, M Quinn; T Rush, C Devlin, D McElhatton; D Lowe, G Devlin, T Lowe. **Subs:** C O'Neill for C Devlin (46), A Coyle for T Lowe (57), J Campbell for McElhatton (60), T Lowe (15th man for ET), D Coyle for O'Neill (80), McElhatton for Robinson (80).

CLIFDEN: I Staunton; G King, J Mannion, N Murray; R King, M O'Toole, S Black; C Joyce, S Sweeney; C Coneys, G Gibbons, H O'Toole; E Conneely, J O'Brien, E Moran. **Subs:** D Kennedy for Conneely (h-t), D Joyce for O'Brien (42), C Connolly for G King (47), E Mahon for Moran (57), Conneely for Joyce (66), C O'Donnell for H O'Toole (77), T Madden for Coneys (80).

REF: J Hayes (Limerick).



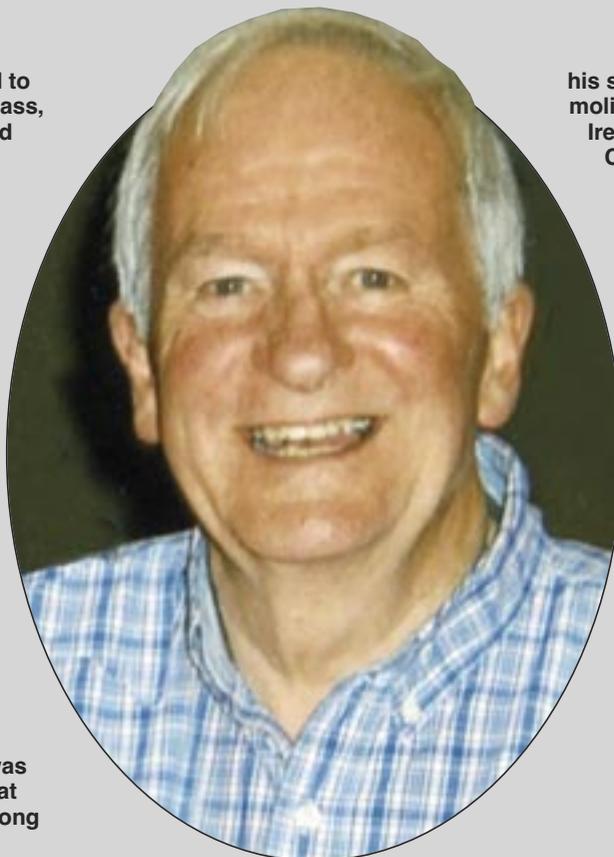
John Cosgrove has left an outstanding legacy

TRIBUTES have been paid to John Cosgrove, Knockglass, Crossmolina, who passed away last week.

A native of Carrowmore Lacken, Mr Cosgrove was the retired principal of Crossmolina Boys' National School. He was also widely known throughout Mayo as a leading GAA referee and the photograph that accompanies this article shows John refereeing the 1980 County Senior Football Final between Knockmore and Castlebar Mitchels.

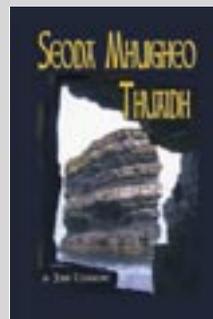
Mayo GAA were among the bodies to pay tribute to John, who played for Crossmolina Deel Rovers before taking up the whistle. He was also a two-time All-Ireland winner of Scór Trath na gCeist.

In his role as principal of Crossmolina Boys NS, John was instrumental in instilling a great passion for Gaelic football among



his student, and most of the Crossmolina team that won the All-Ireland Senior Football Championship in 2001 were former pupils. A talented musician, he also encouraged a love for music in his students, many of whom paid glowing tributes to John on social media

Following his retirement, John devoted a lot of his time to local history and published very detailed histories of Crossmolina Deel Rovers and his native Lacken Sarsfields. In 2020, he completed arguably his finest work of all, Seoda Muigheo Thuaidh, a collection of seanfhocla as Gaeilge from north Mayo. Professor Séamus Caulfield described the book as "magnificent".



John is sadly missed by his wife Mary, daughters, Claudette (McLoughlin), Claire (Loftus), Terri Sue, Sile (Butler); sons, Martin and Colin; sister, Terry Lavin (Lacken); brother, Michael (USA); aunt, Maud McHale (Lacken); sons-in-law Henry, John Gerard, Michéal, and Michael; daughters-in-law, Olive and Eithne; brothers-in-law and sister-in-law, 14 adoring grandchildren, Caoimhe, Cian, Maeve, Fionn, John, Tom, Darragh, Aoiibeann, Emma, Saoirse, Daniel, Finn, Leah and Ciara, nephews, nieces, cousins, neighbours and friends.



Referee John Cosgrove is pictured with Castlebar Mitchels captain Leo Doherty (left) and Knockmore vice-captain Seamus Durkan before the 1980 Mayo Senior Football Final.

Picture: Western People Archives



TRIUMPH: Kilkerrin-Clonberne celebrate another brilliant All-Ireland success. Photo: Ben McShane / SPORTSFILE.

Back-to-back All-Ireland champs

Ladies Football All-Ireland Senior Club Championship - Final

Kilkerrin-Clonberne0-13
Donaghmoynne0-7

By DAIRE WALSH

OLIVIA Divilly and Chloe Miskell kicked a combined tally of 0-9 at Croke Park on Saturday as Kilkerrin-Clonberne successfully defended their currentaccount.ie All-Ireland Senior Club Championship title with a convincing win over Monaghan's Donaghmoynne.

After securing their maiden Senior national crown against Cork outfit Mournabbey at the beginning of the calendar year, Kilkerrin-Clonberne once again marked themselves as the finest

club team in the land. Cora Courtney led the way for Donaghmoynne with three points from play, but the Farney side ultimately came up short on the day.

Within the opening five minutes of the contest, Eva Noone, Miskell, Olivia Divilly and team captain Louise Ward had all raised white flags for Kilkerrin-Clonberne. Donaghmoynne were struggling to establish the same sort of attacking foothold, but wing-forward Amy Garland eventually got them off the mark with an 11th-minute point.

There were a couple of nervous moments for Kilkerrin-Clonberne either side of the first-quarter mark, but a second point from Louise Ward helped to ease any nerves the Tribeswomen might have been experiencing.

There was an abundance of experience in the Donaghmoynne ranks, however, and the Monaghan outfit came to life thanks to a brace of superb points by the influential Cora Courtney.

Nevertheless, Kilkerrin-Clonberne kept their composure and unanswered scores from the attacking duo of Lynsey Noone and Olivia Divilly (two) ensured the Connacht side brought a 0-8 to 0-3 buffer into the half-time break.

Olivia Divilly was one of Galway's leading lights in this year's inter-county championship and her fourth point on the restart edged Kilkerrin-Clonberne a step closer to another national crown. Miskell doubled her own personal haul on 38 minutes, but Willie Ward's charges suffered a temporary set-back when defender Hannah Noone was sent to the sin-bin moments later.

Although Donaghmoynne inside forward Cathriona McConnell kicked a superb score in her absence – and Lauren Garland rattled the crossbar with a speculative shot – Miskell's two-point salvo left Kilkerrin-Clonberne in an even stronger position for Noone's eventual return on the stroke of 50 minutes.



CLEAR: Kilkerrin-Clonberne's Louise Ward drives past the challenge of Donaghmoynne's Cora Courtney at Croke Park.
Photo: Ben McShane / SPORTSFILE.



PASS: Siobhán Divilly of Kilkerrin-Clonberne in action against Aoife Burns of Donaghmoynne in the All-Ireland final.
Photo: Ben McShane / SPORTSFILE.



CLOSE: Ailish Morrissey of Kilkerrin-Clonberne tries to hold off the pressure from Sharon Courtney of Donaghmoynne at Croke Park in Dublin.
Photo: Ben McShane / SPORTSFILE.

Olivia Divilly once again split the posts off a close-range free to put nine points between the sides with the final whistle approaching. While Donaghmoynne finished strongly with successive scores from sisters Rosemary Courtney (two) and Cora Courtney, Kilkerrin-Clonberne were full value for a six-point triumph.

SCORERS - Kilkerrin-Clonberne: O Divilly 0-5 (3f), C Miskell 0-4, L Ward 0-2, E Noone (f), L Noone 0-1 each.

Donaghmoynne: C Courtney 0-3, R Courtney 0-2, A Garland, C McConnell 0-1 each.

KILKERRIN-CLONBERNE: L Murphy; C Costello, S Gormally, C Dunleavy; K Mee, N Ward, H Noone; S Divilly, L Finnegan; O Divilly, L Ward, L Noone; E Noone, A Morrissey, C Miskell.

Subs: N Divilly for Finnegan (47), S Fahy for Mee (52), M Flanagan for L Noone (53), Caitlin Boyle for Morrissey (58), Caoimhe Boyle for Miskell (59).

DONAGHMOYNE: L Martin; J Geoghegan, N Callan, A Callan; F Courtney, S Courtney, E Traynor; C Courtney, E McElroy; A Garland, R Courtney, S McConnell; C McConnell, L Garland, A Burns. **Subs:** G Comiskey for A Burns, A McElroy for S McConnell (both 53), D Collier for A Callan, J Courtney for Geoghegan, S Burns for A Garland (all 59).

REF: Jonathan Murphy (Carlow).



Manley seals famous win

Ladies Football All-Ireland Junior Club Football Championship – Final

Salthill-Knocknacarra1-7
Naomh Abán0-4

By **DARREN KELLY**

ALYSSA Manley's goal in the final minute of normal time settled this contest as Salthill-Knocknacarra were crowned currentaccount.ie All-Ireland Junior Ladies Football Champions in Fethard Town Park.

After building up a six-point interval lead, Cork's Naomh Abán, despite going to 14 players after Roisin Corkery's second yellow card, got back to within three points before Salthill-Knocknacarra's winning goal.

A late change of venue meant a 90-minute delay but that didn't affect the Galway champions who opened through Kate Thompson's point inside two minutes.

Corkery picked up her first sin-bin trip afterwards before Siobhan Divilly won a free which Laura Kelly converted for a second Salthill-Knocknacarra point.

Lauren O'Donnell converted their third on 12 minutes as they also allowed some opportunities to slip. However, Donal O'Connell's team continued applying pressure and doubled their advantage by the break.

Thompson got the next two points, the first from play thanks to a Manley assist; the second from a free after Divilly was fouled.

Naomh Abán had three first half wides but never seriously threatened their opponents' goals and conceded another score before the break as Manley provided Kelly who shot just over the bar.

The Cork champions needed to be more assertive upon the restart and started perfectly with Lydia McDonagh and Corkery supplying Eimear Murphy for a point. However, they wouldn't add again until the final quarter and lost Corkery on 42 minutes.

However, Grace Murphy and McDonagh got two points inside a minute to reduce the deficit to 0-6 to 0-3 on 48 minutes but a couple of other chances went a begging.

Salthill-Knocknacarra got their seventh point through Kelly but Grace Murphy responded leaving it 0-7 to 0-4.

A goal was needed by Noel McDonagh's team but it went the other way. Thompson and O'Donnell were the heroes for Manley to finish to the net putting six between them.

Naomh Abán tried to find a saving score in five minutes of added time but it wasn't to be. Salthill-Knocknacarra held on to secure All-Ireland silverware to finish the year.

SCORERS - Salthill-Knocknacarra: A Manley 1-0, K Thompson 0-3 (1f), L Kelly 0-3 (1f), L O'Donnell 0-1.

Naomh Abán: G Murphy 0-2 (1f), E Murphy 0-1, L McDonagh 0-1.

SALTHILL-KNOCKNACARRA: L Carroll; A Mullen, E Madden, O De Bairread; S Donnellan, Z Rather, R Reddington; S Divilly, A Finnerty; L Kelly, L O'Donnell, K Thompson; D O'Connell, A Manley, A Nash. **Subs:** D Brennan for Reddington (58), A Kelly for Divilly (60), M Mulligan for Madden (60).

NAOMH ABÁN: L Hughes; U Twohig, M Dineen, A Creedon; E Kelly, R Corkery, ME Kelleher; A McDonagh, G Lucey; A Hoare, E Murphy, C Phelan; G Murphy, L McDonagh, A Maher. **Subs:** J Kelly for Maher (35), C Murphy for Phelan (50).

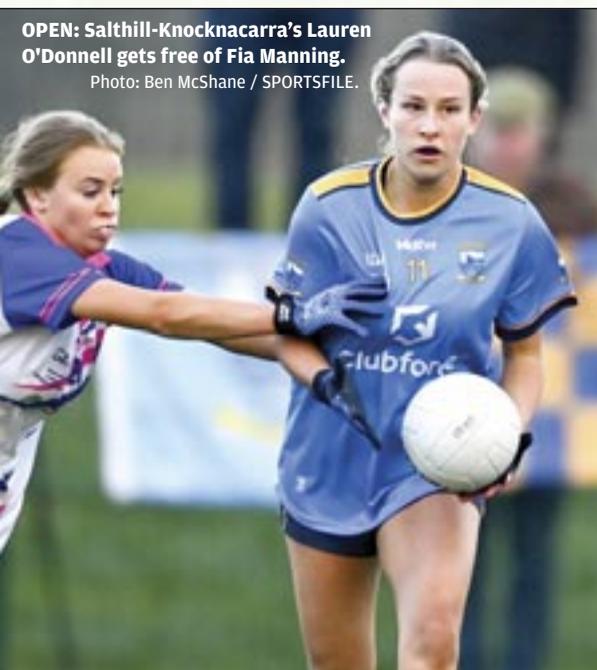
REF: S Mulvihill (Kerry).



TURN: Kate Thompson of Salthill-Knocknacarra evades the tackle of Emma Kelly of Naomh Abán.
Photo: Ben McShane / SPORTSFILE.



WINNERS: Salthill-Knocknacarra celebrate their fantastic All-Ireland success in Fethard, Tipperary. Photo: Ben McShane / SPORTSFILE.



OPEN: Salthill-Knocknacarra's Lauren O'Donnell gets free of Fia Manning.
Photo: Ben McShane / SPORTSFILE.



STRONG: Ailbhe Finnerty of Salthill-Knocknacarra is tackled by Amy McDonagh.
Photo: Ben McShane / SPORTSFILE.





CHAMPS: Sarsfields celebrate another famous night in Croke Park. Photo: Piaras Ó Mídheach / SPORTSFILE.

Brilliant Sarsfields back on top

All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship - Final

Sarsfield2-14
Loughgiel Shamrocks1-14

By SARAH GAUGHRAN
Galway Camogie

SARSFIELDS were crowned back-to-back All-Ireland Champions when they overcame a tough challenge from Loughgiel Shamrocks from Antrim. Sarsfields had to dig deep and grind out the victory, something they have gained with their experience over the last 7 years playing at the top level of club camogie in Ireland.

Sarsfields got off to a dream start with Siobhán McGrath finding the back of the Loughgiel net after 40 seconds. Credit must go to Eimear Boyle in the Loughgiel Shamrocks net who denied the initial shot but McGrath got at the end of the rebound and made no mistake in sticking it in the back of the net. One of the young stars of the team, Caoimhe Kelly followed added a point to the Sarsfields tally two minutes later with McGrath adding a close range free after 5 minutes to leave them 5 points ahead after 5 minutes.

Mary McKillen, Róisín McCormick and Lucia McNaughton helped in getting Loughgiel off the mark after 6 minutes but Niamh McGrath through a point from play and Siobhán through a free ensured Sarsfields maintained a 4-point lead heading into the 20th minute. Sarsfields were dealt

a major blow on the 22nd minute when their centre half back, Maria Cooney went down on her ankle and was forced off due to the injury. It was clear that this blow rattled Sarsfields and Loughgiel took full advantage of the blow scoring 1-3 on the trot when Cooney went off. McCormick



CHANCE: Shannon Corcoran of Sarsfields races clear of Clare McKillop of Loughgiel Shamrocks.

Photo: Stephen Marken / SPORTSFILE.



OPEN: Clodagh McGrath of Sarsfields emerges from a sea of bodies against Loughgiel Shamrocks.

Photo: Piaras Ó Mídheach / SPORTSFILE.



pointed a free on the 24 th minute while Antrim senior star, Cairtrín Dobbin broke through for a goal for Loughgiel.

Annie Lynn tagged along to more points to leave Loughgiel Shamrocks 2 points ahead, something that was hard to see happening after the fantastic start that Sarsfields got. Kelly and Klara Donohue settled the ship for Sarsfields before the break to leave the sides deadlocked at 1-6 a piece heading into the half time break.



McCormick gave Loughgiel their lead back inside the opening minute through a free, but Sarsfields went on one of their scoring sprees scoring 1-3 without reply. Siobhán McGrath and Shannon Corcoran added points from play on the 35 th and 36 th minutes while McGrath set up Rachel Murray on the 37th for their second major of the day. This goal was the difference between the teams at the end of the game.

Niamh McGrath pointed a long range free 2 minutes later to leave them 2-9 to 1-7 ahead. Just like the 1st half, Loughgiel took a strong hold of the game in the middle of the half scoring 0-5 without reply. Four McCormick frees and one from play from Dobbin meant that the sides were deadlocked with 8 minutes to play. Siobhán McGrath and McCormick exchanged frees on the 53 rd and 54 th minutes. With 5 minutes of normal time remaining, Sarsfields dug deep to try and grind out the victory.

Points from Niamh McGrath, one from play and a fantastic long range free, Siobhán McGrath, through a free, and substitute, Sarah Spellman meant that Sarsfields had a comfortable 4-point lead heading into injury time. McCormick did get her 9 th free of the day on the 62 nd minute but it was too little too late as Sarsfields ran out 3-point victors. It finished Sarsfield 2-14 Loughgiel Shamrocks 1-14.

Sarsfields have now won 3 of the last 4 All-Ireland Senior Club titles. It has been a very successful and historic year for the club winning the Club All-Ireland back in

March, the league and championship titles in Galway and now they have added their second Club All Ireland Title in the same calendar year to their role of honour.

This would have been the sweetest of them all for Sarsfields as they had to win without key players such as Orlaith McGrath, Erica Leisle and they also lost Maria Cooney early on in the game. It highlights the strength and dept and talent in their panel and it must be credited. Loughgiel Shamrocks deserve a lot of credit for contributing to a fantastic spectacle of camogie. They have worked very hard to get to this stage having lost 6 Ulster finals in a row to Slaughtneil. They have great talent in their panel and they will learn from the experience and come back stronger.

SCORERS - SARSFIELDS: S McGrath 1-5 (5fs); R Murray 1-0; C Kelly 0-2; N McGrath 0-3 (1f); K Donohoe, S Corcoran, S Spellman 0-1 each.

Loughgiel Shamrocks: R McCormick 0-9 (9 fs); C Dobbin 1-1; A Lynn 0-2; L McNaughton, M McKillen 0-1 each.

SARSFIELDS: L Glynn; R Kelly, L Ward, K Gallagher; T Kenny, M Cooney, J Daly; C McGrath, N McGrath; K Donohoe, R Murray, C Kenny; S Corcoran, S McGrath, C Kelly. **Subs:** S Spellman for Cooney (inj 24); C McGrath for Kelly (62)' C Cahalan for Corcoran (65).

LOUGHGIEL SHAMROCKS: E Boyle; C Campbell, K Lynn, C McKillop; M Lynn, U McNaughton, S Devlin; A Boyle, L Mcaughton; C Laverty, M McKillen, A Connolly; C Dobbin, R McCormick, A Lynn. **Subs:** K McKillop for Connolly (45); C Boyle for Campbell (50); C Higgins for Laverty (62).

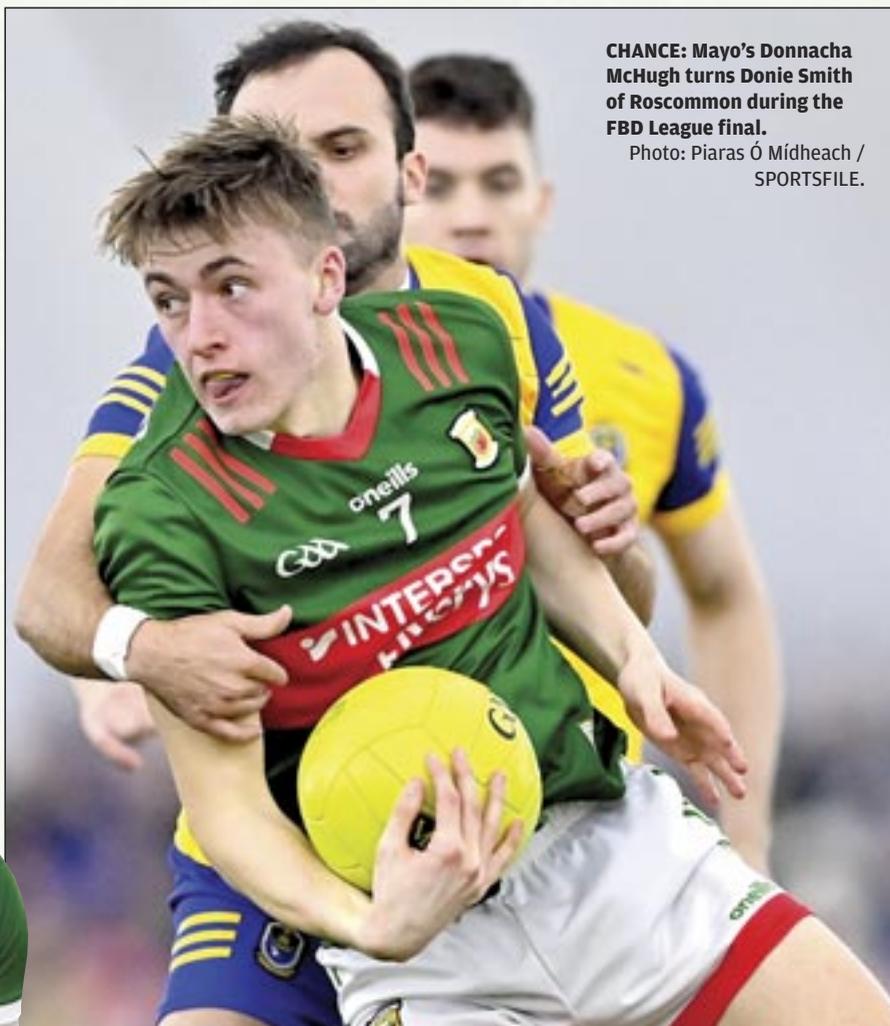
REF: Liz Dempsey (Kilkenny).



Mayo capture first FBD title in a decade



CHEERS: Mayo captain Stephen Coen lifts the cup after his side's win in the FBD League final.
Photo: Piaras Ó Mídheach / SPORTSFILE.



CHANCE: Mayo's Donnacha McHugh turns Donie Smith of Roscommon during the FBD League final.

Photo: Piaras Ó Mídheach / SPORTSFILE.

FBD League - Final

Mayo0-13
Roscommon0-9

By MIKE FINNERTY

LATE scores from Cillian O'Connor and Conor Loftus nudged Mayo to their first Connacht FBD League title for ten years at University of Galway Air Dome in Began.

Kevin McStay's experimental side were deserving winners over a shadow Roscommon selection after a

lacklustre and low-scoring encounter in front of around 1,500 spectators.

Despite scoring just once from play in the opening half — a point from Fionn McDonagh after just 15 seconds — Mayo led at the interval by 0-5 to 0-2.

Roscommon were very slow out of the blocks and struggled to break down the homeside's well-organised defensive structure.

In fact, Davy Burke's side only opened their account on 21 minutes through Niall Daly and their only other white flag arrived from Diarmuid Murtagh three minutes into additional time.

Down at the other end, Ryan O'Donoghue kept the scoreboard ticking over for Mayo with three frees and a well-taken score from a mark.



The Mayo team which defeated Roscommon in the FBD League final

POWER: Mayo goalkeeper Colm Reape is tackled by Roscommon's Ciarán Lennon at the University of Galway Connacht GAA Air Dome in Began.

Photo: Piaras Ó Mídeach / SPORTSFILE.



The second half did see the game open up a little as both teams became slightly more adventurous.

The arrival of Donie Smith and Conor Cox into the Roscommon attack also added a much-needed cutting edge with both of them playing key roles in the visitor's revival.

But Mayo were still setting the pace midway through the second half, leading by 0-10 to 0-6 and keeping their neighbours at arm's length thanks to excellent scores from play from Conor McStay, captain Stephen Coen and Jordan Flynn.

Roscommon then made things more

interesting when Donie Smith landed two superb points in less than a minute to cut the gap in half.

Mayo also lost full-back Rory Brickenden to a red card as the plot thickened

But the eventual winners — who had drafted in both Aidan O'Shea and Cillian O'Connor at that stage — held their composure and three points down the home stretch saw them win the Paddy Francis Dwyer Cup for the first time in a decade.

A late score from Roscommon sub Peter Gillooly came too late to affect the final outcome.

MAYO: C Reape; J Coyne, R Brickenden, E Hession (0-1); S Coen (0-1), C Loftus (0-1), D McHugh; J Flynn (0-1), D O'Connor (0-1, 1f); F McDonagh (0-1), B Tuohy, B Walsh; A Orme, C McStay (0-1), R O'Donoghue (0-3, 2fs, 1 mark). **Subs:** A O'Shea for B Tuohy; E McLaughlin for Walsh; S Callinan for McHugh; P Tovey for McStay; C O'Connor (0-2, 1f) for Orme; R Keane for Hession; E Gibbons for O'Donoghue; J Tuohy for Coen; F Kelly for Loftus.

ROSCOMMON: C Carroll; R Dolan, C Hussey, R Fallon; E McCormack, B Stack, C Daly; N Daly (0-1), K Doyle (0-1); C Glennon, C Murtagh, D Ruane; D Murtagh (0-2), C Lennon, P Carey.

Subs: D Smith (0-2) for C Murtagh; A McDermott for D Murtagh; D Heneghan for Cian Glennon; C Kennelly for Ruane; C Cox (0-2, 1f) for Lennon; C Walsh for Daly; B O'Carroll for Lennon; P McGrath for Fallon; P Gillooly (0-1) for Gaughan.

REF: M McGirl (Leitrim).



SURGE: Keith Doyle of Roscommon breaks through the challenges of Aiden Orme (left) and Jack Coyne of Mayo.

Photo: Piaras Ó Mídeach / SPORTSFILE.



Mayo hold off Galway's late charge



CHARGE: Fenton Kelly of Mayo pulls clear of Galway attacker Barry McHugh at the NUI Galway Connacht GAA Air Dome in Began.

Photo: Ray Ryan / SPORTSFILE.



SWING: Galway's Matthew Barrett wrestled the ball away from Jordan Flynn of Mayo in the FBD League semi-final.

Photo: Ray Ryan / SPORTSFILE.

FBD League - Semi-final

Mayo2-18
Galway3-12

KEVIN McStay tasted his first victory as a manager over Galway when Mayo knocked out the defending FBD League champions and All-Ireland finalists out of this year's competition.

But with the two clashing again in two weeks' time in the first round of the Allianz League there was a touch of shadow boxing about this affair watched by a sell-out attendance of 1,200.

Only eight of the players who featured in the Connacht quarter-final last summer started the game and Mayo were in complete control at half-time, leading by ten points at the break.

But the introduction of Tomo Culhane at the break and the late appearance of Damien Comer saw the Tribesmen stage a spirited second-half revival and there was just three points between the teams at the end of normal time. But Mayo hung on to qualify for next weekend's final

against Roscommon.

Between them the Mayo full-forward line of Aiden Orme, James Carr and Paul Towey scored 2-11 with all bar 0-2 of this total coming from play.

Scores were at a premium in the early exchanges with just four points (two each) being scored in the opening ten minutes. There was nothing between the sides, though Galway took the lead on three occasions the home side pegged it back each time, and the teams were level on four occasions.

But gradually Mayo got on top – the work-rate of their forwards was pivotal as they forced a succession of turnovers against the inexperienced Galway rear-guard.

Rob Finnerty, who had scored 2-3 for DCU in the Sigerson Cup midweek – missed what looked a routine mark in the 20th minute and it was the start of a woeful spell for the All-Ireland finalists.

The key score arrived in the 23rd minute when the tenacious efforts of James Carr resulted in Dylan McHugh being turned over on his own 45 metre line. Carr combined with Matthew Ruane



CHANCE: Paul Toweey of Mayo takes his opportunity despite the attentions of Ian Burke in the FBD League at NUI Galway Connacht GAA Air Dome. Photo: Ray Ryan / SPORTSFILE.

who released Paul Toweey who made no mistake from close range for the game's opening goal.

Mayo piled on the pressure to tag on another two points before Galway had their first score in ten minutes when McHugh pointed a free after Matthew Tierney had missed two long-range placed kicks.

But the home side took complete control in the dying minutes of the half, adding 1-1 with James Carr hitting their second goal in injury time to leave them 2-9 to 0-5 ahead at the break.

Culhane was one of four substitutes Galway introduced at the break and he made an impression hitting a Galway goal in the 42nd minute though it was Ian Burke who did most of the work.

Their work-rate improved significantly as they won a succession of turnovers, outscoring Mayo 1-3 to 0-1 in the first ten minutes of the second half.

Mayo regrouped and their ability to turn over Galway and run at them from deep saw them improve their scoring rate though at a slower rate than in the second quarter.

They had re-established a seven-point advantage with 15 minutes left through Galway captain Tierney fluffed a decent goal chance soon afterwards.

He made amends though eight minutes from the end finding the Mayo net after a brilliant fetch from Comer who had just been introduced. It was back to a

six-point game. And it got better for the visitors with a point from Comer and

Culhane grabbed his second goal to cut the deficit to two points.

A point-blank save from Mayo goalkeeper Rory Byrne denied Galway's Nathal Grainger in the last minute of normal point before a point from Bob Tuohy eased Mayo nerves at the death. A useful work out for both sides and Pádraic Joyce will be pleased with his side's spirited comeback, though McStay will be less pleased with his team's dramatic fade-out.

SCORERS – Mayo: P Toweey 1-4 (0-2f); A Orne 0-5 (1f); J Carr 1-2; B Walsh 0-3; F McDonagh, M Ruane, K Callaghan, B Tuohy 0-1 each.

Galway: T Culhane 2-2; J Heaney 0-3; M Tierney 1-0; B McHugh (1f); R Finnerty 0-2 each; C Sweeney J Maher, D Comer 0-1 each.

MAYO: R Byrne; J Coyne, R Brickenden, S Callinan; F Kelly, S Coen, D McHugh; M Ruane, J Flynn; F McDonagh, B Tuohy, B Walsh; A Orme, J Carr, P Toweey. **Subs:** K Callaghan for McDonagh (57), G Durcan for Carr (61), C Dunleavy for Kelly (67), C Dempsey for Walsh (69), R Carolan for Toweey (70+1).

GALWAY: B Power; S Fitzgerald, B Mannion, J Foley; C Sweeney, D McHugh, D Flaherty; J Maher, M Barrett; D Canney; M Tierney, J Heaney; I Burke; R Finnerty, B McHugh. **Subs:** E Kelly for Foley (h-t), E Murphy for Barrett (h-t), P Kelly for Canney (h-t), T Culhane for McHugh (h-t), J Kirrane for Sweeney (53), J McLoughlin for Maher (56), D Comer for Fitzgerald (60), N Grainger for Burke (67), B Mannion for Flaherty (70).

REF: B Judge (Sligo).



STEP: Galway forward Matthew Tierney gets around Mayo goalkeeper Rory Byrne.

Photo: Ray Ryan / SPORTSFILE.

Doyle's goals send Roscommon through

FBD League - Semi-final

Roscommon3-17
Sligo2-13

By **KEVIN EGAN**

ROSCOMMON picked up a seven-point victory and secured their place in the FBD final at the Connacht GAA Air Dome against but there was plenty for Sligo manager Tony McEntee to appreciate in this contest as well.

Like last week's meeting between Mayo and Leitrim in this competition, this was a clash between two sides that will play their football at opposite ends of the Allianz Football League in the coming months. However for the opening 35 minutes, Sligo were the better team and were full value for their 2-9 to 1-9 interval lead.

After the game, McEntee said that while he understood that it could lead to his side becoming disjointed, his priority was Sligo's upcoming league battle with Laois, and he was happy to make seven substitutions at half-time, including withdrawing Pat Spillane from midfield and Pat O'Connor from full-forward, both of whom had been exceptional up to that point.

When Donal Conlon was sent off after



OPEN: Brian Cox of Sligo in action against Ben O'Carroll of Roscommon in the FBD League semi-final.

Photo: Piaras Ó Mídeach / SPORTSFILE.



STEP: Roscommon's Paul Carey rounds Paul Kilcoyne of Sligo at University of Galway Connacht GAA Air Dome in Began.

Photo: Piaras Ó Mídeach / SPORTSFILE.

collecting a second yellow card in the 40th minute, Roscommon had all the impetus. They levelled the tie by the 48th minute and while ten scoreless minutes followed that – possibly a record scoring drought for intercounty games at the Air Dome – team captain Keith Doyle stepped up for the team in a big way in the closing minutes, firing in two excellent goals to secure the win.

It was all a world away from the early exchanges, though Ben O'Carroll, Diarmuid Murtagh and Paul Carey all kicked excellent points to push the Rossies three points clear. That lead was briefly wiped out when Seán Carrabine goaled and then restored when a glorious pass from Diarmuid Murtagh found O'Carroll to make it 1-5 to 1-2 with 15 minutes gone, but from then on, Sligo owned the second quarter and were very impressive.

Carrabine, Pat O'Connor and Pat Spillane were all excellent, combining to score 2-7 out of Sligo's 2-9 in the half. Roscommon showed some craft going forward, led by the mercurial Murtagh, but in the physical stakes they struggled to compete with their opponents, and trailed by three points at the interval.

It was at that point however that McEntee chose to change seven out of his 15 starters, and while both sides emptied their bench by the end, Roscommon found it easier to maintain continuity after

doing so in stages, while they also were well served by most of their subs, most notably Adam McDermott, Rúaidhrí Fallon, Aengus Lyons and Darragh Heneghan, all of which made positive contributions towards their win.

SCORERS - Roscommon: K Doyle 2-2, D Murtagh 0-5 (0-3f), B O'Carroll 1-2, P Carey 0-3 (0-1f), A McDermott 0-2, B Stack 0-1, N Daly 0-1, C Kennelly 0-1m.

Sligo: P O'Connor 1-3 (1-0 pen), S Carrabine 1-2 (0-1f), P Spillane 0-2, D Quinn 0-1f, P McNamara 0-1, N Mullen 0-1, C Lally 0-1, O Flynn 0-1, N Murphy 0-1f.

ROSCOMMON: C Lavin; D Murray, E McCormack, D Gaughan; P Gavin, C Hussey, B Stack; N Daly, K Doyle; C Lennon, D Murtagh, D Ruane; B O'Carroll, C Cox, P Carey. **Subs:** T Crean for Murray (34), A Lyons for Gavin (half-time), A McDermott for Cox (42), D Heneghan for Ruane (45), R Fallon for Lennon (49), C Glennon for Daly (49), R Dolan for Gaughan (53), C Sugrue for Carey (55), S Cunnane for Murtagh (59), C Kennelly for O'Carroll (62).

SLIGO: D Lyons; N Mullen, E McGuinness, L Nicholson; J Lavin, D Cummins, B Cox; P Kilcoyne, P Spillane; J Keane, S Carrabine, D Quinn; C Lally, P O'Connor, D Conlon.

Subs: G O'Kelly Lynch for Keane (half-time), M Walsh for Kilcoyne (half-time), O Flynn for Spillane (half-time), K Gavigan for Quinn (half-time), L Towey for Cox (half-time), N Rooney for O'Connor (half-time) P McNamara for Nicholson (half-time), E Smith for Carrabine (46), E Lyons for McGuinness (46), N Murphy for Lally (55).

REF: Chris Ryan (Galway).

Finnerty's 2-7 helps All-Ireland finalists Galway book semi-final spot

FBD League

Galway3-21
Leitrim1-13

By **JOHN FALLON**
Media West Ireland

ALL-IRELAND finalists Galway advanced to a FBD League semi-final showdown with Mayo with a comprehensive 14 points win over Leitrim.

Pádraic Joyce's men laid the foundation for the win in the opening half but Leitrim never gave up and there was just a point between them in the second-half exchanges.

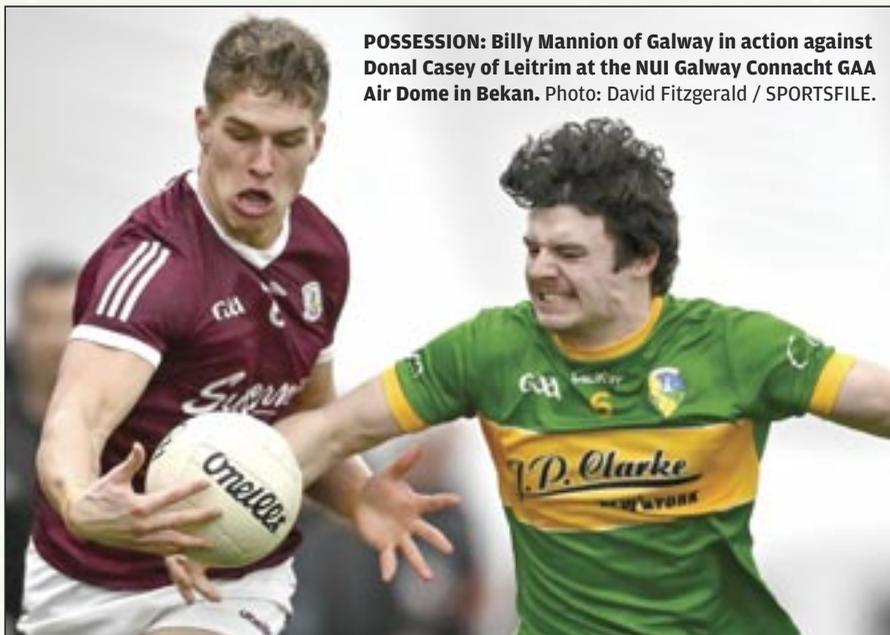
Galway, with five of their All-Ireland final team starting, got on top from the outset and built up a 2-12 to 0-5 interval lead with some flowing football in front of a crowd of 1,200 at the Connacht Air Dome in Began.

Former All Star Ian Burke, back for his first game since the 2020 Connacht final, was sharp and involved in a lot of Galway scores but it was full-forward Rob Finnerty who led the way with the scores, shooting 1-6 in the opening half, with all but two of it coming from play.



DANGER: Galway sharpshooter Robert Finnerty gets his chance in front of goal.

Photo: David Fitzgerald / SPORTSFILE.



POSSESSION: Billy Mannion of Galway in action against Donal Casey of Leitrim at the NUI Galway Connacht GAA Air Dome in Began. Photo: David Fitzgerald / SPORTSFILE.

The goal came after eight minutes after he was set by Burke to open up a 1-3 to 0-1 lead.

Leitrim's opening three points came from placed balls from Keith Beirne and by the time Darragh Rooney kicked their first point from play after 26 minutes, they were 1-9 to 0-4 adrift as Galway dominated all the key positions.

Another free from Beirne was all Leitrim managed before the interval as Galway, with Cillian McDaid and John Maher on top in midfield, pulled away with debutant wing-back Daniel Flaherty and corner-back Johnny McGrath among the scorers.

There was a bad blow for Leitrim before the interval when Burke scrambled home a goal to push the lead at the break out to 13 points.

Paul Keaney pulled back a point after the restart for Leitrim which Galway sub Tomo Culhane cancelled shortly afterwards but Andy Moran's men got a big boost when a good run by Jack Heslin was finished to the net by Barry McNulty after 40 minutes.

Beirne added another free moments later to cut the gap to nine points.

But that was as close as they got. Cathal Sweeney, Matthew Tierney and Finnerty quickly kicked points as both sides emptied their benches.

Five Galway subs managed to score after coming on as the Tribesmen continued to be full of running and it was no surprise when they got a third goal.

It came when Finnerty slotted home a penalty after 56 minutes after sub Brian Mannion was fouled just when it seemed he was poised to hit the net.

Veteran Paul Conroy, who made his debut back in 2008, came on and scored for Galway as they ran out deserved winners against a Leitrim side who battled to the end with Keith Beirne finishing the contest with ten points.

SCORERS - Galway: R Finnerty 2-7 (1-0 pen, 0-3f), I Burke 1-1, T Culhane 0-2 (0-1f), J Heaney 0-1f, J McGrath 0-1, E Murphy 0-1, C Sweeney 0-1, M Tierney 0-1f, D O'Flaherty 0-1, P Conroy 0-1, N Grainger 0-1, B Mannion 0-1, D Canney 0-1.

Leitrim: K Beirne 0-10 (0-8f, 0-1m), B McNulty 1-0, P Keaney 0-2 (0-1m), D Rooney 0-1.

GALWAY: B Power; J McGrath, S Fitzgerald, J Foley; B Mannion, D McHugh, D O'Flaherty; J Maher, M Tierney; C Sweeney, C McDaid, J Heaney; B McHugh, R Finnerty, I Burke.

Subs: E Murphy for Heaney (10-17, temp), T Culhane for McHugh (h-t), M Barrett for McDaid (h-t), Murphy for O'Flaherty (44), B Mannion for Burke (52), J Kurrane for Foley (52), P Conroy for Tierney (57), D Canney for Heaney (57), D Varley for Mannion (60), T O'Malley for Power (60), N Grainger for Finnerty (63).

LEITRIM: N O'Donnell; A Reynolds, D Casey, C Reynolds; S Quinn, C Farrell, R O'Rourke; P Keaney, D Wrynn; A Flynn, J Heslin, D Rooney; O McLoughlin, K Beirne, E Sweeney.

Subs: C McGloin for Farrell (10-15, temp), B McNulty for McLoughlin (h-t), D Flynn for Quinn (h-t), T Quinn for A Reynolds (46), McGloin for Farrell (46), M McKiernan for Sweeney (55), S McLoughlin for C Reynolds (67).

REF: A Clogher.



Galway coast past Wexford

National Hurling League

Galway0-23
Wexford0-15

GALWAY provided all the hurling in the second half to ease their way to a comfortable eight-point victory over Wexford in a disappointing league-opener at Chadwicks Wexford Park.

In the process the Westerners also lifted the Walsh Cup, the final of which doubled up with this league encounter, but there was still evidence that considerable improvement is needed if they hope to add further silverware this season.

Both sides were short a number of key players even before Galway were further depleted by the absences of Joseph Cooney and Kevin Cooney, who missed the game owing to a family bereavement.

Galway started uncertainly but their second-half dominance was indisputable. Such was their control that the winning margin should have been greater.

Both sides had gone toe to toe in the opening minutes but the finishing was wayward. After Donal Reck free and Donal O'Shea exchanged points,

Wexford hit three unanswered points through Conor McDonald, free, Charlie McGuckin and Mikie Dwyer to lead 0-4 to 0-1 after ten minutes.



POWER: Galway forward Evan Niland tries to evade the challenge of Wexford's Liam Ryan.

Photo: Piaras Ó Mídheach / SPORTSFILE



POWER: Galway forward Evan Niland tries to evade the challenge of Wexford's Liam Ryan.

STRONG: Galway goalkeeper Éanna Murphy is tackled by Wexford's Conor McDonald at Chadwicks Wexford Park.

Photo: Piaras Ó Mídheach / SPORTSFILE.

Wexford were still leading 0-6 to 0-4 when Conor Devitt was penalised for a foul on Conor Whelan, but Evan Niland saw his resulting penalty saved by keeper Mark Fanning, with Jason Flynn pointing following a loose clearance.

Very little was to separate the sides for the remainder of the half with Evan Niland pointed frees keeping Galway very much in contention, while Cathal Dunbar, two, Simon Donohoe and Kevin Foley responded with Wexford points which left the sides level 0-1 each at the interval.

Once Galway hit a 0-13 to 0-11 lead with points from Niland and sub Brian Concannon, they went on to control the second period as Niland continued to show his accuracy from placed balls.

Still leading 0-13 to 0-10 after fifty minutes, Galway raised the tempo as Padraig Mannon, Sean Linnane and Geariod McInerney exerted their influence. They soon silenced the home supporters in a crowd 8,200, stretching their advantage thanks to points by Nilan, Sean Linnane and Jason Flynn.

Wexford never looked like recovering, and Galway flowed through the gears, cutting gaping holes in the home defence with sub Liam Collins pointing after a sweeping move, when he should have goaled, batting the cross over the bar from a few metres.

The contest petered out in the final quarter, and spectators started to file away. After full-time, Galway manager Henry Shefflin no doubt left the ground a happy man.

SCORERS - Galway: E Niland (0-10, 8f, 2, '65s), C Whelan, L Collins (0-2 each), T Killeen, J Manion, D O'Shea, D Morrissey, T. Monaghan, B Concannon, S Linnane, J Flynn, R Murphy (0-1 each).

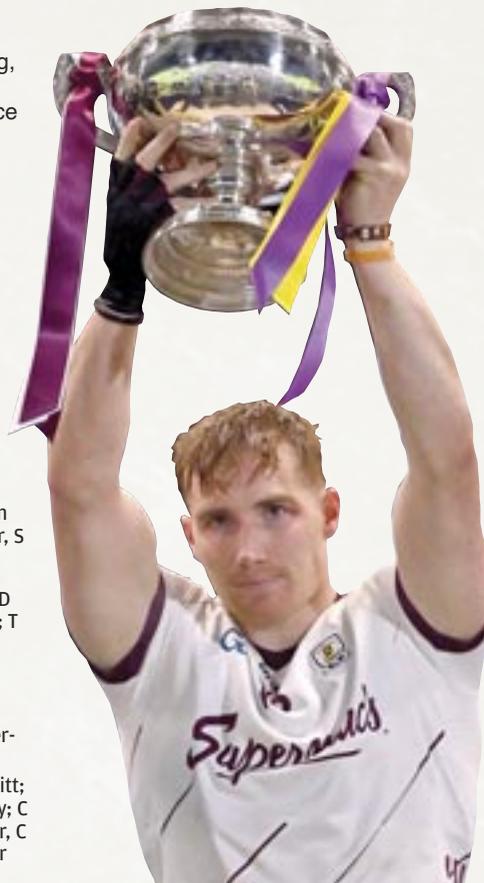
Wexford: C McDonald (0-4 frees), C McGuckin (0-3), D Reck (0-2, 1f), C Dunbar (0-2), M Dwyer, S Donohoe, K Foley, L Ryan (0-1 each).

GALWAY: E Murphy; J Grealish, G McInerney, D Morrissey; E Lawless, P Mannion, T J Brennan; T Killeen, S Linnane; T Monaghan, C Whelan, D O'Shea; J Mannion, E Niland, J Flynn.

Subs: O Salmon for Brennan; R Murphy for Killen, B Concannon for J Mannion (all ht), L Collins for O'Shea (60), J Fitzpatrick for McInerney (67).

WEXFORD: M Fanning; S Reck, L Ryan, C Devitt; C Foey, D Reck, S Donohoe; D O'Keefe, K Foley; C Hearne, L Og McGovern, C McGuckin; C Dunbar, C McDonald, M Dwyer. **Subs:** C Byrne Dunbar for McGovern (50), J Doran for K Foley (54), R Higgins for Dwyer (54), C Flood for Hearne (61), D Clarke for S Reck (66).

REF: J Keenan (Wicklow).



TRIUMPH: Galway captain Conor Whelan lifts the Walsh Cup after his side's victory over Wexford. Photo: Piaras Ó Midheach / SPORTSFILE.



The Fire Brigade arrives at the stadium due to a small fire at the back of the main stand before the clash between Wexford and Galway at Chadwicks Wexford Park.

Wexford's clash with Galway delayed after main stand evacuated due to fire scare



CHANCE: Galway's Donal O'Shea of Galway in action against Conor Foley of Wexford during their National Hurling League tie. Photo: Piaras Ó Midheach / SPORTSFILE.

THE National League Hurling Division 1 opener between Wexford and Galway was delayed for 15 minutes after a fire broke out at the back of the main stand at Chadwicks Wexford Park around 45 minutes before the appointed throw-in time of 5.0.

What was described as a small fire, possibly caused by an electrical fault, caused a complete evacuation of the main stand with spectators moved on to the playing pitch.

But after taking the necessary precautions ground officials allowed spectators back to their seats around 4.30 after about a ten-minute period.

The ground recently unveiled new floodlights which were turned on for the Walsh Cup visit of Kilkenny two weeks ago and also for Wexford's National Football League tie against London.

Tribesmen put Antrim to the sword

Walsh Cup

Galway1-31

Antrim2-15

GALWAY put Antrim to the sword at Darver in the final round of group games in the Walsh Cup.

The Tribesmen had 13 different scorers to Antrim's 10, but like the defeat to Westmeath last week, a high wides tally was a disappointment for Darren Gleeson's side.

Jason Flynn opened the scoring for Galway and they doubled the lead before Niall McKenna hit the first of his and Antrim's three early points, but already the wides were staking up as five shots had gone past the posts before he tied the game at 0-3.

Galway upped it a gear and the scores began to flow with a fine spread across the board. Liam Collins was prominent with five in the opening period, while Jarlath Mannion hit three.

Seamus McAuley's point on 13 minutes was the last Antrim score before Galway hit 1-5 without response, the goal coming on 16 minutes as Flynn burst clear and zipped a pass into Mannion who shimmied and buried past Tiernan Smyth.

The Saffrons were 11 adrift late in the half before a good finish with two McManus points from frees and a goal from Rian McMullan, who whipped home after initially being hooked to narrow the



STRENGTH: Galway forward Mark Kennedy in action against Antrim's Eoghan Campbell in Darver, Louth.

Photo: Stephen Marken / SPORTSFILE.

gap at the break with Galway 1-15 to 1-9 ahead.

Collins picked up where he left off with his sixth point just after the break while Seán O'Hanlon ensured all six starting forwards were on the board with the first of his four second-half points.

Galway hit five on the spin after the break before Antrim grabbed a lifeline as

Eoin O'Neill intercepted a stray puc-out and drilled to the bottom left corner of the net. But the Tribesmen just motored on with the scores flowing, Ronan Glennon pointing.

Antrim matched Galway score-for-score in the final quarter with substitutes Paul Boyle, Conor Johnston and Gerard Walsh all registering, but the Galway bench was just as effective with Tom Monaghan, Cianan Fahy and Declan MacLoughlin all getting on the board as they made it three wins from three in Group One ahead of the final, but while Antrim lost all three, there was still plenty to take out of their campaign.

ANTRIM: T Smyth; D McMullan, P Burke, N O'Connor; C McKernan, E Campbell, S Walsh; D McKernan, J Maskey (0-1); M Bradley (0-1), S McAuley (0-1), N McKenna (0-4); E O'Neill (1-0), N McManus (0-4, 3f), R McMullan (1-0).

Subs: G Walsh (0-1) for C McKernan (46), E McAlonan (0-1) for D McKernan (46), C Johnston (0-1) for R McMullan (46), S Rooney for S Walsh (46), P Boyle (0-1) for J Maskey (46), E Og McGarry for N McKenna (56), A Bradley for S McAuley (60), E Trainor for D McMullan (65), C McGarry for E O'Neill (65).

GALWAY: M Fahy; O Salmon, J Fitzpatrick, D Morrissey; S Ryan, Joseph Cooney, J Canning; R Glennon, G Lee; S O'Hanlon, J Flynn, K Hanney; M Kennedy, J Mannion, L Collins.

Subs: J Grealish for J Canning (HT), D MacLoughlin (0-2) for J Mannion (46), K Cooney for L Collins (49), C Fahy (0-1) for K Hanney (53), E Murphy for M Fahy (55), John Cooney for M Kennedy (59), T Monaghan (0-1) for Joseph Cooney (60), S Linnane for D Morrissey (65).

REF: Eamonn Furlong (Wexford).



OPPORTUNITY: Galway's Liam Collins gets a shot away against Antrim in the Louth Centre of Excellence.

Photo: Stephen Marken / SPORTSFILE.

Shefflin's Galway impress in Walsh Cup opener

Walsh Cup

Galway3-28
Westmeath0-20

By **JOHN FALLON**
 Media West Ireland

HENRY Shefflin's Galway got their year off to an impressive start when an understrength side scored a 3-28 to 0-10 win over Westmeath in the Walsh Cup at Ballinasloe.

Galway led by 1-11 to 0-11 at the end of an entertaining opening half where the sides were level half a dozen times.

Hard-working Conor Whelan, the only member of the attack not to score before the break, set up debutant Martin McManus from Loughrea for the opening goal in stoppage time before the interval.

Killian Doyle struck 0-8 for Westmeath



HOOK: Mark Kennedy of Galway in action against Conor Gaffney of Westmeath.

Photo: Eóin Noonan / SPORTSFILE.



POWER: Galway's Donal O'Shea tries to get past the challenge of Westmeath's Kevin Regan at Duggan Park in Ballinasloe.

Photo: Eóin Noonan / SPORTSFILE.

in that opening 35 minutes, seven of them from frees, as he continued the form which earned him an All Star nominee last year.

Kinvara man Whelan was involved in setting up several scores, including the goal which edged them ahead at the break when he soloed through and debutant Martin McManus from Loughrea supplied a sublime finish.

Westmeath failed to make a couple of goal chances count, with Galway creating the space to pick off points from play.

The Tribesmen got on top after the restart with Niland continuing to shoot points from placed balls before McManus got in for his second major to open up a 2-16 to 0-13 lead after 46 minutes.

Doyle continued to respond but they never looked like getting the goal they needed to mount a comeback.

And it was Galway who finished strongly with Mark Kennedy getting their third goal three minutes from time to seal an impressive win.

Niland finished with a haul of 0-15, while Doyle landed a dozen points for

Westmeath in a game where both Shefflin and his counterpart Joe Fortune will be pleased with this early season workout in wet and cold conditions on a decent surface in the circumstances in Ballinasloe.

SCORERS - Galway: E Niland 0-17 (0-14f, 0-2 '65s), M McManus 2-1, D O'Shea 0-3, M Kennedy 1-0, A Tuohy 0-2, G McInerney 0-1, S Linnane 0-1, J Cooney 0-1, C Whelan 0-1, D McLoughlin 0-1. Westmeath: K Doyle 0-12 (0-10f, 0-1 '65), N O'Brien 0-2, M Cunningham 0-1, S McGovern 0-1, J Boyle 0-1, E Keyes 0-1, R Holding 0-1, J Gallagher 0-1.

GALWAY: D Fahy; J Fitzpatrick, G McInerney, E Lawless; S Ryan, A Tuohy, TJ Brennan; R Murphy, S Linnane; J Cooney, C Whelan, D O'Shea; E Niland, M McManus, D McLoughlin.

Subs: T Killeen for Ryan (45), M Kennedy for Whelan (49), S O'Hanlon for Lawless (59), K Hanney for Cooney (61).

WESTMEATH: N Conaty; D Egerton, C Shaw, J Galvin; K Regan, S Clavin, P Scally; M Cunningham, S McGovern; N O'Brien, K Doyle, J Boyle; S Williams, N Mitchell, D Williams.

Subs: A Craig for Scally (half-time), R Holding for Galvin (46), E Keyes for D Williams (47), P Clarke for S Williams (49), P Maxwell for Cunningham (55), E Cuneen for McGovern (60), E Daly for Boyle (60), D Devine for Doyle (63), C Gaffney for Egerton (63), J Gallagher for O'Brien (65)

REF: Richie Fitzsimons (Offaly).



Tribesmen keep the momentum

Walsh Cup

Galway1-21

Dublin0-15

A WORTHWHILE trip to the capital for Galway who overcame a slow start at Parnell Park to eventually streak past Dublin and through to the Walsh Cup final.

Back to back wins means that even if Henry Shefflin's men lose against Antrim next weekend, they will still make it through to the Croke Park final at the end of the month.

It has been a useful January so far for the 2022 All-Ireland semi-finalists who, according to Shefflin, are on the lookout for talent and are trying their hardest to uncover it.

Evan Niland, who top scored with seven points, is well known at this stage though Declan McLoughlin shone a light over his name with the late goal that applied some gloss to the nine-point win.

Galway made eight substitutions in all with Tom Monaghan proving a strong performer when he came on while Ronan Murphy from the Tommy Larkins club began the game and registered 0-3. Old hands Gearoid McInerney and Jason Flynn were steady too.

Dublin, managed by former All-Ireland winning Galway boss Micheal Donoghue, struggled for any sort of penetration up front throughout the game and slumped to their first defeat of the season.



HOLD: Seán Linnane of Galway in action against Dublin's Fergal Whitely in the Walsh Cup at Parnell Park.

Photo: Daire Brennan / SPORTSFILE.



KICK: Galway youngster Declan McLoughlin moves clear of the Dublin defence.

Photo: Daire Brennan / SPORTSFILE.

It was virtually an entirely new Dublin team from the side that lined out against Antrim in last weekend's 3-26 to 2-22 Round 1 win, also at Parnell Park.

Joe Flanagan, who struck 0-14 in that game, was the only player retained with the likes of 2022 captain Eoghan O'Donnell, Andrew Dunphy beside him in the full-back line, Fergal Whitely and Conor Burke all making their seasonal debuts.

O'Donnell, who closed out the 2022 inter-county season as a Dublin footballer, was stationed at full-back throughout and marked a series of Galway players as the visiting forward line rotated positions throughout.

As for Galway, they went with all but four of the starting team from the Round 1 demolition of Westmeath; Jack Grealish, Tiernan Killeen, Jason Flynn and Brian Concannon coming into the team.

It was a largely experimental Galway team in general with Grealish, Flynn and Concannon the only starters from last July's All-Ireland semi-final defeat to

Limerick retained in the starting lineup.

In cold conditions on a heavy pitch, it was a tough watch initially with the same amount of wides in the first-half, 13, as scores.

Cian O'Sullivan came on for the apparently injured Andrew Jamieson-Murphy and it was O'Sullivan's second point of the half deep into stoppage time that gave Dublin a 0-07 to 0-06 half-time lead.

Flanagan, fresh from a strong debut performance against Antrim, struck three of those Dublin points, all from placed balls.

Niland contributed four of Galway's six points in the opening half with all of those coming from placed balls.

The highlight of the half was arguably O'Donnell's huge hit on Flynn in the 25th minute. Concannon played in Flynn but the big forward's run towards goal was unceremoniously halted by a shuddering shoulder from O'Donnell. Dublin eventually won a free-out and a minor melee ensued though no cards were issued.

Galway claim Connacht Hurling League after comfortable win

Galway1-25
Roscommon1-20

By KEVIN EGAN

Galway's victory over Roscommon the Connacht Senior Hurling League final was far more comfortable than the five-point margin at the final whistle might have suggested, as Eamon O'Shea's men comprehensively outplayed the Rossies for long stretches of the game, only to lose their way late on when a string of excellent scores from 18-year-old full forward Paddy Fallon halved the deficit.

O'Shea, who assembled this development squad exclusively from seven junior clubs in the county, said after the game that simply competing in this competition represented a success story, but those in attendance were left in no doubt as to the incredible depth that exists in the county.

All six starting forwards had scored from play for the Tribesmen by the 20th minute, though Roscommon led at that stage of the game through a close range Brendan Mulry goal.

However the second quarter was utterly dominated by Galway, as they suffocated the Roscommon attack, got great ball into the forward division, and kicked on after Eamonn Trayers goal to lead by 1-16 to 1-7 at the interval.

The contest never really caught fire after half-time, as Roscommon made a host of changes and woeful inaccuracy plagued both sides. A total of 33 wides - 14 for Galway - killed all the momentum of the contest, and while there were moments of real quality from Mickey Joe Egan and Fallon on the Roscommon side, with Donall Ó Cualán, Trayers, Shane Kelly and Ryan Folan picking off excellent points for the winners, the sharpness and power that Galway displayed to build up their interval lead was never replicated.

SCORERS - Galway: E Trayers 1-3, S McDonagh 0-6 (0-5f), D Ó Cualán 0-4, R Folan 0-3, D Newell 0-1, S Joyce 0-1, D Ó Murchú 0-1, B Horgan 0-1, D hÉallaithe 0-1, R Duffy 0-1, S Kelly 0-1, J Mitchell 0-1, B Ó'Conghaíle 0-1.

Roscommon: P Fallon 0-11 (0-7f), B Mulry 1-1, MJ Egan 0-2, M Comerford 0-2, P Kelly 0-1, E Flanagan 0-1, Conor Mulry 0-1, Cormac Mulry 0-1.

GALWAY: B Murphy; G McGuinness, S Burke, M Ó Béarra; D Ó hÉallaithe, E Naughton, B Horgan; D Ó Murchú, N Cox; D Ó Cualán, D Newell, S Joyce; S McDonagh, E Trayers, R Folan. **Subs:** R Duffy for Joyce (48), T Collins for Cox (48), B Ó Conghaíle for Folan (52), S Kelly for Ó Murchú (55), S Fallon for Newell (64), R Ó Beoláin for Trayers (65), K Gleeson for Ó hÉallaithe (67), T Halliday for Ó Cualán (69), J Mitchell for Ó Béarra (69), R Ryan for McDonagh (69), K Ó Conghaíle for Murphy (70).

ROSCOMMON: E Lawless; D Mullen, J Dillon, M Ward; J Brennan, C Cosgrove, P Kelly; P Brennan, J Dowling; R Conlon, E Flanagan, C Mulry; B Mulry, P Fallon, MJ Egan. **Subs:** E Ward for Conlon (h-t), E Fitzgerald for Flanagan (h-t), E Mulry for J Brennan (h-t), T Fleming for M Ward (h-t), M Comerford for Dowling (43), G Egan for Dillon (61), A Donnelly for B Mulry (61), K Brennan for Mullen (61), Cormac Mulry for Conor Mulry (61), M Brennan for Egan (61).

REF: M Connolly (Sligo).



CLASH: Galway's Tiernan Killeen tries to claim possession ahead of Cian O'Sullivan of Dublin at Parnell Park. Photo: Daire Brennan / SPORTSFILE.

Dublin didn't exactly collapse in the second - they played at about the same level and actually yielded a point more than their first-half tally.

It was just that Galway upped the ante, reeling off bursts of three and then five points in a row to open up a 0-15 to 0-10 lead after 55 minutes

Dublin lacked punch going forward, as well as any sort of killer final pass, and their only second-half score from play

came in the 76th minute from Conor Donoghue.

Galway, meanwhile, found scores easier to come by and Tom Monaghan impressed when he came on, scoring 0-2, while Ronan Murphy finished with 0-3.

Donal O'Shea moved onto the frees after Niland's 60th minute withdrawal and Portumna man McLoughlin snatched his goal in stoppage time after a searching ball in from Sean O'Hanlon squirmed into his path on the left.

SCORERS - Galway: E Niland 0-7 (0-7f), D O'Shea 0-4 (0-2f), D McLoughlin 1-0, R Murphy 0-3, J Flynn 0-2, B Concannon 0-2, T Monaghan 0-2, J Cooney 0-1.

Dublin: J Flanagan 0-10 (0-9f, 0-1 65), C O'Sullivan 0-2, A Jamieson-Murphy 0-1, A Dunphy 0-1, C Donoghue 0-1.

GALWAY: D Fahy; J Grealish, J Fitzpatrick, E Lawless; T Killeen, G McInerney, TJ Brennan; R Murphy, S Linnane; J Cooney, J Flynn, D O'Shea; E Niland, B Concannon, M McManus.

Subs: D Morrissey for Lawless 14-18 blood, T Monaghan for Linnane 41-44 blood, Monaghan for Linnane 51, Morrissey for Fitzpatrick 51, G Lee for Murphy 57, M Kennedy for Niland 60, C Mahony for Lawless 65, D McLoughlin for Concannon 67, S Ryan for Brennan 69, S O'Hanlon for Cooney 69.

DUBLIN: S Brennan; M Grogan, E O'Donnell, A Dunphy; C Donoghue, C Burke, P Doyle; J Madden, D Leavy; S Currie, J Flanagan, F Whitely; A Considine, P Crummey, A Jamieson-Murphy.

Subs: C O'Sullivan for Murphy 21, C Costello for Leavy h/t, D Gray for Grogan 41, D O Dulaing for Considine h/t, C O'Leary for Currie 49, L Murphy for Whitely 53, G Whelan for Crummey 59.

REF: Patrick Murphy (Carlow).



OPEN: Galway defender Gearóid McInerney grabs possession with Joe Flanagan of Dublin looking on. Photo: Daire Brennan / SPORTSFILE.

Roscommon unveil senior football captain and vice-captain for 2023

By IAN COONEY
Roscommon Herald



Brian Stack is the new captain of the Roscommon senior footballers for 2023.
Photo: Seb Daly / SPORTSFILE.

THE Roscommon senior footballers have unveiled their captain and vice-captain for 2023.

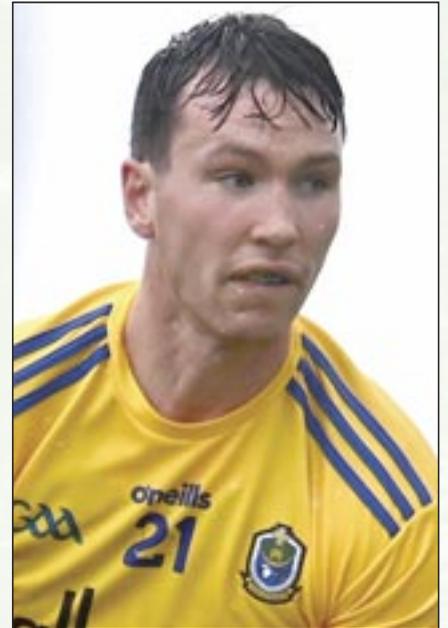
Roscommon GAA confirmed that Brian Stack from St. Brigid's will captain the team for the upcoming season.

Stack burst onto the scene during the 2017 Connacht final when he scored Roscommon's second goal against Galway during the team's famous victory at Pearse Stadium. He has been a regular on the team since then, and has played in a number of different positions.

Tadhg O'Rourke from Tusk will be the team's vice-captain.

The midfielder has been a mainstay on the team at midfield over the last number of years but couldn't commit last season because of work commitments.

However, he has rejoined the panel this season under new manager Davy Burke.



Tadhg O'Rourke has taken the vice-captaincy for the season ahead.

Photo: Sam Barnes / SPORTSFILE.

'The plan wasn't to go backwards all the time'

By IAN COONEY
Roscommon Herald

ROSCOMMON senior football manager Davy Burke has vowed to encourage his players to be more positive with possession in the aftermath of the FBD final defeat against Mayo.

While the Rossies were more solid defensively from the previous week's victory against Sligo, the manager admitted that he was frustrated to see his players moving the ball backwards, especially from frees.

"The plan wasn't to be as negative and go backwards all the time. I'm not sure where this backwards from every free came from — I'm certainly going to try my best to get that out of the lads.

"I look for a bit more positivity myself, but you have to be pragmatic too — I understand that. You can't be kicking the ball into 15 men behind the ball, but I would like to see a better, more offensive plan.

"But we're only early days yet, we haven't done a huge amount of coaching between weather and big panels. But we're getting there," he assessed.



New Roscommon manager Davy Burke says his players needed to be more positive in their play.

Photo: Seb Daly / SPORTSFILE.

Top Roscommon hurler transfers to club in Dublin



Roscommon's Daniel Glynn in action against Ruairi Slane of Tyrone.

Photo: Piaras Ó Midheach / SPORTSFILE.

By IAN COONEY
Roscommon Herald

ONE of Roscommon's top county and club hurlers has transferred to a club in Dublin. Daniel Glynn has been one of Padraig Pearses' key players in recent years, but

it has been confirmed that the talented player transferred to Ballyboden St. Enda's in Dublin on January 19th.

Glynn's departure represents a massive blow to the Woodmount-based club's prospects in 2023. In 2017, when Pearses won their first Roscommon Senior Hurling Championship in 30 years, Glynn contributed 0-15 in the 1-20 to 1-13 victory against Four Roads in the

decider.

Then, in 2020, Glynn went one better, contributing 0-16 during Pearses' 2-22 to 1-18 victory against Athleague in a final that required extra time.

Glynn will be part of the Roscommon senior hurling panel for the upcoming season, but he is not expected to be involved in the team's upcoming Division 3A League campaign.

Change to winner on the day regulations as Leitrim clubs vote on competition motions

Leitrim Observer

"WINNER on the Day" regulations for championship games will no longer be in effect with games going to extra-time and then a replay after clubs voted on competition motions at the first meeting of the Leitrim County Board.

Only one game last year went to a penalty shootout with St Mary's Kiltoghert prevailing over Fenagh St Caillins in the Senior Championship

semi-final and it was a motion from the Carrick-on-Shannon based club that found favour with delegates at Avant Money Pairc Sean Mac Diarmada.

While the St Mary's motion states "all Senior, Intermediate and Junior Football Championship games", the motion only applies to knockout games. "Winner on the day" protocols will apply to all replays, including finals.

A Kiltubrid motion to keep apart

the teams who finish first and second in the group stages of the Senior and Intermediate Championship in the semi-final draw was also passed. It is a further incentive to finish in the top two who already have the benefit of passage direct to the semi-finals and now would be kept apart in the semi-final draw.

A Mohill motion seeking to give any team who reaches a League Final home advantage for the Final was defeated.



Leitrim manager Andy Moran talks to his players during the FBD League.

Photo: David Fitzgerald / SPORTSFILE.



Task for Leitrim is to deliver on the potential in their ranks in Allianz NFL Division 4

By **JOHN CONNOLLY**
Leitrim Observer

ANOTHER Allianz NFL League rolled around and once again, Leitrim footballers were setting their sights on a promotion campaign from Division 4 when they hosted Waterford in Avant Money Pairc Sean Mac Diarmada on January 29, for the opening round of this year's competition.

For Leitrim fans, it is almost like a groundhog day as Andy Moran's troops start yet another League odyssey with the stated aim of escaping the confines of Division 4, something only Terry Hyland achieved back in 2019 since the Leagues were reorganised back in 2008.

Again there is that curious mix of optimism and caution that seems to greet the start of every League campaign - Andy Moran's arrival, the lack of what would be considered a Division 4 heavyweight and a positive 2022 explain the optimism.

The Waterford men have twice ended

promising Leitrim campaigns down in Dungarvan and they've won in Ballinamore when they got promotion from the Division some years ago. Their manager Ephie Fitzgerald comes highly regarded and Waterford will test Leitrim more than most people would expect.

For Andy Moran, keeping Keith Beirne on the field is the big concern - with the mercurial Ryan O'Rourke missing time with an injury, much of the burden falls on the Mohill man.

Thankfully, he has risen consistently to the challenge and if he stays in good form, Leitrim's promotion push will be in good shape.

The loss of last year's captain David Bruen, Dean McGovern and Brendan Flynn is a blow while a number of other players have stepped away but Moran is enthusiastic about the young players who have come into the squad.

Time is a factor for this Leitrim team backboned by two underage squads who made big splashes back in 2014 - the U21 side who reached a Connacht Final that year has provided the likes of Shane Quinn, Domhnaill Flynn, Donal Wrynn,

Shane Moran, Brendan Flynn, Niall Brady & Alan McLoughlin to senior teams for the years since.

The more star-studded Connacht Minor League winning team of the same year featured Keith Beirne, Ryan O'Rourke, Dean McGovern, David Bruen, Mark Plunkett, Conor Cullen, Keith Keegan, Conor Gaffney, Jack Heslin, Oisín Madden, Pearce Dolan & Niall McGovern and it is fair to say that Leitrim have built the current senior squad around that crop.

Not all of those players are still lining out for the Green & Gold but it is staggering to think that both those teams first burst into our consciousness nine years ago.

The addition of one or two quality young players over the years have strengthened Leitrim's hand but those players are the backbone of this squad.

2022 will be remembered for missed chances, losing to London in the League put a hole in Andy Moran's ship and a penalty shootout defeat in the Tailteann Cup brought a lot of regrets. The task is delivering on the potential Leitrim fans believe is in their ranks in this campaign.

Leitrim boss Garrity eager to get started on new era



By **DONAL O'GRADY**
Leitrim Observer

A NEW era for Leitrim Ladies football began when Jonny Garrity takes over the reins of the county senior team as the Green & Gold start the 2023 Lidl LGFA NFL Division 4 campaign with a home game against Derry.

The former All-Ireland Junior winner with his native Fermanagh, Garrity inherits a team from Hugh Donnelly that won back to back Connacht Intermediate titles and reached the Division 4 League Final in 2021 and semi-finals last year but it is safe to say that he is relishing the challenge!

"Absolutely," was Jonny's enthusiastic response to a query over his preference for taking over a Leitrim team with real ambitions, adding "We'd much prefer to come into a reasonably good situation rather than the one Hugh himself faced when he took over. Any ambitions we have of progressing is made all the more doable by the fact that Hugh has a lot of the hard work done, which is brilliant but there has been a sizable turnover this year."

His initial impression of the talent he has to work with are favourable: "It is a coachable group of players that are very keen to progress so I think when you've got that, you've always got the ability to develop the group and we're going in with a lot of optimism. There is no shortage of talent and we're really looking forward to the games beginning.

"I think it is fair to say that there has been a good response from the girls and the majority of the squad has been out early and they're in a position that they're ready to hit the ground running.

"There is probably a group of seven or eight players who are a few weeks behind, having come into the squad a little bit later after an extended rest following the club season. Those players may not be ready but they'll certainly be making up panels and getting game time over the first couple of matches."

With Leitrim desperate to get out of Division 4 and again make a push for All-Ireland Intermediate glory, Jonny prefers to focus on the team's potential rather than baldly stating targets - even if he



New Leitrim manager Jonny Garrity is excited about what lies ahead.

Photo: Stephen McCarthy / SPORTSFILE.

admits that he expects Leitrim to be very competitive in Division 4.

"My targets would not be so much about the competitions or where you finish but how you play and what you're doing.

"For me, it is about trying to reach potential and that will be the big target, about bringing the best out of the group. If we can do that, then realistically we can be looking at every competition as one where we can be competitive and looking to win.

"That's the way we will be going into it - I'd imagine at this point in time, Leitrim have respect for Division 4 because getting out of it has been such a huge job over the course of the last number of years.

"There are teams down there that are fantastic teams - we saw Antrim in the Junior championship last year and Fermanagh who they beat in the final. Wicklow are a good team, Limerick are a good team, Carlow on their day are good and there is nobody who will be an easy match.

"We go in with complete respect for the opposition but at the same time, we believe that our performances will be

worthy of the respect of the other teams as well. I'd be very keen to be competitive in the League."

To that end, the mantra of "one game at a time" will be adopted for the League: "We want to get off to a good start but we'll be taking it one game at a time. Very much our focus is on Derry and everything that we're doing is going into that match.

"Then we'll focus on Kilkenny once that is over and the same goes for the match after that and after that. We're happy to have more home fixtures than away but ultimately these are things that are out of our control so we don't worry about those kinds of things.

"We control what we can control and try to get the best performance we can and that's what we're looking for right now."

One of those factors is the anomaly that Division 4 is divided into two groups with only four games for Leitrim, something Jonny rather didn't happen: "When you do considering there is a sizeable break or two throughout the national league, you'd question why they didn't run the full round of fixtures.

"Even if there is an extra round, because there is an extra team in division four, given the amount of free weekends, you'd have thought there was room to do that. In their defence, they have put in a semi-final where the other divisions go straight into a final. We would certainly hope that we avail of that match if we get the results that we are setting out to get."

Yet behind all the planning for matches and training, you sense that Garrity very much enjoys the task he is facing: "It is one of those things - if you enjoy work, you'll never work a day in your life as the saying goes and that would be the case for me.

The travelling is tiring when it comes to getting back at 11.30 at night from training and being up again the next morning but at the same time, I'm not complaining.

"I'm doing what I love and I'm doing it with an enthusiastic bunch of girls who give me motivation and energy to do it.

"The County Board have been absolutely brilliant in supporting me as well so all things considered, I'm just delighted to be here - we're all putting in a big effort to ensure the product on the field is as good as it possibly can be."



No Tighe comeback for Leitrim as Ladies hoping for Devaney availability

By **DONAL O'GRADY**
Leitrim Observer

THE prospect of Aine Tighe and Muireann Devaney linking up with Michelle Guckian in a Leitrim attack appear to be over after new manager Jonny Garrity revealed ahead of the start of the Lidl LGFA Division 4 campaign that neither multi-sport star will be available for his team.

There were hopes that Fremantle Dockers' AFLW star Aine Tighe and Athlone Town sensation Devaney might be available to join up with the Green & Gold ladies ahead of their Lidl LGFA Division 4 opener against Derry, in Aughawillan but the new Leitrim manager said his door was always open.

"We're still talking to Muireann about the possibility of her coming out for us," Garrity told the Observer, "but it is difficult for her when she has got other commitments. Aine, at this point, I don't believe there is any plan to come home from Australia so we're planning without her at the moment.

But with regard to those two girls and anybody else that might not be in the panel at the moment or had been in previously or has designs on being in, the door remains open and we're very much looking to being a welcoming place to the best talent in the county."

Leitrim will also be without experienced trio Clare Owens, Mary Alice Maguire and Sinead Tighe as Fermanagh native Garrity revealed that the county ladies team have lost between six and ten players from last year's squad: "We've lost probably

between six and ten players from last season - the likes of Clare Owens is unavailable this year, Sinead Tighe and Mary Alice Maguire too.

"That's three from the defence and that is one area of the team where we have a big turnover. But having said that, we'd like to think we've unearthed a few very, very good footballers who haven't played that much county football over the last couple of years and we can expect that they will get more football over the next few.

"One thing I would stress is that we're delighted with the talent we do have out. We'd be very much at ease with the players we have available, we think that they're young, fit and an exciting and we're really looking forward to letting them loose."



Leitrim are looking to emulate the team from 2021 this time around.

Photo: Brendan Moran / SPORTSFILE.

Leitrim graduates from Jim Madden GPA Leadership Programme

LEITRIM footballer Evan Sweeney graduated from the Jim Madden GPA Leadership Programme 2022.

The programme develops a group of inter-county players from Hurling, Camogie and Gaelic football with the necessary skills, motivation and experience to become real leaders in the community.

The tailored programme sees students paired with a professional life coach with whom they work to address their individual development needs. Participants gain skills which they can draw on in their personal, sporting and professional lives.

The programme has been made possible through the support of Michael Madden and his family who have dedicated this programme and curriculum to the memory of their late father Jim, who was a tireless grassroots GAA and community activist in Tipperary.

Close to 250 inter-county players have benefitted from the programme since it began nine years ago.

Glencar Manorhamilton GAA Club will celebrate Golden Jubilee this year

Leitrim Observer

IT is almost 50 years ago since Glencar Manor won their first Leitrim intermediate football championship title, which was just over four years following the Club establishment in the Old St. Clare's National School, Manorhamilton late in December 1968.

In 1973 Glencar Manor won the county intermediate championship final when they defeated St. Mary's Kiltoghert in Páirc Seán MacDiarmada on a 1-9 to 1-6 score line. Meanwhile the Glencar Manor panel of players that helped them win the 1973 Leitrim intermediate championship included Sean McEnroy, Kevin McDonald, Kevin Rooney, Pdraig Flynn, Dan Meehan, Mickey Friel, Leo McDonald (Captain), Pat O'Callaghan, John Brady, Liam Fletcher, Thady McTernan, Brendan Rooney, Sean Farrell, Tom McHugh, Kevin Rooney, John P. Rooney, Tommy O'Connor, Vincent Rooney,

Pat Begley, Seamus Cannon, P. J. Cullen, John Reape, John Rooney and Frank Brady.

On the social side of the Club's events, the 1973 Glencar Manor dinner dance was held in the Maghery Hotel Bundoran where over 180 guests attended. During the dinner dance, Club Treasurer Batty McCann who acted as MC on the night, paid tribute to the late Frank Crawford, Manorhamilton AIB Bank Manager.

Frank's death occurred after a brief illness in November 1973. The Leitrim intermediate championship winning Glencar Manor team medals were presented at the dinner dance by Michael Fox, Leitrim Guardian founder and editor, who had played a major local role in local GAA affairs during the 1950s and 60s.

Meanwhile the newly formed Glencar Manor Club enjoyed its first major Leitrim adult championship success in 1970 when they won their first county junior title by defeating favourites Annaduff by 2-7 to 1-8 in the championship decider played in Páirc Seán MacDiarmada.

Interestingly at this time the Club was officially known as St. Patrick's, Glencar Manorhamilton. The scorers for Glencar Manor in the 1970 Leitrim junior championship final were Kevin Rooney & John Rooney 1-2 each; John P. Rooney 0-2; Michael Friel 0-1.

The Glencar Manor team panel that won the Leitrim junior football championship title 53 years ago included Seamus Feeney, Leo McDonald, Brendan Rooney, Fr. Felim Kelly; Bernie McDonald, Tommie O'Connor, Kevin Rooney (Captain); Tom McHugh, Barry Lambe; Michael Friel, J. P. Rooney, John Rooney; Philip Comer, Kevin McDonald, Sean Farrell; Ned Curneen, Aidan Rooney (Carrickeeny), John Brady; Martin Dillon, Thady McTiernan, Pat O'Callaghan; Packie Feely and Thady Rooney.

A number of Glencar Manor supporters, as well as former players plus Club officials, are hoping the golden jubilees of the junior and intermediate teams' achievements circa a half century can be officially recognised in 2023.

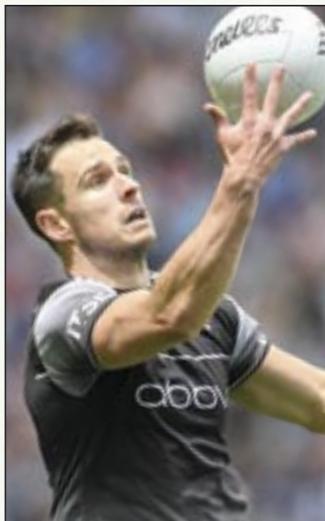
Sligo GAA's 38-man Senior team announced for National League

The Sligo Champion

SLIGO Senior football manager Tony McEntee and his backroom team have confirmed the squad to start this season's Allianz Football League campaign which threw in against Laois at Markievicz Park.

Niall Murphy from Coolera Strandhill will captain Sligo this year with Castleconnor's Seán Carrabine and Calry St Joseph's Darragh Cummins as vice captains.

The 38-man squad features 13 new additions from last year. These include six members of last summer's Connacht championship winning U20 squad – Jack Lavin (Ballymote), Joe Keaney (St Molaise Gaels), Oisín Flynn (Castleconnor), Marc Connolly McGowan (St John's), Eoghan Smith (Drumcliffe Rosses Point) and Lee Deignan (Shamrock Gaels) – and a number of players returning to the squad after a period away including Gerard O'Kelly Lynch and Luke Nicholson of St Marys, Drumcliffe Rosses Point's Cian Lally and Brian Cox from Calry St Joseph's.



Niall Murphy will captain Sligo in 2023.

Photo: George Tewkesbury / SPORTSFILE.

Gordon says Roscommon-Sligo match was worth 'ten good training sessions'



Sligo's Easkey contingent were in preparation for an All-Ireland final.
Photo: Piaras Ó Mídheach / SPORTSFILE.

By GERRY MCLAUGHLIN The Sligo Champion

In his playing days, Easkey team manager Michael Gordon was never inclined to pull out of a tackle.

And as a manager, he does not duck the hard question after his surprise decision to risk so many of his young Easkey stars in the Connacht League on Monday night in Began.

For 50 minutes, it was an all Easkey selection that ran Roscommon pretty close as the latter eventually overcame Easkey on a scoreline of 0-31 to 2-19.

The final ten minutes allowed a total of nine others to take part.

Many eyebrows were raised at the decision to play so many of the Easkey team less than two weeks before their All-Ireland JHC semi-final with Ballygiblin of Cork.

And some were wondering about the consequences of Easkey's talismanic full forward Andy Kilcullen sustaining an injury. In the event Kilcullen was taken off at half time, but Gordon feels totally vindicated by the decision.

"For the first 50 minutes it was an Easkey selection and then we introduced other players".

When put to him that he may have been

taking a chance on risking injury to his players ahead of the big test on Saturday weeks, he said an emphatic "no".

"The bottom line is as far as we are concerned our lads will have to be match fit going in against Ballygiblin.

"You have to be brave enough to follow the courage of your convictions.

"That match was worth ten good training sessions and as for injuries, it could happen anywhere or even at training, so I have no regrets.

"It could happen to you driving the car down the road".

He added: "Everybody is fine, and I have always felt that players should be right on the edge of the pitch and ready for action and the only way you can achieved that is by playing against quality opposition.

"Roscommon are a senior county team with six Galway players who are playing senior club hurling in Galway so that was quite a test for us".

He added: "It was a serious test, and we took Andy Kilcullen off at half time for precautionary reasons and he showed up well and was his usual self".

Michael Gordon's two sons Jimmy, who made a penalty save and Mikey Gordon is pushing hard for a starting slot, are both key figures for Easkey.

Judge named Sligo GAA New York Club Person of the Year

By EMMA GALLAGHER
The Sligo Champion

CASTLECONNOR'S Niall Judge has been named the Sligo GAA New York Club Person of the Year following his dedication to the sport, both on the field and off it.

Castleconnor GAA Club paid tribute to their former player on his achievement, saying: "A massive congrats to Niall Judge who was recently honoured by Sligo GAA New York with the award of Club Person of the Year.

The award night was held at Rosie O'Grady's Steakhouse – New York City on December 10 and was attended by his proud parents, John and Carmel.

This was recognition for all the work Niall has put in to New York GAA both on and off the pitch since arriving there in 2015.

"We at Castleconnor GAA are not



Niall Judge from Castleconnor pictured with his parents, John and Carmel, and Curry's John Marren at the awards night.

Photo: Castleconnor GAA.

surprised to see Niall held in such high esteem in New York as we all remember his exploits in Red and White as he terrorised defences around the county both at underage and senior level. He represented Sligo GAA at Minor and U21 and it was a great source of pride for us to see him show his talents on the national

stage. Although he has been in New York since 2015 he still holds Castleconnor GAA and Sligo GAA dear to his heart and is still a great supporter of both.

"Congratulations Niall Judge, you are doing the club and parish proud across the Atlantic and we sincerely thank you for your continued support," the club added.

St Attracta's are the Connacht champions



St Attracta's were crowned Connacht Junior champions after a narrow win over Sacred Heart Westport.

St Attracta's4-11
Sacred Heart Westport4-8

The Sligo Champion

THERE were celebrations in South Sligo after the St Attracta's Community School Junior Girls team's victory over The Sacred Heart School Westport in Swinford Amenity Park.

The Kathleen Coleman managed side won after a high scoring affair in Swinford with a scoreline of 4-11 to 4-8. This was a fantastic game of football from both teams

with great skills and determination on show. The scorers for St Attracta's were; Blaithín Lavin (2-1), Catherine Gallagher (2-1), Ciara Walsh (0-2) and Ellen Giblin (0-7).

The St Attracta's team was; Sophia Calvey, Erin Walsh, Aoibhe Cooke, Amy McCarthy, Mary-Peig Horkan, Anna Kate Davitt, Aoibheann Durcan, Ciara Walsh (C), Shannon Davey, Ellen Giblin, Lucy Henry, Gráinne Cooke, Catherine Gallagher, Bláithín Lavin, Mia Durkin.

Additional panel; Rebecca Davey, Kate Mullarkey, Kate Buckley, Aisling Hyland, Leah Kerins, Sinéad O'Brien, Madeline Gorman, Mary Kate Nolan, Tara Hosey,

Arlin Barrett, Tara McLoughlin, Katelyn Walsh, Rachael Brennan, Sinéad Walsh, Ava McDonagh, Roisín Casey, Klara Gallagher, Aoibhe Gormley, Emma Kerins, Jennie Brett, Zara O'Brien, Sarah Burke, Rachel Haran, Aoife Walsh, Aoife Roache.

Manager; Kathleen Coleman. Mentors; Ann Brady, Katelyn Concannon, Joe Lynott.

It was a busy time for the South Sligo school, their Senior girls were narrowly defeated by Convent of Mercy Roscommon in the Senior B final, while the Senior boys were playing St Muredach's College in the Connacht Senior B semi-final the following Friday in Began.

St Nathy's GAA club mark 30th anniversary with gala event

The Sligo Champion

ST NATHY'S GAA Club marked their 30th anniversary with a special gala event at the Radisson Hotel.

Players, past and present, their families and supporters were all in attendance on the night.

Cork LGFA star Bríd Stack was the guest of honour and Angelina Nugent was the MC for the night.

2022 saw St Nathy's win their fifth Sligo Senior championship in a row and it was a special occasion for the McDonagh household as manager Eoin followed in the footsteps of his father Liam who also guided the club to five-in-a-row back in the late '90s.



Aine and Noelle Gormley attended St Nathy's 30 year gala dinner dance celebrations in the Radisson Hotel.

Photo: St Nathy's.



Ann Marie Coleman, Carol Coleman, Tara Doddy and Kathleen Coleman attended St Nathy's 30 year Gala Dinner Dance Celebrations in the Radisson Hotel.

Photo: St Nathy's.



Conor, Sadhbh, Etna, Odhrán and Cria Flannagan attended St. Nathy's 30 year gala dinner dance celebrations in the Radisson Hotel.

Photo: St Nathy's.



Roisín Scanlon, Saoirse O'Dowd, Jane O'Dowd, Leigh Mullen, Hannah Walsh and Jacqueline Barrett attended St Nathy's 30 year Gala Dinner Dance Celebrations in the Radisson Hotel. Photo: St Nathy's.



Mary Kate, Conor, Mary, Stephen and Emma Nolan attended St. Nathy's 30 year gala dinner dance celebrations in the Radisson Hotel. Photo: St Nathy's.

Keegan bows out at the top

By GER FLANAGAN
The Mayo News

DENIAL is a strong state of mind. It can be so severe that even in circumstances where the reality of the situation is standing right before your eyes and still, you refuse to believe.

This was the case last week when we heard that the great Lee Keegan was officially hanging up his boots for Mayo, bringing an end to the inter-county career of our greatest ever player.

Thankfully, I do believe the state of mind I'm currently in is more a defence mechanism than a cognitive issue, because not seeing him in a Mayo jersey anymore just doesn't seem right.

Firstly, it's rare that a player goes out at the top of his game on his own terms and, while the 33 year-old Leeroy Keegan might not be the 2016 'Footballer of the Year' version, the 2023 version isn't a million miles off it.

Secondly, and cruelly, the Westport man bowing out without a Celtic Cross feels so unjust that it makes you question everything from the death of JFK to Bertie Ahern having no bank account.

But that's sport in a nutshell, and maybe the situation might have been much worse if Keegan had overstayed his welcome, was in his own state of denial and, in the short term at least, took some of the shine off his legacy.

Kind of like Cristiano Ronaldo, but let's not get into that again.

Listening to his fascinating interview on the Mayo Football Podcast last week, the Westport man sounded completely at ease and content with his decision to bow out on his own terms.

What speaks volume about Lee Keegan is the universal admiration and respect that people have for him. He's as popular outside of the county as he is in it.

Despite his abrasive playing style, that so blatantly flirted with the edge to the point that people were beginning to ask questions-

tions, he has remained a hugely popular figure in the GAA world.

Compare that to any of the generational players this county has had over the past decade, we reckon only Keith Higgins and Colm Boyle could be considered in the same bracket.

This columnist was attending a wedding in the midlands last summer and, naturally, the football talk was in full flow throughout the weekend. The hot topic was if Mayo will ever win an All-Ireland; followed by the brilliance of Lee Keegan.

His excellence on the field was followed by his soundness off it, and I couldn't get over the amount of people who had personal stories and anecdotes about meeting him down through the years and being nothing but impressed with his attitude.

That nonchalant style was how he approached his football too.

I fondly remember after he won his 'Football of the Year' award in 2016, Keegan was lining out in the Connacht Intermediate club championship semi-final in MacHale Park against Monivea only two days later.

It was a scrappy game and a gale-force wind was preventing any real football from breaking out. But at half-time when the two teams were walking into the tunnel, a member of the opposing management team started giving Keegan 'guff' about him performing nothing like a

'Player of the Year'.

It was a tense atmosphere and anyone else would have reacted, but all Keegan did was nod the head and respond with that familiar hearty

smile and laugh we have seen so many times.

After the game, Keegan was absolutely mobbed by kids, parents

interview after retirement with Mike Finnerty, somebody he has known for almost 20 years.

It might not seem like much, but for a player of Keegan's stature to do that says a lot about his priorities.

There were some fascinating nuggets in

the interview.

Notably, how he worked closely with Donie Buckley to transform his game from an unlocked half-back to a defensively-minded defender; how he never once questioned James Horan and the management team when they made his switch to the full-back line a permanent one; clocking up 13-14km in the All-Ireland semi-final victory over Dublin; and how he just casually went for a 12k run during the week to relax and clear his head.

The goal in the 2016 All-Ireland final will never leave my memory.

Standing in a rain-soaked Hill 16, the pace at which he took the pass and the execution of the shot under pressure, was Gaelic football at its very best.

The sound that erupted in Croke Park would have blown

the roof off had there been one.

A year later, he managed to do the same thing, this time shooting into 'The Hill' and quietening the usually deafening Dubs.

They are memories that Mayo supporters will never forget and, in those seconds, filled us with the ecstasy and belief that maybe our time had come.

The fact it didn't happen will probably sit worse with Mayo supporters than the man himself.

It's a crying shame it wasn't to be, but it certainly won't define the legacy of Lee Keegan the player.

As so many people have said over the last week, thanks for the memories, Lee.



Lee leaves on his own terms

By MIKE FINNERTY
The Mayo News

IT'S all over and it's all about to begin. That's how Lee Keegan sees it. He has finished one chapter of his life story, but there are many more to be written.

Most of us may know him first and foremost as an outstanding Mayo footballer, probably the greatest player to ever wear the Green and Red jersey.

But the man himself feels there is so much more to him and certainly doesn't want to be defined by what he did so well for more than a decade on the big stage.

Those who know him best will tell you: 'There's so much more to Leeroy than meets the eye'.

An hour in his company last week confirmed as much.

"That's just the way I played football, maybe under-thinking it ten percent less rather than over-thinking it by ten percent more. Just to be free, just go with it," he said at one point.

And suddenly it all made sense.

The herculean performances in the biggest matches, the goals in the All-Ireland Finals, the five All Stars and the Footballer of the Year award. The ability to get the best out of himself when it mattered.

"For me it was just about personal fulfilment," he explained.

"I loved putting the jersey on every week, playing games, and it was the best bit of craic I've ever had. The journey itself was brilliant.

"People will always point out the All-Irelands [lost] and that's 100 percent, I can accept that, I can take it on the chin, but if I'd won an All-Ireland would I have been any different?

"Maybe not that much to be honest.

"The craic I had over the 12 seasons with the different groups, different

managements, different characters, learning different things about different people, I just had such fulfilment," he added.

"I'd be sitting at home sometimes, and I'd just start thinking about the years gone by and I'd just start laughing. It was just so much fun.

"I got such satisfaction out of putting on the jersey and going into work as hard as I possibly could, and making sure that I was challenging people and they were challenging me. I have no regrets from my career, absolutely none."

As for Lee's decision to retire from Mayo service after 12 seasons, 140 appearances and all the blood, sweat and tears spilt, it turns out that decision was more or less made on June 26 last.

On the day that Kerry knocked Mayo out of the championship at Croke Park. The months that followed were about letting the decision sit and settle in the background. Just to make sure it was the right one.

"I've made peace with the decision," explained Keegan, who turned 33 last October.

"To be

honest, without sounding in any way confident, I'm proud of my work with Mayo. I'm proud of the work I did and I'm also proud that I got to wear the jersey for as long as I wanted to wear it, and I went out on my own accord.

"I'm going out knowing that I left the jersey in a really good place. I had the decision nearly made, to a degree, after the season ended last year.

"But the thing with that was we still had six months before we played again with Mayo, and then we went on a run with Westport and that occupied a lot of my time. By the time we were done with that, it was already into November so I didn't have much time for thinking between the Kerry game and finishing with Westport.

"By the time I started thinking about Mayo again, they were nearly back into their pre-season.

"I had reached a certain conclusion after the Kerry game, and it never fully changed even after the times I met with Kevin [McStay] and Stephen [Rochford], although they said to think about certain things. .

"I had total respect [for them], and at the times I met them you'd get giddy again, but as a day or a couple of days went on, I just kept coming back to the same conclusion," he continued.

"I just knew at that point, if it was like this now, it was going to be very hard for me to get back to the point where I was coming in the years before that.

'I'm ready to rock, I'm ready to roll, I'm ready to work hard here again'. And I just couldn't do that for the sake of the group, I don't think it's fair.

"Guys are competing really hard behind me and they're slogging it out from November, doing pre-season, playing games. Out of respect for the group, I can't go in with half an attitude or 75 percent. It has to be full Lee or no Lee. And that's out of respect for myself, but moreso out of respect to the group.

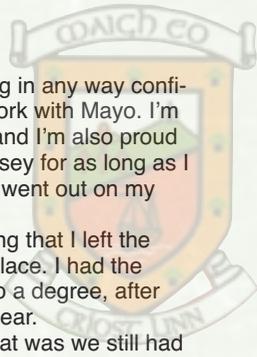
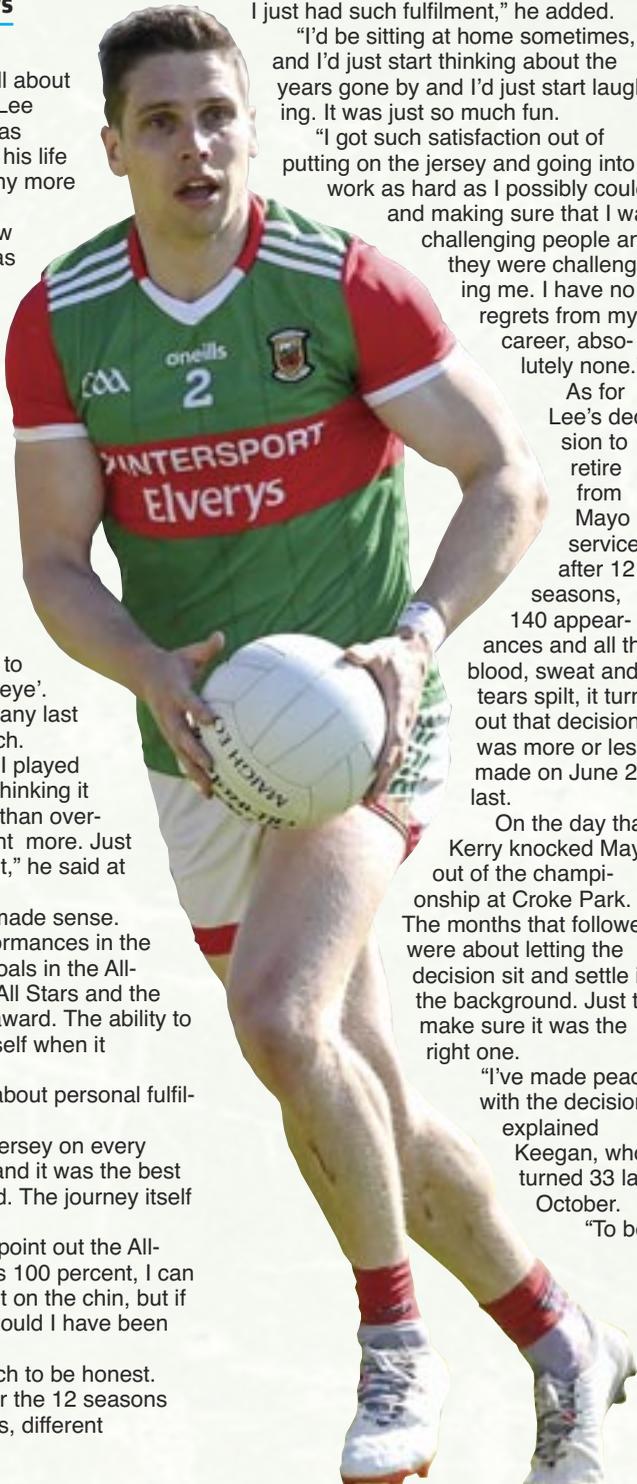
"A lot of people asked why I was retiring. I suppose I'm content with the decision, I'm content with the work [I've done], but I'm also just at a different stage of life now. It's not just solely family, family is a huge part, don't get me wrong, a wife and kids. .

"But I had full blessing from my family to go back if I wanted to. At the end of the day, the decision is coming from myself.

"As I said before, I just don't want to be missing out on milestones, I like being present and around as much as possible, just to experience different things in life, see the mundane stuff, have a few weekends away, take a holiday, do different sports. . .

"Whether it works out or not, I'll stand by my decision.

"It's nice to finish knowing that I went out at the top of my game, but also injury-free and able to do stuff in normal life as well."





Sister act

By **DARAGH SMALL**

SHE came to the game late, didn't play until she was in secondary school, and wore shin pads to her first training session.

However, after moving from Wicklow, Danielle Caldwell soon learned the Mayo way. She loves football now, while still understanding the importance of being able to switch off when she goes home at night.

Her sisters are her grounding force and between Danielle (25), Anna (26), and Katie (29), they have a unique bond. Anna has special needs and has become the fulcrum of their family.

"It's lovely having two sisters who don't play sport because when you come home, it's a complete switch off," says Danielle.

"Anna has no concept of sport at all and she puts everything in perspective as well. Even after a bad game or if you lose, there are people in a lot worse positions than losing the game."

Anna has a translocation of her chromosome 17, which results in her having special needs.



Anna and Danielle Caldwell.

"When Anna first got diagnosed, mum had just found out she was pregnant with me. There's only a year and a month between us and growing up, I kind of grew up a bit earlier than other kids. I was defending her, I suppose, I was nearly a

big sister to her rather than a little sister.

"I wouldn't change anything for the world, she's absolutely amazing. We're better people in our house because of her. She taught us how to be kind and patient and she makes us better people in general.

"She doesn't take anything for granted and she's so happy. There's not a care in the world on her and she is turning 27 in January."

Danielle and Katie have both taken healthcare career paths – it was perhaps inevitable, given their caring natures.

Danielle moved to England in 2018 and has just finished her physiotherapy studies, where she was based in Manchester. Now she works in a nursing home in Knock, County Mayo.

Katie is an occupational therapist and, between them, they have both helped their parents, Josephine and Daniel, to care for their sister.

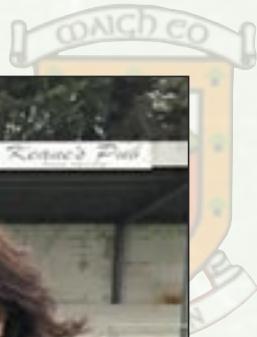
"Both of us went into healthcare just because we wanted to help people. We've cared for Anna our whole life so it kind of stems from that as well, to work with people," said Caldwell.

"Katie and I are in the rehab section so it's to get a patient and help them in some way to get back to their baseline function, or to discharge them home from hospital.



Pictured from (L to R): Anna, Danielle, Katie, and Daniel Caldwell.





Pictured from (L to R): Danielle's boyfriend David Kenny, Anna, Danielle and her parents Daniel and Josephine.

"But I do think the reason we're in this kind of line of work is definitely from Anna. We've been caring for her since we were kids. It's a natural role to fall into."

Caldwell is still a ferocious competitor on the field, and she picked up her first TG4 All Star award at The Bonnington Dublin Hotel just a few weeks ago. It was an amazing night for her and her parents.

She and fellow Mayo All Star winner, Shauna Howley, are inspiring the next generation of Ladies Footballers in the county. The Green and Red have a new young crop that will look to feed off successes from the past.

Mayo train at the Connacht GAA Centre of Excellence, which is close to Caldwell's place of work, which helps, but even when she clocks out and prepares to take the field, she continues to care for her sister.

"Anna would never really be left by herself. So, for instance, when our family are out and it is me minding her, Anna would come to training with me. She absolutely loves coming to training and socialising with the girls. The girls are so good to her, they always make her feel so welcome," said Caldwell.

"She is quite dependent on my mum and dad but she does attend a rehab centre from Monday to Thursday in Castlebar, which is a great social outlet for

her. She has loads of friends in there.

"We are really blessed that Anna has full mobility and she is able to communicate her wants and needs. It is great that she can because I know there are people who aren't fortunate enough to have that."

Danielle speaks like a wise head on young shoulders - and it shows on the football field, where she commands the pitch from the full-back line.

It is amazing to think that she only began playing this game when she was 13 and was making her senior inter-county debut just five years later.

"I grew up in Greystones in Wicklow, so the only sports that I played were athletics and field hockey," said Caldwell.

"I had no real concept of Gaelic up there. I don't know was it because of the school I was in but I was just never introduced to it really. It was only athletics and hockey.

"So when I moved down to Mayo, I tried to find an athletics and field hockey club but I just didn't really enjoy them that much. And of course, I started secondary school so I just thought the best way to make friends and get into the community would be to join a Gaelic team. I joined it and I haven't looked back since."

Caldwell moved to Castlebar and attended Davitt College, where she soon learned the lie of the land, and that football

was the mainstay. However, she knows were it not for the great influence of some of her teachers, it could have been a different outcome too.

"I couldn't praise my PE teacher enough, Ms Flynn. Sinéad created such a nurturing environment for me to excel in. She put me in goals for my first few games but as soon as she saw that I was trying to learn how to solo and hop at training, she threw me into the mix.

"And she never once gave out to me or benched me if I made a mistake. She was just so nurturing and really helped develop as a player."

And behind the scenes, Caldwell's well-known father figure learned about the game over the years too. Daniel Caldwell was introduced to Ladies football by his daughter and is now the Chairperson of the Higher Education Colleges.

"The main thing we bond over is football and it's great," said Caldwell.

"But he's probably the one person that would know what I'm thinking before I even say. "And he knows when I'm lacking confidence, he would know me inside out.

"He's like my personal therapist, I always say. We are really open with each other. If I think he can do something better, I tell him and if I can do something better, he tells me.

"We have a great bond over football."



Double boost for Mayo ladies

By OISIN MCGOVERN
The Mayo News

FORMER Mayo captain Sarah Tierney and All Star forward Rachel Kearns have both rejoined the county senior squad ahead of the National League.

The news comes as a major boost to Mayo manager Michael Moyles, who has also added Charlestown's star forward Deirdre Doherty and Burrishoole defender Clodagh McManamon to his panel.

Moyles' charges headed into their opener at the Connacht GAA COE in Bekan with some injury concerns, including the aforementioned Doherty and McManamon.

Last year's vice-captain Saoirse Lally remains sidelined with a shoulder injury sustained against Cavan last year.

Cill Chomáin attacker Tamara O'Connor (back) and Westport's Aoife Geraghty (finger) will also be out of action next weekend, while 18-year-old Sinéad Walsh is still recovering from a knee injury she received in the 'Play For Emma' charity game last month.

Speaking to The Mayo News, Michael Moyles said that Kilmoremoy's Ciara White is not currently involved due to study commitments while goalkeeper Aisling Tarpey has made herself unavailable for the league.

Burrishoole forward Maria Cannon has been called up to the panel along with



Rachel Kearns' return was another huge boost for Michael Moyles' side.

Photo: Stephen McCarthy / SPORTSFILE.

Sarah Tierney was back in the Mayo squad for their National League opener.

Photo: Piaras Ó Midheach / SPORTSFILE.



Aghamore's Saoirse Delaney and Knockmore duo Ciara Durkan and Emily Reape.

Moyles' backroom team remains unchanged apart from selector Collette Collins, who has stepped down due to work commitments.

Last year's beaten All-Ireland semi-finalists are currently working with a panel of 31 players — in addition to a 12-woman development squad.

"We're trying to bring that youth and energy in as well. It's a constant thing," Moyles explained.

We said it from day one, it's a revolving door. Girls come in and they'll get their chance and if it doesn't work out then other girls are pushing in and that's what the development panel is about.

"We've 95 percent of our panel from last year and we've a small bit of experience back which is great, it's productive and it's going in the right direction."

The Crossmolina native said that Mayo's opening three league games against Cork, Kerry and Waterford presented 'a fairly tough' challenge.

This year's LGFA National League has reverted back to an eight-team format instead of the previous four-team divisions.

"If you look at Cork and Dublin over the last 12 years, they share the majority of All-Irelands between them. Cork is never an easy starting point," Moyles said.

"Cork, Kerry and Waterford are our first three games and the three of them put major emphasis on the league. Kerry, especially, are back very early training very hard, we have Waterford down in Waterford which is going to be very difficult. Usually the league is very, very tight. You've got the four All-Ireland semi-finalists then you've got the likes of Cork, Galway, Dublin. But that's inter-county football."

Moyles said that Mayo needed to play with greater flexibility to push beyond the semi-finals of national competitions.

"If you look at the last three years it's semi-finals consistently, and we're looking to push beyond that, not in the league as such but we're going to have to learn to play a different way.

"Cork last year would have been a very good result for us. Not many people would have seen it in the quarter-final, but then Kerry played a different way, and we weren't able to deal with it."

Moyles also welcomed a recent motion by Mayo LGFA to increase the maximum numbers on underage panels to 40 players.

"For development purposes alone, the more girls we can keep around and help being around county teams, if they are getting a higher level of training then great," he added.



Tooreen vow to be back

By **OISIN McGOVERN**
The Mayo News

TOOREEN aren't finished yet. That's according to their manager Ray Larkin, who said he was 'immensely proud' of a display that saw them push Limerick opposition to the pin of their collar.

Speaking after their heartbreaking All-Ireland club final defeat to Monaleen, Larkin admitted that his side 'lost their way' during the final quarter.

"We're just disappointed really. Going in two points up at half-time I thought we'd a great chance and came up and got the next two scores. After that we lost our way a bit in the second half there in the last ten or fifteen minutes," the Galway native told mayogaa.com

"I'm just immensely proud of the boys. We learned a lot from the Naas game last year and we learned again from today. We'll be back next year bigger and stronger and better.

"It's down to the boys really. They feared nothing coming up today and we'd have thought ourselves we'd a really good chance going in at half-time," he added.

"We were really happy with what we'd done and that's why everything was going well for us. "It was just the bit of luck on the day. We hit the crossbar, missed one or two frees, but another day they'd have gone our way and they'd have made a difference."

The Kilnadeema-Leitrim native had praise for his captain Shane Boland, who played the full game after previously indicating that he would not feature due to a hamstring injury.

The county man finished as Tooreen's joint highest scorer with four points (two from frees).

"Shane hadn't trained really in the last couple of weeks. He'd a scan during the week and we got good news with it," Larkin revealed.

"He worked hard on his injury all week and I'm proud of the lads. A lot of them are very disappointed but we know we have to rile them up again and get going again."

He described the support from the travelling Tooreen fans as 'massive'.

"It's great every person that's in Tooreen is here today. They believed that we'd a great chance today coming up. For the last couple of years, we wouldn't be where we are without them."



Tooreen's Liam Lavin races past Lochlann McHale of Monaleen at Croke Park.

Photo: Piaras Ó Mídheach / SPORTSFILE.





Sacred Heart Westport win

Sacred Heart Westport0-10

Colaiste Bhaile Chláir0-4

By MICHAEL GALLAGHER
The Mayo News

SACRED Heart Westport secured their second Connacht Post-Primary Schools senior title in succession at a sun-splashed Swinford.

The Clew Bay students were clear and deserving winners of a game that never pushed the excitement button.

SHS Westport were excellent at the back with corner-back Eimear Geraghty leading the way with a top-drawer display.

Sacred Heart gave the Clare-

galway forwards little or no room in which to operate and it took 44 minutes for the maroon and navy to get their first score.

World and European boxing medallist Laura Moran led her side from centre-half-forward and the blues were 0-7 to 0-0 clear at the break with Sarah Mulroy powering forward from midfield time after time.

Only a fine save from Claregalway goalkeeper Leah O'Halloran prevented Aoife Staunton



The Sacred Heart team that were crowned Connacht champions after victory over Colaiste Bhaile Chláir.

Connacht schools crown

from putting Sacred Heart out of sight early in the second half, before Roisin Hughes eventually got the chasers off the mark at the end of the third quarter.

The Galway girls powered forward looking to get back into it, with Brenda Naughton to the fore, but they couldn't breach a solid and powerful Westport back division before late points from Chloe Chambers and Saoirse Byrne left the Mayo girls out of reach.

SHS WESTPORT: A Calvey; E Geraghty, A McDonnell, R Cafferkey; A Kelly, B Hoban, E Hyland; S Mulroy, S McCarney; F McLaughlin (0-1), L Moran (0-1), H Sheehy (0-2); A Palasz (0-1), A Staunton (0-3), C McEville.

Subs: C Chambers (0-1) for McEville, E Carney for Hyland, S Byrne (0-1) for Palasz, L Hastings for Kelly, S Scahill for McDonnell

COLAISTE BHAILE CHLÁIR: L O'Halloran; B Naughton, I Claffey, R Hughes (0-1); E O'Riordan, A Colliins, Z Duggan; A Crowe, A O'Flynn; S Kelly, E Brennan, E Brogan; C Hegarty (0-1f), C Flaherty, A Sweeney. **Sub:** M Meehan (0-2f) for Sweeney.

REF: D Henry (Sligo).



Reap what you sow

By **DARAGH SMALL**

LEAVING the Clare setup was the most difficult decision he has had to make and only the right job could have coaxed him back into the game so soon after.

But just across the border, Galway have been brewing for a number of years in the Ladies Football ranks and Evan Talty wants to try his hand in the TG4 All-Ireland Senior Championship as a head coach now.

"To be honest, when I left Clare, I felt I just completely needed a break emotionally from Gaelic games, and timewise, I needed to put a bit more time into my businesses," said entrepreneur Talty.

"I had a couple of offers to go in with teams and I declined them. And then Maghnus Breathnach and Fiona Wynne touched base. I met them and it was probably one of the only projects that would tempt me to get back in straight away."

The 37-year-old still plays club football with Kilmurry-Ibrickane, having experienced some great days in the green and red jersey.

He won nine Clare Senior Football Championship titles, as well as two Munster club titles in 2004 and 2009. The Banner outfit went all the way to Croke Park on St Patrick's Day in 2010, before losing against Antrim's St Gall's in the decider.

Talty was also part of the Clare team when the late, great Páidí Ó Sé was manager in 2007.

All the while, Talty and his family were starting on the road towards a business for the future. And finally, in late 2009, Wild Irish Seaweeds was created.

"We'd set it up out of our kitchen here and we just started off doing bits and pieces, going to various farmers' markets and small shows around the country," says Talty.

"We had no staff and no building. It was just really an idea to see where it was going to go but it started to grow, then over the years we built a factory here and taken on employees and started to export.

"We export to about 25 countries globally in the food ingredients market now. And we have clients such as Nestlé, Lidl, Aldi, lots of big multi-nationals. We have 15 staff here at the moment and we probably have a turnover in excess of €1 million a year. So it's grown quite nicely over the last 10 years or so."

Together with his father, Gerard, Evan Talty previously appeared on RTE's *Dragon's Den*, looking for an investment of €50,000 for five percent of their company.

The five Dragons were blown away by



Former Clare manager Evan Talty has come on board with Galway for 2023.

Photo: David Fitzgerald / SPORTSFILE.

the brilliant opportunity and Alison Cowser invested. Wild Irish Seaweeds has grown rapidly since.

"I'm just looking out the window here, we're literally 500 yards from the edge of the water here in Quilty," Talty says.

"And there's a huge history of seaweed harvesting and seaweed processing in my family, going back probably 80 years back to my grandfather's time. But also in the locality of West Clare, it was a real hub for seaweed harvesting.

"So it's something that's probably in our DNA in West Clare. It was kind of tradition meets innovation. So when we set it up in 2009, the industry was probably dead here in West Clare, it was gone, people were into building and stuff.

"We decided we would try and rejuvenate the industry and try and keep a few of our footballers at home."

Talty has since gone on to set up a business mentoring platform, 1Door, while he also devoted some of his time to the GPA in the shape of a business development consultancy role.

"I would have gone through the process of trying to raise money and all that kind of stuff with Wild Irish Seaweed. So I have a good bit of experience in it," said Talty.

"At the time, with the GPA, there were a few guys involved there. And they looked to roll out some business development programmes for inter-county players who were hoping to set up their own businesses, or even explore setting up their own businesses and maybe try and get access to some funding to build a website or to develop products.

"I would have done that for the bones of a year back two to three years ago. It would have involved going everywhere from Donegal to Cork to Dublin and meet-

ing county hurlers and footballers and setting them on the right path, in terms of how they can go about setting up their own businesses."

While he continues to run Wild Irish Seaweeds, Talty's latest venture is iGAA-Coach.

This is a platform for GAA coaches where they provide the materials for coaches; like session planning tools and tactics boards, along with other products that coaches use.

But they also offer coach consultancy workshops, where they deliver coach education workshops, and they also work with coaches on a one-to-one consultancy basis.

And soon, on the sidelines, Talty will be looking to help unlock the real potential of a Galway team backed by the all-conquering Kilkerrin-Clonberne players.

"I do think Galway have a fantastic team group of players and even looking at Kilkerrin-Clonberne the other day, like they're a fantastic group," said Talty.

"I thought it was a really exciting opportunity, and I did mull over it and I thought the draw of working with such quality players, I just couldn't turn it down. They've some brilliant players.

"And I think what Meath have shown is the playing field is quite level there. When you look at Meath, Kerry, Dublin, Donegal, Cork, Mayo, there's nothing in it, it will be a really exciting championship.

"For me, it will probably be a step up from an intermediate team to a senior team. The other side of it was the lure of just being able to coach was huge for me.

"I couldn't put the time and effort back into management. The lure of going back as just a coach and really being able to focus on the football side of it was a huge thing for me."

Burke commits for 2023

By **JOHN FALLON**
Media West Ireland

GALWAY hurlers have received a timely boost at the outset of the season with 2017 All-Ireland winning captain David Burke committing to at least another year with the Tribesmen.

There were fears in Galway that Burke, who was 33 last weekend, would step away like his midfield partner and teaching colleague Johnny Coen did just before Christmas.

But the St Thomas' clubman, who surpassed Joe Canning's 62 games when he lined out against Cork last June to become record championship appearances, has told Henry Shefflin he's coming back for more.

Burke, who made his senior debut in 2010, will return in the coming weeks after a break following St Thomas' All-Ireland semi-final loss to Dunloy.

"Yeah, David Burke has committed and he will be back in with us soon, which is great," said Shefflin.

"Some of the Thomas' lads are back in and some are getting an extended break because they have had a long, hard road



Galway experienced campaigner David Burke has remained on with the team for 2023.

Photo: Piaras Ó Midheach / SPORTSFILE.

so I think it is important they get that break so David, Conor Cooney and Fintan Burke

will be joining the panel in a couple of weeks' time."

Shefflin, whose side faced Michéal Donoghue's Dublin in the Walsh Cup after defeating Westmeath in their opening game, said Coen will be a big loss to Galway.

"He's a massive loss to the team and to the county. For me last year he was brilliant around the group, a very experienced player obviously but he offered a lot with young and old in the group. He's a massive loss in that regard.

"And then you look at what he brought to the field. You think of that big occasion in Salthill last year when he gets the goal against Kilkenny, he finished it very well. I played against Johnny, he has had a wonderful career.

"And he was so versatile. The first year he started he was corner back against myself and there he was last year popping up in the corner-forward position scoring a goal against Kilkenny.

"He has been a brilliant servant to Galway hurling. He had a very strong club campaign with Loughrea and he just felt the time was right for him now. Players make those decisions and Johnny just felt this was the time to step away," he added.



Canning insists Galway aren't in transition



Joe Canning is part of a new look RTE Sport lineup of pundits.

Photo: Ray McManus / SPORTSFILE.

JOE Canning believes Galway are among the teams who are best-placed to end Limerick's All-Ireland SHC dominance.

The legendary forward was Hurler of the Year when Galway ended their 29-year All-Ireland famine in 2017, and doesn't subscribe to the view that they're now going through a transitional phase under Henry Shefflin.

"I wouldn't say it's transitional period. I

think they're competing. A transitional period comes when you're trying to change the team substantially and you're losing six or seven lads," the Portumna sharpshooter told RTÉ after he was revealed as a 'Sunday Game' hurling pundit.

"But Galway are only looking for one or two so I don't think there's any transition.

"Obviously last year, there was new management with Henry. But in the

second year, hopefully they'll find one of two more guys and have a good year.

"Leinster is very competitive and it has been over the last number of years. A lot of people are skewed towards the Munster championship, saying it's number one.

"But if you look in the last few years in the Leinster championship, there's been great games. I know Kilkenny have won the last three, but they've always had to fight for it."



Blow for Galway as Silke opts out

ALL-STAR defender and former club footballer of the year Liam Silke will be a notable absentee from the Galway squad for both the Allianz football league and Championship after manager Padraic Joyce confirmed he will be remaining in New Zealand for the duration of 2023 inter-county season.

Joyce had previously expressed hope that he would have the services of the Corofin clubman for summer action, but it has now emerged that Silke will be staying put in the Southern Hemisphere where he is currently working as a doctor.

The news means Galway must plan without two four-time All-Ireland club winners with Corofin for foreseeable future, given Silke's clubmate and fellow club player of the year Kieran Molloy is recovering from a long-time ACL tear sustained in the Galway Senior Football Championship.

Speaking to The Tuam Herald this week, Joyce said: "The only one who won't be committing is Liam Silke. It looks like he is going to be saying in New Zealand for the year, so we won't be having him which is a big loss to us.

"I know Mayo lost a few players, but I think Liam Silke and Kieran Molloy are a bigger loss to us. I don't think people understand or realise the importance of Molloy last year for us. He can play anywhere and he's a big, big loss to us.

"In fairness to Kieran, he's working extremely hard. Knowing him, he'll probably defy logic and be back quicker than he should be."

The Connacht champions will also be without a third player who saw action in last year's All-Ireland final defeat to Kerry, with hard-working attacker Finnian Ó Laoi recently moving to Australia.

Football of the Year nominee Cillian McDaid was rated as "50-50" to play against Mayo in the NFL opener by Joyce after picking up a knee injury in the Tribesmen's FBD League clash against Leitrim.

In more positive news for Galway, however, team captain Seán Kelly has returned to inter-county training following Moycullen's All-Ireland club semi-final defeat to Glen.

Liam Silke in action for Galway against Derry in last year's All-Ireland semi-final.

Photo: Ray McManus / SPORTSFILE.



'It's special to share a dressing room with Padraic Joyce'

GALWAY star Jack Glynn says he's relishing this season with the Tribesmen as they look to go one better than last year and claim the Sam Maguire Cup.

Glynn enjoyed a superb breakthrough season in 2022 which saw him winning Connacht SFC honours, as well as helping his county to its first All-Ireland SFC final appearance in 21 years.

Speaking to RTE Sport at the launch of the Electric Ireland HEC & Camogie Third Level competitions, the All-Ireland U20 winning captain said he's looking forward to working under Padraic Joyce again this



Joyce aims to unearth new Galway talent

By JOHN FALLON
Media West Ireland

GALWAY manager Pádraic Joyce said he will be using the Connacht FBD League to try to unearth a few players who will help them build on the progress of last season.

He selected just five of his All-Ireland final team for their

FBD League clash with Leitrim at the Connacht Air Dome in Mayo.

"The FBD League is very important to us. Last year we put a big emphasis on winning it and getting the year off to a good start and it was a good boost to do that last January," he said.

"We know from last year we need to unearth a few more players. The league was funny for us last year where we couldn't afford to lose a game in Division Two. We had to play the best available to us and it was hard to put in new fellas."

Dylan McHugh, Cillian McDaid, Matthew Tierney, Johnny Heaney and Rob Finnerty would get their first run out for Galway since the All-Ireland final, while former All Star Ian Burke would make his return after being out through work commitments for two years.

"We wanted to get an established team which we probably have now, so I think this year's FBD will give us a chance to look at a lot of new players and try and get a few for the national league," added Joyce.

"We have lads still involved with their clubs, a few more just making their way back and we are without a few more, so the opportunity is there for other lads to step up. It is up to those lads now to make the most of the chance."

Galway manager Pádraic Joyce was looking to unearth new talent heading into the league.

Photo: David Fitzgerald / SPORTSFILE.



season and also playing alongside the returning Ian Burke.

"It's special to share a dressing room and get tips from a man who has won All-Irelands, also to have the likes of John Divilly and Cian O'Neill involved. There is a bankful of experience there; you take in everything they say. You're learning from the best. We've been back training since November and Pádraic is keeping a close eye on things," he stated.

"The new (championship) format will be very exciting, but also tough with all the games coming thick and fast. It's going to be an experience alright. You will need a

strong bench, we're working on getting a strong squad together.

"Ian Burke is back. He's a very intelligent player, he has great experience. As a defender it's very insightful to see the way he plays the game. He's a great addition to the squad for the younger lads."

Galway defender Jack Glynn in action against Kerry in last year's All-Ireland final.

Photo: David Fitzgerald / SPORTSFILE.



“I'm looking forward to getting back in with Galway”

By **DARAGH SMALL**

KILKERRIN-CLONBERNE'S double All-Ireland winner Hannah Noone says Galway will be boosted by some returning stars ahead of a crunch tie against Dublin in the Lidl NFL.

Both sides began Division 1 with impressive wins over Donegal and Meath respectively and would now face off at Tuam Stadium.

Galway were still waiting on a number of the Kilkerrin-Clonberne contingent who made history at Croke Park last month, when they secured a second successive currentaccount.ie All-Ireland Senior Championship.

Sisters Eva (19), Hannah (20), and Lynsey (22) were among those in contention as Galway look to make a statement in a rematch of the 2019 TG4 All-Ireland Senior decider.

“It definitely was a good start, we even had a good few girls making their debuts against Donegal and they didn't look out of place out on the pitch,” said Hannah Noone.

“We went training during the week and the rest of us will be going back in. Hopefully this will help drive us a bit more against the Dubs on Sunday, hopefully a few of us will get game time.

“I'm looking forward to getting back in with Galway. You want to be playing against these top teams. Playing against them will only make us better.

“You love having the competition and the tough opponents to play against. At the end of the day, it will help us improve as a team and see what we need to work on and where our strengths are.”

The three Noone sisters were also involved in last year's Yoplait O'Connor Cup semi-final, where Lynsey was part of a successful University of Limerick team. They beat University of Galway en route to a Final win over UCC.

Lynsey has since graduated but Hannah and Eva are still a big part of the University of Galway team vying for success next month.

“We would have wanted, I would have wanted to have won myself but then it was like, at least she (Lynsey) won it,” said Noone.

“It was grand then because you are delighted for her to have won it. The work they have put in is crazy. They deserved to come back with the win.

“I didn't mark her in the semi-final and I was close to because I usually play wing-



Hannah Noone was one of the stars for Kilkerrin-Clonberne as they claimed back-to-back All-Ireland Senior titles.

Photo: Matt Browne / SPORTSFILE.

back and she plays wing-forward but I was midfield that day so I stayed away from her.

“At club training or county training now, there are often times where you have to mark each other. You want her to do good but it nearly makes you want to work harder because there is such competition between the three of us.”

All three sisters have experienced major success with Kilkerrin-Clonberne in recent years and they were joined by their father, Gerry, who is a selector with the team while their mother, Linda, is club secretary.

“It's hard to explain it, unbelievable really,” said Noone.

“The first year we won it was so special because we had lost and we had got to the semi-finals and lost the semi-final, we had lost the final in 2019.

“So to win the first one was just such a relief and then the one then this year, that was first time to ever play in Croke Park as well. For the first time to play in Croke Park and win an All-Ireland with your club is incredible and just so special.

“It showed that we were able to back it up with the second one as well and we weren't just there for one year.”



At the launch of UPMC Ireland using the COE as a base for the Connacht Region were, from left: John Carty, Pauric Clancy, John Mulvey, Tommy Kelly, John Prenty, Rúnai, CLG Cuige Connachta; Patricia Lane, John Windle, Uachtarán Chomhairle Connacht, John Murphy; Paul Cunnane, Dermot Gannon, J. J. Halloran, Anthony Flaherty.

Osteoarthritis rehabilitation programme

UPMC Sports Medicine have announced that a new osteoarthritis rehabilitation programme will be begin on February 28 and run for a period of six weeks at its new location in Mayo.

It will be led by chartered physiotherapists who will guide attendees through a series of gentle exercises that are designed to help reduce pain, increase flexibility and improve overall joint function.

All attendees will receive a baseline assessment of mobility and physical fitness, and this will be reviewed at the

end of the programme to measure improvements. Each person will have a tailored exercise plan specific to each individual's ability and this will be monitored and assessed throughout the programme and may be modified as they become stronger.

Speaking about the new programme, John Windle, general manager, UPMC Sports Medicine, said: "These classes will take place in a welcoming and supportive environment at our new location at the Connacht GAA Centre for Excellence. Here, those taking part in the classes will

have the opportunity to meet and interact with others who are also living with osteoarthritis.

"This provides a great opportunity to share experiences and support each other in their journey to better health."

Classes will take place every Tuesday and Thursday at 11 a.m. from February 28 and the cost for 12 classes will be €120.

Windle added: "Upon completion, each patient will meet with a chartered physiotherapist to review their progress and discuss how they can best continue to exercise."



At the UPMC Ireland were, from left: Vincent Neary, John Murphy, John Courell, Dr Seán Moffatt.



From left: Uachtarán Chomhairle Connacht, John Murphy, and John Windle.



At the UPMC Ireland were, from left: J. J. Halloran, Seamus O'Grady, Tommy Kelly.



Uachtarán Chomhairle Connacht, John Murphy, addresses the attendance at the launch of UPMC Ireland using the COE as a base for the Connacht Region.



The Minister of Justice, Social Protection, Community and Rural Development and the Islands, Heather Humphries, along with TDs Michael Ring, Alan Dillon, Minister Dara Calleary and Councillor John Cribbin turned the sod on the extension to our walkway which was secured through a grant from the CLÁR programme

Busy today at Connacht GAA COE



Minister Humphreys cuts the ribbon on the new fantastic coffee shop at Connacht COE. From left, Uachtarán Chomhairle Connacht, John Murphy; John Cribbin, Minister Humphreys, John Prenty, Rúnaí, CLG Cuige Connachta; Alan Dillon and Minister Dara Calleary





Minister Humphreys taking a tour of the University of Galway Connacht GAA Air Dome, which was constructed with the help of a €2.1million grant from her department, with, from left: J. J. Halloran, Kurt Reinhardt, John Prenty, Rúnai, CLG Cuige Connacht, and TD, Michael Ring.



New coaching model being implemented in the west

A NEW coaching initiative is being rolled out by Connacht GAA. Seventy clubs have signed up for the programme with a total of 42 Club Development Officers (CDO) commencing work in recent weeks.

"Last May we visited each of the five Connacht counties and presented the initiative to all clubs," Connacht GAA Provincial Games Manager Cathal Cregg explains. "Every club was able to apply for it."

Ultimately increasing participation is key according to Cregg. "What we are trying to do is to increase participation in the clubs," he says. "We are coaching in the national schools, then trying to get as many kids as possible into their local football, hurling, and camogie clubs."

"Within the clubs the CDO will assist with the delivery of the club nursery programmes, Go Games, camps, Super Games centres and athletic development programmes. The idea behind the initiative is that the CDOs will assist the club coaching officers in terms of getting these programmes started or continue running them depending on where the club is at."

"The coaching officer will still remain in charge of all the coaching, but with the workload on volunteers increasing all the time, the CDO is there to help the volunteer coaching officers and club's coaches with improving coaching standards and implementing the coaching and games structure as best as possible in their local area."

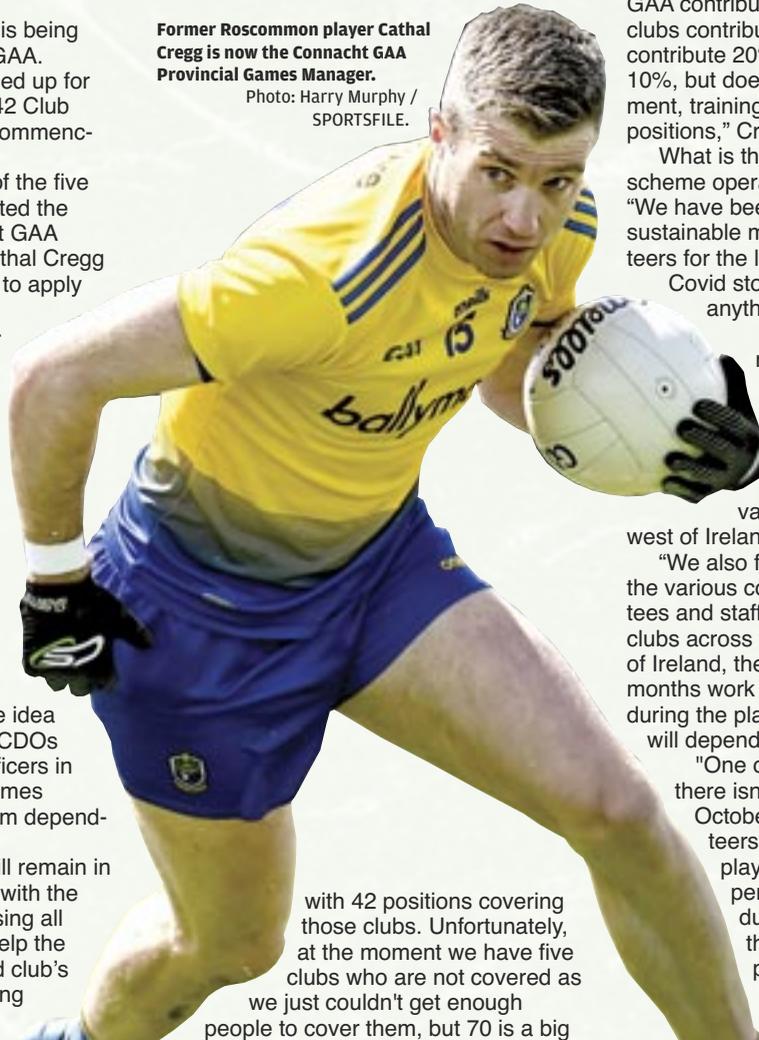
Some clubs will share CDOs, depending on various factors. "We have a number of different criteria to determine the hours a club gets each week such as the number of codes a club is participating in, the number of kids active in a club, how many national schools and number of kids in the catchment area, whether the clubs wanted to do an athletic development programme, the number and type of camps," Cregg states. "All of those things were factored in terms of the number of hours a club were allocated."

"Clubs in the larger urban areas would have got an allocation of 39 hours while some clubs were paired up getting them 19.5 hours each and then smaller rural clubs were put in threes, getting 13 hours each."

"We have 70 clubs in total taking part

Former Roscommon player Cathal Cregg is now the Connacht GAA Provincial Games Manager.

Photo: Harry Murphy / SPORTSFILE.



with 42 positions covering those clubs. Unfortunately, at the moment we have five clubs who are not covered as we just couldn't get enough people to cover them, but 70 is a big number for the first year and much larger than we would have expected to be taking on in year one but that shows the interest out there from clubs."

With the sports industry in Ireland increasing, this venture provides a significant opportunity for students. "We feel it is a good offering for the third level students, we pay them, provide them with a good level of training and they get the practical experience" Cregg says.

"For the majority of them it is a full-time placement of 39 hrs per week and will provide them with a great chance to experience life as a sports development coach before they go back to finish their studies. It is good for them to get six months of full-time work on their CV for when they are going out to try to get full time work in 12 or 18 months."

"There is a huge volume of sports performance and sports coaching courses

across the country. I think at last count it was 18 or 19 courses in total, so we have obviously CDOs from the Connacht region, but we have some from Cork, Kerry, Clare, Westmeath, Meath and so on. We have taken them from all over the country."

Clubs, County Boards, and Connacht GAA contribute to the costs involved. "The clubs contribute 70% and the counties contribute 20%. The province contributes 10%, but does all the recruitment, employment, training, and management of the positions," Cregg reveals.

What is the thought process about the scheme operating on a placement basis? "We have been trying to develop a sustainable model for clubs and volunteers for the last four to five year, but

Covid stopped us really moving on anything," Cregg replies.

"There has been a push to replicate the Dublin model in terms of having one full-time person 52 weeks of the year in clubs, but it's very hard to compare the population of Dublin clubs to the vast majority of clubs in the west of Ireland."

"We also feel, through discussions with the various coaching and games committees and staff working on the ground in clubs across the province, that in the west of Ireland, there is maybe six to eight months work there when clubs are busy during the playing seasons, but that again will depend on the size of the clubs."

"One of the big reasons we feel there isn't work in the months of October to February is that volunteers need down time after a busy playing season. If you have a person employed in the clubs during these quieter periods of the year, they would be putting unnecessary workload on volunteers."

Cregg remains optimistic that a sustainable model is being developed in the west. "If we continue to overload our volunteers all year round, we cannot expect them to stay in the association for a long period of time," he adds.

"We feel it is important that volunteers have a period of down time so they can recharge their batteries, rest up, and then go again for the following year. We want to put in a sustainable model - a model that clubs can afford year on year and that coaches in clubs want to coach year on year, where they aren't burnt out."

"From October until maybe February time we feel there isn't enough work there even if they are going into schools full-time, you would only get 20 hours in a week- that is the absolute maximum and that's providing the weather is good which isn't always the case in the west of Ireland. Facilities is another big challenge for coaching during these winter months."

O'Shea re-energised by new role

A COUPLE of weeks ago, Armagh and Mayo served up the sort of early springtime thriller that had supporters thinking of the possibilities of the summer ahead.

Even though it was only February and the Allianz League, more than 14,000 spectators left the

Athletic Grounds with plenty to talk about.

A couple of weeks ago, Armagh and Mayo served up the sort of early springtime thriller that had supporters thinking of the possibilities of the summer ahead.

Even though it was only February and the Allianz League, more than 14,000 spectators left the Athletic Grounds with plenty to talk about.

Some of the conversations they have had many times before, such as Mayo's game-management issues. This has been a constant talking point for more than a decade, but their inability to hold onto a five-point lead with only a few minutes remaining was fresh fodder as the debate raged again in Ballina and Ballinrobe over the past ten days. What may have been overlooked in the chatter over Mayo's most recent failure to see out a game they had controlled was the departure of Aidan O'Shea from the action.

The veteran rolled back the years in Armagh with his best and most effective performance for the county in a few years.

When Lee Keegan called time on his county career last month, there was a feeling that O'Shea might be tempted to join his teammate in retirement. Even though O'Shea is the younger of the pair he started playing for the county a couple of years before the Westport native. O'Shea has clocked up the third most appearances for the county with only Andy Moran and Keith Higgins having played more.

And as long as Mayo's game-management has been a topic in the county, debate has also raged about O'Shea's best position.

Such is the nature of the modern game, that it has always been hard to decipher where to make the best use of O'Shea's physicality.

It has long grown weary but it will be argued again as the season gathers pace, whether he should be used at full-forward, centre-forward or midfield - he



Aidan O'Shea of Mayo in action against Galway at MacHale Park in Castlebar.

Photo: Piaras Ó Mícheach / SPORTSFILE.

even had a stint at centre-back in last year's league campaign.

The 2015 season was one of Mayo's more forgettable ones during a magical odyssey going back to 2011. Joint managers Pat Holmes and Noel Connelly paid the price and were ousted by the players but one thing the duo did well that summer was deploying O'Shea to the edge of the square - there he had a memorable battle with Philly McMahon over two games in that year's All-Ireland semi-final.

However, the dilemma for Mayo is that they could also do with O'Shea's footballing nous and physical stature further

out the field. That has always been the problem. Then Connacht side could have done with O'Shea in two or three areas of the field.

But now, as he enters the end-game in his county career, Kevin McStay and his management team might have succeeded in narrowing his focus.

O'Shea will be 33 this summer and there has been many inside and outside of his county who felt his race was run. However, his performance against Armagh answered those critics.

He looked re-energised by the role devised for him by McStay and Stephen Rochford.

The Mayo GAA blog pointed out O'Shea was the only survivor from the county's previous visit to the Athletic Grounds 11 years ago. He imposed himself on proceedings back then and did likewise a fortnight ago.

Once he was fed with decent supply from further out the field, O'Shea was quite productive. His size means he is going to be a good target man but one of his most under-rated attributes is his skill and ability to find the right pass. And when you have a full-forward so equipped, it makes any team dangerous.

Crucially, O'Shea spent most of the game at inside-forward and only roved out the field when required, especially in the second half. Such patience will be key this year. Even if Mayo are going through a spell where supply has dried up, O'Shea will need to be disciplined and remain close to the square - in case possession is turned over.

UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY



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.

CONNACHT GAA AIR DOME



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

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.

UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY CONNACHT GAA AIR DOME



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMH
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

 **CONNACHT**
GAA

Cloonacurry, Began, Claremorris, Co. Mayo. EirCode **F12 WF21**

E-mail: reception.connacht@gaa.ie • Phone: **(094) 9630335**