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Celebration time for the All-Stars



Camogie

Linda Mellerick

THE All-Star banquet takes place this evening.

It's an exciting event for those involved. We've previewed to date goalkeepers, full-backs, half-backs and midfielders from other counties who Aoife Murray, Rena Buckley, Laura Treacy, Pamela Mackey, Gemma O'Connor, Eimear O'Sullivan and Ashling Thompson are competing with for a position. Today we close with looking at the half-forwards and full-forwards who Orla Cronin, Orla Cotter, Katrina Mackey and Amy O'Connor are up against.

Aoife Keane (Clare): Keane is one of five Clare players who received an All-Stars nomination for her performances this year. Having progressed through the underage ranks Keane can feel a great sense of pride as her career progresses. This is her first All-Stars nomination.

Denise Gaule (Kilkenny): Last year's Player of the Year turned in another fantastic season in the black and amber jersey. Division 1 League and Leinster honours this year meant Kilkenny still claimed some Silverware. Scoring two points in the All-Ireland final, it is Denise's third All-Stars nomination.

Katie Power (Kilkenny): The Piltown stalwart has been involved in the Kilkenny set up for many years now, playing a pivotal part in the success that has come the Cats way. Power got on the score sheet in the All-Ireland decider in September and after another impressive year she has received her eighth All-Stars nomination, owning two awards.

Niamh Mulcahy (Limerick): Recipient of two Soaring Stars awards, Young player of the Year and four All-Stars nominations, Niamh Mulcahy is regarded as one of the best attackers in the game. The Limerick captain is lethal from placed balls and her influence on her teammates is inspirational.

Shelley Kehoe (Wexford): This Wexford star has had an incredible journey and her career continues to go from strength to strength. Hitting three points in her side's All-Ireland Senior quarter-final defeat to Dublin she remained a shining light in an otherwise disheartening day for Wexford.

Chloe Morey (Clare): The Sixmilecross sharpshooter was in lethal form this season and is deserving of yet another All-Stars nomination. Morey registered 0-15 points against Waterford in the early rounds of the Championship and is looking to add another award to the collection having won the desired All-Stars accolade back in 2013. In total, it is her fifth nomination.

Aisling Maher (Dublin): This is the first nomination for the St. Vincent's player who has continued to go from strength to strength. The Trinity College sports scholar was recognised as Dublin's Young Player of the Year last year and after winning back to back club championships Maher will no doubt be a player to watch in the future.

Aoife Donohue (Galway): Receiving



Valley Rovers celebrate after defeating Blackrock in the SE Systems Cork Camogie Senior B Championship final at Castle Road.

Picture: David Keane



The Ballincollig U14 team that won the B county camogie championship recently. See right for match report.

her third consecutive All-Stars nomination, Donohue will be looking to add her second accolade to the collection after another impressive year for the Galway girls. The Mullagh corner forward posed a real from open play, while adding the crucial scores from placed balls when needed. Donohue was the top scorer for the maroon outfit in their semi-final defeat to champions Cork.

Ailish O'Reilly (Galway): Another dependable and clinical ace in the Galway full-forward line, O'Reilly dominated defences with her sheer strength and agility. The full-forward from Oranmore/Maree led the scoring charts throughout the championship and has been recognised for her excellent displays by receiving her fourth All-Stars nomination.

Julie Ann Malone (Kilkenny): Last year's recipient produced another fine season for the Cats as she cemented

her role as a key operator in the full forward line for Kilkenny. The Mullinavat ace followed on from her Player of the Match performance in the All-Ireland final last year by striking two points in the All-Ireland decider in September.

Miriam Walsh (Kilkenny): The teacher from Tullaroan is looking to add further silverware to the collection after receiving back-to-back All-Star nominations. With three National League titles, two Leinster championship titles and an All-Ireland Senior Championship title to go with her maiden All-Stars win last year, she continues to build a collection of awards that her performances merit.

Orla O'Dwyer (Tipperary): Despite missing out on a semi-final spot with Tipperary this year, O'Dwyer has continued to blossom in the county colours in recent seasons. After winning the Player of the Match accolade in the

Minor All-Ireland final last year the 19-year-old continued her good form in 2017. The Cashel star is the sole nominee from the Premier county.

Beth Carton (Waterford): It has been a great season for the Waterford superstar who was awarded the Littlewoods Division 1 League Player of the League Award back in May. The De La Salle college student has racked up some phenomenal scores for her side throughout the campaign, having already achieved All-Ireland glory at minor level.

Chloe Foxe (Wexford): The youngster from the St Martin's club is one of a new fresh batch of players entering the Wexford ranks. Clinical, strong and pacy, Foxe has every element to her game that you want from your attackers and she has recently taken over the duties from placed balls. This is the first nomination for Foxe.

Good luck to the Cork girls.

Impressive Ballincollig U14s hit Cobh for six

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

Ballincollig	6-3
Cobh	4-4

AN EXCITING contest in the U14 B championship final saw Ballincollig crowned champions at the expense of Cobh in a highly-entertaining game where there were some excellent scores on both sides recorded.

The opening half was close and just a point separated them at the break. Siorcha McCarthy was on target with two first-half Ballincollig goals while Ciara O'Brien was on target with one.

Dara Diggin and Ava Meaney responded with Cobh goals and as the sides dug deep to gain control but they were evenly matched as both picked off points.

For Ballincollig Ella-beth McCarthy, Lily May Farrell and Siorcha McCarthy kept the scoreboard ticking over.

Cobh were equal to the challenge with points from Abbie Mackessy and Ava Meaney and at the break, it was 3-3 to 3-2 in Ballincollig's favour.

Both sides worked hard through the second half with Rionna Barry-Smyth doing Trojan work at mid-field for Ballincollig, and Miriam Healy working hard to ensure they maintained their lead.

Danielle O'Connor, who stepped in to play her first game in goal for Ballincollig following a late injury to their regular keeper had a great game, and she showed huge confidence.

Ballincollig added to their tally with second-half goals from Lily May Farrell, Maebh Power and Molly Lordon.

In response, Cobh had a Molly O'Keeffe goal and two Ava Meaney points but they failed to breach the Ballincollig defence who held their lines to record a five-point victory over a very good Cobh team.

Ballincollig Miriam Healy was named as Player of the Match following a superb display.

Scorers for Ballincollig: S McCarthy 2-1, L M Farrell 1-1, M Power, M Lordon, C O'Brien 1-0 each, E McCarthy 0-1.

Cobh: A Meaney 1-3, M O'Brien, D Diggin, Molly O'Keeffe 1-0 each, A Mackessy 0-1.

Ballincollig: D O'Connor; S McCarthy, C O'Donovan, R Gleeson; C Gleeson, A Daly (c), A O'Connor; M Healy, R Barry-Smyth; S McCarthy, L M Farrell, M Lordon; E McCarthy, O'Brien, F Corkery.

Subs: M Power for F Corkery (40).

Cobh: H Hurley; L O'Rourke, E O'Donovan, B McCarthy; E Diggin, A Gill, I O'Leary; C Bardsley, A Meaney; A Duggan, D Diggin, V Frawley; M O'Brien, A Mackessy; C Farrell.

Subs: Z Smith for L O'Rourke (45), M O'Keeffe for C Farrell (50).

Cork shine brightest at All-Stars



The 2017 Camogie All-Stars awards winners, in Association With Liberty Insurance, at the Citywest Hotel, Dublin, on Saturday night. Included are: Camogie Association CEO Joan O'Flynn; President of the Camogie Association, Catherine Neary, and Deirdre Ashe, Liberty Insurance
Picture: Ryan Byrne/Inpho

Daragh Ó Conchúir

Rena Buckley was named players' player of the year and Paudie Murray manager of the year, while Gemma O'Connor earned a record-breaking ninth individual award as Cork swept the boards at the Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars on Saturday night.

The All-Ireland champions dominated the team with eight All-Stars, while runners-up Kilkenny had four.

Beaten semi-finalists Galway picked up two awards and Dublin's barnstorming run to the last four that captured the imagination of the camogie public was rewarded with a first gong for Aisling Maher.

Laura Treacy (Cork) and Catherine Foley (Kilkenny) were the other first-time recipients.

Buckley won a historic 18th senior All-Ireland medal between camogie and ladies football when Cork defeated Kilkenny last September, taking her ahead of great friend and long-time ally Brieghe Corkery.

She also joined elite company when becoming the first person in

Gaelic games history to captain one county to senior All-Irelands in both codes.

2017 All-Star Team: Aoife Murray (Cork), Rena Buckley (Cork), Catherine Foley (Kilkenny), Laura Treacy (Cork), Gemma O'Connor (Cork), Anne Dalton (Kilkenny), Eimear O'Sullivan (Cork), Meighan Farrell (Kilkenny), Ashling Thompson (Cork), Katrina Mackey (Cork), Katie Power (Kilkenny), Orla Cotter (Cork), Alish O'Reilly (Galway), Aisling Maher (Dublin), Aoife Donohue (Galway).

Champions Cork Lead Camogie All-Stars Awards Selections

By Camogie Press
Posted 04/11/2017



All-Ireland Senior champions Cork dominated the 2017 Camogie All-Stars team sponsored by Liberty Insurance, taking eight places on this year's selection presented by Camogie Association President Catherine Neary at the Citywest Hotel on Saturday, November 4th.

All-Ireland runners-up Kilkenny received four awards, with Semi-Finalists Galway receiving two awards and Dublin completing the line-up with one award.

This year's Awards were extra significant as all of the winning Senior All-Stars will also be invited on the inaugural Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars Tour to Madrid later this month to take part in an exhibition match against their 2016 counterparts.

Amongst the winners for the Rebels in defence were goalkeeper Aoife Murray, right corner-back and captain Rena Buckley, left corner-back Laura Treacy, as well as Gemma O'Connor and Eimear O'Sullivan in the half-back line. O'Connor was collecting a record ninth All-Stars Award to move her ahead of Wexford legend Kate Kelly at the top of the All-Stars Awards Roll of Honour. Ashling Thompson was selected in midfield whilst in the forwards Katrina Mackey and Orla Cotter were selected in the half-forward line.

All-Ireland runners-up Kilkenny are represented throughout the spine of the team with Catherine Foley at full-back, Anne Dalton claiming a fifth All-Stars Award at centre half-back, Meighan Farrell in midfield and Katie Power at centre-half-forward.

Galway are represented by the Championship's top scorer Alish O'Reilly at right corner-forward and Aoife Donohue at left corner-forward.

The 2017 All-Stars team is completed with Dublin forward Aisling Maher rewarded for her key role in the Capital's run to the All-Ireland Semi-Final by being selected at full-forward.

Cork manager Paudie Murray was named as Manager of the Year for the second time after guiding the Rebels to a record 27th All-Ireland title.

Cork's Rena Buckley also collected the Camogie Association/WGPA Senior Players' Player of the Year award. Claire Coffey of Meath was the recipient of the Intermediate accolade whilst Dublin's Aoife Bugler was chosen as the Junior Players' Player of the Year. All three were selected from a shortlist compiled by the WGPA after voting by intercounty players with the awards sponsored by Liberty Insurance.

All-Ireland Intermediate champions Meath lead the 2017 Soaring Stars Awards, represented by six players: goalkeeper Emily Mangan, captain Claire Coffey at full-back, Megan Thynne at right half-forward, Amy Gaffney at left half-forward, Aoife Minogue at right half-forward and Jane Dolan at full-forward who collected an incredible sixth Soaring Stars Award.

Intermediate runners-up Cork are represented by four players: Sarah Harrington at right corner-back, captain Niamh Ni Chaoimh at left corner-back, Sarah Buckley at centre half-back and Keeva McCarthy at centre half-forward.

All-Ireland Premier Junior champions are represented by Laura Doherty at left half-back and Caoimhe McCrossan in Midfield. Runners-up Dublin are also represented by Aoife Bugler at left corner-forward.

The 2017 Soaring Stars team is completed by the Intermediate duo of Carlow's Emma Brennan at right half-

"Finally, I am delighted that the inaugural Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars Tour will take place later this month. The All-Stars Tour provides further evidence of the esteem in which our players are held not only within the Camogie community but also within the wider national sporting context. I wish to acknowledge our partners Liberty Insurance for their continued support of our game and our players."

Speaking on behalf of Liberty Insurance, Director of Personal Lines Deirdre Ashe said:

"Each of the players here this evening are role models for young women by their actions and deeds on and off the field of play, and we'd like to congratulate all of the nominees and winners for playing their part in such a memorable Camogie Championships this year."

"It's important for us in Liberty Insurance to continue to raise the profile & awareness of female athletes, and is a privilege to sponsor the Camogie All-Star Awards this evening which celebrate the achievements of the sport's finest players. It's really exciting too that the first ever Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars Tour to Madrid takes place later this month, building on our commitment to women in sport while providing an opportunity to showcase the game to new audiences in Europe."

Aoife Lane, Chairperson of the WGPA commented:

"We would like to extend congratulations to all of the nominees and commend them for being such excellent role models in their club and county, displaying the highest levels of skill and commitment throughout the year."

"In particular we celebrate the achievement of the three worthy Players' Player of the Year winners; Rena Buckley, Claire Coffey and Aoife Bugler. Each have been chosen by their peers as the outstanding exponents of their game, perhaps the highest tribute which can be paid to any player."

"We wish Camogie continued growth and success in 2018."

2017 All-Stars team sponsored by Liberty Insurance:

Goalkeeper: Aoife Murray (Cork) - 7th Time Winner
Right Corner-Back: Rena Buckley (Cork) - 5th Time Winner
Full-Back: Catherine Foley (Kilkenny) - 1st Time Winner (Won Intermediate Soaring Star in 2014)
Left Corner-Back: Laura Treacy (Cork) - 1st Time Winner
Right Half-Back: Gemma O'Connor (Cork) - 9th Time Winner
Centre Half-Back: Anne Dalton (Kilkenny) - 5th Time Winner
Left Half-Back: Eimear O'Sullivan (Cork) - 2nd Time Winner
Midfield: Meighan Farrell (Kilkenny) - 2nd Time Winner
Midfield: Ashling Thompson (Cork) - 2nd Time Winner
Right Half-Forward: Katrina Mackey (Cork) - 4th Time Winner
Centre Half-Forward: Katie Power (Kilkenny) - 3rd Time Winner
Left Half-Forward: Orla Cotter (Cork) - 5th Time Winner
Right Corner-Forward: Alish O'Reilly (Galway) - 3rd Time Winner
Full-Forward: Aisling Maher (Dublin) - 1st Time Winner
Left Corner-Forward: Aoife Donohue (Galway) - 2nd Time Winner

2017 Soaring Stars sponsored by Liberty Insurance:

Goalkeeper: Emily Mangan (Meath) - Intermediate - 2nd Time Winner
Right Corner-Back: Sarah Harrington (Cork) - Intermediate - 1st Time Winner
Full-Back: Claire Coffey (Meath) - Intermediate - 2nd Time Winner
Left Corner-Back: Niamh Ni Chaoimh (Cork) - Intermediate - 1st Time Winner
Right Half-Back: Emma Brennan (Carlow) - Intermediate - 1st Time Winner
Centre Half-Back: Sarah Buckley (Cork) - Intermediate - 1st Time Winner
Left Half-Back: Laura Doherty (Westmeath) - Premier Junior - 1st Time Winner
Midfield: Emer Reilly (Kildare) - Intermediate - 1st Time Winner
Midfield: Caoimhe McCrossan (Westmeath) - 1st Time Winner
Right Half-Forward: Megan Thynne (Meath) - Intermediate - 1st Time Winner
Centre Half-Forward: Keeva McCarthy (Cork) - Intermediate - 1st Time Winner
Left Half-Forward: Amy Gaffney (Meath) - Intermediate - 1st Time Winner
Right Corner-Forward: Aoife Minogue (Meath) - Intermediate - 1st Time Winner
Full-Forward: Jane Dolan (Meath) - 5th Time Winner - Intermediate - 5th Time Winner
Left Corner-Forward: Aoife Bugler (Dublin) - Premier Junior - 1st Time Winner

2017 Manager of the Year sponsored by Liberty Insurance:

Paudie Murray, Cork - 2nd Time Winner

2017 Camogie Association/WGPA Players' Player of the Year sponsored by Liberty Insurance:

Senior Players' Player of the Year: Rena Buckley (Cork) - 1st Time Winner
Intermediate Players' Player of the Year: Claire Coffey (Meath) - 1st Time Winner
Junior Players' Player of the Year: Aoife Bugler (Dublin) - 1st Time Winner

Rebels do well in All-Star awards

CAMOGIE

■ Éamonn Murphy

THE Rebels were the toast of the Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars on Saturday night, with Cork picking up eight senior awards and four at intermediate level, while Rena Buckley was picked as the Player of the Year and Paudie Murray as the Manager of the Year.

Leeside legend Gemma O'Connor collected a remarkable 10th All-Star at City West, with goalkeeper Aoife Murray, Buckley, Laura Treacy, and Eimear O'Sullivan also selected in defence.

Ashling Thompson was selected in midfield while in the forwards Katrina Mackey and Orla Cotter were picked.

Murray was named as Manager of the Year for the second time after guiding the Rebels to a record 27th All-Ireland title, with Buckley receiving the Camogie Association/WGPA Senior Players' Player of the Year award.

Intermediate runners-up Cork are represented by four players; Sarah Harrington at corner-back and captain Niamh Ni Chaoimh at number four, Sarah Buckley at centre-back and Keeva McCarthy at centre-forward.

Speaking at the event Camogie Association President Catherine Neary said: "I am delighted that the inaugural Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars Tour will take place later this month."

"The All-Stars Tour provides further evidence of the esteem in which our players are held not only within the Camogie community but also within the wider national sporting context."

"I wish to acknowledge our partners Liberty Insurance for their continued support of our game and our players."

CORK'S SENIOR ALL-STARS:

Goalkeeper: Aoife Murray - seventh All-Star.
Right corner-back: Rena Buckley - fifth.
Left corner-back: Laura Treacy - first.
Right half-back: Gemma O'Connor - 10th.
Left half-back: Eimear O'Sullivan - second.
Midfield: Ashling Thompson - second.
Right half-forward: Katrina Mackey - fourth.
Left half-forward: Orla Cotter - fifth.

CORK'S INTERMEDIATE ALL-STARS:

Right corner-back: Sarah Harrington
Left corner-back: Niamh Ni Chaoimh
Centre-back: Sarah Buckley
Centre-forward: Keeva McCarthy

Manager of the Year sponsored by Liberty Insurance: Paudie Murray.

2017 Camogie Association/WGPA Players' Player of the Year sponsored by Liberty Insurance: Rena Buckley.

Newcestown's date with destiny

MUNSTER CAMOGIE

BY GER MCCARTHY

A FAIRYTALE season has one final chapter to go as Cork intermediate county champions Newcestown take on Waterford's Lismore in this weekend's AIB Munster intermediate camogie club championship final.

Cahir is the venue for Saturday's provincial showdown (2pm throw-in) between Waterford's senior champions and Cork's intermediate winners Newcestown. The Carbery club received a bye into the 2017 Munster decider leaving Lismore and Tipperary's Silvermines to fight it out in the semi-final.

Finbarr O'Callaghan was in attendance to witness Lismore's impressive 4-6 to 1-10 last-four triumph and the Newcestown manager is under no illusions of the challenge facing his team.

'My first impression of Lismore is that they are a very good team,' O'Callaghan admitted.

'I suppose the fact that they are the senior champions in Waterford while we are only the



Big test: The Newcestown team pictured before last month's county intermediate camogie final win against Enniskeane.

third grade champions from Cork tells you we are going to be up against it. You have senior, senior B and intermediate in Cork, which we just won, going up against the top camogie team from Waterford.

'They are an impressive set-up and have been regularly winning their championship so we know the task we face is a difficult one.'

A terrific second-half come-

back to overcome Enniskeane in this year's county final should stand a young Newcestown side well. Eight points behind and with a mountain to climb, Newcestown recovered brilliantly and romped to victory following a dominant second half performance.

'Enniskeane scored three goals in about seven or eight minutes but thankfully, we managed to get the last two scores of the first half which settled the team down a bit at a crucial stage,' Finbarr O'Callaghan said.

'I thought we were outstanding in the second half, that was our best display of the entire season, no doubt about it. The whole team deserve credit as

we only conceded one point after the break.

'Not panicking was the important thing and that will hopefully stand to us against Lismore this weekend. Our heads could have easily dropped when we were eight points down but the girls dug deep and came through with flying colours.'

Traditionally, for whatever reasons, Cork teams generally don't seem to do well in Munster camogie competitions. Brian Dillons and Blackrock have struggled in recent years so Newcestown are fully aware they must bring their A game against Lismore.

Unfortunately, the West Cork club will be short a few

key players including Francis Deasy, team captain, who is away on honeymoon and Maria Kenneally, out with an injury. But playing in a Munster final is great opportunity for a young team to show how far they have come ahead of moving into the senior grade next year.

Access to Cloughduv GAA's floodlit and indoor facilities has been a welcome bonus, allowing Newcestown to continue their Munster final preparations despite the recent inclement weather.

The West Cork side can also count on a dedicated band of supporters to get behind the team having played their part in the club's most recent success.

'I've been involved in camo-

gie for many years but witnessed the biggest crowd I've ever come across at our county final against Enniskeane,' Finbarr O'Callaghan stated.

'There was some atmosphere in Brinny and I would hope to have the same support again on Saturday up in Cahir.'

There is a great buzz around the parish at the minute and certainly during the second half of the county final, I thought our supporters were magnificent.

'They really helped the girls through a tough spell and were like a 16th player. We are going up to the Munster final to try and win it and I just hope we play well because if we do, we won't be far off beating them.'

'I've been involved in camogie for many years but witnessed the biggest crowd I've ever come across at our county final against Enniskeane. I would hope to have the same support again on Saturday' – Finbarr O'Callaghan, Newcestown manager

Prizes for Buckley and Murray as Cork win eight camogie All-Stars

AN excellent year for Cork camogie was rounded off in style at the annual Liberty In-

urance All-Stars in Citywest last Saturday night, with the All-Ireland champions receiv-

ing eight awards.

In addition, Paudie Murray won the manager of the year award for the second time, having previously been honoured in 2015, while Rena Buckley – captain as she claimed a record 19th All-Ireland medal across camogie and ladies' football – was named as the player of the year.

It was a double celebration for the Murray family as Paudie's sister Aoife was selected in goal.

Buckley – winning her fifth All-Star – and Laura Treacy were the corner-backs.

Gemma O'Connor won her ninth award as she was named at right half-back, with Eimear O'Sullivan at number 7 and Ashling Thompson in midfield.

In attack, Katrina Mackey and Orla Cotter were the two



Mastermind: 2017 Camogie Association Manager of the Year Paudie Murray pictured with President of the Camogie Association Catherine Neary and Deirdre Ashe of Liberty Insurance at the 2017 Camogie All-Stars Awards held in the Citywest Hotel, Co Dublin, last Saturday night.

(Photos: Ryan Byrne/INPHO)



In a league of her own: Cork captain Rena Buckley received the 2017 Camogie Association/WGPA Senior Player's Player of the Year Award from Catherine Neary.

Cork players included, at right and left half-forward respectively. All of the winning senior All Stars will be invited on the inaugural Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars Tour to Madrid later this month to take part in an exhibition match

against their 2016 counterparts.

2017 All-Star team: Aoife Murray (Cork); Rena Buckley (Cork); Catherine Foley (Kilkenny); Laura Treacy (Cork); Gemma O'Connor (Cork); Anne Dalton (Kilkenny); Eime-

ar O'Sullivan (Cork); Meighan Farrell (Kilkenny); Ashling Thompson (Cork); Katrina Mackey (Cork); Katie Power (Kilkenny); Orla Cotter (Cork); Ailish O'Reilly (Galway); Aisling Maher (Dublin); Aoife Donohue (Galway).

Valleys take that last step

KIERAN McCARTHY chats to Mark Prendergast and joint captain Katie Lynch about Valley Rovers' promotion to the senior camogie ranks for the first time

BACK in June, Mark Prendergast organised a players' bonding day for Valley Rovers.

He wanted to get his troops together ahead of the championship.

This was his first season on board, having watched on the last few years as Valleys missed out on county senior B camogie success and promotion to the senior ranks, and he was adamant that they'd do everything in their power to get over the line this year.

The park in Ballincollig was the venue, there were adventure-based fun and games, all geared towards team building, and not only did it bring the group closer together, it also focussed the minds.

'We were going through mud and nettles and what not,' explained joint-captain Katie Lynch, 'but it was a great day out in terms of bringing everyone together, recognising our strengths and weaknesses, what we needed to work on and also it was a bit of a laugh, good fun.'

Mark Prendergast and Mary Power, also on the Valleys' management team (Paul Hoey also helped out training when needed), got what they wanted from the exercise.

'That's when the girls said that we'd give this a right crack and go one step further than last year. That's exactly the attitude that we wanted and needed to win this county championship,' Mark explained.

To understand what winning this year's recent county senior B camogie championship final against Blackrock meant to Valleys, you need to understand the journey this team has been on.

Like all relatable success stories they've had their fair share of heartbreak.

This hasn't been easy. But that's what makes it so special, winning their first title at this level, a fitting way to mark their 30th birthday.

It hasn't been lost on Mark Prendergast, an outsider from Na Piarasigh who got involved in Valleys as his daughter Cliona (13) is in with the underage set-up.

Mark is a former Cork hurler, he captained his club to Cork SHC success in 2004, he has played at the top level, and he appreciates how important Valleys' big breakthrough is to the club.

'This is the first time the club has gone senior,' he explained. 'They've been trying now for

12 or 13 years since they won the junior, they've got to numerous semi-finals and lost three finals on the way so to make the step-up now is huge for the club, especially with the underage talent coming through.

'It's great for the younger girls to have a senior A team to look up to and to aspire to play at that level.

'To have a senior team up against the likes of Inniscarra and Milford will bring on the team.'

Mark watched on last year as Mallow broke Valleys' hearts in the county senior B final, losing 1-7 to 2-6, but that defeat actually increased this group's resolve this season.

'It took an extra bit of heartache to get up there and that's what drove the girls on this year. They fell at the final hurdle last year and were so close, and the drive this year was to put right the mistakes of last year,' he explained.

Katie Lynch agrees. 'We were getting fed up with all the losses and we knew we were the ones that could turn it around,' she explained.

'It was very close last year, we felt we threw it away so we said that we can't let another opportunity slip away, we need to take our chance.

'We all stuck at it, we only lost one player from that team, so we built on the bond that we built last year and drove on - and we got there in the end!'

Katie is one of the younger brigade on this Valleys team. She's 19, from just outside Innishannon village, a student teacher at Mary I and has played with the seniors for the past few seasons.

Ena Coughlan is more experienced, an important influence on this team.

The Valleys management opted for joint captains this season, Katie and Ena.

Katie was seen as the ideal player to drive on the forwards, Ena the perfect choice to organise the defence, and it meant that there were two strong voices and personalities at either end of the pitch.

Having Katie and Ena as joint captains also helped pull the group closer.

'There is a bit of a gap between the older and younger age-groups so between Ena and myself we helped draw both groups together and bring everyone together,' Katie explained.

'It was effective in the sense that we did make those connec-



Captains fantastic: Valley Rovers joint captains Ena Coughlan and Katie Lynch lift the cup after their victory over Blackrock in the SE Systems Senior B Championship final recently at Castle Road. (Photo: George Hatchell)

tions between the younger and older players.

'We shared responsibilities as joint captains and it worked.'

What helped was the talent in the team. Twenty-eight players toggled out this season. Gillian Harrington was immense between the posts and well able to organise the troops, Clodagh Deasy a commanding figure in defence, Susan O'Leary and Orla Deasy to the fore, the return of Liz Bugler was a great addition, there were Katie and Ena, young Grainne Dart-O'Flynn who played corner back in the county final, player-of-the-match from the final, half back Jennifer Murphy, the Hawkes sisters and Elma O'Mahony in a strong half forward line. Valleys had leaders in every line.

Every team sometimes needs a kick up the backside. Valleys were no different.

One match - a challenge game - earlier this summer stands out in Mark Prendergast's mind.

'We played Castlelyons away in a challenge match when we had a bit of a lay-off,' he explained.

'We didn't know what to expect from Castlelyons, we

underestimated them on the night and they gave us a hard, physical game.

'After that night the girls knew that we needed to step up big time.

'We were blown away by Castlelyons when we should be all over them but we were knocked back and we realised that we had a lot of work to do.

'Everyone knew after that we needed to knuckle down and put things right, and in fairness the girls did everything we asked of them. Their response was fantastic.'

You can tell a lot about how a team by how they respond to setbacks.

This Valleys outfit passed each test, whether it was regrouping after last year's heartbreak or bouncing back from a bad performance in a challenge game.

The players deserve huge credit but so too does the management team who, in this their first year in charge, adopted a back to basics approach and making sure they did the simple things right.

Little emphasis was put on the league, it was championship or bust for Valleys at this stage. 'We took a different ap-

proach this year,' Katie Lynch explained.

'A new management always brings new ideas and we benefited from that.

'Last year we focussed a lot on the other teams, their key players and how we tackle them but this year our primary focus was ourselves.

'Mark got to know us and what our strengths are.

'We started a bit earlier, too. We hit the ground running in February. We had no success in the league but that didn't bother us because the aim all year was the county final at the business end of the season.

'We've been knocking at the door but never had enough to finish it... until this year.'

This is a tight group, Mark Prendergast added, with a tremendous battling spirit and never-say-die attitude. They hook, block, chase, run, whatever is needed to get the result.

And they got it in the end, that 2-8 to 1-10 win against Blackrock in the county final.

The next challenge for this Valleys team is adapting to life at the top table as a senior A team.

That will take time, patience and a lot of hard work.

'There is a huge step-up to Milford, Inniscarra, Carbery, Cloughduv,' Prendergast said.

'I was involved with a senior camogie team in the past and I think this Valleys team is more than capable of holding their own there.

'It will take a few seasons to reach the level of Milford, Inniscarra and the very top teams - but we certainly won't be out of our depth when we step up because we have the players to do it.

'We will make a big push for the league, be competitive there and hopefully we can carry that on into the championship.

'It will take two, three years to settle in and get up to the speed required.'

Valleys will see what happened to last year's senior B champions, Mallow, who were whipped by Carbery in the opening round of this season's senior championship, losing 4-25 to 0-2.

That's a warning of the step up in standard needed.

'We know we have to lift our game and rise our standard but that's the challenge we want,' added Katie Lynch, 'we're where we want to be, up in senior.'

Was it worth the wait? You'd better believe it.



IN A WEST CORK MINUTE

Katie Lynch (19), from Upton, Innishannon, played her role in Valley Rovers' historic county camogie senior B success lately, and here she chats GHDs, Conor McGregor and elephants ...



What's the one thing you can't live without? GHD.

What would I find in your fridge right now? Mould.

Name one element your sport could/should take from another? A professional soccer player's salary.

What do you think about when you're alone in your car? Food.

Who has been the biggest influence on your sporting career? My parents. They have encouraged me the whole way up.

Pick two celebrities to be your parents: Doireann Garrihy and Conor McGregor.

What do you think cats dream of? Dogs.

If you could play any other sport for one day what would it be? Tennis.

If you joined a circus, what would you perform? I'd be the elephant.

If you could get rid of one county in Ireland what would it be and why? Kerry, and we all know why!

What would you do if you found a penguin in your freezer? P-p-p-pick it up.

Before we let you go, teach us something that we don't know: One's terminology of the ideology can become codology, how so? A misunderstanding between two fools.

Katie Lynch is joint captain of Valley Rovers' camogie team along with Ena Buckley, and this pair helped the Innishannon club win the county senior B final against Blackrock recently—a game that saw Valleys earn promotion to the senior ranks for the first time in the club's history. Check out page 5 for more.

Would you like to see someone you know feature in our West Cork Minute? Email us your suggestions to sport@southernstar.ie



Deputy County Mayor Cllr Susan McCarthy; Martin O'Connor AIB Midleton, award sponsors; Janice McConnell, General Manager Midleton Park Hotel (Main Sponsors) presenting Orla Cotter, St. Catherine's Camogie and Cork Senior Camogie Team with her East Cork Sports Star Award award; Amy Horgan, Area Sales and Marketing Manager Talbot Hotel Group (Main Sponsors) and Deputy Lord Mayor Cllr Joe Kavanagh.

Picture: Ger Bonus

Cotter made it six with Rebels

THE Imokilly Division acknowledged top achievers and paid tribute to the county's unsung sporting heroes at the East Cork Sports Star Awards hosted at the Midleton Park Hotel.

The prestigious event saw great figures from camogie, hurling and horse racing assemble at a ceremony celebrating sport at elite and grassroots level.

St Catherine's Orla Cotter helped Cork land her sixth All Ireland Senior Camogie medal, a regular on the Cork Senior team from 2006, she's been ever consistent for 12 seasons.

No doubt 2017 will stand out, Cork reserving their best performance of the past 12 months to record a dramatic victory over champions Kilkenny in the decider and

AWARDS

■ John Tarrant

move past Dublin on the roll of honour with 27 Championship titles.

In doing so, Cork gained revenge for defeats to Kilkenny last autumn and from a league final earlier this season.

"We had to work very hard, we went back early this year and we played Kilkenny in the League Final and felt optimistic yet they beat us decisively.

"Recovering well, we got a great test from Galway in the championship semi-final and thankfully the fruits of our work paid off against Kilkenny to regain the O'Duffy Cup," she said.



CAREER MOVES

Appointment Notice

O'CONNOR APPOINTED CEO OF FEDERATION OF IRISH SPORT

Mary O'Connor, one of the GAA's most decorated players, has been appointed Chief Executive Officer of the Federation of Irish Sport. Currently working as Director of Technical Development with the Camogie Association she takes up her new position at the start of December. Involved in sport all her life Mary represented her native Cork with great distinction both in Camogie and Ladies' Football winning a total of 12 All Ireland medals over a 16-year dual inter county career. She was captain of the 2009 Cork Ladies' Football team that completed five titles in a row. In a distinguished 12 years with the Camogie Association she has been involved in the delivery of three national development plans that has seen growth in both the number of clubs and also in participation. In 2013 as acting CEO of the Camogie Association she successfully guided the Association through a period of great change.

Paudie one of the all-time greats



Camogie

Linda Mellerick

EIGHT senior All-Stars last weekend was a great return.

Aoife Murray picked up her fifth award. Rena Buckley named at left corner-back also collected her fifth. Laura Treacy in the opposite corner, her first.

And in a defence dominated by Cork, Gemma O'Connor collected an amazing 10th All-Star with Eimear O'Sullivan, picking up her second.

Aisling Thompson also landed a second All-Star alongside Kilkenny's Meighan Farrell while up front Cork took just two from six positions in Katrina Mackey, number four, and Orla Cotter with her fifth All-Star.

I'm surprised at the omission and disappointed for Orla Cronin. Not only was she the Player of the Match in the All-Ireland final but she had a very good season from start to finish.

It was a good night too for the All-Ireland Intermediate runners-up. Cork took four positions.

Sarah Harrington at right corner-back, captain Niamh Ni Chaoimh at left corner-back, Sarah Buckley at centre-back and Keeva McCarthy at centre-forward. That's nice for them after their final disappointment.

Paudie Murray took the Manager of the Year award. After six seasons, which has yielded three All-Ireland titles it was another award well deserved.

Cork had last won the All-Ireland in 2009 when Paudie took over as Cork manager in 2012.

They had last taken national league honours in 2007. In an exciting start, Cork won the league. Wexford fell victim to a rejuvenated Cork team but when the crunch came in the All-Ireland final, Wexford blitzed Cork with a 3-13 to 3-6 awesome display.

It didn't matter to Cork that this was one of the best camogie finals seen in Croke Park in many a year. They had lost.

Wexford's defence just blew Cork away. Physically Cork had no answer.

Roll on 2013 and Paudie was getting more to grips with what he had at his disposal and what competition he faced. It's very difficult to come into a senior inter-county camogie set up and get immediate success.

It takes a while to get to know your own players but more pointedly it takes time to size up the opposition. You know very little about other teams in camogie unless you're directly involved as the opportunity to watch them week in and week out isn't there.

Again, Cork started the season well, winning back to back league titles. But in August they suffered a shock defeat to Kilkenny in the All-Ireland semi-final by a single point; 2-12 to 2-11. Victory was snatched from them by a hungrier side.

Having turned a three-point deficit into a two-point lead with fourteen minutes of normal time remaining the pendulum looked to have swung in Cork's direction. Yet the turning point



Lynda O'Connell and Alan Murphy gets a guard of honour from Cork and St Finbarr's camogie players after their wedding at the Honan Chapel UCC last Saturday. Picture: Eddie O'Hare



Cork's Orla Cronin and Ashling Thompson are interviewed before the All-Stars. Picture: INPHO/Disin Keniry

came three minutes later when Ann Dalton's free was magnificently doubled on by Aoife Neary giving Aoife Murray no chance.

I remember how dejected everyone was after that game. To lose the semi-final was a step back from where they had been in 2012. Again, Paudie learned. He changed tactics.

It's interesting to note that Cork haven't won the league since he took this approach in 2013 but they're taken three from four All-Ireland titles. Kilkenny have taken three of the last four league titles, have played in three All-Irelands, winning just one.

Securing the league no longer mattered to Paudie. He went searching, brought in younger players and developed them throughout the league.

Losing the league semi-final to Clare didn't faze him. It proved more than worthwhile when Cork lifted the O'Duffy Cup the following September.

Six points down at half-time Cork gave a masterful second-half display, winning by six; 2-12 to 1-9. The victory was greeted with relief. Finally, Cork were back on top.

Paudie could have left the set up on a high but it is to his credit, despite losing 13 of the 2014 panel to retirement, work commitments, and travel, he stayed on and again handed responsibility to many youngsters. Probably the best testament of his conviction to this new system was when Cork were faced with Galway in the league final in Semple Stadium, ahead of the hurling league final and a large Cork hurling following. You would think the temptation to play his stars and put on a show would have prevailed, but his youngsters had got Cork to the final and he stayed loyal to them, leaving seasoned campaigners sit out.

He didn't go for glory and left himself open to criticism, but he didn't

care. Cork lost the league final. No one expected them to win the championship. They were in transition after all.

Four months later Cork took the championship at the expense of Galway, 1-13 to 0-9 and Paudie must surely rate that as one of the sweetest.

A hungrier Kilkenny took their first title in 22 years at the expense of Cork in 2016. Cork were gutted. Ann Downey received the MOTY award and the concern was that the Cats would now dominate. But what a difference a year can make. Again, Paudie came back, and avenged the defeat in a thrilling final and won his second MOTY award.

Undoubtedly, he has done a fantastic job. Paudie is undecided about what next year brings for him, but his decision is imminent. Regardless of what he decides, he will go down as one of the all-time great Cork camogie managers.

Piarsaigh to play Killeagh in U16 semi

Camogie

Mary Newman

Today, at 1pm, in Na Piar-saigh, the home side, takes on Killeagh in the U16 championship semi-final.

In the U16 A championship semi-final, tomorrow, in Sarsfields, at 7pm, Sars take on Charleville.

The second semi-final of the U16 A championship goes ahead on Tuesday next, at 8pm, when home side, Ballinacollig, meet Ballinora.

Bride Rovers and Aghabullogue meet in the minor B semi-final today, in Castle Road, at 12pm.

The second semi-final, between Enniskeane and St Finbarr's, is on Wednesday next, at 8pm, in Cloughduv.

In the SE Systems minor C championship semi-final, Ballinora meet Sliabh Rua, today, in Castle Road, at 3pm, with the second semi-final, between Millstreet and Fr O'Neill's, to go ahead mid-week.

The SE Systems minor D final goes ahead tomorrow, at 11am in Castle Road, when Grenagh face Rockban.

Seandún will hold three finals today at the Colleges Pitch, Castle Road, at 10.30am.

Nemo Rangers meet St Finbarr's in the U15 B championship final at 12.45pm. It's Bishopstown and Brian Dillon's in the U15 Shield final, and, at 2.45pm, in the U13 Shield final, Na Piar-saigh take on Passage.

Meanwhile, camogie clubs have informed us that Santa Claus has been getting requests about the availability of the new Cork camogie jersey.

Parents or young camogie players can order the jersey through their clubs.

To make the orders in time for Christmas Day, parents are advised to contact their club secretaries or mentors, who will liaise with the county board.

The jersey is available to purchase in sizes from five years up to adults.

Ages 5 to 6 and ages 7 to 8 are priced at €25, while ages 9 to 10 and ages 10 to 11 are priced at €30.

Age 13 is €35 and adult jerseys, in small, medium and large sizes, are €40.

The jersey gives all camogie players and supporters a chance to show their support for the girls, and because it's an official county jersey, it can be also worn to all Cork games in other codes.

The deadline for sending orders to the county board is November 15.

Therefore, parents need to make contact with their club secretary beforehand.

Given that Cork enjoyed such a fantastic year, with the senior side regaining the All-Ireland title against the odds, and the intermediates making the final again, the jerseys are certain to prove popular all across Leaside.

"I'm surprised at the omission and disappointed for Orla Cronin. She had a great year."

U12 aces shine in Seandún deciders

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

THIS year the Seandún camogie committee introduced an U12 development league.

The thinking behind the league was to prepare and introduce players to the game at the level they will be playing at in the season ahead. It was targeted for players in the age 10 and 11 bracket mainly. The competition gave games to players who were finished their Go Games league at their own age level and extended the season for them.

They were played on a 12-a-side basis. The matches were 20 minutes aside and full camogie rules applied in that there were neutral referees.

Eight teams in total entered the competition and they were divided into two groups and games got underway at the end of August.

At the end of the games in the top four clubs went forward to play in the A semi-finals and the remaining clubs went forward to contest the B semi-finals. Catherine Allen was the very efficient co-ordinator and every club that participated had huge praise for the completion.

The knockout phase took place at Na Píarsaigh and St Vincent's. In the A semi-finals, Glen Rovers and Bishopstown were in opposition with Na Píarsaigh taking on Douglas. In the U12 B grade there were just three teams as Nemo were unable to be there, which left St Vincent's, Passage and Blackrock in a play-off.

The A semi-finals were two excellent games with Douglas gaining the upper hand on Na Píarsaigh and Glen Rovers overcoming Bishopstown.

The A final saw the Glen take the crown on a 3-0 to 2-1 scoreline.

The plate final was another thrilling contest and as neither side could be separated they shared the trophy.

The B saw Blackrock beat Passage in the first game and then St Vincent's. The last game between St Vincent's and Passage was a draw and it then went to score difference, which left Passage as runners-up.

The Seandún committee decided to award Player of the Game trophies, with Kacey Healy from St Vincent's and Shauna O'Connor, Na Píarsaigh, the recipients.

Amongst the players to catch the eye were Hazel O'Connell, Maebh O'Shea and Sarah James, Blackrock, Sarah Murphy, Katie O'Regan, and Odhrna Hurley (Glen Rovers), Brooke O'Donovan and Kelly Casey from Na Píarsaigh, and Rachael Moran, Lya Scully and Xuyen O'Driscoll, Bishopstown.

Douglas had good performances from Kate Hourihan, Shona Twomey and Heather Cunningham while for St Vincent's Aoife Gould, Grace Anson and Kacey Healy were to the fore.



The Rockbán camogie team that won the U14 C Championship recently.

Rockbán U14s go the extra mile

Rockbán	4-2
Ballinascarty	3-2
(after extra time)	

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

IT took extra-time to separate Rockbán and Ballinascarty in the U14 C Championship final in Castle Road on Saturday last.

Both sides gave it everything over the hour and it was all square at the end of normal time when they were deadlocked on 2-2 apiece.

And so to extra-time where they again battled to the finish and it was Rockbán who emerged victorious, but not before a determined battle with an excellent Ballinascarty side who had many heroes over the hour and a half. The first half was a hard-fought en-

counter and it was level pegging at the break, with both sides registering two points apiece.

Aimee Noonan was on target with two Rockbán frees and Ballinascarty kept in touch, with Shauna O'Driscoll on target twice, as the sides were evenly matched in all sectors.

The second half was nip and tuck and neither side could gain the upper hand, until Ballinascarty took the lead with a Grace Flynn goal.

Rockbán responded well with Ellie Horgan gaining possession and taking on the Ballinascarty defence. She

evaded tackle after tackle, before striking the ball to the net to level matters.

Digging deep, Ballinascarty responded to regain the lead with a goal from O'Driscoll, but again Rockbán answered the challenge to get back on level terms through Sarah Ahern.

Nail-biting

It was nail-biting, as the sides battled for a winner, but at the full-time whistle it was level 2-2 each and extra-time was needed.

Three minutes into extra-time, Noonan won a free and confidently dispatched it to the net to give her side the lead.

From the puck-out Rockbán launched another attack and with Caoimhe Cahill finding the net they

were now leading by six points.

Ballinascarty battled hard and a goal from Ciara Heverin cut the deficit but Rockbán held on to win, with Noonan named the Player of the Match.

Scorers for Rockbán: A Noonan 1-2 f, E Horgan, S Ahern, C Cahill 1-0.

Ballinascarty: G O'Flynn, S O'Driscoll, C Heverin 1-0 each, S O'Driscoll 0-2 f.

ROCKBÁN: S O'Reilly, A Colbert, N Crowley, L O'Driscoll, E Hegarty, C O'Brien, C O'Riordan (c), K Shaw, A Kelleher, S O'Leary, E Callanan, A Noonan, E Horgan, C Cahill, M O'Sullivan.

Subs: S Ahern for M O'Sullivan, O Humphries for E Hegarty.

BALLINASCARTY: M O'Driscoll, A McManamon, M O'Driscoll, E Fitzgerald, S Hurley, E Cullinane, M Kingston, S Pothwell, M Condon, S O'Driscoll, C Heverin, D McCarthy, G Flynn, R Cahillane, K Ryan. Sub: K O'Hare for D McCarthy.

Blarney withstand pressure, progress to U16 B final

Blarney	3-8
Fr O'Neill's	2-9

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

IN an exciting U16 B championship semi-final, Blarney hung on, despite huge Fr O'Neill's pressure.

Blarney got off to a great start, with Laura Shine scoring a goal and a point to give them a four-point advantage.

Fr O'Neill's worked hard to get into the game, hitting three points without reply, with Clodagh Finn, Jenny O'Sullivan, and Alison Hurley impressing. That cut the deficit to one point.

Blarney extended their lead, with points from Laura Shine and Ava Cronin, from play, while Orla Cremen scored a point from a close-in free to give Blarney a 1-4 to 0-3 lead.

Chloe Finn scored a point after a great run from midfield, but after a Laura Shine goal, for Blarney, followed by a long-range point from Emma Murphy,

they held the upper-hand. Orla Cremen converted a free to leave Blarney ahead by eight points, 2-6 to 0-4, at the interval.

From the restart, Fr O'Neill's upped their game, winning the majority of possession in the third quarter. They added to their tally with a goal and three points, as they continued to apply huge pressure on the Blarney defence.

O'Neill's were now on top, but found it hard to convert their possession into the scores needed to take control. The Blarney defence tightened up and they held onto their slender, two-point lead.

Battling to hold their lead, Blarney got the vital break they needed, as they worked possession up-

field. With Orla Cremen scoring the goal, it helped settle them back into the game.

Responding well, Fr O'Neill's were back to within two points, with Chloe Finn scoring a superb goal.

This left the semi-final finely poised again, just two points between the sides with ten minutes remaining.

It was still very much all to play for, as Blarney won a long-range free, which Orla Cremen duly converted. Again showing their tremendous spirit, Fr O'Neill's battled back, as they scored a point from play.

O'Neill's came in search of more, but Blarney goalkeeper, Sarah Bannon, denied them with two magnificent saves in the last minutes of normal time.

Orla Cremen converted a Blarney free and Fr O'Neill's pressure yielded two points, as Blarney held out under huge pressure to secure their place in the final.

Three U16 finals to be decided today

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

THERE are still game to be played and competitions to be decided and it's going to be another busy weekend as the senior board, the juvenile board and the Seandún board all have a full fixture schedule to get through.

Today, the juvenile board will hold three U16 Championship finals at A, B and C levels.

In the U16 A championship decider Ballincollig will meet Charleville at 11.30am in Castle Road.

The U16 B Championship final sees Blarney meeting Na Piarraigh and also goes ahead today at 11.30am in Whitechurch.

The U16 C Championship final will see Mallow take on St Catherine's at 11.30am in Cloughduv.

At senior level, the SE Systems Minor D final played last weekend Rockbawn overcame Grenagh to take the title.

In the SE Systems Minor C semi final Ballinora overcame Sliabh Rua on a 4-5 to 2-6 scoreline to book their place in the final where they will meet wither Eire Og or Fr O'Neill's who were meeting last night in the semi-final. The final will take place on Sunday next.

St Finbarr's booked their place in the SE Systems Minor B championship final as they overcame Enniskeane in semi-final where it was level at the break but the St Finbarr's girls pulled away in the second half to win their place in the final where they will meet Aghabullogue, who overcame Cloughduv to secure their final place. The final is today at 12.15pm in Ovens.

Ballygarvan are through to the SE Systems Minor A championship final but there is a hold up in playing the semi-final where Sarsfields and Milford/Ballyhea are due to meet.

However, as there is an appeal pending on the result of the Sarsfields versus Newcestown game, the clash between Sarsfields and Milford/Ballyhea cannot go ahead.

The Seandún board hold the last final in their competitions when the U15 A championship final between Blackrock and Glen Rovers goes ahead today at 1pm in the Colleges Pitch in Castle Road.

A few other competitions that will go ahead include the junior A league final tomorrow Sunday which is a repeat of the championship final with county champions Na Piarraigh taking on Watergrasshill in Castle Road at 12pm. The junior summer cup final between Na Piarraigh and Millstreet will take place either on November 26 or December 3 pending Millstreet being involved in the minor C final.

The senior summer cup came to its conclusion on Wednesday last where, in a high scoring contest, Eire Og ran out winners as they defeated Sarsfields.



The Na Piarraigh and Bishopstown camogie teams after the recent Seandún Development Shield final.

Aghabullogue win Muskerry crown

Aghabullogue 1-1
Eire Og 0-2

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

IT WAS a close, hard-fought contest to decide the destination of the Muskerry U13 championship title on Saturday. Aghabullogue won it with two points to spare. It was a low-scoring contest, in Inniscarra camogie grounds, Ballyanley.

Both sides played with huge determination and they must be credited for committed performances so late in the season, despite the heavy conditions that prevail at this time of year.

A goal proved pivotal in a tense encounter, and it was Aghabullogue's Aoife Twomey who scored it, with 10 minutes remaining.

All through the game, it was close and, as the scoreline indicated, little or nothing divided the sides.

Ten minutes into the game, Shauna Sheehan gave Eire Og the lead, with a point.

Aghabullogue responded, with Aoife Twomey also scoring a point, from a free, to tie the game. With play moving from end to end, both sides tried to get the score that would edge them in front, but the defences were strong and, at the half-time whistle, it was level-pegging, 0-1 each.

If the opening half was close, the second-half was closer, and with neither side breaking the deadlock, it remained at 0-1 each, as the game entered the last 10 minutes.

Both defences still stood firm, but, eventually, Aghabullogue crept into the lead, with Aoife Twomey finding the net for the game's opening goal. With nine minutes remaining, they led by that goal.

Eire Og continued to apply huge pressure and it paid off, with Cait Malone scoring a point with three minutes remaining.

Now just leading by two points, Aghabullogue were coming under enormous pressure, as Eire Og battled to grab a goal that would give them the

title. Credit should go to the Aghabullogue defence, which stood strong and denied Eire Og the vital score they pressed so hard to get.

Scorers for Aghabullogue: A Twomey 1-1.

Eire Og: S Sheehan 0-1, C Malone 0-1.

AGHABULLOGUE: E Downey, M McCarthy, C L Twomey, R Barrett, L Corkery, C O'Connell, M Buckley, A Twomey, A Dineen, S Dennehy, A Barrett, K Honohan, E Honohan, N Barry Murphy, C Merrigan.

Subs: M Leahy for E Honohan (20), O Cahill for C Merrigan (20).

EIRE OG: R Halligan, S O'Connell, R Murphy, C Crowley, N O'Shea, S Sheehan, S McGoldrick, E Sheehan, C O'Brien, C Malone, G O'Mahony, L Murphy, R Leahy, C Staunton, M O'Callaghan.

Subs: M O'Donovan for R Leahy (10), G O'Brien for C O'Brien (40).

Referee: John Horgan (Gleann na Laoi).

St Finbarr's crowned champions after easy victory

St Finbarr's 4-9
Nemo Rangers 0-2

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

ST FINBARR'S captured the Seandún U15 B championship title at the expense of a young Nemo side at the Colleges pitch Castle Road on Saturday last.

Underfoot conditions were heavy as both sides went in search of the title and there were some excellent displays from both teams as they gave it everything in search of the title.

Two first-half goals from Ella Wiggington-Barrett gave St Finbarr's a half-time cushion as they took the game to Nemo with Caitlin Crowe, Ciara Golden, Megan McTiernan and Katie Lee all to the fore.

Gemma Heaphy was on target for Nemo with two points as they worked hard to gain a grip on the game.

Through the second half St Finbarr's won a lot of

possession and with Katie Lee finding the range with two further goals they began to put the game beyond Nemo.

Despite this Nemo continued to work hard with Megan McCarthy-O'Donovan superb in goal, ensuring St Finbarr's would not increase their lead further.

There was also good work on show from Ellie Fitzgerald, Alison O'Connell and Eabhna O'Neill.

St Finbarr's kicked on though, with further points from their captain Megan McTiernan, Caitlin Crowe, Ciara Golden and Ella Wiggington-Barrett to ensure the title was secured.

Nemo's keeper Megan McCarthy-O'Donovan was the unanimous choice of the judges as she was

named as Player of the Game following a superb performance.

To have reached the final of the Seandún U15 B championship is a huge achievement for Nemo Rangers and the continued hard work can only augur well.

Scorers for St Finbarr's: E Wiggington-Barrett 2-4, K Lee 2-0, M McTiernan, C Crowe, C Golden 0-1 each.

Nemo: G Heaphy 0-2.

ST FINBARR'S: C Hurley, J Naughton, A O'Herlihy, A O'Keefe, G Clahane, N Oiden, C Crowe, K Lee, CA Sedon, M Murphy, C Golden, M McTiernan (c), E Wiggington-Barrett, S McKeon, T O'Callaghan.

Subs: A O'Leary for S McKeon, A Collins for C Crowe.

NEMO: M McCarthy-O'Donovan, R Russell, K Horgan, E Fitzgerald, A Mulcahy, K Fleury, E O'Neill, R Fraher, E O'Sullivan, A O'Connell (c), G Heaphy, R Treacy, G Kearney, S Walsh A Walsh.

Subs: A O'Connell for A Mulcahy, S Meehan for R Treacy, N Barker for S Walsh.

Referee: Ger Sheehan (Douglas).

Club game must be overhauled

Muskerry, Carbery win blitz finals

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman



Camogie

Linda Mellerick

AS WE close off the 2017 season, this time of year a good time to cast an eye on the year gone by.

When you win an All-Ireland senior title, the year is always considered a success.

It certainly was a great victory in an intense final between two sides that are ahead of the rest of the field. That rivalry will continue for 2018.

Have Kilkenny the upper hand now, from a hunger point of view?

Because that's about all that has separated these teams over the past two seasons.

The intermediates lost their third All-Ireland final, with this year going to a replay. They just don't seem to hit the notes they are capable of.

There's something missing. What will be different next year?

Despite being favourites again, if they don't turn up on the biggest day of their career they'll get the same result. So, something must change within the camp.

The three-week gap between the final and replay probably turned out to go against Cork more so than with them. They seemed to lose spark during those weeks.

Their performance in the replay was extremely flat. The fact that club games were pulled I feel had an impact.

Would the girls have been better off playing club games up to two weeks, even 10 days before the replay? I believe they would.

After a long year, to go back and train for another three weeks after the anti-climax of drawing, was hard going I'd say. To let the players off and back to their clubs would have refreshed them.

We had an exciting senior club championship, some good competitive games, exciting draws, last minute goals deciding winners, some really tough battles. Inniscarra won back to back titles after a gruelling but thrilling week.

They lost out to Inagh-Kilnamona in the Munster championship the day after their county final win over Glen Rovers and lost by five points.

Would they have won if they were fresh?

I firmly believe they would have. They did play their part in club games going off to support their Cork players.

We must stop putting everything on hold for our inter-county teams. Will we all go through next year giving out about the same issue?

I believe we need to review the senior B and intermediate titles and competitions.

Senior B is a Cork-only competition. My recollection is that it was introduced in 1994 as clubs felt that Glen Rovers were dominating too much, and it was leading to other senior clubs being disillusioned.

Looking back, it was probably a silly decision.

The Glen had won four in a row at that point, not unheard of across all



Na Piarsaigh's Orla Bourke and Emily Buckley tackle Watergrasshill's Louise O'Reilly during the Cork SE Systems junior A camogie final at Castle Road. Picture: Eddie O'Hare



The Aghabullogue camogie team were the winners of the Muskerry U13 championship recently. See story on the left.

GAA codes. Milford won four in a row in 2015.

The Glen won three more after the senior B came in but were eventually dethroned and haven't won the county championship since.

The senior B competition is Cork's second-string competition. Comparing it with other counties, it is effectively an intermediate competition.

Yet because 'senior B' isn't recognised by Munster or Central council our Cork senior B champions are not afforded the opportunity to represent us in Munster.

Cork's intermediate championship is our third-tier senior competition and it is those champions that take on Munster.

Realistically, what chance do they have? There isn't a level playing field here.

In my opinion, the Cork board should be challenging this in Munster

and at national level to ensure our senior Bs move on to Munster. How counties name their competition shouldn't matter.

Maybe it's time to review all competitions in Cork. Certainly, the intermediate championship needs a review with just five clubs involved.

Newcestown leave the grade this year having won the championship and junior A champs Na Piarsaigh will move up.

All five teams will play each other in the group (you haven't enough to form two groups) and four teams will go on to the semi-finals.

Whoever plays the cutest with their players during the group games and whoever peaks at the right time will win.

A casual approach to the group stages still gives you a high chance of reaching a semi-final.

There are 17 teams at Junior A and B

“Clubs in Cork seem to move down rather than up, hence the current situation we have

combined. Some B clubs should move to A and a few of the junior A team promoted to the intermediate grade.

Or you move all five intermediate teams up to Senior B.

I don't think the intermediate teams involved would be happy.

Or the junior clubs, but something should be done.

Clubs seem to move down rather than up, hence the current situation we have.

If we continue to only promote clubs that win their competition, then the current intermediate status of five teams won't change, unless clubs start stepping down from senior B and then the problem moves to that grade.

It's no harm to review structures and make changes if it makes sense to do so.

The competitions should be as far as is possible, remain competitive, exciting and challenging throughout.

THE Avondhu division hosted an U13 inter-divisional blitz in the Charleville GAA grounds and in Mannix College.

The trophy for the winning division was the Rob Lott Perpetual Cup and the participating divisions were Seandún, Carbery, Muskerry Carrighoun, and Avondhu.

The Imokilly divisional side was unable to travel, so Avondhu invited the Aghabullogue U14 team to also participate.

That achieved a balance and Aghabullogue pitted their skills against the best of the divisions.

Teams were divided into two groups and proceedings got underway with the home division, Avondhu, taking on Aghabullogue and each side had spells of dominance.

Aghabullogue played with the wind in the first-half and made all the early running, but Avondhu upped the pace to dominate the second-half, aided by the strong wind.

In the second game, Seandún took on Aghabullogue, with Avondhu and Seandún playing the last-round game.

Seandún turned in splendid displays to top the group and book a place in the cup final, with Avondhu, in second place, booking a place in the plate final.

The second group was played in Mannix College pitch, where Muskerry played Carrighoun. It was a close encounter. Muskerry led by two points at half-time, 1-0 to 0-1, but, in the second-half, Muskerry upped the pace and won.

Carbery took on Carrighoun in the second game, with Muskerry meeting Carbery in the last game.

Muskerry won that group to secure their place in the cup final, with Carbery as runners-up, assuring themselves of a place in the plate final.

Despite the hard schedule of games, the four teams in the finals turned in splendid displays and supporters were treated to two excellent, competitive games.

In a closely contested cup final, Muskerry edged it, with two points to spare over Seandún, 3-2 to 2-3.

Carbery took the plate title, as they overcame Avondhu. Avondhu started well and led by four points, but Carbery settled and gained the upper hand, adding to their score-line.

With some excellent defensive play, they limited Avondhu and ran out winners.

A great day of camogie was overseen by referees, Dave Farrell and Denis Curtin, who ensured all games ran smoothly and to schedule.

This was a fantastic initiative and great credit should go to all involved in ensuring it ran smoothly.

30 pages of sport starts with a celebration of Cork's

Erect a statue in my honour? Er — don't you have to die first!

When Cork won the All-Ireland Camogie Championship in September, the records tumbled. The 27th Rebel victory, a dramatic, last-gasp triumph over Kilkenny, edged Cork ahead of Dublin on most titles, while star player Rena Buckley became the first person to captain All-Ireland victories for the same county at ladies football and camogie. Rena is also now the most decorated player in GAA history — with a remarkable 18 All-Ireland medals. Here, she divulges some of the secrets of her success, dismisses talk of a statue in her honour... and spills the beans on whether her friend Briege Corkery sent her a bitchy text when she surpassed her 17-medal haul!



WE DID IT! Rena Buckley lifts the O'Duffy Cup in September, her 18th All-Ireland win
Picture: INPHO/Bryan Keane

Q: So, Rena, 18 All-Ireland medals, more than anyone in GAA history. Was this all part of an ambitious plan back when you started playing sport?

A: No, not at all. I always enjoyed playing, be it at home or at school.

I was delighted when I was old enough to play with the clubs, Donoughmore and Inniscarra, and then when I got the chance to play with Cork I was thrilled. There was never a grand plan at all.

Q: How on earth do you stay motivated after that? Nineteen medals is surely not that much different to 18?

A: I don't have any trouble at all. I think it's great to be looking forward all the time.

Once one year finishes it's all over and a new year begins. And I want to be as good as I can be for that year, even better than the year before if I can, and be part of a winning team, because the winning feeling is amazing!

Q: There have been murmurings of a statue erected in your honour... that must be a weird feeling?

A: Yeah, I've heard some of those murmurings, but to be honest I don't pay any heed to it.

The main criteria of having something like that named after you is to not be in the land of the living, so I don't think there's any need for me to worry about that.

Q: Pass on the secrets of your success to a young girl starting out in sport today.

A: Go training when training is on, do your best at training, practice on your own, eat well and sleep well, and that's about as good as you can do, so everyone will have to be happy with that.

Q: It must be impossible to pick one highlight or moment from all of the ones you have had... so we will ask you to pick out three!

A: Yes I've been very lucky with both club and county. It's very hard to pick out highlights.

Every year is as important as the last and there is a different group of players every year, making each year unique.

My three highlights would be:

■ In 2001, I played with the Donoughmore seniors for the first time and we won the All-Ireland, I thought they never lost. It was a brilliant year.

■ In 2010, we won the county for the first time with Inniscarra, there was a time when I thought we'd never be good enough to do it so that was very special.

■ And with Cork we've had many highlights, but I suppose the camogie final

All-Ireland camogie win, and a record-breaking captain



REBEL ROAR: The Cork team celebrate with the O'Duffy Cup after their Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Senior Camogie Final victory against Kilkenny at Croke Park in September — it was their third success in four years

Julia's journey from injury hell to late, late hero

■ Denis Hurley

EVEN if it hadn't been accompanied by such a good back-story, Julia White's match-winning point for Cork in the All-Ireland final against Kilkenny would have been the camogie moment of the year.

With the two sides locked at 0-9 each and time almost up, most of those present in Croke Park must have expected a replay.

However, Douglas star White, just on the field as a substitute for Chloe Sigerson, made the most of her chance when possession came her way, sending the sliothar between the uprights to ensure Cork regained the O'Duffy Cup.

Given that this primary teacher in Christ King Girls' Secondary School in Turner's Cross had missed the entire 2016 season through injury, it was all the more of a fairytale.

"It still hasn't really sunk in," she told the *Holly Bough* in October, a month after that dramatic match-winning moment.

"I was delighted to come on and make an impact. I'd say a lot of people were surprised I went for it, because even though I'm a forward I wouldn't score a lot. It was instinct really."

"It was amazing that it went over. Everything was a blur, Katrina Mackey asked me afterwards if I thought her pass was good — I didn't even know who had given me the ball!"

Julia's injury was a tough one, and the circumstances rather unusual. "It was when I was teaching in Kilkenny in 2015," she explained.

"I was playing seven-a-side soccer and I ruptured my Achilles tendon, it was a clean snap and it needed surgery."

"It meant 2016 was a write-off, bar two weeks when I tried to come back but then I pulled a muscle in my other foot."

At the outset of 2017, the focus for Julia was on building up her strength and speed.

"Speed would always have been one of my strongest attributes," she said, "and it was difficult to deal with that not being at the same level, I still don't think it's fully back."

"It's something you have to deal with mentally maybe more than physically, but I did a lot of work on the track in UCC with Martin O'Brien, our strength and conditioning coach, my calves had completely disappeared!"

"It was something I couldn't really do on my own, I had to have somebody pushing me on, and Martin was great, I was working with him four times a week."

Then, in May, there was another blow as Julia fractured her foot. Again, she bounced back and worked her way into contention.

"I didn't really get any game-time during the summer," she said, "but then when I got back I was doing well in training, though I wouldn't have been able to last 60 minutes."

"I played a few minutes in the semi-final and then (Cork manager) Paudie Murray threw me in in the final. He didn't say too much, just to go in midfield and thankfully it all worked out!"

"Just even to be part of it was great, I'm so happy for people like Rena Buckley, who has done so much, and Gemma O'Connor, it was lovely that she got the great equaliser."

"I'm just looking forward now to working away over the winter and hopefully seeing the benefit of that next year."



TOP CLASS: Julia White receives support from Christ King Girls' Secondary School, where she teaches, before the final — with teacher Carol Ryan and first year pupils Susan O'Donovan, Kate Ahern, Kate Corcoran, Aoife Byrne O'Riordan and Orla Madden

this year was very special as we were written off, and as you're getting older you appreciate it more and more.

Q: You celebrated a significant birthday this year... how did you celebrate turning 30?

A: I have a twin sister, Mary, so all birthday celebrations are not entirely my own decision! We agreed to do the Killarney to Kenmare walk to celebrate, but between study and sport that's been put on the long finger, so hopefully we'll get around to that soon.

Q: And that leads us nicely to a question Cork GAA fans will not want to contemplate... have you a retirement date in mind?

A: No, not at all. I will enjoy the rest of 2017 and decide over Christmas my plans for 2018.

Q: Turning to the 2017 Camogie All-Ireland success, was there a pivotal moment in the year when you really believed you could lift the trophy as captain?

A: After the league final, which we lost, I really believed if we cut back on mistakes we had enough to do it. Turned out we had, but only just about!

Q: You're trailing to Kilkenny in the final with time running out, how do you, as an experienced team member and captain, keep your players focused?

A: Just by keeping talking to everyone, and by staying positive and optimistic at all times

Q: And that dramatic winning point by super-sub Julie White... are you ecstatic, relieved, or just knackered by then?!

A: Ecstatic, without a doubt, it gave everyone on the team a massive lift

Q: You gave your winning captain's speech as gaeilge... had you rehearsed that for weeks, or do you have a good grasp of Irish?

A: Ah, I've a good grasp of the Gaeilge. I wrote it a week and a half before the match, and practiced reading it out loud



BOND: Rena with Briege Corkery, left, after last year's Ladies Football All-Ireland win, which left both on 18 All-Ireland medals

three times. Worked out OK in the end.

Q: Which team-mate do you have the best bond with now, and in the past?

A: My former Cork team-mate Briege Corkery and myself have been playing together for a long time. There were a few years there when I spent more time with Briege than anyone else in the world.

Also, my sister, Mary, plays with Inniscarra. From playing together for such a long time we know each other inside out

Q: What is Christmas like for an elite GAA athlete? Do you watch what you eat, train, diet, or give yourself a break? If so, what is your naughty food/drink of choice?

A: I give myself a break for sure. I do continue some training on my own as I enjoy it, so why would I stop something I enjoy?

There would be nights out and I certainly wouldn't be counting the calories, but I enjoy eating well and training so I don't break from it for too long.

Q: You run a successful physio business in Macroom, this must be all a shrewd plan to become the physio for the Cork camogie and ladies football teams when you finally hang up your boots? Or would you rather be a pundit?

A: Yeah, I'm happy working in the clinic in Macroom. There's a lot of GAA talk going on there! I'm not fully sure what the future holds. I'm hoping to continue playing in the short term anyway

Q: How have camogie and ladies football changed since you started out? Are any changes for better or worse?

A: Both camogie and ladies football have changed. A big change is the club v county situation for the player. Inter-county players now see very little of their club, which is a pity. Club games are much later in the year.

There is a bigger time commitment involved with strength and conditioning, video analysis, etc, but the nuts and bolts of it are very similar.

Q: Do you think ladies GAA and ladies sports in general get enough coverage in the media? If not, how can it be improved?

A: The amount of coverage female sport is getting is certainly improving across the board. I'm sure that trend will continue, and hopefully people will continue to support female sport in larger numbers and hence the coverage will keep improving

Q: Any more personal goals to aim for? Your seven camogie titles looks a little on the moderate side compared to the record 12 held by Kilkenny manager Ann Downey?

A: No, I don't have any personal goals really. I'm happy playing for my clubs and with Cork for as long as I can, and if we're successful it's brilliant being part of it all.

Q: Finally, when you surpassed ex-team-mate Briege Corkery's 17-medal haul of All-Irelands in September, she must have sent you a bitchy message on phone or text? Spill!

A: Ha, Briege wouldn't have even dreamt of sending me a bitchy message. It just wouldn't be her style at all. I would have loved for her to have been involved in 2017, but, look, you'd never know, she might overtake me yet! She's just an amazing person.

Rena Buckley has now captained her county to camogie and ladies' football All-Ireland glory — but she wasn't the first to achieve that remarkable double. Mary Geaney did it with two different counties, captaining Kerry's ladies' football team to glory in 1976 and leading the camogie team of her adopted Cork to the All-Ireland in 1980. Here, Mary recalls her career and salutes Rena's achievement

Captain Marvel!

WHEN Cork's camogie team took to the Croke Park pitch in September for the All-Ireland final, one eager TV viewer was rooting for Rena Buckley and her team to come good.

Mary Geaney watched the drama unfold at home in Castleisland, Co Kerry, and was thrilled to see Rena lift the O'Duffy Cup and become the first woman to captain the same county to All-Ireland success in ladies football and camogie.

Mary knew the emotions Rena was going through better than most — as she created her own piece of history in her illustrious sporting career.

After captaining her native Kerry to the ladies' football All-Ireland in 1976, Mary led her adopted Cork to the camogie version in 1980.

However, far from wanting to protect that proud record when it came under threat this year, Mary was cheering Rena on.

"I was aware of Rena Buckley and her wonderful record to date," said Mary. "I was absolutely delighted that Cork won in September. Records are made to be broken or bettered so I was delighted to see her coming along and doing the same thing."

"Rena's achievements are second to none and sport is a major part of her life. She is a great role model for all sports people, especially women."

"I would consider she has achieved greatness in sport with that number of All-Ireland medals — 18."

"It is a record all of its own and I admire her tremendously."

Mary was no slouch herself on the sports field.

In the 1976 All-Ireland Ladies' Football final, when Kerry beat Offaly 4-6 to 1-5, she scored 3-2 as the Kingdom won their first title, the championship having begun two years earlier.

She modestly said: "A forward is always dependent on the supply of ball from her teammates, so my score reflected the work of all those around me."

At the time, Cork was in the wilderness in the sport and it would be 2005 before it won the first of its 11 titles — it is now level on most wins with Kerry.

Four years after that All-Ireland win, Mary captained Cork when the county

won the 1980 All-Ireland camogie title after a dramatic two matches against Limerick.

The first game ended in a draw, after Ann O'Sullivan scored a last minute goal for Limerick, her second of the day. In the replay, Cork defeated first time finalists Limerick by three points.

Mary played a pivotal run in that victory too, scoring the clinching goal in the run-in to half time. Limerick goalkeeper Helen Moynihan tried to solo out the field, tipping the ball on her hurl, but failed to clear and the ball was returned to Mary, who scored in an unguarded goal.

Cork were coasting by six points in the second-half when Limerick grabbed a goal and were piling on the pressure before Mary scored a point to end their resistance.

Mary said of the final: "What stays with me most is it was a very hard-fought game and at no stage could we lessen the pressure on our opponents."

"I just felt relief at the final whistle that we had won. When it sank in that we had won, I was thrilled. It was a great honour to be going up the steps of Croke Park to accept the O'Duffy Cup on behalf of the Cork team."

"All players contribute to a team. While we had a fantastic all-round team, the players that remain in my head from that day were Nancy O'Driscoll, Marian McCarthy, Mary Leary, Marian Sweeney, Pat Moloney and Martha Kearney."

Mary said the Cork team celebrated at a function that was also attended by the losing Limerick team, who stayed in the same hotel.

"We returned to Cork on the Monday and there was a homecoming parade from Kent Station to the city centre," she recalled. "In the following weeks we went around to the clubs and the schools with the O'Duffy Cup."

Asked how captaining Cork and Kerry compared, Mary replied: "It is a great honour to captain any team so they were both wonderful experiences and I treasure them always."

She loved playing for her club in

Cork, Éire Óg, calling it "one of the highlights of my life".

She added: "I got on the Cork team having won a number of county championships and Munster titles with them. Con Malone was a fantastic trainer and motivator and had a great influence on my career. I was also lucky to work with a great trainer, Tom Nott, when I played with Cork."

"I made great friendships in Éire Óg which I still have to this day. I also have friendships with Castleisland Desmonds ladies with whom I played for a number of years."

Mary went to the Ursuline nuns boarding school in Blackrock. "The nuns were very kind and caring people who really looked after me. They and the lay teachers gave great encouragement to me in my sporting career."

"I played school hockey with the Ursulines, club hockey with Old Ursulines, Munster and Irish hockey." Mary added: "I can't separate my life from my sport as sport is part of my life. It always has been and always will be, from playing, watching, managing and talking about it! It is my passion."

She still enjoys watching sport on TV — and advises Cork fans to enjoy their team's dominance while they can.

"I love watching camogie and thanks to TG4 have been able to watch a great number of games. TG4 are instrumental in bringing camogie to the forefront as they show a great amount of games."

"Every county will dominate the sport for a number of years so in that sense I don't think Cork's recent dominance is a bad thing. Kilkenny and Tipperary have had dominant periods in the game. That is just part of the sporting cycle."

"The coverage of ladies sport has come a long way since I started. TG4, RTE, the newspapers and social media are covering it. It is fantastic to see more women reporters who have come from sport themselves and have a great interest in it. However, there is still a bit to go to catch up with the coverage of men's sport. Women's sport needs equal exposure in the media."

"I just felt relief at the final whistle that we had won. When it sank in, I was thrilled. It was a great honour to accept the O'Duffy Cup on behalf of the Cork team."



MYSportingLife: From top, Mary Geaney lifts the O'Duffy Cup in 1980; signing autographs for fans after the game; in action for her club, Éire Óg; and (below) meeting legendary RTE commentator Michael O'Hehir at the Jury's Sport Star Awards



SUCCESS STORY: The All-Ireland winning Cork camogie team of 1980, with Mary Geaney front row, far left



Cork's Aoife Murray at the launch of the inaugural Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars Tour at Croke Park yesterday. Murray collected an incredible 7th All-Stars Award this year.

All-Star hero Murray yet to decide on Rebel County future

Daire Walsh

Cork camogie goalkeeper Aoife Murray is undecided about whether or not she will extend her inter-county career into a 17th season.

This year was a memorable one for the Cloughduv net-minder, and in addition to securing an eighth All-Ireland senior title, a series of outstanding individual performances helped her land a seventh All-Star award.

A stoppage-time point from Julia White guided the Rebel County towards a dramatic victory over Kilkenny in this year's decider, but despite having a positive outlook for 2018, Murray will take some time before reach a final call on her future.

"A few people are beginning to ask me that question. It's always a lot harder with a decision to make when you win because obviously you're feeling more positive and you think 'ah yeah, I could do this for another year'. But I am 34, so I'm probably pushing on."

"Apparently there are other things outside of camogie as well, which people keep telling me about! I do have a decision to make, but I'm certainly

not going to make it right now. It's not on my agenda anyway."

Murray was speaking in Croke Park at the launch of the inaugural Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars Tour, which will see the 2016 and 2017 selections facing each other at Universidad Complutense de Madrid on Thursday, November 30.

Murray will be joined in the Spanish capital by six of her inter-county team-mates, and with a reception in the city's Irish Embassy also planned during the four-day trip, she believes it represents a massive step forward for the sport.

"It's probably reflective of all of the work that's being done behind the scenes that people don't appreciate. Even this year, seeing the quarter-finals live on TV shows again just how much we are progressing."

With the increased promotion around camogie, Murray is hopeful that there will be a rise in attendance figures for All-Ireland finals. However, she also recognises the importance of participation at underage level, as well as a continued resurgence in counties like Clare and Offaly.

"Hopefully what you might see in five, six years time is that we're no longer talking about 20,000 at a final, we're talking about 30,000 plus. And hopefully you're looking at other counties like Clare and Offaly (making a breakthrough). That's the most important thing for me. I'd love to have an 80,000 [final], but I'd much prefer to see clubs inundated with young girls coming along. I think that's what I hope anyway from the increased promotion, and all the social media side of things, that that's what you'll see."

2016 Camogie All-Stars: Emma Kavanagh (Kilkenny); Sarah O'Connor (Wexford); Sarah Dervan (Galway); Colette Dormer (Kilkenny); Rebecca Hennelly (Galway); Anne Dalton (Kilkenny); Miriam Walsh (Kilkenny); Orla Cotter (Cork); Michaela Morkan (Offaly); Shelley Kehoe (Wexford); Denise Gaulle (Kilkenny); Niamh Mulcahy (Limerick); Tina Hannon (Offaly); Kate Kelly (Wexford).

2017 Camogie All-Stars: Aoife Murray (Cork); Tara Kenny (Galway); Catherine Foley (Kilkenny); Laura Treacy (Cork); Gemma O'Connor (Cork); Maire McGrath (Clare); Eimear O'Sullivan (Cork); Meighan Farrell (Kilkenny); Ashling Thompson (Cork); Chloe Morey (Clare); Katie Power (Kilkenny); Amy O'Connor (Cork); Ailish O'Reilly (Galway); Aisling Maher (Dublin); Aoife Donohue (Galway).

Camogie:
All-Ireland JCCC semi-finals: Athleague (Roscommon) 1-7 Clannmaurice (Kerry) 3-4; Crosserlough (Cavan) 0-2 Kilmeehan (Meath) 5-15.

Nov 2017



The camogie final between Glen Rovers and Blackrock at the Athletic Grounds, November 1954.

Inaugural Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars Tour set for take-off

By Camogie Press
Posted 20/11/2017



Two teams comprising the country's top Camogie stars will jet out to Madrid next week as Camogie goes 'On Tour' to the Spanish capital for the inaugural Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars Tour.

Recipients of All-Stars Awards from 2016 and 2017 as well as several nominees will take off for Madrid on Wednesday November 29th where they will play an exhibition match in Universidad Complutense de Madrid on Thursday November 30th.

The teams will include stars from 8 counties including Cork's Aoife Murray, Dublin's Aisling Maher and Galway's Rebecca Hennelly who were all in attendance at today's launch in Croke Park. Murray collected an incredible 7th All-Stars Award this year whilst Dublin's Maher collected her very first award after a summer to remember for the Dubs. Hennelly will represent the 2016 All-Stars having collected her first award at right half-back in 2016.

The Tour will also include several other stalwarts of the game including Wexford Legend Kate Kelly who won her 9th All-Stars Award in 2016, and Cork's Gemma O'Connor who moved ahead of Kelly this year with an incredible record 10th All-Stars Award. Cork's Paulie Murray and Kilkenny's Ann Downey will manage the sides. Murray picked up the 2017 Manager of the Year Award having guided the Rebels to a record 27th All-Ireland title this September. Kilkenny legend Downey was Manager of the Year in 2016 having ended the Cats' 22 year wait to lift the O'Duffy Cup.

Antrim's Owen Elliott who refereed this year's Senior All-Ireland Final will be the man in the middle for the exhibition match. O'Neills Sportswear are the official kit suppliers for the Tour.

The Tour will also engage with the local Irish community in Madrid with a reception at the Irish Embassy and the Tour will also be hosted by Madrid Harps GAA Club. Camogie in Europe is on the rise and this Tour will showcase the incredible skills of the game to Madrilenians!

Speaking at the launch Camogie Association President Catherine Neary said:
"I am delighted to launch the inaugural Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars Tour to Madrid. Camogie's continued commitment to the development of our game and our players as outlined in our National Development Plan 'Our Sport Our Future' is further enhanced by this initiative, as we strive to ensure that the needs of our players and our members are to the forefront of our plans."

"This Tour recognises the individual performances and dedication of our players to 'Our Game', promoting them as the tremendous athletes and role models that they are."

"I would also like to acknowledge the continued support of our sponsors Liberty Insurance who have assisted us in making the Camogie All-Stars Tour possible in 2017, and we look forward to our continued partnership in promoting the sport."

Speaking in Croke Park, Director of Personal Lines for Liberty Insurance Deirdre Ashe said:
"Liberty Insurance is committed to raising the profile and awareness of women in sport; that's why it's a privilege for us to sponsor the first ever Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars Tour. The Tour provides an international dimension to one of the most exciting field games in the world, and is an opportunity to showcase the game to new audiences in Europe."

"Both the All-Stars Awards that were held earlier this month, and the Tour to Madrid recognise and celebrate the achievements of the country's finest Camogie players. Each of the players are role models for young women throughout the country by their actions and deeds on and off the field of play and we're really excited to be travelling to Spain later this month."

Speaking on behalf of O'Neills Irish International Sports Company, Business/Marketing Manager Cormac Farrell said:

"We are delighted to supply kit and leisurewear to the inaugural Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars Tour."

"It is fitting, that this year's selected stars will be rewarded with this exciting trip to Madrid. We have designed an eye-catching jersey for the teams and hope they wear it well. We hope that all involved enjoy the adventure, showcasing the great skills of Camogie."

2017 All-Stars Team:
Aoife Murray (Cork)
Tara Kenny (Galway)
Catherine Foley (Kilkenny)
Laura Treacy (Cork)
Gemma O'Connor (Cork)
Maire McGrath (Clare)
Eimear O'Sullivan (Cork)
Meighan Farrell (Kilkenny)
Ashling Thompson (Cork)
Chloe Morey (Clare)
Katie Power (Kilkenny)
Amy O'Connor (Cork)
Ailish O'Reilly (Galway)
Aisling Maher (Dublin)
Aoife Donohue (Galway)

2016 All-Stars Team:
Emma Kavanagh (Kilkenny)
Sarah O'Connor (Wexford)
Sarah Dervan (Galway)
Colette Dormer (Kilkenny)
Rebecca Hennelly (Galway)
Anne Dalton (Kilkenny)
Miriam Walsh (Kilkenny)
Orla Cotter (Cork)
Michaela Morkan (Offaly)
Shelley Kehoe (Wexford)
Denise Gaulle (Kilkenny)
Niamh Mulcahy (Limerick)
Tina Hannon (Offaly)
Kate Kelly (Wexford)

Meet the Teams! Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars Tour - 2016 All-Stars Team

By Camogie Press
Posted 22/11/2017



The inaugural Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars Tour will travel to Madrid, Spain between Wednesday November 29th and Saturday December 2nd and an exhibition match between the 2016 and 2017 Senior All-Stars winners and nominees will take place in Universidad Complutense de Madrid on Thursday November 30th.

2016 All-Stars Team

The 2016 All-Stars will be represented by 14 players from 5 counties, including the 2016 Players' Player of the Year Denise Gaulie.

The legendary Ann Downey will manager the side having won the Manager of the Year Award for the first time in 2016.

The players on the 2016 All-Stars team are:

- Emma Kavanagh (Kilkenny)

Emma collected her first All-Stars Award in 2016 for her outstanding displays between the sticks as Kilkenny sealed All-Ireland glory and was a nominee again in 2017 as they finished as runners-up.
- Sarah O'Connor (Wexford)

Sarah has been a pillar of consistency, receiving All-Stars nominations in both 2016 and 2017 and the young defender looks likely to be a mainstay for the Yellowbellies for years to come.
- Sarah Dervan (Galway)

Links Community Sch

Sarah collected an amazing 4th All-Stars Award in-a-row in 2016, claiming the Full-Back position as Galway reached the All-Ireland Semi-Finals before narrowly losing in extra-time.
- Collette Dorrner (Kilkenny)

Collette picked up her 2nd All-Stars Award in 2016 at Left Corner-Back as the Cats claimed their first All-Ireland title in 22 years.
- Rebecca Hennelly (Galway)

Rebecca claimed her first Senior All-Stars Award in 2016 at Right Half-Back having previously won an Intermediate Soaring Star Award in 2013.
- Anne Dalton (Kilkenny)

An All-Stars winner in both 2016 and 2017, Anne has collected 5 All-Stars Awards in total to date to add to her medal haul which sees her as one of the most decorated players in the game.
- Miriam Walsh (Kilkenny)

Miriam collected her first All-Stars Award in 2016 as recognition for her pivotal role in the Cats' midfield on their way to All-Ireland glory, and was nominated again in 2017 as she maintained her stellar form.
- Orla Cotter (Cork)

Orla was also an All-Stars Award winner in both 2016 and 2017 and has collected 5 All-Stars Awards in her career to date. She has been a key member of the Cork side in recent years, collecting multiple titles along the way.
- Michaela Morican (Offaly)

Michaela is a stalwart of Offaly Camogie and collected an All-Stars Award in 2008, to add to her multiple Soaring Stars Awards. She played a key role for Faithful County as they reached the Quarter-Finals in 2016.
- Shelley Kehoe (Wexford)

Shelley has been a crucial part of the Wexford set-up for many years, and her consistent displays saw her receive All-Stars nominations in both 2016 and 2017. 2016 saw the Yellowbellies agonisingly defeated after extra-time of the All-Ireland Semi-Final.
- Denise Gaulie (Kilkenny)

The Players' Player of the Year in 2016, Denise was one of the standout players for the Cats as they claimed the O'Duffy Cup, scoring vital points through their campaign. She continued this form as the Cats reached the Final again in 2017 which saw her nominated once more for an All-Stars Award in 2017.
- Namh Mulcahy (Limerick)

A nominee in both 2016 and 2017 Namh has led by example in Limerick's rise through the Camogie ranks in recent years, collecting Soaring Stars Awards along the way as her county won the All-Ireland Intermediate title in 2014 to gain promotion to Senior Camogie.
- Tina Hannon (Offaly)

A nominee in 2016, the sharpshooter has led the Offaly forward line in recent years and in 2016 this saw them reach the Quarter-Final stages where they lost to eventual champions Kilkenny.
- Kate Kelly (Wexford)

A true legend of the game, Kate collected an incredible 9th All-Stars Award in 2016 before retiring as she finished as the Championship's top scorer - a fitting end to a glittering career that saw her collect 4 All-Ireland titles with Wexford.

Full details regarding the Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars Tour can be found [here](#)

Meet the Teams! Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars Tour - 2017 All-Stars Team

By Camogie Press
Posted 24/11/2017



Less than a week remains until the inaugural Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars Teams travel to Madrid, Spain. The squads leave on Wednesday November 29th and will return on Saturday December 2nd.

The 2016 and 2017 Senior All-Stars winners and nominees will go head-to-head in an exhibition match in XV Hortaleta Rugby Club, Madrid on Thursday November 30th. Read about the players representing the 2017 team below.

2017 All-Stars Team

2017 Manager of the Year Paude Murray takes charge of this highly talented squad, with representations from five different county teams.

Aoife Murray (Cork) - The Rebels shot stopper won her seventh All-Stars award earlier this month after helping her side to All-Ireland glory in September. The Cloughduv club member played in League, provincial and All-Ireland finals in 2017.

Tara Kenny (Galway) - Despite not claiming an All-Stars award, the Sandfields player can be very proud of her efforts this year after she received her maiden All-Stars nomination. Kenny will be one of three Galway players representing the 2017 All-Stars panel.

Catherine Foley (Kilkenny) - Not many players can say they won their first All-Stars award after their first nomination but Foley can say those exact words after adding her first award to her Soaring Star that she received back in 2014. Foley won League and Leinster titles for the Cats and the Purcell Cup with her college D.L.T. this year.

Laura Treacy (Cork) - The Killeagh corner back claimed her second All-Ireland title in September and after a fourth consecutive All-Stars nomination, she went one step further and claimed her first All-Stars award for her efforts this year.

Emma O'Connor (Cork) - After carrying her eighth All-Ireland title in September the earlier Emma O'Connor added her 10th All-Stars award to the collection, making history for the most All-Stars awards in Camogie history.

Maire McGrath (Clare) - The Banner county player already has a coveted award to her name and despite not claiming another this year, her solid performances in the Clare rear guard merited a place on the trip.

Christine O'Sullivan (Dublin) - The Mount St. Vincent's captain has been a dominant force leading the charge in the Hogan Stand for the fifth time this year. The Ballinacraig club player secured her second All-Stars award this year.

Meighan Farrell (Kilkenny) - The 22-year-old showed excellent maturity throughout her performances in the middle of the pitch for Kilkenny and deservedly added her second consecutive All-Stars award this year.

Aisling Thompson (Cork) - The 2017 Player of the Year nominee won her second All-Stars award earlier this month after some dominant performances in the Rebel midfield this year. Thompson is one of a number of Cork players making the trip to Madrid.

Chloe Morey (Clare) - The Slumlebridge sharpshooter was in lethal form this season and is one of the most clinical scorers travelling to Madrid. Despite not winning an All-Stars award this year Morey does have one award to her name, claiming the award back in 2013.

Katie Power (Kilkenny) - One of many stars in attack for the Cats this year Power is a dominant force in the half-forward line. Her precision and accuracy is second to none which is why she claimed her third All-Stars award this year.

Amy O'Connor (Cork) - The multi-talented athlete produced many fine performances in a very strong Rebel attack this season. The 23-year-old from St. Vincent's is still waiting for her first All-Stars award, however with talent in abundance it is unlikely she will be waiting too many years to get that right.

Alish O'Reilly (Galway) - The full-forward from Oranmore/Waree led the scoring charts throughout the Liberty Insurance Senior Championship and was recognised for her excellent displays by receiving her third All-Stars award earlier this month.

Aisling Maher (Dublin) - Another young player with a wealth of experience Maher produced many effective performances for the Dubs this year. She claimed her first All-Stars award to mark those performances and was the only Dublin player to win an award this year.

Aoife Donohue (Galway) - A second Galway ace making the 2017 team, Donohue won her second All-Stars award for her contributions this year. The Mullagh player was lethal from both open play and placed balls this season and was ever reliable for her team.

Full details regarding the Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars Tour can be found [here](#).

Gemma O'Connor: I could feel my heart pounding through my chest and I thought 'why do I do this?'



Jack O'Toole

November 24 2017 12:43 PM

- [Email](#)

The game of 'will Gemma O'Connor play or will she not' was undoubtedly the biggest subplot surrounding the 2017 Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Camogie final.

Cork were once again facing Kilkenny, in what was a replay of the 2016 final, and Cork captain Rena Buckley had the opportunity to become the most decorated player in the history of Gaelic Games if the Rebelettes could prise their title back from Ann Downey's Kilkenny, but the big question mark heading into the final was will 10-time Liberty Insurance All-Star Gemma O'Connor play?

O'Connor had torn her medial collateral ligament (MCL) in the semi-final win over Galway and she had exactly 22 days to recover in time for the All-Ireland final. On average, it takes six weeks for a MCL injury to heal.

O'Connor was back on the field in just over three weeks. How? She rehabbed the injury morning, noon and night.

"The team had rules and I had to make the call whether I was going to be available or not," said O'Connor.

"I was adamant that I wanted to play so I got with the doctors and physios and said 'if there's any slight chance at all that I can play I'll do whatever it takes'.

"I took time off work and I just tried to build my knee up as best as I could. I needed to rehab and push it because I didn't have time to rest it.

"I strapped it up and started slowly and I worked every second day on a programme the physio gave me.

"Between that I had my own exercises at home and then I had the pool at the Mardyke Arena. Paudie Murray, Dr. Con Murphy and Colin Lane made sure I had everything at my disposal and then when I was off from work I was just trying to rehab it morning, noon and night."

There was no major litmus test for O'Connor's recovery. There was a brief run around the outside of the pitch at the training session on the Thursday, and a few fitness tests on the evening before the final, but she was still very much uncertain about whether her knee would hold.

She said she only realised she had a good possibility of playing the night before the final and that she played the majority of the game through a mix of fear and adrenalin.

"Playing in the backline I was thinking I don't want to be taken to the cleaners here," added O'Connor.

"There was one incident in the first-half and I struck the ball and got this massive pain up through my knee after I planted my foot.

"After that I didn't have too much trouble but I think I could have been playing on adrenalin. Once the whistle blows the aches and pains have to go out the window.

"I had it in my head that I needed to be prepared to go off, if it gets too bad because I have a team to think about as well and not to be putting the team in jeopardy, because I've become a weak link at the back.

"We knew there wasn't going to be an inch out on the field and when the final whistle went, I thought it was the worst game I've been involved in for having that fear that something could go wrong.

"I could feel my heart pounding through my chest for the last couple of minutes and I was thinking 'oh my god, why do I put myself through this?'

"But just seeing Julia White putting the ball over the bar was special. She's been such a crucial player for us down through the years but she's just been so unlucky with injury.

"With very little space she had the composure to take the shot and score and thankfully we had time on our side and the final whistle blew a short while later. That was my favourite moment."

O'Connor added that it was her favourite win of all the finals she's played in, because of what her team was up against heading into the final and because of the uncertainty of her own situation, which made the victory all the sweeter. Winning is still the best antidote.

Two teams comprising the country's top Camogie stars will jet out to Madrid next week as Camogie goes 'On Tour' to the Spanish capital for the inaugural Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars Tour.



Southside and District Sports Award winner Paudie Murray with his wife Jennifer Murray and daughters Isabella and Elena.

Picture: Gerard Bonuz

IT WAS a reflection of the hard work and dedication of the Cork Camogie team and management that they were All-Ireland champions again in September.

Their victory over Kilkenny highlighted their commitment to the red geansaí, their passion for the game of camogie and their resolve throughout a season where the Cats were hot favourites to beat the Rebels.

Into winter now, their squad has been busy collecting All-Stars and a host of other accolades.

The latest saw Paudie Murray saluted at the Southside and District Sports Star Awards hosted at the Cork International Hotel.

Selected Manager of the Year at the Camogie All-Stars, it acknowledges the efforts and commitment of both the team management and the ability of skillful players to work incredibly hard throughout the past year to claim ultimate honours.

In Croke Park on All-Ireland final day, Cork reserved their best performance of the past 12 months to record an extraordinary victory over defending champions Kilkenny and move past Dublin on the roll of honour with 27 Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship titles.

And from a dramatic conclusion, super sub Julia White stepped into the breach to land the matchwinner in the sixth minute of injury time. After conceding last year's title to Kilkenny, Cork regained their crown in a frantic finish that saw White break from a pack of Kilkenny defenders before sailing a beautifully struck point

Murray has been the right guide

AWARDS

■ John Tarrant

over the bar to seal the win for the Rebels.

Murray admitted that he thought the game was heading for a replay before substitute White's late, late effort and praised Cork's beaten rivals.

"Fair play to Kilkenny, they made it very difficult, they're a great team, it's great for camogie that that rivalry is there. The level of interest this year was phenomenal and they have to take a lot of

the credit for that," he said.

"Coming into the game, we spoke about composure, we spoke about desire and finally wearing the Cork jersey and the duty they have to that jersey and they carried out that duty brilliantly."

The return of Gemma O'Connor from a knee injury to start made a crucial contribution. Murray praised the contribution of the now eight-time All-Ireland winner and her fellow veterans in leading the charge to the team's third title in four years.

"Gemma came back and had a good training session on the Thursday night so we just took a chance really," he said.

And Murray hailed the input of 18-time All-Ireland winner across Ladies football and camogie Rena Buckley as "phenomenal".

In doing so, Buckley joined former Kerry footballer and Cork camogie star Mary Geaney as one of two women to lift titles in both codes.

"If you ever meet her you'd think that she hadn't won anything, she's so down to earth, a great leader and a great captain. What a warrior."

"I drive around the city and I see the Christy Ring Bridge and the Jack Lynch Tunnel, I think maybe it's time we name something after her," he said.

Nov 2017

Libby's homecoming inspires young fans

LIBBY Coppinger was the centre of attention when she brought the O'Duffy Cup to St Colum's for a night that will live long in the camogie club's history.

It is the very first time a member from St Colum's brought the All-Ireland senior camogie cup back to Colum's Hall.

It was also a very special evening for the Coppinger family as Libby's grandmother, Breda, was part of the very first committee in St Colum's.

Also the Coppinger family were instrumental in getting camogie up and running in the area back in 2009.

Rebel star Libby was joined by Cork goalkeeper Aoife Murray, Cork manager Paudie Murray along with Damien Murray, Niall Collins and Martin O'Brien, who are part of the

management team.

Mary McSweeney, chairperson, and Mary Bulger of the Cork Camogie County Board were also present at the evening.

Fans, old and young, got the chance to meet and congratulate the players and management for winning the All-Ireland title. The children present got their hurleys signed along with some selfies with Libby and Aoife.

It will be a night that will never be forgotten for all those present. Like Alan O'Connor's homecoming with the Sam Maguire in 2010 which inspired a generation of Colum's players, including Libby, to strive for greatness, Libby Coppinger's homecoming will inspire the next generation to reach for the moon and the stars.



VIPs: St Colum's Libby Coppinger holds the O'Duffy Cup on its first visit to the West Cork club. Also pictured are Cork goalkeeper Aoife Murray, Cork manager Paudie Murray, Damien Murray, Niall Collins and Martin O'Brien, members of the management team.

Newcestown go down fighting

Munster glory evades West Cork women despite gallant second-half performance

MUNSTER CAMOGIE FINAL

LISMORE 1-10
NEWCESTOWN 0-8

NOEL HORGAN REPORTS

IT was obvious Newcestown had an uphill battle on their hands after they conceded a goal shortly before half time in the Munster club intermediate camogie final at Castle Road in Blackrock last Saturday.

While they turned over just five points in arrears, 1-6 to 0-4, it was hard to see them erasing the deficit in the second half in view of how commanding the Lismore defence, particularly the full-back line, had been before the break.

As things transpired, Newcestown failed to reel in the Waterford senior champions, but they made a gallant effort to do so, and had they been more economical with their chances, they would certainly have been closer at the finish.

That they squandered several opportunities from scoreable frees left them with good cause for rueful reflection, all the more so since Aoife Hannon's unerring accuracy from placed balls was a key factor in Lismore's success.

'Normally our free-takers are

very reliable, but it didn't happen for us in that regard today,' lamented Newcestown manager John Cronin afterwards.

'I thought we controlled the game in the second half, but we just didn't put enough scores on the board, and the bottom line is you must take your chances if you want to win these competitions.

'It's very disappointing that we didn't turn Lismore over, but we've had a great year, and this was a bit of a learning curve for the team, so we'd be happy enough.

'We are the county champions, we'll be going up senior, which is where we want to be next year, and hopefully this experience will stand to us,' he remarked.

Newcestown made a promising start, responding to a couple of early Lismore points with a hat-trick of scores shared by Meabh O'Donovan, Colleen Twomey, from a free, and Therese McCarthy during the opening ten minutes.

Lismore enjoyed the better of the exchanges for the rest of the first half however, not least because of their dominance in defence, and the threat carried by full forward Caithriona McGloone at the other end.



Eyes on the prize: Newcestown's Amy Murphy gathers the sliotar ahead of Lismore's Shona Curran during the AIB Munster Intermediate Camogie Club Championship final at Castle Road. (Photos: Howard Crowdy)

'We are the county champions, we'll be going up senior, which is where we want to be next year, and hopefully this experience will stand to us' — Newcestown manager John Cronin

The result was that Newcestown didn't add to their tally until Colleen Twomey, fed by a precision cross from Colette Desmond, pointed in stoppage time, and Lismore, courtesy of a well-taken goal by the ever-menacing McGloone in the 29th minute, had opened up a six-point gap in the interim.

Newcestown almost made a major breakthrough on the

resumption when a long-range free by Suzanne Deasy deceived Lismore custodian Tanya Morrissey, but corner back Sarah Coughlan was on hand to prevent the ball from crossing the line.

Deasy delivered a strong display at centre back for Newcestown in the second half when Maeve Lynch, who performed with the utmost competence throughout, and Alison Crowley were equally effective in the half back line.

Zerica Griffin and Evelyn Crowley were very much to the fore as well at midfield, all of which allowed Newcestown to gain a territorial edge, especially during the last 20 minutes.

Under limited pressure, the Newcestown full-back line, in which Aisling O'Donovan stood out, looked much more assured as the second half progressed, but, while Meabh O'Donovan, Colleen Twomey and Colette Desmond had their moments up front, the Lismore rear-guard remained firmly in control for the most part.

It meant the Waterford kingpins, leading by 1-8 to 0-5 at the three-quarter stage, looked odds-on to prevail before the decision to entrust Colette Desmond with the free-taking duties brought results for Newcestown.

Desmond converted two frees at either side of an excel-

lent point from play by Ciara O'Sullivan, as Newcestown began to nibble away at Lismore's advantage and set the scene for an exciting finish.

They were four points adrift when Colleen Twomey expertly gathered a Colette Desmond delivery to earn a free at the edge of the square, giving them an opportunity to grab the goal they needed to resurrect their hopes in the final minute of regulation time.

Suzanne Deasy's well-struck shot was saved, and, to compound Newcestown's frustration, Deasy was off-target with an effort to bring them back within striking range from a 65 shortly afterwards.

Aoife Hannon had the last word from a free for the Lismore girls, who, while they deserved to come out on top, were flattered by their winning

margin on the overall run of the play.

Scorers

Lismore: A Hannon 0-7f, C McGloone 1-2, S Curran 0-1.

Newcestown: C Twomey 0-3 (2f), C Desmond 0-2f, M O'Donovan, T McCarthy, C O'Sullivan 0-1 each.

Lismore: T Morrissey; S Coughlan, S Prendergast, E Curran; A Houlihan, S Kiernan, M Russell; S Curran, S Williams; R Geoghan, G Kenneally, N Morrissey; A Hannon, C McGloone, J Houlihan.

Subs: S Bennett for A Houlihan (51), E Power for J Houlihan (54).

Newcestown: O Dineen; A O'Donovan, R Desmond, M McSweeney, M Lynch, S Deasy, A Crowley, Z Griffin, E Crowley; M Kenneally, T McCarthy, M O'Donovan; C Twomey, C Desmond, C O'Sullivan.

Subs: A Murray for Kenneally (injured, ht), H O'Mahony for McCarthy (55), E Murphy for Twomey (injured, 62).

Referee: P Dee (Limerick).



Up for the ball: Newcestown's Suzanne Deasy and Zerica Griffin along with Lismore players Grainne Kenneally and Sharon Williams tussle for possession during the Munster final.

★ THE HIGHLIGHTS

Our Star: She was subdued in the second half by Newcestown full-back Rose Desmond, but the classy **Caithriona McGloone** was instrumental in laying the foundations for Lismore's triumph before the break.

Star moment: McGloone's goal nearing half time was a crucial score, giving Lismore a cushion that did much to sustain them in the face of Newcestown's gutsy

efforts to turn the game around after the interval.

Talking point: Considering they wasted so many chances from frees, it isn't inconceivable that Newcestown would have garnered the glory if the free-taking role had been handed to Colette Desmond from the outset.

What's next? Newcestown can look forward to competing at senior level in 2018.



Niamh McCarthy, Inniscarra and Cork camogie player with club officials, Elaine Buckley, Tim Buckley, Joe McCarthy and Rose Malone, Cork Camogie Board at the Muskerry GAA/Auld Triangle October Sports Star Award function. Picture: Anne O'Riordan

THE Auld Triangle and Muskerry Sports Star Award winner for the month of October is Niamh McCarthy.

The Inniscarra camogie star played a starring role in October helping her club win the senior championship final for the second year in-a-row, after victory over Glen Rovers, 2-13 to 1-10. September was also a memorable month for the youngster, as she played a vital role in the Cork senior team win, yet another All-Ireland title, defeating Kilkenny, 0-10 to 0-9. For McCarthy to be playing such a vital role is remarkable given her long dark road in recent years.

McCarthy was a prodigy in 2011, until she suffered two cruciate ligament injuries in 2011 and 2013. From two serious injuries to lifting the All-Ireland trophy in Croke Park in a space of a few years, is some achievement.

McCarthy was joined by her family, team mates, Inniscarra and Cork representatives at the presentation in the Auld Triangle, Macroom recently. The talented camogie player was more than delighted to reflect afterwards on a rewarding two months.

"It's a huge honour to be collecting this award tonight. When you look at the calibre of players who have received it since it started in 2014 and now that I have joined that list, it's hard to believe.

"I received a phone call, and I was shocked to be honest. There were lots of players on my Inniscarra team that would have been worthy winners also. I am just representing them really," she said.

After a disjointed few years, 2016 was the first year where McCarthy had a consistent run of trainings and matches. She steadily improved and then 2017 was one to remember. It is fair to say, she took her chance with both hands, storming onto the Cork senior camogie team, an adven-

Niamh is a Towering success

GAA

■ Barry O'Mahony

ture that would take them all the way to headquarters in September.

"2017 was my first year on the Cork panel and to come in to the side and win my first All-Ireland medal, in the manner that we did (Julia White's last minute point) was an incredible feeling. It's more than I could have imagined in my first year. The win and occasion was unreal. It meant a lot to me and my family."

The feel-good factor continued into October, as McCarthy's club

Inniscarra, claimed the senior camogie championship for the second year running.

"Winning a senior county with the club is special, because it's the people that you have grown up with. Back to back county titles is huge for this group of players. It was only the club's third senior title. When you win the county everyone is out to get you and it's always harder to retain. Given the fixtures and the route to the final that we took, this was extra special."

Rolling back to 2011, McCarthy was one of the most promising players in Cork, until her playing career was stalled for nearly two years on two different occasions, as the third year pharmacy stu-

dent in UCC explains.

"I had basketball training ten days before the All-Ireland club final in 2011 and tore my cruciate ligament injury. I had some trouble with my knee post operation and it took some time to come back. In 2013, I returned, but after two months, the cruciate in my other knee tore while playing camogie. I was gutted. It had taken me almost two years to come back playing after the first time and then it happened again. After the second time, I was thinking to myself "will I ever be able to play again." 2017 is done and dusted for the Tower native, and every aim has been achieved.

"Hopefully 2018 will be every bit as good."



Newcestown's Suzanne Deasy and Zerica Griffen along with Lismore players Grainne Kenneally and Sharon Williams tussle for possession in last weekend's Munster final.

Picture: Michael O'Mahony

All-Stars prepare for Madrid trip



Camogie

Linda Mellerick

TWO teams comprising the country's top camogie stars fly to Madrid next week for the inaugural Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars tour.

Recipients of All-Star awards from 2016 and 2017 as well as several nominees will take off for Madrid on Wednesday where they will play an exhibition match in Universidad Complutense de Madrid on Thursday.

The teams will include stars from eight counties including Cork's Aoife Murray, Dublin's Aisling Maher, and Galway's Rebecca Hennelly who were all in attendance at the launch earlier this week in Croke Park. Aoife collected her seventh All-Star award this year while Aisling collected her very first award for the Dubs. Hennelly will represent the 2016 All-Stars having collected her first award at right half-back in 2016.

The tour will also include several other stalwarts of the game, including Wexford legend Kate Kelly who won her ninth All-Star award in 2016, and Cork's Gemma O'Connor who moved ahead of Kelly this year with an incredible record 10th All-Star.

Cork's Paudie Murray and Kilkenny's Ann Downey will manage the sides. Paudie picked up the 2017 Manager of the Year Award having guided the Rebels to a record 27th All-Ireland title last September. Kilkenny legend Ann was Manager of the Year in 2016, having ended the Cats' 22-year wait to lift the O'Duffy Cup.

Antrim's Owen Elliott who refereed this year's senior All-Ireland final will be the man in the middle for the exhibition match. O'Neills are the official kit suppliers for the Tour.

The tour will also engage with the local Irish community in Madrid with a reception at the Irish embassy and the tour will be hosted by Madrid Harps GAA Club. The tour will showcase the skills of the game to Madrileños.

It's a fantastic experience for the girls, particularly those that are picking up All-Stars for the great players they are but don't have All-Ireland success with their county.

Speaking at the launch, Camogie president Catherine Neary said: "I am delighted to launch the inaugural Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars Tour to Madrid. Camogie's continued commitment to the development of our game and our players as outlined in our National Development Plan 'Our Sport Our Future' is further enhanced by this initiative, as we strive to ensure that the needs of our players and our members are to the forefront of our plans."

"This tour recognises the individual performances and dedication of our players to 'our game', promoting them as the tremendous athletes and role models that they are."

"I would also like to acknowledge the continued support of our sponsors Liberty Insurance who have assisted us in making the Camogie All-Stars Tour possible in 2017, and we look forward to our continued partnership in promoting the sport."



Aoife Murray (Cork), Rebecca Hennelly (Galway), and Aisling Maher (Dublin) at Croke Park in advance of the Camogie All-Star tour, which takes place in Madrid next week. Picture: Inpho/Dan Sheridan



Cork's Orla Cotter bursting past Wexford's Joanne Dillon last summer. She is one of the Rebels heading to Spain on the Camogie All-Stars tour. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

2017 All-Stars Team:

Aoife Murray (Cork); Tara Kenny (Galway), Catherine Foley (Kilkenny), Laura Treacy (Cork); Gemma O'Connor (Cork), Máire McGrath (Clare), Eimear O'Sullivan (Cork); Meighan Farrell (Kilkenny), Ashling Thompson (Cork); Chloe Morey (Clare), Katie Power (Kilkenny), Amy O'Connor (Cork); Ailish O'Reilly (Galway), Aisling Maher (Dublin), Aoife Donohue (Galway).

2016 All-Stars Team:

Emma Kavanagh (Kilkenny); Sarah O'Connor (Wexford), Sarah Dervan (Galway), Collette Dormer (Kilkenny); Rebecca Hennelly (Galway), Anne Dalton (Kilkenny), Miriam Walsh (Kilkenny); Orla Cotter (Cork), Michaela Morkan (Offaly); Shelley Kehoe (Wexford), Denise Gaule (Kilkenny); Niamh Mulcahy (Limerick), Tina Hannon (Offaly), Kate Kelly (Wexford).

Cork's Paudie Murray and Kilkenny's Ann Downey will manage the sides. Paudie picked up the 2017 Manager of the Year Award having guided Cork to a record 27th All-Ireland title.

The Camogie Association's website states that it continues to strive to promote a culture where the health, happiness and wellbeing of its playing members is at the heart of everything that the association does.

They want to include players in the decision-making process. As part of this commitment the association has launched an online Club Player Welfare Questionnaire. The questionnaire gives players a chance to have their say about issues that affect them and to have the opportunity to positively influence camogie in the future.

There is an online questionnaire to complete and many club players in Cork should take the time to fill it in and have their say.

Farrell gets the crucial goal

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

Ballincollig	1-8
Charleville	0-6

BALLINCOLLIG and Charleville battled it out to the final whistle in Castle Road in a bid to take the U16 A championship crown.

In a closely contested game Ballincollig edged ahead.

To lead by two points at the break and grabbing the only goal of the game in the second half they held on to take the title with five points to spare.

It was point for point in the opening half as neither side could forge ahead. Orla McCarthy and Niamh O'Brien were on target with points from play for Ballincollig and with Hanna O'Leary pointing a free and a 45 they were two points in front at the break 0-5 to 0-3.

Charleville worked hard all through the half and had first-half points from Laura Doyle, Alma Jones and Caitlin O'Brien as they matched.

Ballincollig in all sectors and they were well in the game as they showed fierce determination.

Through the second half, the battle to gain control continued with both defences have a lot of work to do.

Ballincollig had points from Orla McCarthy, Hannah O'Leary and Eabha O'Mahony and in reply Laura Doyle kept the scoreboard ticking over with three Charleville points.

Ballincollig were strong in all sectors and not afraid to go for scores and they got the vital with Lilly May O'Farrell dispatching the ball to the net for the game's only goal with just two minutes remaining.

This was vital for them as it stretched their lead to five points a lead they held to final whistle.

Both sides must be complimented on the performances of their players in a game where Ballincollig's Hannah O'Leary was strong in defence all through as Charleville came in search of scores and her performance was enough to win her the Player of The Match Award.

Scorers for Ballincollig: LM Farrell 1-0, O McCarthy: H O'Leary 0-3 each, N O'Brien, E O'Mahony 0-1 each.

Charleville: L Doyle 0-4, A Jones, Caitlin O'Brien 0-1 each.

BALLINCOLLIG: A Hartnett: S Keane, A Kelly, E Gleeson; K Healy, M Healy, C Healy; Z Foley, H O'Leary; O McCarthy, N O'Brien, E McCarthy; E O'Connell, A O'Rourke, I Kennelly.

Subs: LM O'Farrell for S Keane, C Creedon for A O'Rourke.

CHARLEVILLE: L Baggan; S Jones, C Sheehy, O O'Donnell; M Jackman, L Doyle, K Liddy; K O'Reilly, L Costello; Caitlin O'Brien, Clara O'Brien, A Jones; T Dore, F Galvin, R O'Brien.

Ref: Davo O'Connell (Glen Rovers).

Goals the key to Blarney's success

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

Blarney 4-3
Na Piarasigh 0-9

GOALS proved crucial for Blarney as they were crowned U16 B county champions with a six-point victory over Na Piarasigh in Whitechurch last Saturday.

Blarney hit three goals in the opening half, which helped them lead 3-2 to 0-5 at the break.

Through the second half, the sides were evenly matched, but in the finish, Blarney added enough scores to their tally to ensure they were crowned champions.

Orla Cremen pointed an early Blarney free and a Laura Shine goal settled them into the game.

Nicole O'Sullivan and Casey Coleman were on target for Na Piarasigh with points as Megan Waters found the net for Blarney's second goal to keep them in control.

As the sides swapped scores, Blarney held their lead.

Cremen again found the range with a pointed free and a goal just before half-time from Shine helped Blarney extend their lead to six points.

The sides battled hard throughout the second half and Na Piarasigh kept the scoreboard ticking over with Coleman adding to their tally.

As they applied a lot of pressure, they hit the post with a shot that would have narrowed the gap.

Blarney stood firm under the pressure and they held their lead.

With the Na Piarasigh defence holding firm, Blarney had to work hard to try and get something in the second half.

Cremen pointed a free as they battled to get past a Na Piarasigh defence that stood strong.

Blarney grabbed a vital goal with four minutes remaining, with Cremen on target, and it was enough to ensure they took the title after an excellent contest.

The player of the match award went to Jennifer Murphy, Blarney, who had a tremendous hour in the heart of her team's defence.

Scorers for Blarney: L. Shine 2-0, O. Cremen 1-3 (0-3 f), M. Waters 1-0.

Na Piarasigh: C. Coleman 0-7 (0-2 f), N. O'Sullivan 0-2 f.

BLARNEY: S. Bannon; E. Hayes, J. Murphy, E. Quill; A. Hurley, M. Hayes, Sheehan; A. Cotter, E. Murphy, E. Power, O. Cremen, M. Waters; A. Linehan, L. Shine, E. Buckley.

Subs: K. O'Keefe for E. Buckley (h-f), A. Cronin for Megan Waters (50).

NA PIARASIGH: K. Harrington; E. Healy, E. Quinn, A. Murphy; N. O'Connor, A. Allen, E. O'Sullivan; L. Camridge, C. McCarthy; S. O'Connell, C. Coleman, A. McKenzie; E. Sheehan, N. O'Sullivan, E. O'Connor.



Aghabullogue, the SE Systems Minor B Camogie Championship winners.

Healy's haul vital for Aghabullogue

Aghabullogue 2-15
St Finbarr's 2-5

AGHABULLOGUE, with Cliona Healy to the fore, captured the SE Systems Minor B Championship title in Ovens on Saturday last.

The sharpshooter notched up an impressive 2-9 of her side's tally as they overcame St Finbarr's to be crowned champions.

In the opening half, Healy was on target with 1-5 of her team's total but it was by no means a one-woman show as Leah Dineen with two points and Julie Tarrant, Caroline Barrett and Ciara

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

McCarthy, with one each, put the pressure on the St Finbarr's defence.

St Finbarr's kept in touch with as Megan Fitzpatrick goal and with Eimear Hurley, Saoirse Noonan, and Emma Olden all battling hard the Barrs girls kept the momentum going but they were still six points in arrears at the break as Aghabullogue led 1-10 to 1-4.

Through the second half, St Finbarr's worked to try and close down the Aghabullogue attack but with

Cliona Healy in sparkling form, they had a tough job as she added to her tally with four points before striking for a goal.

The St Finbarr's girls added to their tally with Eimear Hurley, Saoirse Noonan, Emma Olden and Lauren McCarthy ensuring they kept the scoreboard ticking over but they had to battle for every score against an Aghabullogue defence where centre-back Katie McCarthy, was magnificent breaking up attack after attack.

Ciara McCarthy added a point to the Aghabullogue tally as they maintained their momentum to the final whistle to be crowned minor B champions.

Aghabullogue's Ciara McCarthy

was named as Player of the Match and presented with her memento by Sheila Golden, vice-chairwoman of the Cork Camogie Board.

Scorers for Aghabullogue: C. Healy 2-9, C. McCarthy, L. Dineen 0-2 each, C. Barrett, J. Tarrant. St Finbarr's: E. Hurley 1-1, M. Fitzpatrick 1-0, Noonan 0-2, E. Olden, L. McCarthy 0-1 each.

AGHABULLOGUE: E. Tarrant; A. Healy, M. Cotter, M. Moynihan; J. Cotter, K. McCarthy, B. Cotter; E. Foley, Tarrant; C. Healy, C. McCarthy, C. Barrett; L. Dineen, M. Dennehy, S. Byrne.

Subs: K. Cooney for L. Dineen, R. Martin for S. Byrne. ST FINBARR'S: O. Keane; A. O'Mahony (c), A. O'Regan, R. Cotter; A. O'Neill, G. Cahalane, C. Varian; I. Keegan, M. Fitzpatrick; E. Olden, E. Hurley, B. Murphy; L. McCarthy, S. Noonan, N. Foley.

Sub: L. McCarthy for N. Foley. Referee: Cathal McAllister (Aghada).

Hall hits a hat-trick for Mallow as Catherine's come up short

Mallow 4-3
St Catherine's 1-10

GOALS win games is the old saying.

It was a reality on Saturday last in Cloughduv no doubt, as Mallow grabbed four and in the process held on to take the U16 C championship title.

Their opponents St Catherine's notched up an impressive 1-10 but it wasn't to be as Mallow's Leah Hall was the toast of her club after hitting an impressive 3-1 of her side's 4-3 tally.

With Linda O'Donnell finding the range striking five first-half points and Niamh O'Regan adding a goal and a point St Catherine's led by the narrowest of margins at the half-time whistle where it was 1-6 to 2-2 in their favour.

Mallow stayed within touching distance in a first

half where they worked hard with Leah Hall and Shauna Ludgate and Rachel Kelleher all to the fore. Nine minutes into the second half they had edged in front thanks to a Leah Hall goal as Sara Barry added a point to St Catherine's tally.

It was nip and tuck as both sides enjoyed equal possessions but a Rachel Kelleher goal followed by a point had Mallow 4-3 to 1-7 in front with 10 minutes remaining.

St Catherine's were not going to give up without a fight and they continued to apply huge pressure

with Linda O'Donnell and Sara Barry adding points as they cut the deficit to two points.

They battled hard to salvage the game but the Mallow defence held firm as they ran out winners with two points to spare with Shauna Ludgate Mallow was named Player of the Match.

Scorers for Mallow: L. Hall 3-1, R. Kelleher 1-0, S. Ludgate 0-1. St Catherine's: L. O'Donnell 0-7, N. O'Regan 1-1, S. Barry 0-2.

MALLOW: M. O'Riordan; C. Buckley, S. Healy, A. Connaughton; A. Tobin, G. Cronin (c), K. O'Brien; A. White, S. Ludgate, M. Willis, L. Hall, C. Walsh; A. Heffernan, R. Kelleher, M. Cunningham.

Sub: L. McDonald for R. Kelleher.

ST CATHERINE'S: C. Dunning; C. Kearney, S. O'Callaghan, C. Bolger; J. England, N. Mulcahy, H. Sheehan; T. Condon, S. Barry (c); C. Draper, L. O'Donnell, L. Mollerick; K. O'Brien, S. Norman, N. O'Regan.

Sub: A. Bolger for K. O'Brien. Referee: Ger Sheehan (Douglas).

Hennelly's incredible journey back from the brink

Daire Walsh

Galway's Rebecca Hennelly will relish this week's historic camogie All-Star tour in Madrid, Spain, more than most. The Ardara star, who was honoured for her defensive displays last year, has fought back from two cruciate ligament tears to be a leading light on the county side.

"I think I was 17 the first time I did the cruciate. I didn't really know anyone who had done it that time, so I didn't really do enough work on it. It went in the club championship the second time a few years later. I knew more about what was required in terms of the rehab. I did a lot of work and then came back stronger and better than ever."

"It is an incredible journey. It's mad looking back and I still find it hard to believe I have an All-Star."

"It's sitting at home in the press. I'm looking at it thinking: 'I'd love a couple more to appear,' but the main thing is

History-making camogie All Stars say hola to Madrid

Daragh Ó Conchúir

History will be made today when the country's top camogie players fly to Madrid on the first Liberty Insurance All-Stars Tour.

The centrepiece of the tour is a game between the 2017 and 2016 All-Stars — plus a number of nominees — at the grounds of XV Hortaleta Rugby Club (Thursday, 5.30pm).

The game will be refereed by Owen Elliott, who took charge of this year's All-Ireland final, in which Cork defeated Kilkenny.

you want a couple of All-Irelands on the starting team."

Hennelly will be joined on the tour to the Spanish capital by her county team-mates Ailish O'Reilly and Aoife

thanks to a dramatic injury-time point by Julia White.

Rebels' manager Paudie Murray takes charge of the 2017 All-Stars, while the 2016 selection will be led by Ann Downey, who stewarded Kilkenny as they ended a 22-year drought last year and preceded Murray as manager of the year.

Players from eight counties will be represented, including Cork's Gemma O'Connor, who set a new All-Stars record when winning her 10th award this year, and former Wexford great Kate Kelly, who retired after

winning her ninth gong in 2016. In all, 29 players will be involved in an 11-a-side game, comprising 25-minutes halves, that will see rolling subs used.

Players and officials will also engage with Madrid's Irish community, while ambassador Sile Maguire will host a reception at the Irish embassy. Madrid Harps GAA Club has assisted with the organisation of the trip.

2017 All-Stars squad: Aoife Murray (Cork), Tara Kenny (Galway), Catherine Foley (Kilkenny), Laura Treacy (Cork), Gemma O'Connor (Cork),

Maire McGrath (Clare), Eimear O'Sullivan (Cork), Meaghan Farrell (Kilkenny), Ashling Thompson (Cork), Chloe Money (Clare), Katie Power (Kilkenny), Amy O'Connor (Cork), Ailish O'Reilly (Galway), Aisling Maher (Dublin), Aoife Donohue (Galway). **Manager:** Paudie Murray (Cork)

2016 All-Stars squad: Emma Kavanagh (Kilkenny), Sarah O'Connor (Wexford), Sarah Derran (Galway), Collette Dorrer (Kilkenny), Rebecca Hennelly (Galway), Anne Dalton (Kilkenny), Miriam Walsh (Kilkenny), Orla Cotter (Cork), Michaela Morlan (Offaly), Shelly Kehoe (Wexford), Denise Gaulle (Kilkenny), Niamh Mulcahy (Limerick), Tina Hanlon (Offaly), Kate Kelly (Wexford). **Manager:** Ann Downey (Kilkenny)

champions Cork, their male counterparts secured the Liam MacCarthy Cup for the first time in 29 years.

Hennelly's club-mate, Jonathan Glynn, commuted from the US to play his part in their All-Ireland success and Hennelly admitted it has motivated the camogie squad to go a couple of steps further in 2018.

"It was unbelievable excitement. Jonathan has been living over in New York for the last year, year-and-a-half. It was brilliant for the club. Whenever he comes home, the kids are just going mad whenever they see him down on the pitch."

"The kids now are all in Galway jerseys. They don't take them off. I'd say the hurlers don't get a minute's peace, to be honest. It's bringing a massive buzz to the county."

"All the camogie players are fairly jealous this year now. Hopefully, we'll get up there next year, and see what happens."

Advertisement feature

The Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars Tour



2017 Camogie All Stars

The game of 'will Gemma O'Connor play or will she not' was undoubtedly the biggest subplot surrounding the 2017 Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Camogie final.

Cork were once again facing Kilkenny, in what was a replay of the 2016 final, and Cork captain Rena Buckley had the opportunity to become the most decorated player in the history of Gaelic Games if the Rebelettes could prise their title back from Ann Downey's Kilkenny, but the big question mark heading into the final was will 10-time Liberty Insurance All-Star Gemma O'Connor play?

O'Connor had torn her medial collateral ligament (MCL) in the semi-final win over Galway and she had exactly 22 days to recover in time for the All-Ireland final. On average, it takes six weeks for a MCL injury to heal.

O'Connor was back on the field in just over three weeks. How? She rehabbed the injury morning, noon and night.

"The team had rules and I had to make the call whether I was going to be available or not," said O'Connor.

"I was adamant that I

wanted to play so I got with the doctors and physios and said 'if there's any slight chance at all that I can play I'll do whatever it takes'."

"I took time off work and I just tried to build my knee up as best as I could. I needed to rehab and push it because I didn't have time to rest it."

"I strapped it up and started slowly and I worked every

#CamogieOnTour

#SupportHerSport

second day on a programme the physio gave me."

"Between that I had my own exercises at home and then I had the pool at the Mardyke Arena. Paudie Murray, Dr. Con Murphy and Colin Lane made sure I had everything at my disposal and then when I was off from work I was just trying to rehab it morning, noon and night."

There was no major litmus test for O'Connor's recovery. There was a brief run around the outside of the pitch at

the training session on the Thursday, and a few fitness tests on the evening before the final, but she was still very much uncertain about whether her knee would hold. She said she only realised she had a good possibility of playing the night before the final and that she played the majority of the game through a mix of fear and adrenaline.

"Playing in the backline I was thinking I don't want to be taken to the cleaners here," added O'Connor.

"There was one incident in the first-half and I struck the ball and got this massive pain up through my knee after I planted my foot. 'After that I didn't have too much trouble but I think I could have been playing on adrenaline. Once the whistle blows the aches and pains have to go out the window."

"I had it in my head that I needed to be prepared to go off, if it gets too bad because I have a team to think about as well and not to be putting the team in jeopardy, because I've become a weak link at the back."

"We knew there wasn't going to be an inch out on the field and when the final whistle went, I thought it was the worst game I've been

involved in for having that fear that something could go wrong."

"I could feel my heart pounding through my chest for the last couple of minutes and I was thinking 'oh my god, why do I put myself through this?' 'But just seeing Julia White putting the ball over the bar was special. She's been such a crucial player for us down through the years but she's just been so unlucky with injury."

"With very little space she had the composure to take the shot and score and thankfully we had time on our side and the final whistle blew a short while later. That was my favourite moment."

O'Connor added that it was her favourite win of all the finals she's played in, because of what her team was up against heading into the final and because of the uncertainty of her own situation, which made the victory all the sweeter. Winning is still the best antidote.



Legend Kelly breaks new ground on last hurrah

Camogie

Daragh Ó Conchúir

Retired Wexford legend Kate Kelly has welcomed a final chance to be part of history as a member of the inaugural Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars Tour to Madrid.

Kelly announced her decision in the spring to call time on a career that yielded four All-Irelands, nine All-Stars and a mammoth 27-315 in 88 championship games.

She earned the last of what was then a record-equalling nine All-Stars in her final campaign and that earned her an invitation to participate in the maiden tour, the centrepiece of which will be an

exhibition game between the 2017 and 2016 All-Star selections.

"It's brilliant, considering I retired and I think I just got in by the skin of my teeth," Kelly said, laughing in the sunshine after participating in a skills display for the staff of Liberty Seguros that caught the attention of bemused passers-by at the Parque de Juan Carlos.

"It's great for players going forward that you get the All-Star and there's something like this at the end of it as a reward. I'm absolutely thrilled to get on the first trip."

"I think it's a huge step forward. It's huge even for kids looking up to their role models going on an All-Star trip. It's progressive, rewarding the top

players in the association. It's exceptional. It's just another way to show it's something worth aspiring to, to be an inter-county player, and that the rewards are another bit closer to how it is with the men."

"It's great, too, to mix with people that you'd know only as enemies and foes on the field and get away in different circumstances and have a bit of craic with them, and to play with them and get to know them better. That's good, to be starting that community within camogie."

The progress in terms of profile, welfare and parity of esteem for camogie and women's sport is unrecognisable since Kelly first played at

senior level. There is a considerable journey to make yet, but the 37-year-old is confident progress will continue.

"Back a good while ago, they did the Rest of Ireland team. That kind of fell away and then the All-Stars came about and that was a huge progressive step. The tour being added on gives more to that accolade."

"You can see the huge strides that have been made in the last five years — even in two to three years — in every aspect of ladies' games, including the social media aspect. I'd like to think that in five years' time, we'll have made huge strides. You'll probably have leap-frogged

what's been done in the last 50 years. Well, you'd like to think that and that's what you need to see happening."

Kelly's brother John was joint manager of the Wexford squad that reached this year's All-Ireland quarter-final and he was quick to persuade her to retain a presence around the camp.

"I enjoyed being back around the girls and working with them in a different capacity. I didn't enjoy the fact that I couldn't help them [on the pitch] or do anything. The fact that I broke my wrist and thumb the week before they played the first match made it a little easier. If I had been training, I would have been kicking myself that I couldn't



Kate Kelly arrives in Madrid for the All Stars Tour.

play. As much as you think it might be the same as playing, it's not."

Kelly will be lining out in today's exhibition at XV Hortaleta Rugby Club (5.30pm Irish time).

"I might be a little rusty, but I'm really looking forward to it."

2016 All-Stars reign in Spain

2016 All-Stars 10-13

2017 All-Stars 7-8

Daragh Ó Conchúir

It was camogie with a difference at the XV Hortaleza Rugby Club in chilly Madrid last night, but entertainment value remained high for those in attendance, as the 2016 All-Stars came out on top in an old-fashioned shootout.

The class of 2016 fired 10 goals in the 11-a-side exhibition game with rolling subs and would have had more but for the agility of Aoife Murray between the posts. The Cork netminder made one spectacular full-length save from a penalty taken by fellow Leesider Orla Cotter that took the breath away in what was the focal point of the inaugural Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars Tour.

Cotter was one of the game's standout players with her distribution and point-scoring, along with Chloe Morey, Sarah Dervan, Niamh Mulcahy and Kate Kelly, but it was Anne Dalton that shone brightest in a much more advanced role than we have seen in recent years.

Ann Downey might have been using the opportunity to scout the midfielder-cum-centre-back's suitability up front and, while space was more available than would be the case in the heart of the summer, she certainly demonstrated her acumen for finding the net with regularity.

The victors led by 6-5 to 4-4 at the break, despite Morey hitting three goals for Paudie Murray's 2017 squad early on. Miriam Walsh and Mulcahy kept the scoreboard ticking for the 2016s, though, to build that seven-point advantage.

The scoring rate slowed considerably in the second half, before picking up again in the last 10 minutes.

Dalton, Mulcahy, Shelly Kehoe, Kelly and Rebecca Hennelly took some fine scores to ensure Downey's



Intense action in last night's Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Star game between the 2016 All-Stars and this year's All-Stars at XV Hortaleza Rugby Club, Madrid. Left: Selfie time during a visit to Real Madrid's Bernabeu Stadium for Katie Power, Collette Dormer, Aoife Donohue, and Tara Kenny. Pictures: Dan Sheridan

outfit were never in danger of being caught.

The current All-Stars showed plenty of pride, but the loss of Gemma O'Connor, who was reduced to cheerleading as she continues to rehab her knee, was significant.

Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Senior Camogie final referee Owen Elliott aided the consistent pace of the game with his unfussy whistling.

2016 SQUAD: E Kavanagh (Kilkenny), S

O'Connor (Wexford), S Dervan (Galway), R Hennelly (Galway), C Dormer (Kilkenny), A Dalton (Kilkenny), M Walsh (Offaly), S Kehoe (Wexford), D Gaulie (Kilkenny), N Mulcahy (Limerick), K Kelly (Wexford)

2017 SQUAD: A Murray (Cork), T Kenny (Galway), L Treacy (Cork), A Donohue (Galway), G O'Connor (Cork), M McGrath (Clare), E O'Sullivan (Cork), M Farrell (Kilkenny), A Thompson (Cork), K Power (Kilkenny), C Morey (Clare), A O'Reilly (Galway), A O'Connor (Cork), A Maher (Dublin), C Foley (Kilkenny).

Referee: O Elliott (Antrim)

Coláiste Choilm claim crown in goal-fest

Cork Colleges Senior A Camogie final

Coláiste Choilm, Ballincollig 8-6

Coachford CC 4-9

Fergus Jayes

Coláiste Choilm upset champions Coachford in yesterday's Cork Colleges Senior A Camogie final, when they turned a nine-point deficit into a victory of the same margin.

Straight from the throw in, Coachford's Ciara McCarthy found Marie O'Reilly who calmly slotted to the net, rocking the Ballincollig girls.

Hannah O'Leary responded with a well-taken goal, but Coachford talisman Cliona

Healy took over, notching 1-4 to no reply, and goals from Marie O'Reilly and Ella Foley gave the champions a dominant lead. However their superiority was short-lived, as Ballincollig went goal crazy in the last 10 minutes of the half, with Meabh Murphy, O'Leary, Dooley and a double from Orla McCarthy leaving Coachford shell-shocked going into the break two points down. Coláiste Choilm picked up where they left off, with Kate Dooley grabbing her side's sixth goal. Healy kept Coachford's heads up with a well-taken free, only for Coláiste Choilm's Hannah O'Leary and Meabh Murphy to kill the game with their second goals.

Scorers for Coláiste Choilm: H O'Leary (2-2), O McCarthy, M Murphy

(2-0 each), C Dooley (1-3), K Dooley

(1-0), R Murphy (0-1). Scorers for Coachford: C Healy (2-7, 0-4 frees), M O'Reilly (1-1), E Foley

(1-0), C McCarthy (0-1). COLAISTE CHOILM: C Buckley; J Dineen, R Quigley, L Riordan; A Kelly, O Keating, I Sheehan; C Hughes, C Keane; O McCarthy, M Kelly, K Dooley; C Dooley, H O'Leary, M Murphy.

Subs: M Kelly for R Murphy (40), A O'Regan for A Kelly (44), E Sheehan for J Dineen (64), J Sullivan for H O'Leary (85).

COACHFORD: C Twomey; B Cotter, M Cotter, L Dineen; C Ring, K McCarthy, M Lyons; J Tarrant, J Burke; C Sheehan, C McCarthy, C Healy, J Verling, M O'Reilly, E Foley.

Subs: M Ring for L Dineen (33), M Twomey for M Lyons (44), C Barrett for J Burke (49), J Cotter for C Sheehan (51), T Clifford for E Foley (55), L Cooney for C Twomey (57), E Foley for K McCarthy (80), L Moynihan for C Ring (62), C McCarthy for J Verling (62).

Referee: A Larkin



Coláiste Choilm captain Rebecca Quigley and her teammates celebrate with the cup after beating Coachford College to claim the Cork Post Primary A Camogie crown at Castle Road. See Page 8 for match report. Picture: Larry Cummins

Donnelly rescues Kilmessan

All-Ireland Junior Club Camogie final

Clanmaurice (Kerry) 1-4
Kilmessan (Meath) 1-4

Daragh Ó Conchúir Crettyard

A brilliant goal by Aileen Donnelly three minutes into injury-time rescued Kilmessan and took Clanmaurice to a replay next Sunday.

Clanmaurice were the first Kerry club to reach a camogie club decider. They dominated the early stages but failed to capitalise, with six first-half wides. Kilmessan grew into the game but found Clan full-back Niamh Leen leading a stout defensive effort, with goalkeeper Alanna Maunsell pulling off two excellent saves.

It looked like Clanmaurice might race away when Patrice Diggin slotted three points inside seven minutes. However Donnelly hit a couple of points, including one with the boot, moments after being de-

nied by Maunsell and it was 0-3 to 0-2 at half-time.

The experienced centre-forward brought the teams level from a free but Diggin ended a 28-minute drought for Mike Enright's outfit from a similar opportunity. Once more Donnelly replied, this time with a classy score on the run.

Aoife Behan poked the shot to the Kilmessan net in the 59th minute, and it looked the crucial score. But Thynne hand-passed to Donnelly and the ciotóg did the rest, driving home a low shot from 25m.

Scorers for Clanmaurice: P Diggin (0-4, 3 frees); A Behan (1-0)

Scorers for Kilmessan: A Donnelly (1-4, 3 frees)

CLANMAURICE: A Maunsell, T Moran, N Leen, M Costello, E Ryall, S Murphy, O Young, P Diggin, O Dineen, A Behan, L Collins, S Horgan, J Fitzell, J Horgan, A M Leen.

Subs: A O'Connor for A M Leen (41), O'Keefe for Ryall (55)

KILMESSAN: A M Donnelly, A Walsh, R Kelly, C O'Leary, L O'Neill, A Lynch, T King, S Horan, M O'Leary, N Doyle, A Donnelly, M Ní Chollaín, L Donnelly, N Thynne, K Ní Chollaín. Subs: K Gormley for Doyle (40), A McLoughlin for M Ní Chollaín (51)

Referee: C Quinlan (Galway)

Big finish helps the Town win Shield title

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

Bishopstown 4-7
Brian Dillon's 2-3

THE Seandún U15 Shield final saw Bishopstown and Brian Dillon's go head to head and in an exciting game.

It took a strong last quarter from Bishopstown to help them secure the trophy after a fine contest in which both sides gave their all.

There were some excellent displays for both sides and for three quarters of the game, the result was in doubt.

The sides were level on two points apiece inside 10 minutes of the throw-in, before a Sophie Porter Foley goal edged Dillon's in front.

Bishopstown responded well with a Julie Langford goal. Brian Dillon's again took the lead with a second goal from Porter-Foley.

A Bishopstown point, in response, cut the lead to two, but Brian Dillon's again found their range and they stretched their advantage to three points once more.

Again though, Bishopstown dug deep to stay in touch and a goal from Anastasia Hassett had the sides back level.

As they battled to gain the upper hand, the pressure was on and it was Hassett who again found the target to propel Bishopstown into the lead.

Bishopstown were putting a lot of pressure on the Brian Dillon's defence with Charlotte Higgins, Caoimhe Henchy, and Abbie Ahern all working hard to keep the ball moving to their inside line.

Charlotte Higgins added to their tally with an excellent goal and from there on in, they tacked on more scores to help them secure the title.

Charlotte Higgins, who caused a lot of bother for the Brian Dillon's defence over the hour, was named Player of the Match.

BISHOPSTOWN: C O'Keefe, A Hassett, J Langford, J Scally, S Murphy, S Reidy, A Ahern, A Jansson, C Henchy, E Wall, J O'Kelly, K Manning, M O'Neill, C Higgins, M McCarthy.

Subs: A Moran for M McCarthy, A Broderick for K Manning, C O'Driscoll for G O'Driscoll, G O'Driscoll for A Jansson, R Healy for C Higgins.

BRIAN DILLON'S: C Rutherford, E Ray, C Brady, M O'Sullivan, C Mulcahy, A O'Hara, A O'Callaghan, R O'Connell, O Gibson, A Garvan, C Barrett, C Alavoine, J Barrett, O Brennan, S Porter-Foley.

Subs: R Barry for O Brennan, T White for A Garvan.

Referee: Aoife Walsh (St Vincent's).



Glen Rovers, the U15 A Seandún championship winners.

The Glen show their class in win

Glen Rovers 3-9
Blackrock 2-8

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

SEANDÚN kept the best till last with their U15 A championship final between Glen Rovers and Blackrock producing a cracker of a contest.

The city's division completed their last competition for 2017 at the Colleges Grounds, Castle Road and it really was a thriller. All through both sides gave it everything and the determination from both teams was superb in a game that had everything.

Blackrock hit the front with an early pointed free, Glen Rovers replied with Tara Mc McCarthy finding the range but the Rockies edged in front with a Sadhbh McCarthy goal. The response

was immediate with Ella Buckley confidently plucking a long delivery from the air and blasted the ball to the net to level matters.

Blackrock then pointed a free before an Anne Golden goal put them four points clear and they made it five as they began to gain a grip.

Tara Mc McCarthy pointed a free but again Blackrock responded with a point to hold onto their five-point lead. With five minutes to the break, Glen Rovers burst into life and two goals in a minute saw them turn the game in their favour.

Caitlin Brosnan cut the deficit to two points before Ella Buckley finished to the net to edge her side into a one-point lead and with Tara Mc McCarthy adding a point they led by two 3-3 to 2-4 at the interval.

From the restart, Glen Rovers set about increasing their lead and with Emma Akinouli and Tara McCarthy and prominent around the middle they ensured a steady supply to their inside line.

McCarthy added two points to their tally but Blackrock hit back with Anne Golden, Lia Guerin and Sadhbh McCarthy working hard they hit three points in a row to cut the deficit to one.

Glen Rovers responded with three points in a row Tara McCarthy, Ella Buckley and Carol Halpin Hurley on

target. With a goal between the sides, Blackrock pressed to get on parity but strong defending kept them at bay.

Ella Buckley added the insurance point to see her side over the line after a superb encounter where Glen Rovers full-back Lisa O'Riordan was named Player of the Match following a tremendous display in defence.

GLEN ROVERS: J Conway, I O'Meara, L O'Riordan, A Newman, L Egan, E O'Meara, R O'Halloran, T McCarthy, E Akinouli, N Howey-Smith, K O'Sullivan (c), C Halpin-Hurley, M Martin, E Buckley, C Brosnan.

Subs: O Lennon for N Howey-Smith, S Meenan for O Lennon.

BLACKROCK: H O'Connell, A Ni Sulleabhain, E O'Riordan, A Walsh, M Cashman, E McCarthy A Casey, A Lucey, S McCarthy, A Golden, A Hegarty, A Grimley, L Guerin, L Nason, A Kenny.

Referee: Billy O'Sullivan (Bishopstown).

Goals prove to be the difference for Fr O'Neill's

Fr O'Neill's 4-5
Ballinora 2-6

CAMOGIE

MARY NEWMAN

FR O'Neill's captured the SE Systems Minor C 13-a-side championship title with a seven-point victory over Ballinora in Castle Road last weekend.

Leading at the break by five points they maintained their momentum to run out winners and take the title in a good contest where both sides worked hard.

Two first-half goals from Jenny O'Sullivan and Clodagh Finn helped Fr O'Neill's lay the foundation for victory.

And with the hard-working Clodagh Finn with three first-half points and Aoife Higgins and Hannah Belton adding one each they set the pace of the game.

Ballinora had points from Kate O'Shea (2) and Cliona Dooley whilst Jane McAuliffe was on target with a first-half goal ensured they stayed in contention and at the half-time whistle it was 2-5 to 1-3 in Fr O'Neill's favour.

Ballinora applied pressure in the second Cliona Dooley added a point and with Kate O'Shea on target twice they kept pace with Fr O'Neill's.

Kayla O'Riordan ensured Fr O'Neill's maintained their lead as she added to their tally with two second-half goals.

Despite Kate Dooley grabbing a Ballinora goal, Fr O'Neill's saw it through to the full-time whistle as

they maintained their lead to take the title.

Fr O'Neill's Clodagh Finn, who had a great hour notching up 1-3 of her side's total, was named as Player of the Match.

Scorers for Fr O'Neill's: K O'Riordan 2-0, Clodagh Finn 1-3, J O'Sullivan 1-0, A Higgins, H Belton 0-1 each.

Ballinora: K O'Shea 0-4 (0-3 f), K Dooley, J McAuliffe 1-0 each, C Dooley 0-2.

FR O'NEILL'S: C Millerick, M Steele, M Cowling, K O'Dwyer, D Corcoran, A Bernard, A Higgins, N Cowling, K O'Riordan, A Dalton, C Finn, H Belton, J O'Sullivan.

Subs: KA Leahy for K O'Dwyer, C O'Keefe for H Belton, L Keegan for J O'Sullivan.

BALLINORA: O O'Shea, A Murphy, K O'Halloran (c), S O'Keefe, B Holmes, G French, A Unnahan, KA Creen, J McAuliffe, K O'Shea, K Dooley, C Nic Abhaird, C Dooley.

Subs: N Mayer for J McAuliffe, A Cabery for C Nic Abhaird, J McAuliffe for KA Creen.

Referee: Michael O'Mahony (Kilbrittain/Templeogue).

Ladies deserve their place at awards gala



Camogie

Linda Mellerick

THE Rearden's All-Star will feature a camogie selection for the first time at tomorrow night's awards in the venue on Washington Street from 7pm.

The 2017 team is primarily made up of the four semi-finalists and finalists with Inniscarra, Glen Rovers, Milford and St Catherine's making up 12 of the 15 positions. The other three go to Ballincollig, Douglas and Courcy Rovers.

1. Denise Luby (Glen Rovers): Glen Rovers reached both the league and championship finals. Denise was consistent between the posts throughout. Cool under pressure, a great hand and strong puck-outs, Denise reads games well.

In only her second season in goal, she was instrumental in Glen Rovers reaching both finals. Had a very good season.

2. Leah Weste (Ballincollig): A solid defender for Ballincollig's senior team for several seasons. Out in front and first to every ball against St Finbarr's in their opening round, she gave a star performance.

Despite losing to Milford in the quarter-final, Leah defended intensely and drove her team forward as they took the game to Milford in the second half. Showed great leadership.

3. Kelly Falvey (Glen Rovers): Playing at full-back for the first time this season, Kelly was given the task of marking opponents' key players in many championship games.

Showing maturity and a calmness under pressure, she denied star forwards many scores with strong persistent play.

4. Elaine O'Riordan (Milford): A consistent superb defender for Milford. Always attacking, never shying from the tough tackle, always driving her team forward.

5. Ashling Thompson (Milford): Had a great season. Started most games at midfield, but defended brilliantly when Milford were under pressure and attacked with force when in possession.

Showing great spirit and leadership, she stood out in every game she played.

6. Rena Buckley (Inniscarra): Coolness personified, a great reader of the game, the leader of a solid Inniscarra defence. Used her experience to huge effect and was outstanding in a tough schedule for the county champions.

7. Aoife Kavanagh (Inniscarra): Lining out alongside Rena Buckley, Aoife grew stronger as the championship progressed. Had a tremendous season.

Very strong under the high ball, winning most of those aerial battles, with a great work rate, Aoife was one of Inniscarra's best defenders throughout the championship and a key reason why they are champions again.



Aoife Kavanagh, Inniscarra, closes down Donna O'Neill, Glen Rovers, in the county final in October.

Picture: Jim Coughlan



Ballincollig's Leah Weste gets her pass away in senior championship clash with Imokilly at Castle Road.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

senior league final and throughout that campaign Jacinta was excellent at midfield, possessing a great work ethic and as a superb free taker.

She carried those performances through to the championship. A solid season.

9. Aileen Sheehan (Inniscarra): A player who was consistently outstanding around the middle of the

Her link play, work rate, defending and forward runs were very impressive. Her goal with two minutes to go in the semi-final saw Inniscarra win by a solitary point and go on to win the championship.

10. Katrina Mackey (Douglas): Another outstanding year for one of Cork's star forwards. Her performances for Douglas were top class

the semi-final.

Scoring 12 points of a total of 14 in the drawn quarter-final and striking nine from 14 in the replay, some of the points were top class, making Katrina an automatic choice.

11. Orla Cotter (St Catherine's): Incredible performances all through for St Catherine's once again. A player who consistently delivers top-

miles, defending, attacking, linking with teammates, showing great positional sense Orla was a stand-out choice.

12. Finola Neville (St Catherine's): Scored a goal to put the game beyond Glen Rovers in the championship opening round. Covering miles all through, made great runs and laid off some great passes for team-mates to score. Was Catherine's best player in their semi-final defeat to Glen Rovers where she worked her socks off.

13. Joanne Casey (Inniscarra): What a club player! Has great strength, speed and wrist work. Extremely dangerous every time she's in possession. Always guaranteed a big return.

A superb free taker. Player of the match in the county final, with a contribution of 2-7, 2-3 from play.

14. Emma Murphy (Glen Rovers): Just 16 years of age the day Glen Rovers booked their place in the final this year. What a player for the future.

Scored in every championship game, with 1-2 in the final. Led the way up front, not afraid to take responsibility. Gathers possession turns and looks to score every time.

15. Maria Watson (Milford): Never fails to deliver and this season was no exception despite the disappointment of losing to Inniscarra by point in the semi-final.

Scored 4-7 from four championship games with some spectacular goals.

Lauren honoured for sporting skills

Draw for camogie championship

All-Ireland champions Cork have been drawn with defeated semi-finalists Dublin, Wexford and Tipperary in the group stages of Camogie's 2018 Senior Championship.

Defeated 2017 finalists Kilkenny have been paired in Group 1 with the other beaten semi-finalist, Galway, plus Munster trio Clare, Limerick and Waterford.

The Intermediate Championship sees defeated 2017 All-Ireland finalists Cork drawn in Group 1 along with Carlow, Derry, Down, Laois and Wexford. Group 2 sees newly promoted Westmeath drawn in a group which also contains Antrim, Kildare, Kilkenny, Galway and Tipperary.

The first round of fixtures in the Senior Championship will take place on the weekend of June 9-10.

Camogie Senior Championship, Group 1: Clare, Galway, Kilkenny, Limerick, Waterford. **Group 2:** Cork, Dublin, Meath, Offaly, Tipperary, Wexford.

Intermediate Championship, Group 1: Carlow, Cork, Derry, Down, Laois, Wexford. **Group 2:** Antrim, Kildare, Kilkenny, Galway, Tipperary, Westmeath.

Premier Junior Championship, Group 1: Clare, Kerry, Limerick, Offaly. **Group 2:** Armagh, Dublin, Ros-

CAMOGIE

John Tarrant

VERSATILE Lauren Homan reveals a crop of exciting sport talent is coming through the ranks and rewarded after a stunning season helped Cork regain the All Ireland Senior Camogie title.

Ball winning and pace are vital traits to the young St Vincents player's game and a real menace for opposition defenders to dispossess her once she gets on the ball. Time and again, the creative play of Homan has helped grab key scores for her club and Cork minor teams that ultimately gained a call up to inter county senior duty that ultimately returned of the O'Duffy Cup to Leeside.

Her commitment and skills across a range of sports merits Lauren the monthly City and County Youth Sports Star Award at a function in the Metropole Hotel, Cork. Lauren earned selection for the Cork Senior panel in the summer following eye-catching performances in the minor grade for both Cork and her club St. Vincents.

"To come on during the closing 15 minutes in the All Ireland against Kilkenny was a huge experience, indescribable, the feeling of winning an All Ireland senior medal in my first year was truly amazing. Compared to minor level, the senior training is much more intensive and I was also preparing for my Leaving Certificate and it proved a hectic season," she said. "The St Vincents camogie club are fantastic, offering terrific encouragement."

The skilful Homan is a keen sports woman, her soccer talents surfaced at Lakewood AFC, prior to signing for Cork City Women's FC as she co-captained a side to win the U16 Gaynor Cup. During her minor camogie involvement with Cork, Homan was also a member of the Ireland U17 Soccer Squad who travelled to Turkey and help her country reach the European Elite Phase.

"It's difficult at times to play two games but I love camogie, probably my favourite sport. I've put camogie number one since the summer. Paudie Murray is a brilliant manager, absolutely trusts the involvement of young players on giving us the opportunity to enhance our careers on a call up to the senior panel," said the Business and Marketing student at Colaiste Stiiofain



Cork Camogie All Ireland winner Lauren Homan, St Vincent's, receives the Cork City and County Youth Sports Star Award from Roger Russell, General Manager, Metropole Hotel. Included is sponsor John Buckley; Deputy Lord Mayor Cllr John Sheehan; Deputy County Mayor, Cllr Anthony Barry; Mary McSweeney, chairperson, Cork Camogie and Sheila Golden, Vice Chairperson Cork Camogie. Picture: John Tarrant

Naofa.

"Currently, the soccer is held up owing to the camogie commitments, hopefully, we can get back to Croke Park with the Cork seniors in 2018 but it will demand a lot of hard work to retain the title," said Lauren.

Deputy Lord Mayor Cllr. John Sheehan and Deputy County Mayor Cllr. Anthony Barry extended congratulations to Homan on her achievement and acknowledged with the City and County Youth Sports Star Award organised in association with John Buckley Sports. Metropole Hotel Manager Roger Russell commended the role played by the young star on retaining the All Ireland title.

"We're delighted to be involved and acknowledge the best talent within the county. Well done to Lauren and her Cork colleagues on claiming All Ireland honours," he said.

Sponsor John Buckley commended Lauren on her dedication and work-rate that yielded ultimate honours.

"The awards are a fantastic opportunity to recognise the talents of Cork's young sporting stars and thanks are extended to all involved for recognising the talents such as Lauren Homan," he said.



Cork Camogie All Ireland winner Lauren Homan from St. Vincents receives the Cork City and County Youth Sports Star Award. Picture: John Tarrant

Nov. 2017



FOURMIDABLE: Michael O'Sullivan, general manager, Rearden's back left and Paul Montgomery, proprietor Rearden's presenting the Overall Player of the Year awards to, from left: Brian Lawton, Imokilly (hurling); Orla Finn, Kinsale (football); Aileen Sheehan, Inniscarra (camogie) and Luke Connolly, Nemo Rangers (football). See P50/51 for more. Picture: Brian Loughheed

Donnelly star of the show for Kilmessan

Daragh Ó Conchúir

Camogie

Kilmessan were crowned AIB All-Ireland Junior Club Camogie champions for the second time after a strong second-half performance against a resolute Clanmaurice in yesterday's replay in Silvermines (0-9 to 0-5).

Aileen Donnelly was the star of the show striking some excellent points from placed balls and showing good leadership, but crucially, Kilmessan had a supporting cast of players like Kate Ni Choileáin, Megan Ni Choileáin, Maeve O'Leary and Nadine Doyle able to find the target from play.

That was a luxury Clan-

maurice did not possess as they were once more overly reliant on Patrice Diggin.

Scorers for Kilmessan: A Donnelly 0-5 (all frees); K Ni Choileáin, M O'Leary, M Ni Choileáin, N Doyle (0-1 each).

Scorers for Clanmaurice: P Diggin 0-4 (all frees), S Horgan (0-1).

KILMESSAN: A M Dennehy, A Walsh, R Kelly, C O'Leary, L O'Neill, A Lynch, T King, S Horgan, M O'Leary, K Ni Choileáin, A Donnelly, M Ni Choileáin, K Gorman, M Thynne, L Dennehy. Subs: N Doyle for Gorman (45).

CLANMAURICE: A Maunsell, M Costello, N Leen, T Moran, E Ryall, S Murphy, O Young, P Diggin, L Collins, A Behan, O Dineen, Collins, S Horgan, J Fitzell, J Horgan, A M Leen.

Referee: A Doherty (Laois).

Kelly delighted to break new ground on last hurrah

By Camogie Press
Posted 30/11/2017



By Daragh Ó Conchúir

RETIRED Wexford legend Kate Kelly has welcomed a final opportunity to be part of history, as a member of the inaugural Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars Tour to Madrid.

Kelly announced her decision in the spring to call time on a career that yielded four All-Irelands, nine All-Stars and a mammoth 27-315 in 88 Championship games for the Yellowbellies between her debut in 1996 and her last outing in an extra-time defeat by Cork in the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Semi-Final 20 years later.

She earned the last of what was a then record-equalling nine All-Stars in her final campaign and that earned her an invite to participate in the maiden Tour, the centrepiece of which will be an exhibition game between the 2017 and 2016 All-Star selections.

"It's brilliant, considering I retired and I think I just got in by the skin of my teeth!" she laughed in the sunshine after participating in skills display for the staff of Liberty Seguros at the Parque de Juan Carlos I that caught the attention of a number of bemused passers-by.

"It's great for players going forward that you get the All-Star and there's something like this at the end of it as a reward. I'm absolutely thrilled to get on the first trip.

"I think it's a huge step forward. It's huge even for kids looking up to their role models going on an All-Star trip. It's progressive, rewarding the top players in the Association. It's exceptional. It's just another way to show it's something worth aspiring to, to be an inter-county player, and that the rewards are another bit closer to how it is with the men.

"It's great too to mix with people that you'd know only as enemies and foes on the field and get away in different circumstances and have a bit of *crack* with them, and to play with them and get to know them better. That's good, to be starting that community within Camogie."

The progress in terms of profile, welfare and parity of esteem for Camogie and women's sport is unrecognisable since Kelly first played at Senior level. There is a considerable journey to make yet but the 37-year-old is confident that progress will continue.

"Back a good while ago they did the Rest of Ireland team. That kind of fell away and then the All-Stars came about and that was a huge progressive step. The Tour being added on gives more to that accolade.

"You can see the huge strides that have been made in the last five years - even in two to three years - in every aspect of ladies' games, including the social media aspect. I'd like to think that in five years' time we'll have made huge strides. You'll probably have leapfrogged what's been done in the last 50 years - well you'd like to think that and that's what you need to see happening."

What about Gemma O'Connor separating herself at the top of the All-Star roll of honour with her 10th award?

"Yeah, I'm coming back next year!" comes the quick response, complete with wide grin.

"Ah no, I'm delighted with what I have. I'm thrilled. I'm delighted for her, she had a great year and a great All-Ireland to come and play given she'd an injury. You'd always have the fear going out on the field, playing with an impediment, you'd have that fear of being taken to the cleaners. It was brilliant to score that point at the end to level it. So no, I don't mind."

Kelly's brother John was joint manager of the Wexford squad that got to this year's Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Quarter-Final and he was quick to persuade her to retain a presence around the camp. Teenager Chloe Foxe is one of the younger contingent that trumpeted the benefits of having such *rous* in the dressing room.

Management and coaching is definitely in her future - indeed it is in her present with her club St Ibar's Shelmaliers Minors - but it will never get compare with playing

"I enjoyed being back around the girls and working with them in a different capacity. I didn't enjoy the fact that I couldn't help them (on the pitch) or do anything. The fact that I broke my wrist and thumb the week before they played the first match made it a little easier. If I had've been training I would have been kicking myself that I couldn't play!

"But I really enjoyed working with the team but it is different. You're not inside. As much as you think it might be the same as playing. It's not.

She will be lining out in today's exhibition at XV Hortaleta Rugby Club (5.30pm Irish time) however.

"I might be a little rusty" she warned smiling, "but I'm really looking forward to it."

President Neary satisfied with progress as term comes to an end

By Camogie Press
Posted 03/12/2017



By Daragh Ó Conchúir

WITH the inaugural Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars match still fresh in the mind from the previous night, Camogie Association President Catherine Neary reflected on Friday on some of the successes of her term, which started in March 2015 and comes to a conclusion next April, when Kathleen Woods will pick up the baton.

How long was the Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars Tour an aspiration?

"It was something everybody would have been aware of for a number of years that we wanted to do as an organisation. Certainly from my point of view, it's all about the game and if it's all about the game it's all about the players as well. So it's another step up that ladder to show we have a fantastic game and players that put so much of their life into our game. This is another small way to acknowledge that. It's important to get it done and that we continue on and learn from it as it goes on. There is no downside to something like this. It's about bringing the game out there, not hiding it."

How have you found the Presidency? Busy?

"I work full-time as well so it's very busy but when you have a passion for something it doesn't feel like work. There are challenges but I'll miss it. There are so many opportunities. You get to go to places and meet people that you never would have otherwise. I've been in the States, I've been in Europe meeting people in the wider Gaelic Games family, bringing the games to a wider audience, meeting players that have nothing to do with Ireland, never seen Ireland but had seen the game or worked with someone Irish that was coming up to the club. And it reminds you how much we take for granted when you see some of the hurdles the international community have to clear, travelling five or six hours to play in a blitz because they love it. Without being President of the Camogie Association, I would never have had those opportunities."

What has been achieved in the last few years?

"One of the big things would have been the new National Development Plan, to have something different but to be very clear where we want to go. That's why it's split the way it is. It's about working together and moving together. It's a true saying, if we come together, we're stronger. We wanted to make sure we focussed on the right areas. Our players, absolutely, but also around our volunteers. Next year we'll have a roll out of our training programmes for our volunteers, to make sure they are supported and feel supported, have someone to talk to, but also they know what their role is. It's about encouraging other people to get involved because no more than the players and managers have become so professional, we need to have that off the field as well. If the structures around the players aren't right, it's hard for the game to reach its full potential.

"We looked at continuing the growth of the game. Certainly, the Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars Tour is part of that. So too was having a Soaring Stars team for the first time. Up to then it was three players picked. In my head I was thinking, "When is a goalkeeper ever going to be selected?" because it's so competitive at Junior and Intermediate level. And while it's a team sport, I think it's important to recognise the individual too within that.

"We are working with the GAA in coming together and hopefully there'll be a bit more on that before I finish. We have a very good relationship and work well together. I would hope that with the change in the hurling structures, we will see a lot more double-headers and I think that's important because there is an affinity between hurling and Camogie.

"We have issued our concussion guidelines too in the last couple of years and have a lot more work to do in that area. That's an area we have worked closely with the GAA on as they have much greater access to the expertise. I don't believe in duplicating things. If the expertise is there, use it. On child welfare, all the organisations are working together under one group too."

The integration process is an arduous one?

"The whole Gaelic Games family, we talk and meet on a regular basis and have discussions about what we have in common. There can be too much focus on what's different. All the associations signed off on One Club Guidelines and that was very important. It's not that everybody has to do it but there is a structure, a best practice around how to do it. My own belief is that we will get there and it will become more formalised in time. You can't force these things, you need a bit of patience. But the GAA have been very supportive. Aogán Ó Fearghail, (GAA President) and Páirc Duffy (GAA Director General) have been very good. The will is there. I can see that at club and county level. I'm very fortunate to be from Kilkenny where it's always been a natural thing to support Camogie. Ned Quinn and all his colleagues were always that way."

The profile is definitely increasing.

"It's wonderful for the people to come and see the games but you want to grow your audience and the best way to do that is through the media. It's been great to have the Quarter-Finals and Semi-Finals televised live by RTE and the feedback was very positive. Even on a local level, the promotion and support of the games has been very good and we want to grow that more. Having games broadcast is important because it encourages girls and you want to have your major players as household names and have young girls looking up to Gemma O'Connor and Anne Dalton, the way it is with the hurlers and footballers. Liberty Insurance have been very good throughout their sponsorship of our Championships and the All-Stars in helping that happen."

What's on the wish list?

"There's a couple of things that will hopefully come up but I'm not going to spoil the surprise now! A couple of things might happen after I'm gone but we've all benefited in that way from the work done by our predecessors. We want to get more media publicity, and support our clubs, make sure our coaching is innovative and up-to-date. Player Welfare is a big issue as well and we'll look to improve on those areas."

You mentioned Player Welfare. What's the relationship like with the WGPA?

"We need to formalise that maybe a little bit more but the Players' Player of the Year Award we run jointly with them has worked well. That the players vote from the list of nominees makes it mean a little more because it comes from their peers. I think it's about working together with the WGPA because we all want the same thing. For us, it can't all be about the elite players because they are just a percentage but what you do for the elite players you need to do for the club players too and make sure it cascades down. I think it's good to have the WGPA as it's important for the players to have a voice."

Glen girls end season on a winning note as Lisa shines

ONE of Cork's most historic GAA clubs is celebrating success on the pitch.

Glen Rovers under 15 camogie girls brought the season to a winning conclusion, winning the Seandun Championship against Blackrock. Played at Blackrock College in Castle Road, both sides served up a thrilling game where the Glen Rovers girls came from five points down to take the title with four points to spare. In a game where everybody shone, Glen Rovers defender Lisa O'Riordan was awarded Player Of The Match following a tremendous display in the fullback position.

With Ella Buckley, Caitlin Brosnan, Tara McCarthy and Carol Halpin-Hurley all on target, Glen Rovers girls notched up an impressive 3-9 to run out winners and take the title with the trophy accepted by captain Kayleigh O'Sullivan on behalf of her team.

The club caters for girls from age four upwards to senior and the hard work being put in at all levels saw them contest the senior county final for the first time in over twenty years. Whilst they lost out to champions Inniscarra in an excellent final the future is bright for Cork's oldest camogie club who carry on the huge tradition of Glen Rovers with pride.

The Christmas break is coming up shortly

the club will be back on the playing fields at the end of January.

Meanwhile, the Glen Community Christmas Tree Of Light and Remembrance event will take place on Friday, December 8 at 7pm.

Locals can congregate at the tree in St. Brendan's Church Grounds for the switching on of the Lights by the Lord Mayor of Cork.

Carol singing by the local school children will provide entertainment and there might be a surprise visit from a man in a red suit on the night.

For more information contact Ann Long at Cork City Partnership's Glen Outreach Office on 021 4550943.

Nov 2017



Glen Rovers player Lisa O'Riordan is presented with the Player Of The Match in the Seandun Under 15 final by chairman Donnacha Broderick after her side's recent victory against Blackrock.

Cork club talent



Rearden's GAA All-Star teams

CAMOGIE

- 1. Denise Luby (Glen Rovers).
 - 2. Leah Weste (Ballincollig).
 - 3. Kelly Falvey (Glen Rovers).
 - 4. Elaine O'Riordan (Milford).
 - 5. Aishling Thompson (Milford).
 - 6. Rena Buckley (Inniscarra).
 - 7. Aoife Kavanagh (Inniscarra).
 - 8. Jacinta Crowley (Couragey Rovers).
 - 9. Aileen Sheehan (Inniscarra).
 - 10. Katrina Mackey (Douglas).
 - 11. Grla Cotter (St. Catherine's).
 - 12. Finola Neville (St. Catherine's).
 - 13. Joanne Casey (Inniscarra).
 - 14. Emma Murphy (Glen Rovers).
 - 15. Maria Watson (Milford).
- Club breakdown: Inniscarra 4, Glen Rovers 3, Milford 3, St Catherine's 2, Ballincollig 1, Couragey Rovers 1, Douglas 1.

The Camogie Team of the Year - included in photo are Paul Montgomery (Reardens); Paudie Murray, Cork senior camogie manager and Michael O'Sullivan (Reardens).



CAMOGIE MATTERS

By Jennifer O'Leary

LASTING LEGACY | Camogie Association President Catherine Neary's term comes to a conclusion next April

First All-Stars tour shows the world how special camogie is

Historic tour to Madrid puts camogie on the world stage and helps grow the game

WHEN the result of the inaugural Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars exhibition match filtered through last Thursday, it was no surprise to hear that Cork goalkeeper Aoife Murray shone between the posts, even though she finished on the losing team, and it was no shock either that those watching on at the XV Hortaleza Rugby Club in chilly Madrid were delighted with what they saw.

There was skill, passion, lots of scores – the 2016 All-Stars team beat the 2017 All-Stars by 10-13 to 7-8 – and the historic first Camogie All-Stars has been a massive success.

When you consider how special camogie is, that was never in doubt.

This tour symbolises another step forward for women in sport but a giant leap for the game of camogie. It rewards the All-Stars who are spreading the word by their heroics on the pitch throughout the year and it's promoting the game and showcasing the talent of camogie players to a new audience. It's win-win.

'It was something everybody would have been aware of for a number of years that we wanted to do as an organisation,' Camogie Association President Catherine Neary reflected, her term coming to an end next April.

'Certainly from my point of view, it's all about the game and if it's all about the game it's all about the players as well. So it's another step up that ladder to show we have a fantastic game and players that put so much of their life into our game. This is another small way to acknowledge that.'

'It's important to get it done and that we continue on and learn from it as it goes on. There is no downside to something like this. It's about bringing the game out there, not hiding it.'

Catherine's right, there is no downside to this. It's another step along the road for our sport.

The 2016 and 2017 All-Star selections, 29 in total from eight different counties, jetted off last Wednesday week to Madrid, all sharing a common goal: to promote the game of camogie

abroad. In the lead-up to this tour, players past and present backed this initiative and praised the forward-thinking of the Camogie Association, in conjunction with Liberty Insurance Ireland, who joined forces to ensure this idea could be realised.

Praise must be given to Liberty Insurance Ireland who have been a great support to camogie and ladies football teams during the past few years and the various initiatives such as 'squad goals' have raised the bar in highlighting the skills and competencies of clubs around the country in camogie.

On arriving to the Spanish capital the All-Star squads visited a number of local tourist attractions such as the home of Real Madrid, the Bernabeu. While sitting in the team seats at the stadium I'm sure the girls felt like the superstars they are, soaking in the sun and visualising what it's like to play in front of a crowd of 81,000 people. They also visited the Irish Embassy abroad as well as the Liberty Insurance offices in Madrid (Liberty Seguros) where the game of camogie was presented to the staff working within its walls.

The highlight of the tour for 2016 and 2017 All-Star Orla Cotter was the exhibition game where all 29 players displayed the skills of the game in a 50-minute match in the XV Hortaleza Rugby Club.

'The game was very enjoyable, playing and linking up with girls you're usually fighting against on the pitch. We had a fantastic welcome and time there. Playing camogie abroad and getting the chance to play and promote the game out here is not something you do get to do too often,' Orla said.

This trip also allowed the inter-county players to interact with locals, showing them the skills of the game in the form of an ad-hoc coaching session in Juan Carlos I Park. Each player broke down various basic skills of the game and demonstrated alongside the eager participants.

We can sometimes forget how skilful and technical camo-



On the big stage: The Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars paid a visit to The Santiago Bernabeu, home of Real Madrid, during their tour to the Spanish capital. (Photos: Dan Sheridan/Inpho)

'There is no downside to something like the All-Stars Tour. It's about bringing the game out there, not hiding it' – Camogie Association President Catherine Neary

gie is. Basic skills such as the jab pick or solo come naturally to those who have been playing from a young age. Here locals were fascinated by the technique involved and enjoyed the task of trying out something new and exciting.

Camogie as a game in Madrid is still just at the thinking phase. The aim is to start a club soon and compete in European competitions. Madrid GAC has over 150 members who provide opportunities to play both Gaelic football for men and women and hurling. Founded in 2003 the member base has grown and includes players from Spain, Ireland and beyond. The

hope is to start camogie in the Spanish capital and I'm sure this fantastic promotion of the game will kick-start this process and capture the imagination of many people.

This can only be the start of an exciting venture for the Camogie Association.

Having played with the Central Coast Camogie team in Sydney Australia, I have experienced how important it is to have that vital link and sense of identity through the help of Gaelic games. It's an integral part of our culture but can also play a vital part in other people's lives that aren't inherently Irish.



In the spotlight: The 2016 All-Stars team, managed by Cork's Paudie Murray, warm up ahead of the game against the 2017 All-Stars at Estadio Central, Universidad Complutense Madrid.

The game should be for all and what better ambassadors of the game but the players themselves who showcase skill, passion and determination to reach the heights in their own game. With continued efforts

between sponsorship partners, players and the Camogie Association itself, there can be significant growth in camogie in future years.

We are only just at the beginning.

Niamh puts injury nightmare behind her to shine for Rebels

GER McCARTHY chats to latest Muskerry GAA award winner Niamh McCarthy

NIAMH McCarthy put five torrid years of injuries behind her to become a county winner with her club Inniscarra and an All-Ireland camogie champion with Cork.

The latest recipient of a Muskerry GAA award, McCarthy recovered from multiple cruciate ligament injuries to make a name for herself with both club and county.

McCarthy's story is all the more remarkable considering she was just 14 when her injury issues began yet by the time she reached 21, two senior county club and an All-Ireland senior Camogie medals were tucked away in her back pocket.

'I was 14 when my first bad cruciate injury in my right knee occurred and it took a year to come back from that,' McCarthy recalled.

'In my first game back, my leg gave away again, it was the same knee. I went in for an MRI and it apparently showed that my cruciate was torn and I had to wait four months for an operation. When I went in for it, the surgeon said it wasn't torn and that there was actually no need to repair it.

'So, I felt I had wasted the whole of that season thinking it was torn when it wasn't. Then I came back again and my other knee went. It was a lot to deal with over such a long period of time.'

Recovering from a five-year period of cruciate injuries would be a monumental task for an experienced senior player. The fact Niamh McCarthy was 14 when her injury woes began makes her comeback and subsequent emergence onto an All-Ireland winning camogie team all the more astonishing.

'I had huge support at home and everything I ever needed was done for me,' recalled McCarthy.

'Rehab wise, that was tough. It was something I had to do on my own though as no one else was going to go to the gym and rehab my knees for me. I suppose, it was tougher mentally on me at that stage because I had to sit there and watch other girls play. All you want to do at that age is play. I was still very young to be unable to play, I mean I was 14.

'Young people at that age are still only picking up sports for the first time and not being in a position like I was, not knowing if I would ever play again.'

Stepping back out onto a pitch for the first time after five years of gruelling pain, trepidation, setbacks, rehab and, understandably, moments of doubt and loneliness was an ex-



Deserved recognition: Eileen O'Flynn presenting the Muskerry GAA/Auld Triangle Sports Award for October to Niamh McCarthy in recognition of her displays with Inniscarra and Cork camogie teams. Included are parents, Andrew and Rose, and brother, Brian. (Photo: Anne O'Riordan)

'I nearly had to be forced out on to the pitch because I was very hesitant to play a full game from the start' - Niamh McCarthy

tremely difficult moment for the young Inniscarra player.

Admirably, McCarthy doesn't make excuses about that difficult time. She was afraid. Who could blame her? In the end, she had to be pushed back on to the pitch for UCC before realising she could play again with fear of injury crippling a sporting career that had yet to begin.

'I nearly had to be forced out on to the pitch because I was very hesitant to play a full game from the start,' admitted the Inniscarra and Cork star.

'In my head, I wasn't going back playing. It was my Mam who said you can do this and you can play again. I was going into sixth year when I had my final cruciate operation and also embarking on my Leaving Cert so had pretty much ruled out ever playing again.

'It was only in my first year in college with UCC that I played my first proper game of camogie after all the injuries.

'Obviously, it was fantastic for me to come through a whole 60 minutes having been getting minutes here and there for a while leading up to the game.

'I wasn't ever confident enough to start a full game un-

til I had built up ten minutes, 20 minutes and 30 minute appearances. It was a massive boost to my confidence when I finally got that full game under my belt.'

Thankfully, there is a happy ending to McCarthy's story after so many years of enduring injuries, surgeries and hospital visits. The 21-year-old third year Pharmacy UCC student bounced back in style, winning back-to-back county titles with her Inniscarra club before playing a huge role in Cork's 2017 All-Ireland Camogie final success.

'This year, Inniscarra won the county senior title for the second year in a row and only the third time in our club's history,' McCarthy stated.

'There was controversy over how we won it because we were forced to play four games in eight days which was a lot to take. We played a quarter-final on a Saturday, the semi-final on a Wednesday, the final on the Saturday and a Munster semi-final the day after, on a Sunday!

'To be honest, we were delighted to win the first county, overcoming Milford in the semi-final, a team we stopped doing five-in-a-row which was



Focussed: Niamh McCarthy in action for Cork this season.

huge for us. Then, to come back and win the title for a second time this past year showed we were no flash in the pan.'

McCarthy's efforts alongside Rena Buckley and her other Inniscarra teammates did not go unnoticed. An unexpected phone call from Cork camogie manager Paudie Murray saw the Inniscarra player receive her first ever call-up to an inter-county squad.

'2017 was my first year on the Cork camogie senior panel, any Cork panel, having only played my first season as a club player the year before,' McCarthy admitted.

'I got a phone call from Paudie (Murray) last December wondering if I would consider trying out for the Cork panel. I made enough of an impression in the league to keep my place on the

team and got game time in the championship after that.

'My feeling at the final whistle after beating Kilkenny in Croke Park was utter relief more than anything else. It was unbelievable to win it, especially with a last-minute point, but having my family there, after everything I had been through, was extra special.'

Few camogie players have had to endure the injuries Inniscarra's Niamh McCarthy went through from the age of 14 to 19. To come back from that and make the impact she has at both club and inter-county level singles McCarthy out as one of the toughest, bravest and most talented individuals to have represented her county in recent times.

Hopefully, a bright and injury-free future awaits.

Aileen vital to the success of Inniscarra

Nov 2017

CAMOGIE

■ John O'Shea

AILEEN SHEEHAN showcased how vital she was to Inniscarra back on what was a very memorable day for the club at the end of October.

As Inniscarra secured back to back Cork Senior Camogie Championship titles, Sheehan most certainly played her part to influence proceedings with an efficient display in the middle of the park.

The Mid Cork side showed the strong character that they were made of this year.

That was in clear evidence in the final victory over Glen Rovers, as Inniscarra showed the grit to dig in and drive on during a number of occasions when the city side were putting it right up to them.

For the second of Joanne Casey's crucial early goals on that final day, Sheehan was the architect for the move as she played a very good ball into her path to set the attacker away.

Sheehan proved during this 2017 championship success for Inniscarra that she is a reliable operator, a player that knows how to dig in for the cause and is a player that thrives out of performing on the big occasions. She quite simply had a remarkable year and a remarkable performance in the Cork Camogie final.

Sheehan was consistently outstanding around the middle of the field for Inniscarra.

Her goal with two minutes to go in the semi-final against Milford saw Inniscarra win by a single point and of course we all know what they went on to do after that.

Therefore it was little surprise that Sheehan was awarded the Reardens Club All Stars Camogie player of the year award.

Giving me her thoughts on what was has been a pretty good year gone by for Inniscarra, Sheehan said:

"It was a very good year for Inniscarra overall.

"It started off a bit slowly and we lost to Sars in the first round.

"But that was the wake up call we needed.

"We got back to the grindstone once the Cork players came back to us and we were able to drive on into the latter stages of the County Championships."

There is a great togetherness about this Inniscarra group of players.

That was in clear evidence in the final victory over the Glen, as whenever they did not have the ball they worked tirelessly to win it back.

When Inniscarra were in possession of the ball there was always an option for someone to pass to.

Inniscarra were determined to show that their 2016 title was not a flash in the pan and they most cer-



From left: Paul Montgomery, Reardens; Aileen Sheehan, Inniscarra, Camogie Player of the Year winner; Keith O'Sullivan, Heineken Ireland, and Paudie Murray, Cork Camogie manager. Picture: Brian Loughheed

tainly proved it was not with what was a terrific display and win their second county championship in a row.

The lead up to the final was quite hectic for Inniscarra to say the very least.

They had to play their quarter final replay against Douglas, their semi final against Milford and lastly the final against the Glen all in just the space of one week.

Sheehan described how in particular the Milford semi final success was massive for the morale inside the camp.

"We are a very tight team.

"After playing those three games in the space of a week there was a lot

of effort put in and our character really came through in the end, when we just kept on going until there was nothing left.

"Last year in the final in CIT the occasion really built the adrenaline and we just about got over Milford in what was an unbelievable match.

"We were lucky at times in that game to get a couple of goals.

"To go out this year on that Wednesday night in Mallow against Milford, we knew what we were doing.

"We had a good plan against Milford.

"They are a fantastic side but our workrate in the end really just won out.

"That victory was fantastic for the

confidence and morale in the group and we were able to drive on for the final against the Glen knowing they were a really good team."

Although this Inniscarra side have showcased time and again they have character in abundance, it was really a bit on the harsh side for them to have to play a Munster Championship game the following day after winning the County title.

"Although it was fantastic to win the County, it was disappointing that we had to play the Munster championship match the following day.

"It was unfortunate the way the fixtures fell that it didn't allow us to go Munster and to go on and play well in the All Ireland.

"As a team we would really like the chance to be able to get back to Croke Park, to get back to where we all would love to play in the All Ireland series," added Sheehan.

Although there are some very experienced campaigners, such as Rena Buckley in the side, this Inniscarra outfit are quite a young side on the whole.

Looking ahead to what the club might potentially go on to achieve next year and beyond, Sheehan added:

"With some of the minor players coming through and a large bulk of the squad around our mid twenties, we have a great panel.

"If we can keep up the great work we're doing and also get the fixtures situation by the board sorted out, I definitely think there is an All Ireland within this group in Inniscarra."

For now Sheehan and Inniscarra can reflect with pride on what has been another immensely satisfactory year for the club.

“Although it was fantastic to win the County, it was disappointing that we had to play the Munster championship match the following day

Grants offer vital support to players

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

THE announcement that the government grants introduced last year for inter-county camogie and ladies' football squads will continue this year is hugely welcomed.

The scheme provides financial support for medical cover and injury prevention, player and team performance and training facilities. Workshops on how to apply for the grants will be held in Limerick, Enniskillen, and Dublin.

The criteria for the grant applications are that they be agreed upon by players, management, and county board officials and representatives from each are required to be in attendance for their squad to be eligible for funding in the year ahead.

The scheme is jointly administered by the Camogie Association, Ladies' Gaelic Football Association, and the WGP, and is supported by Sport Ireland and the Department of Sport.

The workshops will cover information on the spending areas covered by the grants, the application forms, the documenting of expenditure, the reclaiming of funds and the necessary communications. There will also be discussions with representatives from other counties.

2017 was the first time inter-county grants were awarded and they were welcomed as a means of supporting county teams and recognising female players as elite athletes and acknowledging their contribution to Irish sport.

In the first year, 55 squads applied for the government grant funding, covering a wide range of supports and services.

The inaugural scheme was seen as another positive step for ladies' GAA players and was widely welcomed by all inter-county players.

Funding was provided for injury prevention and medical cover, physiotherapists, doctors, pool sessions and sports massage.

Help was also given towards strength-and-conditioning, performance analysis, and sports psychology and nutrition.

Access was provided to training facilities, gyms and pools, indoor halls, floodlit pitches and running tracks. All of these cost county committees and players a lot of money.

Sinead McNulty, who is chairperson of the Scheme Implementation Group, said of how the scheme operated in 2017: "The Scheme Implementation Group is delighted with the success of the first year of the government grant scheme. The workshops provide a great opportunity to share knowledge, experience, and best practise of the counties who availed of the scheme to increase the impact."



Emma Murphy, Glen Rovers, a Rearden's Club All-Star winner, with her godparents Fidelma and Frank Murphy.

Picture: Brian Loughheed

It was a historic week for camogie

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

IT was an historic week for camogie as the country's top stars headed to the Spanish capital of Madrid to take part in the first Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars Tour.

The centrepiece of the tour was a game between the 2017 and 2016 All-Stars, with a group of nominees to cover players who qualified for both teams or were unable to make the trip.

The game took place at the grounds of XV Hortaleta Rugby Club and was refereed by Owen Elliott, who took charge of this year's Liberty Insurance Senior All-Ireland Championship final in which Cork edged out Kilkenny.

Cork manager Paudie Murray took charge of the 2017 All-Stars while Kilkenny manager Ann Downey was the

boss of the 2016 selection.

The Madrid Harps GAA Club assisted with the organising of the trip and they are hoping to establish a camogie team to compete in future European Championships.

Players from eight counties were represented and, in all, 29 players were involved in an 11-a-side game comprising two 25 minutes halves.

During the tour, players and officials had the opportunity to meet with the Irish community in Madrid and the Irish Ambassador, Sile Maguire,

hosted a reception at the Irish Embassy.

The touring party also paid a visit to Liberty Insurance's Madrid headquarters before giving locals an opportunity to try their hand with a hurley and and sliotar at Juan Carlos I Park.

The tour was a just reward for the players, their efforts, and recognition of their status as some of the game's great players.

The entertainment value was high for those in attendance as the 2016 All-Stars came out on top.

In a high scoring 11-a-side exhibition game with rolling subs, Orla Cotter was one of the 's' standout players with her distribution and point-scoring, while Chloe Morey, Sarah Dervan,

Niamh Mulcahy Anne Dalton and Kate Kelly were all to the fore.

The victors led by 6-5 to 4-4 at the break despite Morey hitting three goals for the 2017 squad. Miriam Walsh and Niamh Mulcahy kept the scoreboard ticking for the 2016s to give them a seven-point advantage.

2016 SQUAD: E Kavanagh (Kilkenny), S O'Connor (Wexford), S Dervan (Galway), R Hennelly (Galway), C Dorrer (Kilkenny), A Dalton (Kilkenny), M Walsh (Kilkenny), O Cotter (Cork), M Morkan (Offaly), S Kehoe (Wexford), D Gaulie (Kilkenny), N Mulcahy (Limerick), K Kelly (Wexford).

2017 SQUAD: A Murray (Cork), T Kenny (Galway), L Tracy (Cork), A Donohoe (Galway), G O'Connor (Cork), M McGrath (Clare), E O'Sullivan (Cork), M Farrell (Kilkenny), A Thompson (Cork), K Power (Kilkenny), C Morey (Clare), A O'Reilly (Galway), A O'Connor (Cork), A Maher (Dublin), C Foley (Kilkenny).

Coláiste Choilm pull off stunning victory in epic final

Coláiste Choilm 8-6
Coachford Community College 4-9

CHAMPIONS Coachford Community College had to relinquish their Cork Colleges Senior A Championship title as Coláiste Choilm, Ballincollig recorded an impressive victory at the Cork Camogie Grounds Castle Road recently.

The Ballincollig girls trailed at one stage by nine points but they dug deep as they turned it around to take the title with the same margin to spare.

From the throw-in, Coachford hit the front Ciara McCarthy set up Marie O'Reilly who sent the ball to the net but the Ballincollig girls responded quickly with Hannah O'Leary grabbing a goal.

Cliona Healy dominated the early proceedings for Coachford notching up a goal and four points without reply and with Marie O'Reilly and Ella Foley ad-

ding goals the champions raced into a comfortable lead.

Ballincollig, having absorbed huge pressure, began to up the pace and now beginning to get into their stride it was their turn to enjoy dominance and with 10 minutes to go to the break they struck for goals.

Maebh Murphy, Hannah O'Leary, Kate Dooley and two from Orla McCarthy turned the game on its head and now Coachford were suddenly two points down at the half-time whistle.

On the resumption, Coláiste Choilm kept the pressure on and with Kate Dooley grabbing her side's sixth goal they maintained their lead.

Cliona Healy kept Coachford in the mix when she

pointed a free but Coláiste Choilm were by now in the driving seat and goals from Hannah O'Leary and Maebh Murphy ensured no way back for Coachford as Coláiste Choilm ran out winners.

Scorers for Coláiste Choilm: H O'Leary 2-2, O McCarthy, M Murphy 2-0 each, C Dooley 1-3, K Dooley 1-0, R Murphy 1-0.

Coachford Community College: C Healy 2-7 (0-4 f), M O'Reilly 1-1, E Foley 1-0, C McCarthy 0-1.

COLÁISTE CHOILM: C Buckley, J Dineen, R Quigley, L Riordan, A Kelly, O Keating, I Sheehan, C Hughes, C Keane, O Mc McCarthy, M Kelly, K Dooley, C Dooley, H O'Leary, M Murphy.

Subs: M Kelly for R Murphy (40), A O'Regan for A Kelly (44), E Sheehan for J Dineen (64), J Sullivan for H O'Leary (65).

COACHFORD: C Twomey, B Cotter, M Cotter, L Dineen, C Ring, K McCarthy, M Lyons, J Tarrant, J Burke, C Sheehan, C McCarthy, C Healy, J Verling, M O'Reilly, E Foley.

Subs: M Ring for L Dineen (33), M Twomey for M Lyons (44), C Barrett for J Burke (49), J Cotter for C Sheehan (51), T Clifford for E Foley (55), E Foley for K McCarthy (60), L Moynihan for C Ring (62), C McCarthy for J Verling (62).

Referee: Andrew Larkin (Douglas).

Making her army pitch: I love the outdoor life

CORPORAL Gemma O'Connor loves the active lifestyle of the Defence Forces and after 14 years in the army, her enthusiasm is as strong as ever. "Initially I was thinking about applying to the guards, but applied to the Defence Forces as well. I got called up and never looked back."

Corporal O'Connor said her uncle was in the army at the time and he told her what to expect.

"It appealed to me. I liked the outdoor element, it is a very active and challenging role."

Corporal O'Connor recalls telling her parents about her career choice.

"My mom was grand, she would be very easy going when it comes to career paths, but my father was like 'are you sure?'"

"I suppose it was no big surprise, I have always been very sporty. In the end, my parents thought it was a good move."

"The job suits me, when I signed up I was young, active, full of beans and it seemed ideal."

"I love the outdoor life and doing courses and I have been playing camogie for club and county, with St Finbarr's for a number of years."

Corporal O'Connor also plays basketball, football and camogie with the Defence Forces, although at the moment she is out of action with a knee injury.

She is part of the Brigade Training Centre which coaches Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO's) and recruits.

"We are directly involved in training up civilians that join up with the Defence Forces. It is a great job."

"I get a buzz from instructing and working as a team, it is very enjoyable."

The army has changed a great deal over the years, she says.

"When we are in a learning environment and you are teaching people, we want people to feel comfortable enough to be able to learn."

Based in Collins Barracks in Cork, Corporal O'Connor loves the diversity of the job.

"I have been on three trips with the Defence Forces, Liberia in 2004, Chad in 2009 and Lebanon in 2013."

We are contractually bound to go abroad, some people love it, but for me, the hardest part of the job is going away.

"You could be training for two-three months to get ready to go, and then you are away for six months, so you are gone the bones of a year."

"Once you get over there, the routine kicks in and it gets easier."

"It is hard on my partner Aoife and my dad and brother. They are alone, waiting for you."



On day two of our three-part series on the Defence Forces, reporter Roisin Burke speaks to Corporal Gemma O'Connor about the her life in the army



Cork camogie player, Corporal Gemma O'Connor, left, with private Shelly Kehoe (Wexford) prior to the 2012 All-Ireland final.

Corporal O'Connor said her first trip to Liberia was tough.

"I was only there for four months, because it takes so long to get there as it is a landlocked country."

"We could be travelling for a week to 12 days, setting up camp and doing patrols."

"It was a hot jungle-type area which was tiring and difficult, but I got to explore the Ivory coast, which was great. The trips are hard, but they stand to you in the long run."

Corporal O'Connor said her time in Chad was a little similar.

"There was nothing but desert,

and the poverty was quite bad there."

"I was only there for four months, because it takes so long to get there as it is a landlocked country."

She worked on mainly administration duties in Lebanon.

"The older lads said it had changed dramatically from previous years. It was tense over there and very political. We could only go to certain places."

"It was a busy day every day, just not on patrols."

Corporal O'Connor said she had

been away for two Christmases, due to overseas work.

"It is difficult when you have no social life and no freedom."

"Before Chad, my friends threw a mini Christmas for me. I was going in November and my friends invited my mother and we had a Christmas mini dinner."

Despite this, Corporal O'Connor said she loves the army, because you are constantly diversifying and upskilling.

At the moment, Corporal O'Connor is doing a diploma in military

and medical care at UCD. This is a year-long course which will give her entry to the medical corps.

"After 14 years in infantry, I wanted to try something new, something different. I am learning invaluable skills, critical, crucial techniques that can save lives."

Explaining the benefits of upskilling in this field, Corporal O'Connor said your overseas work is based on your skill set.

"You are chosen or selected based on the courses you have done. For patrol, you need to be a front-line infantry and you may need certain types of weapon courses done."

"Anything outside of that then could be intelligence, operations, signals, admin, medical, etc."

O'Connor said she thinks the Defence Forces offers a lot to young individuals fresh out of school.

"You learn so much in the Defence Forces; teamwork, being reliable, hard working, punctual, motivated and generally looking after yourself."

"They train you up, you don't get that everywhere."

The corporal also said that the craic you have with your colleagues is something special. "The banter with the lads is very enjoyable. You really get to know each other well and you get to know each other under pressure and you form some really strong friendships."

Corporal O'Connor said that black humour is definitely something that comes into play in the army.

"We have a serious laugh, the lads are great, there is a good bond between people. You get to know people fast."

Getting to travel with the Defence Forces is an added bonus for Corporal O'Connor. She has been to New York, France and South Carolina on official business with the army.

"You get to do things you wouldn't normally get to do in the Defence Forces, for example, I went to South Carolina. I went over with a team to the Marines to see how they operate."

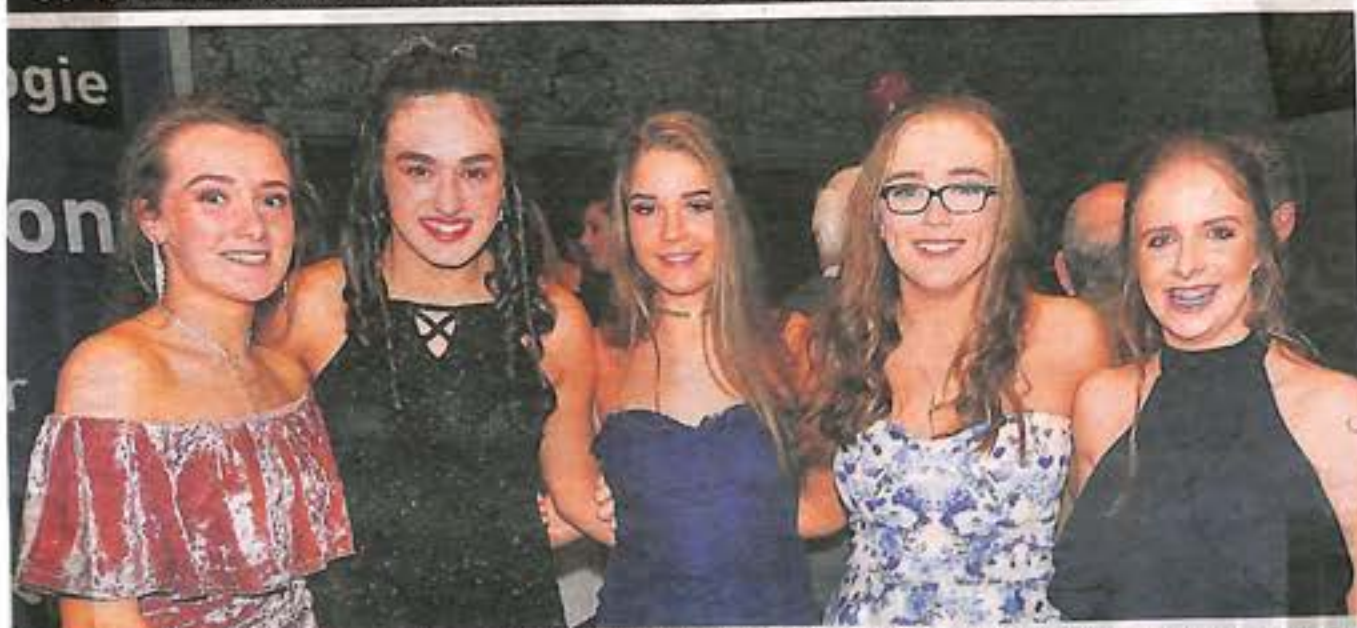
Looking to the future, Corporal O'Connor said she wasn't sure where she would be in 10 years time, but if she was to leave the Defence Forces she would only do so after giving it a great deal of consideration.

"I think I would like to leave after 21 years, but you never know, I might change my mind later, I am certainly not going to leave on a whim."

"The Defence Forces is a great way of life and I enjoy the variety of roles and challenges I face on a daily basis."

■ Tomorrow: Captain Philip O'Leary.

IT'S ALL SMILES AT CAMOGIE ASSOCIATION DINNER



Giara Murphy, Carrigaline; Giara Ring, Inniscarra; Aoife O'Neill, St Finbarr's; Aine O'Regan and Caoimhe Buckley, both Inniscarra; at the Cork Camogie Association celebration dinner and medals presentation ceremony at the Rochestown Park Hotel. Picture: David Keane



Phil Hogan, European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, before receiving the 2017 UCC Alumni Achievement award, at a ceremony in UCC. Also included are UCC Quercus students, Shane O'Donnell, Clare; Sam Grace, Kilkenny; Tom Devine, Waterford; James McGlynn and Alan Hayes, both Kilkenny; Paddy Cadell, Tipperary, and Cork senior camogie team players, Amy O'Connor and Hannah Looney. Picture: David Keane

Sandra is new board secretary

CORK Camogie Board elected a new secretary at its annual convention at the Rochestown Park Hotel. Barry Day stepped down after two seasons.

The board is fortunate to have experienced official, Sandra Corcoran, from the Enniskeane club, to step into the breach.

The Enniskeane native is immersed in all things GAA, having played ladies' football in her younger days with the St Enda's club. She won numerous county medals, at all grades, including All-Ireland honours in the 1980s, at underage level.

Sandra Allen, as she was then, began to take an interest in administration and became chairperson of the developing ladies' football board, from

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

1998 to 2000. She also served as Munster council secretary for 11 years, and national fixture secretary for four years.

Having retired as a player, she then got involved with the Enniskeane GAA club. Sandra is also related by marriage to the late John Corcoran, who was a renowned GAA stalwart in the Enniskeane and UCC GAA clubs.

Sandra took on the job of secretary of the Enniskeane GAA club, where

she served for four years. She also attended the county GAA board as a delegate for the club.

Sandra's daughter, Kate, began to play camogie and it led to Sandra getting involved and helping out, and she served as treasurer and then chairperson of the club.

Sandra's husband, John, is a St Finbarr's man through and through and with their son playing with the Barrs, Kate soon joined him and Sandra quickly got involved, helping out.

She then got involved as a mentor, then secretary, and then became the club's representative at the juvenile camogie board meetings.

At last season's juvenile convention, Sandra was elected treasurer and has

been re-elected for the year ahead.

In 2017, the travelling back and forth was taking its toll and Kate and Sandra transferred back to Enniskeane, after what she told me were many tremendous and enjoyable years with the Barrs.

She was no sooner back and a job needed to be filled and so she took on the role of treasurer and, of course, is also helping out with teams.

With Barry Day not seeking re-election, the board needed a secretary and, at last Monday's convention, Sandra was proposed and will take on the job.

Sandra Corcoran loves a challenge, so, hopefully, 2018 will be a fruitful year, as she joins the Cork Camogie Executive.

Camogie clubs have a chance to honour their unsung heroes

THE 'Volunteer of the Year Award' scheme continues to inspire.

In clubs all over the country, mentors work tirelessly without fanfare. They are the driving forces of many a camogie club.

The Camogie Association is again hoping that all county boards will honour a 'Volunteer of the Year' in their respective counties for the 2017 season.

Each club is asked to nominate one person from their club and to fill out a form and send it to their County Board secretary. The form must be signed by the club secretary and there is only one nomination per club.

Each county board will then select a winner for their county for 2017 and this must be done on or before January 19. Each board would then present their 'County Volunteer of the Year Award' to the winner and honour them with a suitable memento.

In addition to the above, the 'Volunteer of the Year

Camogie

■ Mary Newman

Award' winners from each county will then be honoured at a special awards ceremony in Croke Park stadium on February 17, the day of the All-Ireland club finals.

Amongst the recipient volunteer awards winners in recent years have been Sile Spillane, Deirdre Sutton-Coleman, Maria Dinan, and Joan Casey.

Meanwhile, from January 1, the Camogie Association will move fully to e-vetting, meaning that the previous method of doing paper-based garda-vetting forms will no longer be accepted.

The Camogie Association continues to implement garda/PSNI vetting to comply with child-protection

legislation and to promote best practice in the recruitment and selection of persons to work with children and young people within the Camogie Association.

All information, and relevant forms relating to e-vetting, will be available on www.camogie.ie, from January 1.

Club mentors must also complete a child-protection course. This can be organised through their clubs. Many clubs are now doing these courses with the GAA, and camogie sections are joining forces to do the courses together.

If any club, prospective mentor, or coach administrator has any queries, relating to any of the new procedures in place, or wants to organise a child-protection process, they should contact Stephen Flynn in the Camogie Association offices in Croke Park. He will only be too willing to help them out. Stephen can be contacted on 01-8658618.

Camogie fixture list can cause issues

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

ANOTHER hugely successful year saw a massive programme of games at adult and underage level with both county boards completing their schedule of championship league and plate competitions on schedule.

That is bar one competition which through no fault of their own is held up due to an appeal process with the result in the Minor A championship. The senior board under the chair of Mary McSweeney got through a fixture schedule of 22 competitions at championship and league level. Those were Senior, Senior B, Intermediate, Junior A, B and C, Minor A, B, C and D competitions in championship and league. Add in two Summer Cups and that gives just a small idea of the massive workload organising these games takes.

The juvenile board level under the guidance of chairwoman Mary O'Sullivan are doing massive work catering for the needs of players from U8s up to and including U16. The setting up of this board was a huge step forward for the county and it took a huge burden off the shoulders of the county board.

Clubs were well catered for with U8 to U11 Go Games blitzes, while U12s had three cluster blitzes followed by U12 A, B and C leagues. The U14s participate in leagues and there are three grades A, B and C.

In 2016 the juvenile board introduced and U14 Championship with three grades and it was a huge success. The backdoor system introduced in 2017 was welcome too. The Cork U14 Féile is always hugely popular. The U16 Championship and Leagues at A, B and C make it a busy calendar of games to get through. In total between championship and leagues, there are 15 competitions, without including the Féile and the blitzes.

There are a lot of girls playing camogie but everything is now done and dusted and completed. Without a doubt owning their own grounds in Castle Road has been a major help as it gives them a pitch at their disposal 24-7 but such is the volume of traffic for it another venue for camogie would not go astray.

Having got through such a comprehensive programmes of competitions it is a tremendous achievement for the hard-working officials of both boards who continue to promote camogie to the highest level. Very often clubs tend to get bogged down in their own zones especially when fixtures sometimes do not fall to their liking. With 66 clubs keeping everyone happy is not easy.

In fairness to both boards, they are always flexible, sometimes to their detriment, as when competitions run late the backlash is invariably given to those at the top.

This year with both Cork teams contesting All-Ireland finals, and the intermediate final going to a reply, a lot of club playing time was lost as Cork had to be afforded the time to be at their best. There were instances of clubs calling for championship games to be postponed to allow our inter-county teams times for preparation, then as the competitions dragged on and the year became longer these were the clubs who had the complaints.



Valley Rovers' Katie Lynch goes past Blackrock's Carol Ryan, during the SE Systems Cork Camogie Senior B Championship final at Castle Road, which Valley Rovers eventual won. Picture: David Kean



Na Piarsaigh's players celebrate the win over Watergrasshill during the Cork SE Systems junior A camogie final at Castle Road.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

ation, because they have to concentrate on what are possibly the most important exams she will take?

As there are a lot more boys participating than girls it is easier for senior GAA teams to field during exams. With camogie, a club could have five or six teenagers on any given adult team. That's where the problem lies.

There are calls to sit down early in the year and look at the inter-county calendar and slot in club games around these. To be fair this has been done for years by Cork yet it only takes one draw at the top level to

knock the whole schedule off balance.

The dates of the championship games at clubs level will need to be announced earlier. The draws do not necessarily need to be made for a schedule to be worked out and announced at the end of February. This will then enable clubs to plan ahead and players to book holidays safe in the knowledge they won't be missing out or having to fly home as was the case with one club this year. Huge challenges lie ahead in the bid to get the perfis balance but it can be achieved.

“With camogie, a club could have five or six teenagers on any given adult team.”

The senior board was again fortunate to have the all of their adult championship competitions sponsored by SE Systems they are hugely appreciative to John O'Leary for the help and support his company continues to give to camogie in Cork.

The Evening Echo are also very important to the board as sponsors of all the adult Player of the Match awards for championship and the promotion of the game.

Over the next few Saturdays, we will take a look back at some of the highs and low that was the season gone by.

CORK camogie star Orla Cronin was thrilled to play a crucial role in propelling the Rebels to All-Ireland senior final glory this season.

The ace forward struck three points, all from play which contributed immensely to Cork winning their 27th senior All-Ireland title.

Orla was pleased to help Cork avenge their final defeat against Kilkenny the previous year.

"I suppose between this year's success and last year's disappointment, it definitely showed the highs and the lows involved in sport.

"Losing finals are hard to take and hard to forget about, but winning one overcomes it all.

"There is no better feeling," declared the Cork sports star.

Cork emerged victorious by one point following their dramatic win against Kilkenny.

The Cats had a great chance to go one point up with ten minutes remaining, but they were left to rue their missed opportunity as the Rebelettes finished strongly to secure a dramatic victory.

Orla has a clear recollection of the late drama.

"It was fierce dramatic.

"It was very intense stuff.

"I remember Denise Gaule getting a free out by the sideline for them to go one point up on 60 minutes.

"I just stood there praying to God she'd hit it wide.

"It must have worked. It was some relief at the final whistle.

"I was thrilled that we won obviously, but that it didn't end in a draw either.

"That would have been very anti-climatic.

"We enjoyed great celebrations which are still going.

"It was a sweet win."

Julia White, emerged the heroine for the Cork senior camogie team.

The former captain has overcome a series of injuries over the last two years.

She notched the winning score in the 66th minute.

Orla was delighted for her colleague.

"It was some point by Julia.

"I was so delighted for her.

"She's had a fierce tough time with injuries in the last two years and has been working really hard to get back.

"Her winning point really showed her class and her experience from years past.

"There was nobody going to stop her when she got the ball and she got us over the line."

Cork's latest All-Ireland final triumph also ensured their talismanic captain Rena Buckley has now captured an historic 18 All-Ireland senior medals in both codes, which represents a truly phenomenal haul for the decorated star.

Orla is full of praise for her brilliant team-mate.

"Rena is some player and just a savage sportsperson.

"She's probably the most successful player in GAA.

"It is no surprise because she has an unbelievable work ethic and does everything to her maximum potential.

"There's no stone left unturned with Rena.

"It's unreal to be able to play and train alongside her.

"I've learned so much from her."

Another Cork stalwart Gemma O'Connor shrugged off a knee injury to play a colossal role in the Rebelettes victory.

Orla was thrilled the St Finbarr's star was able to play a prominent role in their latest victory.

"Gemma was super.

"It was obviously worrying when Gemma got injured in the semi-final and it wasn't looking good coming closer to All-Ireland final day.

"With Gemma, however, you know she'll put her heart and soul into getting back fit for an All-Ireland final, which she achieved.

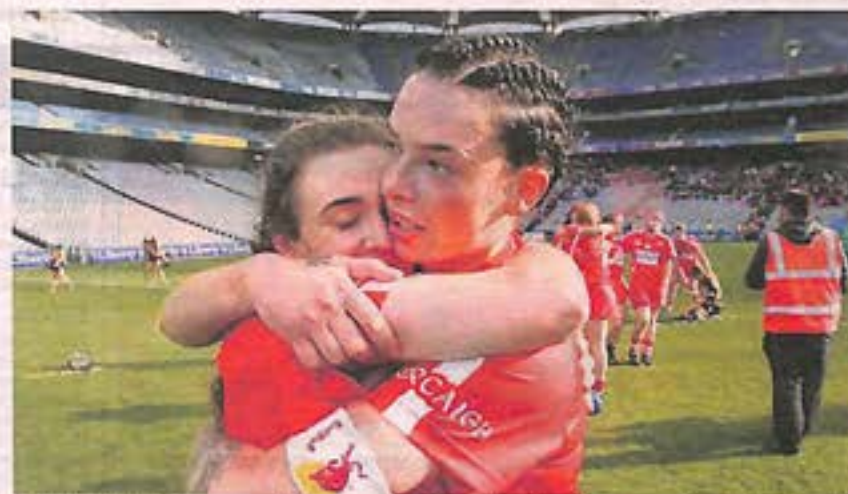
"We had trained with the expect-

Orla thrilled with her role in Rebel win



Cork's Orla Cronin in action against Catherine Foley of Kilkenny during their Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Senior Camogie Final match at Croke Park in Dublin.

Picture: Piaras Ó Midheach/Sportsfile



Cork's Ashling Thompson celebrates with Orla Cronin after the game after victory in the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship final over Kilkenny.

Picture: INPHO/Gary Carr

tation that Gemma wouldn't play, but when she passed the fitness test for the game, it was a huge boost.

"Her presence alone would boost any team. The point she got at the end was brilliant. I'd say the ball is still travelling into Dublin city."

Orla, who was named the Player of the Match following her virtuoso display in the All-Ireland final was thrilled with how her season unfolded throughout the 2017 senior inter-county campaign.

"I'm so delighted with my year.

"We started back early in December 2016 and I suppose there was a lot of things to address and to work on for every individual and the team as a whole after the disappointment of losing the previous final.

"I guess when things don't pan out the way you want them to one year, you want to work really hard to rectify the mistakes and improve on other

things, and that's what I did.

"I'm just delighted it paid off.

"The whole year was a work in progress really, and I think myself as well as the team peaked at the right time when it mattered."

The modest star was thrilled to receive the Player of the Match accolade following her three point contribution against Kilkenny.

Orla was delighted with the honour but felt any one of her team-mates could have received the personal recognition.

"It was a great honour to get it.

"It could have been given to so many of the other girls too as the whole team performed so well on the day.

"The main thing was to secure victory in the All-Ireland final, but it was a nice accolade."

Orla also enjoyed a very strong club campaign with her beloved Enniskeane who were defeated in the Intermediate county final for the second successive season.

"We have a great team coming through.

"There's good interest there in the underage.

"It was heartbreaking to lose our second consecutive final.

"We're very close to it and will definitely be competing for it again next year.

"We're developing all the time which is the main thing and I'm sure our day will come."

Camogie boss will stay on for next year

CAMOGIE

Linda Melleick

CORK Camogie manager Paudie Murray has committed himself to another year at the helm of Cork Camogie for 2018.

Now entering his seventh season Paudie has three All-Irelands to his credit over the past six seasons, having lost two finals (2012 and 2016) and a semi-final to Kilkenny in 2013. He has won three of the past four titles showing how he has come to grips with the players at his disposal, the inter-county scene and what his players face on the field from each county.

"I thought long and hard about it over the past few weeks," said Murray.

"Hopefully we won't have any retirements. We haven't yet, and while it gets harder every year I'm looking forward to the challenge. The league starts off earlier in 2018 and with the Colleges Ashbourne it'll mean we'll again use the league to try out even more new players and every position is up for grabs."

Dec. 2017



Glen Rovers All-Ireland Camogie Club champions 1990. Back Row: Nora Newman (chairperson), Marie Mackey (selector), Mary Ring, Mairead O'Leary, Tracy O'Riordan, Helena Mullins, Fiona McCarthy, Finbarr O'Neill (trainer), Linda Mellerick, Patricia Murphy, June Hamill, Mandy Kenefick, Deirdre Sutton (selector), Mary Newman (selector), Front Row: Teddy Bear, Claire McCarthy, Ger McCarthy, Diane Deane, Ann O'Donovan, Therese O'Callaghan, Denise Cronin, Mary Currid, Deirdre McCarthy, Fiona Twomey, Sandie Fitzgibbon.

Glen sweep all before

AFTER a lapse of four years, Glen Rovers were back in the All-Ireland Camogie Senior Club Championship final in 1990, where they faced the formidable Kilkenny champions St Paul's.

On the way to the decider they had been in imperious form and dispensed of all opposition with ease. In the Cork County final they faced surprise finalists St Finbarr's.

A draw would have been disastrous for both teams as two stars of the respective teams had more important things on their minds — St Finbarr's captain Martha Henchion and Glen Rovers' forward, All-Ireland senior medallist, Ger McCarthy were

CAMOGIE

getting married the following week.

The Blues, who were contesting their first senior final were looking to their talented Cork senior Colette O'Mahony for inspiration; though it was fair to say that in their great run to the decider she received excellent support from Paula Carey, Deirdre Christie, Colette Cronin, Yvonne O'Neill and Brid Walsh (all All-Ireland winners at junior and minor level).

To their credit, they put up a gallant performance but the Glen, backboned by a string of camogie All-Stars, ran out comfortable winners on the

them in 1990 campaign

scoreline 4-14 to 2-6.

For the winners Denise Cronin, Linda Mellerick, Sandy Fitzgibbon, Ger McCarthy, and Mary Ring were in scintillating form.

It's not often that a team fails to score in an All-Ireland semi-final which was the fate that befell Ulster champions Swatragh when Glen Rovers advanced by scoring 1-7 without reply.

St Paul's, who had the amazing Downey sisters Ann and Angela in their line-up, were expected to put it up to the Glen, who since their last All-Ireland Club victory in 1986, were strengthened by the recruitment of quality signings Claire McCarthy, form-

erly of Na Piarsaigh, and Linda Mellerick who transferred from juniors Brian Dillon's.

St Paul's fared no better than Glen's previous challengers and were outclassed by the rampant Cork girls who registered 4-13 and conceded 2-7 to the Kilkenny girls.

The Glen had a diamond in Denise McCarthy who contributed 2-11 of that tally with ace Mellerick accounting for the other 2-2.

Keeper Fiona McCarthy and defenders Sandy Fitzgibbon and Anne O'Donovan were defiant while Ger McCarthy provided most of the ammunition for Denise and Linda.



Barrs camogie team defeated by Glen Rovers in 1990 County Senior Championship final. Back: Brid Walsh, Sheila Hegarty, Ann Santry, C Casey, A Holden, M O'Dea, M Fox, Yvonne O'Neill, Martha Henchion, Colette O'Mahony. Front: N O'Sullivan, M O'Sullivan, Colette Cronin, Ger Kelleher, Deirdre Christie, Fiona O'Sullivan, Paula Carey, Coleen O'Leary.

Eoghan Cormican



"Fortunate," says Orla Cotter. We beg to differ.

The Cork camogie player is reflecting on her 12 years in the red jersey, six of which ended with an All-Ireland senior medal. The conversation was steered to her medal haul by the recent All-Star camogie tour to Madrid, the first of its kind, with Cotter among the travelling party. There, she mixed with contemporaries from Clare, Dublin, and Offaly, players of superb ability who had never been involved in an All-Ireland senior final, let alone held the O'Duffy Cup.

It brought home, in her own words, how "fortunate" and "lucky" she has been to amass such a collection of Celtic crosses.

The 29-year-old half-forward has been part of exceptional Cork teams, but no-one could ever accuse her of being a passenger.

Her first All-Ireland senior medal arrived at the age of 18, Cotter introduced as a second-half sub during the win over Tipperary in 2006. It was her first year on the senior panel, a time when Emer Dillon, Una O'Donoghue and Cathriona Foley were at the height of their powers. She established herself as a mainstay on the starting XV the following year and there she has remained.

She was given a score of 10 by one newspaper for her display in the '08 final win over Galway, and was midfield for the '09 triumph over Kilkenny. She was top-scorer with six points (four frees) when the Cats were again downed in 2014 and was also chief contributor 12 months later for another back-to-back success.

It was she who found Gemma O'Connor for the equalising score towards the end of this year's decider and,

Grateful Cotter owes little to Lady Luck



Cork's Orla Cotter takes on Kilkenny's Miriam Walsh in this year's Liberty Insurance All-Ireland final at Croke Park. As a youngster in Ballynoe, Cotter, right, dreamed of playing for Cork: 'I remember going to Croke Park for a senior camogie final and coming away wanting to be there as a player, not a spectator.'

Picture: Bryan Keane

even on the rare September afternoon when it didn't go Cork's way, Cotter was not to be found wanting. In 2016, when the Rebels were bullied around GAA HQ by Ann Downey's Kilkenny, the rangy midfielder still managed to nab 1-2.

"When you are playing, you don't think much about what you've won, but every so often you realise how fortunate you are to not only have one, but six," says the PE and Irish teacher at Middleton College.

A native of Ballynoe, Cotter saw a fair bit of back garden action before the late Rena O'Leary handed her her first

St Catherine's shirt. Along with her twin brother Shane and older brother Pádraig, both of whom won Munster minor medals, much of her childhood was spent with a hurley in the hand.

"Every summer, there would be a good few games from the parish up at the pitch," she recalls, before adding, somewhat wryly: "There wasn't a whole pile to do in Ballynoe when we were young, we made the most of it, though."

"The brothers and I would be fairly competitive. We certainly brought the best out in each other."

She'd line out alongside them at U12 and U14, joining the St Catherine's junior camogie team at the age of 12.

"Camogie was really important to me growing up. I just loved it. I still do. I always thought to myself, 'yeah, I'd love to pull on the red jersey'. I remember going to Croke Park for a senior camogie final and coming away wanting to be there as a player, not a spectator."

Winning an All-Ireland U16 title in 2003 under the watch of John Cronin provided the first taste. There followed the six All-Irelands and five All-

Stars, the most recent arriving in the last four years.

When Jenny O'Leary, Anna Geary, Joanne O'Callaghan, Sara Hayes, Joanne Casey, and Angela Walsh stepped away after the 2014 victory, Cotter seamlessly took on a more profound leadership role.

"Heading into 2015, maybe, we thought: 'Would we really have a chance this year?' When there is not much expected of you, that's when you progress further. Maybe people thought Cork haven't a chance this year. You have that underdog tag and it helps you more than you think. We all stepped up."

She turns 30 next year, but there won't be any talk of retirement for a while yet.

"A couple of us in the panel would often joke about where does the time go. You remember when you started out and how you were one of the younger ones. The tables don't be long turning. You just have to step up to the mark, use the experience you've gathered and taken from other players to help young girls along."

"Looking back, I've won six out of 12. That isn't so bad. I'll never forget at the end of my first year in with the seniors, Aoife Murray said to me: 'You won't always win.' That's remained with me. It makes you realise how lucky you are to get to Croke Park and even luckier to be leaving it a winner."

Luck has had very little to do with it.



Resilient Rebels prove the doubters wrong

Jennifer O'Leary MY HIGHLIGHT

CALL me predictable, biased or a lady with tunnel vision – but for me there's only one special moment that stands out from all the rest in 2017 and that is when the Cork senior camogie team lifted the O'Duffy Cup for the 27th time.

Maybe it's my emotional attachment to the team and the game of camogie, or perhaps it's gunning for the underdog – Cork this time – in the All-Ireland final this year that caught my imagination.

Seeing Cork achieve what many thought would be impossible against a Kilkenny side that was looking to put their name on the silverware for the second year in a row was simply magical.

Maybe you were one of the doubters and I think we all had to think long and hard about this contest and who we honestly thought would win, Kilkenny

entering the contest as champions and league winners and having held the edge on Cork in recent encounters. But even I didn't believe that Cork could finish out the game in the manner in which they did. It was an epic team performance right to the end.

Usually when Cork win a game, they've established a foothold on proceedings, but clinching victory in the dying seconds of six minutes of injury time is a rarity in my memory. That's just what happened as super sub Julia White scored an injury-time winner in this 0-10 to 0-9 triumph in Croke Park in September.

It reminded me of the formidable Wexford team between the years of 2010-2013 that was never beaten, even with five minutes left on the clock and a few points down. In fact, Wexford appeared to gain even

more momentum and confidence with every dying minute, and Cork showcased this strength and belief too in their epic victory.

There were many special moments in this game, Cork's backs commanding the danger area, the tenacity and determination of both sides, Orla Cronin's star performance and Julia White's point to snatch victory in the 66th minute was incredible; the latter still gives me goose bumps thinking about it.

Gemma O'Connor's point to level the game in the 60th minute was also extra special. I remember feeling emotional seeing her strike the ball so sweetly from over 45 yards out. Most people believed she was a non-runner in this All-Ireland final having suffered a knee injury in the semi-final against Galway.

There was so much hype about this. It captured the imagination of many. Will she or won't she tog out?

We had to wait until the day itself, and there she was, lining out wearing the Cork jersey with pride.

I'm sure she felt a mixture of mental, physical and emotional turmoil leading up to the day, the 'what ifs' consuming her



STAR QUALITY: Deirdre Ashe, Liberty Insurance, presents the All-Ireland final Player of the Match award to Enniskeane's Orla Cronin after her fantastic performance in the win against Kilkenny.

mind, so it was special to see her self-belief, playing with no inhibitions and hitting that sweet strike over the bar.

There will be critics and doubters and there will be injuries and setbacks – but the power of belief within a squad

is very hard to knock. The Cork senior camogie team are believers and they have certainly made my year in sport.



**Q&A with
Colette Desmond**
The talented Newcestown forward won a Cork intermediate camogie title and got married within two weeks in October, and she's hoping to fit her honeymoon in next year.
Over to you, Fintan...

Q. If you could relive one sporting moment from the past year, what would it be and why?

The final whistle at the end of the county intermediate camogie final. Having missed out on the junior county celebrations in 2015 as I was in Vietnam travelling, this was my first adult county win. The team coming back after being eight points down and having my sister Rose on the pitch, back from retirement, made the win even sweeter.

Q. Picture this: Donald Trump has relocated to West Cork – fake tan, quiff and all – and he is interested in the local sports scene, what sport do you think would best suit the American President?

Rowing, the O'Donovan brothers could teach Trump how to pull like a dog! Not sure how long the fake tan will last in the Skibbereen water though....

Q. What will you miss most about 2017?

Wedding planning! Juggling training with menu tastings, table plan decisions and dress fittings was challenging but exciting. The cup was a welcome late addition to the guest list and stole the show on the dance floor on the night!

Q. Who do you think is West Cork's biggest sports star?

Jenny O'Leary. She may be living in Armagh now but she'll always be West Cork and Barryroe's star. I'm very fortunate to have played alongside her. Her skill, passion, and commitment to camogie is admirable.

Q. Outside of your sport, what sporting moment from 2017 captured your imagination?

Cork winning the Munster senior hurling title. You can't beat the trip to Thurles. The atmosphere in the terrace was electric that day and it was great to see Luke Meade putting Newcestown back on the map also.

Q. How do you usually spend New Year's Eve?

In my local of course, O'Mahony's Bar. They've the best selection of G&Ts in West Cork, served up in a fish bowl by Buddy with elderflower and cucumber; where else would I go?!

Q. If you could go for New Year's Eve drinks with three sports people – local, national or international – who would you pick?

Brian O'Driscoll, as long as he brings Amy along! If she's as funny as her Instagram posts we'd have a right laugh. Throw in Roy Keane and Davy Fitzgerald for a night in the local.

Q. What local sports star should we keep an eye on next year?

Newcestown's rising camogie star Ciara O'Sullivan; she's fiery and skilful, just like her Uncle Jim. No pressure Ciara!

Q. Any advice to get over the January blues?

While avoiding Conor Condon's shuttle runs, have a laugh and organise a mystery night away with Frano Tours! She's the best in the business.

Q. Finish the sentence: In 2018 I want to

help Newcestown have a great senior B championship campaign, tick a few more countries off my bucket list and enjoy my honeymoon! Now if I could also just shorten the road from Dublin to Cork....

Why set limits on what we can achieve?

Joan O'Flynn



Hortazelda Stadium in Madrid was an unlikely microcosm of the camogie world in 2017.

The 2017 All Stars' goalkeeper, Aoife Murray, audaciously stood against the right upright of the rugby goalpost, leaving an open goal of 5.6 metres to her left.

Orla Cotter, playing on the 2016 All Stars' opposition, lifts and drives the penalty shot. Body and hurley are one as Murray extended full stretch as far as the other goalpost. With pinpoint accuracy, the ash and leather connected in a shot block. That cameo of Murray and Cotter's one-on-one penalty, typical in hurling but not allowed in camogie, stands out for me as a powerful indicator of the continuously increasing technical skill, capability, and athleticism of camogie players.

Standing still was not an option for Murray. It's not an option for women in sport either.

Athletes, like Murray and Cotter, or, Paralympian Orla Barry, international rugby player Niamh Briggs, Cork Camogie captain Rena Buckley, jockey Nina Carbery, horse trainer Jessica Harrington, boxer Katie Taylor, Olympian sailor Annalisse Murphy, rower Denise Walsh, referee Joy Neville and, before them camogie legends the Downey sisters, Angela and Ann, and once in a generation athletes Maeve Kyle and Sonia O'Sullivan, best demonstrate that boundaries and glass ceilings are there to be broken.

These athletes reflect a diversity of individual and team sport, professional and amateur sport, track and field sport, water sport, indigenous and Olympic sport. In the latter, Ronnie Delany's gold medal in the 1,500m in the 1956 Olympics is well recounted. Little noted from those Games is that Kyle became Ireland's first female track athlete at the Melbourne Games. It took another eight years before the Olympic movement recognised team based sport played by women when volleyball was included in the 1964 programme.

Today, there is more recognition of women in sport than ever. Media exposure is better. Awards and recognition is better. Attendances are better.

Coaching standards are better. Technical skill and entertainment value are better. Financial investment is better. Participation rates are better - though variable - and highest when females are younger. Within Camogie, our past year reflects all these wel-



Sarah Dervan with Aoife Donohue after the Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Star Game at Estadio Central, Universidad Complutense, Madrid last month.

Picture: Dan Sheridan

come developments. We have had nine inspiring achievements - at least!

1. The rivalry of Cork and Kilkenny in the All-Ireland final thrilled to the final minute. When Rena Buckley raised the O'Duffy Cup she made history becoming the first player across camogie, hurling and football to win 18 All-Ireland medals while Cork moved to top the national roll of honour with 27 titles.

2. We enjoyed the most competitive senior championship in our history. Each game mattered. The All-Ireland senior championship, run on an open-draw basis with two groups, went down to the wire. In the last round, each of the 10 teams were in contention for the knock-out stages.

3. Meath and Westmeath emerged to win their first All-Ireland titles at Intermediate and Premier Junior levels.

4. Players' achievements were recognised in the inaugural Liberty Insurance All Star Tour to Madrid.

5. Intercounty players received a boost through a €500,000 financial investment from the inaugural Government Grant Scheme for Intercounty camogie and football players. A similar investment will be made in 2018.

6. For the first time, all the knockout stages of the All-Ireland senior championship were broadcast live on RTE TV.

7. The All-Ireland senior camogie final was designated as free-to-air TV by the government.

8. 20,733 people witnessed the highest-attended All-Ireland camogie finals in September since the triple headers (senior, intermediate and premier junior grades) were introduced in Croke Park in 2010.

9. We expanded grassroots initiatives that support participation, achieved new club growth with 600 clubs playing at home and internationally and published guidelines with the GAA and LGFA to promote a unified approach to administering games through the One Club Model.

These are all milestones in growing our sport. They are achieved in an environment where unfair gender differentials are still evident not just in sport, but across society. Research shows Irish people with daughters are less likely to participate in sport with their children than those with sons. And parents of daughters have a less favourable opinion of their child's sporting ability than parents of sons. For girls, for women, and for society, it's vital to challenge these attitudes and behaviours. Fairer attitudes and actions will add to the momentum where women and the communities and families that we live in, contribute more and benefit more from what sport offers.

Let's not stand still on what women in sport can achieve.

Let's support sport for all - for everyone's benefit.

■ Joan O'Flynn is ard stiúrthóir of the Camogie Association

History-maker Rena continues to lead the way

BY DENIS HURLEY

IT would be understandable if anybody felt that this was Rena Buckley's world and we all just lived in it.

On December 6th, the Cork camogie captain graduated with a Master's degree in physiotherapy from UCC; then, the following morning, she was among the 14 nominees for the RTE Sportsperson of The Year Award. High achievements, certainly, but almost par for the course for the Inniscarra native.

With 17 All-Ireland senior medals won across camogie and ladies' football before 2017, her decision to opt out of football could have been taken as a sign that she was winding down on the sporting front. Far from it. Combining that aforementioned Masters with running her own physiotherapy practice

in Macroom had meant that a dual inter-county career was no longer sustainable, but she was still more than able to be a force in a single code.

With Inniscarra having won the county senior camogie title in 2016, Buckley had the Cork captaincy conferred on her and that is what tipped the balance when it came to making a decision. As she told *The Southern Star* before the All-Ireland final against Kilkenny though, it wasn't like free time abounded.

"In one sense, it's nice that you're at all the sessions," she said, "you're in with everything, you're not flying off and worried about matches clashing or anything like that but obviously, I miss the football gang."

"I would say though, even if you are only playing one, you're still doing an amount of training, so it's not like I'm sitting at home in the evening drinking



CAPTAIN FANTASTIC: Cork captain Rena Buckley lifts the O'Duffy Cup after the Rebels' Liberty Insurance All-Ireland senior camogie championship final win against Kilkenny in September. It was Buckley's 18th All-Ireland senior medal.

tea and saying, "I'd love to be out playing football". Her time was put to good use as Cork bounced back from losing the 2016 All-Ireland to Kilkenny by beating Wexford, Tipperary, Offaly and Limerick to top their group, then seeing off Galway in the semi-final before gaining revenge on the Cats.

Buckley, who twice captained Cork to All-Ireland football wins, created history by becoming the first woman to skipper a county to victory in both codes

(Mary Geaney had previously captained Kerry to football glory and Cork to a camogie win). Just in case anybody wasn't impressed enough, she then delivered her entire speech in Irish. Another All-Star award was won - her fifth in camogie, with six ladies' football claimed - and then in October she drove Inniscarra on to back-to-back county glory. We'll leave the last word to Inniscarra legend Irene O'Keefe, who spoke about Buckley's impact last year.

"She always looked after herself and never did anything silly," she says, "she got the rest and sleep she needed and ate right, even from a young age she was always doing the right things."

"Having said that, sometimes you had to tell her, 'Rena, you're not training tonight, you need a break'. From a club perspective, 99 per cent of the time she'd turn up and once she turned up she'd want to train."

"Off the pitch, she'd make sure to set the example for everyone else. She's the most dedicated club player I've come across, even with all the national titles she was won it still comes back to the club. She's at the meetings and arranging the trainers, the club is still where her heart is."

Cork's Emma Murphy in action against Limerick in the Munster U16 A semi-final at Castle Road earlier this year.
Picture: M Sheehan

Emma has the right stuff to reach the top

"I REALLY want the O'Duffy Cup. I never had a picture taken with it, because I want to win it myself."

That is the aspiration of Emma Murphy, the youngster who turned just 16 the day Glen Rovers played their senior county camogie championship semi-final against St Catherine's last October.

And if her performances continue to develop in the same manner as the season gone by, there is every reason to believe she will see that dream realised.

It's been a whirlwind season for this promising young player who received the call-up to the Glen's senior team in a league game last February.

Emma picks up the story: "It was the first game of the league. I was playing a league game at U16 against Eire Og.

"Management asked me to come out for the last few minutes of the senior game.

"They brought me on for the last five minutes, I got a goal and I started every game since."

Not only did Emma start every game, she scored in every championship game, showing a confidence and maturity beyond her years.

A member of the Cork U16A team this year, she found the move up to



Camogie

Linda Mellerick

senior club a greater step up again, but it was something she relished.

"The step up to senior was huge. It was another step up from Cork. There was even a huge difference between league and championship.

"When we reached the league final I said to myself that, this is as hard as its going to get. Then we came to St Catherine's (in the opening round of the championship) and it was a different speed altogether.

"They were just running past us and I was saying 'where are they gone?' They'd be over scoring a point and I was standing wondering how they could do it so fast.

"Killeagh was a real eye-opener. Then I realised how fast the game

could get. It took me a half to get used to it. After the half-time mark, I picked it up a bit. But even Inniscarra in the county final that was something else again.

"I am a physical player but when the girls come in with a shoulder, or its hip to hip you're like 'that hurt'. But I wouldn't be afraid to go in."

No one expected the Glen to be in the final running and while they may have had ambitions of the county title, it seemed a pipe dream.

But as the year progressed and they took it one game at a time, this young side found themselves in unknown territory.

Up to now, they just couldn't get that senior championship win under their belt, something that Emma acknowledges.

"Yeah, at the start of the year management did have a goal of getting to the county final and yet we were thinking that's probably a bit much.

"It came to St Catherine's (opening round) and the nerves got the better of us. We lost. We came back against

Ballygarvan and we really wanted to win it. We weren't great in the first half, but at half-time the coaches said that we've got to get the monkey off our back, that we needed to win and when we did, it was great and everything after that was bonus territory. No one expected us to win and it suited us that we were underdogs going in to every game."

A transition year student in Carrignavar, Emma has her sights on a future working with animals, possibly a veterinary nurse. Playing camogie since she was six years of age, it wasn't love at first strike for Emma. She credits her dad Terry for keeping her involved in the game she now adores.

"I didn't really like it at the start. Then my dad made me keep going as I had no sport at the time so he made me go back and I improved over the years. I used to get very frustrated when I couldn't pick up the ball.

"I couldn't pick it up until I was about 10. I found it very hard and I used to see other players picking it

up. But I learned that you have to keep practicing."

Dad, Terry played with Glen Rovers and St Nick's up to minor age.

"He has been the biggest influence in my career. He's the one who would have pushed me on and taken me practising on the late nights. He brought me training and all over the country."

Emma had a happy time at underage with the Glen and tasted success. "We were the first team to win the Declan Crowley Cup. It was 11 years in competition and it was the first year the Glen had won it."

The pedigree is in Emma. Her great grand aunt, Mary Frances Kelleher, was a great camogie player with the Glen, but losing her hand in a work accident in Sunbeam ended her career.

One attribute which stood out to me as I watched Emma this season was the responsibility she took on in front of goal.

Her first thought every time she had possession was, is there a score on? She took that chance every time and only passed if a score wasn't on.

Clearly Emma has a bright future in camogie. Taking to staying behind after training and working in Glen Rovers hurling alley, she is doing everything right as she chases her dream. That picture with the O'Duffy Cup may not be too far away.

"They were just running past us and I was saying to myself 'where are they gone?' They'd be over scoring a point and I was standing wondering how they could do it so fast"



ONLY WAY IS UP: The Newcestown camogie team that won the county intermediate final against Enniskeane.

'I wouldn't be afraid of any team we'll come up against'

BY KIERAN MCCARTHY

TWENTY- EIGHT minutes into the county intermediate camogie final last October, just after Enniskeane scored their third goal in seven minutes to jump 3-2 to 0-3 in front, Colleen Twomey was worried.

It was an 'oh feck' moment. 'After their third goal, my heart definitely jumped at that point,' Colleen admitted.

'Going into the game we never thought we were going to lose the county final but I did panic a little but after their third goal.'

Fear not, Newcestown's response was impressive. It was the stuff of champions in the making, and by half time the gap was down to a more manageable six points, 3-3 to 0-6.

'We were confident enough still at the break, we knew we had a lot more in us, that we were better than what we were playing and that we had a lot of

the ball but couldn't score - that all changed in the second half,' Colleen says, and she was to the fore that day, finishing with six points (five from placed balls).

One of her scores in the second half drew Newcestown level, another edged them in front, another doubled the lead, then tripled the lead, as they saw off their neighbours and rivals by 1-13 to 3-4.

The celebrations were huge. This win completed a league and championship double, Enniskeane also beaten in the league final at the end of May.

The rewards were many: promotion to senior B for 2018, a chance at Munster glory and a special guest for two teammates weddings that followed in the week after the county final win. Colette Desmond, player of the match in the county final, was first to walk down the aisle, two weeks after the big win in Brinny, and a week later Frances Deasy got married.

The county cup was treated like royalty at both.

'Once the DJ came on at midnight in both weddings, the Newcestown camogie team took over the dance-floor. It just added to everything,' smiles Colleen, who has been playing with the club since she was 13 years old and has seen the ups and the downs.

The county intermediate final was definitely an 'up' moment, coming off the back of the 2015 county junior final win against Watergrasshill where Colleen was the star of the show. She has played senior B in the past but rewind back five, six years, the club regarded from senior B to intermediate and then to junior - but they're back now and in a far better position.

'There seems to be a lot more interest now,' she explains.

'There are some very talented players coming up from U16 and minor and there is a good

core of older players there already and they mix well.

'Suzanne Deasy, Hilda O'Mahony, Emma Crowley, Colette Desmond, myself, we're some of the older girls and then you have younger players like Maria Kenneally who came on this year, Ashling O'Donovan, they were all revelations for us. It was my first year playing with them and I was delighted to have Maria next to me or Ciara O'Sullivan; you know you can give them a ball and that they will use it well. There's trust there, throughout the team.'

Off the field, Newcestown made sure they left no stone unturned.

They started training in the last week of January, Buddy O'Mahony, the local publican in Newcestown, took the team for strength and conditioning classes in the hall for six weeks, then Conor Condon took over on the pitch with Sean Twomey a massive asset, too. His drills, Colleen says, were unreal, faultless.

'The two guys who came on board with us at the start of the year, Conor Condon and Sean Twomey, they really added a professionalism this season. It was a really professional well-run set-up and we knew we had a great chance of winning the county,' she says.

'We had Lisa O'Donovan doing all the organising of matches so we went into every game very organised and we knew what we were meant to do.'

After the 'up' of the county fi-

nal came the 'down' of Munster club intermediate camogie final against Lismore of Waterford who won, 1-10 to 0-8, the rescheduled final played at Castle Road in November.

It's one that still hurts Colleen.

'It was a great experience to get to the Munster final but we never got off the ground that day,' she says.

'I am still finding it very hard to take.

'Myself, I didn't perform on the day, my frees didn't go right everything went wrong.

'For a lot of us, we just never got going.

'We achieved what we wanted to achieve last season and we did win the county so we have to keep reminding ourselves of that.

'Because I hadn't played in 2014 I hadn't suffered a camogie defeat since 2012, but then it went wrong in the Munster final.'

Still, Colleen and Newcestown achieved their number one target and won the county title, and it means a step-up in standard in 2018 when they return to the senior B ranks.

'I wouldn't be one bit afraid of any team we'll come up against,' she says.

'Half the team know what it's like up there at senior level and over the last few years the younger girls have got fierce experience, they are used to winning and they don't know what it's like to lose in championship.'

Colleen had waited a long time before winning her first camogie medal with Newcestown in 2015 and now after adding another to her collection she wants more in the new year.

'Once the DJ came on at midnight in both weddings, the Newcestown camogie team took over the dance-floor'



MOMENT TO SAVOUR: Colleen Twomey and her daughter Fiadh celebrate the county intermediate final win.

Valleys atone for the heartache of 2013

CAMOGIE

Mary Newmaen

THE Cork County Senior B Camogie Championship is always hotly contested.

Made up of two groups, one with five teams and one with six, it was going to be a tough championship to win.

The prize of promotion to the highest grade to participate among the top clubs in 2018 is the added bonus in what is a highly competitive championship with the format being the top two teams from each group going on to contest the semi-finals.

Brian Dillon's, in their second year in the grade, had settled in well and after some good results in their league games, they were tipped to have a big say in where the title might rest.

Eire Óg had been knocking on the door for several years and lost a semi-final to eventual winners Mallow the previous year, and they were hoping to go one better and finally lift the coveted crown.

Barryroe dropped down to senior B three years ago and, working hard to re-establish themselves, they looked to be strongly positioned.

Newcomers Blackrock, promoted following their intermediate championship success in 2016, took the Senior B league and, blazing a trail, were the side hotly tipped for championship honours.

Ballinhassig re-graded from senior while defeated finalists in 2016, Valley Rovers, were hoping to make the big breakthrough and go one better.

Interesting times and an exciting championship laid ahead when the groups were drawn as follows:

Group One (six teams): Carrigaline, Fr O'Neill's, Brian Dillon's, Barryroe, Blackrock, Eire Óg.

Group Two (five teams): Valley Rovers, Kilbrittan/Timoleague, Ballinhassig, and Clonakilty.

First round games got under way on the last weekend in June and in section one, Fr O'Neill's and Barryroe had victories over Carrigaline and Brian Dillon's, Blackrock and Eire Óg played out a thriller before ending all square.

In section two, Clonakilty overcame Aghabullogue, but Kilbrittan/Timoleague were unable to field against Ballinhassig, and with the latter having a bye in round two, they were without a championship game until July 30 when they met and defeated Clonakilty.

On the same weekend Valley Rovers, who had recorded a win over Clonakilty earlier in the month, made it back-to-back victories with a good performance against Aghabullogue, who had defeated Kilbrittan/Timoleague in round two.

All eyes were focused on section one as Carrigaline got their first win in round two when they overcame Barryroe.

Brian Dillon's were unable to field against Blackrock and the meeting of Eire Óg and Fr O'Neill's had to be postponed due to a bereavement.

As the weeks progressed there were some close games with Blackrock continuing to record good wins over Barryroe and Carrigaline, Eire



Valley Rovers celebrate after defeating Blackrock in the SE Systems Cork Camogie Senior B Championship final at Castle Road.

Picture: David Keane



Mary Newman presents the Evening Echo-sponsored player-of-match award to Valley Rovers defender Jennifer Murphy, after they defeated Blackrock in the SE Systems Cork Camogie Senior B Championship final at Castle Road.

Picture: David Keane

Óg defeated Carrigaline and Barryroe, and Fr O'Neill's stayed in contention with a win over Barryroe. They drew with Blackrock and it was still all to play for in this section.

In section two Valley Rovers were going about their business quietly as they continued to impress with a win over Kilbrittan/Timoleague.

Aghabullogue overcame Ballinhassig and with one game left to play, Ballinhassig needed to beat Valley Rovers to secure a semi-final spot. A defeat would send them into a play-off with Aghabullogue for the other

semi-final spot.

In a close battle, Ballinhassig shaded it on a 1-11 to 0-12 scoreline to ensure they progressed with Valley Rovers to the last four.

Back in section one, Eire Óg had the upper hand on Fr O'Neill's in the last game in the series where it finished 0-14 to 1-4.

The result was enough to secure a semi-final spot for Eire Óg and prevent a three-way play-off.

The scene was set for the semi-finals. Valley Rovers and Eire Óg had been knocking at the door of the sen-

ior B championship for several years while Ballinhassig, having dropped down a grade, were pitted against debutants Blackrock.

Blackrock had to hold on tight as Ballinhassig staged a strong second-half comeback to come to within a point after trailing by 10 points.

Ballinhassig lead by a point with five minutes remaining, but a strong response saw Blackrock win by a point to book their place in the final.

The second semi-final was another thriller where a late Orla Deasy goal was enough to give Valley Rovers a

place in the SE Systems Senior B final on a 1-8 to 2-3 scoreline after they turned a four-point half-time deficit into victory.

The final was a big day for both clubs who were battling it out for the second biggest prize in Cork camogie.

Blackrock were tipped by many to take the title, but Valley Rovers, with the pain of losing in 2013 still very much alive, were determined not to be bridesmaids again.

Both sides battled hard to gain the upper hand and from the throw-in Valleys signalled their intent and desire to succeed.

They went on the attack from the throw-in and took an early lead and might have grabbed an early goal, but for Clodagh Coughlan who brought off two great saves.

Blackrock settled into the game and, putting on the pressure, it was they who grabbed the opening goal when the impressive Michelle Murphy fired a low shot across the face of Gillian Harrington's goal and into the net.

Blackrock held a four-point interval lead, but Valleys didn't panic and they showed their experience at this level with players such as Liz Bugler, Gillian Harrington, Ena Coughlan, Mary Ann Hawkes, and Eileen Foley all having been here before.

Captain, Katie Lynch, led the fight-back with a goal inside two minutes of the restart and a ding-dong battle followed as the Blackrock girls dug deep to hold their lead and Valleys battled to get on top.

In the finish, an Eileen Foley goal was the vital score that edged Valleys in front and sent them to dine at the top table of Cork Camogie in 2018.

For many people it was a day never to be forgotten as, 30 years after they were founded, Valley Rovers had reached the top.



CAMOGIE MATTERS

By Jennifer O'Leary

STAT ATTACK | Rena Buckley won a hat-trick of All-Star awards in both codes in 2006, 2007 and 2015

Appreciate Rena because we won't see her likes again

TEACHING Shakespeare to my second year English class. We are discussing Romeo, one half of drama's most tragic couple, and trying to decipher an adjective that encompasses his character. I place a list on the board and, in groups, the students brainstorm on what they feel the most powerful word is.

They take notes and then they present their findings through use of key moments in the play.

Later, at home, I practiced what I teach and put Rena Buckley's name on the centre of my page in preparation for writing this article. My list of suitable adjectives takes over my A4 sheet and I am left with an accumulation of words that make up the player and the person Rena is.

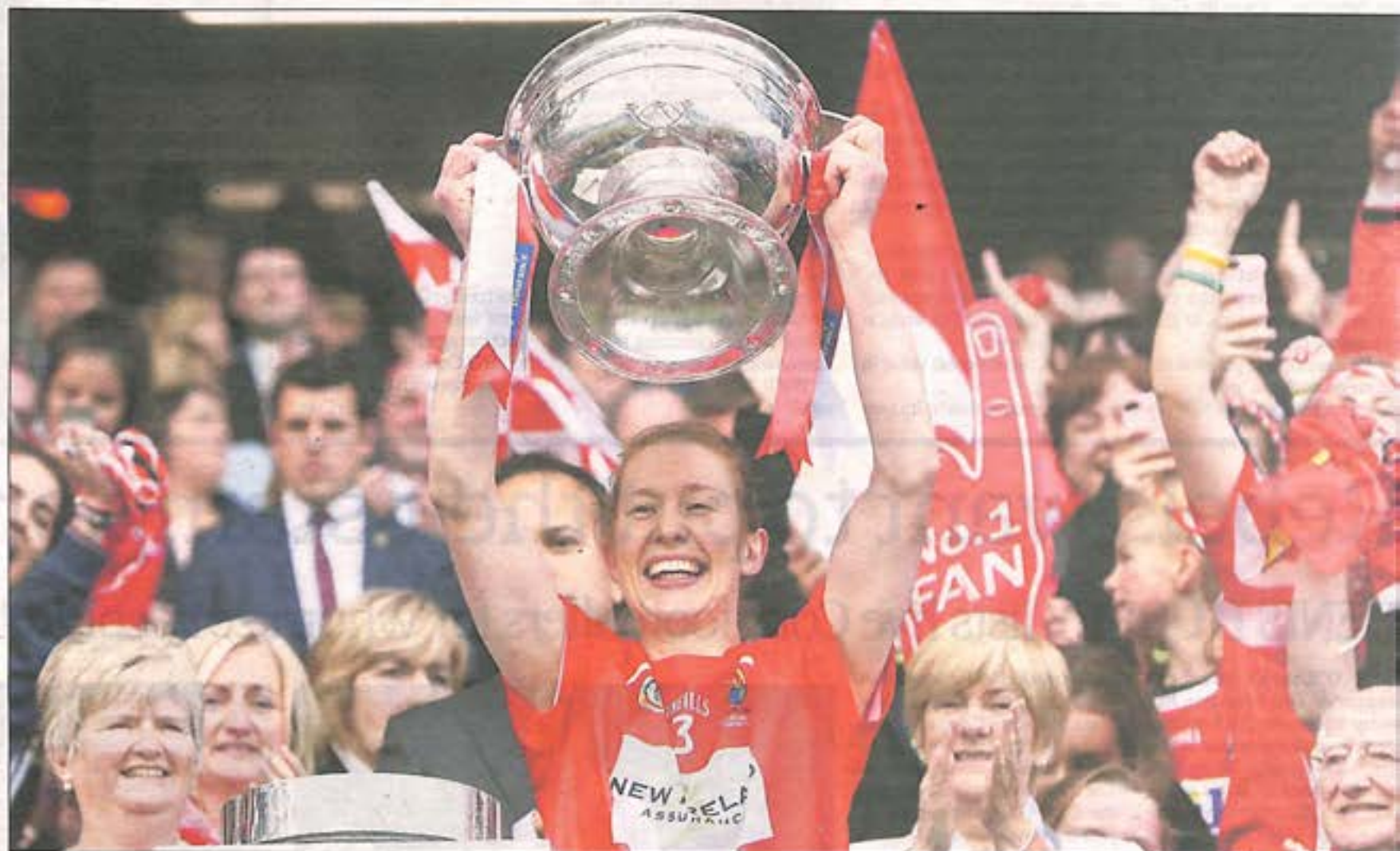
However, it's difficult to pick just one word. The key moments she has been a part of are overwhelming and too many. I persist and narrow it down to the following: living legend, superstar, phenomenon, consistent, role model, humble, genuine, friend.

Rena, a native of Inniscarra, featured heavily in newspaper headlines around Ireland in 2017 following her success as captain when Cork lifted the O'Duffy Cup last September.

She is now the only player in the history of the GAA to have won 18 senior All-Ireland medals, having claimed 11 in ladies' football and seven in camogie, from 2005 to the present day.

What's also interesting is that she is one of the few players who have won a hat-trick of All-Star awards in both codes in the same year – doing so in 2006, 2007 and 2015. The only other player who has surpassed this is her good friend Brieghe Corkery, who achieved the double in five different years. Rena's club Inniscarra are also currently the senior camogie champions in Cork; her influence once again is the driving force within the team.

With such a consistent record, a house full of awards and dedication to both sports both in club and county, it's only justified that Rena should be lauded and celebrated but she doesn't want any of that. She is probably the most humble and



History maker: Cork captain Rena Buckley lifts the O'Duffy Cup after the Rebels' Liberty Insurance All-Ireland senior camogie championship final win against Kilkenny last September. It was Buckley's 18th All-Ireland senior medal.

Rena's achievements speak for themselves. How many more All-Irelands will it take for her talent, commitment and dedication to be fairly recognised?

modest person you are lucky enough to meet. There are no airs and graces surrounding this girl, she's as down to earth as the grass growing in your garden.

Thankfully I had the pleasure of playing alongside Rena – aka 'Bucks' – between the years of 2005 and 2014. When she first appeared onto the panel at the age of 17, she was shy and one of the babies within the team. She has come a long way since then, she has grown in confidence and has become a key player for Cork.

We often had to mark one another and I can't say I ever

enjoyed it as she is sticky and very clever. She doesn't give you an inch and when you think you have the ball in your hand, she quickly flicks it away. There was always total focus with her, even during practice games towards the end of a session. If you decided you wanted to take it easy, she would show you up.

During Rena's first year of college in UCD studying physiotherapy, we found ourselves in the Ashbourne final, only this time as opponents. I was in my final year in University of Limerick and we were vying to make history within our college by capturing a three in a row.

Rena was flying the Cork flag alone for UCD while we had players like Anna Geary, Angela Walsh and Amanda O'Regan in our arsenal. I remember Rena having a tremendous game that day. Commanding midfield, she scored six frees and one from play. It was almost like a free-taking competition between us with those crucial scores being the difference at the end of the game. We were victorious that day by 0-13 to 1-9 but there really was nothing between us.

How Rena manages to juggle her sport with her own physiotherapy practice in Macroom as well as studying for her Master's degree in sports physiotherapy in UCD baffles me. She appears to achieve what some may view as the impossible in the most impossible ways. She makes it work and somehow finds a balance in her hectic life.

A nominee for the RTÉ Sportsperson of The Year

award, Rena deservedly found herself in the company of athletes such as Michael McKillop, Joe Canning, Paul O'Donovan and Katie Taylor, to name a few. It was empowering to see her in the company of Irish greatness, but it's where she belongs.

Personally, I feel she was the most worthy of winning and it's not because of my affiliation with Cork, with camogie and with Rena my friend, it's because her achievements speak for themselves. How many more All-Irelands will it take for her talent, commitment and dedication to be fairly recognised?

She is a role model of the highest calibre to young and old. She trains like a professional athlete while also acting like a pro and holding down a physiotherapy practice. She has proven time and time again that she is a winner and has worked hard every single year she has

worn the Cork jersey, in both football and camogie.

It's hard for me to understand the Irish public mindset with their failure to vote for this amazing woman who is still so young and has so much yet to give. The winner, Republic of Ireland and West Brom midfielder James McClean, has received much criticism for claiming this honour, which isn't right either as it wasn't chosen by him, it was the Irish public.

Rena is young and still has much more to give in her sport. Her achievements haven't come to a halt yet. The past year has taught me that she is a force to be reckoned with and a person and a player like her should be appreciated now.

Appreciate her in the present time as there are very few people in life who can and will achieve what she has achieved already.



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Sports Award for Na Piarsaigh Camogie

NA Piarsaigh camogie team, winners of the Junior A County Championship, were presented with the December 2017 North City & District Sports Award at a lunch at Clayton Hotel Silver Springs.

- 1. Na Piarsaigh players Casey Coleman, Orla Connolly, and Carlyn McCarthy.
- 2. Shirley Moloney, PRO, Cork Camogie Board, and Madge Fogarty, Glanmire.
- 3. Amy Lee, team captain.
- 4. Tony O'Sullivan, chairman, judging panel, Kay Dunne, Cork camogie, and Michael Ellard, judging panel.
- 5. Selectors Trevor Allen and Trevor Coleman.
- 6. Na Piarsaigh players, Lisa Burns, Rebecca Rourke, and Sinead Warren.
- 7. Deputy Lord Mayor, Fergal Dennehy, Sean O'Sullivan, event co-ordinator, and councillor Joe Kavanagh.
- 8. Na Piarsaigh Camogie Club player and secretary Trisha Coleman, and Mary McSweeney, chairperson, Cork Camogie Board.

Pictures: Denis Minihane



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DEC 2017

MIERN (Knockraha, Co. Cork): On January 12, 2018, peacefully, in the presence of her loving family, in the exceptional care of the staff of Unit 1, St. Stephen's Hospital, **BRIDIE** (nee O'Sullivan), Ballinagau and late of Ballyshoonin, dearly loved wife of the late Pat and much loved mother of Noelle (Murphy), Sean and Stephen and loving sister of Sheila, Liz, Bernie and the late Ann. Sadly missed by her loving family, sisters, daughters-in-law, son-in-law, grandchildren Eoghan, Killian, Gemma and Adam, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, nephews, nieces, relatives and friends. Reception prayers on this (Saturday) evening at 5pm in St. Mary's Church, Knockraha. Requiem Mass on Monday at 12 noon. Funeral afterwards to St. Mary's Cemetery, Carrigrohane. May she rest in peace. www.jerhoganfuneralhomes.ie



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Cork stars take to the floor for return of hit TV show



Former Munster and Ireland rugby star, Tomás O'Leary, and his dance partner Giulia Dotta.



RTÉ presenter Marty Morrissey, with his dance partner Ksenia Zsikhotska, as 'Dancing With the Stars' waltzes off on Sunday night on RTÉ 1 at 6.30pm.

ANNA GEARY, Rob Heffernan, Tomás O'Leary and the other celebrities taking part in *Dancing with the Stars* have revealed who their dance partners will be for the new series. The pairings were unveiled on *Can't Stop Dancing* on RTE2 last night.

Cork's All-Ireland winning camogie captain and former Rose of Tralee finalist, Anna, has been paired with Kai Widdrington, who made it all the way to week nine last season. Kai has twice appeared on ITV's *Britain's Got Talent*, making the final in 2012 and semi-final in 2014. Anna and Kai are the early favourites with the bookies.

Recently-crowned Athlete of the Year Rob Heffernan will take to the floor with Emily Barker. She was unlucky in last year's competition when she and her celeb partner, *Big Brother* contest-

■ Gráinne McGuinness

ant Hughie Maughan, became the first couple to be eliminated from the show.

Grand Slam winning scrum-half and former Munster rugby player Tomás O'Leary will partner Giulia Dotta, who danced with comedian Des Bishop all the way to his shock elimination in week six last year.

Valeria Milova, who won last year with GAA player Aidan O'Mahony, this year partners comedian and broadcaster Bernard O'Shea.

Amanda Byram and Nicky Byrne return once again to present the series on RTE One from 6.30pm on Sunday.

Also returning this year is the expert panel of judges — including Brian Redmond, Loraine Barry and Julian Benson.



TV star and former Cork All-Ireland winning camogie captain, Anna Geary, and her dance partner Kai Widdrington.

Aoife Murray to captain Rebels in 2018

BY DENIS HURLEY

ALL-IRELAND senior camogie champions Cork get their national league campaign underway on Sunday as they host Galway at Castle Road (2pm), with manager Paudie Murray admitting that the early start may count against his side.

Whereas the 2017 league began on February 18th, teams are in action five weeks sooner this time round. With Cork having only recently re-assembled, Murray says he's 'not expecting a lot', but doesn't intend to use that as an excuse.

'We've only a few days' work done,' he says.

'The Galway game is coming a bit early but we'll get that out of the way and then work away. I didn't want to do anything before Christmas as there was no point in flogging the girls, we came back four weeks early for 2017 but there was a strong appetite there after how 2016 had gone, you can't go full tilt all the time.'

'I fear that the early start is badly thought out. We're lucky that we have our own pitch but how many counties don't have their own grounds?'

'I don't think that too many clubs would be giving out their main pitch at this time of year if the conditions are bad.'

Murray says that there have been no retirements since last year and he doesn't expect or

foresee any others.

The new captain, his sister Aoife, is injured, as is Gemma O'Connor, while Rena Buckley and Eimear O'Sullivan are not back in training yet while Katrina Mackey will miss the national league as she is studying in Germany.

The captaincy isn't a case of nepotism at play, either — goalkeeper Aoife was nominated by the county champions Iniscarra.

The Mid-Cork club retained the title they had won in 2016, when they nominated their star player Buckley.

She felt unable to give the commitment to the role again. — 'Rena would only do something like that if she could do it fully,' Murray says, 'she wouldn't just be in it for the honour and the glory.' — and with no other guaranteed starter, they went for another Muskerry native in the Cloughduv netminder.

The manager certainly has no reservations about the quality of the choice.

'You look at it objectively,' he says, 'she has been there for 16 years and has won eight All-Irelands, and for the last 13 years she has been driving down from Dublin for training and matches.'

'She has served her apprenticeship well and I think that the decision has been well received.'

A leader by example, who's



Special occasion: Libby Coppinger, St Colum's Camogie Club and Cork senior player (front row, second from right), celebrating her All-Ireland win with family and friends at the Cork Camogie Board's presentation of medals and victory dinner at Rochestown Park Hotel. (Photo: Mike English)

not afraid to let her team-mates know if standards need to be

upped?

'No better woman,' her

brother agrees, 'and you can include me in that too, she won't

hold back there! It'll be an interesting year, certainly.'



Camogie Association presents its medals

AT the Cork Camogie Association celebration dinner and medals presentation ceremony at The Rochestown Park Hotel were:

- 1. Anne Margaret Ring with Peter and Ali Smith, all from Midleton.
- 2. Clara Murphy, Carrigaline; Lauren McCarthy, Togher, and Kate Corcoran, Enniskeane.
- 3. Chloe Sigerson, Killeagh, and Maeve McCarthy, Glanmire.
- 4. Cliona and Eileen Healy, Aghabullogue.
- 5. Cork captain Rena Buckley and team-mates Orla Cotter and Eimear O'Sullivan.
- 6. Gillian Foley, Rochestown, and Chloe Lynch, Bishopstown.
- 7. Mary Sheehan and Mary Newman, both Glen Rovers.
- 8. Evanne Ni Chuilinn, RTE; Cllr Mary Shields, deputising for the Lord Mayor; and Tracey Kennedy, Cork County Board chairperson.
- 9. Team manager Paudie Murray and Niall Collins, team management.
- 10. Paul and Jackie McCarthy, Ballyvolane.

Pictures: David Keane



Equality push far from over

Daragh Ó Conchúir

New Cork captain Aoife Murray says that there is still a long way to go for women to be treated equally to their male counterparts within the Gaelic games family.

Speaking at yesterday's launch of the Littlewoods Ireland Camogie Leagues, which get underway on Sunday with a round of Division 1 games, Murray hailed the success of the recent inaugural All-Stars tour to Madrid as a vital development in providing camogie players with parity of esteem.

In a week when the LGFA announced a number of high-profile double-headers throughout the National Leagues, she also noted that camogie had shared its Division 1 League final with the hurling equivalent for a number of years and been part of a number of championship double-headers as well.

There remains a road to travel though, she points out.

"It's great that we're trying to match with the hurling league this year again but the other side is how do we get pitches for all our games?"



Cork's Aoife Murray at yesterday's launch of the 2018 Littlewoods Ireland Camogie Leagues. Picture: Inpho/Dan Sheridan

500 grand. Now that €8,500 that we will get this year will make such a difference. It means we can deal more with the science of the game, which will help not just us, but every other county. In 10 years' time, having a GPS, a heart monitor will just be the done thing. Having hydrotherapy pools will be the done thing. But if we still have to pay €200 to use GAA grounds?

"We bring money to training to buy our food. We don't do it begrudgingly because we know how much has been done for us. As one of the girls said 'I'm taking off a GPS monitor, I can't complain about paying a fiver for some food' but then you see the Cork footballers getting their free runners. You don't begrudge them but it shows that there's still a way to go yet."

The Cloughduv goalkeeper will miss the start of the National League after having fluid removed from her knee last month, while Gemma O'Connor will also be absent

as she continues to recover from the consequences of playing the All-Ireland final and a club match with damaged knee ligaments.

The future of last year's All-Ireland-winning skipper Rena Buckley remains unknown and Murray's nomination by Buckley's club, county champions Inniscarra, to succeed the 2017 Player of the Year casts doubt over whether her long-time colleague will return to the fold.

"I don't know, to be honest, but I certainly won't retire Rena!" said a smiling Murray.

"I'm very, very lucky to call Rena a really good friend of mine. I hope to God she does come back but for a woman who has given so much to the game, if she does make that call, I'll respect that. I'll be gutted. She was playing better than ever last year. I think it was the right decision to pick one code and I hope to God it's camogie this year but if it's not I will give her my 100% support."

Home comforts can aid Sacred Heart's quest

BY KIERAN MCCARTHY

HOME advantage could help Sacred Heart Clonakilty over the line in Saturday's Munster colleges' senior B camogie final, insists manager Brian Daly.

The Clon school is back in a provincial final for the first time since they beat St Mary's High School, Middleton in Clonakilty three years ago, and Daly hopes the home support will make a difference this weekend as it did in 2015; throw-in at 1pm.

"The crowd was the difference three years ago," he said.

"It's our first time back in a Munster final since then, we have been there or thereabouts

SCHOOLS CAMOGIE

but never got to a final, we won a county title but never got back to a senior final like this, so we're hoping for a big turnout like we got against Middleton - and that made a difference."

In 2015 Sacred Heart went all the way to the All-Ireland senior C final where they lost to St Dominic's College Dublin in Nenagh, and a number of the younger players from that team now form the core of the current group.

Current Leaving Certs include Ciara Ryan (Clonakilty),

Clara Crowley (Ballinascorthy), Lorraine Dineen (Kilbrittain/Timoleague), Orla Lowney (Clonakilty), Katie Sexton (Kilbrittain/Timoleague) and Orla Fahey (Kilbrittain/Timoleague), and this gives Sacred Heart plenty of experience of the big days out, crucial ahead of the clash against the fancied Ursulines of Waterford this Saturday.

As in 2015, there are a large cohort of third years in this team, including goalkeeper Daire O'Brien who usually plays out field, Hannah Sexton, Katelyn Dineen and Jessica McCarthy.

In the Munster semi-final Clonakilty came back from five points down to beat St Flannan's of Ennis by 2-5 to 1-5, and more of that character will be needed against the free-scoring Waterford school on Saturday.

"In this championship there was a round-robin first of all, we played Borrisokane in our opening game and we won quite well, by 12 points, and then we played Nenagh and won by four points; both those games were played in Mallow," Daly explained.

"We qualified for the semi-final and we beat St Flannan's in



Experience matters: Sacred Heart senior camogie team's eight Leaving Cert students who will lead the team in Saturday's Munster final; back from left, Clara Ryan, Lorraine Dineen, Orla Lowney, Katie Sexton and Orla Fahey; front from left, Kate Whelton, Meabh Deasy and



Final preparations: Daire O'Brien (Enniskeane), Clara Crowley, Claire Kingston, Anna Flynn (all Ballinascorthy) and Orla Fahey (Kilbrittain-Timoleague) getting ready for Saturday's Munster decider

CIT. We were five points down at half time and we won by two in the end, Orla Lowney got two goals, the second just minutes from the end."

Daly is under no illusions about the challenge ahead, however. "Ursulines played Nenagh, runners-up in our

group, in their semi-final and they beat them by 18 points," he said.

"They are an excellent team, they won the All-Ireland junior title last year, they will be up senior next year so we know we have a big challenge ahead - but we are ready for that."

"We have a good team here, we're strong across the field and we have prepared well for this."

Fingers crossed Sacred Heart can repeat the result from three years ago and bring the Munster title back to Clonakilty again.



THAT'S OUR GIRLS: Glen Rovers Camogie Club members and families celebrate with Emma Murphy, Tara McCarthy and Lisa O'Riordan, who received their under 16 medals won with Cork in 2017 at the Cork Camogie Board's victory dinner at Rochestown Park Hotel. PHOTO: MIKE ENGLISH



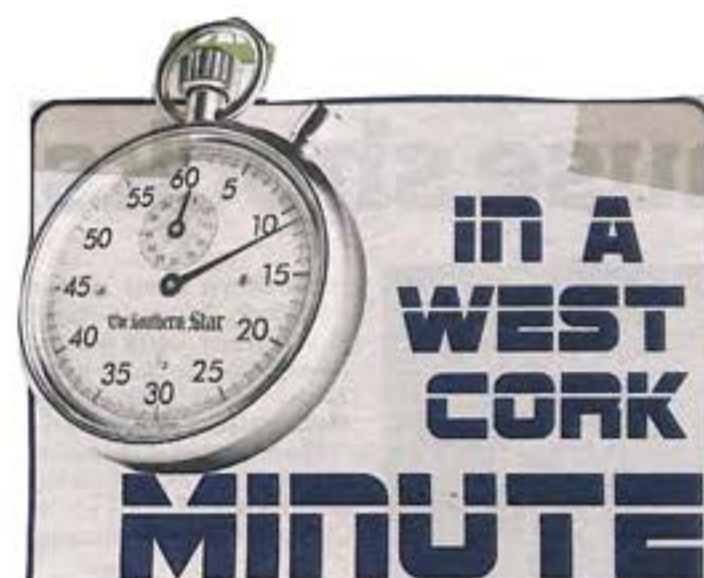
PLAYING FOR KEEPS: Goalkeeper Aoife Murray celebrates Cork's All-Ireland camogie title win over Kilkenny in Croke Park last year. Super sub Julia White's late point proved the difference in a 0-10 to 0-9 victory. Croke Park will host the final on Sunday, September 9th. Picture: James Crombie, Inpho

DEC 2017



ORLA CRONIN
Camogie, Enniskeane

When Barryroe's Jennifer O'Leary retired from inter-county camogie, West Cork lost its finest-ever camogie player – and while her boots will never be completely filled, Orla Cronin has done her bit to keep the West Cork flag flying on the national scene. The UCC student is starting her fifth season on the Cork senior team and in the previous four campaigns, she has contested an All-Ireland final every year and has three winner's medals to her name. Last season was her best in a Cork jersey and her performance in the All-Ireland final against Kilkenny where she scored three points in a tight game earned her the player of the match award, and the 22-year-old has the potential to move to the next level and become a mainstay of the Rebels for years to come.



Sacred Heart Clonakilty Leaving Cert student, and team captain, Clara Crowley is hoping to pass the Munster colleges' senior B camogie final test this Saturday

What's the one thing you can't live without? My iPhone – it is my lifeline at all times.

What would I find in your fridge right now? Milky Bar Yoghurts.

Name one element your sport could/should take from another? In camogie we should wear shorts instead of skorts.

What do you think about when you're alone in your car? If I ever pass my test, I will let you know!

Who has been the biggest influence on your sporting career? My Dad, as he has great patience and has been there from the start.

Pick two celebrities to be your parents: My parents are celebrities enough... in their own minds!

What do you think cats dream of? All Cats dream of the Liam McCarthy Cup!

If you could play any other sport for one day what would it be? Shinty.

If you joined a circus, what would you perform? A lion tamer.

If you could get rid of one county in Ireland what would it be and why? Let's concentrate on getting back the ones we have lost already.

What would you do if you found a penguin in your freezer? Keep it as a pet.

Before we let you go, teach us something that we don't know:

There are eight Leaving Cert students playing for Sacred Heart Secondary School Clonakilty team in Saturday's Munster colleges' senior B camogie final in Ahamilla, Clon, at 1pm. This is the first time the Clon school is back in a Munster final since beating Midleton in a provincial decider in 2015.

Clara Crowley, 18, from Cappa, Enniskeane, will captain the Sacred Heart Secondary School, Clonakilty team in Saturday's Munster colleges' senior B camogie final in Ahamilla, Clon, at 1pm. This is the first time the Clon school is back in a Munster final since beating Midleton in a provincial decider in 2015.

'I'll be walking into a dressing room full of captains'

Aoife Murray is the new captain of All-Ireland camogie champions Cork, who begin their Littlewoods Ireland League campaign against Galway at Cork Camogie Grounds tomorrow. A sister of manager Paudie and former All-Ireland-winning Rebel hurler Kevin, the 34-year-old Cloughduv goalkeeper is going into her 17th year at senior level and hoping to add to her tally of eight All-Irelands and seven All-Stars

Interview by Daragh Ó Conchúir

This is the second year the Camogie Leagues have had a title sponsor with Littlewoods Ireland, Ireland's leading online department store, who inked a three-year deal with the Camogie Association in 2016. Littlewoods Ireland launched the leagues with a photocall at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, a stylish venue providing the perfect backdrop for a partnership that continues to break new ground in the worlds of fashion and sport in Ireland.

until the end of July so we've loads to work on. And individual players know they could write out 10 things they need to work on — certainly have. You can't rest on your laurels.

Q: What are the targets for the Littlewoods Ireland League?

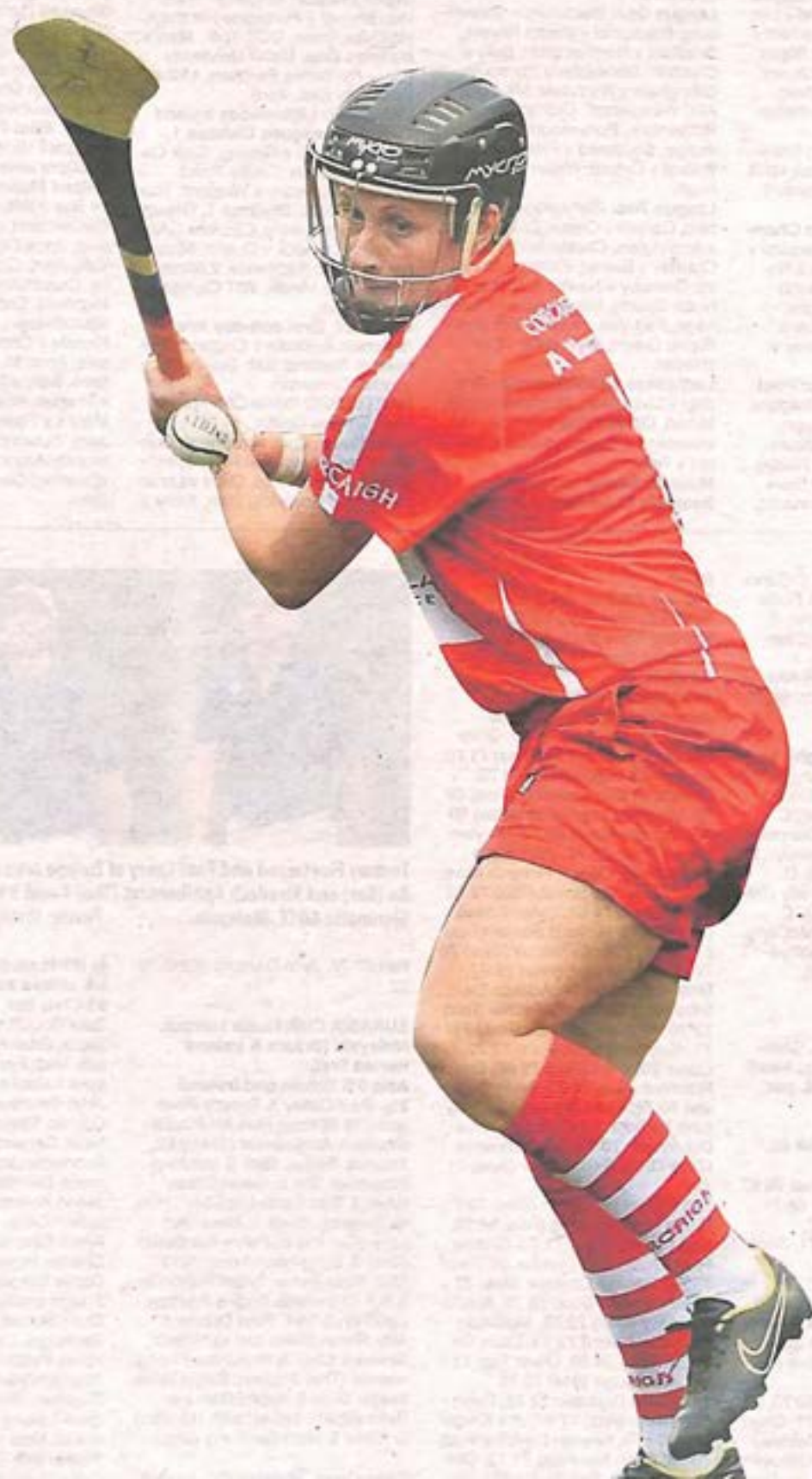
A: It's starting so early this year. It's too soon for me, unfortunately. I'm coming back from a knee injury, Gemma (O'Connor) is coming back from a knee injury. It's a pity as we loved playing the League last year. It was a great foundation for us for the championship. Especially when you're older as it sometimes takes a little bit longer to get the fitness back. We've got a lot of girls involved with college games as well. So I'd say it'll be quite an experimental team. Last year we got Chloe Sigeron, Niamh McCarthy and Libby Copping from the League. If we could get another two or three, win or lose, it'll be worthwhile. Losing the League final was awful, as we had 70 per cent of the possession but we turned around afterwards and it was a super learning.

Q: We know you have been managing chronic back pain caused by herniated discs and damaged vertebrae for years, and were told to by a consultant to stop playing in 2013. But what's the story with the knee?

A: I don't have any cartilage in my right knee. My right knee cap has shifted off to the right so it's just bone on bone. I ended up getting a cyst at the back of my knee and I got it drained a few weeks back. I got an injection at the front to try and replace the cartilage. So I've got four weeks of rehab trying to build up the calves, the quads, the glutes to try and take that impact. It's never gonna be fixed but if I can get through... Last year, it was ballooning. I had it strapped for the final. The Friday before, I got down on my knees to talk to my three-year-old niece. She's from Derry so I love her accent. Then I looked at my brother Kevin and said 'You're gonna have to help me up here.'

Q: You took part in the inaugural All-Stars tour to Madrid. How important was that development?

A: We knew it was important before it happened but we all felt it was such a success because, firstly it was really enjoyable. It was a super atmosphere and getting to socialise with all the other girls is something I haven't had the opportunity to do in years. Back in the day, you'd go to a restaurant and have a beer or two with the opposition. You don't do that in the last 10 years. For the likes of me and Gemma it was like going back in time. We could relax with these people you'd be beating the heads off of and we were all able to mix and have the craic. It was great fun. But not only that, the game showed how it's moving on with the speed of it and the skills. It shows we're in a better place than a lot of people realise. There was great feedback here from people I know that haven't a clue about camogie. There was some negativity, people saying it should have happened years ago but you can't go back. At least it's happening now and now it has happened once, it has to happen again and for the girls that are there in two years, it'll be bigger and better.



Q: Did the captaincy contribute to your decision to play on in 2018?

A: I was really considering retiring. I'm not going to lie. I sat down with those who are closest to me. We discussed it and at the end of the day, you're retired long enough. I've spoken to a lot of people who probably felt they retired a year or two before they should have and regretted that. I'd much prefer to go back and for that to be the wrong decision, than to not go back and that be the wrong decision. It was first mooted about the captaincy in early January. It would have been a childhood dream of mine and I think if anybody said they never dreamt of it, they'd be lying to you. It's an amazing opportunity and a really nice touch to do that for me.

Q: Having stepped away once before at the end of 2015, you know what it feels like to realise you'd made that wrong call.

A: Actually, yeah. I thought then 'This is it.' Once that hour went back, it's completely different. Your mindset completely changes. You're looking at the lovely long evenings. You're still in touch with some of the girls. They're complaining that they have to go training and you're thinking 'I'd love to be going to training!' It was a massive lesson for me and it made me not jump into it. It's easy after you win to jump into a decision of retiring because you're feeling so good but you know what, most of the easy decisions I have made in my life have been wrong so I took a bit of time to think about it.

Q: Was Paudie staying on a factor?

A: It probably would have been. I wasn't going to make a decision until he had one made. If he had gone back, I wouldn't have let him down. Whatever about leaving him down, I'd be leaving my parents down and my family down. My Dad had a stroke years ago and us playing and being involved is such a boost. I haven't seen my parents since I was announced as captain but I know from talking to my brothers and sisters they're absolutely buzzing.

Q: You were always known as a leader in the dressing room. Will the captaincy change anything?

A: I hope not. I think, as a captain, I'm quite lucky to have the panel of players that are there. For me to walk into the dressing room as captain, I'll be walking into a dressing room full of captains. If that's not how it is, we're at nothing anyway, whether I'm captain or not. Girls that are in there now, have all lost and have all won. Those girls are well able to lead from the front. I saw that in last year's final, the attitude they had, the patience, the composure and the maturity. I'll be hoping the only difference for me this year is having to pick 'heads or tails'.

Q: How do you reflect on 2017?

A: Everybody is saying to me 'Ye had a great year' and I'm saying the difference was six minutes between us having a good year — because we didn't have a great year, it was a good year — versus us having an absolutely terrible year. So we're not getting carried away. We have a nice environment of honesty... we know we didn't hit form in training

Newcestown's memorable year

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

THE Intermediate championship, with just five teams participating, was played on a round-robin series and with four teams to emerging to play in the semi-final the pressure was on not to be the one to lose out.

Earlier in the season, the Intermediate teams had joined forces with the Senior B clubs to participate in the league and it proved very successful.

Junior A county champions of 2016 Newtownshandrum made a return to the intermediate grade. Enniskeane had battled over the years to take the title and having lost out in the 2016 final to Blackrock they were focused on going one better. With former Kilkenny All-Star Elaine Alward joining their backroom team as a selector there was huge enthusiasm.

Newcestown had enjoyed a tremendous league campaign, in their second season down at intermediate level. With plenty of young emerging talent in their ranks they went in as the side hotly tipped to be there at the finish. Tracton and Sliabh Rua were two clubs who had other contenders.

Newcestown quickly installed themselves as the side to watch in championship as they turned in a superb display in the opener to defeat Newtownshandrum in the championships opening round game on an impressive 2-19 to 0-8 scoreline. Tracton held on in a tight game to get the upper hand on Sliabh Rua, 2-11 to 2-10, with Enniskeane having a bye.

Newcestown sat back and relaxed as the other four faced into round two. Tracton and Newtownshandrum played out an exciting contest: 11 goals and 23 points were recorded in total and it was Newtown who were smiling at the finish as they recorded a four-point win, 6-12 to 5-11. Sliabh Rua were hoping to bounce back after losing out in round one but Enniskeane were too strong on the day.

Boosted by their good opening round Enniskeane kept it going and in round three remained on course. Newcestown overcame Newtownshandrum. By this stage a pattern was emerging and going into the last round Enniskeane and Newcestown had their places secured. Newtownshandrum, Sliabh Rua and Tracton with one victory each were all in the running for the remaining semi-final spots. Tracton and Sliabh Rua emerged after a three-way play-off.

Enniskeane booked their place in the final with an impressive 5-11 to 1-4 victory over Tracton, while neighbours Newcestown had a 4-6 to 0-2 victory over Sliabh Rua.

Come the final, many of the players lined out as divisional colleagues for Carbery against St Catherine's in the senior quarter-final earlier that weekend.

Enniskeane took the junior title in 2013 and had worked hard since then to take the next step. In 2016 they reached the final only to lose out to Blackrock, who defeated Newcestown in the semi-final.

The sides met twice earlier in 2017: Newcestown took the league title with a 2-14 to 1-8 victory and in the round robin series of games in championship



Newcestown's Amy Murphy gathers the sliothar ahead of Lismore's Shona Curran during the AIB Munster Senior Camogie Club Championship final at Castle Road.
Picture: Howard Crowley



Newcestown after becoming the Cork Camogie Intermediate League winners in 2017. They'd also added the championship crown.

Enniskeane had a 4-6 to 1-11 victory.

A storming second-half performance where they outscored their opponents by eight scores to one was the springboard for Newcestown's victory in an entertaining SE Systems Intermediate Championship final in Brinny.

Newcestown were in determined mood but they found themselves playing second fiddle to a motivated Enniskeane all through the opening half.

The game was eight minutes old before we had the opening score Suzanne Deasy converting a Newcestown free.

Danielle Carroll showed her pace as she took on the Newcestown defence to level the scores and with Siobhan O'Driscoll adding to their tally they hit the front.

Enniskeane squandering two scoreable frees and they found themselves in arrears as Colleen Twomey converted for Newcestown.

With their defence closing down at-

tack after attack Enniskeane grew in confidence and with their nimble attack troubling the Newcestown defence they hit the front with three goals in a seven-minute spell. Megan O'Regan hit the first, before captain Orla Coughlan won possession and showed great pace to net from the edge of the square. Battling to get something Coleen Twomey pointed but Enniskeane grabbed their third goal with Sinead Hurley on target.

Newcestown finished the half stronger Maria Kenneally and Colette Desmond pointing to narrow the gap before the break where Enniskeane led 3-3 to 0-6.

On the resumption Enniskeane went on the attack but could find no way through. Therese McCarthy and Maria Kenneally cut the deficit to a point before Clara O'Sullivan got the last touch in a goalmouth scramble to give Newcestown the lead. Twomey's

“Newcestown put up a brave battle in the Munster club championship but lost out to a very good Lismoreside”

free levelled matters and driven on by the excellent Desmond, Zerica Griffen and Twomey they availed of every opportunity that came their way.

Desmond pointed, Danielle Carroll levelled it before Desmond edged her side and Twomey nailed two frees to push the lead to three. Enniskeane applied pressure but needed their players to push forward more as Newcestown crowded them out and quelled any hope they had of finding an equaliser.

Desmond was named as Evening Echo Player Of the Match following a superb display. She won her first adult championship medal with her club just two weeks before her next big day when she walked down the aisle for her wedding to Fintan O'Toole, a former Evening Echo columnist.

Newcestown put up a brave battle in the Munster club championship but lost out to an experienced Lismore side.

Cork get campaign underway at home

CAMOGIE

■ Linda Mellerick

TOMORROW

Cork v Galway, Littlewood's Ireland Camogie Leagues Division 1, Cork Camogie Grounds, Castle Road, 2pm

THE 2018 Littlewoods Ireland National League Division One season begins in earnest this weekend as reigning champions Kilkenny travel to Clare to begin the defence of their title and achieve a three-in-a-row, while All-Ireland champions Cork begin their campaign with a challenging opening round at home to Galway in Castleroad.

Paudie Murray will certainly want to go far, to get as many games as possible out of it, but he will use his four guaranteed group games against Galway, Offaly, Tipperary and Wexford to experiment with current fringe players and new blood.

New Cork captain Aoife Murray is injured with Amy Lee of Na Piarasigh's likely to take her place. Gemma O'Connor is also recovering from injury while Rena Buckley and Eimear O'Sullivan are yet undecided on their intentions for 2018. Pamela Mackey due to other commitments has limited availability at present while sister Katrina is unavailable until April.

Meabh Cahalane returning from injury will figure again in Cork's defence. All-Ireland injury time heroine Julia While will start and will hope that 2018 gives her a deserved break from injuries.

Paudie is sure to give further opportunities to Finola Neville, Linda Collins and Laurer Homan in addition to calling on other club players and Cork minors of the last couple of seasons to see if the potential is in them for the top flight.

After another year of unrest in Galway, off the field, we wait to see if the public spat will inspire or dishearten the county. The entire 2017 management team were sacked and even the appointment process of a new manager came in for heavy criticism from ex-Mayo Ladies Football boss Frank Browne who put his name forward for the role. Tony O'Donovan was the selection committee's choice. Tony from the Oranmore-Maree Club guided the Galway U16s to two All-Ireland titles.

Galway have had so much underage success over the past couple of decades and really should be acquitting themselves far better in the senior grade. 2017 saw them win their third in a row U16A All-Ireland title in addition to the minor All-Ireland trophy win.

There is so much analysis required in the game today and what is crucial is knowing the team you are playing inside out and ensuring you get your match-ups right. It's what won Cork their 27th championship title last September.

Hennelly has faith in new guard as Galway reset once more

Daragh Ó Conchúir

Upheaval and Galway camogie seem to go hand-in-hand in recent years and, despite having gone so close to defeating subsequent champions Cork in the All-Ireland semi-final last year, the Tribeswomen have gone into the new season with a fourth manager in as many campaigns.

No-one would suggest such an approach is conducive to a team's development, as the process of implementing structures and style of play must start again, while the players and management begin their respective assessments of one another.

Tony O'Donovan comes into the job on the back of leading Galway to the All-Ireland U16 championship and Rebecca Hennelly hopes that he can bring that golden touch to the biggest stage.

Galway renew acquaintances with Cork at Cork Camogie Grounds on Sunday in the marquee tie, as the Littlewoods Ireland Camogie Leagues begin with a full round of Division 1 games.

It is a stern test, but Hennelly can't wait.

"I'm looking forward to Sunday to see how things go, to see where we are at. We don't really know Tony, but we're learning and we're looking forward to the league, to getting games. He's getting to know us and we're getting to know him and that's what the league is for, before we get into the championship."

It is very evident, from her tone and also the glistening of her eyes, that the memory of falling a goal short of the Rebels at the Gaelic Grounds last August is still very raw for Hennelly.

"[There are] lots of regrets from last year. It was very dis-

appointing, looking back. We didn't perform at all against Cork and we still could have won it. It's hard to look back on that — when you're not performing and you just can't seem to get it right — and now we've a new manager again. It's hard, but sure what can you do only stay going and try to get it right."

The managerial merry-go-round cannot be helpful, but even before the departure of All-Ireland-winning manager Tony Ward in 2015 and subsequent one-year terms of Ollie Bergin, who resigned, and Mark Dunne, who was sacked in acrimonious circumstances last October, it was one of camogie's great puzzles: That Galway were not cashing in on the talent at their disposal.

"We have so much ability in the panel. We have great players, a great team. It's about getting it right on the



Rebecca Hennelly at the launch of the 2018 Littlewoods Ireland Camogie Leagues. Follow the action on Twitter @Official-Camogie, Instagram/Official-Camogie, or on Facebook/Official Camogie Association using #StyleOfPlay.

Picture: Dan Sheridan

the club championship and Niamh Kilkenny sidelined until March after an operation on her jaw, there will be chances for players to create an impression on O'Donovan and his fellow mentors.

"We have loads of young players coming through and there are a lot of new ones this year. It's great to see them pushing for places and giving the rest of us a run for our money. It'll be a totally different team from what you're used to. We're missing a good few, but it gives loads of other girls an opportunity."

day and performing. We can't seem to get a consistent performance over the years and it's just trying to find that," Hennelly concedes.

Galway won the All-Ireland minor title in 2017, and their

U16 success completed a three-in-a-row at that grade, so the conveyor belt continues to produce quality players. With a seven-strong Sarsfields contingent unavailable due to their involvement in

Another prize for Na Piarsaigh's camogie players



Joe Kennedy, general manager of Clayton Hotel Silver Springs hotel, presenting the North City & District Sports Award for December 2017, to Catherine Allen, chairperson of Na Piarsaigh camogie club at Clayton Hotel Silver Springs. The team were winners of the Junior A County Championship.

Picture: Denis Minihane

JAN. 2018

Four-point margin sees Kilmessan crowned All-Ireland junior club camogie champions

Kilmessan (Meath) 0-9

Clanmaurice (Kerry) 0-5

KILMESSAN CAPITALISED ON their second bite of the cherry to become AIB All-Ireland Junior Club Camogie champions for the second time after a strong second half performance against a resolute Clanmaurice at Silvermines.

John Watters' outfit were never in front in the drawn encounter at Crettyard and it took a goal with almost the last act of the game in the third minute of extra time from Aileen Donnelly to secure a replay, four minutes after Aoife

KILMESSAN: A M Dennehy, A Walshe, R Kelly, C O'Leary, L O'Neill, A Lynch, T King, S Horan, M O'Leary, K Ní Choileáin, A Donnelly, M Ní Choileáin, K Gorman, M Thynne, L Dennehy. Subs: N Doyle for Gorman (45)

CLANMAURICE: A Maunsell, M Costello, N Leen, T Moran, E Ryall, S Murphy, O Young, P Diggin, L Collins, A Behan, O Dineen, Collins, S Horgan, J Fitzell, J Horgan, A M Leen.

Murray:
You'd have
to be
happy

REACTION

■ Linda Mellerick

IN what was an impressive start for an opening league game and only back training a week, Cork manager Paudie Murray was obviously content with how his charges acquitted themselves yesterday.

"Yeah, I suppose we've very little done for the 14th of January and you'd have to be happy with it."

"The main thing for me during the National League, particularly after winning the All-Ireland last year was the attitude of the players. We certainly don't want players getting carried away with themselves and I thought that side of things was very, very good. There's a nice positive vibe in the dressing room."

Cork settled after five minutes, and after that Galway were chasing the game with some good inter-play and movement particularly in the forward line. Paudie agreed: "Thirteen points today with the rain that has fallen over the past number of days you'd have to be happy with it."

"We want a couple of players to be putting their hand up again this year and that's what we'll be looking for during the league."

So, is that the main goal of this league campaign? "Yeah, we've always gone that way with the league. If we can get two players out of the league it'll be a success. I think we got three last year."

Will Cork have their full All-Ireland championship team available this year? Have there been any retirements?

"No not at the moment and we hope that's the way it'll stay," he smiled.

"We've Wexford away next weekend so that's a nice trip for us but look, if we can keep moving, particularly up front, if our forwards don't remain static, that's key."

Meanwhile, former Limerick hurler Tom Ryan has joined Pat Gilroy's Dublin panel.

He has also linked up with the All-Ireland, Leinster and Dublin club champions Cuala, although he isn't expected to feature in their current campaign to defend their All-Ireland crown, according to the Limerick Leader.

The 25-year-old played for Gilroy's men in the second-half of a 1-26 to 0-12 challenge-match defeat to Tipperary.

A member of the 2013 Munster-winning panel, Ryan is best known for scoring the injury-time winning point in the Treaty county's 2-18 to 2-16 Munster semi-final victory over eventual All-Ireland finalists Tipperary in 2014.

He came on a sub in that year's Munster final loss against Cork, before making his only senior start in an All-Ireland quarter-final against Wexford, scoring three points.

His last of seven championship appearances arrived off the bench in the semi-final loss to Kilkenny.

Cork's pace and hunger does trick



Camogie

Linda Mellerick

Cork	0-13
Galway	1-3

CORK showed five changes to the team which lined out in last September's All-Ireland final with Aoife Murray, Rena Buckley, Eimear O'Sullivan, Gemma O'Connor and Katrina Mackey sitting out and Amy Lee, Leanne O'Sullivan, Meabh Cahalane, Finola Neville and Linda Collins coming in.

Meanwhile, Galway opened their campaign with six changes to the side that lost out to Cork in the 2017 championship semi-final by a goal. Niamh Kilkenny is out with injury while the three McGrath sisters, Tara Kenny and Maria Cooney are focused on their Club semi-final game with Sarsfields against Burgess Duharra on January 28.

Shauna Burke, Siobhan Coen, Fiona Keeley, Niamh Hanniffy, Catriona Cormican, who has made the switch from ladies' inter-county football, and Rachel Monaghan got their opportunity.

Cormican has a strong reputation for great fielding, putting the head down and taking on defences and with her very first possession that's what she did.

The league commenced earlier this year to keep the Camogie league final date in line with the National Hurling League decider, a double-header on the day. That may result in game postponements due to adverse weather conditions but there were no such problems yesterday in a Castleroad pitch that was in good nick.

Yesterday's game was really a case of Cork shaking off the dust after the winter break, yet they showed no signs of winter blues with a lively performance.

They've only just recommenced training and it'll be a while before matters settle down with college camogie, work commitments and extended breaks for some players still part of the mix. But yesterday's performance was a good start with several players impressing.

Galway started well. Tall and strong and with good fielding they played like Cork played it last season with at times, short puck-outs, breaking the tackle in defence and then delivering long where they ran at Cork.

Rebecca Hennelly pointed a free, Orla Cotter replying with a point from a penalty after goalkeeper Shauna Burke gathered the ball off the ground after good work by Ashling Thompson, Hannah Looney and Orla Cronin. But from the puck-out an impressive Galway move involving Shauna Healy and Ailish O'Reilly saw the latter finish to the net after six minutes.

But Cork settled and that was to be Galway's last score of the half. Ashling Thompson dropped back in front of her half-back line, creating more space around Cork's midfield and half-forward line and working hard they took the game to Galway with the visitors



Cork's Amy O'Connor, who hit 0-4 in the league opener, challenges Orlaith McGrath of Galway in last year's All-Ireland semi-final.

Picture: INPHO/Bryan Keane

seemingly chasing the game after that.

Cork's movement was impressive with Orla Cotter once again showing great leadership. She was in top class form again from placed balls and covered miles with a great work rate.

Amy O'Connor, Hannah Looney and Cotter (2) hit over the next four scores leaving Cork ahead at the break 0-5 to 1-1.

Cork dominated the second half, showing great hunger. They were the ones first off the ground after any collision. Orla Cotter struck four in a row, one beauty from play, as Ashling Thompson, Libby Coppinger, Orla Cronin, Amy O'Connor were prominent.

Cork's movement up front was non-stop, and Galway found it hard to control, particularly as the game wore on and legs became heavy.

The lightning pace of Amy O'Connor saw her clear her markers and score a further three points and while Orla Cronin struck just one during the game she made a nuisance of herself throughout and took a chance with a few long attempts, which is the right thing to do in the league.

Aoife Donoghue hit two for Galway and they'll be disappointed with their return but missing 11 in total from their panel and with new management on board it's a work in progress for them.

Scorers for Cork: O Cotter 0-7 (0-4 f, 0-1 pen, 0-1 45), A O'Connor 0-4, H Looney 0-1, O Cronin 0-1. **Galway:** A O'Donoghue 0-2 (0-1 f), A O'Reilly 1-0, R Hennelly 0-1.

CORK: A Lee, L O'Sullivan, L Treacy, M Cahalane, P Mackey, F Neville, C Sigerson, A Thompson, L Coppinger, A Lee, O Cronin, H Looney, L Collins, N McCarthy, O Cotter. **Subs:** L Homan and A Sheehan for N McCarthy and M Cahalane (53).

GALWAY: S Burke, R Black, S Dervan, L Ryan, S Coen, R Hennelly, H Cooney, A M Star, S Healy, F Keeley, N Hanniffy, C Cormican, A Donoghue, A O'Reilly. **Subs:** A Lynskey for F Keeley (38), E Helebert for S Coen (46), C Murphy for R Monaghan (54).

Referee: Liz Dempsey (Kilkenny).



Ashling Thompson did a vital role in yesterday's win over Galway by dropping deep and mopping up loose ball.

Picture: INPHO/Oisin Keniry



Cork manager Paudie Murray issuing instructions.

Rena 'takes it to a whole new level'

imear
ryan



wouldn't like to count all the All-Ireland medals in this room," remarked Joan Flynn, Camogie Association chief executive, as she began proceedings at a lunch honouring Rena Buckley's record-breaking career at Páirc Uí Chaoimh on Saturday.

I looked around at the players, past and present, at my own table of nine. Around 10 medals, at a rough estimate — and that was just one table out of 10.

Buckley herself, of course, can account for 18 — 11 football, seven camogie, the most of any person to play Gaelic games.

At the weekend the LGFA and Camogie Association came together along with several of Buckley's teammates to pay tribute to her achievement.

"When I grew up, we used to hear a lot about Kathleen Mills and Christy Ring," said former Cork ladies' football manager Eamonn Ryan, referring to Ring's eight All-Ireland medals with Dublin. "But Rena has taken it to a whole new level."

In a heartfelt speech, Ryan paid tribute to Buckley's work ethic and humility, as well as her patience during his tenure. "When you've a lad two generations older than you over the team he's bound to repeat himself and make mistakes. I never saw a slump in Rena's body language, she never raised an eyebrow."

"There are three strands to a young person's life. Work and college, your pastime, and your social life. Rena has excelled in all three. She has a successful physiotherapy business, she's done alright at the hurling and football,



Cork Camogie and Ladies Football legend Rena Buckley was honoured by both the Camogie Association and Ladies Gaelic Football Association in a special event at Páirc Uí Chaoimh at the weekend. Left, Catherine Neary, Camogie Association president, centre Rena Buckley, right, Ladies Gaelic Football Association chief Maire Hickey. Picture: Seb Daly/Sportsfile

and she's well able to sing a song," he added, to laughter — *Caledonia* apparently being Buckley's party piece.

"Cool, calm, and collected," was how camogie manager Paudie Murray summed up her demeanour, both on and off the pitch. He, too, praised her professional success, noting that she completed a Masters degree in physiotherapy last year while captaining Cork.

In a moment of devilment, he more or less confirmed Buckley's continuance in the Cork camogie panel. "It's interesting that Rena's boyfriend is also named Paudie. I reminded him at the camogie

victory dinner recently that I'm still number one. In fairness to him, he said I'll be number one for 2018 as well."

The general tone of the afternoon was that this was no testimonial; that Buckley may well break her own record before her career is out. Another common theme in the speeches was the cooperation between the Camogie Association and LGFA that made the occasion possible.

"Rena has brought us together today," said LGFA president Marie Hickey and that spirit of cooperation was echoed by Hickey's camogie counterpart, Catherine Neary. Long an advocate of

one umbrella organisation for all four Gaelic codes, Neary remarked on taking office in 2015: "I am in favour of working closer together and integrating. My background is a family that was steeped in the GAA. I didn't see a difference growing up between hurling and camogie."

Speaking at the lunch, Neary noted while we often look to players like Buckley as role models for young girls, in reality she's a role model for everyone: "There were no female athletes to look up to when I was a kid. I looked up to Kilkenny hurlers and later, Ann and Angela Downey. But there was never anyone like

Rena. She's not just a role model for kids — she's a role model for me, for adults, for men and women."

After a brief musical interlude by Paddy Collins of Free-mountain, it was time for the woman of the hour to speak. As a slideshow of photos from her career played behind her — club, county, camogie, football, All-Star trips, and team holidays — Buckley began her speech as *Gaelige*. "I came along at the right place at the right time," she said, "in a golden era of ladies' GAA in Cork."

It's a comment typical of Buckley's grace and modesty, but it's also undeniably true.

"I came along at the right place at the right time in a golden era of ladies GAA in Cork"

Even if another Rena Buckley or Briege Corkery came along — a dual player with that exceptional level of skill, dedication, and versatility — who's to say they'd be fortunate enough to be born in a county that's firing on all cylinders, as Cork has for the last decade and more? From this vantage point, it seems unlikely that Buckley's achievement will ever be equalled. Buckley paid tribute to everyone who helped her career right from the beginning: her family, teachers, clubs Donaghmore and Inniscarra, and even t Inniscarra Athletics Club: "Unfortunately I took that training and applied it elsewhere."

She didn't come from a big GAA household, and credits her older brother Gerry for introducing hurling to the household: "I used to run around the garden thinking I was Teddy McCarthy when I was young."

Echoing the earlier comments on cross-association co-operation, she quoted a recent speech by GAA president Aogán Ó Fearghail: "If the GAA was established today it would be established for both men and women."

To her fellow players in the audience, she said: "I hope I've contributed as much to ye as ye have to me."

Wrapping up her speech, the most decorated GAA player in history remarked: "The biggest success for me is the friendships in this room."

O'Donnell goal ensures glory at last for Thurles

Munster Colleges
Camogie

Therese O'Callaghan

A goal deep into injury time from Grace O'Donnell saw Presentation Secondary School Thurles claim the Munster senior A colleges camogie title with 3-5 to 0-12 victory over Coachford College at Ballyagran on Saturday.

After suffering defeat in the last two deciders, the Tipperary side finally got over the line, but only after a close and hard-fought battle with the Cork team.

Presentation Secondary School held a one-point lead at the interval, 1-3 to 0-5 — the

goal from the stick of Casey Hennessy midway through the half.

However, they were made to work hard for the win when Coachford College gained the upperhand in the second-half through points from Clara McCarthy and Cliona Healy.

Seoirse O'Meara netted Presentation's second goal with eight minutes remaining, but once again, the Cork girls regained the initiative and were a point ahead entering stoppage time. However, when O'Donnell latched onto a free, her powerful strike to the net sealed the title for Presentation Secondary School.

Meanwhile, there was joy for Ursuline Convent Water-

ford as they were crowned Munster senior B champions. They made the trip to west Cork a successful one, coming out on top against Sacred Heart Secondary School Clonakilty, 1-12 to 0-5 in Clonakilty.

Although trailing early on in the first-half, the game turned in Ursuline's favour when top-scorer Annie Fitzgerald had the game's only goal from a free 10 minutes into the second-half.

Ursuline moved 0-6 to 0-4 ahead at the break, and following a magnificent team effort, they began to pile on the pressure while also managing to keep their opponents scoreless for the majority of the closing stages.

Cork off to impressive start

Camogie League Div 1

Daragh Ó Conchúir

All-Ireland champions Cork registered a 0-13 to 1-3 win over Galway at Cork Camogie Grounds as the Littlewoods Camogie League Division 1 got underway yesterday.

Though without Aoife Murray, Gemma O'Connor and Rena Buckley, Cork fielded a very experienced line-up, whereas Galway were without their large Sarsfields contingent and the talismanic Niamh Kilkenny.

Orla Cotter scored seven points and Amy O'Connor four from play for the hosts but it was the visitors that got off to the better start under new manager Tony O'Donovan. Ailish O'Reilly goaling

Cotter had exchanged early frees.

Four consecutive points — scores from O'Connor, Hannah Looney and a brace of Cotter frees — put Cork ahead at the break by 0-5 to 1-1.

It was all Cork in the second half, Cotter slotting three points on the trot, including one from play. O'Connor found the target twice more too and though Aoife Donohue kept Galway in touch, efforts from Cotter, O'Connor and Orla Cronin eased Paudie Murray's team to victory.

Kilkenny are pursuing a League three-in-a-row and they also produced a strong second-half display to emerge with a 1-13 to 1-3 win over Clare in Clonlara. A fortuitous goal from distance by Chloe Morey, followed by a fine

player, helped the hosts into a 1-3 to 0-4 interval lead. Aoife Doyle, Miriam Walsh, Anne Dalton and Julie Ann Malone were among the scorers as Kilkenny raised the tempo on the restart. Clare had no answer to the champions who had the final say with a Doyle goal.

A Linda Bolger goal in the game's final act snatched a 3-10 to 2-12 win for Wexford over Tipperary at The Ragg while Limerick overturned a six-point deficit to secure a 2-12 to 2-12 draw against Dublin at Mick Neville Park in Rathkeale.

And finally, Waterford's experience of senior camogie told as six points from Beth Carton, three from Kaiesha Tobin and a goal from Lorraine Bray propelled them to a 1-12 to 0-6 victory in Carrigan-

Glitz and glamour at

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

IT was an evening of glitz and glamour as the Cork camogie players swapped their boots for ball gowns to celebrate a tremendous year on the playing fields.

Pride of place went to the county senior team who overcame Kilkenny in a thrilling final to recapture the O'Duffy cup and in the process go top of the leaderboard with 27 titles to their credit. The seniors were joined by the Division 2 side that captures a magnificent Littlewoods National League title as they overcame a fancied Derry side. Indeed they were unlucky not to add the All-Ireland crown to their haul having lost out in a replay of the final to Meath.

Also honoured on the night were the County U16 A and B sides who were crowned Munster champions, while the Munster U16 A winning teams of 2016 along with the Junior team who took Munster honours were also presented with their medals at a function held in the Rochestown Park Hotel.

Captain fantastic Rena Buckley led the senior team into the room to a standing ovation from over 300 guests and later in the evening MC, RTE's Evanne Ni Chuilinn spoke to both Rena and coach Paudie Murray as they relived the magical moments from a year never to be forgotten.

Rena gave an honest and frank interview where she explained her decision to concentrate on camogie in 2017, the commitment needed to ensure the job of captain was fulfilled to the best of her abilities saw her put her football career to one side.

Rena paid tribute to the wonderful backroom team and to all the players who helped her add to her tally of All-Ireland medals which is now at a record breaking total of 18.

However Rena was quick to point out that both Gemma O'Connor and Aoife Murray both now hold eight camogie medals.

"Both Gemma and Aoife have and continue to give huge dedication to Cork camogie," she said.

Paudie spoke how much he enjoyed coaching the Cork team and paid tribute to his backroom team and players whose dedication and commitment was second to none.

Joining the celebrations on the night was the new chairman of the Cork GAA board Tracy Kennedy who spoke of her hope of a closer working relationship with Cork camogie and ladies football in her term of office. She spoke of the wonderful victory for the senior team and also had a special word for all the victorious teams and management.

She also complimented Cork Camogie on their wonderful facility in Castle Road which is a credit to the board and clubs in the county.

President of the Camogie Association Catherine Neary, a Kilkenny native, congratulated Cork and went on to present the medals to the various teams.

Deputy Lord Mayor Mary Shields, who was a wonderful help to the camogie board during the development at Castle Road, also spoke and had huge praise for Mary McSweeney and the Cork camogie family for the huge amount of voluntary work they are doing.

Team sponsors New Ireland Insurance had a large representation present led by Mark Kenny, who expressed his company's delight to be involved with Cork Camogie.

Presentations were made to the team management by the board and players before a wonderful evening was enjoyed by all present.



Tara McCarthy, Glen Rovers, and Kate Dorney, Ballygarvan, at the Cork Camogie Board's victory dinner at Rochestown Park Hotel.

Pictures: Mike English



Ballygarvan Camogie Club's Martin Hourihan, Chairman, Sarah Ahern (Intermediate), Cliona O'Leary (U16), Oliver Hallahan, President, and Kate Dorney (U16).



Libby Coppinger, St Colum's Camogie Club, second from right kneeling, celebrating her All-Ireland win with family and friends.



Hannah O'Leary, member of the Cork U16 camogie team, with her parents, Eleanor and Terence and grandfather, Joe, at the Rochestown Park Hotel.



Sandra Corcoran, Enniskeane, secretary Cork Camogie Board, with her daughter, Kate, member of Cork U16 team, with husband, John and son, Oisín.

Cork camogie ball



Inniscarra girls who featured on winning Cork camogie teams in 2017. Included are Erin Looney, Áine O'Regan, Ciara Ring, Ellen Murphy, Caoimhe Buckley, Rena Buckley and Niamh McCarthy.



Sandra Corcoran, secretary Cork Camogie Board, making a presentation to Evanne Ni Chuilinn.



Marian McCarthy, treasurer Cork Camogie Board making a presentation to special guest, Tracey Kennedy.



Blarney representatives at the Cork camogie board's victory dinner at Rochestown Park Hotel were Ray Murphy, St John Cremin, Jennifer Murphy, Orla Cremin, Maura Cremin and Eithne Murphy.



Cork senior camogie All-Ireland winner, Chloe Sigerson, Killeagh, being congratulated by family members at the Cork Camogie Board's victory dinner at Rochestown Park Hotel.



Na Piarasigh representatives on Cork camogie teams in 2017, Casey Coleman, Emily Buckley (U16) and Amy Lee (senior), received their medals.



Glen Rovers Camogie Club members and families celebrate with Emma Murphy, Tara McCarthy and Lis O'Riordan, who received their U16 medals.

Legend, a word invented



Cork Camogie and Ladies Football legend Rena Buckley with Cork Ladies Football manager Ephie Fitzgerald, left, Rena Buckley, centre, and Cork Camogie manager Paudie Murray, at a reception by Camogie Association and Ladies Gaelic Football Association at Páirc Uí Chaoimh to recognise her extraordinary career to-date. Pic: Sportsfile



Camogie

Linda Mellerick

A CROWD of over 100 current and former players, mentors, family and friends from the Camogie and Ladies' Football associations joined together in the beautiful surroundings of the Legend Room in Páirc Uí Chaoimh last Saturday to pay tribute to the career of the most decorated player in Gaelic Games history, Rena Buckley.

While Rena's playing days aren't over, and who knows what the future may bring in that regard, it was a wonderful idea by both associations to come together and honour someone who is current and has done so much for the profile and legacy of both games, having achieved 18 All-Ireland medals, ten in Football and eight in camogie.

Former Cork Ladies Football manager Eamonn Ryan was the first to pay tribute to our sportstar.

"It's a unique occasion, said Eamonn. "I'm around a fair bit and when I was young the two people we always heard about were Kathleen Mills with 15 camogie medals and Christy Ring winning his eighth in 1954 but Rena has taken this to a new level altogether, so it's hard to find words to really give her her due."

"What I will say is that I was lucky enough to work with her for quite a number of years and like all her colleagues what impressed me most was not Rena's football talent, it was the work ethic, the dedication, the commitment."

"It was the humility, that was huge amongst Rena and her pals and it's something that will stay with me."

"Never once can I remember negative body language, raised eyebrows, a shrug of the shoulders from Rena and the girls and I suppose when you think about that's the secret to their success and honouring Rena here today. It's a unique achievement."

"If you had said to me back in the late 1940's that I'd be in the same room as someone with 18 All Ireland medals, it's just amazing."

"Rena is a brilliant role model for all young people, both boys and girls."

"There are three strands to a young person's life."

"There's work or study, their pastime and there's the socialising and Rena just got that bang on."

"She has done brilliantly in her studies, done well enough in the hurling and football (to laughs from the crowd)



Former Cork football goalkeeper Elaine Harte, former Cork ladies footballers Norita Kelly, Geraldine O'Flynn and Juliet Murphy, former Cork Camogie player Sile Burns, Cork Camogie and Ladies Football star Rena Buckley, Joanna Browne, former Cork Camogie player Catriona Foley, and current Cork Camogie players Orla Cotter, Eimear O'Sullivan and Anife Murray at Páirc Uí Chaoimh. Pic: Cork City Council



Cork Camogie and Ladies Football player Rena Buckley at the reception in her honour at Páirc Uí Chaoimh. Pic: Sportsfile

for superstar Rebel Rena



Inniscarra Camogie Club members, including Tim Buckley, chairman; Rena Buckley, captain of the All-Ireland winning senior Cork team, enjoying the Cork Camogie Board's victory dinner at Rochestown Park Hotel. Picture: Mike English

and she's a fair woman to sing a song. "She was brilliant at compartmentalising. I'm just in awe of Rena's achievement".

Paudie Murray, Camogie Manager was also glowing in his praise of Rena, making it very clear that her captaincy played a key role in Cork winning the All-Ireland final last September.

"I know Rena a long time, over a long number of years but it's over the past six years as Manager of the Cork team that I really got to know Rena.

"She can certainly be described as one of the great players of the modern era.

"I was delighted back in October when she was named Player of the Year.

"She's a great leader on the field both as a player and a Captain and those skills really contributed to our success last year. She's cool, calm, collected and always dependable and I've come to rely on her heavily over the past number of years".

President of Camogie, Catherine Neary and President of the Football Association

Marie Hickey all paid glowing tributes to Rena before Paddy Collins of Freemount, father of Rena's boyfriend Paudie, sang a magnificent song he himself composed and sang on the day about the legendary player which I'm sure will be sung by generations to come.

Finally, the woman of the moment spoke and typically deflected her own success back towards her teammates at both club and county level and what it meant to her to play for Inniscarra, Donoughmore and Cork. She went back to her early days and paid tribute to John and Mary Maher of Blarney and Inniscarra Athletics and the work they put into her as a youngster before she took it all and transferred it over to GAA, which received a good laugh from the attendance.

The main thing she said was that she's been very lucky to be in the right place at the right time in what is a golden period for women's GAA in Cork. She thanked her parents, brother and sister and everyone who supported her along the journey.

Also in attendance were Cork GAA Secretary Frank Murphy, Christy Cooney and Bob Ryan. There were dozens of players from both associations in attendance and it was a pleasure to be in the room with them. Brid Stack, Elaine Harte, Angela Walsh, Joanne Browne (O'Callaghan), Fiona O'Driscoll, Irene O'Keeffe, former Cork player and manager Denise Cronin, Juliette Murphy, Elaine Burke, Catriona Foley, Sheila Burns, Geraldine O'Flynn, Briege Corkery, Norita Kelly, Orla Cotter, Eimear O'Sullivan, Gemma O'Connor and Aoife Murray.

Inniscarra was very well represented with mentors and players.

What a wonderful afternoon it was. The day was lovely and to walk down the Plaza beside the Páirc and the all-weather pitch where underage development squads were in full flow and then to enter the beautiful 'Legends' suite to honour our very own sportstar.

Afternoons don't come much better than that.



Rena with her Irish Tatler Women of the Year Award received last year at the Clayton Hotel, Burlington. Picture: Paul Sherwood



Rena accepting her 2017 Camogie All-Stars Award at Citywest Hotel Dublin. Picture: Inpho/Ryan Byrne



Pictured at the event are, from left, President of the Camogie Association, Catherine Neary; Rena Buckley; and President of the Ladies Gaelic Football Association, Máire Hickey, at Páirc Uí Chaoimh.



Rena Buckley addresses the audience at the reception in her honour.

Picture: Seb Daly/Sportsfile



2017 GAELIC LIFE ULSTER CLUB ALL-STARS CAMOGIE TEAM OF THE YEAR

BACK ROW: Amy Boyle (Loughgiel, midfield), Dymphna Dougan representing Louise Dougan (Slaughtneil, midfield), Ciara Donnelly (Eglish, half-forward), Angela Boyle representing Racquel Murphy (Loughgiel, full-forward), Sinead McKenna (Crosferlough, half-forward), Tina Hannon (Slaughtneil, half-forward), Leanne Donnelly (Eglish, full-forward), Therese Mellon (Slaughtneil, full-forward)
 FRONT ROW: Aoife Ni Chaiside (Slaughtneil, half-back), Clare McGrath (Slaughtneil, half-back), Jenna Boden (Clonduff, full-back), Megan Coyle (Loughgiel, goalkeeper), Laura Connolly (Loughgiel, full-back), Dervlagh McGuigan (Slaughtneil (full-back), Aoishe O'Reilly (Crosferlough, half-back)

CAMOGIE PLAYER OF THE YEAR **TINA HANNON (SLAUGHTNEIL)**

Camog of the Year Tina Hannon receives her award from Rosemary Hughes-Merry, secretary, Ulster Camogie Council, alongside Padraic McKeever, theGAAstore.com (left) and Sean McIntosh, Gaelic Life (right)

MC 73

The 2017 Camog of the year is Tina Hannon after her brilliant performances for Slaughtneil during their successful defence of their Ulster title. But Tina Hannon did not start out life as a Slaughtneil woman, she's originally from Offaly.

She told Gaelic Life how she came to become involved with the club.

"A couple of years ago I went travelling and working in Australia. I met Patsy Bradley who plays midfield for Slaughtneil. It kind of went from there, and I moved up last March and then I joined the girls in April.

"I haven't really looked back."

Being from a completely different province it affords us a chance to get a perspective from someone who has seen the club from both the inside and the outside. She was impressed with Slaughtneil before she got involved.

"I think what the team has done over the last couple of years has just been phenomenal. Going on to do the treble in Ulster and then going on to give Croke Park that possible headache of having maybe the hurling and football (on the same day for the final).

"The footballers just fell short but what they have been doing has been remarkable. Everyone's been following them. I'm lucky to

be a part of it now."

In two weeks time the Camogs face Thomastown of Kilkenny and that's a game that Hannon and her team mates are looking forward to.

"They should be very strong up front. They are a very good scoring team. It's all to play for. These girls won the All-Ireland last year so they want to keep their hands on that trophy and I am delighted that this year I can be part of the team.

"We have high hopes for the semi-final and we are preparing well.

"It is the same four teams that were in the last four last year and there is not much be-

tween the teams so it will really be all on the day.

"I'm really looking forward to it."

Hannon says that the Slaughtneil team is filled with strong willed players who believe they can win again.

"I'm just looking at the girls who won awards Aoife Ní Chaiside, Dervlagh (McGuigan), Clare (McGrath), they are girls that would make any team. There is just such strength and depth and they are very determined and very dedicated.

"Then you have a very well organised management who can back that up. It's the overall package."



CUMANN
CAMÓGAÍOCHTA
ULADH
ULSTER CAMOGIE

Congratulations to all the winners and nominees from the 2017 Gaelic Life All Star Awards

Clon school left broken hearted

Munster final
camogie loss
for brave
Sacred Heart



Tom Lyons
reports from
Ahamilla

URSULINES
WATERFORD 1-12
SACRED HEART
CLONAKILTY 0-5

SACRED Heart Secondary School, Clonakilty were left broken hearted after defeat in the Munster colleges' senior B camogie final – but they had no complaints.

Following an overnight downpour, this school's decider was a real endurance test for the players on a sodden, grassy pitch in Clonakilty on Saturday afternoon but full credit to the teams who served up a thrilling, hard-hitting encounter.

The awful underfoot conditions, on a fine day, were bound to have a big effect and we witnessed a disproportionate amount of hurling rucks all through the game as players fought tooth and nail for supremacy.

In the end it was the stronger, more experienced Waterford girls who triumphed, with some outstanding, skilful hurlers in their midst, but the final score did little justice to Clon's brave effort on the day.

In fact, it was Clon who led this final after 25 minutes but a period of supremacy just before the break indicated what was about to come in the second half as Ursulines grabbed control.

'We knew we were up against a superb Ursulines side,' admitted Sacred Heart coach Brian Daly.

'No team has come anywhere near them this season and they won the semi-final by 18 points. But our girls gave it everything and we were hopeful of creating a surprise. They were cramping there at the end having given their all.'

'The conditions were atrocious but we did well to get the game played, very few pitches would have taken that amount of rain. They're an up-and-coming school and are in the junior final as well and they were just too strong for us in the second half.'

'We can have no complaints, the better side won and we wish them well in the All-Ireland.'



Great effort: The Sacred Heart Secondary School team that was defeated by Ursulines Secondary School, Waterford in the Munster colleges' senior B camogie final at Clonakilty on Saturday.

(Photos: Paddy Feen)

'Our girls gave it everything and we were hopeful of creating a surprise. They were cramping there at the end having given their all' – Brian Daly, Sacred Heart coach

Once the girls got used to the rucking type of hurling they had to play in the conditions, we were treated to a cracking contest.

With the half forward line of Orla Lowney, hard-working Orla Fahey and Ciara Ryan, dominating outfield and corner forward Katelyn Dineen causing trouble inside, it looked good for Sacred Heart in the first half.

Points from Fahey, Dineen and Ryan, in answer to an opening score from Ciara O'Sullivan, had the Clon girls two clear after ten minutes. When strong full forward Aoife Fitzgerald and Fahey swapped points it was Sacred Heart in front by 0-4 to 0-2 at the end of a lively first quarter.

The second quarter belonged to the Waterford school. Using their strength to good advantage, they began to wear down the opposition. Sacred Heart had to resort to fouling to stop the momentum and Annie Fitzgerald's accuracy from placed balls proved vital as she rifled over three frees to give her side the lead by the 28th minute.

A fine point from play by Abby Flynn closed the first half scoring as Ursulines led by 0-6 to 0-4 at the interval.

Sacred Heart had a glorious chance to grab the lead in the opening minutes of the second half but failed to grasp the op-

portunity. When Orla Lowney was fouled in the 32nd minute, outstanding goalkeeper Daire O'Brien blasted the semi-penalty over the crossbar and a minute later a close-in free was driven wide. That pointed semi-penalty was, in fact, Clon's only score in the second half as the Waterford girls went from strength to strength.

The crucial score arrived in the 38th minute when a free by Annie Fitzgerald from 35 metres out on the wing slipped into the roof of the Clon net and there was no catching the winners subsequently.

The rampaging Aoife Fitzgerald, flying winger, Abby Flynn, and Annie Fitzgerald added points and it was Ursulines in front by 1-9 to 0-5 as the last quarter dawned.

Sacred heart gave their all in the final quarter, with goalkeeper Daire O'Brien moving

outfield, but despite the best efforts of Katie Sexton, Claire Kingston, Kate Whelton, Clara Crowley, Orla Fahey, Orla Lowney and Ciara Ryan, there was just no comeback for the Clon side.

Scorers

Ursulines: Annie Fitzgerald 1-4 (1-4f), Aoife Fitzgerald 0-4, Abby Flynn 0-3, Clara O'Sullivan 0-1.

Sacred Heart: Orla Fahey 0-2, Clara Ryan, Katelyn Dineen, Daire O'Brien (1f) 0-1 each.

Ursulines: Leah O'Donoghue; Shauna Farrell, Lucy Hogan, Emma Flynn; Leah Sheridan, Collette Hogan, Hannah Flynn; Kate Lynch, Clodagh Carroll; Annie Fitzgerald, Niamh Murphy, Abby Flynn; Rachel Walsh, Aoife Fitzgerald, Clara O'Sullivan.

Sacred Heart: Daire O'Brien (Enniskeane); Róisín Dullea (Barryroe); Kate Sexton (Kilbrittain); Grace Tobin (Barryroe); Claire Kingston (Ballinascorthy); Meabh Deasy (Clonakilty); Clara Crowley (Ballinascorthy); Hannah Sexton (Kilbrittain); Orla Lowney (Clonakilty); Orla Fahey (Clonakilty); Clara Ryan (Clonakilty); Katelyn (Kilbrittain); Jessica McCarthy (Barryroe); Lorraine Dineen (Kilbrittain).

Subs: Annie Condon (Ballinascorthy) for J McCarthy (35), Anna Flynn (Ballinascorthy) for G Tobin (44).

Referee: Cathal Egan (Glen Rovers).

★ THE HIGHLIGHTS

Our Star: Ursulines had excellent hurlers in Clodagh Carroll, and Annie and Aoife Fitzgerald but in terrible conditions the ball control, speed off the mark and accuracy of wing forward Abby Flynn stood out as she hit three points from play.

Star moment: Annie Fitzgerald's goal from a 35m free in the 38th minute was the decisive moment as it opened a four-point

gap which Clon never looked like closing, despite their best efforts in the second half.

Talking point: The awful conditions, the number of rucks and the ability and bravery of the players on the day.

What's next: Ursulines move on to the All-Ireland semi-final and will take a lot of beating on this form. Sacred Heart can reflect on an encouraging campaign.



Clearing her lines: Sacred Heart's Katie Sexton powers the ball past Ursulines' Clodagh Curham during the Munster final



In control: Sacred Heart's Clara Ryan breaks away from Ursulines' Hannah Flynn.

Piarsaigh broke Hill hearts with late rally

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

THE junior A championship is always one that throws up great games and in the last few years there have had some terrific battles.

With just seven teams in contention for honours, the groups were small. Newtownshandrum had gone up intermediate as junior champions with Ballyhea making the step up following their victory in the junior B championship.

Na Piarsaigh went into 2017 as firm favourites to lift the crown, having lost out to a late scoring flurry in the final to Newtown. They went well in the league and they were determined to bring that form to the championship table.

Banteer, junior B champions in 2015 and with a year's experience in the A grade behind them, were a side to watch out for. St Vincent's, with Cork senior Amy O'Connor and Cork minor Lauren Homan, in their starting 15, had a good league campaign.

Watergrasshill, defeated in the 2016 semi-final by Newtownshandrum, were strengthened by the transfer in of former Cork senior Marie O'Neill following several successful years in the Milford colours.

Former Rockbawn and Cloughduv player Catriona Foley, who captained Cork to senior All-Ireland glory, also joined Watergrasshill while they acquired the services of Aisling Whoooley, who moved from Sarsfields, and former Clare senior player Ruth Kaiser.

Na Piarsaigh signalled their intentions with a strong opening round victory over Bride Rovers. Ballyhea were too strong for Banter and Youghal overcame Bishopstown, while Watergrasshill had eight points to spare over St Vincent's.

Ballyhea continued their good form with a 3-7 to 1-3 victory over Bride Rovers in round two. Na Piarsaigh had to work hard to get over Banteer, but they did enough to get their second win and guarantee themselves a semi-final spot.

Watergrasshill got their second win when they defeated Youghal and St Vincent's recorded a win over Bishopstown.

In section one, Na Piarsaigh defeated Ballyhea, who were already through. In section two, Watergrasshill defeated Bishopstown to make it three wins and guarantee themselves a semi-final spot, while St Vincent's edged out Youghal.

It took a replay to separate Ballyhea and Watergrasshill in the last four, after it finished level 1-8 apiece. In the replay Watergrasshill upped the pace to run out winners on a 0-13 to 0-9 scoreline to secure their place in the final.

It was also close in the all north side clash with Na Piarsaigh holding out with two points to spare over Vincent's to make it to their second final.

The final was a low-scoring encounter with all the drama reserved for the second half where we had three goals, a red card, a penalty save and a dramatic finish that saw Na Piarsaigh snatch the lead and the title in a similar finish to the final of 12 months previous.

Playing 20 minutes of the second



Na Piarsaigh captain Amy Lee and players celebrate after defeating Watergrasshill in the Cork SE Systems junior A camogie final at Castle Road.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare



Na Piarsaigh's Rebecca Rourke and Emily Buckley tackle Watergrasshill's Ruth Kaiser.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

half with 14 players following the dismissal of their goalkeeper, Watergrasshill looked to have weathered the storm, but, cutting the deficit to a point as the game entered added time, Na Piarsaigh struck to grab the title with two late goals.

Aided by the strong wind in the opening half, Watergrasshill held a

four-point interval lead and possibly should have been further ahead.

On the resumption, both defences came under pressure and Na Piarsaigh had the wind in their favour, though Watergrasshill captain Edel Murphy was superb.

The big moment came when the referee's attention was brought back

to the goal area where, on consultation with his umpires, a straight red was issued to the Watergrasshill goalkeeper. It also resulted in a penalty, though Amy Lee was denied by a good save on the line from Catriona Foley.

Watergrasshill coped well with the numerical difference and still we

awaited the first score of the second half as Na Piarsaigh failed to avail of their advantage.

With nine minutes remaining Marie O'Neill edged Watergrasshill five points clear and they still held the upper hand.

Orla Bourke pointed a 45 after good pressure had forced the Watergrasshill defence into an error and when the same player adding a second point from play a minute later Watergrasshill's lead was down to three. O'Neill rallied Watergrasshill with a point with three minutes remaining, but Na Piarsaigh continued to improve and, pumping long ball into the danger area, they were causing problems for the Watergrasshill defence.

Winning a free on the 20-metre line, they opted to bring Lee forward to hit it and the keeper made no mistake aiming high to the roof of the net with two minutes remaining.

As Na Piarsaigh battled for an equaliser the clock ticked into added time and with two minutes played, a dipping shot from Trisha Coleman out on the wing struck the end of the upright and went over the line for the lead.

Watergrasshill, stunned by the late rally, had no time to respond and a Casey Coleman goal on the full-time whistle was the icing on the cake for Na Piarsaigh.

Next week we will take a look back at the Junior B and C championship and minor championships.

Aoife is ready for her latest challenge

BY DENIS HURLEY

WHILE injury prevented new Cork camogie captain Aoife Murray from taking part in last Sunday's national league opener against Galway, the goalkeeper was still about to play a role.

A knee injury means that the Cloughduv clubwoman must spend another week or two on the sideline, but she made sure to keep her vocal chords exercised at Castle Road last weekend.

'I sat beside Gemma [O'Connor] in the dugout and I think I wrecked her head for the first half,' she laughs, 'so I said I'd give her a break for the second half, I just walked up and down the line.'

'I'd always be talking when I'm in goal to keep myself in the game and I was wrecking Gemma's head so I was shouting at the backs in the second half.'

Amy Lee deputised for Murray against the Tribeswomen. While Murray's status as the number 1 is underlined by the

captaincy, she'd never be so arrogant as to think that she has a divine right to start.

'At this stage, everybody will have an ego and confidence and self-belief,' she says, 'but at the same time, I've always said that if somebody is better suited to play a role, then so be it.'

'I'd much prefer to not be there if I'm not the best choice for it. Amy, in my opinion, has all the credentials, she could be a great, outstanding, goalkeeper. I've great faith in her.'

At the end of the 2015 season, the then-32-year-old Murray retired from intercounty action before opting to come back. Cork lost the 2016 final to Kilkenny but gained revenge last year – did she consider going out on a high?

'I'd be lying if I didn't say that I thought about it,' she says.

'I sat those with those closest to me to chat about it, but I'd much prefer to go back and for that to be the wrong decision rather than to retire and for that to be the wrong decision.'

'I'd prefer to regret coming

'I sat those with those closest to me to chat about it (retirement after 2017 All-Ireland final), but I'd much prefer to go back and for that to be the wrong decision rather than to retire and for that to be the wrong decision,' – Cork captain Aoife Murray



Starting with a bang: New Cork camogie captain Aoife Murray pictured at the recent launch of the 2018 Littlewoods Ireland Camogie Leagues. (Photo: Dan Sheildan/INPHO)

back than regret not coming back, I see plenty of people who have retired but who'd love to still be playing.

'It was hard to come back but my way of thinking with a harder challenge was, isn't that so much better than taking an easy option?'

The captaincy is an added bonus, bestowed by county champions Inniscarra. 'The last time we won a county 2005, so that was my last chance of being captain,' Murray says.

'I had kind of maybe moved on from my childhood dream, to be honest, but it is a great honour to be asked. At the same time, at intercounty level you have to have 15 leaders on the pitch and five or six other girls on the sideline who are willing to come in and lead from the front.'

'Something I'll have to figure out when I get back is how to fit

the coin-toss in – anyone who warms me up knows that I can be quite pernickety about it!'

'There are a few of those kinds of logistical challenges but I hope to God it won't make any difference.'

Of course, that means being a bridge between players and management, with her brother Paudie the man in charge.

'It was always the case that I was just another player,' she says, 'but I would hope that they would see it as an easier link.'

'I have the ability to be quite direct and blunt – I think the girls know at this stage that that's how our relationship has always been. If I have an issue, I'll raise it straightaway and I'd hope that that's how the other players would see it.'

'We're in a very honest dressing room and if someone's unhappy with something, more than likely you're unhappy with

it. 'If something is bothering me, then Paudie will know about it but by the same token if he has a problem it'll be easy for him to take me aside and tell me, without having to think about his words.'

'Hopefully, it'll be quite a smooth transition.'

All-Ireland champions Cork registered a comprehensive 0-13 to 1-3 win over Galway at the Cork Camogie Grounds as the Littlewoods Camogie League Division 1 got off to an early start.

Despite some high-profile absentees in new captain Aoife Murray, Gemma O'Connor and Rena Buckley, Cork fielded a very experienced line-up, whereas Galway were without their large Sarsfields contin-

gent and the talismanic Niamh Kilkenny.

Orla Cotter scored seven points and Amy O'Connor provided four from play for the hosts but it was the visitors that got off to the better start under new manager Tony O'Donovan, Ailish O'Reilly goaling after Rebecca Hennelly and Cotter had exchanged early frees.

Cork remained undeterred however and four consecutive points – scores from O'Connor, Hannah Looney and a brace of Cotter frees – put them in front at the break by 0-5 to 1-1.

It was all Cork in the second half, Cotter slotting three points on the trot, including one from play. O'Connor found the target twice more too and though Aoife Donohue kept Galway in touch with two points of her own, Cotter, O'Connor and Orla Cronin eased Paudie Murray's team to the honours.



DECEMBER: Anna Geary and Brieghe Corkery Captained their teams to All Ireland wins.



AUGUST: Vincent Harrington and Anna Marie O'Keeffe Record-breaking winning camogie team trainers have led St Mary's Secondary School to Senior and Junior All-Ireland wins.



CROWNED: Eglish's Shauna Jordan has her hurley broken as she bids to block down Johnstownbridge's Siobhan Hurley in yesterday's All-Ireland Intermediate Club Camogie semi-final at Donaghmore Ashbourne GAA, Co Meath.

Ballinora look ahead with confidence

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

THE junior B and C championship are always keenly contested with a mix of clubs, some fielding their first choice adult teams while others put out their second adult teams.

For the SE Systems Junior B championship draws 12 teams went into the hat and were divided into two groups of six and with the top two from each group to emerging to contest the semi-finals. Eight were second teams with Ballincollig, Douglas, Newcestown, St Finbarr's, St Catherine's, Glen Rovers, Sarsfields and Inniscarra involved. This was an indication of the growth in the game with first teams from Charleville, Ballinascarty, Ballinora and Cobh also featuring. It is also interesting to note that in the lead-up to the championship Charleville, Ballinora and Ballinascarty had all enjoyed excellent league campaigns.

2016 Junior C champions Ballinora fit in well to the Junior B grade and they looked ahead with confidence to championship where they hoped to bring the same form to their games. The groups were divided as follows: Group 1: Charleville, Douglas, Newcestown, Ballinora, St Finbarr's and Ballincollig; Group 2: Ballinascarty, Sarsfields, St Catherine's, Inniscarra, Cobh and Glen Rovers.

After some exciting contests Ballinora and Charleville emerged from section one and they were joined by Cobh and Sarsfields from section two. The semi-finals saw Charleville overcome Sarsfields on an impressive 6-22 to 0-6 scoreline. The second semi-final was a closer affair as Ballinora had four points to spare over Cobh in a 3-8 to 3-4 clash to book their place in the B final just 12 months after taking the C crown.

Ballinora got a great start in the final with an early goal from Jennifer Murphy and when Lisa O'Shea added to their tally with a point they were in a good position. Charleville settled into the game with points from Sinead Dennehy and Fiona Nelligan but Ballinora stayed in front thanks to Slobhan O'Regan.

Charleville had a stroke of luck when a lobbing shot from Nelligan dropped in under the crossbar to the net but again O'Regan put Ballinora back in front.

It was nip and tuck as Charleville edged in front with two points in a row but Ballinora again cut their lead. Charleville hit a purple patch and adding to their tally with a Maeabh Buckley goal and a Natalie O'Brien point Ballinora stayed in touch with O'Regan on target but the break it was Charleville who led 2-6 to 1-6.

The sides swapped early second-half points but a Charleville goal from Caitlin Sheehan extended their lead to six points. As Ballinora battled to stay in the contest Nelligan hit two points. The sides swapped points again but a solid Charleville defence closed down the Ballinora attack and never allowed them the lee-



Millstreet winners of the SE Systems Junior C Championship last year.



Charleville landed the SE Systems Junior B championship in 2017.

way needed to make inroads into their lead which they held to the final whistle to be crowned champions.

Charleville's Lauren Corrigan gave a solid display all through and it came as no surprise that she was named as the Evening Echo Player of the Match.

A lot of clubs in the Junior C championship were also second adult teams Courcey Rovers, Kilbrittan/Timoleague, Valley Rovers, St Vincent's Na Piarisagh and Valley Rovers all fielding their second adult teams. There were also new clubs in the junior C grade and it is great to

see Castlemartyr and Kinsale entering teams at adult level for the first time.

Kilworth continued to make progress in their second year at junior level and they are a club who are working hard to establish the game in their area.

Aghada are another club who are continuing to make huge strides at underage level and this augurs well for the future of their adult team and all looked forward to participating at junior level for the first time.

Fourteen teams entered the championship draw but Mallow didn't par-

ticipate, leaving six teams in section one and seven in section two. Millstreet proved too strong for a fancied Castlelyons side whilst Blarney had too much experience for Kinsale in the last four.

Millstreet set the foundations for victory in the opening half where they lead 1-12 to 1-6 at the interval. Weather conditions were trying as both sides battled to get a grip but huge credit to both teams for producing such a high scoring contest. In an opening half there were some excellent scores, Marie Ellen O'Connor, Kate O'Keeffe, Emily Ring, Alanna

“A strong finish from Millstreet saw them add 1-2 without reply to ensure the title was secured”

Barry and Claire O'Keeffe were all on target with Millstreet points and a goal from Kate O'Keeffe was crucial as they built up their interval lead.

Oria Cremen opened the Blarney scoring with a goal followed by points from Megan Murphy, Stephanie Murphy and Olivia Murphy and Blarney were well in contention.

An Emma Murphy goal with five minutes remaining put Blarney into a one-point lead but they came under huge pressure and a strong finish from Millstreet saw them add 1-2 without reply to ensure the title was secured.



Cork camogie stars back cervical cancer awareness campaign: P3

Women on a mission

Cotter keeps Cork on boil

Camogie

Daragh Ó Conchúir

Five-time All-Star Orla Cotter hit 10 points as Cork held off Wexford by five points (0-15 to 1-10) to record their second win in Division 1 of the Littlewoods Ireland Camogie League.

Amy O'Connor, Orla Cronin and Hannah Looney also impressed for the visitors in Saturday's Group 1 tie at St Patrick's Park, Ennisecorhy.

Linda Bolger was the star for the hosts with nine points and her opening score gave Wexford an early lead but then Cork shifted through the gears with Cotter in deadly form up front.

The hosts rallied well in the second quarter however and were back to within a point at half-time (0-9 to 1-5) thanks to a Jackie Quigley goal and efforts from Una Leacy and Bolger (free).

The Model county's defence continued to struggle under significant pressure after the resumption though and that resulted in a number of frees which Cotter converted in ruthless fashion.

And indeed the Cork star was satisfied to tap over the bar from a penalty late in the game.

Wexford never gave up and Bolger shot some excellent points from placed balls to drag them back into contention but they needed another goal and the Rebel defenders were not in generous mood.

In the other Group 1 game, Tipperary finished strongly defeated Offaly 0-16 to 0-7 at The Ragg.

In Group 2 Limerick defeated Meath (2-10 to 0-2) while Waterford and Clare served up a thriller at Carriganore to finish 2-13 apiece.



Celebrations: The Newcestown Intermediate camogie team that won the county title in 2017 pictured at the club's victory dinner in the Munster Arms Hotel, Bandon on Friday night. Back from left, Therese McCarthy, Evelyn Crowley, Mary McSweeney, Suzanne Deasy, Rose O'Mahony, Colleen Twomey, Alison Crowley, Aishling O'Donovan, Orla Dinneen, Maeve Lynch, Collette Desmond, Maria Kenneally and Aoife Buckley. Front from left, Eimear Murphy, Emma Murphy, Aoife O'Sullivan, Kate Barry, Alice Tarrant, Frances Deasy, Keelin Barrett, Zerica Griffin, Amy Murray, Maebh O'Donovan and Clara O'Sullivan.

(Photos: Jerry O'Mahony)

Newcestown honours heroes

IT was a year that Newcestown camogie won't forget in a hurry so it was fitting that they honoured their 2017 exploits in fine style at the Munster Arms Hotel last Friday night.

At the Newcestown Camogie and GAA victory dinner dance, the heroes of 2017 took centre stage on a night where their success last season was honoured.

Newcestown's intermediate camogie team won the county final against Enniskeane and they contested the club's first-ever Munster final, and this season they'll compete in the senior B ranks here in Cork.

As well as that, Newcestown's minor A camogie team won county league and West Cork A titles in 2017 so the conveyor belt of talent is strong in the club.

Great season: Karen, Emma and Eimear Murphy at the Newcestown dinner dance.



Sister act: Colette Desmond and Rose Desmond having good fun at the victory dinner dance.



Good times: Maria Kenneally, Orla Dinneen, Aishling O'Donovan and Lauren Whelan enjoying the night.



Having fun: Alison and Evelyn Crowley at the victory dinner dance on Friday night.



Rebel star: Cork camogie star Orla Cronin, centre, winner of the September monthly award, pictured at the awards night with Eamonn and Carmel Fitzgerald, Yvonne Lordan, Bernie Humphrey and Daniel Cronin, Sinead Curtin and Tim Lordan.



At the Cork 96FM & C103 14th Annual GAA Sports Star Awards at the Rochestown Park Hotel were (overall winner) Aoife Murray, Cork Camogie, Tom Cashman (left) who received the Donal Lehane Lifetime Achievement Award; and Brian Turnbull who received the Kieran O'Driscoll, GAA Youth Award.

Picture: Tony O'Connell Photography

JAN. 2018

Dancing With The Stars competitor Anna Geary has forged a successful career on the sports field, but taking part in the RTÉ reality show has unleashed the inner 'dramatics' that her mother always knew lay beneath her sporting exterior.

Corkonian Anna has been a huge hit on the show, going from tough tackler on the camogie pitch to graceful dancer on the glitterball show.

'For me, it is as much about the acting and performance as much as it is about the dance. And my mum always reckoned there was a little actress in me. I have a little bit of the dramatic streak,' reveals Anna.

While she may have had that streak, Anna maintains that she didn't have the training to unleash her inner dance diva.

'I wish I had dance experience. I danced when I was age six – Irish dancing – badly, I'll admit. What Irish girl hasn't been put into dancing or Irish dancing at some stage in her childhood? I wish now I had done some sort of ballet or something to help me.

'But it's a challenge that you have to master. Essentially, you are going out there in front of a million people and you're strutting your stuff and you have to remain calm, even if you miss steps. And even if

'We're all behind each other, but it's a competition after all'

you miss steps you have to convince the audience that you haven't.'

While Anna is revelling in mastering a new craft and embracing the camaraderie of the hit show, she hasn't shaken off her competitive edge and says she is in it to win it.

'I would be lying if I said I didn't want to stay in this competition as long as possible. I'm having an absolute ball, I'm learning a new skill, I'm learning to stand better, to control my hands.

'I'm making memories with an absolutely amazing bunch of people. What you see is not put on; we are all getting on. It's almost like there is a collective vulnerability, and we all know what the other is going through.

'We are all behind each other, but it is a competition after all. So do I want to stay till the end? Of course! Do I think I can? Well, that's up to the public to decide if they want me to. But I'm having an absolute ball and I don't want to go home.'

Last week her fellow dancer Erin McGregor used her time in the



Tough talk: Camogie star Anna Geary on the pitch for Cork

I'm a tough sportswoman... THIS IS ALL ABOUT THE WIN

Anna Geary reveals her dramatic side and tells of her competitive streak on the dance floor.
By Niamh Walsh

spotlight to highlight negativity and bullying that seems to be pervasive in society.

And while Anna is familiar with the negative side of fame, she says she wants to focus on the positives.

'At the end of the day, I was on Ireland's Fittest Family before. You are going to get negativity – everybody does – but I try and ignore it and not to look at it. I focus on the positives and the people that are behind me and parents and little girls watching it.

'They are the people that I like to focus on and I hope will say "she did really well". Negativity is in every part of society and almost by watching and talking about it, we are giving them

and giving them more than they deserve. If people sit in their sitting room and say nasty things, then they're probably worse off. I work with a performance coach and I work with people to try and overcome these types of things.

'It is a TV programme, we are in the public eye and we would be naïve to say they love us, but of course I want people to like me and vote for me.'

Blonde, beautiful and a battler on the pitch and, as she has demonstrated, on the dance floor, Anna says that she hopes to inspire young girls around the country to embrace and chase their dreams.

'I'm a sportsperson; people in Ireland know me predominantly as a sports-

person. I'm very proud to have played sports for so long but people are getting to see me in a different light. And little girls can see that even if you play sport, you don't have to just play sport,' she says.

'You can do other things as well; you don't have to just choose sport. The more people that stay active and fit, the better.

'This has helped me so much from a fitness and resilience point of view, knowing that if you get not-so-great comments, you learn from it and come back from it.

'More and more it's about the overall performance – and if all else fails, just keep smiling.'

■ *Dancing With The Stars* is on RTÉ One tonight at 6.30pm.



Ice queen: Anna and her dance partner Kai on last week's show

Perfect ten from Cotter gets Cork up and running

CORK 0-15
WEXFORD 1-10

CAMOGIE LEAGUE

CORK made it two wins from two in the Littlewood Ireland NCL Division 1 Group 1 as Orla Cotter scored ten points in the narrow win over Wexford in Enniscorthy on Sunday.

Having had a good win at Galway a fortnight ago, this was another step

up for Paudie Murray's side and they were challenged all the way by the Model County before showing good resolve to take the points home.

Wexford's Linda Bolger was entitled to feel hard done by as she finished with nine points, but Cotter had just a little more

support from the likes of Amy O'Connor, Orla Cronin and Hannah Looney.

Wexford led early on with Bolger among the scorers but Cork shifted through the gears and their Cotter's radar was in fine working order as they moved six clear.

The hosts rallied well in the second quarter however and were back to within a point at half time, trailing by just 0-9 to 1-5.

The goal arrived with 27 minutes elapsed thanks to Jackie Quigley and buoyed by that score, Wexford finished strongly with points from Una Leacy and Bolger (free).

The Models rearguard continued to struggle under sig-

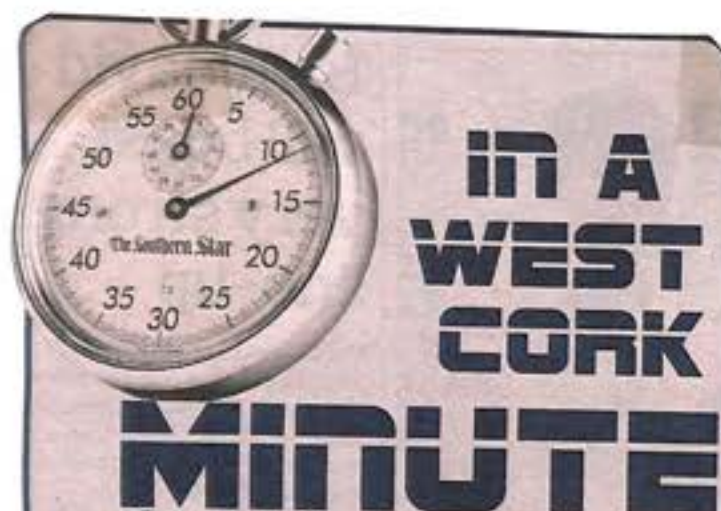
nificant pressure after the resumption though and that resulted in a number of frees. Cotter accepted the opportunities gleefully as Cork charges edged clear once more. Indeed, an indication of how comfortable they were was that Cotter was satisfied to tap over the bar from a penalty.

To their credit, Wexford never gave up and Bolger shot some excellent points from

placed balls to drag them back into contention but they needed another goal and the Rebel defenders were not in generous mood.

With five teams in Group 1, Cork are not in action this weekend as the other four counties play.

A home tie with Tipperary on Sunday, February 18th is the All-Ireland champions' next outing.



Each week we ask to be taught something that we don't know and Newcestown Camogie Club chairperson and player Evelyn Crowley has come up trumps this week...

What's the one thing you can't live without? My iPhone... and The Southern Star every Thursday of course!

What would I find in your fridge right now? Hummus, cheese and Ballymaloe relish.

Name one element your sport could/should take from another? I wouldn't change a thing.

What do you think about when you're alone in your car? I'd be hoping that it doesn't break down on me as it's giving me a bit of trouble of late!

Who has been the biggest influence on your sporting career? My father Seán as he always brought us to matches since we were young and is a very proud Newcestown man.

Pick two celebrities to be your parents: Michael D Higgins and Ellen DeGeneres.

What do you think cats dream of? If my cat is anything to go by they dream of getting into the house and eating all the food.

If you could play any other sport for one day what would it be? Rowing with the O'Donovan brothers, they seem like great fun.

If you joined a circus, what would you perform? I'd probably be a clown because I wouldn't be much good at anything else!

If you could get rid of one county in Ireland what would it be and why? Dublin so that Mayo can get the chance to win the All-Ireland.

What would you do if you found a penguin in your freezer? I'd hope it was the chocolate version so I'd have it with a cup of tea.

Before we let you go, teach us something that we don't know: The US marines have a hurling team.

Evelyn Crowley, from Newcestown, works as a primary school teacher in Sunday's Well Girls' NS, and is also the chairperson of Newcestown Camogie Club as well as a player on their senior B team. Evelyn and her team-mates won county intermediate championship and league titles last season.

Cork master tough conditions

CAMOGIE

■ Linda Mellerick

Cork 0-15
Wexford 1-10

IN wet and muddy conditions, Cork made it two wins from two in the Division 1 of the Littlewoods Ireland Camogie National League in Enniscorthy on Saturday.

Opting to play against the wind from the throw-in, Wexford were dogged in the opening half, but as Cork moved matters up a notch they held Wexford scoreless from play in the second half in a game where scores mostly came from frees.

Orla Cotter was again unerring from placed balls, notching up 10 points while Linda Bolger claimed nine.

Wexford took an early lead, but Cork shifted through the gears before moving six clear.

The hosts rallied well in the second quarter, however, and were back to within a point at half time, trailing by just 0-9 to 1-5.

The goal arrived on 26 minutes from Jackie Quigley, and buoyed by that score, Wexford finished strongly with points from Una Leacy and Bolger (free).

With Wexford's star forward Leacy well marshalled by Laura Treacy and a hard working debut by Aileen Sheehan, Cork's defence did well.

Ashling Thompson moved to centre-back from midfield. Cork had two long range points from Orla Cronin and with Niamh McCarthy contributing to further Cork scores from Amy O'Connor, and Hannah Looney, Cork were going well.

Wexford's defence continued to struggle and conceded a number of frees, Orla Cotter converting the opportunities.

When Niamh McCarthy was fouled in the square midway through the second half, Cotter was satisfied to tap over the bar from the penalty.

Jackie Quigley was prominent throughout for Wexford with Linda Bolger also a constant threat.

Bolger shot some excellent points from frees to drag Wexford back into contention, but they needed another goal which never looked like coming.

Cork's next outing is February 18 with a home venue against Tipperary.

Scorers for Cork: O Cotter 0-10 (0-8 f, 0-1 p), A O'Connor 0-2, O Cronin 0-2, H Looney 0-1.

Wexford: L Bolger 0-9 (0-8 f, 0-1 '45), J Quigley 1-0, U Leacy 0-1.

CORK: A Lee; L O'Sullivan, L Treacy, M Cahalane; A Sheehan, L Coppinger, C Sigerson; H Looney, A Thompson; L Homan, O Cronin, A O'Connor, L Collins, N McCarthy, O Cotter.

Subs: M McCarthy for O Cronin (55), K McCarthy for A Sheehan (59).

WEXFORD: E Kiely; E O'Connor, S Sinnott, D Doyle; A Cardiff, S O'Connor, K O'Connor; C Foxe, Shelley Kehoe; L Bolger, J Quigley, E Walsh; J Dillon, U Leacy; Aoife Guiney.

Subs: Stacey Kehoe for A Guiney (45); L Walsh for D Doyle (50).

Referee: Liz Dempsey (Kilkenny).



Aoife wins overall award

On Friday last before a huge gathering, Cork camogie goalkeeper, and captain for the coming season, Aoife Murray was named as the overall winner of the 96FM/C103 GAA Sports Star of the Year, in association with the Rochestown Park Hotel.

Aoife was chosen from an impressive list of the 12 monthly nominees, that included several players who had anchored Cork's hurling season that saw Munster titles won at under 17, minor and senior.

Aoife was pleasantly surprised but delighted at being selected saying: "It was a brilliant year, and in the end, we as a team on and off the field got our just reward, and I would not be here tonight only for the hard work put in by a very dedicated group of players."

She was gently reminded that two years ago she hinted at retirement. "Yes, that true, but then the motivation to win another All-Ireland was enough to keep me going."

It should be pointed out that Aoife is Dublin based, but rarely misses a training session, and if she did her brother Paudie, the team manager, would quickly let her know. As for the travelling, she says: "It's part of my routine now although I could do without the toll plazas."

What does 2018 hold?

"Training is going well, we have won our two games in the league and we will see where it takes us, but we are all looking forward to summer and the championship."

FEB. 2018

Season past a strong one for Cork clubs

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

AS the Juvenile camogie board gear up for a busy season ahead we take a look back at some of the highlights in what was another superb season at underage level in Cork.

The juvenile board under the guidance of chair Mary O'Sullivan, is doing huge work catering for the needs of players from U8s up to and including U16s. The setting up of this board in 2000 was a huge step forward for Cork and it took a huge burden off the shoulders of the county board.

Clubs can enter competitions from U8 to U11 in Go Games Blitzes, while U12s are well catered for with three Cluster Blitzes followed by U12 A, B and C leagues.

The U14 participates in League and Championship and there are three grades A, B, and C, while the Cork U14 Féile na nGael also comes under the remit of the juvenile board in late April.

U16 championship and leagues at A, B and C levels make it a busy calendar of games to get through. In total between championship and leagues there were fifteen competitions.

This week we take a look at the U12 and U14 competitions and where the titles went.

A total of 66 clubs entered the various competitions for 2017 and the three U12 finals were in Ballinlough on the same day lending itself to a wonderful atmosphere.

At U12 A level there were six teams: Cloughduv, Éire Óg, Inniscarra, Sarsfields, Valley Rovers and Youghal. In the final Éire Óg beat Sars, with Shauna Sheehan was named the Player of the Match.

The U12 B grade had a total of 31 teams split into four groups, one group of six and five groups of five. Ballygarvan and Fr O'Neill's made it through to the final, with Ballygarvan the victors though Fr O'Neill's Grace Rooney was Player of the Match.

A total of 28 teams entered the U12 C competition, was divided into five sections, before Watergrasshill defeated new club Laochra Óg in the decider. Ava Fitzgerald of Watergrasshill was awarded the Player of the Match after a superb performance.

Following on the huge success of the inaugural U14 championships in 2016, the juvenile board continued the competition and in 2017 they introduced a backdoor system in order to give clubs extra games.

Sixteen teams went head to head in search of the U14 A championship title for a trophy in memory of the late Peter Downey who was a wonderful referee and camogie official. His friend and refereeing colleague John O'Leary from Mallow took charge as Éire Óg met All-Ireland Féile champions Sarsfields in the final. On the day Éire Óg, led by Player of the Match Emily Coffey, won out.

Twenty Teams competed in the U14 B Championship and there were some hugely competitive before Ballincollig and Cobh made it to the final where Ballincollig took the crown, with Miriam Healy to the fore annex-



Familiar faces to Cork camogie clubs, refs Willie Wallace, Ger Sheehan and William O'Sullivan, enjoying a break in Ballinlough.



The Éire Óg U14 A championship winning panel from last season.

ing the Player of the Match award.

There was huge interest in the U16 C championship where 24 teams competed. The final was played at Castle Road where Rockbá and Ballinascarty had to go to extra time before Rockbá took the title, driven by Player of the Match Aimee Noonan.

The U14 leagues took place before the championships and there were some excellent games before the three finals were held on the same day in Ballinlough.

Ten teams were divided into two groups of five in the U14 A league before Sarsfields defeated Inniscarra, with the Player of the Match award going to Cliona Lynch Sarsfields.

Twenty one clubs battled it out for the U14 B league title where the final was contested between Cloughduv and Newcestown with Newcestown's Eabha Sheehan chosen as Player of the Match as her club were crowned champions.

The U14 C League was divided into

four sections with six teams in each. Buttevant had put in huge work in reorganising their underage action and they made huge strides to reach the final but on the day they had to give way to a strong Middleton side taking the clubs first title since the club restructured.

There was further joy for Middleton as Jodie Keegan-O'Connell was selected as Player of the Match.

In the Division 1 Féile final, Sars beat Éire before going on to repre-

sent Cork at the national Féile, where they were victorious.

The Division 2 Féile final was contested by Newcestown and Charleville with Newcestown taking the title.

The Cork Féile Skills winner was Ann Marie Collins, Courcsey Rovers, who went on to represent Cork and came second overall.

And so as another season is about to unfold we look forward with enthusiasm to plenty of underage camogie action.

“There was huge interest in the U16C championship where 24 teams competed”

Cats are guaranteed of spot in the last four with third win

CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

KILKENNY moved well clear at the top of Group 2 of the Littlewoods Ireland Camogie League Division 1 with their third win in three outings at the weekend.

This time a 1-14 to 0-8 triumph over south-east neighbours Waterford at the Conahy Shamrocks club.

Ann Downey's outfit are almost assured of a place in the last four on nine points as they pursue a third title in a row but the battle for the second spot is certain to go down to

the wire with Limerick, Dublin, Waterford and Clare in a logjam all on four in behind.

Miriam Walsh and Denise Gaule struck four points each, while Grace O'Donnell's goal after 11 minutes helped the winners establish a seven-point advantage.

Waterford have shown the benefit of a couple of years at the top level this term and dis-

played commendable resilience to stay in the game, Beth Carton hitting three points on the trot on her way to compiling her personally tally of seven. They got to within four early in the second half but Walsh, Gaule and Aoife Doyle hit scores as the champions eased away to the derby victory.

There was a Shannonside derby too and Clare claimed the bragging rights and their first win by 1-8 to 0-9 at Rathkeale. They burst out of the

traps with a trio of points including a brace from play by Orla Devitt, but Niamh Mulcahy hit four in succession to move Limerick ahead.

The key score arrived in the 29th minute, when Clare's Regan Conway brilliantly fielded the sliotar from Eimear Kelly's free and her shot dropped to the net. Scores by Chloe Morey and Andrea O'Keeffe ensured that the Bannerwomen kept their noses ahead but Mulcahy displayed her customary leader-

ship from play and placed balls to keep the result in doubt right to the end.

In the group's final game, Dublin also bagged their first win of the campaign, 0-15 to 0-10 against Meath. There was nothing in it at the break, with the Royals just a point in arrears 0-7 to 0-6 thanks to four points from Aoife Maguire, who finished with six, and two from Amy Gaffney.

Siobhán Kehoe struck three first-half points for last year's All-Ireland semi-finalists and

added five in the second to enable David Herity's crew chisel out the hard-fought victory.

In Group 1, All-Ireland champions Cork had the weekend off and were joined at the top of the table by Wexford, who defeated Offaly by 2-11 to 0-8 at the St Rynagh's facility in Banagher.

Goal machine Una Leacy and Joanne Dillon raised the green flags, and Joanne Dillon converted five frees successfully.



CAMOGIE MATTERS

By Jennifer O'Leary

DATE FOR DIARY | Cork's next camogie league game is home to Tipperary on February 18th

The top ten lessons Cork will learn from the league

WITH two wins from two games, Cork are sitting pretty at the top of their Littlewoods Ireland Camogie League Division 1 group with maximum points – and in a good position to qualify for the business end of the competition.

Wins against Galway and Wexford so far have Cork off to the ideal start and they now face Tipperary and Offaly in their final two group games.

Some say that winning isn't everything, it's the only thing. Yes, this will be Cork's mentality come June in the height of championship, but the league campaign can be utilised for far more important things, more significant in fact that winning silverware at this time of the year. Here are ten lessons Cork will hope to learn from this year's league campaign.

Blooding of new/younger players: Last season saw Cork contest both All-Ireland senior and intermediate finals. We have seen before that both grades training together can prove beneficial to both squads, especially for the intermediate team who reap the rewards of high-intensity training at the top level. Cork will look to some of these players to make the step up to senior inter-county camogie and will experiment during the league to see how they strengthen their senior panel.

To identify the necessary hunger and drive: It's easy to become stagnant and find yourself going through the motions with no real push or drive during a season, especially at the beginning of the year. Cork have experienced success on and off over the past number of years. They have to find something to propel them forward once again to new heights this year and often the league can indicate how ravenous a squad may or may not be.

Management teams and their players are quick to sense a hunger within a team and if they feel it is absent early in the year, they will work hard to try and bring out that spark come championship time. Following a league campaign, teams can often have an eight-week window where they seek inspiration, a reason to make such a huge commitment.

Homework for management: Management teams all over the country would tell you that no squad, no final 15 or number 12 is set in stone in February, not to mind June. What the league allows is for players to prove their worth, to show off and hopefully find some place within the starting team.

Cork are now faced with the challenge of replacing players who are no longer in the squad. Last season's captain fantastic Rena Buckley and the versatile Eimear O'Sullivan are two players that we don't know yet if they'll be back. If these players don't return, who will slot into their positions? Perhaps the league will assist management in solving this puzzle.

Work on the weaker points of last year: Playing with full focus over 60 minutes was something that was lacking in the Cork camogie team last year. We saw it in the All Ireland semi-final where Galway appeared to be making a significant comeback in the second half and Cork had to defend like never before to edge into the final.

Cork need to push on when they're ahead and be relentless to ensure they are not in a panic situation. Not only is it difficult for the players, it causes heart palpitations for the spectators! While the team won't have a consistent line-up in every game of the league, this attitude and complete concentration is



More to come: Orla Cronin had her best-ever season in a Cork jersey last year and she will be keen to build on that, says Jennifer O'Leary.

Last season's captain fantastic Rena Buckley and the versatile Eimear O'Sullivan are two players that we don't know yet if they'll be back. If these players don't return, who will slot into their positions?

something Paudie Murray will be trying to instil into all his potential players in preparation for tougher games in the summer.

Build on the strengths of 2017: A shining light of the 2017 league and championship campaign was undoubtedly Enniskeane's Orla Cronin. She had the best year of her life on the camogie field last

year and really showcased herself as a confident and skilful half forward who has etched out a regular position for herself within the team. Amy O'Connor was also one to watch and is growing in strength and ability as every year passes. There are stalwarts of the



team in the accurate Orla Cotter and the reliable Gemma O'Connor who are experienced and will bring the younger players to greater heights this year.

Finding who can withstand the pace: The league part of the season can also be the most gruelling when it comes to training. Ultimately, pre-season training is still in full swing and players will be trying to juggle tough conditioning gym sessions with regular camogie training as well as accounting for the league games on tough terrain. This is an arduous time of year and often players who are unable to withstand the pace and commitment are identified fairly easily. Management will be taking note of this while players themselves may feel the pressure of wanting to impress.

Treat the league as a learning process instead of a winning process: As I have mentioned earlier, the league doesn't really tell the real story of how a team is doing and what to expect from them come championship. Most teams that win the league can often fall away in the later stages of the summer games. The league should be utilised as a learning process. There is no peaking in February and only the most experienced teams can truly

get this timing right. For this Cork team, the league is just a practice, the championship is the real deal.

Create a strong bond between the players: Every year brings new players to the fold and so a familiarity and camaraderie needs to be established between them. The league can help to build a trust between each player and instil a belief that all players from one to 25 will have a role to play in the season.

Set out a signal of intent: Cork are the All-Ireland champions and so they will also want their league campaign to express their aims and objectives for the year. They will be sending out a message to the other ten teams that 'We are Cork' and 'We have our eye on the prize again this year'.

New captains bring new ideas: Aoife Murray of Cloughduv has stepped up as captain this year and she will be immense. Aoife was always very vocal in the dressing room and the huddle, not to mind from the goal-line area where her presence was felt all over the pitch. No doubt Aoife will work closely with her brother Paudie to ensure no stone is left unturned in the year ahead. She is a strong character and the respect players have for her will grow from the league into the heights of the season.

Cork's Eimear O'Sullivan in action in the 2017 All-Ireland final.

Newcestown's hard work is rewarded

CAMOGIE

■ John Bohane

THE victorious Newcestown intermediate camogie team, who captured county glory last season, were honoured for their historic success when they held their victory dinner dance at the Munster Arms Hotel recently.

The Newcestown intermediate camogie team enjoyed a great 2017 as they captured league and championship glory. The guest of honour on the night was legendary dual star Brieghe Corkery. Team coach Finbarr O'Callaghan was thrilled with the dinner dance.

"It was a great night, well deserved after their heroic year. It was nice for the players to enjoy the limelight. The players enjoyed themselves. It was a very enjoyable evening," declared their proud coach.

Finbarr was lavish in his praise for the contribution inspirational Cork player Brieghe Corkery made on the night. Brieghe who won 17 All-Ireland titles in both codes delivered a rousing speech which went down a treat.

"She spoke very well. The main theme of her speech was hard work.

"She regaled us with stories about the feats of Rena Buckley and her sheer dedication to both her club and county in both codes. She also stressed the importance in finding the right balance between sport and rest. It was very powerful stuff and our players took it all on board.

"She is a very inspirational player and individual."

Newcestown had previously won the intermediate camogie championship in 1995 before they re-graded down to the junior grades in the early part of the 21st century. The club is now thriving once again thanks to hard work both on and off the pitch. Finbarr is delighted they have returned to glory.

"Our numbers competing at underage level decreased rapidly and we struggled for a good while. Our numbers have since gradually improved.

"We won the junior A championship two years ago and thankfully we won the intermediate title shortly after going up.

"Lots of stuff behind the scenes has come right for us which has enabled us to enjoy success once again. We have a great underage set-up with great coaches involved which is crucial for the long-term future of the club."

Finbarr was thrilled to play his part in helping the intermediate team capture league and championship honours.

"We enjoyed a great season. It was great to finish the season with the double. It was very important to win the intermediate county title which enables us to move up a grade.

"We had seven or eight of the U18 panel also playing big roles on the intermediate team which augurs well for the future. Their presence on the team shows the hard work going on behind the scenes.

"The coaching within the club is brilliant and it is paying off on the pitch. All the coaches within the club can take great pride in the success we enjoyed last season."

The Newcestown intermediate



The Newcestown panel were Cork Camogie Intermediate League champions in 2017 before adding the championship title.



Newcestown's Amy Murphy gathers the sliothar ahead of Lismore's Shona Curran during the AIB Munster Senior Camogie Club Championship final at Castle Road.

Picture: Howard Crowdy

success was built around a nice mix of youth and experience. Finbarr paid tribute to the leadership qualities of his players.

"We had a lot of experienced players in our panel who displayed great leadership throughout the season which was vital in our success. Our players travelled from all over the country to make training sessions and games.

"Their attitudes are brilliant. They were also great in helping the

younger players integrate within the squad which created a strong unity within our team."

The dedicated team coach resumed training the Newcestown adult camogie team three seasons ago. He is delighted he came back to train them once again.

"They are a great team to work with. The players have been a joy to coach. We have a big panel of 30 players who are all keen to enjoy success with Newcestown. They always

"Lots of stuff behind the scenes has come right for us which has enabled us to enjoy success once again"

want to improve.

"John Cronin, who enjoyed a lot of success with Cloughduv and Cork, asked me to get involved. We have a great backroom team. We have worked great together.

"Aoife O'Sullivan has done great work. Sean Twomey got involved last year and he was a great addition to the team."

Following their county success, Newcestown proceeded into the Munster club championship. They

were ultimately defeated by Waterford side Lismore in the Munster final. It was a great experience and learning curve according to Finbarr.

"Lismore were a very strong team, it was their fifth time winning the Munster club championship. It was a great experience for our players.

"We had great support and it was a great occasion for the players to participate in a Munster final. We will definitely learn from the experience."

Newcestown will now compete in the senior B grade this season. Finbarr well aware of the stern challenges ahead is looking forward to the new grade.

"It will be a very tough grade. There are 12 teams in the grade. Any one of those 12 teams will fancy their chances of success. It is great to be in this grade.

"It will be a tough challenge, we are under no illusions. We will train hard, prepare well and hopefully enjoy a good season. We will have a lot of young players involved once again with our panel and hopefully they will continue to improve.

"We have a lot of very talented young players coming through which is very positive."

Finbarr is very confident Newcestown camogie club have a very positive future.

"Our underage numbers are very strong, we have a great committee and great coaches doing super work. The future is bright."

Newcestown camogie keen to build on 2017 success

BY KIERAN MCCARTHY

ANOTHER busy season lies in wait for Evelyn Crowley, on and off the field.

One of the more experienced players on the Newcestown camogie team that will compete in the senior B ranks in Cork this year, Evelyn is also the chairperson of Newcestown Camogie Club.

Busy times at the helm, but it's a dual role she enjoys.

'I was living in Kildare for a bit, I came home last year and at the AGM they were looking for a chairperson, I was free so I took up the role,' she said, now into her second year as chairperson.

Two weeks ago she spoke at the Newcestown Camogie and GAA Celebratory Dinner Dance held in the Munster Arms Hotel, an event that toasted the many successes of the club in 2017.

There was the league and championship double for the intermediate team – with Evelyn involved – and they also qualified for the club's first-ever Munster final. The Newcestown minors also won a West Cork and league double, so good times for camogie in Newcestown.

Underage camogie is strong,

too, the U8s, U10s and U12s all have good numbers while the U14s won the county Féile last season and went on to represent Cork in the national Féile.

On top of all that, Newcestown camogie was also represented at county level – Grace Ryan, Orla Barrett and Aoibhe Sheehan played U14 for Cork in 2017. Ciara O'Sullivan was with the U16s, while Maeve Lynch was involved with the minors and intermediates.

'The GAA is very important here in Newcestown,' Evelyn explains.

'All the kids in Newcestown school play GAA and it starts there.

'There is great support from teachers in the school and parents as well, and with the club we have great help from the trainers and parents, and there's so much interest and goodwill towards the various teams and the club.'

A teacher at Sunday's Well Girls' NS, juggling being a player and chairperson is a labour of love for Evelyn whose cousins, Colette and Rose Desmond are key members of the senior B team, while she is a sister to John Crowley who captained the Newcestown hurlers to Cork PIHC glory a few seasons back. On top of that, she is a



The dream team: The Newcestown senior B camogie management team of Sean Twomey, Conor Condon, Lisa O'Sullivan, John Cronin and Finbarr O'Callaghan pictured at the recent celebration night.

niece of former All-Star Cork hurler Tim Crowley so Newcestown GAA is very much a part of who she is.

'Winning the county intermediate title – against Enniskeane in the final – last year is a huge boost to the club,' she explains.

'We were senior B a few years ago but it didn't go well.

'It was hard to going out every year and losing so we took the decision to drop down to junior and build the club up again.

'Three years ago we won the junior title and then it took us two years to win the intermediate so it's fantastic to be back up to senior B. It was a tough decision to drop down but we made the right call. It has worked out just as we hoped and we are back now a better team and a stronger club.'

Evelyn considers herself part of the more experienced brigade on the team, along with Rose and Colette Desmond, Suzanne Deasy, Therese McCarthy, Hilda Kenneally and Colleen Twomey.

'We've plenty of experience anyway,' she laughs ahead of the start of a new season – and a crack off senior B. Last year's management team of Conor Condon, Sean Twomey, John



Newcestown Camogie Club Chairperson Evelyn Crowley (centre) pictured with Rose Desmond and Sean Crowley.

Cronin, Lisa O'Sullivan and Finbarr O'Callaghan has remained on, and training starts this weekend.

'We want to drive it on again and get as far as we can in all competitions – and if the club is half as successful as last year,

it will be another great season,' said Evelyn, as Newcestown camogie looks to build on its momentum from 2017.

Camogie Association Media Awards and Mick Dunne Memorial Awards' recipients announced

By Camogie Press
Posted 06/02/2018



The Camogie Association Media Awards and Mick Dunne Memorial Awards' recipients for 2017 have been announced with a wide range of winners from throughout the country.

The 2017 Mick Dunne Memorial Awards' recipients are:

- Local Media – C103
- Match Programme – Munster Camogie Board
- PRO of the Year – Ann Marie Guinan (Offaly)

The 2017 Camogie Association Media Awards' recipients are:

- Best Media Innovation – Tipp FM
- Digital Promotion – We Are Dublin
- Photography – Aidan Ryan (Clare)
- Special Recognition – Wexford Camogie4Teens

The awards will be presented on Saturday February 17th in Croker Park in conjunction with the Camogie Association Volunteer of the Year Awards.

This is the twelfth year of the awards which honour the contributions of local and national press and volunteers in the promotion and development of Camogie.

McCormack on fire for C&P history makers

By Camogie Press
Posted 11/02/2018

CROSS & PASSION BALLYCASTLE have made history by becoming the first Antrim school to reach the O'Neills All-Ireland Post Primary Schools Senior A Camogie Final as a result of a 4-8 to 2-3 victory over Presentation Thurles in Cusheadun.

They will be joined by champions Loreto Kilkenny, who were far too strong for St Brigid's Loughrea, advancing by 4-17 to 2-4 at the Conahy Shamrocks grounds.

C&P had home advantage but the visitors got off to a good start with a wind-assisted goal from a free. Charley McCarry and Róisín McCormack were showing well for Ballycastle though and the Ulster representatives led by 2-5 to 2-3 at half time.

They pulled away after the resumption, with their star operators making full use of the elements that were in their favour.

McCormack scored a brilliant goal after good work from Bronagh McKeague and grabbed her second soon after to put the issue beyond doubt. It wasn't all positive for the victors though as McKeague was sent off in the dying minutes.

Loreto Kilkenny have a very strong recent record in this competition, having completed a famous four-in-a-row from 2010-2013. They are an hour away from a sixth title now and go into the decider in good form after making short work of St Brigid's.

The victors led by 3-8 to 2-2 at the break but with a strong wind in their favour, the Saints would have been hoping to make some significant inroads into the deficit. It wasn't to be however, as Loreto redoubled their efforts and cruised to a 19-point triumph.

The Senior B Final will be between St Angela's Waterford and Coláiste Iosagáin Dublin, after the former beat Abbey CC Fermank in a Déise Derby by 2-8 to 2-4, while the girls from the capital accounted for Pres Wexford 3-2 to 1-7.

In the C championship, John The Baptist Hospital accounted for St Catherine's Armagh 3-10 to 0-6, and Loreto Mullingar had too much firepower for Claregalway of Galway, prevailing by 4-12 to 0-10.

Coláiste Naomh Cormac booked their place in the Senior D decider by virtue of their 3-7 to 0-5 defeat of St Cuan's Ballinasloe. They must wait until next week to find out who their opposition will be in the Final, with St Clare's Ballinacorney facing the challenge of Loreto Fermoy on Saturday.

O'Neills All-Ireland Post-Primary Schools Senior Semi-Finals Fixtures

By Camogie Press
Posted 06/02/2018



The details for the upcoming O'Neills All-Ireland Post-Primary Schools Senior Semi-Finals have now been confirmed as follows:

Friday February 9th

Senior C

St. Catherine's Armagh v John The Baptist, Horehound
Referee: TBC Venue: Abbey Park @ 2pm

Saturday February 10th

Senior A

Cross & Passion Ballycastle v Pres Thuries
Referee: Eamon Cassidy - Derry Venue: Cusshendun @ 12noon
Loreto Kilkenny v St. Brigid's Loughrea
Referee: Gavin Donegan - Dublin Venue: Conahy Shamrocks @ 1.30pm

Senior B

Abbey CC Ferrybank v St. Angelas Waterford
Referee: Aidan O'Brien - Wexford Venue: Kilmacow @ 1pm

Senior C

Loreto Mullingar v Claregalway
Referee: Alan Doherty - Laois Venue: St Lomas @ 1pm

Senior D

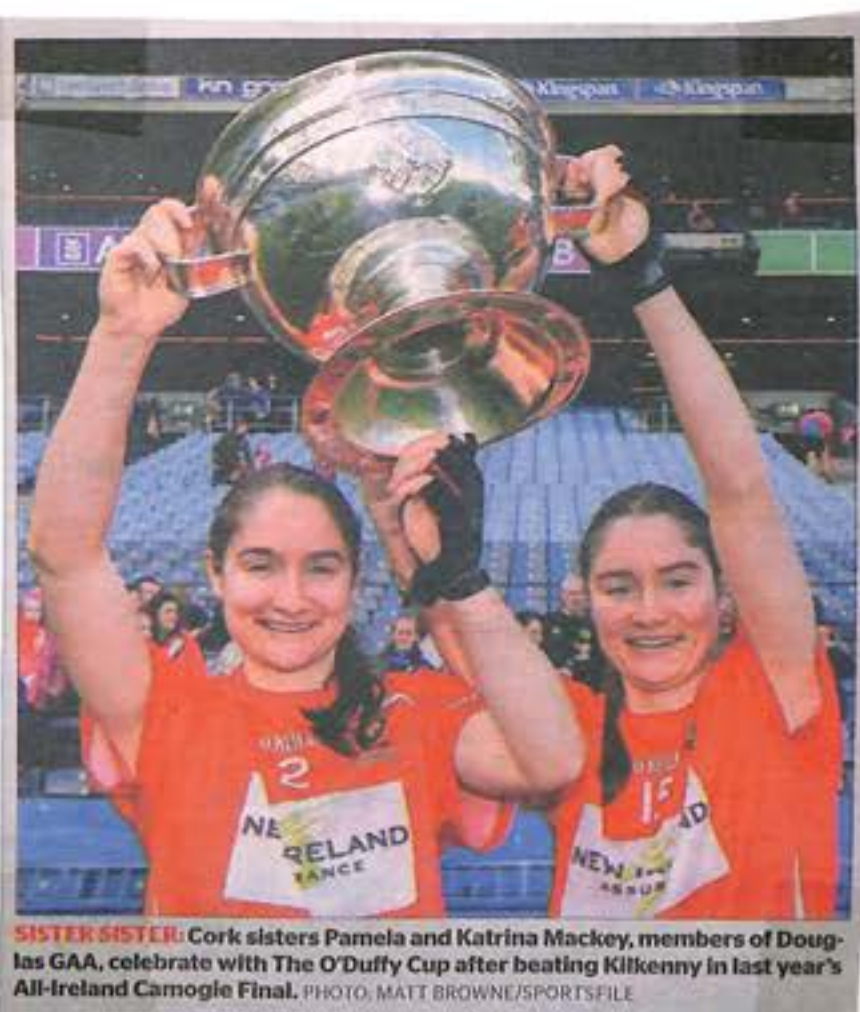
Coláiste Naomh Cormac v St. Cuans Ballinasloe
Referee: Alan Lague - Kildare Venue: Mount Bolus @ 2pm

Saturday February 10th

Senior D

St. Clares Ballyjamesduff v Loreto Fermoy
Referee: Alan Lague - Kildare Venue: Dublin Astro @ 2.30pm

FEB. 2018



SISTER SISTER: Cork sisters Pamela and Katrina Mackey, members of Douglas GAA, celebrate with The O'Duffy Cup after beating Kilkenny in last year's All-Ireland Camogie Final. PHOTO: MATT BROWNE/SPORTSFILE

Ashbourne Cup Final set for Live Streaming!

By Camogie Press
Posted 09/02/2018



NH Galway will host the 107th Ashbourne Cup festival this Saturday February 10th and Sunday February 11th, with teams competing for the Ashbourne, Purcell and Fr. Meachair Cups.

As ever, the weekend offers up the cream of the Camogie colleges crop from around the country. Live Streaming of the 2018 Ashbourne Cup Final from Duggan Park, Ballinasloe will be available live on our Facebook page and our YouTube channel from 3.40pm (this Sunday).

Tom Carney will provide commentary of the match and will be joined by various guests and analysts throughout the broadcast.

Full Fixtures:

Saturday February 10th

Ashbourne Cup

Semi-Finals

UCC v UCD

Venue: Dangan

Throw-In: 12.45pm

Referee: John Dermody

UL v WIT

Venue: Dangan

Throw-In: 2.45pm

Referee: Fintan McNamara

Purcell Cup

Semi-Finals

NUIJ v ULJ

Venue: Dangan

Throw-In: 12.45pm

Referee: Mike Ryan

Garda v UL

Venue: Dangan

Throw-In: 2.45pm

Referee: John McDonagh

Fr. Meachair Cup

Semi-Finals

GMIT v St. Mary's

Venue: Dangan

Throw-In: 11am

Referee: Conor Quinlan

AIT v IT Sligo

Venue: Dangan

Throw-In: 11am

Referee: Kevin O'Brien

Sunday February 11th

Ashbourne Cup Final

- Live Streaming will be available on our Facebook page and our YouTube channel from 3.40pm

Venue: Duggan Park, Ballinasloe

Throw-In: 4pm

Referee: John McDonagh

Purcell Cup Final

Venue: Duggan Park, Ballinasloe

Throw-In: 2pm

Referee: Fintan McNamara

Fr. Meachair Cup Final

Venue: Duggan Park, Ballinasloe

Throw-In: 12noon

Referee: Mike Ryan

Draws are made for 2018 tournament

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

LAST year after a break, the Ballincollig Camogie club reorganised their hugely successful under lights senior camogie tournament.

Once again the event was a big hit with the clubs participating as it provided them with excellent pre season games in the lead up to the league competitions getting underway. The competition received a huge boost last year when the family of the late Brendan Butler came on board sponsoring a cup for the competition and this added to the prestige of the event to have such a beautiful trophy for the winning team.

The late Brendan was an officer of Ballincollig Camogie Club when he passed away five years ago. He was a huge character in the club and always had a word for everyone and he is still fondly remembered by everyone in the club.

With the support of his wife Liz and two daughters Kate and Anna the cup was presented to the club and their support gave the competition a huge boost as the participating clubs gave it everything to come out on top.

The honour of being the first captain to receive the trophy fell to Cork senior player Leanne O'Sullivan who captained the first winners of the trophy Glen Rovers who edged out Sarsfields in an exciting final.

It's time to get up and running again and on Friday night last this year's tournament was launched at the Ballincollig GAA club where the draws were made for the games. Since the first tournament in 2009 the competition has provided great pre-season games for clubs getting back into training as the main aim is to get teams back onto the playing fields.

Ballincollig Credit Union have once again come on board as main sponsors for the tournament and the family of the late Brendan Butler were again present on Friday last and this adds to the prestige of the event, also this year the winning team will be presented with medals which are being sponsored by Ken Quinn, who is a member of the Ballincollig GAA club and who was a good friend of Brendan's.

Organisers from the Ballincollig camogie were present on the night including secretary Denis O'Rourke, who will co-ordinate the tournament, camogie club PRO Orla Egan and vice chairwoman Breda Barry. Camogie chairman Mike O'Brien spoke and welcomed all in attendance.

He paid tribute to all who put a huge effort into the event each year and had a special mention for the late Brendan who worked so hard within the club.

Mike welcomed Liz Butler and thanked the family for their support of the event. Mike also thanked Ken for coming on board to sponsor medals for the winning team something which again adds further to the tournament, he also Mike thanked the GAA club for allowing the competition to go ahead under lights.

"This is an ideal opportunity for clubs to get their season up and running, this year we have six teams five Senior and one Senior B competing



Ballincollig camogie chairman Mike O'Brien Louise Weste and Liz Cremin-Butler at the launch of the Ballincollig under lights camogie tournament with Ted Curtin, Douglas, Eithne Allen, Sars, and Martin Haurihan, Ballygarvan.



Ballincollig's Denise Cronin breaks past Ballinhassig's Hayley Cullinane.

Picture: David Keane

"The late Brendan Butler was a huge character in Ballincollig camogie club..."

and since the tournament began clubs look forward to it every year and we thanks all the clubs for coming along and making the competition so special.

"At this time of the year it is all about getting back into training and with each club guaranteed a minimum of three games it will help enormously as clubs are trying to get back into action and get the feel of the pitch after the long winter break. I am sure that which every club

comes out on top this year will be closely watching to see can they make it to the top in their championship campaign."

Another first this year is that there will be a Player of the Final award. This will be chosen on the night of the final and is sponsored by Liz Butler and family.

Down through the years, the club has got huge support from the referees and again this year they have a panel of refs ready and willing with

Cathal Egan, Pat Nolan, Eddie O'Sullivan and Ger Sheehan all available and ready to go.

Participating in the tournament are five senior clubs Douglas, Ballygarvan, Ballincollig, Glen Rovers and Sarsfields and senior B club Éire Óg. Teams will be in two groups with the top teams in each group going forward to contest the final. Where teams are on level points at the end of the series scores for and against will be taken into account.

Round one gets underway on Wednesday next when hosts Ballincollig take on Éire Óg, followed at 8pm by Sarsfields against Douglas.

The schedule for the remainder of the competition is as follows:
February 21: Ballygarvan v Glen Rovers at 6.30pm; Ballincollig v Douglas at 8pm.
February 28: Sarsfields v Glen Rovers at 6.30pm; Ballygarvan v Éire Óg at 8pm.
March 7: Sarsfields v Éire Óg at 6.30pm; Ballincollig v Glen Rovers at 8pm.
March 12: Ballygarvan v Douglas at 6.30pm.
March 14: Final at 8pm.

Major step forward for progressive club

CAMOGIE

■ John Bohane

KILMEEN and Kilbree GAA Club have established a junior camogie team for the first time in their history this season to meet the growing demand from emerging players within their hinterland.

The underage section of their camogie club have enjoyed great success in recent seasons which prompted the club to register an adult team this season.

The club held their first training session of the year on Friday, February 2, which proved a huge success revealed their hard working PRO Marie Dorgan.

"We had a great turnout.

"It was a very proud moment for the club.

"We are a relatively young club and it is great to see our club growing and our players developing.

"We have very talented young players coming through and the junior team will provide them with an outlet to continue their development," said the diligent PRO.

The decision to create an adult team within the Kilbree camogie club was made to ensure the talented underage players coming through at present will ultimately advance to their junior team, while the growing demand from adult players within their hinterland necessitated the establishment of a junior team.

"We felt it was the right choice and time to act as it will ensure the current talented group of players coming through can continue their development with our club.

"It is important we hold on to the girls going forward and meet the growing demand for an adult camogie team.

"We have had a great response to setting up an adult team.

"We have attracted back players who had been playing with neighbouring clubs and we have recruited players who haven't played in a while.

"It is great for the local girls to play camogie with their local club.

"We have a small catchment area so every player who commits is warmly welcomed.

"It is also great for the community.

"There is a great buzz in the area.

"We feel this is the right time to set up a junior team.

"We have very strong experienced players who combined with the very promising young players coming through will ensure a strong junior team going forward."

The junior team will compete initially in the lower grades in both the West Cork league and championship as they seek to establish themselves at adult level.

"Our aim is to start low and work our way up.

"We didn't want to be put in a high grade initially in case we struggled which would have been disheartening.

"Our underage camogie teams are competing in the highest grades possible which augurs well for the future.

"The emphasis in the first year



Kilbree celebrate with the trophy after their win in the U14 Carbery Camogie Championships.



Kilbree U14 camogie team receive their Carbery championship medals from Kevin O'Donovan on February 3.

won't be on winning as such, it will be all about integrating players and getting used to systems etc.

"It is important we find our feet at the adult grade and hopefully in time we can work our way up the respective grades."

The Kilbree junior camogie team will be coached by Sean O'Brien, who played an influential role in guiding the Kilbree junior hurling team to divisional success in 2016.

It is a huge coup for the club to have enticed Sean to train the junior camogie team, revealed Marie.

"We have a very dedicated team of people helping out within the club which is greatly appreciated.

"Sean is a great coach. He helped the junior team win the Flyer Nyhan Cup.

"We are thrilled to have him on board.

"Aidan O'Shea who plays with the junior hurling team is also coaching the team.

"He is a young lad who knows the players well. He is a great addition to the coaching ticket."

The Kilbree camogie underage section is thriving.

They have won two county titles at both U12 and U14 level in recent years.

Their heroics were recognised recently when they were the stars of a celebratory medal presentation.

Cork County Board vice-chairman Kevin O'Donovan presented the medals to the talented players.

"We are fielding teams from U6 level to U16.

"We have a number of players currently playing for development squads which is great recognition both for them and the club.

"Our primary school Kilmeen NS won the county title last season.

"There is a great nucleus of players coming through.

"Next season, we hope to field a minor team.

"Membership is going very well.

"We have great support from the parents of the players also which is a great help.

"They are very willing as there is a job for everyone.

"The medals presentation was a great success.

"There was great excitement and the players really enjoyed themselves."

Camogie has grown rapidly in Cork and West Cork in particular over recent seasons.

The establishment of a junior team in Kilbree camogie club is testament to the growing demand.

“Our aim is to start low and work our way up... Our underage camogie teams are competing in the highest grades possible which augurs well for the future”

Marie is thrilled with the rise of camogie in West Cork.

"Every club is developing and working hard.

"We may not have a lot of clubs, but there is a lot of good work going on behind the scenes.

"The coaching is very strong and the players are developing with each year.

"There is great work been done at Carbery level which aides the players development also.

"It is great to see."

Marie is very positive Kilbree camogie club have a bright future going forward.

"The positive effects of our talented underage teams will be felt in our junior team in the foreseeable future.

"We have a lot of strong players coming through."

Cork ace Aoife given top award

CORK camogie goalkeeper and captain for the coming season Aoife Murray was named as the overall winner of the 96FM/C103 GAA Sports Star of the year, in association with the Rochestown Park Hotel, on Friday night at the annual gala banquet.

Aoife, winner of the September award, was chosen from an impressive list of the 12 monthly nominees that included several players who had hugely successful seasons with their clubs or counties.

Included among the monthly winners Cork's were players who buoyed success with Cork hurling teams that took Munster titles at U17, minor, and senior levels.

The eight-time All-Ireland medal winner and seven-time All Star proved to be a hugely popular choice and received a standing ovation from the attendance.

Aoife was pleasantly surprised but delighted at being selected and, in a questions and answers with MC Finbarr McCarthy, she looked back on the season gone by. "It was a brilliant year and in the end we as a team on and off the field got our just reward, and I would not be here tonight only for the hard work put in by a very dedicated group of players."

Aoife paid tribute to the players, backroom team, and county board: "We have a fantastic setup and it makes it so easy as a player to be working together, the county board works closely with us as a team and with the management and this is important as you know everything is looked after well."

She was gently reminded that two years ago she hinted at retirement. "Yes, that's true I certainly was thinking in that direction but then the motivation to win another All-Ireland was enough to keep me going."

Aoife is based in Dublin but rarely misses a training session, and if she did, her brother Paudie, the team manager, would quickly let her know. "Yes he sure would there is no preferential treatment there."

The travelling is hard and when one thinks it's done without any courtesy car, it's a tribute to the dedication Aoife has to camogie — but again she shrugged off the praise. "Ah sure, it's part of my routine now although I could do without the toll plazas or maybe someone would sponsor me a few toll tags."

Looking ahead with enthusiasm to 2018 and the honour of leading Cork in



Aoife Murray collects her award for overall GAA Sports Star at the Cork 96FM and C103 14th annual GAA Sports Star Awards held at the Rochestown Park Hotel, alongside, Kieran McGeary, CEO Cork 96FM and C103; Tracey Kennedy, Cork GAA County Board chairwoman; MC Finbarr McCarthy, Frank Murphy, secretary Cork County Board; and Diarmuid Vaughan, sales manager at the Rochestown Park Hotel. Picture: Tony O'Connell

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

the defence of the title, Aoife knows it will be a big ask again. "Training is going well we have won our first two games in the league and we will see where it takes us, but we are all looking forward to summer and the Championship ship."

In her address, County Board chairwoman Tracey Kennedy praised all the monthly winners. "It includes

some of the very best hurlers, footballers, and camogie players we have in our county and while only one will win the overall award, every one of you are winners by the manner in which you played our games during the year."

Tracey praised the award sponsors, saying: "These are the most prestigious awards in the county and in 96FM/C103 we here in Cork are the envy of every county in the country given the outstanding coverage they give our games, while I cannot speak highly enough of the courtesy I am

afforded by everyone here in the Rochestown Park Hotel every time I visit."

"I commend them for their continued support of these awards and our games within the county."

There were two other awards presented on the night: Douglas and Cork minor hurling star Brian Turnbull was the recipient of the Kieran O'Driscoll Youth Award, while former Cork All-Ireland-winning captain Tom Cashman was the recipient of the Donal Lehané Distinguished Career award.



FREE TALK

'Physical & Mental Health Awareness'

with

Cork Camogie Star

Aisling Thompson

Trident Hotel, Kinsale

Thursday, February 15th at 8pm

This talk is organised by Kinsale Youth Support Services.

Under 16's should be accompanied by a parent/guardian



Caring for the Mental Health of Young People

www.kyss.ie

Kinsale Youth Support Services
Informing and Understanding

Cork favourites to advance to semi



Camogie

Linda Mellerick

SUNDAY: Littlewoods Division 1 National League: Cork v Tipperary, CIT, 3pm.

IT'S no surprise that Cork go into their third National League fixture on Sunday with two wins from two.

In a group that contains Wexford, Tipperary, Galway and Offaly, they were always strong favourites to advance to the semi-finals. It isn't a sure thing yet, but Cork will be expected to account for Tipperary on Sunday at home in CIT.

Cork haven't played a game in three weeks but with many playing third level camogie at present they should still be sharp. While the Third Level championship has undoubtedly hindered full squad training, other counties find themselves in the same position. Poor weather conditions postponed last Sunday's Ashbourne Cup final between UL and UCC to next Wednesday with Cork playing either side of it against Tipperary and away to Offaly on Saturday the 24th.

With Cork having last weekend off Wexford, who defeated Offaly by 2-11 to 0-8, joined them at the top of the Group 1 table but Cork have a game in hand. Tipperary also have three games played, losing two to Wexford and Galway and defeating Offaly. Cork will once again head into the game as favourites.

Conditions aren't conducive to flowing hurling this time of the year and Cork dug out a battle in Enniscorthy three weeks ago.

Aileen Sheehan acquitted herself well for her starting debut with Orla Cotter scoring 10 points, nine from frees, from Cork's total tally of 15.

Aoife Murray and Gemma O'Connor are back training but it's doubtful they'll start Sunday's game. Julia White is also training well.

While the team wasn't announced at the time of going to print I expect it to be along the lines of Amy Lee in goal, Leanne O'Sullivan, Laura Treacy, Maeve Cahalane, Finola Neville, Aileen Sheehan and Chloe Sigerson in defence.

Although Ashling Thompson could



Cork's Lauren Homan and Wexford's Katie O'Connor in their league clash at the end of January.

Picture: INPHO/Ken Sutton

well play a defensive role too. Libby Coppinger, who gets better with every outing, and Orla Cotter could take the midfield positions while Hannah Looney, Orla Cronin, Amy O'Connor, Loran Homan, Niamh McCarthy and Linda Collins could again get a starting nod as the Mackey's are also rested. The league is for trying new players, so I'd expect many of Cork's seasoned players to sit out.

Meanwhile, an inexperienced Galway line-up claimed their first triumph of the season under new manager Tony O'Donovan, building on being level at the break 0-6 apiece to pull clear after the resumption and overcome Tipperary 2-14 to 1-10.

Tipp's C  it Devane was the game's leading scorer with eight points, seven of which came from frees, and substitute Grace O'Brien hit the net, but the Premier county were unable to sustain a lead. They do remain marginally ahead of the Westerners in third on the table, however, with a score difference of one point in their favour.



Cork's Niamh McCarthy is tackled by Wexford's Shauna Sinnott. Picture: INPHO/Ken Sutton

New faces added to Cork Division 2 camogie panel

SUNDAY: Littlewoods Division 2 National League: Cork v Carlow, CIT, 1pm.

Cork open the defence of their Division 2 Littlewoods National league title in CIT on Sunday.

Twice last season Cork and Carlow's paths crossed with victory going to Cork on both occasions.

At present Paudie Murray is managing the Division 2 side but he hopes to add to his backroom team as the weeks go on. Former senior selector Geroge Fitzgibbon from Milford has joined, with Ballyhea's Frances Killeen also coming on board while Sean Cremin, who was joint-manager with Paudie last season, continues on the selection committee.

There are a few new faces on the panel this season. Ballinhassig's Catriona Collins, Inniscarra duo Aileen Sheehan and Aoife Kavanagh, Keelagh Cullinane, Fr O'Neill's, Siobhan Hutchinson (Eire Og), Rachel O'Callaghan, St Catherine's, and Kate McCarthy (Aghabullogue) have all received the call

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

up and will be hoping for game time through the league.

Last season captain Niamh N   Chaoimh is currently abroad whilst Leah Weste, Jennifer Barry and Sarah Buckley have not as yet returned.

Lauren Callanan, who was tremendous all through last season, Sarah Harrington and Roisin Killeen should be amongst the starting 15 on Sunday.

SUNDAY: All-Ireland Minor Championship: Cork v Dublin, Parnell's, 2.30pm.

Cork head to Dublin for the opening game of the minor championship in a tough group that has them paired with Wexford, Kilkenny and champions Galway.

Over the last number of years, Dublin camogie has

come on in leaps and bounds the huge amount of support being pumped into teams in all codes in the capital is very evident.

Preparations have been going well but with just under four weeks work put in Cork will be severely tested by a Dublin side who have a lot of work done pre-season.

Cork have a new management team in place this year.

Former Cork senior hurling and Midleton hurling club trainer Jerry Wallace is the manager and he is joined by former U16 coach Mike Boland, Michael Walsh and Marguerite Fitzpatrick.

Cork have eight survivors from last year's panel including Sarah Ahern, Moira Barrett, Fiona Nelligan, Aoife Hurley and Laura Hayes. It will be a tough ask to come away with the points on offer but Cork will give it everything they have as they bid for the perfect start.

McCarthy top-scores as Cork prevail

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

Cork 1-12
Carlow 0-3

CORK got the defence of their Littlewood's Division Two National League crown off to a good start as they overcame Carlow in CIT yesterday.

Conditions were taxing with rain making it difficult for the players but the excellent pitch conditions helped as the sides battled to gain the upper hand.

The first five scores came from placed balls as referee Kevin O'Brien wasn't inclined to allow play develop blowing for a lot of simple little errors and it was level at two points apiece with 10 minutes played.

Cork played well and played as a unit finding their players with some excellent distribution and their reading of the game saw them hold the upper hand on a Carlow side that could never get to grips with them.

Cork looked comfortable and composed all through and playing with confidence they led 0-5 to 0-2 at the interval.

Keava McCarthy with three pointed frees and Kaitlin Hickey and Maeve McCarthy from play kept the scoreboard ticking over as a solid Cork backline held Carlow to two points from frees.

From the restart, Cork continued to hold the upper hand and a goal inside three minutes of the restart from Castriona Collins helped stretch the advantage.

With their defence dealing comfortably with anything the Carlow attack threw at them, Cork continued to dominate.

In midfield, Kaitlin Hickey worked hard and kept the ball moving and, continuing to pick off scores, they were always in control.

Such was Cork's dominance through the half that they held Carlow to a single point from a free as they ran out very comfortable winners.

Tougher tests lie ahead, of course, but it was still encouraging to see the Rebels play well and be in a position to use 19 players across the hour.

Scorers for Cork: K McCarthy 0-5 (0-4 f), C Collins 1-1, M McCarthy 0-3, K Collins, K Hickey, C Sugrue 0-1 each.
Carlow: E Treacy 0-3 (0-3 f).

CORK: A Lee; L Callanan, S Harrington (c), R Kileen; S Hutchinson, F Neville, K McCarthy; A Kavanagh, K Hickey; C Collins, M McCarthy, K Collins; K McCarthy, R O'Callaghan, C Sugrue.
Subs: R O'Shea for R O'Callaghan (41), N O'Callaghan for A Kavanagh (41), R Keane for K Collins (44), K Barry for R Kileen (58).

CARLOW: K Kinsella; A Ryan, A Nolan, T Birmingham; L Nolan, K Nolan, N Canavan; E Cody, E Treacy; M Doyle, A Breen, C Quirke; E Sinnott, R Sawyer, A Cusheen.

Subs: M O'Shea for L Nolan (11-1), E Brennan for E Sinnott (41).

Referee: Kevin O'Brien (Limerick).

Rebels show their class in the end



Camogie

Linda Mellerick

Cork 3-15
Tipperary 0-13

AFTER 57 minutes just five points separated Cork and Tipperary in CIT yesterday in the Rebels' third Division 1 league outing of 2018.

The gap was 11 at the final whistle after St Vincent's duo Amy O'Connor and Lauren Homan struck a goal each to knock the fight out of Tipp in the dying minutes.

The scoreboard up to the closing minutes didn't reflect Cork's superiority throughout the hour. They were well in control with two factors keeping Tipp in contention, their work ethic in defence and Cork's final passing movement, letting them down at times.

Cork's movement was very good but on occasion, the final pass was over or undershot. But it's February and their flair and thought process was impressive.

After 57 minutes it looked as if Tipp would travel home with a respectable defeat.

A free-flowing game was again prevented by excessive use of the whistle, some misdemeanours so small we questioned what they were. As we enter another inter-county season one wonders for how much longer we as an association will allow this poor component of our game to continue.

Defensively Cork were well in control and from there started a fast-short passing game where two or three overlaps led to scores.

Up front Amy O'Connor was waltzing through the opposition, scoring and setting up scores. Linda Collins had Cork's opening goal on 17 as she coolly finished a good Cork move well.

Cork led 1-10 to 0-8 at the break. Tipperary began to lose their shape during the third quarter. Cork's defence were comfortably dealing with rare attacks as all over the field Cork seemed to have a numerical advantage as their overlapping play had Tipp at sixes and sevens.

Cait Devane's excellent contribution



Linda Collins, Cork, fires the sliotar past Ciannait Walsh and Julie Anne Bourke, Tipperary.

Picture: Jim Coughlan

from placed balls kept Tipp in the hunt and in the final quarter they upped matters, calling on Aoife Murray and Maeve Cahalane to make two good saves.

But up stepped O'Connor and Homan to clinch two long-range goals which dipped the keeper and Cork were home and dry.

Scorers for Cork: A O'Connor 1-3, L Collins 1-2, L Homan 1-1, O Cotter 0-4 (0-2 f), H Looney 0-2, L Coppinger, A Sheehan O Cronin 0-1 each.

Tipperary: C Devane 0-11 (0-8 f, 0-1 p), M Ryan, E Fryday 0-1 each.

CORK: A Murray; L O'Sullivan, L Treacy, M Cahalane; A Sheehan, L Coppinger, C Sigerson; A Thompson, O Cotter, A O'Connor, O Cronin, L Collins; H Looney, N McCarthy, L Homan.

Subs: J White for L Coppinger (46), P Mackey for C Sigerson (49).

TIPPERARY: C Bourke; J A Bourke, C Walsh, L Loughnane; E Loughman, K Kennedy, E Fryday; J Kelly, A McGrath; A Loughnane, M Ryan, K Linehan; S Fryday, C Devane, G O'Brien.

Subs: N Walsh for A Loughnane (42), M Campion for G O'Brien (46), C Quirke for E Loughman (49).

Referee: Fintan McNamara (Clare).



Amy O'Connor, Cork, clips a point over the bar despite the best efforts of Emer Loughman, Tipperary.

Picture: Jim Coughlan

Murray believes his side have improving to do

DESPITE Cork's comfortable victory yesterday manager Paudie Murray still believes they have a lot of improving to do.

"I suppose overall I'd say disappointed. I just think that the way the games are being refereed during the league is appalling to be honest. And you wouldn't blame anyone if they didn't come to watch it.

"The biggest worry I have of the league this year so far is that the game is being dictated by frees and there was no tempo to the game whatsoever as it was all stop-start.

"It was the same against Wexford and the first day out against Galway.

"So, if people want spectators to come and watch the game it certainly has to change and change quickly because the way things are going there'll be no one coming to watch the games.

"Our own performance? I would say that some of our inter-play was quite good. Probably the final ball

REACTION

Linda Mellerick

wasn't where it should be.

"We've only one session done outdoors and the other problem we've had all along is that we have 13 girls involved with UCC in the Ashbourne and we've tried to be fair to them but it's probably killing us at the moment.

"This week we can't train either because the final is Wednesday night. Some of these girls have only turned up once or twice with us at this stage."

But is Paudie really concerned with that at this time of the year with Cork still tipping away in the league, with three wins from three?

"Yeah I suppose the big concern really is that the second Sunday in March we're in a league semi-final and you'd want to be going a lot better than we were

today. I don't think our level of fitness is where it should be. I think we're tired in the last twenty minutes so we've a lot of work there to do."

But are other counties in the same position with college players. Are Cork really behind?

"I think we're definitely behind. I understand that Tipperary don't allow their girls to train with UL. I think they looked fresher than us today. At the end of the day I think we suffer the most as we've thirteen players involved. I don't think any other team has that number.

"When people look at the scoreboard here today, they'll think we're flying it but if you analyse it correctly I think there's an awful lot of improving to do yet.

"It's fitness I'm concerned about. I think our passing and movement is excellent. I think we're at a totally different stage now with that than where we were this time last year."

U16 level thriving as more teams participate

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

THE U16 grade is the top competition the juvenile camogie boards organise and for a lot of players it is their last season at underage level before they go on to participate in adult competition at minor, junior or senior.

The juvenile board did a tremendous job in the season gone by as they organised championship and league competitions at A, B and C level and there were many highs through a tremendous season which saw some terrific contests in all grades of league and championship.

In the U16 A section it was good to see more teams participating and in total 16 teams participated in the A grade of the league with one section of six and two of five. Inniscarra and Ballinora emerged to contest the final which is the only competition remaining to be completed.

Below that, 21 teams battled it out for the U16 B league title and at the final stage just Blackrock and Enniskeane remained. Enniskeane turned in a superb performance to take the title in Ballinlough as they proved too strong for a spirited Blackrock side that battled to the final whistle. Enniskeane had many heroines Eimear O'Brien, Tara Sheehan, Justine Hennigan, Daire O'Brine, Hazel Browne, Ciara O'Donovan, Grainne Mulcahy and Sinead Hurley, while Hurley was named Player of the Match.

There were four sections in the U16 C league one of six teams and three of five and the final saw Barryroe take on Youghal where it was nip and tuck all through as it went down to the wire before Barryroe hung on by two points to take the title despite huge pressure from Youghal. All through there was huge excitement as the play ebbed and flowed and just four points separated the sides with four minutes remaining but the Youghal girls had it down to a point.

Róisín Dullea made a crucial save in the Barryroe goal as Barryroe broke upfield with time up and a point from Jessica Mc McCarthy gave them a two-point lead to the sound of the full-time whistle.

Fittingly, Jessica McCarthy was presented with the Player of the Match after giving a superb display.

And so to the championship where the Juvenile Board introduced a backdoor system in order to give clubs more than one championship game and this proved a huge hit with the players and clubs. Despite the huge amount of clubs participating everything was ran off smoothly and the first round games were played by 12th September moving on swiftly to the losers rounds which were all completed by 28th September, the third rounds were finished by 15th October, quarter-finals by 28th October the semis were over by 14th November and finals were held on 18th November.

Twenty teams competed in the A Championship and the final went ahead in Castle Road on a glorious day on the 18th of November where Ballincollig took on Charleville in a thriller. The sides battled it out to the



Juvenile vice-chairman Wayne Carroll presenting Sinead Hurley (Enniskeane Camogie Club) with the U16 B Player of the Match award.



Brian Dillon's Camogie club award winners last season: John O'Connor, chairman, Mary O'Sullivan U16 Most Improved Player, Gayle Buckley coach, Eve O'Connor Player of the Year, and Brian White mentor.

final whistle and in a closely contested game Ballincollig had edged ahead to lead by two points at the break and grabbing the only goal of the game in the second half they held on to take the title with five points to spare.

Both sides have to compliment on the performances of their players in a game where Ballincollig's Hannah O'Leary was a tower of strength in defense and her performance was enough to win her the Player of The Match Award.

The B championship featured 16 teams and the final went was played

in Whitechurch between Blarney and Na Piarsaigh in a game where goals proved crucial for Blarney as they were crowned champions with six points to spare.

Blarney hit three goals in the opening half and this helped them lead 3-2 to 0-5 at the break.

Through the second half the sides were evenly matched as they battled it out but in the finish Blarney added enough to their tally to ensure they were crowned champions. The Player of the Match award went to Jennifer Murphy Blarney who had a tremendous hour in defense.

Kerry club Causeway entered the U16 C championship where 20 teams gave it everything to take the title. Mallow and St Catherine's made it to the final which was hosted by Cloughduv.

Goals again proved important in this final and hitting four was crucial for Mallow.

Their opponents St Catherine's notched up an impressive 1-10 but it wasn't enough as Mallow's Leah Hall was the toast of her club after hitting an impressive 3-1 of her side's 4-3 tally.

Mallow led 4-3 to 1-7 with 10

minutes remaining and St Catherine's battle hard with Linda O'Donnell and Sara Barry adding points they cut the deficit to two points but the Mallow defense held firm as they ran out winners with two points to spare with Shauna Ludgate, Mallow, was named Player of the Match.

Another season done and dusted, and another hectic one to look forward to, already the juvenile board have earmarked the weekend of March 24 for the Féile na nGael. All that remains now is for the weather to improve and the pitches to firm up and it all systems go.

“The juvenile board did a tremendous job in the season gone by as they organised championship and league competitions at A, B and C level”

Libby and Orla lead UCC to final of Ashbourne Cup

BY DENIS HURLEY

WHEN you have a scheduled as packed as Libby Coppinger's, postponements are unwelcome developments.

Last weekend, the St Colum's star was set to play in the final of the Ashbourne Cup, the intervarsity camogie competition, for UCC against UL, but Mother Nature - clearly never a camogie player herself - made a decisive contribution.

At the time of writing, the two teams were waiting to find out when the game would take place, leaving Coppinger and her team-mates in limbo, though appreciative of the rest.

'When you're up for a game like that, it's hard when you're told it's off,' she says.

'We were kind of surprised as it had been bad for the semi-final the previous Tuesday, but the extra rest won't have done us any harm, that's never a bad thing.'

'We haven't heard a finalised date yet for it to go ahead, there's talk of it being next

Tuesday or Wednesday. We do play a lot of college camogie during the week anyway, though it will be kind of weird to have the final midweek.

'With the national leagues though, there won't be any other free weekend, so a weekday is the only way to go.'

For UCC and public health student Coppinger, it's a third straight final against UL, with the previous two having been lost. This year, she is joint-captain along with Enniskeane's Orla Cronin.

'I was very surprised to be asked,' she says, 'it's a great honour.'

'It was the management's choice to have joint captains, I didn't ask why as I was just trying to take it all in!'

'I suppose it's nice to have two different voices and it puts less pressure on us rather than there just being one captain, the duties can be shared.'

The pair roomed together the night before last weekend's non-game, but Coppinger says that there has been no discus-

sion of who would make the speech if they do win, saying that they'd 'deal with that if and when it happens'.

Already this year, she has captained the Cork senior camogie team as well, filling in for the injured Aoife Murray for the Galway game at the start of the league.

She will once again be involved with the Cork footballers too and, having been the reluctant subject of a fixtures-clash last year, she is optimistic that such incidents are a thing of the past.

'That's the hope,' she says, 'from what we've been told it's less likely that it's going to happen again.'

'The finals of the O'Connor Cup [intervarsity football - UCC played DCU in the Mardyke last night] may clash with a camogie league game but we'll cross that bridge when we come to it.'

'Both management teams have been co-operating well and working out a schedule that will suit us all,' Coppinger added.



Joint effort: Libby Coppinger (St Colum's) and Orla Cronin (Enniskeane) are joint captains of the UCC camogie team.

Limerick inflict first loss on Cats

Littlewoods Ireland Camogie League

Daragh Ó Conchúir

Limerick inflicted a first defeat of the League on champions Kilkenny in Division 1's Group 2 in Dunmore.

The Shannonsiders' 1-14 to 1-9 victory keeps their hopes of making the last four alive but they are locked in a battle with Clare and Waterford, who they play next weekend, for what is likely to be the second qualification berth, as Kilkenny look assured of top spot.

Niamh Mulcahy hit nine points for the winners while Sarah Carey also impressed and hit two points.

Anne Dalton hit 1-4 for the Cats but Limerick were not to be denied and sealed victory with a late Caoimhe Lyons' goal.

Waterford are enjoying their best top-tier season and they were impressive in dispensing with Dublin by 1-14 to 1-7 in Carriganore while eight points from Chloe Morey propelled Clare to a 0-12 to 0-1 triumph over Meath in Ogonnell.

In Group 1, Cork beat Tipperary by 3-15 to 0-13 in a thrilling game.

A first-half goal from Linda Collins helped Cork into a 1-10 to 0-8 lead at the change of ends. Tipp remained in contention as Cáit Devane brought her tally to 11 points, 10 of which came from placed balls, but Cork had a greater spread of scorers and goals in the final quarter from Amy O'Connor and Lauren Homan cemented the Rebels' position at the top of the table.

Galway will play Wexford in a winner take all battle next weekend after their 3-11 to 0-11 success over Offaly at Pearse Stadium.

UCC bid to halt UL's three-in-a-row chase

Therese O'Callaghan

Camogie

University of Limerick are bidding for three in a row when they face UCC in the Ashbourne Cup final at Mallow GAA complex this evening (7pm).

Adverse weather forced the decision to be postponed 10 days ago in Ballinasloe, the rearranged fixture will see the Cork team go in search of a first title since 2003.

When these sides met in the last two finals, it came right down to the wire on both occasions.

UL, who impressed in their win over Waterford IT in the semi-final, can call on a host of inter-county names including Beth Carton (Waterford), Caoimhe Lyons (Limerick) and Tipperary trio Eirena Fryday, Orla O'Dwyer and Sarah Fryday. Interestingly, another Premier star Cait Devane is among their back-room team.

Meanwhile, UCC had three points to spare over UCD in

their penultimate round. They are backed by several players from All-Ireland champions Cork. Joint managers Niall McCarthy and Wesley O'Brien will look to the likes of Orla Cronin, Amy O'Connor, Niamh McCarthy, Chloe Sigerson, Pamela and Katrina Mackey, Hannah Looney, Meabh Cahalane and Libby Coppinger who were all involved in their dramatic one-point victory over Kilkenny last September.

This is a big week for UL as their hurlers will line out at the same venue where they will take on DCU in the Fitzgibbon Cup final. The women will be looking to achieve the first leg of the double tonight.

■ Live Streaming of the 2018 Ashbourne Cup Final from the Mallow Sports Complex will be available on the Camogie Association's Facebook page and YouTube channel from 3.40pm this afternoon.

FEB. 2018

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

TOMÁS Ó SÉ and Rena Buckley are among the special guests in Loreto Secondary School in Fermoy tomorrow when the topic of female participation in sport is on the agenda.

The theme of the panel discussion is 'gender equality with special emphasis on female participation in sport', as part of Social Justice Week in the school. Along with Kerry legend Ó Sé, who teaches in nearby Gaelscoil de hÍde, and dual icon Buckley, are past pupils Finola Neville, Ashling Hutchings and Leah Lyons. The special guests for the event are as follows.

Ashling Hutchings: Past pupil, current staff member and winner of five senior football All-Ireland medals with Cork.

Elmear O'Donnell: Current staff member & All-Ireland senior singles and All-Ireland senior foursome inter-club golf winner 2017 with Kilkenny Golf Club.

Finola Neville: Past pupil and winner of two senior camogie All-Ireland medals with Cork.

Fiona O'Driscoll: Current staff member and winner of 6 All-Ireland senior camogie medals as player and two senior All-Ireland medals as coach/manager.

Leah Lyons: Past Pupil and current Irish rugby international.

Marketa Bartakova: Current staff member and former Olympic Handball international athlete for the Czech Republic.

Rena Buckley: Winner of 18 All-Ireland senior medals and last year's Cork camogie captain. She will bring the O'Duffy Cup with her.

Tomás Ó Sé: Winner of five All-Ireland senior football medals with Kerry.

Cork 1-12
Dublin 0-4

CORK got their All-Ireland Minor Championship campaign off to a great start as they took the points on offer at Parnell's GAA grounds on Sunday.

A close opening half saw Cork lead by two points at the interval, Cliona Healy showing her accuracy, pointing three frees. With Fiona Keating and Healy adding a point each from play, it was Cork 0-5 Dublin 0-3 at the break where Aoife McMahon was on target for the home side.

Cork were stronger in all sectors. 20 minutes into the second half, they led 0-10 to 0-3 Cliona Healy and Moira Barrett adding to the points tally. Any hope the home side had of a comeback were quashed when Laura Hayes finished a Cork free to the Dublin net with seven minutes remaining.

Dublin battled on, and Clara Hol-

land pointed a free before Cliona Healy had the final say pointing a Cork free to finish with a personal tally of nine points as Cork ran out winners.

Next weekend Cork take on Kilkenny, who beat holders Galway 0-13 to 1-8.

Scorers for Cork: C Healy 0-9 (0-6 f, 0-1 45), L Hayes 1-0 f, M Barrett 0-2, F Keating 0-1.

Dublin: A Mc Mahon 0-2 f, C Holland 0-1 f.

CORK: S Aherne, O Keating, M Cotter, E Buckley, L Doyle, L Hayes, C Ring, Saoirse McCarthy, E O'Regan, C Healy, M Barrett, E Murphy, M Fitzpatrick, F Keating, R O'Regan.

Subs: A Hurley for M Fitzpatrick (40), H O'Leary for E Murphy (49), S Bateman for E O'Regan (54), F Nelligan for R O'Regan (55), Sally McCarthy for M Barrett (57).

DUBLIN: A Ramsden, G Couch, S Keating, K Clarke, M Carroll, J Couch, N Gannon, A Mahon, L Quinn, S Wylde, H Kennedy, C Mullen, J McClelland, A Buckley.

Subs: C Holland for A Buckley (51), O Meagher for O Gray (58), O Gray for O Meagher (59), O Meagher for L Quinn (61).



Flashback to 2015 and Cliona Healy evading Clare defender Alannah Ryan in an U16 A clash. She scored 0-9 for the minors against Dublin last Sunday. Picture: Larry Cummins

UL secure Ashbourne Cup three in a row



Ashbourne Cup

UL 0-15
UCC 1-9

Therese O'Callaghan
Mallow

UL claimed their third Ashbourne Cup title in a row at Mallow last night, but only after a hard-fought three-point victory over arch rivals UCC. This was another great tussle between these top colleges, and like the previous two finals, it was decided by a puck of the ball.

A free-flowing game ended in a welter of excitement as UCC won a free in their own half. With the sliotar hanging in the square, it was batted to safety by goalkeeper Roisin Breen before eventually being cleared by none other than full-forward Niamh Hanniffy.

UL manager Dinny Ryan paid tribute to his players and the way they finished the game after being a point behind at the interval.

"The tradition between UL and UCC is immense. But we had to work so hard. We started poorly. UCC had their homework done, they played a sweeper in behind Beth Carton and Niamh Hanniffy. At half-time we regrouped, we said we would play a more attacking game. It worked. The game opened up and our forwards had more space."

The first half was nip and tuck with UL eking out a 0-3 to 0-1 lead after 12 minutes thanks to points from Orla O'Dwyer, Beth Carton, and Eirena Fryday. With UCC steadfast in defence, the sides were deadlocked with 10 minutes to go to the turnaround — Orla Cronin (2) and Maeve McCarthy.



UL's players celebrate with the cup after their victory over UCC in last night's Ashbourne Cup final in Mallow.

Picture: Inpho

UCC took command when Katrina Mackey finished to the net on 28 minutes after being put through by her inter-county teammate Amy O'Connor. UCC went to the dressing room 1-3 to 0-5 to the good.

Carton fired the opening point of the second half to level, only for UCC to respond with a brace from Katrina Mackey. However, they would soon be on the back foot when they conceded the next six points on the trot.

Some glorious chances were finished by Roisin Howard, Carton (3), O'Dwyer, and sub Grace O'Brien (0-12 to 1-5).

Cronin converted a pair of frees to reduce the margin, making for an electric finish. A classy point from O'Dwyer ensured a three-point game once more, but with five minutes left on the clock Cronin struck her fifth point and the Cork college were two behind. Hanniffy landed a terrific

Club forum in Kerry over incidents

Eoghan Cormican

The LGFA will arrange a club forum in Kerry in an attempt to solve the problems that led to a minor manager being sacked by email one week before championship and the newly elected chairperson and secretary resigning from their roles.

The ladies football governing body has decided an official LGFA investigation is not warranted despite receiving a letter, signed by concerned individuals from at least 10 clubs involved in ladies football in Kerry, alleging

widespread bad practice by Kerry LGFA.

It was agreed by the LGFA management committee that the matters raised in the correspondence can only be resolved by "internal dialogue within Kerry". A club forum, overseen by the LGFA's development team, will be convened in the Kingdom. "It is hoped that this will lead to a swift and amicable resolution of all outstanding issues in Kerry LGFA," read an LGFA statement. The controversy began when club delegates were not willing to ratify the financial accounts presented to convention before Christmas. There was also difficulty in filling top-table positions, with two EGMs taking place before an executive was cobbled together.

white flag but when Cronin pointed, the deficit was two again.

Both sides were going flat out. Right on the 60-minute mark Carton eased the pressure

by rifling over from a placed ball following a foul on O'Dwyer.

UCC pressed for the equalising goal but superb defending was crucial and headed up by

outstanding captain Eimear Kelly, UL held out.

Scorers for UL: B Carton (0-6, 0-3 frees), O O'Dwyer (0-4), R Howard, E Fryday, G O'Brien, N Hanniffy and S Fryday (0-1 each).

Scorers for UCC: O Cronin (0-6, 0-5 frees, 0-1 45m), K Mackey (1-2), M McCarthy (0-1).

UL: R Breen (Kilkenny); C Walsh (Tipperary); M Ryan (Tipperary); C Maher (Tipperary); E Kelly (Clare, Capt); C Hehir (Clare); K Kennedy (Tipperary); E Fryday (Tipperary); C Murphy (Galway); R Howard (Tipperary); B Carton (Waterford); O O'Dwyer (Tipperary); S Fryday (Tipperary); N Hanniffy (Galway); C Lyons (Limerick).

Subs: G O'Brien (Tipperary) for C Lyons (44); A Keane (Clare) for S Fryday (46); A Considine (Clare) for C Murphy (59).

UCC: L Brennan (Wexford); L O'Sullivan (Cork); M Cahalane (Cork); R Phelan (Kilkenny); A Landers (Waterford); P Mackey (Cork); L Coppinger (Cork, Co-Capt); M McCarthy (Cork); S McNamara (Limerick); A O'Connor (Cork); O Cronin (Cork, Co-Capt); C Sigerson (Cork); K Mackey (Cork); N McCarthy (Cork); H Looney (Cork).

Subs: L Callanan (Cork) for M McCarthy (46); H Ryan (Cork) for A Landers (50).

Referee: John McDonagh (Galway).

'You could have held a gun to my head and I wouldn't have flinched, wouldn't even blink'



Ashling Thompson recalls how she struggled mentally after a serious car accident outside her home in 2009.

Picture: Oisín Keniry

John Fogarty

Cork camogie star Ashling Thompson has spoken candidly about how difficult life was for her family as she battled depression.

In her *Laochra Gael* programme, to be aired on TG4 tonight, the Milford midfielder recalls how she struggled mentally after a serious car accident outside her home in 2009.

As she rehabbed from back and neck injuries, she became a tearaway. "When sport was no longer an option and I wasn't the player and athlete that I used to be, then I started to crave that attention from a different light. "People I hung around with

and got involved with I never thought... I just wasn't that type of person."

"I suppose that was the attraction. It was dangerous and it was what I felt was going to fill that void."

"I turned into a completely different person, extremely angry... I had a fuse the length of my toenail. It was serious."

"My mother was afraid of me, my own brother was afraid of me, and you just couldn't control me, it went to that point."

Thompson has talked about her suicidal thoughts before and felt an onus to open up on the issue. Some regrets remain, however. "It's something I have to live

with for the rest of my life, decisions that I made, and mistakes that I made, and the road and path that I went down. It's something that scars me and I'll have in the back of my mind for the rest of my life."

"I am just that one number that did come out of the right side of it. The majority don't. I know how hard it was to get over that period to the point where it could have killed me, and very nearly did, and that was down to having no support system."

The 26-year-old described the elation when she felt her old self returning.

"The one thing I will never forget, like, bouncing back is being able to feel emotion

again. I remember when I was going through that tough time, I had absolutely no feelings whatsoever."

"You could have held a gun to my head and I wouldn't have flinched, wouldn't have even blinked, and I actually even remember crying and feeling that emotion when I did to come back to myself, I remember appreciating it so much."

"It was probably at training when I lost my temper but I will never forget the moment I felt emotion again. It was such a good feeling. I was crying but I was so happy I could feel the emotion."

Ashling Thompson's *Laochra Gael* will be televised on TG4 at 9.30pm today

Cup frustration continues for UCC

CAMOGIE

■ Diarmuid Sheehan

UL	0-15
UCC	1-9

UCC'S long wait to get their hands on the Ashbourne Cup will need to go on for at least another year after the college came up just shy against UL in Mallow last night.

In front of a large, vocal crowd, the Leeside students battled hard against the competition favourites but ultimately came up short after the reigning champions upped the ante in the second period to pull clear.

UCC's Orla Cronin was the star of the show for their side with seven points (five frees and a 45) with Maeve McCarthy and Katrina Mackey adding to their side's challenge on the scoreboard.

Captain Libby Coppinger, Limerick native Sinead McNamara and Cork star Hannah Looney also showed well in the game, however on this occasion, it was to be UL's day as they showed patience and no shortage of skill coming back from a tight first half to see this one out well at the finish.

The Shannonsiders were pushed all the way by the Cork side that were looking to bridge a 15-year gap since they last got their hands on this prestigious crown.

Led on the scoring stakes by Beth Carton and Orla Dwyer, UL started this one well and looked like they would lead at the turn, however, a goal on the stroke of half-time from UCC's Mackey meant that the challengers went in leading by the minimum, 1-3 to 0-5. The corner-forward cut in after a brilliant pass from Amy O'Connor and finished well past UL's Roisin Breen to rock the holders.

The interval came at the right time for UL as they had a chance to regroup and credit to the 2016 and 17 champions they responded straight from the restart with a point from Ciara Murphy. The intensity of the tie was palpable at this point and the Leesiders hit back with a quick brace from



Leanne O'Sullivan, UCC, looks up before firing the ball out from the defence against UL at Mallow.

Picture: Larry Cummins

Cronin and Mackey but from that point on the Limerick side took control, pushing out to a five point lead as the game entered the final 10 minutes.

UCC's Cronin continued to keep the scoreboard ticking over for the Skull and Crossbones with four late frees. UCC fought hard to make an impression on the possession and on the scoreboard stakes but they were thwarted by a Limerick defensive group that hunted in packs and were determined not to let the Cork girls in on goal again.

That said, UCC did have chances to raise their second green flag, and if they had managed to net again then this one may well have turned out differently, however, they failed to make

the most of those chances and that would seal their fate.

There was one late scare for the winners when a long high ball came into a packed square however Breen in the UL goal did well to bat the ball clear which was UCC's last chance to steal this one at the death.

UCC will be happy with the display on the night, however, they met up with a side that fully deserved the win carrying the Ashbourne Cup north up the N20 to where it will sit for another year at least.

Scorers for UL: B Carton 0-5 (0-2 f, 0-1 45); O Dwyer 0-4; R Howard, C Murphy, S Fryday, G O'Brien, N Hanniffy, E Fryday 0-1 each.

UCC: O Cronin 0-7 (0-5 f, 0-1 45); K Mackey 1-1; M McCarthy 0-1.

UL: R Breen (Goresbridge); C Walsh (Annacorney); M Ryan (Moneygall); C Maher (Burgess/Duharra); Kelly (Truagh/Clonlara); C Hehir (Inagh/Kilnamona); K Kennedy (Thurles Sarsfields); E Fryday (Clonoulty Rossmore); C Murphy (Clarinbridge); R Howard (Cahir); B Carton (De La Salle); O O'Dwyer (Cashel); S Fryday (Clonoulty Rossmore); N Hanniffy (Oranmore/Mauree); C Lyons (Monaleen).

Subs: A Keane (Inagh/Kilnamona) for S Fryday (40); A Considine (Kilmihil) for C Murphy (45); G O'Brien (Nenagh) for C Lyons (50).

UCC: L Brennan (Rathmore); R Phelan (Conah Shamrocks); M Cahalane (St Finbar's); L O'Sullivan (Glen Rovers); A Landers (An Rinn); L Coppinger (St Colum's); C Sigerson (Killeagh); M McCarthy (Sarsfields); H Looney (Killeagh); A O'Connor (St Vincent's); O Cronin (Enniskeane); S McNamara (Na Piarasigh); P Mackey (Douglas); N McCarthy (Inniscarra); K Mackey (Douglas).

Subs: L Callanan (Glen Rovers) for M McCarthy (40); H Ryan (Blackrock) for A Landers (50).

Referee: J McDonagh (Galway)



Hannah Looney, UCC, in action against Karen Kennedy, UL, in last night's game.



Orla Cronin, UCC, battles for possession against UL.

Picture: Larry Cummins

Cork continue winning streak

CAMOGIE DIVISION 1

CORK 3-15
TIPPERARY 0-13

SHIRLEY MOLONEY REPORTS

CORK continued their winning streak in Littlewoods Ireland Camogie League Division 1 when they overcame a spirited Tipperary side at CIT on Sunday last.

There was little separating the sides until Linda Collins struck for goal after Orla Cronin found her with a pass 20 metres from goal. Still with some work to do, Collins side-stepped the defence and made no mistake in rattling the Tipperary net.

Two Devane frees quickly followed to close the gap to just three ten minutes from the short whistle. Four unanswered points from Cork saw them open up a seven-point lead in as many minutes. Aileen Sheehan, operating at wing back, struck the first of the four, before Cotter from distance, O'Connor on the run and Lauren Homan drilled over the fourth to see Cork stamp their authority on the game on the cusp of half time.

A brace of Devane 20-metre frees closed the scoring for the half with Tipperary trailing 0-8 to 1-10.

Within a minute of the re-start Hannah Looney picked off a fine point before Laura Loughnane cancelled it out three minutes later.

After Collins and Devane swapped scores, Orla Cronin got on the score-sheet after she was on the end of some great passing that started with Ashling Thompson in defence.

Another Looney point saw Cork 1-14 to 0-10 ahead with 12

minutes remaining. Tipp fought back to cut the gap to five – but two Cork goals in the closing three minutes from O'Connor and Lauren Homan rubber-stamped this latest win.

Scorers
Cork: A O'Connor 1-3, L Collins 1-2, L Homan 1-1, O Cotter 0-4 (2f), H Looney 0-2, A Sheehan, L Coppinger, O Cronin 0-1 each.
Tipperary: C Devane 0-11 (9f), L Loughnane, M Ryan 0-1 each.
Cork: A Murray (c); L O'Sullivan, L Treacy, M Cahalane; C Sigerson, A Thompson, A Sheehan; O Cotter, L Coppinger; A O'Connor, O Cronin, H Looney; L Collins, N McCarthy, L Homan.

Two finely-struck Amy O'Connor points either side of a Cotter long-range effort saw

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Subs: J White for L Coppinger (46), P Mackey for C Sigerson (49).
Tipperary: C Bourke; L Loughnane,



Ground control: Cork's Orla Cronin, left, moves in to take possession during the Rebels' Division 1 win against Tipperary last Sunday. (Photo: Trevor Patchett)

C Walsh, JA Bourke; E Loughman, K Kennedy, E Fryday; A McGrath, J Kelly; A Loughnane, M Ryan, K

Lenihan; S Fryday, C Devane, G O'Brien. Subs: N Walsh for A Loughnane

(42), M Camplon for G O'Brien (48), C Quirke for E Loughman (49). Referee: Fintan McNamara (Clare).

Thompson to star in Laochra Gael

CORK camogie star Ashling Thompson will star in the new series of the ever-popular Laochra Gael series on TG4. Thompson is one of five GAA personalities to feature in the upcoming series that has a new hour-long format, along with Lar Corbett, Graham Geraghty, Henry Shefflin and Mickey Harte. To be broadcast on Wednesday, March 14th at 9.30pm, in this episode called Warrior Woman, Thompson will give a fascinating

insight into her life, from her early days to her rise to All-Ireland winning captain, including how she overcame a career-threatening injury and her slump into darkness and depression. The series kicks off with Understanding Lar Corbett next Wednesday, February 28th at 9.30pm, followed by Graham Geraghty on March 7th, Thompson on March 14th, Henry Shefflin on March 21st and Mickey Harte on March 28th.



Camogie League Division 1 Group 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
1. Cork	3	3	0	0	52	32	9
2. Galway	3	2	0	1	46	37	6
3. Wexford	3	2	0	1	49	41	6
4. Tipperary	4	1	0	3	60	70	3
5. Offaly	3	0	0	3	26	53	0

Collins' goal key as Rebels off to winning start

CAMOGIE DIVISION 2

CORK 1-12
CARLOW 0-3

SHIRLEY MOLONEY REPORTS

IT took a second-half goal from Caitriona Collins to set-up a victory for Cork after a very fragmented and scrappy opening 30 minutes in the Littlewoods Ireland Division 2 fixture played at CIT on Sunday against newly-promoted Carlow.

It was very much a new-look Cork side with many new recruits and changes from the side that lined out in last year's All-Ireland intermediate final. Cork led at the break by

three, 0-5 to 0-2, however there were long spells without scores as the outfield battle proved challenging with tricky underfoot conditions.

The second half sprung to life when Collins goalied shortly after the resumption and set Cork up to take victory.

Carlow opened the scoring through Eleanor Treacy before Keeva McCarthy levelled the game for Cork, and the same played edged the home side in front.

After Treacy squared the game at 0-2 apiece, Cork responded with points from Keeva McCarthy, Katelyn Hickey

and Maeve McCarthy as they grew into the contest. Cork led 0-5 to 0-2 at the break.

The second half sprung to life within two minutes when a long-range delivery from Aoife Kavanagh saw goalkeeper Kate Kinsella come off her line only to mis-control into the path of Caitriona Collins, who was on hand to calmly slot past the keeper into the net.

Five minutes later Keelagh Cullinane pointed from close-range to extend Cork's lead to seven.

Carlow mustered a solitary point through a Treacy placed ball before Cork registered six unanswered points in the final 11 minutes.

Collins, Maeve McCarthy (2), Keeva McCarthy (2) and Caro-

line Sugrue all pointed as Cork took the spoils and got off to a winning start in their first outing of the season.

Scorers

Cork: K McCarthy 0-5 (4f), C Collins 1-1, M McCarthy 0-3, C Sugrue, K Hickey, K Cullinane 0-1 each.
Carlow: E Treacy 0-3 (3f)
Cork: A Lee (Na Piarraigh); L Callanan (Glen Rovers), S Harrington (Fr O'Neills, captain), R Killeen (Ballyhea); K McCarthy (Aghabullogue), F Neville (St Catherine's), S Hutchinson (Eire Og); A Kavanagh (Inniscarra), K Hickey (Blackrock); C Collins (Ballinhassig), M McCarthy (Sarsfields), K Cullinane (Fr O'Neills); K McCarthy (St Finbarr's), R O'Callaghan (St Catherine's), C Sugrue (Ballinascorney).
Subs: R O'Shea (Carrigaline) for R O'Callaghan (41), Niamh O'Callaghan (Sarsfields) for A Ka-



The getaway: Cork's Rachel O'Shea under pressure against Carlow. (Photo: Trevor Patchett)

vanagh (41), R Keane (Inniscarra) for K Cullinane (44), M Lynch (Newcestown) for K McCarthy (52), K Barry (Sarsfields) for R Killeen (52).
Carlow: K Kinsella; A Nolan, T

Birmingham, A Ryan; L Nolan, A Breen, N Canavan; E Cody, E Treacy; E Sinnott, C Quirke, R Sawyer, M Doyle (c), K Nolan, A Cusheen. Sub: E Brennan for E Sinnott (40). Referee: Kevin O'Brien (Limerick).

Intermediate: Gearing up for new ball game

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

FOR the new season there will be changes in the grades of competitions as the proposal of the county board's executive to dispense with the Senior B grade was unanimously accepted by the clubs.

Over the last few years the third adult grade of intermediate has only had five clubs battling for the league and championship titles and two clubs were seeking to re-grade down to junior this season. The thought behind dispensing with the senior B grade and elevating intermediate to Cork's second-highest championship is that the winners of the second tier competition will now be competing in the Munster intermediate championship.

Previously, the winners of the senior B Cork championship did not have a provincial competition to participate in.

Is this a good move?

It remains to be seen. Many clubs who have worked very hard down through the years to win the intermediate title and win promotion to senior B are now down a grade again. I personally think it is sad to be dispensing with a grade that has been hugely successful and competitive.

I find it strange that clubs don't seem to mind this, as for a lot of clubs I would have thought their senior status would be something they were hugely proud of.

It's interesting also that the winners of the intermediate championship in 2017 Newcestown who should have been participating at Senior B in 2018 will now still be intermediate, yet the winners of the junior A in 2017, Na Piarasigh, will face teams who were senior B.

The intermediate clubs now also find themselves in new territory as the senior B clubs have all come down to join them making it a hugely competitive championship.

So will it work? Certainly, we will have a fiercely contested championship and league. You'd wonder will losing their senior status affect clubs or will they just get on with it?

The big prize for the winners of the intermediate championship will be promotion to senior but the worry is whether clubs who were previously graded intermediate can survive in with the former senior B teams. Maybe a better option would have been to strengthen the intermediate grade by promoting up teams along the line starting at the bottom and promoting up a few teams from junior C to B, junior B to A and promote up a few junior A teams to strengthen the intermediate grade. This would have seen the senior B grade saved.

Either way, let's hope the new structure will prove successful.

With the groups decided for leagues competitions will begin the end of March.

SENIOR: 14 teams divided into two groups of seven as follows:

Group 1: Glen Rovers, Ballygarvan, Milford, Valley Rovers, Douglas, Killeagh, St Finbarr's.

Group 2: Courcy Rovers, Inniscarra, St Catherine's, Mallow, Sars-



Enniskeane captain Orla Coughlan bears down on goal at speed before firing home an excellent individual goal against Newcestown in the first half of last year's intermediate final. Picture: Larry Cummins



Sister Patricia of the Presentation Order presents Frances Deasy, the captain of Newcestown, with the Intermediate Championship trophy, the Nano Nagle Cup, in 2017.

fields, Cloughduv, Inniscarra.

INTERMEDIATE: 13 teams divided into two groups, one group of seven and one of six:

Group 1: Eire Og, Enniskeane, Fr O'Neill's, Aghabullogue, Ballinhasig, Blackrock, Barryroe.

Group 2: Kilbrittan/Timoleague, Clonakilty, Na Piarasigh, Newcestown, Carrigaline, Brian Dillon's.

JUNIOR: The A grade has nine teams and it was decided that there will be just one group with all play-

ing each other: St Vincent's, Bishopstown, Charleville, Banteer, Ballyhea, Watergrasshill, Sliabh Rua, Newtownshandrum, Tracton.

There are 11 teams in Junior B with five of the team's second adult teams of higher-graded clubs.

Group 1: Inniscarra, St Finbarr's, Sarsfields, Ballinascarty, Cobh, Ballincollig.

Group 2: Glen Rovers, Ballinora, Millstreet, Castlelyons, Bride Rovers.

Ten clubs will participate in Junior C in two groups of five:

Group 1: Blarney, Kilworth, St Fannah's, Aghada, St Vincent's.

Group 2: Kinsale, Ballinhassig, Cobh, Na Piarasigh, Barryroe.

There is also a junior 13-a-side competition for clubs not able to field at 15-a-side level and there are five clubs in this grade and here they will participate in a double round leave home and away. The four teams are Kilbree, St Colm's, Castlemartyr,

Rockban, Grenagh.

The only minor league sections announced was the minor A where there will be 12 teams in two groups of six:

Group 1: Newcestown, Courcy Rovers, Sarsfields, Milford/Ballyhea, Eire Og, Aghabullogue.

Group 2: Glen Rovers, Ballincollig, Charleville, Inniscarra, Ballygarvan, Carrigaline.

The minor B, C and D leagues will be announced shortly.

“Many clubs who have worked very hard down through the years to win the intermediate title and win promotion to senior B are now down a grade again

Unbeaten Rebels up for Offaly test



Camogie

Linda Mellerick

TOMORROW

Littlewoods Division 1: Cork v Offaly, Faithful Fields Centre of Excellence, Offaly, 2pm.

CORK make the journey to the Faithful Fields in Offaly on Saturday in their penultimate Division 1 league outing.

With three wins from three Cork should finish top of their group with Offaly so far having a disappointing season with three defeats from three.

With Limerick causing the shock of the campaign by defeating Kilkenny last weekend either Limerick or Waterford will pip Kilkenny, if they win, to take a top spot and this would force a Cork and Kilkenny semi-final. If, however, Limerick and Waterford draw in Ballyagran on Sunday then Kilkenny remain top and will avoid the Rebels at semi-final stage.

Cork have had it comfortable to date, despite a challenging game in Wexford in awful conditions in early February. Last week their movement was very impressive against Tipperary. With five non-starters from last September's All Ireland final they still had enough flair to see Tipperary off, despite the Premier county staying with them for most of the game.

With so much progress in Offaly in recent times, they'll be disappointed with their return in the league.

They were heavily defeated by Galway in Pearse Stadium 3-11 to 0-11. It was a must-win for Galway and their approach bore testament to that.

When one compares the win Cork had over Tipperary last weekend and the 0-16 to 0-7 victory Tipperary themselves inflicted on Offaly in the opening round, it shows the gap that exists between the top and bottom counties. You have the top three or four, then the middle tier followed by counties who are doing everything to bridge the gap, but it's a roller coaster.

Tipperary did all the early running against Offaly and maintained the upper hand all the way through the game.

Ereena Fryday and Jean Kelly's midfield dominance was vital as Tipp



Chloe Sigerson, Cork, gets away from Keely Lenihan, Tipperary, at CIT last weekend.

Picture: Jim Coughlan.

moved 0-9 to 0-6 at half-time, Michaela Morkan's three frees keeping her team in contention. Offaly only managed one point in the latter period, however, and Orla O'Dwyer, the returning Cáit Devane and Nicole Walsh (top scorer with 0-6) kept the scoreboard ticking over.

Had Offaly managed to goal from either the penalty or 20-metre free they were awarded their fortunes may have turned but Tipp goalkeeper Caoimhe Bourke saved both.

Wexford also defeated Offaly by 2-11 to 0-8 in Banagher. Una Leacy and Joanne Dillon raised the green flags, and Linda Bolger converted five frees successfully. Michaela Morkan was top scorer for the hosts with three points.

Paudie Murray may shake up his starting fifteen a bit now that the semi-final is looming, but he does tend to stick with a mixture of experience and new additions and for that reason, Lauren Homan and Aileen Sheehan should start again.



Katrina Mackey must bounce back from the disappointment of UCC's loss in the Ashbourne Cup final.

Picture: INPHO/Tommy Dickson

Antrim women travel to face in-form Rebels

TOMORROW Littlewoods Ireland Camogie League Division 2: Cork v Antrim, Castle Road, 2.30pm.

ROUND two of the Littlewoods Division 2 league sees Antrim make the long journey to Cork.

Following an impressive opening round victory over Wexford they sit top of the table with Cork and Westmeath.

The three additions to their side this year all performed well with Aoife McGowan, Christine Lavery and Siobhan McKillop slotting into the side confidently. Mentors Aidan McKeown and Joe Baldwin will travel to Cork in determined mood.

Cork overcame Carlow in a game where they never really looked in danger of losing.

This is an experienced Cork side though Paudie Murray has introduced a few new faces to his line out with Catriona Collins impressing as she contributed 1-1.

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

Yet it was the veteran performers like Kaitlin Hickey, Lauren Callanan and Finola Neville that stood out and led the way.

Antrim are a young side and they will include the four Donnelly sisters Kathryn, Aine, Niamh and Clodhna in a line out that is led by Captain Katie McAleese and will also include Aoife McGowan, Colleen Patterson, Aileen McManus, Laoise McKenna and Christine Lavery.

MINOR

Cork host Kilkenny in the All-Ireland Minor Championship at Ballynoe on Sunday at 2.30pm.

Having got the upper hand on champions Galway last weekend in round one of the All-Ireland Minor

Championship, Kilkenny will travel to face Cork in confident form.

Cork will also face into the tie in good form boosted by their own excellent opening round performance where they got the upper hand on Dublin.

Former Cork and Middleton hurling coach Jerry Wallace is the man in charge this season and he has worked hard with his charges and last weekend's excellent result was a big one for his side.

With games to go against Galway and Wexford a victory on Saturday would put them top of the table and in a good position to grab a place in the last four.

U16

Both Cork U16 teams are in Munster championship action this weekend also, the Cork B team host Clare in Castle Road on Saturday 11.45am whilst the A side travel Annacarty GAA grounds to on Sunday to take on Tipperary at 2pm.

Cork beat Antrim in defence of their title

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

Cork 1-17
Antrim 0-5

DIVISION Two National League holders, Cork, beat Antrim, in Castle Road, on Saturday. Cork quickly picked off five unanswered points, from Caroline Sugrue, Rachel O'Shea, Keava McMcCarthy (2), and Finola Neville.

As the game continued, so did Cork's dominance and, with 20 minutes played, they had extended their advantage to nine points. With nine minutes to the break, Caroline Sugrue scored the only goal of the game and it was hard to see the result going any other way. Cork were in control. By the interval, Cork had notched up 1-13. With their defence rock-solid, Antrim failed to register an opening-half score.

Keava McMcCarthy scored a point from an early second-half free to stretch Cork's lead, but Antrim enjoyed a lot more possession. The Cork defence stood firm, and with Roisin Killeen, Lauren Callanan, and Sarah Harrington all impressing, there was little danger. Ten minutes into the half, Antrim registered their first score, Lucia McNaughton scoring a point from a free. With Katie McAleese adding two further points, the scoreboard looked more respectable. But three points in a row, from Keava McMcCarthy (2) and Caroline Sugrue, had the Cork win secured, before a late Antrim flurry of two points.

With three games to go — against Wexford, Down, and Westmeath — Cork's defence of their title is going well.

Scorers for Cork: K McMcCarthy 0-10 (0-5, 0-1, 0-4), C Sugrue 1-2, R O'Shea, F Neville 0-2 each, M McMcCarthy 0-1.

Antrim: K McAleese 0-3 (0-2), L McNaughton 0-1 (0-1), S Armstrong 0-1.

Ref: Alan Doherty (Laois).

Cork 3-10
Kilkenny 0-8

A huge victory for the Cork minors in round two of the All-Ireland championship, as they got the upper hand on Kilkenny, with an excellent, second-half display on Saturday, in Ballynoe.

Level at the break, 1-3 to 0-6, an Emma Murphy goal, fifteen minutes into the game, was crucial. Cork edged ahead, before Kilkenny drew level before the break.

On the turnover, it was nip-and-tuck. Fiona Keating edged Cork in front, but Kilkenny replied again and they then added a point to gain the lead. But with Cliona Healy showing her accuracy from frees and play, Cork regained the initiative. Cork scored two goals inside three minutes Cliona Healy in the 22nd minute, and Emma Murphy in the 25th for a victory that puts them top of the group. With games to come against Wexford and Galway, they are in prime position for a place in the last four.

Cork win despite Offaly pressure



Camogie

Linda Mellerick

Cork 2-11
Offaly 2-9

LEADING by six points at half-time, after two first-half goals, Cork came under increased pressure in the second half against a physical and spirited Offaly side in their Littlewoods Division 1 fourth-round tie in Kilcormac on Saturday.

It was arguable Cork's toughest game out of their four played, one which they will undoubtedly be grateful for and it begs the question as to why Offaly finished the group with zero points, when they are quite capable of turning it on.

Despite Offaly playing with a sweeper Cork had plenty of space. Ashling Thompson was lauding it unmarked at centre back.

They quickly created the overlap and ran Offaly up front with Amy O'Connor again making great use of her speed. With Cork playing two inside and two outside in their half forward line, it suits Corks play as they spread defences.

Hannah Looney had Cork's opening goal inside six minutes after good work by Linda Collins and the brilliance of Karina Mackey shone through as she rocketed Cork's second on fourteen.

With Leanne O'Sullivan, Laura Treacy, Orla Cronin and Niamh McCarthy all sitting out with various injuries they had more than able replacements in Pamela and Katrina Mackey, Julia White and Katelyn Hickey. Offaly had raced into a 1-1 to no score lead by the third minute after a defensive error allowed Helen Dolan in to flick over the line. Offaly scored just three further points in the opening half as Cork took over.

Leading 2-7 to 1-4 Cork looked comfortable at the turnaround, but their opponent's intensity increased.

An extremely hard-working defence inspired the same response all over the field and by the fortieth minute the gap was down to two after Helen Dolan pounced on a ball batted out by Aoife Murray.



Corks Caitriona Collins looking to get her shot on target with Offaly's Ann Marie Guinan attempting to block. Picture: Ger Rogers Photography.

Cork's response was expected. Orla Cotter landed three on either side of an Amy O'Connor point and Cork again enjoyed a six-point cushion.

But as Offaly regrouped, space was at a minimum and it was the home side which finished the strongest. Debbie Flynn, Patricia Delaney (6), and two fine points from substitute Kate Kenny left Cork on tender hooks. But they held firm and top group two with the semi-final in two weeks' time.

Scorers for Cork: A O'Connor 0-4, H Looney 1-0, K Mackey 1-2, O Cotter 0-5 (0-4).

Offaly: P Delaney 0-3 (0-1), H Dolan 2-0, D Flynn 0-3, Kenny 0-2, S Harding 0-1.

CORK: A Murray, L Coppinger, P Mackey, M Cahalane, C Sigerson, A Thompson, A Sheehan, O Cotter, K Hickey, K Mackey, L Homan, A O'Connor, L Collins, H Looney, J White.

Subs: C Collins for K Mackey (inj, 23m), R Keane for C Collins (24).

OFFALY: G Egan, A M Guinan, F Stephens, S Walsh, T McDonald, R Egan, A Roddy, G Dolan, O Kwan, D Flynn, P Delaney, A Watkins, H Dolan, S Harding, L Sullivan.

Subs: G Teehan for A Roddy (16/1), K Kenny for L Sullivan (45m).

Referee: Owen Elliot - Antrim.



Corks Lauren Homan drives up field against Offaly. Picture: Ger Rogers Photography.

Good win for tired players, their third game in six days

Camogie

Linda Mellerick

A TOUGH, fourth-round game for Cork, in Kilcormac, on Saturday, but Paudie Murray isn't complaining. His side won.

"I think it was a great workout for us, which is no harm," Paudie Murray said. "And, I suppose, three games in six days tells its own story."

"I thought we were very tired in the second-half," he said, because of Cork's game against Tipperary, last Sunday, and UCC's Ashbourne cup final, on Wednesday night (when 10 Cork players lined out). "I suppose, my story isn't much different to what it was last week, in that we have a lot of work to do for the semi-final and you'd worry about going into it, with the level of injuries and preparation."

"We don't have any pitch, yet, for training next week, so we don't even know if we'll be able to train outdoors on Tuesday and Thursday, so things aren't good that way."

"We trained on the Park 4G pitch last Thursday

night, which was excellent, to be fair, but, yeah, we can't train. We're inside, in a hall, at the moment (due to pitch closures and a lack of light), so that isn't good."

Cork's first half-display showed plenty of flair, plenty of running.

Can Paudie pinpoint the difference in the second-half, which allowed Offaly back in the game?

"I think our ball in, in the second-half, wasn't good. It was hit straight into the middle of the pitch the whole time and not into space."

"We overdid it a bit, at times, as well, with passing."

"But we've had just a few training sessions on a pitch, so you've got to take all that into account and, look, we're starting from today, that's really the way

we've looked at it and we just have to train hard now, and get our injured players back."

Paudie stated, after their game against Tipperary that he was concerned about the fitness of his team and, certainly, Cork tired a little.

"Yeah, it was a tired ball. Look, you had to take into account and tiredness has to set in, matter how much you try to look after them."

"I've very happy with the workout."

"It was worth ten training sessions. It's probably the best workout we had during the league campaign, so, from that point of view, I'd be very happy."

The venue for the semi-final, in two weeks' time will depend on the outcome of the Limerick and Waterford game.

"I'd hope they'd get it into a stadium. I think that's important, the likes of the Gaelic Grounds or Páirc Uí Rinn, if it's Limerick."

Limerick squeeze into semi-finals

Camogie

Daragh Ó Conchúir

Champions Kilkenny will play Galway in the Littlewoods Ireland Camogie League Division 1 semi-final while All-Ireland champions Cork face Limerick in the other last-four tie.

Limerick edged through for the fourth consecutive year, squeezing out Waterford by virtue of a superior score difference following a 1-9 to 1-9 draw with the Déise.

Limerick led 1-3 to 0-5 at half-time thanks to a Niamh Mulcahy goal in the third minute.

Waterford looked set for the semis when Kaiesha Tobin found the Limerick net to put her side 1-8 to 1-7 ahead with seven minutes remaining. Limerick replied with points from Caoimhe Costelloe and Mulcahy and though Waterford drew level as Carton brought her own tally to seven points, they could not find the winner they needed.

Clare's semi-final ambitions ended at Parnells, where they lost to Dublin by 1-12 to 0-10 where a late Róisín Baker goal sealed victory.

In the other Group 2 game, Kilkenny waltzed to a 2-19 to 0-6 win over Meath, Julieann Malone netting twice.

Galway got the better of Wexford by 2-16 to 4-8 in the winner-takes-all battle to claim the second semi-final berth from Group 1, after Cork had maintained their perfect record with a 2-11 to 2-9 triumph over Offaly.

Goals from Aoife Guiney and Una Leacy gave Wexford an early advantage but Galway kept the scoreboard ticking over via Caitríona Cormican, Aoife Donohue and Rebecca Hennelly.

Then Ailish O'Reilly goalied to edge Galway 1-10 to 2-4 ahead at the change of ends.

In the second half Guiney notched up her second goal for Wexford, only for O'Reilly to do likewise at the other end. When Leacy became the third player to bag a brace of majors, it was back in the melting pot but Galway held out.

In Faithful Fields, goals from Katrina Mackey and Hannah Looney proved crucial for Cork along with a fine display from Orla Cotter.

Amy O'Connor has been in magnificent form throughout the Littlewoods Ireland League and pre-match concerns about her fitness, and that of Orla Cronin, were allayed as O'Connor contributed three points and Cronin had two.

Helen Dolan, who was part of NUIG's Purcell Cup-winning squad on Tuesday night, had two goals for the hosts.

Debbie Flynn and Patrice Delaney provided three points each as the hosts put Cork to the pin of their collar but they will now be preparing for a relegation play-off against Meath.

Limerick will be a tough challenge



Camogie

Linda Mellerick

SUNDAY

Littlewoods Division 1 National League semi-final: Cork v Limerick, CIT, 2pm

THERE was a time when the meeting of Cork and Limerick in any competitive game was a foregone conclusion.

Cork would win, and win comfortably. And while, when it comes to the All-Ireland championship, Cork maintain the upper hand, the league and Munster Championships have sung a different tune in recent times.

Limerick are no longer threading gingerly out of the dressing room.

They burst out with a spring in their step, eager and excited by the challenge of facing the consistent might of Cork. And that has led to them causing more than one upset.

In 2015 Cork had five points to spare in the league semi-final, 1-12 to 0-10, in what was Limerick's first foray back into the senior grade after winning the intermediate championship title the year previously.

Cork were defeated by Limerick in their opening 2016 league game, 1-11 to 0-9, and both sides had to go at it again in a play-off to decide who would advance to the semi-final.

Many believed Limerick had their hour of glory in that opener and wouldn't do it a second time. They did, winning by 1-11 to 0-7.

Granted, Cork hadn't their full complement, but they should still have had enough in the tank and they didn't.

The sides met in the Munster final just weeks later when Cork came out on top, but only just, 0-12 to 0-10.

In 2017, Cork widened the gap again, 3-15 to 0-12 in the league semi-final in Páirc Uí Rinn, a result which was extremely disappointing for Limerick after the progression of 2016.

But 2016 still rings clear in their minds and they'll be up for Sunday's clash.

A draw last weekend against Waterford saw Limerick pip them to a semi-final spot by virtue of their superior points difference.

Niamh Mulcahy won the WPGA February Camogie Player of the Month award, having played three games in



Cork's Hannah Looney under pressure from Offaly's Sarah Walsh and Ann Marie Guinan as she attempts to gather the dropping sliotar when the sides met recently. Picture: Ger Rogers Photography.

the league, recording a tally of 1-21 (1-6 from play) against Clare, Kilkenny, and Waterford. She remains the danger woman from Cork's perspective.

Cork, meanwhile, have several injuries worries and won't be naming their team until late in the day to give players that extra time to recover.

Aoife Murray is a definite non-starter due to a serious knee problem. Others the Cork management are waiting on are Laura Treacy, Maeve Cahalane, Orla Cronin, Katrina Mackey, Julia White, Leanne O'Sullivan, Amy O'Connor, and Niamh McCarthy.

Having trained earlier in the week they will wait to see how the players respond. With last weekend a washout training wise, both sides will feel that has hindered preparations. But it's a level playing field in that regard.

Cork will go into the game as favourites, but depending on the extent of their injuries, maybe it's a great opportunity for Limerick to reach their first league final.



Limerick's Niamh Mulcahy has been in top form for the Shannonsiders this season so far. Picture: INPHO/James Crombie

Cork girls will face difficult assignment in Wexford

SUNDAY

Littlewoods Division 2 National League: Cork v Wexford.

ROUND three of the Littlewoods Division 2 National League sees Cork head to Wexford, looking to make it three wins from three.

The are joint leaders with Westmeath after two good victories. They opened with an impressive win over Carlow before recording a comfortable win over Antrim and in both games they played with a lot of confidence.

Wexford lost to Antrim 2-9 to 1-2 in their opener before getting beating Down 2-9 to 0-8. With a trip to Down and a home tie against Westmeath to come, a win on Sunday would put Cork in a nice position in their quest to defend their title.

With the senior team in National League semi-final action against Limerick on Sunday in CIT (2pm), it means both adult teams are playing on the

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

same day. It is another crazy situation, given that some of the division 2 team are substitutes for the division 1 team, which could leave the division 2 side without a full panel for this important clash.

They have had some excellent performances in their opening games. Up front Keava McCarthy continues to find the range from placed balls, and Maeve McCarthy and Róisín Killeen have also done well, while experienced campaigners Lauren Callanan, Finola Neville, and Sarah Harrington have been tremendous in defence. It is good to see additions to the sides this season and Caitríona Collins and Siobhán Hutchinson have also been impressing.

With their senior side no longer in contention for league honours, Wexford will be in a position to field

a strong division 2 side with several of the players who were tied up with the division 1 side now available. In their two outings to date, Eimear Nolan, Michelle Kehoe, Leanne Foley, Emma Doyle, and Sorcha Foley have been to the fore and on home turf they will test Cork.

A win is vital to keep their hopes of qualification alive and with games to come against table toppers Westmeath and Carlow they know every result is vital for them.

MUNSTER U16 FINALS: Sunday is a busy day also for the U16 A and B sides with both qualified for the Munster finals.

The A side, following their 0-13 to 1-7 victory over Tipperary, take on a Limerick side who defeated Clare 1-14 to 0-13.

The B team is scheduled to meet Waterford after they had a 1-7 to 2-3 win over Clare while Waterford got the upper hand on Tipperary 0-8 to 0-4.

Mum's the word for Treaty's inspirational defender Carey

Cliona Foley



International Women's Day is always an occasion for celebrating powerful women. Sarah Carey certainly qualifies for that today, and not just for her brilliant camogie skills.

She is in the last two months of her social care degree at Limerick IT so is juggling her thesis and completing a pile of assignments with training and playing for Limerick, whom she will captain in the Littlewoods Ireland National Camogie League Division One semi-finals on Sunday.

Victory on Mother's Day would have particular resonance for the 25-year-old Patrickswell defender as she is juggling her finals and elite sport with being a mum to a particularly active toddler.

"Nicky is one-and-a-half now. He's running non-stop at the moment, up to everything," she grins proudly. "He is just gas, a real character and sometimes we just sit down to laugh at him!"

It's hard to know when she even has a minute to sit down nor indeed his dad either, as her boyfriend Tom Condon also stars, at corner-back, for the Limerick senior hurlers. "We both actually train the same nights with the county," she explains.

"Tom goes straight from work to training because they have to be there very early. Our training is very late the last few weeks because we've changed pitches as we couldn't see what we were doing on the last one."

"We're not training until 8.30pm now so that means I can put Nicky to bed and move on to training afterwards. We're blessed because he's really good. Once he's down he's asleep for the night."

They are blessed, too, to have "amazing support" and a small army of babysitters offering their services. Nicky is the first grandchild in her family and then there's her county teammates who are



"obsessed" with him.

"The team bought him his first jersey! It has number 6 and 'Mummy' on the back of it but he probably only got three games out of it," she laughs at her child's rapid growth rate.

Young mothers often quit elite sport at this time due to their hectic workload but Carey decided: "I'm not going to have the opportunity to play for Limerick forever so I'm taking it now when I can. It's very busy at the moment but it's really worth it."

"When I first found out I was pregnant, my mother said 'we'll be there 100% to support you so you can go back to your camogie', because she knows what it means to me."

"I was shocked at first, especially as I played a league game against Cork and discovered three days later that I was 13 weeks pregnant."

"But I think being so fit really helped," says Carey. "I

flew through the pregnancy, really loved being pregnant, but I really missed the camogie too and found it really hard to watch the matches."

So badly that she bawled when she had to miss out on the 2016 Munster final and almost didn't go to watch Limerick run vaunted Cork to within two points.

So badly too that, "in a moment of madness", Carey returned to play in the 2016 county final just a month after giving birth. "I just couldn't get back fast enough once I



Limerick's Sarah Carey at yesterday's captain's run in the Iveagh Gardens ahead of Sunday's Camogie Leagues semi-finals, and left, with her father Giaran.

Picture: Inpho/James Crombie

was able and came on in the end of the county final against Ahane.

"The deal was that I could come on for 10 minutes if we were leading by a few points but Tom didn't talk to me when I was going out the door

with my gear," says Carey. "Nicky was only four weeks old. It was a moment of madness really but worth it. I was OK and we won."

Becoming a mum may have forced a hiatus in her sport and studies but now she's im-

mersed in both again and her return for Limerick last summer was surely a factor in their famous first Munster senior final victory over Cork.

Carey is a gifted centre-back, capable of forward surges that are often reminiscent of her dad Giaran in his prime, and she is part of a talented Limerick team who just can't get over the line sometimes.

This will be their fourth league semi-final in a row yet they've still to leap that penultimate hurdle.

Carey's only major honours still are an Intermediate All-Ireland in 2014 and last year's precious Munster senior.

A draw with Waterford last time out put them through to Division One's last four on score difference but they have already taken one massive scalp this season. "We have some serious talent and some great leaders but we've been stuck at this point," says Carey.

"Our squad is made up of a handful of really experienced girls and then a big gap to the younger girls who I think are nearly afraid to speak up at times, but I think we're finally gelling together."

"Beating Kilkenny in our group was a huge boost — that's the first time I ever won against a Kilkenny senior team."

"We just need to keep that standard up, that's our downfall and it's in our heads really. We can be amazing in one game and then drop the next day out. We need to find consistency."

Once again it's the reigning All-Ireland champions who stand between them and a league final. "Of course you'd look up to Cork but we can't fear them," she says.

"They're the standard we want to be at and I can't wait for this game. Hopefully now we can gel together, be consistent and get more confidence."

Limerick play Cork at Cork IT on Sunday while Kilkenny take on Galway in St Rynagh's, Banagher (both games throw-in at 2pm). Both Division 1 semi-finals will be streamed live on the Littlewoods Ireland Facebook page.

West teams discover camogie draws

CARBERY have been paired against Ballygarvan in the opening round of the 2018 county senior camogie championship.

Meanwhile, newly-promoted Valley Rovers will begin their senior campaign against Killeagh — and the loser of Valleys v Killeagh will take on the loser of Carbery v Ballygarvan.

Senior: A) Cloughduv v Inniscarra, B) Ballincollig v Douglas, C) Carbery v Ballygarvan, D) Mallow v Sarsfields, E) Killeagh v Valley Rovers, F) St Finbarr's v Muskerry, G) Milford v Glen Rovers, H) St Catherine's v Courcy Rovers.

Losers' Round: I) C v E, J) G

v D, K) B v F, L) H v A.

Meanwhile, a revamped intermediate championship replaces the senior B grade that had existed, with the move made for a number of reasons, including allowing the new intermediate winners — now the second grade, behind senior — to progress to the Munster and All-Ireland club series as well as making this a more competitive grade.

Five teams would have contested in senior B had it been left as it was but now 13 teams will battle it out at intermediate level, including 2017 intermediate champions Newces-

town who have been paired in a group with local rivals Enniskeane, Aghabullogue and Ballinhassig.

This change to the championship structure will make this grade more competitive.

There is plenty of West Cork interest at intermediate level as both Barryroe and Clonakilty are in Group 1 while Kilbrittain-Timoleague are in Group 2.

Intermediate

Group 1: Na Piarasigh, Carrigaline, Barryroe, Blackrock, Clonakilty.

Group 2: Kilbrittain-Timoleague, Fr O'Neills, Brian Dillons, Eire Og.

Group 3: Newcestown,

Aghabullogue, Ballinhassig, Enniskeane.

Further down the grades, Ballinascorthy are in Group 1 of the Junior B championship along with Cobh, Ballinora, St Finbarr's, Glen Rovers and Sarsfields.

In Junior C, Barryroe, Kilbrittain-Timoleague and Valley Rovers are in Group 2 along with Cobh, Blarney, Aghada and Castlelyons, while Newcestown are in Group 1 as are Kinsale.

In Junior 13-a-side, St Colum's will compete with Killee, Rockabán, Grenagh and Castlemartyr.



4. Kay Dunne, Denis Hurley, president Sarsfield Hurling Club, and Marie Kearney.

Underage league games set to begin

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

THE juvenile board are ready to go with their U14 leagues opening what will be another busy season for them.

The board will organise league and championships at U14 and U16 as well as U12 leagues and Go Games from U8s up to U11.

Féile na nGael will be held earlier this year and in order to get games moving the board will begin the U14 leagues on March 11.

The U16 leagues get underway in with everything ready it now only remains for the weather to improve as youngsters are eager to get going.

Fixtures and starting dates for the U14 leagues have now been sent to clubs and clubs are now just hoping for better weather to enable them get back on the pitches as soon as possible before the leagues begin.

Again this year there will be three grades at U14 level A, B, and C and after the league there will be a grading review before championship commences. Let now just hope the inclement weather will improve to allow leagues commence on Sunday week.

The grading is as follows:

In U14 A, there are 12 teams Aghabullogue, Ballincollig, Ballygarvan, Cloughduv, Eire Og 1, Inniscarra 1, Kilbree, St Finbarr's, Sarsfields 1, Tracton, Youghal, and Ballyhea/Milford.

Twenty five clubs will contest the U14 B league and these are divided into five sections with five teams in each as follows.

In section one it's: Mallow, Carrigaline, Glen Rovers, Sarsfields 2, and Douglas 1.

In section two it is: Rockbán, Na Piarasigh, Courcy Rovers, Aghada, and Castlemartyr.

In section three we have Killeagh, Bishopstown, Cobh, Millstreet and Fr O'Neill's.

Section four will have Blackrock 1, Ballinasally, Valley Rovers, Castlelyons and Sliabh Rua.

While section five is made up of Blarney, Charleville, Kilbrittan/Timoleague, Clonakilty 1, and Newcestown.

Again in U14 C there are 25 teams as follows Ballinhassig, Ballinora, Bandon, Barryroe, Blackrock 2, Brian Dillon's, Bride Rovers, Buttevant, Carrigtwohill, Clonakilty 2, Carrigtwohill, Douglas 2, Dungourney, Enniskeane, Erin's Own, Grenagh, Kilworth, Laochra Og, Midleton, Nemo Rangers, Passage West, St Catherine's, St Colum's, St Vincent's, Watergrasshill.

The sections in the under 16 grades are not finalised yet but the teams in each grade are as follows:

U16 A:

There will be 18 teams in U16 A this is an increase of since last year and this is a welcome move.

The A clubs are as follows Aghabullogue, Ballincollig, Ballyhea/Milford, Ballinora, Ballygarvan, Blackrock, Charleville, Eire Og, Enniskeane, Glen Rovers, Inniscarra 1, Kilbrittan/Timoleague, Newcestown, Sarsfields, St Finbarr's, Valley Rovers and Youghal.

There are 24 clubs in the U16 B grade as follows:



U14 A Cork County Camogie champions Eire Og with the cup back at the clubhouse after their victory over Sarsfield at Coachford on Saturday.

Picture: Larry Cummine



The Sarsfields camogie team winners of Mayfield Garda Camogie Blitz last year.

Picture: Derek Connolly

Aghada, Banteer, Bishopstown, Blarney, Carrigaline, Castlelyons, Castlemartyr, Clonakilty, Cloughduv, Cobh, Courcy Rovers, Douglas, Dungourney, Fr O'Neill's, Inniscarra 2, Kilbree, Killeagh, Mallow, Midleton, Na Piarasigh, Rockban, St Catherine's, Sliabh Rua, Tracton.

There will be 15 teams competing

in the U16 C grade:

Ballinhassig, Barryroe, Brian Dillon's, Bride Rovers, Buttevant, Erin's Own, Grenagh, Kilworth, Laochra Og, Millstreet, Nemo Rangers, St Colum's, St Fanahan's, St Vincent's, Watergrasshill.

CORK U16s REACH MUNSTER FINALS:

A good weekend for both Cork U16s sides last weekend as both made it through to their respective Munster finals.

The U16 B squad were first out and they held on to record a one-point victory over Clare in Castle Road on a 2-3 to 1-7 scoreline.

The U16 A sides travelled to take

“There will be 18 teams in U16 A this is an increase of since last year, a welcome move.”

on Tipperary in Annacarty on Sunday and led 0-9 to 0-2 at the interval after playing with the aid of a strong wind.

Tipp piled on the pressure in the second half but with Cork held on to record a 0-13 to 1-7 victory thanks in the main to a good opening 30 minutes.

War of words between Cork camogie and UCC

John Coleman and Denis Hurley

A bitter war of words has erupted between Cork camogie manager Paudie Murray and his UCC ladies football counterpart, Shane Ronayne, in a dispute over dual players.

On Saturday night, Ronayne claimed Murray's management had stopped two players — Meabh Cahalane and Hannah Looney — from lining out in the university's O'Connor Cup semi-final defeat to UL that day, while Libby Coppinger opted to play for the college.

Ronayne told Cork's RedFM: "I don't think it's very fair on the players involved. It's a move that we're very, very angry about. It's very underhand from the Cork camogie management."

However, following Cork's 2-17 to 2-13 win over Limerick in yesterday's Littlewoods Ireland Camogie League semi-final, Murray launched a broadside of his own.

"On January 2nd, we brought it to the attention of the girls playing O'Connor Cup that there was a clash," said Murray. "We told them that if we were in a semi-final what we would be expecting. We made numerous attempts [to resolve the situation]."

"This issue didn't rear its head this week. I think people were well aware of what was happening. I think UCC did very little [on the matter]. We have done everything possible."

Murray then claimed players feared their "grants would be withdrawn" if they didn't line out for UCC.

He said: "I would question what UCC have done. I had parents ringing me telling me



Limerick's Rebecca Delee loses her hurley as she is tackled by Cork's Ashling Thompson during yesterday's Littlewoods Ireland Camogie League Division 1 semi-final at CIT.

that their daughters got texts saying that their grants would be withdrawn. I think that it's very, very disappointing. I would also like to say that certain management of UCC ladies' football team texting my management team at two and three o'clock this morning is uncalled for. I think it just shows how shabby the whole thing was."

Last night, Ronayne acknowledged players receiving scholarships are subject to certain demands from the college.

He told RedFM: "UCC have a vast scholarship programme. They give out scholarships to elite players. They're investing in those

players' futures. It's not just about sport. To receive those scholarships, there are certain commitments and you have to represent the college if you're fit and able."

"Those two girls are on scholarships and signed up to the terms of the scholarships. It's a bit like a contract, in a professional sense. Yesterday, they were reminded of that commitment to the college, that they would have to represent the college if they were able to play."

"Paudie is claiming threats were made to the two players. I know, and he repeated it to me, that those players were told they would never again tog out for Cork if they played

[for] UCC."

"On Friday night, Hannah Looney put up a message in the [UCC] players' group apologising that she couldn't play. The words she used was that their inter-county careers were at stake."

Asked if the players who opted to play for Cork would be subject to sanctions, Ronayne replied: "The authorities in UCC will be looking into it."

Ronayne also denied Murray's assertion he received abusive text messages.

"He said they were drunken and vile texts. I take serious issue with that," he said.

A text was sent to one of his selectors, wishing them the best today. There was a



UCC ladies football manager Shane Ronayne, left, and Cork camogie boss Paudie Murray are in a dispute over dual players.

remark passed about why the players were not released. There was no abuse, they were not drunken or vile and they weren't at two or three o'clock in the morning."

The controversy didn't seem to impact yesterday on Cork, who led by 2-8 to 0-4 after 25 minutes. Linda Collins netted twice, while Orla Cotter and Orla Cronin were also on target.

However, a goal from Limerick captain Sarah Carey, along with Niamh Mulcahy's dead ball accuracy, narrowed the game to 2-9 to 1-7 by the break.

It was nip and tuck on the resumption, before Cork pushed on, with Collins, Cotter and Amy O'Connor to the fore as they lead by 2-16 to 1-11 with five to go.

Limerick, however, kept battling and, when Mulcahy converted a soft penalty and followed it with another free, they trailed by three and were in with a shout. Amy O'Connor then slotted over her third to make certain of Cork's deserved victory.

In the other semi-final, Kilkenny beat Galway 2-10 to 1-9 in Banagher, with Aoife Doyle and Julieann Malone goaling for the winners.

Davy delight as D'Arcy on board

John Fogarty

Davy Fitzgerald says he is delighted to have Wexford camogie goalkeeper Mags D'Arcy on board as an assistant coach to his management team.

At the Liberty Insurance Women in Sport symposium in Croke Park, D'Arcy revealed she was part of Fitzgerald's

set-up and the Clare native explained her role when contacted by the Irish Examiner yesterday.

"What Mags is doing is getting experience in coaching and she is helping out our goalkeeping coach Noel Considine as well as doing some general coaching. We like to have her around, she's a great

person and is fairly on the ball."

"She'll no doubt pick up a lot from the coaches. She's involved in different elements of coaching and I often ask her to work on different techniques with fellas one-on-one."

News of four-time All-Ireland winner D'Arcy's appointment has been well received

and Fitzgerald continued: "She'll add things to our group. At the outset, she said she was mad to learn and in Wexford if anyone can be of benefit to us then fair play. We have four or five hurling coaches and we're delighted she is part of the set-up and she's working extremely hard as they all are."



Mags D'Arcy: An assistant coach to Wexford senior men's team.

Camogie:

Littlewoods Ireland NCL Div 1 semi-finals: Kilkenny 2-10 Galway 1-9, Cork 2-17 Limerick 2-13.

Scorers for Cork: L Collins 2-3, O Cotter 0-6 (0-3 frees), O Cronin and A O'Connor 0-3 each, A Sheehan and J White 0-1 each.

Scorers for Limerick: N Mulcahy (1-0 pen, 0-4 frees, 0-2 '45's) 1-6, S Carey 1-1, K O'Leary, S O'Callaghan, D Murphy, R Delee, A Scanlan and C Lyons 0-1 each.

CORK: A Lee; L O'Sullivan, L Treacy, M Cahalane, A Sheehan, P Mackey, C Sigeron, J White, A Thompson, L Homan, O Cronin, L Collins, H Looney, N McCarthy, O Cotter.

Subs: K Mackey for Cronin (in), 35), A O'Connor for Homan (40), G O'Connor for White (51) and J White for McCarthy (63).

LIMERICK: L O'Neill, S McNamara, L McCarthy, M O'Quaid, L Scanlan, J Mulcahy, M O'Connell, S Carey, K O'Leary, D Murphy, S O'Callaghan, C Costelloe, N Mulcahy, R Delee, C Lyons.

Subs: A Scanlan for O'Connell (hit), M Greener for O'Callaghan (40), K Hennessy for L Scanlan (45), F Hickey for O'Quaid (52) and M O'Callaghan for O'Leary (55).

Div 2 Grp 1: Antrim 2-9 Westmeath 2-9, Carlow 3-10 Down 2-8, Cork 5-22 Wexford 1-1; Grp 2: Laois 4-5 Derry 2-9, Kilkenny 0-11 Dublin 1-8, Tipperary 2-13 Kildare 0-7; Div 3: Clare 0-10 Tyrone 0-8.

O'Flynn a hard act to follow in camogie

Everyone knows the GAA is looking for a new director general, with names such as Tom Ryan, Liam Sheedy and Ken Spratt being bandied around as potential replacements for Pádraic Duffy, who is shortly to step down.

A mention here, though, for Joan O'Flynn, who is now stepping down as director general of the Camogie Association after five years at the helm of the organisation.

O'Flynn has done a terrific job steering the Camogie Association through controversies such as the 'coin toss' furore a couple of years ago, as well as contributing to the recent announcement of a memorandum of understanding between the Camogie Association, the LGFA and the GAA as they seek to forge stronger links (it's been a little surprising there hasn't been more focus on this, incidentally — the ramifications of such an agreement between those three bodies is huge).

Congrats on a job well done — O'Flynn's replacement has some big shoes to fill.

Five star show sees Cork crew coast it

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

Cork 5-20
Wexford 1-1

THERE was no doubt about the result of this one as a strong performance from holders Cork helped them to their third victory in the Littlewoods Division 2 National league as they totally outclassed the hosts in WIT yesterday.

Cork led 1-10 to 1-1 at the interval after they had held Wexford scoreless until the 23rd minute of the opening half. In all sectors Cork were superior and in the second half they ran out convincing winners.

With Kaitlin Hickey, Caroline Sugrue, Keava McCarthy and Finola Neville all finding the range Cork had opened up a 0-6 lead before a Kaitlin Hickey goal stretched the Cork lead 17 minutes in.

A Chloe Cash free went all the way to the net to opened the scoring for Wexford and adding to it with a point they cut the deficit but Cork finished the half strong to hold a nine-point lead. There was only one team in it in the second half as Cork were in the driving seat. They continued to pick off scores and with goals from Finola Neville, Rachel O'Shea and Kaitlin Hickey the lead was increased as Wexford simply had no response to the strength of Cork.

With just two games to go against Down and Westmeath Cork are in a strong position to once again advance to another league decider.

Scorers for Cork: K Hickey 2-2, Keava McCarthy 0-7 (0-4 f), R O'Shea 1-4, F Neville 1-4, C Sugrue 0-2, A Kavanagh 0-1, S McCarthy 0-2, C Collins 0-1.

Wexford: C Cash 1-1 f.

CORK: C Collins; L Weste, S Harrington, N O'Callaghan; L Callanan, M Lynch, Katie McCarthy; A Kavanagh, S Buckley; Keava McCarthy, K Hickey, F Neville; C Sugrue, M McCarthy, R Keane.

Subs: K Cullinane for M McCarthy, R O'Shea for R Keane, C Healy for K Hickey, S McCarthy for C Sugrue.

WEXFORD: E Bate; E O'Connor, L Foley, A McCray; K O'Connor, C Cash, D Doyle; S Foley, L Dempsey, V Burke, O Molloy, S Kelly; M Kehoe, E Doyle, L Kelly.

Subs: N Dunphy for E O'Connor, E Kelly for E Bate.

In the Munster U16 A final Cork proved too strong for Limerick as they recorded a 4-8 to 0-4 victory to hold onto their title.

In post primary competitions, Loreto Fermoy took the Senior D All-Ireland title with a 1-12 to 1-8 win over Offaly side Naomh Cormac.

In the Junior C final, there was a win for St Mary's, Middleton over St Cuan's, Ballinasloe on a 3-17 to 2-9 scoreline to take the honours.

Cork hang on as Treaty fight back

CAMOGIE



Linda Mellerick

Cork 2-17
Limerick 2-13

ON two occasions during this entertaining league semi-final fixture in CIT yesterday Cork led well, by 10 and eight points.

Yet they let Limerick back into the game and just three separated the sides before Amy O'Connor stepped up to give Cork that four-point cushion on the stroke of full time.

Cork were superior throughout and the gap should have been wider at the final whistle. Just three of their 2-17 came from placed balls as their speed, interplay and classy point scoring was joyful.

The game was open with plenty of space afforded and while Cork were tight at the back initially, Limerick did hit a five-minute purple patch on the 27th minute where they exposed the home side defensively, striking 1-3 to give them impetus as they entered the dressing room.

Cork had led 2-8 to 0-4, up to that point. Ashling Thompson, roaming in Cork's half-back line, and Chloe Sigerson gave good diagonal deliveries and the sweet play of Linda Collins, who finished the game with 2-3, and Orla Cronin led a merry dance.

Linda Collins' first goal came from an Orla Cotter free which dropped into the square and she was first to react to grab and strike home.

There was little fluency to Limerick's play, with Cork's work rate preventing any smooth run.

They started to get into rhythm towards the end of the half however and ran at Cork. They were through for goal only to drop the ball at the critical moment. Sarah Carey made no mistake a minute later though as Cork's concentration lapsed, and she rattled the net to leave just five between the sides at the turnover, 2-9 to 1-7.

It was a better Limerick side in the second half, led by the pacy and hard-working Deborah Murphy, Rebecca Delee and Sarah Carey.

Entering the fourth quarter Cork



Cork's Chloe Sigerson, despite losing her hurley, gets her pass away from Judith Mulcahy of Limerick.

Picture: INPHO/Oisín Keniry

had stretched their lead to seven but their scores weren't as plentiful. Limerick were keeping in the hunt and when Sarah Carey rifled home a harsh penalty call on the competent Amy Lee, the gap was four. A Niamh Mulcahy free brought it to three before Amy O'Connor had the final say.

Scorers for Cork: L Collins 2-3, O Cotter 0-6 (0-3 f), O Cronin 0-3, A O'Connor 0-3, A Sheehan, J White 0-1 each.

Limerick: N Mulcahy 0-6 (0-5 f, 0-1 45), S Carey 2-1 (1-0 pen), S O'Callaghan, D Murphy, R Delee, C Lyons, K O'Leary, A Scallan 0-01 each.

CORK: A Lee; L O'Sullivan, L Treacy, M Cahalane; A Sheehan, P Mackay, C Sigerson; J White, A Thompson; L Homan, O Cronin, L Collins, H Looney, N McCarthy, O Cotter.

Subs: K Mackey for O Cronin (inj 34), A O'Connor for L Homan (40), G O'Connor for J White (51), J White for N McCarthy (63).

LIMERICK: L O'Neill; S McNamara, L McCarthy, M Quaid; L Scallan, J Mulcahy, M O'Connell; S Carey, K O'Leary, D Murphy, S O'Callaghan, C Costelloe; N Mulcahy, R Delee, C Lyons.

Subs: A Scallan for M O'Connell (h-f), M Creamer for S O'Callaghan (40), K Hennessy for L Scallan (45), F Hickey for M Quaid (52), M O'Callaghan for K O'Leary (55).

Referee: Ray Kelly (Kildare).



Laura Treacy examines her broken hurley during yesterday's clash with Limerick.

Picture: INPHO/Oisín Keniry

Murray responds to UCC manager's stinging blast

CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

CORK might have beaten Limerick in the league semi-final, but the real talking point was UCC's O'Connor Cup semi-final on Saturday.

After the College lost, their manager Shane Ronayne expressed his anger and heavily criticising camogie boss Paudie Murray for refusing to release three players.

Murray explained he had flagged up the fixtures clash two months ago with officials.

"Look, the keyboard warriors never worry me. It doesn't worry me whatsoever what they call me and whatever."

"I think, just to address it on the second of January, we brought it to the attention of the girls playing O'Connor Cup that there was a clash. We told them to go about it."

"We told them that if we were in a semi-final what we would be expecting. We made numerous attempts. I was at a WPGA meeting."

"I did bring it up to people in both football and camogie organisations."

Cork's second team had to travel to play Wexford away on Sunday afternoon, which limited the back-up players Murray could have called on to fill in.

"We went as far as last week to request the intermediate game (which Cork played yesterday as well) to be changed to Saturday to facilitate these girls in that it would mean we would have some of the intermediate players to work off today."

"That was declined fairly rapidly. This didn't rear its head this week. I think people were well aware of what was happening."

"I think UCC did very little (to help). They were looking at taking them for a day, but you know you

ask the question that if they won Saturday where would they be today?

"We would have 15 players today, that's the first thing."

"And there is no way that UCC would have left those girls go on a bus yesterday evening."

"I've a brother that has been involved with UCC Sigerson football for the last 10 years. They have come up against inter-county the whole time."

"They respect it. They treat things with a bit of class."

"So, I just can't understand what it's all about."

"We have done, and I repeat, we have done everything possible."

"I would question what UCC have done. I had parents ringing me yesterday morning."

"I think it's very, very disappointing. UCC has a long history of sport and they promote the game."

"I don't know does UCC stand for that."

A Rebel who is also a role model



Camogie

Éamonn
Murphy

ASHLING THOMPSON has always done things her way.

She has put the rebel into Rebel. Her arms are comic-book panel explosions of tattoos and her nose is pierced. She has jet-black hair and a style you don't associate with traditional camogie.

She hurls with the same colour, swagger and self belief. Fast and furious off the ball, precision passing when in possession.

Thompson broke barriers back in 2014 with her frank interviews on mental health. Ireland has become more open on the topic of depression in recent years and there's no doubt she was at the forefront of this.

In the NBA last month basketball stars Kevin Love and DeMar DeRozan went public with their struggles off the court and have been lauded for their honesty. Thompson was able to open up about her difficulties four years ago, coming in the wake of Cloyne's Conor Cusack leading the way in 2013.

Unquestionably it gave her a massive profile, making her the most famous camogie player in the country aside from another former Rebel, Anna Geary. She has sponsorship deals with Red Bull and Puma and has chatted to Ryan Tubridy and Ray Darcy on prime-time TV.

The key is she has walked the walk as well as talking the talk. In the modern era Thompson has four counties, four Munster titles and three All-Irelands with her club Milford, three All-Irelands with Cork – one as captain – and two All-Stars.

When the chips are down Thompson delivers. Though primarily an all-action midfielder – she can offer a bit of Michael Fennelly-esque toughness to go with her Daniel Kearney-style dynamism – she's also adept at number six. In the big games, especially Kilkenny, she's often at her best which is about the biggest compliment you can pay any player.

Her fascinating career is documented superbly on Wednesday on TG4 as she features in the 16th series of the brilliant Laochra Gael show. The new hour-long format has been terrific so far, with Lar Corbett and Graham Geraghty covered to date, and Henry Shefflin and Mickey Harte to come.

Dubbed the 'Warrior Woman', Thompson is just the second female Leinster to appear after ladies football legend Juliet Murphy and the 17th Corkonian overall. It's a genuine honour when you reflect on the Rebels who TG4 have worked with.

Hurlers Con Murphy, Justin McCarthy, Tomás Mulachy, Donal O'Gusack and Gerald McCarthy have appeared, as well as footballers Billy Morgan and Larry Tompkins.

Then you have the dual players – emphasising Cork's tradition in that regard – Jack Lynch, Dinny Allen (who lined out for the Cork hurlers in the mid-70s), Ray Cummins, Teddy McCarthy, Jimmy Barry-Murphy, Brian Corcoran, Seán Óg O'hAilpín and John Allen.



Ashling Thompson delivers the ball despite pressure from Caoimhe Lyons of Limerick in last weekend's league semi-final at CIT.

Picture: INPHO/Oisín Kenir



Red Bull athletes Joe Canning, Ashling Thompson and Kilkenny hurler Richie Hogan.

Picture: INPHO/Morgan Treacy

The only pity is the longer format wasn't an option for some of those iconic figures. The truncated approach used previously meant players' careers were often reduced to highlight reels.

As the press release for Wednesday's episode explains, Thompson details: 'The highs and lows as well as the struggle to maintain professional standards in an apparently amateur sport.'

'She also speaks about how her camogie bruises affected her brief career as a fashion model, mental health advocacy, sledging, referees, the challenges faced by a top female sports star, and her Red Bull colleague Joe Canning.'

Her sporting brilliance is there too, but dovetailed with her life, particularly the way former Milford manager Frankie Flannery ensured she emerged from a dark time as a stronger person while also excelling on the camo-

pie pitch.

This is a golden age for Cork's female GAA stars. Briege Corkery and Rena Buckley are on a par with Jack Lynch, Teddy Mac and JBM as the greatest dual aces the county has produced.

Gemma O'Connor is the best Rebel centre-back since 2000, hurling, camogie, men's or ladies football. Juliet Murphy, Valerie Mulcahy, Aoife Murray, Brid Stack and Angela Walsh, like Thompson are absolute warriors.

Anna Geary called time on her playing career too soon – she was just 27 in 2015 – but in switching into a career in media and television, she's done an incredible job promoting camogie.

Geary, Thompson and more have shown you can be glamorous and an elite player. That's an important message to send to young girls when the drop-off rates among teenagers are especially high in female sport.

“When the chips are down Thompson delivers, primarily as an all-action midfielder...”

It's one of the reasons last weekend's spat between UCC's ladies footballers and the Cork camogie team was so disappointing. Hannah Looney, Meabh Cahalane and Libby Coppinger were caught in the crossfire as the College had an O'Connor Cup semi-final on Saturday, with a possible final the day after, while Cork hosted Limerick in the league semi-final on Sunday.

Looney and Cahalane sat out UCC's loss, with Coppinger, who also plays senior ladies football with Cork, starting. She subsequently did not feature for the Cork camogie team in their win over Limerick.

UCC boss Shane Ronayne and Cork manager Paudie Murray went back and forth in apportioning blame, but whoever is at fault, the players should not have been put in this position. The sooner the camogie and ladies football associations are amalgamated the better.

Cork hold off Limerick comeback to reach final

DIVISION 1 SEMI-FINAL

CORK 2-17
LIMERICK 2-13

SHIRLEY MOLONEY REPORTS

ALL-IRELAND camogie champions Cork will face old rivals Kilkenny in the Littlewoods Ireland Camogie League Division 1 final after they overcame Limerick at CIT last Sunday.

Leading by seven points with just minutes remaining, Cork saw that advantage cut to three points as Limerick responded well, but Amy O'Connor was on hand to send over an insurance point in injury time to ensure that Cork advanced.

Cork – without Libby Coppinger but with Hannah Looney and Méabh Cahalane present, having opted to play for their county rather than for UCC in the O'Connor Cup – were four

clear after five minutes courtesy of an Orla Cronin point and a well-taken goal from on-form Linda Collins.

Limerick registered their opening score compliments of their accomplished sharp shooter Niamh Mulcahy when she slotted over a 30m free.

A brace from Cotter and Julia White pushed Paudie Murray's side five clear, but Limerick stayed in touch, Rebecca Delee, Caoimhe Lyons and Deborah Murphy all on target in response to Cork scores from Cronin and Orla Cotter.

Three unanswered points from Cronin, Aileen Sheehan and Collins saw Cork move seven clear before Collins found the net for the second time when she side-stepped goalkeeper Laura O'Neill and blasted to the net.



Clearing her lines: Cork's Ashling Thompson passes this ball before Caoimhe Lyons of Limerick can challenge during the Littlewoods Ireland Camogie League Division 1 semi-final at CIT on Sunday.
(Photos: Oisín Keniry/INPHO)

Limerick rallied and cut Cork's lead in dramatic fashion on 29 minutes when Mulcahy pointed a free before captain Sarah Carey found the net after a great one-two with Sophie O'Callaghan. Cotter fired over a placed ball before Limerick's late flurry of the half was rounded off by O'Callaghan, who pointed to see Cork head to the dressing room five clear, 2-9 to 1-7.

Upon the resumption, Collins pointed before Cotter pushed Cork seven clear with a placed ball. Karen O'Leary cut the deficit to six when she punished a short Cork clearance, and on 36 Mulcahy had Cork's lead down to five when she pointed a 45m free.

It was to be eight minutes before the next score was registered and it came via Amy O'Connor, who made an immediate impact off the bench with a point. With 15 remaining, a brace from Collins and O'Connor opened up an eight-point lead for the Leesiders. However, Carey struck over a great long-range point to see Limerick trail by seven with seven remaining.

Cork meet Kilkenny, again

WE MEET again – that's what both Cork and Kilkenny will have been thinking after their respective Littlewoods Ireland Camogie League Division 1 semi-final wins last weekend.

As Cork beat Limerick 2-17 to 2-13 in CIT, Kilkenny got the better of Galway by 2-10 to 1-9

in Banagher, meaning the two familiar foes will meet again in the league final, a repeat of last year's All-Ireland final that Cork won.

It's also a repeat of last year's league final that Kilkenny won as they target a third Division 1 title in a row and fourth in five seasons.



Crack of the ash: Cork's Laura Treacy examines her broken hurley.

Cotter and Aisling Scanlan exchanged points before Limerick were thrown a lifeline when awarded a penalty three minutes from time. Sharpshooter Mulcahy made no mistake when she stepped up to cut the lead to just four before pointing a placed ball in the first minute of added time to see just one score between the sides.

However, Cork didn't panic and O'Connor got what proved to be the final score as the Rebels ran out four-point winners.

Scorers

Cork: L Collins 2-3, O Cotter 0-6 (3f), O Cronin, A O'Connor 0-3 each, A Sheehan, J White 0-1 each. Limerick: N Mulcahy 1-6 (1-0 pen, 3f, 2 45), S Carey 1-1, K O'Leary, D Murphy, S O'Callaghan, R Delee, C

Lyons, A Scanlan 0-1 each. Cork: A Lee, L O'Sullivan, L Treacy, M Cahalane, A Sheehan, P Mackey, C Sigerson, O Cotter, A Thompson, J White, O Cronin, H Looney, L Collins, N McCarthy, L Homan. Subs: K Mackey for Cronin (34), A O'Connor for Homan (40), G O'Connor for White (50). Limerick: L O'Neill, S McNamara, L McCarthy, M Quaid, L Scan-

lan, J Mulcahy, M O'Connell; S Carey, K O'Leary, D Murphy, R Delee, C Costelloe, N Mulcahy, S O'Callaghan, C Lyons. Subs: A Scanlan for O'Connell (half-time), M Creamer for O'Callaghan (40), K Hennessy for Scanlan (44), F Hickey for Quaid (51), M O'Callaghan for O'Leary (54).

Referee: Ray Kelly (Kildare).

THE HIGHLIGHTS

Our Star: Linda Collins was in top form for Cork, scoring 2-3, with her two goals coming in the first half.

Star moment: With Limerick staging a late comeback to narrow the gap to two, Amy O'Connor tagged on an insurance point to ease Cork nerves.

Talking point: The county v

college row as Cork lined out without Libby Coppinger but with Hannah Looney and Méabh Cahalane, the latter duo opting to play for their county rather than for UCC in the O'Connor Cup.

What's next? Cork will take on Kilkenny in the Division 1 league final.

Study reveals one in three camogie players suffer burnout

Larry Ryan

More than one third of camogie players have suffered symptoms of burnout, according to a survey of club players carried out by the Camogie Association.

Some of the key concerns emerging from the survey surround access to physios and strength and conditioning coaches – 68.3% of players surveyed stated they “seldom, hardly ever, or never” had ac-

cess to a physio, while that figure rose to 78.6% for strength and conditioning coaches.

Some 34.6% felt they “often or always had three or more symptoms of burnout”, which included “feelings of intense fatigue”, “felt vulnerable to infection”, and “felt detached from family and friends”.

Of those playing with three teams in 2017, 62.4% said they often or always experienced three or more symptoms of burnout. For players playing

with more than three teams, that increased to 71.4%.

More encouragingly, 68.2% of players surveyed said they were comfortable approaching fellow teammates for mental health support.

The report, Joan O'Flynn's last as ard stúirthóir, stresses the Camogie Association's commitment to improving the standard of coaching at all levels, and to cultivating a better environment for players on and off the pitch.

In 2017, 897 camogie coaches were accredited and 10 new coach education tutors were accredited in conjunction with Sport Ireland Coaching.

In the report, O'Flynn highlights the rising participation rates in camogie, improved media exposure, and growing attendances.

In 2017, the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland senior quarter-finals were televised live for the first time by RTE, while there was a 14% in-

crease in peak TV viewing during the senior final, from 328,000 to 374,000.

At grassroots level, 18 new clubs were formed in 2017, bringing the total number in Ireland to 567.

O'Flynn welcomes the draft memorandum of understanding drawn up by the Camogie and Gaelic Athletic Associations last month to formally recognise the links between them.

“The joint memorandum is

a statement on the future of Gaelic games and a statement about the future of young people in Gaelic games” she writes.

“Implementing the memorandum through building a united entity for our mutual benefit, in a way acceptable to both, is an idea whose time has come and is a sensible next step to strengthen the experience, profile, and well-being of our game, and Gaelic games overall.”

It's Féile weekend here in Cork

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

AN earlier than usual start as Cork's Féile na nGael gets underway this weekend.

In Division 1 there are three sections.

In section 1, Owens is the venue where Éire Óg will play hosts to St Finbarr's, Youghal and Ballyhea/Milford.

Section 2 is in Aghabullogue where they will be joined by Inniscarra, Kilbree and Tracton.

In section 3 Ballygarvan will play hosts as they welcome Cloughduv, Ballincollig, and defending All-Ireland Féile champions Sarsfields.

In Division 1, section games will be 15-minutes a-side and the top two teams from each section will qualify for the quarter-finals which be 20 minutes a-half and these will be played tomorrow.

Two clubs will get a bye into the semi-finals and four clubs will play off in the quarter-finals.

In Division 2, Enniskeane, Bishopstown, Clonakilty, Rockbá, Charleville and the county camogie grounds in Castle Road will all be hosting sections.

Section 1 in Fr O'Neills gets underway at 12.30pm with the host club joined by Brian Dillon's, Middleton and Douglas.

Section 2 in Glen Rovers throws in at 10.45am and here Glen Rovers will host Castlemartyr, Killeagh and Ballinascarty. Enniskeane will be joined by Millstreet, St Colum's and Ballinhassig where it's an 11am start.

Start

Section 4 is in Castle Road and here Courcy Rovers, Kilbrittan/Timoleague, Carrigaline and Carrigtwohill start games at 12pm.

Section 5 is in Bishopstown starting at 2pm with Valley Rovers, Cobh, Ballinora and Erin's Own.

In section 6 the venue is Clonakilty where Sliabh Rua, Blackrock and Newcestown will battle it out.

Section 7 is in Rockbá, including Nemo Rangers, St Catherine's and Aghada where it is a 10.30am start.

Section 8 is in Charleville with Blarney, Mallow and Castlelyons, starting at 11am.

In Division 2 there are five teams per section and one will qualify from each section for the quarter-finals which will be played tomorrow.

They will be 20 minutes a-side.

The draws for the quarter-final are (A) winners of section 3 v winners of section 8, (B) winners of Section 2 v winners of section 4, (C) winners of section 6 v winners of section 1, (D) winners of section 7 v winners of section 5.

The semi-finals will be on March 31 and will be 25 minutes a-side with the winners of A v winners of B and winners of D v winners of C.

Best of luck to all teams taking part in Féile.

It's a pity the final isn't in Croke Park



Camogie

Linda Mellerick

THE AIB club finals finally take place today after two postponements. And after all that unsettlement the games have been taken out of Croke Park and moved to St Tiernach's Park, Clones, in Monaghan.

Double the journey for Galway over Slaughtneil for the senior final but that isn't the main dissatisfaction. To take the All-Ireland finals out of Croke Park is just awful.

What playing in Croke Park meant to these girls can't be underestimated. It just shouldn't have been allowed to happen, at any cost.

Playing an All-Ireland club final in March of the following year still doesn't sit well with me.

An All-Ireland final should be played in its calendar year.

And with the seasons changing the way they are there is less of a risk now that weather will intervene in a November final.

Why we ever changed is beyond me. We copy the GAA in almost everything they do and at times it isn't the right thing to do.

Take the Limerick v Clare decider last weekend. I believe that if the camogie association had come up with such a way of determining a winner we'd have been sneered at for being so amateurish.

Cork's league final against Kilkenny is set for April 8 as a double-header with the hurling final. There was a bit of uncertainty when it would be played.

Earlier in the week, I was informed it was set for today. I'm not sure why, but here seems to be a lack of interest or excitement in his year's league.

It never sets the world alight, particularly from Cork's perspective, but I don't know if it's because of the earlier start and the postponements surrounding the GAA and fixtures in general but there just seems to be a case at this stage of wanting it out of the way and move on to championship.

The weather hasn't helped grounds either with club pitches slower to open than usual.

The pre-season work just seems to be going on and on. We have yet to feel the real buzz of competitive action even if we are at the final league stage.

Cork secured their semi-final spot with a game to spare after a 100% record in the campaign before defeating Limerick in the semi-final. No surprise there.

They were made to work for their win against Wexford and had a good challenge in Offaly but with the outcome never in doubt and without several reputable players.

Tipperary, after much promise a couple of years ago, failed to reach the semi-finals after winning just one of their four group games, over Offaly.

Galway did okay throughout the league but again, was there any real doubt that Cork and Galway would emerge to the semis. It's too easy to predict such is the gap and is it any surprise that Cork and Kilkenny are in the final again.



Former Cork camogie player Anna Geary and Kai Widdrington will tomorrow compete in the final of RTÉ's Dancing with the Stars.

Picture: Kobpa



The Rockbá camogie club who took part the St Patrick's Day parade in Blarney.

Picture: Gavin Brown

Offaly had a disappointing campaign with defeats to all four group challengers.

Clare got their first win of the campaign against Limerick in round three and ended up on seven points with wins over Limerick and Meath and a draw with Waterford.

Nothing too exciting there. Meath failed to pick up any points in this campaign but will have been buoyed by their competitive display in a couple of deciders.

The Cats began the campaign in impressive style with three comfortable wins under their belt against Clare, Dublin and Waterford. They had to work hard for their wins and were rocked when Limerick took the spoils in February by five points.

Limerick had a good run and suffered their first defeat of the campaign

in round three against Clare. This group proved a far tighter one than group 1 where Cork lay in wait.

Dublin got their first win of the campaign in their third outing as they defeated Meath away from home but that win and a draw with Limerick still saw them finish second bottom of the table.

There's little consistency and even less to judge on from league campaigns at this stage. Limerick, for example, draw with Dublin and then beat Kilkenny.

Cork find themselves in Group 2 of the championship which kicks off on June 9 with a home venue to Wexford.

It's a given that Cork will reach the semi-finals. And of course, they've kept Cork and Kilkenny in separate groups again.

That isn't just a coincidence. The deciding factor in that group will be the

“To take the finals out of Croke Park is awful. What playing in Croke Park meant to these girls can't be underestimated”

meeting of Kilkenny and Galway on July 21.

Assuming both will win their other games this fixture will determine who finishes second in the group and face Cork in the All-Ireland semi-final, which is assuming Cork will finish top of their group.

Hectic schedule for clubs on Leaside

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

THE draws for the SE Systems Junior A, B and C and the 13-a-side championship were made recently while the dates for all championship from senior down to junior thirteen were ratified.

With Cork teams at all levels looking forward to what is hoped will be another successful championship summer, the headache of finding dates for championship games continues. The hope is that the comprehensive schedule of games will all go to plan with everything geared around the inter-county calendar.

The big hope is that the inter-county season will run smoothly and hiccups can be avoided and hopefully there will be no drawn games such as we had in last season's intermediate All-Ireland final which saw the championship schedule thrown into chaos.

Ten clubs will contest the junior A championship and with it being played on a round robin league basis there will be two groups of five with the top two clubs emerging to contest the final. Last season's defeated finalists, Watergrasshill, will be hoping to go one better this year after losing out to Na Piarsaigh in last season's final, where two late goals saw the title slip from their grasp.

Charleville make the step up having won the junior B championship crown in 2017, but Newtownshandrum have taken a step down from intermediate as have Tracton and Sliabh Rua and their inclusion at junior A level will strengthen the grade and make for an interesting championship.

The groups are as follows, group 1: Watergrasshill, Sliabh Rua, Bishopstown, Ballyhea, Youghal. Group 2: Banteer, St Vincent's, Newtownshandrum, Charleville, Tracton.

The Junior B grade has 12 clubs battling it out for honours, of these seven are the second adult team in their clubs with St Finbarr's, Glen Rovers, Sarsfields, St Catherine's, Douglas, Ballincollig and Inniscarra all fielding second teams. Millstreet won the junior C championship last year as they edged out Blarney in a high scoring final and they will participate at junior B level this year.

It will be two groups of six with the top two in each going to the semi-finals, the groups are as follows group 1: Ballinascarty, Cobh, Ballinora, St Finbarr's, Glen Rovers and Sarsfields. Group 2: Millstreet, Bride Rovers, St Catherine's, Douglas, Ballincollig and Inniscarra.

Fourteen teams will contest the junior C championship and again there are second teams from Na Piarsaigh, Ballinhassig, St Vincent's, Newcestown, Barryroe, Kilbrittan/Timoleague, Valley Rovers and Cobh. Groups are group 1: St Vincent's, Newcestown, Na Piarsaigh, Ballinhassig, Kilworth, Kinsale, St Fanahan's.

Group 2: Barryroe, Kilbrittan/Timoleague, Valley Rovers, Cobh, Blarney, Aghada and Castletyons.

This year there is also a junior 13-a-side championship for clubs who may not have the numbers and five clubs will contest this championship



Enjoying the Carrigaline St Patrick's Day parade were Chloe Cremin, Robyn O'Mahony and Lizzie O'Riordan of the Carrigaline camogie club.

Picture: Howard Crowdy



Inniscarra Camogie Club members, Sheila Golden, Ann Dineen, Emma Dineen, Tim Buckley and Joan O'Leary, with playing gear and new crest which they designed and which was unveiled at the club's victory function.

Picture: Mike English

which will be played on double round system with each club playing each other twice home and away. The top two will go forward to contest the final. The participating clubs are Grenagh, St Colum's, Castlemartyr, Kilbree and Rockbawn.

The dates for the start of the SE Systems championships were also announced and are as follows in the senior championship:

On July 20, Mallow meet Sarsfields while on July 23, Killeagh meet newly promoted Valley Rovers. On July 24 it's Ballincollig versus Douglas and on July 26 divisional side

Carbery will be in action against Ballygarvan. On July 27 it's an all Mid Cork clash of neighbours as Cloughduv take on county champions Inniscarra and on the same night defeated finalists last year Glen Rovers meet Milford.

On July 28, the two games down for decision are St Catherine's and Courcsey Rovers while St Finbarr's take on divisional side Muskerry.

The new look SE Systems Intermediate championship which replaces the senior B championship will commence on June 27.

In section 1 Na Piarsaigh will meet

Carrigaline, Barryroe take on Blackrock and Ballinhassig meet Enniskeane.

In section 2, June 29 sees Kilbrittan/Timoleague meeting Fr O'Neill's and on June 30 it's Brian Dillon's versus Eire Og.

In section 3 on the same day its Newcestown versus Aghabullogue.

Round two on July 17 has neighbours Barryroe in action against Clonakilty and on July 18 the all city meeting of Blackrock against Na Piarsaigh.

Kilbrittan/Timoleague and Eire Og clash on July 21 with Fr O'Neill's

“The headache of finding dates for championship games continues on the club front.”

battling Brian Dillon's on July 22.

July 23 has Aghabullogue meeting Ballinhassig. The following evening Newcestown face the team they defeated in last year's final, Enniskeane.

Round 3 on July 29 features Clonakilty-Blackrock and Carrigaline-Barryroe. August 6 and Blackrock meet Carrigaline, and Clonakilty battle Na Piarsaigh.

August 15 sees Kilbrittan/Timoleague in action against Brian Dillon's.

On August 20 there are five games scheduled to be played.

Nicole's first in the ring for Glen

ANOTHER chapter in the illustrious history of the Glen BC was written recently after 24-year-old Nicole O'Brien became the first female boxer from the club to win an All-Ireland title.

It was a historic night for all involved with the Blackpool unit when O'Brien was presented with her cert and medal at Dublin's National Stadium last weekend.

The presentation was made on behalf of the Irish Athletic Boxing Association by the President of the Cork Board Michael O'Brien.

Nicole is steeped in Glen sporting tradition and she's also an accomplished player with the Glen Rovers senior camogie team where she continues to make headlines as a prolific goal scorer.

Following the presentation, O'Brien congratulated the champion on her historic achievement at the home of Irish boxing.

"Glen Rovers has, down through the years, provided many hurlers who boxed with the Glen, but this is a first for the ladies and an occasion which must be cherished in Blackpool by both clubs," he said.

O'Brien added that this point will not be lost on Mary Newman whom he described as the excellent and hard working PRO with Glen Rovers.

The Glen BC is the oldest club in the country, the distinguished elder statesman of Ireland's most successful Olympic sport.

In 2016 they celebrated their Centenary. Tom Kelleher, head coach, said: "This is a very proud night for the club."

"In all the success we've enjoyed over the years, we have never had a female All-Ireland champion."

"Nicole has become a trailblazer for all future female boxes at our club."



CCBB President Michael O'Brien presenting Nicole O'Brien of the Glen with her All-Ireland medal and certificate. Nicole is the Glen's first female All-Ireland winner.

BOXING

MAR 2018

Johnson heroics deny Athenry and make it an All-Ireland three-in-a-row for Johnstownbridge

By Camogie Press
Posted 24/03/2018



By Danagh O'Conchuir

Johnstownbridge (Kildare) 1-8
Athenry (Galway) 1-6

A STUPENDOUS display of shot-stopping by goalkeeper and captain, Tanya Johnson denied Athenry and ensured that Johnstownbridge were celebrating a third consecutive AIB All-Ireland Club Championship title at St Tiernach's Park.

The Junior champions of the past two campaigns made light of the step up to intermediate level by garnering ultimate honours once more, having beaten last year's champions Myshall and the runners-up Eglish on the way to the decider, but they needed their skipper to be at her inspirational best to defy the odds one more time.

Johnson made three saves in the first half from Noreen Coen, one of the stunning variety and another that showcased her complete lack of interest in self-preservation as she launched herself in the path of the Athenry full-forward's hurley from close range.

She was finally beaten by Eimear Keane early in the second half but when Athenry legend Therese Donohue (formerly Maher) bore down on goal and shot for the corner, the netminder stood firm once more.

In stark contrast to the weather that caused two postponements, the sun shone in Clones though Johnstownbridge were playing with a wind in the first half.

And they got off to a fabulous start that laid the foundation for the victory with a wondrous point from right on the right wing and just inside the 45 by Siobhán Hurley within a minute of the throw-in by Andrew Larkin.

Coen was a threat throughout the first half and she benefited from a quick delivery to fire the equaliser but Johnstownbridge were the superior outfit in the initial exchanges.

They had a goal from Shauna Beattie in the seventh minute and it was a wonderful piece of opportunism by the corner-forward who only had a baby last May, latching onto a break after Megan McDonogh had blocked a shot by Hurley.

Louise Codd was making her first start of the campaign after having a baby in August but the pace and scoring power that have been a feature of her play for many years with her native Wexford and Johnstownbridge have clearly not waned and she launched a brilliant point later, at the end of a strong run when she fielded a Johnson puckout.

That came in the wake of exchanged points by Róisín O'Connell and a brace for Athenry via Coen and Donohue (from a free).

The Galwegians were establishing a greater foothold in proceedings thanks to Jessica Gill, Donohue and Coen but the latter's second point was the only return from four goal-scoring opportunities, thanks largely to Johnson.

In fact it was Johnstownbridge that stretched their advantage to five points at the interval (1-5 to 0-3) with a pointed free from her own 65 and then a 45 by Hurley.

Athenry had shown enough into the wind to suggest that they could make hay with it but they never created the same opportunities, with Coen's influence reduced by moving away from the edge of the square.

Having said that, the new full-forward Keane had a goal straight from the restart after good work by the excellent Derval Higgins and Niamh Keogh, who was introduced as a first-half sub.

At that juncture, Athenry were favourites to get their hands on the Agnes O'Farrelly Cup but just as they had done in the second half of the Semi-Final win over Eglish, ITB displayed considerable resilience and with Aisling Holton, Clodagh Flanagan and Aoife Trant prominent, made themselves very difficult to break down.

Holton sped forward for a vital point before Johnson somehow repelled Donohue but a couple of converted frees by Higgins left the minimum between the sides.

O'Connell (free) and Mahon swapped points to leave the game on a knife edge before Hurley was calmness personified to leave Johnstownbridge with that dangerous-looking two-point advantage.

It was to be enough though as they kept Athenry at bay to spark riotous scenes of joy at the final whistle.

SCORERS FOR JOHNSTOWNBRIDGE: S Hurley 0-4(2fs, 145); S Beattie 1-0; R O'Connell 0-2(1f); L Codd, A Holton 0-1 each

SCORERS FOR ATHENRY: E Keane 1-0; N Coen, D Higgins (fs) 0-2 each; T Donohue (f), E Mahon 0-1 each

JOHNSTOWNBRIDGE: T Johnson, E McEvoy, E Hurley, E Morgan, C Farrell, A Trant, J Murphy, A Holton, C Flanagan, L Codd, S Hurley, M Murphy, R O'Connell, C Moloney, S Beatty. Sub: J O'Donoghue for McEvoy (52)

ATHENRY: M McDonogh, R Glynn, N Keane, F Page, K Moran, J Gill, L Hannon, D Higgins, G Cahill, N Hannon, T Donohue, E Keane, N Donnellan, N Coen, E Mahon. Subs: N Keogh for N Hannon (26), N Hannon for Donnellan (36), C Duvellie for Mahon blood (54-56)

REFEREE: A Larkin (Cork)

Dream finale for Hannon as Slaughtneil prevail

AIB All-Ireland Club Camogie senior final

Slaughtneil (Derry) 2-11
Sarsfields (Galway) 1-9

Daragh Ó Conchúir
Clones

Losing last year's goalscoring hero Mary Kelly to emigration was a significant blow to Slaughtneil's ambitions of defending their AIB All-Ireland Senior Club Camogie title. For a while, it looked like they might have to without Shannon Graham too, though

thankfully she returned from a stint abroad and was magnificent as the Derry side proved too strong for Sarsfields in the decider once more. They did have a new, not-so-secret weapon however in Tina Hannon.

The Offaly star relocated to the area and is building a house with former Derry footballer and Slaughtneil midfielder Patsy Bradley.

Having played a major role in getting them to St Tiernach's Park, Hannon produced another starring performance by scoring 1-8 and in the end, even augmenting a

tremendous defensive effort.

Hannon's 1-4 in the first half were crucial as Slaughtneil struggled to gain a foothold in the opening period.

The goal came immediately after Sinéad Cannon capitalised on sensational work by Siobhán McGrath to raise a green flag at the other end.

The teams went in at 1-5 apiece and the Robert Emmets' contingent gradually exerted increased pressure as the second half wore on.

"It's been a dream," said Hannon. "Sarsfields got off to a better start, they were quite strong and we were lucky

enough to be going in a draw at half-time. We were delighted, we pushed on, pushed forward and got the result: back-to-back All-Ireland champions."

Hannon's former club Naomh Brid sent her a card wishing her luck beforehand. It also included a bit of grass, and a reminder not to forget her roots. That would never happen.

"On days like this, you think back to where it all started. It started with my native club Ballyskenach and then we amalgamated with Coolderry to be Naomh Brid.

It was a real journey.

"I left the club last year on a high, we won the junior championship. Even when I was leaving last year, they knew the circumstances and they've been nothing but a massive support."

"On days like this, I think back to when I was wearing the green and black jersey and I'll never forget those days."

Meanwhile Johnstownbridge (Kildare) defeated Athlone (Galway) (1-8 to 1-6) in the junior final.

Scorers for Slaughtneil: T Hannon 1-8 (0-6fs); L Dougan 1-0 (pen); T Mellon 0-

2; S McKaigue 0-1.

Scorers for Sarsfields: S Cannon 1-1; S McGrath 0-3 (fs); N McGrath 0-2 (ff); O McGrath, R Murray, M Cooney (f) 0-1.

SLAUGHTNEIL: J Bradley, C McGrath, B Ni Chaiside, Dervagh McGuigan, E Ni Chaiside, A Ni Chaiside, G O'Kane, D McGuigan, L Dougan, S Graham, T Hannon, S McKaigue, T Mellon, J McMullan, S Mellon.

Subs: C McElowney for S Mellon (52), A McGrath for Denise McGuigan (56), B McAllister for T Mellon ((60+2).

SARSFIELDS: Y Lyons, R Murphy, L Ward, A Spellman, T Kenny, C McGrath, E Leslie, K Gallagher, N McGrath, M Cooney, O McGrath, S Spellman, S Cannon, S McGrath, R Murray.

Subs: K Donohue for N McGrath inj (40), E Larkin for Leslie inj (60+4).

Referee: C Egan (Cork).

REACTION: "We fight for each other to the last minute" – Tina Hannon

By Camogie Press
Posted 26/03/2018



By Daragh Ó Conchúir

Slaughtneil (Derry) 2-11
Sarsfields (Galway) 1-9

LOSING last year's goalscoring hero Mary Kelly to emigration was a significant blow to Slaughtneil's ambitions of defending the AIB All-Ireland Senior Club Championship title.

For a while, it looked like they might have to without Shannon Graham too, though thankfully she returned from a stint abroad and was magnificent as the Derry side proved too strong for Sarsfields in the decider once more.

They did have a new, not-so-secret weapon however in Tina Hannon. The Offaly star relocated to the area and is building a house with former Derry footballer and Slaughtneil midfielder Patsy Bradley.

Having played a major role in getting them to St Tiernach's Park, Hannon produced another Player-of-the-Match performance by scoring 1-8 and in the end, even augmenting a tremendous defensive effort.

Hannon's goal and four points in the first half were particularly important as Slaughtneil were definitely in the back foot in that opening period.

The goal came immediately after Sinéad Cannon capitalised on sensational work by Siobhán McGrath to raise a green flag at the other end.

The teams went in at 1-5 apiece and the Robert Emmets' contingent gradually exerted increased pressure as the second half wore on.

"It's been a dream reality" said Hannon. "It was tough all the way through. Even before this match, we'd a really tough Semi-Final and we knew playing 60 minutes that day would stand to us. Sarsfields got off to a better start, they were quite strong and we were lucky enough to be going in a draw at half time."

"When you go in a draw at half time it's even Stephen again for the second half. We were delighted, we pushed on, pushed forward and got the result we wanted: back-to-back All-Ireland champions."

Hannon's former club Naomh Brid sent her a card wishing her luck beforehand. It also included a bit of grass, and a reminder not to forget her roots. That would never happen.

"On days like this you think back to where it all started. It started with my native club Ballyskenach and then we amalgamated with Coolderry to be Naomh Brid. It was a real journey. I left the club last year on a high, we won the Junior Championship."

"Even when I was leaving last year, they knew the circumstances and they've been nothing but a massive support. On days like this, I think back to when I was wearing the green and black jersey and I'll never forget those days."

Being named Player of the Match was welcome but Hannon was accepting it on behalf of her fellow Slaughtneil players.

"It's a team sport... you win together and you lose together. On our jersey is 'There's no strength without unity' (*Ní níl go gceim le chéile*) and we carry that through when we come onto the pitch. We fight for each other to the last minute. It's a testament that we usually finish strong in a match and I'm delighted that once again we put in a performance and finished strong again today."

SCORERS FOR SLAUGHTNEIL: T Hannon 1-8 (0-6fs); L Dougan 1-0 (pen); T Mellon 0-2; S McKaigue 0-1

SCORERS FOR SARSFIELDS: S Cannon 1-1; S McGrath 0-3 (fs); N McGrath 0-2 (ff); O McGrath, R Murray, M Cooney (f) 0-1 each

SLAUGHTNEIL: J Bradley, C McGrath, B Ni Chaiside, Dervagh McGuigan, E Ni Chaiside, A Ni Chaiside, G O'Kane, D McGuigan, L Dougan, S Graham, T Hannon, S McKaigue, T Mellon, J McMullan, S Mellon. Subs: C McElowney for S Mellon (52), A McGrath for Denise McGuigan (56), B McAllister for T Mellon ((60+2)

SARSFIELDS: Y Lyons, R Murphy, L Ward, A Spellman, T Kenny, C McGrath, E Leslie, K Gallagher, N McGrath, M Cooney, O McGrath, S Spellman, S Cannon, S McGrath, R Murray, S Mellon. Sub: K Donohue for N McGrath inj (40), E Larkin for Leslie inj (60+4)

REFEREE: C Egan (Cork)

REPORT: Dougan bullet sets Slaughtneil on route to two-in-a-row

By Camogie Press
Posted 25/03/2018



By Daragh Ó Conchúir

Slaughtneil (Derry) 2-11
Sarsfields (Galway) 1-9

SLAUGHTNEIL maintained their position as the premier Club team in the land, a commanding second half performance ensuring that they retained their AIB All-Ireland Senior Championship title at St Tiernach's Park.

In the process, they continued the dreadful run of Galway representatives in the decider, with Sarsfields' second consecutive loss the sixth in a row for the western champions at the final hurdle.

It took Slaughtneil a while to kick into gear and they would have been delighted to go in at the break level on 1-5 apiece, given that Sarsfields were more threatening.

The champions hit the front in the 42nd minute, when the excellent Tina Hannon pointed, and this was the first of three events in as many minutes that turned the game.

Sarsfields talisman, Niamh McGrath lost her ongoing battle with a leg injury that clearly hampered her contribution immediately after and was withdrawn. This was a monumental blow.

And then, right on the three-quarter mark, Louise Dougan rifled an unstoppable shot to the roof of the Sarsfields net from a penalty, after the brilliant Shannon Graham was hauled down by Erica Leslie.

By now, Slaughtneil were managing to impose themselves physically and when Hannon gave them a four-point advantage, the Derry girls were able to protect the lead by dropping deep and denying the opposition danger women the space they needed to thrive.

Slaughtneil goalie, Jolene Bradley was called into action from the very first attack, when Maria Cooney caught a McGrath free and sent a powerful shot that the Slaughtneil goalkeeper was equal to.

It was a lightning quick start to proceedings, and the sides were level on two points apiece when they then exchanged goals.

Sinéad Cannon applied the finishing touch to Sarsfields' major in the 10th minute but while the finish was cool, the score was all about Siobhán McGrath, as the 17-year-old beat three defenders and drew a fourth before passing to her teammate, who made no mistake.

Hannon provided the perfect riposte though. A two-time All-Ireland winner with Offaly, the centre-forward, who finished with a game-high tally of 1-8, drove through the middle and though her initial shot was saved by Yvonne Lyons, she was on hand to knock home the rebound.

Hannon converted a couple of more frees to bookend scores from Niamh and Oriath McGrath and then equalised after Siobhán McGrath slotted her second free, her latter effort coming after a smart stop by Lyons from Josie McMullan.

That sent them in level at the change of ends and it remained extremely competitive as the rain made conditions more difficult early after the restart.

Cannon and Mellon, and Siobhán McGrath and Hannon inched the scoreboard forward but still, they could not be separated. That was when the key moments occurred.

By now, Tara Kenny had begun to reduce, if not completely eradicate Hannon's visibility in general play but Dougan stood out in reprising the deep-lying role that proved so effective 12 months ago, while Graham moved into top gear with a rampaging second half display.

In defence, Bróna Ni Chaiside in particular was a considerable presence at full-back and once Slaughtneil had established primacy, they never looked like ceding it.

Rachel Murray did launch a brilliant point on the run and Eilis Ni Chaiside made a good stop from an attempt at goal by Cooney from a free in injury time but Slaughtneil were not going to leave this slip and the Bill & Agnes Carroll Cup will be spending another year with the Robert Emmets' contingent.

SCORERS FOR SLAUGHTNEIL: T Hannon 1-8 (0-6fs); L Dougan 1-0 (pen); T Mellon 0-2; S McKaigue 0-1

Cork beat Down to remain unbeaten

CAMOGIE/HURLING

■ Mary Newman

Cork	0-11
Down	0-9

CORK maintained their position undefeated in their group in the Littlewoods Ireland Division 2 National League with a hard-fought victory over Down away from home yesterday.

Leading by two points 0-8 to 0-6 at the interval Cork held their lead to the finish to secure an important win as the defence of the title continues. With just one game to go the win ensured Cork will make it to the latter stages.

It was close all through with little between the sides but in the finish, the greater drive of Cork saw them grind out a much-deserved victory that ensured they remain on course to retain their title.

Scorers for Cork: K McCarthy 0-6 (0-3 f, 0-1 45), F Neville 0-2, K Hickey, K Cullinane, R O'Shea 0-1 each.

CORK: C Collins; R Killeen, S Harrington, N O'Callaghan; L Callanan, M Lynch, K McCarthy; A Kavanagh, S Buckley; K Hickey, F Neville, K Cullinane; R O'Shea, C Sugrue, K McCarthy.

Subs: K Barry for R Killeen, R Keane for K Cullinane, K Wall for A Kavanagh, R O'Callaghan for C Sugrue.

Meanwhile, Tipperary enjoyed a remarkable 19-point turnaround at Croke Park to eventually win at their ease and secure an Allianz hurling league semi-final clash with Limerick next weekend.

Michael Ryan's side were tipped to win comfortably but had to come from eight points down after just 10 minutes against a Dublin side that started strong but ultimately burnt out.

Dublin led 0-9 to 0-1 after a blitzkrieg start that included points from six different players including the excellent Danny Sutcliffe and Paul Winters.

But 2017 league finalists Tipp soon found their range and roared back level by the 23rd minute at 0-11 apiece.

They took the lead for the first time in the 26th minute when John McGrath, who finished with 1-4 from play, netted and duly led 1-15 to 0-14 at half-time.

Poor Dublin slipped out of the contest from there despite having an extra man following Ronan Maher's dismissal for a second yellow card following a high challenge in first-half injury-time.

The Dubs only scored 10 points from the 10th minute onwards with only five of those coming from play as Tipperary bossed the majority of the contest.

In that same time frame, from the 10th minute until full-time, Tipp outscored Dublin by 2-24 to 0-11 which underlined the hosts' fall after that bright start.

Tipperary brought on John 'Bubbles' O'Dwyer who hit two points while the likes of Paul Shanahan, Paul Maher and Willie Connors all got rare senior run outs at Croke Park as second-half substitutes.



Courcey Rovers' player who lined out with Cork camogie in 2017, Saoirse McCarthy (Minor), Fiona Keating (U16), Linda Collins (Senior) and Siobhan O'Donovan (U16). Keating got the vital goal at minor yesterday.

Picture: Mike English

Keating strike is crucial for minors

Cork	1-11
Galway	0-13

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

A goal from Fiona Keating proved vital in Castle Road yesterday as Cork shaded it over holders Galway in an important All-Ireland minor championship encounter.

Keating scored 23 minutes into the game to edge Cork into a lead they held to the end despite enormous Galway pressure.

Twice Cork denied Galway goals thanks to Sarah Ahern. At point blank range she stood up and denied Chloe Reilly whilst Laura Hayes got the vital touch to a penalty taken by Galway keeper Sarah Healy with two minutes remaining as Cork led by a point.

It was nip and tuck as the sides swapped early points. Niamh Neilland and Cliona Healy twice swapped scores and, with Laura Doyle and Tegan Canning doing likewise, it was level pegging.

Points from Niamh Horan and Niamh Neilland edged Galway in front before Fiona Keating found the net to give Cork the lead. With Neilland converting a free, Cork led 1-5 to 0-7.

Maura Barrett and Fiona Keating extended the lead with two quick points but Katie Mannion with one kept Galway on Cork's tail. It was score for

score through the half but Cork never allowed the champions take control.

Cork led 1-9 to 0-10 as the game entered the final quarter but a strong Galway rally saw them draw level with two Niamh Neilland points and one from Niamh Horan.

Cork needed to hold their composure. Pushing forward they won a vital close in free Cliona Healy tapped over and they were back in front. Galway attacked from the puck out and won a penalty but credit Cork they stood firm.

On the counter-attack Emma Murphy won possession and fired over from close range when maybe a goal was on but, importantly, it kept Cork in front. Galway mounted another attack but Cork were not to be denied.

The win puts Cork top of the group with a game to go and qualification secured. Galway will need to defeat Dublin to keep their hopes alive.

Scorers for Cork: C Healy 0-5 (0-4 f), F Keating 1-1, L Doyle, C O'Sullivan, Saoirse McCarthy, M Barrett, E Murphy 0-1 each.

Galway: N Neilland 0-7 (0-6 f), T Canning, N Horan 0-2 each, K Mannion 0-1.

CORK: S Ahern; G Collins, M Cotter, O Keating; L Doyle, L Hayes, C Ring; Saoirse McCarthy, E O'Regan; C Healy, M Barrett (c), C O'Sullivan; A Hurley, E Murphy, F Keating.

Subs: Sally McCarthy for C Ring (h-t), S Bateman for C O'Sullivan (45).

GALWAY: S Healy, S Keady, L Burke, M Larkin; P Finnerty, A Kelly, E Donoghue; N Horan, T Canning; R Hanly, C Helebert, K Mannion; N Neilland, M Dillon, C Reilly.

Subs: K Screene for S Keady (24), K Moran for E Donoghue (h-t).

Referee: Liz Dempsey (Kilkenny).

Camogie:
AIB All-Ireland SCCC final: Sloughneil (Derry) 2-11 Sarsfields (Galway) 1-9;
Littlewoods Ireland NCL Div 2 Grp
1: Antrim 2-10 Carlow 0-13, Down 0-9
Cork 0-11, Westmeath 5-13 Wexford 0-3;
Div 2 Grp 2: Armagh 0-6 Kilkenny 1-17,
Derry 1-14 Dublin 2-11, Laois 2-6 Tipperary 1-10;
Div 3: Tyrone 2-6 Kerry 4-14.

Inniscarra celebrate

GAA

■ Mary Newman



REPRO FREE 10.03.2018 Inniscarra Senior Camogie team celebrated their 2017 Championship win at Lee Valley Golf Club. Included are Mary Buckley, captain, Tim Buckley, chairman, Joe McCarthy, Padraig Hughes, Kevin Murphy, and Kieran Keane, selectors. Picture: Mike English

IT was a night of celebration recently at the Lee Valley Golf Resort for Inniscarra Camogie Club when a large gathering celebrated the county championship winning success with a medal presentation.

The evening was superbly organised by a committee of Joe McCarthy, Tim Buckley, Treasa McCarthy, and captain Mary Buckley.

2017 was a hugely successful year for the club with their senior team making it back-to-back senior county championship wins as they annexed their third senior title as they edged out Glen Rovers in an exciting clash at Castle Road.

The senior success was the third title for Inniscarra the first was in 2010 when they also took the Munster title and went all the way to Croke Park, only to lose out to a strong Killimor side from Galway.

Inniscarra chairman Tim Buckley opened the night and paid tribute to those who worked to retain the title. He said the huge work that went into the year had to be acknowledged and he paid tribute to all who worked for the club.

The senior team led by their captain Mary Buckley were presented with their county championship medals by former Cork star Briege Corkery from their neighbouring club Cloughduv.

The hard working team management of Padraig Hughes, Kieran Keane — he himself holds a senior county hurling championship medal won in 1989 with Glen Rovers — Kevin Murphy, Joe McCarthy, and Tim Buckley were recipients of presentations from both the club and the players, as were their wives, the ladies behind the management team.

Captain Mary Buckley acknowledged the huge effort made by all in helping make it back to back titles.

Before the formalities of the evening were completed club chairman Tim Buckley was presented with the club Person of the Year for all his work at all levels in the club. There followed an evening of huge celebration as the county champions celebrated in style again.



Pat, Aoife, and Ann Dineen attending the Inniscarra Camogie Club's victory function at Lee Valley Golf Club. Picture: Mike English



Deirdre O'Callaghan, Aileen Sheehan, and Aoife Kavanagh at the Inniscarra Camogie Club's victory function at Lee Valley Golf Club. Picture: Mike English



Sisters Treasa and Roslyn McCarthy, Erin and Caitlin Looney, Rena and Mary Buckley, celebrating Inniscarra Camogie Club's 2017 Championship win at Lee Valley Golf Club. Picture: Mike English



Eimear, John, Jane, and Aisling O'Reilly at the Inniscarra Camogie Club victory function at Lee Valley Golf Club. Picture: Mike English

in style at Lee Valley



Inniscarra Camogie Club members, Sheila Golden, Ann Dineen, Emma Dineen, Tim Buckley, and Joan O'Leary, with playing gear and new crest which they designed and which was unveiled at the club's victory function. Picture: Mike English



Tim Buckley, chairman, welcoming special guest, Briege Corkery, to the medal presentation function at Lee Valley. Picture: Mike English



Niamh Dilworth, Aine O'Connor, and Grace Heffernan attending the Inniscarra victory function at Lee Valley Golf Club. Picture: Mike English



Sisters Caitlin and Erin Looney at the Inniscarra Camogie Club's victory function at Lee Valley Golf Club. Picture: Mike English



Selector Joe McCarthy, with daughters, Treasa and Roslyn, at the victory function at Lee Valley Golf Club. Picture: Mike English



Tim and Frankie Quigley with Aoife (Under 16) and Rebecca (Senior) at the Inniscarra Camogie Club's medal presentation function at Lee Valley Golf Club. Picture: Mike English



Rebecca Keane, Rebecca Quigley, Aisling O'Reilly, Jenny Burke, and Kate O'Herlihy celebrating Inniscarra Camogie Club's County Championship 2017 win at Lee Valley Golf Club. Picture: Mike English

Slaughtneil camogs clinch back-to-back All-Irelands

Niall
Gartland



DAMIAN MCELDOWNEY REFLECTS ON A TRULY HISTORIC ACHIEVEMENT AS SLAUGHTNEIL CEMENT THEIR PLACE IN HISTORY

SLAUGHTNEIL boss Damian McEldowney believes they have well and truly cemented their place as the foremost camogie team in Ireland.

There can be no doubters after they clinched back-to-back All-Irelands with Saturday's five-point final win over Sarsfields at Clones.

That the game was played at Clones caused a notable degree of annoyance in the build-up in the game and lent credence to the theory that the fairer sex are second class citizens among the powers-that-be in Croke Park.

However, McEldowney said that it was an even better experience than last year as they got to convene with their loyal supporters on the pitch af-

ter the final whistle.

"It got to the stage where we just wanted to play the game and didn't care where it was. Look, we played in Croke Park last year and it was brilliant but at the same time, our supporters and the fans were still in the stands so we were kind of separated from them.

"This time around everyone came onto the pitch and it was nearly better as we got to celebrate with our families and friends and take photos and it was a nice way to end the year."

In a repeat of last year's final pairing, the Slaughtneil girls were slow out of the traps and were relieved to go in level at the break. However, they produced a stunning final 30 minutes and were relatively comfortable 2-11 to 1-9 winners by the final whistle.

Shannon Graham, Bróna Ní Chai-

side, Lousin Dougan and Grainne O'Kane were massively influential, while Tina Hannon scored 1-8 of their overall total. McEldowney says it proved last year's win was no fluke.

"Everyone's going to say maybe they're a bit lucky, but to win two in a row puts all those questions to bed.

"There were five points in it at the end. With about 10 minutes to go I just didn't see us getting beaten, the girls were so comfortable on the ball. It's proved to everyone that the girls are the best team in Ireland."

"It's an unbelievable achievement for the girls. I don't think it's sunk in yet for any of us, that'll take a week or two."

It was a fairytale end

to the season for the club after their footballers and hurlers (of course, there's a considerable overlap) fell short in the All-Ireland semi-finals. McEldowney says they were as pleased as punch for the girls.

"The lads were all there on Saturday supporting us and sending messages during the week to the girls, everyone was behind us and it was good to see them there and out on the pitch afterwards."

The last month has been a bit of a roller-coaster ride for the Slaughtneil girls. They were initially supposed to play their final at St Patrick's Day but it was called off due to Storm Emma. It was then postponed for a second time 10 days ago, again due to the weather, but luckily it didn't

hamper their performance too much when it finally did go ahead.

"I was afraid of the postponements and how it would affect the girls. I said that's not the way I want to lose an All-Ireland. The girls were so focused all the way through it and didn't let it affect them. I thought some of our bigger players weren't in the game early on and we were relieved to get in level. We spoke to them and made one or two changes and we came out a better team, I thought we were fairly comfortable to be honest with you."

McEldowney, Woody McKinley and Mickey Glover have already committed to another year in charge. The girls have barely had a break in the last two years and it's only another fortnight to the start of the Derry leagues. McEldowney has a plan to give their mainstays a rest, however.

"We want to give the girls a break and we will give the girls a break. We have a big squad so we'll use the early part of the season as a chance to look at some of the younger girls."



GLORY DAYS...Aoife Ní Chaiside and Clare McGrath hold aloft the trophy after defeating Sarsfields in the All-Ireland final



Kevin Cummins of Cummins Sports, makes the presentation to Megan O'Donovan of St Mary's High School, Midleton, winners of the Rebel Óg monthly award for March 2018, at the Clayton Hotel, Silver Springs. Also included are Esther O'Leary of Munster Colleges Camogie, Jim Healy, Rebel Óg secretary, John Purcell, Rebel Óg chairman, Sean O'Gorman, judging panel and Cllr Susan, McCarthy, deputising for the Mayor of the County of Cork.

Picture: David Keane



Lisa Lawlor of Red FM, makes the presentation to Emma Murphy of St Mary's High School, Midleton, winner of the Rebel Óg monthly award for March 2018, at the Clayton Hotel, Silver Springs. Also included are Stephen Ryan of Red FM, Cian O'Brien, Rebel Óg PRO, Cllr Susan McCarthy, deputising for the Mayor of the County of Cork, Sandra Corcoran, Cork County Camogie Board and Carloyn Motherway of St Mary's High School.

Picture: David Keane

St Mary's honoured for All-Ireland win

SAINT MARY'S High School, Midleton, are the March winners of the Rebel Óg monthly award, sponsored by the Clayton Hotel Silver Springs, Cummins Sports, the *Evening Echo* and RedFM.

They won the both the Munster and All-Ireland Post-Primary Junior Camogie championships.

The school has a proud sporting tradition since being established in 1902. Some 40 years ago camogie was introduced in the school and since then they have achieved much success at county and Munster level in all grades.

History was made on March 10 when the junior team won the schools' first-ever All-Ireland camogie title with a fantastic performance over St Cuan's College Ballinasloe on a scoreline of 3-17 to 2-9.

In the earlier stages of the Munster competition, St. Marys overcame Ennis and St. Augustine's Dungarvan which set up a meeting with Cashel community college in the Munster final.

St Mary's defeated Cashel on a scoreline of 3-13 to 2-5 and in doing so were crowned Munster champions. As winners of the Munster final, St. Marys progressed onto the All-Ireland semi-final to play Our Lady and St Patrick's College Knock, Belfast. After a tough encounter, the

REBEL ÓG

■ Rory Noonan

Midleton school won out on a scoreline of 3-9 to 3-5.

St Cuan's College, Ballinasloe, having come through on the opposite side of the competition would be the opponents for the final. Both teams having put up huge scores in their respective campaigns meant that it promised to be an exciting final.

St Mary's started well scoring three goals in quick succession in the first-half, leaving them ahead by nine points at half-time.

St Cuan's rallied in the second-half but could not impact the lead St Mary's had built up. The final score on a historic day in the University of Limerick was 3-17 to 2-9.

This was a fantastic team performance from start to finish with every player on the team and panel working hard to achieve the common goal of bringing the first ever all Ireland camogie title to Midleton.

St Mary's high school would like to acknowledge the support of Midleton CBS for the use of their training facilities as well as the local GAA clubs that have generously facilitated the hosting of school matches throughout the year.



Norina O'Callaghan of the Clayton Hotel, makes the presentation to Ali Smith of St Mary's High School, Midleton, winners of the Rebel Óg monthly award for March 2018, at the Clayton Hotel, Silver Springs. Also included are Peter Smith, team coach, Tracy Sheehan, Cork County Juvenile Camogie Board, John Purcell, Rebel Óg chairman and Tracey Kennedy, Cork County Board chairperson.

Picture: David Keane



Attendees at the presentation ceremony to St Mary's High School, Midleton, winners of the Rebel Óg monthly award for March 2018, at the Clayton Hotel, Silver Springs.

Picture: David Keane



Nicola Cullinane of the Evening Echo, makes the presentation to Aine O'Driscoll of St Mary's High School, Midleton, winners of the Rebel Óg monthly award for March 2018, at the Clayton Hotel, Silver Springs. Also included are Jim Healy, Rebel Óg secretary, Ronan Dwane, Cork County Board coaching officer, Tina Sheehan, Cork County Juvenile Camogie Board, Tracey Kennedy, Cork County Board chairperson and Margaret O'Regan, St Mary's High School.

Picture: David Keane



John Purcell, Rebel Óg chairman, presents a bouquet of flowers to Lisa Lawlor of Red FM, during the Rebel Óg monthly award presentation ceremony for March 2018, at the Clayton Hotel, Silver Springs.

Picture: David Keane

Rebels avoid paying the penalty to stay unbeaten

CORK 1-11
GALWAY 0-12

SHIRLEY MOLONEY REPORTS

CORK held on against Galway in Castle Road last Sunday to remain unbeaten in Group 1 of the All-Ireland minor A championship, but it was a close-run thing.

With six minutes left and Cork leading by just a point, Galway were awarded a penalty, which goalkeeper Sarah Healy came forward to take. Her effort was stopped, however, and Cork attacked, with Emma Murphy fizzing a shot over the crossbar to give the home side a two-point lead they would retain until the end.

Galway came to Cork seeking a victory in order to avoid a must-win game next weekend against Dublin in their final fixture of the group. In contrast, Cork were seeking to reinforce their dominance at the top of the group and remain unbeaten in the group stages. In the end, Cork's great tenacity, embodied by Laura Hayes, Saoirse McCarthy and Moira Barrett, ensured they took the spoils.

After ten minutes, the sides were level at 0-2 each, Cork's Cliona Healy and Galway's Niamh Niland exchanging frees.

Laura Doyle picked off a fine point from play to push Cork one clear on 11 before Healy opened up a two-point lead when she pointed a 20m free. Three unanswered Galway points courtesy of Tegan Canning, Niamh Horan from a placed ball and a well-taken Niland effort from play had the visitors back in the lead on 19.

Ciara O'Sullivan responded for Cork to level before Fiona Keating rattled the Galway net after collecting the ball and showing her marker a clean pair of heels. Canning pointed for Galway to see them trail by the slimmest before Cork were awarded a penalty on 26. Healy stepped up, however, her low drilled shot was saved on the line and cleared and Cork maintained their one-point advantage to half-time, 1-5 to 0-7.

A Cork brace in quick succession through Barrett and Keating had the Leesiders three clear, however, Katie Mannion cut it to two when she fired over on 31. Healy pointed a 20m free before Canning fired over to see the Tribeswomen trail by two before a long-range McCarthy free restored Cork's three-point advantage.

Horan split the posts on 39 before Sarah Ahern pulled off a point-blank save from Chloe Reilly a minute later to deny Galway. Niland reduced Corks



Cork captain Moira Barrett from Ballinascorthy pictured with the Galway captain and referee Liz Kennedy before last Sunday's All-Ireland minor game.

lead to one and then tied the game on 49 with consecutive 20m frees.

Healy put over a 20m free for Cork to shade it heading into the final ten. While Galway pressed, they couldn't come any closer.

Scorers

Cork: C Healy 0-5 (f), F Keating 1-1, S McCarthy (f), C O'Sullivan, L Doyle, M Barrett, E Murphy 0-1 each.

Galway: N Niland 0-6 (5f), T Canning 0-3, N Horan 0-2 (1f), K Mannion 0-1.

Cork: S Ahern (Ballygarvan); G Collins (Eire Og), M Cotter (Aghabullogue), O Keating (Ballincollig);

L Doyle (Charleville), L Hayes (St Catherine's), C Ring (Inniscarra); S McCarthy (Courcey Rovers), E O'Regan (Ballygarvan); C Healy (Aghabullogue), M Barrett (Ballinascorthy), C O'Sullivan (Newcestown); A Hurley (St Catherine's), E Murphy (Glen Rovers), F Keating (Courcey Rovers).

Subs: S McCarthy (Bride Rovers) for Ring (half-time), S Bateman (Cloughduv) for O'Sullivan (45).

Galway: S Healy; S Keady, L Burke, M Larkin; P Finnerty, A Kelly, E Donoghue; N Horan, T Canning; R Hanniffy, C Helebert, K Mannion; N Niland, M Dillon, C Reilly.

Subs: K Screeve for Keady (25), K Moran for Donoghue (36), N Keogh for Mannion (52), N Heffernan for Canning (58).

Referee: Liz Dempsey (Kilkenny).

Grenville too much for Cork to handle

GAA

Mary Newman

Westmeath 1-10
Cork 0-10

WESTMEATH brought Cork's unbeaten run in the Littlewoods Division 2 National League to an end in Castle Road yesterday as they edged it with a goal to spare to ensure they finished top of the group, a point up on Cork.

Cork got off to a great start and led by two points inside five minutes. They had stretched it to 0-4 to 0-1 by the end of the opening quarter before the visitors settled.

Muireann McCormack and the excellent Pamela Grenville hit two in a row to get them level before a Grenville pointed free gave them the lead.

Keeva McCarthy slotted over a Cork free, followed by one from Finola Neville but with Westmeath applying a lot of pressure they grabbed a vital goal with two minutes to the break. Pamela Grenville blasted to the net from close range. She then showed her accuracy, pointing a free on the short whistle to leave Westmeath in front 1-6 to 0-6.

From the restart, Cork attacked and a Kaitlin Hickey point narrowed the gap again. Grenville replied to keep the goal between the sides but for the next quarter Cork had enough possession to get level. Cork then wasted chances.

McCarthy, with two points from a free and play, dragged them back to within a point but Westmeath won a 45 which they converted.

A strange decision to penalise and issue a yellow card to Rachel O'Shea for charging when she clearly made an effort to avoid two defenders and was in fact fouled, saw Cork lose a goal chance.

McCarthy had Cork within a point with five minutes remaining but another odd decision to penalise a Cork defender for overcarrying gave Grenville a tap over free.

A second close-in free with time up saw Westmeath close the result out.

Scorers for Westmeath: P Grenville 1-7 (0-5 f, 0-1 45), M Scally, H Core, M McCormack 0-1 each.

Cork: K McCarthy 0-4 (0-2 f), K Hickey 0-3, R O'Shea, F Neville, R O'Callaghan 0-1 each.

CORK: A Lee, R Killeen, K Barry, N O'Callaghan; K Mc McCarthy, M Lynch, L Callanan; A Kavanagh, S Buckley; F Neville, K Hickey, R O'Shea; C Collins, R O'Callaghan, K Mc McCarthy.

Subs: J Barry for M Lynch (h-t), M Lynch for K Barry (41 in), C Sugrue for C Collins (44), K Cullinane for A Kavanagh (44).

Meanwhile, Cork's minors travelled to Wexford for the last game in the round robin series but lost 1-8 to 1-3.

Trailing at half-time, 0-7 to 0-1, despite rallying and holding Wexford to just a point after the break Cork failed to narrow the gap.

With a semi-final spot already secured it all systems go for April 14 and a meeting with Clare.



The light of faith

Dom Augustine McGregor of Mount Melleray Cistercian Abbey lights the Paschal candle from the flame of the sacred Paschal fire at the Easter vigil, held by Sr Lily Scullion, Cistercian Monastery, at Glencairn Abbey, Co Waterford.

Picture: Valerie O'Sullivan

Colleg win Butler Cup in difficult conditions

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

ANOTHER very successful Brendan Butler Memorial tournament, under lights in Ballincollig, came to a conclusion last Friday with the host team claiming the spoils on a score-line of 2-1 to 0-5.

As was the case all through the tournament, the weather caused havoc.

Continuous rain all day resulted in horrific underfoot conditions with pools of water all over the pitch making it difficult for the players.

The rain that fell all through the game ensured there was little comfort for players and mentors, but both sides wanted to play so off they went.

In the lead-up to the final, both Ballygarvan and host club Ballincollig had performed well and, having endured postponements due to snow and waterlogged pitches, they were ready to go.

Ballincollig Credit Union were again on board as main sponsors and the family of the late Brendan Butler was present as the winning team were presented with medals which were sponsored by Ken Quinn, a member of Ballincollig GAA club and a good friend of Brendan's.

It was hard at times to even see the ball, but credit goes to both teams who battled on, and to referee Ger Sheehan and his umpires who had to work hard in trying conditions.

Ballygarvan's Catriona Kelly had the game's opening score, pointing an early free and with conditions difficult it was hard for both sides to keep the ball moving.

As Ballygarvan got to grips with conditions, they extended their advantage and led by four points with Kelly, Isobel O'Regan and Kelly again all finding the range.

Ballincollig worked hard and when Ashley Lovett found the net for their opening score there was just a point between the sides.

As the half-time whistle loomed Sinead O'Callaghan converted a Ballincollig free to level matters and leave the half-time score at 0-4 to 1-1 and all still to play for.

As the rain continued to pour down, the teams took to the field for the second half and again conditions were bad and this led to few scores. Six minutes in, Patricia Buttimer gave Ballincollig the lead with a goal.

As the full-time whistle approached, Kelly had a Ballygarvan point, but despite piling on the pressure, they failed to get the goal that they needed as Ballincollig hung on to take the title.

Ballincollig's Elaine Casey was named as Player of the Match and was presented with her trophy afterward in the club pavilion as was the Brendan Butler Memorial trophy, which was presented to captain, Adele Kiely.

This was only the second occasion that the host club have been successful having won the inaugural event.

Camogie chairman Mike O'Brien welcomed all in attendance and he paid tribute to all those who put huge effort into the event.

He had a special mention for the



Ballincollig players after the Brendan Butler Tournament final Aoife Cotter, Miriam O'Leary, Maria O'Donoghue, Lisa Marie O'Mahony, and Ciara O'Riordan.



Ballincollig captain Maria O'Donoghue with Liz Cremin- Butler and player of the match Elaine Casey after the Brendan Butler Memorial tournament.

late Brendan who worked so hard within the club.

O'Brien welcomed Liz Butler and thanked the family for their support of the event.

He also thanked Ken Quinn for sponsoring the medals for the winning team and he also thanked the GAA club for allowing the competition to go ahead under lights and, given the horrific weather conditions that the teams had to endure, he thanked all the participating clubs Douglas, Ballygarvan, Ballincollig, Glen Rovers, Sarsfields, and Eire Og

Scorers for Ballincollig: A Lovett, P Buttimer 1-0 each, S O' Callaghan 0-1 (f).

Ballygarvan: C Kelly 0-4 (0-1f), I O'Regan 0-1, BALLINCOLLIG: L M O'Mahony, A Cotter, M O'Leary, C O'Riordan, S Keating, L Weste, M O'Donoghue, E Casey, A Kiely, S Coomey Dorgan, S O' Callaghan, A Lovett, P Buttimer, O O' Leary. Sub: N O'Brien for O O' Leary.

BALLYGARVAN: ME O'Donovan, S J Brady, E Ryan, A Keohane, N Lyons, S Wynne, M Buckley, C Murphy, C Kelly, R Murphy, I O'Regan, L Guinane, S Elliffe, R Crowley, B Keohane. Referee: Ger Sheehan (Douglas).

■ With their place in the All-Ireland minor A championship semi-final already secured, Cork head to St Mar-

tin's Piercestown GAA grounds today at 2.30pm in relaxed mood.

The home side, with just one win out of three games, will be hoping to get a result, but the real battle will be in the other game where Galway and Dublin go head-to-head in Gort.

Galway, having lost out to Kilkenny and Cork, need to win this game, while a draw for Dublin will be enough to put them into the last four.

Were Galway to win and go level with Dublin it will come down to scoring deference so every score will be vital.

“As the full time whistle approached Catriona Kelly had a Ballygarvan point but despite pressure they failed to get the vital goal that they needed as Ballincollig hung on to take the title.

Dublin are +12, Galway +7, leaving Galway needing to win by more than five points to join Cork as the second team going through. An interesting day looms.

In group two Tipperary, who have all their games played, are top followed by Waterford and Clare who meet today.

The winners here will go through to the last four with Tipperary.

■ Please note the Division 2 Littlewoods National League clash between Cork and Westmeath is on tomorrow in Castle Road at 2pm.