

The Cork stars were celebrated as heroes at the homecoming event for both the Cork senior and intermediate cup winning teams, at Castle Rd, Blackrock, Cork. Picture: Dan Linehan



Cork players arm in arm in celebration after overcoming Kilkenny, in the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland intermediate camogie final at Croke Park.



Cork fans celebrate the victory over Kilkenny in the All-Ireland intermediate camogie final.



Cork captain Molly Lynch and vice captain Meabh Cahalane raise the O'Duffy cup in front of their adoring fans, the Taoiseach, and the Tánaiste.

A brilliant point, from a tight angle out near the sideline, by Mackey put the Rebels back in front, but again Galway hit back through Aoife Donohue.

The Tribeswomen took the lead for the first time 15 minutes in when Dolan pointed another free.

Orlaith Cahalane had the sides level for the fourth time when she pointed. Before that, Cork felt hard done by when it looked like O'Connor had been fouled.

Niamh Mallon put Galway back in front before Cliona Healy split the posts to level it once again.

Another Dolan free put Galway back in front before O'Connor pointed from a placed ball at the other end to make it 0-9 apiece.

Just before half-time, the Tribeswomen took the lead when Donohue pointed from play, to make it 0-10 to 0-9 at the break.

With 35 minutes gone, Cork got the boost they needed when O'Connor took on the Galway defence, soared past a few defenders to set up Mackey for a green flag.

McCarthy added a point as the Rebels let Galway know they weren't giving up their title easily, making it 1-12 to 0-10.

O'Connor pointed from a free and in the space of 10 minutes since the restart they went from a point down to six in front.

Two in a row from Donohue had the sides level with nine minutes to go.

Sorcha McCartan put Cork back in front before Clodagh Finn extended their lead to two points, 1-15 to 0-16.

McCartan got the last score of the game to see the Rebels run out winners after a battle supreme and a game worthy of the final.

It was a battle from start to finish and joy for Cork as they were crowned Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Camogie champions by 1-16 to 0-16.

Before that, heart, guts and determination was the order of the day as Cork captured the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Intermediate Camogie title after a titanic battle with Kilkenny, by 1-11 to 1-10.

In a game that went right down to the wire, a point from sub Fiona Nelligan three minutes into injury time saw Donie Daly's sides capture the county's fifth intermediate title.

Playing with the aid of the strong wind in the opening half, Kilkenny went to the dressing rooms trailing by a point 0-7 to 0-6, both sides having been evenly matched through the opening half where Cliona Dooley gave Cork an early lead with the game opening point.

It took Kilkenny six minutes and three wides in a row before they were on the score sheet after six minutes.

Three points in a row, all from play by Claire Doheny (2) and Caroline Kennedy, saw them edge into the lead.

With their defence strong, Cork held their lines and two Lauren Homan pointed frees along with two excellent Niamh O'Regan scores swung the pendulum back in Cork's favour.

However, they were grateful to goalkeeper Ciara Hurley who dealt superbly with two long-range efforts.

Morrissey had the sides level on the resumption but from the puck-out Cork hit the front, Olivia McAllen off-loading a superb ball to O'Callaghan who made no mistake finishing to the net.

Danielle Morrissey pointed a free on 42 minutes to again put one between the sides and four minutes later she turned over possession in the middle of the field and her long-range effort ended in the net to push Kilkenny two points in front.

Cork needed more from their attack.

Winning a free, Homan split the posts and when Kilkenny attacked, Cork broke it up.

Tara McCarthy drove the ball upfield.

Cork won the breaking ball as Cliona O'Callaghan leveled from play with two minutes remaining.

With three minutes of injury time played, Fiona Nelligan drove the ball between the post: Advantage Cork.

It was now just a matter of defending tenaciously and they sure did.

From a puck-out, Cork won possession and drove it upfield to the sound of the full-time whistle.

Those victories saw 12 Cork players nominated for PwC Camogie Senior All-Star Awards, as well as two players for PwC GPA Player of the Year at senior and intermediate levels.

Laura Hayes and Saoirse McCarthy are in the running for the Senior Player of the Year award.

Lauren Homan and Emma Flanagan are two of the three nominees for the Intermediate Player of the Year.

The Cork nominees for the senior All-Stars are: Amy Lee, Pamela Mackey, Izzy O'Regan, Laura Hayes, Hannah Looney, Laura Treacy, Aoife Healy, Ashling Thompson, Saoirse McCarthy, Amy O'Connor, Orlaith Cahalane, and Katrina Mackey.

The winners will be announced at Croke Park on November 15, after the *Holly Bough* hits the shelves.

Cork also had six players named on the PwC Soaring Stars team for 2024.

They are: Emma Flanagan, Niamh O'Leary, Aoife Barrett, Tara McCarthy, Cliona O'Callaghan, and Lauren Homan for their part in the intermediate win.

And to top it all off, Ger Manley was named as Manager of the Year for leading the Rebels to the senior title.

A great year for Cork and one that will be remembered for some time.

"The senior decider was always going to be a close encounter

Camogie

Champions Cork take eight All Stars as Hayes wins player of the year

All-Ireland camogie final winners Cork have been awarded eight All Stars, while Cork's Laura Hayes was crowned the PwC GPA senior player of the year at an awards ceremony at Croke Park last night.

Beaten All-Ireland finalists Galway have five players on the All Stars team, with Tipperary captain Karen Kennedy and Dublin's defensive ace Claire Gannon making up the side. Adding to awards heading to Leeside, Ger Manley was named manager of the year.

Having only been appointed in November of last year, he led the side to a three-point win against Galway in the final, making it their 30th All-Ireland senior itle, and their second in a row following their 2023 success under Matthew Twomey.

Announcing the winners, Camogie Association president Brian Molloy said: "I would like to congratulate all of our nominees and winners. The level of talent and dedication in camogie is truly outstanding, and these awards are a tribute to the tremendous effort put in year-round.

'Communities'

"Huge sacrifices are made by each and every one of our players day in day out.

"Camogie is at the heart of our communities, and this year, as we mark our 120th anniversary, we have seen that connection celebrated right around the country.

"Clubs everywhere have commemorated this milestone



Cork's Laura Hayes was crowned the PwC GPA senior player of the year

in a myriad of ways, and we are very grateful for the ongoing commitment of our volunteers and players to the promotion and development of camogie at all levels."

Meanwhile, Armagh footballer Niall Grimley, Clare hurler John Conlon, Kerry footballer Louise Ní Mhuircheartaigh and Cork camogie player Hannah Looney won the personality of the year awards in their respective codes at last night's Gaelic Writers' Association awards in Dublin.

Dublin football great David Hickey, Tom Dempsey (Wexford), Kitty Ryan Savage (Tipperary) and Ciara Gaynor (Tipperary) were inducted into the GWA Hall of Fame.

2024 PWC CAMOGIE ALL STAR TEAM
1 Amy Lee (Cork); **2 Dervla Higgins** (Galway), **3 Róisín Black** (Galway), **4 Pamela Mackey** (Cork); **5 Laura Hayes** (Cork), **6 Laura Treacy** (Cork), **7 Claire Gannon** (Dublin); **8 Ashling Thompson** (Cork), **9 Aoife Donohue** (Galway); **10 Saoirse McCarthy** (Cork), **11 Karen Kennedy** (Tipperary), **12 Carrie Dolan** (Galway); **13 Niamh Mallon** (Galway), **14 Katrina Mackey** (Cork), **15 Amy O'Connor** (Cork).

Cork clean up at the All-Stars

CAMOGIE



Rory Noonan

It was a great night for Cork at the PwC Camogie All-Star Awards in Croke Park.

It came on the back of Cork retaining their senior All-Ireland title as well as winning the intermediate championship on the same day. Eight players picked up All-Stars and six more from the intermediate side were named on the Soaring Stars team.

As well as that, Cork's Laura Hayes was crowned PwC GPA Camogie Senior Player of the Year and Ger Manley was named PwC Camogie Manager of the Year.

The Glen Dimplex Senior All-Ireland Championship runners-up, Galway, won five All-Stars. Tipperary and Dublin both came away with one award each for Tipperary captain Karen Kennedy and Dublin's defensive ace Claire Gannon.

Ger Manley was recognised for his outstanding leadership and achievements with the Cork camogie team.

Having only been appointed in November 2023, he continued to lead a strong Cork senior team to a three-point win against Galway in the final, making it their 30th All-Ireland senior camogie title, and their second in a row following their 2023 success under Matthew Twomey.

PWC CAMOGIE ALL-STARS: Amy Lee, Cork; Dervla Higgins, Galway; Roisin Black, Galway; Pamela Mackey, Cork; Laura Hayes, Cork; Laura Treacy, Cork; Claire Gannon, Dublin; Ashling Thompson, Cork; Aoife Donohue, Galway; Saoirse McCarthy, Cork; Karen Kennedy, Tipperary; Carrie Dolan, Galway; Niamh Mallon, Galway; Katrina Mackey, Cork; Amy O'Connor, Cork.

The 2024 PwC Camogie Soaring Stars team is made up of teams from the Premier Junior and Intermediate Championships, and is compiled by a dedicated All-Star nomination committee, to celebrate the high performance and commitment of these extraordinary players.

The team includes six Cork players, four Kilkenny players, two Laois players, and one each from Offaly, Kerry and Tipperary.



The PwC Camogie Senior Player of the Year for 2024 is Cork's Laura Hayes. Picture: INPHO/Morgan Treacy

Kilkenny's Danielle Morrissey was named the PwC GPA Camogie Intermediate Player of the Year while Laois's Clodagh Tynan was named the PwC GPA Camogie Premier Junior Player of the Year.

SOARING STARS: Cliona Murphy, Kilkenny; Emma Flanagan, Cork; Niamh O'Leary, Cork; Aoife Barrett, Cork; Mairead Kennedy, Kilkenny; Clodagh Tynan, Laois; Hannah Scott, Kilkenny; Danielle Morrissey, Kilkenny; Tara McCarthy, Cork; Cliona O'Callaghan, Cork; Lauren Homan, Cork; Grace Teehan, Offaly; Jenny Grace, Tipperary; Aimee Collier, Laois; Jackie Horgan, Kerry.

Brian Molloy, president of the Camogie Association, said: "Camogie is at the heart of our communities, and this year, as we mark our 120th anniversary, we have seen that connection celebrated right around the country.

"Clubs everywhere have commemorated this milestone in a myriad of ways, and we are very grateful for the ongoing commitment of our volunteers and players to the promotion and development of camogie at all levels."



Manager of the Year, Cork's Ger Manly, with Camogie Association Uachtarán Brian Molloy. Picture: INPHO/Morgan Treacy



By Daragh Ó Conchúir

With a Rebel Yell, they cried more, more, more.

The garlands continue to come for a Cork unit that completed the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior camogie championship two-in-a-row with a one-point victory in a pulsating final against Galway at Croke Park in August.

A strong Leeside contingent made the return trip to Jones' Road for the PwC Camogie All-Stars on a night of glitz, glamour and celebration on Friday, when former players that have gone on to achieve on the international stage, European 1500m champion Ciara Mageean and Irish hockey captain Katie Mullan, were in attendance as guests of honour.

While the attire was different, the result was the same for it was Cork that came away the big winners once again.

Laura Hayes was voted the PwC GPA senior Player of the Year by her peers, seeing off the challenges of fellow nominees, close friend and Rebel teammate Saoirse McCarthy, and Galway dynamo, Aoife Donohue, the 2021 POTY.

Hayes was one of eight PwC All-Stars for the Blood and Bandage, while Ger Manley, who took over from Matthew Twomey as boss this season after two years as coach, succeeded the Douglas man as Manager of the Year.

Hayes (right half-back, 2nd award) and McCarthy (right half-forward, 3) were joined on the team by goalkeeper Amy Lee (2), left corner-back Pamela Mackey (5), centre-back Laura Treacy (4), midfielder Ashling Thompson (4), Katrina Mackey at full-forward (8) and right corner-forward Amy O'Connor (3).

Donohue was earning her fifth award, selected on this occasion at midfield, having previously also been a winner among the forwards. Galway had five representatives in total, with Dervla Higgins (right corner-back, 2), Róisín Black (full-back, 2), Carrie Dolan (left half-forward, 1) and Niamh Mallon (right corner-forward, 1) also honoured.

Dolan and Mallon were among three first-time winners, with Dublin's Claire Gannon the other, chosen at left half-back.

The team was completed by Karen Kennedy, from Very League champions Tipperary. Kennedy is one of seven survivors from last year's team – Lee, Black, Treacy, McCarthy, Katrina Mackey and O'Connor are the others – having been chosen in defence 12 months ago.

McCarthy has now won awards in defence, midfield and attack.

Another stat of interest was that it was the fourth time the Mackey twins had won awards in the same year, having first been selected in 2012. Katrina is the active player with the most All-Star awards. Her tally of eight is three short of the record of eleven held by long-time former Cork teammate, Gemma O'Connor.

The nominees were described by Mageean as "my heroes," in a short speech after receiving a presentation in honour of her major championship success earlier this year.

"This is such a huge honour," said Mageean, who earned her stripes on the camogie fields of Portaferry in Down, alongside her childhood friend, Mallon. "It's a dream to be here. I dreamt of winning an All-Star and that won't happen for me now so you're living my dream now. You are my heroes. I don't play anymore but I still consider myself a camog.

"One of the upsides of missing the Olympics (through injury) was that I got back for the All-Ireland final and to watch my clubmate play, Niamh Mallon, who's nominated for an All-Star tonight."

As Mageean emphasised, even though she earned a rapturous ovation, the night was about the camogie stars of today, however, and Hayes was top of the tree. The St Catherine's star thought of the example set by legendary clubmate Orla Cotter, a six-time All-Star and elite role model she had set as the bar from the time she started playing.

"It's just such an honour, especially when it's a player's vote as well," said Hayes of the recognition.

"For me growing up, I really admired Orla Cotter. It's very well known around our area, I knew everything and anything about her. I was completely starstruck. And then in 2018, when Paudie Murray called me in to the Cork panel, I ended up playing with her. So my aspiration was always to be like her, to play for St Catherine's, to play for Cork, and to win the All-Ireland, to be going up the steps of the Hogan Stand.

"But to go beyond that, it's nice to be nominated for an All-Star and then for Player of the Year. It's just surreal.

"It's always a great night, the one night of the year where you kind of cross the borders to the other teams and chat away. When you've your helmet on and you're on the field, you don't really see other people's personalities, everyone's locked in so you actually get to know them on a night out like the PwC All-Stars.

"And it's great too to have an occasion for your family to come with you, for your club and for Cork as well."

Hayes also insisted that she would not have been recognised were it not for the efforts of her teammates and Manley delivered a similar message after he received his award.

"They're elite athletes. They're phenomenal. They'll do anything you ask of them but it's what they put in when we're not training is why they get their rewards," said Manley.

1. Amy Lee – Cork (Goalkeeper)
2. Dervla Higgins – Galway (Corner Back)
3. Roisin Black – Galway (Full Back)
4. Pamela Mackey – Cork (Corner Back)
5. Laura Hayes – Cork (Wing/Half Back)
6. Laura Treacy – Cork (Centre Back)
7. Claire Gannon – Dublin (Wing/Half Back)
8. Ashling Thompson – Cork (Midfield)
9. Aoife Donohue – Galway (Midfield)
10. Saoirse McCarthy – Cork (Wing/Half Forward)
11. Karen Kennedy – Tipperary (Centre Forward)
12. Carrie Dolan – Galway (Wing/Half Forward)
13. Niamh Mallon – Galway (Corner Forward)
14. Katrina Mackey – Cork (Full Forward)
15. Amy O'Connor – Cork (Corner Forward)

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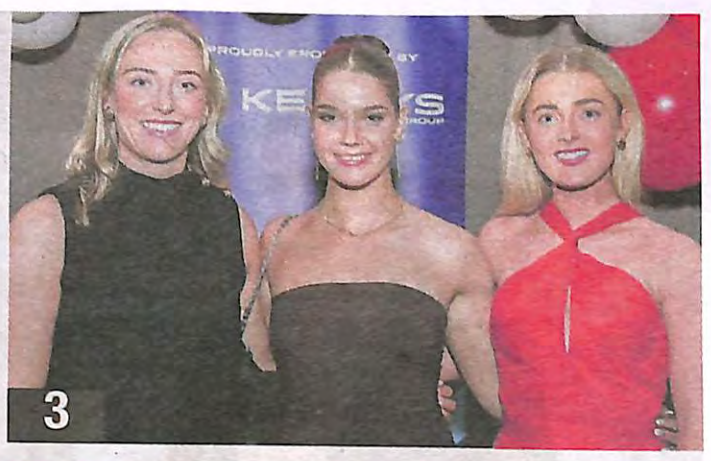
Kilkenny's Danielle Morrissey was named the **PwC GPA Camogie Intermediate Player of the Year** while **Laois's Clodagh Tynan** was named the **PwC GPA Camogie Premier Junior Player of the Year.**

Soaring Stars Team:

1. Cliona Murphy – Kilkenny (Goalkeeper)
2. Emma Flanagan – Cork (Corner Back)
3. Niamh O'Leary – Cork (Full Back)
4. Aoife Barrett – Cork (Corner Back)
5. Mairead Kennedy – Kilkenny (Wing/Half Back)
6. Clodagh Tynan – Laois (Centre Back)
7. Hannah Scott – Kilkenny (Wing/Half Back)
8. Danielle Morrissey – Kilkenny (Midfield)
9. Tara McCarthy – Cork (Midfield)
10. Cliona O'Callaghan – Cork (Wing/Half Forward)
11. Lauren Homan – Cork (Centre Forward)
12. Grace Teehan – Offaly (Wing/Half Forward)
13. Jenny Grace – Tipperary (Corner Forward)
14. Aimee Collier – Laois (Full Forward)









Cork Camogie teams' celebration dinner

The Cork Camogie senior, intermediate, and U16 victory dinner took place at Rochestown Park.

■ **1**. Mairead O'Donovan, Lauren Homan, Sheila O'Callaghan, deputising for the Mayor of Cork County; Terry Coleman, deputising for the Lord Mayor; Marie Kearney, Meabh Cahalane, Caoimhe Power, and Cork County Board chairperson Pat Horgan.

■ **2**. Meabh Cahalane, Fiona Keating, Orlaith Cahalane, Emma Murphy, Ciara O'Sullivan & Clodagh Finn.

■ **3**. Izzy O'Regan, Aoife O'Neill, and Hayley Ryan

■ **4**. Lauren Homan and vice captain of the senior team Meabh Cahalane

■ **5**.Lucy Allen, Emma Flanagan, Tara McCarthy, and Aoife Barrett.

■ **6**. Aoibhinn Halpin, Ava McAuliffe, Caoimhe Power, Emma McSweeney, and Ashling O'Brien.

■ **7**. Ciara Hurley and Gráinne Cahalane at the Cork Camogie victory dinner to honour senior, intermediate and U-16 teams that was held at the Rochestown Park

■ **8**. Maedhbh de Búrca and Ciara Morrison.

■ **9**. Joe, Louise, Aoife, and Martina Barrett.

■ **10**. Clare, Millie, and Jack Condon.













Truagh Clonlara dance in dark

Munster senior camogie final replay

Truagh Clonlara	**4-12**
Gailltir	**3-15**

(AET) Truagh Clonlara win 9-8 on '45s

Tomás McCarthy
Moycarkey Borris

The parish of Truagh Clonlara celebrated in pitch darkness on Saturday evening as a sudden-death '45 from Róisín Begley secured their first Munster senior camogie title. After a three-hour marathon with Gailltir, including double extra time, the Clare side edged a tense shootout 9-8.

A sea of supporters congratulated Begley and her team-mates. "We're from a very small parish in East Clare and the whole place is her," she said. "Everyone gets behind us, they gave us so much money to support us on this journey. It's absolutely unbelievable."

She thanked the locals for digging deep into their pockets. "We raised a little bit of money before our county final. We don't have lights in Clonlara so we needed money to pay for pitches, for buses, and for food.

"When we ran out after the match last week, we had to go again. Everyone got behind us and had no problem giving us more money in the parish. It's amazing, like. I'm so proud of where I'm from and so proud of my team."

Begley missed her first '45 in the shootout. Second time around, she decided to go last. "I mishit the first one. I let the other girls go ahead of me, the ones that had scored. I took a big deep breath. There was less pressure on me because the Gailltir girl missed hers. I had to hit it, so that's what I did!"

The two teams got a raptur-ous round of applause from the packed stand after 90 nail-biting minutes. The drawn game was tough, but this was even tougher. Referee Donnacha O'Callaghan allowed the physical challenges to fly in.

Fans wandered out onto the field to watch the shootout unfold. Begley's miss gave Annie Fitzgerald the chance to win it for Gailltir. A roar from the crowd, just as she was about to strike, distracted her however, and the ball landed in the net. Gailltir management and players expressed their anger with the incident. The tension mounted as it went to sudden death. Fitzgerald missed her second, but Begley didn't. A pile of black-and-amber bodies ended up on the ground to greet a hard-fought victory.

Clare senior Áine O'Loughlin collected the Player of the Match award after shooting 2-6. Eimear Kelly also caught fire up front with 2-4 from play. Gailltir, playing for the fifth week in a row, recovered from seven points down in normal time. Teenager Emma Fitzgerald scored 1-9, Laoise Forrest starred in defence, and midfielder Kate Lynch won six frees.

Scorers for Truagh Clonlara: A O'Loughlin 2-6 (5fs), E Kelly 2-4, R Foley, J Egan 0-1 each.

Scorers for Gailltir: E Fitzgerald 1-9 (9fs), M Comerford, Aoife Fitzgerald 1-1, L Forrest 0-2 (2fs), C Sherlock, Annie Fitzgerald 0-1 each.

TRUAGH CLONLARA: S Cullen; S Ryan, M Powell, S Hogg; E Horgan, L Foley, L Egan; E Begley, A Marren; J Egan, R Begley, H Horgan; A O'Loughlin, R Foley, E Kelly.

Subs: N Ryan for H Horgan (39), L Hawes for N Ryan (70).

GAILLTIR: N Murphy; F Murphy, M Brennan, M Sheridan; S Fitzgerald, C Carroll, A Hartley; K Lynch, C Sherlock; A O'Sullivan, L Forrest, M Comerford; E Fitzgerald, Annie Fitzgerald, A Corcoran.

Subs: C O'Sullivan for Sheridan (HT), H Flynn for Hartley (HT), Aoife Fitzgerald for Corcoran (54), A Corcoran for C O'Sullivan (71), O Walsh for Brennan (80).

Referee: D O'Callaghan (Limerick)

CHAMPIONS! Brilliant Barryroe win county U16A camogie title



The victorious Barryroe U16 camogie team that won the U16A county final by beating Kilworth 2–13 to 1–10. Back from left, Megan O'Regan, Aibhlin McCarthy, Niamh Doyle, Íde Barry, Aisling Coakley, Éabha Ní Bhuachalla, Shona Fleming, Ellen Foley, Clodagh McCarthy, Ava Sexton, Mairéad Whelton, Lucy McCarthy, Marianne Keohane, Clíona Harte and Lily Kirby. Front from left, Nora Dineen, Aoife Harte, Kate Collins, Megan Whelton, joint-captains Eimear Whelton and Maria O'Donovan, Louise Coleman, Sinéad O'Callaghan, Lena Earts, Seodhna Walsh and Fiona Walsh.

The Echo Women in Sport Awards

Read the full details of the amazing achievements of this month's winner in **The Echo** and on **echolive.ie/womeninsport**

Wednesday, November 20

MONTHLY WINNER

OCTOBER



Camogie

AOIFE O'NEILL

Aoife for her Player of the Game display as St Finbarr's won the Cork Senior Camogie Championship for the first time since 2006.

The Echo Echo LIVE

Aoife O'Neill went from hating camogie to loving it in a month

AWARDS



Rory Noonan

Two senior All-Ireland medals, a minor one and a senior club championship medal with St Finbarr's are just some of the accolades that Aoife O'Neill has won over the years.



The Echo Women in Sport winner Aoife O'Neill, St Finbarr's, is presented with her trophy by Rory Noonan of 'The Echo'. Picture: Larry Cummins



The Echo Women in Sport winner Aoife O'Neill at the Barrs club. Picture: Larry Cummins



Aoife O'Neill in action for St Finbarr's at Castle Road. Picture': Denis Minihane

Not a bad haul for someone who freely admits she hated camogie when she first started playing.

"I was seven when I started and I really didn't want to play at all," said Aoife, "I hated it but my mum made me come out because my granddad wanted me to play so bad.

"He was like no you have to get her out, so I went out on a Saturday morning and I knew everyone between family playing and school.

"But I hated it, absolutely hated it starting out and pretended to be sick so I wouldn't have to go training. My mum was no, keep at it, and if you do for a month you'll be grand.

"So I said ok and after the month I was kind of enjoying it with the girls and sheer all my friend were playing so I stayed at it and was happy out after that.

"I felt they were all screaming at me and I didn't know what they were saying. Things like pull on the ball and whatever and I just didn't take to it at the start.

"Then all of a sudden I just loved it, it was more like my friends were all doing it and they were training after school. And I was like, oh, I want to go train after school. So then it clicked and I loved it.

"I starting playing with the school (Togher Primary School) and we were always in the Sciath na Scol finals and won a good few. We had the Lough leagues and stuff like that as well.

"We were winning them every year like so I was lucky enough to captain the Barrs in the Lough leagues in six class as well, so that was great.

"We had a good team with the Barrs coming up along through the age grades as well, A load of girls my age kind of like stuck at it when normally come minor, you can lose a load. But a load of like my age group really stuck at it and lots of them are still playing on various teams with the club.

"We won the Minor B in 2018-2019 and that was a big thing for us at the time, to win a county title at that level.

"We used to win the Seandún U13 and U15 nearly every year and we used to love that, but we got out into county then and you'd be playing bigger, stronger country girls and we were be kind of put back in our box by them.

"But minor then was a different story and it was like the first real big thing that we won. That win gave us a huge boost of confidence and it drives you and then to say this is class you want to be winning more."

But not too much success came at club level for Aoife until this year. It was a long time, 2006, since the Barrs won the senior county camogie title.

That was until this year when they beat the defending champions, Sarsfields, in the final and afterwards Aoife was named Player of the Game. For that Aoife is the October winner of *The Echo* Women in Sport award.

That win was built on a loss to Cloughduv in the quarter-final last year, one that hurt the Barrs and was a major driving force for them this season.

"I think I've watched that match (v Cloughduv) like a million times over. I do think it was the first 10 minutes that caught us. We never took off after that, it was nearly point for point, which it shouldn't have been.

"But look fair play to Cloughduv they put everything into that match, they put heart and soul and died fir each other on the pitch that day. We didn't give as much as we could have, so I think that was a massive like driving factor coming in this year.'

The Echo Women in Sport Awards

"I just knew if we got past the semi-final we would win. At the start of the year we met and set out our goals and obviously the big one is the championship.

"I think everyone was bang on the same page, so focused on what we wanted to achieve. It was straight from the start and I think this year as a club group we were the closest we have ever been.

"You can have all the talent in the world but if you have no chemistry as a group you are not going to win.

"This year everyone was so willing to work for each other, we just bonded and it showed in the final what it meant to every single person when we won it. When we faced Cloughduv in the semi this year we were just determined that it wasn't going to happen again and they weren't going to beat us.

"Thanks be to god we got over the line against them and once we did I just knew we would win the final. I don't know why but I just knew it.

"Sars are a class team and we knew it wasn't going to be easy but coming in at half-time in the final we were saying we hadn't played well.

"We said we needed to up it now as we were playing against the wind and Molly Lynch (Sars goalkeeper) has the best puc in Ireland so we knew the danger of that.

"So we knew the ball was going to be landing down on top of us and if I went up for a ball and missed it then I had confidence in the players around me that they would pick it up. Everybody just upped their game and when Orlaith Cahalane got the goal it was a huge score.

"When the final whistle went I just cried, you would have in your head what you would do, but I just cried. My whole family is Barss and I knew just how much it would mean to them as it did to all the players and management.

"It was genuinely the best feeling ever and hopefully one we will get to experience again very soon," concluded Aoife.



Deirdre Carey, daughter of Lilly Grant, presents her mother's cup to Courcey Rovers captain Isobel Lordan.

Courceys beat Barrs to win Lillie Grant title

Courcey Rovers	**1-6**
St Finbarr's	**0-6**

CAMOGIE

■ **Mary Newman**

Courcey Rovers took the SE Systems Junior Lillie Grant camogie title after a close battle with St Finbarr's in Castle Road.

In a closely-fought opening half, the sides were level at the break, St Finbarr's 1-0 Courcey Rovers 0-3.

Emma O'Donovan gave St Finbarr's an early lead with a goal eight minutes in, but Courceys landed three points to tie in up after a low-scoring opening 30 minutes

They hit the front with three points, with Ursula Quinn, Liz Minihane, Aine O'Donoghue, and Lilly Murphy to the fore.

The Barrs pressed hard and it took solid defending to keep them at bay as the more battle-hardened Courceys side showed their experience.

It took a double save from Courceys goalkeeper Ciara Hayes 10 minutes from full time to deny St Finbarr's an equaliser.

As the sides battled hard, their defence stood firm under huge pressure and a Sinead Hayes goal proved critical.

After a contest in which both defences excelled despite being under huge pressure, Courcey Rovers' Liz Minihane was named *The Echo* Player of the Match.

MINOR CHAMPIONSHIP

All adult and underage championship titles have been, but the minor championships are still ongoing.

The playing pitches and hopefully the superb weather we are experiencing will hold for another few weeks to ensure all get a chance to play in good conditions.

With all of the group stages of minor championship completed, the draws were made for the quarter and semi-finals of the SE Systems championship.

In the SE Systems Premier quarter-finals, to be played this weekend, Newtownshandrum face Ballinhassig, with the winners taking on Éire Óg in the semi-final.

Kilbrittain/Timoleague will battle Aghabullogue, the winners meeting Sarsfields.

The semi-finals are to be played on or before November 24, with the final fixed for December 1.

There is also a Premier Minor Plate competition and in the semi-finals, to be played on or before November 24, Erin's Own will meet Cloughduv and Inniscarra will play Ballinora.

In the SE Systems Minor A Championship, Ballincollig are paired with Blackrock in the quarter-final with the winner meeting Laochra Óg.

Glen Rovers face Midleton with the winner playing Ballyhea.

As with the top tier, the games will take place in the coming weeks, to be completed the final by December 1.

In the SE Systems Minor B championship semi-finals, Castlemartyr will play Sliabh Rua and Fr O'Neill's take on Barryroe.

The SE Systems Minor C Championship is at the semi-final stage and will see Bandon face Aghada and Buttevant will be in opposition to Banteer.

The semi-finals in the B and C competitions will be played on or before November 17, with the finals to take place on November 24.



Liz Minehane is presented with *The Echo* Player Of the Match award by Mairead O'Donovan, chairperson Cork Camogie.



The camogie All Star award winners with Camogie Association Uachtarán Brian Molloy and Camogie Association, Marie Coady, PwC Markets Partner. PHOTO: INPHO/BRYAN KEAN

Cork dominate camogie All Stars awards

It wasn't exactly a clean sweep up but Cork managed to pick up the PwC GPA Camogie Senior Player of the Year and PwC Camogie Manager of the Year awards along with 8 spots on the 2024 PwC Camogie All-Stars Team!

Cork's Laura Hayes was named as the PwC GPA Camogie Senior Player of the Year at the PwC Camogie All-Star Awards in Croke Park on Friday night while Ger Manley was named PwC Camogie Manager of the Year.

In a separate event, on Saturday night, the 2024 TG4 Ladies Football All-Star team was revealed at the annual TG4 All-Star awards banquet in association with Lidl, at the Bonnington Dublin Hotel. It featured Cork's Katie Quirke at full-forward. Cork progressed to the TG4 All-Ireland semi-finals this year.

Cork's 2024 PwC Camogie All Star winners are: Amy Lee - goalkeeper, Pamela Mackey - corner back, Laura Hayes - wing/half back, Laura Treacy - centre back, Ashling Thompson - midfield, Saoirse McCarthy - wing/half forward, Katrina Mackey - full forward and Amy O'Connor - corner forward.

Ger Manley was named PwC Camogie Manager of the Year, recognising his outstanding leadership and achievements with the Cork camogie team. Having been appointed in November 2023, he lead the Cork senior team to a three-point win against Galway in the final, making it their 30th All-Ireland senior camogie title, and their second in a row following their 2023 success under Matthew Twomey.

Half-back Lauren Hayes was rewarded for her outstanding displays all year in the heart of the formidable Cork defence. She wins the award a year later after her teammate Amy O'Connor took the award.

Cork also had six players named on the 2024 PwC Camogie Soaring Stars, made up of the best players of the year from Premier Junior and Intermediate Championships.

It is compiled by a dedicated All-Star Nomination Committee, to celebrate the high performance and commitment of these extraordinary players.

The Cork players on the Soaring Stars Team were: Emma Flanagan - corner back, Niamh O'Leary - full back, Aoife Barrett - corner back, Tara McCarthy - midfield, Cliona O'Callaghan - wing/half forward, Lauren Homan - centre forward.

Brian Molloy, Uachtarán of the Camogie Association, said: "The level of talent and dedication in camogie is truly outstanding, and these awards are a tribute to the tremendous effort put in year-round. Huge sacrifices are made by each and every one of our players day in day out.

"I wish to thank our sponsors, PwC for their support. This event wouldn't be possible without their partnership and sponsorship of the All Stars, so thank you for continuing to stand behind our elite camogie players.

"Camogie is at the heart of our communities, and this year, as we mark our 120th anniversary, we have seen that connection celebrated right around the country. Clubs everywhere have commemorated this milestone in a myriad of ways, and we are very grateful for the ongoing commitment of our volunteers and players to the promotion and development of camogie at all levels."

Enda McDonagh, Managing Partner, PwC, said: "On behalf of everyone at PwC, I extend our heartfelt congratulations to all the winners of the 2024 PwC Camogie All-Stars, PwC Camogie Soaring Stars, Manager of the Year, and the PwC GPA Camogie Player of the Year Awards.

"These athletes have demonstrated exceptional performances at the highest level throughout the season. Their unwavering commitment to their teams and their pursuit of excellence see them as deserving winners of these awards."



Katie Quirke is presented with her All-Star award by Ard Stiúrthóir TG4 Alan Esslemont and President of the LGFA, Mícheál Naughton during the TG4 Ladies Football All Stars Awards banquet. PHOTO: BRENDAN MORAN/SPORTSFILE



The PwC Camogie Senior Player of the Year Laura Hayes. PHOTO: INPHO/MORGAN TREACY

Nov. 2024

'Phenomenal' Rebels dominate All-Stars

Courcey Rovers star Saoirse McCarthy wins her third Camogie All-Star in a row

BY DARAGH Ó CONCHÚIR



Two of the big winners at the awards hailed from Cork, as Manager of the Year Ger Manley is pictured with Senior Player of the Year Award winner Laura Hayes.



Courcey Rovers' Saoirse McCarthy receives her 2024 Camogie All-Stars award from Camogie Association Uachtarán Brian Molloy and Marie Coady, PwC Markets Partner. (Photos: Morgan Treacy/INPHO)

ALL Cork players dominated the 2024 PwC Camogie All-Star Awards, Rebels boss Ger Manley hailed the back-to-back All-Ireland winning group as 'phenomenal'.

After a season that saw Cork defend their All-Ireland senior camogie crown, beating Galway in August's final, as expected the Rebels cleaned up at the All-Stars held in Croke Park on Friday night – Cork won **EIGHT** All-Stars, Laura Hayes was named PwC GPA Camogie Player of the Year, while Ger Manley was crowned PwC Camogie Manager of the Year.

'They're elite athletes. They're phenomenal. They'll do anything you ask of them but it's what they put in when we're not training is why they get their rewards,' Manley explained.

'I think the camogie standard has improved throughout the last couple of years, all the teams. I think we drove it on a bit last year and this year, we were a bit more consistent and I think that paid the way for us but the girls are phenomenal and that's the reason I'm here. The players make the difference and we've an exceptional bunch in Cork.'

While the attire was different in their latest visit to Croke Park, the result was the same as Cork were the big winners on a night of glitz, glamour and celebration.

With Laura Hayes voted the PwC GPA senior Player of the Year by her peers, she saw off the challenges of fellow nominees, close friend and Rebel teammate Saoirse McCarthy from Courcey Rovers, and Galway dynamo Aoife Donohue, the 2021 Player of the Year.

Hayes (right half-back, second award) and Ballinspittle native Saoirse McCarthy (right half-forward, third award) were joined on the All-Stars team by goalkeeper Amy Lee (second All-Star), left corner-back Pamela Mackey (fifth award), centre-back Laura Treacy (fourth All-Star), midfielder Ashling Thompson (fourth All-Star), Katrina Mackey at full-forward (eighth All-Star) and right corner-forward Amy O'Connor (third award).

'It's just such an honour, especially when it's a player's vote as well,' said St Catherine's star Laura Hayes of the recognition.

'For me growing up, I really admired Orla Cotter. It's very well known around our area, I knew everything and anything about her. I was completely starstruck. And then in 2018, when Paudie Murray called me into the Cork panel, I ended up playing with her. So my aspiration was always to be like her, to play for St Catherine's, to play for Cork, and to win the All-Ireland, to be going up the steps of the Hogan Stand.

'But to go beyond that, it's nice to be nominated for an All-Star and then for Player of the Year. It's just surreal.' The PwC Soaring Stars team was also named and there were six members of Cork's Glen Dimplex All-Ireland intermediate-winning side involved – Emma Flanagan, Niamh O'Leary, Aoife Barrett, Tara McCarthy, Cliona O'Callaghan and Lauren Homan.

PwC Camogie All-Stars: ***Amy Lee (Cork)***, Dervla Higgins (Galway), Róisín Black (Galway), ***Pamela Mackey (Cork)***, ***Laura Hayes (Cork)***, ***Laura Treacy (Cork)***, ***Ashling Thompson (Cork)***, Aoife Donohue (Galway), ***Saoirse McCarthy (Cork)***, Karen Kennedy (Tipperary), Carrie Dolan (Galway), Niamh Mallon (Galway), ***Katrina Mackey (Cork)***, ***Amy O'Connor (Cork)***.



Cork defender Laura Treacy, who picked up her fourth All-Star, with Camogie Association Uachtarán Brian Molloy and Marie Coady, PwC Markets Partner.

Donohue a standout but pain of defeat still lingers

Daragh Ó Conchúir

These end-of-year bashes are fun but they're just not the same without a silver guest of honour.

In the case of Aoife Donohue and the Galwegians at last Friday night's PwC Camogie All-Stars, having been within hailing distance of the O'Duffy Cup when last they were in Croke Park but seeing it lured away by Cork was tough to take.

A former PwC senior player of the year, Donohue was nominated again for the individual honour, chosen by her peers. She missed out on that too, to Cork's Laura Hayes, but that didn't bother her in the slightest.

The diminutive Mullagh ace was one of five Galway players to receive All-Stars and she was picking up her fifth gong.

But losing the All-Ireland to the last three points, having reeled in a six-point deficit to draw level down the stretch, remains an open sore.

"We were very close," says Donohue. "It was there, wasn't it? It was there. It's a pity. We got a lot right. We had a plan, obviously, and it worked fairly well. The last 10 minutes were crazy, from what I remember.

"I remember the goal obviously going in, and like, you're down the far end of the pitch and all you see is the back of the net going. You don't see anything else. Then they go five or six up, then we get ourselves back into a really good position again, and then the last 10 minutes was just crazy," she says.

"There were a couple of chances. And then I remember, definitely, Ann Marie Starr being creeled. They're frees you have to be giving but we had chances, had a couple of wides that should have been put over the bar, one after the other. I think this is gonna hurt for a long time. It's probably the one that will stick with me."

It would have been a sweet one after a "very up and down" campaign but they backed the quality they had if they could just get to a final.

They were given little chance in that game, having been destroyed by the Rebels in the group stages. Ailish O'Reilly revealed afterwards that Donohue, who missed that game with a hamstring injury, delivered a stern message afterwards. "Some small words of encouragement" is how she describes it now.

"As long as I've been playing with Galway, we never would have lost a game to that degree. We had Waterford the following week in the quarter-final so it was kind of do-or-die. There was a few of us that spoke. Obviously, I was sitting watching from the sidelines, and emotions were probably a little bit high," she adds.



Galway's All-Star award winner Aoife Donohue with Camogie Association Uachtarán Brian Molloy, and Marie Coady, PwC Markets Partner.



All-Stars team winner Saoirse McCarthy, Cork, with Camogie Association Uachtarán Brian Molloy and Marie Coady, PwC Markets Partner. Picture: Inpho/Morgan Treacy

Cork Camogie Board bring Christmas cheer and fair to Castle Road

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

Away from the camogie playing fields, but at the same time just on the door step, the Cork Camogie Board are holding a Christmas Fair and Bric-à-Brac sale tomorrow, Sunday, November 24, from 10am to 4pm in the clubhouse at Castle Road.
There, they will have a fantastic selection of festive items, including, gifts, ceramics, glassware, jewellery, home baking, and much more.
All the funds raised will go to the on-going development of Castle Road and they are asking all clubs and the public to come along and support this fundraising event.
They would also be delighted to receive donations of new gifts, Bric a Brac and in particular, home baking Anybody with items for Christmas fair can hand them into Castle Road today, Saturday, between 10am and 1pm or on Sunday.
Don't miss out, go along and enjoy the holiday atmosphere with free entry and parking, so call in and support the event.

Well done

Congratulations to the eight Cork players named on the All-Star team last weekend.
Amy Lee, Laura Hayes, Saoirse Mc McCarthy, Laura Treacy, Pamela and Katriona Mackey, Aisling Thompson and Amy O'Connor.
Six Cork intermediate players, Lauren Homan, Tara McCarthy, Emma Flanagan, Niamh O'Leary, Cliona O'Callaghan and Aoife Barrett were Soaring Star recipients, whilst Ger Manley was named as manager of the year.
Well done to all.

Minor Championship

The quarter finals of the SE Systems Minor Camogie championships took place over the last week.
In the SE Systems Premier Camogie Championship, Aghabullogue advanced after a close battle with Kilbrittain / Timoleague which saw them edge it with a point to spare in an exciting 2-15 to 4-8 encounter.
In the second semi-final, Newtownshandrum were too strong for Ballinhassig when the sides met where it finished 0-17 to 2-2 in their favour.
It's down to the semi-final stage and today, Saturday, 23, Sarsfields take on Aghabullogue in Caherlag at 2pm, Éire Óg and Newtownshandrum will met in the second semi-final which is due to be played on or before Sunday as time of going to print the date hadn't been confirmed.



Manager of the Year, Ger Manley of Cork, Senior Player of the Year Award Laura Hayes of Cork Picture: Inpho/Bryan Keane

Premier Plate

In the SE Camogie Systems premier plate semi-final, Erin's Own will meet Cloughduv, with the winners meeting Inniscarra in the final after they overcame Ballinora in their semi-final clash.

Minor A

In the S E Systems Minor A championship quarter finals, Ballincollig had a 5-10 to 2-10 victory over Blackrock to book their semi-final place where they will travel today, Saturday, to meet Laochra Óg in Ballymacorcoran at 12 noon.
Glen Rovers got the upperhand over Midleton in their quarter final on a 2-10 to 1-3 scoreline and they will play Ballyhea tomorrow, Sunday, 24, in the semi-final in Ballyhea at 2.45pm.

Minor B

In the SE Systems Minor B championship quarter finals there were two close clashes.
Fr O'Neill's booked their place in the last four with a 1-12 to 3-5 victory over Barryroe.
Sliabh Rua and Castlemartyr battled it out where a single point separated the sides, as Sliabh Rua booked their semi-final sport on a 2-7 to 2-6 scoreline.
The final goes ahead tomorrow, Sunday, 24, in Castle Road at 1.30pm where Fr O'Neill's and Sliabh Rua will battle it out for the title.

Minor C

Bandon qualified for the SE Systems Minor C final as they defeated Aghada in their semi final.
They will meet the winners of the Banteer versus Buttevant semi-final which was postponed last week due to a bereavement.



The Courcey Rovers junior team, and selectors, who won the Lily Grant county cup championship are (front, from left): Roisin Nolan-Collins, Lauren Crowley, Hannah Coakley, Isabel Lordan (captain), Roisin Griffin, Aine O'Donoghue, Lily Murphy, Caoimhe Hannon and Sarah Galvin. Back (from left): Joey Gallagher, Lisa Murphy, Ciara Hayes, Ursula Quinn, Niamh Twomey, Sinead Hynes, Sadhbh Napier, Lily-Ellen Crowley, Neasa McCarthy, Aine O'Reilly, Anna Hannon, Liz Minihane, Alanna Crean, Kevin Hannon, Sarah Walsh and loyal followers (from left) Amy Minihane, Katie Minihane and Shauna Walsh.



All-Stars award winner Carrie Dolan of Galway, with Camogie Association Uachtarán Brian Molloy and Marie Coady, PwC Markets Partner at the All-Stars banquet at Croke Park on Friday night. Galway's other camogie All-Star winners were Roisín Black, Dervla Higgins, Aoife Donohue and Niamh Mallon.



Galway's Nona McHugh, the first ever captain of the Republic of Ireland women's soccer team, was inducted into the FAI Hall of Fame at the Association's annual awards night.

remembered McHugh, who also won All-Ireland camogie titles with Galway.



All-Stars award winner Dervla Higgins of Galway, with Camogie Association Uachtarán Brian Molloy, and Marie Coady, PwC Markets Partner.

COUNTY MINOR A CAMOGIE FINAL



The Sarsfields camogie team which defeated Athenry in the County A Final at Duggan Park on Sunday. Back row, left to right: Jessica Hynes, Aoife Finnerty, Hazel Fahy, Saoirse Kelly, Daisy Griffin, Aoibheann Cogavin, Aoibheann Donohue, Hannah Nevin, Clodagh Ward, Emily Dillon, Laoise McGrath, Ciara McGrath, Hannah Earls, Saoirse Duhan, Kellie Burke. Front row: Orla Prior, Sommer McNamara, Tegan Scully, Shauna Fahy, Mikayla Noone, Tegan Cannon, Tegan Forde, Caoimhe Kelly, Mary Brigid Cosgrove, Aoibhe Deely, Eva Murray, Julie Earls, Tori Spellman. Mascot: Dylan Thomas Earls.



Sarsfields Captain Ciara McGrath is presented with the County Minor A Cup by Paul Kelly, Chairperson of Camogie Fixtures.



Athenry's Mollie Noone is chased by Saoirse Cahill of Sarsfields during the County Minor A Camogie Final at Duggan Park.



The Athenry minor camogie team which lost out to Sarsfields in the County A Final at Duggan Park on Sunday. Back row, left to right: Back row left to right: Isabel Fleet, Ailish Molloy, Aoibhe Whyte, Maeve Feeney, Clodagh Burke, Katie Noone, Kerri O'Driscoll, Tarron Kilkenny, Jenni McNamara, Ruth Kelly, Ciara Morrissey, Katie Burke, Ciara Murtagh, Alison Canavan, Abbie Donohue, Kate Sunderland, Amanda Conway. Front row: Sarah Hession, Ciara Walsh, Rachel Carty, Sinead Feeney, Mollie Noone, Anna Jordan, Eva McGlynn, Claire Hough, Aoibhin Hannon, Ailbhe Mulhall, Cadhla Fox, Molly Mulry, Leah Farrell, Aine Duffy.

Cork's camogie sides



Captain of the Cork Intermediate team, Lauren Homan; Deputy Mayor for Cork County, Sheila O'Callaghan; Cllr Terry Coleman, deputising for the Lord Mayor of Cork; vice captain for the senior team Meabh Cahalane and U16 captain Caoimhe Power, at the Cork Camogie victory dinner to honour senior, intermediate, and U16 teams that was held at the Rochestown Park Hotel.
Pictures: David Creedon

CAMOGIE



Rory Noonan

It was a night when hurleys and helmets were forgotten as Cork camogie players were presented with their All-Ireland winning medals at the Rochestown Park Hotel.

This year two teams were honoured for All-Ireland glory as the senior and intermediate champions received their medals.

Also honoured on the night was the Cork U16 B team that won the Munster championship.

The senior side also collected their medals for winning the Munster championship to mark a remarkable for manager Ger Manley and his squad.

Having taken over from Matthew Twomey he ensured Cork retained their All-Ireland crown and added the Munster championship to the trophy cabinet this season.

The intermediate squad won both the league and championship, but lost out in the Munster series.

Under Munster rules a number of the squad were not able to play as they were part of the side that won in 2023 so were ineligible for 2024, rule that probably cost them the treble.

It was also great to see the U16 team honoured, as by Cork sides it was a year of missed opportunities from minor down.

But the U16 B side bucked that trend to take the Munster title as they were delighted to collect their medals.

A spokesperson for Cork Camogie said they were delighted to honour all the players on the night and were hopeful for the season ahead.

They went on to thank all their management teams, across all side, for their dedication and hard work not just in 2024 but over the years. They said that without these teams of volunteers it would not be possible to run Cork sides.

All the other volunteers across all sorts of roles were also acknowledged for their contribution to Cork camogie.

Last, but not least, the players were also thanked for their dedication to Cork and their achievements in 2024. Any year you win one All-Ireland title is a good one, but to win two is exceptional.

They wished all a happy Christmas and said they were looking forward to getting going again in 2025.



Lianne, Allie, and Alan Sexton at the Cork Camogie victory dinner to honour senior, intermediate and U-16 teams that was held at the Rochestown Park Hotel, Cork



Ciara Hurley and Gráinne Cahalane at the Cork Camogie victory dinner to honour senior, intermediate and U16 teams that was held at the Rochestown Park Hotel.



Members of the U16 team that won the Munster Cup, Abbie Hyde, Grace Hughs, Natasha Barrett, Allie Sexton and Ciara O'Brien, at the Cork Camogie victory dinner held at the Rochestown Park Hotel.



Joe, Louise, Aoife and Martina Barrett at the Cork Camogie victory dinner to honour senior, intermediate and U-16 teams that was held at the Rochestown Park Hotel.

presented with medals



Senior players Izzy O'Regan, Aoife O'Neill and Hayley Ryan at the Cork Camogie victory dinner to honour senior, intermediate and U16 teams at the Rochestown Park Hotel. Pictures: David Creedor



Members of the senior team, Meabh Cahalane, Fiona Keating, Orlaith Cahalane, Emma Murphy, Ciara O'Sullivan and Clodagh Finn at the Cork Camogie victory dinner.



Therese, Natasha and Eddie Barrett enjoying the celebrations at the Rochestown Park Hotel.



Clare, Millie and Jack Condon at the victory dinner. Millie was part of the senior All-Ireland winning team.



Captain of the intermediate team Lauren Homan and vice captain of the senior team Meabh Cahalane show off the All-Ireland winning trophies.



Sliabh Rua captain Grace O'Riordan, left, and vice-captain Aoibhinn Halpin, right, are presented with the S E Systems Minor B camogie cup by Padraic Treacy, Cork County Board vice-chairman.

Emma stars for Sliabh Rua in minor B victory

Sliabh Rua	**2-16**
Fr O'Neill's	**0-5**

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

A polished performance from Sliabh Rua saw them take the S E Systems Minor B Camogie title when they overcame Fr O'Neill's in Castle Road.

Sliabh Rua set the foundation for victory with an impressive first-half display and led 1-13 to 0-2 at the interval.

Emma McSweeney was to the fore for Sliabh Rua as they kept the Fr O'Neill's defence under pressure and her tally of 10 points earned her *The Echo* player of the match award.

Laoise Hill kept the scoreboard ticking over for Fr O'Neill's in the first half with three pointed frees.

Goals in each half from Grace McCarthy and Erin Ridgeway helped Sliabh Rua hold the upper hand, while Caoimhe Horgan, Kate O'Sullivan, and Hannah Deasy were all on target with points, as were McCarthy and Ridgeway as Sliabh Rua took the title despite a battling performance from a Fr O'Neill's side, who gave it their all, Hill and Ruth Cody adding points, but they met a determined Sliabh Rua side who ran out easy winners.

Sliabh Rua: K Cusack; S Hurley, C Hurley, A Coleman; A Halpin, C O'Donnell, F O'Riordan; H Deasy, C Horgan; A Rath, N O'Donnell, O McCarthy; E MacSweeney, E Ridgeway, G McCarthy.

Subs: K O'Sullivan for N O'Donnell, A Sheehan for O McCarthy, A Hayes for A Rath, K O' Callaghan for E Ridgeway, A Whyte for H Deasy, E Murphy for G McCarthy, R O'Brien for E MacSweeney.

Fr O'Neill's: H Law; O Hennessy, L Wiggins, A O'Brien; E Finn, C Murphy, E O' Brien, R Cody, T O'Neill; A Reilly, O Murphy, K Finn; M Collins, L Hill, M Motherway.

Subs: M Holland for E O' Brien, E Daly for A O' Brien, A Carroll for O Hennessy.

Minor championship finals

Sarsfields will meet either Éire Óg or Newtownshandrum in the S E Systems Premier minor final in Castle Road today (2pm).

The S E Systems minor C camogie final between Bandon and Banteer is at 11.30am.

Tomorrow, in the S E Systems Minor A camogie championship final, Glen Rovers will meet either Laochra Óg or Ballincollig (11.30am) which will be followed by the premier plate final between Inniscarra and Erin's Own (2pm).

New Cork U16 management

The Cork Camogie Board ratified the appointment of Brendan Foley as Cork U16 manager for a two-year term.

Foley takes over from Anthony Cashman, who stepped down having taken on the role in 2024.

Foley has been involved at club level with Midleton and with divisional side Imokilly and he was a member of the county U16 management team last season.

He is joined by selectors Mick Wallis (Erin's Own), John Duff (Aghbullogue), Don O'Sullivan (St Vincent's), with Abbie Foley as stats/analysis.

Cork camogie training gear

The county board are taking orders for the Keary's training tops and shorts which can be ordered through your club secretary.

They come in all sizes from age 7 to adults, and the costs are: sizes 7/8, 9/10, 10/11 training top and shorts €50; sizes 11/12, 13, small, medium, and large training top and shorts €60.

Shorts are available in sizes 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, and 36.

Training tops can be ordered without shorts and cost, 7/8, 9/10, and 10/11 €35; 11/12, 13, small, medium, and large €40.

Orders must be with club secretaries on or before Wednesday, December 4.



Camogie board vice-chairman Padraig Treacy presents Emma McSweeney with *The Echo* Player of the Match award.

'We want to be first team in Clare to reach final'

Camogie

Therese O'Callaghan

Truagh-Clonlara face off against St Vincent's in the AIB All-Ireland senior club camogie championship semi-final tomorrow in Waterford's Walsh Park (1pm), in what is a historic day for the Clare champions.

Two weeks ago Róisín Begley's sudden-death 45 secured provincial silverware after two periods of extra-time against Gailltír. The replay scoreline, 4-12 to 3-15 and 9-8 on 45s, came three hours after pulsating action.

County senior Áine O'Loughlin, yet again, was player of the match after nailing 2-6. Hot on her heels was Eimear Kelly with 2-4.

While this is uncharted territory for the back-to-back titleholders, they will see it as a wonderful opportunity to advance to an All-Ireland final.

A Munster outfit have not won this prestigious competition since Milford's great run which ended with three titles in 2015.

Truagh-Clonlara coach Ryan Morris hopes "Christmas will come early".

"The Munster final was such a long game and the drawn game the week before, it's a case now of making sure the bodies are right and the minds are right.

"It took us a long time to get over the line in Clare, 17 years ago we were fighting at intermediate level. But each time we've come through in Clare and Munster in the last few years, we are banking on that experience now.

"It has already helped us win our first Munster final. We want to be the first team in Clare to reach the All-Ireland final, we want to break down that barrier. The whole county is behind us.

"But we know St Vincent's are an experienced team and have been at this level before, while we haven't."

St Vincent's, who are the last Dublin team to reach the All-Ireland final in 1998, are going in search of an inaugural title as well. They do possess that bit of know-how after contesting two semi-finals in the last six years.

They too required extra-time to see off Piltown in the Leinster decider, Ava Lambe's green flag a crucial score.

The second semi-final involving Sarsfields of Galway and Antrim's Loughgiel Shamrocks takes place tomorrow in Kingspan Breffni Park (2pm). This is a repeat of the 2022 face-off that went the way of Sarsfields.

The Galway side are no strangers when it comes to this stage of the competition — they are the All-Ireland champions of 2019, 2021, and 2022. Last month the Michael 'Hopper' McGrath-managed team won an incredible sixth county title in a row against St Thomas'. Captained by Laura Ward, it was their eighth piece of silver in nine years.

Loughgiel are a coming team though, and will surely take inspiration from what Slaughtneil of Derry have achieved in winning three in a row between 2016 and 2018 — two of which were against Sarsfields.

They had it easy in the Antrim final, coming away with a big 20-point winning margin over Swatragh.



Cork camogie player Ciara O'Sullivan recently graduated with BSc finance degree from UCC.

CAMOGIE: All-Ireland Club Championship semi-finals: **Senior**: St Vincents (Dublin) v Truagh-Clonlara (Clare), Walsh Park, 1pm; Loughgiel Shamrocks (Antrim) v Sarsfields (Galway), Kingspan Breffni, 2pm. **Intermediate** (2pm): Clanmaurice (Kerry) v St Brigids (Laois), Bansha; Ahascragh/Caltra (Galway) v Eglish (Tyrone), Naomh Pádraig, Kinnegad.

CAMOGIE

All-Ireland Senior Club Championship semi-finals: Loughgiel Shamrocks (Antrim) 3-9 Sarsfields (Galway) 1-16, St Vincents (Dublin) 0-Truagh-Clonlara (Clare) 0-11; **All-Ireland Intermediate Club Champion semi-finals:** Clanmaurice (Kerry) 1-15 St Brigids (Laois) 2-10 Ahascragh/Caltra (Galway) 1-8 Eglish (Tyrone) 10; **All-Ireland Junior B Club Championst semi-finals:** Annacurra (Wicklow) 0-4 Naomh Treasa (Tyrone) 3-7, Ceann Creige (Britain) 3-11 Pádraig Pearses (Roscommon) 0-1; **All-Ireland Junior Club Championship semi-finals:** Granemore (Armagh) 2-9 Oran (Roscommon) 1-3, Modeligo (Waterford) 1-6 Knockananna (Wicklow) 1-16; **Cork Minor Premier Cup final:** Sarsfields 2-9 Eire Og 1-9; **Cork Minor Premier plate final:** Erin's Own 4-3 Inniscarra 1-6; **Cork Minor A final:** Ballincollig 1-13 Glen Rovers 2-2; **Cork Minor C final:** Bandon 2-13 Banteer 3-7.



Katie O'Driscoll, Amy Shepherd, and Molly Burke (football and camogie) were awarded MTU sports scholarships. Picture: Joleen Cronin

Sarsfields' final place is familiar territory



FINAL-BOUND: Sarsfields' Maria Cooney celebrates victory over Loughgiel Shamrocks in the All-Ireland Club senior camogie championship at Kingspan Breffni Park. Picture: Laszlo Geczo/Inpho

Camogie roundup

Kevin Egan

The 2024 AIB All-Ireland senior club camogie final will be a clash between Galway side Sarsfields, who will be competing in their eighth final in nine campaigns, and Truagh-Clonlara, who won't just be making their first appearance in the showpiece club occasion, but will also be the first Clare club ever to stand just 60 minutes away from lifting the Bill and Agnes Carroll Cup.

The manner of their progression through to the December 15 decider at Croke Park was similar for both sides, however, as Loughgiel Shamrocks and St Vincents both pushed their West of Ireland opponents to the wire in their semi-final clashes.

Going into the closing stages at Walsh Park, it looked like St Vincents were the more likely side to progress in their battle with the Banner County and Munster champions, but Áine O'Loughlin, Aoibhinn Marren, and Becky Foley struck the last three points of the game to seal an 0-11 to 0-9 win for Truagh-Clonlara.

There was never anything between the sides in Waterford, and five times the scores were level over the course of the hour.

Dublin stars Aisling Maher and Anna Sullivan got some key scores before half time to help St Vincent's lead by 0-7 to 0-4 at the break, albeit after playing with the aid of the breeze, and the advantage shifted back towards the South Clare side when two points each for O'Loughlin and Eimear Kelly nudged them into the lead.

A stunning save from Dara Cooke to deny Foley left the Dubliners in the game and they led with just over five minutes to play, Sullivan taking the lead score, before Truagh-Clolara struck with a decisive finish.

At Kingspan Breffni Park, Catherine Dobbin gave Loughgiel Shamrocks the dream start with an early goal when she took advantage of Annie Lynn's brave block to scoop up the loose sliotar and fire it to the net after three minutes, as the Antrim camogs looked to avenge their 2022 All-Ireland final defeat to Sarsfields.

The upset looked to be on when Róisín McCormack made it 2-1 to 0-0 with less than five minutes played, and their lead was out to nine when Dobbin played in Lucia McNaughton. The centre-forward took a hard hit and still swept the ball to the net to make it 3-3 to 0-3 midway through the first half. Had they held that lead for more than a few minutes, their Galway opponents might have started to feel the pressure, but instead a Niamh McGrath free from midfield was allowed to bounce and on the uneven turf, Eimear Boyle didn't gather it before it crossed the line.

Caoimhe Kelly's excellent score before half time made it 3-4 to 1-6 at the break, and Kelly was also the scorer of the vital point from the left wing in the 60th minute that gave Sarsfields their first lead of the game, with Siobhán McGrath and McCormack trading frees to leave it 1-16 to 3-9 at the final whistle.

The intermediate decider will share the Croke Park stage with the senior, and Ahascragh-Caltra will fly the Galway flag in that one too, when they take on 2021 All-Ireland junior champions Clanmaurice of Kerry.

It was drama all round here too, with Ahascragh-Caltra needing extra time to overcome Eglish in Kinnegad, 1-8 to 0-10. The sides were level at 0-4 each at half time before two Aoibhe Glynn points nudged the Galwegians ahead midway through the second half.

Olivia Farrelly and Leanne Donnelly (45) hit fine scores to give Eglish a narrow lead, but three minutes into stoppage time, Sarah Noone was the hero for Ahascragh-Caltra, pointing to make it 0-7 each at the full-time whistle.

Eglish took a two-point lead again before Noone's long-range free in the first period of extra time went all the way to the net, leaving Ciara Geoghegan to tie up the scores going into the last change of ends.

Eglish now had the breeze but Noone wasn't going to be denied, scoring the winner from 50 metres to secure her side's progression.

Bansha was the venue for Clanmaurice versus St Brigid's, where Jackie Horgan scored the goal that put the Munster champions 1-6 to 0-5 in front of their Laois rivals at the break.

St Brigid's got the first two scores of the second half but Clanmaurice stepped it up again, hitting four in a row and eventually moving seven points clear, with Horgan, Patrice Diggin, and Eimear Hassett leading the scoring charge.

Goals from Jessie Quinlan and Clodagh Tynan ensured a dramatic finale, however, with Clanmaurice holding on to prevail by 1-15 to 2-10.

It was more clear cut in the junior ranks, where Granemore (Armagh) overcame Oran (Roscommon) by 2-9 to 1-3 in Ballyshannon and Ciara Byrne hit 1-9 in Wicklow side Knockananna's 1-16 to 1-6 win over Modeligo of Waterford.

The Junior B final will be a clash between Naomh Treasa of Dungannon and Glasgow's Crann Creíge, after they enjoyed 3-7 to 0-4 and 3-11 to 0-11 wins over Annacurra (Wicklow) and Pádraig Pearses (Roscommon) respectively.



Champions Glen Rovers celebrate after victory over Douglas in the Cork Camogie Minor A League final last evening at Ovens. The Glen will contest the Minor A Championship final at thehe weekend. Picture: Denis Boyle

Glen edge Douglas in tight battle

Cork Minor A Camogie League Final

Glen Rovers	3-7
Douglas	2-8

(aet)

Therese O'Callaghan

A terrific Cork Minor A Camogie League final eventually went the way of Glen Rovers in Ovens last night, the contest was a fitting tribute to their friend and club mate Sarah-Kate O'Meara who passed away unexpectedly last June.

The sides were tied 2-5 each after normal time, Abby Kenneally's goal in the first period of extra-time put some daylight between the teams. In a thrilling finish, free-taker Clodagh Morrissey reduced the deficit to two.

But the Glen, superbly led by captain Sarah Murphy, weren't going to be denied.

Douglas edged 0-3 to 0-2 ahead with Kate Hourihan's accuracy telling. The first goal arrived in the15th minute through Aoife Martin.

Three minutes from the break Aoife Keenan replied for Douglas to send her side 1-4 to 1-3 up at the break.

Keenan grabbed a second goal upon the restart. Sinead Roche was equal to the task for Glen Rovers, and as the action swung from end to end there was no separating the two teams at full time.

Both sides had some excellent players. Captain and goalkeeper Zoe O'Leary, Clodagh Sweeney, Emma O'Driscoll and Kate Hourihan carried the fight for Douglas.

Odhrna Hurley, Cara O'Flynn, Sarah Murphy and Sophie O'Sullivan were among those to the fore for Glen Rovers.

The Blackpool club will be seeking the double when they contest the Minor A Championship final at the weekend.

Scorers for Glen Rovers: S Roche (1-1), A Kenneally and A Martin (1-0 each), S Murphy, J Horgan and S O'Sullivan (0-2 each).

Scorers for Douglas: A Keenan (2-0), C Morrison (0-5, 0-4 frees), K Hourihan (0-2), MO'Shea (0-1).

GLEN ROVERS: A O'Driscoll; Sarah O'Sullivan, K O'Regan, C O'Flynn; B Coughlan, O Hurley, L O'Donovan; S Murphy (Capt), J Horgan; Sophie O'Sullivan, A O'Halloran, K O'Halloran; S Roche, A Kenneally, A Martin.

Subs: J Akinkouli for A O'Halloran (37), A O'Halloran for B Coughlan (66), A Turnbull for L O'Donovan (74).

DOUGLAS: Z O'Leary (Capt); A Butler, A Flynn, F Nodwell; A Ahern, A Fitzgerald, C Sweeney; A Clarke, E O'Driscoll; M O'Shea, M O'Sullivan, S M Ní Cheallacháin; C Morrison, K Hourihan, A Keenan.

Subs: A Sheehan for M O'Sullivan (37), S Daly for A Keenan (57), E Horgan for S M Ní Cheallacháin (60), S Murphy for A Butler (70).

Referee: John Horgan (Gleann na Laoi).



Cork manager Ger Manley watching from the stands at the final whistle, after defeating Galway in the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior camogie final at Croke Park. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

Manley: Winning a tight All-Ireland made it sweeter

CAMOGIE

John Cashman

The year soon ending could hardly have gone any better for new Cork camogie manager Ger Manley as the O'Duffy Cup was retained after a cracking All-Ireland final against Galway in August.

Recently, the Midleton man was in the spotlight as he was presented with PwC Camogie Manager of the Year, on a night when eight of his team were honoured with All-Star awards and St Catherine's Laura Hayes was named Player of the Year.

Manley has been looking back and beginning to look forward as the ladies in red plan for the challenge that lies ahead in 2025.

Having been involved in a coaching capacity for a number of years, he had an in-depth working knowledge of the current group of players when he took over the main job last November.

"It was a great year. The big difference for any manager is the players you have available and we are lucky, having a great group. They were all very focused and put so much into it themselves. For me it was a privilege to be involved with them.

"To be honest I didn't see myself getting involved a couple years ago, but Matthew Twomey initially approached me and I'm delighted now the way it has worked out. The girls are just so easy to get on with, they train so well and across the board as we have seen the quality is getting better.

"There's no doubt they are a very talented bunch as reflected by their individual awards. If anything I thought, we might even get one of two more All-Stars awards. I'm delighted for all of them that got awards.



Ger Manley received the Camogie Manager of the Year award. Picture: Bryan Keane/Inpho

"Laura deservedly won the Player of the Year. She'd been the highest performer, the most consistent player we had all season. If you look at where she was last year, when she got a really bad injury, Laura has been absolutely phenomenal this year.

"She has a great physical approach: Very strong, very quick, her attitude is top-class.

"Overall we had a very strong panel in 2024 and there is more talent out there too.

"After last year's big final win over Waterford, we came back a bit late this year, but the team was incredibly consistent for most of the campaign. Following the Clare game and Waterford games in the Munster Championship, I thought from there on we were really impressed.

"The Munster final win left us exactly where we wanted to be. We did a few really hard blocks of training either side of the provincial win"

That Munster win and the return of a number of players to full fitness put Cork in a really strong position going into the championship summer again. Manley picks up the storyline.

"Monsoon-like conditions prevailed for the opener against Wexford at Páirc Ui Rinn, but I thought we were very impressive that day," he said. "From then on, we seemed to get better and better. Wins over Down and Clare set us up nicely for the Dublin game — again I thought the team played very well.

"Galway then was a huge game for us, probably our best performance. The girls were outstanding for the first 40 minutes.

"The win meant we had Dublin again in the semi-final. Being honest Dublin probably didn't produce their best performance and we got to the final with something to spare. Overall though we got very consistent throughout the year.

"The last 20 minutes of the final against Galway really showed the hunger we had in the camp. The girls wanted to win it again; they are the sort of a group who push themselves so much. I think the All-Ireland final is probably the best game I was ever involved with, men's or camogie.

"I couldn't say I enjoyed it, but looking back maybe the few changes we made in the second half worked out well. Overall, it is some game, so close. For us to win a tight game was so important.

"The first year I was involved, Kilkenny beat us with a late goal, the year previous Galway got another late goal. To come around from where they were says so much about their mindset of these Cork players."

Reflections about successive All-Irelands always raises the issue of a potential three-in-a-row. This team looks well primed for another big effort but the manager knows it's very much going to be one game at a time in what will be a competitive 2025 championship.



Brendan Keary, CEO, Kearys Motor Group, with Cork players Niamh O'Regan, Meadhbh Ring, Amy O'Connor, Saoirse McCarthy, and Lauren Homan, as Kearys Motor Group announced the renewed its title sponsorship of Cork Camogie for a further three years. Picture: John Allen

Kearys Motor Group announce sponsorship deal with Cork Camogie

CAMOGIE

Rory Noonan

Kearys Motor Group has renewed its title sponsorship of Cork Camogie, for a further three years from 2025-2027 inclusive.

This includes branding rights for Cork county camogie teams, plus an additional investment by Kearys in the sponsorship activation.

Since becoming title sponsors in 2022, Kearys Motor Group have celebrated with Cork Camogie as they won two All-Ireland senior championships, bringing the O'Duffy Cup back to Leeside in 2023 and 2024, as well as the Intermediate All-Ireland championship this year.

As part of the deal, Kearys will sponsor the senior, U23, junior, minor and U16 teams as well as the U16 and U14 club championships.

The new Cork camogie jersey will be launched by Kearys in January, just before the senior league gets underway.

Kearys will also provide a new 251 Renault Trafic kit van for the senior team.

To announce the sponsorship agreement, Kearys hosted a special event at the Renault / Dacia Cork dealership, with Cork senior and intermediate players, together with the All-Ireland trophies, Cork County Board and special guest, Kearys Brand Ambassador, Sonia O'Sullivan, who shared her insights on sport, with a focus on the success and development of women's sport In Ireland in particular.

Brendan Keary, CEO Kearys Motor Group said: "We are delighted and proud to partner with Cork Camogie for the next three years with this significant sponsorship that reflects Kearys' culture, values, inclusivity and team spirit.

"We recognise the value of camogie as one of Ireland's leading and growing sports for women and girls and we look forward to continuing our great relationship with all the teams who compete at the highest level.

Kearys Motor Group represents the BMW, MINI, Motorrad, Hyundai, Renault, Dacia and Nissan franchises across 10 dealerships in Cork as well as Kearys Carstore used car supermarkets in Dublin, Cork and Limerick and We Buy Cars, a national car buying business.

Speaking on behalf of Cork Camogie, Mairead Donovan chairperson said: "Our Cork Camogie teams are an amazing group of athletes and are fantastic ambassadors for Cork as we have proven with huge successes over the past three years both at adult and underage levels.

"We look forward to continuing to work with Kearys Motor Group and growing our excellent relationship together over the next three years. Cork as a county are one of the most successful since the 21st century began and over the past 24 years, the Cork inter-county team have competed successfully at senior, intermediate, junior, minor and U16 levels winning multiple All-Ireland and Munster titles."



Brendan Keary, CEO, Kearys Motor Group, with Saoirse McCarthy, Amy O'Connor, Mairead Donovan, chairperson Cork Camogie, and Lauren Homan, at the announcement. Picture: John Allen



Mairead O'Donovan, chairperson Cork Camogie board presents the S E Systems Minor A Championship trophy to Ballincollig players Ella Hickey and Kate O'Flynn.

Minor final wins for Sars and Ballincollig

Sarsfields	**2-9**
Eire Og	**1-9**

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

Despite the difficult weather conditions, Sarsfields and Éire Óg served up a cracking S E Systems Premier Minor Championship final in Castle Road.

The gale force wind made it difficult for both sides, but to their credit they played with determination and little divided them all through.

A goal five minutes into first-half injury-time when they trailed by nine was of huge importance to Sars because they had the wind advantage for the second half.

Sars opened the scoring with a Nessa Treacy point and Abbey Casey replied for Éire Óg.

Sars edged in front again, but Éire Óg drove at their opponents' defence and two points without reply had them in front before Clara Murphy sent a penalty to the net and, adding three more points to their tally, they were nine clear as the first half went into injury-time.

Sars pressed and won a free and Fennessy caught the Éire Óg defence unawares and fired low to the net and it was very much game on as the half-time whistle sounded.

Three quick points had Sars level inside five minutes of the restart; Éire Óg responded with a pointed free to go a point in front, but it was to be their only score of the second half as Sars' defence closed down attack after attack.

Rachel Roche hit the equaliser before Lucy Murray denied Éire Óg with a penalty save at the three-quarter stage.

With conditions taking their toll, both sides had to dig deep, but they did and Treacy put Sars in front after she won possession and outpaced the Éire Óg defence to finish to the corner of the net. She then added a point and with Roche adding another, Sarsfields were two in front as the game went into injury-time.

Éire Óg pressed and it took an excellent save form Murray to deny them a goal. Sars drove down field and when Fennessy pointed a late free it was enough to see them retain their title with Roche named *The Echo* player of the Match.

Ballincollig	**1-13**
Glen Rovers	**2-2**

A goal from Tara Goulding inside two minutes of throw-in settled Ballincollig in the S E System Minor A final in Castle Road.

Sinead Roche responded with a point for Glen Rovers, but aided by the wind, Ballincollig enjoyed the lion's share of possession and with Laura Collins, Abbey Mooney, and Izzy Fleury all finding their range with three pointed frees and two from play they stretched their lead and at the break led 1-5 to 0-1.

On the resumption Ballincollig drove at the Glen defence and having went to extra time in their midweek league final with Douglas, tiredness began to take its toll.

Ballincollig stretched their lead with two pointed frees before Glen grabbed a goal, Ballincollig added two points in reply before Abby Kenneally, with a Glen point and an Odhrna Hurley goal gave them a lifeline.

Glen pressed for more, but despite strong pressure, they failed to bridge the gap as Ballincollig added a point to run out winners after an entertaining contest after which Goulding was named *The Echo* player of the Match.



Sheila and Gillian Golden present the Tommy Golden Cup for the Premier Minor Camogie Championship to Sarsfields captain Ciara Rice.



Kearys Motor Group chief executive Brendan Keary, brand ambassador Sonia O'Sullivan; and Cork camogie players Saoirse McCarthy and Amy O'Connor with the All-Ireland title they claimed this year, as Kearys Motor Group announced its renewal of the title sponsorship of Cork camogie for three more years from 2025.
Picture: John Allen

Cork camogie and Kearys extend sponsorship

Camogie

Shane Donovan

Kearys Motor Group has extended its sponsorship of Cork camogie for the next three years.

The motor sales company has been Cork's title sponsor since 2022 and the new agreement will run to 2027.

"Our Cork camogie teams are an amazing group of athletes and are fantastic ambassadors for Cork as we have proven with huge successes over the past three years both at adult and underage levels," said Cork camogie chairperson Mairead Donovan.

"Cork as a county are one of the most successful since the 21st century began and over the past 24 years, the Cork inter-county team have competed successfully at senior, intermediate, junior, minor, and U16 levels, winning multiple All-Ireland and Munster titles."

Kearys chief executive Brendan Keary said: "We are delighted and proud to partner Cork camogie for the next three years with this significant sponsorship that reflects Kearys' culture, values, inclusivity, and team spirit."

He continued: "We recognise the value of camogie as one of Ireland's leading and growing sports for women and girls and we look forward to continuing our great relationship with all the teams who compete at the highest level."

The new Cork camogie jersey will be launched by Kearys next month.



Camogie players Niamh McGrath (Sarsfields, Galway) and Róisín Begley (Truagh Clonlara, Clare), ahead of the AIB Camogie All-Ireland Senior Club Championship final, which takes place on Sunday, December 15 at Croke Park.
Picture: Dan Sheridan/Inpho



Bandon camogie club's minor team with their coaches and mentors after winning the minor C championship final against Banteer last Saturday at the Cork camogie grounds, Castle Road, Cork. The team was captained by Alice Lillis.

CAMOGIE



Rory Noonan

Barrs have massive presence in camogie team of the year

Such was the quality of the majority of games in this season's SE Systems Cork senior camogie championship you could easily have picked two or three Reardens club camogie teams of the year.

For every position there is at least one other player who could take their place and not weaken the side in any way; some would argue that it might make it stronger.

But the judges, which included Mary Newman, looked at the entire championship, from the first round to the final, and made their decisions based on the amount of games players played as well as their contributions in them.

It's no great surprise to see nine St Finbarr's players on the team, followed by Sarsfields with four and one each from Glen Rovers and Cloughduv.

All are worth their place and in conversations with some players since it was announced on *The Echo* sports podcast earlier this week, most agree with the selections.

The goalkeeping position went to St Finbarr's Ciara Hurley, who was outstanding all through.

She made a number of quality saves on their route to the final in which she made three outstanding ones to ensure the cup headed to Togher for the first time since 2006.

There are many positives to the full-back line and one is that any of the three players can switch positions and still be very much at home.

St Finbarr's Stephanie Punch and Aisling Egan are strong on the ball and not too many forwards got the better of them all year.

No surprise there when you have to mark the likes of Orlaith Cahalane and Sorcha McCartan in training.

The Glen surprised many by reaching the semi-final but deserved to get that far and the defensive displays of Kelly Falvey played a major part in that.

She was a key player for her side all season and no doubt will be again next year.

Sarsfields Lucy Kelly is flanked side by Ciara Golden and Aoife O'Neill in the half-back line.

O'Neill was *The Echo* player of the game in the county final, so no more needs to be said about her. As comfortable in any position in defence she marked different players in the Barrs' success, and for those displays she was included.

Golden was a model of consistency and not too many half-forwards came out on top when they came up against her.

Kelly was outstanding for Sars all through and is one of the best readers of the game in Cork at the moment. She just seems to know where the ball is going to go, even before it is hit.

Her displays in the club championship could easily see her called into the extended Cork squad next year and you never know what could happen then.

Midfielders Ava Fitzgerald and Emma Olden would make the type of pairing any manager would love to be able to name week after week.

Both are comfortable on the ball and can play pin-point accurate passes into the forward line, as well as helping out defensively.

In the half-forward line it was a pleasure to watch these three players all season.

Lucy Allen has a hand that must be made of glue as she plucks ball after ball from the air to either score or play a team-mate in.



St Finbarr's Stephanie Punch is chased by Sarsfields' Orlaith Mullins and Kate Fennessy during the SE Systems Cork Senior Camogie Championship final at Castle Road. Punch had a superb season for the Barrs leading them to their first county final win since 2006.
Picture: Dan Linehan



Cloughduv's Amy Sheppard and Courcey's Lucy Crowley battle over the ball. Sheppard was a key player in Cloughduv's run to the semi-final of the SE Systems senior camogie championship.
Picture: David Creedon

Reardens camogie team of the year

Ciara Hurley, (St Finbarr's); Stephanie Punch, Aisling Egan, (both St Finbarr's), Kelly Falvey, Glen Rovers; Ciara Golden, (St Finbarr's), Lucy Kelly, (Sarsfields), Aoife O'Neill, St Finbarr's; Ava Fitzgerald, (Sarsfields), Emma Olden, (St Finbarr's); Lucy Allen, (Sarsfields), Amy Sheppard, (Cloughduv), Kate Wall, (St Finbarr's); Orlaith Cahalane, (St Finbarr's), Orlaith Mullins, (Sarsfields), Sorcha McCartan, (St Finbarr's).



Sarsfields Lucy Kelly in action against Caoimhe Kelly of Sarsfields Galway in the All-Ireland club championship. Kelly has been a tower of strength for her club in the championship this season.
Picture: INPHO/Ryan Byrne

The best compliment you can pay Amy Sheppard is that a top defender remarked she was her toughest opponent all year and that's saying something.

Kate Wall is comfortable in any position across the line and scored some vital points for the Barrs, particularly when they were needed.

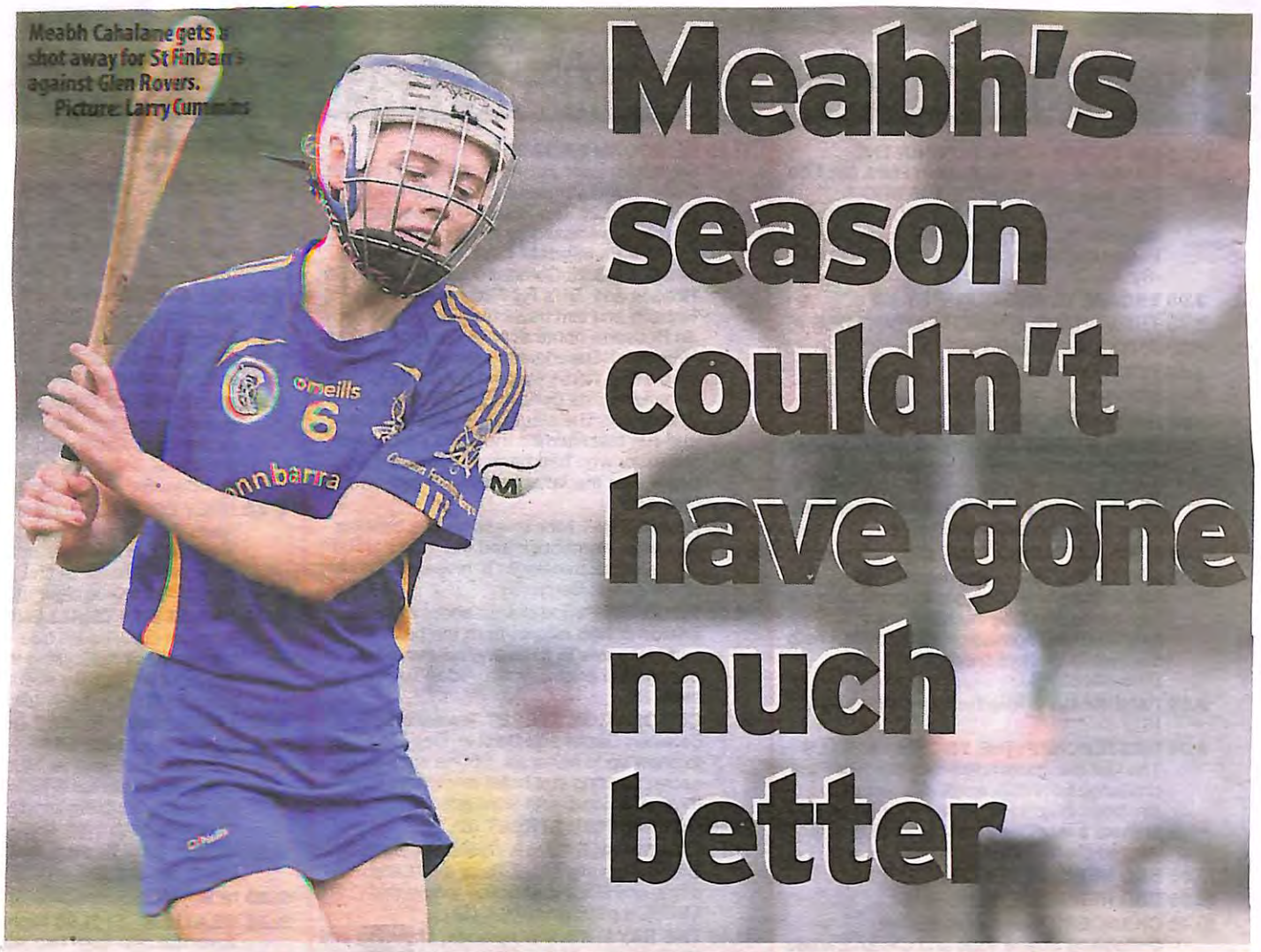
The full-forward line is one that would scare any inter-county defence, not to mind a club one.

Seeing Orlaith Cahalane, Orlaith Mullins, and Sorcha McCartan running in and knowing you have to make them probably turned many a defenders stomach before a game even starts.

All are on the Cork senior panel and all played their parts in the Rebels All-Ireland success and their respective clubs run to the county final.

Players will receive their All Star medals on Friday December 27 at 7pm in Reardens Bar.

> "For every position there is at least one other player who could take their place and not weaken the team in any way"



Meabh's season couldn't have gone much better

CAMOGIE

Rory Noonan

For Cork and St Finbarr's star defender Meabh Cahalane, the season couldn't have gone much better.

All-Ireland and Munster championship wins with Cork were topped off with her club winning their first county title since 2006.

But her season also had its setbacks, including an injury that saw her miss some of Cork's championship campaign before she returned to the side to secure All-Ireland glory against Galway in a nail-biting final.

"Yeah, look, it was great, I suppose, coming towards the end of the year with Cork, I was coming back from an injury and probably struggling to race back for that (All-Ireland final) and then all the hard work that I'd put in that couple of week, I was able to reap the rewards," Cahalane said.

"With the club I got to play a number of games and I think when we got over the line against Inniscarra, we had a really tough game against them and getting over Cloughduv, and in the final getting over Sars was a huge monkey off the back for us.

"I think it was just really good for the team to get over the line eventually. We've had a number of players there that felt we fell short over the last couple of years, so it was a great year overall and we really celebrated for a few weeks."

Cahalane was speaking at the announcement that Kearys Motor Group has renewed its title sponsorship of Cork Camogie for a further three years.

As part of the deal, Kearys will sponsor the senior, U23, junior, minor, and U16 county teams as well as the U16 and U14 club championships.

"It's great to have Kearys involved with us again for another three years and they've provided great support to us over the last number of years and it's great to hear that they're continuing that sponsorship. We've had great success over the last two years and hopefully they can support us again going forward and we will have more success."



Brendan Keary, CEO, Kearys Motor Group; Kearys brand ambassador, Sonia O'Sullivan, with Cork camogie players Saoirse McCarthy and Amy O'Connor at the announcement that Kearys Motor Group has renewed its sponsorship of Cork Camogie for a further three years. Picture. John Allen

Having been sidelined because of injury Cahalane admitted she found it frustrating and just wanted to get back on the pitch to play.

"People have had really big injuries that cost them a year out of sport and that's really tough to take, but when you have an injury and a timeframe of five to eight weeks, you really believe that you can get back in.

"But I suppose injuries do take time. They're very frustrating and you know, I suppose that was probably my first season where I was on the sideline.

"The biggest thing for me was I found it quite challenging, going to training and watching the girls train, and because you just really want to be in the thick of it.

"But you know what I was so proud of them, even with myself and Libby Coppinger injured this year, you wouldn't have known you could have a full-back line that played so well. Izzy O'Regan, to be fair to her, slotted in there and she had a huge year.

"So next year there is going to be huge competition for places and we're all really looking forward to it."

Speaking on the Barrs' championship win, Cahalane felt they were driven on by their loss in the quarter-final in 2023.

"I think we had huge regrets from the year before and that's not to take from Cloughduv (who beat them in the quarter-final) because they were worthy winners on the day. We came off the field that day with massive regrets and we definitely felt that we didn't perform to our best.

"It was something that drove us on, and we said that if we managed to get to a semi-final or final and it was a close game that we weren't going to let another team let us play on their terms.

"Brian O'Sullivan, our manager, he got us to focus on ourselves and on what we're good at. I definitely think it made a huge difference and it just clicked for us this year and we were just delighted to get over the line and win the county final."

For now, like the rest of the Cork panel, Cahalane is enjoying some downtime but said that she is looking forward to getting going again.

"This year was one you dream about but when you get into that Cork starting 15 it's something you don't want to let go. It's why training is so competitive and lets us peak at the right time.

"We are still really hungry to get back in there, enjoying the downtime now, but really looking forward to January to get back in there and get going."



The Glen Rovers minor camogie team, A County League champions.

Glen remember Sarah Kate as they win camogie crown

Glen Rovers' minor camogie team were crowned A county league champions as they overcame Douglas.

Four days later, they contested the championship final, but came up just short against Ballincollig.

The club said: "Including a hard-fought semi-final, three games in seven days took their toll, but it was the resilience that shone through from the group of girls and their mentors, and club as a whole, and silverware was indeed secured in the league."

Earlier in the season, the sudden passing of their star player, Sarah Kate O'Meara, rocked the club, but they rallied and pushed themselves to take the league title.

In her acceptance speech, captain Sarah Murphy said "this is for Sarah Kate", a sentiment that drew huge applause.

The game was a cracker as Douglas and the Glen girls battled for the title.

It was level pegging at full time, 2-5 each, and under the lights at Ovens on a cold November evening the sides faced in to extra time and Glen Rovers went four points ahead.

However, Douglas reduced the deficit to two. With the game in the melting pot Douglas pushed for a winner, but Glen Rovers defended solidly to ensure the title was secured in the memory of their beloved Sarah Kate. The game ended after extra time, Glen Rovers 3-7 Douglas 2-8.

Camogie appeal

The Camogie Association has launched a nationwide appeal for historical materials to contribute to the GAA Library and Archives.

Items required include, but are not limited to; minute books, convention reports, match programmes and souvenir programmes (i.e. opening of grounds), publications (books, magazines and annuals), old photographs and letters and diaries relating to Camogie.

The appeal forms part of the Camogie Association's Newman Fellowship Project at University College Dublin, to mark the 120th anniversary of the founding of camogie. GAA Archivist Adam Staunton can be contacted at astaunton@crokepark.ie or 01 8192350.

Brian Molloy, Uachtarán, Camogie Association

ALL-IRELAND CLUB CAMOGIE SENIOR SEMI-FINAL



Sarsfields' Maria Cooney celebrates after their All-Ireland Club Senior Camogie semi-final victory over Loughgiel Shamrocks at Breffni Park on Sunday. PHOTO: INPHO/LASZLO GECZO.

Hopping with delight!

Sarsfields boss McGrath ecstatic as Galway champs pull it out of the fire

EANNA O'REILLY

FOLLOWING their epic comeback victory over Loughgiel Shamrocks in Sunday's All-Ireland semi-final at Breffni Park, Sarsfields' boss Michael 'Hopper' McGrath was immensely proud of his players, who came through a huge test of character and resolve to grind out a win in the most difficult of circumstances.

The opening quarter of the game saw Sarsfields perform uncharacteristically poorly, giving themselves a mountain to climb against the Ulster champions. They looked rattled and disjointed against a capable Loughgiel outfit.

Despite being outplayed for most of the opening period however, Sarsfields rolled up their sleeves and dug in, eventually reeling in their opponents in the second half. The team manager was ecstatic following Sarsfields' dramatic victory.

"We were with hit three sucker punches in the first ten minutes," he said. "I don't think there's a team in Ireland that could have come back from that. We rolled with the punches; we were playing against the breeze in the second half, and we were four or five points down at half time.

"Those few scores we got at the end of the first half were very important. It gave us less of a hill to climb and we made a great start to the second half. We were level ten minutes into it and we were playing well at that stage. They blocked up the centre with players dropping back for most of it, so we focussed on playing as much ball as we could down the wings."

The Sarsfields boss paid tribute to the battling spirit of his players, who left every drop of energy they possessed on the pitch in Cavan.

"The girls just kept coming and coming. Without getting a goal in the second half, we kept taking our points. Look, they're just an amazing group of girls. I said to them at half time, we're going to forget about the end result, just go out and give it everything we have."

According to McGrath, their primary focus at half time was on raising their performance to a level which would do the team justice, and that regardless of the result, they would leave every ounce of fight they possessed on the pitch.

"We said that if we lose, we lose, but we were going to die with our boots on. If we went down today, we were going to go down with honour. The way the girls fought for each other out there today, it was just incredible."



Sarsfields attacker Siobhan McGrath with the All-Ireland Club semi-final Player of the Match award.

Having secured their place in their sixth consecutive All-Ireland club Final, the Sarsfields boss was beginning to focus on the title decider against Clare and Munster champions Truagh-Clonlara, who he believes will be formidable opponents.

With seven previous final appearances, Sarsfields have huge experience of playing on the biggest day in national club camogie. With three victories and four final defeats, they are very familiar with both sides of the coin. McGrath is more aware than anyone of the fact that an entire year is defined by the result on final day.

"We were very disappointed after [All-Ireland Final defeat to Dicksboro] last year. Any time you lose a final you're going to be disappointed naturally enough. But look, this is a completely new year and a new final. Winning this will be soon forgotten about if we don't win in two weeks' time. It's all about getting over the line, however we get over the line."

"We'll have two weeks now to be ready for it, but it's great to be there. It's another big day in Croke Park for the club and after last year, we'll really be looking to perform as best as we can," he concluded.

After playing a huge part in helping her side record a tremendous comeback victory over Loughgiel Shamrocks, Sarsfields' star forward Siobhán McGrath was delighted that the character and resolve of her teammates was rewarded with a place in the final once again.

"Look, before today, we wouldn't have cared how we won the match as long as we won it. It's hard to believe it, but we went nine points down there in the first half. It's really unbelievable that we managed to claw it back, but it shows the spirit in our team and the character of the girls."

According to McGrath, there was no panic in the dressing room during the interval. "At half time we were calm enough. We played well in the last ten minutes of the first half, so we weren't too disappointed. In the first 20 minutes we were asleep, but we were only four points down at half time, which is nothing in camogie. We were annoyed ourselves more than anything, with the way we had played.

"I think before today we had won four semi-finals by a single point. So, it's something that we've done before, and we've won five semi-finals [by a point] now. But look, all we wanted was to be going to Croke Park in two weeks' time, and we're there now thank God."

McGrath paid tribute to Sarsfields' opponents Loughgiel Shamrocks, who pushed the Galway champions to the brink before coming up short by the smallest margin.

"Loughgiel are a brilliant team, we were under no illusions about how strong they were going to be. We just about beat them in the final two years ago. They have top class forwards there, the likes of Caitrin Dobbin and Róisín McCormick. You saw the damage they did in the first half. We knew it was going to be a dogfight today."

As ever, McGrath demonstrated tremendous leadership in attack and came to the fore when Sarsfields' need was at its greatest. Along with Caoimhe Kelly in the full forward line, McGrath sparked them into life with some brilliant scores as she finished with four points from play in an extremely tight contest.

Sarsfields are still standing thanks to heroic comeback

Defiant McGrath's charges overcome nine-point deficit to secure final place

SARSFIELDS	1-16
LOUGHGIEL SHAMROCKS	3-9

EANNA O'REILLY
AT BREFFNI PARK

A STUNNING comeback victory for Sarsfields saw them qualify for their sixth consecutive All-Ireland senior club final as they overcame Loughgiel Shamrocks at Breffni Park in Cavan on Sunday. Michael 'Hopper' McGrath's side appeared to be down and out in the first half of this semi-final, trailing their opponents by nine points.

It certainly looked as though Sarsfields had given the Ulster champions far too much of a head start, and that a high flying Loughgiel side were simply beyond their reach. However, the three time All-Ireland champions kept their composure and worked their way back into the contest.

Having been comprehensively outplayed for most of the first half, the Galway champions gradually imposed themselves and chipped away at the deficit. Sarsfields soon got on top throughout the field and reeled in their opponents as the second half progressed.

Hopper McGrath's charges took the lead for the first time in the 62nd minute to complete a marvellous comeback. From a position of being 3-3 to 0-3 down in the first half, it was a testament to the resolve and determination of the Sarsfields players, who refused to fold under pressure against a top quality side.

It sets up the east Galway club for another tilt at the biggest prize in national club camogie, which they are seeking to win for the fourth time since 2020. Sarsfields will have the opportunity to make amends for their defeat to Kilkenny club Dicksboro in the title decider 12 months ago when they take on Clare and Munster champions Truagh-Clonlara at Croke Park on Sunday week,

However, the chances of Sarsfields appearing in their eight All-Ireland senior final appeared very remote halfway through the first half in Breffni Park. They were chasing a nine point deficit, after conceding three goals, and Loughgiel were threatening to run away with the game. The Ulster side made a blistering start and led by 2-1 to 0-0 after five minutes.

Lucia McNaughton opened the scoring for Loughgiel with a point inside the first 60 seconds. A minute later, a turnover in Sarsfields' defence saw Caitrin Dobbin take possession close to goal and finish past Laura Glynn to the net.

Loughgiel soon opened Sarsfields up to score their second goal. Amy Boyle, Christine McCloskey, and Annie Lynn all transferred possession intelligently to set up Róisín McCormick, who fired to the net.

Niamh McGrath landed a badly needed point for the Galway champions to get them off the mark, but Loughgiel responded with two points from Annie Lynn and McCormick, to make it 2-3 to 0-1. Siobhán McGrath soon tallied her first two scores (one free) to make it 2-3 to 0-3, before the Ulster champions struck for their third goal.

An excellent pass from Dobbin sent McNaughton through on goal and the centre forward finished to the net, despite being dragged down by Sarsfields' defenders. With a nine point margin separating the sides, things looked grim for the Galway title holders at this juncture.

Sarsfields got a fortunate break when a long range free from Niamh McGrath was fumbled over the goal line by Loughgiel 'keeper Eimear Boyle. Annie Lynn replied with her second point at the other end, but Sarsfields finished the first half strongly, tallying the final three points before the interval.

> **SARSFIELDS HAD MORE LEFT IN THE TANK, AND A SUPERB SCORE FROM KELLY EDGED THEM AHEAD FOR THE FIRST TIME**

Siobhán McGrath (free and '45) and Caoimhe Kelly with a good score from the right corner, ensured the margin was reduced to four points at the change of ends. Having conceded three goals in the opening quarter, Sarsfields would have taken this outcome as they regrouped for the second half, with the scoreboard reading 3-4 to 1-6.



Sarsfields' Caoimhe Kelly in a race for possession with Finuola McVeigh of Loughgiel Shamrocks during Sunday's All-Ireland Club Senior Camogie semi-final at Breffni Park. PHOTOS: INPHO/LASZLO GECZO.

Sarsfields were re-energised after the resumption and came roaring back into contention. They outscored Loughgiel by 0-5 to 0-1 in the first ten minutes of the second half to draw level by the 40th minute.

Cora Kenny, Orlaith McGrath, and Siobhán McGrath (0-3, one free) registered scores to turn the momentum in Sarsfields' favour. McCormick pointed a free at the other end, but the contest was back in the balance.

Points from Dobbin and McCormick (free) made it 3-7 to 1-11, but Sarsfields then outscored Loughgiel by 0-3 to 0-1 during the next ten minutes. Three excellent scores from Caoimhe Kelly, Siobhán McGrath, and Cora Kenny saw Sarsfields capitalise on their dominance, while McCormick replied with one for Loughgiel at the other end.

Sarsfields had more left in the tank, and a superb score from Kelly edged them ahead for the first time in the second minute of injury time. McGrath then drew a foul before converting her fifth placed ball of the afternoon.

McCormick pointed a free to reduce the margin to one, but the Galway champions held out in the remaining two minutes to book their place in the All-Ireland senior club final for the sixth consecutive year.



Sarsfields' Rachel Murray gets her handpass away against Finuola McVeigh of Loughgiel Shamrocks at Breffni Park on Sunday. PHOTO: INPHO/LASZLO GECZO.

Sarsfields' resolve and composure when their backs were to the wall, as well as their experience and hunger, were the most crucial factors in this tremendous victory.

On the day, Hopper McGrath's side had stand out displays from Laura Ward, Réitseal Kelly, Joanne Daly (second half), Caoimhe Kelly, Cora Kenny (after her introduction), and the McGrath sisters.

Sarsfields: L. Glynn; T. Kenny, L. Ward, K. Gallagher; R. Kelly, M. Cooney, J. Daly; Clodagh McGrath, S. Spellman; K. Donohue, O. McGrath (0-1), R. Murray; C. Kelly (0-3), N. McGrath (1-1, 1-0 free), S. McGrath (0-9, 0-4 frees, 0-1 '45). Subs: L. McGrath for Cooney (blood 4-11), C. Kenny (0-2) for Murray (HT), L. McGrath for Clodagh McGrath (52), Ciara McGrath for Spellman (58).

Loughgiel Shamrocks: E. Boyle; C. McKillop, K. Lynn, F. McVeigh; M. McGarry, E. McFadden, C. Laverty; A. Boyle, A. Connolly; A. Lynn (0-2), L. McNaughton (1-1), C. McCloskey; C. Dobbin (1-1), K. McKillop, R. McCormick (1-5, 0-3 frees). Subs: M. Lynn for McVeigh (45), A. McKillop for K. McKillop (61).

Referee: Gavin Donegan (Dublin).

'It's hard to play dual, especially in Kerry'

Murt Murphy



Clanmaurice's Joanne Diggin, Aoife Behan, Niamh Leen, and Danielle O'Leary celebrate after their All-Ireland Club Intermediate semi-final victory over Galtee Rovers earlier this month.
Picture: Ben Brady/Inpho

Danielle O'Leary stands alone in the annals of Kerry sporting folklore as the only person to have won All-Ireland medals with Kerry ladies football team and an All-Ireland Intermediate camogie medal with Clanmaurice.

Mary Geaney from Desmonds won both football and camogie All-Irelands but the camogie was with Cork.

The unique 22-year-old O'Leary was always going to play football for Kerry, but coming from Rathmore, camogie was not on her radar, having never played it at underage level.

"I only took up camogie in my second year in college in MTU in 2021," says O'Leary.

"I was playing a bit too much football. I wanted to find another sport. It was a choice between camogie and rugby and I picked up the camogie. I was staying with a girl from Offaly who played camogie and Kate Lynch from Glenflesk, she was there as well, and we both joined Clanmaurice in the same year.

"She has been brilliant and I have her to thank for all of my skill set. Even in the last few months, any time I have asked her to go for a puck around, she would be back to me within 30 seconds and down to our local pitch in Barradubh or Glenflesk or even in Tralee after work, she's brilliant. She has definitely been a big influence on my camogie skill set."

O'Leary admits that being a dual inter-county player is no longer a runner: "In 2023 I tried playing both the football and the camogie. It actually worked well for a while. The Munster ladies final did clash; Kerry were playing Laois in Lixnaw the same day. Having the football on first was kind of good because I could keep the football guys happy and the camogie were delighted to have me come on.

"But look, it's hard to play dual, especially in Kerry, where camogie wouldn't be as popular as football. I don't think anyone fully achieved playing dual before in Kerry. It can be hard enough, there is a lot of people with you and a lot of people against you, but if you look at Cork and their great dual players, they are able to manage it and that's the light at the end of the tunnel for me.

"I really enjoy playing the game, 100%. It's something fresh, something new. It all comes down to the craic at training, I've a lot of respect for Clanmaurice and Kerry camogie and their management, their training style is brilliant.

"There's no doubt that there is plenty of craic on and off the pitch. It's easy to do something when you have the love and passion for it and most of all when you are enjoying it."

Patrice Diggin was herself part of the Kerry ladies football panel at one stage, and O'Leary has enormous respect for her teammate and captain. "Unbelievable. I don't think there are words to describe that girl, to be honest with you. Such an under-rated player, it is frightening. In terms of skill set, in terms of athleticism, definitely the best player I have ever played with, trained with, even played against. She is an unbelievable player, personality, character, she has it all. The passion that she shows for the game is obsessional. I think it was actually said in the huddle before the Munster final that if there was any one day or reason to do it, it was for Patrice Diggin."

This is O'Leary's second time heading to Croke Park this year to face a Galway team in an All-Ireland decider and third time when you throw in the league final against Armagh.

"It's brilliant to be going back to Croke Park. It did actually occur to me during the All-Ireland ladies final that hopefully I might be back here again in December. It was always the goal. Last year was such a great memory, we all wanted to repeat it. It is something special to play in Croke Park, especially with your club, and especially with this bunch of girls. They are just such a joy to play with. It's not really about an All-Ireland medal — in one sense, it is, of course, but the journey to get here, everything that they have been through and are going through, the least they deserve is another All Ireland medal."

O'Leary does admit to some butterflies on All-Ireland final day but she appears to be nerveless. "You try to take every game in your stride," she says. "You can tell yourself that it's just another game but nerves are natural, you know? If you didn't have nerves, you wouldn't really want to win. The more you want it, the more nervous you get. Every player is different. For myself, I like a good bit of distraction before games.

"I listen to my music. I go for a bit of a wander, look at the other dressing rooms and poking my head through doors that I probably shouldn't! I will do anything to distract myself. Maybe wandering around the Croke Park Hotel catching up with friends you might not have seen for a while, now that training has tapered down and you'd actually have a bit of time before the game. Even now, it's my sister's wedding next Saturday, so there will be plenty of distractions."



The Ahascragh/Caltra Intermediate Camogie Team who qualified for the All-Ireland Final after defeating Eglish of Tyrone (back – from left) Liz Noone, Noel Higgins, Patrick Hartigan, Emma Reaney, Ellen Jordan, Rosa Bleahene, Grace Gérard, Aoibheann Fitzpatrick, Mikayla Mockler, Molly Mulryan, Laura Noone, Helen Cullinane, Katie Delaney, Rebecca Murray, Rachel Hurley, Niamh Nolan, Lauren Glynn, Aoibhe Glynn, Chloe Byrne, Ciara Power, Jane Higgins, Aine Tully, Trevor Kennedy, with (front) Deirdre Leonard, Sarah Noone, Ciara Murray, Saoirse Murray, Laoise Kirwan, Aoife NiCeallaigh, Caoimhe Ni Ceallaigh, Denise Kelly, Megan Higgins, Caoimhe Hibbitt, Grace Raftery, Ellen Bleahene, Carmel Hannon, Alan Ward, Anna Madden.

Just telling it as it is



Denis Hurley

GAA

Hurleys are following in grand-dad's footsteps

Just over two years ago, the Donal Hurley Cup was inaugurated as the new trophy for the Cork Premier JFC.

Named in honour of a St Finbarr's great who had died in January of 2022, it was fitting that the first edition of the new grade, the 2023 competition, was won the Togher club.

At the function where Cork County Board chairperson Marc Sheehan took possession of the canister, the handover was made by Donal's grandchildren Shane, Eimear, and Ciara Hurley.

At the time, Shane was just coming off an excellent season after keeping goal as the Barrs won the Premier SHC for the first time in 29 years; in 2024, his sisters joined him in claiming county medals — and, in doing so, they paid tribute to a rare feat achieved by their grandfather.

In 1956, Donal helped the Barrs to win the county SFC, having been part of a county hurling-winning side the year before; however, as he was based in Dublin at the time while attending teacher-training college, he was eligible to play for Erin's Hope and helped them to the SFC in the capital.

Nearly six decades on, a move to Dublin for Eimear as part of work with Bord Bia meant that she transferred to Cuala — she helped them to win the county senior 2 camogie title and, in tandem with that, Ciara was part of the Barrs side that won the Cork senior championship for the first time since 2006.

"When I first moved up in 2023, I was looking for somewhere to train," says Eimear, who helped Cork to win the intermediate All-Ireland in 2018, "and one of the girls here in work said, 'why don't you come down to us in Cuala?'

"I trained with them for the summer and they were just so welcoming. I was eight weekends in a row travelling back to Cork for training and championship, but we were beaten in the quarter-final.

"Last December, I played for UCD in a challenge game against Cuala and I came across the girls again — they were just so nice and so welcoming. The eight weekends had been tough and I was thinking that doing the same again would be so tough work-wise and in terms of my social life, so I felt I had to make the move and it was worth it in the end, I suppose."

Eimear's move meant a bit of a change of landscape for her sister — Ciara, now 21, had joined the senior panel in 2020, taking the goalkeeping spot from her sibling, who was grateful of the opportunity to move out the field.

"We used to travel to training together and talk about what went on or discuss the team or stuff like that," says Ciara, an All-Ireland intermediate winner with Cork this year.

"It was weird, not having that person to discuss nearly everything with. At the same time, it was bittersweet because I knew that she was enjoying Cuala so much, it wasn't like she was not playing camogie.

"It took a while to get used to, but it was good all the same."

The girls had won a county minor medal together in 2019 and there was huge potential in a senior team that was knocking on the door — in fact, Eimear was sure that that door would be opened in 2024.

"To be honest, when I made the decision in January, I actually knew the girls were going to win," she says.

"I was aware of what I was stepping away from, but for me, it was the right call.

"I had parted ways with it, I had made my decision and left it behind me."

The prophecy proved to be true as wins over St Catherine's, Éire Óg, Glen Rovers, Inniscarra, and Cloughduv brought the Barrs to the county final against Sarsfields. A time for celebration, but the one kink was that the decider was set for Sunday, October 13 — the same day as Cuala's county final against Erin's Isle.

Unfortunately for the girls' parents, Diarmuid and Colette, bilocation was not an option.

"For me, it was the semi-final when I knew — we had a nice draw and I knew we'd be over them," Eimear says.

"I said at home, 'you know that, if we're in finals, they'll be on the same day?' and it was, 'we'll cross that bridge when we come to it'!

"In fairness to my parents, they came up for the semi-final for me and stayed in Cork then for the final."

Another goalkeeping member of the family — the girls' uncle Briain — underlined the historical parallels that were becoming stronger.

"Ciara, Shane, and I have a group-chat with him," Eimear says, "and he said that we'd have to follow in grandad's footsteps.

"Then, the closer the final came – you're in a new county, a new club and don't necessarily have a tie to it, but suddenly it became more about a legacy, almost. As we got closer to the end, it was big."

The Barrs' final was first up, with a 2pm throw-in, followed by Cuala's at 4pm.

"In fairness to Eimear, when she moved up, the Barrs were very supportive of her and were following her progress — every game, they'd be asking for updates," Ciara says.

"When Eimear found out her game was on the same day, they were honestly disappointed because a lot of us would have made the journey up to support her.

"That was probably a disappointing factor, but thankfully it all worked out in the end.

"She set up a group-chat with one of her friends in Bord Bia and she was on the ball with all the scores."

Eimear herself wasn't able to follow the Barrs' famous victory in real-time, but thankfully things worked out.

"I had to switch off," she says.

"We FaceTimed in the morning, before the games and I put my Barrs top on that morning but, once 12 o'clock, 1 o'clock came, that was it — into my Cuala gear, into my Cuala mindset.

"I think it was that I'd have carried extra pressure going in, knowing they'd won. I had no doubt that they would win, but if I knew for certain that it had happened it would have been at the back of my mind.

"After the final whistle went, it was lovely, you had friends and family of the players on the team coming over, but then I was anxious and I needed to know. One of the girls from work was there and I asked if I could borrow her phone and I rang mom, just before the cup was being presented.

"I said, 'mom, we won — did ye?' She said they did and I hung up. That was enough then to go back to my own celebrations!"



Shane, Ciara, and Eimear Hurley presenting the Donal Hurley Cup - named after their grandfather - to Cork County Board chairperson Marc Sheehan in 2022.



St Finbarr's celebrate after the SE Systems Cork Senior Camogie Championship final win over Sarsfields at Castle Road. Picture: Dan Linehan



Niamh McPeake of Galway in action against Saoirse McCarthy of Cork in the Glen Dimplex Camogie All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship final

THRILLING AND PULSATING YEAR FOR CAMOGIE

What a game camogie is to watch now. In an era when there is much debate surrounding our Gaelic Games and how many changes need to be made to some or all of them to increase their entertainment value, it is notable that one amendment was all that was needed to free up the female warriors of the hurley code.

In an acknowledgement that the players had passed out the game in terms of conditioning, the antiquated insistence on forcing referees to blow the whistle with every minimal physical encounter was dispensed with.

Fears expressed in some quarters that camogie would be dominated by giants have proven unfounded. What has happened is that with the drastic reduction in frees, passages of play are more prolonged.

Yes, you need to be able to give and take a hit but speed and athleticism have become paramount. And for a game to be quick, the skills of the game have to be elite.

We have been blessed with countless samples of the success of this amendment and this year's Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior final in which Galway pushed Cork to the brink before the Rebels edged the verdict to claim a second consecutive title, was another.

It was a thrilling, pulsating encounter full of drama, containing non-stop high-octane fare played at breakneck speed. You just had to marvel at the fact that the women putting it on the line at Croke Park could operate at that tempo, and propel themselves so fiercely into shuddering collisions, and yet continue to produce such incredible quality.

The season began with the Very Leagues and it was Tipperary that emerged for a famous triumph, again over Galway, in the Division 1 decider at Headquarters.

It was another entertaining contest that went down to the wire before Denis Kelly's crew emerged victorious by 1-13 to 0-15. This was a first national senior title for the Premier since completing a League and Championship double 20 years previously.

Eimear McGrath had been their scoring machine throughout the tournament and while there were no goals on this occasion from the Drom & Inch star, her eight pointed frees were critical, particularly as many of them helped her side reel in a six-point deficit after 21 minutes.

Captain, Karen Kennedy provided the spectacular goal that really lifted Tipp.

Galway fought might and main, former Down star, Niamh Mallon inspiring a brilliant comeback on her first appearance in maroon as a last-quarter sub. Mallon equalised in the 58th minute but having been on the ropes, Tipp found the knockout punch via Karin Blair's point from the ensuing puckout to take the honours.

It was a day to remember for



former All-Star Mary Ryan, who was introduced in the second half and has been a member of the county panel since 2005.

Cork and Tipp progressed directly from the group stages of the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior championship series to the semi-finals. Galway edged out the 2023 All-Ireland finalists Waterford in an arm wrestle to emerge from one of the quarter-finals, thanks to a brilliant finish for a goal by Aoife Donohue in the 40th minute.

There was a shock result in the other last-six bout, as Dublin overcame a slow start to take the scalp of Kilkenny with four points to spare. Skipper Aisling Maher struck seven points and allied with a wonderful goal from former All-Ireland-winning footballer Sinéad Wylde, who played with a broken bone in her hand, that laid the foundation for a famous win.

Gerry McQuaid's charges found the Cork challenge too much in the semi-final. Amy Lee saved Maher's penalty in the first minute and with Laura Treacy outstanding in the pocket and Ashling Thompson and Aoife Healy dominant at midfield, Saoirse McCarthy and Orlaith Cahalane were able to inflict significant damage up top, providing 3-4 between them.

In an echo of what was to come, Sorcha McCartan came off the bench to have an impact, grabbing a goal, and Clodagh Finn split the posts twice after her introduction. In all, Ger Manley got 1-4 from his subs as the Leesiders advanced to the decider.

Galway looked dead and buried in a repeat of the League final, when despite Mallon's goal at the start of the second half, they conceded four points on the trot to fall two behind Tipp in the 56th minute of the other semi.

Points from Dolan (free) and Donohue brought them level and it was Dolan that held her nerve from another placed ball to snatch the verdict for Cathal Murray's squad, 1-12 to 1-11.

The best was saved till last. Thompson and Treacy were among the chief architects as Cork just about held off a Galway side that produced its best performance of the season.

Donohue, Dolan and Róisín Black were inspired as the Tribeswomen threw everything at the champs.

Katrina Mackey was attempting to play through a hamstring injury when she goaled early in the second half but the long-serving Douglas dynamo was forced off soon after, to be replaced by McCartan. After the westerners had drawn level, the ex-Down teammate of Galway's Mallon would hit two huge points in the closing quarter, either side of an excellent effort by Finn, who had also been introduced to the fray, and the O'Duffy Cup was heading back Leeside.

The day's other two finals were tight-fought affairs also. Cork secured the first leg of a memorable double as they squeezed by old rivals Kilkenny, 1-11 to 1-10, super sub Fiona Nelligan rifling over the winner for Donie Daly's unit.

Jenny Grace pointed a free in the fifth minute of injury time as Bill Mullaney's Tipperary edged out Laois by 0-12 to 1-8, finishing strongly after being completely outplayed for the opening 20 minutes or so of proceedings.



Cork goalkeeper Ciara Hurley is tackled by Rose Kelly of Kilkenny in the All-Ireland Premier Intermediate Camogie Championship final



Grace Moloney of Tipperary in action against Laura Finlay of Laois in the All-Ireland Premier Junior Camogie Championship final



CAMOGIE ALL STARS


AMY LEE
CORK


DERVLA HIGGINS
GALWAY


ROISÍN BLACK
GALWAY


PAMELA MACKEY
CORK


LAURA HAYES
CORK


LAURA TREACY
CORK


CLAIRE GANNON
DUBLIN


ASHLING THOMPSON
CORK


AOIFE DONOHUE
GALWAY


SAOIRSE McCARTHY
CORK


KAREN KENNEDY
TIPPERARY


CARRIE DOLAN
GALWAY


NIAMH MALLON
GALWAY


KATRINA MACKEY
CORK


AMY O'CONNOR
CORK



Cork manager Ger Manley and Waterford manager Jerry Wallace during last season's Very National Camogie League, round 2, at the SETU Arena, Waterford. They will renew rivalries in the league opener next February. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

Cork to get their league campaign underway against Waterford

CAMOGIE

Rory Noonan

It may not be Christmas yet but Cork senior camogie side know their league fixtures for next season.

On the plus side for Ger Manley's charges is the fact they will be at home for three with away trips to Dublin and Tipperary.

It will be a busy year for Ger as he also takes charge of the Cork U23 side, in a change to the format of competitions this season.

Cork, along with all other counties who have a second team, can no longer enter the intermediate or junior All-Ireland championships.

That means that the side captained by Lauren Homan last year cannot defend their title as intermediate sides for next season must be a county's first team. The same rule applies at junior level as well.

This is a huge blow for Cork as it means a number of players now find themselves in limbo, as they won't be able to play in the U23 competition and are unlikely to make the senor squad.

The U23 championship is only that and, at present, there is no league for this side.

Whether players who are on the senior panel can also play in the U23 championship, which would include the likes of Orlaith Cahalane and Orlaith Mullins, is something that Ger will have to look at.



Laura Hayes will play a key role for Cork when they open their league campaign early next year. Picture: INPHO/Natasha Barton

Those games will be on opposite days later in the season once the All-Ireland series starts.

In the senior league, Cork will start with a home tie against Waterford, a game that was a hard-fought win last season, as it gets underway on February 22.

Former Cork minor All-Ireland winning manager Jerry Wallace took over the Déise this year and with a season under his belt they will be tough opponents again.

2024 was a learning curve for him with Waterford and you can be sure he will have them charged up for this one and they will be stronger this time out.

Cork used the league in 2024 to try out a number of players and Ger is likely to do the same again in 2025. He will be more concerned about performance than results but he will still want to get points on the board and get off to a winning start.

A week later, they are away to Dublin, a team they beat well in 2024 and the same would be expected this time around.

The Cats are in town on March 8 before there is a break for a few weeks as the Rebels will travel to Tipperary on March 22.

Their final game is against Galway on March 29, a clash Cork lost last year which cost them a place in the league final.

But the experience some Cork players gained in the league stood to the Rebels as they went on to win the Munster and All-Ireland championships. Should the same happen in 2025 few will be complaining.

FIXTURES

Saturday, February 22: Cork v Waterford.
Saturday, March 1: Dublin v Cork.
Saturday, March 8: Cork v Kilkenny.
Saturday, March 22: Tipperary v Cork.
Saturday, March 29: Cork v Galway.
Sunday, April 13: League final.



TOT'S IMPRESSIVE: Sarsfields' Niamh McGrath returned just two months after giving birth

Veteran Niamh McGrath still hungry for title glory

Ten years is nothing... we'll be long enough retired

By **Micheal Clifford**

ANY questions about Niamh McGrath's appetite for more success were answered earlier this year when she togged out in a Galway league game against Athenry.

Just eight weeks earlier she had given birth to her son, Ruadhán.

'It's as much of a mental outlet as anything else just to see the girls. It was always my intention to go back because when you have a team good enough to win an All-Ireland, you want to do that,' explains the 31-year-old Sarsfields' star, who is dismissive that her rapid return should be seen as an inspiration to first-time mothers.

'I'm not an inspiration to anyone but I was just trying to prove it to myself as opposed to anybody else really that I could do it.

'A lot of women have done it before me. Last year Lucinda Gahan was playing in the All-Ireland final for Dicksboro and she only had a baby five months

'WE KNEW WE'D COME BACK, WE'RE CONFIDENT IN OURSELVES'

before and she basically won that All-Ireland for them.

'Niamh Kilkenny is flying it and she only had a baby last year, Ann Marie Starr... there's countless women that have had babies and come back so I knew it could be done just from watching them.

'They were kind of my inspiration to get back to be honest and it's just great to be back. You kind of don't know what's ahead of you but it's going good so far.'

Back in the fold after missing last season because of her pregnancy, she has been key in ensuring the Galway champions reach a seventh All-Ireland final inside eight years, as they face first time finalists Truagh-Clonara in Croke Park this afternoon.

Earlier this month, in an epic semi-final clash against Antrim's Loughgiel in which they trailed by three goals inside 15 minutes, Niamh and her sister Siobhán combined to score 1-10 as they edged a one-point game.

Mind, she is not taking much credit for the freak goal she scored just before half-time that opened the door for Sarsfields to get back into the game.

'I don't even know how it got in,' she admits. 'I felt sorry for the goalie to be honest, it was a hit and hope but these things happen.

'If we didn't get that goal we wouldn't have won the match but we just knew that we'd come back because we're confident in ourselves and we've been there so many times before.

'That's what comes with being in these situations so many times I think and we've been together so long that we knew the shackles were off, we just had to go for it at that stage.

'We were lucky in the end to get it to be honest because there was only a point in the difference.'

But luck has little to do with it. It was the fifth time over the last eight years that Sarsfields had just a point to spare in winning an All-Ireland semi-final, which can be taken as a measure of the resolve within the group.

'I suppose it's a good sign of a team to come out in those tough battles,' she concedes. 'Galway is so competitive, I know we don't have a provincial championship which you might think is a bad thing but you get so many challenges in Galway, we're prepared for the All-Ireland series.'

And after missing last year's final, she most certainly is.

'It's a lot tougher watching it on the sideline as opposed to playing to be honest because you have no control. It was horrible last year watching them in the last 15 minutes when Dicksboro got on top and then you lose it, it was really tough to watch,' she admits.

That loss had led to a narrative of this season being something of a last dance for Sarsfields, especially for the more experienced players in the group. But as neat as that sounds, it is well wide of the mark as far McGrath is concerned.

'There's a cohort of us that have been involved in 10 county finals since 2012 when we got into our first one against Killimor and there's five or six of us that have been involved in ten county finals, winning eight of those.

'It's not just this era to be honest, there's more coming because we won the Minor 'A' in Galway this year and the Junior 'A' and the Junior 'D' as well so we still have a lot more to come.

'I know a lot of people were saying that we're kind of coming towards the end but in my mind we're not, we're kind of just leaving it for more girls to take over from us so we want to win as much as we can while we can because in the grand scheme of things, ten years is nothing.

'We'll be long enough retired so that's our main motivation.'



WINNER: Róisín Begley

Sarsfields' experience could be trump card

By **Aoife English**

SUPER-CONSISTENT Sarsfields are contesting their sixth successive senior final, and eighth in nine years, and the 2022 champions will be bidding to make up for last year's defeat to Kilkenny crew Dicksboro. Even with three triumphs on their roll of honour, Michael McGrath and his gang remain as hungry as ever.

The return of Niamh McGrath to the fold is a huge boost of course, the eldest of the manager's talented progeny having missed out last year as she was expecting a baby.

The former club player of the year and All-Ireland-winning captain hasn't missed a beat since coming back and remains hugely influential, along with younger siblings Siobhán, Clodagh and Orlaith, as well as Maria Cooney, Tara Kenny and Caoimhe Kelly among a strong squad.

They beat St Thomas' by nine points to secure a sixth consecutive county championship at the end of October but were made to call on their undisputed character in the semi-final by Loughgiel Shamrocks, in a repeat of the 2022 decider.

Clare have never been represented in a senior club final before but Truagh-Clonlara have left a trail of high-class victims in their wake.

After confirming county supremacy for the second year in a row with a four-point defeat of Inagh-Kilnamona, Bob Caulfield's charges then beat Waterford's Gailltír in a dramatic 45s shoot-out after Róisín Begley's strike in virtual darkness.

The All-Ireland semi-final was a very different affair, Truagh-Clonlara edging a hard-fought clash with St Vincents by two points.

Sarsfields will be desperate to get their hands back on the Bill and Agnes Carroll Cup and their experience may be the difference.

ALL-IRELAND SENIOR CAMOGIE FINAL

SARSFIELDS V TRUAGH-CLONLARA

Croke Park, 4.15 (RTÉ 2)

Conlon and Clonlara hurlers playing part in Truagh odyssey

All-Ireland Club Senior Camogie Championship final

Sarsfields (Galway) v Truagh-Clonlara (Clare)

Sunday: Croke Park, 4.15pm
Referee: Justin Heffernan
TV: RTÉ 2



Paul Keane

CLOSE to darkness and pretty close to the end of her tether.

Truth be told, getting past Gailltir after an AIB Munster club camogie final epic, that went to a 45s contest at the end of a replay which contained double extra-time, wasn't a whole pile of fun for Róisín Begley.

Truagh-Clonlara only won their first Clare senior title in 2023 and here they were last month, duking it out to the bitter end in a provincial decider.

Begley missed her 45 the first time around and when it went to sudden death, the shooting order was changed up, to let others go ahead of her.

It came down to her puck in the end though and, as good as dark at that stage at the Moycarkey-Borris grounds in Tipperary, she held her nerve to slot the winner.

"I was hoping it wouldn't come back around to me but lo and behold it did, I wasn't the most confident," said Begley, a club and county attacker. "It's not something that I thoroughly enjoyed. Just really, really nerve-wracking stuff. You just hope you can do it for your team and you also hope that it doesn't fall back on your shoulders if it goes against you. It was tough. It's the most nerve-wracking thing I've ever had to do, sporting-wise."

That's just how Truagh-Clonlara seem to roll though. Last year, when they beat Scariff-Ogonnelloe to win that first Clare title, it took a late Áine O'Loughlin goal from a free won by Begley to secure a one-point win. "A finish worthy of a Spielberg epic" was how Clare FM reported it.

More recently, when they overcame St Vincent's of Dublin to become the first ever Clare team to reach an AIB All-Ireland club senior final, they reeled off the last three points of the game to win by two.



Róisín Begley: You just hope you can do it for your team.
Picture: Dan Sheridan/Inpho

"Every time that has happened, it has stood to us," said Begley of the arm wrestle encounters they've won. "We are coming out the right side of them, by the skin of our teeth, but we are doing it. It has made us a bit more resilient as we go along."

If Truagh-Clonlara can do it just once more, and make history for not just themselves and the club but Clare camogie, local legend John Conlon can take some of the credit. He isn't involved with them this year as Ryan Morris is the coach (Morris planned to be on honeymoon in New York this weekend initially) and Bob Caulfield is manager but Conlon has been heavily involved over the years.

According to Begley, the most experienced player on Clare's All-Ireland winning team this year has "brought us to another level" with his input. "Obviously he has so much experience playing with Clare and playing with Clonlara," said Begley.

"We owe him a lot and it just shows the bond between ourselves and the hurling club in Clonlara.

"Even though John is not involved with us this year, we've had other Clonlara hurlers getting involved. We have Clonlara hurlers on the sideline doing water for us every week.

"It's something that you don't see in every club and it's really special. We don't take it for granted."

A few weeks ago, when Begley sensed fatigue within the group after a long season, she piped up. Croke Park was high on her mind.

"I remember saying to the group, 'Just remember that we're only three matches away from playing in Croke Park'. I think a few light-bulbs went off in the group, I don't think others had maybe thought about it like that. It ended up being four matches with the replay but it's definitely something I'd thought about as a target. We're here now and hopefully we can make the most of it."

Murphy in awe of 'Spartan' players

Murt Murphy

Clanmaurice coach Eddie Murphy cannot hide his admiration for this group of players and their refusal to accept defeat.

He recalls the final minutes against St Brigid's in the All-Ireland semi-final to prove his point.

"It was a drawn game heading into injury time and whoever got the next puckout was going to be crucial, so thank God Amy O'Sullivan ended up winning it.

"I think it was Aoife Behan who came forward with the ball. If St Brigid's had won that one, it could have been curtains. It was that close and thank God the girls showed great character. That's why we are champions.

"It was so frenetic on the line, there were so many things happening, but to get those last two scores from Patrice Diggin when your backs are to the wall, it was incredible. It was something similar to the Shannon Rovers game last year when they went a point ahead and Patrice equalised with the last free, an iconic score.

"The same thing this time and she put those two points over and God, 'twas such a relief to win that one. St Brigid's put up a great challenge, which we knew they would, the same as Ballinora before them."

One of the great sporting stories, Clanmaurice, with never more than 21 players, have won seven Munster Junior tittles including five in a row from 2017 to 2021, one All-Ireland Junior (2019), runners-up in 2017 and 2021, three Munster Intermediate titles in a row, and an All-Ireland Intermediate in 2023.



St Brigids' Sarah Creagh evades Clanmaurice's Ann Marie Leen.

Little wonder Murphy believes that Clanmaurice are one of the great stories in sport and very few know the obstacles they have to overcome.

"You look at all these teams, they have their own club grounds, they have massive panels, there's plenty money behind them. I've said it before publicly and I'll say it again, in Clanmaurice, there's so many no's in their lives between no pitch, no underage, no Kerry competitions, no real finance behind the club... you are jumping obstacles all the time."

Murphy continued: "We play teams who travel in massive busses, they are all videoing the matches. We don't have that. The girls don't even have showers after training in this weather, no grub. It's very Spartan, very frugal, everything that we do, but I think it works. I know it sounds paradoxical, but it works because of this perennial chip on their shoulder almost, the 'whole world against us' kind of feeling."

Murphy has seen such a bond in very few, if any, male teams he has coached.

"There's an incredible bond among these girls which is hard to quantify. They would die for one another on the pitch, they would do that. There's a will to win that's almost an obsession — the girls are never beaten. They fight to the bitter end.

"They hook, they block, they chase, they get their hands dirty, they can hurl. They can do it all and they are a hard team to beat because of all those elements. There is so many things that they have to put up with but that's battle-hardened them."

Clanmaurice returning to Croke Park is a real achievement, according to Murphy, who was almost in tears as he recalled the journey that the club has been on.

"To be going back to Croke Park is some achievement with 21 players. We won the All-Ireland last year with just 17! Never done before nor will it be done in the future.

"We started training back at the start of September. We have no county championship, no league campaign with the club, so we were going in cold into the Moneygall game (the first round of Munster).

"We got over that one — that was a tough week with the controversy over the football and with Abbeydorney playing as well. We were without Caoimhe Spillane, an outstanding player, understandably she had to play with Abbeydorney, totally understand that, but we got through it.

"Ballinora was a tough game, Ballinora fancied their chances of going far towards winning an All Ireland. They had won the junior and the intermediate and now senior.

"They are all good teams, all these games are going to go down to the wire, including Sunday week. They are all tough games. I would never have the arrogance to say that we are going to win. It's not that.

"But if we play well, we are in with a good chance and that's the most I'd ever say because it's tough."

Sarsfields desperate to regain crown

Weekend camogie previews

SATURDAY

AIB All-Ireland Junior Club camogie final: Granemore (Armagh) v Knockananna (Wicklow), Donoughmore Ashbourne, 1.30pm (Live on Camogie Association YouTube)
Knockananna bid to prevent Granemore retaining their title and from making it a fourth straight triumph for Ulster in this grade.

AIB All-Ireland Junior B Club camogie final: Crann Creige (Glasgow) v Naomh Treasa Dungannon (Tyrone), Abbotstown Pitch 1, 2pm (Live on Camogie Association YouTube)
History will be made regardless of the result as Glasgow's Crann Creige take part in an All-Ireland for the first time. Dungannon's Naomh Treasa are a seasoned outfit, however, and they had too much of a goal threat for Annacurra (Wicklow) in their semi

SUNDAY

AIB All-Ireland Senior club camogie final: Sarsfields (Galway) v Truagh-Clonlara (Clare), 4.15pm, Croke Park (Live on RTÉ2)
It says a lot about Sars that they are back again, having fallen short to Kilkenny crew Dicksboro a year ago. They will be desperate to get their hands back on the Bill and Agnes Carroll Cup but Truagh-Clonlara have a chance of making history for club and county. It seems like a recipe for a corker.

AIB All-Ireland Intermediate club camogie final: Ahascragh/Caltra (Galway) v Clanmaurice (Kerry), 2pm, Croke Park (Live on Camogie Association YouTube)
The Clanmaurice story continues and they are back in the final, 12 months after defeating Meath's Na Fianna by a goal in their first appearance at this level. Ahascragh/Caltra were worthy victors against 2011 All-Ireland senior champions Killimor in the Galway final. They faced a stiffer test from Roscommon representatives Oran in the Connacht final but emerged with three points in hand, then overcome Tyrone champions Eglish 1-8 to 0-10 in the semi.

Fourth title for Sarsfields is 'most special one yet'

All-Ireland Club Senior Championship final

Sarsfields (Galway) 1-17

Truagh-Clonlara (Clare) ... 0-6

Daragh Ó Conchúir
Croke Park



FOUR-MIDABLE: The Sarsfields team and supporters celebrate after victory over Truagh-Clonlara in the AIB All-Ireland Senior Camogie Club final at Croke Park.
Picture: Stephen Marken/Sportsfile

"This was undoubtedly the most special yet," said a beaming Niamh McGrath.

McGrath is a highly decorated player with multiple All-Irelands for both club and county, so the words carry weight.

Perhaps the hint was in the 10-month-old bundle in her arms that goes by the name of Ruadhán. Resplendent in a tiny Sarsfields geansaí, McGrath's son was attending his second All-Ireland final.

His mother was still expecting him 12 months ago and her absence from the field in terms of general play and leadership was keenly felt as the Galway queenpins lost their title to Dicksboro.

Her baby boy is obviously the apple of her eye but she was heavily motivated to be back in the thick of it, as quickly as possible. Under two months, the manager, her father, Michael — or 'Hopper' as you might know him — related afterwards.

Anyway, what made it so special was not her own personal absence last year. No. It was all about the collective.

"It was just losing," the midfield powerhouse explained. "You want to come back from that. It's great to be here and it was awful watching it, though obviously I had a very good reason, but losing hurt and we all wanted to be back. It really drove us on."

And she was imperious in helping to make that happen, scoring six points, including some outstanding efforts from prodigious distances from play. Her striking was so crisp and pure and wherever the sliotar went, she seemed to be there. The player-of-the-match gong was merited.

Meanwhile, as we have become accustomed to, in the green of Sarsfields and maroon of Galway, her younger sister Siobhán was doing damage, scoring another All-Ireland final goal to mark the beginning of the end of Truagh/Clonlara's aspirations.

That came in the 21st minute and Siobhán had three points on the board from play within the first 10.

It meant a 50% return from an eighth All-Ireland final appearance in nine seasons, a coveted fourth All-Ireland title.

"This year, after last year, was really, really special. There was a lot of talk that maybe we were an ageing and a tired team, and to be fair, there was. But the oldest girl on that team is Niamh at 31 and you see how she played.

"She's a fitness fanatic. She was back hurling at seven and a half weeks after having the baby. Mighty.

"The experience counts but you look at Dicksboro — came from nowhere last year and won the All-Ireland. It can often be on the day but our girls were very hungry for this.

"We won our first senior county championship in October '16 but they're very self-motivated. There's a different carrot in front of them every year — they treat every year as a new year but they're a special bunch.

"Since camogie went 15-a-side in the mid-90s, we're the first team to win four All-Irelands. Millford, Oulart-The Ballagh, Slaughtneil, and Granagh-Ballingarry all won three so it's nice to say that.

"For a small parish, we've won five All-Ireland semi-finals by a point," she said. "They've dug many games out. They're a great bunch."

Scorers for Sarsfields: S McGrath 1-5(0-2fs); N McGrath 0-6(3fs, 1 45); C Kenny, K Donohue 0-2 each; R Murray, L McGrath 0-1 each

Truagh/Clonlara: A O'Loughlin 0-2(fs); E Kelly, H Horgan, R Begley, N Ryan 0-1 each

SARSFIELDS: L Glynn, R Kelly, L Ward, K Gallagher, T Kenny, M Cooney, J Daly, Clodagh McGrath, N McGrath, K Donohue, O McGrath, S Spellman, C Kelly, S McGrath, C Kenny.

Subs: R Murray for C Kenny (49), L McGrath for Donohue (51), Ciara McGrath for C Kelly (54), C Kyne for Ward (60), C Cahalan for S McGrath (60)

TRUAGH/CLONLARA: S Cullen, S Ryan, M Powell, S Hogg, E Horgan, L Foley, L Egan, E Begley, E Kelly, A Marren, J Egan, H Horgan, R Begley, R Foley, A O'Loughlin.

Subs: N Ryan for J Egan (33), L Hawes for Hogg (48), J Egan for Marren blood (51-57), J Egan for R Foley (57), L Slater for Ryan (60+3), T Morris for Marren (60+3)

Referee: Justin Heffernan (Wexford).

Knockananna claim All-Ireland Junior title

All-Ireland Club Junior Camogie final

Jason Kealan and Gary Toohey

Wicklow and Leinster champions, Knockananna, put in a sensational second-half display to overturn a half-time deficit and dethrone AIB All-Ireland Junior 'A' title from holders Granemore of Armagh on a scoreline of 3-11 to 0-12 on Saturday.

Both sides came into the game in Donaghmore-Ashbourne GAA grounds with high hopes of silverware in what was a repeat of a goalfest 2023 semi-final.

In what proved to be a crucial swing moment, Ciara Hill almost found the Knockananna net from a long-distance sideline cut moments into the second half, but goalkeeper Kelli Byrne just managed to clear. Not long after, the value of that intervention was proven when fantastic tussling in the corner led to Áine Darcy winning possession in the corner of the Knockananna attack, and she found Ciara Byrne, who blasted to the net.

A long-range point seconds later from Laura McGrath meant that despite Granemore having the much larger share of possession and territory up to that point, the sides were now level.

Granmore did reset themselves after Knockananna's whirlwind start. Merry pointed another free before chipping in with a '45, but in the final quarter, only one more free would be added to their total as they were outgunned by Knockananna.

Elsewhere, Naomh Treasa of Dungannon got the better of the history-makers from Ceann Créige in Glasgow at the NGDC in Abbotstown to secure Junior B All-Ireland club camogie honours, with Gráinne Rafferty's long-range goal the clinching score — in a 2-3 to 0-4 game.

Madden's eyes on next season after stunning win

All-Ireland intermediate club final

Clanmaurice (Kerry) 2-16

Ahascragh/Caltra (Galway) 1-1

Daragh Ó Conchúir
Croke Park

Usually, the mantra at the end of a final is not to look to the future, but to relish the now.

And while there could be no doubts that the small panel of Clanmaurice players, their backroom staff, family, and friends were going to give it holly for a few days at least after going back-to-back in the AIB All-Ireland Intermediate Club Camogie Championship, manager John Madden was looking to next season.

"The thing about this group, they've gone to the well so many times," said Madden, as he watched the woman he called "the heart of the club", club secretary and team captain Patrice Diggin, give her acceptance speech, having been presented with the trophy.

"They just don't know when they're beaten, and they come back time and time again, and I know they're gonna love having a crack off senior next year. I think they'll all stay together because they'll want one crack at it. It's brilliant."

It isn't all that long ago they were losing a junior final, but they have travelled all sorts of roads together, overcome countless hurdles, with not enough players but more than enough, even when they won an All-Ireland semi-final starting with 14 and with a heavily pregnant 15th willing to stand in a corner if need be.

Thankfully it didn't come to it on that occasion, but the spirit is in keeping with their path to the highest level.

"I just can't get over the heart in these girls. I love playing with them and I'm sure they'd say the same thing about the girl beside them. We love going out there every day and it showed there today. We enjoyed every minute of it."

Goals from Jackie Horgan late in the first half and early in the second stopped Ahascragh/Caltra in their tracks after a 24th-minute major by Aoibhe Glynn had given them hope, but they could not cope with the physicality of the Kerry side, nor the breadth of threat.

With much focus on Diggin and Horgan, the likes of Caoimhe Spillane and Kate Lynch flourished in the resultant spaces, with Laura Collins' industry at the centre of many a score.

Sara Murphy and Niamh Leen were colossal in defence and there was no questioning the merit of their two-in-a-row and the chance now, to test themselves against the best.

"We were stressed enough coming into it," Murphy revealed. "But to be fair to our management, they did their homework and they got their match-ups right... But we've been trucking along a long few years, so that definitely stands to us.

"Amy [O'Sullivan] was injured last year and she had a good year's training under her belt and has been flying through the campaign. Patrice was injured as well last year and is flying it as well now. Training has been going great and we've always stuck at it. We'll keep going."

"We asked them for a performance, and they gave it," Madden noted. "In the first half we were under the cosh. I know we went in six points up, but we weren't convinced it was enough, but in the first five minutes after half time we really drove it on.

"We kind of drifted off for 15 or 20 minutes and their goal kind of woke us up. In other games we've faded after half time, but in fairness to the girls, in those 10 minutes after, they gave a great performance.

"The girls' game management is simply unbelievable. But the one thing that stood to them is their workrate. Every one of them fought for every ball. They never let off. That's the one thing we asked for."

Murphy was anxious to catch up with her colleagues, to get what would surely be a serious shindig under way, but her words were far from throwaway, offering meaning in every syllable.

This is a collection of players that have overcome all sorts of odds, some they shouldn't have to, others that are just circumstances. It all feeds them, even though they have now built up an enviable roll of honour and medal collection between them all.

"I don't think we'll ever go away, hopefully," the full-back said, grinning. "I think it adds fire to our bellies and I think that is an aspect to us, that we're always coming up against different things in life, be it sicknesses or whatever. Everyone has their own things going on, and it's a small panel, but we're definitely not lacking in heart."

Scorers for Clanmaurice: J Horgan 1-3; C Spillane, P Diggin(3fs) 0-4 each; K Lynch 0-3; A Behan 0-2

Ahascragh/Caltra: A Glynn 1-0; S Noone 0-1

CLANMAURICE: A Fitzgerald, R McCarthy, S Murphy, M Costello, A Behan, N Leen, A O'Connor, P Diggin, D O'Leary, C Spillane, K Lynch, L Collins, AM Leen, J Horgan, A O'Sullivan. Subs: E Ryall for O'Connor (55), J O'Keeffe for Horgan (56), C Moloney for O'Sullivan (57)

AHASCRAGH/CALTRA: L Noone, D Kelly, H Cullinane, M Higgins, R Blehane, S Noone, C Ní Cheallaigh, A Fitzpatrick, A Ní Cheallaigh, C Power, A Glynn, C Murray, L Kirwan, E Reaney, S Murray. Sub: M Mulryan for Power (ht); J Higgins for Murray (40), L Glynn for Blehane (40), E Blehane for Glynn (52), G Gerard for Ní Cheallaigh (57)

Referee: Gavin Donegan (Dublin)



Laura Ward lifts the trophy after Sarsfields' victory in the All-Ireland club camogie final at Croke Park. Photograph: Laszlo Geczo/Inpho

Majestic McGraths inspire 'most special one yet' for Sarsfields

Powerful Galway champions prove too strong for Truagh/Clonlara as they reclaim All-Ireland crown

Sarsfields (Galway)	**1-17**
Truagh/Clonlara (Clare)	**0-6**

DARAGH Ó CONCHÚIR
at Croke Park

"This was undoubtedly the most special yet," said a beaming Niamh McGrath.

McGrath is a highly decorated player with multiple All-Irelands for both club and county, so the words carry weight.

Perhaps the hint was in the ten-month-old bundle in her arms that goes by the name of Ruadhán. Resplendent in a tiny Sarsfields geansaí, McGrath's son was attending his second All-Ireland final.

His mother was still expecting him 12 months ago and her absence from the field in terms of general play and leadership was keenly felt as the Galway queenpins lost their title to Dicksboro.

Her baby boy is obviously the apple of her eye but she was heavily motivated to be back in the thick of it, as quickly as possible.

Under two months, the manager, her father, Michael – or 'Hopper' as you might know him – related afterwards.

Anyway, what made it so special was not her own personal absence last year. No. It was all about the collective.

Losing hurt

"It was just losing," the midfield powerhouse explained. "You want to come back from that. It's great to be here and it was awful watching it though obviously I had a very good reason, but losing hurt and we all wanted to be back. It really drove us on."

And she was imperious in helping to make that happen, scoring six points, including some outstanding efforts from prodigious distances from play. Her striking was so crisp and pure and wherever the sliotar went, she seemed to be there. The player-of-the-match gong was merited.

Meanwhile, as we have become accustomed to, in green of Sarsfields and maroon of Galway, her younger sister Siobhán was doing damage, scoring another All-Ireland final goal to mark the beginning of the end of Truagh/Clonlara's aspirations.

That came in the 21st minute and Siobhán had three points on the board from play within the first ten.

It meant a 50 per cent return from an eighth All-Ireland final appearance in nine seasons, a coveted fourth All-Ireland title.

"This year, after last year, was really, really special. There was a lot of talk that maybe we were an aging and a tired team, and to be fair, there was. But the oldest girl on that team is Niamh at 31 and you see how she played.

"She's a fitness fanatic. She was back hurling at seven and a half weeks after having the baby. Mighty.

"The experience counts but you look at Dicksboro came from nowhere last year and won the All-Ireland. It can often be on the day but our girls were very hungry for this.

"We won our first senior county championship in October '16 but they're very self-motivated. There's a different carrot in front of them every year, they treat every year as a new year but they're a special bunch.

"Since camogie went 15-a-side in the mid-90s, we're the first team to win four All-Irelands. Millford, Oulart-The Ballagh, Slaughtneil and Granagh-Ballingarry all won three so it's nice to say that. For a small parish. We've won five All-Ireland semi-finals by a point. They've dug many games out. They're a great bunch."

Gaelic games Round-up

Sunday

All-Ireland club SHC semi-finals: Sarsfields (Cork) 0-18 v Slaughtneil (Derry) 0-17; Loughrea (Galway) 0-16 v Na Fianna (Dublin) 0-17.
All-Ireland club IHC semi-final: Watergrasshill (Cork) 1-21 Carey Faughs (Antrim) 0-8.
All-Ireland club JHC semi-final: Easkey (Sligo) 0-13 St Lachtain's (Kilkenny) 3-15.
All-Ireland club camogie finals – Intermediate: Ahascragh/Caltra (Galway) v Clanmaurice (Kerry), 2pm. **Senior:** Sarsfields 1-17 (Cork) v Truagh-Clonlara (Clare) 0-6.
LGFA All-Ireland women's club junior final: Mungret St Paul's (Limerick) 0-12 Na Dúnaibh (Donegal) 0-4.

Saturday

All-Ireland club IHC semi-final: Tynagh-Abbey-Duniry (Galway) 2-19 Rathnure (Wexford) 2-11.
All-Ireland JHC semi-final: Russell Rovers (Cork) 2-22 Ballinascreen (Derry) 1-9.
All-Ireland club junior camogie final: Knockananna (Wicklow) 3-11 Granemore (Armagh) 0-12.
LGFA All-Ireland women's club finals – Intermediate: Bennekerry/Tinryland (Carlow) 2-10 Annaghdown (Galway) 1-7.
Senior: Kilkerrin-Clonberne (Galway) 0-13 Kilmacud Crokes (Dublin) 0-9.

SARSFIELDS: L Glynn, R Kelly, L Ward, K Gallagher, T Kenny, M Cooney, J Daly, Clodagh McGrath, **N McGrath (0-6, three frees, one 45), K Donohue (0-2)**, Ó McGrath, S Spellman, C Kelly, **S McGrath (1-5, 0-2 frees), C Kenny (0-2). Subs: R Murray (0-1)** for C Kenny (49), **L McGrath (0-1)** for Donohue (51), Ciara McGrath for C Kelly (54), C Kyne for Ward (60), C Cahalan for S McGrath (60).
TRUAGH/CLONLARA: S Cullen, S Ryan, M Powell, S Hogg, E Horgan, L Foley, L Egan, E Begley, **E Kelly (0-1)**, A Marren, J Egan, **H Horgan (0-1), R Begley (0-1)**, R Foley, **A O'Loughlin (0-2, two frees). Subs: N Ryan (0-1)** for J Egan (33), L Hawes for Hogg (48), J Egan for Marren blood (51-57), J Egan for R Foley (57), L Slater for Ryan (60+3), T Morris for Marren (60+3).
Referee: Justin Heffernan (Wexford).

'I'm not an inspiration to anyone' – McGrath

Sarsfield captain is closing in on another club title with Sarsfields just 10 months after giving birth

PAUL KEANE

An inspiration? Niamh McGrath isn't having any of it.

Sure, she's closing in on another AIB All-Ireland club title with Sarsfields just 10 months after giving birth to baby Ruadhán.

She was actually back swinging timber just eight weeks later, featuring in a league game against Athenry before summer had even arrived.

But she isn't the first or the last camogie player to make a hasty return to the pitch after childbirth.

That's her claim by the way, not ours, because it seems like a monumental feat in itself just being in a position to toe the whitewash at Croke Park this weekend after such a draining few months.

"To be honest, I'm not an inspiration to anyone," says McGrath, captain of Sarsfields when they won their breakthrough All-Ireland club title in 2020. "It was just kind of for myself and trying to prove it to myself as opposed to anybody else really that I could do it.

"A lot of women have done it before me, I remember last year Lucinda Gahan was playing in the All-Ireland final for Dicksboro and she only had a baby five or so months beforehand and she basically won that All-Ireland for Dicksboro.

"Niamh Kilkenny is flying it and she only had a baby last year, Annmarie Starr, there's countless women that have had babies and come back so I knew it could be done just from watching them.

"They were kind of my inspiration to get back, to be honest. You kind of don't know what's ahead of you but it's going good so far."

McGrath's plan is to keep it all going for a few more years yet. Childbirth hasn't brought any sort of barrier to her sporting ambitions.

"I'm going to go playing for as long as I can anyway," she says. "I am still only 31, so I think I have a few years left. I would be thinking more about things from a time perspective. You can't really go anywhere on the weekends with training being so intense at the minute.

"That's the only kind of negative but we'll have a nice break now after the final, hopefully we'll get to do plenty of things then."

These are boom times for McGrath and her Sarsfields team-mates who are an hour from a fourth national title in six seasons. In all, they have contested seven of the last eight All-Ireland finals. Stats like those are hard to walk away from.

They're a tight-knit band of sisters too, as one-point wins in five of their semi-final wins attests.

Last time out, against Loughgiel Shamrocks, they probably should have been done for when they conceded 3-3 early in the game. Their old rivals from Antrim had two goals scored in the first five minutes alone. Slowly but surely Sarsfields clawed themselves back into that one, took the lead for the first time in the 60th minute and won by the minimum for a finish up.

According to McGrath, it's up there with the very best of their wins over the years.

"But if we don't go on and win the All-Ireland now, it means nothing really," she says.

Baby Ruadhán has been at most of the games and might even get a spin in the cup if McGrath is successful on Sunday. She is just happy that she will have an opportunity to influence the game having looked on helpless last year as Dicksboro prevailed.

'Performance'

"It was horrible watching them in the last 15 minutes when Dicksboro got on top, and then to lose," McGrath says. "It was definitely tough but we're back again this year and I can actually control things, well my own performance anyway, and be a part of the team that's playing so it's great to be back."

Whatever the outcome, *McGrath feels like there is more* to come from not just this generational group of Sarsfields players but from the club.

"There's a cohort of us that have been involved in 10 county finals since 2012, when we got into our first one against Killimor," she says. "There's five or six of us that have been involved in the 10, winning eight of them.

"It's not just about this era though, to be honest, there's more coming through because we won the minor A in Galway this year and the junior A and the junior D as well so we still have a lot more to come I think.

"I know a lot of people were saying that we're kind of coming towards the end but in my mind we're not, we're kind of just leaving it for more girls to take over from us."



Niamh McGrath: 'There's countless women that have had babies and come back so I knew it could be done just from watching them.' PHOTOGRAPH: DAN SHERIDAN/INPHO

Diggin: Let's test 'ourselves against the best'

Murt Murphy

Patrice Diggin is an iconic Clanmaurice captain, club secretary, and leader on the field as well as being the go-to player when Clan are in trouble.

Rewind the clock to the Munster Intermediate final last November at the famed Na Piarsaigh grounds in Limerick. Tipperary champions Shannon Rovers led by a point with seconds remaining.

The Clanmaurice adventure appeared over but they won a free 65 metres out and on the sideline with the Rovers fans irate at the awarding of it.

Up stepped Diggin and despite barracking from the crowd, she split the post to force extra time. Clanmaurice closed out the game and went on to win the All-Ireland Intermediate club for the first time.

Then in this year's semi-final two weeks ago, Clanmaurice led by six points with less than five minutes to go but St Bridget's leveled with two quick fire goals.

But from the puck out from that second goal, Amy O'Sullivan collected and found Diggin, who fired over the lead point before repeating the feat from the St Bridget's puck-out. The skipper had done it again.

So what did climbing the Hogan Stand and lifting the trophy mean to Diggin on Sunday? " Unreal" she said.

"There are probably no words to describe the feeling of winning out there today. I am delighted and just relieved that we got over the line."

Despite being 18 points in front late on, the Clanmaurice players were still working as hard as they were in the opening quarter. Is that what Diggin meant when she described the bond in the team in the build-up?

"We probably felt we didn't do ourselves justice last year in Croke Park as well. We were poor on the day and we knew that and still got over the line so I suppose Eddie asked us to light up Croke Park and we probably did that in the second half and got over the line."

Despite leading by six points at half time, Diggin explained why Clanmaurice went for the juggler in the third quarter.

"I suppose in the last three games we played up until today that is when we left teams back into it," she added.

"It was that first few minutes after half time and we were adamant that we were going to be the team that were going to dominate that 10 minutes. We targeted that 10 minutes after half time and it took them to score a goal in the first half to wake us up out of lull.

"We were not going to let that happen again and we were going to drive on and that management were pushing that message at half time to drive it on and really show what Clanmaurice were about."

Many in the Kingdom felt in the build-up that a win would mean the end of Clanmaurice as they would being senior next year and Diggin discounts any doubts of what the team felt. Once a club wins the Intermediate Club, they have to move up to senior grade and the Clanmaurice captain confirmed that they will and, in fact, they want to.

"I think one of the biggest goals we had going out today was to win so as we could go senior. Pete Young said it either before the match or at half-time that we wanted to go senior. All week anyone who asked how we felt if we won today again and I actually told them that I wanted us to go up to senior to see what Clanmaurice really are.

"We played senior club De Le Salle in a challenge game and we beat them by five points without three or four key players. I know it was only a challenge game but we put it up to them.

"We did the same to Newcastle West in Limerick so that is one of our main goals to test ourselves against the best and see where we are.

"We could go out and get hammered next year or we could win our first game. So we will just play senior Munster and say play Clonlara if they win Clare. It will show where exactly we are and I just hope this group stays together so as we can give it our best and if it's not good enough, so be it"



Clanmaurice's Patrice Diggin lifts the Agnes O'Farrelly Cup.



CLAN GATHERING: Clanmaurice's Patrice Diggin celebrates with teammates after their win over Ahascragh-Caltra in camogie's All-Ireland Intermediate Club Championship final at Croke Park. Picture: Laszlo Geczo/Inpho

Ruadhan sees mum's sister act win at Croker



● Ruadhan Kennedy (10 months) with his mother, Niamh McGrath of Sarsfields, after the Galway side won the AIB All-Ireland Senior Camogie Club final match against Truagh-Clonlara at Croke Park. Niamh was one of six McGrath sisters on the pitch, with their trainer father, Michael 'Hopper' McGrath, on the sideline. *Photo: Stephen Marken* **See Sport Pullout**



Glen Rovers captain Sarah Murphy is presented with the Minor A League Cup by Mairead O'Donovan, chairperson Cork Camogie Board.

Glen find that bit extra to see off Douglas

Glen Rovers	**3-7**
Douglas	**2-8**
(after extra-time)	

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

It was a night filled with emotion for Glen Rovers who edged Douglas in an exciting Minor A camogie league final in Ovens. This was a game that went to extra-time to decide a winner. The contest was a fitting tribute to their team-mate Sarah-Kate O'Meara, who passed away unexpectedly last June.

The sides were tied 2-5 each after normal time.

A goal from Abby Kennelly in the first period of extra-time gave Glen breathing space and put daylight between the teams, but Douglas battled on, and in a close and exciting finish, free-taker Clodagh Morrissey reduced the deficit to two, but Glen, superbly led by captain Sarah Murphy, weren't going to be denied.

Douglas settled into the game and led 0-3 to 0-2 early on, Kate Hourihan showing her accuracy before the first goal arrived on 15 minutes courtesy of Aoife Martin as Glen edged in front.

Three minutes from the break Aoife Keenan replied with a Douglas goal to put her side 1-4 to 1-3 up at the interval.

Sinead Roche and Sophie O'Sullivan were prominent for Glen who stayed in touch with points.

Keenan grabbed a second Douglas goal but in a quick response Roche got one back for Glen and it was non-stop action as play swung from end to end and there was no separating the teams at full-time.

Tired legs in heavy conditions failed to dampen the enthusiasm of both sides as they went for it.

Kenneally's goal gave Glen Rovers a cushion and with O'Sullivan and Juliet Horgan on target with points, they showed huge determination to get over the line.Glen captain Sarah Murphy, in an emotional speech, dedicated the win to their late team-mate Sarah-Kate O'Meara, who played a huge part in the league competition as Glen Rovers made it to the final.

Scorers for Glen Rovers: S Roche (1-1), A Kenneally and A Martin (1-0 each), S Murphy, J Horgan, S O'Sullivan (0-2 each).

Scorers for Douglas: A Keenan (2-0), C Morrison (0-5, 0-4 frees), K Hourihan (0-2), M O'Shea (0-1).

GLEN ROVERS: A O'Driscoll; Sarah O'Sullivan, K O'Regan, C O'Flynn; B Coughlan, O Hurley, L O'Donovan; S Murphy (c), J Horgan; Sophie O'Sullivan, A O'Halloran, K O'Halloran; S Roche, A Kenneally, A Martin.

Subs: J Akinkouli for A O'Halloran (37), A O'Halloran for B Coughlan (66), A Turnbull for L O'Donovan (74).

DOUGLAS: Z O'Leary (c); A Butler, A Flynn, F Nodwell; A Ahern, A Fitzgerald, C Sweeney; A Clarke, E O'Driscoll; M O'Shea, M O'Sullivan, S M Ní Cheallacháin; C Morrison, K Hourihan, A Keenan.

Subs: A Sheehan for M O'Sullivan (37), S Daly for A Keenan (57), E Horgan for S M Ní Cheallacháin (60), S Murphy for A Butler (70).

Bandon	**2-13**
Banteer	**3-7**

Bandon overcame Banteer in a closely-fought Minor C camogie championship final in which they led at the interval 1-11 to 1-2.

Clodagh Barry hit nine first-half points and with Kate O'Halloran adding a goal, and with points from Evelyn McCarthy and Jessica Bolster they set a solid foundation.

Banteer battled back and, hitting three second-half goals, they had Bandon under pressure.

Barry helped Bandon hold their composure with two second-half points before a Maeve Ahern goal helped seal the result in Bandon's favour.



Alice Lillis, Bandon captain is presented with the S E Systems minor C championship trophy from Darina Foley, secretary Cork Camogie Board.



Méabh Cahalane, Saoirse McCarthy, and Hannah Looney.

Elsewhere, former Dublin manager Adrian O'Sullivan is the new Cork camogie coach. All-Ireland-winning Cork boss Ger Manley has been on the hunt for a new coach ever since the highly-regarded Liam Cronin departed the set-up at the beginning of October to join John Kiely's Limerick backroom team.

O'Sullivan managed the Dublin senior camogie team in 2021 and 2022, reaching the All-Ireland quarter-final in the second of his two-year stint.

A Limerick native, he also previously coached University of Limerick to back-to-back Ashbourne Cups in 2018 and 2019.



Gael Coláiste Mhuire AG, Cork Colleges Junior C Camogie Championship winners

Gael Coláiste Mhuire AG win Cork Colleges Junior C championship

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

Gael Coláiste Mhuire AG	**2-4**
Pobalscoil Na Tríonóide Youghal	**1-4**

A superb contest under the lights in the Cork Colleges pitch, Castle Road, saw Gael Coláiste Mhuire AG take the Cork Colleges Junior C Camogie Championship title as they overcame the challenge of Pobalscoil Na Tríonóide Youghal in a game that went right down to the wire as two determined sides battled it out for the title.

For Gael Coláiste Mhuire AG, it was a huge boost to camogie in the school who are more renowned as a hurling stronghold. The North Mon has a proud GAA tradition and the ladies are now carrying on this tradition on the camogie fields.

They are doing so much to the delight of principle Donal Ó Bhuachalla who told me after the game how proud he is of the huge efforts being put in by all the pupils as Gael Coláiste Mhuire AG continues to grow.

Gael Coláiste Mhuire A G got the prefect start with a goal inside five minutes of the throw in with Kelly Ní Éadromáin reacting quickest, kicking the ball to the net in a crowded goalmouth.

They stretched their lead quickly with two points from Ali Nic Cárthaigh to lead by five points inside ten minutes of the start of the match.

With their defence solid, led superbly by Anna Ní Bhuachalla and Sophie Ni Cheallachain, Gael Scoil Mhuire AG were on top and it was eighteen minutes in before Pobalscoil na Tríonóide opened their account with a Ruby Cashman point.

Gael Coláiste Mhuire AG replied with a point and beginning to win the majority of possession they were now well on top.

The Pobalscoil na Tríonóide defence were under huge pressure and five minutes from the break Gael Coláiste Mhuire AG stretched their lead with Kelly Ní Éadromain grabbing her second goal, and as they continued to press Helena Golka pointed to put them nine points in front.

Pobalscoil na Tríonóide rallied and were boosted by a much needed goal with substitute Ava O'Keeffe sent a pin-point pass to Laoise Hill, who made no mistake finding the net to narrow the gap and at the interval it was Gael Coláiste Mhuire AG who led 2-4 to 1-1. If the opening half belonged to Gael Coláiste Mhuire AG, the second half belonged to Pobalscoil na Tríonóide.



Sarote Ní Ailpin presents the Cork Colleges Junior C Camogie Championship trophy to Chloe Ní Éadromáin, captain of Gael Coláiste Mhuire AG.

They made all the running and put the Gael Coláiste Mhuire AG defence under enormous pressure and they narrowed the gap with an Ava O'Keeffe point 12 minutes into the second half.

Keeping the pressure on, Pobalscoil na Tríonóide were on top and it took solid defending to deny them and at the other end of the pitch the Gael Coláiste Mhuire AG's attack were now being closed down by a much tighter marking Pobalscoil na Tríonóide defence.

As the clock ticked towards full time, Pobalscoil na Tríonóide narrowed the gap with a Ruby Cashman pointed free and now just a goal separated the sides.

Pobalscoil na Tríonóide applied huge pressure but all credit to the Gael Coláiste Mhuire AG defence who stood firm under huge pressure to take the title despite Pobalscoil na Tríonóide pressing to the final whistle for an equaliser.

Scorers for Gael Coláiste Mhuire AG: K Ní Éadromain 2-0, A Nic Cárthaigh 0-3, H Golka 0-1.

Pobalscoil Na Tríonóide: L Hill 1-0 R Cashman 0-3 (0-1f), A O'Keeffe 0-1.

GAEL COLÁISTE MHUIRE AG: A Ní Cheallaigh ;A Ní Bhuachalla, S Ní Chealiacháin; A Ní Chéilleachair; C Ní Aodha, A Nic Cárthaigh, C Ní Éadromáin (c), L Ní Chearúlláin, L Ní Loingsigh , K Ni Éadromain, H Golka, G Ní Mhurchú; S Ní Shíocháin, M Ní Mhurchú, E Nic Eafarcaigh.

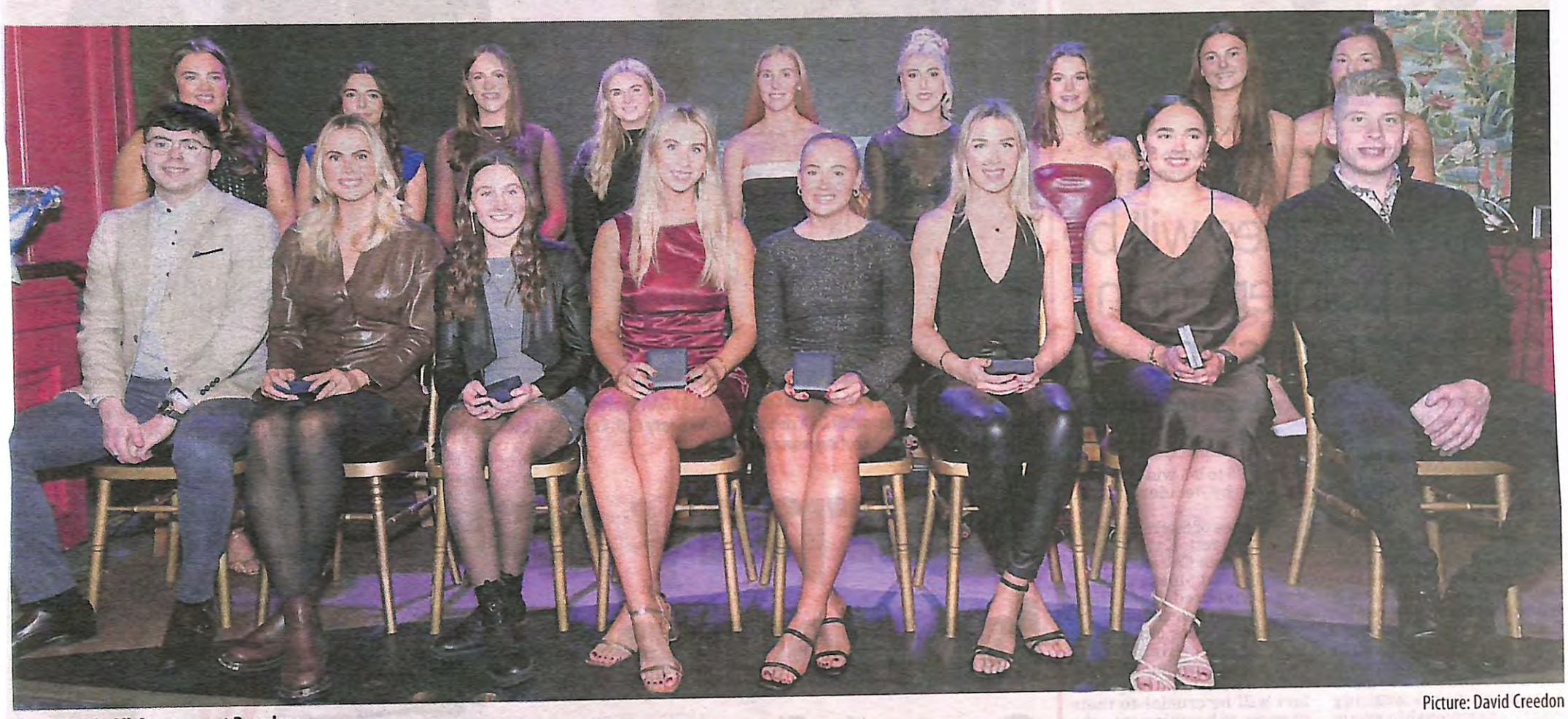
Subs: G Ní Éafaigh for M Ní Mhurchú (h/t), R Nic Cárthaigh for G Ní Mhurchú; (58), H De Búrca for S Ní Shíocháin (59).

POBALSCOIL NA TRÍONÓIDE: A Lane; E Gillman (c), K Harvey, L Mc Guigan; N Ni Mhuirí, C Brennan, S Hill; O Lucey, M Roche; S O' Brien, A Devereaux, O Motherway, L Hill, R Cashman, C Spillane.

Subs: A O' Keeffe for S O' Brien (23), P Power for O Motherway (57).

Referee: Ger Sheehan, (Douglas).

to Cork club All-Stars



Picture: David Creedon

The camogie All-Star team at Reardens.

tured, as the only two eligible for selection in Seamus Harnedy and Darragh Fitzgibbon missed out.

The latter's clubmate did win an award though — with Tim Hawe's tally of 7-7 giving him the full-forward spot for 2024.

Aghada's defensive stars in Sarah Walsh, Sarah Leahy, and Róisín Phelan all took home awards in ladies' football while the experienced Hannah Looney and Emma Farmer join Kaitlin Smith to make up the six All-Stars for the first time senior champions.

The All-Star recipients in full:

Ladies football: Sarah Walsh (Aghada); Sarah Leahy (Aghada), Jennifer O'Gorman (Éire Óg), Siobhán Callanan (Clonakilty); Aisling Kelleher (St Val's), Róisín Phelan (Aghada), Shauna Sheehan (Éire Óg); Niamh McNabola (St Val's), Hannah Looney (Aghada); Kaitlin Smith (Aghada), Laura Cleary (Éire Óg), Orlaith Roche (Glanmire); Emma Farmer (Aghada), Orlaith Cremin (Éire Óg), Aishling McAllen (Glanmire).

Football: Darragh Cahalane (Castlehaven); Johnny O'Regan (Castlehaven), Rory Maguire (Castlehaven), Colin Molloy (Nemo Rangers); Mattie Taylor (Mallow), Mark Corrigan (Muskerry), Mark Collins (Castlehaven); Barry Cripps (Nemo Rangers), Andrew Whelton (Castlehaven); Seán McDonnell (Mallow), Jack Cahalane (Castlehaven), Paul Kerrigan (Nemo Rangers); Steven Sherlock (St Finbarr's), Brian Hurley (Castlehaven), Mark Cronin (Nemo Rangers).

Camogie: Ciara Hurley (St Finbarr's); Stephanie Punch (St Finbarr's), Aisling Egan (St Finbarr's), Kelly Falvey (Glen Rovers); Ciara Golden (St Finbarr's), Lucy Kelly (Sarsfields), Aoife O'Neill (St Finbarr's); Ava Fitzgerald (Sarsfields), Emma Olden (St Finbarr's); Lucy Allen (Sarsfields), Amy Sheppard (Cloughduv), Kate Wall (St Finbarr's); Orlaith Cahalane (St Finbarr's), Orlaith Mullins (Sarsfields), Sorcha McCartan (St Finbarr's).

Hurling: Eoin Davis (Imokilly); Timmy Wilk (Imokilly), Ger Millerick (Fr O'Neills), Ciarán O'Brien (Imokilly); Dáire O'Leary (Imokilly), Ciarán Joyce (Imokilly), Luke Elliott (Sarsfields); Shane Hegarty (Imokilly), Brian O'Sullivan (Kanturk); Declan Dalton (Fr O'Neills), Daniel Hogan (Sarsfields), Conor Lehane (Midleton); Tim Hawe (Charleville), Alan Connolly (Blackrock), Jack Leahy (Imokilly).



Rory and Zoe Noonan at the Reardens All-Star awards. Picture: David Creedon



Johnny O'Regan, Katie Hegarty, Áine Crowley and Rory McGuire at the Reardens All-Star awards. Picture: David Creedor



Orlaith Mullins and Clodagh O'Donovan at the Reardens All-Stars. Picture: David Creedon



Eimear Hurley and Hannah O'Leary at the Reardens All-Star awards which took place at Reardens, Washington Street. Picture: David Creedor





Rachel Finn, Stephanie Punch, Eimear Hurley, and Sorchá McCartan at the Reardens All-Star awards. Picture: David Creedon

Fiona Keating can reflect on her 2024 accomplishments with a great sense of pride

BY GER McCARTHY

'NO act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted' – Aesop, Greek storyteller

WHAT a year it has been for Courcey Rovers and Cork camogie star Fiona Keating. Not content with winning a second consecutive All-Ireland senior medal, the versatile forward also raised over €10,000 for Self Help Africa.

Joining 50 fellow Irish GAA players and musicians, Keating travelled to Kenya in support of Self Help Africa for the Plant the Planet Games in partnership with Warriors for Humanity in November.

Each of the players involved committed to raise at least €10k and help plant a total of one million trees, leaving a lasting legacy for generations to come.

'I think it's something I'd always wanted to do, some bit of charity work,' Keating says.

'I was after raising €10,000 for Self Help Africa. I just wanted to go out and experience something different in Africa, and give back to the community. Travelling to Africa and planting a million trees in a week was something special.

'As well as that, visiting nurseries and different communities while we were over there, it was definitely a great experience.'

Before she set foot on the African continent, Keating was especially proud of her local Ballinspittle community and surrounding areas for coming together to contribute to the fundraising total.

'My local community played a massive role in that I put up a poster in Centra Ballinspittle and I think it raised close to €4,000,' she says.

'Our primary school in Ballinspittle raised €1,000 through bake sales and a non-uniform and jersey day. That was close to half the total. Local businesses added sponsorship and then online donations made up the rest.

'So, you wouldn't be long to make the total when you have a fantastic community and local area like that behind you.'

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'The key is not the will to win. Everybody has that. It is the will to prepare to win that is important' – Bobby Knight, USA basketball coach.

2024 was another stellar year for Cork camogie. Twelve months earlier, manager Matthew Twomey stepped away having brought the O'Duffy Cup back to Leeside.

Fast forward 12 months and a new Cork manager in Ger Manley was patrolling the sidelines against a fresh All-Ireland final opponent, Galway. This final proved much closer and pushed Cork to the limit until Katrina Mackey's goal was the decisive score in a 1-16

KEATING'S IMPACT ON AND OFF THE PITCH



Courcey Rovers team-mates Saoirse McCarthy and Fiona Keating lift the O'Duffy Cup after Cork's All-Ireland win in August.

'We had such a drive in us to

MATTHEW HURLEY caught up with Ballinascarthy captain Annie Condon after they won the 2024 Cork premier junior A championship

MATTHEW HURLEY: Congrats on a great season, Annie! Winning the county title and promotion to the intermediate ranks for next year was a superb achievement – would you consider this year to be the best of your career?

ANNIE CONDON: Yeah, it's definitely up there alright. It's such a great feeling winning with your club as you're playing alongside the girls you've grown up with and went to school with.

MATTHEW: It was terrific to get over the line this season, and what do you think was the key factor that helped Ballinascarthy win the county title?

ANNIE: We had such a drive in us to win it this year, I don't know what it was. We actually believed we could do it. I do think our whole team got on so well together this year on and off the pitch, and I think it helped to drive it on for one another.

MATTHEW: Was there any particular moment or game where you saw something that gave you the belief that Bal would win the championship?

ANNIE: Our last championship match in the group stages against Aghada was the point I started thinking we could actually do it. We hadn't been playing great up until then and it was such a tough game, we just about won it by a point.

I think if we had lost we were knocked out, so it also gave us a huge confidence boost.

MATTHEW: What were the celebrations like after Ballinascarthy beat Milford (0-9 to 0-5) in the final? And how important is it to celebrate successes like this?

ANNIE: The celebrations were brilliant! We had a bit of a homecoming in the hall in Bal and people came down to congratulate us. It was very nice to see all of the younger children all kitted out in their Ballinascarthy gear.

After that we headed over to the Henry Ford for the rest of the night, and the celebrations then carried on for another three days! I think it's so important to celebrate these wins; we train from January onwards in rain, hail or snow, with the aim of winning a county, and they certainly don't come around every year. So, it is well worth it when we finally get there!

MATTHEW: Looking ahead to 2025, can Ballinascarthy use the momentum from this year to kick on again next season?

ANNIE: I'm hoping we can have a good run at it, but I think we all know it will be a huge step up and there will be very tough games. It is our first year ever playing intermediate camogie, so we will have to wait and see how we get on!

MATTHEW: Fill us in on your Ballinascathy career,



Bal captain Annie Condon receives the cup from Cork County Camogie Board chairperson Mairéad Donovan.



Fiona Keating on her trip to Kenya that launched the campaign to plant a million trees and raise awareness of global warming and climate change.

to 0-16 triumph. To underline the Rebels' strength in depth, Cork also claimed the All-Ireland intermediate title on the same day in Croke Park.

'I think after winning one All-Ireland, you're kind of like, oh God, did that really happen?' Keating admits.

'Back in January, we set out right from the start that there was going to be no complacency. Ger had a great management team alongside himself and I think that made a massive impact as well. The likes of Liam Cronin, who will be a huge loss to us this coming year but we wish him all the best with Limerick. Cork's management team set a high standard and maintained that throughout the whole year which played a massive part in our success as well.

'No box was left unticked and that really showed on All-Ireland final day.'

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'You can't win unless you learn how to lose' – Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, NBA LA Lakers basketball champion

Whilst things went superbly for Keating on the inter-county front, an unfortunate injury curtailed her club ambitions as Courcey Rovers bowed out of the Cork camogie senior championship at the quarter-finals stage.

Watching on as Rovers lost out to Cloughduv was hard but the emergence of a talented crop of newcomers and the club's juniors claiming a county title bodes well for the Ballinspittle club's future.

'Unfortunately, I suffered a grade two hamstring tear,' Keating says.

'I was out for about eight weeks after that and it felt like I ended up completing a pre-season in the month of September.

'It happened during the Sarsfields (group stage) game. I played the St Catherine's game afterwards but could barely move, to be honest. That probably made the injury worse more than anything.

'That meant I missed Courcey's county quarter-final against Cloughduv. We lost that one 2-14 to 0-12 which was hugely disappointing. The week leading up to the game, I was debating: will I, won't I? My physio was ready to kill me for even thinking I might try to tog out.

'So yeah, it was hard watching on as the girls lost out. To be fair though, Courcey Rovers has a really young team at the moment. There are girls just up from U16 and minor. There is plenty of talent coming through because our juniors won a county title.

'It was really disappointing to lose to Cloughduv but they are an up and coming team themselves and beat St Finbarr's last year. It was a tough challenge but showed us where we (Courcey Rovers) are at right now.

'To finish the year as one of the top eight senior teams is still a good achievement for us, being such a small club. Hopefully, the experience, especially for the younger ones on the panel, will help us make another step forward next year. We will keep plugging away anyway.'

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'A champion is afraid of losing. Everyone else is afraid of winning' – Billie Jean King, USA, tennis champion

The long winter nights will shortly be replaced by the icy cold air of the new year. That means a return to pre-season training and, whether they like it or not, Cork's bid for three-in-a-row drawing plenty of headlines. Building on Ger Manley and his management team's work throughout 2024, Cork will once again look to strengthen their panel ahead of the new season.

'Last year, probably the first time in a long time, Cork had a panel of players that created a fight for the starting fifteen,' Keating points out.

'I think that will be the case again. Even more so this year. There is so much competition for places right now. Look at Orlaith Cahalane, still a young one, who proved that point and ended up getting her starting position.

'Definitely, there will be no complacency. I think everyone on the Cork senior panel begins the year fighting for a starting position and what it is all about, having a strong panel.

'Nowadays, success comes down to having 20 players who can deliver on match-day. That was definitely the case on All-Ireland final day for Cork.'

Keating's experiences, both on and off the pitch, have made the Courcey Rovers stalwart a better player heading into 2025. That's good news for her local club and Cork, as the Rebels embark on another All-Ireland senior championship final tilt.

win the county. We believed we could do it'

The Ballinascarthy team crowned 2024 Cork premier junior A champions. Back from left, Kate O'Donovan, Megan Ryan, Michelle O'Driscoll, Kaela O'Driscoll, Karen Lucey, Mischa May Pattwell, Michelle Dullea, Sinéad McCarthy, Sarah Cahalane, Grace Flynn, Martina O'Brien, Ella Cahalane, Moira Barrett and Aoife Kingston. Front from left, Nicole Prochniak, Muireann Fadian, Síofra Pattwell, Aoibhín Ryan, Maeve Kingston, Annie Condon (captain), Millie Condon, Orlaith Dee, Rachel Cahalane, Clara Crowley, Jane Twomey and Ciara Hayes.

ANNIE'S TEAM-MATES

Bal camogie captain Annie Condon fills us in on her county-winning team-mates!

Who is the fastest? It's probably a toss-up between Maeve Kingston, Moira Barrett and Millie (Condon).

Most skilful? Sinead McCarthy is flying it with the sidelines, and Megan Ryan is very knacky too.

Team-mate you'd least like to mark? Definitely Grace Flynn or Kaela O'Driscoll.

The joker in the pack? Two, Moira Barrett and Martina O'Brien!

Best to start a sing-song? Aoibhín Ryan, we can never stop her from singing Ed Sheeran at training!

and what playing for Bal means to you?

ANNIE: I started playing when I was six years old. Myself and Sinead Mac started together on the same day all togged out, and I have loved playing it ever since. Apart from winning the county this year, there have been a lot of other highlights. We won the junior B county final in 2018, I think I was only 15 at the time but it felt great getting to play with all of the older girls and get a win, as we don't get them too often! Another highlight has definitely been our breakfast club. During the summer we used to have training at 8.30am on a Saturday morning, so we organised a breakfast club where we would all bring some food or drinks to have after training together, and sometimes we would head for a swim afterwards if the weather was nice! I think it was nearly the only reason I made those early trainings some weeks!

MATTHEW: Who is the camogie player who inspires you the most?

ANNIE: Jennifer O'Leary. She was doing very well playing for Cork when I was younger, and I couldn't believe she was so local to me!

MATTHEW:We know your sister Millie is a Cork senior camogie player, so do things get competitive between the two of you?!

ANNIE: Oh absolutely! we have always been that way, nothing has changed. When I was playing camogie with the college in first and second year we used to play against the Cork minor trials, which Millie was playing at.

We would both end up marking each other at the beginning, but it didn't last long. We ended up having to change markers, as we were tearing into one another!

MATTHEW: What will you miss most about 2024?

ANNIE: Just playing with this team. Between going on J1s, holidays and people moving away, I'm not sure when we are all going to be playing together again.



A GREAT YEAR FOR CORK CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

It was a marvellous year for Cork camogie as two adult All-Ireland titles were won on an unforgettable day in Croke Park.

At local level, the county board organised championships and league competitions from U12 up to and including senior plus a huge volume of underage Go Games while in schools and colleges all over the city and county, camogie continues to grow.

On the inter-county scene, the O'Duffy Cup returned again as back-to-back senior titles were achieved and the intermediate team won a superb final having battled their way all through the campaign where they certainly came in under the radar. At under-age level, it was disappointing to see both the minor and U16 sides losing their All-Ireland crowns but it has to be acknowledged that, with the U16s chasing four in a row and the minors three in a row, it's a big ask to keep it going and although there was disappointment at losing out, the huge effort by both sets of players and managements was superb and they gave it their all through both campaigns.

At senior level, Ger Manley took over from Matthew Twomey as manager. Having failed to make it to the national league final, they showed huge resolve and determination to go on and be crowned All-Ireland champions. After the league campaign, a lot of questions were being asked, Cork were without the experienced Libby Coppinger, who had a long-term leg injury ruling her out for the season, but they knuckled down and made it to the Munster final, where Waterford provided the opposition.



The Cork Team that defeated Waterford in the Munster Senior Camogie Championship Final at Semple Stadium Thurles (Pic: George Hatchell)

Having lost to the same opponents in the Munster quarter-final the previous year, Cork were determined to get the better of the Déise this time out. They had defeated Waterford comprehensively in the All-Ireland final in 2023 but Ger Manley knew it was not going to be as easy this time around and with former Cork minor manager Jerry Wallace now at the helm in Waterford, it added extra to the clash.

Amy O'Connor's first-half goal proved to be a crucial score with Laura Hayes, Fiona Keating and Meabh Murphy also impressing as Cork ran out winners by 1-16 to 0-14 with Laura Hayes names player of the match.

In the All-Ireland championship, Cork were drawn in Group 2 with Galway, Dublin, Clare, Wexford and Down. Impressing in all games, they topped the group undefeated with Galway in second place, having lost two games. Securing a semi-final place they awaited the quarter-final winners: Galway overcame Waterford and Dublin caused a big shock, knocking out Kilkenny. Semi-finals are all about getting over the line and Cork had little difficulty as they proved too strong for Dublin, running out 4-17 to 0-9 winners. The second semi-final was a cracker as Galway edged it over Tipperary, 1-11 to 1-10, and so the stage was set.

In the All-Ireland final, Cork went in as raging favourites to make it back-to-back titles but they were pinned to their collars by a resilient Galway side who battled with all their might. It was a battle from start to finish and Cork, having not had any hard game until the final, had to call on all their experience to get over the line against a Galway side that made it really hard from start to finish.

A goal from Katrina Mackey at the start of the second half proved to be a vital score as Cork battled to gain a grip and the Cork defence stood strong as Galway threw everything at them. With nine minutes remaining, two Galway points in a row had the sides level but Cork responded with three points without reply to ensure they retained their title after a thrilling contest. It finished 1-16 to 0-16.

Ashling Thompson was named as the player of the match on a day when each and every one of the side performed heroically. A huge well done to manager Ger Manley, who drove his side on with the same determination he showed himself on the playing fields. Having taken over from Mathew Twomey, Ger Manley continued in the same vein and the whole process was a smooth one for the players. Given that Ger had served on Matthew's backroom team, the players knew and trusted the new man at the helm.

Cork's intermediate team played in Division 2B of the league, a competition confined to all counties with second adult teams. With new management team led by Donie Daly, who



(Pic: George Hatchell)

had enjoyed a hugely successful tenure with Cork U16s, Cork topped the group with four wins out of five. Having overcome Tipperary, Galway and Kilkenny, they surprisingly lost out to Wexford in round four before they dusted themselves down and overcame Clare in their last game to ensure their final spot was secured. In a tough battle, the Cork defence proved to be the launching pad for victory as Cork ran out 0-13 to 0-10 winners.

Cork topped a tough All-Ireland intermediate championship group, defeating Offaly, Galway, Clare, Westmeath and Wexford to secure a semi-final meeting with Offaly, where they ran out winners with two goals to spare to set up a final meeting with Kilkenny, who had gone to extra time to overcome Galway.

Kilkenny were tipped by many to take the title but Cork showed heart, guts and determination as they captured the title after a titanic battle in a game that went right down to the wire. A point from substitute Fiona Nelligan three minutes into injury time saw the Rebels capture the county's fifth title. Playing with the aid of the strong wind in the opening half, Kilkenny went to the dressing rooms trailing by a point 0-7 to 0-6, both sides having been evenly matched through the opening half.

Through the second half, the sides were evenly matched and Kilkenny hit the front on 42 minutes with a long-range Danielle Morrissey goal but, with two minutes remaining, Cork were back on level and as the clock ticked into added time Finola Nelligan slotted over. Still there was time and Kilkenny pressed but the Cork defence stood strong to get the day off to a magnificent start for The Rebels with Emma Flanagan named as player of the match.

Ger Manley was named as manager of the year and Laura Hayes the player of the year. Cork picked up eight All-Stars – Amy Lee, Laura Hayes, Saoirse McCarthy, Laura



(Pic: George Hatchell)



(Pic: George Hatchell)



Treacy, Pamela and Katrina Mackey, Ashling Thompson and Amy O'Connor. Six Cork intermediate players – Lauren Homan, Tara McCarthy, Emma Flanagan, Niamh O'Leary, Cliona O'Callaghan and Aoife Barrett – were Soaring Star recipients.

There was no joy for the county minor team, who, having topped their group make it to the semi-final, lost out to Waterford on a 3-9 to 1-10 scoreline. There was a similar fate for the U16A side, who lost out at the semi-final stage to Galway, 3-6 to 2-6. Cork entered the Munster U16B championship and ran out winners as they overcame Limerick. The Cork U16A team had to give way to Limerick in their final meeting.

At local levels, St Finbarr's overcame champions Sarsfields in the SE Systems County Senior Camogie Championship final. Ballinora overcame Ballinhassig in the premier intermediate decider while the intermediate title was won by Charleville. Ballinascarthy took the premier junior championship as they overcame Milford, Bishopstown defeated Blarney to win the junior A title. St Fanahan's won the junior B championship and the Barry O'Sullivan junior title was won by Sarsfields, who also won the Lillie O'Sullivan junior title. Courcey Rovers took the Lillie Grant championship.

With two out of four All-Ireland titles won in 2024, Cork can be pleased with their year and, based on the quality of young players coming through the ranks at county and club level, with the youth leading the way it can only augu well for the future of camogie in Cork.



Action from a camogie match in the Phoenix Park in the 1930s. The sport, founded in the early years of the century, was effectively relaunched in the 1930s when an All-Ireland inter-county championship was introduced.

Camogie stories deserve centre stage

IN attics and sheds and down the back of wardrobes, there are boxes which are filled with the history of the lives people lived across many decades.

These boxes stand as the record to immense voluntary endeavour that has sustained sporting organisations in the modern world.

In many respects, the minute books and letters and accounts which fill these boxes record the aspect of sport that is usually hidden and generally disregarded, but without which modern sport could not exist.

Anyone who has ever served on the sporting committee of a local club knows just how thankless the task is. There is no mileage allowance, no meat-pack, no holiday fund, no government grant.

At best, there is a sort of grudging respect — but even that melts away when there are controversies or hard decisions which force people to take positions that do not please any or all.

And yet, without the volunteers who sustain every sports club by serving as officers, there can be no sport.

It is usually such officials who preserve the history of a sport. It is true that modern media documents the actually playing of games and much that flows from it. But the story of what goes on beneath the bonnet is often neglected.

A raw truth is that when such officials pass away or lose interest, the material they have recorded often disappears. There are many skips that have been filled with the records of club officials.

The result is a record that is grossly incomplete.

A prime example of this is camogie. For generations, a relatively small number of people laboured enormously to provide games for girls and women who would otherwise have had none. They did so in the teeth of discrimination and neglect.

Their words and their deeds deserve to be collected and remembered.

In this respect, the GAA Library and Archive has launched an initiative to expand its collections of material relating to camogie, as part of the Camogie Association's Newman Fellowship Project at University College Dublin.

The fellowship project on the history of camogie was launched to celebrate the 120th anniversary of the founding of camogie and will document the unique place of the game in Irish life since the beginning of the 20th century.

Since its establishment in 2007, the GAA Library and Archive has been collecting the publications, records, and archives of the GAA, the Camogie Association, and the LGFA.

The material collected by the GAA Library and Archive includes administrative records (minute books and convention reports in particular), publications (books and articles), magazines, annuals, photographs, posters and flyers, GAA newspapers, and match programmes.

The camogie material will be held at the GAA Library and Archive, based in the GAA Museum at Croke Park, where there is a dedicated and fully supervised reading room, and a professional archivist, fully trained in all aspects of cataloguing, preserving, and administering access to records.

If individuals or clubs have camogie material they believe is suitable for inclusion, and may inform the Newman Scholarship research, or would like more information, they should contact the GAA Archivist, Adam Staunton (gaamuseum@crokepark.ie /01 8192350).



THE history of camogie is a fascinating one. When the GAA was established in 1884, its founders pledged to open its doors to men of all classes. It never seems to have occurred to them that women, too, might wish to play.

In time, boundaries began to shift. By 1900, women were appearing in far greater numbers in secondary schools, in teacher training colleges, universities, and the civil service. Independent women sought their own place in the world and sport played a significant part in shifting the perceptions of what a woman was capable of doing.

Far from waiting for the men to receive them into the GAA, women moved to form their own clubs to allow them play hurling.

The initiative was framed by the involvement of women in the Gaelic League which had been founded by Douglas Hyde in 1893. As well as its primary endeavour of promoting the Irish language, it was also charged with the promotion of all aspects of Irish culture.

In 1898 members of the Gaelic League in Navan, Co. Meath, established a ladies' hurling team. The immediate inspiration was the playing of an exhibition match among themselves as part of a local commemoration of the 1798 rebellion. The game was played at the Hill of Tara, a site resonant with historical allusions.

No further advances were made until 1903, and again a branch of the Gaelic League was involved. In Dublin, the Keating Branch had fine hurling and football teams for its male members. In 1903 a group of women members, including many who had travelled from various parts of Ireland to work in Dublin, determined to play the game of hurling.

Led by Máire Ní Chinnéide, a graduate of the Royal University (a forerunner of the National University of Ireland), the group devised a code of rules that was based on hurling.

Both hurleys and sliotars were to be smaller and lighter than those used by the men, and the pitch was shortened so that its dimensions were to stand between 60 and 100 yards in length and between 40 and 60 yards in width.

The number of players per team was 12 and among the rules was one which cited as a foul the deliberate stopping of the ball with the long flowing skirts then fashionable among early players. The game which carried these rules was renamed 'camogie'.

In that summer of 1903, the women of the Keating Branch began their practices, firstly in Drumcondra Park, and later in the Phoenix Park. Many of the women hid their hurleys under their coats as they travelled on trams in an attempt to deflect ridicule from the wider populace.

A second camogie club, Cúchulainns, was founded in Dublin in early 1904. This allowed for the staging of the first recorded camogie match, which was played at the Meath Agricultural Society Grounds (later redeveloped as Páirc Tailteann) in July 1904.

By the end of 1904 there were five teams playing in an organised league in the city. There was also a club active in Co Down, and the game was even played in Glasgow.

The progress was sufficient to allow for the formal establishment of An Cumann Camógaíochta, with Ní Chinnéide as president, at 8 North Frederick St, Dublin, on February 25 1905.

The impetus that followed saw more clubs established around Dublin. The game spread tentatively to the south with the foundation of a club in Cork, and spread north with Louth, Monaghan, Fermanagh, and Antrim involved.

That the game was played in areas where hurling was not well-established emphasises the importance of the Gaelic League to its development.

Progress was slow and the organisation stagnated. In 1911, led by Seán O'Duffy of the Crokes club, An Cumann Camógaíochta was relaunched in Dublin. Eleanor, Dowager countess of Fingal, was appointed president at a meeting attended by 13 Dublin clubs.

This time a determined effort was made to establish the game on a nationwide basis and by the middle of 1912 there were camogie matches regularly played in each of the four provinces.

The first official inter-county game was played in 1912 when Dublin defeated Louth at Jones's Road.

In the 1915-16 season, the oldest camogie competition, the Ashbourne Cup, was established as an inter-varsity championship.

Well-received matches played at the Tailteann Games in the 1920s — footage of which was shown in cinemas across Ireland and overseas — helped boost support.

Camogie was not helped by a series of internal disputes. Such were the divisions that, while some clubs played under camogie rules, others insisted on playing by the hurling rules used by the men.

Again, it became necessary to relaunch. Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael was reborn at a special convention in the Gresham Hotel in Dublin on 25 April 1932. It was then that camogie began to truly establish itself as a national sport and the first All-Ireland championship was started, though the final was not played until summer 1933.

By 1935, camogie was being played by 10,000 players on 423 teams in 28 counties.

Almost immediately, the association again tore itself asunder. A proposal to lift the ban on hockey players playing camogie led to a bitter split. Only in the early 1950s was unity restored. This unity proved enduring and allowed for the long-term development of camogie.

By the 1960s the association had a formidable structure in place, with club, county, and inter-collegiate competitions well-established.

Camogie progressed steadily through the 1970s and 1980s, driven by a passionate few dedicated to providing women with sporting opportunities.

In a new millennium, women playing sport received a new status, even if the mould shaped by the Victorian world was never properly broken — overt discrimination may have disappeared, but its remnants lived on.

Nonetheless, camogie — now played by teams of 15-a-side on a pitch the same size as that used by men — could boast a record 530 affiliated clubs with more than 100,000 members. The game. by 2024. was thriving as never before.

This project is an opportunity to pull local stories out of boxes and place them centre stage.

■ Paul Rouse is professor of history at University College Dublin

Paul Rouse

New Munster competitions are a big success

Munster camogie introduced the Mai O'Connell Cup and Shield competitions this year, two new standalone tournament competitions for junior clubs who won their respective county championships at a level not catered for under the Munster Club Championship umbrella.

The Cork junior A champions Bishopstown participated in the Munster Junior Club Championship and it was an opportunity for the Cork junior B and C champions, St Fanahan's and Nemo, to take part in a competition involving clubs from other Munster counties.

Both Cork sides reached the finals which were played in Austin Stack Park Tralee last Saturday, with Nemo contesting the Shield final and St Fanahan's playing in the cup final.

The tournament was named after Mai O'Connell, who passed away in June 2023.

Mai was president of Kerry Camogie Board and she was also an influence on hurling in North Kerry, and it was a fitting tribute to a lady who gave so much tome to both games.

St Fanahan's 1-9 Cashel 1-5

The cup final was a tight, exciting contest with great skill shown by both sides.

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

It was nonstop all through the game as play swung from end to end.

St Fanahan's were the dominant team in the first half but hitting several wides, they were just one point in front at half-time, 0-5 to 0-4, and were thankful to goalkeeper Eyrn O'Sullivan who was outstanding when making some excellent saves.

From the restart Cashel fought back and an Emily Manton goal on 40 minutes edged them in front, but St Fanahan's responded and an excellent point from Rachel Mullins had the sides level on 45 minutes.

As both teams battled to gain a grip, St Fanahan's grabbed the initiative with a goal on 55 minutes from sub Mary Hogan who put daylight between the sides.

Battling to hold the upper hand, St Fanahan's began to dominate and had excellent performances all over the pitch with player of the match Thea Coleman leading the way.

She was ably assisted by Maeve Geary and Ciara Ryan who were on target with points as they held on to take the Mai O'Connell Cup.

An Rinn (Waterford) 1-12 Nemo Rangers 1-3

In the shield final An Rinn took the honours with a superb display from player of the match Treasa Crotty.

A first-half goal from Adhmhin Ni Riordan laid the foundations for An Rinn's victory. They were the better team in the first half when they raced into a 1-9 to 01-2 interval lead thanks in the main to Onelia Ni Fhaolain, Treasa Ni Chrotaigh, and Adhmhin Ni Riordan who all found the range as they picked off points.

Caoimhe Power was on target for Nemo, pointing a free and adding one from play as they battled against a strong An Rinn defence.

Nemo never gave up and it was a much tighter second half as they closed down the An Rinn attack and limited them to three second-half points.

An Orla O'Donovan goal and a point from Caoimhe Power ensured Nemo kept An Rinn on their toes, but thanks to their strong opening half display the Waterford side had done enough to take the shield title.

Cork v Clare



The Cork Primary Game team that Played Clare at half time in the Munster SHC between Cork and Clare at Super Valu Pairc Ui Chaoimh Selectors: Muireann, Sc na nÓg, Niamh Ní Chaoimh, GS Uí Riordain, ,Ciara Cashman, Upper Glanmire (Pic: George Hatchell)

Ainm	Camogie Nominee
Glenville NS	Abiageal Fenton
Scoil Oilibheir Ballyvolane	Bella Brosnan
St.Marys NS, Cobh	Bláithín O'Rourke
Knockraha NS	Caoimhe Street
Liscarroll NS	Faye Buckley
St. Catherine's NS Ballynoe	Grace Higgins

Ainm	Camogie Nominee
Scoil Naomh Iosaf, Riverstown	Ruby Allen
Meelin NS	Amy O Connor
Upper Glanmire NS	Rebecca Dwane
Gaelscoil Uí Ríordáin, Baile an Chollaigh	Róisín Ní Dhraighneáin
Scoil Bhríde Eglantine, Douglas	Sophie Considine

Munster

Meanwhile, Cork camogie star Laura Hayes — All-Star winner and player of the year for 2024, has been crowned Munster camogie player of the year.

Hayes — from the St Catherine's club — was Cork vice-captain for the 2024 season which started with the Rebels winning the Munster final — a game in which Hayes won player of the match.

Hayes' good form continued throughout the All-Ireland championship as Cork powered their way to the glory once more with victory over Galway, Cork's second in as many years and Hayes' third in total.



21ST YEAR OF **96FM/C103** MONTHLY SPORTS STAR AWARDS

MAY

The Cork senior camogie team won the Munster Championship was won and were in good shape as they began the defence of their All-Ireland crown and we all know how that turned out.

Laura Hayes was in brilliant form, her pace has blitzed many an opponent and her ability to rifle over long range points was a vital part of the team's displays.

The St Catherine's player remained a model of consistency throughout the season, and how fitting that she was named the Camogie Player of the Year along with winning another All-Star award.



At the Rochestown Park Hotel for the Cork 96FM C103 GAA Sports Star of the Month Award were L To R. Tom Tobin GM, RPH, Marion McCarthy, Team Liaison Officer,Finbarr McCarthy 96FM Presenting the Award to Laura Hayes, Cork Camogie, Isabel Keane, Head of Sponsorship Promotions and Marketing Cork 96FM C103 ,Francis Kenneally PRO Cork County Board and Ken Perrott, Cork 96FM. Picture, Tony O'Connell.

AUGUST

For the second time this year, we had dual winners as, fittingly, the All-Ireland-winning Cork camogie teams were honoured as they completed the double.

Aoife Barrett was an outstanding defender as the intermediate team got the better of old rivals Kilkenny by the narrowest of margins in a thrilling final, just reward for a classy player. The Aghabullogue player was also named on the Soaring Stars Intermediate Team of The Year.

As the seniors made it back-to-back titles by beating Galway, it was another defender that was acknowledged for her part in that triumph, with Pamela Mackey the recipient.

An experienced and quality player, Pamela was outstanding as the Cork defence held firm in the closing stages of a thrilling final. Pamela was winning her seventh All-Ireland medal and along with eight of her colleagues she was honoured with an All-Star Award.



At the Rochestown Park Hotel for the Cork 96FM C103 GAA Sports Star of the Month for August 2024 Recipients Pamela Mackey, Cork Senior All Ireland Camogie Champions and Aoife Barrett, Cork Intermediate All ireland Camogie Champions pictured L to R., Padraig Treacey, Vice Chairperson Cork Camogie Board, Isabel Keane, Marketing and Promotions, Cork 96FM C103, Finbarr Mc Carthy, Cork 96FM, Tom Tobin, General Manager RPH and Pat Horgan, Chairman Cork County GAA Boad. (Picture, Tony O'Connell)

PA FINN
A LIFETIME OF SERVICE TO CORK GAA

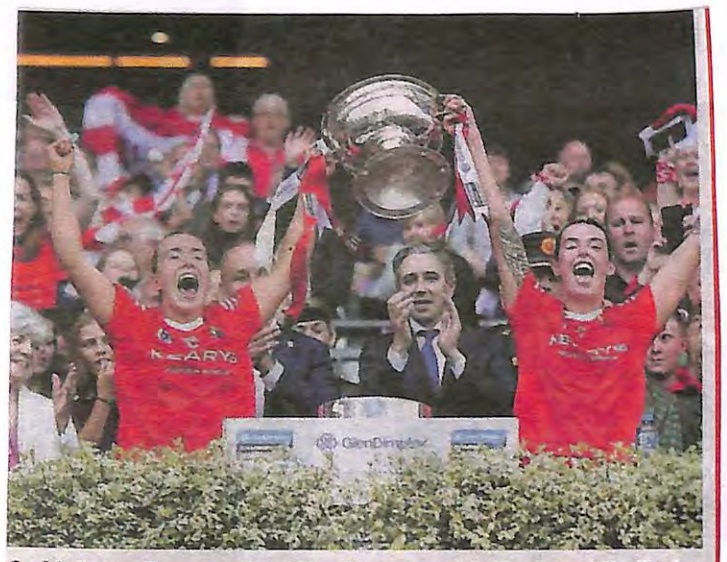


games.

A career highlight in Gaelic games came in 2002 when he landed the O'Duffy Cup with the Cork camogie team. His calm demeanour and ability to get through to players in a straight and often charming way was highlighted by the

girls as among his greatest attributes – many of whom also remained friends with him up to his very last days.

While coach of the Cork senior camogie team, he fought for better conditions and preparations for 'his girls' and wasn't slow to voice his displeasure when he felt they were not being treated properly. Cork camogie legend Gemma O'Connor invited Pa and Nora to her book launch a number of years ago, where she highlighted the fact that he was the manager who launched her inter-county career with that victory in 2002, a career that ultimately yielded nine All-Irelands and 11 All-Stars.



Cork's Laura Treacy and Ashling Thompson lift the Sean O'Duffy Cup after their win over Galway. Picture: Inpho/Ben Brady

Cork's camogie double capped a fantastic year

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman



Cork's Lauren Homan lifts the Jack McGrath Cup.

Last year will go down as one of the finest in the history of Cork camogie.

The double was achieved in glorious fashion on a never-to-be forgotten day in Croke Park as Rebel hearts were lifted following the disappointment experienced two weeks earlier in the hurling final.

The senior team retained the O'Duffy Cup and the intermediate team won a superb final having battled their way all through the campaign where they came in under the radar as underdogs.

The seniors, with new manager Ger Manley, showed huge determination to be crowned All-Ireland champions. Having failed to make it to the National League final they showed huge resolve and determination to go on and be crowned All-Ireland champions.

After the league campaign a lot of questions were asked; Cork were without the experienced Libby Coppinger who was injured for the season, but they knuckled down and made it to the Munster final where Waterford, who they defeated comprehensively in the All-Ireland final in 2023, were the opponents.

Manley knew it was not going to be as easy and with former Cork minor manager Jerry Wallace at the helm in Waterford it added extra to the clash.

Amy O'Connor's first-half goal proved to be a crucial score, with Laura Hayes, Fiona Keating, and Meabh Murphy also impressing as Cork won 1-16 to 0-14 with Hayes named Player Of the Match.

In the championship Cork were in group two with Galway, Dublin, Clare, Wexford, and Down and they topped the group undefeated with Galway in second place having lost two games.

Securing a semi-final place, they awaited the quarter-final winners, Galway overcame Waterford and Dublin caused a big shock knocking out Kilkenny. Cork proved too strong for Dublin, running out 4-17 to 0-9 winners, the second semi-final was a cracker as Galway pipped Tipperary 1-11 to 1-10 and so the stage was set.

Cork were raging favourites to make it back-to-back titles, but they were pinned to their collars by a resilient Galway side who battled with all their might. It was a battle from start to finish and Cork, not having had a difficult game until that point, had to call on all their experience to get over the line against a Galway side that made it really hard from start to finish.

A goal from Katrina Mackey at the start of the second half proved to be a vital score as Cork battled to gain a grip and their defence had to stand strong as Galway threw everything at them. With nine minutes remaining two Galway points in a row had the sides level, but digging deep, Cork responded with three points without reply to ensure they retained their title after a thrilling contest.

Aishling Thompson was named as the RTÉ Player of the Match on a day when every player performed heroically.

Well done to Manley who drove his side on with the same determination that he himself showed on the playing fields. Having taken over from Mathew Twomey, Manley continued in the same vein and the process was one of a smooth transition for the players, and given that Manley had served on Twomey's backroom team, the players knew and trusted the new man at the helm and he didn't disappoint.

Well done to all on a great senior season. Now thoughts turn to holding on to the crown and no doubt Ger and his back room team are ready and able for what lays ahead.



SIBLING RIVALRY: Jack Cahalane (football) and Orlaith Cahalane (camogie) have been awarded prestigious sports scholarships as part of the ongoing partnership between Munster Technological University (MTU) and Clearstream, a branch of Deutsche Börse Group. This collaboration supports MTU's student athletes by providing financial assistance to help them excel in both their academic and athletic pursuits. MTU GAA Development Officer Kevin O'Callaghan remarked on the shared values driving the partnership, which includes enhanced support for MTU Cork Campus GAA Club. PHOTO: JOLEEN CRONIN

Cahalane duo scoop MTU Cork awards

GAA

Barry O'Mahony

Orlaith and Jack Cahalane have been announced as recipients of the Clearstream GAA scholarship awards for their sporting achievements in MTU Cork.

Part of the famous GAA sporting dynasty that is the Cahalane family, Orlaith and Jack both study Coaching Science & Sports Pedagogy and are the first recipients of the prestigious awards.

Orlaith has represented MTU in both camogie and ladies football, being a key member of the MTU Purcell Cup winning team in 2023 while also starring with the ladies football team that reached the final of the Lynch Cup in 2024. Orlaith has represented Cork at all levels in both camogie and ladies football with two All-Ireland senior camogie medals, one senior camogie county medal and a dual All-Ireland medal winner at minor level. Orlaith is a super athlete and a role model for the MTU GAA club on and off the pitch.

Jack is also a dual star in MTU and a key member of the Sigerson Cup and Fitzgibbon Cup panels. He has a huge CV outside of MTU also, senior club county medals in both hurling and football along with a Minor All-Ireland football medal and two U20 All-Ireland hurling medals.

Speaking at the presentation function, Jack expressed his thanks to Clearstream for their support of students in MTU GAA club: "It is an honour for me and Orlaith to wear the MTU jersey and we are very



Kevin O'Callaghan, MTU GAA development officer, with Jack Cahalane and Orlaith Cahalane, and David Brosnan of Clearstream Cork. Picture: Joleen Cronin

grateful to Clearstream for their recognition of high performance sport in MTU through these scholarships."

David Brosnan, CEO of Clearstream stated: "The partnership between Deutsche Börse Group/Clearstream and MTU has been a resounding success, benefiting both parties immensely. Through our sponsorship and support of the college athletic scholarship program, we have not only fostered the development of talented athletes but also strengthened our ties with the local community.

"We are thrilled to congratulate both Orlaith and Jack Cahalane, the two winners of the scholarships, whose dedication and hard work have truly shone through.

"This collaboration underscores our commitment at Clearstream and the entire Deutsche Börse Group to local engagement and the importance of investing in the future of our youth. Moving forward, we expect this partnership to continue thriving, creating more opportunities for students and further solidifying our presence and impact in the region with our work in the community and also as an employer of choice."

MTU Student GAA Club Development Officer Kevin O'Callaghan also attended the scholarship presentation and noted: "Both MTU and Clearstream are committed to fostering a long-term relationship focused on promoting excellence in sports, inclusivity, and community engagement. This is the first time that Clearstream has provided scholarship awards to MTU and we are very lucky to have two students of Orlaith and Jack's calibre as the inaugural recipients."


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Barrs senior camogie victory dinner event

At St Finbarr's Senior Camogie Victory Dinner, at the Rochestown Park Hotel, Cork, were:

- 1. Liz O'Donovan and Elizabeth Dillon.
- 2. Ciara Hurley and Ella Wiggington Barrett.
- 3. Sofia Daly, Aoife Byrne, Aoife O'Connor, Gillian Fitzgerald, and Stephanie Punch.
- 4. Keeva McCarthy, Stephanie Punch, and Caoimhe Moore.
- 5. Cliodhna Sargent, Claragh Callanan, Ciara Sargent, Alex Moynihan, and Aine O'Callaghan.
- 6. Anthony O'Neill, Dylan Byrne, Brian O'Sullivan, Cliodhna Sargent, Marian McCarthy, Denis Harrington, Paul Harte, and Graham Browne.
- 7. Sisters, Cara and Aoife O'Neill with their family, grandad Peter Doolan, and mum and dad Maria and Fionan O'Neill.
- 8. Natasha Hogan, Jennifer Mehigan, and Caoimhe Moore.
- 9. Marian McCarthy and Denis Bohane.
- 10. Players Emma and Nicole Olden with their mum, Jackie (centre).

Pictures: Jim Coughlan


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