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Milford's Laura Stack pulls away from Ballygarvan's Ellen O'Regan and Liadh Murphy during the SE Systems Senior Camogie Championship match in Castle Road. Picture: Howard Crowdy

Glen against Seandún is the pick of the senior championship ties

**SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIP
ROUND 4 AT CASTLE ROAD**

Sat: Sarsfield v Douglas 3pm
Sun: Killeagh v Ballygarvan
12.30pm; Glen Rovers v
Seandún 3.30pm; Courcey
Rovers v Newcestown 6.30pm

AS the SE Systems Senior Camogie Championship moves expediently towards the latter stages, it's hugely disappointing that these games are behind closed doors.

We have some great pairings this weekend in round four, the round before the quarter-finals. The mouth-watering tie of the weekend must be Glen Rovers versus Seandún. Both sides were impressive in their opening rounds.

The Glen gave possibly their best performance of the last few years against the champions, Sarsfields. Seandún gave a strong team display against Imokilly, which put clubs on alert. What may throw a little doubt on Seandún's potential is the strength of Imokilly.

The east Cork divisional side received a hiding from newcomers, Newcestown, in the back door last weekend. Considering Newcestown are senior debutants, the margin of that victory leaves question marks over just how good Imokilly were and, by reference, Seandún.

It's a question that hangs out there. But Seandún do have a very strong team and that is also a reason to believe their game against the Glen should be a cracker.

Amy Lee, in goal, behind a strong defence that includes Courtney O'Keeffe, Niamh O'Leary, and Michelle Murphy, leads up to a midfield where the Glen need to consider options if things aren't going well.

Susan Kate Brosnan and Katlyn Hickey are two attacking players and cover huge ground. Susan Kate will cover every blade. Up front, the spread of fast, scoring forwards is plentiful in Lauren Homan, Hayley Ryan, Sinead Mills, and Laura O'Neill.

The Glen's victory over Sars bore the hallmarks of a confident, evenly balanced side. It was great to see a spread of forwards hitting the mark. With Katie Walsh in top form, and Kayleigh O'Sullivan and Lydia Cunningham, the Glen will also need Emma Murphy on the scoring sheet and midfield may be too far out to capitalise there.

Nora O'Riordan is one of the most skilful players in the game and the right position needs to be found to get the most out of her. Denise Luby will be unerring

CAMOGIE

■ Linda Mellerick

from frees.

Glen's half-back line was its launching pad, with the excellent Karen O'Connell and Lauren Callanan on fire. Add in the experience of Leanne O'Sullivan and it's a strong one.

Sars and Douglas could also be a close affair. Douglas improved a lot from their opening defeat to St Finbarr's. Against Ballincollig, they scored an impressive 3-19 from five contributors. Katrina Mackey again topped the board, with 12 points, seven from frees. It's fine to say Sars need to hold Katrina, but it isn't that easy.

She's evasive and seems to be really enjoying her game. I think a lot of inter-county players are loving this club focus and are thriving. Pamela Mackey and Julia White will again be prominent; Jessica Kavanagh gives confidence to those in front of her; Mairéad Mulrooney is finding the target, and Joy Leo will always be a handful.

When you're the champions, every team will raise their performance against you. Therefore, you need to up your game from your victorious year. Sars are encountering hard challenges to their crown. But that's to be expected and they'll develop with it. The Cork championship is a tight one, with five teams capable of winning it. Holly Herlihy is showing leadership up front. Sars' substitutes against Cloughduv proved match-defining when things got sticky and it's that competition for places that could increase the intensity they bring to the pitch.

Full credit to Ballygarvan for overcoming a strong Milford challenge. Their more economical use of possession saw them over the line by five points. A young side, with the experience of the long-serving and talented Catriona Kelly, Ballygarvan hit three goals.

Against a strong Killeagh defence and Stephanie Beausang in goal, picking off points from distance will also be required. Killeagh have strong hopes of reaching this year's final, after their agonising semi-final replay defeat in 2019. They're testing things positionally and will go into this game as favourites. Courcey Rovers will face Newcestown, where they'll head in as strong favourites. If Newcestown's year should end here, they'll have had a great season. But that won't be on their agenda.

Camogie mourns passing of Una

CAMOGIE

■ Pat Ryan

THE death occurred on August 12, at her residence in Mitchelstown, of Una Toomey (Nee Brennan), formerly of Ballybay, Co Monaghan.

She was in her 95th year and was well-known in camogie circles.

She was a founder member, player, and trainer of Mitchelstown Camogie Club, in 1968, and was actively involved up to 1995.

She played and trained for 50 years, from the age of 20 until 70. Una won camogie titles in Co Cork, in Co Dublin, and in Ulster.

She played for the love of the game; competing was more important to her than winning. Una was a very clean player, never noted for a dirty stroke.

Her hurling idols included Christy Ring and the Rackard brothers, of Wexford.

Una served as chairperson of the Mitchelstown club and was an administrator over many years. She was a great family lady.

Her husband, Denis, was also involved in GAA, being a former referee. He was chairman of the Ballygiblin club from 1977 to 1979.

Una was described by members of the camogie club as a stalwart and very enthusiastic. She was also involved in the Red Cross.

Requiem Mass was celebrated in the parish church on Friday. There was a guard of honour by the camogie club as the coffin made its way out of the church for burial in the adjoining cemetery.

To her husband, Denis, sons, Tomas, Brian, Denis, Gerard, Finian, daughters, Mary (Rock), Sr Regina, Majella (Kelly), daughters-in-law, Ursula, Nora, Therese, Veronica, Margaret, sons-in-law Ron, Kieran, sister-in-law, grandchildren, great grandchildren, nephews, nieces, neighbours and friends, we tender our sincere sympathy.

Camogie getting the spotlight in Trabeg

GAA

■ John Bohane

NEMO Rangers are now fielding camogie teams across all the age groups, stretching from U8 level up to the junior grade.

Their junior camogie team recently played their first competitive adult game in over 40 years following the successful launch of their underage teams in recent years. These underage players have progressed through the ranks and they were complemented by members of their junior ladies football team for a historic occasion.

The Nemo Rangers junior camogie team started their championship campaign with a game against Brian Dillons, which they narrowly lost on Friday, August 14.

Club chairman Padraig Treacy is delighted with their continued progress.

"That was a big occasion for the club. A lot of great coaching work has gone into these players all the way up. Martin Kearney in particular has done great work with the various teams. These junior players have been there since our first U12 team was launched in 2014."

There has always been a good tradition of camogie within Nemo Rangers. They were an established junior team going back over four decades ago before the numbers gradually decreased. The success of the ladies football club acted as a catalyst for the camogie teams to start fielding once again.

"The players got a real thirst for playing camogie as they were playing indoor hurling with the underage teams. That was the starting point for getting camogie up and running again. Playing camogie in the summer camps was also a big help. We as a club were happy to facilitate their wishes to play camogie."

Competing in this year's junior camogie club championships represents a great feat for the club.

"The board wanted to know our long term plans for camogie and we initially pinpointed 2021 as a target date for entering an adult team in the championship."

"We are 12 months ahead of schedule. There is a great vibrancy within the club. We operate as a one-club model and have been doing so for many years."

"We discovered that it was better off with all sections of the club operating under the one umbrella. The club operates successfully on that model. When the camogie teams were re-established they just fell into the structure that was already in place. It means everybody has fair access."

Nemo Rangers have enjoyed a very strong start to their championship season across all the respective teams in all the various grades.



Courcey Rovers' Saoirse McCarthy keeps eye on the ball against Newcestown's Siobhán Kelleher. Pictures: Gavin Browne

Talented Courcey prove too strong for spirited Newcestown

Courcey Rovers 3-14
Newcestown 2-6

Linda Mellerick

A spirited performance by Newcestown wasn't enough to stem the flowing talent of Courcey Rovers in round four of the SE Systems Senior Camogie Championship at Castle Road.

Two Ciara O'Sullivan goals in the final quarter put a better reflection on the scoreboard and it was a reflection Newcestown deserved for a once again committed performance. Intermediate champions of 2019 Newcestown can be proud of their introduction to senior club camogie and the three championship games they played will stand to them as they move forward.

The flair of Courceys was there for all to see. They enjoyed a 1-9 to 0-1 lead at half time and would have had another two balls in the net were it not for the bravery of Newcestown keeper Orla Dineen who put her body in front of Saoirse McCarthy's pile driver after just five minutes and another on fifteen when she advanced to smother Christine O'Neill's attempt.

Courceys' goal came on 21 minutes when a Jacinta Crowley free was prevented from going over the bar by Newcestown and batted into the path of Fiona Keating who tapped it in. It's always a split-second decision whether to help those ones over the bar or bring them down into the square. It proved the wrong decision this time round.

Defensively Rovers were very strong. Full back and Captain Karyn Keohane had an excellent game on danger woman Collette Desmond. The only time Desmond escaped her attention was on 47

minutes and Desmond's pass found Ciara O'Sullivan for her first goal. Grainne Hannon and Ashling Moloney were others to shine and from mid-field up Courceys had the speed and scoring forwards.

The nifty play of Linda Collins saw her hit 1-1 inside six minutes of the restart and she had Rovers' third goal by the 41st minute. Newcestown never gave up and they hit a purple patch between the 47th and 49th minutes when O'Sullivan struck 1-2. The accuracy of Jacinta Crowley then saw her hit over a 45 and a free either side of Ciara O'Sullivan's second goal to give Courcey's a comfortable victory.

The quarter-final pairings for two weeks are: Courcey Rovers v St Catherine's, Glen Rovers v Inniscarra, Killeagh v St Finbarr's and Douglas v Éire Óg. After the exit of champions Sarsfields, it further opens up a championship that never fails to deliver. It really is wide open.

Scorers for Courcey Rovers: L Collins 2-3, J Crowley 0-6 (0-5 f 0-1 45), F Keating 1-2, S McCarthy 0-2, C O'Neill 0-1. **Newcestown:** C O'Sullivan 2-5 (1-3 f), G Ryan 0-1.

COURCEY ROVERS: S O'Reilly, E O'Regan, K Keohane, G Hannon, C Hayes, A Moloney, E Moloney, J Crowley, Elaine O'Reilly, Eimear O'Reilly, F Keating, Lorraine Collins, Linda Collins, C O'Neill, S McCarthy.

Subs: E Maguire for Linda Collins (56), G O'Reilly for Lorraine Collins (58).

NEWCESTOWN: O Dineen, A O'Donovan, M McSweeney, R Hallahan, E Tarrant, S Kelleher, M Crowley, E Crowley, C O'Sullivan, M O'Donovan, G Ryan, M Kenneally, O O'Mahony, C Desmond, A O'Sullivan.

Subs: E Murphy for O O'Mahony (41), L Jennings for M Crowley (47), B Desmond for G Ryan (48).

Referee: Cathal Egan (Glen Rovers).



Glen Rovers' Emma Murphy keeps ahead of Seandún's Katelyn Hickey and Susan Kate Brosnan in the SE Systems Senior Camogie Championship. Picture: Gavin Browne

Glen have to go that extra mile



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

Glen Rovers 2-18
Seandún 3-13

FOR the second time over the weekend a senior camogie championship tie went to extra-time in a pulsating clash between Glen Rovers and Seandún at Castle Road on Sunday afternoon.

With Glen Rovers looking like they would coast to victory at half-time, leading by seven points and dominating play, they hung on by the skin of their teeth to push the game to extra-time after Seandún commanded the second half.

Seandún received a blow before the game when all St Vincent's players except Loran Homan withdrew from the panel. The Glen were masterful in the opening thirty minutes.

By half time six players had found the scoreboard, five of the forwards and Emma Murphy from midfield. Amy Lee made a good save from Katie Walsh to keep the gap respectable as Seandún struggled all over except for midfield where Susan Kate Brosnan was excellent.

Trailing by 1-7 to 0-3 on twenty minutes an own goal threw Seandún a lifeline after Susan Kate's strike deflected to the net. Katie Walsh was causing havoc at right corner forward and one wonders why Seandún didn't make a change there.

The half time break affected both sides, Seandún in a positive way but the Glen slipped. It was all Seandún.

Glen scored just three points, one from play as the divisional side started to play with improved teamwork and confidence and they'll rue a number of scoreable frees and forty fives which would have seen them win this game in normal time.

Substitute Roisin De Faoite made an immediate impact when introduced on 36 minutes. She struck 1-1 to reduce the deficit to three. It was nip and tuck.



Seandún's keeper Amy Lee clears the ball against Glen Rovers' Katie Walsh. Picture: Gavin Browne

Lisa O'Riordan made a great save from a Sinead Mills strike on fifty two, Homan hitting the rebound over the bar for the sides to draw level. Denise Luby (f) gave the Glen a one point advantage before Mills levelled it again and we headed for extra time.

Considering the Glen scored just one point from play in that second half they more than made up for it in the first period of extra time.

Emma Murphy shot out of the blocks with a great point. Michelle Murphy goaled for Seandún. Walsh and Luby (f) had the side's level again.

Katlyn Hickey pointed and then the outstanding Katie Walsh scored a goal fitting of any venue, a rasper beyond the advancing Amy Lee.

Hickey responded again leaving a point in it at half time of extra time. The Glen upped the momentum again for the last ten minutes. Seandún became ragged and went into defensive mode clearing up field where Glen players were in abundance and one wonders why they had moved Lauren Homan back out the field thereby losing her scoring threat.

The Glen showed far more cohesiveness and calm when needed and when Tara McCarthy scored the only point of the second half on full time for the Glen to finish up two point victors and it was a victory hard earned and well deserved.

Scorers for Glen Rovers: K Walsh 2-3, E Murphy 0-5, N O'Riordan 0-2, D Luby 0-5 (f), N O'Brien, L Cunningham, T McCarthy 0-1 each.

Seandún: S K Brosnan 1-2, L Homan 0-4 (0-2 f), R De Faoite 1-1, M Murphy 1-0, S Mills 0-2, K Hickey 0-2, L O'Neill, H Ryan 0-1 each.

GLEN ROVERS: L O'Riordan, C O'Brien, K Falvey, C Martin, K O'Connell, L O'Sullivan, L Callanan, T McCarthy, E Murphy, N O'Riordan, L Cunningham, N O'Brien, K Walsh, D Luby, K O'Sullivan.

Subs: M Browne for N O'Brien (41K), A Wallace for K O'Sullivan (46).

SEANDÚN: A Lee (Na Piarraighe), K O'Brien (Brian Dillon), A Dorgan (do), N O'Connor (Na Piarraighe), L McKeogh (Blackrock), E Buckley (Na Piarraighe), N O'Leary (Brian Dillon), K Hickey (Blackrock), S K Brosnan (Brian Dillon), E Sharpe (do), L Homan (St Vincent's), M Murphy (Blackrock), S Mills (Brian Dillon), L O'Neill (Bishopstown), H Ryan (Blackrock).

Subs: L Barry (Brian Dillon) for L McKeogh (41K), R De Faoite (Blackrock) for L O'Neill (36), M Scannell (Bishopstown) for L Barry (51), C Rodgers (Brian Dillon) for S Mills (69).

Referee: Cathal McAllistar (Aghada).



Newcestown's Maria Kenneally about to strike the ball forward against Courcey Rovers' Edel Moloney.



Killeagh's, Rachel Sheehan in action against Ballygarvan's, Liadh Murphy in the SE Systems Senior Camogie Championship at Castle Road, Blackrock. Picture: Gavin Browne

Early goals key as Killeagh march on to quarter-finals

Killeagh 2-14
Ballygarvan 1-9

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

TWO first-half goals were crucial for Killeagh who advanced to the quarter-final of the SE Systems Senior Camogie Championship at the expense of a spirited Ballygarvan side at Castle Road yesterday.

With Chloe Sigerson contributing 1-11 of her side's tally over the hour, Killeagh looked to be in a comfortable position as they led 2-10 to 0-7 at the interval, but all credit to a Ballygarvan side, who dug deep despite playing out 22 minutes of the second half with 14 players after they lost defender Ellen O'Regan for a second yellow card.

Throughout the second half, they worked hard and outscored a Killeagh side, who had done all the damage in the opening half.

Hannah Looney and Sigerson had Killeagh off the mark with early points, but Catriona Kelly was on target with two pointed frees to tie the contest inside 10 minutes.

Sigerson had added a point before she won possession and she offloaded superbly to the in-running Jess O'Shea who made no mistake finishing to the net for the game's opening goal and at the water break it was advantage Killeagh 1-5 to 0-3.

Sigerson converted two frees as Kelly replied with one, but a second Killeagh goal on 22 minutes from Sigerson gave Ballygarvan a mountain to climb.

They continued to work hard, but their over-reliance on Kelly for scores was costly. Killeagh tacked on five

points to Ballygarvan's four before the half-time whistle and on the restart the sides again traded points before Ballygarvan were reduced to 14 and were in trouble.

All credit to them, they battled on.

O'Shea added a point for Killeagh, but a much tighter Ballygarvan defence was now holding their own and with Shannon Wynn denying Killeagh a goal from a penalty, it gave them a huge lift as they drove downfield with Kelly pointing a free.

With six minutes remaining, Molly Kelleher struck for a superb Ballygarvan goal to cut the Killeagh lead, but two pointed Sigerson frees saw Killeagh safely through to a quarter-final meeting with St Finbarr's.

O'Keefe will be confident they can go a step further in this championship.

Scorers for Killeagh: C Sigerson 1-11 (0-8 f), J O'Shea 1-1, L Looney, L Treacy 0-1 each.

Ballygarvan: C Kelly 0-9 (0-7 f), M Kelleher 1-0.

KILLEAGH: S Beausang; E Treacy, A Walsh, N O'Keefe, L McEvoy, H Looney, C Daly, R Sheehan (c), C Barry, R Fogarty, L Treacy, C Harney, A O'Driscoll, C Sigerson, J O'Shea.

BALLYGARVAN: S Ahern, S Lyons, S Wynn, L Murphy, K Dorney, E O'Regan, S J Brady, C O'Leary, M Buckley, T Crowley, C Kelly, C O'Sullivan, R Crowley, O'Regan, M Kelleher.

Subs: A Finnegan for C O'Sullivan (56), N Lyons for L Murphy (56), M O'Donovan for R Crowley (56), S Quilligan for T Crowley, G Kelleher for T Crowley (58).

Referee: Michael O'Mahony (Kilbrittain/Templeogue).



Douglas' Katrina Mackey shoots from Sarsfields' Chloe Casey and Lucy Kelly during the SE Systems Cork Senior Camogie Championship at Castle Road. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

Douglas topple Sars in a classic

CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

Douglas 1-20
Sarsfields 3-11
(after extra time)

AN outstanding display once again by the Mackey sisters and an all-round determined Douglas team dethroned holders Sarsfields in the SE systems senior championship fourth-round tie on Saturday afternoon.

The champions' dreams of two in a row came to an end after a dogged Douglas fight. Douglas's improvement since their first-round defeat to St Finbarr's has been monumental.

They led from the 23rd minute until the 50th when Clara Irwin goalied for Sars to go one up.

Sars then had three to spare with 59 minutes on the clock but five minutes of additional time and a Pamela Mackey beauty point brought the game to extra-time.

It was a game that swung end to end with so much going on that at times it was hard to keep up. Sars made use of nine substitutes, Douglas three, during what finished up at 91 minutes of playing time.

Credit both teams that left absolutely everything out on the pitch.

Sars had a few positional and personnel switches to their team at throw-in primarily due to Glanmire ladies footballers playing a championship game three hours before the game.

Ellen Murphy, Olivia McAllen, Ellen Twomey, and Gaby Cashman were the four involved. It was too much to ask that players can play back-to-back knockout championship games.

Very little separated the sides for the first 25 minutes of this game and all through it was end-to-end work-rate. The only goal of the opening half came from the stick of impressive Sars youngster



Douglas' Julia White hand passes away from Sarsfields' Katie Barry and Meabh Mullins. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

Saoirse Desmond.

Pamela Mackey was outstanding in defence. Her blocking, hooking, and stylish play in addition to her long-distance points were top class. Beside her, she had defenders who were willing to put their bodies in.

Emma Kavanagh, Amy Curtin, and Seosai Mulrooney were strong and tightened down on any advancing Sars forward.

Jessica Kavanagh was busy as Sars dropped a lot of ball in and, as always, stood up to the task. Within 10 minutes of the second period Desmond, Lucy Allen, and Lucy Kelly had the gap to one.

It was back and forth until Irwin's goal swung the pendulum Sars' way. Tacking on further points with a greater spread of scorers than Douglas, it looked as if Sars had done enough. But Katrina and Chloe St Ledger struck two over before Pamela pointed for extra-time.

It was anyone's game. You couldn't see Douglas racing into a five-point gap inside the first half of extra-time but that's what happened.

How Mackey evaded three defenders, including Sars goalkeeper Molly Lynch to

job a hand pass over their heads to the net is anyone's guess. A big blow for Douglas was when Katrina Mackey was carried off the pitch at half-time in extra-time.

But credit her teammates' tenacity. How they fought.

Sars made more changes. Julia White came into her own in extra-time scoring three points and despite Hollie Herlihy's late goal on 91 minutes, it was Douglas's day.

Scorers for Douglas: K Mackey 1-10 (0-3 f, 0-1 45), J White 0-4, P Mackey 0-3, K Holland 0-2, C St Ledger 0-1.

Sarsfields: S Desmond 1-5 (0-4 f), C Irwin 1-0, H Herlihy 1-0, L Allen 0-2, L Kelly, R O'Mahony, C Mullins, O Mullins 0-1 each.

DOUGLAS: J Kavanagh, E Kavanagh, A Curtin, S Mulrooney, C Nason, P Mackey, R Sheehan, C Noonan, M Mulrooney, C St Ledger, K Holland, K Mackey, C McCarthy, J Leo, J White.

Subs: A Walsh for C Carthy (48), J O'Mahony for J Leo (65), E McAndrews for K Mackey (in 79).

SARS: M Lynch, M Mullins, K Barry, E Lonergan, C Casey, N O'Callaghan, E Casey, L Kelly, C Mullins, C Irwin, H Herlihy, M Barry, L Allen, A Mullins, S Desmond.

Subs: E Murphy for A Mullins, R O'Mahony for C Casey (7-1), O Mullins for M Barry, O McAllen for L Allen (47), G Cashman for M Mullins (58), M McCarthy for C Irwin, M Barry for R O'Mahony (74), E Woods for S Desmond (86), A Mullins for C Mullins (89).

Referee: John Horgan (Glanmire Na Laoi).



Killeagh's, Emma Treacy clears the ball from Ballygarvan's, Clara O'Sullivan. Picture: Gavin Browne

Cork Senior Camogie

Therese O'Callaghan

There was plenty of club action in Castle Road on Saturday and yesterday, after which the pairings for the SE Systems Cork senior camogie championship quarter-finals were confirmed.

All four games will take place on the weekend of September 5/6 at Castle Road.

St Catherine's, Éire Óg, Inniscarra, and St Finbarr's received a bye to the last eight courtesy of their first-round successes.

Inniscarra, beaten finalists in 2019, will meet Glen Rovers following the Blackpool's side epic extra-time battle with Seandún. In a highly competitive encounter, the Glen refused to yield, eventually winning out on a scoreline of 2-18 to 3-13.

They initially looked to be in a comfortable position at half-time, 1-11 to 1-4 — and they will have been disappointed to have conceded the goal (an own-goal) 10 minutes from the break, as Susan Kate Brosnan's attempt went in off one of the defenders.

Upon the resumption, they were reeled in by the divisional outfit, who upped the ante. The introduction of Roisin de Faoite ignited their challenge, and the full-forward had the sliotar in the net within 10 minutes of her introduction.

Seandún kept rallying and came within a point and with five minutes to go, they drew level. Captain Denise Luby edged the Glen to the front once again and they looked as if they might hold out only for Sinead Mills to engineer an equalising point, 1-14 to 2-11 at the end of normal time.

Matters got worse for Glen Rovers when Michelle Murphy netted at the start of extra-time, the divisional team now in the ascendancy, 3-11 to 1-15.

Glen Rovers needed to dig deep and they showed great character in seeing this contest out. Katie Walsh's blister-

Glen Rovers survive epic battle with Seandún



Sarsfields' Katie Barry tries to get past Douglas' Julia White in Saturday's Cork Senior Camogie championship clash at Castle Road. Douglas prevailed in extra-time over the reigning champions. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

ing goal at the end of the first period of stoppage proving to be crucial. The flying corner-forward also bagged a goal in the 18th minute, while captain Luby and Emma Murphy shared 10 points between them.

The Seandún challenge was led by goal-scorers Brosnan, Murphy and de Faoite. Lauren

Homan too was prominent as was skipper Katelyn Hickey, but they passed up too many glorious scoring opportunities that cost them in the end.

Killeagh booked their place against St Finbarr's thanks to their 2-14 to 1-9 victory over Ballygarvan.

A haul of 1-11 from Chloe Sigerson helped the east Cork

team on their way. They were 2-10 to 0-7 up at half-time and despite Ballygarvan being reduced to 14 players five minutes into the second-half after Ellen O'Regan received a second yellow card, the south-east representatives still fought tooth and nail.

Catriona Kelly finished with nine points and Molly

Kelleher fired a fine individual goal five minutes from time.

Shannon Wynne did well to stop a Sigerson penalty too midway through the second half after captain Rachel Sheehan was fouled.

However, with the experienced Laura Treacy and Hannah Looney in their lineup,

Killeagh's dominant opening 30 minutes got them over the line.

It was a hard-earned win for them though and while they only scored four times in the second-half — once from open play — their defending was heroic. Kelleher's goal arrived late in the game near full time.

It will be Courcey Rovers versus St Catherine's, after Courceys were too strong for last season's Intermediate winners Newcestown, 3-14 to 2-6. Courcey Rovers, who contested the final two years ago, were on top from the start. They seized the initiative, striking eight points to Newcestown's one in the first 20 minutes. Fiona Keating's goal in the 21st minute gave them a 10-point advantage.

By halfway, they were 1-9 to 0-2 to the good.

Ciara O'Sullivan grabbed the Newcestown's scores, indeed O'Sullivan went on to register all but one of her team's total. Her brace of goals in the fourth quarter ensuring they never gave up. And Orla Dineen proved to be a solid shot-stopper too, denying Courcey's at least two more goals.

Linda Collins was a constant threat in the full-forward line for Courcey Rovers and tallied 2-4, chipping in with goals in the 33rd and 41st minutes, while Keating accounted for 1-2 and free-taker Jacinta Crowley converted five frees.

Douglas qualified to meet Éire Óg following their extra-time victory over champions Sarsfields on Saturday. Pamela Mackey's stoppage-time point left the sides locked, 0-16 to 2-10 — the Sars green flags from Saoirse Desmond and Ciara Irwin in either half.

But with Pamela and her twin sister Katrina in top form (Katrina hit 1-10), they finished strong, Katrina's goal the all-important score in the first period of extra-time. Holly Herlihy's goal at the death for Sarsfields was not enough, in their 1-20 to 3-11 defeat.

GLEN NEED EXTRA EFFORT TO SEE OFF SEANDÚN



Glen Rovers' Katie Walsh gets away from Seandún's Leah McKeogh in their SE Systems Senior Camogie Championship at Castle Road. See Monday Sports Extra for camogie reports. Picture: Gavin Brown

O'Sullivan wants Courceys to be more ruthless

Courceys advance but they have work to do

SENIOR CAMOGIE

COURCEY ROVERS 3-14
NEWCESTOWN 2-6

NOEL HORGAN REPORTS

RUNNERS-UP to Inniscarra two seasons ago, Courcey Rovers booked a place in the last eight of the SS Systems county senior camogie championship by virtue of a decisive win over Newcestown at Castle Road last Sunday.

It was a chastening experience for the Newcestown ladies, whose fate looked sealed at half time when they trailed by 1-9 to 0-2, but it was always going to be a difficult assignment, as was acknowledged by Courceys coach Mark O'Sullivan afterwards.

'You have to give Newcestown credit, they fought very hard, but we felt coming in that our greater experience would count for a lot, and so it did,' O'Sullivan remarked.

He said he wasn't entirely satisfied with Courceys' display, suggesting they rested on their laurels a bit in the last quarter.

'You need to be ruthless if you are going to win a county at senior level, and, to be honest, I was disappointed with the way we switched off in the closing stages today.'

'I also felt we could have got a bit more out of the forwards, but our midfield worked hard, and I thought our six backs were excellent, so I'd be happy enough with the win,' concluded the Carrigdhoun side's boss.

It was easy to appreciate why O'Sullivan was rich in his praise for the Courceys rear-guard, which hadn't a weak link, with Emily O'Regan, Karyn Keohane and Grainne Hannon comprising an airtight full-back line. Edel Moloney was another to stand out on the left wing, as Courceys prevented Newcestown from raising a flag from play before the break.

While Newcestown's difficulty in making headway up front did much to undermine their challenge initially, they weren't without their problems at the other end either, reflected in the fact that Courceys

went close to finding the net on three occasions before Fiona Keating bagged their first goal in the 21st minute.

Full-forward Christine O'Neill shot over the bar with a golden opportunity early on, while the sharpness of Newcestown goalkeeper Orla Dineen twice denied Courceys a major breakthrough later.

In bringing off another brace of heroic saves in the second-half, Dineen was unquestionably a leading light for the losers, as was stylish midfielder Ciara O'Sullivan, who finished with 2-5, 1-2 from play, to her credit.

Rachel Hallahan, Meabh O'Donovan, Emma Tarrant, Mary McSweeney and Evelyn Crowley also had their moments for Newcestown, but the bottom line is Courceys held most of the aces, building up a sizeable lead after their opening point by impressive centre-forward Fiona Keating had been negated by a Ciara O'Sullivan effort from a free.

They were 1-8 to 0-1 to the good following Keating's opportunist goal, and – after Jacinta Crowley and Ciara O'Sullivan exchanged points from frees to complete the first-half scoring – they piled on the punishment in earnest on the resumption, primarily because of the impact made by Linda Collins after being switched from the right corner to full-forward.

With the rampant Collins chipping in with two goals, Courceys had moved 3-12 to 0-4 midway through the second-half. At that stage it was clear Newcestown – whose first two points from play were excellent efforts by Grace Ryan and Ciara O'Sullivan – were battling for mere respectability. They achieved it to a certain extent, with a goal from O'Sullivan, following good work by Meabh O'Donovan and especially Colette Desmond, triggering off their best spell.

It yielded two points and a fortuitous goal from a long-range free by O'Sullivan, but unerring free-taker Jacinta Crowley, who put in a solid shift at midfield, kept the scoreboard ticking over for Courceys with a couple of con-

'You need to be ruthless if you are going to win a county at senior level, and, to be honest, I was disappointed with the way we switched off in the closing stages'
– Mark O'Sullivan, Courcey Rovers

verted placed balls, one from a 45, on the run-in.

In the final analysis, this was never a true contest as Courceys were quick to stamp their authority on the proceedings, with the result the writing was on the wall for Newcestown virtually from the outset.

Scorers

Courcey Rovers: Linda Collins 2-5; F Keating 1-2; J Crowley 0-5 (4f, 145); C O'Neill, F McCarthy 0-1 each.

Newcestown: C O'Sullivan 2-5 (1-3f); G Ryan 0-1.

Courcey Rovers: S O'Reilly; E O'Regan, K Keohane, G Hannon; C Hayes, A Moloney, E Moloney; J Crowley, Elaine O'Reilly; Eimear O'Reilly, F Keating, Lorraine Collins; Linda Collins, C O'Neill, S McCarthy.

Subs: E Maguire for Linda Collins (55), G O'Reilly for Lorraine Collins (57).

Newcestown: O Dineen; M Crowley, R Hallahan, A O'Donovan; S Kelleher, M McSweeney, E Tarrant; E Crowley, C O'Sullivan; M

O'Donovan, G Ryan, M Kenneally; O O'Mahony, C Desmond, A O'Sullivan.

Subs: L Jennings for M Crowley (38), E Murphy for O'Mahony (44), B Desmond for Ryan (48).

Referee: C Egan (Glen Rovers).

THE HIGHLIGHTS

Our Star: Linda Collins produced a power-packed performance at full forward for Courceys in the third quarter, putting paid to Newcestown's already remote hopes of getting back into contention.

Star Moment: Collins' second goal, which made it 3-12 to 0-4 in the 42nd minute, was a superb individual score after she had picked up possession on the right wing.

Talking Point: While the gap in standards was significant, newly-promoted Newcestown should benefit from this experience, and could be a more formidable side in the seasons ahead.

What's next? It's on to a quarter-final meeting with St Catherine's for Courceys.

QUARTER-FINAL DRAW

WE'RE down to the last eight in the SE Systems Cork Camogie Senior Championship – and here are the quarter-final pairings (games to be played the weekend of September 5th): St Catherine's v Courcey Rovers, Glen Rovers v Inniscarra, St Finbarrs v Killeagh, Douglas v Eire Og.

Two of Cork's brightest young camogie stars, Courcey Rovers' Fiona Keating and Newcestown's Ciara O'Sullivan, battle for the ball during their Round 4 clash at Castle Road on Sunday.
(Photos: Trevor Patchett)



Courcey Rovers' Edel Moloney gets her pass away despite pressure from Newcestown's Maria Kenneally.

'What camogie is missing now is goalscorers'

Linda Mellerick, Glen Rovers and Cork

MY hands are pretty good. I was lucky in terms of injuries — I did break one of my thumbs twice in my career but it's held up pretty well so far. It doesn't give me any aches and pains in the winter. There's no sign of arthritis yet anyway.

Which isn't to say I didn't pick up injuries. When I was playing junior, in particular, I seemed to get split all the time, but that stopped, really, when I started to play senior with the Glen.

I did get one bad wallop when I was about 16. I was playing junior with Brian Dillons against Killeagh, down in Killeagh. Helmets weren't compulsory at that time — I never wore one in my career — and I got a hurley across the mouth during the game.

I got 17 stitches in my mouth and the tooth went dead. Between veneers and all sorts of procedures over the years, I probably ended up spending about €16,000 on it, and eventually I got an implant about 10 years ago.

That's about the only serious injury. I was always getting split around the head in games, but you wouldn't really take any notice of those while you're playing.

In terms of making a breakthrough, I was very late starting to play. I didn't

start until I was almost 13, when I went to St Patrick's for secondary school, and even then I gave it up early on, to be honest. When I started first year there I went to a couple of training sessions but I just lost interest in the game.

But then the school won the All-Ireland final the following March. The excitement, the buzz in the school was fantastic, and it really made an impression on me.

I said to myself, "I've got to be part of this," so I went back playing.

I was useless for the first year and a half or so, to be honest, but when I got to third year it clicked. I just got the knack of it and it spiralled very quickly from there when I got the hang of it. You could say 18 months, two years into it, I got to grips with the game.

I was still casual enough with it for a while, but after I left school, like a lot of people I was unemployed for a while, and I remember going out every day to a car park near where we lived at the time in Passage West. I'd hit the ball off the gable wall every day, for 15-20 minutes at a time, for a year or two.

So that built up the touch and the wrists, even though you wouldn't really realise it at the time. There were no drills, just hitting the ball over and over, but it had to stand to you.

I was too casual with my hurleys, really. Looking back at the size of them, even — I'm 5'4½", 5'5", but I was prob-

ably using a 36 or 37-inch hurley, and the weight of it was huge compared to the hurleys players use now.

I'd bring them up to Joe Crowley in the Glen and there were a lot of splints and repairs and fixing-up done, but in retrospect, I was very casual when it came to looking after them. But that was a fairly general attitude at the time, I think. Most players were like that, and someone who was obsessed with their sticks would have been seen as unusual.

Players I admired — in my time playing Angela Downey was someone you'd have to pick out, even though I hated her at the time in that sports context. She could turn on a sixpence and the power in her shot... I remember in one game I chased her down the field and I hooked her.

My God, the vibration from the contact was incredible, the power she had in her shot, even though she was probably smaller than me.

Sandy Fitzgibbon was another fabulous player. In terms of heart, putting her head in where she shouldn't have, Therese O'Callaghan would get battered in games, but she didn't care.

There are some very skilful players now. Gemma O'Connor has skill but she's also got a commanding presence, power, everything. When Julia White is in full flight it's like she's floating, she's so light on her feet. Jennifer O'Leary was another great player.

A stand-out moment? Gemma O'Connor hit an equaliser for Cork in the All-Ireland camogie final two years ago. It was an unbelievable point under pressure from over 70 yards out, to take the responsibility like that. A lot of players wouldn't do that, which is the mark of how good she is.

Is camogie better now? It's hard for me to answer that because as a former player I'm going to prefer the old days. But I think we are missing goalscorers now. Players are stronger now and are happy to take points from out the field, and there are great scorers and scorers, but I think there's nothing like goals in a game.

When we were playing, we had great goalscorers, players who Lynn Dunlea, Irene O'Keefe, Fiona O'Driscoll, and we don't have that to the same extent nowadays — it's a part of the game that I miss.

We trained as hard, though the training was different. Looking at the likes of Sandy (Fitzgibbon) and Therese (O'Callaghan), they'd walk onto a modern camogie team, but by the same token there are players now who'd walk onto a team in our era.

The modern player is very fit, and the level of striking could be better, particularly at inter-county level, but there are parts of the old game that I'd miss.

Interview: Michael Moynihan



Orla Cronin displays the new face shield helmets with some of the Valley's underage players; Cronin is a key player for her side this weekend.

Four intermediate quarter-final games dominate fixture list

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

FOUR SE Systems Intermediate Championship quarter-finals dominate Sunday's fixture schedules where Castle Road will host three games, with the fourth going ahead in Brinny.

The first game of the triple header gets underway at 12pm in Castle Road with Fr O'Neill's taking on Kilbrittain/Timoleague.

This is followed at 3pm when Enniskeane meet Blackrock and at 6pm it's Brian Dillons versus Ballyhea, also at 6pm in Brinny, Carrigaline take on Aghabullogue.

Fr O'Neill's had an opening round win over Na Piarsaigh 0-16 to 1-6 and they take on a Kilbrittain/Timoleague side that lost out in round one to Carrigaline 1-11 to 1-9 but got themselves back into contention with a losers round victory over Na Piarsaigh where they edged it in a tight 1-8 to 1-6 contest.

Fr O'Neill's will have been pleased with their tally of 16 points in their opening game and they're going well this year, they have excellent players in Clare O'Brien, Kate Harrington, Keelagh Cullinane, Clodagh Finn and Ciara O'Doherty and they will provide a strong opposition to Kilbrittain/Timoleague.

Having lost out narrowly to Carrigaline, Kilbrittain/Timoleague got the show back on the road as they dug deep against the challenge posed by Na Piarsaigh. They worked hard and came out on the right side of a tough contest.

Last year's runners up Enniskeane are one of the favourites to lift the title.

They lost out in last year's decider to Newcestown and they are determined to go one better this year. For several years they have been knocking on the door and they would dearly love to take the next step and go all the way.

Their meeting with Blackrock should be a thrilling contest as without doubt it pairs two of the strongest contenders for the title.

Enniskeane totally dominated in their opening round clash with Ballyhea with Cork senior star Orla Cronin in superb form, she is their stand out player but it is by no means a one woman show.

Daire O'Brien, Louise Duggan and Danielle Carroll are solid defenders and up front Cronin is joined by the impressive Tara Sheehan, Siobhan O'Driscoll and Sinead

Hurley.

Blackrock also came through with a comprehensive first round victory over Valley Rovers, Kaitlin Hickey, Hayley Ryan, Roisin De Faoite, Grace Mulqueen, Cait Kelleher and Michelle Murphy are amongst the players on a strong Blackrock side who are also determined to go all the way this year.

They were disappointed not to reach the decider last year but with all their players available this season they are in with a right chance of lifting the title.

Brian Dillons had a point to spare over Clonakilty in a 1-7 to 2-3 opening round game, Ballyhea lost out heavily to Enniskeane but regrouped and got over the challenge of Watergrasshill 2-8 to 1-6.

Ballyhea having won the Junior A championship last season will be happy to be in the quarter-finals and they will be determined to go one step further and make it to the last four.

Roisin Killeen, Rachel Harty, Laura Dillon and Kate Kilcommins will lead their quest for a place in the last four but Brian Dillons will look to Niamh O'Leary, Susan Kate Brosnan, Sinead Mills and Emma Sharpe and to lead the way as they bid to get one over on Ballyhea.

Brinny is the venue at 6pm as Aghabullogue and Carrigaline go head to head.

Aghabullogue looked impressive as they overcame Watergrasshill, cork senior Cliona Healy was to the fore in that outing ably supported by Aoife Twomey, Ciara McCarthy, Julie Tarrant and Robyn Martin.

They are a well-balanced side but no doubt they will meet strong resistance from a Carrigaline side, who had a good spread of scorers in their clash with Kilbrittain/Timoleague.

Rachel O'Shea, Zoe O'Herlihy, Emma Cooney, Mollie Barrett, Kayleigh O'Connor, Rachel O'Regan and Emma Cooney are well capable of finding the range and Aghabullogue will need to close them down.

Equally so Carrigaline will need to keep a tight rein on Cliona Healy as she has proved in the past just what



Newcestown's Meabh O'Donovan in action against Courcy Rovers' Emily O'Regan last weekend. Picture: Gavin Browne

Championship action continues at all levels from U14 upwards

CHAMPIONSHIP games at all levels are still being decided as we look back on a few results from the U14 Premier Championship.

Eire Og and Newcestown battled it out, before the Owens team kept their winning sequence going.

Sarsfields also maintained their good form, with a tough battle in Inniscarra, which they won.

Douglas are going well in the premier championship. They recorded their second group win away to Ballinora.

In the U14 A, round-two games, Ballinhassig beat Tracton, Valley Rovers made it two out of two with a home victory over Aghabullogue, and Sarsfields' second team beat Killeagh.

Torrential rain failed to dampen the spirits of Glen Rovers and St Finbarr's at the Glen Field on Monday evening.

A point separated the sides at the break, as the home side led, but a second-half rally saw the Glen Rovers girls make it back-to-back wins.

Ballincollig bounced back after losing their opening-round game to St Finbarr's. They got off the mark with a win over Blackrock. Blarney got their campaign off the mark with a win over Carrigrohilly.

In the U14 C Championship, St Vincent's hosted Fermoy and won.

Two U16 championship results were first-round games: A win for Fr O'Neill's over Killeagh, and a win for St Fannah's over Kilworth.

U16 championship resumes with a full schedule of games in the week ahead, as clubs go into round two.

It's down to the quarter-finals in the SE Systems Junior A Championship. Last night, Mallow and Newtownshandrum will have battled it out, after Newtownshandrum had two goals to spare over Sliabh Rua in their game last weekend.

Today, Castle Road hosts three quarter-final clashes, and first into action are Tracton and St Vincent's, for a 12pm throw-in.

In their opening game, St Vincent's had a 4-9 to 2-11 win over Sliabh Rua, while Tracton defeated Banteer 0-13 to 1-

Vincent's will go into this favourites. With Amy Nicole Crean, and

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

Lauren Homan in their side, they should be too strong for a Tracton side that will look to Mary McGuinness, Orlagh Dempsey, Jennifer Lynch, and Emma Good to hit top form as they bid for a semi-final spot.

At 3pm, Banteer and Ballinascorthy take centre stage and Ballinascorthy look to be the better-balanced. They have superb players in Caroline Sugrue, Aoife Nyhan, Dullea, Moira Barrett, and Clara Crowley.

They had to fight hard to overcome Ballinhassig in their opening game, but they fashioned out a two-point win to make it through.

Banteer lost to Mallow, but they overcame Watergrasshill to keep their hopes alive. It will be another big ask of them, but they always show huge fighting spirit and, no doubt, this will be evident as they take on a strong Ballinascorthy side.

The clash between last year's runners-up, Charleville, and junior B champions of 2019, Ballinora, should be a close encounter.

Both sides have quality players. Charleville captain, Fiona Nelligan, is a joy to watch. A great player in possession, she will be hard to stop.

Kathleen Dore, Laura Doyle, Kate Liddy, Molly Jackman, and Teresa Dore are others who continue to impress for a Charleville side that overcame Sarsfields in their first-round clash, 5-15 to 1-7.

Ballinora blazed a trail of glory in 2019, taking the junior B league and championship titles and they will be hoping to build on this in 2020.

They continue to work hard and have excellent young players in Jennifer Murphy, Kate Dooley, Cliona Dooley, and Siobhan O'Regan, who led the way for them last season. With an opening-round victory over Newtownshandrum to their credit, they will go into this evening's clash confident they can make it to the semi-final stages.

In minor A, two loser-round games are to be decided. Aghada meet St Finbarr's and Ballinora will meet Newcestown.

We will have a full round-up of minor championship results next week.



St Vincent's club members, Blake Murphy, Cork U 20s, Lauren Homan, Amy O'Connor, Cork senior camogie, Lorna Coffey and Nicole Crean, Cork senior Camogie, lent their support at the club's Kellogg's Cúl Camp. Picture: Mike English

High-scoring games point to a camogie treat

CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

WE are at the quarter-final stage of the SE Systems Senior Camogie Championship and if last weekend's games are an indicator of what's to come between the eight still standing, then we're in for a treat.

Two games went to extra-time — Douglas and Sarsfields and Glen Rovers and Seandún.

Douglas and Sars served up 4-31 between them with just eight points coming from placed balls.

Glen and Seandún hit 5-31 with 5-24 coming from play. Now that's what we want to see.

Katrina Mackey is okay after being carried off at half-time of extra-time so that's good news for Douglas and Cork, who begin their campaign away to Offaly on October 17/18.

We had the issue again of dual fixture clashes with Sars and Glanmire ladies footballers both scheduled for last Saturday and on Sunday Courcy Rovers had to withdraw from a junior B football championship game as it clashed with their camogie championship game with Newcestown.

I fully appreciate the fixture schedule that both boards have.

There is a club deadline before inter-county starts again and the pressure is on to get each championship completed.

In fairness to the camogie board I know they always, where possible, agree to a re-schedule. I'm sure the football board do likewise.

The problem is that when fixtures are set, if there is a clash it's left up to all clubs to agree to a change and if they don't there's very little the board can do.

It's made all the more difficult when you have girls playing camogie with one club and that panel play with a number of different football clubs.

How do you manage that?

I'd imagine that all Sars dual players play with Glanmire so that should be easier to manage. Likewise, with Courcy's, both codes under the one club.

We need to do something. If we keep a dedicated club and inter-county season like we have this year, that's a big problem



solved.

A suggestion may be that we rotate camogie and ladies football on a bi-weekly basis.

During the two-week period that camogie (or football) is played you play your underage games during the week and senior at the weekend.

You have a crossover of players between minor and senior so you play minor on Wednesday nights at a home and away venue.

We can have a crossover with U16/U18 and senior players and that will prove a bit of managing, but the schedule won't be any more hectic for those players than it is today.

The only difference is that they can concentrate on one sport for that two-week period. Our championship window may have to extend, but if the inter-county season is pulled in or pushed out, we may have that available to us.

It's food for thought as no one wants this situation, neither the players, managements, county or national boards.

Glen Rovers and Seandún served up a thriller.

Seandún lost their opportunity in normal time. The Glen fully deserved to win in extra-time.

Seandún were served a late curveball when the St Vincent's players, except Lauren Homan, withdrew from the panel.

With their club playing junior A championship this weekend, the players were advised that if they played with the divisional side they wouldn't be selected for the club's game against Tracton.

This was wrong. At the start of a season a potential divisional management team seek out players to determine their inter-

est in representing their division at senior level.

They do this to give those players an opportunity to play senior camogie and they are to be admired for giving of their time to do that.

If players or players' clubs at the outset decide they don't want to play, that their focus for the year is club only, that's totally fine. I've no issue with that.

But if you make yourself available as a player and your club doesn't have that discussion with you, then you both commit.

Based on the interest that's there in January a divisional side is either formed or not. In this case Seandún had strong interest.

They had an opening round victory over Imokilly, they looked a promising side. I've no doubt that the late withdrawal last week had an effect on Seandún's first-half display.

How must the other girls have felt?

The withdrawal gave the vibe to their team-mates that Seandún's involvement in the senior championship is only a token gesture, a take it or leave it 'friendly' game you might play after work on a Friday evening.

What if every club did this? Where would that leave all divisional sides?

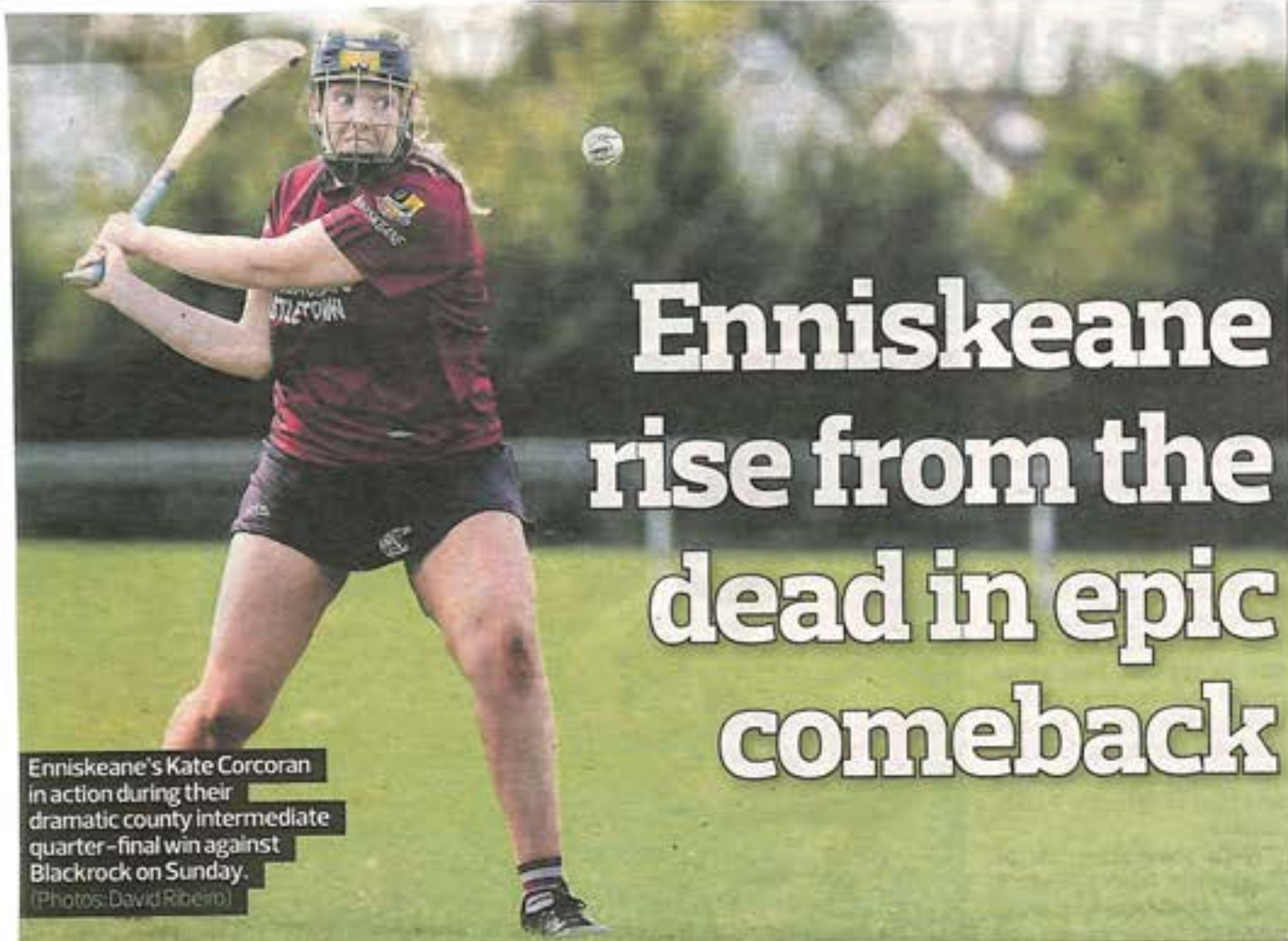
Pulling out of championships that's where, getting fined and leaving the championship fixtures in disarray.

I'm also against this culture we have in recent years of giving players ultimatums. I find that you don't win in those scenarios.

As a manager you might win one day but you'll lose out the next. It's ultimately the player that loses out, she has the headache and the worry when all she wants to do is play.

It was St Vincent's last weekend, but on another day it could be any other club and it needs to stop. I admire Lauren Homan for playing.

She may suffer the consequences this weekend, but so will St Vincent's if they lose narrowly to Tracton and she's sitting on the bench.



Enniskeane's Kate Corcoran in action during their dramatic county intermediate quarter-final win against Blackrock on Sunday. (Photos: David Ribeiro)

Enniskeane rise from the dead in epic comeback

Enniskeane rally from 13 points down to book semi-final spot

INTERMEDIATE CAMOGIE

ENNISKEANE 1-18
BLACKROCK 2-13

BY SANDRA CORCORAN

IN 2016 Ballineen's most famous sportsperson, sprinter Phil Healy, shot to international fame when she came from the 'depths of hell' to win a relay race for UCC. Now, four years

later Enniskeane's camogie team produced a comeback story of their own to qualify for the semi-finals of the county intermediate championship.

At one stage of their quarter-final against Blackrock at Castle Road last Sunday, Enniskeane trailed by 13 points, but they never panicked and slowly chipped away at the lead.

It had started so well for En-

niskeane with two points from Cork senior Orla Cronin and one from Eimear O'Brien. But then the wheels came off the wagon when Roisin de Faoite availed of a mix up in the Enniskeane defence to goal and put Blackrock ahead, a lead they would hold until the 56th minute.

Persistent fouling from Enniskeane gave Hayley Ryan four pointed frees with Ann O'Farrell (3) and Katelyn Hickey (1) also on target. At one stage of the half, Blackrock led 2-10 to

0-3 after Ryan added their second goal. Before half time, four frees from the influential Orla Cronin settled Enniskeane who trailed 2-10 to 0-7 at half time.

The second half was a completely different match with Enniskeane cutting into the Blackrock lead. Orla Cronin, Laura Mannix, Orla Coughlan, Sinead Hurley, Danielle Carroll and Tara Sheehan were all on target before Blackrock responded with points from Roisin de Faoite, Katelyn Hickey and Hayley Ryan between the

43rd and 45th minutes. These were Blackrock's last scores.

At the second water break Enniskeane were trailing by seven points, 2-13 to 0-12. Still, they kept chipping away at the lead and they grabbed the goal they needed when Sinead Hurley's mishit shot deceived the Blackrock goalkeeper and finished in the net. Remarkably, Enniskeane were now ahead for the second time in the match. The final point of the day went to the outstanding Orla Cronin whose work-rate over the hour was tremendous.

This quarter-final was heart-stopping and totally unpredictable. When Blackrock went up 13 points there seemed to be no way back for Enniskeane, however with exemplary performances from Louise Duggan, Siobhan O'Driscoll, Kellie Scannell, Aisling O'Driscoll, Laura Mannix and Orla Cronin, whose experience led Enniskeane through very deep waters, they found a way back into the contest.

Enniskeane had to dig deep here and their reward is a semi-final against Fr O'Neills on September 12th while Aghabullogue will meet Ballyhea in the other semi-final.

Scorers
Enniskeane: O Cronin 0-10 (6f, 1 45); S Hurley 1-1; O Coughlan, L Mannix 0-2 each; T Sheehan, D

Carroll, E O'Brien 0-1 each.
Blackrock: H Ryan 1-6 (5f, 0-1 pen); R de Faoite 1-1; A O'Farrell 0-3; K Hickey 0-2; C Kelleher 0-1.

Enniskeane: Kate Corcoran, Louise Duggan, Celine Nyhan, Kellie Scannell, Emma O'Driscoll, Danielle Carroll, Aisling O'Driscoll, Tara Sheehan, Laura Mannix, Eimear O'Brien, Siobhan O'Driscoll, Orla Cronin, Deirdre Browne, Sinead Hurley, Orla Coughlan, Caitlin O'Donovan.

Blackrock: Clodagh Coughlan, Tia McMahon, Carol Ryan, Kate O'Brien, Aine Murray, Anna Lucey, Leah McKeogh, Katelyn Hickey, Michelle Murphy, Kate Leneghan, Cait Kelleher, Ann O'Farrell, Roisin De Faoite, Sadhbh McCarthy, Hayley Ryan, Lia Guerin, Emma McCarthy.

Cork ace Orla Cronin was the star of the show for Enniskeane.



Bal blitz Banteer in stunning second half

JUNIOR A CAMOGIE

BALLINASCARTHY 1-13
BANTEER 2-7

DESPITE two late goals from Banteer that set up an exciting finish, Ballinascorthy were good value for their county junior A quarter-final win at Castle Road on Saturday afternoon.

A stunning Bal blitz in the second half saw them come from behind at the break to surge ahead, and they are now through to the last four where they will play either Tracton or St Vincent's.

Having played against the wind in the opening half Bal trailed 0-6 to 0-4 at the break. Moira Barrett (2), Clara Crowley (free) and Michelle Dullea all scored for the Carbery side, while Banteer finished the half with four points in a row.

The second half, however, belonged to Bal. With the wind at their back, they worked hard, pushed on and took over. Scores from Clara Crowley (three placed balls) and Anna Flynn, who finished after an Ashling Hutchings pass, pushed Bal ahead before Michelle Dullea hit a bullet of a shot to the back of the Banteer net.

Bal's scoring spree continued with Anna Flynn finishing off a Clare Kingston free for a fine point. Moira Barrett firing over another point and again Clara Crowley converting a free just before the second water break. Bal now led 1-11 to 0-6 and they kept their foot on the pedal with further scores from Annie Condon and Anna Flynn.

Banteer tried to break down the Bal defence several times but Kaela O'Driscoll, Lisa He-



The Ballinascorthy camogie team that beat Banteer on Saturday. Back from left, Clare Kingston, Megan Ryan, Sarah Cahalane, Kaela O'Driscoll, Hannah O'Donovan, Marie Phayer, Aoife Nyhan, Niamh Nyhan, Breda McCarthy, Lisa Hegarty, Kate O'Donovan, Michelle Dullea and Moira Barrett. Front from left, Martina O'Brien (captain), Maeve Kingston, Anna Cullinane, Siobhan McCarthy (mascot), Ashling Hutchings, Annie Condon, Anna Flynn, Clara Crowley and Maeve Moroney.

garty, Anna Cullinane and the Kingston sisters, Clare and Maeve, didn't let them through.

Banteer were awarded a penalty that was sent over the bar for a point and with five

minutes left Bal led 1-13 to 0-7. However, Banteer finished with a flurry to hit two late

goals but not enough to stop Bal deservedly advancing to the last four in the county.



Sarsfields' Clare Mullins and Douglas' Seosai Mulrooney. Pic: Eddie O'Hare

Exciting weekend in the offing as sides square up for quarter-finals

WE have four mouth-watering clashes to look forward to this weekend in the SE Systems Senior Championship quarter-final round in Castle Road.

First up tomorrow is the clash of St Catherine's and Courcey Rovers. It has been five weeks since St Catherine's have been in competitive action, having defeated Ballygarvan in the opening round and receiving a bye in round four, taking them to the quarter-final. Courceys, on the other hand, have two games behind them with an opening win over Cloughdub and an additional win against Newcestown, two weeks ago.

Rovers may have enjoyed a 3-14 to 2-6 winning margin, but Newcestown are a dogged outfit and that game will stand to the quarter-finalists. They are an in-form side with talent in every area, and a forward line many would envy. St Catherine's are an experienced side with many long-established names.

Finola Neville will bring a hard-working hour to the pitch and alongside Carolyn Metherway, Rachel O'Callaghan, Laura Hayes, Evelyn Ronayne, and the stylish Aoife Hurley, St Catherine's will match Courcey Rovers' talent. Rovers do seem to have more potential scorers up front, and Catherine's will have their hands full should they fire on all cylinders.

Killeagh and St Finbarr's are the second Saturday game. Killeagh have strong hopes of going all the way this year and boast three senior inter-county stars in Hannah Looney, Laura Treacy, and Chloe Sigerson. Add in Niamh O'Keefe and Ciara Daly, among others, and they have a side to compete for the title.

Killeagh have amassed 3-37 from two games with 1-19 coming from frees, and giving away frees to the accurate Sigerson is something St Finbarr's will need to watch. Lining out at full-forward Killeagh are pinning a lot on Chloe being the answer to their lack of scoring in 2019.

The Barrs are another side to receive a bye to the quarter-final. Their last outing was against Douglas in early August. They looked in control during the opening half before a tightly fought second half. Killeagh have a strong defence and it is difficult to see how the Barrs, who rely on Keeva McCarthy, will penetrate it.

CAMOGIE

■ Linda Mellerick

Attacking and scoring half-backs and midfielders will be important for both sides. Killeagh have that, particularly in Looney and Treacy. The Barrs of course have it in Gemma O'Connor, Meabh Cahalane, and Linda O'Connell.

The county finalists of 2017 meet again when Glen Rovers and Inniscarra throw-in at 1pm on Sunday.

Glen Rovers are a much more balanced and fired up outfit this season, and have two big scalps behind them after impressive wins over Sarsfields and Seandún.

Those games, as well as the manner in which they had to dig deep, particularly in extra time against Seandún, showed them just how good they are, and they should carry that belief into a tough battle against Inniscarra. Inniscarra of course have the talented Joanne Casey and Aoife Kavanagh back, but that has been somewhat negated by the loss of Niamh McCarthy who has a cruciate injury for the third time.

What an awful disappointing blow that is to Niamh personally and to Inniscarra. But this game should nevertheless be a cracker.

The Glen are progressing the in this championship hard way. They have had no easy rounds and are standing tall.

They gave Inniscarra a two-goal start in the opening four minutes three years ago. They failed to get out of the blocks early. They lost that final by those two goals. How has each team improved since then?

Time will tell. Last up is Douglas-Éire Óg. What a transformation in Douglas since their opening-round defeat. That in itself must add a huge impetus to their training.

Add in the fact that they had two strong wins over Ballincollig and Sarsfields and they will go in as favourites against Éire Óg who had an impressive win over Milford in round one but have not seen championship action since.

They'd have liked more.

FIXTURES, all Castle Road

TOMORROW
St Catherine's v Courcey Rovers, 2pm;
Killeagh v St Finbarr's, 5pm
SUNDAY
Glen Rovers v Inniscarra, 1pm; Éire Óg v Douglas 5pm.



Star forward: Linda Collins.

Forwards can fire Courceys into semi

COURCEY Rovers will look to build on their recent win over Newcestown when they take on St Catherine's in a quarter-final of the county senior camogie championship this Saturday, 5th, in Castle Road at 2pm.

Courceys beat the Carbery club by 3-14 to 2-6 in the last round to follow on from their 3-15 to 0-9 Round 1 win against Cloughdub, so they're gathering a bit of momentum at the right time.

That said, Courceys coach Mark O'Sullivan, speaking in the aftermath of the win against Newcestown, demanded more from the South East side who contested the 2018 county final.

"You need to be ruthless if you are going to win a county at senior level, and, to be honest, I was disappointed with the way we switched off in the closing stages. I also felt we could have got a bit more out of the forwards, but our midfield worked hard, and I thought our six backs were excellent, so I'd be happy enough with the win," O'Sullivan said, as he felt Courceys took their foot off the pedal to leave Newcestown in for two goals.

St Catherine's, who beat Ballygarvan in the opening round, will be wary of the talented Courceys attack. In their wins against Cloughdub and Newcestown they hit a combined 6-29 with rising star Fiona Keating (who scored 5-0 for the West Cork senior footballers in a county semi-final last weekend) hitting 3-7, Cork forward Linda Collins has scored 2-7, Jacinta Crowley has racked up 0-10 and Saoirse McCarthy has 1-2. Defensively, Courceys are a strong unit and are hard to break down with Karyn Keohane, Ciara Hayes, Ashling Moloney and Edel Moloney key figures. The signs point to a Courceys win but only if they produce a more consistent performance.

The other three senior camogie quarter-finals this weekend are as follows – Saturday, 5th, Killeagh v St Finbarr's at Castle Road (5pm); Sunday, 6th, Glen Rovers v Inniscarra at Castle Road (1pm); Éire Óg v Douglas at Castle Road (5pm).



Action from the cracking intermediate camogie clash of Enniskeane and Blackrock. Picture: Cork Camogie Twitter.

First-half goals set Fr O'Neill's on their way to semi-finals

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

FR O'NEILL's, Enniskeane, Aghabullogue and Ballyhea advanced to the last four of the SE Systems Intermediate championship at the weekend.

The semi-final pairings are Aghabullogue v Ballyhea and Fr O'Neill's v Enniskeane.

The opening game in Castle Road saw Fr O'Neill's lay the foundation for success with three first-half goals, Ciara O'Doherty, Kate Harrington, and Deirdre Corcoran hitting the all-important scores after Kilbriann/Timoleague had got a good start with two early points.

Eight minutes in with the sides level Kate Harrington fired a low shot to the net and, continuing to hold the upper hand, they added points with Keelagh Cullinane and Clodagh Finn finding the range.

Doherty added O'Neill's second goal, grabbing a long range free on the edge of the square and finishing well to the net. Corcoran grabbed a third before the break for a 3-5 to 0-2 interval lead.

On the turnover O'Neill's maintained their momentum and held the advantage as they ran out winners on a 4-7 to 0-6 scoreline with Finn hitting their fourth goal midway through the half.

A tremendous second half fight-back from Enniskeane saw them claw back a 10-point half-time deficit to defeat Blackrock by two points 1-18 to 2-15 and book their place.

Blackrock dominated the opening half and led 3-10 to 0-6 at half-time. Goals from Róisín De Faoite and Hayley Ryan helped them build up a 2-7 to 0-3 lead inside the opening quarter as the Enniskeane defence struggled to gain a grip.

With Ryan, Aine O'Farrell and Kaitlin Hickey pointing, they stayed in control as Enniskeane had Orla Cronin on target with five points while Eimear O'Brien and Orla Coughlan added one apiece.

Enniskeane, with the aid of the slight wind for the second half, were fast off the mark and they hit four points in a row before De Faoite and Kaitlin Hickey had one each for the Rockies. Enniskeane never let their head drop and continued to grow in confidence. They had Danielle Carroll and Laura Mannix on target with points as they cut the Rockies lead and it was 2-13 to 0-12 at the second water break.

With 12 minutes remaining.

With Coughlan, Sinead Hurley, and Cronin superb they continue to drive forward at every opportunity with Coughlan working hard to get fast ball to their inside line where Sinead Hurley, Tara Sheehan, and Eimear O'Brien were troubling the Blackrock defence.

Five points without reply saw them close the gap to two with five minutes remaining. O'Brien won a good ball, found Hurley who left herself with a tight angle and attempted a point, but she shot dipped and nestled in the corner of the net to give Enniskeane the lead for the first time since the third minute.

Now Blackrock needed to respond, but they failed to breach the strong Enniskeane defence who stood firm. Cronin extended the lead with a point as Enniskeane fashioned out a superb victory.

An early Sinead Mills goal gave Brian Dillon's a 1-3 to 0-3 advantage over Ballyhea and they stretched it with points from Emma Sharpe and Shauna Cronin before Ballyhea struck to lead 1-6 to 0-5 at the water break.

Mills and Caoimhe Rodgers cut the lead, but Ballyhea responded with a Jane Foley goal and a Ciara Harty point and held a 2-8 to 1-7 half-time lead.

Brian Dillon's, with a Susan Kate Brosnan goal, narrowed the gap on the restart and led 3-10 to 2-11 thanks to points from Emma Sharpe and Sinead Mills.

Finishing stronger, Ballyhea with a Harty goal and points from Rachel Killeen ran out 3-15 to 3-11 winners.

Aghabullogue had excellent performances from Cliona Healy, Emma Flanagan, Ciara McCarthy, Julie Tarrant, and Joanne Crowley as they safely negotiated the challenge posed by Carrigaline in Brinny.

Leading at the interval 2-9 to 0-3 they were well in control through the second half despite the efforts of Ciara O'Leary, Ellen Twomey, Rachel O'Shea and Rachel O'Regan who battled to the finish for Carrigaline but it was Aghabullogue who ran out 4-15 to 1-6 winners.

Murray: Camogie matches need top-class venues

CAMOGIE

■ Paddy Hickey

CORK boss Paudie Murray has called on the Camogie Association to ensure All-Ireland Championship games are staged at top-grade venues.

The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in this year's competition opening in mid-October and winding up with the All-Ireland final on December 12.

"Obviously the weather and the condition of the pitches for the matches won't be as good as in the summer, so it's very important that they are fixed for venues with good quality pitches and excellent facilities.

If that doesn't prove to be the case, then a lot of the matches in the championship could turn out to be dire affairs with very little play of a decent quality. I think it would be a good idea if grounds with flood-light facilities were chosen," he said.

In the Rebels' open outing, Murray's charges face an away clash against Offaly on the weekend of October 17/18, and they host Wexford on October 31/

November 1, before concluding their campaign away to All-Ireland champions Galway on November 7/8. "Offaly play most of their games at Birr, and that's an exceptional venue, and I suppose the likes of Pearse Stadium or Ballinasloe would be very acceptable for our game against Galway.

"With regard to our home game against Wexford, we would be very happy with either Páirc Uí Chaoimh or Páirc Uí Rinn, and in the past the County Board have been very good to us."

Cork won the All-Ireland title in 2017 and 2018 but were beaten by Galway in last year's semi-final.

"This year, in the two league games that we played against Waterford and Kilkenny, both of which we won, we brought in a lot of new players with

the average age of the team being only about 22," he said.

"So we will be probably be using a lot of inexperienced players in this year's championship.

"As well, our goalkeeper Aoife Murray [his sister] has retired, there's a question mark over whether Gemma O'Connor will be with us, and Orla Cotter will be hardly be involved as she's now living in New York."

"And we also be without Niamh McCarthy this year.

"It's also not in our favour that the County Board have put their main priority on the county club championship this year, with the result that this won't be finished until the end of September.

"So we will only have time to hold about six training sessions before we play our opening game against Offaly, but we've just got to get on with it and do our best."



Courcey Rovers' Ashling Moloney and Newtownshandrum's Collette Desmond and Aoife O'Sullivan in action recently. Picture: Gavin Browne

Three of the four junior camogie semi-finalists are now in place

THREE of the four SE Systems Junior A championship quarter-finals were decided with Newtownshandrum, Ballinascorthy and Ballinora advancing to the semi-finals.

The game between Tracton and St Vincent's failed to yield a result after an injury to St Vincent's player Amy O'Connor saw the game held up and not restarted as the player awaited an ambulance to arrive. This happened in injury time with Tracton leading by four points.

Tracton had made all the running as they led from the start, two first-half goals gave Tracton a 2-6 to 0-4 interval lead.

Tracton maintained their lead through the second half as St Vincent's added to their tally with points and as the clock ticked into added time St Vincent's won a penalty but the Tracton defence stood firm.

However, the injury to the St Vincent's star saw play end without the game concluded as the rule says if a player cannot be treated within 15 minutes the game must be abandoned.

Thankfully Amy is on the road to recovery and we wish her well.

We understand that the game was re-fixed for last night but that Tracton had appealed the decision to replay the game.

At the time of going to print no confirmation of the appeal or of the re fixture was confirmed.

Newtownshandrum continued their impressive displays as they overcame neighbours Mallow in Castle Road on a 3-17 to 0-5 scoreline.

The opening quarter was closely fought and at the first water-break, Newtownshandrum led 1-4 to 0-1 Cliona O'Callaghan with 1-2 and Caoimhe Collins with a point keeping Newtownshandrum in front.

A second O'Callaghan goal on the resumption and a Mariah Reidy point helped Newtownshandrum open up 2-5 to 0-4 half time lead.

The second half belonged to Newtownshandrum as they went on a scoring spree with O'Callaghan adding to her tally with three points, Aoife Twohill chipped in with two, while Katie Coughlan and Róisín Twohill hit a point each.

Reidy added a further five

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

points as they safely booked their passage to the semi-final.

Ballinascorthy made it to the last four with a hard-fought 1-13 to 2-7 victory over a determined Banteer side.

Playing against the wind in the opening half Ballinascorthy took an early lead with Clara Crowley pointing a free. The sides swapped score for score before the water break with Cliona Healy on target for Banteer and Moira Barrett finding the range for Ballinascorthy from play.

Michelle Dullea edged Ballinascorthy in front but a strong response from Banteer saw them hit four points without reply, Healy with three, two from frees, and a Gemma Cashman point had Banteer leading 0-6 to 0-4 at the break.

With the wind in their favour for the second half, Ballinascorthy dug deep and three points in a row had them on level before they hit the front thanks to Clara Crowley converting a 45 and two frees and Anna Flynn adding one from play.

Michelle Dullea stretched the Ballinascorthy advantage with a superb goal and with Anna Flynn, Barrett and Crowley adding points Ballinascorthy held a 1-11 to 0-6 lead at the second water-break.

Annie Condon and Anna Flynn added points on the resumption and with five minutes to go to the final whistle it looked to be done and dusted but all credit to Banteer they battled back hard.

Healy's penalty effort was turned over for a point and keeping the pressure on they had goals from Elizabeth Philpott and Cliona Healy but Ballinascorthy hung on by a goal despite huge Banteer pressure to advance to a semi-final meeting with either Tracton or St Vincent's.

Ballinora last season's Junior B champions will be delighted with their continued good progress as they have made it to the last four.

They had an impressive 3-14 to 1-5 victory over last seasons defeated finalists Charleville to set themselves up for a semi-final meeting against Newtownshandrum.



Ballygarvan's Michaela Buckley about to gain possession ahead of Milford's Nicole O'Connor in a recent game. Both club's key players will now look forward to the inter-county season as championship is over for both clubs. Picture: Howard Crowdy

Cork get a nice opening game

THE revised fixtures for the 2020 Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Championships were confirmed last week with the return of inter-county set to begin on the weekend of October 17-18.

This is three weeks after the senior club championship concludes, pending a replay, so the clear run-in will be beneficial and a first game against Offaly isn't a bad draw at all to get Cork moving again.

All competitions will take place from October until December with the camogie calendar culminating with the All-Ireland final on Saturday, December 12.

There are three groups in the senior championship.

■ Group 1: Cork, Galway, Offaly, Wexford.

■ Group 2: Kilkenny, Limerick, Waterford, Westmeath.

■ Group 3: Clare, Dublin, Tipperary.

Cork begin their campaign on October 17-18 away to Offaly, date, venue and time yet to be determined. Their second outing will be at home to Wexford on October 31/November 1, with their remaining game away to Galway on November 7-8. The quarter-finals are set for mid-November 14-15 with the semi-finals down for the last weekend of the month.

The Cork intermediates are in a tough group with Kerry and Meath. Just the three of them in it with Cork at home to Kerry on October 24-25 and away to Meath on November 7-8. So, two long journeys for Cork that weekend.

It has also been confirmed that the trial playing rules which were initially implemented in this year's national league competitions will remain in place for the All-Ireland Championships. This is welcomed.

There is a slight amendment to trial playing rule 3: Quick puck-out. These trial playing rules will not apply to the 2020 All-Ireland U16 Championship or any other competitions.

These trial rules were approved following the work of the rules revision working group in 2019 who engaged with over 1,500 people to propose potential changes to the



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

current playing rules.

The trial playing rules are only being implemented in the 2020 All-Ireland Championships at present and any decisions on the wider implementation of the various trial rules will be made upon review of their impact following the conclusion of the All-Ireland Championships.

The six trial playing rules being implemented in the championships are:

■ **Approved trial playing rule 1: Contact:** A player may use minimal contact on an opponent's body from side-on once they are making a reasonable effort to gain possession of the sliotar.

Minimal contact is described as contact made while making a reasonable attempt to gain possession of the sliotar. Contact must not be made in an aggressive or cynical manner.

The penalty is a free from where the foul occurred except as provided in Rules 11.2 - 11.12.

I'm not a fan of this one as its too discretionary and will vary greatly amongst referees.

■ **Approved trial playing rule 2: Persistent foul:** A player who is deemed to be persistently fouling another player in the first instance will be noted by the referee. For any further infringement normal rules apply.

I'm not so sure there's any significant change here. Shouldn't that have always been the case?

■ **Approved trial playing rule 3: Quick puck-out:** To restart the game following a wide (Rule 9.5), the referee will blow the whistle to signal a wide and from that point the sliotar is back in play and the goalkeeper is free to restart the game via a

puck-out from the correct position.

The referee will have discretion to stop the play. I really like this one. Apart from speeding up the game it'll make teams more alert instead of trotting back out with all the time in the world to spare. Not sure why the referee has to have discretion though. If it's allowed it's allowed unless another infringement takes place.

■ **Approved trial playing rule 4: Free from the hand:** A player may choose to take a quick free from their hand if they are fouled inside their own 45-metre line.

Only the player that is fouled can take it from the hand and it is an indirect free. Another great rule.

■ **Approved trial playing rule 5: Dropping the hurley and hand-pass goal:** Should a player deliberately drop their hurley, then this will result in a free to the opposing team from where the foul occurred.

Any sliotar that is hand-passed directly into the net by an attacking player will be treated as a wide and therefore result in a puck-out.

I like this one, but I've already seen issues with it. Players have discreetly pulled hurleys out of opponent's hands and gotten away with winning a free. Referees / umpires will need to keep up with the play in that regard.

■ **Approved trial playing rule 6: Penalty/20m free:** A penalty must be struck from on or outside the 20m line but not inside it.

In addition, only one defending player may stand on the goalline during a penalty and shall not move towards the 20m line before the sliotar has been struck.

Where any free is awarded on or near the 20m line, the free must be struck from on or outside the 20m line. No free or penalty may be struck from within the 20m line or within 20 metres of the goal.

Penalty: Free out to the opposing team where the infringement occurred.

So interesting and hopefully positive improvements as we gear ourselves up for what hopefully will be an exciting inter-county championship.

Cork ace hospitalised, game abandoned in injury time

THERE was widespread concern as news circulated on Saturday that St Vincent's and Cork star Amy O'Connor received a worrying injury during her club's junior A championship match against Tracton in Castle Road.

According to St Vincent's stalwart Michelle Gould by Saturday evening, Amy was ok but was being kept in overnight for observation in hospital.

At this stage there is no suggestion that she will miss Cork's senior camogie campaign which starts in October.

The club was sending their best-known hurler their wishes in what was a concerning time for all involved.

There was a lot of tension when the game was abandoned. Tracton were four points ahead nine minutes into injury time, 2-8 to 0-10 when the star forward received the knock which grounded her and left her vision blurred and there was immediate anxiety around her safety.

CAMOGIE

■ Linda Mellerick

The correct thing to do is not to move a player when there is a head or neck concern.

Speaking with referee Cathal McAlister on Saturday evening, he explained that two-and-a-half minutes of that nine-minute additional time was for the second-half water break which we all know drags on from what it should actually be.

In addition, the second-half stoppages for injuries in this game was above the norm, justifying the extra minutes.

Tracton were defending when O'Connor got injured. They had possession.

Had play resumed, Tracton would have been awarded an indirect free and with it the final whistle would have been blown. But the play had to stop. Immediately

when the referee is alerted to a potential head injury, play must stop.

The camogie ruling is that if the injury to a player cannot be dealt with in 15 minutes, the game must be abandoned.

While the ambulance service was quick to arrive at the scene once called, the 15 minutes expired and Cathal McAlister had no option but to abandon the game.

Regardless of the fact that the game was almost over, the referee was following the rules.

So you would feel sorry for Tracton but the right course of action was taken to ensure that Amy O'Connor received the best possible care.

It looks like she's going to be fine and we're grateful for that.

Hopefully, we'll see her back on the field shortly.

The county board will have to decide what happens next in terms of the game.



Meabh Cahalane, St Finbarr's, challenges Chloe Sigerson, Killeagh during their senior camogie championship clash. Picture: Jim Coughlan

Goals prove the difference as Barrs advance to semis

St Finbarr's 3-7 CAMOGIE
Killeagh 0-7 Mary Newman

ST FINBARR'S were full value for their three-goal victory over Killeagh in this SE Systems Senior Championship quarter-final in Castle Road. They led from sixth minute after Keeva McCarthy blasted to the net from close range having won a long delivery on the edge of the square.

The Barrs' overall work-rate was superb as they kept the foot firmly on the pedal and never allowed Killeagh to gain a grip on proceedings.

Killeagh were forced to line out without their inter-county star Laura Treacy who picked up a broken hand in their earlier round clash with Ballygarvan and her presence was missed.

With Gemma O'Connor solid at centre-back and Aisling Egan doing a good job in the full-back berth, St Finbarr's closed down the Killeagh attack. Maebh Cahalane and Aoife O'Neill were also impressive for the Barrs.

Hannah Looney had the game's opening score with McCarthy replying through a free, Emma Olden and Rachel Sheehan exchanged points, but with the wind in their favour, the Barrs kept the pressure on.

With four minutes to the break, Orlaith Cahalane laid off a superb pass to the unmarked Ciara Golden who made no mistake with a super strike to extend her side's lead to six points.

Killeagh found it difficult to make any progress against a solid defence and their cause wasn't helped as they struck three wides in a row from frees and at the interval St Finbarr's led 2-3 to 0-3.

Killeagh enjoyed the best of

the early second-half exchanges with Chloe Sigerson finding the range with three points in a row. It was surprising that with the wind at their backs Killeagh persisted with a lot of hand passing instead of playing direct ball into their inside line as time and time, St Finbarr's turned them over as they worked and regained possession.

Fifteen minutes into the second half, McCarthy pointed a free to relieve the pressure and on the 19th minute she was again on target as the Barrs regained their momentum.

Killeagh needed something and they created a goal chance with six minutes remaining after Looney found Sheehan with a long delivery, but her kicked effort went over for a point.

With five minutes remaining, Barrs' Eimear Ryan sealed the deal with a goal after good work from Lynda O'Connell saw Golden offload to Ryan. Finishing strong with points from Ella Wiggington-Barrett and McCarthy, St Finbarr's are safely through to the last four.

Scorers for St Finbarr's: K McCarthy 1-5 (0-5 f), E Ryan C Golden 1-0 each, E Olden, E Wiggington-Barrett 0-1 each, Killeagh: C Sigerson 0-4 f, R Sheehan 0-2, H Looney 0-1.

ST FINBARR'S: C Hurley, S Punch, A Egan, A O'Neill, M Cahalane, G O'Connor, R Finn, L O'Connell, A Shannon, C Sargent, C Golden, K McCarthy, O Cahalane, E Olden, R Myers.

Subs: E Wiggington-Barrett for C Sargent (48), E Ryan for R Myers.

Killeagh: S Beausang, E Treacy, A Walsh, N O'Keeffe, L McEvoy, H Looney, C Daly, J O'Shea, S Kent, C Barry, C Sigerson, C Harvey, A O'Driscoll, R Sheehan (c), R Fogarty.

Sub: K Aherne for S Kent (14).

Referee: Simon Stokes (Tullylease).



Linda Collins, Courcy Rovers, breaking out past Laura Hayes, St Catherine's.

Picture: Jim Coughlan

Courceys shake off Catherine's

CAMOGIE
Linda Mellerick
Courcy Rovers 2-9
St Catherine's 1-6

IT was only when Linda Collins hit the net in the 56th minute that Courcy Rovers could feel like this game was theirs.

Until that green flag, it was a tightly fought clash with St Catherine's in the SE Systems Senior Championship quarter-final played in Castle Road on Saturday.

It took Catherine's until the 39th minute to score from play, but that shouldn't take from the possession they had or the battle they presented.

They shared the attacking stats in a low-scoring opening half, but creating space was at a minimum due to a tremendous Rovers defence in which Ashling Moloney, in particular, was outstanding.

Courceys, with the more threatening forwards, were trying to give Collins or Christine O'Neill space inside as they alternated positions.

Equally, St Catherine's defence was strong. Cork team-mates Laura Hayes and Collins were having a great contest with Hayes instrumental in keeping Courceys' first-half scores from play to 1-1.

Catherine's had the opening advantage of a deceptively strong wind blowing cross-field, but evidently in Catherine's favour based on the blowing jersey of Jacinta Crowley as she faced the elements and struck three frees and 45s.

Her 45 on four minutes was batted down into the square where O'Neill was waiting to tap into the corner of the net.

O'Neill was causing problems with a strong work-rate, good distribution, and winning frees. Fiona Keating was making searing runs down the middle and it looked as if the west Cork side would have too much firepower.

Just after the water break St Catherine's had a goal opportunity cleared off



Christine O'Neill, Courcy Rovers, celebrates scoring a goal against St Catherine's.

Picture: Jim Coughlan

the line and Courceys took a narrow four-point lead into the half-time break.

They increased that lead by three to 1-6 after Keating, Crowley, and Collins had three more points on the board inside seven minutes, the latter's score an inspiring one after brilliant defensive play again by Moloney.

It looked as if that was going to be how the second half would play out, Rovers were pulling away.

But the game swung on its head as St Catherine's responded with 1-2 bringing the gap to two points and creating a nervousness in Courceys' approach.

Evelyn Ronayne first made a brilliant block on Saoirse McCarthy to stop a certain goal, then she delivered a perfect ball into Finola Neville, who caught and hit the net despite goalkeeper Sinead O'Reilly getting a touch.

Crowley steadied the nerves with a pointed free and Courceys had time to regroup as the second water break of the game arrived.

Again Crowley pointed (f) but St Catherine's were not going away.

It was a tight battle, with numerous frees and yellow cards handed out. But it was exciting. Finally, Courceys could breathe easier with Collins' belter of a

goal, as she finally got away from the attentions of the excellent Hayes.

McCarthy pointed before Sara Barry and Neville again replied. But it was in injury-time and Rovers led by six points in a game they deserved to win but one in which Catherine's made them work all the way for.

Orla Cotter, of course, was a loss to St Catherine's. Her intention was to return from New Jersey for her club's championship but due to travel restrictions that wasn't possible.

Rovers advance to the semi-final where they will be hard to beat on this form.

Scorers for Courcy Rovers: J Crowley 0-5 (0-4 f, 0-1 45), L Collins 1-1, C O'Neill 1-0, F Keating 0-2, S McCarthy 0-1.

St Catherine's: F Neville 1-2 (0-2 f), L O'Donnell 0-2 (0-1 f, 0-1 45), A O'Regan, S Barry 0-1 each.

COURCY ROVERS: S O'Reilly, C Hayes, K Keohane, G Hannon, O Twomey, A Moloney, E Moloney, J Crowley, Elaine O'Reilly, Eimear O'Reilly, F Keating, Lorraine Collins, Linda Collins, C O'Neill, S McCarthy.

Subs: G O'Reilly for Lorraine Collins (14), E Maguire for E O'Reilly (56).

ST CATHERINE'S: Y O'Neill, O Neville, C Motherway, A M Rohan, R O'Callaghan, L Hayes, E Ronayne, M Rohan, M O'Keefe, N O'Regan, F Neville, C Dwyer, L O'Donnell, A Hurley, C Dunning.

Subs: A O'Regan for C Dunning (14), S Barry for C Dwyer (54).

Referee: Andrew Larkin (Ballygarvan).



Gemma O'Connor, St Finbarr's, clears her lines against Killeagh.

Picture: Jim Coughlan

White and Mackey deliver as Douglas see off Éire Óg

Camogie

Therese O'Callaghan

Douglas produced another efficient performance at Castle Road on Sunday in the SE Systems Cork senior camogie club championship to get the better of 2018 Intermediate champions Éire Óg, 4-13 to 3-9. They now progress to a semi-final meeting with Courcey Rovers next weekend.

The victors proved too strong for the mid Cork side (who never gave up) laying the foundation for victory midway through the opening half. Alicia Cremin's goal in the 13th minute, enabled them to lead 1-4 to 1-1.

Douglas were ruthless in the second quarter and Katrina Mackey's green flag from a penalty after Chloe St Ledger was fouled, saw them hold a 2-9 to 1-4 interval advantage.

Julia White pounced for two second-half goals, and along with the Mackey twins Katrina and captain Pamela, they are the backbone of this team.

White and Katrina Mackey finished with tallies of 2-2 and 1-8 respectively. And Cremin was a huge threat at full forward having not been involved in the previous match.

"We are going well this year," said White, hero of Cork's All Ireland success in 2017. "We are really happy now to have two wins in a row. We would have had a few heavy defeats last year. We have a lot of players back and having time to train together as well has helped."

"Alicia Cremin was with us tonight. She has been away in Edinburgh but she has been training away. She did very well and we were definitely happy to have her in there."

"We have new management as well (Philip Kavanagh, Eddie Sheehan, Aisling O'Brien, Pat Harrington and Ger McSweeney)."

"But there is tough opposition waiting. We won't be getting ahead of ourselves. I suppose for the body it is nice to have a week to recover but I like the continuity as it keeps the momentum going and it keeps us focused."

Despite, the seven-point winning margin Éire Óg, who were without their influential full-back Aoife Hennessy due to injury, didn't give them an easy passage.



Éire Óg's Ciara Sheehan tumbles under pressure from Joy Leo of Douglas in the Cork Senior Camogie Championship at Castle Road, Blackrock.

Pictures: Gavin Browne

Full forward Margaret O'Herlihy played a key role, bagging 2-5, her second goal a minute from time drilled home from a free after Isobel Sheehan was fouled following a brilliant run.

And Emma Crowley found the net in the first half to give her side an early lead.

Once Douglas settled, they had too much firepower. They can regard themselves as contenders against Courcey Rovers.

Courcey Rovers booked their last four place on Saturday against St Catherine's emerging victorious on a scoreline of 2-9 to 1-6. They didn't get matters all their own way though, this was competitive from start to finish.

The match-up between inter-county mates Linda Collins and Laura Hayes alone was intriguing. It was a goal from Collins in the second period that finally decided the outcome.

Courcey Rovers started well and when Christine O'Neill pounced for their opening goal in the fourth minute, it gave them a platform on which to



Douglas' Chelsea Noonan tries to stop Éire Óg's Isobel Sheehan at Castle Road yesterday.

build. The full forward was alert to the breaking ball following a free from Jacinta Crowley.

They were 1-3 to 0-2 up at the interval but the expected fightback from St Catherine's materialised — captain Finola Neville's goal reducing the deficit to two points.

St Finbarr's claimed a big

scalp beating Killeagh on Saturday, 3-7 to 0-7. But it should be noted that this was a Killeagh side without the injured Laura Treacy.

First-half goals from St Finbarr's captain Keeva McCarthy and Ciara Golden gave them an interval cushion of 2-3 to 0-3. Eimear Ryan put the game beyond the east Cork

side's reach with their third goal in the second half.

In these unique times, clubs have access to county players and multiple All Ireland and All-Star winner Gemma O'Connor is enjoying her time with the club.

"It is brilliant. Everyone gets to concentrate on their club. Usually you are trying to squeeze in everything. I think everyone across the country is enjoying playing club."

"It is about us getting used to our own players as well. There are players there you played with for years and there are new players."

"They don't know you and you don't know them so this year everyone has a chance to get to know each other."

St Finbarr's await the winners of the Glen Rovers and Inniscarra tie. This quarter-final was postponed due to an Inniscarra player feeling unwell on Saturday and having to be tested for Covid-19.

Cork Camogie Board said last night they will make a decision about the re-fixture when the test results are known.

Douglas drive on to last four



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

Douglas	4-13
Éire Óg	3-9

EVEN though Éire Óg will have been disappointed to lose this SE Systems Senior Camogie Championship tie at Castle Rd yesterday evening, it was a respectable result against an experienced Douglas side with inter-county players of the calibre of Katrina and Pam Mackey, Julia White, and former inter-county goalkeeper Jessica Kavanagh.

The loss of injured full-back Aoife Hennessy was also a big blow.

With Emma Crowley hitting 1-1 inside six minutes, it was a great start for Éire Óg. Crowley gave Douglas keeper Jessica Kavanagh no chance from point-blank range, but from there, Douglas took control. From that sixth minute until after the quarter mark, Éire Óg struggled to get beyond their half-forward line and Douglas started picking off the scores.

Julia White was enjoying herself, as were the Mackeys, but it wasn't just Katrina on the scoreboard, as Alicia Cremin declared herself very much on the scene. The only personnel change from Douglas' last outing had a blinder at full forward. She caused havoc, with a great catching display, and great strength and finish. She closed the game out with 1-2 and played a major part in both of White's second-half goals.

Mairead Mulrooney was another heavily involved as Douglas went on the attack. Scoring 1-6 without reply, Cremin's goal coming on 13 minutes, they led by four points.

Éire Óg got back into the game as Aoife O'Callaghan, Isobel Sheehan, Ruth Murphy, Meabh Ellen Desmond, and Margaret O'Herlihy drove forward. But the Douglas full-back line was once again tight, with Emma Kavanagh, Amy Curtin, and Seosai Mulrooney growing in confi-



Julia White of Douglas in action against Éire Óg's Aileen Hennessy at Castle Rd, Blackrock.

dence with every game. At the other end Chloe St Ledger was pulled down in the square for a penalty and Mackey made no mistake to give Douglas a 2-9 to 1-4 interval lead.

Despite Mackey getting the opening score of the second period, Isobel Sheehan came back out in attacking mode as Éire Óg made another burst at goal.

O'Herlihy struck two points but they were knocked back again after Cremin kept a high ball from going over the line and hand-passed it towards the net, leaving Julia White the simple task of tapping it in.

Three chances Éire Óg then had of netting, but Kavanagh denied them with the first two. Margaret O'Herlihy eventually found a way through after receiving a good pass from Sheehan and maybe this game wasn't over yet. The gap was seven points but it was certainly not a runaway victory.

However, any hopes Éire Óg had of a fightback were short-lived when from the puck-out, White had her second goal after another brilliant catch and offload by Cremin.

Despite trailing at that stage by 10 points, you would have to give credit to Éire Óg, who never gave up the fight.

In the last quarter they struck 1-3, Margaret O'Herlihy netting from a close-in free, to leave a very respectable seven-point defeat.

This was Douglas' fourth outing and undoubtedly they have grown with every game.

Unfortunately for Éire Óg, having won their opening round and receiving a bye in round four, this was just their second. In just their second season at senior level they would have liked more games, which would have done them the world of good.

But that's how it played out. Douglas advance to the semi-final where they'll meet Courcsey Rovers.

Scorers for Douglas: K Mackey 1-8 (1-0 p, 0-2 f), A Cremin 1-2, J White 2-2, C Noonan 0-1

Éire Óg: E Crowley 1-1, M Gleeson 0-2, M O'Herlihy 2-5 (0-2 45, 1-1 f), M E Desmond 0-1

DOUGLAS: J Kavanagh, E Kavanagh, A Curtin, S Mulrooney, C Nason, P Mackey, R Sheehan, M Mulrooney, C Noonan, K Holland, K Mackey, C St Ledger, J White, A Cremin, J Leo.

Subs: C McCarthy for J Leo (23), J O'Mahony for C St Ledger (54)

ÉIRE ÓG: R Murray, A Hennessy, K McCarthy, C Sheehan, E Quigley, A O'Callaghan, S Hutchinson, A McSweeney, I Sheehan, R Murphy, M E Desmond, R Sheehan, M Gleeson, M O'Herlihy.

Subs: A Buckley for K McCarthy (40), K McCarthy for C Sheehan (54, inj).

Referee: Cathal McAllister (Aghada).



Douglas's Pamela Mackey in action against Éire Óg's Meabh Ellen Desmond in the SE Systems Senior Camogie Championship at Castle Road. Picture: Gavin Browne

Douglas face Courcsey's as Glen meet Inniscarra after Covid-19 delay

CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

WHEN Douglas lost by seven points to St Finbarr's, few could have imagined they would later get through to the SE Systems Senior Camogie Championship semi-final. The 'Barr's weren't predicted to be in the last four of this year's championship either. Why, I'm not sure, considering they only lost to Sarsfields by four points in last year's semi-final.

We weren't giving them the credit they deserved, because they're here again, showing consistency and, in my opinion, playing better than 12 months ago.

Both clubs put in solid and impressive performances to get to the semi-finals. Douglas face Courcsey Rovers on Sunday, in what should be a cracking game. Michael O'Regan will be streaming the game online, so people won't be denied the chance to see these two in action.

The 'Barr's await the winners of Glen Rovers versus Inniscarra, which was postponed last weekend because an Inniscarra member was being tested for Covid-19. Thankfully, the test was clear and that game is the first of the double senior header in Castle Road on Sunday.

Finalists in 2018 and plagued with injuries in 2019, Courcsey's were always going to be a side to be reckoned with again this season. A couple of years older and wiser from that championship final, they are fast becoming an experienced and proficient outfit.

Of the teams left, who has the most balanced side? The gap is narrowing.

St Finbarr's improved with that three-goal return against Killeagh. Douglas have strengthened in a lot of areas; their defence really stood tall last weekend.

You can add in Mairead Mulrooney and Alicia Cremin (who was just excellent at full-forward), but it isn't just about the Cork players in the Douglas set-up.

Rovers have such a strong defence. Ashling Moloney is a real leader; Ciara Hayes is rock-solid; they have Karyn Keohane at full-back, and Jacinta Crowley at midfield, who is very accurate on frees. Up front, Christine O'Neill had a great quarter-final, while Linda Collins, Fiona Keating, and Saoirse McCarthy show that they have such talent in every line.

But it takes more than that when it comes to a semi-final. It takes a real desire to win. Courcsey's showed that spirit against St Catherine's; they'll need to demonstrate it again this weekend.

The Glen and Inniscarra game is another exciting prospect. The Glen have had the toughest of routes and are playing really well, and it's been a while since Inniscarra put on their championship boots.

Down to the last five, the cream of the crop start going head to head.

Katrina Mackey missed out on the club championship in 2019 because of a prolonged hand injury. She does so much more than score spectacular goals and points. Her presence, how she lifts the entire squad, is telling.

Last season, even without Katrina, Douglas should have had a far better return than five points against Éire Óg, in the back door, having already lost to Sars, and, at that point, it seemed a long way back for the city club.

But here they are, having to put that opening defeat to St Finbarr's behind them and impressively accounting for Ballincollig, champions Sarsfields, and Éire Óg, hitting 4-13 this time around.

Douglas look as if they're enjoying themselves and it's no surprise that manager, Philip Kavanagh, has a part in that.

He said it's all about enjoyment.

"Look, the reason girls play sport is to have fun. We have fun. We'll take the next game like we took the last and if we win, great, if we don't, we'll take that, too," Kavanagh said.

"We'll give it our best. Having Pam, Katrina, and Julia with us has been immense. All the girls, those that won the Féile in 2009 and the younger players behind them, have all gelled and bought into each other. Ashling O'Brien, our chairperson, has done huge work and been a great help to us. We're taking nothing for granted; just one game at a time," Kavanagh said.

SUNDAY

SE Systems Senior Championship at Castle Road Quarter-final: Glen Rovers v Inniscarra, 2pm; Semi-final: Courcsey Rovers v Douglas, 5pm.

INTERMEDIATE SEMI-FINAL

BY KIERAN MCCARTHY

HER sister Melissa is regarded as one of the best defenders in the country and is an All-Star footballer – but camogie has always been Louise Duggan's first love.

Of the four Duggan sisters in Ballyboy in Dunmanway, three play football for the Dohenys (twins Melissa and Michelle, and Aprille) while the oldest, Louise, bucks the trend.

'I played a bit of football underage but I always preferred camogie. I love the speed of the game and the skill involved,' explains Duggan, who is vice-captain of the Enniskeane team involved in Saturday's county intermediate camogie championship semi-final against Fr O'Neill's at Castle Road (2pm).

'They used to play camogie underage with Enniskeane too. Actually, Melissa and Michelle have county underage camogie medals whereas I don't! They won an U14 county title.'

Louise might have missed out on an underage county medal with Enniskeane but she has been involved in their journey from 13-a-side junior B to intermediate, picking up medals along the way, and now she wants to add a county intermediate medal to her collection.

Enniskeane have come very close in recent years. They lost the county finals in 2017 and 2019, both to Newcestown, so they've been knocking on the door. Not surprisingly, they are regarded as one of the front-runners again this season.

'We have been very close in the last few years. Last season we lost by only a point and that

hurt a lot but it's driving us on this year. We are very motivated, there are no distractions and we are focussed on what we need to do,' Duggan says.

After a convincing 4-19 to 0-9 win against Ballyhea in Round 1, Enniskeane almost came unstuck in the last round against Blackrock. At one stage of the opening half they trailed by 13 points before a stirring comeback saw them eventually emerge 1-18 to 2-13 winners. Duggan, who played wing back that day, was one of the leaders in the fight-back.

'We shouldn't have left ourselves get into so much difficulty against Blackrock,' says Duggan, who works as a pharmacist in Drinagh Pharmacy in Skibbereen.

'We had a bad start but we settled down after that and we didn't panic. We showed great resolve and resilience. We have great belief in ourselves and that showed because we kept working, kept popping over the points and then we got in for the goal.'

Enniskeane showed their character in that comeback but they know they can't afford a slow start in Saturday's semi-final against Fr O'Neill's, who beat Kilbrittain-Timoleague by 4-5 to 0-6 in another quarter-final.

'Our goal is to get up to senior level, that's where we want to be but we have to take every match as it comes so all our focus is on the semi-final,' explains Duggan, and key to their title hopes will be Cork senior Orla Cronin



Louise Duggan in action for Enniskeane in their county intermediate quarter-final win against Blackrock. (Photo: David Ribeiro)

Enniskeane one win away from third county final in four years

who has scored 1-21 in their two championship matches so far.

'We have seen more of Orla this year because of the Covid-19 situation and having her around has been invaluable,' Duggan says.

'She has played with the best

players at the highest level and she demands high standards from us – that drives us on and makes us better players. She has huge experience and that's great to have, especially for the younger players who see what it takes to reach the highest level.'

'They used to play camogie underage with Enniskeane too. Actually, Melissa and Michelle have county underage camogie medals whereas I don't!'

Collins' late goal seals Courceys' victory

SENIOR CAMOGIE

COURCEY Rovers will take on Douglas in a county senior camogie championship semi-final this Sunday.

The winners got the better of St Catherine's by 2-9 to 1-6 in a quarter-final at Castle Road last Saturday afternoon, and their reward is a last-four battle with Douglas, again at Castle Road in Mahon, throw-in 5pm.

Courceys were pushed all the way by St Catherine's but they were deserving winners and will be fancied to reach the final for the second time in three seasons. Courceys led 1-3 to 0-2 at the break thanks to Christine O'Neill's early goal, though, as expected, St Catherine's hung in there and reduced the gap to two points at one stage in the second half.

It was only when Linda Collins scored a 56th minute goal for Courceys did the winners have some breathing space.

Coming off the back of a facile win over Newcestown in the last round this was just the type of challenge that Courceys needed as we head into the business end. Jacinta Crowley scored five placed balls, Ashling Moloney stood out at centre back while Fiona Keating's direct running caused Courceys problems.

Next up for Courceys in the semi-final is a Douglas team that beat Éire Óg by 4-13 to 3-9 in their quarter-final last weekend. Despite Margaret O'Herlihy scoring 2-5 for the Mid Cork team and Emma Crowley also scoring a goal for Éire Óg, the city side advanced with Katrina Mackey (1-8) and Julia White (2-2) leading the charge.

The other semi-final also takes place at Castle Road this Sunday when Glen Rovers take on Inniscarra, at 2pm.



Courceys Rovers' Linda Collins rifles home her side's second goal against St Catherine's in the county senior quarter-final. (Photo: Trevor Patchett)

'With hurleys I've a bit of confession to make - I'm using one of Michelle Quilty's'

HURLING HANDS

Anne Dalton,
St Lachtain's and
Kilkenny

My hands are in pretty good shape — whatever about how they look, they're healthy enough. I've been very lucky in that I've never broken any bone which is amazing, given how long I've been playing camogie.

I've had the odd nick and scratch from games, though I notice the older you get, the slower they are to heal. Because of that, I've a couple of scars there if you look closely. I don't have arthritis. Not yet, anyway.

Developing as a player isn't something I'd have thought about in those terms, particularly as a child. I played because I just loved playing and loved winning, but when you reflect years later, it's possible to pick out something that helped you develop as a player.

For instance, in Freshford primary school we'd play in school leagues, as we called them — teams were made up of the kids in fourth, fifth, and sixth classes, and even a few from third. Every day at little break and big break, you'd be playing a match against different teams within the school.

I was lucky enough to be allowed to play with the boys, which brought me on an awful lot. When I played underage with the club, it was a similar situation, I was allowed to play with the boys up to U14. That's always going to speed up your hurling, speed up your hands — you get to learn pretty quick that you'll only get one chance to gather

the ball because it'll be gone if you need to take a second bite at it.

I wasn't even thinking of how that brought me on because it was just the way things were in the school, but I can see it now in retrospect. That was just how it was done in the school, but the need to get the ball under control first-time in particular was a big help.

With hurleys I've a bit of confession to make — I'm using one of Michelle Quilty's. She broke it one day at a game and left it after her. Ann Downey handed it to me and I kept it at home in a cupboard for a couple of years, but when we went back after Covid I broke a few hurleys in quick succession, so I was stuck.

I picked up hers going out training one evening and I haven't stopped using it since. My conversion rate for frees has gone up so I'm beginning to wonder if her accuracy is down to her hurley... I don't know anything about it, where she got it or whatever, but it works. She won't be getting it back anyway!

I'd usually go in to Star Hurleys in Kilkenny for my hurleys. I've played with theirs for years and I always get a 32 inch hurley with an adult bas: I put linseed oil on it, let it dry and then put a grip on and play away.

I have four now that I can use apart from Michelle's — and there are a couple outside that I'll have to get rid of them, they're fairly well battered now.

Two players I'd admire among those I've played with, Michelle Quilty and Claire Phelan, are head and shoulders above everyone — and I get to play with Claire at club level as well.

They're unbelievably skilful, the pair of them. At times when you're training

with them they'll do something and you just say 'wow' to yourself.

I've been made a fool of by Claire a few times in training. The other night she did it again — we went in for the tackle together but she was able to rise the ball, spin me and, without me getting close to her, she gave me a nice bruise on the top of my leg.

So she took the ball, made a fool out of me and left me hurting, all in the one move — and then got a goal.

Michelle's hands are unbelievable — she'll be facing the wrong way but throw out a hand pass and wrongfoot the defence.

We played Wexford a lot when I was U14, U16 and so on, but that meant every year we'd come up against Una Leacy, and her skill was incredible. The first time playing against her I could see she was a special talent.

If she was on the pitch, you were guaranteed to see a goal for her side. Guaranteed. And she always had that ability, because I was playing against her when she was 12 or 13 and she had that ability even then — she was a lot better than most of us.

The first player I really took notice of playing senior inter county, really standing out at that level, was Eimear McDonnell of Tipperary.

She was very fast — still is — and the first day I saw her play against us, she got a couple of goals.

Her wristwork, her ability with the hurley — I've seen her a few times since and she proved it wasn't just a one-off, because she was always able to do something on that level. That's what great players can do.

Interview: Michael Moynihan



Anne Dalton: 'I've been very lucky I've never broken any bone, which is amazing, given how long I've been playing camogie.'



Limerick's Niamh Mulcahy chases down Cork's Laura Tracey in a National League clash.

Picture: ©INPHO/Ryan Byrne



Enniskeane's Orla Coughlan will be a key player for her side in their game with Fr O'Neill's.
Picture: Larry Cummins

Exciting intermediate semi-finals on the cards at Castle Road

WE ARE down to the last four in the SE Systems Intermediate Camogie Championship. This afternoon, Castle Road will host both semi-finals at 2pm and 5pm.

Last year's defeated finalists, Enniskeane, recorded a superb victory over Blackrock to book their place in the opening game in Castle Road at 2pm this afternoon where they will take on an in form Fr O'Neill's side.

A tremendous second half fight-back from Enniskeane saw the claw back a 10-point interval deficit to defeat Blackrock by two points, 1-18 to 2-15.

Blackrock dominated the opening half and early goals saw them lead 2-7 to 0-3 inside the opening quarter as Enniskeane struggled in all sectors.

Enniskeane, with the aid of the slight wind for the second half were fast off the mark and hit four fast points they never allowed their head to drop and grew in confidence as the half progressed.

They picked off score after score but still trailed by seven points with 12 minutes remaining but all credit to them as they fashioned out a superb win with Orla Coughlan, Sínead Hurley and Orla Cronin driving them forward at every opportunity.

Orla Coughlan is a player who works tremendously hard and she will have a key role to play this afternoon to ensure plenty of ball gets to their inside line where Sínead Hurley, Tara Sheehan and Eimear O'Brien will troubling any defence.

Fr O'Neill's have impressed in their campaign to date with victories over Na Piarasigh and Kilbrittain / Timoleague, they hit an impressive sixteen points in their opening game against Na Piarasigh before grabbing four goals against Kilbrittain / Timoleague.

Ciarra O'Doherty, Kate Harrington, Deirdre Corcoran, Keelagh Cullinane and Clodagh Finn are key players for a side who are steadily rebuilding having for many years participated at senior level they would dearly love to go that extra mile and regain their senior status.

Aghabullogue and Ballyhea meet at 5pm.

So far it has been a wonderful campaign for Ballyhea who are participating at intermediate grade for their first time, winning the Junior A championship last year.

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

They made the step up this year and they must be delighted to be in the last four and no doubt they will battle to take it a step further.

They lost out heavily to Enniskeane in their opening game 4-19 to 0-9 but they put the shoulders to the wheel and fashioned out a one point victory over Valley Rovers in the back door round.

They were one of two teams who had to play an extra game and here they overcame Watergrasshill in round three as they confidently progressed on a 2-8 to 1-6 scoreline.

Brian Dillon's were their round four opponents and here they again had to dig deep before a strong finish saw them run out 3-15 to 3-11 winners.

Rachel Harty, Laura Dillon, Roisin Killeen and Kate Kilcommins will lead their quest for a place in the final.

Aghabullogue are a hard working side who are putting in huge effort at all levels, a 2-15 to 1-5 first round win over Watergrasshill was a statement of their intentions in this championship and they went on to overcome Carrigaline 4-15 to 1-6.

Cork senior Cliona Healy is their stand out player but they have also excellent players in Emma Flanagan, Ciara McCarthy, Julie Tarrant and Joanne Crowley and they have a huge work rate which has stood to them in their game to date.

On Sunday, in Castle Road at 11.30am, it's an all Mid-Cork clash as Cloughduv and Éire Óg contest the first county final of what has been a strange year for sport when they meet in the junior second teams final.

Cloughduv recorded a victory over St Finbarr's whilst Éire Óg proved too strong for Douglas.

In the SE Systems Junior A semi-final, Tracton who overcame St Vincent's in the replay of their quarter final game that had to be abandoned due to an injury in added time to a St Vincent's player take on Ballinascorthy in Brinney at 12 noon.

Newtownshandrum await the winners in the final after their 5-12 to 1-13 semi-final win over Ballinora on Tuesday.



Christine O'Neill, Courcey Rovers, celebrates scoring a goal against St Catherine's.

Picture: Jim Coughlan

Positives out of season

THREE more clubs exited the senior championship last week at the quarter-final stage.

While both semi-finals were down for decision this weekend, the Glen Rovers versus Inniscarra quarter-final, which was postponed, goes ahead, meaning that either Douglas or Courcey Rovers will have a two-week lead into the final, whereas the Glen or Inniscarra will have the one.

That can't be helped, given Covid-19, and, sometimes, assuming everyone is free from any niggling injury, it can be better to keep the momentum going and play again so soon. Equally, it can be a big ask. If you win, it's considered a plus; if you lose, it's a negative.

St Catherine's, Killeagh, and Éire Óg were the three teams whose championship hopes have to be shelved for another year. Many felt that Killeagh's exit was a surprise. I didn't.

Granted the absence of Laura Treacy had a significant impact — out with a broken bone in her hand, picked up in Killeagh's fourth-round victory over Ballygarvan. But Killeagh had a fairly handy championship draw up to now.

No disrespect to the teams they played, but Newcestown, up to senior for the first time, and a young Ballygarvan side weren't considered championship contenders. Yet, even in those games, Killeagh weren't making a mark, not the mark they should have if they wanted a jubilant 2020.

Scoring 12 points from play against Newcestown and 2-6 against Ballygarvan wasn't an impressive return and in general play, it just wasn't happening. I can't put my finger on why Killeagh aren't setting the championship alight. They certainly came very close last year with two tremendous games against Inniscarra in the semi-final but in and around that there regularly seems to be something missing.

I have great admiration for Hannah Looney, Laura Treacy and Chloe Sigerson, all great players but when you look at what Douglas are getting out of Katrina and Pam Mackey and Julia White, there's no comparison.

Why is that? It's a question Killeagh need to ask themselves. They tried Chloe in the full-forward line. I don't think it

CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

worked out so well but to be fair they had to try something.

Chloe is equally effective scoring-wise out the field and contributes more coming forward. To her credit she went in there and gave it her best shot, possibly preferring to be further out.

A great sign of a selfless player. Killeagh should have a fairly balanced team. With Stephanie Beausang, Niamh O'Keefe, Ciara Daly and Jessica O'Shea alongside the three Cork seniors you have a very strong backbone by which to build on and bring on others around you.

I see Douglas' 'club only' players growing with every game. And this reminds me of when they won the title in 2008 and 2011. Steady, disciplined performances by all 15.

Killeagh have been promising for a while and last year would have given much hope but 2020 has turned out to be very disappointing. It happens but the years go quickly by and the promise of a good team can pass.

St Finbarr's gave a good performance. Ashling Egan had a very solid game at full-back adding to an impressive defence. They brought on Ella Wigginton Barrett, granddaughter of the great Dave Wigginton of Cork Hibs, and Eimear Ryan late in the second half and they scored 1-1 between them, Ryan with the goal. That always gives a team a lift when subs come on and make an immediate impact.

Upfront was where I felt the Barrs would struggle, relying too much on Keava McCarthy but they hit three goals. They've a tough semi-final against Glen Rovers or Inniscarra but is there ever an easy semi-final?

St Catherine's lost out by six points to Courcey Rovers. As expected Rovers just had to much firepower to handle. Catherine's made Rovers fight all the way and you'd expect nothing less from them.

Even when the game looked to be slip-



Meabh Cahalane, St Finbarr's, battling Chloe Sigerson, Killeagh.

Picture: Jim Coughlan

ping away from them they battled back and put themselves right back in contention. Rovers can thank them for a really good game ahead of tomorrow's clash with Douglas.

I'm not sure if I'm the only one but I'm getting a really good vibe out of this year's championship. The way it's being run off week after week, the tangible way you can see the positive impact having their Cork players is having on clubs and panels, there's a real feel-good presence around it.

I know that having the games behind closed doors is taking from the atmosphere, I certainly get that, but it isn't impacting on the standard or effort the players are giving on the pitch and you actually tend to forget that there's no one on the banks watching once the ball is thrown in.

The live streaming of games has brought in a great audience. I know of people watching the games on their large TV screens at home.

These are neutral spectators to the actual clubs playing, who more than likely wouldn't physically go to watch the game but are thoroughly enjoying it at home. So, some positives out of the season.

Surely, the season divide between club and county is now a must with the positivity that has come in the past few months from intercounty players and clubs alike.



High-flying Inniscarra player Aileen Sheehan jump over the Glen's Karen O'Connell and team-mate Erin Looney. Picture: Ger Bonus

Inniscarra move on to the senior semi-final but will need to be better

Inniscarra 2-11
Glen Rovers 2-8

SENIOR CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

INNISCARRA meet St Finbarr's in the SE Systems Senior Championship semi-final after a close encounter with Glen Rovers in Castle Road.

Inniscarra will be the first to admit that they'll need a big improvement next Saturday but having not played a championship game in six weeks the rustiness may now be behind them.

It was an uninspiring opening half from both sides. Looking jittery and stale the distribution from both Glen Rovers and Inniscarra was poor. Rena Buckley picked up Glen danger woman Katie Walsh and the flicks that made her such a successful defender were still evident. Nullifying the Glen's top scorer from play in this year's championship contributed much to Inniscarra's three point win.

A low-scoring opening half, 0-4 apiece at the break, three points from play from Inniscarra and two from the Glen epitomised the struggle that this game was going through.

It did look as if Inniscarra were that bit stronger if they got flowing and had more of a scoring threat.

Inniscarra came out with the strong but swirling wind at their backs in the second half. The game picked up a bit although distribution at times was still wayward. Inniscarra looked to be pulling away on two occasions but twice the Glen came back bringing an element of excitement to an otherwise game that failed to live up to expectations.

An eight minute purple patch saw Inniscarra hit 1-4, the goal coming from an astute finish by substitute Treasa McCarthy, her intro-

duction at half time having a big impact.

Four points from play from Ellen Murphy (2), who was starting to cause the Glen problems, and Claudia Keane and Inniscarra led by double scores. The Glen looked in disarray as it all started to go wrong. But the free taking stick of Denise Luby brought the Blackpool side back. Her forth ninth minute free caught the Inniscarra defence napping as she rattled the net.

An inspiring Joanne Casey point steadied Inniscarra again and Clara Ring's goal fifty six in looked to be the nail in the coffin for the Glen. But again they refused to go away and a top class strike from Nora O'Riordan brought the gap down to three again.

With the Glen in possession they defensively gave away a needless free in injury time and Casey made it 2-11 to 2-7. The Glen attacked ferociously but Inniscarra weathered the storm conceding a free out on the wing which Luby converted and it was game over.

Scorers for Inniscarra: C Keane 0-4, J Casey 0-4 (0-2 f), T McCarthy 1-0, C Ring 1-0, E Murphy 0-2, A O'Regan 0-1.

Glen Rovers: D Luby 1-6 (1-5 f, 0-1 45), N O'Riordan 1-0, K Walsh, M Browne 0-1.

INNISCARRA: S Walsh, A O'Regan, C Looney, A Kavanagh, C Keane, R Buckley, R O'Mahony, E Looney, K O'Mahony, J Casey, N Dilworth, A Sheehan, R Quigley, C Ring, E Murphy.

Subs: T McCarthy for N Dilworth (h/t), E O'Reilly for E Looney (52, in), J Burke for C Ring (57).

GLEN ROVERS: L O'Riordan, C O'Brien, K Falvey, C Martin, K O'Connell, L O'Sullivan, L Callanan, T McCarthy, E Murphy, K O'Sullivan, L Cunningham, N O'Riordan, K Walsh, D Luby, M Browne.

Sub: A Wallace for K O'Sullivan (33).

Referee: Andrew Larkin - Ballygarvan



Courcey Rovers' Linda Collins hammers home her goal from Douglas' Seosai Mulrooney during the SE Systems Cork Senior Camogie semi-final at Castle Road. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

Courcey's class pays off



SENIOR CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

Courcey Rovers 2-15
Douglas 2-5

THERE was no denying Courcey Rovers a place in the SE Systems Senior Championship final after an impressive 10-point victory over Douglas in Castle Road.

Courceys' defensively were excellent, how they worked the ball out of trouble impressive. Their distribution is always meaningful, their deliveries intelligent. And inside, their forwards provide the necessary.

Two fast hurling sides delivered an exciting opening quarter and you wouldn't have seen ten points in it at the finish at that stage but the all-round strength of Rovers wore down the Douglas challenge.

Douglas opened with the strong wind elements but it was Courceys that went in four points to the good at half time and it would have been more only for three brilliant first-half saves by Jessica Kavanagh.

Inside the opening minute, before Douglas had time to catch their breath, Linda Collins had the ball in the back of the net. It was the type of ball she loves, head high where she caught, turned and finished clinically.

Play was pacy, end-to-end, and just a point separated the sides at the quarter hour mark. Courceys were getting more from their attacks but still just a goal separated the sides as both went at it hammer and tongs. The teams were level on 21 minutes after the gripping hand of Alicia Cremin again came to the fore and she gave goalkeeper Sinead O'Reilly no chance.

Fiona Keating was having a storming game at centre forward, her searing runs, circulation and accuracy splitting the Douglas defence. Collins, Keating and two frees from Jacinta Crowley gave Rovers a



Courcey Rovers' Saoirse McCarthy tussles with Douglas' Katelyn Holland for possession. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

deserved half time lead, Jessica Kavanagh having made another acrobatic save on 32 minutes to keep Douglas within a fighting chance.

A classy Christine O'Neill score inside twenty seconds of the restart signalled Rovers intent on reaching their second senior final in the club's history. Linda Collins, difficult to manage, struck two more either side of a Katrina Mackey point and when Douglas won a free on 38 minutes, such was the run of play the latter had no option but to go for a goal.

Even though just six points separated them at that stage this game was only going one way. Mackey's shot was blocked and with it Rovers continued to impress. The movement of the players, how they spread the play to find those in a better position, the pin point accuracy of those passes, saw them push further ahead. Keating hit another three. Collins struck one as a ten point gap opened up.

Douglas kept battling but the game was over at the three quarter way mark. They made full use of their bench and drove on. Another Mackey free made the net on sixty one minutes but it was Rovers and

Linda Collins that capped off a great team performance in style, blasting a shot to the right of Jessica Kavanagh, giving her no chance.

It was an impressive hour by Rovers and on this display they'll be hard to beat. But they've been here before and one imagines they'll keep their feet firmly on the ground this time around.

For now they're into another final and they'll watch St Finbarr's and Inniscarra next weekend with keen interest.

Scorers for Courcey Rovers: L Collins 2-4, J Crowley 0-4 (0-3 f, 0-1 45), F Keating 0-5, Eimear O'Reilly, C O'Neill 0-1 each.

Douglas: K Mackey 1-4 (1-1 f), A Cremin 1-1.

COURCEY ROVERS: S O'Reilly, C Hayes, K Keohane, G Hannon, O Twomey, A Moloney, E Moloney, J Crowley, Elaine O'Reilly, Eimear O'Reilly, F Keating, Lorraine Collins, Linda Collins, C O'Neill, S McCarthy.

Subs: G O'Reilly for C O'Neill (53), E Maguire for Lorraine Collins (60).

DOUGLAS: J Kavanagh, E Kavanagh, A Curtin, S Mulrooney, C Nison, P Mackey, R Sheehan, M Mulrooney, C Noonan, K Holland, K Mackey, C St Ledger, J White, A Cremin, J Leo.

Subs: J O'Mahony for J Leo (h-t), A Walsh for C St Ledger (44), C O'Sullivan, J Donegan for K Holland, S Mulrooney (56), E McAndrews for C Noonan (60).

Referee: John Horgan (Gleann na Lae).



Glen Rovers' Katie Walsh makes a powerful clearance up the field. Picture: Ger Bonus



Aghabullogue's Miriam Cotter takes a look to find a team mate against Ballyhea in the SE Systems Intermediate Championship semi-final.
Picture: Gavin Browne

McCarthy and Healy rule roost as Ballyhea struggle to compete

Aghabullogue 2-25
Ballyhea 0-3

INTERMEDIATE CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

AS THE scoreline suggests this was a bridge too far for last season's Junior A champions Ballyhea.

The stronger, more experienced Aghabullogue totally dominated from the early stages of this SE Systems Intermediate semi-final in Castle Road.

In all sectors, the Mid-Cork girls were on top.

Up front, they had the effective Cliona Healy and Ciara McCarthy, who were more than a hand full for an over-worked Ballyhea defence. They picked off score after score and found their players with some excellent passing moves that ultimately resulted in scores.

Aghabullogue were quick off the mark with Niamh Barry-Murphy and Julie Tarrant points inside the opening minutes and a Ciara McCarthy goal five minutes in signalled their intentions as they went at the Ballyhea defence. At the end of the first quarter, they led 2-4 to 0-1, the second goal coming from Healy.

With Emma Flanagan, Meadhbh Ring and Katie McCarthy strong along their half-back line they cut out any moved Ballyhea made.

At midfield, they won vital possession and getting it through the lines to Healy and McCarthy they were on top. At the break with Jane Foley and Ciara Harty having got through for Ballyhea points, it was Aghabullogue having played against the strong

wind who led 2-8 to 0-2.

Through the second half, Ballyhea continued to battle hard but the gap in standards was evident but all credit they never gave up, as Aghabullogue added to their tally with 17 second-half points.

Julie Tarrant, Emma Flanagan and Robyn Martin all got on the scoresheet as Cliona Healy and Ciara McCarthy continued to lead the way.

Rachel Harty added a Ballyhea point from late free as Aghabullogue went safely through to a final meeting with Enniskeane who will no doubt present a huge challenge to their aspirations of lifting the title.

Scorers for Aghabullogue: C Healy 1-9 (0-3 f, 0-1 45), C McCarthy 1-9, J Tarrant 0-3, E Flanagan 0-2, R Martin, N Barry-Murphy 0-1 each.

Ballyhea: R Harty (f), C Harty, J Foley 0-1 each.

AGHABULLOGUE: L Cooney, C O'Connell, M Cotter, E O'Shea, E Flanagan, M Ring, K McCarthy, E Foley, R Barrett, A Twomey, C McCarthy, J Crowley, J Tarrant, C Healy, N Barry-Murphy.

Subs: B Cotter for R Barrett (40), M McCarthy for C O'Connell (45), A Barrett for N Barry-Murphy (45), R Martin for A Twomey (45).

BALLYHEA: C Keogh, L Dundon, M C Carroll, L Dillon, G O'Leary, J Hoper, C Dundon, E Crowley, R Harty, J Foley, C Johnson, T O'Sullivan, C Harty, R Killen, I Mortell.

Subs: K Cronin for C Dundon (31), I Hanley for G O'Leary (45), N Healy for T O'Sullivan (45), A O'Sullivan for C Johnson (50), C Morrissey for C Harty (51).

Referee: William Wallace (Aghada).



Aghabullogue's Caoimhe O'Connell gets away from Ballyhea's Jade Hooper.
Picture: Gavin Browne



Enniskeane's Sinead Hurley is tackled by Fr O'Neill's Sharon Murphy during the SE Systems Cork Intermediate Championship semi-final.

O'Brien has Keane edge

Intermediate Camogie

■ Mary Newman

Enniskeane 3-12
Fr O'Neill's 3-8

ENNISKEANE had to fight to the finish before victory was secured in this SE Systems Intermediate Championship semi-final clash in Castle Road.

Despite having dominated the early stages, having played with the aid of the strong wind, Enniskeane only led by two points at the break as Fr O'Neill's settled first and got into the game.

Playing with a lot of confidence, O'Neill's took an early second-half lead but in the finish, it was Enniskeane that made it through thanks to two Daire O'Brien goals.

Fr O'Neill's goalkeeper Nicola Nagle was superb all through and she denied Enniskeane with the first attack of the game bringing off a point-blank save from Orla Cronin. With Cronin (45), Sinead Hurley and Tara Sheehan on target Enniskeane opened up a three-point lead inside 10 minutes.

Keelagh Cullinane had one back for Fr O'Neill's before Clodagh Finn tied the sides up with a superb goal.

Enniskeane's response was instant Tara Sheehan had them on level before Sinead Hurley hand passed to the net after Orla Coughlan had intercepted a short puck out and offloaded an excellent pass to Hurley.

With Cronin stretching their advantage from play Enniskeane held the upper hand and again Nagle denied Coughlan with a point-blank save and the first water break Enniskeane held a four-point lead 1-5 to 1-1.

The closing 10 minutes of the half belonged to Fr O'Neill's and three points without reply from Keelagh Cullinane, Ciara O'Doherty and Clodagh Finn had them within a point.

Cronin then converted a free to give Enniskeane a 1-6 to 1-4 interval lead.

On the resumption Fr O'Neill's got a dream start with Cullinane edging them



Fr O'Neill's Clodagh Finn hammers home her goal against Enniskeane.

Pictures: Eddie O'Hare

into the lead hand passing to the net after she collected a long Yvonne Murphy delivery and with Sarah Harrington adding a point it was all Fr O'Neill's.

Holding their composure Enniskeane dug deep Tara Sheehan had two-point in a row before Cullinane and Cronin swapped points as the sides were again level. With their defence holding a tight rein on the Enniskeane attack Fr O'Neill's pushed forward and they hit the front again when Cullinane's long-range free from almost the 65 dropped in the square and looked to be deflected to the net.

Pushing to extend their lead O'Neill's went four clear with a Sarah Harrington point.

Cronin hit one in reply and with her now playing a roving role she was winning a lot of ball around the middle.

Daire O'Brien switched from defence to attack and proved to be hand full and she had the sides level before the second water break.

Cronin edged Enniskeane ahead with a pointed free and with 13 minutes remain-

ing the game was there for the taking.

Twice Nagle again denied Enniskeane before Cronin converted a free to put two between the sides before a second O'Brien goal with four minutes remaining gave Enniskeane breathing space.

O'Neill's battled back with Finn denied by Kate Corcoran. Kate Harrington hit point for O'Neill's but in the finish Enniskeane just about edged it thanks in the main to O'Brien's two second-half strikes.

Scorers for Enniskeane: O Cronin 0-7 (0-4 f, 0-1 45), D O'Brien 2-0, T Sheehan 0-4, S Hurley 1-1.

Fr O'Neill's: K Cullinane 2-3 f, C Finn 1-1 (0-1 f), S Harrington 0-2, K Harrington C O'Doherty 0-1 each.

ENNISKEANE: K Corcoran, L Duggan, C Nyhan, K Scannell, E O'Driscoll, S O'Brien, A O'Driscoll, L Mannix, D Carroll, S O'Driscoll, E O'Brien, O Cronin, O Coughlan, S Hurley, T Sheehan.

Subs: D Browne for O Coughlan (43), C O'Donovan for K Scannell (52).

FR O'NEILL'S: N Nagle, C McGrath, S Murphy, L Lawton, A Higgins, Y Murphy, R Steele, S Harrington, E O'Keefe, C O'Brien, K Cullinane, D Corcoran, C Finn, C O'Doherty, K Harrington.

Subs: N Cowling for E O'Keefe (in 9), A Dalton for D Corcoran (48), K O'Riordan for C O'Doherty (58).

Referee: Cathal Egan (Glen Rovers).

'My father would always say the hurley needs to be an extension of your hand'

Hurling Hands

Cáit Devane, Tipperary and Clonoulty-Rossmore

MY HANDS are in good nick. We would always have been coached to make sure any time you put your hand up for the ball, you have the hurley up to protect it as well. The other side of that was you didn't get much sympathy if you did get a bang across the fingers. I might strap a couple of fingers that I've sprained over the years just as extra protection in a game but I haven't had too many serious injuries. I get scratches and nicks around the knuckles, the usual small stuff.

I was lucky enough to grow up in a GAA-mad household where everyone took an interest. We all honed our skills practising out the back — my father would always say the hurley needs to be an extension of your hand, that it needs to feel like it just belongs there.

So having the hurley in your hand all the time was a big lesson, and to this day I'd firmly believe that what you do with the hurley away from training and

matches is what makes the difference. I can remember as a small child practising drop-shots in the garden, but when I was six or seven I had the wrong grip. One evening I went over to Rossmore, the local club, and the coach over the seniors that time, Donagh O'Donnell, spotted me running around pucking the ball.

He said to me, 'If you want to get better you're going to have to change your grip'.

I came home and I can remember tapping my right hand to the top of the hurley. It stayed there for a couple of weeks until I got the hang of the new grip.

I was lucky to have great coaches in school and with the club at underage level. For example, Liam Kearney, who passed away since, set up a little league for primary classes, boys and girls.

That was my first exposure to competition and games, they were like All-Ireland finals to us. But having those structures in place was a huge bonus for us — the time the likes of Liam put into the game, and others in clubs all over Ireland, is something you'd have to appreciate.

I played up to U16 with the boys — I have two U12 A county medals that I won at full-back. Physically and skill-

wise, it certainly helped in my development as a player — as Anne Dalton said here last week, your first touch has to improve, because you'll be lifted out of it if you don't control the ball first time. I'm pretty picky with my hurleys. If I don't like a hurley, I won't use it — I go up to Jim O'Brien in Dranganan once or twice a year, and I get three or four at a time so I'm not stuck if one gets broken. I might bring two or three to training and use them at different times in the session, because if you break your favourite in a game then at least you're used to the second or third option.

I like a different weight in the hurley at different times of the year — a slightly heavier one for the Ashbourne Cup because you're playing from November to February, and a slightly lighter one for the summer games.

Hands? I'd have two players in mind, and the two of them were my idols growing up, players I modelled my game on — and two players I was lucky enough to share a dressing-room with at the start of my career and the end of theirs. Eimear McDonnell and Claire Grogan are the two players. They could be unmarkable, they could do anything with the ball, and what they did for Tipperary camogie was unbelievable. I was



Enniskeane's Sinead Hurley is tackled by Fr O'Neill's Sharon Murphy.

Enniskeane aiming to put heartbreak behind them and take crown

SUNDAY
Intermediate Final
Aghabullogue v Enniskeane,
Castle Road; 4pm

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

SUNDAY is a big day for Enniskeane and Aghabullogue as they go in search of the SE Systems Intermediate championship title and a promotion to play at the top table in 2021.

Defeated in last season final Enniskeane have battled hard to again reach the decider, down through the years have had their fair share of disappointments and they are hoping this will be their year.

They have shown huge determination and a will to get over the finishing line.

In their opening game, they overcame the challenge of Ballyhea before going on to defeat Blackrock in a game where they fought back from being ten points in arrears to win by two. They again had to show the same fighting spirit on Saturday last as they overcame Fr O'Neill's in a game where they dominated the early exchanges but allowed themselves fall behind but all credit they showed huge spirit to get back into the game and carve out a win.

Cork senior Orla Cronin is a huge player for them and her drive and determination has helped lift them when things are going wrong.

Lining out at wing forward she moved out around the field and helped win ball and get it to their inside line where the switching of Daire O'Brien from defence to attack proved a master stroke as she grabbed the two goals that were crucial.

Aghabullogue will have to pick up Cronin and ensure they close her down as she is a key player for Enniskeane. Danielle Carroll, Louise Duggan, Tara Sheehan, Sinead Hurley and Eimear O'Brien are others who have impressed in this campaign and they would dearly love to finally get over the line.

Aghabullogue are no strangers to Intermediate title success, they were crowned champions in 2012 and went up to Senior B grade but in 2018 the Senior B grade was abolished and they found themselves once again playing intermediate.

They reached the final in 2018 but lost out narrowly to their Mid Cork neighbours Eire Og.

They are a well-balanced outfit and have been impressive since their opening round

clash with Watergrasshill notching up a 2-15 to 1-5 win, they went on to over Carrigaline before defeating Ballyhea in one sides semi-final on Saturday last where they were too strong for last season's junior A champions.

In all sectors they possess players of huge ability the excellent Cliona Healy who has steadily impressed at inter county level with Cork minor and Intermediate sides and is now a member of the senior panel has been one of the players who is hugely influential for Aghabullogue.

She is be joined by the equally impressive Ciara McCarthy, who is also a player who has stood out through this campaign, Emma Flanagan Julie Tarrant and Robyn Martin have also been on target for them but the main threat to Enniskeane will come from Healy and McCarthy and they will need to be able to contain the twin threat they will pose.

Enniskeane will need two fast defenders to track the Aghabullogue duo, Healy lined out at full forward last weekend but she is a player who will roam and win possession and her finish is superb as she showed last weekend notching up 1-10 all but three points coming from play.

Ciara McCarthy did likewise 1-8 from play a good return from centre forward and it will be interesting to see will Enniskeane line out with Daire O'Brien at centre back as they did last weekend before they redeployed her to their attack where she grabbed the vital goals that saw them through.

It's a big call now for them to make do they start O'Brien up front where she was hugely effective or have her at the heart of a defence that is bound to come under huge pressure.

Both sides have impressed to date, Enniskeane without doubt have had the harder passage to the final and have answered all the hard questions when posed.

Aghabullogue have had little or no real hard test and have got through each round comfortably they can expect the biggest test on Sunday as Enniskeane bid to finally lay the ghost and be crowned champions.



Tipperary's Cáit Devane likes a different weight in the hurley at different times of the year — a slightly heavier one for the Ashbourne Cup because you're playing from November to February, and a slightly lighter one for the summer games. Picture: Brian Reilly-Troy

in awe of them. With hurlers, Eoin Kelly of Tipperary was probably top of my list. I'll never forget one game against Cork in Semple Stadium, he was running towards his own goal — away from the target — with a player covering him. He took one touch and, without looking, hit the ball over his left

shoulder and over the bar. To me, that defied all the rules. He was going in the opposite direction to where he was shooting, he had a marker breathing down his neck, he never even looked at the goal — and yet somehow it went right over the black spot. I suppose it was his trademark

score. I think JJ Delaney said on *Laochra Gael* that sometimes in a game you knew that was what he was going to do but you still couldn't stop him.

It's a passage of play where everything is wrong on one level, and yet he got it right. Only a genius can do that.

Interview: Michael Moynihan

Enniskeane are back in county final

ENNISKEANE 3-12
FR O'NEILLS 3-8

SANDRA CORCORAN
REPORTS

ENNISKEANE are back in the county intermediate camogie final – but, again, they didn't make it easy for themselves.

In last Saturday's semi-final against Fr O'Neills at Castle Road they were six points down at one stage before they rallied.

Aided by the strong breeze Enniskeane got off to a great start and scored three points – from Orla Cronin (free), Sinead Hurley and Tara Sheehan – before Fr O'Neills hit back with 1-1. Enniskeane responded in style. After another Tara Sheehan point, Sinead Hurley scored their first goal, followed by another Orla Cronin point. It was now 1-5 to 1-1. Three points in a row from Fr O'Neills brought them back into the game, though Cronin did add a point for the Carbery side who led 1-6 to 1-4 at half time.

Fr O'Neills raced out of the blocks in the second half. Keelagh Cullinane goaled to push them ahead. There was little between the two and after 40 minutes it was level, 1-9 to 2-6, but then Fr O'Neills hit a purple patch, as a goal from Keelagh Cullinane and three more points sent them six clear.

Enniskeane didn't panic. Orla Cronin pulled one point back before Daire O'Brien goaled, and Cronin was on target again from frees to level. It was Enniskeane that finished stronger with Cronin on target again while Daire O'Brien struck for her second goal.

Laura Mannix showed great leadership for Enniskeane throughout. Others to play well were Danielle Carroll, Sinead Hurley, Aisling O'Driscoll and Siobhan O'Driscoll.

Scorers

Enniskeane: O Cronin 0-7 (4f, 1 45); D O'Brien 2-0; S Hurley 1-1; T Sheehan 0-4.

Fr O'Neills: K Cullinane 2-3; C Finn, 1-1; S Harrington 0-2; C O'Doherty, K Harrington 0-1 each.

Enniskeane: Kate Corcoran, Louise Duggan, Celine Nyhan, Kellie Scannell, Emma O'Driscoll, Danielle Carroll, Aisling O'Driscoll, Daire O'Brien, Tara Sheehan, Laura Mannix, Eimear O'Brien, Siobhan O'Driscoll, Orla Cronin, Sinead Hurley, Orla Coughlan, Caitlin O'Donovan, Deirdre Browne.

Fr O'Neills: Nicola Nagle, Clara McGrath, Sharon Murphy, Lucy Lawton, Aoife Higgins, Yvonne Murphy, Rachel Steele, Sarah Harrington, Emily O'Keeffe, Claire O'Brien, Kate Harrington, Deirdre Corcoran, Keelagh Cullinane, Clara O'Doherty, Clodagh Finn, Niamh Cowhig, Aoife Dalton, Kayla O'Riordan.



Orla Cronin is Enniskeane's top scorer in this championship campaign.

Cronin hopes it will be third time lucky for Enniskeane

INTERMEDIATE FINAL

Cork forward is playing a starring role in Enniskeane's bid for glory

BY KIERAN MCCARTHY

IT'S seven years since Orla Cronin and Enniskeane won their last county adult title – and the Cork star feels the wait for the next one has gone on too long.

They've come close in the years since. In 2017 and 2019, Enniskeane lost county intermediate camogie finals, both times to neighbours Newcestown.

Now they're back in their third intermediate decider in four years, determined to go one step further this Sunday when they take on Aghabullogue in Castle Road, Mahon (4pm throw-in).

'I can't believe it's seven years since we won the county junior A championship in 2013. It feels like it was just the other day but a lot of time has passed since, and we've come to close to winning the intermediate in some seasons and in others we haven't been close,' Cronin said.

'You learn from defeats but you can't dwell on them either because you need to move forward too. Of course, they hurt and that motivates you because we know what it's like to lose a county final and we don't want to feel like that again. That will drive us on.'

In 2013 Cronin was a rising teenage star, already on the Cork senior panel, when Enniskeane beat Watergrasshill by 0-12 to 1-4 in the county junior A final. Cronin and Co had lost the county final by one point after a replay in 2012, but came back the following year to win it.

Against Watergrasshill in 2013, Enniskeane conceded a goal after 29 seconds but they stayed calm, regrouped and kicked on. Seven years later, the Enniskeane camogie team still doesn't panic when backed into a corner, as evidenced in their recent championship wins against Blackrock and Fr O'Neills. In both games they found themselves in a tricky spot, especially 13 points down in the quarter-final against Blackrock, but they rallied to come through both. That shows their guts, character and spirit, but Cronin knows that they can't afford to let Aghabullogue build a lead in Sunday's final.

'We did go down a few points against Fr O'Neills but it wasn't as severe as the quarter-final against Blackrock,' she said.

'It's something that we need to acknowledge going into Sunday's final because we can't afford to give a team like Aghabullogue a lead because we will be making life very hard for ourselves. It's something we will focus in on and that we have to change. We need to keep our foot on the pedal and do what we do best.'

'It's been encouraging that we have been able to come back against Fr O'Neills and Blackrock and finish the games so strongly but we can't do that

'I think the dedication and the desire to fix the mistakes that we have made in the past has been very evident this year, so hopefully it works out for us'

all the time either. We can't let the same situation unfold again.'

It's no surprise that Cronin is leading the charge for Enniskeane. The Cork centre forward hit 1-11 against Ballyhea, 0-10 against Blackrock and 0-7 against Fr O'Neills. Her inter-county class shows at intermediate level and this year, because of Covid-19 pushing the inter-county season to later in the year, she has been a lot more involved with Enniskeane – and she's loving it.

'I think every county player will agree and say it's been brilliant to be able to spend more time with their club this season, and I feel exactly the same,' four-time All-Ireland senior winner Cronin said.

'It's highlighted too how the GAA should look to make it two separate seasons, one for club and one for county. It might mean it's a longer year but I think there are definitely ways that they can keep them separate.'

'It has made this year a lot more enjoyable for myself, and I have been able to spend time with my club that I wouldn't have got in the past. It's been brilliant to be able to dedicate the time to the team.'

'There are girls there that I have played with all the way up and now I am getting the chance to play with the younger girls who are coming through and that's been really enjoyable. I've seen the talent and the potential that is coming through and it's really encouraging.'

Enniskeane have momentum behind them, but they have been here before. In 2017 they lost 1-13 to 3-4 against Newcestown in the county intermediate final. Last season, the same opposition beat them by a single, agonising point, 2-9 to 2-8. Will it be third time lucky this Sunday? Cronin hopes so.

'The girls have been playing unbelievably well this year. We have acknowledged things that we need to improve on collectively. Every year that you haven't been successful you have to take things on board from that,' Cronin explained.

'One of the silver linings from this year is that we have been able to have everyone together, dedicated to the team. Having everyone around has helped morale and we are all working towards the same goal.'

'It's been a nice journey for us together and it's great to get back into another county final. It gives us a chance to rectify those losses that we have had in the last few years.'

'I think the dedication and the desire to fix the mistakes that we have made in the past has been very evident this year, so hopefully it works out for us.'

Fingers crossed, Enniskeane's luck in county finals will change this Sunday.



Orla Cronin is a key player in the Cork attack.

ENNISKEANE'S JOURNEY

In Round 1, Enniskeane beat Ballyhea by 4-19 to 0-9 with Sinead Hurley (2), Orla Cronin and Tara Sheehan scoring the goals. Scorers were Orla Cronin (1-11), Sinead Hurley (2-1), Tara Sheehan (1-4), and Laura Mannix, Siobhan O'Driscoll and Eimear O'Brien (0-1 each).

Against Blackrock in the quarter-final, Enniskeane won 1-18 to 2-13, with scores from Orla Cronin (0-10), Sinead Hurley (1-1), Orla Coughlan and Laura Mannix (0-2 each), and Tara Sheehan, Danielle Carroll and Eimear O'Brien (0-1 each). Enniskeane beat Fr O'Neills by 3-12 to 3-8 in last weekend's semi-final.

Courceys move one step closer to senior glory

SENIOR CAMOGIE

Rovers back in county senior final for second time in three seasons

BY GER MCCARTHY

COURCEY Rovers will contest this year's SE Systems Senior Camogie Championship decider following an impressive run to the final.

The Ballinspittle club powered past Douglas in last Sunday's semi-final and will find out their county final opponents once St Finbarr's and Inniscarra's last-four clash is completed this weekend.

That Douglas win followed a 2-9 to 1-6 defeat of St Catherine's and equally impressive 3-14 to 2-6 victory over 2019 Intermediate champions Newcestown.

Team captain Karyn Keohane is a vital member of Courcey's set-up and, similar to every camogie player in the country, is glad to be out playing the sport she loves in such challenging times.

'From our point of view, the main thing this year was just getting back out to play camogie,' the Courcey Rovers captain said.

'If someone had mentioned to you last March that we would eventually be back playing club championship games, you would have thought they were mad. That's why, last weekend, heading into the Douglas match felt like bonus territory, just getting out to play in a county semi-final.'

'Reaching a county final is massive, but, as I said, just being able to play any camogie in the middle of what's going is bonus territory.'

Keohane and her team-mates being able to train together for a prolonged and uninterrupted period is one of the main reasons Courcey Rovers will contest this year's county senior championship decider. Having a settled squad and regular championship games has clearly benefited Rovers during a dominant campaign.

'Having our inter-county players available for every training session and all our matches has been a huge benefit to the team,' Keohane said.

'The intensity they bring to our training has been hugely important. That has driven all the other players on. The chance to mark an inter-county player during a training session means everyone has had to up their effort. It has definitely made a big difference to us this year.'

One of Courcey Rovers most notable traits in qualifying for the county final has been an even spread of scorers through-

'Reaching a county final is massive, but just being able to play any camogie in the middle of what's going is bonus territory'
— Karyn Keohane, Courcey Rovers captain

out the duration of the championship. Last weekend's semi-final defeat of Douglas is a prime example. Linda Collins (2-4), Jacinta Crowley (0-4), Fiona Keating (0-5), Eimear O'Reilly and Christine O'Neill (0-1 each) accounted for the winner's 2-15 total.

Gone are the days of Courcey's being over-reliant on the likes of Keating or Saoirse McCarthy for the bulk of their scores. Rovers are a far more rounded side now and, as a result, will pose multiple attacking threats against either the Barrs or Inniscarra on county final day.

'If you are relying on one scorer then it is very easy for your opponents to counteract that,' Keohane pointed out.

'That's why having six scoring forwards is such a huge advantage. The forwards, midfielders and backs have all benefited from regular games this year, though. This year's championship is completely different to previous ones simply because it is all club before the inter-county starts.'

'Previously, we would have played the first round of the county at the end of July but



Courcey Rovers' centre forward Fiona Keating fires over another point in the semi-final win against Douglas last Sunday. (Photos: Trevor Patchett)

mightn't have played again until the end of September, depending on how the inter-county teams were doing. That's an eight or ten-week gap where you are not playing any club games or training as a squad.

'This year, we have had a match every second weekend and that has been brilliant. I think this format is something that should be considered for future championships. It is definitely the way to go and helps gel (club) teams that bit more because they are able to train and play on a more regular basis.'

'I have found that it is easier to stay focussed and raise your intensity at training when you know there is another match right around the corner.'

Keohane doesn't know which opposing club captain she will be standing across from for the pre-match coin-toss prior to this year's county final. But that doesn't matter as the thought of winning a senior championship medal alongside the friends and team-mates she grew up with is all the motivation Keohane requires.

'It would be a bit of history, were we to win a senior championship, as it is only the second time that we have reached a county final,' Courcey's captain concluded.

'Honestly, it would be a massive, massive achievement for our club. It would keep all the younger girls coming through interested in playing the sport. Seeing that they too could one



Courcey's defender Ashling Moloney challenges Douglas's Julia White.

day possibly reach a county final and represent their club at the highest senior grade would act as motivation for future generations.'

Kilbree finish very strong to book final spot

JUNIOR C CAMOGIE

KILBREE will take on Aghada in the county junior C camogie final this Saturday evening in Castle Road, at 5pm.

So far, the Carbery club has defeated St Fanahan's, Inniscarra, Na Piarraigh and Kinsale on the road to the final, and they will look to continue that winning streak.

Kilbree defeated Kinsale by 2-12 to 2-3 in the county semi-final in Ballinacarriga last Saturday. An early goal by Caoimhe Murphy and points by Grainne O'Brien, Aoife Dullea and Mairead Crowley gave Kilbree a good start.

However, Kinsale came back into the first half with some fine points of their own. Kilbree led at half time by 1-5 to 0-3.

A sluggish third quarter meant Kinsale had a one-point lead just before the second water break. Mairead Crowley scored a lovely point to leave the sides level at the water break. The final quarter was one of Kilbree dominance. Another goal by

Caoimhe Murphy and further points by Mary Murphy and Mairead Crowley guaranteed Kilbree a place in the county final.

Kilbree's defence was outstanding throughout the entire match led by Sinead O'Donovan and Aine Crowley and closed off all of Kinsale's scoring opportunities in the final quarter and actually held Kilbree scoreless in the final quarter.



The Kilbree team that defeated Kinsale in the county junior C camogie semi-final.



Douglas' Chloe St Ledger is hooked by Courcy Rovers' Elaine O'Reilly last weekend. This time, the junior A and junior C finals take centre-stage. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

Finals weekend likely to result in close and exciting games

TODAY in Castle Road at 5pm, Kilbree and Aghada will meet in the SE Systems Junior C final while tomorrow, Newtownshandrum and Tracton battle it out for the SE Systems Junior A title at 1pm.

Firstly, we take a look at the journey Kilbree and Aghada have made to reach the C final, competing this season for the second year at adult level.

Aghada will relish an opportunity to take the title for the first time.

Last year, they lost out to Blarney in the junior C final by a point, 1-6 to 0-8, and they will be hoping to get it right this time out. They got their campaign off to a great start with a victory over a strong St Colum's and they went on to overcome near-neighbours Midleton before accounting for another East Cork club Killeagh to reach this afternoon's decider.

They are a young side, the majority of whom were members of the minor B winning league team in 2019 and with players of the calibre of Ali Smith, Eve Rose Boylan, Lauren McAllister, Mary Leahy and Aine McGrath, they will be hoping that the experienced gained last season will stand to them.

Kilbree were 13-a-side junior champions last season and they have made the step up this year to junior C with huge confidence.

With a lot of experienced players in their sides, they contested this championship with huge confidence as they got off to a good start with a win over St Fanahan's, they had a win over Na Plarsaigh in their second game before going on to a semi-final victory over Kinsale.

Heather Brimble, Kate O'Donovan, Caoimhe Murphy, Mairead Crowley and Leanne Sheehy will lead them quest to bring the title home.

Newtown and Tracton meet in the SE Systems Junior A final tomorrow at 5pm in Castle Road and in all probability, a lot of people would not have bet on these being the last two standing from the original 12 that started on July 24. All credit to both sides they are deservedly there and with both having defeated fancied oppositions along the way they can both stand proud they face the final hurdle.

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

Tracton have taken a lot of fancied scalps along the way. Banteer were defeated in round one before they knocked out favourites St Vincent's who fell to them at quarter-final stage.

This was a game that had to go to a replay to decide the winner after an injury to St Vincent's Amy O'Connor with seconds remaining saw the game abandoned before the arrival of an ambulance.

At the time, Tracton were leading by four points but under camogie rules the game had to be replayed where two points separated the sides at the full-time whistle. The extra game stood to Tracton and on Sunday last, they were full value for the 3-9 to 2-5 victory over a strong Ballinas-carthy.

They are a very experienced unit with several of their players having given the club huge service down through the years. Jennifer Lynch continues to find the range and is deadly accurate from placed balls so the Newtown defence needs to be disciplined.

Mary McGuinness, Aoife Kiely, Chloe Castleton and Jennifer Kiely will be to the fore for the South East girls.

Newtownshandrum have battled hard through the last few years to get their club back on track and there is huge credit to them to be in the Junior A final. Many of their sides would have enjoyed huge success with the club in years gone by and their dedication to the cause is still as bright as ever.

They lost out in round one to Ballinora but re-grouped and overcame the same opponents in a semi-final where they proved way to strong as they ran out 11-point winners. In between, they overcame Barryroe, Sliabh Rua and Mallow and they were ready for whatever Ballinora threw at them.

Cliona O'Callaghan, Roisin Twohill, Katie Coughlan and Mariah Reidy are very experienced players and they have shown huge determination to reach this final.

A close encounter is in store in what promises to be a great final.



Gemma O'Connor, St Finbarr's, breaks out past Aine O'Driscoll, Killeagh.

Picture: Jim Coughlan

Reaching out for the final



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

SATURDAY
Senior Championship semi-final
Inniscarra v St Finbarr's,
Castle Road, 2pm

ST FINBARR'S or Inniscarra should be preparing for a county final this weekend but because of the postponement of Glen Rovers-Inniscarra two weeks ago we find ourselves at second semi-final stage, Courcy Rovers already through.

It's a pity the winning team and their club will have just a week to prepare for a final but that can't be helped and at this moment in time, getting to that final is the priority.

Inniscarra of course are aiming for their fifth final in a row. Hat-trick winners from 2016-2018 they lost to Sarsfields in last year's decider and are back in contention. Some going.

Inniscarra were knocking on the door far sooner than 2016 but fell to the sticks of champions Milford in 2013, '14 and '15. This is a very experienced side that has come through some amazing tight battles over the years.

Much of the 2016 victorious team remains, some went through retirement, work, travel or injury over the past few years. Others fell in, youngsters grew, players returned and that makes the consistency of Inniscarra all the more admirable.

Aoife Kavanagh is back after injury. Joanne Casey has returned from abroad; Niamh McCarthy is out with a ACL injury and is a big loss.

Young players have stepped into the fray. Claudia Keane, a tormenting sub for the opposition for the past few seasons, now has a starting slot and she made full use of that last weekend. Ellen Murphy did really well in at corner forward as still Inniscarra have a rounded side.

The players back boning this panel for many years include Caitlin Looney, Rebecca Quigley, Rosie O'Mahony, Rena



Inniscarra's Aileen Sheehan makes a determined strike past the Glen's Ailsing Wallace.

Buckley, Katie O'Mahony, Aileen Sheehan, Erin Looney, Treasa McCarthy and Niamh Dilworth. A very strong team on paper even if last Saturday's quarter-final victory over Glen Rovers didn't set Castle Road alight.

It wasn't complacency, Inniscarra knew they would have a hard fight on their hands against the Glen. There was just a lack of championship action very evident. It was like an opening round for Inniscarra such was the six-week gap between their two championship games and over the years it was always easiest to catch Inniscarra in their opening fixture. They should perform about 30% better this weekend.

They'll have to at a semi-final stage against a St Finbarr's side that have progressed encouragingly and have the grit between their teeth.

Both defences are strong. It's the Barrs' strongest division with a very competent goalkeeper and full back line, who have stood tall this season, and a daunting half-back line of Meabh Cahalane, Gemma O'Connor and at times, Lynda O'Connell.

The latter has been spending much of her time around the middle of the park, Rachel Finn ably filling in her slot with O'Connell pushing forward, which is what

the Barrs need. Despite three goals against Killeagh, who on paper had a strong defence, there is a need at this stage to get a strong return from all forwards.

Substitutes Eimear Ryan and Ella Wigginton Barrett are strong introductions and are sure to be sprung again from the bench. Ciara Golden, Orlaith Cahalane and Emma Olden can produce the goods and need to be confident of doing so.

Meabh Cahalane may well pick up Joanne Casey, leaving Gemma to concentrate more on her own game or pick up Claudia Keane, who's run's down the middle caused the Glen a lot of problems. Ellen Murphy, Niamh Dilworth, Treasa McCarthy will also need watching.

I'm not so sure Inniscarra will place Rena Buckley on Keava McCarthy. They may leave that to another dependable defender such as Rosie O'Mahony and allow Rena play a more attacking game from half back.

As mentioned both defences are strong and it's what forward division can penetrate best at either end.

Attacking half-backs and midfielders picking off scores from further out is again a vital part in breaking down barriers.



Inniscarra players celebrate Ellen Murphy's goal against St Finbarr's.

Crucial Murphy goal sends Inniscarra to the county final past Barrs

Inniscarra 1-11
St Finbarr's 0-11

CAMOGIE

■ Linda Mellerick

GIVEN the closeness of this SE Systems Senior Championship semi-final tie in Castle Road on Saturday a goal was always going to be the deciding factor.

And so it came to pass from the stick of Inniscarra's Ellen Murphy on 52 minutes which effectively sealed St Finbarr's fate despite the fact that they had the gap back down to one three minutes later. But great defensive play and two points from Joanne Casey, who had gone off injured at half time and returned on 48 minutes, put Inniscarra through to their fifth final in a row.

Inniscarra started the brightest and by the seventh minute were four points to the good, by four different players.

St Finbarr's played two inside forwards and two outside, crowding midfield and their half back line. Initially with Rena Buckley standing alone between those two lines it looked like that could be a mistake but such was the intelligent delivery by their outfield players it was working a treat. Once the Barrs settled they played some great hurling. Defensively they were superb and with the speedy inside full-forward duo of Rachel Myers and Orlaith Cahalane the sides were level on 18 minutes.

Scores were hard to come by but that didn't take from a highly competitive game as play swung end to end on a gloriously hot day. As predicted both defences were strong with the question who was going to get more from their forward division.

It seemed as if the Barrs were making the most headway, showing great speed and creating that bit more space. Inniscarra were equal in their possession but over played it at times and ran into a St Finbarr's full-back line who were excellent.

The Barrs finished the half with two points to lead 0-6 to 0-5 and had the first two of the restart. But Inniscarra who were losing the battle in their half forward line and midfield started to get a grip and hit three on the trot to level matters.

Finbarr's seemed to go more into defensive than attacking mode as they left Inniscarra with a free defender.

Good work by Casey to Ellen Murphy saw the latter surrounded but finish to the net and despite the Barrs efforts, Casey and Dilworth (45) kept the points ticking to give them a hard fought victory.

Scorers for Inniscarra: C Keane 0-1, E Murphy 1-2, J Casey 0-3, K O'Mahony 0-1, N Dilworth 0-3 (0-2 f 0-1 45), T McCarthy 0-1. **St. Finbarrs:** K McCarthy 0-4 (0-3 f), O Cahalane 0-3, R Myers 0-2, G O'Connor 0-2 (f).

INNISCARRA: S Walsh; R Quigley, R Buckley, A O'Regan, A Kavanagh, A Sheehan, R O'Mahony, J Casey, K O'Mahony, C Keane, C Ring, J Burke, E Murphy, N Dilworth, T McCarthy. **Subs:** R Keane for J Casey (h-t in), E O'Reilly for J Burke (h-t), J Casey for C Ring (48). **St. Finbarrs:** C Hurley; S Punch, A Egan, A O'Neill, M Cahalane, G O'Connor, L O'Connell, A Shannon, R Finn, C Golden, K McCarthy, C Sargent, O Cahalane, E Olden, R Myers. **Subs:** E Wigginton Barrett for E Olden (39), G Cahalane for C Sargent (47), E Ryan for R Myers (48), N Olden for C Golden (52).

Ref: Cathal McAllister - Aghada



Enniskeane players celebrate their victory against Aghabullogue in the SE Systems Cork Intermediate Camogie Championship final at Castle Road. Picture: Denis Minihane

Enniskeane inter champs

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

Enniskeane 1-16
Aghabullogue 2-8

ENNISKEANE put the heartache of losing last year's intermediate camogie final behind them as they finally buried the hoodoo and were crowned champions on Sunday afternoon.

Aghabullogue made the better start in this SE Systems Intermediate championship final at a sun-drenched Castle Road.

Two points on the trot from Aoife Twomey and a Cliona Healy pointed free had them settle into the momentum of the game before Orla Cronin had Enniskeane's opening score, pointing a free on thirteen minutes.

Daire O'Brien had the sides tied up on seventeen minutes after good work from Tara Sheehan and at the first water break it was 0-2 apiece.

Enniskeane did have a sniff of an opening goal on ten minutes but Miriam Cotter beat Orla Coughlan to a superbly delivered ball and cleared to safety.

On the restart Aghabullogue had to absorb a lot of Enniskeane pressure and an Eimear O'Brien point in the 17th minute gave Enniskeane the lead for the first time in the game.

Orla Cronin stretched it to two points as the Aghabullogue defense continued to soak up a lot of pressure.

With Laura Mannix Tara Sheehan and Daire O'Brien doing huge work for Enniskeane they won vital possession.

They constantly found Orla Cronin with some good passes and the Cork senior star duly punished an over-worked Aghabullogue defense as she stretched their lead to three points before converting a close in free to make it a four point gap.

They continued to enjoy the better of the second quarters exchanges and at the interval Enniskeane led 0-7 to 0-2.

On the resumption, Enniskeane kept the pressure on the Aghabullogue defence Orla Cronin pointed a free.

Aghabullogue replied with a Cliona



Enniskeane captain Kate McCarthy lifts the Nano Nagle Cup.

Picture Denis Minihane

Healy pointed free but Enniskeane continued to hold the upper hand as they hit the next five scores.

Orla Cronin pointed a free before she set up Snead Hurley for an Enniskeane goal on thirty seven minutes.

Leading the way Orla Cronin hit three without reply and as Aghabullogue battled to get into the contest Julie Tarrant and Maebh Ring hit points but still Enniskeane were in control.

Orla Cronin continued to cause problems for the Aghabullogue defence with two points in-a-row but Aghabullogue lifted their game and a Cliona Healy point set the on the road for a fight back.

Winning a penalty they won't for goal but were denied by an alert Enniskeane defense but they continued to press and goals from Ella Foley and Cliona Healy on sixty one minutes led to a nervous closing minutes for Enniskeane but with Orla Cronin leading the way they thwarted the Aghabullogue rally with Cronin points to ensure the title was going West and Enniskeane with compete at the top table in

2021. Aghabullogue will be disappointed at losing out but they will learn a lot from their campaign as did Enniskeane who have battled so hard over a number of years to take this title.

Orla Cronin was named *The Echo* Player of the Match after leading the way for her club with a superb display as she notched up 13th points of their tally.

Scorers for Enniskeane: O Cronin 0-13 (0-6 f's) S Hurley 1-0, D O'Brien, E O'Brien, T Sheehan 0-1 each. **Aghabullogue:** C Healy 1-5 (0-3 f's), E Foley 1-0, J Tarrant, M Ring, A Twomey 0-1 each. **Enniskeane:** K Corcoran; K Scannell, D Carroll, C Nyhan; A O'Driscoll, E O'Driscoll; L Duggan; L Mannix, D O'Brien; S O'Driscoll; O Cronin; E O'Brien; S Hurley; O Coughlan, T Sheehan. **Subs:** D Browne for S O'Driscoll (17), K McCarthy for K Scannell (60), L Corcoran for E O'Brien (60), C O'Donovan for S Hurley (60). **Aghabullogue:** L Cooney; C O'Connell, M Cotter, E O'Shea; E Flanagan, M Ring, K McCarthy; E Foley, B Cotter; A Twomey, C McCarthy, J Crowley, J Tarrant, C Healy, N Barry-Murphy. **Sub:** R Martin for N Barry-Murphy (42). **Referee:** Cathal Egan (Glen Rovers).



Ellen Murphy, Inniscarra battles with Aoife O'Neill, St Finbarr's.

Inniscarra edge Barrs in thriller

Camogie

Inniscarra 1-11
St Finbarr's 0-11

Eoghan Cormican

A strong final quarter showing advanced Inniscarra on Saturday to a fifth consecutive Cork senior camogie final. Next weekend's decider against Courcey Rovers is a repeat of the 2018 decider, which Inniscarra won.

The vanquished Barrs will look back on this semi-final with sizeable regret, the city side failing to push on after opening up a three-point advantage — 0-8 to 0-5 — five minutes into the second half.

They would manage only one further score from play in the remaining 25 minutes of action and were outscored 1-6 to 0-3 during this period.

Parking the result momentarily, the game was a superb advertisement for club camogie in Cork. Referee Cathal McAllister allowed as much as possible to let proceedings flow. He couldn't be accused of being whistle-friendly, a complaint regularly thrown at camogie officials.

The Barrs had fine individual showings from corner-back Aoife O'Neill — what a battle she had with Ellen Murphy in the first period — and young Orlaith Cahalane,

Fun in the sun as brilliant Enniskeane claim Cork glory



It was third time lucky for Enniskeane as they avenged the 2017 and 2019 county intermediate camogie final defeats when overcoming Aghabullogue by 1-16 to 2-8 in yesterday's decider. Cork senior player Orla Cronin was the standout performer for the winners, hitting five from play and six frees. She also set up Sinead Hurley for their second-half goal.

while, for Inniscarra, Rena Buckley mopped up significant ball in the second period. Joanne Casey deserves mention too, the former Cork senior withdrawn at half-time but when reintroduced after the second-half water break, she

had a hand in the game-deciding goal and also chipped in with two late points.

The game's only goal came on 54 minutes, from a scorable Barrs free which dropped short at the other end of the pitch. Inniscarra worked pos-

session up the field, with Ellen Murphy providing the finish. The green flag moved last year's beaten finalists 1-8 to 0-8 in front, quite a turnaround after finding themselves 0-8 to 0-5 in arrears earlier in the half. Orlaith Cahalane,

daughter of Niall, and Gemma O'Connor (free) cut the deficit to a point but a pair of Casey points edged Inniscarra across the finish line.

The winners made much the brighter start, Claudia Keane, Murphy, Casey, and

Katie O'Mahony shoving them four in front after seven minutes. The Barrs settled thereafter and Inniscarra would add only one further point to their first-half tally, that a Niamh Dilworth free.

The Barrs, in a bid to curb the influence of Rena Buckley at centre back, played the wings to great effect, with Cahalane and Rachel Myers troubling the Inniscarra full-back line. Myers, Cahalane, and Keava McCarthy were on target in nudging them into a 0-6 to 0-5 interval lead and while they widened this gap at the break, they were unable to keep their noses in front in the closing stretch.

Scorers for Inniscarra: E Murphy (1-2); N Dilworth (0-2), 0-1 45), J Casey (0-3 each); K O'Mahony, T McCarthy, C Keane (0-1 each).

Scorers for St Finbarr's: K McCarthy (0-4, 0-3); O Cahalane (0-3); G O'Connor (0-2 frees), R Myers (0-2 each).

INNISCARRA: S Walsh; A O'Regan, A Kavanagh, R Quigley; A Sheehan, R Buckley, R O'Mahony; K O'Mahony, J Casey; J Burke, C Ring, C Keane; E Murphy, N Dilworth, T McCarthy.

Subs: E O'Reilly for Burke, R Keane for Casey (both HT); J Casey for Ring (50).

ST FINBARR'S: C Hurley; S Punch, A Egan, A O'Neill; M Cahalane, G O'Connor, R Finn; L O'Connell, A Shannon; C Golden, E Olden, C Sargent; O Cahalane, K McCarthy, R Myers.

Subs: E Wigginton Barrett for Olden (39); G Cahalane for Sargent (47); E Ryan for Myers (50); N Olden for Golden (54).

Referee: C McAllister.

Picture: Denis Minihane

STAR Sport

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 26, 2020



Enniskeane are going up!

Enniskeane captain Kate McCarthy lifts the cup after they won the county intermediate camogie final against Aghabullogue on Sunday. See pages 2-3.

(Photo: David Ribeiro)

Third time lucky for Enniskeane

Heroic Enniskeane banish final defeats as they capture county crown

ENNISKEANE 1-16
AGHABULLOGUE 2-8

SANDRA CORCORAN REPORTS

RELIEF and euphoria all rolled into one – that's how it felt when the final whistle announced Enniskeane as county intermediate camogie champions at Castle Road last Sunday.

Relief that, at last, Enniskeane won this title, having lost two of the previous three county finals. Euphoria that all the hard work paid off, a county title was heading west and Enniskeane were heading to the senior ranks in 2021.

"To be playing with this group of girls that have had that heartache over the years, it's brilliant for the club and the team that we are going up senior and going to play at a level that we know we are good enough to play at. It was a long time coming," a delighted Enniskeane captain Kate McCarthy told the *Star Sport Podcast* this week.

While Enniskeane eventually reached the summit of the intermediate mountain, they didn't make it easy for themselves in the final as Aghabullogue rallied with two late goals but the Carbery side had built up enough of a lead to withstand this comeback.

This was heroic from Enniskeane. They had heroes all over the pitch. Emma O'Driscoll, Aisling O'Driscoll, Laura Mannix, Louise Duggan and Danielle Carroll were all hugely influential, as was player of the match Orla Cronin, who helped fire her club to the Nano Nagle trophy and a place at senior level for 2021. Not only that, but Enniskeane also have the Munster series to look forward to early next month so the adventure isn't over yet.

Aghabullogue got off to a great start with two points from Aoife Twomey and Cliona Healy



Enniskeane players celebrate their county intermediate camogie final triumph against Aghabullogue on Sunday. (Photos: David Ribeiro)

INTERMEDIATE FINAL

(free). They also had four wides before Enniskeane opened their account with a point from an Orla Cronin free. Tara Sheehan levelled with another point following an Emma O'Driscoll interception. Enniskeane then took control, and points from Eimear O'Brien, Tara Sheehan and Orla Cronin (3) had Enniskeane ahead at half time, 0-7 to 0-2.

On the resumption Cork star Cronin added two more points before Enniskeane struck for their only goal. Again, Cronin was involved as Sinead Hurley finished to the net in the 37th minute. They were in command and led 1-12 to 0-5 at the second water break.

Cliona Healy was keeping Aghabullogue in touch but scores from Cronin and Orla Coughlan left the West Cork team firmly in control, 1-14 to 0-7, and powering to glory.

Aghabullogue then hit a purple patch and two goals in one minute, from Ella Foley and Cliona Healy, followed by a Healy free left just three points

between the sides. Enniskeane didn't buckle though. Instead, they hit back with a brace of points from Cronin to seal the win, while goalkeeper Kate Corcoran also stood firm between the posts.

"Resilience is something that we have in buckets," explained captain Kate McCarthy.

"We've shown it over the years. We are a team that loses by a point, and we got so close (in previous years), and I think we had resilience this year, there was always a belief that we would turn it around."

And Enniskeane did turn it around. Third time lucky, they're now county champions

and are heading to the senior ranks next season.

"We can't wait to see the draw for next year. We want to be hurling at the top level. We want to go up and be competitive, and we have the drive and the belief to power on," McCarthy added.

This victory was also a great way to commence celebrations for the club's 25th anniversary. The Enniskeane management includes Anthony O'Sullivan, Dermot Curtin, Elaine Alyward and Brian Daly helped by Sandra Corcoran and paramedic Ciara Whyte.

Scorers

Enniskeane: Orla Cronin 0-11 (6f); S Hurley 1-0; Tara Sheehan 0-2; E O'Brien, D O'Brien, O Coughlan 0-1 each.

Aghabullogue: C Healy 1-4 (2f);

E Foley 1-0; C McCarthy 0-2; A Twomey, M Ring 0-1 each.

Enniskeane: Kate Corcoran; Celine Nyhan, Danielle Carroll, Louise Duggan; Emma O'Driscoll, Kellie Scannell, Aisling O'Driscoll; Laura Mannix, Sinead Hurley; Eimear O'Brien, Orla Cronin, Daire O'Brien; Siobhan O'Driscoll, Orla Coughlan, Tara Sheehan.

Subs: Deirdre Browne for O'Driscoll (16), Kate McCarthy for Scannell

(59), Lauren Corcoran for E O'Brien (59), Caitlin O'Donovan for Hurley (59), Caroline O'Donovan for Coughlan (65).

Aghabullogue: Leah Cooney; Caoimhe O'Connell, Miriam Cotter, Eireann O'Shea; Emma Flanagan, Joanne Crowley, Meadhbh Ring; Katie McCarthy, Ella Foley; Aoife Twomey, Brid Cotter, Clara McCarthy; Julie Tarrant, Cliona Healy, Niamh Barry Murphy.

Referee: Cathal Egan (Glen Rovers).

Three reasons why Enniskeane are champs

RESILIENCE – After two defeats in the previous three finals, in 2017 and 2019, Enniskeane showed impressive resolve and character to come back again this season and take that next step. Captain Kate McCarthy has spoken of the belief in the team this year and they backed that up on the pitch. In their quarter-final, they trailed Blackrock by 13 points before coming back to win. That's impressive by any standards.

CLASS ACT – Orla Cronin showed her inter-county class with a player-of-the-match performance in the county final. She scored 0-11, including five from play, in the four championship games Cronin racked up 1-39. She has loved being able to train full-time with Enniskeane these past few months and both the team and herself are now reaping the rewards. Their go-to player stood up, again.

YOUNG GUNS – Numbers are good at the club this year, and they fielded a second adult team for the first time too, and another positive is the wave of talented young players coming through. Eimear O'Brien, Daire O'Brien, Sinead Hurley, Tara Sheehan, Deirdre Browne, these are some of the young guns who have stepped up to help drive Enniskeane camogie forward.

Orla Cronin with her player of the match award.



THE HIGHLIGHTS

Our Star: It's hard to look past Orla Cronin who showed her class with an 11-point haul and drove her team on to glory.

Star moment: Sinead Hurley's 37th minute goal for Enniskeane pushed them well ahead and gave them a cushion they needed later on.

Talking point: After losing two of the previous three finals Enniskeane deserve huge credit for regrouping, going again and winning the intermediate championship.

What's next? The senior talk can wait for a while as Enniskeane are in Munster intermediate action against the Waterford champions on October 4th in Dungarvan. The winners play the Tipp champs one week later.



Enniskeane's Tara Sheehan keeps possession under pressure.

Courcey set for 2018 final repeat

CAMOGIE

■ Linda Mellerick

IT'S a repeat of the 2018 county senior camogie final.

Twenty-four months ago, Courcey Rovers had a tremendous campaign and reached their first senior final in the club's history.

They faced county champions Inniscarra who were reaching for their third title in as many years. Inniscarra won, 1-13 to 0-5.

It was a hard lesson for the young Rovers side.

Mike Boland manager and coach for the past three years alongside selectors Kevin Hannon and Joey Gallagher, and Shirley Moloney who stepped in this year, have put in tremendous work to get Courcey's back into another final.

There are others who have also stepped in to lend a hand and Mike is thrilled how well they all work together.

"We all get on very well as a management team. Thankfully we're nearly always in the same frame of mind and not pulling against each other."

Reflecting on 2018, Mike says the occasion got the better of his team.

"The occasion got to them (players). Inniscarra two years ago were coming off winning two counties, into their third final and the bottom line is that experience stood."

"We started well that day, we got the first two scores but Inniscarra grind you down, they stay in the game and a lot of our girls that day didn't perform to where we had been throughout that championship."

"I think nerves, our first county final, they were very nervous and it showed because at times things happened that didn't happen throughout the championship."

"We had won the league the year before (2017), and after winning that, with a trophy in hand, I thought that we might be able to kick on but I think the occasion, the national anthem being played, things the girls had never experienced before probably got to them."

"But that's not taking away from Inniscarra, they do what they do well, they turned up, they played to their high standard and they'll turn up on Sunday coming the very same way."

"They'll have their high standard, the difference I would be hoping this Sunday is that we would turn up with the high standard we are capable of producing too."

"Things are going well and I'd just be hoping we can transfer that onto the field without any frills or circus that surrounds it."

In 2018, with such a young side at the time many felt that it might be too soon for Courcey's.

As it turned out the final didn't go their way and here they are again two years later, stronger, older, wiser.

One imagines they'll appreciate this one all the more if the result goes their way.

"Yeah," Mike agreed.

"They're after maturing, they know their roles now. It took 12 months to find their roles three years ago but they know where they should be on the field at any stage now."

"They're a lot more developed and as a group they're more mature. I think



Courcey Rovers' Grainne Hannon gets the ball away from Douglas' Joy Leo during the SE Systems Cork senior camogie championship semi-final at Castle road. Picture: Eddie O'Hare



Treasa McCarthy, Inniscarra, racing through chased by Aisling Shannon of St Finbarr's in the SE Systems Cork Senior Camogie Championship semi-final. Picture: Denis Minihane

even the younger girls that have come in, Fiona Keating was only 17 at the time (2018), Saoirse McCarthy was only 17, they were very young girls."

"Linda (Collins) was 22. We had probably six girls that were between the age of 17 to 19. That's very young to go into your first county final."

It's more or less that same team, maybe one or two changes. Lorraine Collins, in her first year out of minor, has come into the starting 15.

Emily O'Regan who started at corner back at the start of the season is out with injury.

Ashling Moloney is 27 years of age and has once again had a great season at centre back, driving Courcey's at every stage.

"Ashling is a massive leader," acknowledges Mike.

"She's very mature and has got better over the past two years. This is probably the best I've seen her."

"She's a great leader on the field for us. Jacinta (Crowley) is back injury free and that's a big plus for us too."

And his thoughts for Sunday are that it is going to be very close.

"Inniscarra in fairness to them, lets give them credit. Last Sunday you'd be thinking the game is going against them."

"They dug in and they got the most important score at an important time that didn't leave the Barrs back in."

"Last year they were being beaten by Sars by six points with time almost up and they could have snuck a draw because they were very unlucky with a couple of goals."

"They were there three years before they made the breakthrough, losing to Milford, so they've been around eight years."

"They know how to win and sometimes you can't buy that experience in knowing how to win tight games."

"I think it has the makings of a cracker of a match. It's David and Goliath"

"I'd be hoping we'll put in a performance. The years go by and you might never get back to a county final. We're lucky that we were able to keep going and be back here again."

"This is nothing new to Inniscarra, the bottom line is they know what's coming Sunday. They'll be prepared."

"We know what's coming Sunday. We've seen their last two games against the Glen and the Barrs. We know that both teams had a sneak of winning the match but still Inniscarra ended up winning them."

"Inniscarra are the ones in the final. If we turn up Sunday we'll have as good a chance as them."

"I think it has the makings of a cracker of a match. It's David and Goliath. It's one of those matches I think where everyone is waiting to see do Courceys turn up or are Inniscarra the same as they usually are."



Inniscarra captain Katie O'Mahony and manager Kevin Murphy speaking after their side's victory over St Finbarr's.

Murphy ready for final push

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

INNISCARRA camogie manager Kevin Murphy is looking forward to another senior county final on Sunday against Courcey Rovers in Castle Road.

Having been involved with the senior team in the club for the last five years he has seen the club win three senior county title in a row but he has also experienced the heartbreak of losing out in last year's final to Sarsfields.

He is a very experienced mentor who has been involved in the GAA all his life, having worn the colours of his beloved Inniscarra since a young age.

He knows success doesn't come easy. Kevin is the first to admit how lucky his side are to be contesting the final after having to battle with all their might to hold off the huge challenge of Glen Rovers in their quarter-final outing and then St Finbarr's in their semi-final where they came away with a goal victory in both games.

"We are thrilled to have got over the line in both games and be in another final and to be honest we know how lucky we are to be here."

"Both St Finbarr's and Glen Rovers pushed us to the limits and could easily have force extra-time up to the very last puck of both games and we had to call on all our resources to see us through."

"We won both game by a goal and it shows just how close the game in this championship have been, we have had to call on all our experience to make it to the final but now we are there we are concentrate on the job in hand and the challenge Courcey Rovers will pose."

The job in hand is a big one and having lost out in last season's final to Sarsfields Inniscarra know the challenge they are facing as Courcey Rovers bid for their first senior title.

"Courcey Rovers are a good team, they were in the final two years ago and they will have learned a lot from that, they have beaten good team to reach this final and they are there on merit."

"They were excellent in their quarter final against St Catherine's and the semi-



Aoife Kavanagh of Inniscarra racing downfield with the ball chased by St Finbarr's players.

final outing against Douglas and we know it will take a huge effort from us to take the title."

Playing in their fifth final in a row is a huge achievement for Inniscarra, they lost out last year as their bid for four in a row was quenched and Kevin acknowledges the hurt from that defeat will hopefully drive his side on.

"Yes it was hard to lose out last year in the county final but Sarsfields were hungry for success and no doubt Courcey Rovers will bring the same challenge on Sunday but hopefully we will have learned from losing out in last year's final and go one better this year."

Kevin knows his charges will battle to the finish and has every confidence in their ability.

"We really have had to fight to reach this final but in the games we didn't panic we simply held the heads and kept working away and it came right for us."

"The experience in the sides helps as well and with players such as Rena Buckley, Treasa McCarthy, captain Katie O'Mahony, Joanne Casey, Rosie O'Mahony and Niamh Dilworth there leading the way the younger ones responded

well."

Looking back on the championship Kevin expressed huge satisfaction at the whole competition. It has been a great championship and there have been some excellent games that were all very close and it is good for the game to see this."

The Inniscarra conveyor belt of players keeps producing excellent young players and again this year has been no exception with a few younger players stepping up again to join the senior panel and with the clubs Junior B team contesting the county final on Saturday it a busy weekend.

"Yes it great to have so many players in the club and to bring a few of them through each year to the senior panel and I suppose they keep the rest of them on their toes and keep the pressure on them."

"The junior B team are in the final as well and all the games have stood to them and we are looking forward now to what we hope will be a successful weekend for our club."

On Sunday Kevin is join by fellow selectors former Cork and club star Irene O'Keefe, Martin Murphy, Joe O'Herlihy and coach Ger Dinan as they bid to bring the title back to Inniscarra.

McCarthy draws inspiration from O'Neill resilience

Cork Senior Camogie final

Eoghan Cormican

Spare a thought for Niamh McCarthy tomorrow.

Instead of lining out for Inniscarra in the Cork senior camogie final, McCarthy is confined to the sideline and role of spectator.

The injury preventing her involvement is the cruciate ligament tear she endured during the opening minutes of Inniscarra's first challenge game post-lockdown.

Rotten luck, says you.

Indeed, but you've not heard the half of it yet.

McCarthy, who only recently turned 24, is far more familiar with the dreaded cruciate injury than someone her age should be. The tear to McCarthy's right knee in early July, you see, wasn't her first cruciate injury, neither was it her second.

"This is the third time I've done it," she says with a rather heavy and yet totally understandable sigh.

McCarthy was just 14 when she first tore the cruciate ligament in her right knee. The timing couldn't have been worse, injury befalling her two weeks before Inniscarra's 2011 All-Ireland senior club final date at Croke Park.

Despite her young age, McCarthy was an integral part of the team. It was her goal which paved the way for their semi-final win over Antrim's O'Donovan Rossa.

"Missing out on an All-Ireland final in Croke Park was tough," she recalls. "I went and had surgery, but the knee was giving me trouble the following year so I had to have a second operation. I was out for a year and a half in total."

Little over two months after returning to the pitch, McCarthy tore the cruciate ligament in her left knee.

"I got injured when I was 14 and didn't play again properly until I was 19. It took four years to come back from both cruciate tears."

"It was incredibly tough to get back after both injuries. Mentally, it was quite draining. When the second one went, I was saying to myself, 'I don't even have a good knee now'. There were times when I thought, 'there is not a hope I'll come back from this'."

But return she did. Having eased herself back

Paths to the final

COURCEY ROVERS

First round: Courcey Rovers 3-15 Cloughduv 0-9.

Third round: Courcey Rovers 3-14 Newcestown 2-6.

Quarter-final: Courcey Rovers 2-9 St Catherine's 1-6.

Semi-final: Courcey Rovers 2-15 Douglas 2-5.

INNISCARRA

First round: Inniscarra 2-14 Ballincollig 1-5.

Inniscarra got a bye to quarter-final.

Quarter-final: Inniscarra 2-11 Glen Rovers 2-8.

Semi-final: Inniscarra 1-11 St Finbarr's 0-11.

in towards the end of 2015, there followed three seasons beyond her wildest dreams.

Inniscarra won three county titles on the bounce from 2016-18, McCarthy's club form earning her a call-up to the Cork panel. She was at full-forward for the 2017 All-Ireland final win, coming off the bench a year later as she picked up a second Celtic Cross.

"If you said to me when I was 16 or 17 and trying to come back after the second cruciate that I'll win three county championships in a row and two All-Irelands, I would have laughed in your face. It is way more than I could have ever expected."

And despite this latest setback, McCarthy is far from done. She will sit the final exam of her Pharmacy degree today, roar on her team-mates tomorrow at Castle Road, and then go under the knife on November 11 with a view to getting back on the pitch for the 2022 season.

"My Inniscarra team-mates are some of my best friends. They are the reason I wanted to come back playing camogie after the first two injuries and they are the people who will drive me on during my next period of rehab. I am only 25 next year. There is no excuse not for me to come back."

"Cork footballer Colm O'Neill text me in 2011 and told me to keep the head up. I can't believe almost 10 years on, I am in his position and have done my cruciate three times. He came back from three and hopefully I will too."



SUNNY SIDE OUT: Niamh McCarthy has endured wretched luck on the injury front but she's staying positive. Picture: Matt Browne/Sportsfile

Dual star Keating is on the brink of a double



Fiona Keating in action for West Cork in the county senior football final.



Saoirse McCarthy of Courcey Rovers.

Courceys face their toughest test yet

IF Courcey Rovers want to win the club's first county senior camogie championship title then they need to beat the team that dashed their dreams in 2018. Two years ago Inniscarra beat Courceys by 1-13 to 0-5 in the county final to complete the three-in-a-row and also break Courceys' hearts. That was the latter's first-ever county senior final but they were taught a lesson by the Inniscarra outfit.

Inniscarra's 1-11 to 0-11 semi-final win against St Finbarr's last Saturday means they are back in a fifth consecutive final, and Courceys know they have it all to do this Sunday afternoon in Castle Road when the pair clash at 3pm.

Ellen Murphy scored the crucial goal for Inniscarra against the Barrs, while the former champs were also tested in their quarter-final – a 2-11 to 2-8 win against Glen Rovers. The loss of the injured Niamh McCarthy is a blow to Inniscarra, but they still carry a scoring threat and had six players on target against the Barrs.

Courceys will have learned from their 2018 final appearance, are two years further along in their development and won't be fazed by the trappings of a county final.

Cork forward Linda Collins has scored 5-8 in Courceys' three championship wins (2-9 to 1-6 v Catherine's, 3-14 to 2-6 v Newcestown and 2-15 to 2-5 v Douglas), including 2-3 against Newcestown and 2-4 in the semi-final against Douglas. Jacinta Crowley's free-taking has also been a feature and she's chipped in with 0-15 from placed balls while 19-year-old dual star Fiona Keating (1-9) and Cork forward Saoirse McCarthy are also big threats. The Courceys defence has been very impressive too with centre back Ashling Moloney in top form, while captain and full back Karyn Keohane and Grainne Hannon are also very influential.

Courceys look a more balanced team than in 2018. The question now is will it be enough to make history against an Inniscarra team that knows how to win county finals?

West Cork football ace hoping to fire Courcey Rovers to senior camogie glory

BY KIERAN MCCARTHY

FIONA Keating didn't have much time to celebrate West Cork's recent county senior football final triumph.

By 11pm that Saturday night she was at home in bed in Ballinspittle, with her thoughts wrestled away from the football celebrations and focussed on Courcey Rovers' county senior camogie semi-final the following day.

There were less than 24 hours between the final whistle that greeted West Cork's breakthrough victory against Mourneabbey at CIT and Courceys' emphatic camogie semi-final win against Douglas at Castle Road. In between it was about rest and recovery.

'It was an early night for me after West Cork won the county final,' the 19-year-old dual star said.

'I passed my driving test a few weeks ago so I was able to leave the football celebrations early and drive home. My club (Courcey Rovers) means so much to me and I wanted to be right for our semi-final.

'When I got up on Sunday morning, I put down to the beach and put my legs in the water for a bit. I went for another sleep at 12, just so I was well rested.'

She was due to work from 9am to 2pm that Sunday morning at her local Centra in Ballinspittle but understanding bosses gave her the time off, so she could recover for the second half of a hectic weekend.

Keating played the full, energy-sapping final against

Mourneabbey. Physically and emotionally, that was a tiring game as West Cork won their first-ever senior county title against the team that had beaten them in the previous two finals. She had switch from that to her club's camogie semi-final, and, again, she lasted the full 60 minutes against Douglas and scored five points from play, as Courceys returned to their second senior final in three seasons.

'I felt good in the camogie semi-final, but it did hit me in the last ten minutes,' she said.

'I was playing in the full-forward line with Linda Collins, it was just the two of us in there. In the last 10, 15 minutes they tried bringing me out wing forward, but I lasted about two minutes there because my legs were starting to cave in, so I went back into the full-forward line for the last ten minutes.'

Two huge games, two big performances and two massive wins that leave the current Celtic Ross West Cork Youth Sports Star on the verge of a unique double – county senior football and camogie winner's medals in the same season.

In October 2018, Keating lined out in two county senior finals on the one weekend, within 25 hours of each other, but both ended in heartbreak. On the Saturday Courcey Rovers lost their first-ever county senior final appearance to Inniscarra and the following day West Cork came up short against Mourneabbey in the county football final replay.

But now she's on the brink of a senior double, with the foot-

ball title residing in West Cork for the next 12 months.

'It was such an incredible feeling to beat Mourneabbey because they're the best club team in the country and they've had it over us in the recent finals – but it all just came together,' Keating said.

'We trained a good bit this year, more than normal, and because there was no inter-county we had more time for West Cork. That gave us a chance to gel more as a team and not just a division. You could see that this year in our matches, that we played more as a team than a division, and I think we all trusted each other more and that had a huge impact on each other.'

'You could see with the celebrations after, everyone was absolutely delighted.'

Now, her attention is on the camogie final, against familiar opposition, as it was Inniscarra who beat Courceys in the 2018 county decider.

'Two years ago when we got to the final, I was only 17 and didn't have much experience, but I'm two years older now and a lot more experienced so I feel in a good place, and so does the whole team' she said.

'We know now what it's like to get to a county final, to play in one and to lose one – and we don't want to experience that again. We want to win and we want to get into the Munster series.'

Keating can also draw on the experience of West Cork's recent 4-9 to 2-13 football win against Mourneabbey ahead of Sunday's camogie decider

'I've already played in four county finals so that will help me and it will help the team as well'

against Inniscarra.

'You learn a lot when you lose and you never want to be back in that position,' explained Keating, who lost senior football finals in 2018 and 2019, as well as the 2018 camogie final.

'I've played in three county senior finals in a row with West Cork and that will stand to me. I know now what it's like to win a county final, whereas with camogie most of us have only played in the one that we lost.'

'Even when it comes to dealing with nerves before a big game, I've already played in four county finals so that will help me too and it will help the team as well.'

In 2018, it was Courceys' first county senior final. It was all new to them. But they're two years on in their development and they're a better team now. They've shown that in wins against St Catherine's (2-9 to 1-6), Newcestown (3-14 to 2-6) and Douglas (2-15 to 2-5).

'We're a team that is very even, our backs are as strong as our forwards – and I don't think many teams can say that,' said Keating, who was named the



Courcey Rovers' centre forward Fiona Keating fires over another point in the semi-final win against Douglas.

Aghada get it right at third time of asking

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

Aghada 0-12
Kilbree/Kilmeen 1-7

IT was a case of third-time lucky for Aghada who banished the ghosts of losing two previous finals to overcome Kilbree in the SE Systems Junior C championship decider at Castle Road in idyllic weather conditions. Kilbree/Kilmeen's Mairead Crowley opened the scoring with a pointed free, but two in a row from Ali Smith and one from an Aoife Healy free had Aghada 0-3 to 0-1 in front inside 10 minutes. Kilbree/Kilmeen stayed in touch with a C Crowley pointed free and just on the water break it was Aghada who led by two after Roisin Keane slotted over from play. Kilbree/Kilmeen began to find gaps in Aghada's defence and they were level when Crowley pointed a free. The sides swapped points with Abigail Ring and Crowley on target before Smith converted an Aghada free to give them a one-point lead, 0-6 to 0-5, at the break. Kilbree/Kilmeen took control from the restart with midfielder Caoimhe Murphy setting up Aoife Dullea with an excellent delivery and Dullea made no mistake to fire Kilbree into the lead for the first time



The Aghada team who won the SE Systems Junior C Championship, beating Kilbree/Kilmeen in the final at Castle Road.

in the game. Crowley added to their tally with a point to push Kilbree/Kilmeen two points in front. Aghada narrowed the gap with a point before the second water break. Maeve O'Neill gave Kilbree/Kilmeen a three-point advantage on the resumption and they were boosted when keeper Heather Brimble denied Aghada with a penalty save as the game entered the final quarter. Aghada failed to panic and showed their experience in the closing 10 minutes as they hit five points in a row. Smith, Keane, and Healy were all to the fore as they killed off the strong Kilbree challenge and finally get their hands on the coveted Junior C Championship title after a strong test from a determined Kil-

bree side who will, no doubt, have learned so much from their first season participating at Junior C level after winning the 13-a-side title last season. Aghada's Aoife Healy was named as The Echo Player of the Match after turning in an excellent display for her side. **Scorers for Aghada:** A Smith 0-6, A Ring 0-3A Healy 0-2, R Keane 0-1. **Kilbree/Kilmeen:** M Crowley 0-6, A Dullea 1-0, M O'Neill 0-1. **AGHADA:** A Stafford; A Horgan, K O'Farrell, A Rose; M Leahy, A Mc Grath, E R Boylan; A Healy, R Leahy; A Ring, A Smith, A Mc Grath, R Keane, S Leahy, K Terry. **Subs:** C Mc Grath for K Terry (h/t), A Crowley for A Ring (43). **KILBREE/KILMEEN:** H Brimble; R Hurley, Si-nead O'Donovan, Sarah O'Donovan; S O'Connell, A Crowley, K O'Donovan; E O'Donovan, E

O'Brien; M Crowley, M O'Brien, L Sheehy; G O'Brien, A Dullea, C Murphy. **Subs:** R Dullea for G O'Brien (h/t), M Murphy for E O'Brien (h/t), M O'Neill for L Sheehy (40). **Referee:** Frank O'Dwyer (St Finbarr's). **Cloughduv 2-8**
Eire Og 1-5 Cloughduv captured the Junior Second teams championship title after they overcame neighbours Eire Og in an entertaining contest. Caoimhe O'Mahony was on target with five first-half points, four from frees and one a 45, while a Caoimhe Foley goal was also crucial as Cloughduv opened up an interval lead of 1-7 to 0-2. Foley and Katie Verling added points to an impressive first-half tally as Eire Og

had points from Ciara Beechinor and Emily Coffey in the opening half. Eire Og battled back in the second half with a Ciara Beechinor point and a 12th minute goal from Fiona Murphy. Emily Coffey and Orla Beechinor added points, but Cloughduv responded well with an O'Mahony pointed free and a goal from former Cork senior Joanne O'Callaghan who was encouraged back from retirement for the closing stages of championship as they did enough to secure the title thanks in the main to an excellent opening half display. **Scorers for Cloughduv:** C O'Mahony 0-6, (0-4 fs 0-1 45), C Foley 1-1, J O'Callaghan 1-0, K Verling 0-1. **Eire Og:** F Murphy 1-0, C Beechinor, E Coffey 0-2 each, O Beechinor 0-1.



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

IT CERTAINLY is hard to call tomorrow's SE Systems senior county camogie final between Inniscarra and Courcey Rovers.

It's a repeat of 2018 where Inniscarra won their three in a row, 1-13 to 0-5, but one gets the feeling that it will be a different Rovers that take to the pitch this time around.

They are a stronger team with more purpose and confidence alongside a hard-working ethic.

But of course, they face one of the dominant forces in club senior camogie for the past eight years.

Inniscarra's first title in 2016 came after three seasons of heart-breaking defeats to Milford. They lost the 2013 quarter final, the 2014 final and the 2015 semi-final to the North Cork side.

Finally, they broke Milford's control in a pulsating 2016 final and it's been a great run since. Three in a row of titles and losing out narrowly to Sarsfields in last year's decider.

During the past eight years Inniscarra have had more than their fair share of injuries and to key players.

They also lost players such as Joanne Casey to work and travel. Yet they continued to produce and win titles. And it is to their great credit that they contest their fifth final in a row tomorrow.

Inniscarra haven't been firing on all cylinders this season yet they are still in the final and they didn't have the easiest of passages having to face Glen Rovers and St Finbarr's in the quarter and semi-finals respectively.

Inniscarra know how to win, they have the experience of holding onto a lead despite ferocious pressure and on the flip side, pulling big games out of the fire. They have tremendous battling qualities and often win games at the death.

Twice the Glen came back at Inniscarra when the job looked done. Things weren't going Inniscarra's way against the Barrs.

They are typically very good at

Final should be epic encounter

starting games well and hit four points before the Barrs had caught their breath.

But from there on it was St Finbarr's that looked the side most likely to advance to their first final in 12 years.

But with eight minutes to go Inniscarra's Ellen Murphy got the all-important goal and from there Inniscarra drove on. The Barrs didn't know what hit them.

I've been very impressed with Courcey's this season. You can go through every line and pick out players that impress.

The attacking section for Rovers contains Linda Collins, Saoirse McCarthy, Fiona Keating and Christine O'Neill who has really enthralled.

Inniscarra have a very dependable defence with an attacking half back line. If this game opens up Rovers will be hoping to capitalise on their speed. A tighter game will suit Inniscarra more.

You have the threat of Claudia Keane, Ellen Murphy and Joanne Casey up front for Inniscarra as their main threat.

Treasa McCarthy won't be found wanting either. Casey picked up a rib injury earlier in the campaign and went off at half time in the semi-final only to be re-introduced on forty-eight minutes and play a decisive role in closing out the game.

Claudia Keane is extremely strong and difficult to stop as she bursts down the middle. At times last week



Inniscarra captain Katie O'Mahony (left) and vice-captain Aoife Kavanagh after their side's victory over St Finbarr's in the SE Systems Cork Senior Camogie Championship semi-final at Castle Road. Picture: Denis Minihane

Inniscarra took too much out of the ball, running into cúl de sacs and dropping harmless balls into the Barrs keeper's hands which she cleared comfortably.

They can't afford to waste possession like that tomorrow. Defensively Ashling Moloney has

been a standout performer for Rovers. Ciara Hayes and Edel Moloney haven't been far behind her.

Add in captain Karyn Keohane, Grainne Hannon and Orla Twomey and you have a really strong defence. Moloney may well pick up Claudia Keane, Ciara Hayes on Ellen

Murphy. Joanne may go into full forward where she caused endless problems against St Finbarr's after coming back on.

She's sure to figure at some stage in Inniscarra's full forward line. Rovers may leave their capable full back line to cope with that rather than start switching things around.

Midfield as always will play an important role. Here Katie O'Mahony rarely has an equal and that's something Rovers will be mindful of.

They'll need a big return from Jacinta Crowley in that department.

Rena Buckley picked up Linda Collins in the 2018 final and had a storming game.

As the game progressed supply was limited going into Linda and she had to drift deep to try and see some action and that suited Inniscarra down to the ground.

I'm sure Rena will do the same again. Linda is a stronger player two years down the line so it's a challenge for both players and that's what whets the appetite.

Will Inniscarra regain the title they narrowly lost to Sarsfields in 2019 or will they suffer another final defeat as Courcey Rovers win their first?

Often games don't reach the heights you expect of them. That won't be the case tomorrow.

This will be epic and it's too close to call. A draw maybe? Who knows.

County camogie final heartbreak for Kilbree

JUNIOR C CAMOGIE

KILBREE 1-7
AGHADA 0-12

THERE was heartbreak for Kilbree in the county junior C camogie championship final at Castle Road last Saturday. The brave Blues came up short after a 0-12 to 1-7 loss to Aghada.

Kilbree won the junior C 13 a-side county championship last year, and this season they qualified for the final of the 15-a-side competition. Meanwhile, Aghada were contesting their third final, looking to claim the title.

Mairead Crowley scored Kilbree's first point before Aghada reeled off four points of their own to take control. Crowley responded with two points for the Carbery side and there was just one point between the teams, 0-4 to 0-3, at the first water break.

Kilbree's play improved in the second quarter as they found their feet in this county final, and both sides scored two points each. It meant that Aghada held a slender lead at the break, 0-6 to 0-5.

Early in the second half, Caoimhe Murphy made a burst from midfield, let the ball into Aoife Dullea who scored a super goal. When Mairead Crowley added another point, Kilbree took a 1-6 to 0-7 lead. The outlook seemed even better when Maeve O'Neill scored a point after the second water break.

In the most dramatic circumstances, it looked like it could be Kilbree's day when Heather Brimble saved a penalty early in the fourth quarter.

However, Aghada's experience counted in the last ten minutes when they scored



The Kilbree camogie team that lost the county junior C final last weekend.

five fine points to secure the county crown, but Kilbree can hold their heads high after a battling performance.

Kilbree: Heather Brimble; Rebecca Hurley; Sinead O'Donovan; Sarah O'Donovan; Sinead O'Connell; Aine Crowley; Kate O'Donovan;

Emily O'Donovan; Ellis O'Brien; Mairead Crowley; Maire O'Brien; Leanne Sheehy; Grainne O'Brien; Aoife Dullea; Caoimhe Murphy.

Subs: Rosemary Dullea for Grainne O'Brien (ht); Mary Murphy for Ellis O'Brien (ht); Maeve O'Neill for Leanne Sheehy (40).

Enniskeane going senior after county final triumph

STAR Sport



Enniskeane player Orla Cronin winner of 'The Echo' player of the match award after her side won the SE Systems Cork Intermediate Camogie Championship final at Castle Road.
Picture: Denis Minihan



Enniskeane's Aisling O'Driscoll celebrates their dramatic county intermediate championship quarter-final win.

Boland thrilled with final success

MATCH REACTION

■ Mary Newman

COURCEY ROVERS manager and coach Michael Boland is seldom lost for words.

Yesterday though, he was overcome at the final whistle as the side he has been involved with for four years took their first senior county championship title.

The Limerick-born Carrigrohilly resident is a busy man. He is also a selector with the Carrigrohilly senior hurling squad.

Boland is also a Cork minor camogie selector and was one of the people behind the success of the Cork minors over the last two years. At Castle Road the day belonged to classy Courcye Rovers though and Boland could not contain his delight.

"We came up here today to atone for losing out two years ago."

"Inniscarra were worthy winners that day, but today is our day."

"These are marvellous girls and anything we asked of them they did it, they made huge sacrifices to win this county and I am really delighted for them and for the club."

Courcye tasted the bitter pill of defeat to Inniscarra in their last county final meeting, which made this triumph all the sweeter now.

"There are wonderful people in the club, driving it forward and they work they have put has been rewarded here."

"Having new champions can only be good for the game in the county as well and it will spur on other clubs to now go on and do what we have done."

Having gone five points in arrears inside 13 minutes Courcye Rovers showed huge character to get back into the game. Not only that, they dominated the majority of the exchanges from there on.

"We had to dig deep to get into the game, but we'd never panicked and once we got the first score on the scoreboard we settled, we told the girls if we went behind to just hold the hands and not to panic and to just work hard and it would come right."

Earlier in the year, he was going to retire but several Courcye players got on to him and asked him gave it one more year.

Certainly, it was the right decision to stay on.

"I felt maybe they needed a new voice, but sure I couldn't just walk away and I'm so glad I stayed with it, they are great girls and a great club and I'm delighted to have been part of a historic first title win with them."

Courcyeys come of age with first title



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

Courcye Rovers	5-12
Inniscarra	1-12

AFTER 21 years playing senior camogie, Courcye Rovers won their first senior championship as they took the SE Systems sponsored title in absolute style in Castle Road.

Trailing by five points after 13 minutes and having yet to score, things were looking ominous for Rovers, but a brilliant 13-minute spell saw them turn this game around and lead 2-8 to 0-6 at half-time.

Inniscarra started glowingly as they so often do. They looked to have their match-ups right.

With the middle of the field packed, Inniscarra were winning the battles and the breaks and some beautiful points by Aileen Sheehan, Joanne Casey and a converted '45 by Niamh Dilworth saw them race into a five-point lead.

Additionally, they were unlucky not to goal on nine minutes after a great save by Sinead O'Reilly who had an excellent game throughout.

The game was fast and free-flowing, helped in no end by the wise refereeing of Cathal McAllister. The game didn't have its first free until 13 minutes in.

The tide turned for Rovers on 14 minutes. They decided to go down the short puck-out route and work the ball up the field. It worked a treat and Linda Collins hit the first of two great points to bring Rovers into the game. All through, the supporting capability of Rovers and their interplay was top notch.

The course of this game started to change. Fiona Keating and Collins were brilliance personified with Keating winning the player of the match accolade and Collins also considered.

Rena Buckley, at first, had the measure of Collins, but slowly the Rovers' player got the upper hand and when Buckley moved out to the half-back line in the second half, Collins did



Courcye Rovers celebrate their senior camogie final win over Inniscarra at the final whistle.

Picture: Jim Coughlan.

further damage. With Jacinta Crowley now winning the midfield section and giving a great supply, Rovers thundered into the game.

They were level on 21 and when Keating goaled three minutes later after a great Collins pass, a different game was now being witnessed.

Dilworth struck over a free on 29 minutes, Inniscarra's first score since the 13th minute, as Rovers took an eight-point lead into the break.

Inniscarra threw everything at Rovers as play resumed. Casey and Aileen Sheehan pointed and they laid siege on Rovers defence, but just as they had been all season the Courcyeys' defence were dazzling.

As play was cleared Keating gathered and despite Sheila Walsh blocking, Keating got the rebound to hit the net and Inniscarra's good work was

snuffed out.

Linda Collins pointed and then the intense work of Lorraine Collins, escaping three Inniscarra defenders, saw her offload to Keating who hit her third goal and there seemed no way back for Inniscarra. Rovers now led by 13.

But Inniscarra weren't going to give up easily and followed with two points and an Erin Looney goal, but in truth, this was going to be Courcye Rovers' day.

Sheehan won a penalty that went over the bar and Casey hit a rasper of a shot which looked destined for the net, but Sinead O'Reilly again saved brilliantly.

All over the field Rovers were impressive, their fitness, teamwork, and clinical finishes were from the top drawer and when the classy Linda Col-

lins stuck Rovers' fifth goal on 52 minutes Courcye Rovers were going to be county champions.

Scorers for Courcye Rovers: F Keating 3-2, L Collins 1-5, McCarthy 1-1, J Crowley 0-4 (0-2 f, 0-1 45), Inniscarra: J Casey 0-6 (0-1 f, 0-1 45), E Looney 1-0, A Sheehan 0-2, N Dilworth 0-2 (0-1 f, 0-1 45), R Buckley 0-2 (0-1 pen, 0-1 f).

COURCYE ROVERS: S O'Reilly, O Twomey, K Keohane, G Harmon, C Hayes, A Moloney, E Moloney, J Crowley, Elaine O'Reilly, Eimear O'Reilly, F Keating, Lorraine Collins, Linda Collins, C O'Neill, S McCarthy.

Subs: E Maguire for C O'Neill (46), A M Collins for Lorraine Collins (60), E O'Regan for Eimear O'Reilly (63).

INNISCARRA: S Walsh, A O'Regan, R Quigley, A Kavanagh, R Keane, R Buckley, A Sheehan, R O'Mahony, K O'Mahony, T McCarthy, C Ring, C Keane, E Murphy, N Dilworth, J Casey.

Subs: E O'Reilly for N Dilworth, E Looney for T McCarthy (h-t), C Looney for A O'Regan (42), J Burke for C Ring (53), D O'Callaghan for R Keane (55).

Referee: Cathal McAllister (Aghada).



Courcye Rovers captured their first Cork Senior Club Championship at Castle Road.

Picture: Jim Coughlan



Fiona Keating, Courcye Rovers, The Echo Player of the Match winner received the trophy from Linda Mellerick.

Picture: Jim Coughlan

Keating's hat-trick sees Courceys seal historic win

Cork senior camogie final

Courcey Rovers 5-12
Inniscarra 1-12

Therese O'Callaghan

Courcey Rovers made history yesterday in Castle Road clinching the Cork senior camogie championship title. On a perfect day for camogie, the club from Ballinadee and Ballinspittle saw captain Karyn Keohane lift the cup for the first time. It was the perfect performance too.

The standard produced was worthy of the day. They needed inspirational displays from big players and they got just that.

Two years ago, when they contested their first final, they fell to Inniscarra. The Mid Cork side were appearing in their fifth decider in a row and have made a major contribution to Cork camogie but, apart from a nervous start, Courcey Rovers were immense. Their teamwork was a joy to watch.

Mike Boland and his back-room team have worked wonders with this squad since suffering disappointment two years ago.

From brave goalkeeper Sinead O'Reilly — one of four sisters on the panel — they delivered.

There were contributions all over the field especially player-of-the-match Fiona Keating (3-2), Saoirse McCarthy (1-1), and Linda Collins (1-5). Keating created history of her own by adding a camogie title to the football medal she secured with West Cork earlier this month.

"I can't even put it into

words," she said. "We were there two years ago, and last year things didn't go our way with injuries. The first 10 minutes today were tough, going five points down. The ball wasn't coming up too much. Once we found our feet, we drove on."

"The win over Mounseabey in football set off the year for me. I know what it is like to lose county finals, I have lost three or four. When I won the football it gave me that extra bit of bite to go on and win the camogie." Inniscarra were quicker out of the blocks and had five points on the board without reply. Once the Courcey machine got going, they would not be stopped.

Keating nailed goal number one in the 24th minute. A second goal, and a timely boost, came just before half-time when McCarthy's shot went all the way to the net.

Courcey Rovers transformed the scoreboard, 2-8 to 0-6 at the break.

Their huge work-rate around the middle third enabled them to run at the Inniscarra backs and Jacinta Crowley was reliable from placed balls.

Inniscarra came at them hard after the change of ends. Joanne Casey driving forward, and a couple of points reduced the deficit.

Keating's second goal was a killer blow on 38 minutes. Her

third arrived three minutes later. Inniscarra pulled one back from sub Erin Looney but they still had a mountain to climb. Collins' green flag eight minutes from time was the final nail in the coffin.

Heroes everywhere. Ashling Moloney, Ciara Hayes, Edel Moloney mopping up every ball that came their way.

And for captain Keohane, the realisation of a dream. "It was not until the final whistle I knew we had it won. I thought, is this really happening?"

"We have some unbelievable forwards. Even when the pressure was put on them, the others came into play."

Scorers for Courcey Rovers: F Keating (3-2), L Collins (1-5), S McCarthy (1-1), J Crowley (0-4, 0-2 frees, 0-1 45).

Scorers for Inniscarra: J Casey (0-6, 0-1 45, 0-10), E Looney (1-0), N Dilworth (2), R Buckley (2) and A Sheehan (0-2).

COURCEY ROVERS: S O'Reilly; O Twomey, K Keohane (Capt), G Hannon; C Hayes, A Moloney, E Moloney; J Crowley, Elaine O'Reilly; Eimear O'Reilly, F Keating, Lorraine Collins; Linda Collins, C O'Neill, S McCarthy.

Subs: E Maguire for C O'Neill (46), A M Collins for Lorraine Collins (60), E O'Regan for Eimear O'Reilly (63).

INNISCARRA: S Walsh; A O'Regan, R Quigley, A Kavanagh; R Keane, R Buckley, A Sheehan; R O'Mahony, K O'Mahony (Capt); T McCarthy, C Ring, C Keane; E Murphy, N Dilworth, J Casey.

Subs: E O'Reilly for N Dilworth, E Looney for T McCarthy (half-time), C Looney for A O'Regan (42), J Burke for C Ring (53), D O'Callaghan for R Keane (55).

Referee: Cathal McAlister (Aghada).



HISTORY MAKERS: Karyn Keohane, Courcey Rovers captain, lifts the SE Systems Cork senior camogie championship cup aloft. Picture: Jim Coughlan

THE 60 SECOND REPORT

IT MATTERED

Courcey Rovers arrived in Castle Road in the correct frame of mind. They were ready to do battle. Two years ago, it was all so different for a young team. This time, their eye was firmly on the prize.

CAN'T IGNORE

Fiona Keating's marvellous achievement winning senior county titles in camogie and football, especially when playing both codes is so demanding.

GOOD DAY

Any day you celebrate a first county title has to be good.

BAD DAY

Inniscarra and legend Rena Buckley are naturally down. They lost a Junior B final as well on Saturday.

SIDELINE SMARTS

Inniscarra started out attempting to negate the opposing big names but in the end there were just too many to curtail.

BEST ON SHOW

Fiona Keating got the official gong. And you couldn't argue with that. The number 11 was a standout player among many candidates.

MAN IN THE MIDDLE

Superb job from Cathal McAlister and his team. The Aghada man is greatly respected in camogie and hurling circles.

WHERE NEXT

Munster club championship for Courcey Rovers against Clare champions Inagh/Kilnamona next weekend.



HEAD OVER HEELS: Shirley Moloney and Joey Gallagher of Courcey Rovers celebrate at the final whistle after their victory in the Cork Senior Club camogie final at Castle Road. See page 22. Picture: Jim Coughlan



Courcey Rovers celebrate their win over Inniscarra in the Cork Camogie Senior Club Championship final at Castle Road.

Picture: Jim Coughlan

Rovers savour county final win over Inniscarra

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

COURCEY ROVERS captain Karyn Keohane led the celebrations at Castle Road as the South East club made history on the big stage.

Having lost to Inniscarra two seasons ago, Courceys had no shortage of motivation here and once they settled drove home their advantage with a flurry of goals.

"I'm honoured and privileged to captain my club and to lead this fantastic group of girls to our first senior championship title is something I will always cherish," said Keohane.

"This win is just not about today it's about years and years of hard work and dedication by so many people to promote and keep camogie alive in our area.

"There are so many people I could mention, but it's just to say this win is for every person who has worn the Courcey jersey, it's a dream come through to see our club go onto the Cork roll of honour to join the names of all the great clubs who have won the title and we are really thrilled to have finally got over that line."

Keohane has served the club down through the years with huge determination and having lost out to Inniscarra two years ago she said they could not have met a better challenge.

"We were so disappointed two years



Fiona Keating, Courcey Rovers, battling Aine O'Regan and Aoife Kavanagh, Inniscarra.

Picture: Jim Coughlan

ago we lost out to a great Inniscarra side but nerves played a part that day.

"Today we said we would not allow ourselves to fall into the same trap, we were going to play to our strengths and even if they went ahead we would not let ourselves panic and I think we did just that. They went five points ahead, but we showed great character to get into the game."

The win will do a huge amount for the club and they are looking forward to representing Cork on the provincial stage.

"It will keep the season going for us and hopefully we can drive it on and do Cork proud, for our club, it is a huge boost and it will help promote camogie for all the young girls who are coming through."

■ See report on P37.



Courcey Rovers celebrate their win over Inniscarra in the County Senior Camogie final at Castle Road.

Picture: Jim Coughlan

Rovers face a stiff Munster test from Clare champions

SUNDAY

Munster senior championship semi-final Courcey Rovers v Inagh Kilnamona, Inagh

Kilnamona GAA (Clare) 2pm COURCEY ROVERS celebrated their first senior county championship title in style on Sunday night, but merriments would have been short-lived as their attention on Monday turned to this weekend's Munster Senior Championship semi-final against strong Clare opponents Inagh Kilnamona.

While Cork, as a county, are stronger than Clare, you would therefore imagine Cork's club scene to be stronger, yet Cork haven't been too successful in Munster over the past number of years.

So, club camogie is a different ball game.

A comprehensive display in the Clare county final saw Inagh comprehensively defeat Newmarket-on-Fergus, 2-17 to 1-7.

Much was spoken about Newmarket's vast experience ahead of the decider, but they couldn't match Inagh's intensity. The scoring statistics alone tell their own tale as all but four points of Inagh-Kilnamona's 2-17 total came from play whereas all but three of the champions' scores came from placed balls.

The chief conductors of Inagh-Kilnamona's command performance were the central axis of captain Clare Hehir, Fiona Lafferty, substitute Aoife Keane and in particular the inspirational Andrea O'Keeffe who was seemingly everywhere in an impactful roaming role.

However, as much as it was the stuff of dreams for Inagh-Kilnamona, Newmarket's sixth successive final appearance couldn't have been any more nightmarish as they just couldn't reach the heights of previous displays or years.

Defensively, Inagh were strong, deflecting two strong goal chances that Newmarket had and allowing their opponents just three scores from play throughout the hour.

Courcey Rovers, you'd predict to be that bit more clinical when goal chances arise, considering their goal tally of five last Sunday and 15 throughout the campaign.

Inagh had seven individual scorers in their opening half, finishing with eight in total.

They worked their puck-outs well, through the distinctive understanding between Aoife Keane and Andrea

CAMOGIE

■ Linda Mellerick

O'Keeffe. O'Keeffe may have worn the number 10 jersey and started at centre-forward, but she popped up everywhere between 5 to 15 in a match-defining roaming role, along with hitting 1-4 and directly setting up a similar tally in a player-of-the-match performance.

Newmarket had strong inter-county names such as Laura McMahon. Inagh have inter-county players Teresa O'Keeffe, Aoife Keane, Clare Hehir, and Fiona Lafferty.

Inagh are seasoned victors in the Clare championship winning their fourth title in five years and have successfully blended in youth, teenage newcomers Tiarna Hegarty and Danielle Griffin impressively performing like veterans. Considering Inagh are regular county champions, they undoubtedly will have their sights set on the Munster title.

It was a seventh title for the former All-Star nominee Fiona Lafferty. You could tell that the Munster championship was in the back of her mind as she gave her views after their win.

"We were bitterly disappointed last year, especially when we saw what Scariff-Ogonnelloe went on to achieve afterwards by winning Munster, the job that we couldn't finish the previous year. So, we were very eager this year, even though we knew from the draw how difficult it was going to be. But it was a relatively short championship, the matches came thick and fast so it was about everyone rowing in behind each other for that condensed period and thankfully it all worked out today."

Inagh's county final was played on September 12 so they've had time to celebrate, come back down to earth and refocus their minds. They'll need to be a fine outfit to beat an in-form Courcey Rovers. But Rovers could fall into the trap of being happy with their lot having achieved a momentous and historic day for their club just a few short days ago.

"It's hard to come back down to earth so quickly from that. If they want it enough they should advance in what will be a strong challenge in a Inagh Kilnamona parish which is awash with flags, bunting and teddies ahead of the game."

'We listened to the national anthem at training'



Thrilled: Sinead O'Reilly.

BY KIERAN MCCARTHY

WHEN Courceys Rovers qualified for their first-ever senior county championship final in 2018, it was all new to them. Sinead O'Reilly remembers that the playing of the national anthem before the game caught them by surprise.

They hadn't experienced that before. They were caught in the headlights – and they lost to Inniscarra.

Two years on, Courceys took the lessons they learned from the 2018 county final and made

'The girls brought a boombox to training last week, we'd be training away and someone would just put on the national anthem'

sure they were ready for all the trappings that accompany the showpiece game in the Cork camogie calendar.

"Two years ago most of us were totally green going up there, and that we are two years older this year made a huge difference," the Courceys goalkeeper told the *Star Sport*

Podcast this week.

"The girls brought a boombox to training last week, we'd be training away and someone would just put on the national anthem. You'd be like, 'okay, that's normal, that's fine'. It was little things like that, small psychology things, that made a difference to us."

It certainly made a difference as Courceys looked at home on the big stage in Castle Road as they beat Inniscarra by 5-12 to 1-12.

Going into the game, O'Reilly knew they were good enough to make history and win the club's first senior championship crown.

"The biggest turning point for us was beating Douglas (in the semi-final), they were coming strong this year, and after we won that game I said to the girls, 'if no-one else believes after that then we are in trouble'."

There was big belief that we could do it this year," she said, but even when an umpire, during the second half last Sunday, told O'Reilly that Courceys had two hands on the cup, she didn't believe him.

"At one stage, we might have been two goals up, the umpire, he was a lovely old fella, said that we have it in the bag but I said there's no way you can say that, this is Inniscarra and it's a county final. But in the last five minute I started crying in goal because I knew we'd won!" O'Reilly said.

HURLEY ON THE DITCH

By Denis Hurley

DOUBLE SUCCESS | Dual star Fiona Keating won senior county football and camogie titles within two weeks of each other

Courceys learned their lessons from 2018 loss and bounced back in style

WE'LL let you in on a secret, but you have to promise not to tell anyone – quite a sizeable chunk of sports coverage revolves around the use of clichés. They're very subtle, but if you look hard enough, you'll find them. One which get a good bit of airtime, but which isn't without merit, is the adage that you have to lose a final before you can win one.

To be fair, there are a few examples, even if we just focus on local matters. The Cork football teams that won All-Irelands in 1989/90 and 2010 had in fact each tasted defeat twice on All-Ireland final day before going all the way, while Castlehaven's SFC two in a row in 2012/13 and Carbery Rangers' victory of 2016 were underpinned by agony in deciders, 2011 for the Haven and 2014 for Ross. Similarly, the Haven's win in 1989 featured quite a few of the players who had lost ten years earlier.

The Cork ladies' football team that swept all before them under Eamonn Ryan didn't lose a final before winning 11 in 12 years from 2005 on, but they had won the Munster title in 2004 and got a lesson in that year's quarter-final from Mayo. Going back further, Kilbrittain's 1995 IHC title – more of which next week – came after final losses in 1988, 1999 and 2003, while Bandon had to lose the finals of 2007 and 2008 before coming good in 2011.

And yet, of course, there are exceptions. Clonakilty have appeared in three senior football finals since 1985 – in 1996, 2003 and 2009 – and won them all, while O'Donovan Rossa went all the way to All-Ireland glory in 1992-93 despite not having been in the county final prior to that. In fact, Skibb lost a final after winning one,

Now that Courceys have managed to get to the top of the tree, who is to say that they can't stay there?

to the Haven in 1994, while Bantry Blues did similar, winning in 1995 and 1998 before losing in 2001.

All of which brings us to Courceys Rovers, who created history last Sunday as they claimed the Cork county senior A camogie title for the first time. The Ballinspittle/Ballinadee side were going up against Inniscarra, who had won the title in 2010, 2016, 2017 and 2018 before losing to Sarsfield last year, meaning they were keen to retain the title.

Courceys had won the senior B title in 1999 to reach the top tier, but even so, playing a final against such vaunted opposition would have seemed like a huge task from the outside. Any such expectations were confounded, though, as they won by 5-12 to 1-12, with Fiona Keating scoring a hat-trick of goals.

The victory capped a marvellous few weeks for Keating, who was also part of the West Cork ladies' football team that broke through their glass ceiling to beat Mounseabbey in the county final, while Linda Collins and Saoirse McCarthy also found the net. Now that Courceys have managed to get to the top of the tree, who is to say that they can't stay there? Whether they do or don't though, for players like Karyn Keohane, Emily O'Regan, Christine O'Neill, Sinead O'Reilly and Ciara Hayes, who had solidified for years in the red and white, it was a well-earned reward.



A delighted mom and dad celebrate their daughter Saoirse McCarthy's and Courceys Rovers' historic win in the county senior camogie championship final against Inniscarra last Sunday. (Photo: Trevor Patchett)

Somebody else whose patience was rewarded was Jimmy O'Mahony, the Newcestown stalwart who died last week. When he accepted the role of club secretary in 1967, he could never have imagined that he would still be in situ half-a-century later, or that they would one day compete at both senior hurling and football.

At the end of 2016, when

Newcestown reached the promised land in hurling after years of trying, we spoke to Jimmy for the Cork GAA Yearbook and he was humble about his own longevity as well as optimistic about the on-field challenges that lay ahead.

"It's too long, really," he said, "but I suppose it's a good sign that they didn't ever try to get rid of me! I'm quite satisfied with the job anyway,

especially when the club are winning things."

"We're very privileged to be dual senior now and all we can do is see how it'll go."

"We'll have a whack at it anyway. With a population of 1,400 people, it isn't easy but we're used to punching above our weight."

While O'Mahony has departed, that fighting spirit will live on.



The victorious Courceys Rovers panel celebrate their first-ever county senior camogie championship triumph.

(Photos: Trevor Patchett)

Courceys long wait is all over

**COURCEYS ROVERS 5-12
INNISCARRA 1-12**

COURCEYS Rovers' long wait for a first county senior camogie championship title is over.

They came of age to beat Inniscarra at Castle Road last Sunday and avenge their 2018 county final defeat to the same opposition.

This was Courceys' day, but they had to battle back from a poor start that saw Inniscarra race 0-5 to 0-0 ahead inside 13 minutes. Once Courceys settled they blew Inniscarra away and led by 2-8 to 0-6 at the break, with goals from Fiona Keating and Saoirse McCarthy.

Teen star Keating (19) picked up the player-of-the-match award after her 3-2 haul while her Cork senior team-mates, Linda Collins (1-5) and Saoirse McCarthy (1-1), were hugely influential too.

Inniscarra did rally at the start of the second half with scores from Joanne Casey and Aileen Sheehan, but then Keating struck for her second goal, followed by her hat-trick strike – and there was no catching Courceys.

The excellent Linda Collins scored their fifth goal after 52 minutes and the celebrations could begin, as this Courceys team created history. From goalkeeper Sinead O'Reilly to captain and full back Karyn Keohane up to Keating, Collins and McCarthy in attack, there were heroes all over the field.

Next up is the Munster semi-final this Sunday away to the Clare champions.

Scorers

Courceys Rovers: F Keating 3-2; L Collins 1-5; S McCarthy 1-1; Crowley 0-4 (2f, 145).

Inniscarra: J Casey 0-6 (1f, 145); E Looney 1-0; A Sheehan, N Dilworth (1f, 145) 0-2 each; R Buckley 0-2 (0-1pen, 1f).

Courceys Rovers: Sinead O'Reilly; Orla Twomey, Karyn Keohane, Grainne Hannan, Clara Hayes, Ashling Moloney, Edel Moloney, Jacinta Crowley, Elaine O'Reilly, Eimear O'Reilly, Fiona Keating, Lorraine Collins, Linda Collins, Christine O'Neill, Saoirse McCarthy.

Subs: E Maguire for C O'Neill (46), AM Collins for Lorraine Collins (60), E O'Regan for Eimear O'Reilly (61). **Inniscarra:** Sheila Walsh; Aine O'Regan, Rebecca Quigley, Aoife Kavanagh, Rebecca Keane, Rena Buckley, Aileen Sheehan, Rosie O'Mahony, Katie O'Mahony, Triona McCarthy, Clara Ring, Claudia Keane, Ellen Murphy, Naimh Dilworth, Joane Casey.

Subs: E O'Reilly for N Dilworth, E Looney for T McCarthy (ht), C Looney for A O'Regan (43), J Burke for C Ring (54), D O'Callaghan for R Keane (55).

Referee: C McAllister (Aghada).

Cork conquered, Courceys want to take over Munster

BY GER MCCARTHY

WHAT a week it has been for Karyn Keohane and her Courceys Rovers team-mates.

Last Sunday they captured the club's first-ever Cork senior camogie championship title and it sparked huge celebrations, but already their attention has turned to their new target: the Munster senior camogie championship.

The new Cork champions travel to Clare this Sunday to take on the Banner County's finest, Inagh/Kilnamona.

It should be a cracking contest in which Courceys will need to be at their best. Inagh/Kilnamona defeated Newmarket-on-Fergus by ten points to capture their fourth Clare senior title in five years a few weeks ago.

'There was talk at the beginning of the season that there might not even be a Munster championship, depending on Covid, so we really didn't focus on it too much,' Courceys captain Karyn Keohane said.

'It was only after all the excitement died down a bit after the final whistle that we

'We want to go as far in the competition as we can' – Karyn Keohane

realised, God, there's a Munster championship game to get ready for. In the past few days, talk has turned to that game and we want to go as far in the competition as we can. Everyone is looking forward to it.'

Still, they have allowed themselves to soak in the glory from last Sunday's famous win against Inniscarra, and no doubt they will return to it again once they've, hopefully, conquered Munster.

So, what was the feeling like at the exact moment the final whistle shrilled against Inniscarra after Courceys 5-12 to 1-12 win?

'To be honest, I can't remember!' Keohane admitted.

'I suppose it was pure delight and trying to realise that this was finally after happening for us. We got there, we finally won it (senior county). I don't think that it has properly registered with us yet. I think a lot of the

players are still in a bit of disbelief that we have finally won a county.

'Getting our hands on that trophy, it is just mad really. Even a couple of days after, it hasn't (properly) hit us at all yet.'

Whatever the future holds, Courceys Rovers will cherish the feeling of winning a first senior title and deservedly so. After getting off to a slow start, the eventual winners rattled the net five times to cement the Ballinspittle club's deserved triumph.

'We talked about it beforehand in that we knew Inniscarra always started their matches at a fierce pace and high tempo,' Keohane explained.

'We knew they were going to come at us with their usual intensity, right from the start. Just before the final started,

Courceys captain Karyn Keohane lifts the cup.

we got together and said even if they get three goals in the first three minutes, there will be 57 minutes left so let's keep our composure and don't panic.

'As it happened, Inniscarra had five scores on the board before we registered our first point but not a single one of us panicked. We knew that we would be able to claw back that lead once things settled down. We got into our rhythm, passed the ball through the lines and got going.

'The team fought to the bitter end and didn't leave a single player isolated. It was our work rate, from start to finish, that was unbelievable. I know Inniscarra got the

first few scores but watching the game back again, even conceding the first five points, our work rate was unbelievable.

'Having the likes of Fiona Keating, Linda Collins and Saoirse McCarthy on the team, they produced the goods on the day which was great.'

Naturally, Courceys Rovers' chief scorers – Keating (3-2), Collins (1-5) and McCarthy (1-1) – drew plenty of headlines, but Keohane is quick to pay tribute to her fellow defenders who held their opponents scoreless during crucial periods of the county final.

'Well, I am one of the defenders so I will always claim bragging rights for the backs!' Keohane admitted.

'Throughout the season, I believe our backs have been phenomenal. All six of us have worked well as a unit and always hunted in packs. From the first game against Cloughduv, until the county final against Inniscarra, our defence has worked ever so hard. The backs definitely deserve all the praise that they get!'

And they're not finished yet. Bring on Munster.

Rebel boss Murray impressed by champs

BY KIERAN MCCARTHY

IN Paudie Murray's eyes, the best team won this year's county senior camogie championship.

The Cork manager predicted that Courceys Rovers would emerge victorious in last Sunday's final, but he was surprised

by the manner of their emphatic win.

Courceys were impressive, Murray says, but Inniscarra were naïve.

'Before the match I did say that Courceys would go in as favourites because of the scores they put up and when you have a forward line with Linda Col-

lins, Saoirse McCarthy and Fiona Keating, you always have a chance,' Murray said.

The Cork boss knows Collins, McCarthy and Keating well as all three are on his county senior panel, and he was also impressed with a number of other Courceys players.

'I thought Courceys goal-

keeper, Sinead O'Reilly, gave an outstanding performance and was dominant in the square. Their full back, Karyn Keohane, is a player you can rely on while Clara Hayes has had an outstanding campaign and she brings a never-say-die attitude,' Murray explained.

'Ashling Moloney, in the role

she plays, is one of the better around, in that she tends to sit and she does that very well. I think Inniscarra were naïve and I would have tried something different to force her up the pitch.

'They were all top-class performers throughout the campaign.'



The Echo Player of the Match in the SE Systems Junior B camogie final Leah Hallihan, Castlelyons is presented with her trophy by Sile Golden, vice chair Cork Camogie Board.

Newtownshandrum put in superb display to claim Junior A crown

Newtownshandrum 3-17
Tracton 1-6

A SUPERB display saw Newtownshandrum claim the SE Systems Junior A championship crown as they overcame the challenge of Tracton.

Newtownshandrum started well opened up a six points to one lead but it was in the second half that they really showed their class as they picked off vital scores with huge confidence to run out winners.

Jennifer Lynch pointed and early Tracton free but with Cliona O'Callaghan pointing two forty fives Newtownshandrum took the lead.

Mariah Reidy added a point from play as the Newtownshandrum attack found space and they continued to put the Tracton defence under pressure as they added to their tally with Reidy and O'Callaghan on target.

Lauren Murphy and Jennifer Lynch narrowed the gap with Tracton points and with two between the sides it looked like Tracton were getting a grip but just before the half time whistle they were dealt a blow when the excellent Cliona O'Callaghan grabbed the first goal of the game and at the interval Newtownshandrum led by five points 1-6 to 0-4.

On the resumption, Newtownshandrum upped the ante with a Rosin Twohill point and five in row from Cliona O'Callaghan. Jennifer Lynch converted a forty five to narrow the gap but Newtownshandrum responded Cliona O'Callaghan finishing to the net for her second goal.

Three points in a row before a Katie Coughlan goal on 50 minutes had them 19 points clear before Emma Good grabbed Tracton goal. Cliona O'Callaghan and Mariah Reidy sealed a great day for Newtownshandrum before Jennifer Lynch had the final say with a pointed Tracton free.

Scorers for Newtownshandrum: C O'Callaghan 2-11, K Coughlan 1-1, M Reidy 0-3, S Moloney, R Twohill 0-1 each.
Tracton: J Lynch 0-5 (f's), E Good 1-0, L Murphy 0-1.

Newtownshandrum: C Griffin, C Herlihy, E Reidy, G Sheehy, B O'Neill, R Sheehy, A Walsley, C Collins, D Caprine, A Twohill, C O'Callaghan, R Twohill, K Coughlan, M Reidy, S Moloney.
Subs: S Treacy for K Coughlan, S O'Donnell for S Moloney, R Ryan for C Collins.

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

ins, A Doyle for C Herlihy, M Noonan for A Walsley.

Tracton: J Dempsey, K McCarthy, C Castleton, N Mullane, J McLaughlin, A Fahy, J Kiely, K Walsh, A Bell, A Rice, E Good, J Lynch, L Murphy, M McGuinness, A Kiely.

Subs: G Mc Guinness for A Rice, O Dempsey for A Bell, S Sinclair for A Fahy.
Referee: William Wallace (Aghada).

Castlelyons 2-14
Inniscarra 1-5

Castlelyons atoned for last season final defeat as they overcame Inniscarra to take the SE Systems Junior B championship title with a superb display from Leah Hallihan earning her *The Echo* player of the match award.

Leading 2-9 to 0-5 at the interval but they had to withstand a lot of second half Inniscarra pressure before securing the title.

First half goals from Jessie O'Leary and Grainne McCarthy plus points from Ava and Leah Hallihan, Sarah Morrison and Jessie O'Leary saw them take the game to Inniscarra who had Caoimhe Buckley on target with all their first half points.

Inniscarra grabbed a goal on the restart with Caoimhe O'Shea finishing well but Castlelyons sensing an Inniscarra revival dug deep with Grainne McCarthy, Ava and Leah Hallihan and Lucy McNulty on target as they finished in style to be crowned champions.

Scorers for Castlelyons: L Hallihan 0-6, J O'Leary 1-2, G McCarthy 1-1 (0-1f), A Hallihan 0-3, S Morrison, L McNulty 0-1 each.

Inniscarra: C Buckley 0-5 (f's), C O'Shea 1-0.

Castlelyons: Z Power, A Ni Mhaolain, N Chattrain, N Barry, C McCarthy, C O'Flynn, M O'Sullivan, S Morrison, L McNulty, A Hallihan, A O'Sullivan, N McCarthy, L Hallihan, A Beirne, G McCarthy, J O'Leary.

Subs: B Shanahan for A O'Sullivan, I Fenton for A Beirne, A Greeney for G McCarthy, K O'Riordan for J O'Leary, O Sheehan for A Ni Mhaolain, N Chattrain.

Inniscarra: J Sullivan, M Lyons, K Lordan, E Lyons, A Dineen, M O'Leary, R Murtagh, L Desmond, K Buckley, A McCarthy, S O'Callaghan, C Buckley, A O'Connor, E Gaffery, N Byrne.

Subs: A Condon for E Lyons, A Quigley for K Buckley, C O'Shea for E Gaffery, A Power for S O'Callaghan, A Harty for C Buckley.

Referee: Dave O'Connell (Glen Rovers).



Courcsey Rovers celebrate victory over Inniscarra in the Cork Camogie Senior Club Championship final at Castle Road.

Picture: Jim Coughlan

Goals key to Courcsey triumph



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

I'M SURE Courcsey Rovers had a tremendous night around Ballinspittle and Ballinadee last Sunday evening.

And well deserved it was after a resounding county final victory over Inniscarra.

A four-goal victory mirrored the goal scoring spree that Rovers offered up throughout the campaign, hitting 15-65 from five games giving an average 3-13 a game.

When you're hitting the net with that consistency it's hard to be stopped. Inniscarra matched Rovers' 12-point tally but couldn't match the goals.

When Inniscarra endeavoured to come back at the champions after half time with two quick points, Fiona Keating's goal wiped out their efforts.

That's a real demoralising blow. Keating was outstanding and won the player of the match accolade.

It could just as easily have been Linda Collins who is a joy to watch with her deft pickups, speed and chic scoring. But a hat trick of goals in a county final just pipped it.

Linda finished up with 1-5 and while it was Saoirse McCarthy rightly got credited with Courcsey's second goal just on the half time whistle after her long delivery, it was Linda's run into the square which caused the distraction to allow the ball drop into the net.

After a hesitant start where Inniscarra looked so impressive hitting five points on the trot it raised a few eyebrows as Rovers were struggling all over the field. But one moment of great play started their scoring and from there they were just awesome. From a short puck out, Rovers played it through the lines and with just four or five touches Linda hit Courcsey's first score on fourteen minutes. Their short inter-play and support off the shoulder was at times as good as you'll see and it's obvious a lot of work went into that during the year.



Fanta (aka Mark O'Sullivan), Courcsey Rovers, celebrates the win.

Picture: Jim Coughlan

There was also accurate long distance striking with wonderful point scoring. Saoirse McCarthy gave some great deliveries in once she drifted further out the field alongside Jacinta Crowley who was very influential in getting Rovers back into the game.

It was a great game, particularly the first half which was fast and flowing, thanks to referee Cathal McAllister. We had eight frees by half time and while we had more in the second it aided a great spectacle. The players were let at it and that's how it should be.

Defensively Rovers have been excellent all year. They conceded 6-38. Ashling Moloney is a tremendous leader at centre back. Captain Karyn Keohane, Grainne Hannon, Edel Moloney, Ciara Hayes and Orla Twomey who slotted in well from their opening round all had great seasons. Often keepers get overlooked but Sinead O'Reilly gives her back six confidence as she made another couple of fine saves.

It seems as if Courcsey's have only recently made their mark but they've been playing senior for 21 years and credit Karyn for mentioning those players that have gone before in her victory speech. Players such as Sarah Hayes and Rachel Moloney played big roles with Sarah having only retired post the 2018 campaign.

It was such a different county final to two years ago when Rovers didn't hit the heights they had promised all year but Inniscarra too were still in their prime.

Two years later Inniscarra looked tired and who would blame them. That team has been on the road for the past ten seasons. They won their first county title back in 2010.

Obviously there's been players in and out during the past decade but a large core remained and it's a long time. It is to their credit that they have remained at the top for so long. They reached the All Ireland club final from that 2010 county win, they lost in 2011 to Douglas and St Catherine's in 2012 both at semi-final stage.

They lost the 2013 quarter final, the 2014 final and the 2015 semi-final all to Milford before finally breaking Milford's control in a pulsating 2016 final and it's been a great run since, winning three titles in a row 2016-2018 and reaching the last five finals.

That's a great record. But all great teams come to an end. It may be the end for a number of the current team but there will be plenty of experience remaining and with the good structure that Inniscarra have at underage hopefully they'll still be strongly competing. Unlike many clubs that focus so much on a great senior team and don't place such as strong an emphasis on underage, Inniscarra haven't done that so they certainly won't be out in the wilderness and well done to them for that. I also want to mention Niamh McCarthy who was a big loss to Inniscarra and we wish her well with her operation and rehabilitation over the coming months.

Courcsey's looked such a mature side in the final. They have grown so much in two seasons and when you're young that can happen rapidly. I'd imagine the average age of the team to be early 20s so they can have a big say over the coming years if they look after themselves. Well done to Mike Boland, Kevin Hannon, Joey Gallagher, Shirley Moloney, Mark Enright, Mark 'Fanta' O'Sullivan, Nuala O'Reilly, Rebecca Crowley and Sean Duggan.

Of course, celebrations will have ceased after Sunday as Rover's face Inagh Kilnamona in the Munster semi-final tomorrow and we wish them the very best of luck as they represent Cork.

Inagh-Kilnamona too strong for Courcey Rovers

Munster Senior Club Camogie Championship

Inagh-Kilnamona 1-19
Courcey Rovers 1-04

Eoin Brennan

Inagh-Kilnamona powered to a third Munster Senior Club Camogie final in four years when keeping provincial debutants Courcey Rovers at arm's length in Inagh yesterday afternoon. With a strong gale largely dictating matters, not even an early

Linda Collins goal for the new Cork champions could stop their experienced hosts.

The Clare team responded with the next 12 points through seven scorers including five from the hugely influential Amy Keating to carve out a healthy 0-14 to 1-0 interval cushion.

So while a strong backlash was anticipated on the turn-over, it never really materialised as Inagh-Kilnamona matched Jacinta Crowley's frees before issuing the decisive blow in the 40th min-

ute when Danielle Griffin scrambled a rebound to the net at 1-17 to 1-02.

Jacinta Crowley, Ashling Moloney and Fiona Keating did their utmost to stem the tide in what will be seen as a learning curve for the newcomers. However, Inagh-Kilnamona, led triumphantly by Keating, Andrea O'Keefe, Aoife Keane, Fiona Lafferty and Clare Hehir, will have their sights firmly fixed on making it third time lucky in Munster.

They now have a final

showdown with last year's beaten finalists Drom-Inch scheduled for next Sunday, who defeated Killeedy of Limerick 1-8 to 0-8 in the other semi-final.

Scorers for Inagh-Kilnamona: A Keating (0-8, 6f); D Griffin (1-2); A Keane, A O'Keefe (0-3 each); A Ryan, F Lafferty, S Power (0-1 each).

Scorers for Courcey Rovers: J Crowley (0-3, 2f); L Collins (1-0); F Keating (0-1).

INAGH-KILNAMONA: R Keating; L Ryan, S Quinn, M Mescal; T Hegarty, C Hehir, T O'Keefe, F Lafferty, A Keating; D Griffin, S Power, A Keane; A O'Keefe, A Ryan, C Commans.

Subs: H Hehir for Commans (56); J Fitzgerald for A. Ryan (57); C Cullinan for Hegarty (60); H O'Connor for Power (60).

COURCEY ROVERS: S O'Reilly; C Hayes, K Keohane, G Hannon; Elaine O'Reilly, A Moloney, O Twomey; J Crowley, Eimear O'Reilly; A O'Donovan, F Keating, Lorraine Collins; E Maguire, Linda Collins, C O'Neill.

Subs: A M Collins for O'Donovan (48); G O'Reilly for Maguire (48); D O'Reilly for O'Neill (51); I Lordan for Twomey (55); L Heibrow for Lorraine Collins (59).

Referee: M Ryan (Tipperary).
■ In the intermediate championship, Gailltír of Waterford beat Cork's Enniskeane 1-17 to 0-9.

A match too far for Courcey Rovers

CAMOGIE

■ Linda Mellerick

Inagh Kilnamona 1-19
Courcey Rovers 1-4

WITH just a seven-day turnaround from their first senior county championship win, and losing two players from that starting side, yesterday's Munster semi-final clash with Inagh Kilnamona proved a bridge too far for a Courcey Rovers team that just couldn't match the heights of last week.

There's no doubting that Inagh were the better team, playing with the ferocious wind advantage in the opening half, taking an 11-point lead into the break and still scoring more than Rovers in the second half with great workrate and teamwork.

Saoirse McCarthy was a big loss to Courceys after injuring her shoulder in Cork training during the week and Rovers struggled to get attacks going against the wind. As they understandably played a sweeper it afforded Inagh the opportunity of double marking Linda Collins.

Inagh had their homework done and smothered Rovers' short passing game out of defence. Going long with puck-outs wasn't an option and Inagh were impressive. By half-time they had seven scorers which was a concern.

Collins had Courceys' only score of the first half on three minutes as she rounded Sinead Quinn to strike off her left to goal. After that, though, Inagh knuckled down and Rovers trailed 0-14 to 1-0 at the break.

When a team has such a lead they'll do everything to hold it and that's what Inagh did. They fell deep and won possession around the middle and half forward line.

Jacinta Crowley pointed after two minutes but by the 12th minute, Inagh had hit three and it was going to take a mammoth effort now to win this game. Ashling Moloney did everything she could at centre-back as Rovers continued to work hard, but everything went wrong on the day.

The turnaround was just too much and Inagh looked fresher all over the field and thoroughly deserved to advance to the Munster final.

Scorers for Courcey Rovers: J Crowley 0-3 (0-2 f), L Collins 1-0, F Keating 0-1.
Inagh Kilnamona: A Keating 0-8 (0-6 f), D Griffin 1-2, A Keane 0-3, A O'Keefe 0-3, A Ryan, F Lafferty, S Power 0-1 each.

COURCEY ROVERS: S O'Reilly; O Twomey, K Keohane, G Hannon; C Hayes, A Moloney, Elaine O'Reilly; J Crowley, Eimear O'Reilly, C O'Neill, F Keating, Lorraine Collins; Linda Collins, A O'Donovan, E Maguire.

Subs: A M Collins for A O'Donovan (46); G O'Reilly for E Maguire (47); D O'Reilly for C O'Neill (51); I Lordan for O Twomey (55); L Heibrow for Lorraine Collins (59).

Inagh Kilnamona: R Keating; L Ryan, S Quinn, M Mescal; T Hegarty, C Hehir, T O'Keefe; F Lafferty, S Power; A O'Keefe, C Commans, A Keane; D Griffin, A Keating, A Ryan.

Sub: J Fitzgerald for A Ryan (57).

Referee: Mike Ryan (Tipperary).



Fiona Keating, Courcey Rovers, powers upfield.
Picture: Jim Coughlan



Star player: Orla Cronin.

Enniskeane on the road to Waterford

HAVING conquered Cork, Enniskeane will now set their sights on a Munster adventure.

The newly-crowned county intermediate camogie champions will travel to Waterford this Sunday, October 4th, to take on the Déise champions, Gailltír, in a Munster intermediate club semi-final. Gailltír have home advantage for this provincial semi-final, which throws in at 12pm. Cork star Orla Cronin, Celine Nyhan, Aisling O'Driscoll, Laura Mannix, Louise Duggan, Daire O'Brien, Tara Sheehan and Sinead Hurley are all key players for Enniskeane.



Kate O'Halloran captained the Bandon U14 camogie team to county success.

Terrific year for Courceys in spite of Munster championship defeat

MUNSTER SENIOR CAMOGIE SEMI-FINAL

BY GER MCCARTHY

COURCEY Rovers Munster camogie championship odyssey may have been ended by Inagh Kilnamona but should not detract from what's been a terrific year for the Ballinspittle club.

Courcey's Cork inter-county star Linda Collins played an integral role in helping her club claim a first ever county title over the past number of months.

A seven-day turnaround between the county decider and provincial semi-final plus the loss of Saoirse McCarthy to a midweek injury made for a

difficult build-up. Atrocious weather conditions did little to help Courcey's cause against a rested and well-prepared Inagh Kilnamona.

'The conditions were a major factor,' Linda Collins told The Southern Star.

'We experienced dry conditions and clean hurling throughout the (Cork) senior championship until last weekend. There were times we were hitting the sliotar and it was almost coming back at you, so strong was the wind.

'It was a totally different experience for us and after a 3-hour car journey as well, we just weren't used to it. Very

tough conditions against the wind in the first half and we hardly had any energy left in the second (half) then.'

Sole scorer

Collins was Courcey's sole scorer in a difficult opening half, netting a fine individual goal early on. Yet, that was as good as it got for a Rovers side that struggled to withstand Inagh Kilnamona's constant attacks and trailed 0-14 to 1-0 at the break.

Although they added four additional points after the break, Danielle Griffin's goal ensured the Clare club won their third Munster senior

crown in four years.

Yet, it would be unfair for last weekend's result to overshadow Courcey's achievement of claiming a first ever county senior title in 2020. It is clear that a full squad training together without any outside distractions may have been the deciding factor in Rovers triumphant campaign.

'Having everyone around made a massive difference this year,' Collins added.

'Nobody was going to their Debs, no one was going on holidays or getting married! Everyone was around and looking forward to meeting each other at training. There were nearly 25 players training every night.

'I had never been to so much club training in the last six or seven years. Everyone just re-

ally enjoyed it. The fact that every player was buying into it and if you weren't there, you'd feel like you were missing out.

'We would go to the beach after every session for a recovery swim. We used to go over to the beach on the day before any of our championship games and have breakfast together. That definitely helped build a bond within the panel.'

Zoom training

During Covid, it was Shirley Moloney who kept the Courcey Rovers panel on their toes by hosting zoom training sessions. There was no talk of camogie, just making sure everyone remained fit while they were stuck at home.

'This year, because of the pandemic, showed what it

takes to win a county medal,' Cork camogie star Collins admitted.

'Other years, a few of us would be missing whilst training with Cork. Then, we have a few intermediate and junior inter-county players away as well. That's why (Covid) showed what it takes to win a county championship. Every club player needs to be together and buy into what's required as well.'

Courcey Rovers finish the year as first-time Cork senior camogie champions. No one quite knows what the immediate future holds. Linda Collins and her teammates first taste of county glory suggests Courceys possess all the attributes to defend their title and have another crack off the Munster championship.

Gailtír make better use of the elements

MUNSTER INTERMEDIATE CAMOGIE SEMI-FINAL

GAILTÍR 1-17
ENNISKEANE 0-9

BY GER MCCARTHY

A POWERFUL second half display enabled All-Ireland intermediate champions Gailtír to see off Enniskeane in the last four of the Munster Camogie Championship at Dunmore East last weekend.

Enniskeane produced a commendable performance in trying conditions but failure to build a first half lead was punished by their Waterford opponents. Level at the break, despite having a gale wind at their backs, the West Cork club were unable to stem the flow of constant Gailtír attacks during the second period.

Annie and Aoife Fitzgerald were in top form for the winners, providing the bulk of Gailtír's winning total. On the same afternoon, Orla Cronin and Tara Sheehan did their best to keep the scoreboard ticking over, but Enniskeane would live to rue missed opportunities, especially in the first half. Laura Mannix also deserves praise for an all-action display in the centre of the pitch.

As with most recent GAA games, a gale force wind made life difficult for both sets of players and this Munster

semi-final proved no different. The Cork champions lost the toss and played with the wind at their backs in the opening half.

Elements
Making full use of the elements, Enniskeane's Tara Sheehan (two) Eimear O'Brien and Orla Cronin (free) points made it 0-4 apiece at the first water break.

Gailtír were performing admirably in the face of a strengthening wind and Enniskeane's Kate Corcoran was called upon to make a double-save as the Waterford side grew in confidence. Yet, the visitors managed to add a pair of converted Cronin frees plus an additional Laura Mannix effort.

A 0-7 to 0-7 score was a fair reflection of an evenly-fought opening half an hour. Disappointed at not having built a lead, the West Cork side were guilty of squandering a couple of goal chances before changing ends and facing into an even stronger wind for the second period.

Gailtír simply made better use of the elements in the second half with Anne Fitzgerald's late goal underlining the Waterford team's superiority. Fitzgerald would finish with a personal tally of 1-7 on afternoon the home side floated over 10 points during an impressive

final 30-minute showing.

To their credit, Enniskeane kept pressing forward with Cronin (free) and Tara Sheehan adding to their team's total before the final whistle.

This result should not overshadow what has been a memorable year for Enniskeane camogie. The future looks bright for the Carbery club when you consider their U14's contested a county decider this past weekend and their minors are one step away from a possible county final appearance.

Enniskeane will be back.

Scorers

Gailtír: Annie Fitzgerald (1-7), Aoife Fitzgerald (0-4), Anne Corcoran (0-2), Shauna Fitzgerald (0-2), Una Jackman and Emma Walshe (0-1 each).

Enniskeane: Orla Cronin (0-4, 4 frees), Tara Sheehan (0-3), Eimear O'Brien and Laura Mannix (0-1 each).

Gailtír: Clara Jackman; Emily Mahony, Margo Heffernan, Sorcha Cantwell; Leah Sheridan, Clodagh Carroll, Hannah Flynn; Kate Lynch, Shauna Fitzgerald; Anne Corcoran, Clara O'Sullivan, Una Jackman; Alannah O'Sullivan, Annie Fitzgerald, Aoife Fitzgerald.

Subs: Emma Roche, Emma Walshe, Claire Dunne, Sarah Maher, Róisín Flood, Clodagh Hoctor, Jodie Tuohy, Aoife Hartley, Maeve Sheridan and Rachel Jones.



Cork senior camogie star Orla Cronin was a key player for Enniskeane all season.

(Photo: Trevor Patchett)

Enniskeane: Kate Corcoran; Danielle Carroll, Celine Nyhan, Kellie Scannell; Louise Duggan, Emma O'Driscoll, Aisling O'Driscoll; Laura Mannix, Eimear O'Brien; Siobhan O'Driscoll, Dáire O'Brien, Orla Cronin; Sinead

Hurley, Tara Sheehan, Orla Coughlan.

Subs: Deirdre Browne, Kate McCarthy (captain), Saoirse Fleming, Lauren Corcoran, Ruth O'Driscoll, Caitlin O'Donovan, Julie Anne Hayes, Caroline O'Donovan,

Davina Connolly, Elbhlin Mangan, Aoife Sheehan, Labhaoise McCarthy, Clara O'Donovan, Katie Hennessy, Marguerite Nyhan, Anna Nyhan, Hazel Browne, Laura Cullinane, Rochelle Scannell. **Referee:** Liz Dempsey (Kilkenny).



Mairéad Donovan, registrar Cork Camogie Board, presenting the Premier U14 championship trophy to Anna Nestor, captain, Sarsfields.

Sarsfields overcome gallant Éire Óg to take U14 championship

Sarsfields 4-22
Éire Óg 1-5

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

A HUGE impressive display saw Sarsfields overcome a gallant Éire Óg to take the Premier U14 championship at Castle Road.

Playing against the stiff breeze in the opening half, Sarsfields laid the foundations for victory with early scores from Kate Fennessy, Nessa Treacy, and Jane O'Brien.

Taking control of proceedings with Rachel Roche and Ava Fitzgerald doing huge work, they picked off some great scores.

The brilliant Fennessy grabbed two goals and Fitzgerald, O'Brien, Neveah O'Connell, and Sinéad Hurley all found their range to open up a 2-10 to 0-5 interval lead.

Éire Óg battled hard with points from Meabh McGoldrick, Clodagh Fitzgerald, and Orlaith Cremin, but as they turned to play against the wind, they had a big job on their hands.

Sars star Fennessy was a thorn in the Éire Óg side and she added nine points in the second half.

Impressive

Clodagh Fitzgerald raised a green flag for the Owens outfit, but goals from Nessa Treacy and Aoife Mullins kept them at bay. Mullins, Desmond, Hurley, and Nessa Treacy added points for a highly-impressive Sars.

Fennessy ending up with a stunning 2-15 to her credit, including 2-6 from play.

Elsewhere, a goal separated the sides in an exciting U14 A championship final in Castle Road as the combination side Fr O'Neill's/Youghal edged out Enniskeane.

Despite playing against the strong wind, Enniskeane were on top in the opening quarter.

Strong defending by the East Cork amalgamation limited Enniskeane to a point with Grace McCarthy getting the opening score of the game. At the first water break, Fr O'Neill's/Youghal led 0-2 to 0-1.

As the sides swapped points they were evenly matched but Fr O'Neill's/Youghal were finding it easier to score, as they landed

four points.

Enniskeane hit back with two Grace McCarthy goals but Fr O'Neill's/Youghal responded with two frees before Aoibhe Daly sent a free to the Enniskeane net to cut their lead to the minimum at the interval.

Gráinne Finn hit a point before and a Raina Landers goal gave Fr O'Neill's/Youghal a four-point advantage with 15 minutes remaining.

Enniskeane dug deep with Molly Hillard, Grace Nyhan and Maebh O'Brien on target before Hillard converted a free to level the game with three minutes remaining.

Now the battle was on to take the title and it was Fr O'Neill's/Youghal who grabbed the vital score.

Orlaith Murphy hit the match-winning goal to see the combination sides take the title.

Scorers for Fr O'Neill's/Youghal: A Daly 1-2, G Finn 0-4, R Landers, O Murphy 1-0 each, C Fitzgerald 0-1.

Enniskeane: G McCarthy 2-2, M Hillard 0-3 (0-2 ft), G Nyhan, M O'Brien 0-1 each.

ENNISKEANE: S Cronin; L Nolan, L O'Leary, K Crowley, R Dineen, S Hillard, M Browne; G Nyhan, N O'Donovan; P Jennings, M O'Brien, A Barry; G McCarthy, L O'Sullivan, M Hillard.

Subs: A O'Driscoll for S Cronin, G Murphy for L O'Sullivan, E Long for N O'Donovan.

FR O'NEILL'S/YOUGHAL: H Law (c); A O'Brien, R Kennedy, R Cody, E Finn, C Murphy, L Wiggins; A Daly, C Fitzgerald; S O'Leary, G Finn, O Murphy; R Murray, R Dunphy, M Collins.

Subs: R Landers for R Dunphy, Y Fitzgerald for R Murray, T O'Neill for A O'Brien.

Scorers for Sarsfields: K Fennessy 2-15 (0-9 ft), N Treacy, A Mullins 1-1 each, S Hurley 0-2, A Fitzgerald, J O'Brien, N O'Connell, A Desmond 0-1 each.

Éire Óg: O Cremin 0-4, C Fitzgerald 1-1, M McGoldrick 0-1.

SARS: L Lynch; A McMahon, A Nestor (c), S Crowe; C Rice, L Dunlea, S Hurley; A Fitzgerald, R Roche; A Mullins, K Fennessy, J O'Brien; N Treacy, N O'Connell, A McCarthy.

Subs: A Desmond for N O'Connell, E Buckley for C Rice, K Sari for J O'Brien, O Walsh for L Dunlea.

ÉIRE ÓG: K O'Brien; L Sheehan, L Waugh, G Harris; G O'Sullivan, A Casey, L Healy; C Fitzgerald, L Ahern; L Murphy, O Cremin, F Malone; R O'Leary, M Goldrick, E Healy.

Sub: G Young for L Waugh.

Fr O'Neill's/Youghal 3-7 Enniskeane 2-7



Karyn Keohane, Courcsey Rovers captain, lifts the senior title.

Picture: Jim Coughlan

All hopes riding on inter-county scene



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

THE sudden stoppage of club activity is a disappointment.

The Cork club championships were running fluently. We had just one senior delay, for a week, for Covid-19 testing, and that was a great return in a very uncertain time.

Controls were relaxing within the entire GAA family and something had to be done. The stoppage is harder for those who were doing everything by the book.

Despite many pubs and restaurants following the guidelines, it's still a blanket ban.

The camogie fixtures were flowing brilliantly in a well-run, condensed period and another couple of weeks would have seen it out.

The juvenile committee had eight finals planned for this weekend, in addition to two minor finals, with the remaining two next weekend.

The Camogie Association delayed their statement by a day. I'm not sure why, as we were always going to follow suit. Maybe, if the season was almost complete, they would have let it run, but with every county at different stages, you just have to call it.

Courcsey Rovers would have appreciated that break a week earlier as they were tired against Inagh Kilnamona last Sunday. The turnaround was too short, whereas Inagh had a three-week break and it showed.

Inagh played good hurling and deserved their victory.

It'll suit Waterford and Clare, with Gailltír and Inagh due to contest the Munster final this weekend. Waterford manager, Fergal O'Brien, was up in arms last week about the Munster Club Championship going ahead when the Leinster championship isn't scheduled until January. With such a large contingent of Gailltír players on his county panel, he couldn't get a squad together for training.

It wasn't a level playing field, he argued. And he was right.

It was left up to each provincial board to set their club dates, but when the club county championships were over, it was expected that the players would get a clear inter-county run before the championship throws in next weekend. The Courcsey Rovers players had to train with Cork last week and Saoirse McCarthy picked up a shoulder injury, ruling her out of last Sunday's semi-final and she was a big loss.



Fr O'Neill's/Youghal camogie players celebrate their U14 A championship win over Enniskeane.

The ban freed up the Munster club finalists from last Monday, so some few are happy with the current situation.

There's an almost palpable tension in the air whenever NPHET are meeting the Government, as the country holds its breath. You'd wonder if the inter-county scene will survive the next few months.

Hard to tell. But imagine getting to a semi-final and it pausing until after Christmas.

What a drag of a season that would be and it would damage 2021 title hopes, as you just can't run one season into another and expect to be at your peak mentally and physically.

January and February have been our worst weather months in recent years, with numerous games called off, so trying to finish a championship in those conditions won't be easy. But we'll be positive and see how it goes.

It'll be interesting to see who has prepared best ahead of the camogie championship. Cork initially had five games in their group. They now have three: Offaly, Galway, and Wexford. Not a bad draw, except just one team advances to the semi-final, with second- and third-placed entering the quarter-finals.

That's not a bad option, either. Cork were doing very well in the league.

While they had two games left to play — against Offaly and Clare (postponed due to bad weather) — it was envisaged, based on other results, that they had a great chance of winning it. Tipperary were already through to the final and they must feel really unfortunate, as a league title

would do wonders for them.

It would have been very useful for Cork's new panel introductions, too, but as we all know now, the league was cancelled.

Galway and Kilkenny didn't have the best of leagues. Kilkenny, in particular, were very disappointing, finishing second from bottom at the time of cancellation. Galway lost to Tipp and came second, with no semi-finals in this year's league competition.

Maybe the break will have done them more good than harm. I'm sure many counties were doing some non-contact training behind closed doors during the lockdown. I'd imagine it's very hard to pick the Kilkenny girls up after losing another All Ireland last September, their fifth final loss in six appearances in seven years.

Galway have had a lot of underage success and still have Cathal Murray in charge, who has the respect of the players, so they should be to the forefront again.

Cork have lost Orla Cotter and Aoife Murray from their first 15. Laura Treacy is out injured with a broken hand, but Cork still have the nucleus of a strong team and with the blend of new panel members will, of course, be title-hunting again.

The test rules that were in play for the league are being maintained for the championship.

Let's hope we have free-flowing games that allow the players to get on with it, as we look forward to another inter-county campaign.

'We have to work hard to make

DARAGH
Ó CONCHÚIR



THERE is a pervading sense of the Chinese water torture about the news cycle of late, so the tantalising prospect of the All-Ireland championships getting under way, even if behind closed doors, has induced a feeling of giddiness among Gaelic games followers.

This comes on the back of the heart-warming festival of club fare, though that was cut short when the failure to heed numerous warnings surrounding post-match activity led to the cessation of domestic action earlier this week.

The Liberty Insurance Camogie Championships begins on Saturday, with the mouth-watering senior clash between neighbours Kilkenny and Waterford on the Suir side of the border ensuring a high-octane opening.

Camogie Association chief executive Sinéad McNulty is a member of the GAA's Covid-19 advisory group, as is her LGFA counterpart Helen O'Rourke. Croke Park's approach has been a united one in dealing with running sport during a global pandemic.

"The three Associations collaborate in many areas and are working more closely all of the time," says McNulty. "This year, we should have had all the joy and celebration of launching some really big, collaborative projects between the three Associations — a foundation coaching programme, national officer and leadership development training, and working together on the Youth Fo-

rum. Work continues on these projects, regardless of Covid-19."

Providing a single Gaelic games family message makes sense. The same advice was provided to the three Associations, who while free to make their own decisions based on the advice, naturally made the same calls.

"We're committed to working together, prioritising our members at a club level, and enabling our inter-county competitions to proceed as well, all in a safe fashion. That's our focus, to keep people safe and keep the games active."

This over-arching primacy of the club in the current climate was why commencing the foreshortened window with county action, with a view to potentially grabbing a greater portion of the media profile, was never a runner.

"We made that decision early," says McNulty. "Even if it wasn't about games, it was about supporting clubs. Every action we took, everything we spoke about concerned supporting clubs. That's what we talked about back in March and April."

The dual player scenario has raised its head again last week, with a quintet of Cork players facing a choice between camogie and ladies' football on November 7. While that may well be averted now, after the Galway camogie management reportedly offered a 24-hour postponement, it remains a hot issue and one that is unlikely to go away.

"Should we try and schedule more cohesively together? Yes, I probably think we should, though when you consider we are sharing facilities, or borrowing facilities from GAA colleagues, you're in a bit of a minefield. Dual players is a big challenge for us, and we have it in a number of counties, but I think we also have to think about our players who play



Sinéad McNulty: 'Committed to working together'

other sports. So not alone do we have athletes who play camogie and ladies' football, we have athletes who play hockey, soccer, basketball, volleyball, rugby. They spend their days managing their time around all of their different sporting commitments and sometimes face tough choices.

"The professionalisation of camogie means it's not two days a week. That's a lifestyle choice. People are choosing a seven-day commitment, how they behave around their food, their rest and

sure All-Irelands happen safely'

recovery, as well as their training. To try and do that for two sports at the same level is really challenging."

The "transformational" provision of government funding enables the running of the 2020 championships, when so many revenue streams having been wiped out, while the continuing support of sponsors Liberty Insurance is also vital. In particular, news that Liberty Insurance will carry on providing livestreaming of games is very welcome indeed, along with RTE's highlights packages and live coverage of the quarter-finals, semi-finals and final.

"We're pretty excited about it, and whether we're watching it from the stands or our couches, we're just glad we're going to have a championship," says Liberty Ireland country manager, Stuart Trotter. "It is important to support our customers now, more than ever, which is why, like a number of other companies, we refunded premiums back in April and May and then recently, announced a €1.85m donation to three frontline charities — ALONE, Barnardos and Pieta on behalf of our customers."

Orlagh Murray is joint captain of the Armagh squad that will get their junior campaign under way on October 24. Getting back to training and playing with Keady first, and then Armagh, hasn't been straightforward, with the number of positive cases in Northern Ireland are increasing at a greater rate than in the Republic, but Murray is remaining positive.

"When we went into lockdown in March, we didn't know if there would be a season," Murray reasons. "We didn't know if there'd be a club season so it was great to have that and finish it successfully. It was very good that your focus was club for so long and it's now

changed to county. In the past couple of years girls have struggled with that half and half, the pull from one training to the next, whereas this year it was focus on the club first and then we'll talk about the county."

"We're looking forward to the county now and we actually have a few new girls who missed it the past few years, didn't have the time because of work commitments and are on board this year. Work places are actually a bit more flexible because of Covid and because so many people are working from home, it gives more girls a chance to play county."

Murray seems to reflect the majority of county players who have relished being able to contribute fully to their clubs without the pressures of attempting a juggling act and feeling bad about not being at present on home turf as they might like to be.

It is something McNulty is cognisant of and along with multiple code commitments, will be considered in the wider context of fixture-planning.

"Players seem to have enjoyed having a very clear club championship and a very clear county championship season so that's been good," McNulty acknowledges.

"It's definitely something to look at. We now know that this virus isn't going

anywhere anytime soon so I think we're going to have to approach 2021 with an open mind and try put together the best programme of games for the largest number of people at club and county that we possibly can."

"There's always challenges. We've seen them this year particularly because we've all four field sports codes in the Gaelic games family trying to compete over a 10-week period. So, there are challenges around facilities, being able to book your pitch, or waiting to know outcomes from another competition so you can book your game."

She doesn't rule out a resumption of club activity though with the landscape changing, it is difficult to offer clarity. The advisory group will continue to meet weekly, as it has done since May, but the public health advice will continue to inform decision-making.

That undoubtedly places an incredible amount of stress on McNulty and her counterparts but she highlights the dynamism of her colleagues in the Camogie Association, the collegiate approach of the Gaelic games organisations and indeed, of the wider sporting family through the Federation of Irish Sport. Consultation with other sport NGBs is constant, and there is comfort in sharing the load. There is much she wants to do but right now, it's about brass tacks.

"We're an ambitious Association. We set out targets in our National Development Plan across a wide range of areas and commercial is one of them. But for now, it's about more eyes on the game, getting people out to matches and until we can do that, getting people watching them. We're really looking forward to the All-Irelands now. We have to work really hard to make sure it happens safely for everyone."

'We've four field codes trying to compete over a 10-week period'

Coppinger calls for associations to merge

Eoghan Cormican

On a weekend where the Camogie Association followed the LGFA in rejecting a motion designed to facilitate and support dual players, Cork dual player Libby Coppinger has called for a merger of the two associations.

The Dublin motion, rejected by 76% of Camogie Congress attendees, sought to write in rule that the Camogie Association "recognises and supports the concept of a Dual Player, as defined, and will encourage all of its Units to support and facilitate its playing members of all ages, who wish to do so, to play both Camogie and Ladies Gaelic Football".

No more than when the motion was defeated at the LGFA Congress earlier this year, it is believed Saturday's Camogie Congress — which took place in a virtual format — voted down the motion because of concerns the wording was too open-ended.

Cork dual player Libby Coppinger, who is facing three potential fixture clashes next month, has said it is time for the two associations to come together under the one banner. Such a merger should have happened years ago, she

added.

On Saturday, November 7, Cork's ladies football and camogie teams are scheduled to play All-Ireland championship group games. Galway are willing to move the camogie championship fixture between the counties to Sunday, November 8, but, as of yet, there has been no official confirmation of this switch.

The All-Ireland camogie quarter-final is fixed for the same day — November 14 — as Cork's All-Ireland ladies football championship group fixture against Cavan, while the All-Ireland semi-finals in both codes are pencilled in for the weekend of November 28/29.

As reported by the *Irish Examiner* last Friday, Cork's five dual players — Hannah Looney, Fiona Keating, Meabh Cahalane, Ciara McCarthy, and Coppinger — are considering boycotting any games that end up being played on the same day.

"Obviously, I think we should be the one association and be promoting camogie and ladies football together," said Coppinger, an All-Ireland winner in both codes.

"One association should be the case for years. It is not a new thing. I don't know why, when they were doing the fix-

tures and knew they were working with such a short period of time, they didn't just pick up the phone to say, 'this is what we are doing, we are open to working around you if you work around us'.

"It is a two-way street, and they are both on very different roads. Other teams always seem so accommodating. It seems to be down to the two associations not being able to talk."

Coppinger said it is the players who are suffering because of the lack of communication and cooperation between the Camogie Association and LGFA.

"They need to communicate. They need to talk to each other and listen to each other. Players are suffering. I feel it always seems to be Cork in the headlines, but there are dual players all around the country who literally just want to play the games they love and give it their all."

"The associations need to come together and make it easier for dual players to focus on the games they love and put in the time and effort to make themselves better, and not having to try and figure out how to sort out a clash. Take that away from them and make it as easy as possible for



Libby Coppinger: 'There are dual players around the country who just want to play the games they love and give it their all.' Picture: Inpho

them just to play the game."

The 2020 county championship winner with West Cork footballers fears the dual player may become an endangered species at inter-county level if such fixture clashes as

those facing the Cork quintet next month continue.

"If the dual player has to go, it should be because the standard has gotten too high or you can't commit to both, not because they are not facilitat-

ing it. It shouldn't be a case that fixtures are stopping people playing both."

In her Congress foreword, Camogie president Kathleen Woods said the association's "working relationship with the GAA and LGFA has moved forward, driven by the Memorandum of Understanding agreed by all three Codes".

Ard Stiúrthóir Sínead McNulty, in her report, said the memorandum of understanding will bring the associations closer together.

"At a national level we will develop closer working relationships with a view to an agreed model for the Gaelic Games family in the future. This partnership working and relationship building at a local level is bringing rewards with players playing in County grounds more often, shared fixtures calendars being prepared, and officers being able to consult their counterparts for advice in various situations."

Meanwhile, Hilda Breslin will become president of the Camogie Association next year after her election at Saturday's Congress. The Leinster chairperson will take over from Kathleen Woods after the 2021 Congress in April.

Treacy: Cork camogie panel open to strike action over

Eoghan Cormican

Laura Treacy has said the Cork senior camogie panel are willing to pull out of the 2020 All-Ireland Championship if there is no resolution to the fixture clashes affecting the county's dual players.

The Cork camogie panel going on strike would be an option of last resort, but full-back Treacy has said the panel are willing to do whatever is necessary to ensure a resolution to the fixture clashes facing the quintet of dual players next month.

The 2017 All-Star defender admitted she would have no problem withdrawing from the 2020 championship for her dual team-mates.

On Saturday, November 7, Cork's ladies football and camogie teams are

scheduled to play All-Ireland championship group games. Galway are willing to move the Camogie Championship fixture between the counties to Sunday, November 8, but, as of yet, there has been no official confirmation of this switch.

The All-Ireland Camogie quarter-final is fixed for the same day — November 14 — as Cork's All-Ireland Ladies Football Championship group fixture against Cavan, while the All-Ireland semi-finals in both codes are pencilled in for the weekend of November 28/29.

As reported by the *Irish Examiner* last Friday, the five dual players in question — Hannah Looney, Fiona Keating, Meabh Cahalane, Ciara McCarthy, and Libby Coppinger — are considering boycotting any two games that end up being played on the same

day. But now, four-time All-Ireland winner Treacy, who is Cork's WPGA representative, has revealed Paudie Murray's entire panel are willing to pull out of the 2020 Championship if the Camogie Association and LGFA fail to sort out the clashes.

"It is the same thing that is happening every year. It literally just takes a little bit of communication for these clashes to not happen and for the bad publicity going out all last week, and then us trying to change it, trying to make it as big as we can in the media so that something will be done," said Treacy.

"I don't even know it is going to have to go down the route that a total strike of Cork camogie and Cork ladies football has to come into play."

"Does it actually have to be some-

thing so dramatic like that for change to happen. I would hope not."

"It shouldn't be a case that something like [a strike] would have to happen, but if it is something that has to happen, it is something I know I personally would be willing to do."

"I am sure a lot of the girls involved with Cork senior camogie. I know I can speak on behalf of them that they'd be happy to do something like that because these clashes are something that are happening not just in Cork, we saw it in Tipperary, it is happening in Dublin. It just seems to be something that is happening so frequently, happening every year."

"If it is a case that something dramatic has to be done, that we just have to sit out for the rest of the year, that we are not going to be playing on the day of

those fixture clashes, then I wouldn't rule it out."

The Killeagh clubwoman was scathing in her criticism of the Camogie Association and LGFA for failing to properly communicate prior to the publication of their respective 2020 fixture schedules.

"I completely understand that we have a small window to be playing in, but there are still two days in a weekend, there is a Saturday and a Sunday."

"We are in the year 2020 and we are trying to promote women in sport. It seems to be the same complaints every year."

"I do know Galway were very good to us and they are saying they are happy to play us on Sunday, November 8, which is great."

"There are still other clashes down

fixture clashes

the line and I am hoping they are going to be resolved well before the time."

"It is unacceptable really in 2020 for things like this to be ahead of the media again."

A hand injury sustained during Killeagh's county championship win over Ballygarvan earlier in the summer means Treacy will miss Cork's opening All-Ireland Championship game this Saturday away to Offaly.

She is hopeful of being back in action for their second group game, against Wexford, on October 31.

"I was in a cast for a few weeks. I have just come out of the splint now and am able to start strengthening it up."

■ Cork camogie player Laura Treacy was speaking during the launch of the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Camogie Championships.

Looney's journey back to a happier self

Camogie

Eoghan Cormican

Hannah Looney is one of the five Cork dual players at the centre of a fixtures storm for the past fortnight.

But the onfield clashes still facing her and her teammates next month is not the starting point for our conversation, rather we rewind to this time 12 months ago when the 23-year-old chemical engineer began to realise something was amiss with herself.

After finishing her final year exams at the beginning of last summer, Looney threw herself head first into Cork's All-Ireland championship campaigns in both camogie

and ladies football.

Neither ended as she would have liked and when the hamster wheel slowed as summer, sport, and college life faded into the rearview mirror, "everything just started caving in a bit".

Her mental health, she admits, was in a poor state.

"I felt I was in a bit of a rut, in a hole, and I kept digging down further and further," Looney recalls.

"It got to a stage where I wasn't seeing the life in things I normally would, like going out with friends. That seemed to bring more anxiety than good."

"All the things that normally brought joy into my life weren't enjoyed as much."

"When I look back, it was probably going on a lot longer than I realised."

"All through college, it was a lot easier to be with your friends, have the craic, ignore your problems by going out socialising and just being lucky enough to be in an environment where I had people around me the whole time."

"Probably this time last year, I was back on my own and didn't really like it. I didn't really know what to do. People would get onto me to socialise and I would think, 'oh great', but then I couldn't enjoy that environment for some reason. I just felt pretty anxious around people."

"I didn't suffer any extremes with my mental

health, but that's probably important to note, that that's when extremes can come along is when people don't address it in the early stages."

Looney turned a corner when opening up to those closest to her and this was followed by a text to the WPGA who provided the four-time All-Ireland camogie winner with a counselling service. Accepting that it was okay to feel down in the dumps was the starting point in the journey back to her old and happier self.

"These trained people can approach things differently and it is nice to let out everything to someone who doesn't necessarily know you well and has no judgement. A lot of

it too would have been resolved for me from having deeper conversations with friends and family."

"Finding what worked for me was important. During Covid, I was able to realise when my mental health isn't too good and go back to the tools that helped in the first instance."

Getting back inside the whitewash post lockdown has also been a massive help.

Her hope is inter-county competitions will safely proceed in the coming weeks and while relieved Cork's camogie game against Galway has been pushed back from November 7 to 8, thus avoiding a clash with the county's ladies footballers, she is concerned

the potential clashes on November 14 and the weekend of November 28/29 will not be addressed until much closer to the time.

Looney was particularly scathing in her criticism of the LGFA who she believes has done next to nothing to help the plight of the dual player. She is adamant that if a clash arises on either of the two aforementioned dates, it should be the LGFA who move their game.

"The LGFA needs to step up and take some onus. From what I have experienced at the moment, they have no regard for the dual player."

"It is just really disappointing at this stage the LGFA approach to the fixture clashes."



JEWEL: Brilliant teenager Fiona Keating has shone for Cork underage and won counties with Courcey Rovers and West Cork. Picture: Jim Coughlan

Dual dilemma cruel on Cork



GAA

Éamonn
Murphy

ONE of the byproducts of Cork's dominance of the women's game in the modern era is the dual icons it produced.

Make no mistake about it, if Rena Buckley and Brieghe Corkery weren't so ridiculously talented in both codes, they wouldn't be as popular or well-known. Were they better for Cork with the hurley in their grasp or an O'Neill's? It didn't matter, they ripped it up at Croke Park either way.

Rena and Brieghe — as genuine Leaside legends they're identifiable without using their full names — grew in stature as dual inter-county players were squeezed out in the GAA. Eoin Cadogan, Aidan Walsh and Damien Cahalane all gave it a fair rattle, but even with underage teams, operating as a hurler and footballer is discouraged now.

That's an important backdrop to the current controversy surrounding camogie and ladies football fixtures next month. While we criticise both associations for their failure to accommodate dual players, especially as Cork have five crossing both squads, Hannah Looney, Libby Coppinger, Meabh Cahalane, Fiona Keating and Ciara McCarthy, the GAA has wiped out the male equivalent.

Still, it wouldn't have been that hard to liaise during lockdown before the winter schedule was revealed to ensure matches were on separate days. Cork are down to All-Ireland championship group games in camogie and ladies football on November 7, though All-Ireland champions Galway made a classy gesture to move.

The All-Ireland camogie quarter-final is fixed for November 14, same as Cork's All-Ireland ladies football championship group fixture against Cavan. The All-Ireland semi-finals are on the weekend of November 28-29, though that allows scope for a Saturday and Sunday schedule if Cork reach that stage in both.

The Irish Examiner reported the Rebel



Cork star Libby Coppinger excels at camogie and ladies football. Picture: Eóin Noonan

dual players were considering boycotting games that end up on the same day. You couldn't blame them.

Particularly after the Camogie Congress last weekend. A Dublin motion, rejected by 76%, sought to write in rule that the association "recognises and supports the concept of a Dual Player, as defined, and will encourage all of its Units to support and facilitate its playing members of all ages, who wish to do so, to play both Camogie and Ladies Gaelic Football".

The LGFA shot down a motion designed to facilitate and support dual players earlier this year. Basically, the excuse on both occasions was the wording put the onus on them to concede ground to the other.

That's really it parsed down though. The ruling bodies of both sports are pitched as rivals for the best young female players.

You've separate committees in the majority of clubs in Cork and beyond for ladies football and camogie. There are distinct training slots for U6 up and really it's unworkable.

We're not naive enough to suggest that GAA clubs don't have conflicts between the hurling and football sides. And many simply prioritise one over the other. The

deferred senior football final between Nemo Rangers and Castlehaven reflects that.

Libby Coppinger called for a merger of the two associations last week.

"I think we should be the one association and be promoting camogie and ladies football together."

"One association should be the case for years. It is not a new thing. I don't know why, when they were doing the fixtures and knew they were working with such a short period of time, they didn't just pick up the phone to say, 'this is what we are doing, we are open to working around you if you work around us'."

"If the dual player has to go, it should be because the standard has gotten too high or you can't commit to both, not because they are not facilitating it."

Take Fiona Keating. What an incredible talent the teenager is.

An All-Ireland minor winner in both, Keating was the Player of the Match as Courcey Rovers landed the senior camogie crown last month, having already contributed to West Cork making the breakthrough in ladies football.

Keating is only 19 but has the potential to become a force at national level. If she's allowed to,



Mary O'Connor, CEO of the Federation of Irish Sport. Picture: Inpho

Cork legend O'Connor outlines depth of Irish sports financial crisis

TODAY'S Budget will be closely watched, given the year that's in it, and the battle for interest groups to secure a slice of the pie will be tougher than ever.

In a normal year, the Federation of Irish Sport's pre-Budget submission is a key focus, but in these most unprecedented of times, the need to advance the interests of the country's various sporting bodies has been heightened.

The FIS represents the country's national governing bodies (NGBs) for sports and local sports partnerships (LSPs) and was instrumental in securing the creation of a resilience fund to aid sporting organisations earlier this year. Former Cork footballer and camogie player Mary O'Connor, the chief executive of the FIS, is keen to ensure that sport's multi-faceted role is recognised.

"This year has been unusual in that, since March, it's been relentless, really," she says. "We played a big role in trying to secure the €70m for the resilience fund, but the budget submission is an annual thing. This year is different, of course, in that a lot of sectors are under pressure and sport is no different to any other sector. What we're trying to do is make the point that, when you invest in sport, you get a return. We can't afford to see investment in sport as 'nice to do', it must be seen as 'have to do'."

It goes without saying that, while the return of sport was a welcome boost during the year, the limits on attendees remains a huge challenge, for a variety of reasons.

"It's massive," O'Connor says, "because it's not just the spectators but the revenue that goes with them."

"You have to consider sponsorship, too — sponsors aren't going to sponsor an event that has no footfall, so you're losing all of these revenue streams."

"What some sports clubs are doing with membership now is to extend them into 2021, like a credit note, to try to keep afloat but there is a cost there again."

"To take the case of Athletics Ireland as an example, they run 26 big events a year, which provide their main income, and they've lost 21 of those."

O'Connor is naturally aware that it is a crowded field and, as such, she doesn't think

SPORT

■ Denis Hurley

that the FIS's requests are outlandish. Therefore, chief in the organisations aims is to ensure the commitment to Action 45 of the National Sports Policy 2018-27, created by the last government, which states: "We will aim to increase funding to participation programmes for every year of the policy, with the intention to double our annual investment in participation by 2027. We will support local authorities in developing and implementing local sports plans, which will aim to work with local stakeholders to increase participation levels."

"For this year, we stuck to our main aim, which is asking the government to stick to their own commitments of increasing current spending — what the governing bodies get to run their operations — because Action 45 will ensure then that the sports sector will be able to be viable for 2021."

"In the Budgets for 2019 and 2020, the government did deliver on Action 45 and what we're asking to do is to keep doing that. There's a statistic that, for every €100 the government invest in sport, they're getting a return of €195. The one that I look at more so is that, every year, there's a cost of €1.5bn to the health budget because of obesity and a lack of physical activity in this country."

"In the last five years, we have spent €5.3m on obesity surgery by the HSE, which is scandalous. So you're talking about billions in the health budget, but only millions in terms of investing in sport."

And that's why O'Connor is keen for the Government to redirect some of the income from the Sugar Sweetened Drinks Tax, in order to tackle the problem in a proactive way.

"A sugar tax in itself won't stimulate behavioural change," she says, "an educational programme tied into sport will."

"We want 4.5 percent of that tax, which equates to €1.35m annually, so that we can ensure that we're targeting the hard-to-reach groups and it's acting as intervention rather than just putting up the price."

"People have going to pay the extra 20c anyway, so you want to try to make a difference."



The Ballinora camogie team that were recently crowned U14 Premier Plate winners.

Larkin's late goal seals U14 title for impressive Ballinora

Ballinora 1-11
Clonakilty 1-6

BALLINORA captured the U14 Premier Plate in a tight contest with Clonakilty in Brinny recently when a late goal from Jane Larkin, along with the accuracy of Louise O'Neill and Rachel Murphy, and Tara O'Donoghue and Amy O'Riordan's defensive strength were crucial. Ballinora hit the front with a Larkin point and captain Louise O'Neill added a second point before Clonakilty opened their account with a pointed free.

The sides were evenly matched with both defences under pressure and they swapped scores so Ballinora maintained their one point advantage at the first water break: 0-3 to 0-2. Rachel Murphy extended the Ballinora advantage with a point from a long range free and with O'Neill and Murphy on target from frees, the Mid Cork outfit went four points clear. Clonakilty cut the gap to two points with good play from Amy McCarthy, Grace Hourihane and Sinead Crowley, but Ballinora finished the half impressively. With Rachel Murphy adding three points without reply, it left Ballinora ahead at the break 0-9 to 0-4.

Clonakilty showed huge determination on the restart and a Lauren Eady goal cut the Ballinora lead to two. As they piled on the pressure Ballinora had to be at their very best defensively, while keeper Tara O'Donoghue denied them with two excellent saves. Amy O'Riordan was a tower of strength in the centre-back position, so at the second water break Ballinora still held a two-point lead.

The impressive Larkin and O'Neill struck for vital Ballinora scores with the game on the line. Sinead Crowley found the range for Clonakilty but the next score proved to be decisive.

As the clock ticked towards full time, Larkin struck for a goal after good work from Julia Mehigan to seal the result in Ballinora's favour after a superb contest from two committed sides.

Scorers for Ballinora: R Murphy 0-5 (0-2), J Larkin 1-2, L O'Neill 0-4 (0-1).

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

Clonakilty: S Crowley 0-3, L Eady 1-0, A McCarthy 0-2, G Hourihane 0-1.

BALLINORA: T O'Donoghue, E O'Flynn, E O'Driscoll, M Twomey, L Twomey, A O'Riordan, S Werner, C Quirk, E McAuliffe, C Ahern, R Murphy, E Lavery, C Twomey, L O'Neill, J Larkin.

Subs: J Mehigan for S Werner (h/t), A Conway for C Twomey (45).

CLONAKILTY: A Giles, C McCarthy, D Geaney, M Murphy, A O'Gorman, Clodagh McCarthy, A Oldham, C Barrett, A McCarthy, N Coffey, S Crowley, G Hourihane, L Eady, L Daly, E O'Sullivan.

Subs: S O'Mahony for A Oldham, A Korinek for N Coffey.

Midleton 6-5
Ballinhassig 1-0

MIDLETON proved too strong for a gallant Ballinhassig as they took the U14 A plate recently in Castle Road, with Rachel Ryan grabbing a hat-trick. Playing with the wind advantage in the opening half, Midleton built up a 10-point lead by half time. Goals from Kate O'Sullivan and Cara Foley helped them build a strong foundation for victory.

All through the second half Ballinhassig worked hard and Aoife Cottrell grabbed a goal but unfortunately for them the scores they needed did not arrive. That was in the main down to an excellent Midleton defence who stood firm under severe pressure. Piling on the pressure Midleton added to their tally with three Rachel Ryan goals and one from Saoirse Ni Theangana ensuring they ran out comfortable winners.

Scorers for Midleton: R Ryan 3-1, S Ni Theangana, 1-3, K O'Sullivan 1-1, C Foley 1-0.

Ballinhassig: A Cottrell 1-0.

MIDLETON: S Walsh, A Magann, J Fitzgerald, K Sanderson, P Hennessy, L Goulding, S Cronin, M Ni Conchubhuair, I Nestor (c), K O'Sullivan, S Ni Theangana, K Quirk, M Collins, R Ryan, C Foley.

Subs: T Wallace for C Foley, R Greene for M Collins, A McCarthy for A Magann, E O'Neill for K O'Sullivan.

BALLINHASSIG: S Whyte, E Madden, M O'Rourke, T O'Farrell, A Cussen, M O'Sullivan, S Deasy, C Crowley, A Cottrell, K Moynihan, F O'Brien, E Casey, A Lynch, A Lombard, K Reynolds.

Subs: A Lucey for E Madden, K O'Leary for K Reynolds, L McDonogh for T O'Farrell, S Connolly for E Casey, E O'Sullivan for K Moynihan.



The Midleton U14 camogie team that won the plate recently. See left for report.

Fixtures clash a joke but it's no laughing matter



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

IT'S hard to believe we had such negative publicity all week again between the Camogie Association and the LGFA regarding fixture clashes.

It's hard to fathom that both associations made the same fixture dates for championship games on November 7 during the group stages. There is another potential clash on November 14 and it's absolutely mindboggling that the All-Ireland camogie and ladies football semi-finals are also fixed for the same weekend, November 28-29.

How can both associations know this is on the cards and yet bury their heads in the sand?

It doesn't matter who set out their fixtures first. That doesn't relieve you of your responsibility.

Why won't the heads of the associations sit down and talk? Does it not bother them that, again, we are being lambasted on social media for these standoffs?

Their behaviour is making a complete mockery of the 20x20 campaign. There are so many wonderful sportswomen and men pushing for greater coverage, support and attendances at women's sport and then the two largest female sports organisations in the country show a complete lack of respect for each other and fight each other every step of the way.

We're a laughing stock. I don't buy this 'year that's in it' cop-out at all, the excuse being the open window is short so there is no choice. This is an annual occurrence. I'm weary of it.

The thing about being weary is that it could make you throw your hat at it and just accepting the status quo. But that's certainly something we can't do, 'associations' and 'delegates' afford the people behind those titles to do damage and hide.

What is the Women's GPA's stance? From what I can see, the member representatives from both codes support each other 100%. I feel the WGPA is going to have to get involved.



Cork's Laura Treacy at the launch of the 2020 Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Camogie Championships. Picture: INPHO/Dan Sheridan

Already we have Cork players threatening to strike. We could see an all-out players strike across the country in both codes if matters aren't resolved soon. What frustrates me is that in the past few years it has taken days of criticism from the Irish public before one or other organisation concedes. They will almost always concede because they have to.

Although we have seen clubs across the country forfeit games in either code due to clashes that weren't resolved. The nationwide support is obvious when you consider that the Galway camogie team have offered to switch the game from Saturday to Sunday to accommodate Cork.

We are still waiting at the time of writing on the association to approve that. Despite the repeated efforts of the two Cork management teams and respective county boards to get one of the games moved from November 7, both remain fixed for the first Saturday of next month.

This is so energy-sapping for both sets of management. There are five Cork players involved in both games: Hannah Looney, Libby Coppinger, Meabh Cahalane, Fiona Keating and Ciara McCarthy.

Last weekend the annual Camogie Congress took place in a virtual format for the

first time due to Covid 19 restrictions. Over 100 delegates were in attendance from across Ireland as well as a number of international delegates.

Just as happened in March when the LGFA defeated the following motion, so too did the Camogie Association by 76%.

The proposed rule, which was put forward by Dublin, states: "The camogie association recognises and supports the concept of a dual player, as defined, and will encourage all of its units to support and facilitate its playing members of all ages, who wish to do so, to play both camogie and ladies football. In doing so, the camogie association and all of its units will be conscious of and promote the welfare of all players."

I said back in March when the same motion was defeated at the ladies football congress that had it come before the camogie congress it would have failed also. To be honest I find the proposal flimsy and too open-ended.

It had to fail at the Camogie Congress. The fact that it was defeated by the LGFA, what would have happened if camogie had passed it?

Would the LGFA have had a carte blanche and camogie have to play second fiddle on everything to do with the sport, not alone fixtures? That possibly was a concern among delegates.

This joined-up approach must be led from the top. Have they no shame in how they are portraying our organisations by not sitting down together?

Is one organisation willing to and the other not? Is it part arrogance? Or are they both against it?

I don't know.

All I know is that all this negativity and lack of respect for players is a slap in the face to all the good work done by volunteers and the 20x20 movement around the country.

This year's congress saw the election of Kildare native Hilda Breslin as president-elect. She will take up her position as Uachtarán at the 2021 annual congress next April in Armagh.

The All-Ireland championships will take place over a nine-week period beginning today. This year's championships will culminate with the senior final taking place in Croke Park on Saturday, December 12, 7pm under lights.

By Daragh Ó Conchúir

WESTMEATH marked their debut in the Liberty Insurance Senior Camogie Championship with a famous victory over Limerick, while Kilkenny pulled away in the second half to claim the spoils in the south-east derby with Waterford.

Both ties were in Group 2 and Westmeath have given themselves an opportunity of making the knockout stages at the first attempt as a result of a stunning first half in Bruff.

Limerick showed plenty of determination to get it back to a goal at the final whistle, having trailed by eight points after 24 minutes and they almost rescued a draw, but Westmeath netminder Fiona Keating saved in the fourth minute of injury time from Judith Mulcahy.

It would have been rough justice on the visitors though, as they excelled for the majority of proceedings.

Points from Keating, Pamela Greville, Megan Dowdall and Ava Balfie got them off to a tremendous start and when Denise McGrath goalied, they were in dreamland, Limerick relying solely on two Caoimhe Costelloe points from frees to have it 1-7 to 0-2.

Paul Sexton's side finished with four points, including their first score from play by Orlaith Kelleher, to hint at improved fortunes but Westmeath showed plenty of resilience, although Costelloe did bring her tally to nine in the second half.

Aoife Doherty helped increase the margin to seven and that enabled Johnny Greville's crew to hold off a determined rally by Limerick.

The Shannonsiders will now play Waterford with a lot at stake after the Déise fell to Kilkenny by 0-15 to 0-8 at Walsh Park.

Denise Gaule and Beth Carton shot three points each as the sides went in deadlocked on 0-6 apiece at half-time.

Interestingly, former player of the year Anne Dalton began as part of a two-player full-forward line and got the scoring under way. With Lydia Fitzpatrick industrious around the middle, Gaule capitalised on finding space with a couple of lovely scores.

Abby Flynn, Annie Fitzgerald and Carton were threatening though, leading to a number of frees that Carton converted, while Lorraine Bray was also on the mark. Waterford will rue not registering a goal from a couple of chances however.

Kilkenny had the wind in the second half and found another gear, while Waterford carried none of the threat of the opening period.

Katie Nolan, Miriam Walsh and her cousin Grace were among the scorers as Brian Dowling's charges pulled away from Fergal O'Brien's unit for a deserved triumph.

In Group 1, Offaly awarded Cork a walkover.

Meanwhile, Tipperary ace Karen Kennedy says the county are ready to build on recent progress ahead of today's Group 2 opener against Clare at The Ragg, which will be streamed live on the Camogie Association's Facebook page, with throw-in at 2pm.

The procurement of a place in the League Final, following a gritty triumph over champions, and All-Ireland kingpins Galway in Ballinasloe's Duggan Park provided a first appearance in a national decider since the League final 11 years previously



TUSSLE: Annie Fitzgerald of Waterford is tackled by Meighan Farrell of Kilkenny



UPBEAT: Karen Kennedy has high hopes for Tipperary

Stunning win for Westmeath as Cats cruise

but, unfortunately, was a Covid-19 casualty.

'We still take the positives from that and try take the momentum forward, what we were building on. The last few years we've kind of gotten to the same stages and people are questioning is that as far as you can get, so we wanted to prove a point in the League to show we were with the top guns as well.'

'In other years, when teams got on top of us, we'd crumble and let the heads go down but we had a no-die attitude going out against Galway and stuck at it. We were nearly all down at the backs for half the match, but it was worth it!'

'We have definitely improved our style of play. Before it was more traditional hit-and-hope but we've worked on our play, with more

support running. When you come up against Cork and Kilkenny and then you have to change the way you play or you won't be getting anywhere against them.'

The 22-year-old is working from home where possible, living with her parents and sister - 'we haven't killed each other yet!' - only going into Anneal's Cashel laboratory when testing is necessary at the

start-up inhaler production company.

'You never get anything your own way against Clare. We always have tough battles against them and we know that Sunday won't be any different.'

'I played with a lot of the girls in UL and know the calibre of talent down there. We won't be underestimating anything.'

Cork plans upset after Offaly give a walkover

CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

CORK were due to travel to play Offaly in the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland senior Championship opening round tomorrow. During the week they were finding it difficult to get the exact venue for the game from Croke Park and on Wednesday morning Cork were informed that Offaly had given a walkover. The decision to withdraw from the fixture is non Covid related and it seems to be more a case of not being able to field. Offaly have not withdrawn from the remainder of the campaign. I can't recall something like this occurring at senior inter-county level before and it throws Cork's preparations completely out of sync.

Your preparation for a game begins two weeks in advance as you tailor your training to peak for the clash instead of driving on with more intense sessions. It was a surprise to still be without a venue on Tuesday evening and the reason why became apparent to Cork early on Wednesday morning. So, Cork's first game of just two group ties will be on October 31



DISAPPOINTED: Cork boss Paudie Murray.

at home to Wexford. Cork manager Paudie Murray couldn't hide his disappointment.

'We're very disappointed in that it was Wednesday morning when we heard. We've been working logistically all week to try and get things sorted and to hear so late isn't good.' Cork were travelling by car and trying to keep numbers travelling together to a minimum so as to minimise close contact as much as possible. They couldn't stop anywhere for a bite to eat so had arranged to bring food for the team and stop on the side of the road. Every travelling team is in the same position and it's a case of planning and preparing as best you can. It's unfortunate that so much time was spent on that this week by Cork.

CAMOGIE

Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Senior Championship Group 1: Galway 5-17 Wexford 3-9; Group 2: Westmeath 1-12 Limerick 0-12, Kilkenny 0-15 Waterford 0-8; Group 3: Tipperary 0-20 Clare 1-8; Intermediate Championship: Galway 3-19 Dublin 0-5; All-Ireland U16 A Championship: Group 1: Galway 3-12 Tipperary 3-10; Group 2: Kilkenny 1-17 Dublin 0-8; U16 B Championship: Limerick 4-10 Offaly 4-7.

Goal-hungry Galway make winning start to title defence

All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship

Daragh Ó Conchúir

Wexford provided indications that the horror of the past couple of seasons might be in the rear-view mirror as they posed questions of Galway before the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland champions got their Group 1 campaign underway with a 5-17 to 3-9 win.

Some of the issues exposed by the hosts at Bellefield did not go unnoticed, but victorious manager Cathal Murray was satisfied with his charges' response given the unusual preparation, and that he has enough to tend to in the weeks ahead.

"Coming down to Wexford and scoring 5-17, that's a very good score," said Murray.

"There are plenty of things to work on as well. We conceded three goals and looked

rusty at times. Wexford were definitely the better team in the second quarter.

"I thought we struggled a lot with their movement and didn't really track our runners, but we regrouped at half-time and the second half was really, really good.

"We have a really good panel. We've an awful lot of quality. The girls are working really hard and when they get the chances, they have to take them.

"You need that competition for places. Plenty put up their hand today and that's really good going forward."

Allish O'Reilly struck two goals and Catherine Finnerty one in the first half for Galway, but Mags Byrne replied for Wexford and it was 3-9 to 1-7 at the interval.

A stunning goal by Joanne Dillon reduced the margin to four points early in the second half, but with Carrie Dolan



Kilkenny's Niamh Deely is challenged by Waterford's Beth Carton in their All-Ireland Championship match in Waterford. Picture: Ken Sutton

bringing her tally to nine points and Niamh Hanniffy and the all-action Aoife Donohue adding goals, Galway were able to pull clear.

Bill Mullaneey was understandably content too as Tip-

perary defeated Clare by 0-20 to 1-8 at The Ragg.

The visitors began solidly, but Tipp soon opened up with championship debutant Aisling Moloney, Karen Kennedy, Grace O'Brien, and

Orla O'Dwyer supplementing five points from Cáit Devane to make it 0-13 to 0-4 at the break. When you're playing a team like Clare, you need to get off to a good start or else they're going to put you under pressure," Mullaneey noted.

"Not that you're going to get away from them, they won't give you anything easy. With the wind we took our scores well from out the field. I thought we were relatively sharp from midfield up into the forwards.

"At the beginning of the year, we were saying that this is a panel game now, it's 30 players, 15 who start, and then whoever finishes the game. The first 15 are on the field to start the game, set it up and the other five come on to finish the game. There's no other way."

That showed after the dismissal of Moloney in the 20th minute, following a period of

consultation by Ray Kelly with his sideline and fourth officials.

Mullaneey made a number of alterations positionally and in personnel and the reaction was notable.

Devane kept the scoreboard ticking over in trademark fashion from placed balls and play, while Kennedy also got on the mark again from her new midfield role.

The margin was 12 when Emer Kelly tore through the heart of the Tipp defence to goal in the fourth minute of injury-time, but Ger O'Connell's charges paid the price for a lethargic opening period.

On Saturday, Westmeath recorded an historic 1-12 to 0-12 success over Limerick in Bruff on their senior championship debut, just three years after playing junior camogie, while Kilkenny accounted for Waterford by 0-15 to 0-8.

Delee accuses Limerick camogie

Tom Clancy

Limerick camogie star Rebecca Delee has launched a blistering attack on those running the game in the county.

Delee, an All-Ireland minor and intermediate medal winner, is one of nine players from last year's squad who is not playing for the county this year.

Róisín Ambrose, Niamh Mulcahy, Sarah Carey, Karen O'Leary, Deborah Murphy, Laura Stack, Lisa Leonard, Katie Hennessy, and Delee were notable absentees for Limerick's shock 1-12 to 0-12 defeat to Westmeath on the opening weekend of the All-Ireland senior championship on Saturday.

Delee withdrew from the panel, citing a lack of support and frustration with standards within the group.

The Newcastle West club woman tore cruciate knee ligaments playing for Limerick in the National League last February but says she received no support or communication from the county board or management team since then.

The former Ashbourne Cup and

O'Connor Cup winner said: "I had my operation March 13 and I heard nothing from any of the management team. I was disappointed that I gave so much time to Limerick camogie and I didn't hear from them.

"I didn't want much, a text would have done. They [Limerick] didn't provide a physio or a S&C Coach. I know we were in tough times, with lockdown, but even a text or a video call would have been good. I had contemplated leaving for a while, I bit the bullet, and left the group."

Due to the player exodus, manager Paul Sexton has been forced to recruit new players from across the grades in the county. But Delee was bemused by the lack of communication as an existing panel member.

"I played under that management team when I suffered that injury. Paul was the manager that day and he couldn't pick up the phone to contact me. If he was unable to pick up the phone to me, then how can he contact people he doesn't know?"

Delee won the All-Ireland Junior Ladies Football title in 2018, but her first love is clearly camogie.

"We don't ask for much, we play in the pitches that are left. Sometimes we pay for our own gear. The girls got skorts last year that they had to pay for. We don't get travel expenses, we don't always get food. We don't normally complain about that, we just get on with it. At the end of the day, we just want to be backed by the person that is over us.

"We want them to set the standards. It goes back to respect and high standards. We felt that Declan Nash [2019] was disrespected. It's the small things that matter and once you see



Rebecca Delee is not playing for Limerick this year having withdrawn from the panel. Picture: Inpho/Oisín Keniry

chiefs of disrespect

"We are back to where we were a few years ago. It seems to be a circle that we are in.

"To be fair when Declan withdrew [from the application process to return as manager], it was going to be tough for whoever came in. For the first month, we were holding onto that feeling that we wanted Declan back. But we let go of that and felt, that 'this is it now', but truth be told, I don't think the standards were good enough from the start.

"Everything needs to be in order and if it isn't in order the first month you go in, what hope is there for the rest of the year? I had enough with the injury and felt I didn't need to be in that environment anymore. I wanted to focus on my knee and get it right."

There have been plenty of ups and downs since her debut in 2013.

"We fought and we fought but you can't keep fighting when all you want to do is play at a high standard and compete. We got the Gaelic Grounds for the first game against Tipperary, and the next match was in LIT. Obviously LIT

are our sponsors for the underage but at the same time, there were no dugouts and supporters were on the field. We went from the Gaelic Grounds to LIT, it lashed rain and there was no cover for the subs. Are people fighting for us to get the likes of Bruff and Kilmallock? It seems to be one thing after another."

Karen O'Leary, Deborah Murphy, and Róisín Ambrose are teammates at Newcastle West and the three have withdrawn their services to the Limerick camogie team. The main reason appears to be a fixture pile up in September which left them with three crucial games in just eight days.

"It isn't the first time this happened. Last year, we played Cork in the Munster Senior semi-final in Cork. We had to play a league final against Killeedy the following morning [for Newcastle West] and we were told that the fixture had to be played before a certain date. We had four players involved and coming off a defeat against Cork we had to pick ourselves up the following morning."

We need to work harder to hang onto multi-sport superstars

AISHLING MOLONEY doesn't do things by halves. It's hard to imagine a more dramatic and impactful inter-county debut for the young Tipperary player than her performance against Clare in the first round of the All-Ireland camogie championship last weekend.

Moloney is, of course, one of Tipp's star footballers, renowned for her probing runs and long-range kicking, but Sunday was the first time that her camogie skills were broadcast to a wide audience. Wearing number 27, she fired over three points from play — one phenomenal effort from her own 45 — and assisted in several others.

If that wasn't headline-grabbing enough, she got a straight red card at the second water break to top it all off.

The Camogie Association's coverage of last weekend's fixtures was of decent quality, but the livestream form has its limitations — just the one camera, brief blind spots when the ball goes behind a stanchion, and limited replays, to name a few. The Tipp-Clare coverage didn't capture Moloney's off-the-ball sending-off offence, so you're reduced to analysing body language in an attempt to figure out what happened.

Referee Ray Kelly called over Moloney and mimed an alarming stabbing motion. Ah no, just a bit of a swipe, Aishling seemed to mime back. Unmoved, Kelly whipped out the red card.

Moloney's debut reminded me of a sequence in the classic *Simpsons* episode 22 *Short Films About Springfield*, in which Apu reluctantly leaves the Kwik-E-Mart for five minutes to attend a pool party. In a rush to get back to his shop, he manages to eat a hotdog, tear up the dancefloor, have a romantic encounter in a garden shed, and fall into the pool, all in the space of five minutes. Moloney similarly fit a season's worth of thrills and spills into three-quarters of a match.

Aside from Moloney's performance, there was much to enjoy from a Tipp perspective in their 0-20 to 1-8 victory over Clare. It was one of those belting, confident performances where points are going over from all angles, powered by sheer exuberance. The players are clearly excited to be playing together again, and — since their first match was in the Ragg — there was an element of 'not on our patch' bravado to the performance. Róisín Howard's fist pump after her point in the 11th minute reminded me of the stakes, of how long these players have waited for their championship, of how much this all means — particularly in 2020, when uncertainty hovers over everything.

Elsewhere, a supremely confident Cáit Devane was on fire, popping over a couple of her trademark over-the-shoulder points. Veteran defender Mary Ryan, in her 15th inter-county season, was rock solid at full-back, even bursting forward in the dying moments of the game to set up a Miriam Campion score. Orla O'Dwyer was hopping off the ground, her spring season with the Brisbane Lions clearly having done her good.

One has to imagine that the presence of multi-sport superstars such as O'Dwyer and Moloney will have a transformative effect on Tipperary camogie, and consequently on women's Gaelic games as a whole. As someone who has been a one-track sports person for most of my playing career, I find it fascinating what you can learn from team-mates who play other sports to a high level. Soccer players are brilliant at anticipating and moving into space. Basketball players are masters of the short pass and the overlap.

Footballers love to run it; Moloney's direct runs are pure football, and devastating in a camogie context.

Though the dual player has essentially been eliminated from men's hurling and football, it's still a relatively common occurrence in the women's codes — not least in Cork, where there are five: Hannah Looney, Libby Copping, Meabh Cahalane, Fiona Keating, and Ciara McCarthy.

This unique strand in camogie and ladies football is further complicated by the emergence of the AFLW, which in 2020 has 18 Irish players on its books. (Indeed, Moloney herself has turned down a couple of offers from Australian clubs, opting to finish out her degree in DCU before deciding whether to go semi-pro or not.) Some of the 18 are triple threats: O'Dwyer plays camogie and ladies football as well as AFLW; Sarah Rowe plays both ladies football and soccer.

What knock-on effects will this injection of professionalism have on women's GAA in the years to come?

Most of the players who have gone to Australia are extremely loyal to Gaelic games, saying in interviews that their inter-county teams remain their first love and first priority. The fact that the AFLW season takes place during our wintertime means that county players have so far been able to balance both. But another striking theme in the players' reports of AFLW is their appreciation for the semi-pro set-up, with top-class facilities shared equally with the men's squads. Quite apart from being paid, the players are looked after exceptionally well. How must it feel to come back from that environment to a sport where not even expenses are provided?

BOTH the Camogie Association and the LGFA have been embroiled in a striking run of player welfare controversies in recent months. It began in Tipperary at the end of September, when Cahir ladies football and camogie teams were expected to play two county finals in the span of a weekend. Understandably, they made the difficult decision to withdraw from the camogie, handing Knockavilla a hollow victory. Moloney, Howard, and AFLW star Aisling McCarthy were among the Cahir players impacted, and all were outspoken in their frustration.

Cork's dual stars faced a direct fixture clash when both the camogie and ladies football teams were scheduled to play All-Ireland championship games on Saturday November 7. The clash has since been avoided, with the camogie match moved to the Sunday — but still, playing two championship games in the space of 24 hours is hardly ideal. More recently, nine Limerick players left the inter-county camogie setup, again citing concerns over player welfare and a lack of support for dual players.

You might say that it's 2020; that the curtailed calendar is working against us and that fixture clashes were inevitable. But this is a problem that crops up every year and there seems to be very little will at administrative level to solve it.

Worse, there's an implicit lack of respect, a sense that the players will put up with impossible situations because of their love of the game.

But increasingly those players have other options, and we can't rely on their loyalty and goodwill indefinitely without giving any back.

If we want to hang onto our multi-sport superstars, we have to give them a reason to stay.

Cork expect a tough test from new-girls Kerry

INTERMEDIATE CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

TOMORROW
Liberty Insurance Intermediate
Championship: Cork v Kerry,
Castle Road, 2pm

CORK will get their intermediate championship campaign underway when they host All-Ireland junior champions Kerry tomorrow.

The championship is divided into four groups with the top team in each qualifying for the semi-finals. Cork are in a group of three, joined by Meath and Kerry and they will need to win both games to qualify.

It's a tough opener against a county that are on the up.

Kerry confidently participated in the division two league before lockdown and despite losing their three games, they showed that they were well able for the challenges that the step up to intermediate brought.

Cork, for their part, enjoyed a good league campaign and were in with a shout of making it through having defeated Kilkenny and Kildare.

They narrowly lost to Meath and it was all down going to be down to the last game against Westmeath before Covid-19 restrictions saw the league abandoned.

There is a new man at the helm this year with Inniscarra's Mark McCarthy taking over earlier this year having previously been the hurling and strength and conditioning coach with the side in 2019.

His involvement with the UCC intermediate camogie squad in 2019 led him to becoming the coach to the Ashbourne side for the last two seasons and when the opportunity arose to take on the manager's role at Cork he stepped up to the plate.

"I got a call from Frances Killeen the former Cork intermediate manager in 2019 to step in as hurling and S&C coach and I jumped on that opportunity."

"It was certainly a learning curve, but this year I find myself in a much better place. I know the players, but you're always learning though."

Mark knows the championship campaign is going to be a tough one. "It will be a tough challenge, we have an away game against Meath; they beat us by three points in the league and hopefully we will reverse that result, but first we have to get over Kerry."

Cork lost a few players since the league campaign, among them Lauren Callanan, Moira Barrett, and Nora O'Riordan, who have dropped out due to studies, and Linda Dorgan has an on-going injury.

On the plus side, the superb Cork championship games at all levels allowed them to take a look at a lot of players and they have brought in a few new faces, among them Danielle Carroll, Clodagh Coughlan, Katie Walsh, and Gillian O'Leary.

Kerry, with the excellent Patrice Diggins, Brid Horan, and Sara Murphy in their lineout will come to Cork determined to make it a perfect intermediate championship debut.

Ten camogie teams removed

Ten teams have been removed from the All-Ireland intermediate and junior camogie championship after the Camogie Association received direction from the Department of Sport that each county can field just one team in the 2020 All-Ireland championship.

Cork, Dublin, Galway, Kilkenny and Tipperary all field second teams in the intermediate camogie championship, as do Clare, Wexford, Waterford, Limerick and Offaly at junior level, but these 10 teams are no longer permitted to compete in the lower-tier 2020 championships simply because each of the 10 counties has a senior team.

The intermediate championship will now consist of Laois, Kildare, Kerry, Meath, Antrim, Down, Carlow and Derry, while the junior championship becomes a final between Roscommon and Armagh.

Heightening the sense of frustration around the decision is that teams no longer eligible to play in these two competitions had already begun their championship campaign.

Meanwhile, Limerick senior camogie manager Paul Sexton has stepped down from the role, the county have confirmed.

In a brief statement yesterday morning, he announced he was departing for "due to personal family circumstances".

After a shock home defeat to Westmeath in their championship opener last weekend, the Shannonsiders travel to Walsh Park to face Waterford on Sunday afternoon.

News of Sexton's departure came just a few hours after an unchanged team for their second-round clash in two days' time was announced.

Eoghan Cormican
and Joel Slattery

Eimear
Ryan





Celebrations for Kinsale after winning the U14C Championship.

Gould goals give the seashiders edge over determined Kilworth

**Kinsale 3-6
Kilworth 1-2**

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

KILWORTH made the trip to Kinsale for the U14C championship final recently.

On a perfect day for camogie the sides served up a highly entertaining contest where Kinsale came out on top but not before being severely tested by a determined Kilworth side.

Kilworth were on the score board fast as they opened the scoring with a point from Orlaith Kenny and they held their lead as both sides battled too hard to find a way past two very determined defences.

Kinsale settled into the game and growing in confidence opened their account with a Maisie O'Callaghan goal and the same played added a point to put her sides three clear at the end of the opening quarter.

Kilworth responded well with Tara Carey pointing a forty five but again Kinsale hit back with a Nora Gould goal and it gave Kinsale a 2-1 to 0-1 at the break.

From the restart Kinsale extended their lead with three early with Ava McCarthy and Catherine Murphy on target as they kept the pressure on the Kilworth defence.

Kilworth worked hard and needed a score and Orlaith Kenny responded as she finished from an acute angle to the top corner of the net to give her sides a much needed lift.

Kinsale battered down the hatches as they sensed a Kilworth revival and they held vital possession to ensure Kilworth didn't build on their goal. Kinsale needed to put the result beyond doubt and they added a goal with Nora Gould on target before a Catherine Murphy point sealed victory.

Scorers for Kinsale: N Gould 2-0, M O'Callaghan 1-1, C Murphy 0-4, A McCarthy 0-1.

Kilworth: O Kenny 1-1, T Carey 0-1 (45).

Kinsale: H Garry, K Carmody, C Cahill, O Woods, E Coughlan, S Queva, F Hayes, A McCarthy, C Murphy, A Murphy, N Gould (c), E Kearney, A Ferguson, M O'Callaghan, L A Grannan.

Subs: Long for L A Grannan, S Thullier for A Ferguson, R Beecher for O Woods.

Kilworth: S Lane, E Kenny, T Carey, N Carey, L Bracken, J Casey, E Lane, R Feehan, E M Fahy, S O'Driscoll, T O'Callaghan, C McCarthy, S O'Riordan, O Kenny, T Harrington.

Subs: S Morrissey for S O'Riordan, E McSweeney for T O'Callaghan.

**Bandon 0-3
St Vincent's 0-1**

IN what was a low scoring contest Bandon had two points to spare at the final whistle over St Vincent's when the sides met in the U14C plate final in Ballinlough recently.

As the score line indicated both defences were on top and scores were at a premium, indeed all the scores came in the first half with neither team registering a score in the second half, a tribute to the hard work and determination of the backs on both teams who worked hard to deny their opponents any bit of room or space.

It was ends to end action as the opening half progressed Emily O'Reilly found the range for St Vincent's with a point but the strong Bandon defence stood firm as St Vincent's searched for more.

Kate O'Leary converted a forty five and as Bandon kept the pressure on the St Vincent's defence Maria O'Donovan and Maggie France each added point to put two between the sides and at the break it was advantage Bandon 0-3 to 0-1.

On the resumption both sides gave it their all on the superb city division's pitch but with both rear guards standing firm there was no way through and it was Bandon who held on to the final whistle to take the plate after a superb contest.

Scorers for Bandon: K O'Leary, (45), M O'Donovan 0-1, Maggie France 0-1 each.

St. Vincent's: E O'Reilly 0-1.

Bandon: E McCarthy, E Waugh, C Foley, J Fleming, K Twohig, K O'Leary, S Barr, M McCarthy, D Kelly, M France, K O'Halloran, M O'Donovan, A Lillis, A Troy, A Glavin.

Subs: E Kingston for A Glavin, A O'Sullivan for A Troy.

St Vincent's: A Gould, C Leahy, E King, J Lynch, A Kelly, S Murphy, K Healy, G Salmon, E Birmingham, K Lynch (c), N Goulding, K O'Callaghan, A O'Shea, E O'Reilly, G O'Donovan.

Subs: R McCarthy for G O'Donovan, S Noonan for K O'Callaghan, E Dunlea for A Kelly.



Martina Navratilova in action in 2002. "When I came on the court some people jeered and booed or whistled. I don't think I got that kind of reception because they didn't like my tennis or my very bad haircut."

Martina had to have resilience

TO MARK the conclusion of 20x20 and to celebrate what has truly been a transformative two-year movement for Women in Sport in Ireland, KPMG together with 20x20 presented a live event last Wednesday.

The event aimed at provoking debate and to inspire viewers and other stakeholders in sport to act and choose what's next for 'Women in Sport' in Ireland.

RTE's Jacqui Hurley hosted a magnificent event. She was joined by a host of national and international trailblazers including one of the most successful female tennis players of all time, Martina Navratilova, Sonia O'Sullivan, Brian O'Driscoll, Rachel Blackmore and Leona Maguire.

I was a bit starstruck if I'm honest watching and listening to Martina Navratilova. I was and remain a big fan.

Her history and resilience in becoming one of the best tennis players in the world is mesmerising.

She offered us some fantastic insights into how to be true to yourself and break down barriers. I bring you here just a snapshot of her story and advice.

It's a lesson for all sportswomen but also for life in general.

Martina was born in Prague, Czechoslovakia, now the Czech Republic, an oppressed state where she wasn't allowed to think for herself. She was 18 when she fled to the US, angering the communist Czech regime, which immediately stripped her of her nationality.

She later said she had been forced to leave Czechoslovakia because the authorities were trying to stop her from playing in the US, where the majority of big tournaments were then held.

She last won at Wimbledon at age 46 despite people telling her she was too old.

Yesterday she told us: "First I was too young, then I was too old. I say to them, so when was I just right? You can't let other people set your limitations."

"If I did that I would never have left my country. I would never have broken the records that I broke, you would never have heard of me."

Another bold move in 1981 was when she came out as being gay.

"I wanted to be myself. I had to decide if coming out as a gay woman was the right thing to do, as this was 1981."

CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

"Back then it was lonely out there and definitely not the thing to do. I was criticised from all kinds of places, all kinds of people, even my own family."

"I remember when I played Chris Evert and we were introduced, everybody clapped when Chris came out on the court but a lot of people just sat on their hands when I came on. When I came on the court some people even jeered and booed or whistled. So, I don't think I got that kind of reception because they didn't like my tennis or my very bad haircut."

"Coming out definitely didn't help my tennis popularity. I paid a price. I think the price that I heard the most was career suicide."

"I know I lost some endorsements and sponsorships but in my heart I know I have gained things of much greater value."

"I worked to live my life to the fullest, with integrity, with intent, with knowledge that others might have come out because of my path and the chance to change the world for the better."

"The world has changed albeit very slowly but had I not broken those boundaries I wouldn't be here sitting talking to you guys."

"You have to believe in yourself because if you don't, who will and you have to fight for what you feel is right which is what I did and from there you've got to stay focused so that you can achieve, you can succeed, because you know life in general is never smooth."

"It's not clear sailing, there are always twists and turns that have to be negotiated, especially now in the global world that we live in."

"The most important attribute for successfully breaking down barriers is 'Resilience'. For all of you out there that want to break through that glass ceiling for women in sporting Ireland and around the world you must be resilient."

"You must be able to bounce back from low points, to bounce back from adversity."



Hilda O'Mahony presented Bandon captain Kate O'Halloran with the U14C camogie Plate after her side's win over St Vincent's recently.

I've heard it said that resilience is a tennis players best friend. Because even if you're losing, staying in the game and on the court is a victory in itself.

"It's also been said that adversity is what introduces you to yourself, our lives are filled with highs and lows but I've learned to stop viewing and labelling experiences like a missed shot as bad or good."

"I treat them as challenges or opportunities to grow and improve. So, you've got to treat your life as a game when you're constantly being challenged."

"Treat the vow for equality for women in sport as something that will challenge you and you need to be your best. And when you do that, very little will phase you."

"You will view negatives as challenges and an opportunity to grow. I also think I'm resilient because I live my values, I embrace values like sportsmanship, fairness, human rights equality."

"These qualities are what keeps me standing even if I am getting pummelled."

"If you really do believe sincerely in what you're doing and your goals are worthwhile you will have the confidence to persevere even if faced with naysayers."

Never a truer word. What a treat!

McCarthy fears intermediate stars may walk away

BY DENIS HURLEY

CORK are among seven counties seeking the reversal of a decision by the government to limit the All-Ireland intermediate and junior camogie championships to county first teams.

Cork had been due to face Kerry in their championship opener last Saturday but, on Friday, communication from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport

and Media stated that they and Dublin, Galway, Kilkenny and Tipperary couldn't compete, while Clare, Limerick, Offaly, Waterford and Wexford have been excluded from the junior.

Along with Dublin, Galway, Kilkenny, Limerick, Tipperary and Wexford, Cork have so-signed a letter to the Ard-Chomhairle of the Camogie Association, asking for the decision to be reconsidered.

Otherwise, Cork manager

Mark McCarthy fears that, given the manner and timing of their elimination, players could be disenchanted to the point of giving up.

"I'd imagine so," he said.

"When you're trying to build towards something for six weeks, with three sessions a week, and the anticipation and the drive within the camp that that brings, and all of a sudden it's taken away, 24 hours before competition, you'd be thinking

some girls would throw their eyes up to heaven and say, 'What's the point?'

"That's what I'm getting back from them but there are a couple of senior players who have reached out to me and said, 'Whatever it takes, we'll back.'

"If a petition could be got going, the same way the Cork minors did at the start of lockdown when that championship was taken away – Jerry Wallace started a petition and got 5,000

signatures.

"They're looking towards that but I suppose time is against us. There are 150 or so players disappointed with this. If we had been told that the whole championship was called off and the senior was getting all the focus, with testing and so on, you'd say fair enough.

"For the whole thing to go ahead without us because we're a second team, it feels like a kick in the teeth."

It is believed that the possibility of senior and intermediate or junior panels mixing was a factor in the decision, but in Cork the two squads had been preparing independently.

"That's why we're so frustrated and stunned," McCarthy said.

"We're a completely separate panel and separate entity – only once in six weeks did the senior team look for one of our players for a challenge match."

Intermediate Rebels may opt out this year

CORK intermediate camogie manager Mark McCarthy fears that some members of the panel may opt out after the decision to exclude the team from this year's All-Ireland championship.

The Rebels had been due to face Kerry on Saturday but on Friday a directive forced Cork and other second-string outfits – Galway, Kilkenny, Tipperary and Wexford – out of the championship.

McCarthy is left disappointed with the call and feels that some players may be so disenchanted that they won't come back.

CAMOGIE

■ Denis Hurley

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couple of senior players who have reached out to me and said, 'Whatever it takes, we'll back.'

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Cork intermediate camogie manager, Mark McCarthy.

"For the whole thing to go ahead without us because we're a second team, it feels like a kick in the teeth."

White's knee injury a major blow for Cork

CORK camogie has suffered a major blow with key player, Julia White, ruled out after suffering a serious knee injury in a recent challenge game against Waterford.

"Unfortunately, Julia's injury has been diagnosed as a fractured knee-cap and femur and it will be next year before she will be able to play again," said manager, Paudie Murray, of the Douglas club player. She won't need to have an operation for her injury, but her rehab will take a good deal of time.

"Julia's absence from the team is a huge loss for us, as she is a player of outstanding quality."

White has five All-Ireland medals at senior level and hit the winning point against Kilkenny in the 2017 All-Ireland final. Cork, who were given a walkover by Offaly for last weekend's opening round-robin tie, have games against Wexford

CAMOGIE

■ Paddy Hickey

and Galway to come, and could also be without experienced defender, Laura Treacy, on October 31.

"Because of her injury, Laura's hand originally had to be put in a cast, but she now has had that removed," said Murray.

"She is now able to take part in the running part of the training, but she is not yet able to catch a hurley and strike a ball."

"So I think the game against Wexford will come a little too soon for Laura, but, hopefully, she will be available for the game against Galway."

A major plus for Cork is that veteran ace, Gemma O'Connor, has returned. In the wake of St Finbarr's defeat by Inniscarra in the club semi-final, the nine-time

All-Ireland medal winner has decided to defer her retirement.

"We didn't want to rush Gemma into making a decision. Now that she has decided to give it another go, we're delighted that she will be with us once again," Murray said. "She played in a recent challenge game that we had against Waterford and showed that she is in excellent physical condition."

Meanwhile, Murray has called on the Camogie Association to fix championship ties for grounds that have decent playing surfaces. "Last weekend, the game between Wexford and Galway was played at Bellefield, in Enniscorthy, and the game between Tipperary and Clare was played at The Ragg (near Thurles). And the surface at both grounds is not of a sufficiently high standard for championship matches to be played on them."

Rockett blasts Déise to victory

Camogie

Daragh Ó Conchúir

Two goals from Niamh Rockett gave Waterford their first triumph of the Liberty Insurance Senior Camogie Championship and set up a winner-takes-all clash against Westmeath on Sunday week with a place in the Quarter-Finals up for grabs.

When Rockett drilled her first goal in the 21st minute after some deft work and vision by Beth Carton, the game was turned on its head after a tightly contested opening quarter.

By the time she notched up her second, from another Carton assist, two minutes from the end of regulation time, they had the game put to bed despite Costelloe clocking up eight points, running out 2-15 to 0-9 victors.

Waterford manager Fergal O'Brien is looking for more from his side for the future, however.

"Some aspects of the performance I wouldn't have been happy with it. I thought overall when we needed to, we pushed on but I think we weren't clinical enough in front of goal in a couple of passages of play."

"So we're happy just to get the win today but going forward we'll have to be a bit more clinical in front of the goal I think."

"After about 10 minutes we got going... I think if you get a goal in Camogie, it's worth so much more than three points. It's a massive score and it did give us a bit of a lift and we drove on from there, started creating more and more chances."

Limerick are now out of contention, while the result also confirmed Kilkenny's progression to the semi-finals as Group 2 winners.

The Noreiders were on fire on Saturday, Miriam Walsh hitting a hat-trick of goals, Aoife Doyle grabbing two and Denise Gaule totting up 1-9 as they blitzed Westmeath 6-23 to 1-7. Megan Dowdall goaling for last year's Intermediate champions.

Tipperary confirmed their participating in the last six as Group 3 winners by getting the better of Dublin at the Parnells grounds in Coolock by 1-13 to 0-11.

Cáit Devane shot 1-6, the goal coming in the 13th minute as the Tipp talisman reacted with alacrity after Nicole Walsh's shot for point came back off the upright.

Dublin remained competitive throughout, Sinéad Wylde and Aisling Maher (0-7) keeping them in touch but Grace O'Brien, Orla O'Dwyer, Róisín Howard and Devane were on target at the other end to ensure Tipperary's supremacy.

DENIS HURLEY spoke to Cork camogie star Laura Treacy ahead of their championship opener

Cork star Laura Treacy at the recent launch of the 2020 Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Camogie Championships. (Photo: Dan Sheridan/INPHO)



Long wait for championship is almost over

IT has been a long wait for a championship game for the Cork senior camogie side – extended for reasons beyond their control – but Laura Treacy is looking forward to finally getting into action.

The Rebels had been due to face Offaly a fortnight ago but the Faithful County forfeited due to Covid-19 factors and so this Saturday's clash with Wexford in Páirc Uí Rinn (2pm) is their opener, with a trip to face All-Ireland champions Galway the following week.

'I think we're ready to play now,' she says, 'we went back training in November of last year and it's hard to think that it's nearly 12 months later and here we are lining out for the first round of the championship.'

'We're ready to go and I think we need the games, something to be aiming for. We were gearing ourselves up for the Offaly game and that didn't happen so we had to regroup again.'

'There's been another two weeks of intense training to build the whole thing back up and we're all really looking forward to the weekend. Everyone's fighting for a place,

'We just need to win one of these two games and we're guaranteed a quarter-final'

they've been training for the bones of a year and want that jersey so every girl is looking forward to it.

'Wexford will obviously bring their own challenges and then we have to go to Galway and try to overcome them in their home patch, which is going to be huge.'

'It's a great experience for the new girls coming on. We just need to win one of these two games and we're guaranteed a quarter-final. We're looking at Wexford and if we can get over them, we're in a quarter-final.'

'Then if we could beat Galway we'd be straight into a semi but that's a bit of a bonus, we're not really thinking about that just yet. We need to reach the quarter-finals first and then hopefully regroup for a huge game against Galway the following week.'

Treacy is a nurse in the

CUMH colposcopy clinic at St Finbarr's Hospital. In terms of camogie, she benefits from the lack of night-shifts or weekend work, but obviously there is a constant elephant in the room to deal with in terms of Covid-19.

'It has affected us to a certain degree,' she says.

'Everyone has to wear a mask in the clinic and their temperature is taken when they come through the door and they're asked all the usual questions like if they've been travelling abroad or experienced any symptoms.'

'We have quite a big waiting room but only a minimal amount of people are allowed in. Quite a few treatments had to be cancelled in the early stages when we didn't know the extent to which it travelled through the air.'

'We've had to adapt, like everyone else, and the health system has to keep going anyway so you keep going and learn ways to adapt. It's weird when you're in work now and not wearing a mask.'

'I'm obviously cautious, we've had the masks on in here all the time and just washing my hands

regularly and doing everything I can to not pick it up. You could pick it up in Dunnes Stores as easily as you would inside in work.'

In the midst of all of that, Treacy drew headlines recently when she was the Cork representative at the championship launch and stated that the team would consider strike action if a scheduling conflict affecting dual players Hannah Looney, Fiona Keating, Meabh Cahalane, Ciara McCarthy, and Libby Coppinger wasn't sorted.

While not seeking to be a revolutionary for the sake of it, the Killeagh native felt that action was needed.

'It's something that we've all felt so strongly about over the past few years and I got the opportunity to speak out about it,' she says.

'I am the WGPA representative and I suppose I felt it was my responsibility to represent the girls and their feelings about it, seeing as I had the opportunity to do that. I've spoken to all five players on numerous occasions about this. Initially, they were saying that they would sit out both rather than having to pick one code

over the other.

'When I was hearing that and I went back to Paudie and the WGPA and spoke to other senior players like Orla Cronin, we felt that we needed to take a stand with those girls. They're basically elite athletes at both levels, so how can we let them go about this by themselves?'

'It was something that needed to happen. This has been going on since way back when Mary O'Connor, Angela Walsh, Briege Corkery, Rena Buckley had it going on year after year after year.'

'Social media has been driving this for the past few years and maybe people think that it's something that's only been happening more recently, but it's been happening for a lot longer and something needed to be done.'

'People have been talking about the 20x20 campaign and the "can't see it, can't be it", but

it seems that we're constantly battling this. The campaign was about change and evolving but still, in the year 2020, we still had girls in the position where three games were clashing.'

'So far, two have been resolved but the situation with the All-Ireland semi-final still remains to be changed by either the Camogie Association or ladies' football.'

'It's not something that I'm going to give up on or that the girls themselves are going to give up on. If it isn't going to be changed, then, if we're lucky enough to reach an All-Ireland semi-final, it might be a case that we won't be playing that.'

'We don't want that to happen and it's the last thing anyone wants to be doing but it's time something drastic was done about it for younger girls who want to play sports. Things like this are going to keep happening otherwise.'

ALL-IRELAND GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	SD	Pts
1. Galway	1	1	0	0	32	18	14	3
2. Cork	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
3. Offaly	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
4. Wexford	1	0	0	1	18	32	-14	0



Cork's Laura Treacy at the launch of this year's Liberty camogie championship.

Picture: INPHO/Dan Sheridan

Wexford tie like final for Rebels



Linda Mellerick

SATURDAY: Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Camogie Championship: Cork v Wexford, Páirc Uí Rinn, 2pm

THERE are counties battling it out for quarter-final spots in their groups and Cork have yet to strike a ball in this year's Liberty Insurance All-Ireland senior championship.

They have three points from the walkover they received from Offaly and have just two games left. That's why tomorrow's second-round tie with Wexford is so important.

If Cork drop points tomorrow, they will be under immense pressure to get a result in Galway next weekend. Cork are in Group 1. With three groups, the winners of Group 1 and Group 2 proceed directly to the semi-finals.

A further draw will take place: The winner of Group 3 and the runners-up of Group 1, 2, and 3 will play each other in the quarter-finals.

So, Cork need six points, at least, and maybe a higher scoring difference, if points finish level, to advance to a quarter-final. That's where the walkover becomes an issue. Cork have no scoring average because of that walkover.

If Wexford do beat Cork and Offaly and if Cork defeat Galway, scoring average could be the deciding factor. That seems as if we're looking too far ahead, but with just four teams in Groups 1 and 2 and three in Group 3, the outcomes will be decided next weekend.

It's a must-win for Wexford tomorrow, having lost to Galway. Wexford provided indications that they have put their poor form of the past few seasons behind them as they asked some questions of Galway before the All-Ireland champions got their campaign under way with a 5-17 to 3-9 win.

While Galway looked on their way with a fourth-minute goal from Catherine



Limerick's Katie Finn breaks free against Waterford in last weekend's camogie clash.

Picture: INPHO/Tommy Dickson

Finnerty, Wexford hit back quickly with a smart finish to the net by Mag Byrne.

Wexford displayed impressive spirit and work rate and had the margin down to four with just a minute remaining in the first half, but a point by Galway's Cairiona Cormican and a second goal for Alish O'Reilly left them trailing 3-9 to 1-7 at the interval.

Wexford struck the net early in the second half to reduce the gap to four points. Centre-back Sarah O'Connor gathered Sarah Healy's lengthy drive and burst through and offloaded to the supporting Linda Bolger.

The midfielder accelerated forward, before hand-passing to Shelly Kehoe, who transferred quickly to Joanne Dillon and she made no mistake from 13m.

Galway responded and started to pull away, but Wexford continued to battle, O'Connor grabbing another goal following another run down the centre of the Galway defence. It wasn't enough for the Slaneysiders, but getting three goals past Galway is a very good return.

Conceding five at the other end isn't, however, and you would expect a pacy Cork to have the upper hand in Páirc Uí Rinn tomorrow. Late autumn and winter hurling is different and Wexford tradition-

ally have had the physicality over Cork.

It hasn't been all plain sailing for Cork since they returned to action. A number of injuries have hit them. Thankfully, Laura Treacy, who was nursing a broken hand from a first-round club championship game, seems ready for action again, after coming through a challenge game last week.

Katrina Mackey is having difficulty with a tendinitis problem in her ankle, while Julia White is more than likely out for the remainder of the year. She's been plagued with injuries this past few seasons and it's disappointing for her and for the team.

Other niggles have affected the squad, but they seem to have come through them.

We can expect a couple of new names making their championship debut alongside regulars, Ashling Thompson, Hannah Looney, Chloe Sigerson, and Gemma O'Connor, who looks likely to take on a new attacking role for the 2020 campaign.

Cork manager, Paudie Murray, knows the task ahead.

"This is a final. As we said to the girls, this is our All-Ireland final and we have to approach it that way. To go to Galway and turn over the champions, when the pressure is on, won't be easy," Murray said.

Maher beats horror injury

Camogie

Daragh Ó Conchúir

A draw will be enough for Dublin against Clare at Fr McNamara Park today in the quest for an All-Ireland quarter-final place.

Aisling Maher was influential for the Dubs against Tipperary last week, a year after being told she might not play again after a biking accident.

"I ended up with a double break in my leg and a break and dislocation in my ankle," she said.

"I sat up, looked down, and my leg was pointed one way and my foot another. I went in for emergency surgery where they put in plates and screws and a bar.

"I still have a plate from my ankle to just below my knee. And I have eight screws and a bar across through my ankle at the end.

"I was told I would never play again, but everybody's been told that for something or other, haven't they? I kinda knew that wasn't going to happen."

A revised prognosis suggested six months from December so Maher halved that in her own head, targeting an All-Ireland final in March if her club St Vincent's could make it. Sarsfields ended the dream, but Maher was on the pitch for Dublin in February.

"Between the leg and injuries and everything that's been going on this year, we're just extremely grateful to be on the pitch and playing.

"But the nature of playing elite sport is as soon as you're allowed to play, you want to win, and hopefully get to look forward to a quarter-final after that. That's what we will be striving to do."



Referee Eddie O'Sullivan with rival captains Caoimhe Heffernan, Kinsale, and Hannah Buckley, Bandon, before the U16 C camogie championship final in Brinny.

Bandon take U16 title but Kinsale show camogie strong in both clubs

Bandon 0-9
Kinsale 2-2

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

BANDON as they took their first county title when they had a point to spare over Kinsale in an exciting contest in Brinny. They were crowned U16 C county champions after a thrilling game where just a point separated the sides at the full-time whistle. The sides had met earlier in the championship series where Bandon had a three-point victory over Kinsale and despite having won their four preliminary games to reach the final they were taking nothing for granted. They knew Kinsale were a formidable side and that there would be little between the sides and this is how it panned out in a game that was balanced on a knife-edge to the end. Bandon opted to play against the strong wind in the opening half but were quickly settled into the game as they raced into a four-point lead by the first water break. Kate O'Connor and Hannah Buckley were on target from play, with Laura Cummins converting two frees.

After the water break Kinsale settled and got on the score board Catherine Murphy pointing twice in the second quarter and at the interval it was Bandon who led 0-4 to 0-2. Despite playing with the wind in their faces Kinsale hit the front within minutes of the restart thanks to an Ellen Crowley goal which gave them the lead for the first time. Bandon had to dig deep and they replied with two points in a row Rachel O'Donovan from play and again Laura Cummins converting a free to edge Bandon back in front. Play was fast and furious with both sides battling to gain a firm grip and two strong defences made it hard as they closed down every attack with fierce determination.

Kinsale responded to Bandon hitting the front with a Mary Murphy goal and at the second water break

with 15 minutes remaining it was advantage Kinsale at the second water break.

With the game finely balanced Bandon upped the pace in the quarter, a Rachel O'Donovan point was quickly followed by one from Aisling O'Connor to level matters with minutes to go.

It looks as if the sides would have to go to extra time to find a winner as both sides were denied by excellent defending at both ends of the field. As Bandon kept the pressure on they won a free and with Laura Cummins holding her nerve converting confidently they edged back into a one-point lead 0-9 to 2-2.

A few nail-biting minutes followed but there were no further scores, Bandon has the clock ticked towards full time the sides battled hard but strong defending by Bandon denied Kinsale an equaliser and the opportunity to take the game to extra time. Both clubs are not long in operation.

Kinsale are a new club founded just six years ago and they are making huge strides, while Bandon were re-established five years ago having dropped out of camogie for a number of years. Huge credit to both clubs for serving up a wonderful final and their achievement in reaching a county final has to be applauded.

Scorers for Bandon: L Cummins 0-4 (0-3 f), R O'Donovan, 0-2, K O'Connor, H Buckley, A O'Connor 0-1 each.

Kinsale: E Crowley, M Murphy 1-0 each, C Murphy 0-2.

BANDON: O O'Driscoll, C Foley, C Lehanne, A Cotter, M Kelly, A McWeeney, M McCarthy, A O'Riordan, H Buckley, S Queva, F Hayes, C Helleman (c), J Murphy, A Murphy, N Gould, C Murphy, A Ferguson, E Crowley, M Murphy.

KINSALE: H Garry, C Cahill, Z McLaughlin, C Barrett, A S Broderick, S Queva, F Hayes, C Helleman (c), J Murphy, A Murphy, N Gould, C Murphy, A Ferguson, E Crowley, M Murphy.

Subs: A McCarthy for A Murphy, M O'Callaghan for A Ferguson. Referee: Eddie O'Sullivan (Inniscearra).



Waterford's Beth Carton with Muireann Creamer of Limerick in their camogie opener.

Picture: INPHO/Tommy Dickson

Rebels get back in action



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

CORK were the only team not in action in the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland senior championship these past two weekends, having been given a walkover by Offaly.

It was a very strange and secretive build-up to Offaly finally releasing a statement that a member of their management team was diagnosed with Covid-19 and a number of their players were self-isolating due to unrelated cases.

Cork finally get their championship off the ground today with a home game to Wexford in Páirc Uí Rinn at 2pm. I'm sure the game will be streamed but at the time of writing there was no notification yet put out there.

Limerick were defeated by debutants Westmeath and suffered a second loss to Waterford last weekend. It's very clear that there are big issues in Limerick camogie. There were public statements made post their opening defeat from players who have left the panel, prompted by comments made by manager Paul Sexton.

"We are talking about players, who are not there. That's their decision. They have decided not to come in. It's not because we haven't gone looking for them or anything like that."

Karen O'Leary returned: "This would have been my eighth year playing senior camogie championship for Limerick. Not playing for Limerick is the hardest decision that I ever had to make. We are just sick of getting a raw deal and nothing seems to change."

O'Leary and others withdrew from the Limerick camogie panel for the 2020 championship in protest at their recent club schedule in the Limerick senior camogie and senior ladies football club championships. O'Leary, Deborah Murphy, Roisin Ambrose and Rebecca Delee all play camogie with Newcastle West but opted out of Paul Sexton's inter-county camogie panel for the All-Ireland



Aisling Moloney, Tipperary, under pressure from Laura Cleary and Hannah Looney, Cork.

championship.

Roisin Ambrose is part of a group of nine players who have withdrawn their services from the Limerick camogie squad for various reasons. Those named above were joined by Niamh Mulcahy, Sarah Carey, Laura Stack, Lisa Leonard and Katie Hennessy.

It's not clear why all nine removed themselves but Ambrose explained that she, along with three other players, stepped away over player welfare issues arising from dual club player concerns.

"With the commitment, effort and sacrifices that players put in, all we ask for in return is respect. Respect for the players and respect for our welfare both physically and mentally. We strive to achieve high standards and standards filter from the top."

On top of that, before they were due to play Waterford Paul Sexton withdrew himself as manager 'due to personal family circumstances'. Limerick are out of the competition at this stage with zero points and one game left.

With three groups in the championship, the structure will see the winners of group 1 and 2 proceed directly to the semi-finals. A further draw will take place where the winner of group 3 and the runners up of

group 1, 2 and 3 will play each other in the quarter-finals.

Therefore, group games are few. Cork have Wexford today and Galway next Sunday and really need to get a win today to advance.

So, if Wexford beat Cork today, Cork would have it all to do to travel to Galway and beat the All Ireland champions in their home turf. You would however expect Cork to take the points today.

Tipperary have impressed. They had the magnificent dual player Aisling Moloney making her championship debut after she finally decided to give inter-county camogie a chance having focused on inter-county football to date. I always felt that if Tipp could get her they would have a big say.

She scored three wonderful points from midfield in the opening 20 minutes of Tipp's first-round game against Clare but an off the ball incident saw her sent to the line with twenty minutes played and she has since received a two-match ban meaning she'll only be back for a semi-final if Tipp get through their quarter-final.

It could well be Cork they meet in a quarter-final depending on the results of the next seven days. Moloney would be a huge loss to Tipp if that arose.

By **Daragh Ó Conchúir**

CLARE secured a quarter-final berth in this year's Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship at Dublin's expense as they prevailed by 11 points in Fr McNamara Park yesterday afternoon, 1-18 to 1-7.

It was knockout Championship in all but name at the Ennis venue, following Tipperary's win over Dublin in the previous round, and the tension was palpable right from the start.

In a tight opening half, neither side was able to build a commanding lead. Dublin's Aisling Maher pointed a brace of frees, Chloe Morey slotted a '45 between the posts and Eimear Kelly was on target in the first four scores of the game.

Mairéad Scanlon edged Clare in front but Dublin wing-back Niamh Gannon produced a real highlights reel moment when she pushed

COMMANDING DISPLAY IN THIRD QUARTER SEALED THE CONTEST

forward to fire a rousing score with 25 minutes gone, in a game where every point was hard earned.

The Dubs managed to move in front through Aisling Maher, but Clare's hard running and support play in the forward line tested their opponents' discipline in the tackle and they edged 0-6 to 0-4 in front at half time thanks to three scores without reply, two of them from dead-ball points.

A commanding performance in the third quarter from the home side effectively settled the game.

Player of the match Niamh O'Dea led the way with a dominant display at centre-back, anchoring a powerful defensive unit, and gradually they started to pull away with three more unanswered points.

Mairéad Scanlon scored from an acute angle in another moment of sheer quality for the Banner women and while Dublin dug their heels in, Ger O'Connor's women struck a decisive blow in the 38th minute. Dublin failed to deal with

an Orlaith Duggan delivery and it was Scanlon who reacted quickest, gathering the sliotar and firing it to the back of the net to move Clare eight points ahead.

Clare hit four more scores without reply, tightening their grip on the contest and suffocating the life out of Dublin at the same time, with very few attempts on Aisling Corbett's goal.

Corbett was eventually beaten in the 59th minute when Sinéad Wilde's ground pull got the better of the Scariff-Ogonoloe custodian, but it was academic as Clare progressed to the All-Ireland quarter-finals, putting their defeat to Tipperary behind them.

After 237 days without a competitive game, Cork returned to action

exactly as they would have wished, overcoming Wexford by 3-12 to 1-8. Wexford will feel that the losing margin doesn't tell the whole story, as two late Cork goals added gloss to the victory.

Paudie Murray's Cork side started slowly with the sides level at two points apiece in the early stages.

However, the 2018 All-Ireland winners began to settle in to the contest, with Orla Cronin's accuracy from frees helping Cork establish a lead.

Amy O'Connor found the net in the opening half as she struck 1-2 in the first 30 minutes of action, with Cronin's five first-half frees contributing to a five-point, 1-8 to 0-6, half-time lead.

Linda Bolger converted three

placed balls and Shelley Keogh added two well-taken scores from play for Wexford.

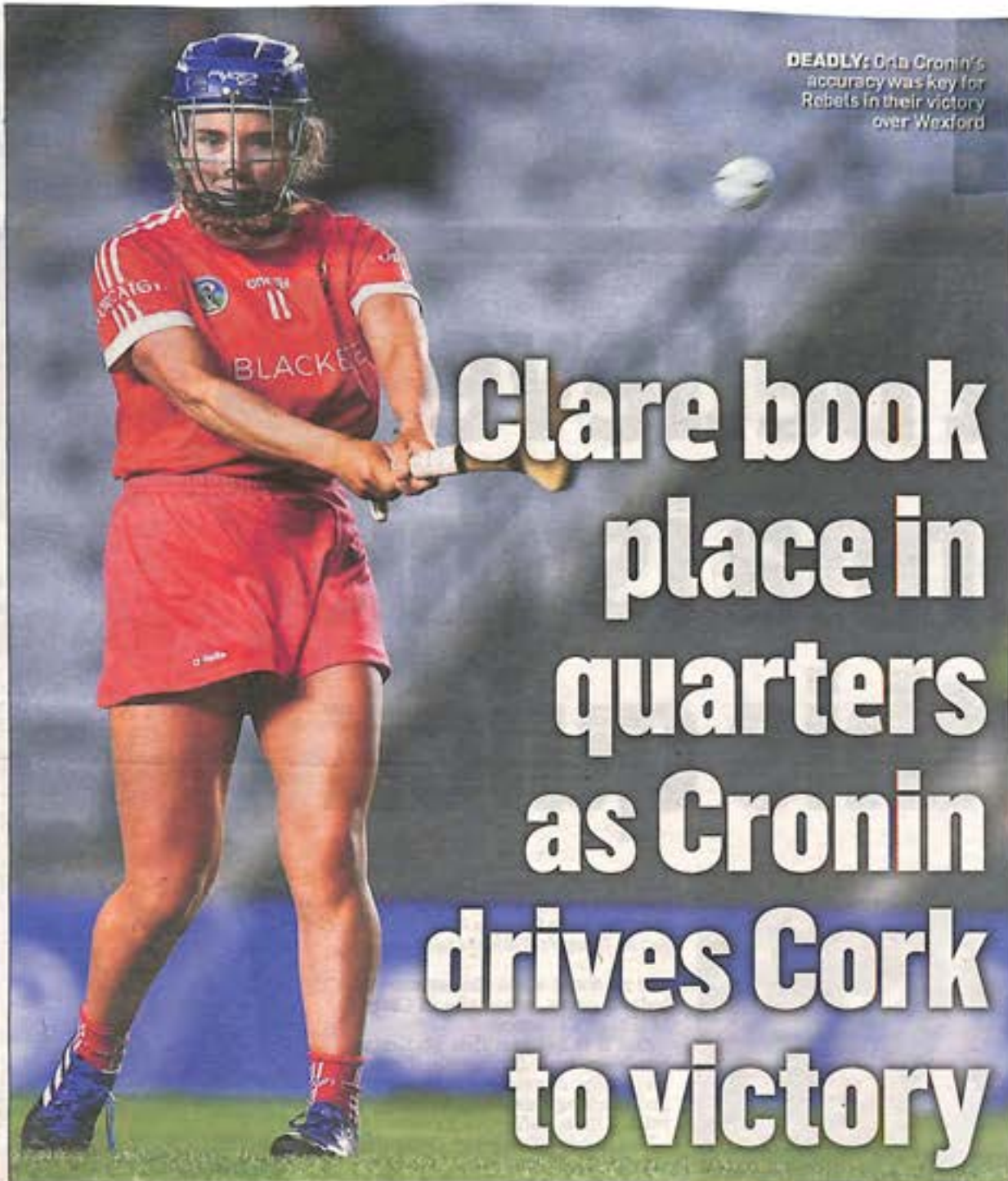
Wexford managed to hit back with a goal in the early stages of the second half to cut their arrears to two points.

With Ciara O'Connor excelling at centre-back, they continued to frustrate their opponents, with Cork only leading by three at the water break.

However, Cork summoned all their experience and a second Amy O'Connor goal sealed the victory.

Substitute Saoirse McCarthy added a third as Cork found the scores they needed to set up a top of the table clash against Galway next weekend.

DEADLY: Orla Cronin's accuracy was key for Rebels in their victory over Wexford



Clare book place in quarters as Cronin drives Cork to victory



Cork's Amy O'Connor shoots over a point past Wexford's Louise O'Leary during the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland senior camogie championship at Páirc Uí Rinn. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

Cork secure knockout spot



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

Cork	3-12
Wexford	1-8

CORK got their opening game of the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland championship off to a winning start in Páirc Uí Rinn and, due to their first round walkover from Offaly, are now guaranteed at least an All-Ireland quarter final spot ahead of their trip to Galway next Sunday.

While the final score flattered Cork after Amy O'Connor and Saoirse McCarthy hit two goals minutes before full time, they will be glad to have got rid of their championship cobwebs. Cork were dealt a blow the day before the game with the news that Gemma O'Connor was unavailable and could miss the next few weeks.

Ballygarvan's Izzy O'Regan, Sarsfields' Ellen Murphy and Fiona Keating of Courcsey Rovers all made their championship debut as Cork finished the first quarter four points to three in front in a low scoring opening half.

Cork's short passing game got them in trouble time and again with Wexford playing a defensive style and closing them down at every turn. It was clear that Amy O'Connor and Linda Collins had the speed inside to cause problems but supply was short and slow. Cork were getting turned over and they need to have the mind-set to switch to the long ball when things aren't going their way.

Wexford conceded five goals to Galway last weekend and quite obviously that was something they wanted to prevent again. But they sacrificed their attack for it in that opening period while playing with a nice wind. Often playing just two inside their scoring threat was minimal, picking off a low six points in the first 30 minutes, two from play.

Cork led 1-8 to 0-6 at half time after Amy



Cork's Laura Hayes clears from Wexford's Linda Bolger during the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland senior camogie championship at Páirc Uí Rinn. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

O'Connor, who was clearly on her game, finished a nice Linda Collins pass to the net. There was complacency in Cork's play at times, twice getting hooked when initially there was plenty of time to get the ball away.

In addition, with the new ruling of not having to wait for the referee to approve a puckout, Cork were guilty of not using that to their advantage when at times there clearly was an advantage on.

Cork were the better side against a Wexford team rebuilding but they weren't making it count and Wexford could have and should have had the game level five minutes into the second half.

A defensive mix-up afforded Shelley Kehoe the opportunity to pull on a loose ball to the net reducing the gap to two and Wexford were handed two scoreable frees but failed to convert which would have seen the sides on level terms.

Orla Cronin was unerring from frees, with a 100% conversion rate, and three second half frees by the 52nd minute saw Cork four points clear but not yet having scored again from play with supply slow inside.

Every time Cork hit a long fast ball in they got something from it, with a forward line very capable of doing damage, and it was that which saw Cork close the game out.

Substitute Cliona Healy did very well to win possession in the corner when the odds were stacked against her and her offload to Amy O'Connor saw the Cork Captain hit the net from close range. A minute later another substitute Saoirse McCarthy finished a fast move for Cork's third goal.

The game was out of Wexford's reach when Linda Bolger struck a 20-metre free for goal which was well saved by Amy Lee as Wexford exited the championship.

It was a stop-start second half with too many yellow cards unnecessarily shown. Cork looked rusty but will be thankful of the game ahead of next week's clash between the table's top two. Cork's Fiona Keating breaks from Wexford's Katie O'Connor. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

Scorers for Cork: O Cronin 0-9 f, A O'Connor 2-2, S McCarthy 1-0, L Collins 0-1.

Wexford: S Kehoe 1-2, L Bolger 0-4 f, C Foxe, A Curran 0-1 each.

CORK: A Lee, E Murphy, L Tracey, M Cahalane, P Mackey, H Leoney, L Hayes, C Sigerson, A Thompson, I O'Regan, O Cronin, K Mackey, F Keating, L Collins, A O'Connor.

Subs: C Healy for K Mackey (52), S McCarthy for F Keating (57), L Coppinger for C Sigerson (60).

WEXFORD: L Brennan, L Dempsey, A Lacey, L O'Leary, A Hennessy, K O'Connor, E Walsh, C O'Connor, L Bolger, A Curran, J Quigley, C Foxe, J Dillon, S Kehoe, S O'Connor.

Sub: T Doyle for C Foxe (57).

Referee: John McDonagh (Galway).

Keating will not forget year after three finals

GAA

John Bohane

CORK dual star Fiona Keating has enjoyed a brilliant 2020.

The 19-year-old sports ace has won senior county titles in both football and camogie, with West Cork and Courcsey Rovers respectively, while she has also won All-Ireland basketball glory and Munster football glory with her secondary school teams earlier this year.

This has been a surreal year for many, but Keating bucked the trend with a very successful year. The modest ace reflected on her brilliant sporting achievements this year.

"Considering the year that we're all after putting down even getting the chance to go back training was unreal not to mind winning two county finals.

"I started off the year on a high with my school.

"We won an All-Ireland basketball medal and a Munster football medal back in February.

"During lockdown we continued to train in the hope the season would go ahead. To then get the chance to go back training and playing matches was brilliant.

"It gave us some bit of normality again. To enjoy so much success was a bonus."

The dual star played key roles in helping Courcsey Rovers and West Cork secure senior county success in both codes. She scored a hat-trick in the camogie final, while she was an integral part of the West Cork success story.

"I don't think it has hit me yet. The aim this year was to win one as I've already lost three county titles. It was just a dream come true really.

"We've always been there or thereabouts with West Cork the past few years. To finally go that step further this year was just unreal.

"Camogie wise, I suppose we learned a lot from our first county final appearance in 2018. I think we were that bit more experienced and mature this year."

She resumed training with the inter-county senior panels back in September.

The senior camogie team began their championship campaign last weekend, while the footballers will play Kerry this weekend.

"We started back training in September and both management teams and group of girls have been so welcoming. There's a big transition from minor to senior level, between physicality and maturity.

"I'm sure that will all come to me in time.

"Libby Coppinger has made my transition a lot easier.

"She's been so good. She's like my second mother. She's taken me under her wing.

"Anytime I've had any queries she'd always be there to answer them for me.

"I look forward to playing with her and both Cork teams in the years to come."

O'Dea delighted to prove Clare's doubters wrong

Camogie

Daragh Ó Conchúir

Player of the match, Niamh O'Dea revealed that a desire to show the "real Clare" fuelled a tremendous second-half rally to give Ger O'Connell's side a 1-18 to 1-7 victory over Dublin at Fr McNamara Park on Saturday.

The win propels them to the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland senior camogie quarter-finals as Group 3 runners-up.

The Bannerwomen had been beaten by nine points in their opening tie against group winners Tipperary but had plenty to play for in Ennis on Saturday.

"We had a lot to prove after the Tipp game and I think that's a proper representation of this Clare team," said O'Dea. "Rain, hail or snow, we stuck to our game plan. We trusted ourselves, trusted the subs we had, and the management."

"The work has gone in since before Covid has been massive. But we'll drive it on now for two weeks' time in the quarter-final and hope we can put up a good display there and show what we're about."

"That's the real Clare side you saw there on Saturday. There were a lot of doubts about us in the media during the week. You take that with a pinch of salt as well. We know what we're about and any side we meet in a quarter-final, we're not going to fear them."

The hosts only led by 0-6 to 0-4 at the break but Mairéad Scanlan turned the tie on its head with a stupendous point soon after the resumption, followed by a 38th-minute goal.

The margin continued to grow and Sinéad Wylde's late goal for Dublin was of statistical interest only.



Clare's Niamh O'Dea (left) and Dublin's Sinéad Wylde tussle for a ball in the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Senior Championship Round 3 game at Fr McNamara Park in Bunow, Co. Clare on Saturday. Picture: Inpho

Meanwhile, the manager of All-Ireland champions Galway, Cathal Murray labelled next week's opponents Cork the 'favourites' for this year's competition after his team's 3-13 to 0-3 defeat of Offaly at Pearse Stadium yesterday set up a clash with the Rebels, with direct progression to the semi-final on offer.

Both sides are already assured of a quarter-final spot, Cork having done the necessary by overcoming Wexford, 3-12 to 1-8 on Saturday thanks to a brace of goals from Amy O'Connor and a late major

from substitute Saoirse McCarthy.

Niamh Hanniffy found the net twice in the first half for Galway, and Aoife Donohue hit a fine goal soon after the restart and though the westerners only managed another two points, Murray was disinclined to be critical given the atrocious conditions.

"In the first half, we're really happy with the way we played," Murray declared. "2-11 is a great score at half-time. It's wet and cold out there. The second half went away from us a small bit. We probably

tried to take too much out of the ball and walk it into the net but overall we're happy. It's very hard playing into that breeze and the wind. We came here looking for the victory. There's plenty to improve on but we're happy."

"I was listening to (Cork manager) Paudie (Murray) and he was talking about how it wasn't worth his while coming up (to see the game) but we know how good Cork are. They've Gemma O'Connor to come into the team, Saoirse McCarthy came on (against Wexford), Cliona

Healy came on. They're favourites for the All-Ireland for a reason. They've been there and done that."

"It's a huge task for us next week but it's something we're looking forward to. Where we are and where Cork are, we have two chances to get to a semi-final."

"You either take the chance next week or you go into a quarter-final against the likes of Tipperary, Waterford or Clare. That's a lottery and you get caught there. So there's a lot at stake and I'm sure it's gonna be a cracker."

BY DARAGH Ó CONCHÚIR

CORK manager Paudie Murray is looking on his side's top-of-the-table Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship Group 1 clash with champions Galway as an educational exercise for many of his charges.

Having played just three games this season and only gotten their championship campaign under way last Saturday with a workmanlike defeat of Wexford, the Rebels travel to Pearse Stadium this Sunday (2pm) as underdogs, with both sides assured of a place in the final six but a direct route to the semi-finals on offer.

Cork were awarded a walkover win for their first scheduled fixture by Offaly. However, Galway's superior scoring difference from each side's victories over Wexford puts them ahead of their rivals in the table, meaning that Cork will need to win on Sunday in order to top the group but Murray insists that the primary goal has been achieved.

The Cork boss is not averse to playing down his side's chances in public but it is impossible to argue against the notion that Galway are the favourites to prevail.

"(Wexford was) our third game this year," said Murray on Sport Export Cork.

"Certainly we were rusty. The first half was good in patches.

Mission accomplished already says Cork boss ahead of Galway clash

We probably could have moved the ball a bit quicker but other than that, I thought we were fairly good in the first-half. Just that third quarter really killed us. Wexford came at us and troubled us for long periods of that quarter.

"We've had a number of injuries so preparation hasn't been good. It's a good game to get and we're in the quarter-final and that's really all we want. We'd five girls making their debut so this team is very young and I think every game that we play this year, we're going to be in a dogfight."

"We're facing into Galway and it could be a long trip for us. It's a fairly daunting prospect. We're down five from last year and Galway have really strengthened with the McGraths coming back into it, Rebecca Hennelly going

very well, Róisín Black coming back into it as well, so certainly they're a far stronger outfit than last year. Some people would say we're weaker. It could be a lonely journey home for us."

Meanwhile, Murray is hopeful that the new playing rules being trialled throughout the championship will be retained.

"Certainly there's more physicality with it and we're all crying out for that. The quick puckout is something the hurling might look at in that it speeds up the game. Hopefully they'll stay."

being trialled throughout the championship will be retained.

"Certainly there's more physicality with it and we're all crying out for that. The quick puckout is something the hurling might look at in that it speeds up the game. Hopefully they'll stay."

Cork manager Paudie Murray.





Cork's Amy O'Connor gets the sliotar away from Wexford's Aine Lacey during the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland senior camogie championship at Páirc Uí Rinn.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

Win is important at this stage says Amy

CAMOGIE

■ Linda Mellerick

CONSIDERING that it was Cork's first competitive outing since February, manager Paudie Murray and captain Amy O'Connor were more relieved than thrilled with reaching the quarter-final of this year's Liberty Insurance All-Ireland championship by beating Wexford.

After being given a walkover by Offaly, Cork got the job done on Saturday against Wexford, with Galway to come.

"It was a great game to get, our third competitive game this year so certainly we were rusty," admitted Murray.

"I wouldn't be too happy with the performance, particularly in the third quarter, that really killed us I think. Our first half was good in patches.

"You'd like us to move the ball that bit quicker, but other than that, I thought we were fairly good in the first half. Wexford came at us in that third quarter and they troubled us for long periods.

"But we changed things around just coming to the end of that period and it worked out for us."

It was tough to get going again, after such a long lay-off?

"There's no doubt about that, particularly in the conditions that we're playing in. I don't want to be making excuses, but we've had a number of in-

juries over the last number of weeks so preparation hasn't been good.

"So you know it was a good game to get. I think the bottom line really is what I said to them after the game, we're in a quarter-final and that's really all we want.

"We've five girls making their debut here today so this team is very young and I think any game we play this year we're going to be in a dog fight."

Cork captain Amy O'Connor, who was really on top form at Páirc Uí Rinn, said the result was the key thing.

"We're thrilled to get the victory. Obviously, the performance was a bit lacklustre at times and we know we need to make massive improvements, but it's good to be playing championship again, it's been so long.

"So we're delighted to get the win, that's what we came here to do.

"I think it's 237 days since our last competitive outing," said O'Connor, who was obviously ticking the days off on her calendar.

"It's been a long time. With all that's going on with the uncertainty you always had questions in the back of your head, despite remaining as positive as you could, whether or not it would go ahead so it's definitely brilliant that it's going ahead.

"We've won and achieved our objective, which was, regardless of Covid, to get to the knockout quarter-final stage of this year's championship and we've managed that now so we're quite happy with that and we know where we need to improve."

Camogie kind of saved my life, says Waterford's O'Regan

Daragh Ó Conchúir

This afternoon Waterford's Brianna O'Regan will be laser-focused as John Dermody throws the sliotar in to signal the start of the second Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Senior Championship quarter-final.

She is a completely different operator from the one that filled the custodian's role as a 16-year-old in her debut season, when the Déise became Intermediate champions in 2015.

Her puckouts are more varied and considered. The shot-stopping is at elite level, as evidenced by the spectacular diving save from Megan Dowd-all's penalty in last weekend's win over Westmeath.

On her time off, she heads down to the pitch with her cones to work on footwork and reflexes, the type of tedious

stuff those looking on from the outside never think of, chasing for infinitesimal gains, a 1% that might just get you to the sliotar quicker.

This is deadly serious to her. She is adamant that while Tipperary, as semi-finalists in the last two seasons and with some of the best players of the modern era in their ranks, will be ferocious opposition, Waterford must win.

But whether they do or not, she will decamp to her family. Her brother and sister. Her grandparents. Her aunt. The community that has always been there. The greyhounds. And she will lace up the boots again, for camogie is a friend, not a foe, and losing a match will never change that.

O'Regan's father, Bryan, was a Mount Sion man, though he had hurled with Butlerstown when he was

younger and with Roanmore a bit as well. As the eldest, Cian followed him up to Marian Park and it made sense for Brianna to do likewise.

When her time playing with the boys ended however, there was no camogie so she had to switch to neighbours De La Salle. Having the outlet was absolutely imperative.

In 2006, when Brianna was just seven, her parents Bryan and Johanna, and 21-month-old sister Niamh, died in a house fire at their home in Ballybeg. Brianna, Cian, and Aaron managed to escape.

Asking about the mental resilience required to play goal is redundant here.

The three siblings have lived with Bryan's parents, Patrick and Joan since, while her aunt Karen is a constant support. The community rallied immediately and are

always present. Greyhounds, camogie, and the GAA have been central to the process of living since.

"We had greyhounds out where we used to live, and they helped my grandad cope as well so we stuck with it. Myself and my older brother are drilled into them as well. We have about 15 out the back.

"Camogie kind of saved my life. And having the greyhounds as well, and you kind of keep pottering around with them. I had and still have great people around me.

"You wouldn't heal from it but you learn to deal with what happened. Your life can't stop on hold because of what happened. You just have to get up every morning and go as they wanted your day to be. You just have to keep going.

"I'm after missing many anniversary masses. And Grand-

ad was like, 'Look, your father wouldn't want you to be here. He'd want you to be out on the pitch.' When I miss them, I go down to the grave and have a few words with them."

The games do bring unwelcome reminders, even if just fleetingly. "It's not the same when you see all the rest of the girls' parents there but I'd have my nanny and grandad there, my aunt and my two brothers. They're not here but they are here, if you get me."

She is 22 now, preparing for a third consecutive quarter-final on the trot. There isn't a Gaelic Games follower in the land doesn't know their new coach, Dan Shanahan. For many of these players, he would have been an absolute hero, Cú Chulainn rocking a back-to-front baseball cap.

"I'd say the first two or three training sessions we

had, we were kind of fumbling balls, thinking, 'Dan is our coach!' So then you thought, 'Okay, you're going to have to rein it in now!' We settled in, Dan settled in and we got down to work."

This afternoon's challenge is considerable. Tipperary may be a little bit further down the line but Waterford feel they have paid their dues and need to take another step themselves. "Tipp are a phenomenal side. We're after meeting them the last three years. Karen Kennedy, Cáit Devane, Mary Ryan are just a handful of the players they have. All around the pitch they have hurlers that are well able to play. But we have to push on and get that win and get to a semi-final. And then hopefully keep pushing on."

As she herself has always done.

Cork's chance to lay down a marker



Amy O'Connor celebrates scoring against Wexford in Cork's All-Ireland senior championship Group 1 win at Páirc Uí Rinn on Saturday. (Photo: David Ribeiro)



Fiona Keating, on her senior championship debut for Cork, on the front foot against Wexford. (Photo: David Ribeiro)

Galway boss tries to heap pressure on visiting Rebels

SENIOR CAMOGIE

CORK	3-12
WEXFORD	1-8

BY KIERAN MCCARTHY

THE mind games never stop. Ahead of Cork's trip to Galway this weekend, it appears that the Tribeswomen's manager, Cathal Murray, has embraced reverse psychology.

With both Cork and Galway already assured of their places in the knock-out stages, the winner of this top-of-the-table clash will top Group 1 and go straight into the semi-finals, while the runner-up will be out in a quarter-final on November 14th. Galway are reigning All-Ireland champions, but Cathal Murray is keen to heap the pressure on the Rebels.

'I was listening to (Cork manager) Paudie (Murray) and he was talking about how it wasn't worth his while coming up but we know how good Cork are. They've Gemma O'Connor to come into the team, Saoirse McCarthy came on (against Wexford), Cliona Healy came on,' the Galway boss said.

'They're favourites for the All-Ireland for a reason. They've been there and done that. It's a huge task for us (this weekend) but it's something we're looking forward to.'

No doubt Paudie Murray smiled wryly to himself when he read those quotes. The Cork boss knows his side faces a big test against Galway, especially considering the latter has played two championship games while the Rebels' win against Wexford at Páirc Uí Rinn last Saturday was their first competitive game in 237 days, as Offaly had forfeited their opening Group 1 match. It meant that Cork were a bit rusty, but in captain Amy O'Connor and centre forward Orla Cronin, Cork had two of the game's dominant figures;

between them they scored 2-11, with Cronin nailing all nine frees.

'I'd like to see a little bit more intensity in our play, I thought we were a bit pedestrian at times, a bit laboured. We have plenty to work on,' Paudie Murray said afterwards, but he'll be glad they got off the mark and assured their place in the knock-out stages with one match to spare.

Cork led 1-8 to 0-6 at half time thanks to five frees from Enniskeane woman Cronin and 1-2 from Amy O'Connor, her goal coming after a nice pass from Linda Collins of Courcey Rovers. Another Courceys woman, Fiona Keating (19), made her senior championship debut, as did Ballygarvan's Izzy O'Regan and Sarsfields' Ellen Murphy.

Wexford hit back with a goal in the early stages of the second half to cut the Cork lead to two points, and the home side only led by three at the second water-break. There was a kick in the Rebels, though, and late goals from Amy O'Connor and sub Saoirse McCarthy, another of the Courceys' contingent, sealed a win and set-up the top-of-the-table clash this Sunday.

Scorers

Cork: O Cronin 0-9 (9f); A O'Connor 2-2; S McCarthy 1-0; L Collins 0-1. Wexford: S Kehoe 1-2; L Bolger 0-4 (4f); C Foxe, A Curran 0-1 each. Cork: A Lee; E Murphy, L Tracey, M Cahalane; P Mackey, H Looney, L Hayes; C Sigerson, A Thompson; I O'Regan, O Cronin, K Mackey; F Keating, L Collins, A O'Connor. Subs: C Healy for K Mackey (51), S McCarthy for F Keating (56), L Coppinger for C Sigerson (59). Wexford: L Brennan; L Dempsey, A Lacey, L O'Leary; A Hennessy, K O'Connor, E Walsh; C O'Connor, L Bolger; A Curran, J Quigley, C Foxe; J Dillon, S Kehoe, S O'Connor. Sub: T Doyle for C Foxe (56). Referee: John McDonagh (Galway).

Rebels travel to Galway to take on reigning All-Ireland champs

BY GER MCCARTHY

AUGUST 17th, 2019 is a date etched in Linda Collins' mind – but not for the right reasons.

The Gaelic Grounds in Limerick played host to a Liberty Insurance All-Ireland camogie championship semi-final between Cork and Galway that afternoon. It was the day the Connacht side shocked the reigning All-Ireland champions 0-14 to 1-13 before going on to defeat Kilkenny and claim their first senior crown in six years.

As unexpected as it was gut-wrenching, Cork could never have envisaged having to wait so long for an opportunity to atone for that defeat.

It has been a long and Covid-induced wait for another crack off the title-holders in the camogie championship. The time has come, as Cork travel to Pearse Stadium on Sunday with a place in the All-Ireland semi-finals on offer for the winners.

So, are Cork looking to lay down a marker or is it just another championship game? 'For the season that's in it, we would love to lay down a marker alright but having said that, Galway are flying fit and they are so physical, a great team,' Cork forward Linda Collins commented.

'They are well able to take their scores and work the ball so well. They really are flying it right now. They also have played an extra game compared to us heading into this weekend.'

'For us, Gemma (O'Connor) is injured and we are dealing with a few other injuries as well. There is also the fact that we must all travel separately up to Galway for the game to consider. They are major

'There is also the fact that we must all travel separately up to Galway for the game to consider' – Linda Collins, Cork forward

factors. It will definitely be a tough test and we will be up against it but we will put our best foot forward and hope for the best.'

It's worth mentioning that despite the obvious rivalry, a healthy respect exists between the Cork and Galway camps. The latter stepped in and sportingly offered to change the date of this weekend's All-Ireland Group 1 game during the ongoing LGFA and Camogie Association fixtures debacle affecting five of Cork's dual players.

That means Fiona Keating, Libby Coppinger, Hannah Looney, Meabh Cahalane and Ciara McCarthy are free (if needed) to participate in the Cork and Kerry football clash on Saturday before heading for Galway and their Cork camogie assignment the day after.

'It's a pity for the girls involved but Ephie Fitzgerald and Paudie Murray work so well together and make sure they can train and play with both squads equally,' Collins said.

'The issue is coming from up higher; it is the two associations that are clashing. They don't see what's happening at ground level which is such a pity. On

CAMOGIE GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	SD	Pts
1. Galway	2	2	0	0	54	21	33	6
2. Cork	2	2	0	0	21	11	10	6
3. Offaly	2	0	0	2	3	22	-19	0
4. Wexford	2	0	0	2	29	53	-24	0

paper, things might be working out but realistically, it is not okay for girls to play two inter-county matches in one day.

'All the girls are asking for is 24 hours between games. If they could even get agreement on that much it would be a big step forward. So, credit to Galway for

teammates had to work extra hard for their maiden victory.

'I don't think the score-line reflects what a difficult game that was,' the Courcey Rovers county championship winner admitted.

'Wexford are a strong and physical team. I felt we never really got going and things were disjointed. It was our first championship game and we hadn't played a competitive game together since February.

'We missed a lot of league games too due to storms and bad weather, so all things considered, we didn't do too badly against Wexford. Missing out on playing Offaly was a disappointment as well. We were on back foot that day whereas Wexford were playing their third game on the trot.'

Despite an unsurprisingly rusty display, Cork's merited win has earned the Leesiders an All-Ireland quarter-final berth irrespective of this weekend's result against Galway. But victory over the All-Ireland champions would send the Rebels straight to the semi-finals, as well as a confidence-booster heading into the business end of the season, while also laying down an important marker than Cork mean business.



Star: Linda Collins.

moving this weekend's game and facilitating them.'

Cork got their 2020 campaign off to a positive start following a 3-12 to 1-8 defeat of Wexford. That represented an impressive score considering it was Paudie Murray's side's first outing.

Offaly's failure to field a team in Cork's championship opener coupled with a dogged Wexford effort meant Collins and her



Peg Sheehy, president of Kilworth camogie club and former Cork camogie player, presents Kinsale captain Nora Gould with the U14 C Championship trophy after her side's recent victory over Kilworth.

Hope remains that finals can be played before Christmas

THE Cork juvenile camogie committee was faced with a mammoth task of getting competitions up and running for the young players under their jurisdictions.

The county board were in a similar situation and having had to postpone league competitions, they went straight into championship games as they laid out a plan to be finished before the inter-county season got underway.

The plan was also to give the club players more game time and for the league competitions to begin on a smaller scale once the championship was over and it was all systems go with the new league sections organised and a start date of October 3 set. However, all these games went by the wayside with the restrictions back in place.

The huge efforts made by all the clubs and the board and juvenile committee cannot be underestimated as they dug in and got championship games underway. The juvenile committee decided to get championships running in group stages with the top teams from each group progressing to the knockout stages of the championships and the second places teams going to the plates.

All the adult championship were run on a back-door basis and this was a change in format for the intermediate and junior clubs but this worked well and all clubs were happy with the organisation of the championship which were run off superbly.

The aim of the juvenile committee under the guidance of county registrar Mairead Donovan was to get all championship finals completed by the second weekend in October. Everything was running to plan with eight U16 finals planned for that weekend until level 5 restrictions hit and all finals had to be cancelled. It was a pity given that one more weekend would have seen the calendar done and dusted.

The juvenile board are now hoping that restrictions may be lifted to allow them to play the remaining games before Christmas as competitions running into the following year is something that hopefully could be avoided.

The U16 Premier Championship has one semi-final to be played and this will see Aghabullogue take on Aghada with the winners playing

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

holders Sarsfields.

The U16 Premier Plate final is ready to go with Éire Óg down to meet Inniscarra in the final.

All set and ready to play also in the U16 A Championship with Glen Rovers facing Midleton; the U16 A Plate will see Sarsfields 2 and St Finbarr's meet.

The U16 B Championship final will have Buttevant taking on Ballinascorthy while in the U16 B Plate final Carrigaline 1 go head to head with Castlelyons.

One U16 Championship final was thankfully played with Bandon taking the title at the expense of Kinsale in a thrilling contest.

The county board successfully completed their Senior, Intermediate and Junior A, B and C, 13-a-side junior and second teams junior championships and were pushing ahead with their minor championships.

They have two semi-finals and four finals to complete to get all their championships done and dusted.

In the SE Systems Minor A championship the same teams that are involved in the U16 A semi-final and final are also due to meet. This may cause a hold up unless the board can get these games played under lights if and when the go-ahead to resume games is given. Sarsfields are in the final with Aghabullogue and Aghada due to play in the semi-final.

In the SE Systems Minor B championship, Kilbrittain/Timoleague are in the final and they are waiting for the winners of the semi-final between Enniskeane and Ballyhea/Milford.

The SE Systems Minor C and Minor D championship finals are ready to go with Ballinascorthy due to meet Castlelyons in the Minor C decider and Banteer in opposition to Grenagh in the Minor D final.

For a lot of the clubs, it will be the first time reaching a county final and the boards are determined to give the players their day in the sun.

The hard work put in by clubs, players and mentors needs to be recognised and no better way to do it than to get our championship finals played shortly.



Cork's Katrina Mackey shoots against Wexford last weekend.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

Galway tie to decide group

CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

THIS weekend we are at the final group stages of the All-Ireland senior championship with the quarter finals down for next Saturday, November 14, the semi-finals set for November 28, and the final December 12.

With Cork having been out just once so far and an away trip to Galway tomorrow, it seems a bit surreal that in another five weeks, the championship will be over.

The table currently sits as detailed below.

Tipperary qualified two weeks ago but despite leading group 3, they will be placed into the bowl and drawn for a quarter final as there are just three teams in that group who were also seeded.

Galway and Cork tomorrow decides who tops group 1 and heads directly to the semi-finals or proceeds via the quarter finals.

You would expect Kilkenny to account for an in-trouble Limerick and Waterford to win over Westmeath, both also playing tomorrow, meaning Kilkenny head to the semi-finals and Waterford the quarter final.

Clare also booked their quarter final position with an impressive victory over Dublin last weekend.

It was knockout championship in all but name at the Ennis venue, with it all to play for following Tipperary's win over Dublin in the previous round, and the tension was palpable right from the start.

In a tight opening half, neither side was able to build a commanding lead.

Dublin's Aisling Maher pointed a brace of frees, Chloe Morey slotted a '45 between the posts and Eimear Kelly was on target with the first four scores of the game.

Mairéad Scanlon edged Clare in front but Dublin wing back Niamh Gannon produced a real highlight moment when she pushed forward to hit a rousing score with 25 minutes gone, in a half where every score was hard earned.

The Dubs managed to move in front through Aisling Maher, but Clare's hard running and support play in the forward line tested Dublin's discipline in the



The Cork substitutes social distancing in the stand at Páirc Uí Rinn.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

tackle and they edged 0-6 to 0-4 in front at half time thanks to three scores without reply, two of them from dead balls.

A commanding performance in the third quarter from the home side effectively settled the contest.

Player of the match Niamh O'Dea led the way with a dominant display at centre back, anchoring a powerful defensive unit, and gradually they started to pull away with three more unanswered points.

Mairéad Scanlon scored from an acute angle in another moment of quality for the Banner women and while Dublin dug their heels in, Ger O'Connor's women struck a decisive blow in the 38th minute.

Dublin failed to deal with an Orlaith Duggan delivery and it was Scanlon who reacted quickest, gathering the sliotar and firing it to the back of the net to move Clare eight points ahead.

Clare hit four more scores without reply, tightening their grip on the contest and suffocating Dublin at the same time, with very few attempts on Aisling Corbett's Clare goal.

Corbett was eventually beaten in the 59th minute when Sinéad Wilde's ground pull got the better of the Scariff-Ogonollee custodian, but it was a token goal as Clare comfortably advanced, 1-18 to 1-7.

Dublin were out.

Player of the match, Niamh O'Dea revealed that a desire to show the "real Clare" fuelled a tremendous second-half rally after Clare had been beaten by nine points in their opening tie against Tipperary but had plenty to play for in Ennis.

"We had a lot to prove after the Tipp game and I think that's a proper representation of this Clare team", said O'Dea.

"Rain, hail or snow, we stuck to our game plan. We trusted ourselves, trusted the subs we had and the management."

"The work has gone in since before Covid and after Covid, it's been massive. But we'll drive it on now for two weeks' time in the quarter-final and hope we can put up a good show there and show what we're about."

"It's our first time in a quarter-final in a long time and we're all just itching for that now and hopefully it goes our way."

"That's the real Clare side you saw there today. There were a lot of doubts about us in the media during the week. You take that with a pinch of salt as well. We know what we're about and any side we meet in a quarter-final, we're not going to fear them."

The draws will take place tomorrow evening.



Cork's Aisling Thompson shoots from Wexford's Sarah O'Connor and Laura Dempsey during the All-Ireland senior camogie championship.

Cork will need to be strong



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

SUNDAY
Liberty Insurance All-Ireland camogie championship: Galway v Cork, Pearse Stadium, 2pm

GALWAY top group 1 of the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland senior championship on points difference over Cork and it is the meeting between the group's top two that will determine who advances straight to the semi-final or goes via the quarterfinal route.

Either way both sides are through to the knockout stages. This game is more to do with laying down a marker for the possibility that could arise for both teams meeting in the latter part of the championship. Galway will go into the game as favourites. They retain the panel which saw them take the county's third All-Ireland senior title last September whereas Cork have six players last weekend either making their debut or having just a little senior championship experience under their belt.

Galway outscored Offaly last weekend by 3-13 to 0-3. I wouldn't be getting too excited over that. Offaly are weak and if anything, I'd have expected more points scored by the champions.

It brought a smile to those listening to Amy O'Connor's interview after their Wexford victory as she informed us that it was 237 days since Cork's last competitive outing. Cork did look rusty.

Wexford played a very defensive style, in the opening twenty minutes in particular, and you wouldn't blame Cork for trying to work the ball between the lines so as not to launch it into a defence packed with purple and gold.

But at the same time when space was there the delivery wasn't quick enough as Cork continued to try and work the ball up the field even when space had opened up for them. Cork have two midfielders in Ashling Thompson and Chloe Sigerson



Cork's Fiona Keating breaks from Wexford's Katie O'Connor.

who can drive the ball 70 yards comfortably, yet they too choose to deliver a short ball instead of driving the ball over the bar when they had time to do so.

Uncharacteristically Sigerson also passed a free laterally when she had the range to attempt a point. There was complacency in striking as players got hooked unnecessarily.

So those are the cobwebs that needed dusting down after 237 days in competition isolation. I'd expect to see a livelier Cork on Sunday with a game now behind them.

Ellen Murphy, Izzy O'Regan and Fiona Keating all made their championship debuts. Add in Amy Lee, Cliona Healy and Saoirse McCarthy who haven't seen a huge amount of action either and it's clear Cork are in rebuilding phase. Healy and McCarthy both made an immediate impact when introduced and we'll see if they get a start on Sunday or are held as impact subs again. Galway retain strong players throughout the field: Shauna Healy, Niamh Kilkenny, Rebecca Hennelly, Niamh Hanniffy, Aoife Donoghue, the McGrath sisters, Niamh, Orlaith and Slobhan, Ailish O'Reilly, Carrie Dolan and Catriona Cormican.

Galway struck 5-17 against Wexford,

Cork 3-12 last week. Galway however conceded three goals to the Slaneysiders which gives the indication of vulnerabilities defensively and Cork need to capitalise. Galway won't go defensive like Wexford did, elements permitting.

If there is a gale on the day they could deploy a sweeper and most teams would but if the weather is reasonable Galway will play 15 on 15 and let every player go out to win their spot. They'll attack the game full on and therefore it will be a good test for Cork. You would expect Cork to play more direct against this opposition.

Full credit to Galway for offering to switch this game from Saturday to Sunday in order to accommodate Cork's dual players who line out tomorrow against Kerry in their All-Ireland championship group game. You're always the wrong side of it when your team play second to the dual player.

Hannah Looney, Fiona Keating, Libby Coppinger, Meabh Cahalane and Clara McCarthy will be affected having mentally and physically taken part in such an important game for the footballers and then to have to travel to Galway on Sunday for the camogie game is going to take its toll. That's where Cork's panel will be required.

Gemma and Libby out of Galway clash

CAMOGIE

■ Paddy Hickey

CORK camogie boss Paudie Murray has suffered a massive blow with key players Libby Coppinger and Gemma O'Connor ruled out of Sunday's championship clash against Galway.

Murray, whose side overcame Wexford in their opening championship tie last weekend, said: "Libby damaged her ankle ligaments in a challenge game against Waterford two weeks ago, but she had recovered to come on for the last few minutes against Wexford."

"However, she hurt her ankle again in a practice game with the Cork football panel, so she has no chance of playing any part against Galway."

"Gemma is ruled out of the Galway game due to a punctured lung and and it will probably be two months before she is able to play again."

Murray also finds himself in the unfortunate situation where he will be unable to pick his side until after tomorrow's football championship game against Kerry because four members of his panel — Meabh Cahalane, Fiona Keating, Hannah Looney and Clara McCarthy — could be involved with Ephie Fitzgerald's side in Tralee.

"It's a huge blow to be without Libby, Gemma, and Julia White (who suffered a fractured knee-cap and femur in the game against Waterford)."

"Also, we will have a lot of changes since we played Galway in last year's All-Ireland semi-final. We won't have Aoife Murray, Gemma O'Connor, Briege Corkery, Orla Cotter, Julia White, and Libby Coppinger who all played in August of last year."

"Also, this year's championship is the first that Amy Lee, Ellen Murphy, Isabelle O'Regan, Fiona Keating, and Cliona Healy, who played in the Wexford game, have participated in. Another newcomer is Saoirse McCarthy, who came on against Wexford."

■ See P37 for more.



Galway's Aoife Donohue tries to block Cork's Orla Cronin. Picture: INPHO

Cork lose to Galway but now face Clare in All-Ireland quarter-final

Galway 0-15
Cork 0-12

CAMOGIE
Linda Mellerick

DESPITE the fact that both sides had already qualified for either the quarter or semi-final of this year's Liberty Insurance All-Ireland senior championship, this final group game in Pearse Stadium on Sunday afternoon had a real feel of knockout to it.

It was a much better performance by Cork than seven days ago. They looked faster, fitter, sharper and hungrier and they started the game with intent. A goal chance inside 35 seconds presented a penalty.

Lovely ball control by Orla Cronin saw her deliver into Amy O'Connor and Sarah Dervan. The ball fell kindly, O'Connor gathered and was taken down.

Chloe Sigerson didn't fully connect and Sarah Healy comfortably saved. But it was a good start by Cork.

Cork played deep from their half forward line, packing the middle third where the intention is to work the ball out of defence and deliver it fast into space to their inside forwards.

This forced Galway into a sweeper and Galway's full back line were strong. Galway too played just two inside leaving Cork with their extra player around their own 45 with much of the tussles now in the middle of the park and many frees awarded.

The unusual looking free taking style of Carrie Dolan proved decisive for Galway as did the wonderful side-line skill of Rebecca Hennelly.

The importance of a good side-line cut is as important as a good free taker due to the fact that two points are awarded for such a skill in Camogie.

It's rarely capitalised on but Rebecca Hennelly's beautiful strike on twenty three minutes pushed Galway from a point down to two in front.

Chloe Sigerson was very close minutes later to matching Hennelly's score. Hennelly then repeated the feat on twenty nine minutes.

Cork were far more direct in their play. Laura Hayes' point on 33 minutes optimising the space Cork can create. Galway were double scores to the good at half time, 0-10 to 0-5, the margin not reflecting the closeness of the tie, the side-line scores being the major contributor.

Outside of impressive free taking and side-lines we had just three points from play in that opening period. Galway's full back line of Shauna Healy, Sarah Dervan and Heather Cooney was hard to break down.

Amy Lee had worked on her quick puck outs and her delivery was good. Chloe Sigerson struck some long distance frees and along with Hannah Looney and Orla Cronin Cork had it down to two points after five minutes of the restart.

Hannah was making telling runs up the right wing with Ashling Thompson always supporting. While Cork looked to be making the runs it was Galway who pushed four ahead again after two good points from Aoife Donohue and Ailish O'Reilly.

Cork could feel somewhat aggrieved that Galway's dropping of the hurley wasn't penalised. We were now getting more from play, Linda Collins scoring a nice point on 42 minutes.

Cork couldn't quite bridge that four point gap against a hardworking in your face Galway side. Galway held it from the 13th minute until the 22nd before Niamh Kilkenny made it five. Orla Cronin pointed a free.

Galway's physicality won key battles and their ability to get the important flick in denied some good Cork moves. Defensively Galway are excellent and they work the ball well, as did Cork who will need to find a way to avoid tight battles.

Cork will take a lot of positives from the game as they move forward to a quarter final with Clare next weekend.

Scorers for Cork: C Sigerson 0-3 (ft), O Cronin 0-5 (0-4f), L Hayes, H Looney, P Mackey, L Collins 0-1 each.

Galway: R Hennelly 0-4 (st), C Dolan 0-7 (ft), O McGrath, A O'Donohue, A O'Reilly, N Kilkenny 0-1 each.

CORK: A Lee, M Cahalane, P Mackey, E Murphy, H Looney, L Treacy, L Hayes, C Sigerson, A Thompson, I O'Regan, O Cronin, K Mackey, L Collins, A O'Connor, C Healy.

Subs: F Keating for C Healy (38), N O'Callaghan for I O'Regan (48), S McCarthy for L Collins (56).

GALWAY: Sarah Healy, Shauna Healy, S Dervan, H Cooney, E Helebert, S Gardiner, T Keeney, A Donohue, N Kilkenny, C Dolan, R Hennelly, N Hanniffy, S McGrath, A O'Reilly, O McGrath.

Subs: C Coimican for S McGrath (40), C Finnerty for R Hennelly (58), A M Starr for N Kilkenny (35).

Referee: John Dermody - Westmeath

Rebels down but

Camogie

Daragh Ó Conchúir

Cork camogie manager Paudie Murray was far from downbeat after his side were beaten by three points against defending champions Galway in the All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship.

"I'm very proud of them," said Murray of the 0-15 to 0-12 defeat. "I'm disappointed with some of the stuff that went on out there, players taking eight or nine steps, dropping the hurley. But from our own display, I'm very proud of them, they're a young team and they're developing. They showed massive character out there."

"In the second quarter we

lost our way a small bit. But I'm very proud the way this team has gone about it and they're going to give us a lot of promise."

Despite the loss, Cork will play Clare in the first of next Saturday's two quarter-finals, which will be televised live at Páirc Uí Chaoimh.

"We've a couple of injuries, one or two that will worry us for the week. The main thing is that we try to get back one or two players and build from there."

"It's winner-take-all. The pressure is on us to perform, the same as it is for Clare, and we look forward to the challenge."

Galway boss Cathal Murray was delighted with the 0-15 to 0-12 win which saw the West-

not out after loss to Galway

erners secure a semi-final berth. The champions recovered from a slow start that saw them fall two points behind, and needed Sarah Healy to save Chloe Sigerson's third-minute penalty. Galway went on to establish a five-point interval lead and kept their noses in front in a low-scoring but intense second half.

"Cork started really well, got the penalty, and Sarah made a great save," Murray noted. "Up to the water break we were struggling, they were 3-1 up, but the second quarter we played really well and that's the reason we won today."

Given the margin, the four points accumulated by Rebecca Hennelly from two converted sideline pucks in that

second quarter were hugely significant.

"It's a serious skill, and from both sides of the field as well. They were four points we really needed. She's able to take them. She scored a goal in the county final as well from a line ball."

"That was all about today. We needed to get to a semi-final. It would be a long journey down to Cork next Saturday evening if we lost today, only a six-day turnaround. So it was really important, to get straight through to the semi-final and avoid Kilkenny."

"Cork aren't gone. We know they have players to come back in. They're a serious team and gave a massive performance out there."

The second quarter-final

will involve Waterford and Tipperary, after Beth Carton scored 1-14 in the Déise's 2-17 to 0-10 victory over Westmeath at Cusack Park. Carton was magnificent from placed balls and though Pamela Greville kept the hosts in contention in the third quarter, goals by Carton and Niamh Rockett settled the affair.

That secured the runner-up spot in Group 2 behind Kilkenny, who accounted for Limerick by 2-16 to 0-8 at UPMC Nowlan Park. Second-half goals from Aoife Doyle and Denise Gaule allowed Kilkenny to pull away from Limerick, who brought grit but could not match the firepower of the Noresiders, who also had Anne Dalton and Katie Nolan showing prominently.



Cork boss Paudie Murray.

Murray sees positives in Cork defeat

EVEN though Cork suffered a 0-15 to 0-12 loss to reigning champions Galway in the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship at Pearse Stadium last Sunday, Rebel boss Paudie Murray was far from downbeat.

'I'm very proud of them, they're a young team and they're developing. They showed massive character out there,' Murray said.

'In the second quarter we lost our way a small bit but I'm very proud the way this team has gone about it and they're going to give us a lot of promise.'

Galway led by double scores at the interval, by 0-10 to 0-5, but had a very early let-off when conceding a penalty with just a minute elapsed, awarded for a chop on Cork full-forward Amy O'Connor. Chloe Sigerson did not get enough on her strike however and the ultra-reliable Sarah Healy made a smart save.

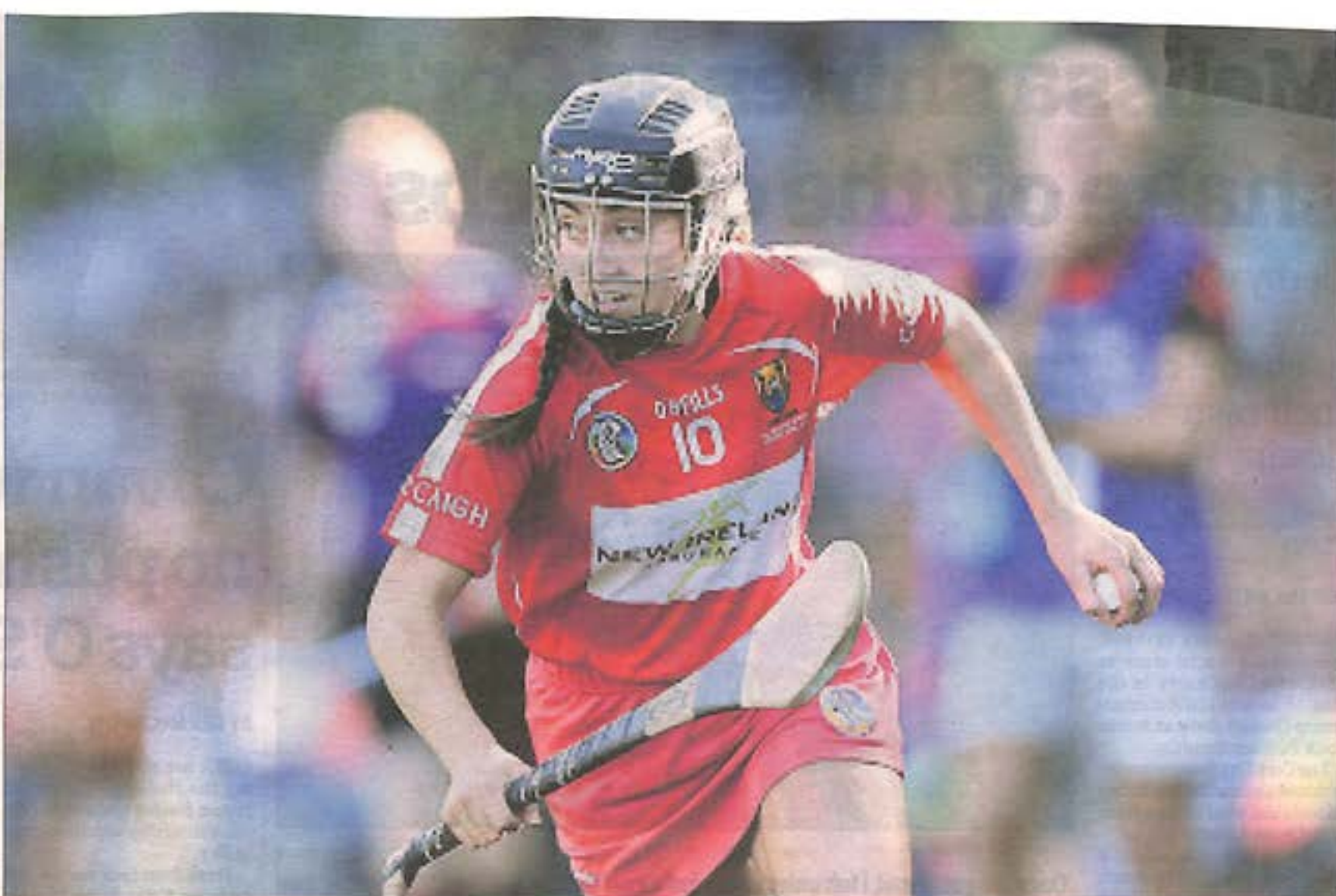
Sigerson was accurate from two frees and Orla Cronin another after Carrie Dolan had scored for Galway, to give Cork an early lead but following the water break, Galway began to get on top to neutralise the early threat of the Rebels' inside attacking division.

They had achieved parity by the time Hennelly cut her first sideline stroke from 40 metres out on the left, and the Ardahan star's ability from the discipline was certainly significant, as she repeated the trick from 46m on the right. Dolan and Orlaith McGrath were also on the mark to stretch the margin at the break.

Cork cut it to two very quickly, Sigerson lofting over a free from inside her own half, Hannah Looney following up immediately after driving forward from half-back and Cronin pointing another placed ball.

Galway showed their experience to provide the ideal riposte though, Dolan, Aoife Donohue and Ailish O'Reilly, with an excellent solo score, giving Cathal Murray's crew some vital breathing space.

Cork continued to battle hard and got it back to within three again but it was Hennelly's heroics that proved definitive. Still, a lot of positives for Cork to take into Saturday's televised quarter-final against Clare at Páirc Uí Chaoimh.



Cork senior camogie manager Paudie Murray wants more protection from referees for his star players such as Amy O'Connor. (Photo: Tommy Dickson / INPHO)

Cork eager to rebound from defeat by champions Galway

ALL-IRELAND SENIOR CAMOGIE QUARTER-FINAL

BY GER MCCARTHY

PAUDIE Murray wants better protection for his players ahead of a Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Senior Camogie quarter-final showdown with Clare in Páirc Uí Chaoimh on Saturday. The Cork manager is concerned with some of the treatment being dished out to the likes of Amy O'Connor and others heading towards the business end of this year's All-Ireland championship.

'The treatment that is being dished out to Amy O'Connor is disgraceful at the moment,' Murray told *The Southern Star*.

'I think that referees should be there to protect the likes of these special talents. People come out to watch camogie to see the Amy O'Connors, but the way she has been chopped down over the last two games, I believe stronger action has to be taken.'

'It is fine to be able to pull someone down but when someone comes in and chops down

across her hands with their hurley? To me, that's a red card, but it has happened two or three times now.'

'We certainly weren't very happy with the way the Galway game was refereed. You'd be hoping that you get more experienced referees in the upcoming games, starting with Clare.'

Cork head into Saturday's meeting with the Banner eager to rebound from last weekend's defeat to Galway. The reigning All-Ireland champions edged Paudie Murray's side by three points despite a gutsy Cork showing in Pearse Stadium.

That outcome meant Cork must now overcome Munster rivals Clare to keep their All-Ireland championship hopes alive. Despite the Group 1 loss to Galway, Murray was able to take plenty of positives from his team's display.

'The players' attitude and work rate were two key things for me,' Murray said.

'Look, you are going up to play the All-Ireland champions,

a team expected to win it again this year. So, to lose by three after missing an early penalty and conceding four points from sideline cuts – something I've rarely seen during all my time involved with camogie – all in all, there were reasons to be positive after it.'

Thankfully, Cork's preparations should be eased somewhat by not having to negotiate an arduous cross-country car journey or dealing with any additional injuries.

'Injuries have killed us, there is no doubt about that, and we are probably in a race against time for this weekend with some players,' Murray added.

'It is something (injuries) we are fighting the whole time, so you'd like them to clear up and have a clear run at it. Having football in the middle of it is not easy for the girls either.'

'Obviously, last weekend's journey was a long one and everyone had to travel separately. Some of us travelled for over four and a half hours so all those things add up and it wasn't easy, no.'

Cork's opponents in the last eight finished second in their qualifying group following a 0-20 to 1-8 loss to Tipperary

When someone comes in and chops down across her hands with their hurley, to me, that's a red card

and a morale-boosting 1-18 to 1-7 victory over Dublin. Manager Ger O'Connell oversaw that impressive defeat of the Dubs with player of the match Niamh O'Dea outstanding at centre-back and Mairéad Scanlan netting the winning side's goal.

Paudie Murray is not underestimating the challenge a Clare team with nothing to lose will pose. Having the game played at Páirc Uí Chaoimh is a welcome bonus and another important step for camogie within the county.

'First of all, from the Camogie Association's point of view, I think it is a massive thing they have done in securing Páirc Uí Chaoimh for this weekend's All-Ireland quarter-final,' the Cork senior camogie manager stated.

'We played there in February of this year and I would

certainly say that it is the best playing surface in Ireland. I'd put it ahead of Croke Park.'

'You can see the way it has held up over the past two weeks despite the huge amount of rain that has fallen. The surface is magnificent. It is a great boost for us to play there and we should use it to our advantage.'

'The key thing for us will be the referee on Saturday as I don't think we got the rub of the green in either of our first two championship games.'

Cork GAA is on a high following last weekend's men's and women's results. Paudie Murray isn't getting carried away and remains focused on what his team needs to do to reach the last four of the All-Ireland.

'Our goal is to get into an All-Ireland semi-final, no different to the Cork hurlers or footballers and the ladies' footballers,' commented Murray.

'It is a winner-take-all game next Saturday so it is important that we perform. If we win, we win, if we don't, we are out of the championship.'

'We are around long enough to know that if we bring the level of intensity that we brought against Galway, we have a chance.'



Laochra Óg, winners of the Muskerry U15B Shield

Muskerry doing its bit to promote camogie at underage level

DIVISIONS play a huge part in promoting camogie in Cork and they do huge work in ensuring games for the younger age groups.

One division that is hugely active is Muskerry, who despite Covid restrictions, enjoyed another busy and progressive season.

Camogie in Muskerry has a long and proud tradition and they have built on the foundations laid down over a number of years.

Muskerry camogie is made up of the Mid Cork clubs Aghabullogue, Ballincollig, Ballinora, Blarney, Cloughdub, Eire Óg, Grenagh, Inniscarra, Laochra Óg, and Rockban who are all actively promoting camogie within their clubs, with all participating at different levels of competition at county level from senior to junior 13-a-side.

In the early days of camogie there were many fine clubs in the division and in 1933 the senior title was won by Muskerry.

We had to wait until 2007 for the next senior title to go the division's way. Muskerry usually enter a senior team in championship, but this year they decided against it, given the Covid restrictions.

As the year got under way, Muskerry chairperson, Pat Nolan, Inniscarra; secretary, Linda Linehan, Ballincollig; treasurer, Eileen Healy Aghabullogue; development/PRO, Michelle Cooney, Aghabullogue; vice-chair, Dave Bannon, Blarney; registrar, Paul Tobin, Ballincollig; and child welfare officer, Margaret Murphy, Ballinora got their plans in place for a busy year.

Little did they think when they set about getting their year up and running, the obstacles they and their fellow clubs would face as they battled to keep the show on the road and get their competitions played.

With county underage championship at U14, U16, and minor all getting under way when the restrictions were lifted, it was going to be difficult to get all their competitions up and running but they dug in and set about organising championship at U12, U13, U15 plus they also organised an U14 competition which they called an U14 spread out blitz with games going on at different venues on the same

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

day. This was organised as a one-off given that the players did not have any Féile this year.

Once again the highlights of the division's year were the U12, 13 and U15 competitions and these proved to be most competitive.

Unfortunately the division just ran out of time and they are waiting for the latest restrictions to be lifted to get the U15 A final played between Inniscarra and Eire Óg.

The U15A shield final was played and it saw Cloughdub overcome Rockban to take the title.

The U15 B cup final was between Blarney and Aghabullogue with Blarney coming out on top and the U15 B shield final was won by Laochra Óg as they defeated Grenagh.

It is great to see clubs such as Laochra Óg and Grenagh making steady progress in these competitions and competing strongly at county level.

There were five U13 finals played and in these Eire Óg came out on top in the U13A Cup beating Ballinora in an exciting contest.

The U13A Shield final saw Rockban take the title at the expense of Aghabullogue. Ballincollig were victors over Inniscarra in the U13A plate final.

Cloughdub won the U13B cup Cloughdub beating Laochra Óg, the U13B Shield went to Blarney as they defeated Grenagh. The U12s were well catered for with the U12 A won by Inniscarra, the U12B winners were Ballinora whilst the U12 C final remains to be played between Aghabullogue 2 and Grenagh.

Busy off the playing fields as well Muskerry also organized a very successful school links programme with coaches continuing to promote the game within the schools in the division.

They also ran a coach the coaches course by offering to put coaches into each club to up-skill some of the club coaches.

A busy year for one of the county's oldest divisions who like us all will be hoping for an even better one in 2021.



Galway's Carrie Dolan is closed down by Laura Hayes and Izzy O'Regan of Cork.

Picture: INPHO/Lorraine O'Sullivan

Cork may face Galway again



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

GALWAY manager Cathal Murray was delighted to defeat Cork by 0-15 to 0-12 and secure a semi-final berth in the All-Ireland senior championship.

But had plenty of praise for his opponents.

It was a good performance by Cork who have introduced a number of debutants for the 2020 season.

The champions recovered from a slow start that saw them fall two points behind but established a five-point interval lead and keep their noses in front in a low-scoring but intense second half.

"Cork started really well, got the penalty and Sarah made a great save," Murray noted.

"Up to the water break we were struggling, they were 3-1 up, but the second quarter we played really well and that's the reason we won today."

Given the margin, the four points accumulated by Rebecca Hennelly from two converted side-line punks in that second quarter were hugely significant.

"It's a serious skill, and from both sides of the field as well," Murray acknowledged.

"They were four points we really needed. She's able to take them. She scored a goal in the county final as well from a line ball."

"It was all about today. We needed to get to a semi-final. It would be a long journey down to Cork if we lost, only a six-day turnaround."

"So, it was really important, to get straight through to the semi-final and avoid Kilkenny."

"Cork aren't gone. We know they have players to come back in. They're a serious team and gave a massive performance out there."

"It could have gone either way to be straight about it and they could be meeting us later in the year, you'd never know."

"It's nice to top the group but in 2015, I think, we beat Cork in the group and they went on to beat us in the All-Ireland final."

"In '16, we beat Kilkenny and they went



Galway's Niamh Hanniffy tackles Laura Treacy of Cork.

Picture: INPHO/Lorraine O'Sullivan

ing from Cork's half forward line, even if playing deep. Equally Galway scored four points from play indicating a good defensive display by Cork.

Cork will beat Clare today and Cathal feels that Kilkenny are seeded on the other side so Cork could well end up playing Galway again in two weeks' time.

They won't be overawed by that considering the three-point defeat. Cork missed a penalty and Galway took four points from two side-line cuts.

Of course, that could happen again, a team is almost sure to get a side-line cut around the opposition's 45. Previously, giving away a side-line wasn't seen as a real threat.

It will be from now on if the game has players the calibre of Rebecca Hennelly. Chloe Sigerson is another who takes a strong side-line and she came close to scoring one last Sunday but it edged narrowly wide.

After Hennelly's display you can see this art becoming more of a focal point for teams. It's an art that's poor in club camogie, rarely practised.

While the two points has been in for a few years now it seems to have only dawned with players that this is a huge advantage if you get it right.

I've seen many penalties in both club and intercounty camogie this year with a very small return. Most are poorly struck. Not stepping over the 20-metre line has helped the goalkeeper.

Players are standing over the free rather than striding up to it with momentum and they need momentum for strength in the delivery.

A penalty miss is a big blow to a team and a huge boost for the opposition, particularly in big games.

The second quarter final will involve Waterford and Tipperary, after Beth Carton scored 1-14 in Waterford's 2-17 to 0-10 victory over Westmeath at Cusack Park to secure the vital runner-up spot in group 2 behind Kilkenny, who accounted for Limerick by 2-16 to 0-8 at Nowlan Park.

Tipperary were the first team to qualify after topping group 3 on October 25th.

There was nothing at stake in terms of extending their season beyond last weekend but Wexford and Offaly served up a treat in their championship group 1 tie at Bellefield in Enniscorthy, before the Model county prevailed by 1-15 to 1-13.

I'd like to see Ashling Thompson and Chloe Sigerson do this as they have the range. Although I feel that Chloe is best placed in Cork's half back line.

Oria Cronin is another capable of scor-



Galway's Niamh Hanniffy and Laura Treacy of Cork.

Home comforts can be of benefit to Rebels as they take on Banner

SATURDAY

Liberty Insurance All-Ireland senior quarter-finals
Cork v Clare 1pm.Tipperary v Waterford, Páirc Uí Chaoimh 2.45pm
A HOME game for Cork as they take on Clare in the Liberty Insurance senior quarter-final in Páirc Uí Chaoimh tomorrow.

While Cork may not train in the Páirc it's a benefit to not have to travel particularly with such an early throw in and travel / overnight restrictions making journeys difficult for teams.

Tipperary and Waterford follow in the second quarter final double header.

Cork will head into the knockout game as favourites. Clare emerged second to Tipperary in a group of three, beating Dublin in the deciding game.

A first round defeat to Tipperary on a score line of 0-20 to 1-8 Clare needed a favourable result against Dublin to see them through.

They got it with a 1-18 to 1-7 victory. Player of the match, Niamh O'Dea revealed that a desire to show the "real Clare" fuelled their impressive second-half rally over Dublin.

"We had a lot to prove after the Tipp game and I think that's a proper representation of this Clare team," said O'Dea.

"Rain, hail or snow, we stuck to our game plan. We trusted ourselves, trusted the subs we had and the management."

"The work has gone in since before Covid and after Covid it's been massive. But we'll drive it on now for two weeks' time in the quarter-final and hope we can put up a good show there and show what we're about."

"It's our first time in a quarter-final in a long time and we're all just itching for that now and hopefully it goes our way."

"We know what we're about and any side we meet in a quarter-final, we're not going to fear them." Clare camogie boss Ger O'Connell is also hopeful that his charges' confidence will have soared following the victory.

"There was a lot of negative talk after our game with Tipperary and rightly so, we didn't perform on the day."

"Our second half against Dublin is what we expect from the group, the girls put in so much effort and work, we see

CAMOGIE

■ Linda Mellerick

it on the training field and to see that second half was really good, hopefully the confidence will build from that.

"At the start of the year you have your goals and aims, number one was to get out of the group no matter what, it hasn't been done in a while which is nothing against any previous management but it is a hard thing to get to the quarter-final. Goal one has been got, now we can go and have a right cut at this quarter-final."

The former county goalkeeper felt an improvement was visible within their ranks and was a more significant factor for their progression to the quarter-finals rather than the advantage of being in a three-team group.

So, Clare will come to Cork hugely buoyed and take that enthusiasm onto the pitch against the rebels.

Inagh Kilnamona had an impressive win over Courcey Rovers in the Munster semi-final and Clare's underage has made healthy strides over the past number of years.

Their focal point in attack is Aine O'Loughlin with Chloe Morey and Robyn Conway also a threat. Stalwart Laura McMahon has moved to the attack.

Niamh O'Dea at centre back is a pivotal player for Clare alongside Alannah Ryan as Clare's hard work and support play has improved.

Despite that, considering Cork's pedigree, it's hard to see anything but a Cork win. The manner of their approach to the game and their performance from the throw in is the critical factor.

Tipperary and Waterford will be a tightly fought contest. Aishling Moloney still sitting on the side-line due to a suspension is a bit loss. Expect this game to be a physical battle.

Both fixtures will be live on RTE Two and the RTE Player International with coverage beginning at 12.30pm.

Extra-time periods and free competition will be applicable in both matches if required and the draw for the semi-finals will take place live on RTE at full-time of the second match to determine who will play Galway or Kilkenny in the semi-finals on Saturday November 28.



Cork's Amy O'Connor celebrates the first of her two goals against Clare.

Picture: Eddie O'Han

Cork will now host the Cats



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

Cork 3-15
Clare 0-8

DESPITE the final margin, Cork didn't have it all their own way against Clare in the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland quarter-final in Páirc Uí Chaoimh on Saturday afternoon.

It was as Clare tired in the final quarter that Cork put the game to bed.

The end result, though, is an All-Ireland semi-final against Kilkenny on Saturday week on home turf again in the Páirc, with Galway against Tipp on the other side of the draw.

Cork again played the short passing game and tried to walk the ball into their full-forward line where they were up against a strong Clare back three of Ciara Crogan, Clare Hehir and Ciara Doyle. Clare to their credit took the game to Cork.

I had a fear before the game that they would go defensive and be content with a respectable defeat rather than go out and try and win the game but they attacked from the outset. It was Cork that played deep as they again packed their own 45 and middle section to support their off the shoulder game.

Off the shoulder is fine to a certain extent but Cork again aren't taking their scores from scoreable positions out the field, instead seeming to feel the need to be at least 30 yards from the goalposts before willing to shoot, Orla Cronin the exception. Aishling Thompson again operated defensively, her attacking game a distant memory now. Really six points from play in the opening half from Cork wasn't good enough.

They scored five over the hour against Galway last week. Clare's Clare Hehir and Amy O'Connor of Cork.

There were two changes to Cork's starting 15 from last weekend with Sarsfields' Niamh O'Callaghan and Courcey Rovers'



Cork's Saoirse McCarthy shoots from Clare's Ciara Doyle.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

Saoirse McCarthy given the nod to start.

Liz Dempsey had an easy job in such a big pitch and the game was relatively free-flowing in the opening half although on two occasions she should have let advantage play out, once when Linda Collins had the goal in front of her and again denying Clare when in space a few minutes later.

Clare goalkeeper Aisling Corbett had a couple of hairy moments under the dropping ball but Cork weren't in the square to capitalise. The wind was strong and Clare opened with it. They were full value for their trailing point at half time 0-7 to 0-6, working their socks off to stop Cork's interplay. It was a bridge to far for them to sustain it over the hour.

Cork's second half provided more scoring attempts from distance but for the second week in a row the opposition's full back line were on top for a period despite Katrina Mackey finished an Amy O'Connor pass to the net to give Cork their engine start.

On the other end Hannah Looney was on song alongside Laura Treacy and Meabh Cahalane.

We can assume that Cork's management felt the game was won on 52 minutes when Katrina Mackey was called to the line as the RTE Player of the Match had a busy hour. Cork utilised their five subs. Clare started to tire and made sloppy

mistakes particularly coming out of defence and it allowed Amy O'Connor through for Cork's second goal.

Another sloppy clearance allowed for Orla Cronin to take it down well and offload to Amy O'Connor who with just one defender in front of her was always going to go for the jugular.

Cork's experience took over. The experience of physical battles shows in the final quarter as Cork struck 2-6 and looked impressive. They picked off some nice scores and took chances at distance and even though a couple went wide it was the right decision.

There will be tougher battles ahead.

Scorers for Cork: K Mackey 1-3, A O'Connor 2-4, Cronin 0-6 (0-4 6), C Sigerson (1), L Collins, S McCarthy, C Healy, H Looney 0-1 each.

Clare: C Morey 0-4 1, A O'Loughlin, E Kelly 0-2 each.

CORK: A Lee, L Coppinger, L Treacy, M Cahalane, H Looney, P Mackey, L Hayes, N O'Callaghan, A Thompson, K Mackey, O Cronin, C Sigerson, A O'Connor, S McCarthy, L Collins.

Subs: C Healy for S McCarthy (43), L Homan for N O'Callaghan (44), J O'Regan for K Mackey (53), E Murphy for L Coppinger (54), F Keating for H Looney (60).

CLARE: A Corbett, C Grogan, C Hehir, C Doyle, R McMahon, N O'Dea, A Ryan, S Vaughan, O Duggan, L McMahon, E Kelly, M McGrath, C Morey, A O'Loughlin, M Scanlon.

Subs: R Conway for M Scanlon (36), S Conlon for S Vaughan (43), G Hickey for L McMahon (48), A Power for M McGrath (56), M Caulfield for O Duggan (57).

Referee: Liz Dempsey (Kilkenny).

Murray: Cork starting to hit form

Camogie

Therese O'Callaghan

Cork and Tipperary progressed to the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship semi-finals at Páirc Uí Chaoimh on Saturday.

They will return to the same venue on Saturday week to take on Kilkenny and champions Galway respectively. A second-half goal from Karen Kennedy, allied to seven points from joint-captain Cáit Devane, helped Tipperary pull away from Waterford, winning by 1-12 to 0-10.

Tipperary manager Bill Mullane had nothing but praise for his players.

"The girls did everything and more, played brilliantly, worked really hard. The communication was excellent and the subs that came on were excellent."

Tipp were just two points ahead after a wind-assisted first-half. Kennedy's goal was significant, sending them to a third consecutive semi-final.

"Karen was centre-back and ended up scoring the goal. She was tracking her player and took the score. But they all contributed. There was a savage save from Aine Slattery at the end too."

"The girls have suffered heartache over the years. They want to get to a final, they deserve to get to a final. We met Galway this year and we got out of Ballinasloe in March with a point win. But you have to earn it."

Waterford boss Fergal O'Brien was frustrated with some of the decisions.

"It wasn't the losing of the game. We lost the game because Tipperary were better than us. But we thought some blatant fouls against us weren't given."

"I am extremely proud of this group of girls. They have been fantastic all year. It is so disappointing when you don't get that performance on the field. We thought we were ready to kick-on at half-time but it didn't happen."

"This is the third quarter-final we have got to and we

haven't taken the next step."

Meanwhile, old rivals Cork and Kilkenny will face off in the other semi-final after the Rebels were comfortable winners over Clare, 3-15 to 0-8.

Following a tight opening 30 minutes, they upped the gears courtesy of second-half goals from Katrina Mackey and skipper Amy O'Connor (2).

Cork manager Paudie Murray said their approach was very professional.

"Our use of the ball was better today than the last day. Scoring was better. We will take a lot of positives out of it. A number of our players are starting to hit form which is key. When we ran at Clare and created the overlap, we caused them trouble."

"I would like more energy if we are to get to the level of a semi-final. We moved the ball well enough in the first half against the wind. A small bit critical of the final pass but other than that you have to be happy."

"The semi-final is a massive, massive task to get ourselves mentally and physi-

cally to the next level. The key now is to make sure all our injuries are okay and work from there."

"We will have to look at Pamela (Mackey) tomorrow. Libby (Coppinger) and Katrina (Mackey) came through 40 minutes. Gemma (O'Connor) is seeing a consultant during the week to see can she start some sort of activity. But you are talking about two months with a punctured lung. Gemma being Gemma, she is going to give it a shot but I think we are asking a lot."

For dual player Hannah Looney, the hectic schedule continues.

"It is tough the two matches on the same weekend but I am delighted the semi-finals of camogie and ladies football are different weekends."

Clare manager Ger O'Connell couldn't hide his disappointment. For Clare camogie to move forward, he said structures top to bottom have to be put in place.

"That is so important and it really needs to be done. We need to sit down and see



Cork's Orla Cronin is tackled by Clare's Niamh O'Dea during the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland senior camogie championship quarter-final at Páirc Uí Chaoimh.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

where we are going to go.

"This is my second year. I think we made progress, but after today we haven't made enough. We want to get higher than quarter-finals. The players are fantastic. They are young and are learning every day. We need that bit more bite and finish."

"Cork are five, six, or seven years ahead of us as regards structures. We have to get up to that, everybody from the county board to us in the managerial level and all the way down to underage. There needs to be a connection. Cork have that connection. We don't, it is very separate."

Cork and Tipperary advance to last four

By Daragh Ó Conchúir

CORK enjoyed a comfortable 3-15 to 0-8 Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship quarter-final win over Clare at Páirc Uí Chaoimh.

The sides were level five times in total in that first half.

Cork went in at the break leading 0-7 to 0-6, late points from Saoirse McCarthy and Katrina Mackey – her third – putting two between them for the first time before Clare's Chloe Morey had the final say of the half with a long range effort.

The Rebel women got the perfect start to the second period when Amy O'Connor set up Mackey for a goal within seconds of the resumption but Clare remained in contention, Morey (free) and Aine O'Loughlin splitting the posts.

It was Cork that finished the stronger though to advance to the semi-finals in a fortnight's time.

In the other quarter-final, a 42nd minute goal by Karen Kennedy gave Tipperary the vital breathing place and ensured a place in the last four after a 1-12 to 0-10 win over Waterford.

It was the third year in a row too that Waterford failed to get beyond this hurdle but they can have few complaints here.

It was a far cagier affair than the opening quarter-final, with both teams withdrawing players even when playing with the gale into the Blackrock End.

There was three between the sides when Kennedy somehow found herself in the opposition danger zone, and winning the race with Waterford goalkeeper Brianna O'Regan to force the sliotar home for a critical score.

Beth Carton led the resistance but Tipp's Nicole Walsh and Cáit Devane kept the scoreboard ticking over at the other end, and Aoife McGrath, Kennedy and Mary Ryan were in among those in no mood to yield.

By Daragh Ó Conchúir

THE development of Camogie in Ulster was advertised in no uncertain terms yesterday, with the province set to provide all the contestants in the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Intermediate and Premier Junior Camogie Championship finals on December 5.

Antrim and Down will contest the Intermediate decider, while Cavan, who have already claimed the Nancy Murray Cup as Junior A champions this month, will look to complete a unique double when they cross swords with Armagh.

Down were beaten finalists two years ago before falling at the penultimate hurdle to ultimate victors Westmeath 12 months ago, and they accounted for 2017 champions Meath by 0-14 to 0-8 at St Tiernach's Park.

The Royals were back in the Intermediate Championship after suffering relegation from the Senior ranks in 2019 but they were always second best in Clones, apart from a period of about 10 minutes in the final quarter, when they reduced the margin to three.

But Down always gave the impression they had another gear and confirmed that as Niamh Mallon fired a brace of points and the excellent Saoirse McCartan added another score to confirm their qualification.

Down led by 0-6 to 0-2 at half-time, which flattered Meath, as the Mourne County outfit failed to capitalise on a couple of goal opportunities. Mallon adopted a deeper role than many have been accustomed with and got on plenty of possession, while Fionnuala Carr was effective picking up breaking ball in front of her full-back line, ensuring the legendary Jane Dolan was starved of possession.

Paula O'Hagan gathered a clearance quickly and returned it from 50m over the black spot, followed with a pointed free.

Sinéad Hackett and Aidin Slattery got on the scoresheet for Meath but another converted free by O'Hagan and a splendid strike by McCartan, after winning possession herself and exchanging passes with the industrious Lauren Clarke, put Down four ahead at the break.

Their grip tightened after the resumption, O'Hagan continuing to punish the indiscretions of the Meath defence, while Sara-Louise Graffin and McCartan added to the tally from play.

There was rarely any doubt about the verdict in the second semi-final in Inniskeen, where Antrim won



TOO EASY: Antrim players celebrate after their 0-14 to 0-3 victory over Laois.

CAVAN LOOKING TO COMPLETE A UNIQUE DOUBLE

by 0-14 to 0-3. The Saffrons found scores much easier to come by in general play, and three apiece from Maeve Kelly and Catherine Dobbin were at the heart of their 0-9 to 0-3 interval lead. Róisín McCormack also found a neat score, while Nicole O'Neill landed a pair of points from frees. Laois were reliant on placed balls, Kirsten Keenan (two) and Clodagh Tynan registering their first-half scores.

The midlanders failed to trouble the scoreboard operator in the second half and the game fizzled out to its inevitable conclusion, O'Neill slotting three frees to bring her tally to five, with McCormack and Lucia McNaughton completing the scoring.

Cavan put on the after-burners in the second half to leave Athleague with a 2-16 to 1-6 success over the

hosts in the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Premier Junior semi-final. Shauna Fallon opened the scoring for Roscommon with a goal but points from Sinéad McKenna and Shanise Fitzsimons helped the Junior A champions draw level at the interval, 0-6 to 1-3.

It was one-way traffic in the second half, Róisín O'Keefe's goal putting daylight between the sides. Fitzsimons added another major in the 55th minute to continue the Breffniwomen's fairytale run.

Tyrone were no match for Cavan in the Nancy Murray Cup decider but parked their disappointment from that setback with a display of goal-scoring that threatened to derail Armagh's aspirations, before Eimear Smyth goaled twice for the 2016 finalists to advance, 2-10 to 3-4, in Crossmaglen. Ciara Donnelly

and Rachael Merry helped Armagh into an early lead but Norah Ward registered Tyrone's first goal, after strong work by Reagan Fay, and then Kelley Cuddy's delivery from distance travelled all the way to the net. Cara Little raised another green flag and it was 3-1 to 0-5 at the change of ends.

Armagh poured forward but found the Tyrone defence in obdurate form, providing an exhibition of excellent hooking and blocking, while Una McCann made two fantastic saves. There was nothing the 'keeper could do about Smyth's rocket to reduce the margin to one.

McCann was called into action once more to deny Leanne Donnelly but the onslaught eventually told, Smyth pulling first time off the sod for her second to edge Armagh home.



Cork's Saoirse McCarthy is tackled by Clare's Clare Hehir at Páirc Uí Chaoimh.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

Murray: We will have to step up a level for Cats



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

CORK manager Paudie Murray was pleased with his side's All-Ireland quarter-final performance against Clare at the weekend.

The victory put them through to the All-Ireland semi-final.

Now they'll host Kilkenny in the last four clash at Páirc Uí Chaoimh on Saturday week, with Galway facing Tipperary on the other side of the draw.

In the second game in Páirc Uí Chaoimh on Saturday, a 42nd minute goal by Karen Kennedy gave Tipperary the vital breathing place and ensured a place in the last four for the third consecutive season, with champions Galway lying in wait.

It was the third year in a row too that Waterford failed to get beyond this hurdle, but they will have little cause for complaint having not been able to go through the gears in the second half.

"I suppose last week was going to take it out of the players so we're happy to be in the semi-final at this stage," Murray said.

The first-half conditions were clearly tough on the players in the Páirc.

"The wind was gale force, particularly at the far side, I don't think you'd notice it so much in the stand so we'd take the half-time point lead all day long.

"The instruction at half-time was to keep doing what we were doing but to do it that bit faster."

Katrina Mackey's goal kick-started Cork's win early in the second half, with



Katrina Mackey bursts past Clare's Maire McGrath.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

Amy O'Connor nailing another two goals afterwards.

"Yeah look, Katrina has had a lot of injuries over the past 12 months, but I noticed over the last two or three weeks that she was starting to come so a massive performance."

"I thought the work of our inside line was very good today and we managed to get a couple of scores from it and that aspect I'd be pleased with."

Prior to the semi-final draw, Murray said that his side had no control over who they are paired with, and would take the game as it comes.

"We only have control over ourselves and the next two weeks will be, number one, to get the injuries cleared up and we've got to try and bring it to another level particularly."

"We saw Galway last week, a very physical team. Obviously the weather is going to suit them as we get closer to Christmas. Kilkenny are going very, very good as well so we know we're going to be under pressure."

Referring to the injuries in the Cork camp, Murray explained Gemma O'Connor, Julia White and Libby Coppinger are particular concerns.

"Gemma is one, Julia White, two, Katrina Mackey there and Libby is only just coming back from injury so we've a lot of things to get right over the next couple of weeks."

Getting White back in action against the Cats would be a major boost, adding pace and skill to the Cork forward unit.

"Julia is back doing a light jog at the moment, that was only Thursday night so two weeks is probably a long, long call there."

"I think it's too early to call, it's a gradual process."

The football and camogie semi-final fixtures clash has been averted with the LGFA switching the semi-final to December 6 after Cork progressed on Sunday. That is sure to help both teams' preparations.

"Absolutely, I think particularly a semi-final. I think it would be unfair on either one of the teams that was going out second and to the players, so common sense came good eventually."

Considering there are a number of younger players in the panel, Murray is happy with how they are progressing.

"The average age is 24. I think what killed us this year is that we didn't have the summer to develop these players so they've had to learn fast, but I think that anyone who came in there today is playing well."

Cork not really tested by Clare

ALL-IRELAND SENIOR CAMOGIE QUARTER-FINAL

CORK 3-15
CLARE 0-8

NOEL HORGAN REPORTS

IT went very much according to plan for hot favourites Cork in the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland senior camogie championship quarter-final encounter with Clare at Pairc Ui Chaoimh last Saturday.

A comprehensive 16-point victory tells its own story, notwithstanding the fact that they led by just the bare minimum at the end of a keenly-contested first-half.

After the game, Cork manager Paudie Murray revealed he wasn't in the least bit worried by the situation at the interval, considering his charges had played into a strong wind during the opening 30 minutes.

'The wind was almost gale-force, so, to be honest, I thought we were in a great position going in a point up after facing it in the first-half,' he remarked.

As regards Cork's performance overall, Murray said it was all about getting the job done in a game they were expected to win handily.

'I'd be pleased enough with this display, but we know it's going to be a different kettle of fish altogether in the semi-final, and I think we'll need far more energy in our play the next day.'

'That's the message the players will be getting over the next two weeks, because we are going to be under pressure to bring it to another level,' he admitted, adding that Cork's progress to the semi-finals has been most encouraging.

'We now have a very young team, I think the average age is 24, and a major handicap this year is that we didn't have the summer to develop the newcomers, so they've had to learn fast.'

In the final analysis, Murray is entitled to be satisfied with the way Cork dealt with Clare's spirited challenge.

Playing into the elements, they never fell more than a point behind in the first-half when their defence generally ruled with a firm hand.

Hannah Looney and Laura Hayes regularly caught the eye with some probing runs from the wing-back berths, while the influential Ashling Thompson processed an amount of ball at midfield, even if her distribution wasn't up to scratch on occasions.

Forced to indulge in a short-passing game against the wind, Cork found it difficult to unhinge a well-drilled Clare

rearguard, with wing-forward Katrina Mackey earning the main plaudits up front before the break.

After Orla Cronin and Saoirse McCarthy shared a brace of points, Mackey bagged her third to put two between the teams for the first time in the 29th minute.

While Clare's ace free-taker Chloe Morey completed the first-half scoring to make it 0-7 to 0-6, the visitors' bid to upset the odds was severely dented within a minute of the resumption.

A well-taken goal by Katrina Mackey put Cork firmly in the driving seat at that stage, and when Orla Cronin, fed by the ever-industrious Ashling Thompson, tacked on a point, it was obvious that Clare, 1-8 to 0-6 arrears, had a mountain to climb.

To their credit, they didn't give up the fight, but any hopes they might have harboured of erasing the deficit were effectively dashed when centre-forward Eimear Kelly had a goal-attempt foiled by Cork custodian Amy Lee in the 38th minute.

The losers were still in with a shout three minutes later after a point from full-forward Aine O'Loughlin left them trailing by 1-9 to 0-8, but, as things transpired, they were unable to add to their tally in the remaining time. The Cork defence, in which Libby Coppinger and Meabh Cahalane, rarely put a foot astray in the corner-back slots, came up with all the answers on the run-in, Ashling Thompson and Orla Cronin, who had been switched from centre-forward, established complete control at midfield, while Amy O'Connor thundered into the picture in attack.

The result was that Cork piled on the pressure and the punishment in earnest, with O'Connor, subdued by her own standards in the first-half, underlining her quality when ramming in two goals, having set Katrina Mackey up for the winners' first.

Hannah Looney, O'Connor, the classy Orla Cronin and substitute Cliona Healy chipped in with some fine points from play as Cork clocked up a total of 2-6 without reply in the last quarter to leave the outgunned Banner girls trailing in their wake.

With players such as Gemma O'Connor and Julia White ruled out by injury for this test, Paudie Murray feels that Cork have plenty to be concerned about ahead of the All-Ireland semi-final.

'Libby (Coppinger) has just



Cork's Laura Hayes gains possession against Clare in the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland senior camogie championship quarter-final at Pairc Ui Chaoimh on Saturday last. (Photos: Bryan Keane / INPHO)



Cork forward Katrina Mackey about to score a goal for Cork against Clare in their All-Ireland senior camogie championship quarter-final clash at Pairc Ui Chaoimh in Cork at the weekend.

come back from an injury, and Katrina Mackey got a knock out there today, so we have a lot of things to get cleared up over the next couple of weeks,' he stressed.

Scorers

Cork: A O'Connor 2-1, K Mackey 1-3, O Cronin 0-6 (4f), L Collins, S McCarthy, H Looney, C Sigerson (f), C Healy 0-1 each.

Clare: C Morey 0-4 (f), A O'Loughlin, E Kelly 0-2 each.

Cork: A Lee (Na Piarsaigh), L Coppinger (St Colum's), L Treacy (Killeagh), M Cahalane (St Finbarr's), H Looney (Killeagh), P Mackey (Douglas), L Hayes (St Catherine's), N O'Callaghan (Sarsfields), A Thompson (Milford), K Mackey (St Catherine's), O Cronin

(Enniskeane), C Sigerson (Killeagh), L Collins (Courcey Rovers), S McCarthy (do.), A O'Connor (St Vincent's). Subs, C Healy (Aghabullogue) for McCarthy, 43, L Homan (St Vincent's) for O'Callaghan, 45, I O'Regan (Ballygarvan) for Mackey (injured), 53, E Murphy (Sarsfields) for Coppinger, 54, F Keating (Courcey Rovers) for Looney, 61.

Clare: A Corbett, C Grogan, C Hehir, C Doyle, R McMahon, N O'Dea, A Ryan, S Vaughan, O Duggan, L McMahon, E Kelly, M McGrath, C Morey, A O'Loughlin, M Scanlon. Subs, R Conway for Scanlon, 36, S Condon for Vaughan, 43, G Hickey for L McMahon, 49, A Power for McGrath, 56, M Caulfield for Duggan, 57.

Referee: Liz Dempsey (Kilkenny)



Enniskeane's Orla Cronin taking a free for Cork during Saturday's Liberty Insurance All-Ireland senior camogie championship quarter-final in Cork on Saturday last.

★ THE HIGHLIGHTS

Our Star: Katrina Mackey and Amy O'Connor both made telling contributions in attack, but perhaps Cork's most consistently-effective performer was Hannah Looney, who embellished an impressive wing-back display with an excellent point in the second-half.

Star Moment: The outcome was never in doubt after Amy O'Connor did the spadework for Cork's first goal scored by Katrina Mackey early in the second-half.

Talking Point: In view of Clare's obvious limitations, it isn't easy to assess Cork's future prospects on the basis of this decisive victory.

What's Next: Cork will take on Kilkenny, runners-up to Galway last year, in the All-Ireland semi-final at Pairc Ui Chaoimh on November 28th.



The Kilbrittain/Timoleague U14A camogie team who were the Carbery division winners.

Carbery winning game of catch-up after delays from Covid restrictions

THE Carbery camogie division consists of nine clubs.

These are Barryroe, Ballinascahy, Bandon, Clonakilty, Enniskeane, Kilbrittain/Timoleague, Kilbree, Newcestown and St Colum's.

The officer board of the division is chairman, James Tobin, Barryroe; secretary, Mary Sexton, Kilbrittain/Timoleague; treasurer, Deirdre O'Leary, Kilbree; PRO, Caroline McSweeney, Bandon, and the child welfare officer is Linda O'Donovan, Kilbree.

They got a busy few weeks of divisional competitions off to a later than usual start in July when restrictions were lifted and a great effort was put in to complete competitions in the U11, U12 and U13 age groups.

The division also organised very successful U15, U17, junior and intermediate divisional competitions and in most of these, they are ready to go with the finals when games resume.

In the U13A cup final Enniskeane met Kilbrittain/Timoleague in a closely-contested and exciting final.

Enniskeane had the upper hand and ran out winners on a final score of 2-3 to 1-2.

The U13A shield final saw Newcestown meet Bandon in the final with Newcestown winners on a 6-6 to 2-1 score line.

The U13B cup saw St Colum's travel to play Barryroe and in another closely-contested game with little between the sides, St Colum's edged it in the closing stages to win 5-2 to 4-1.

The U13B shield final saw Ballinascahy meet Clonakilty 2 where Clonakilty were the stronger team on the night.

At U12 level each division ran their own league and the top teams from each division went forward to the county semi final and final.

In the U12A cup final Bandon 1 got the upper hand on Kilbrittain/Timoleague as Bandon were winners on a scoreline of 1-5 to 1-4.

The U12A shield final between Clonakilty 1 and Enniskeane was neck and neck the whole way with Enniskeane clinching it at the finish.

The U12B cup final was between Barryroe and Bandon 2. Bandon were the stronger team winning out on a score of 5-2 to 4-0.

Ballinascahy defeated St Colum's to take the U12B shield final.

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

The U11 grade was a new competition this year.

Seven clubs competed and based on results, they divided them into two groups.

In the U11A final Kilbrittain/Timoleague and Bandon met in a very close game and it came down to the final puck of the ball where Kilbrittain/Timoleague pointed in the closing seconds to claim the cup on a scoreline of 3-2 to 1-6.

In the U11B competition Enniskeane took the title at the expense of Ballinascahy winning 3-3 to 0-1 on the day in an enjoyable contest.

The U15 league commenced in July and all clubs got off to a great start but as the county games began these were the priority and it proved more difficult to get games played and the division are now waiting to play these finals.

In the U15A final Clonakilty 1 and Enniskeane battled it out in a well-contested game.

It was to be Clonakilty's night as their work rate paid off as they ran out winners of 5-6 to 2-7.

The U15A Shield final is still to be decided and here Newcestown and Barryroe will meet in the coming weeks.

Likewise, the U15B final where Ballinascahy will play Kilbrittain/Timoleague and in the U15B shield Clonakilty and St Colum's will battle it out in the near future.

The U17A final between Clonakilty and Kilbree was won by Clonakilty 4-10 to 4-3.

The U17B final will be between Ballinascahy and Kilbrittain/Timoleague.

Four clubs entered the junior competition, but there are still games to be played before finalists are known.

Kilbrittain/Timoleague and Clonakilty played in the final of the intermediate grade and it was Kilbrittain/Timoleague who were winners on the night.

It was a great season for the Enniskeane club as they won the County Intermediate championship and will join their fellow divisional neighbours Newcestown in the senior ranks for 2021.

It is great to see the clubs in the Carbery division continue to make huge progress at all levels and well done to all who work so hard in the clubs to promote camogie.



Cork manager Paudie Murray and the subs look on against Clare.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

Cork have room for improvement



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

I CAN tell you that it's absolutely freezing in the media area in Páirc Uí Chaoimh.

It's always a little chilly there, no matter what time of the year, similar to Croke Park as it's outdoor. Not too many people realise that.

They think the print and radio media are tucked away in nice cozy press boxes on big days in these stadiums, but I can vouch that it's the opposite. But it has a bird's eye view of magnificent pitches and games, and for that we are privileged.

The pitch in Páirc Uí Chaoimh looked like a billiard table last Saturday for the All-Ireland senior championship semi-finals. Comparing it to Thurles and Croke Park for the hurling games, it looked the best of the three.

Cork had a comprehensive win over Clare in the first semi-final, but that only really came in the last quarter when a tired Clare lost concentration and made silly errors coming out of defence.

They had done so well for 45 minutes, possibly the best I have seen Clare play in a long, long time and full credit to them. It was only then that Amy O'Connor capitalised and scored two well-taken goals. When Amy is through on goal there's typically only one result, it hits the net. Trying to get in on goal against a strong full-back line can be difficult and that's why I'd like to see a bit more variety in Cork's play.

It was very clear that while Clare's back three were solid, their six defenders didn't have the speed of Cork's forwards and with so much space in the park, and Clare playing a traditional attacking style of hurling, that was the time to hit low, fast balls inside to the line of O'Connor, Linda Collins, and Saoirse McCarthy.

The delivery is too slow. Cork's management has defended its 'through the lines' process when teams go defensive on



Amy O'Connor celebrates the first of her two goals against Clare recently in Páirc Uí Chaoimh.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

them and that's a fair decision. But there was no such heavy defensive play on Saturday from Clare and Cork still went down the same route.

I'd suggest that it's Cork that are forcing teams back as they themselves play deep, pulling out their forwards and crowding the middle third. You could argue they used that style against the wind in the opening half and did play that bit more direct in the second with it at their backs, but I suspect that regardless of conditions or the opposition's approach, this style of play is what Cork will stick to.

If they win the All Ireland, they'll be vindicated of course. Let's not forget that there are six changes in the current Cork starting 15 compared with the team that last won the All-Ireland in 2018.

Aoife Murray, Leanne O'Sullivan, Rena Buckley, Orla Cotter, and Julia White are five while Gemma O'Connor has also missed out on their last two championship games.

That's a big gap to fill considering the calibre of those mentioned. And yet, Cork are still in with a great chance of winning the 2020 All-Ireland title.

Orla Cronin was excellent again in her

role at centre-forward but playing deep. She creates so much in that forward division, giving great assists and also popping up with some lovely points. She is Cork's pivotal player up front.

Katrina Mackey is back to her best, despite coming off with what looked to be a shoulder injury. She's had her fair share of injuries for 16 months or so and has battled back.

It was a tremendous boost for her to get the Player of the Match award and if she can manage those injuries for the remainder of the season, which is a maximum of three weeks if Cork win next Saturday, then she is coming good at the right time.

People might feel that Linda Collins isn't firing on all cylinders because she isn't coming away with a bucket of scores to her name, but she is doing a lot of donkey work and laying off good assists. She was involved in four or five scores for Cork.

Laura Treacy had an outstanding game at full-back, just as she did against Galway. Meabh Cahalane is having a solid season.

Hannah Looney is really impressing. She played very well against Galway a day after lining out for the Cork footballers. Hannah and Meabh lined out again last Sunday as the footballers also qualified for the All-Ireland semi-final.

I think Cork's back six are doing a good job. Pam Mackey is Ms Reliability and Laura Hayes has also filled the left half-back slot well.

Cork haven't settled on their starting 15, with a couple of changes made ahead of last weekend's game again. Gemma O'Connor is back training, hopefully in plenty of time for the semi-final.

The LGFA came out the week before the quarter-finals with the statement that if Cork reached both semi-finals they would switch the Cork game out a week to December 6. I'm not going to congratulate them on common sense prevailing as the clash should never have happened in the first place.

It's great for both managements that the five dual players can concentrate on just the one code in the week leading up to their respective games.



Cork's Amy Lee in action against Waterford.

Picture: ©INPHO/Ken Sutton

Lee earns her place in team



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

FOR 18 seasons Aoife Murray was the number one camogie goalkeeper for Cork. Come the big championship games she was always the first automatic name on the team sheet.

For five seasons Na Piarsaigh's Amy Lee was Aoife's standby, rarely called upon during those championship games, but remaining patient and learning all the time.

2020 came and with the retirement of Aoife after last year's semi-final defeat to Galway Amy Lee became number one and it's fair to say that Aoife who will be 25 this month, is more than holding her own between the posts.

While it seems a huge step up with big boots to fill Amy says that this isn't a baptism of fire for her as she has been in the squad for five years and has developed nicely under the guidance of Aoife and the management of Paudie Murray.

"I'm not a raw baby really. I know the girls a long time now. I've been in the dressing room and heard all the advice and game plans during that time," Lee said.

"When I first came on the panel in 2015 I played all the league games. I've had loads of game time over the past number of seasons. It is a small bit daunting if I dwell on it filling the boots of Aoife but we spent so long training together and there were many games when I stepped into goal and she was on the line.

"She helped me loads, even though we used to kill each other. We got on very well and I learned so much from her.

"Mark McNulty and Sean Cremin have spent a lot of time with me this year.

"We might start our session a half hour before the others and get our bits done. Sometimes we'll spend the full session together, other times we'll join the rest of the group for part of it.

"I feel I've come on hugely over the past



Cork goalkeeper Amy Lee celebrates her side's goal against Down. Picture: ©INPHO/Laszlo Geczo

few years. You'll get advice from different people and you'll learn what's good for you.

"It takes a while to iron out all the small silly habits you get into as a goalkeeper but I can see a lot of those having left me.

"Things like not making the right decisions, when to go and when not to, puck-outs, etc."

It's a proud time for Amy's club Na Piarsaigh. I'm trying to recall the last Na Piarsaigh player to hold down a position on Cork's senior team.

I stand to be corrected but I think it could be Paula Goggins back in the nineties.

Amy's mother Angie moved back to Ireland when Amy was 10 and her sister Shannon was five.

The three have a tight bond. As soon as they landed in Upper Fair Hill Amy was off down to her local club as she was mad to play Camogie.

"I was always sporty as a child. In the UK I played Gaelic football and soccer, out with the boys all the time, but I was dying to play Camogie and went straight down to Na Piarsaigh."

Playing with Cork never entered Amy's head. She didn't have idols as she rarely watched games.

She just went along with the club and even though selected on Cork U15 and U16 development squads and making the minor panel you get the impression from Amy that she just went with the flow.

That call up to the senior panel in 2015 may finally have awakened something in Amy to realise that she was a good keeper.

She is now turning into a very good keeper with a lot more still to learn.

She credits Na Piarsaigh for her standing today.

"I love playing for the club and am here today because of them. I really enjoyed this summer with them.

"We didn't have a lot of luck with two ACL injuries and were disappointed not to do better than we did but it was really nice to train fully with them for the campaign and hopefully we'll do better next year."

Ahead of the All-Ireland semi-final against old rivals Kilkenny Amy isn't overwhelmed with the task in front of her. In fact, it's just the opposite.

"I can't wait. I love the big days. I won't panic and am really looking forward to it. I feel I still have a lot to learn. Just watching all the games which were streamed over the last few weeks, I feel the game is starting to evolve and I'm going to evolve with it."



Hannah Looney: Cork camogie players "hurting from last year".

Picture: INPHO/Bryan Keane

Cork on a mission after last year's semi-final defeat says Looney

CAMOGIE

■ Daragh Ó Conchúir

AFTER falling short to Galway by a point in last year's Liberty Insurance All-Ireland camogie semi-final, Cork are motivated this season.

The squad is shorn of key players Aoife Murray and Orla Cotter, but remains on track with a semi-final against Kilkenny at Páirc Uí Chaoimh this Saturday.

Hannah Looney, with her power and athleticism, is key at half-back for the Rebels this season. They are traits that see her shine in ladies' football, too.

"Obviously, we were all very disappointed losing to Galway (in the group)," says Looney. "We did take positives from it. I think we did show a good bit of character; maybe we were lacking that bit last year."

"I was probably a bit nervous going into that Galway game, because I don't think we performed that well against Wexford. I was hoping we could match them and I think we did. Galway were flying and are really experienced. They're going to have that every game. And Rebecca Hennelly's sidelines are going to be a dagger in anyone's coffin, but I was really happy with how we performed. We showed that we have that character, that we have that drive," Looney says.

Looney noted the benefit of the live streaming of games, exposing camogie to a wider audience, including Hennelly's strikes from each wing.

"It's some skill. I think the main thing to take from that is people got to see it and that's huge," Looney says.

"That's something Galway have. Chloe Sigerson, for ourselves, isn't far off it and, maybe when we need it, she'll

deliver it as well."

With nine minutes left against Clare, Cork still only held a five-point lead, but they finished with a flurry.

"We knew Clare were going to put it up to us. They weren't gonna be easy," Looney says. "They've been training really hard. They've gotten to this stage of the championship not from lack of work rate, not from lack of playing well."

"We were probably a bit slow starting. Conditions, maybe, didn't help, but I'm glad we kept in there. Clare were putting loads of pressure on us getting those scores, but we kept it going and drove on in the second half. I think a lot of that has to go to the work rate of the forwards. They really brought that on," Looney says.

"The message that Amy O'Connor was driving home to us during the week was: 'No complacency'. We weren't complacent, we kept with it, and delighted we ground it out in the second half and drove it on a bit. We don't fear what comes next. It's a big challenge, but we'll work hard and get it right."

And so it is a reprise of the rivalry with Kilkenny, which dominated the latter half of the last decade. "Kilkenny and Galway have been leading the standards for the last few years," Looney says. "The main thing is to focus on ourselves; let the lads deal with the match-ups and tactics. We'll get the body right and the mind right. It's gonna be a big task. I think a lot of us are really hurting from last year."



Hannah Looney, of Cork, and Aisling Gilsenan, of Cavan.



Connecting past and present... Breda O'Farrell with her daughter Katie and Katie Terry with her mother Vera, celebrating after Aghada secured their first adult county camogie title

Onwards and up for Aghada ladies

NINE years on from the birth of the club, Aghada's camogie team wrote a piece of history in recent months, winning the club's first adult county title.

As they approach their virtual AGM on December 2, members will certainly be looking forward to building on this inaugural success, achieved with a 0-12 to 1-7 win over Kilbree/Kilmeen in the SE Systems Junior C Championship decider.

"It was a close call again in the final," commented industrious Aghada club chairperson Vera Terry. "We were obviously delighted to get over the line, having lost two previous finals."

The win means that we have now won county titles at U14, U16, minor and junior level since the club was

CAMOGIE

■ John Cashman

formed, which represents a great achievement.

"Overall the club is in a very good place and we have a great bond with the ladies football side, as well as the hurling and football sector. Our camogie membership now stands at 211, with the majority of the players also playing ladies football. Looking ahead there is certainly a really bright future in the club."

Terry, who says that more young referees are urgently needed in the game to cope with swelling playing numbers, is one of seven people still in-

involved who were part of the original committee numbering 19, which came together in 2011.

"My inspiration came from Sheila Spillane in Killeagh. She did so much to promote camogie and help players, that I just wanted to do something positive to promote the game."

Interestingly past and present success was united in Aghada's recent county win.

Three members of the victorious team, Ali Smyth, Abigail Ring and Kyra Owers are great grandnieces of the legendary Christy Ring. It was appropriate that 100 years on from his birthday, his name should again be linked with county success on the playing fields.

Between them, Ali and Abigail

scored nine points in the final, which saw Aoife Healy named as Player of the Match.

In another link from the past, two more members of the winning team Katie O'Farrell and Katie Terry were taking the first steps on a pathway that they hope will be paved with gold.

Forty years ago, their mothers Breda O'Farrell (Landers) and the aforementioned Vera Terry (Motherway) were celebrating as part of the Killeagh team that became the first club from Leaside to win the All-Ireland senior title. Meantime, sisters Sarah and Rachael Leahy are also a successful family trail, as their grand-aunt Noreen Duggan scored 3-2 for Cork in the 1955 All-Ireland final against Dublin.



Cork's Katrina Mackey gets ahead of Clare's Alannah Ryan.

Mackey twins are as determined as ever to drive Cork back to final

THE Mackey twins are true leaders and wonderful role models for Cork camogie.

Now in their 12th season in Rebel red, Katrina and Pamela are looking forward to the challenge Kilkenny will pose on at Páirc Uí Chaoimh this Saturday. Along with Gemma O'Connor and Julia White, they are the longest-serving members of the current squad and are one win away from returning to the All-Ireland final.

Hugely committed to the game, they can be found in the gym during the off-season as they keep themselves sharp. Every season they come back rearing to go.

For Katrina: "It's just that the game is at such a high standard now that if you stop you will be left behind."

"You must keep it going all year around if you want to be the best no longer is it acceptable to finish the season and take a few months off and expect to come back in good shape, you must be ready when the season starts and this is what must be done."

Both girls acknowledge the help from John Corr in Fitnessworx Gym who is always superb to them.

Pamela explained: "John is a huge help and is always on hand to look after us and we really appreciate it and all the facilities in Fitnessworx Gym we are able to use, we would be lost without them."

The influx of younger players into the panel has brought a new buzz to the camp and Katrina and Pamela look back to their early days when they started on the senior journey.

"When we joined the senior squad in 2009, Gemma O'Connor, Aoife Murray, Orla Cotter, Rena Buckley and

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

Mary O'Connor to name a few were the established players and we looked up to them but they treated us no differently.

"We wanted to be as good as them so we had to challenge ourselves and up the work-rate to try and keep on top of things. It is the same now with the younger girls who have come in they want to be as good as the older established players so it is up to all of us to challenge them and perform to the highest of our ability in training and set high standards."

They are big fans of the new split-season and this year they really enjoyed being able to train with Douglas and get to know a lot of the club's younger players.

"It was great to go down to the club and be part of everything going on in the championship build-up, it was good for clubs to have their players available and also when the championship was over to be able to fully commit to inter-county so we really enjoyed it."

They have had huge success so far. The holders of five All-Ireland senior medals, two All-Ireland Féilles, an All-Ireland senior colleges title and a county, they have done it all but the desire to win on Saturday is huge.

"Last year hurt so much we were gutted to lose to Galway. We're back in the semi-final and the rivalry is intense with Kilkenny," said Pamela.

Katrina says they have "hugely skillful forwards all capable of winning a game, they will be up for it especially after the last two meetings".



Cork's Ashling Thompson celebrates a score against Kilkenny in 2017.

Picture: Oisín Kenir

How Cork can beat the Cats



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

TOMORROW: All-Ireland camogie semi-finals: Cork v Kilkenny, 12.30pm; Galway v Tipperary, 2.15pm; Páirc Uí Chaoimh. Live on RTE

We really do have two humdinger semi-finals in the senior championship in Páirc Uí Chaoimh tomorrow.

Cork and Kilkenny face off in the curtainraiser followed by Galway-Tipperary. The All-Ireland champions typically play second so that's the reasoning there, but the Cork versus Kilkenny clash is anything but a prelude. What a game we have in store. There is so much at stake for both sides. Apart from the obvious that there's an All-Ireland final place on the line I'd argue that Kilkenny have so much more to lose than Cork.

Cork have been champions four times over the past six years and are in rebuilding mode, though still with a very strong backbone. Kilkenny on the other hand lost another All-Ireland title last September and you get the feeling that if they don't reach the final this year it's the most difficult of roads back for them, maybe even impossible for this particular group.

They have suffered so much in recent times, losing five finals in seven years and psychologically that does damage, not to mind the mileage on their clocks. Mileage takes its toll far harder when you're losing.

Brian Dowling, Ann Downey's number two in 2019, has now taken over the helm, assisted by Tommy Shefflin. I wonder if he'll use a different tactical approach in the semi. I'm setting aside Kilkenny's previous outings in this campaign as they had little competition and that will not have helped Brian.

In the 2017 and 2018 finals that Kilkenny lost to Cork Ann Downey was criticised inside and outside her county for being extremely defensive. They invited Cork onto them and lost in low-scoring finals,



Cork's Amy O'Connor and Grace Walsh of Kilkenny battle at Croke Park in 2018. Picture: Laszlo Geczo

0-10 to 0-9 and 0-14 to 0-13.

However, in 2019 they changed all that and played a more attacking style. And what happened? They conceded three goals in last year's final to Galway as their defence was ripped asunder by the running midfield duo of Niamh Kilkenny and Aoife Donoghue.

Was Ann Downey therefore justified in how she played those 17 and 18 finals? It seems so. What will Brian Dowling do in Páirc Uí Chaoimh? Cork's short passing game could play into Kilkenny's hands. They need to get the ball in fast and split them. Kilkenny have weaknesses defensively. Running at them down the middle was the Cat's weak spot a year ago.

Orla Cronin plays deep from centre-forward; will she be the thorn in their side? If Brian Dowling hasn't sorted his defence then Kilkenny will be in trouble. Either he has or he will play seven or eight defenders and if that happens that's where Cork need to start taking their scores from distance. It's an area in which Cork has been poor at so far.

That and taking too much out of the ball with hand-passing. You are inviting trouble with that style. Gone are the days when you used it just to get out of trouble. Cork were regularly dispossessed last

year as a hungry, in-your-face team, will distract you. The defence have been excellent. On the flipside, Kilkenny too will need to take their scores from outside Cork's 45. Cork however, crowd the middle third and that could prevent Kilkenny getting the space to do so.

Amy Lee, in her first year is having a great season, Laura Treacy is playing a blinder minding the square, Meabh Cahalane is a very welcomed addition back to the squad, Pam Mackey is a leader with Laura Hayes also having a good season. Hannah Looney is playing a lovely attacking style from the right wing which Kilkenny will want to dampen.

Katie Power, Kilkenny's best forward in battles with Cork, was ruled out for the season after breaking her kneecap in training six days before their opening championship game and it goes without saying her loss is immense for the Cats.

Tactics will play a huge role in how this game plays out. It'll either be a very attacking, exciting game or we'll go back to a 2017/2018 format which will lead to low scoring and minimal distance between the sides at the end.

If Cork speed up their play and from midfield up they pop over the points I'd tip them to win.



Douglas' Pamela Mackey races away from Ballincollig's Denise Cronin.

Kilkenny determined to add to title haul, warns exile Aylward



All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship semi-final

Cork v Kilkenny

Tomorrow: Páirc Uí Chaoimh, 12.30pm

Referee: Owen Elliot (Antrim)

TV: RTE Two

Eoghan Cormican



Elaine Aylward is on RTÉ co-commentary duty for Saturday's All-Ireland camogie semi-final between Galway and Tipperary.

But the former Kilkenny captain will land into the Páirc Uí Chaoimh press area long before she is due on air in order to catch the first of the afternoon's semi-finals involving her native county and hosts Cork.

Aylward's journey to Páirc Uí Chaoimh will not see her drive south from Kilkenny; rather she'll make the much shorter spin up from the West Cork village of Enniskeane.

"I'm inside enemy lines," Aylward quips during her lunch break at Clonakilty's AIB branch. "My husband, Colin, is from Enniskeane. I am down here since 2016," she adds, by way of explanation.

Aylward's relocation to West Cork two years after she retired from the inter-county scene brought her into direct contact with one of the game's then-rising stars. Enniskeane's Orla Cronin has since established herself as one of camogie's most stylish and intelligent forwards; the 2017 All-Ireland final's Player of the Match heads into this weekend's fixture as Cork's leading championship scorer with 0-20 to her name and is the player who will be top of the Kilkenny watchlist.

Although she has been in Enniskeane for four years now, Aylward continues to play her club camogie with Mullinavat in Kilkenny. The almost five-hour round trip for a Tuesday or Thursday evening training is anything but feasible, and so the 2009 All-Star defender has been falling in with the locals mid-week since moving down.

She being a half-back and Cronin a half-forward, surely they've picked up one another at Enniskeane training?

"Every now and again they give me that challenge," says Aylward, her tone suggesting it is not always the most pleasant of experiences.

"I think it is because nobody else wants to mark her at club training that



The new statue dedicated to Michael Hogan, the Tipperary player killed in the Bloody Sunday events of 1920 in Croke Park, in Grangemockler, Tipperary.

Picture: Eoin Noonan/Sportsfile

they always pick on me being the outsider. Marking Orla certainly keeps me on my toes.

"It would be fascinating to put a player on her for an entire game and just watch her runs and her movement, and then on top of that, her striking is just so sweet.

"Even the free-taking, to step into Orla Cotter's shoes this year hasn't been a bother to her. She has been just brilliant."

Cronin hit 11 points five from play — as Enniskeane overcame Aghabullogue to claim Cork Intermediate honours in mid-September. Aylward was on the sideline serving as selector.

"Enniskeane have been really good to let me train with them, and I've been more than happy to give them a hand as selector the past couple of years.

"Moving down to West Cork, you think you are coming into football country, but they are hurling mad here,

and there are a couple of really driven people in the club.

"Wherever you go in the world, when you can talk camogie and hurling with others, you'll make friends and acquaintances fairly quickly. It has been no different here in Enniskeane."

Still very much a Kilkenny woman at heart, she says the team-mates she left behind will not be content to end their respective inter-county careers with the solitary All-Ireland medal they picked up in 2016. Either side of that final win over Paudie Murray's Cork, there have been All-Ireland final defeats in 2014, '17, '18 (all to Cork) and '19. Indeed, some current panellists such as Collette Dormer, Anne Dalton, and Denise Gaule were there alongside Aylward for the 2009 defeat to Cork.

"Not being content with their one All-Ireland medal, I think that is why so many of the players are coming back year on year. It would have been very

"I think it is because nobody else wants to mark her at club training that they always pick on me ..."

easy to look around last year after being beaten in your third All-Ireland final in a row and say: 'That's it, that's my lot, I am throwing the towel at this.'

"In fairness, they are all back and driving it on again. To the fore have been the long-serving players, the likes of Denise Gaule, Anne Dalton, Collette Dormer, Claire Phelan. As I said, it would have been easy to step away and say: 'It is not to be'. But they are back, and you have to admire their resilience.

"But also, they'll realise the smallest thing could have swung some of those All-Ireland finals. They were so close in 2017 and 2018. It wasn't even a game of inches, it was a fraction of an inch in those finals. The games swung on a magnificent point from Julia White, in 2017, and that late, late Orla Cotter free in 2018.

"They were such small margins, and Kilkenny will use that as a real motivator this weekend."

Tipp camogie has begun to expect again

Tipperary want an extra plate set at camogie's top table. The Premier women have watched the big three rule for long enough. No longer do they see themselves as inferior.

It is an inescapable blot on the game of camogie that the senior championship has been a three-horse race since Wexford slipped down the pecking order in the years after their 2010-12 All-Ireland three in a row.

From 2013 onward, no county outside of Cork, Galway, and Kilkenny has appeared in the All-Ireland final. Indeed, the unspoken truth has been that whoever from this three avoids the other two at the All-Ireland semi-final stage is a safe bet for a final spot. A look back at recent semi-final results confirms such.

Over the past seven years, Wexford (2013-16), Dublin (2017), and Tipperary (2018 and '19) have lost their All-Ireland semi-final games against the big three by an aggregate total of 50 points. That's an average losing margin of just over seven points.

Tipperary contest a third consecutive All-Ireland semi-final this afternoon. Reaching



Liberty Insurance All-Ireland senior camogie semi-final

Galway v Tipperary

Today: Páirc Uí Chaoimh 2.15pm

Referee: R. Kelly, Kildare

TV: RTE

Eoghan Cormican



the last four three years running is a level of consistency the county has not achieved since the tail end of the noughties, which was a glorious decade for Tipperary camogie.

The Premier women were 12 adrift of Cork in the 2018 semi-final and the margin would have been exactly the same at the end of last year's penultimate round-fixture against Kilkenny were it not for two late goals from Orla O'Dwyer and Karen Kennedy.

Having tried — and failed — against two of the big three, it seemed only appropriate the

semi-final draw a fortnight ago should pit them against the one remaining dominant force — Galway — they had not encountered at this stage in recent years.

Just over a week before the country went into lockdown last March, Tipperary went to Ballinasloe and beat the All-Ireland champions on their home patch to advance to a first league decider in 11 years.

That the league was subsequently abandoned was of course disappointing for Bill Mullaney's charges, but the Premier took immeasurable amounts of confidence from the 1-8 to 0-10 win. And while they had to wait seven months for an opportunity to build on and back up this result, three championship wins from three outings has them again within one hour of a first All-Ireland final appearance since 2006.

Tipp full-back Mary Ryan, a veteran of 16 seasons, was 17 years old when introduced as a second-half sub during the 2006 final defeat to Cork.

Where Tipperary travelled in hope of a favourable result on weekends such as this in

recent years, Ryan says they now expect.

Indeed, when asked if Tipperary view themselves as being in the same bracket as the big three, Ryan's reply highlights the changed mindset in camp. "I think it is time we see ourselves there now. We have heard the chats, we know there'd be a question mark over us and our consistency over the years. It is something we probably had to question ourselves. Getting to the semi-final the last three years, we are starting to prove our strength.

"Going back a year or two maybe, we might have said, 'right, we have reached a semi-final, we want to perform, we hope we perform'. At this stage now, we expect to perform, we expect more of ourselves and we expect ourselves to compete.

"It has probably taken experience of a semi-final, and hopefully that stands to us come the weekend, that we expect that performance and bring it."

Given one has to go back to the 2012 All-Ireland final for the last time Cork, Kilkenny or Galway were beaten by an-

other county in a knockout championship fixture, the Boston Scientific engineer knows Tipperary won't be considered at the level of the big three until they dump out one of the game's standard-bearers. "We know that when you break into that top four, the challenge is bigger. It is the semi-final stages, nothing is going to be easy.

"At this stage, we expect ourselves to be making a final. It is what we are pushing for. We are getting closer. We'd like to prove ourselves by beating one of those top three, whether that's done at a championship group stage or semi-final shouldn't matter.

"I know people will say our win over Galway was the league. But whatever stage it was at, we went up and beat the All-Ireland champions. What we could take from it would be confidence and for our own mental game, that we should have nothing to fear when we meet them, regardless of when we played them, that we know they are a team we have beaten and we've potential to do the same again."

Joining the panel in 2005 as a 16-year-old corner-forward,

the Moneygall clubwoman was coming into a group that had won five of the six previous All-Irelands. But as it transpired, Ryan had just missed out on Tipperary's golden years.

Final defeats were encountered in 2005 and '06, semi-final losses endured in 2007 and '08. There followed nine years of early championship exits. "We have gone through a complete full circle in that we spent a lot of time away from the top six.

"When I came in first, there was a really strong panel and massive success, and massive support too. Camogie in Tipp was at the highest level and highest calibre it could have been at. I do feel it is heading back there.

"Looking back, we had such a strong panel. Over the years then, you lose players, you get players, but we lost a settled set-up. The last three years getting to the semi-finals, we have a good core set-up and a good strong panel again.

"[To reach an All-Ireland final] would be huge. It is where we want to be and it is where we are starting to expect ourselves to be."



Valley Rovers, the South East U11 A camogie winners.

Carrigdhoun work hard to make sure underage games are played

IN the south-east division of camogie, Carrigdhoun, nine clubs make up a hugely active camogie community: Ballinhassig, Ballygarvan, Carrigaline, Courcy Rovers, Crosshaven, Kinsale, Sliabh Rua, Tracton, and Valley Rovers. March is normally a busy month in the division as they hold a hugely successful indoor blitz for U7s to U10s in Riverstick, but Covid restrictions put paid to that as sport ground to an abrupt halt.

With everything on hold, it was July before business resumed and the U11, U13, and U15 Carrigdhoun Leagues got underway. Pitches were at a premium, clubs found it difficult, but, working together they got the job done.

The U11 league got underway and in the U11 A final, Valley Rovers and Tracton went head to head.

From the start, the girls on both sides showed great skill and determination and Valley Rovers came away as winners after an excellent contest.

Sliabh Rua and Ballygarvan contested the U11 B final where there was great teamwork and skill shown by both sides as Sliabh Rua came away with the title. In the U11 B1 final, Courcy Rovers took on Crosshaven on a glorious day for camogie and, battling hard, Courcys held off the challenge of Crosshaven to run out winners.

The U12 competitions are normally run by the county board, but this year each division ran their own league within their division and this worked out very well.

Each club had four games in a league format. This year there was a difference where you got two for a score over the bar and this did cause confusion for players, coaches, and players alike, and it's something that needs to be looked at again.

Carrigdhoun got all their U12 finals played and in each there was great skill, teamwork, and commitment.

Sliabh Rua and Valley Rovers made it to the final of the U12 A and it promised to be a thriller with both teams having won all their games to get to the

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

final. Sliabh Rua were quick to settle and they forced the pace from the start as they kept the pressure on Valleys for the entire game; not letting Valleys get into the game.

Despite strong pressure Sliabh Rua held firm and came away with the win. In the U12 A1 final Ballinhassig and Carrigaline served up an exciting game from the throw-in and it was end-to-end action with two hard-working teams giving it their all. As scores came fast and furious and with two points being allowed for a point players mentors and supporters had to wait for the final tally before Carrigaline were declared winners of a very exciting contest.

The U12 B final was hosted by Tracton who took on Courcy Rovers and they set about their business early as they took the lead from the start.

Courcys never let up and rallied in the second half, but having laid the foundations for victory in the opening half, Tracton held on until the final whistle. Crosshaven headed to Ballygarvan to meet the home side in the U12 B1 decider and here the Ballygarvan girls had too much strength for a Crosshaven side that showed great commitment throughout the game.

For the U13 leagues the teams in the division were divided into two groups, but despite the huge efforts put in by all the clubs who were participating in county board competitions too. The league was not finished due to the recent Covid lockdown, but hopes are high that this can be completed as soon as restrictions are lifted.

In the U15 league, clubs were finding it hard to play games due to county commitments, so the league has still to be finished.

Courcy Rovers brought the senior county title to the division as they took their first senior title defeating Inniscarra.

A hard but enjoyable year for a division, who are always to the fore in Cork camogie.



Cork's Lauren Homan and Niamh O'Dea of Clare.

Picture: INPHO/Bryan Keane

Cork girls won't fear Kilkenny

IT was wins all round for Cavan GAA last weekend as their junior team qualified for the All-Ireland junior camogie championship final after beating Roscommon 2-16 to 1-6.

They face Armagh who beat Tyrone, 2-10 to 3-4. The All-Ireland intermediate final pairing will be Antrim and Down.

I'm sure those counties will be thrilled to win an All-Ireland title, but it's a bit of a sham in my view when five intermediate teams and five junior teams from around the country were prevented from partaking based on last-minute restrictions introduced by the association that eliminated second adult teams from competitions.

It makes a mockery of winning those titles now. Galway, Cork, Dublin, Kilkenny, and Tipperary all fielded second teams in the intermediate championship while Offaly, Wexford, Waterford, Limerick and Clare featured in the premier junior competition.

The senior semi-finals will be live on RTE 2 today. I don't think Cork will fear Kilkenny at all; I think they'll enjoy the challenge and as previewed last night, it'll either be a cracking all attacking game or a crowded fight with low scoring and little separating the teams.

Let's hope it's the former. Former Kilkenny camogie player Aine Fahy says the Cats have one of the strongest panels they've had in a long time.

That will be tested. Especially without Katie Power, who broke her kneecap in October. I was surprised by that statement.

Aine says the management team can't wait for this game. "This is going to be a huge task for them, Brian (Dowling) is going to relish this, he really wants this more than anything, he wants to get these girls back to an All-Ireland final."

"I think he'll have the girls primed and ready for the semi-final, and the older



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

girls, the likes of Anne Dalton, Denise Gaule, and Collette Dormer, they will be ready and they will pull on the younger girls as well, and there's a really strong panel, probably one of the strongest panels we've seen in a long time."

Power has had a really tough year. It was while running in a straight line at training that she broke her kneecap and she was only back after having three finger operations where one of her fingers has been fused and is now immobile.

Fahy reflected on the Cork and Kilkenny camogie rivalry. They have met in four All-Ireland finals since 2014, with Kilkenny victorious in just one, in 2016.

Fahy believes this may add an edge to the game and make it one of the best games of the year.

"You know they've always been there or thereabouts in league finals and things like that as well. There is that bit of rivalry on the field, but off it I feel like a lot of them are very close, they'd be all quite friendly with each other, but you know when you step over those white lines on the day of the game, it's a completely different kettle of fish."

"This is going to be new territory for Kilkenny going down to play in Páirc Uí Chaoimh, which I must say looks in great condition as well."

That's the difference today, isn't it, with a large majority of school leavers heading to college and making great friends with players from other counties, particularly while playing in the Ashbourne cup and

shields. Back in the 1980s and early 90s those going to college were far fewer, so that rivalry extended beyond the pitch for many. They could never see themselves friends with the opposition.

Of course, when you get older you realise how silly that is, but at the time they were arch enemies and that was it.

Dowling, in his first year in charge of Kilkenny, after being Ann Downey's number two in 2019, would love to beat Cork in the Páirc. He'll know that the games he's played which saw them top their group will count for nothing.

The former Kilkenny hurler's demand for a high work-rate without possession as a non-negotiable on the field of play could play a big part if Cork overdo their hand passing style.

"I think any manager's dream is to see your players getting turnovers, getting hooks, getting blocks. We really drilled it into them all year, looking at the statistics after the games, who's making the scores, not just the people who are scoring."

"It's who's getting in the hooks and the blocks, who's getting the turnovers that's leading to the scores and that's a huge thing for us," the Kilkenny manager said.

Aishling Moloney is back for Tipperary against the All-Ireland champions Galway (2.15pm).

She is such a top-class player but has only 20 minutes of championship action behind her after being sent off in Tipp's opening victory over Clare.

What a midfield battle that will be with Moloney and possibly Eirena Fryday paired against Niamh Kilkenny and Aoife Donoghue, the instigators of Galway's three goals last September to take just their third All Ireland senior title.

Tipperary have a strong side, they're confident and believe they'll take this semi-final over champions Galway.

With the year that's in it, stranger things have happened.

By Daragh Ó Conchúir
AT PAIRC UÍ CHAOIMH

GOALS from Anne Dalton and Miriam Walsh, and a doughty defensive effort, enabled Kilkenny to recover from a six-point deficit to record a 2-10 to 1-11 win over rivals Cork and seal a place in the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Senior Camogie Final.

Cork stuck like lightning early on, winning a free from the throw-in that Chloe Sigerson drove over and, by the eighth minute, they were leading by six. Gemma O'Connor drilling a goal after Katrina Mackey soloed through the middle and fed the St Finbarr's star.

In the opening quarter, the Rebelles patiently worked it out of defence, drew players and capitalised on the movement of centre-forward Orla Cronin to draw Meighan Farrell out to the flanks.

Kilkenny needed something. And they appeared to be galvanised by a piece of dogged defending by Michelle Teehan, who dispossessed Laura Collins and was fouled coming out with ball. Soon after, Mary O'Connell launched a stunning point from wide on the left and Dalton followed up with an equally impressive score.

Mackey hit back after again being found all on her own inside the opposition 45 but Kilkenny shot four of the next five points, Denise Gaule converting three frees.

O'Connell added a second as the constant rotation of the Kilkenny attack appeared to cause confusion in the Cork defence. What's more, their ability to gain a greater share of possession prevented the Leesiders from finding the spaces as much, and the decision to persist with Farrell and Davina Tobin following Cronin and Amy O'Connor everywhere, eventually paid off.

They were really motoring though when Dalton grabbed Gaule's long-distance free and rifled to the far corner of the net in the 28th minute to take the lead. The teams exchanged two points apiece and it was 1-8 to 1-7 at half-time.

It got even better for the Noreiders three minutes after the resumption when Miriam Walsh timed her run perfectly from deep onto an Aoife Doyle pass, carried, took the hit from Pamela Mackey and drove to the net.

Cork hit a pointed free but Gaule followed suit in the 43rd minute to put four between the sides. Cronin wasted a couple of good chances from frees before Katrina Mackey pointed. But that was a spurned goal opportunity as the Douglas speedster was facing the posts when gathering possession just outside the semi-circle,



SHEER JOY: Kilkenny duo Kellyann Doyle and Niamh Deely celebrate their victory over Cork

Kilkenny and Galway set up epic rematch

7 Kilkenny's sharp-shooter Denise Gaule racked up seven points to play a massive role in her team's win

with only Collette Dormer between her and goalkeeper Aoife Norris with Gemma O'Connor to her right. It was a two-on-one but Mackey chose to tap over.

Ashling Thompson and Sigerson, the latter with a fantastic score, reduced the margin to the minimum but Cork couldn't draw level as the Kilkenny defence performed heroics and Aoife Doyle attracted a late foul for Gaule to bring her tally to seven as they edged home.

Meanwhile, a 15th-minute goal by Carrie Dolan gave Galway breathing space as they beat Tipperary 1-11 to 0-8 to set up a clash with Kilkenny - a repeat of last year's final.

Cathal Murray's crew prevailed on that occasion with a display of

attacking intent that they couldn't replicate yesterday.

The weather conditions were far more difficult of course but significant credit must go to Tipp, and while it might be scant consolation at this early stage, the impression that the Premier have improved considerably this year was confirmed with a performance of stubbornness and determination.

Bill Mullaney's outfit matched the renowned workrate of Galway, even though they were without the injured Nicole Walsh, Aisling Moloney, Eirena Fredya, and Orla O'Dwyer, who is in Australia preparing for the AFLW season.

That said, Galway were always in control once Dolan netted, and their physicality and pace in attack made them a greater scoring threat throughout. At the other end of the pitch, skipper Sarah Dervan served

up the customary colossal full-back performance for the champions.

Niamh Hanniffy had a point in the second minute for the champions but Tipp were the better team in the opening quarter and points from Róisín Howard and the first of six from Cáit Devane gave them the lead.

That goal arrived just before the first water break though, a combination of Ailish O'Reilly and Orlaith McGrath setting up the half-forward, who rode a challenge before finishing from close range.

Tipp did have a golden chance of responding in kind in the 20th minute, when Sarah Fryday found Howard with a drilled pass but Sarah Healy made the stop.

Niamh Kilkenny and Rebecca Hennelly pointed after that for Galway, with Devane slotting a pair of frees, the second of which should

have been a penalty when Fryday was pulled down off the ball.

Aine Slattery made a point-blank save from Ailish O'Reilly just before the break when it was 1-6 to 0-5. Points from McGrath, Dolan (45) and McGrath again established a seven-point lead.

Fryday flashed a shot over after a tremendous surge from Niamh Treacy and Devane slotted a free but Galway defended stoutly.

Galway were able to bring on some real talent from the bench and Slattery saved Healy's penalty after sub Siobhán McGrath was fouled, and the Sarsfield sharp-shooter also slotted the resultant 45 after having a shot deflected around the post. When McGrath opted to take a point from another penalty, it was indicative of the control Galway had and they ran out deserving winners.



Amy O'Connor: Cork will look to her to lead way against Kilkenny.

though Kelly Mallon's threat must also be contained. Keeping a hot attack like Mayo's to one goal was an impressive feat but it's another thing to keep this Dublin team as quiet. Admittedly the champions haven't been shooting the lights out in this campaign - but Mick Bohan will be expecting his players to ramp things up for today. There is just too much talent in the ranks, too much experience in the likes of Sinead Aherne, Noelle Healy, Sinead Goldrick and Niamh McEvoy to be caught even by an Armagh side brimming with confidence. Verdict: Dublin.

Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Senior Camogie semi-finals. Cork v Kilkenny, Paírc Uí Chaoimh, 12.30pm, (O'Elliot, Antrim) Live RTE.

After finishing as runner-up in Group 1 that featured reigning champions Galway, Cork were

made to work even harder to reach this point with a quarter-final win over Clare.

Attackers like Amy O'Connor and Katrina Mackey have led the way and their defence has been incredibly tight but they face a Kilkenny side aiming for a fifth consecutive All-Ireland final appearance. Like Cork, their defence has been impressive but Cork represent a step up in class. But Brian Dowling's charges will be raring to go and if they can produce the form that they have showed in their campaign they will provide a real test to the Cork backline. Verdict: Kilkenny.

Galway v Tipperary, Paírc Uí Chaoimh, 2.15pm, (R Kelly, Kildare) Live RTE.

It has been a successful campaign for a Galway side who finished top of their group to secure straight passage into the semi-final. Niamh

Hanniffy and Aoife Donohue are in sensational form and Galway look strong in all areas of the park.

Tipperary are back in the semi-final stages for the third successive year and desperate to push on and make a final. They are no doubt a stronger outfit this year, and their results to date have backed up that claim after a superb league campaign that saw them reach the final before the pandemic hit.

Cáit Devane looked in supreme form on the way to this semi-final and Clare remain the only team to score a goal against them. That extra bit of know-how, though, should favour the champions.

Verdict: Galway.

Words: John Fogarty



Cork's Amy O'Connor after the defeat to Kilkenny.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare



Linda Collins is tackled by Kilkenny's Michelle Teehan at Páirc Uí Chaoimh.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

'We had no fear of playing in the Páirc'

MATCH REACTION

■ Mary Newman

JOY for Kilkenny boss Brian Dowling after departing Páirc Uí Chaoimh with a place in the All-Ireland camogie final secured.

"We are really delighted to have come here today and get a win and get over the line and be in another final. We came down today quietly confident; our aim all year has been to get to the final so were just relieved to get over the line."

Dowling said he was concerned after 10 minutes as Cork made a blistering start: "It wasn't looking too good for us after ten minutes and I suppose if you were a betting man you would have said they were going to give us a trimming. Cork were flying and we were under huge pressure but to be fair the girls, they dug deep and never gave up."

"We told them to stay going and to remain focused no matter what and to not give up, we told them we wouldn't be shouting on the line we said just need to keep focused and keep at it. They have experienced the hurt in previous years so to get over the line today and make it to the final was a huge desire."

He said coming to the Páirc wasn't an issue.

"We weren't too worried to be travelling to play in Cork, in fact, we played twice at home and were very flat so really there was no added pressure on us to be playing Cork on home turf."

Dowling paid tribute to Ann Dalton, who grabbed an important first-half goal.

"We were struggling in the opening quarter and Ann's goal was vital as it got us right back into the game, we settled down and went in at half-time a point ahead."

Kilkenny hurling ace Henry Shefflin also came in for praise.

"A few weeks ago we got Henry Shefflin in to do a bit of free-taking work with Denise Gaule and it certainly paid off because she was tremendous today converting six vital frees."

Dalton has soldiered for many years in the Black and Amber and has suffered her fair share of disappointments at the hands of Cork.

"We're relieved to get over the line, they got a great start and we never panicked."

The desire to win the title is huge. It's been 2016 since Kilkenny were champions and Dalton is looking forward to another tilt at glory.

"Four years since we won it and it would be great to get over the line, it's been a strange year and we are just so glad to still be playing. Our intermediate team along with a few other counties could not participate in their championship and you have to feel so sorry for those players."

"Hopefully we will do them all justice now as well and bring a title home to Kilkenny."

Wasteful Cork pay the price

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

Kilkenny 2-10
Cork 1-11

CORK will wonder how they let this Liberty Insurance All Ireland senior semi-final slip from their grasp in Páirc Uí Chaoimh on Saturday, as last year's defeated finalists Kilkenny made it to the Christmas decider.

A whirlwind start saw Cork lead 1-3 to no score inside eight minutes of the throw-in as they took the game to the Cats in what developed into a superb contest. Piling on the pressure after a Chloe Sigerson long-range free on 58 seconds gave Cork the lead they took control early.

Sigerson and Orla Cronin were on target with points before Gemma O'Connor, lining out in her first championship game of the season after recovering ahead of schedule from a punctured lung, rattled the net with a pile-driver after Katrina Mackey had split the Kilkenny defence with a blistering solo run before offloading to O'Connor.

Kilkenny eventually opened their account on 11 minutes with Mary O'Connell and then Ann Dalton pointing. Mackey clipped over a great point as Cork regained control and at the first water break they led 1-4 to 0-3, O'Connell second point keeping them in touch.

Settling on the resumption, Kilkenny began to win frees and with Denise Gaule unerring they began chipped away at Cork's lead. It was 1-5 to 0-5 on 25 minutes, Orla Cronin tapping over a free, but Cork were struggling with Kilkenny's intensity around the middle third at that stage.

Kilkenny hit the front with a superb Ann Dalton goal as she grabbed Gaule's long-range free turned and fired to the net.

What a boost it was to the visitors, with three minutes to go to the break they were now a point ahead.

Ashling Thompson levelled but again Kilkenny responded, Gaule with two points in between a neat Sigerson effort; Kilkenny were 1-8 to 1-7 up at the half-time whistle.

We had an explosive start to the second half as Cronin equalised before



Katrina Mackey has her shot blocked down by Kilkenny's Collette Dormer.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

Miriam Walsh hit the goal that ultimately proved to be the difference between the great rivals. Kilkenny won possession after Cronin's score and after working the sliotar to Walsh she gave Amy Lee no chance.

Gaule pointed again on 40 minutes but remarkably that was Kilkenny's only score for the next 21 minutes as Cork began to get a grip on possession without turning it into scores. It didn't help that they lost Pamela Mackey with an injury. At the water break, Katrina Mackey split the posts on the run and when the impressive Ashling Thompson scored after 50 minutes, Cork looked the likely victors.

They were hugely wasteful from here on, as they hit four wides in a row before the outstanding Sigerson hit

her fourth score with four minutes of normal time remaining.

Just one down, Cork needed to be composed and clinical. Instead, they squandered some great chances, including a couple of sidelines, betrayed the great work the defence was doing at holding the Cats at bay.

Unfortunately, panic began to set in as the clock ticked toward 60 minutes when Cork only needed a point to at least force extra time.

With four minutes added time announced, Gaule broke Kilkenny's duck and edged them two points ahead.

That left Cork chasing a goal but from the puck-out, the Rebels couldn't engineer a worthwhile chance. Kilkenny stood firm at the back and when the whistle sounded, they were after se-

curing a berth in the All-Ireland next month.

Remarkably, one score from play in the second half was enough to see Kilkenny through.

Scorers for Kilkenny: D Gaule 0-7 (0-6 f), A Dalton 1-1, M Walsh 1-0, M O'Connell 0-2

Cork: C Sigerson 0-4 (0-1 f), O Cronin 0-3 f, G O'Connor 1-0, A Thompson, K Mackey 0-2 each. KILKENNY: A Norris; G Walsh, C Dormer, M Teehan; C Phelan, M Farrell, D Tobin; A Farrell, A Dalton; A Doyle, L Murphy, D Gaule; K Nolan, M Walsh, M O'Connell.

Subs: S Fitzgerald for L Murphy (14); N Deely for Teehan (49); K Doyle for O'Connell (56).

CORK: A Lee; M Cahalane, L Treacy, L Coppinger; H Looney, P Mackey, L Hayes; A Thompson, K Mackey; A O'Connor, O Cronin, C Sigerson; L Collins, G O'Connor, S McCarthy.

Subs: N O'Callaghan for P Mackey (44, inj); C Healy for Collins (49); J White for McCarthy (54).

Referee: O Elliot (Antrim).

Player ratings

Rebels didn't get the key breaks

Amy Lee: Couldn't be blamed for two well-taken goals by Kilkenny. Puck-outs were lost on occasion but were strong distance wise against the wind. A good game and season overall. 7

Libby Coppinger: Came under pressure at times. But also won good ball, particularly in the final quarter. Cork's full-back line should have done better for Miriam Walsh's goal. 6

Laura Treacy: Outstanding. Brilliant in the first quarter as Cork started brightly. Prevented a positive Kilkenny attack and cleared for Gemma O'Connor's goal. Possibly could have done been stronger in preventing Miriam Walsh's goal. 8

Meabh Cahalane: Did little wrong despite being pulled around by Mary O'Connell. Got caught with a pass coming out of defence when maybe the best option was to drive it up the pitch, but overall a competent game. 7

Hannah Looney: Tried extremely hard. Kilkenny nullified her attacking runs up the wing and the middle third was busy which prevented space. Those attacks were missed. 7

Pamela Mackey: Had a tough task marking Ann Dalton. A steady performance until a shoulder injury ruled her off in the 43rd minute. 6

Laura Hayes: Did well in her first full season as Cork's left half-back. Was confident on the ball. 6

Chloe Sigerson: Finished with four points and was actively involved in a lot of good that Cork did. Possibly should have kept the ball in play for her last side-line attempt from a tight angle. 7

Ashling Thompson: Had a quiet first half, but came thundering into the game in the second. Won good ball and scored two points. 6

Amy O'Connor: A quiet day at the office for the Cork captain. Clearly a marked player after some dashing performances this season. 5

Orla Cronin: Won tremendous ball and scored three points. Uncharacteristically missed a couple of frees, one you'd have bet your house on but that's sport. 7

Katrina Mackey: Did well. Found space and laid off good scores including Cork's goal as well as hitting two points herself. 7

Linda Collins: Found the going tough and her first touch left her down on a couple of occasions. Her style is one-handed pick-ups low to the ground. Two hands at times would be the better option. 5

Gemma O'Connor: A late addition after being out for the past few weeks with a punctured lung. Placed in at full forward. Scored a good goal to give Cork a strong lead, but was quiet by her standards overall in a new position. 5

Saoirse McCarthy: A youngster still developing. Hit a few balls short and wide. Hard to adjust to the tenacity and tension of an All-Ireland semi-final against Kilkenny. 5

Subs: Niamh O'Callaghan 6, Julia White and Cliona Healy, not on long enough to be rated. Compiled by Linda Mellerick



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

SPORT can be so wonderful and so cruel.

Apart from referee Owen Elliot ruining the second half of this game with frees, we were treated to a tremendous battle between Cork and Kilkenny whose rivalry was to the fore once again. Toughness, fitness, skill, and tremendous scores were there for all to see.

It was a game which Cork dominated early on, Kilkenny took over, then it was Cork again, but the scores just wouldn't come for the home side in that last quarter.

Cork won so much ball for 20 minutes. Ashling Thompson came powering in. Orla Cronin was winning a huge amount, but Cork couldn't match it on the scoreboard. Kilkenny didn't score for 21 minutes in that second half.

Nerves came into it a little bit in the final quarter as players tired and mistakes were made, but there's no mistaking that this was a great game between two top sides. Unfortunately for Cork that will be of little consolation as, for the second year in a row, they fell short at the semi-final stage.

I had said during the week that Cork needed to play direct and pick off scores from distance to win this game and they did that. To be fair they did nothing wrong on Saturday. They were beaten by the better team on the day.

Both sides will rue misses, but that's what championship is all about. When so little separates sides, you need to take every chance.

I think that not stopping the clock for water breaks in camogie is wrong. No sour grapes here, but to stop the game for two minutes in each half and for that time not to be added on isn't right.

Pamela Mackey was down for a few minutes with a shoulder injury that saw her taken off. Clare Phelan also went down, yet just four minutes was added on at the end.

No matter how much attention you



The Cork team head into battle against Kilkenny.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

give Ann Dalton she does damage. What a brilliant goal in that opening half to take the lead for the first time. What an incredible catch under pressure and a great strike from a tight angle.

Cork started so brilliantly. They raced into a 1-3 to no score lead after just eight minutes. Gone was the slow play out of defence. Their movement, interplay, and scores were excellent.

Chloe Sigerson hit the first two followed by an Orla Cronin free, laying the foundations, before a brilliantly worked goal which started out with Laura Treacy at full-back, and Katrina Mackey offloading to Gemma O'Connor saw her struck low to the net past Aoife Norris.

Treacy was playing a stormer at full-back. She won every ball on Katie Nolan in a wonderful attacking style. Both sides went with a moving, split-

ting forward line; Kilkenny often working the 1-1-3 format or the 2-2-2.

Cork likewise pulled their half-forward line deep as they typically do. Gemma hovered around the square.

Kilkenny were giving Katrina Mackey too much space as they tried to counteract Cork's overlapping play and she was instrumental in scores in that opening quarter.

Kilkenny never panicked. By the water break, on 16 minutes, they were four points down and possibly should have been level but for some poor wides. On one occasion Denise Gaule was running through and should have given the pass for a goal chance but didn't and I wondered if the killer instinct was gone from the Cats.

Mary O'Connell, a relatively unknown player, scored two fine points to settle Kilkenny while at the other end Michelle Teehan I thought was

playing a pivotal role in preventing Cork capitalising further. Both were taken off later in the game, but they had done their job. Gaule played a top game once more and was up there for Player of the Match.

Cork missed a chance to go in level at the break, but one point down and coming out with a slight wind at their backs wasn't a bad scenario. What was a concern was how Kilkenny had fought their way back to go one up. Level after two minutes of the restart, another excellent Kilkenny goal by Miriam Walsh and now we were worried.

But Cork fought back. The scores wouldn't come. I think I'd have brought on Cliona Healy and Julia White sooner, but it's easy to sit in the stand and say that.

Kilkenny march on to this unique of All-Ireland finals on December 12. Cork are left to reflect.



Saoirse McCarthy is tackled by Kilkenny's Niamh Deely at Páirc Uí Chaoimh.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare



Cork's Julia White and Cliona Healy after the defeat to Kilkenny on Saturday.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

Cats set sights on happy final tale



Kilkenny's Collette Dormer and Claire Phelan show their delight after Saturday's victory over Cork in Saturday's All-Ireland senior camogie semi-final at Páirc Uí Chaoimh. Picture: INPHO/Laszlo Geczo

IT MATTERED

Cork's second-half wastefulness. Limited their opponents to one score between the 33rd and 64th minute, but were unable to capitalise on a succession of chances at the City End to either get level or ahead of Kilkenny. Cork wasted five scoring opportunities in the third quarter, while sustained, late pressure after narrowing the gap to the minimum was not reflected on the scoreboard.

CAN'T IGNORE

Kilkenny, despite only one second-half score from play and going scoreless for 21 minutes of the second period, managed to come out on top.

GOOD DAY

A first Kilkenny victory over Cork in the championship since the 2016 All-Ireland final.

BAD DAY

Cork are going to harbour deep regrets over this result throughout the winter. Paudie Murray's charges know this was an opportunity lost. Bar the second quarter, Cork were on top in this contest.

BEST ON SHOW

Three early wides did not dent Denise Gaule's confidence and her contribution of 0-7 (six frees) was crucial to the Kilkenny win.

SIDELINE SMARTS

Cork's short-passing approach had Kilkenny in all sorts of bother in the early stages. But on too many occasions Cork's intricate passing game broke down in the opposition half. There were also a couple of occasions where Cork were guilty of over-playing possession in the middle third.

PHYSIO ROOM

Injury forced Cork centre-back Pamela Mackey off heading into the final quarter. "Pamela is an outstanding player so any team would miss her," said Paudie Murray afterwards. A word of acknowledgement for Gemma O'Connor who played the full hour four weeks after suffering a punctured lung.

MAN IN THE MIDDLE

Owen Elliot was satisfied he played the correct amount of second-half injury-time after the RTÉ television clock suggested he blew for full-time two minutes early. The Páirc Uí Chaoimh stadium clock did not pause time during the second-half water break, whereas the RTÉ television clock did, thus creating the discrepancy in time. Timekeeping aside, Paudie Murray, as can be read elsewhere on this page, was disgusted with the referee's display.

WHAT'S NEXT

A 7pm All-Ireland final throw-in for Galway and Kilkenny on Saturday, December 12. The pairing is a repeat of last year's decider, which Galway won.

WORDS: Eoghan Cormican



All-Ireland Senior Camogie semi-final

Kilkenny 2-10

Cork 1-11

Eoghan Cormican

Páirc Uí Chaoimh



There are three Kilkenny players from Saturday's victorious semi-final team facing into their eighth All-Ireland camogie decider on December 12.

Collette Dormer, Anne Dalton, and Denise Gaule played in their first All-Ireland final back in 2009. It ended in defeat, as did five more of the All-Ireland finals they have featured in.

The trio have their Celtic cross from 2016, but all in all, All-Ireland final day has not been a happy hunting ground for them or their team-mates who lined out in the 2013, '14, '17, '18, and '19 losses.

Dormer was a steady presence at full-back during Saturday's semi-final win, while further forward, Dalton and Gaule contributed 1-8 of Kilkenny's 2-10 total.

To keep returning to the

coalface and to keep driving Kilkenny back up the hill to the concluding afternoon of championship action year after year is testament to their resilience and character.

Dalton, however, was adamant after this latest semi-final victory, that past heartache — and there has been plenty of it — is not what fuels them.

"I think the media kind of play into this, 'oh, ye have lost so many', but honestly, we only think about 2020," said the six-time All-Star.

"If we thought about any other year, you are thinking in the past and that is no use to you when you go out on a pitch. For us, it is not about last year, it is not about next year, it is about 2020. If you play any other game bar the one in front of you, you absolutely don't have a chance. To get to the All-Ireland final is the aim every year. It is great to be back there. But it's no use unless you win. We fell short last year so we just have to push it on, focus solely on 2020."

Dalton's 28th-minute goal, after fetching a Gaule free, put Kilkenny in front for the first time, 1-6 to 1-5.

The visitors, who had not been properly tested en route to the last four, were almost shell-shocked by Cork's early intensity and found themselves 1-3 to 0-0 adrift inside eight minutes.

Let off the hook by Cork's failure to capitalise on further goal opportunities after Gemma O'Connor hit the net, Kilkenny gradually arrived at the pitch of proceedings.

Ahead by 1-8 to 1-7 at the break, Kilkenny moved 2-8 to 1-8 clear when Miriam Walsh struck for their second goal three minutes after the restart. Two Gaule frees is all they'd manage between there and the finish. And yet, this meagre tally proved sufficient to secure the county a fifth consecutive All-Ireland final appearance.

"Twenty-one minutes without scoring is frightening. We won't be winning All-Irelands

doing that," admitted Kilkenny boss Brian Dowling.

"Our backs were tremendous. That Cork team has some unbelievable forwards. The likes of Amy O'Connor and Orla Cronin. We gave Meighan Farrell and Davina Tobin jobs to do, they had to sacrifice their own game, and they were immense."

Cork's Katrina Mackey could — and should — have played Gemma O'Connor through for a goal when firing over just before the second water break. But at least Mackey hit the target. Too many of her team-mates dropped their efforts either wide or short as Cork domi-

nance came to little. Neither Chloe Sigerson or Orla Cronin had much joy from placed-balls throughout the second period. Cork cut the gap to the minimum, 2-9 to 1-11, on 57 minutes, but couldn't find an equaliser. A 64th minute Gaule free, Kilkenny's first score in 21 minutes, sealed Cork's fate. His own team's wastefulness and referee Owen Elliot's performance were the two issues exercising Cork manager Paudie Murray afterwards.

"First of all, we had our chances to win it. I thought the referee was very, very inconsistent. We were blown for overcarrying on a number of



Bench press powers Galway back to All-Ireland final



All-Ireland Senior Camogie semi-final
Galway 1-11
Tipperary 0-8

Therese O'Callaghan
 Páirc Uí Chaoimh

Galway manager Cathal Murray and his players will face familiar foes in the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship final next month. A final like no other on Saturday week as for the first time the showcase involving the defending champions and Kilkenny will be played under the Croke Park lights (7pm). It is a repeat of the 2019 decider.

Their hard-earned victory over Tipperary on Saturday in a misty Páirc Uí Chaoimh propelled them into their sixth final since 2010. A tonic goal from Carrie Dolan in the 15th minute provided the necessary breathing space for the Westerners, their nous and experience of the big day enabling them to withstand a brave Tipperary challenge.

"There are a few sore bodies in the dressing room," reflected Murray. "We left chances behind us. 1-11 isn't a great score but then conditions were hard to play in."

A formidable backline headed up by hard-working captain Sarah Dervan conceded just four points from play, while the reinforcements off the bench were hugely significant.

"We brought on four subs and they all made an impact, and that is what you want. It is certainly going to be hard for us to pick the team for the final. People are putting up their hand for selection."

"Kilkenny are a quality side. They didn't get half enough credit for last year's All-Ireland final against us. They scored 17 points and that would have won five or six of the last All-Irelands. There were two points in that game with five or six minutes to go. They are not going to be afraid of us."

Tipperary appear to be moving in the right direction and the gap is narrowing. Nonetheless, semi-final losses define their last three seasons.

"Galway are an experienced team and close down your options. Finding that extra decision is where we are lacking," said boss Bill Mullaney.

"We need to push through the door and get into that final. I would be convinced if we got to the final, we would have won it. One through 34, they give savage effort. I can't ask any more of that squad

and the management team as well. Lads are thinking morning, noon, and night how do we improve. We gave our best. We came up short and weren't good enough."

"Injury-wise, Eireana (Fryday) and Nicole (Walsh) were out. Aishling (Moloney) had an injury from the football. Orla (O'Dwyer) going back to Australia. They are four super players and four players that would usually start."

Scores — and chances — were at a premium. Joint captain Cait Devane stuck six out of their eight points.

Mullaney, however, said he was perplexed with some of the refereeing decisions.

"Karen Kennedy got busted twice going through and we got nothing. It is not like you expect handy or easy frees but they were obvious. We had a player down with a head injury, I know it was accidental, we weren't looking for a free. But it is normal, in GAA or camogie, that the whistle is blown. Galway went on and got a point off of it. It might sound like sour grapes, it is not. Galway beat us. They were the better team. Those are player welfare issues — she was on the ground, laid out, helmet off, and nothing for it. The frees were obvious. They should have been given, the head injury was obvious, the play should have stopped."

Scorers for Galway: C Dolan (1-3, 0-1 free, 0-1 45), S McGrath (0-1 pen, 0-1 45) and O McGrath (0-2), N Kilkenny, R Hennessy, N Hanniffy and A O'Reilly (0-1).

Scorers for Tipperary: C Devane (0-6, 0-4), S Fryday and R Howard (0-1).

GALWAY: Sarah Healy; Shauna Healy, S Dervan (Capt), H Cooney; E Helebert, S Gardiner, T Kenny; A Donohue, N Kilkenny, C Dolan, C Cormican, R Hennessy, A O'Reilly, N Hanniffy, O McGrath.

Subs: S McGrath for R Hennessy (44), S Spellman for C Dolan (52), N Coen for A Donohue (60), R Black for T Kenny (63).

TIPPERARY: A Slattery; J A Burke, M Ryan, E Loughman; M Eviston, A McGrath (J-Capt), C Quirke; K Kennedy, N Treacy; J Kelly, R Howard, S Fryday; G O'Brien, C Devane (J-Capt), M Campion.

Subs: S Quirke for C Devane (bs 4-5), S Quirke for J Kelly (48), C McIntyre for M Campion (48), C Maher for N Treacy (55), K Blair for S Fryday (60).

Referee: Ray Kelly (Kildare).

THE 60 SECOND REPORT

IT MATTERED

A depleted Tipperary gave it their all but without four of their first-choice players due to injury and unavailability, they had it all to do up against the All-Ireland champions.

CAN'T IGNORE

Ahead of the final it would be good to get clarity on the water-break and to make sure all clocks are in sync given the confusion which arose on Saturday afternoon.

GOOD DAY

A good two years for Cathal Murray and his management team as they target back-to-back All-Ireland senior titles.

BAD DAY

Just like 2018 and 2019, Tipperary are outdone at the penultimate stage.

SIDELINE SMARTS

Galway got a massive contribution from the bench. All four subs — Siobhán McGrath, Noreen Coen, Sarah Spellman and Róisín Black — made notable impacts.

BEST ON SHOW

Galway captain Sarah Dervan excelled at full-back. She provided great protection for goalkeeper Sarah Healy. Mention too for Tipperary custodian Áine Slattery who was outstanding.

MAN IN THE MIDDLE

Tipperary manager Bill Mullaney took issue with some aspects of Ray Kelly's officiating. However, he did acknowledge that the better team won.

WHAT'S NEXT

Galway will defend their crown against Kilkenny in a repeat of the 2019 final on Saturday week (Dec 12) at Croke Park (7pm).



FINDING A WAY: Galway's Sarah Dervan bursts past Tipperary's Miriam Campion in the All-Ireland camogie semi-final. Picture: Inpho/Laslo Geczo

occasions and you'd like that to apply on the other side as well. I seriously question his display. I am just absolutely frustrated with the standard of refereeing this year and other years. I am in it long enough to know the rules myself. You look for consistency on a day like today, and we certainly got the opposite."

Murray disagreed with the suggestion that Cork, whose gameplan centres around a short-passing game, should have been more direct.

"I am sick of hearing that. There were an awful lot of people on during the week shouting about it. When we play our short, running game, the first 15 minutes is an example of that, we carved them open. Our biggest prob-

lem was we went away from that. Maybe the players listened to the press too much."

Scorers for Kilkenny: D Gaulie (0-7, 0-6 free), A Dalton (1-1), M Walsh (1-0), M O'Connell (0-2).

Scorers for Cork: C Sigerson (0-4, 0-1 free), O Cronin (0-3, 0-3 free), G O'Connor (1-0), A Thompson, K Mackey (0-2 each).

KILKENNY: A Norris; G Walsh, C Dorrer, M Teehan; C Phelan, M Farrell, D Tobin; A Farrell, A Dalton; A Doyle, L Murphy, D Gaulie; K Nolan, M Walsh, M O'Connell.

Subs: S Fitzgerald for L Murphy (HT); N Deely for Teehan (49); K Doyle for O'Connell (56).

CORK: A Lee; M Cahalane, L Treacy, L Coppinger; H Looney, P Mackey, L Hayes; A Thompson, K Mackey; A O'Connor, O Cronin, C Sigerson; L Collins, G O'Connor, S McCarthy.

Subs: N O'Callaghan for P Mackey (44 mins, inj); C Healy for Collins (49); J White for McCarthy (54).

Referee: O Elliot (Antrim).



Murray defends Cork style after All-Ireland exit

BY NOEL HORGAN

PAUDIE Murray was scathing in his criticism of the referee following the All-Ireland semi-final loss to Kilkenny.

Immediately after the game the consensus was that the match official hadn't allowed for the water-break when he blew the final whistle prematurely in stoppage time – though the Camogie Association insisted afterwards the time-keeping was correct – but Cork manager Murray was irked by ref's overall performance.

'A lot of things went on out there that I certainly wasn't happy with, and I thought the referee was very inconsistent, to be honest,' Murray remarked.

'We were blown for over-carrying on a number of occasions, and you'd like to have seen it applied on the other side too.'

'I don't want to get started about referees, I'm sick to death of it at this stage, but I'm absolutely frustrated by the standard this year, and other years as well.'

'I'm at this long enough to know the rules myself, but you look for consistency on a big day.'

'We certainly got the opposite today, and I'd seriously question his (the referee's) display,' blasted the Cork boss, who revealed he was made aware immediately after the game there was about two minutes short of the additional time played.

'It's a crazy situation, because there's no way somebody should be getting that wrong at this level.'

Murray also took exception to the suggestion by a reporter that Cork might have fared out a lot better had they adopted a more direct approach over the hour – rightly pointing out that the team's short-passing game had enabled them to hit the ground

'I thought our biggest problem today was that we went away from the short game'

running.

'I'm sick of hearing talk like that, there was a lot of people shouting about it again during the week, but I thought our biggest problem today was that we went away from the short game which had worked superbly early on,' Murray said.

'We couldn't have asked for a better start, and, while you'd have to give Kilkenny credit for the way they fought back, it's just very disappointing we didn't keep doing the things we were good at and were doing so well in the first quarter.'

Despite relinquishing the initiative in the second quarter, Murray felt Cork were in a strong position at half time.

'I was happy enough going in a point down and having the wind in our backs for the second half, but the early goal Kilkenny got was probably the killer-blow,' he pointed out.

'Having said that, we got on top again in the last 20 minutes, but we didn't take the chances we had to win the game.'

'We missed a few frees too, so we have only ourselves to blame from that point of view, because it's those small margins that make the difference at this level.'

Now in his ninth season involved as Cork manager, and with four All-Ireland wins under his belt, Murray is convinced the future is bright for his current charges.

'While a lot of our players have All-Ireland medals, the majority are 25 years old and younger, so this team is going to take a bit of time to fully develop, and it's definitely on the way up in my view,' he said.

KILKENNY 2-10
CORK 1-11

NOEL HORGAN REPORTS

TO say Cork flattered to deceive in the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland senior camogie semi-final clash with Kilkenny at Páirc Uí Chaoimh last Saturday would be putting it mildly.

Bursting from the traps, they clocked up an unanswered 1-3 inside the opening eight minutes, performing with such fluency and cohesion as a unit that they looked capable of dismantling the Noreiders' ambitions before the break.

By the short whistle, however, Cork found themselves trailing by 1-8 to 1-7, which, on the face of it, wasn't a major cause for concern considering they had played against the wind in the first half.

At the same time, it was bound to be a significant boost to Kilkenny to have recovered so well from a potentially disastrous start, and it seemed as if they might be ready to keep the momentum going after full-forward Miriam Walsh bagged their second goal within two minutes of the resumption.

They were four points up, 2-9 to 1-8, after their ace free-taker Denise Gaule was on target in the 42nd minute, but then the pendulum swung back in Cork's favour. And without ever reproducing the sparkle they exhibited during the early exchanges, they could have regained the lead had they made the most of their chances in a gripping finale.

Cork manager Paudie Murray agreed they allowed Kilkenny off the hook to a certain extent in the closing stages, but he insisted the most frustrating aspect of the day from his perspective was that the team deviated from the style of play that had yielded such rich dividends early on.

'It's when we play our short running game that we're at our best, which was clearly exemplified in the first 15 minutes today,' Murray said.

'We carved Kilkenny open in this period, and the thing that's annoying me most now is we didn't continue to do what we're good at, because I believe we'd have had a better result if we did,' the Rebel boss lamented.

It isn't difficult to appreciate where Murray was coming from, given Cork's whirlwind start, highlighted by a move begun by full-back Laura Treacy and also involving Hannah Looney, Orla Cronin and Katrina Mackey before the latter's smart lay-off set full-forward Gemma O'Connor up for the game's opening goal.

It left Cork leading by six points, but, regardless of how well they were playing, to think they were going to have things all their own against a team

CATS TAME REBELS



Cork defender Hannah Looney tries to come to terms with the defeat.

Second All-Ireland senior semi-final exit in a row as Cork fail to build on blistering start

that had been involved in the last four All-Ireland finals was expecting a lot.

So maybe the fact that the complexion of the contest changed considerably before the interval had less to do with Cork losing their way than with Kilkenny raising their intensity levels.

A superb goal by centre-forward Ann Dalton allowed the visitors to hit the front, 1-6 to 1-5, in the 28th minute. After Cork twice got back on terms through points from Ashling Thompson and Chloe Sigerson, it took a converted free by Denise Gaule in stoppage time to separate the sides at the break.

Sigerson was most impressive up front in the first half when Thompson and Katrina Mackey both had their moments at midfield, with Laura Treacy and

Pamela Mackey particularly commanding in the central defensive berths as Cork dominated in the opening quarter.

The growing threat from the Kilkenny attack was underlined by Miriam Walsh's goal on the turnover,

which came in reply to an equalising point by Cork's Orla Cronin from a free.

Cronin didn't reach her customary heights at centre-forward on this occasion while an even more below-par performance came from Amy O'Connor, who struggled to elude the leech-like attentions of Kilkenny defender Davina Tobin.

With their two most potent

Cork's Ashling Thompson scores a point against Kilkenny.



Cork manager Paudie Murray.





Cork's Meabh Cahalane can't hide her disappointment after their All-Ireland semi-final loss to Kilkenny at Páirc Uí Chaoimh. (Photo: Laszlo Geczo/NPHO)

'It's hard to see Cork ranked as the number three team'

BY KIERAN MCCARTHY

AOIFE Murray is someone who knows what's needed to win All-Ireland senior camogie titles.

In an 18-year inter-county career she won nine All-Irelands as well as eight All-Stars, and her retirement earlier this year brought down the curtain on her remarkable time with Cork.

Now, outside the line, the former Rebels' goalkeeper admits watching Cork get knocked out of this year's All-Ireland senior championship took its toll on her last Saturday, not least because she had backed her former teammates to go all the way this season. Instead, it's back-to-back All-Ireland semi-final exits for Cork.

'Genuinely, I had us to win the All-Ireland this year from what I saw,' Murray said.

'From the few games in the league, from what I had heard from a few practice matches in September, to even seeing the club championship and how competitive that was, to having two All-Ireland minor successes in recent years, to having the intermediates winning two years ago, there was a lot to be optimistic about.'

'Unfortunately, what they have done now is put themselves under huge pressure for next season. I don't see talent or ability as being an issue. They've introduced a few younger players this year - Izzy O'Keefe, Fiona Keating, Ellen Murphy - and now they have championship minutes under their belt. With the new breed coming in, if they have a degree of ruthlessness, then we can be in a good position next year.'

But before that, Cork will watch on as Galway and Kilkenny battle it out in the All-Ireland final for the second year in a row. That's going to hurt, Murray says. From 2014 to 2018 Cork contested every All-Ireland final, but this will be their second season on the bounce missing out on the showpiece game of the year. The title of third best team in Ireland doesn't interest the former Cork shot-stopper.

'That's the thing, we would always see ourselves as better. Not being cocky, but we always would feel that we should be the ones that are setting standards and setting expectations,' Murray said.

'It's hard for camogie people in Cork - and true sportspeople in Cork who follow ladies' GAA - to see us as number three, and now we have been number three for two years. I can't remember the last time that happened and as



Former Cork camogie star Aoife Murray.

'Not being cocky, but we always would feel that we should be the ones that are setting standards and setting expectations' - Aoife Murray, nine-time All-Ireland winner

someone who loves Cork camogie that's a hard thing to take.'

Reflecting on the semi-final against Kilkenny, Murray commented: 'It's a bit like last year's semi-final and Cork have no-one to blame but themselves because we had enough opportunities in the game. Players got themselves into really good positions but the finishing left them down.'

'I would question why Gemma O'Connor was moved from full forward for the second quarter when she was creating confusion and panic in the Kilkenny defence. If it's not broken...'

Murray doesn't feel either that the loss of a few experienced figures, like herself, can be used as an excuse because there's enough experience in the ranks now to drive the team on.

'I don't think you can put it down to losing leaders. The only three that aren't playing this year are Brieghe Corkery, Orla Cotter and myself, but there's a good ten or 12 of those players playing who have played with us for years and years so it's not like we left it fell off the edge of a cliff and a whole new gang came in,' Murray explained, using defender Laura Treacy as an example of someone who has stepped up and flourished this season.

There will be a winter of reflection ahead for the Cork management team - headed by her brother Paudie who is manager - and the players because this is a game that they will all have regrets about. The good news is, Aoife Murray says, that Cork have the talent to bounce back next year.

'It's when we play our short running game that we're at our best'

attackers kept on a reasonably tight rein, Cork were always going to be hard-pressed to prevail, and, four points adrift, their prospects looked bleak heading into the last quarter.

Thanks primarily to the lion-hearted efforts of Ashling Thompson at midfield, they made a gallant bid to pull the game out of the fire, with Katrina Mackey and Orla Cronin also working tirelessly to increase the pressure on the Cats' rearguard.

In addition, Cork came up with most of the answers at the other end where Meabh Cahalane, switched from corner-back, filled the pivotal slot to good effect following Pamela Mackey's departure through injury.

Points from Katrina Mackey, Thompson and Sigerson enabled the Leesiders to cut the gap to the minimum, but they were left to rue their failure to avail of four other oppor-

tunities before Kilkenny lifted the siege to grab the insurance score, courtesy of Denise Gaulle from a free.

Scorers

Kilkenny: D Gaulle 0-7 (6f); Ann Dalton 1-1; M Walsh 1-0; M O'Connell 0-2.

Cork: C Sigerson 0-4 (3f); G O'Connor 1-0; O Cronin 0-3 (3f); A Thompson, K Mackey 0-2 each.

Kilkenny: A Norris; G Walsh, C Phelan, M Teehan; C Dormer, M Farrell, D Tobin; A Farrell, L Murphy; Aoife Dalton, Ann Dalton, D Gaulle; K Nolan, M Walsh, M O'Connell.

Subs: S Fitzgerald for Murphy (ht), N Deely for Teehan (47), K Doyle for O'Connell (53).

Cork: A Lee (Na Piarsaigh); L Coppinger (St Colum's), L Treacy (Killeagh), M Cahalane (St Finbarr's); H Looney (Killeagh), P Mackey (Douglas), L Hayes (St Catherine's); K Mackey (Douglas), O Cronin (Enniskeane), C Sigerson (Killeagh); S McCarthy (Courcey Rovers), G O'Connor (St Finbarr's), L Collins (Courcey Rovers).

Subs: N O'Callaghan (Sarsfields) for P Mackey (inj. 43), C Healy (Aghabullogue) for Collins (47), J White (Douglas) for McCarthy (51).

Referee: O Elliot (Antrim).



Cork's Saoirse McCarthy gets away from Kilkenny's Grace Walsh during the All-Ireland semi-final.

★ THE HIGHLIGHTS

Our Star: Ashling Thompson played her heart out at midfield for Cork, but, on a day when Orla Cronin and Chloe Sigerson lacked consistency from placed balls, the input from Kilkenny's flawless free-taker Denise Gaulle had a vital bearing on the outcome.

Star Moment: Gemma O'Connor's first-half goal for Cork stemmed from as clinical and exhilarating a build-up as one could wish to see.

Talking Point: While Cork had the chances to win the game near the end, the manner in which Kilkenny got back on track following a most uncertain start makes it difficult to quibble about the merit of their victory.

What's next? Kilkenny will be hoping to avoid the unenviable record of becoming the first team to lose four consecutive All-Ireland finals when they take on Galway in the showpiece.



Cork's Gemma O'Connor after the defeat to Kilkenny.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

Rebels will have regrets



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

REWATCHING the All-Ireland semi-final between Cork and Kilkenny on Sunday afternoon, emphasised it's a game Cork will truly regret losing.

That's what will hurt the players most. But on the day the best team won because Kilkenny scored more.

It's as simple as that. It's rarely in the latter stages of a championship that you can have so many wides and hope to get over the line.

Ann Dalton played a roaming game. She seemed to have the freedom to play as she wished and it doesn't look as if any Cork player in particular was tasked to mark her. I thought Pam Mackey would have followed but she only went so far.

At times in the first half you could see Katrina Mackey close to Ann as both players played deep. Ann popped back into centre forward at times and was on the edge of the square for Denise Gaule's free which led to that wonder catch and goal despite the attention of Pam Mackey and Laura Treacy.

Owen Elliot made his fixation with steps clear from the throw-in when he penalised Denise Gaule just on the fourth step. While it's frustrating, if it's consistent across the board it's acceptable but I thought the free against Pam Mackey on 12 minutes was wrong. She had tapped ball to hurley and didn't over-carry.

He was so picky on the fourth step you could understand if there is irritation around Miriam Walsh's goal. There was at least six.

He penalised Michelle Teehan harshly minutes later too though while that free looked like one that Orla Cronin would score with her eyes closed it went right of



Cork manager Paudie Murray against Kilkenny at Páirc Uí Chaoimh.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

the post.

It was a very soft free on 42 minutes which makes a mockery of the new contact rule and handed Denise Gaule her sixth point and Kilkenny a four-point lead.

But all of the above is not the reason Cork lost.

They more than had their chances to reverse the deficit. Early on Kilkenny were gifted two Cork puck-outs and hit wides.

Denise Gaule struck wide from close distance but more obvious was that she had a free player inside her and had she laid it off it was a golden goal opportunity.

Pam Mackey was clearly struggling after Walsh's goal. She wasn't going to contribute much with one shoulder but stayed on the pitch another 10 minutes.

Davina Tobin, Grace Walsh, Michelle Teehan, Colette Dormer, Claire Phelan and Meighan Farrell were extremely

strong in defence in that second half. Cork were struggling up front, particularly in the full-forward line and I thought we'd see a change sooner.

Cork went 15 minutes without a score before Katrina Mackey pointed with 45 on the clock. Cork were outnumbering Kilkenny on her run in two to one. On another day Mackey would have gone for the jugular.

Cork got nothing from Chloe Sigerson's three side-line cuts. Two went wide.

With two points on offer for this in camogie you can't blame Chloe for taking the chance but when it doesn't work it's possession lost.

I wouldn't be at all worried about Cork's future. They're a young side with loads to offer going forward.

Every defeat is difficult to take but it's a lesson learned for the many younger players that joined the panel this year.

Cats are bouncing after beating Cork but Galway a very different animal

THERE are certain players in the hurling pantheon whose mere presence on the pitch has a psychological impact on the game, and Gemma O'Connor is one of them. Like Brian Corcoran in the 2000s or Declan Ryan in the late '90s, O'Connor brings physicality, experience, and a hurling brain to whatever line of the field she occupies.

Paudie Murray is well cognisant of this talismanic aspect of O'Connor; her ability to galvanise her team and rattle opposition. He used it once before to brilliant effect in the 2017 All-Ireland final, insisting that the injured O'Connor wasn't fit to start in the build-up, but springing her on the day. She was crucial to Cork's one-point victory on that occasion, offering a steadying hand at the back and popping up for a monster equaliser at the close of normal time. The build-up to last weekend's All-Ireland semi-final felt like a strange echo of 2017: the same opposition in Kilkenny, the same question-mark over O'Connor's fitness.

Still, it was a surprise to see her start in the full-forward line last Saturday. Though her career has incorporated spells at midfield and centre-forward, she's now synonymous with centre-back. When she ghosted away from Colette Dormer in the eighth minute and received Katrina Mackey's handpass to smash it to the net, however, it seemed as if the gamble was paying off. Cork had stumbled on a compelling formula: run it and offload to O'Connor, who is, after all, one of the game's most powerful strikers of the ball.

But for all her inventive movement on the edge of the square for the remainder of the game — time and again she positioned herself to execute a carbon-copy goal — O'Connor wasn't fed. It's the inside forward's dilemma: having to rotate out of direct play to be available for the pass, but powerless if the ball isn't given.

Kilkenny's sleepy start — down 1-3 to 0-0 after 10 minutes — might be explained by the relative ease with which they overcame Westmeath, Limerick, and Waterford in the group stages on their path to the semi-final. Mary O'Connell settled them with two fuss-free points, one from each wing. Ann Dalton, like all the great players can, turned the game by creating something from nothing: catching a high dropping ball under pressure from Pamela Mackey and Laura Treacy and finishing low, pushing Kilkenny into the lead for the first time in the 26th minute.

Cork, to their credit, responded immediately with an Ashling Thompson point. By the end of the 60 minutes, Thompson's midfield partnership with Chloe Sigerson yielded five points from play in total, many from long-range. In recent years, a similar haul from play would often be enough to win a game. But in the winter championship, goals win matches, and Miriam Walsh's head-down determination early in the second half gave Kilkenny a platform to drive on.

The joy and relief of the Kilkenny players at the full-time whistle, having beaten Cork in the knockout stages for the first time since 2016, was palpable — and contrasted sharply with the muted reaction of Galway to their victory in the opposite semi-final.

Dispatching Tipperary was a torrid day's work for Galway, who were never allowed to fully get into their stride.

It's been another heartbreaking season for Tipp, who made the semi-finals for a third year in a row and are tired of being congratulated for it. While they're now firmly reestablished in the game's top four powers after a spell in the wilderness in the early part of the decade, Tipp won't be satisfied until they crack that elusive top two.

As impressive as many of their performances were this year, 2020 has also been shot through with bad luck for Tipp. Having beaten All-Ireland champions Galway in the league semi-final in March of this year, the final was cancelled due to lockdown. New signing Aishling Moloney missed two games due to suspension and was injured for the All-Ireland semi-final; experienced players Nicole Walsh and Eirena Fryday were also ruled out because of injury. Meanwhile Orla O'Dwyer, juggling three elite sports, was unavailable due to her return to the Brisbane Lions. A Cork or a Kilkenny, used to making finals year in year out, could perhaps absorb these setbacks, but a breakthrough team needs wind in their sails.

AS Bill Mullaney emphasised in his post-match interviews, the players who started last Saturday did their utmost, but experience counts for so much at this level. Think of Mary Ryan at full-back, feet like a boxer, always keeping her body between the attacker and the goalmouth and somehow never conceding frees. She pushed forward several times in the second half while Cait Devane dropped deep, as if between them they were trying to jump-start Tipp's attack. Karen Kennedy, too, was industrious and troublesome to the Galway defence, but ultimately Tipp will be disappointed with their 0-8 tally. Again, the truism: goals win matches.

With Galway and Kilkenny in the final on December 12, we have a sequel to last year's free-flowing scorefest to look forward to — such a tonic after the tight, tense trilogy of chess matches between Cork and Kilkenny that preceded it. Kilkenny will likely be favourites, despite losing last year on a scoreline of 3-14 to 0-17. Their quality and strength in recent years is plain, but so too is the fact that out of six All-Ireland finals since 2010, the Cats

have only won a single title. In fact, the psychological advantage might well be with Galway, given that both their All-Ireland victories in the last decade — 2019 and 2013 — have been at the expense of Kilkenny. With both this decider and Waterford and Limerick in the men's final taking place over the same weekend,

Christmas is indeed coming early. V's the least 200 can do for this stage.

Elmear Ryan



JOY AND PAIN: The reaction of Kilkenny senior camogie players Kellyann Doyle and Niamh Deely, following their All-Ireland semi-final win over Cork, is in total contrast to that of TJ Reid (inset) after the Kilkenny senior hurlers lost their semi-final to Waterford in Croke Park. See inside for action and reaction from a mixed weekend for the Cats PICTURES: LASZLO GECZO/INPHO & STEPHEN MCCARTHY/SPORTSFILE



THAT WINNING FEELING



Colette Dormor and Anna Farrell celebrate after Kilkenny's win over Cork in the All-Ireland senior camogie semi-final. The Cats earned their place in the December 12 final with a hard-fought win over the Rebels in Pairc Uí Chaoimh. Kilkenny have now launched a gofundme campaign to help defray costs ahead of the big game against Galway in Croke Park. See sport for more PICTURE: LASZLO GECZO/INPHO

ALL-IRELAND CAMOGIE CHAMPIONSHIP SEMI-FINAL

Galway full back Sarah Dervan comes under pressure from Miriam Campion of Tipperary during Saturday's All-Ireland camogie semi-final at Páirc Uí Chaoimh.

PHOTOS: INPHO/LASZLO GECZO



Mission accomplished as Galway stay on course to retain All-Ireland title

GALWAY	1-11
TIPPERARY	0-8

STEPHEN GLENNON
AT PÁIRC UÍ CHAOIMH

A SOLID performance - nothing more, nothing less - from Galway in this hard-fought All-Ireland senior camogie semi-final at Páirc Uí Chaoimh on Saturday. On the champions' march to a second consecutive final, where they will defend their crown against old foes Kilkenny.

It's days like these when the result outweighs everything else and in overcoming Tipperary, a side that continues to improve game-on-game, Galway now have the opportunity to achieve something that the county has never done before: win back-to-back titles.

Standing in their way are their old nemesis Kilkenny, who will be driven to avenge their All-Ireland defeat to the Tribeswomen in last year's September encounter.

That will be a potent motivat-

ing factor for Kilkenny as they look to buck a trend that has seen them lose six of the last seven All-Ireland finals they have appeared in since 2009 - two of those losses coming against Galway in 2013 and 2019.

Galway manager Cathal Murray will be wary and, certainly, it will not be lost on him just how impressive Kilkenny were in accounting for Cork, 2-10 to 1-11, in last Saturday's curtain-raiser, particularly given the pressure Brian Dowling's women came under when Cork raced into an early lead. It was an impressive recovery from the Cats.

In contrast, Galway, at times, stuttered to this victory. When they got into their flow, they looked to be a class apart but for long periods, they were forced to play this physical semi-final on their opponents' terms.

What champions do, though, is that they find a way and this they did on Saturday. While Tipperary may argue the six-point margin didn't reflect what they brought to the contest, in truth,



Galway's Orlaith McGrath secures possession despite the challenge of Julie Anne Burke of Tipperary at Páirc Uí Chaoimh.

Galway could have claimed this victory by much more.

Aside from Carrie Dolan's

brilliantly worked and taken goal on 15 minutes, Galway

spurned goal chance after goal

chance throughout the 60 min-

utes. Two of those were from the penalty spot, although in

fairness to substitute Siobhan McGrath, who took the second penalty on 60 minutes, the instruction had come from the sideline to tap it over.

Galway's first penalty midway through the second period was taken by Galway goalkeeper Sarah Healy and, although hit well, Tipp No. 1 Aine Slattery was equal to the task and diverted the shot to safety.

These were just two of multiple goal opportunities Galway had, with McGrath, who was a real menace when introduced, also going close late on when she skinned the Tipperary defence, only to see her strike go wide by the proverbial whisker.

As disappointed as Galway will be not to have converted these chances, they will know that if they can get this right for the decider, it will go a long way to returning the O'Duffy Cup back west for another year.

That said, despite Tipperary bringing huge honesty in their endeavours, Galway, having built up a 1-6 to 0-5 half-time lead, were always in control of this tie in the second period. They hit five points to Tipp's



Galway's Emma Helebert taking no prisoners against Mary Ryan of Tipperary during the All-Ireland camogie semi-final at Pairc Uí Chaoimh on Saturday. PHOTO: INPHO/LASZLO GECZO

Dervan leads the way

SARAH HEALY - 8

Excellent puck outs, good handling and made an important save in the first half from Tipp's Róisín Howard. Her penalty was well hit, but saved by Slattery. A typically excellent performance from the All-Star goalkeeper, whose reliability is a huge asset.

SHAUNA HEALY - 9

Marvellous performance from the warrior-like corner back. Defensive skills second to none, tremendous aggression and clever distribution under pressure. Defiant in the face of any pressure and as good a marker as there is in the game.

SARAH DERVAN - 10

Magnificent game from the Galway captain. Flawless performance, tremendous under pressure and made some key interceptions when necessary. Visibly inspired her teammates, showed typical leadership and broke up countless Tipp attacks throughout the game. Absolutely colossal.

HEATHER COONEY - 8

Had some difficulties against

Sarah Fryday early on but grew into the game, having a terrific second half. Reliable as ever, excellent positional sense and tackling. Very intelligent on the ball and never wastes possession.

EMMA HELEBERT - 7

Had a very solid game, made some good tackles and gave nothing away. Very clever in possession and probably the best striker of the ball in the Galway back line. Excellent reader of the game and a key part of a defence which conceded only 0-4 from play.

SIOBHÁN GARDINER - 8

Had a shaky first half but grew into the game and was outstanding in the second half. Improved positionally in the second period and was a very dominant presence at number six. Smart use of possession is a big feature of her game.

TARA KENNY - 7

Displayed excellent defensive skills, reading of the game and ability to tidy up any breaking ball in defence. An expert

Eanna O'Reilly puts the spotlight on the individual displays of the Galway players in Saturday's All-Ireland camogie semi-final victory over Tipperary at Pairc Uí Chaoimh and gives top billing to team captain Sarah Dervan.

marker, she was typically cool under pressure and gave little away. As reliable as ever.

AOIFE DONOHUE - 7

Not on the ball as much as usual, but excellent work rate and won plenty of possession throughout. Surprisingly moved into corner forward, where she got little supply, but took on the Tipp defence at any opportunity.

NIAMH KILKENNY - 8

Massive work rate, she won plenty of possession in a very physical midfield battle and was increasingly dominant as the game went on. Terrific energy, she made lots of tackles and

helped set up attacks throughout the game. Brilliant engine to compliment all of her ability.

CARRIE DOLAN - 8

Typically sharp, involved in lots of attacks and got on plenty of ball. Impressive work rate, classy striker of the ball and took her scores impressively. Unfortunate to pick up a hand injury in the second half, forcing her withdrawal.

CAITRÍONA CORMICAN - 7

A tireless worker, she made a huge number of tackles throughout the game and helped to win the midfield battle in the second half. Looked much more at home in the mid-

dle of the field, where her energy and athleticism were major assets.

REBECCA HENNELLY - 7

Impressive on the ball, one of Galway's most creative players and used possession well. Played quite deep in the first half but still managed to get forward for a well taken point. Her skill in possession is second to none.

AILISH O'REILLY - 8

Great energy, creativity and scoring threat throughout the game. Some excellent passes during the match, including one in the lead up to the goal. Extremely productive in possession and typically dangerous on the ball, especially close to goal.

NIAMH HANNIFFY - 8

Brought out the field early in the game, she made a huge impact in the physical stakes. Won a huge amount of ball and set up numerous attacks with her runs from deep, particularly in the second half. Her athleticism is a huge asset to the team.

ORLAITH McGRATH - 9

Galway's most threatening forward throughout the game. Looked unstoppable any time she received good ball. Her second point was a marvellous individual effort, typifying her ability to open up the Tipp defence. She was also Galway's best outlet for long deliveries into the full forward line.

SUBS:

SIOBHÁN McGRATH - 7

Extremely sharp, she brought an additional threat to the full forward line which hadn't been there prior to her introduction. Linked up well with O'Reilly and Hanniffy.

SARAH SPELLMAN - 6

Impressive energy and athleticism, but not involved in much of the play after her introduction.

NOREEN COEN - 6

Looked sharp and was involved in a couple of attacks but was given very little time to make an impact.

RÓISÍN BLACK

Not on long enough to be rated.

THE GAME WILL BRING US ON BUT IT NEEDS TO - GALWAY MANAGER MURRAY

STEPHEN GLENNON

AN All-Ireland semi-final victory over Tipperary has placed Galway's senior camogie team exactly where they want to be: in another All-Ireland final.

As the reigning champions, and boasting a squad rich in talented players, a second consecutive All-Ireland final appearance was the minimum target they set themselves.

"Yeah, that is our goal at the start of the year - every year," said Galway boss Cathal Murray, speaking to the media after his side's 1-11 to 0-8 semi-final triumph over the Premier County at Páirc Uí Chaoimh last Saturday.

"We want to be back in Croke Park every year. I suppose, it was September we wanted to be there this year, but it has gone on a few months. Look it, it will be a lovely occasion in two weeks' time. It is under lights on the Saturday night so it is lovely to be there and, as I said, that was our goal. Obviously, we are in it now and we want to go and win it."

Reflecting on their semi-final win, Murray acknowledged it was a concern that Tipperary had an extra-game - a quarter-final win over Waterford - where his side qualified straight for the penultimate stage as group winners. The Tipp test, though, will stand to them.

"I would hope so. It is going to bring us on. I am sure there are a few sore bodies there in the dressing room now so it is probably going to take us a week to recover. That is what this week will be all about, recovery. So, again, it is certainly going to bring us on, but it needs to."

"Kilkenny are a quality side and they didn't get half



Galway camogie manager Cathal Murray following the action against Tipperary.

enough credit that they deserved last year in the All-Ireland final. They scored 17 points against us. That would have won them five, six or seven of the last All-Irelands, I'd say. We know how good Kilkenny are and it is going to take a massive performance to beat them in the final."

Indeed, while he was happy with Galway's display in the semi-final, he said it was not good enough to win an All-Ireland decider. Several aspects of their play will have to be improved on, among them securing a greater return on scoring chances created. That said, he noted that was not to take away from what Tipperary brought to the contest.

"We knew it was going to be a battle against Tipperary. They beat us already in the league and they had a great win over Waterford in the quarter-finals, so we knew they would give us a huge test, and that is what they did."

"Our goal in the first half was crucial. Tipp were probably on top at the time and it meant, then, we were always that bit ahead. I thought the backs were outstanding, especially in the last 15 or 20 minutes. Really held out."

With a subs bench the envy of most counties, the introduction of fresh legs in the second period had a positive effect, with Siobhan McGrath causing Tipp all sorts of problems. No doubt, she will be among those pushing for inclusion in the starting line-up come the final.

"I'm sure the team is going to change going into the final, there is no doubt about that, because people are putting up their hands all the time. That is something we talk about. We brought on four subs today and they all made an impact and that is what you want. It's going to be hard on us to pick the team for the final, but that is the way we want it."

As for Tipperary manager Bill Mullane, he acknowledged that Galway's recent All-Ireland and National League wins stood to the Westerners on the day. "Maybe, that is where our experience is lacking, in just finding that extra pass or making the right decision when you are under savage pressure, which Galway put us under today."

"But, I mean, the players who played gave their best, played as honestly as they could, gave 100% effort and commitment and I can't fault them. We just weren't good enough on the day and we were held out by a very good team," he concluded.

three, with the lively Orlaith McGrath, with two superb points, and Dolan (45) extending Galway's advantage, 1-9 to 0-5, by the 36th minute.

That they only tallied two points through Siobhan McGrath (45 and penalty) thereafter - Tipp fared little better with three - will be a concern for the set-up and, when they analysis the footage, they will recognise various facets will have to be addressed.

For, at times, the Tribeswomen were ponderous; their transitioning was laboured due to the wide chasm they left between defence and attack in the middle third; quite often, the support was too slow in coming, leaving the player in possession isolated; and they could have made better use of the space, instead of directing play or ball back into traffic.

Yet, despite the above, which are all fixable, their defence was immense, led by captain Sarah Dervan. Superb at getting that touch in to disrupt the opposition attack, every time there was a breakdown and a ruck developed Dervan was drawn to it like a bee to a honeypot.

Dervan thrives in these battles and the six-time All-Star was, once again, not found wanting on this occasion. She was ably assisted by Shauna Healy, Heather Cooney, Emma Helebert Siobhan Gardiner and Tara Kenny.

At any rate, missed goal chances and lack of fluency aside, Galway were well on their way to victory at half-time when leading 1-6 to 0-5 - their goal coming just before the first-half water break when Orlaith McGrath played in Dolan. Indeed, Dolan was lively in that

first period, tallying 1-2, and she was giving the Tipp defence plenty to think about.

It was Oranmore/Maree's Niamh Hanniffy, though, who opened the scoring on the second minute, finishing off a neat move involving Dolan and her club-mate Ailish O'Reilly.

Tipperary responded with points from Roisin Howard and Cáit Devane to lead after 12 minutes, but then Galway pounced for that Dolan goal to take ownership of the contest.

After the water-break, O'Reilly and Dolan (free) traded points with Devane (play and free) and, as the game opened up, there were more chances, most notably in a 60-second spell around the 20th minute mark.

First, Howard had an excellent opportunity to goal, only to be denied by Galway custodian Sarah Healy, before in the ensuing passage of play Orlaith McGrath set up O'Reilly for a similar chance, only for the effort to strike the woodwork and go wide.

Having struggled to shake off Tipperary, Galway eventually put a little daylight between themselves and their opponents late in the half, outscoring Bill Mullane's charges by three points to one.

The first of Galway's scores could easily have provided another goal. Direct running from Aoife Donohue cut open the Tipp cover. The Mullagh dynamo off-loaded to O'Reilly in goal territory but good defending from Tipperary's Julie Anne Bourke forced O'Reilly to turn out and hand possession to Niamh Kilkenny, who opted for the point.

As it was Rebecca Hennelly,



Galway's Niamh Hanniffy and Mairead Eviston of Tipperary battling for possession in the All-Ireland camogie semi-final.

scoring at the end of a move after Galway overturned the resulting puckout, and Dolan, after O'Reilly had a goal chance saved by Tipp custodian Slatery, picked off points to edge Galway into a four-point half-time lead.

That said, the Tribeswomen were fortunate the margin wasn't tighter, after a foul on Sarah Fryday by Heather Cooney on the edge of the square could have yielded a Tipperary penalty. Instead, Kildare referee Ray Kelly deemed it was

outside the box and gave a free, which Devane converted.

Devane would also score two of Tipp's three second half points - Sarah Fryday tallying the other - but it was never going to be enough to dethrone the All-Ireland champions. Tipp needed goals and, while Devane tried her level best to conjure these up with two injury-time frees, the Galway defence was not for breaching.

Overall, manager Cathal Murray has to be happy. At the business-end of the championship,

nothing matters but securing wins and, with this fixture, his side got a stiff test that exposed a few areas that must be tidied up before the All-Ireland decider. For any manager, that's a win-win.

In addition to Dervan, each of the Galway defenders acquitted themselves superbly while further up the field, Carrie Dolan, Ailish O'Reilly and the McGrath sisters, Orlaith and Siobhan, also stood out.

Galway: Sarah Healy; Shauna Healy, S. Dervan, H. Cooney, E. Helebert, S. Gardiner, T. Kenny; A. Donohue, C.

Cormican; N. Kilkenny (0-1); R. Hennelly (0-1); N. Hanniffy (0-1); C. Dolan (1-3; 0-1, 0-1 45); A. O'Reilly (0-1); O. McGrath (0-2). Subs: S. McGrath (0-2; 0-1 45, 0-1 pen.) for Hennelly (44 mins.); S. Spellman for Dolan (51 mins.); N. Coen for Donohue (60 mins.); R. Black for Kenny (60+ mins.). Tipperary: A. Slattery; C. Quirke, M. Ryan, E. Loughman; M. Eviston, K. Kennedy, A. McGrath; N. Treacy, J.A. Burke; J. Kelly, R. Howard (0-1); S. Fryday (0-1); G. O'Brien, C. Devane (0-6; 0-5 frees); M. Campion. Subs: S. Quirke for Kelly (48 mins.); C. McIntyre for Campion (48 mins.); C. Maher for Treacy (54 mins.); K. Blair for Fryday (60 mins.). Referee: R. Kelly (Kildare).



John Maher, Labour Party councillor, dropped into the Glen Rovers Camogie Academy and presented them with a First Aid kit.

New registration system extra work for camogie clubs

CAMOGIE clubs have been made aware by the Camogie Association that the Servasport registration system is being replaced. The new system is called Foireann.

Foireann will provide better and more efficient processing for clubs, says the association.

The intention is to transition from the old system to the new one as seamlessly as possible. To assist club officials with the new system, the association is holding a number of webinars in the coming weeks.

Clubs have been asked to get the person responsible for registrations to sign up and to begin to prepare for the work involved in getting everybody on the new system. It will be a lot of work for club volunteers, many of whom have had a tremendously hard season because of the coronavirus.

The new Foireann system went live to clubs from December 1, yet the webinars were only due to start on the same night.

Each club will have an administrator, who will have access to additional functions in Foireann and the existing administrators from the Servasport system are to be migrated across to the new system, provided clubs have profiles set up for them.

Club officials can check that they have administrator privileges by looking at their club profile and reviewing what they've added. Clubs where an officer is an administrator will be flagged accordingly.

The thinking behind the new set-up is that it will be hugely beneficial to clubs and should significantly reduce administration.

Clubs are being asked to ensure they have access to Foireann and they then need to verify that they have the correct privileges within the system and the administrator must then ensure that their club's teams at each grade are in place.

All existing member records previously held in the Servasport system will be available in the new system and there will be no requirement for data re-entry for existing members.

There are, however, some important changes in how membership data is managed and this is important for club officials to understand, so that they can maximise the benefits of the system.

The Servasport system holds the membership and registration records for clubs and is generally only accessible to club administrators.

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

Foireann will allow the online profiles of club members to be linked to their membership record, so that they can re-register, if a club so chooses to allow this and do their registration membership this way.

Many clubs choose to do their memberships manually and this is an acceptable method of ensuring every player and member is in and fully compliant. Many clubs feel that if it is left up to individuals to do their memberships and registrations online, they will not be done.

Having spoken to a lot of club secretaries/registrars since this was announced, many feel it is a huge amount of information to take in, given Christmas is fast approaching.

Club officials are tired and looking forward to a well-earned rest and the last thing they want to be doing is learning a new system.

When the Servasport system was rolled out, clubs attended workshops to get them up to speed and they were given hands-on training.

As this is now not possible to do, given social-distancing, many club officials may struggle to get to grips with what seems to be a very complicated set-up. It remains to be seen just how it will work.

The new functionality should significantly reduce the administration workload. To make full use of the system from December 1, club officials should receive instruction and complete a webinar.

Via the new system, club administrators will be able to configure and accept online payments (through Stripe), manage club communications in compliance with GDPR and Children First legislation, register their members with the GAA, the Ladies' Gaelic Football Association, or the Camogie Association (also handball and rounders, if relevant), and to allocate coaches to teams for organising training or health-questionnaire verification.

The new system will be accessible through the following links: Foireann.ie; gamesmanagementsystem.ie; returnto-play.gaa.ie.

The old GMS system will be still be accessible through the usual links: people.gaa.ie; people.ladiesgaelic.ie; people.camogie.ie. However, it should only be used for reference purposes and should not be used to register any further members.



Cork's Amy O'Connor wins the ball from Clare's Clara Grogan this season. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

Equal funding is our right



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

THE chairperson of the Oireachtas committee on sport, this week, said that there is no justification for the Government to spend more money on male Gaelic players than on their female counterparts.

€3.7m was paid out by the Government to support Gaelic players last year, with €3m for males and €700,000 for females. That's €9,000 per squad.

The funding gap has been criticised by players, managers, and representative organisations involved in women's Gaelic games. Typically, when the disparity in fees, expenses, or monetary awards is raised, the argument has been that men get greater exposure, draw bigger audiences, and bring in more money.

That disparity in exposure is a debate for another day. In this case, the Government doesn't rely on audiences or gate receipts when providing grants, so what is the reason behind the significantly lower allocation?

It's treating sportswomen like second-class citizens.

It's telling them that their sport and their commitment aren't important, that they don't give the same effort or commitment, or incur the same expenses as their male colleagues.

That's absurd. 93% of players do not receive any travelling expenses. 65% pay for their own gym membership and 60% contribute towards their own recovery costs.

Catherine Martin, the sports minister, told RTE that sport is for all and she and Jack Chambers, the minister for state, are committed to increasing funding for programmes targeted at women, at people with disabilities, and at older people. She also said she is "aware of the disparity" between the funding for men's and women's Gaelic-player support schemes.

"I can confirm that my department and Sport Ireland are committed to working with the Gaelic games' associations and players' representatives, with a view to a narrowing and, ultimately, eliminating the gender funding gap," Ms Martin said.

Great, but I hope this doesn't take years to achieve.

The Women's Gaelic Players' Association has also called for the gap to be closed. Maria Kinsella, WPGA president,



Cork's Fiona Keating shoots from Wexford's Sarah O'Connor. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

said analysis by the association found that female Gaelic players were paying for their own boots, hurleys, gear, travel, and food.

Kerry ladies' football co-manager, Declan Quill, said the Government allocation to support female Gaelic players was "pitiful". "Where did they come up with these figures and who said it was okay to do so? I can't believe it."

Two schemes were operated by Sport Ireland to facilitate the dispersal of government funding last year. The GAA Inter-county Support Scheme, valued at €3m, was only available to male players. It allowed for individual player grants to be channelled to inter-county players via the GAA and the Gaelic Players' Association.

A separate scheme to support inter-county camogie and ladies' football allocated €700,000. This scheme did not provide for individual player grants, but awarded funding to teams to enhance access to training facilities, injury prevention, and medical health checks, player performance, and national administration and governance.

Sport Ireland said the schemes to support Gaelic players are decisions of government. It said Sport Ireland plays no role in setting the amount of money available under each scheme.

However, it added it has proposed an independent review of these schemes to consider the strategy for funding in the future.

Meanwhile, the Kilkenny camogie team have set up a GoFundMe page to raise money ahead of their All-Ireland final, next Saturday. While Glanbia sponsors the inter-county panels, food and accommodation for the players are not factored in and in the absence of county gate re-

ceipts this year, money is required.

The very best of luck to Cork's ladies' footballers tomorrow. Let's hope they can reach the All-Ireland final and make up for last Saturday's camogie disappointment, particularly for the dual players involved.

Controversy again, earlier in the week, when it was announced that the semi-final between Cork and Galway has been moved from the Limerick Institute of Technology Gaelic Grounds, in Limerick, to Parnell Park, in Dublin, as the Limerick senior hurlers require the stadium to prepare for the All-Ireland final next weekend.

While social media have commented that a semi-final having to be moved for a training session is wrong, I don't think it is in this case. The Limerick GAA board had informed the LGFA that they could have the ground if the hurlers didn't require it.

Limerick were strong favourites to reach this year's final and there was every chance they'd need the pitch. Why not move the training time, I hear you say, it's no big deal? I'd argue that it is a big deal.

The hurlers could have a full afternoon session planned with training, food, video analysis, and a second training session post-analysis. It's the week of an All-Ireland final and it is Limerick GAA's ground.

The LGFA should never have booked it in the first place. It was too risky.

And taking Galway and Cork to Dublin is wrong. What was wrong with Mallow? Was that option tried?

Maybe it was and it wasn't available. Either way, I don't feel the fault is with the Limerick hurlers and board on this one. Good luck to Ephie and the team.

Defensive steel and sharp books All-Ireland spot for

**KILKENNY
CORK**

Trevor Spillane
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2-10
1-11

A senior camogie championship is still on Kilkenny's Christmas wish-list after the Cats delivered a solid performance to reach the All-Ireland final.

Twists, turns, goals and, in the end, sheer determination. If it was drama you were after, Paire Uí Chaoimh had it in spades!

It may have been a gloomy Saturday afternoon, but Kilkenny lit up the Munster skyline as they weathered a Cork storm to reach their seventh senior final in eight years, and fifth in succession.

While some matches can be described as a game of two halves, Kilkenny's tussle with the Rebels was more like a three-act play. The first saw an under-fire side look to be in real trouble. The second turned into an awesome attacking performance where the Cats really showed their claws.

And the third? That was all about defensive strength as Kilkenny worked overtime to repel their rivals and hold on to a precious lead.

"It may not have been our best performance hurling-wise," said a happy manager Brian Dowling after the game, "but it was all about

pure determination, character and hard work."

The Cats delivered a game of silk and steel as they went toe to toe with their old rivals and fought their way into the December 12 decider in Croke Park.

That game - which will be a repeat of last year's final after defending champions Galway beat Tipperary in the second semi-final - will give Kilkenny the chance to add the finishing touch to a relentless chase for the O'Duffy Cup.

In the end, the decisive moment when the game took on a definite black and amber hue came when the Cats soaked up Cork pressure and hit their hard-chasing rivals with a flowing move three minutes into the second half.

Denise Gaule got them motoring, winning an Aoife Norris puck-out drilled sharply along the left. Gaule's low ball was fed down the line

towards Aoife Doyle, who raced out to snap up possession before off-loading it to Miriam Walsh.

Using her pace to burn a hole in the Cork defence, Walsh headed for goal and didn't stop - even outrushing goalkeeper Amy Lee couldn't halt her progress, Walsh taking the challenge before lashing the sliotar home.

It was a huge score for Kilkenny, and one that clearly rattled Cork. Their composure slipped for a spell - Orla Cronin put two frees wide in quick succession soon after - before a like score from Gaule left them chasing a four-point gap as the game ticked towards the final quarter (2-9 to 1-8). It was a gap they would not bridge.

Such an advantage was probably the furthest thing from Kilkenny's minds after they endured a torrid opening to the game. Tough underfoot conditions and a fast start from a confident-looking Cork had them chasing shadows, not to mention a six-point gap, inside the opening eight minutes.

The Rebels oozed class as they tore through the Kilkenny ranks in the early exchanges, firing off short quick passes as the exploited the gaps that appeared between the 65m and 45m lines.

That space led to shooting chances and fouls; Chloe Sigerson helped herself to the

Denise Gaule (Kilkenny) gets her shot away as Niamh O'Callaghan (Cork) tries to make the block during the senior camogie All-Ireland semi-final PICTURES: LASZLO GECZO/INPHO



**Time and again
Cork tried to
break through
their ranks but
the Kilkenny
defence held firm
and repelled
every attack**

game's opening scores (one a free), before Orla Cronin converted a seventh minute placed ball.

After a shaky start, things were about to get a little worse for Kilkenny. Within 60 seconds the Rebels had doubled their lead, Gemma O'Connor profiting from the incisive play and pace of Cronin and Katrina Mackey when she gathered the latter's pass and blasted the sliotar home from close range (1-3 to 0-0).

The alarm bells were ringing for Kilkenny, a point Saoirse McCarthy proved when she robbed possession from a troubled defence, but Aoife Norris came to her side's rescue with a good save. Mary O'Connell eased their nerves with a fine opening point, a superb scored picked off from a tight angle on the left, but three wides in quick succession did little to raise their confidence.

The mood lifted a little before the waterbreak, Ann Dalton and O'Connell shooting two fine scores in response to a steady Mackey point for Cork, but it was on the restart that Kilkenny

clicked into gear. Given a chance to clear their heads the Cats took on an attacking focus, with Dalton and Gaule pulling the strings.

PRESSURE

It helped that, as they attacked, Kilkenny began to pile the pressure, swarming around any Cork player in possession. Pressure saw Ashling Thompson blown for overcarrying, a move that gave Gaule a simple free. She would add two more points from placed balls soon after, cancelling out a like score from Cronin (1-5 to 0-6).

Kilkenny were growing in confidence, and finally took the lead three minutes from half-time. Pushed forward to trouble the Cork defence as a long Gaule free dropped towards the square, Ann Dalton made the trip worthwhile. A superb catch saw her pluck the sliotar from among a forest of Cork hands. A little turn and bang - the net shook.

While Cork rallied Kilkenny had the bit between their teeth. Gaule led the way chipping in with two more points. Ashling Thompson



The players celebrate at the final whistle - victory gave Kilkenny a place in the final for the fifth year in a row



Kilkenny 'keeper Aoife Norris fends off Saoirse McCarthy (Cork)

attack Cats



Kilkenny lit up the Munster skyline to reach their seventh senior decider in eight years, and fifth final in succession

and Sigerson kept the scoreboard ticking over for Cork, but from six points up they found themselves one behind at the break (1-8 to 1-7).

The gap was out to four when Miriam Walsh and Denise Gaule hit that quick 1-1 after the restart, but the final quarter saw Kilkenny deliver a different element to their winning performance. The gauntlet was thrown down to Cork, who tried to fight their way back into the reckoning, but they couldn't quite claw the leaders back. Katrina Mackey and Ashling Thompson chipped points off the deficit, but the big score

they needed wouldn't come.

It wasn't for a lack of effort. Cork almost bagged a goal out of nothing when a long Sigerson free took a nick off Gemma O'Connor and bounced towards goal, but netminder Aoife Norris moved smartly along her line to flick the sliotar to safety.

Cork kept battling for scores, adding more point through a booming Sigerson effort, but chances dried up as Kilkenny, to a player, fought for every ball and contested every challenge as if their lives depended on it.

Time and again Cork tried to break through their ranks but the Kilkenny defence held firm and repelled every attack. Rather than launch the ball to safety they cleverly used possession, drilling diagonal clearances into the corners, where the forwards chased after possession and ate up valuable time on the clock.

The pressure was still there in injury-time, but Kilkenny never cracked. Aoife Doyle typified the performance when she used a last ounce of energy to chase after Davina Tobin's clearance. She won possession and was fouled, giving Denise Gaule the chance to convert one last free.

She didn't disappoint. One more free sailed between the posts - with it Kilkenny were on their way to the final!

SCORES
Kilkenny - Denise Gaule (0-7, 0-6 frees); Ann Dalton (1-1); Miriam Walsh (1-0); Mary O'Connell (0-2). **Cork** - Chloe Sigerson (0-4, 0-free); Gemma O'Connor (1-0); Orla Cronin (0-3, frees); Ashling Thompson, Katrina Mackey (0-2 each).

Kilkenny - Aoife Norris; Grace Walsh, Colette Dormer, Michelle Teehan; Claire Phelan, Meighan Farrell, Davina Tobin; Anna Farrell, Ann Dalton; Aoife Doyle, Laura Murphy, Denise Gaule; Katie Nolan, Miriam Walsh, Mary O'Connell. Subs: Steffi Fitzgerald for Murphy, 31 mins; Niamh Deely for Teehan, 48 mins; Kellyann Doyle for O'Connell, 55 mins.

Cork - Amy Lee; Meabh Cahalane, Laura Treacy, Libby Coppinger; Hannah Looney, Pamela Mackey, Laura Hayes, Katrina Mackey, Ashling Thompson; Amy O'Connor, Orla Cronin, Chloe Sigerson; Linda Collins, Gemma O'Connor, Saoirse McCarthy. Subs: Niamh O'Callaghan for Mackey, 44 mins; Cliona Healy for Collins, 48 mins; Julia White for McCarthy, 53 mins.

Referee - Owen Elliott (Antrim).

'Determined' Kilkenny deserved win - Dowling

Trevor Spillane
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Their victory may have been missing a polished finish, but for Brian Dowling Kilkenny's semi-final win over Cork had everything he was looking for from his team.

"Hurling-wise it probably wasn't our best performance of the year, but pure determination, hard work and character are words we'd use to describe how we played," he said in the aftermath of Saturday's battle against Cork.

"We came to Cork quietly confident that we'd get the job done and we got over the line.

"A lot of people had written us off before the game - all I could hear in the weeks before the game was how it was going to be a Cork and Galway final," he continued. "We drilled it home to the girls that people had forgotten about this team, that they hadn't been given the respect they deserved. While we may not have won the All-Ireland finals we played in it takes a consistently good team to get there.

"Someone said to me during the week that semi-finals are for winning," Dowling added. "Now we're back where we want to be."

That quiet confidence was tested in the early exchanges as a hungry Cork tore into the Cats and opened up a six-point lead. Although there was still time to turn things around, Dowling admitted the start wasn't what his side had hoped for.

"I'd be lying if I said



HOOKED! Anna Farrell (Kilkenny) stretches to hook Cork's Ashling Thompson PICTURES: LASZLO GECZO/INPHO

we weren't panicking a little, wondering what was going on," he said with a smile.

"A lot of people spoke about how we hadn't had a competitive game for a few weeks coming into the semi-final; maybe that long lay-off without a tough game was part of it, maybe it was the trip down - I don't know. It's something we need to improve on for the next day, certainly, but you can turn negatives into positives and we showed character to do that.

"I thought we got on top after that (the slow start) and, after a few wides, Mary O'Connell got a super score to settle us down."

TOOK CONTROL

Once Kilkenny got to grips with the game they took control, getting a real boost when Player of the Match Ann Dalton popped up with a valuable goal. It helped push the Cats ahead, but

Dowling felt that advantage could have been greater.

"Ann Dalton's goal was a huge score in the first half, but I was a little disappointed that we only went in one point up at half-time," he said. "Given the way we

hurled in the second quarter I thought we deserved to be further ahead, but that's a testament to the girls and how they turned it around."

The first half waterbreak was key as Kilkenny regained their focus.

"I felt that we were on top in the last five minutes of the first quarter and that was the message we wanted to drive home," he said. "We knew we were in the game, we had settled down - giving out wasn't going to be of any help."

If Dalton's goal was valuable, the second was worth its weight in gold.

"The goal after half-time was crucial," said Dowling. "At the break I said to Miriam Walsh that this was her half, to drive the team on - we were saying it to her all week about how great a player she is. She took that on and took her goal with incredible composure. It was a brilliant finish."

And while goals win games, Kilkenny's tough performance in the final stages drew plenty of praise from the manager.

"The last quarter was about getting over the line," he said. "It wasn't for fancy hurling, but the weather didn't allow for it - when the floodlights are turned on for a 12.30 game that says it all. We got the job done."

The goals showed strength of attack, but other parts of the game proved how strong Kilkenny's defence was.

"Our backs were unbelievable," he said. "They probably came in for criticism last year with the goals we conceded in the

All-Ireland final, and it looked like we were in more bother after conceding 1-3 inside eight minutes, but after that they just shut down Cork. Claire Phelan came with ball after ball in the second half, Colette Dormer and Michelle Teehan gave their all and we also had Niamh Deely there to come in and help finish the job. We asked Meighan (Farrell) and Davina (Tobin) to do a job marking Amy O'Connor and Orla Cronin, two players people are speaking about in Player of the Year terms. I thought they were unbelievable, the ground they covered and the flicks and hooks they got in.

"Our backs were fantastic," Dowling finished. "Hopefully they'll keep that going for the final."



Saoirse McCarthy (Cork) is chased down by Kilkenny duo Grace Walsh and Colette Dormer



Davina Tobin: 'I always felt real belief. Mentally, we're way stronger.' Photo: Laszlo Ceczo

Kilkenny's Tobin determined to lay down a marker in final

Top class defender never shirks the responsibility of taking on tough tasks

DARAGH O'CONCHÚIR



OFF the pitch, Davina Tobin is passionate about beauty and creativity. Having toyed with the idea of joining the Defence Forces and An Garda Síochána, and been accepted for training by the Army, she decided instead to become a hairdresser.

"The money was probably better," the Urlingford native says with a laugh.

It has been wall-to-wall appointments at The Grafton Barber in Kilkenny since Tuesday's welcome return to work. Split ends, visible roots, uncontrollable hairiness and homemade horrors have been the focus of Tobin's hectic week.

You think she might hope for the mayhem to start tapering off towards the end of next week, with the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland senior camogie final against Galway taking place next Saturday night at a floodlit Croke Park. But she doesn't think that way.

"We're crazy. It's just a constant flow of people. D'ya know what? It's great. It's great to be back but we're not getting much of a chance to look at a clock or anything. The day flies. A good few lads have been cutting their own hair, so we're doing a lot of 'fix me ups'. Coming in with lines all over their head, their friend had done it. Fringes all cut up and wondering when it will grow back."

Tobin didn't enjoy being confined to domestic barracks.

"I'd be very bad now. I find it very hard to stay at home, to be doing nothing. I'd rather be tipping away all day. I had daddy and mammy doing a few kettle bells and going for walks, so that was grand."

So taking time off wouldn't be an option, even if the 28-year-old hadn't already missed half a year's work. If she is an artisan, enjoying cutting designs customers show her on a phone into their hair, she has always combined that side of her personality with a ferocious

work ethic. This is what we see more on the pitch. Prevention over the more obvious aesthetics, though there is tremendous skill in that job too. More often than not, her brand of athleticism, eye, touch and grit is deployed in a specific marking role.

She gave a masterclass against Amy O'Connor in the two-point semi-final triumph at Páirc Uí Chaoimh. The Cork skipper is lightning quick with a deft touch, but she could not shake off the black and amber limpet doing whatever it took to nullify her threat. In a game of such tight margins, the execution of the job description was critical.

Camogie has taken a back seat due to that work ethic and single-mindedness too. And her desire for independence. If she is utterly selfless in a team environment, having to rely on others to dig her out is anathema for her. She did not pick up a hurley for three years because of it.

"I was working three jobs to put myself through college. I just didn't have the time to play. All three jobs were in Urlingford so I was going home, getting changed and going to the next job. You're young, trying to run your own car."

"I have two older sisters and a younger brother; you don't want to be going to your mum and dad all the time looking for money. I'd be very independent that way. I always wanted my own money, look after yourself."

That she is one of the game's elite defenders is extraordinary given such a backdrop. Her pedigree had been well established as an All-Ireland winner at under 16 and minor level but not playing even with Emeralds, in her late teens and early 20s, had to have inhibited her development.

She returned to the club in 2014 and shone as they reached the county final. Ann Downey called her into the county squad the following season.

"When I did go in with Kilkenny for the first time, we were only a junior club at the time and the speed of the ball... oh my God, I thought, 'I'm never going to get back to this.' It took me four or five weeks to get back up but luckily I was very fit and that stood to me."

"We put in the same amount of effort as the men"

Tobin has been an ever-present since, adding a senior medal to her haul in 2016. She has been on the other side of the verdict in the subsequent three finals however and with a considerable turnover of players this year, not many thought Kilkenny would be back in a fifth consecutive decider.

"There was probably a lot of talk, some teams thought maybe we were just a team to get over to get to the All-Ireland final. We had a few injuries on the team as well. Katie Power was a massive loss, Edwina Keane is gone as well, Michelle Quilty — there's big changes on the team and girls that were on the panel for three or four years are getting to show themselves."

They were 1-3 behind in what seemed an eye blink in the semi-final but doubt never invaded Tobin's consciousness, however.

"No way for a minute did I think, 'What's going on?' or anything like that. I knew we'd pull it back. I always felt real belief in all the girls. Mentally, we're all way stronger. When that 1-3 went in, I'd say everyone at home was thinking, 'Oh God, they're finished', but you had someone like Mary O'Connell, a new girl coming in, she got two big points in the first half. That just shows her confidence. You have to believe in your teammates."

Believe too in your management and their tactics. Centre-back Meighan Farrell was instructed to follow Orla Cronin wherever she went. It was the same with Tobin and O'Connor. That left gaps that Cork exploited early on. But Kilkenny held firm, began winning more individual battles in other parts of the field and that space was no longer an issue.

"It was a hard job. Meighan on Orla, myself on Amy. Everyone had their own jobs, the forwards trying to score as well. As long as we all trusted each other, we knew we could pull it off. Whatever they ask, I need to do... I probably am the marker on the team and I understand that. If it's to better the team, I've no problem doing it. I'll do it all day."

A GoFundMe page was quickly set up to help raise funds for the final and though such fundraising isn't unusual for teams of either gender, it attracted a lot of publicity as the debate on the discrepancy of State funding in particular between men's and women's Gaelic games codes intensifies.

"The first year I was in, we didn't have any air time on telly, maybe the All-Ireland. Every year, you can see a stepping

PATHS TO THE FINAL

GROUP 1

Oct 18: Galway 5-17 Wexford 3-9
Nov 1: Galway 3-13 Offaly 0-3
Nov 8: Galway 0-15 Cork 0-12

GROUP 2

Oct 17: Kilkenny 0-15 Waterford 0-8
Oct 24: Kilkenny 6-23 Westmeath 1-7
Nov 8: Kilkenny 2-16 Limerick 0-8

SEMI-FINALS

Nov 28: Kilkenny 2-10 Cork 1-11;
Galway 1-11 Tipperary 0-8



LIBERTY INSURANCE ALL-IRELAND SENIOR CAMOGIE FINAL

Galway v Kilkenny
Croke Park, Saturday December 12, 7.0
Referee: Owen Elliot (Antrim)
Live on RTE 2

stone. It is becoming better in terms of coverage, which is great. Kilkenny GAA have set up a golf classic for us to try and raise money. They have always been very good to us and we get a lot of support in the county. We put in the same amount of effort as the men now so it would be nice to have the same outcome as well in terms of government funding. Hopefully they will sort that."

Galway broke their hearts last year, having endured plenty of disappointment themselves over the years.

"Anytime we have played Galway in the last few years, we've always had a battle with them. They're amazing camogie players. It's going to be a battle next Saturday. We're just going to have to give it our all again."

In particular, the champions possess a number of potential match winners in attack. What role Tobin is deployed for will be interesting indeed.

"There's going to be a job for everyone next week. Again, we'll stick to the plan." And before you have time to follow up.

"Now I don't know what the plan is yet Daragh, so I can't tell you that!" Spotting the danger early, neutralising it. It's an art. Job done.

Donnelly's lucky 13 is the ticket for Armagh

CAMOGIE

By Daragh Ó Conchúir

CIARA DONNELLY'S haul of 13 points was enough to get Armagh over the line against Cavan in the All-Ireland Premier Junior Camogie Championship final at Breffni Park.

The Orchard women overcame a spirited Cavan challenge on a 0-19 to 3-7 scoreline with Donnelly and sister Leanne combining for 17 points, and Rachael Merry providing the other two scores.

The match was in the balance right to the end, a high-quality encounter ending with Cavan having two opportunities in the four minutes of injury time to find an equalising goal.

First Shanise Fitzsimons shot weakly with a better-placed teammate inside. Fitzsimons then almost made amends from the resultant 45 when her powerful shot was somehow blocked by Gemma McCann.

Cavan got off to a flying start, Orla Smith showing electric pace to finish immediately from the throw-in.

A brace of points by Leanne



ORCHARD JOY: Catherine Beagan

Donnelly got Armagh off the mark before Cavan's Róisín O'Keeffe and Ciara Donnelly exchanged scores.

Points from Fitzsimons and Sinéad McKenna gave them the lead before Rose Crowe-McKeever drove a powerful shot to the roof of the Armagh net just before the water break.

Crowe-McKeever was her side's fifth different scorer, whereas Armagh were heavily dependent on the Donnelly sisters.

The game was poised 0-10 to 1-4 in Armagh's favour at the interval but Cavan came storming out of the traps in the second half, wiping out the deficit before taking the lead within eight minutes of the restart.

Crowe-McKeever struck for her second goal with a stunning ground stroke and Smith and O'Keeffe raised white flags immediately after, putting Cavan in front.

Armagh then moved ahead through Leanne Donnelly before Cavan came once more, this time McKenna's bullet shot crossing the line to put them ahead again.

Michael Murphy freshened up his side by introducing five subs and that might have been significant, as Armagh scored the last four points of the game through arch marksman Ciara Donnelly.

Elsewhere, Down won the Intermediate Camogie Championship with a 4-16 to 2-10 victory over Ulster rivals Antrim at Breffni Park.

Confident Cavan can put cap on rapid rise

BY SEAMAS McALEENAN

SURELY it could not happen that Cavan, a team not in existence this time last year, could win the All-Ireland Premier Junior final just three weeks after taking the Junior 'B' grade Nancy Murray Cup.

But going into this final they actually have better form than Armagh, particularly when comparing their semi-final performances.

Armagh struggled to put away neighbours Tyrone in Crossmaglen and actually only took over the lead in the last 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, Cavan went down to Athleague, got hit with a goal from Roscommon in the opening five minutes and recovered to dominate the second half and win comfortably.

Add in that Cavan comfortably beat the same Tyrone side in the Nancy Murray final the week before, and you can see why they should be confident.

There is little doubt Armagh probably went into the Tyrone game a little complacent. They did not start Eimear Smyth and captain Orlagh Murray, but were forced to bring them on for the second half and the pair probably changed the game, with Smyth scoring both goals



FITZ THE BILL Shanise Fitzsimons is a key player in the Cavan ranks, with her scoring prowess, and that of her fellow forwards, giving the Breffni county a real chance of turning over Armagh tomorrow afternoon. Picture: INPHO

to get them over the line.

The Donnelly sisters, Ciara and Leanne, and Rachel Merry are Armagh's main scoring threats and they were fairly well subdued by Tyrone, although the supply of good ball coming through was limited.

If Cavan boss Jimmy Greville manages to get the match-ups right in marking these Armagh attackers, the Breffni county will have a great chance of pulling off an unlikely victory.

Cavan are strong in attack and the good thing about an emerging team is that different players have risen to

the occasion in different games.

In the Nancy Murray Cup final all six forwards scored, with Orla Smith and Shanise Fitzsimons doing most of the damage.

Against Roscommon, there was again a fair spread of scores with Róisín O'Keefe and Sinéad McKenna the main threat. That are reasonably strong at the back too with Erinn Galligan and Ciara Finnegan driving them from half-back.

At first glance, Cavan are very inexperienced as they are only back at inter-county level after more than a decade away.

However, their club scene has

been quite strong and Crosserlough collected two Ulster junior club titles in 2017 and '18.

Armagh are a team in transition. They only have a handful of players remaining from the team that lost the 2016 final to Carlow at Croke Park.

Despite their wins over Roscommon and Tyrone on the way to this final, they are not playing with a lot of confidence.

Cavan are at home in Kingspan Breffni, have momentum and the county is buzzing with the senior footballers also on a roll. An upset is on the cards.

Donnellys point the way for Armagh

Armagh 0-19
Cavan 3-7

BREFFNI PARK

IT was unlucky 13 for Cavan as Ciara Donnelly shot the lights out to banish Armagh's nightmare of losing the decider of four years ago and finally become Liberty Insurance All-Ireland premier junior camogie champions.

While Ciara finished with 13 points, her sister Leanne tallied four and Rachael Merry provided the other two points.

The result was in doubt right to the end with this duel ending in a welter of excitement as Cavan chased a levelling goal and had two opportunities in the four minutes of injury-time.

Shanise Fitzsimons shot weakly with a better-placed teammate inside and then almost made amends from the resultant 45, when her powerful shot from just inside the 13-metre line was blocked by Gemma McCann.

Cavan had already won the Nancy Murray Cup for the Junior A Championship three weeks ago to mark their first season of competition after a 10-year sabbatical and showed their quality at the next level, particularly in attack.

Cavan started brightly, looking dangerous when getting the ball quickly into their forwards. When Rose Crowe-McKeever drove a powerful shot to the roof of the Armagh net just before the water break they were on the front foot.

Not for the first time since the resumption of activity, the water break precipitated a turnaround in momentum, which saw Armagh take the initiative, largely through the accuracy of Ciara Donnelly, exhibiting her unique free-taking technique of running into the lift rather than the standard standing method.

Armagh led 0-10 to 1-4 at half-time. But Cavan stormed out of the traps, revitalised, wiping out the deficit and indeed taking the lead within eight minutes of the restart. Crowe-McKeever struck for her second goal with a stunning ground stroke, after initially failing to gather Róisín O'Keefe's pass.

Smith and O'Keefe (free) raised white flags immediately after. Cavan looked like scoring goals if they had sufficient supply.

But Armagh moved two points clear, Leanne Donnelly lofting possibly the score of the game when winning possession from a clearance, flicking away from another defender before lifting and striking on the run over her right shoulder. Back came Cavan once more, this time Sinéad McKenna's bullet finding the net.

Michael Murphy freshened up his side by introducing five subs and that might have been significant, as they finished with the last four points, as Ciara Donnelly in particular took responsibility.

Scorers — Armagh: C. Donnelly 0-13 (4f, 2'45); L. Donnelly 0-4; R. Merry 0-2 (f). Cavan: R. Crowe-McKeever 2-0; S. McKenna 1-2; O. Smith, R. O'Keefe (f) 0-2 each; S. Fitzsimons 0-1. **Armagh**: C. Devlin; G. McCann, N. Woods, M. Meagher; A. Harvey, L. Toner, S. Kiernan; C. Hill, A. McMahon, R. Merry, O. Murray, L. Donnelly; E. McKenna, E. Smyth, C. Donnelly. **Subs**: E. O'Carra for Harvey (h-t); E. O'Carra for McKenna (38); N. Forker for McMahon (48); H. French for Meelan (53); L. Smyth for Smyth (56). **Cavan**: R. Brady, A. Finnegan, C. Clarke, L. Cahill, N. Reilly, C. Finnegan, E. Galligan; R. Crowe-McKeever, J. Maguire, S. McKenna, R. O'Keefe, S. Fitzsimons; H. Boylan, C. Shalvey, O. Smith. **Subs**: A. Coyle for Crowe-McKeever (59). **Referee**: M. Ryan (Tipperary).



REPORT: Donnelly Destroys Cavan's Double Dreams and Lays Ghost of 2016 to Rest

Mallon inspires free-scoring Down

Down 4-16
Antrim 2-10

BREFFNI PARK

NIAMH MALLON illustrated the full breadth of her wonderful talents as Down made experience count, producing a power-packed second half to win the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland intermediate camogie championship for the first time in 22 years.

The Castlewellan star shot 2-3 from play, with the two goals in response to Maeve Kelly's 36th-minute strike for Antrim finally breaking their youthful opposition.

Teenagers Kelly and Róisín McCormick linked well in the Saffrons attack at times, while Maeve Connolly provided tremendous leadership and Chloe Drain was resolute in defence.

But Down just had too much firepower, with Sara-Louise Graffin proving a very influential foil to Mallon, while the likes

of Sorcha McCartan, Lauren Clarke and Aimee McAleenan were selfless in their toil.

Further back, Graffin's sister Fionnuala Carr thundered into the fray in the last 10 minutes of the first half, the 39-year-old marking her 22 years of representing Down at adult level in stirring fashion alongside fellow co-captain Karen McMullan.

Down were not to be denied despite the shock of conceding a goal to McCormick after less than 30 seconds. It took five minutes for Derek Dunne's crew to regain their composure but they were in front by the 12th minute, Mallon, McAleenan, Paula O'Hagan and Graffin raising white flags.

Antrim were resolute and hit four of the next five scores to establish a two-point advantage.

The Down response was notable, with three points including a wonderful effort by McCartan and then, after Nicole O'Neill pointed a free at the other end, Graffin goalied in the third minute of injury-time.

That made it 1-8 to 1-5 at the interval but Paul McKillen got the ideal response from his charges. Dobbin pointed early

in the second half before Kelly drilled a fantastic goal in the 36th minute.

A fine Mallon goal returned her side to the lead. She followed up with a point, as did O'Hagan (free) and when Mallon concluded some deft footwork with a resounding finish the writing was on the wall for Antrim.

In the end, it was Clarke who raised the game's final green flag, a fair reward for her tireless efforts, though unfair on the vanquished side as a barometer of their efforts.

Scorers — Down: N. Mallon 2-3; S. Graffin, L. Clarke 1-2 each; P. O'Hagan 0-5 (4f, 1'45); A. McAleenan 0-3; S. McCartan 0-1. **Antrim**: M. Kelly, R. McCormick (f) 1-2 each; N. O'Neill 0-5 (5f); C. Dobbin 0-1. **Down**: C. McGourty, C. Caldwell, D. Magee, D. Harrison; K. McMullan, F. Carr, B. Fitzpatrick; A. Keown, P. O'Hagan; S. McCartan, S. Graffin, N. Mallon; C. Cowen, L. Clarke. **Antrim**: M. Kelly, R. McCormick, C. Rocks for Fitzpatrick (60+1), C. Fitzpatrick for Cowen (60+2), I. O'Hara for Clarke (60+6). **Antrim**: E. Boyle, C. Patterson, C. Drain, C. Connolly, N. Donnelly, M. Connolly, A. Boyle, E. Lavery, L. McNaughton; Christine Lavery, M. Kelly, C. Dobbin; R. McCormick, Ciara Lavery. **N. O'Neill**: Subs: C. McKillop for E. Lavery (60), O. O'Hara for Ciara Lavery (54); N. A. Donnelly for Patterson (46), A. Donnelly for Christine Lavery (60). **Referee**: J. Heffernan (Wexford).



RESULTS/LATEST - Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Intermediate & Premier Junior Championships Finals - 05.12.2020

Íde struck blow for



STANDING OUT FROM THE CROWD: Delegates at the Cork County Board camogie convention at Cork Courthouse in Washington Street in January, 1949, with Íde Bean Uí Shé circled in a stylish coat

How 1970 launched a golden age for Cork

THIS year marked the golden anniversary of a pivotal date in the history of camogie in Cork.

The county bridged a 29-year gap in winning the All-Ireland title in 1970, the start of a four-in-a-row that signalled a shift in dominance in the sport away from Dublin to the Rebel County.

Mary Moran was a member of that victorious Cork senior camogie squad who defeated Kilkenny in the final, and recalled captain Anne Comerford, of Watergrasshill, "racing up the steps of the Hogan Stand and holding the O'Duffy Cup aloft, to the ecstatic Cork supporters."

Mary went on to be the 18th President of the Camogie Association, and has fond memories of that day in 1970 when Cork finally got back to winning ways.

The All-Ireland camogie championships began in 1932 and, after Dublin won the first two, Cork won six of the next eight, up to 1941. They produced some legendary players such as Peggy Hogg, Kitty Buckley,

■ By Therese O'Callaghan

Josie McGrath Kathleen Coughlan, Lil Kirby and Joan Cotter.

However, a dispute kept Cork out of action from 1944 to 1952, and great Dublin teams dominated the championships, winning 19 of 20 from 1947 to 1966. Coached by Carrigrohilly's Nell McCarthy, they played with great skill and passion and were well ahead of the rest.

In the late 1960s, little shoots appeared on the Cork camogie scene and new talent emerged. The Munster Secondary competition was claimed by Cork in 1966, putting Hannah Dineen and Anne McAuliffe in the spotlight. Sheila Dunne of Canovee captained a great UCC team to Ashbourne Cup glory. Marie Costine and Mary Jo Ryan were the pick of the 1967 Cork Secondary team.

Cork had two teams, senior and junior, in Croke Park in 1968, but lack of experience on and off the field cost them dearly. However, players and mentors arrived home deter-



GLORY: The Cork team that won the 1970 Camogie All-Ireland, including teen ace Liz Garvan (circled, back row) and Mary Moran (circled, front row)

mined to make a quick return and carve out a happier outcome.

South Presentation P.P. made a historic breakthrough in 1969, lifting the Cork Senior Championship for the first time. Goalkeeper Mel

Cummins, Hannah Dineen, Betty Sugrue, Anne Comerford and Marion McCarthy were picked to lead the charge for Cork. Three bright young stars shone in the colours of UCC, who were to make a huge impact

with Cork; Liz Garvan and Rosie Hennessy were scoring forwards while Pat Moloney was equally impressive at midfield or in attack.

The 1970 team was completed by the experienced Peggy Dorgan, who won seven county championships in the colours of Glen Rovers.

The final piece of the puzzle was the appointment of Jack Dempsey as coach. The ex-Cork and Blackrock hurler improved the skill and fitness levels of the players and got them to play as a team and believe in themselves.

Cork defeated Tipperary, Antrim and Kilkenny on their way to the title. Garvan, 18, stole the show, scoring 3-6 in the final, Peggy Dorgan adding 2-1. Garvan, of St Als, became the first Camogie Player of the Year.

As the crowd streamed away from Croke Park, who would have believed that in the next 50 years, Dublin would add only one more title to their tally, as Cork secured a further 22 to put them on top of the Roll of Honour, where they remain?

the sisterhood

THE first Cork camogie club was founded in 1905 and took the name of Fainne an Lae. Seap Ó Coindealbháin (Conlon) coached the team in the basics of the game; his sisters, Kate and Margaret, and cousin, Christina Conlon, also played.

Sean's daughter, Ide Conlon (or Ni Choindealbháin), who later became Ide Bean Uí Shé, was born in 1916.

Ide received her primary education at St Aloysius school, Cork. Her mother died when she was 12 and her father sent her to Dublin, where she received her secondary education from the Dominican Nuns at Eccles Street.

She then studied at UCC and was awarded an M.A. in Irish in 1939.

There are no records of Ide Conlon playing for UCC in the inter-varsity competition, the Ashbourne Cup, but she did play with UCC in 1938 and 1939 in the Cork Championship. She remained a member of the UCC club for the rest of her life.

The All-Ireland Inter-County Camogie Championship began in 1932, in the same year Cork established its County Board. Many of the officers were male.

The 1930s saw a mixture of success and strife for Cork camogie. A mix-up in administration saw Cork fail to enter the first All-Ireland Camogie Championship in 1932. The year after, the majority of Cork clubs refused to impose a ban on foreign games and those which supported the ban broke away and formed their own board for a short while.

In 1934, the Camogie Association imposed a national ban on foreign games, similar to that of the GAA. This reduced the strength of Dublin in particular, and helped Cork to win a three-in-a-row of All-Ireland titles from 1934.

The ban caused trouble for Cork too when, in 1937, a player from the Cara Cliodhna Club was suspended for playing hockey. This led to the whole team leaving camogie and taking up hockey instead.

Finance was also an ongoing issue for the Camogie Board. By 1939, it was so broke that Louth paid for Cork to travel to their county for the All-Ireland semi-final. Cork went on to win the title.

In 1940, Ide Conlon was elected Registrar of the Board. She had a reputation for wearing the latest fashions and carried that sense of style into her everyday life. It is said she always wrote with a "feathered pen" and the colour of the feather would change to match the colour of her coat or top.

In 1942, Lil Kirby, Cork Chairperson and inter-county team member, was elected President of the Camogie Association. She also married and moved to Bandon to live that year. Her camogie club, Old Als, had a ban on playing married players (which lasted until 1968) so it meant she had to retire from playing. Travelling from Bandon to Cork regularly during 'The Emergency' and ration years proved an arduous task, so she stepped down as Chairperson of Cork at the end of the year.

Ide Conlon also married in 1942. Lieutenant Michael O'Shea was a lecturer in Dairy Science at UCC and, upon marrying, Ide was

A great driving force in Cork camogie, Ide Bean Uí Shé played a pivotal role in advancing the sport — and at a time when Ireland was a patriarchal society, she took great delight in facing down the men who tried to stand in her way, reveals DIARMUID O'DONOVAN

then elected Chairperson in place of Lil Kirby.

Her first year in the job was dogged by the troublesome financial matters that occupied the Board's mind, but Bean Uí Shé did manage to put positive policies in place. She used her old Dublin connections to organise a game between a Cork Schools selection and Dublin Schools selection, an event which became an annual affair until the Second Level All-Ireland Championship began in 1969.

Bean Uí Shé fervently believed there was no need for a male involvement in the affairs of the Camogie Association. It was her opinion that women were capable of managing their own affairs, not just in camogie but in life in general. She showed she was prepared to put her beliefs into action at her first convention as Chairperson at the end of the 1943 season.

Liam Dynan, the outgoing secretary, was opposed by Alice Quigley. The vote ended in a tie, and Ide Bean Uí Shé used her casting vote in favour of Quigley.

Ide now began her reform. Firstly, she revamped the Schools Board and recruited schoolgirls as Schools Board Officers, allowing them to organise the games and affairs of the Board under her guidance.

She was mindful no doubt of the haemorrhage of effective officers, like Lil Kirby, because of marriage and family commitments. The Schools Board introduced hundreds of girls to the game, while also providing a steady stream of trained officer material for the Adult Board and the clubs.

Also, in 1944, at a meeting to reform the Munster Camogie Council, Ide refused to pay Cork's affiliation fees until a number of demands were met, which included that there would be no male officers. The demands were denied and Cork was excluded from the Munster Championship.

At the next County Board meeting, Uí Shé said: "Missing out on a Championship season (to achieve an all-female leadership) was a small price to pay."

It would be eight years before Cork would participate in the Munster and All-Ireland Championships again. At the end of the year, the Board put forward a motion for Congress stating "that no man hold an official position in the association".

The Camogie Congress of 1945 did not appreciate the trouble Cork was causing. National Secretary Jean McHugh reported the Association had twice as many meetings as normal because of "the affair in Cork".

Ide Bean Uí Shé would not budge from her beliefs and quoted Pope Pius XII to back up her case. "Our Holy Father the Pope has... called on Catholic women to take a greater interest in public affairs and to take a more active part in their administration."

Even though Cork were not playing at inter-county level, within the county interest in playing Camogie was growing rapidly. At the end of 1946, the number of clubs had risen to 60 — up from 19 in 1944.

In 1947, Imokilly won the County Senior Championship with a win over Lee Hosiery in the final. It was a watershed moment. Imokilly became the first divisional side to win the championship, and Lee Hosiery became the last factory team to reach a final.

The newly-formed Blackrock club won the senior championship in its first year in 1948 and Glen Rovers won its first championship in 1950.

Ide Bean Uí Shé stepped down as Chairman in 1950. She was elected Board President for life, and remained as a mentor to the Schools Board.

In January, 1951, a motion to the Cork convention asked for Cork to re-join the inter-county scene. There were moves towards unity from the Camogie Association too.

The Secretary, Jean McHugh stated in her annual report: "The all-important County of Cork remains outside the control of our organisation."

Cork was needed nationally. It entered the Munster Championship in 1952 and won the Munster title, its first in nine years, before losing to Antrim in the All-Ireland semi-final.

At the Cork Convention of 1953, Ide Bean Uí Shé gave a triumphalist speech:

"The Camogie Association of Ireland has evolved from being an organisation run mainly by men to one run almost entirely by women at the present day... I am glad to say that Cork played a decisive part in this evolution."

"For some years, some of the men in key positions showed anything but a fatherly interest in the up-and-coming young women of the Association, and tried to keep them submissive and obedient. However, in modern Ireland, it is evident that women are now able to run their own associations efficiently."

Ide Bean Uí Shé, as Board President, continued to speak at the Annual Conventions for many years. In 1969, when a motion was proposed to allow the re-admittance of men to the County Board, she met it with a broadside.

"Since 1922, women have been allocated a certain role in Irish life. The day is gone when Ireland's destiny can be decided by men alone, and in this year of celebrating the jubilee of the first Dáil sitting, surely (re-admitting men) is a retrograde step."

She also spoke on the other topic of the day in camogie; the dress code. Players wanted change from the traditional gym frock worn by teams.

Ever with a keen eye for fashion, Bean Uí Shé said: "Perhaps with the advent of the mini-skirt, Central Council should consider holding a fashion competition among players to pick a young designer to fashion a new uniform."

She made a brief return to the Cork Camogie Board as an officer in the late 1970s, and was Vice-chairman in 1977, Registrar in 1978, and Treasurer in 1979. By then her health was failing badly, and she withdrew from public life.

Bean Uí Shé died on March 23, 1986, and was survived by her sons, Cian and Colm.

Among her legacy is that she began a debate on the role of women in camogie, and in society in general. She led her generation of women towards taking control of their own affairs.

Since 1970, Cork has won 22 All-Ireland camogie titles, and while the sport has been overtaken in popularity by Ladies Football, it is likely, within the next few years, that those two bodies and the GAA will merge into a new super-Gaelic Games Association. Camogie will then be stronger financially and in terms of facilities.

The price for this merger will be that autonomy may be lost, and the influence of men on the affairs of camogie may once again be a feature.

Would Ide Bean Uí Shé have been upset about this, or would she have declared, as she did in 1944: "It's a small price to pay?"

Her speeches over the years would suggest she may well have chosen the latter.

"For some years, men tried to keep women submissive and obedient..."

Since 1922, women have been allocated a certain role in Irish life. The day is gone when Ireland's destiny can be decided by men alone."



COLLEGE RIVALRY: A match between UCC and UCD in the Ashbourne Cup inter-varsity competition at Victoria Cross, Cork, in March, 1916

TOM LYONS looks at the very early days of camogie in West Cork

Here's how camogie came to West Cork over 100 years ago

CAMOGIE came into existence in Dublin in 1904. The word 'camogie' is the English version of the Irish word 'camógáilocht', which comes from the word 'camóg', meaning a small camán (hurley). The first camogie match was played between Keating's branch of the Gaelic League and Cúchulainn's, at a feis in Navan on July 17th, 1904.

Although camogie, or ladies hurling as it was often described in the early days, first saw the light of day in 1904, it was not until May 1912 that we read of its first introduction to West Cork.

Maybe that might suggest that the ladies of West Cork were less emancipated than their Dublin counterparts but, in reality, it was an era when women were not encouraged to take part in any kind of physical sports. However, a tide of Gaelic culture was sweeping across Ireland, as evidenced, in particular, by the growth of the Gaelic League and the holding of many feiseanna and aeridheactanna across rural Ireland. These feiseanna included not only cultural events but hurling games as well and it's no surprise that the ladies wanted to get in on the physical activities as well as the cultural.

It is probably true to say, too, that most of the men involved in hurling in West Cork, introduced only seven years earlier, in 1905, to the area, were reluctant to get involved with women trying to play hurling and it took outsiders to bring the game to the region. We can see this from the introduction of camogie to Skibbereen in 1912.

The very first mention of camogie in West Cork comes in Bandon in 1912. The Bandon ladies were stirring themselves and in early May they set up a 'ladies hurling club' (camogie club), the first practice session being held in the famous 'Bogs', the GAA field on the banks of the Bandon, now occupied by a supermarket.

The evening was damp and the 'going' was not in the best of condition, but, nevertheless, the ladies appeared to enjoy the sport immensely.

A good crowd of boys and young men watched the practice and were impressed with the ability of the girls, 'and their dexterity in wielding the camáns.'

'There were few 'croppers' and the first practice was a great success. Mr Thomas O'Shea, secretary of the local branch of the Gaelic League,



Although camogie first saw the light of day in 1904, it was not until May 1912 that we read of its first introduction to West Cork.

deserves much credit for starting the Club.'

Apparently, the Bandon camogie club was set up in the little village of Kilpatrick, near the town. The greatest credit was due to the secretary, Hannah O'Mahony, and the captain, Annie Lyons. The club could field a team as sturdy and business-like as any in the city.

We hear no more of camogie in West Cork until that November when the game was introduced to Skibbereen. This time it was a 'blow-in' who introduced the gospel. Miss Cáit Ní Dhonachadha - staying at Keenan's Hotel, Glandore - was the representative of the United Irish Women's League. She intended staying in the area some time and, having promoted 'Camógeacht' in Dublin, Wexford and Cork, she was anxious to set up a camogie club in Skibbereen. The writer, Cum na Gaoithe, was totally in favour of setting up a camogie club for the young ladies, especially the middle or lower classes, who got little exercise in the fresh air.

'I think Mr PJ Cullinane and Mr Jas O'Driscoll would be excellent organisers to get such work underway, and when the club has been formed the cailíní themselves could easily keep it going.'

A meeting of the ladies of the town was fixed for Monday, November 4th, in the Town

The very first mention of camogie in West Cork comes in Bandon in 1912

Hall, to formally start a camogie team.

On November 16th, we read in the *Skibbereen Eagle* that: 'The ladies have made great progress with their hurling club, and, I understand that at the meeting held this week it was decided to hold a practice on Wednesday next in the Town Park. A club has also been started in Castletownshend this week, so we hope in a very short time to see a match between these two teams.' In all probability, it was also Cáit Ní Dhonachadha who introduced the game to Castletownshend.

Unfortunately, no more is written about the progress of both clubs or if they played any matches.

At that time Kinsale was taken as part of West Cork GAA and the first reported camogie match played in West/South Cork was in Kinsale on October 5th, 1913. A Gaelic carnival was held that day in Kinsale under the auspices of the South Parish (Cork) Branch of the Gaelic League and part of the events were camogie and hurling matches.

The camogie game was between Clan Emer and Clan na nGaedhal, two city teams. The

first goal recorded, was by Josie O'Sullivan of Clan Emer. All the players were referred to as 'Miss'. M. Dunlea responded with a goal for Clan na nGaedhal. Further goals for Clan Emer by D. Murphy, J. O'Sullivan and K. Cramer gave Emers a half-time lead of 5-1 to 1-0, with L. Stokes scoring the solitary point.

Daisy Murphy, who was 'all over the field,' opened the second-half scoring with a point, and more goals followed for Emers from Murphy and J. O'Sullivan (3), with Murphy getting another point. Gaedhals' only reply was a goal from Madge Murray. Final score was Clan Emer 8-4, Clan na nGaedhal 2-0.

Clan Emer were again in action against another city team, Emmets (selected), at the Dunmanway Aeridheacht on June 28th, 1914. The Aeridheacht was held in a field near the Chapel Lake. It was the first camogie match ever seen in the district and was thoroughly enjoyed by the crowd who kept shouting encouragement to the players.

'While the match was in progress many and varied were the expressions of opinion along

AERIDHEACT.

SUNDAY, JUNE 28th, 1914

MOST Interesting Programme, including Singing by First-Class Artistes, Musical Items, Dancing by Gold Medalists, Hurling Puck, Great Camogie Contest between Two Cork Teams. Don't miss it. It is the first opportunity you have had of seeing such in West Cork. Hornpipe competition.

Here is a mention of a camogie match in West Cork in 1914.

the lines. Here was the interested follower of his club shouting to the player to mind her place; here was the delighted old Doheny footballer enjoying the rare sport to him of seeing girl knock girl or crack her with the camán in the shin in earnest; here also was the old grandmother with her grandchildren expressing her indignation at the conduct of the hussies. For my part I thoroughly enjoyed the display, for it is undoubtedly a very good exercise for ladies and a local club should be started in my opinion.'

Clan Emer emerged winners by 3-3 to 3-0. Miss Delia Coakley, N.T., Mr Jack Young, N.T., Brother Carthage and Shamus O'Brien were the main organisers of the Aeridheacht.

In 1915 the young ladies of Timoleague had tried to start a camogie club, which had proved successful for a while until it fell through from want of proper organisation. However, in 1916 they had secured a very suitable field from Miss Griffin and practised camogie every fine evening. Their numbers were small but it was hoped many more would join.

'Some members of the team are very clever players and we hope to see them engaged in a match with some other club early in the season.'

In Part 2 next week, TOM LYONS will look back at the very first West Cork Camogie Championship held in 1917.

Courcey sisters feature in new book

A BRILLIANT photo that captured sisters Shirley and Ashling Moloney embracing after Courcey Rovers won the club's first county senior camogie championship title features in Sportsfile's latest offering, *The Toughest Season*.

In September, five-star Courceys defeated Inniscarra by 5-12 to 1-12 in the county senior decider to win the title for the first time – and this image captured that magical moment.

The *Toughest Season* – the result of AIB partnering with Sportsfile, the GAA and the Camogie Association – captures in 120 images the resilience of clubs, fans, and communities before, during and after the Covid-19 lockdown. This photobook is a pictorial account of how hurling, football and camogie communities came together to support one another throughout one of the toughest years in history.

All proceeds from the sale of the book will be donated to the AIB Together Fund supporting Age NI, Alone, FoodCloud, Soar and Pieta House. Earlier this Autumn, AIB called on those across the country to take part by submitting their own images that depict their experience of 'The Toughest Season'. Along with Sportsfile imagery, the book is comprised of photographs from individuals across Ireland who have visually shared their own stories.



M LEE MEDIA
BY David Ribeiro

This superb photo of sisters Shirley and Ashling Moloney embracing after Courcey Rovers won their first county senior club camogie championship title features in *The Toughest Season* by Sportsfile.



CHALLENGING FOR HONOURS: The Cork camogie team who were defeated by Dublin in the 1957 All-Ireland semi-final. This team included eight of those who started against Antrim in 1956 — Betty Walsh, Joan Clancy, Teresa Murphy, Lil Coughlan, Maura Hayes, Ann Crotty, Noreen Duggan, Mona Joyce. Also pictured are Elaine O'Donovan, Kitty Barry Murphy, Josephine O'Grady and Lily Grant

Courceys captain Karyn Keohane adds West Cork Sports Star Monthly Award to her growing collection

BY KIERAN MCCARTHY

IT'S fitting that from Karyn Keohane's home, high up in the townland of Kilgobbin, halfway between Ballinspittle and Ballinadee, she can see the lights of Cork Airport in the distance – because the Courcey Rovers stalwart has been flying high these past few months.

In September she captained Courceys to the club's first-ever county senior camogie championship title. Her feet haven't touched the ground since.

That was a magical moment for Keohane and her team-mates, as they blitzed Inniscarra by 5-12 to 1-12 in the county final at Castle Road.

In their 21st year playing senior camogie, Courceys' wait to land their maiden title was over.

The joy and the emotion was unbelievable. It's only when you watch the match back that it hits you,' Keohane says, after she was last week presented – via Zoom – with a Celtic Ross West Cork Sports Star Monthly Award for September.

This latest accolade was for her team-mates as much as her, their captain fantastic insists, but no-one will begrudge her this moment of recognition either.

She's one of the longest-serving players with Courceys. In 2008 she captained the club's junior C footballers to a county title and 12 seasons on she captained the club's senior camogie team to an historic county title. That's longevity right there. But then again, she's a very determined woman.

'When I was in third year of secondary school I was the only girl still playing sport,' she explains. Her love of sport and the outdoors and her strong desire to win meant that dropping out of sport was never an option. It means too much to this Kinsale native who joined Courcey Rovers because she wanted to play GAA. At the time, Kinsale didn't have a ladies' GAA section, so Courceys was her route to playing GAA – and she hasn't looked back.

That county junior football title in 2008. Then there were two seasons with the Cork senior B footballers, including an All-Ireland win in 2009. She had to wait until 2014 for her next county success, the Cork junior B football title when Courceys beat Dohenys to move up to junior A.

In 2017, Courceys landed an important county senior camogie league title. It was followed by a first county senior camogie championship final appearance the next season which ended in heartbreak, but, ultimately, was an experience they needed to endure.

In 2019, Keohane was picked, by her team-mates, to captain the senior camogie team, but then she received some great news: she was pregnant. In October last year, Karyn and her husband Ronan welcomed

Keohane is flying high after Courceys' big win

Karyn Keohane captained Courcey Rovers to county senior glory in September. (Photo: David Ribeiro)

'It felt like you were going to meet your friends on the beach rather than this big, serious conversation in a clubhouse'

their first child, Lailah. The new mom's hands were full, but Courceys was never far from her thoughts. And there was never a doubt in her mind that she would return this year. Again, she was named captain.

'I didn't put any pressure on myself saying that I had to come back, but I felt good,' Keohane explains.

'I have been fortunate that I have had very few injuries and I've always maintained a certain level of fitness so I felt I still had something to contribute to the team.

'Even when I was pregnant last year I still went to a lot of the training sessions and matches, and I would have kept that close connection with the team and the management. I still wanted to play my part and be there for my team-mates, even when I wasn't on the pitch.'

This season, her comeback

year, has been the most unusual in living memory for most of us, but Keohane and Courceys never lost their focus. Instead, they embraced the challenges, they adapted and they pushed on. As a result, their bond strengthened.

'Given the Covid situation this year the clubhouse was closed so if we had a match at the weekend, we used to meet at Garretstown Beach every Saturday,' Keohane explains.

'We used to walk along the water, everyone would bring their breakfast and maybe a cup of tea, and we'd have a team chat. It became more relaxed, it felt like you were going to meet your friends on the beach rather than this big, serious conversation in a clubhouse. That approach suited us, it was very relaxed and open. We had a routine that worked for us and we kept it for every game,

from the first through to final.'

In a normal year, odds are Courceys wouldn't have used Garretstown as a meeting point. Instead, it would have been a dressing-room at the clubhouse.

'We are so lucky to have the beach so close to us but we wouldn't have taken advantage of it before. But when you do have to think outside the box, and when the clubhouse wasn't available, it benefitted us hugely. Even for next year, we are already saying we need to keep the same approach, go to the beach, go for a walk,' Keohane explains.

Courceys approach certainly paid off this season. Round by round, they improved and impressed, and Keohane played her role. She set high standards. After one training session they were told to run up the hill outside the dressing-room at the clubhouse. When they were finished and still trying to catch their breath, Keohane asked to do it five more times. Like we said, she's determined.

It meant they arrived in the final, against the Inniscarra

team that had beaten them in the 2018 senior decider, hopping off the ground physically, while also a lot more streetwise. Lessons were learned and there was no way they were going to be caught in the headlights like two years earlier.

'In 2018 the lads were in the county final as well, and we probably started thinking that we will all be in the lorry together after, celebrating,' she admits. 'Even seeing flags and banners up around the village, which we hadn't seen before, you probably get caught up in the moment.'

'Then there was the national anthem on the day of the final. We were still doing the warm-up and our trainer was calling out different drills when the anthem started. We were all over the place to be honest, but that experience stood to us.'

Ahead of this year's county final, there was a boombox at training. Every now and again, someone would play the national anthem, just to normalise it. Courceys were determined not to be caught out again by the trappings of the big day – and

they weren't.

Now, heading into 2021 as champions, Courcey Rovers are the team to beat, and that's motivation right there for Keohane and Co.

'In the past we would have been looking at the team who wins the county final as the level we need to get to, so we're well aware that every other team will be looking at us and wanting to beat us,' she says.

'We know that people will want to take us down but we don't want to be a one-year wonder, we feel we can get better and we want to keep this journey going, that's a huge motivation for us.'

'Now that we know what it feels like to win a county title, we want it again and we want to hold on to that feeling.'

For Keohane, a middle child, she deserves her name in the headlines and a moment on stage all to herself, for the service she's given Courceys and the commitment she's shown over the years. And if her feet don't touch the ground until 2021, well, she's earned that too.



Character can lead Cats to

Robert Cribbin talks to Kilkenny camogie manager Brian Dowling as the Cats look forward to Saturday's All-Ireland final clash with Galway

The O'Duffy Cup will be presented to the winners of Saturday's Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship final

In some ways it was an unenviable task with Brian Dowling taking over from Anne Downey as Kilkenny camogie manager, but thus far it has worked out perfectly as he leads his team into an All-Ireland final on Saturday against Galway (throw-in 7pm).

A year where the sporting calendar was interrupted by Covid-19 was far from ideal for the new Cats boss but he is happy with how things have gone thus far given the circumstances.

"It's been a very strange year with everything that has gone on," he said, speaking at Kilkenny's media day at a chilly UPMC Nowlan Park.

"The league didn't start as well as we would have liked. We lost here against Clare the first day and we struggled over the line against Offaly before Cork gave us a bit of a trimming. Looking back on it the league was actually a positive for us as we found a lot of new players.

"We were missing a lot of

players during the league and these new players stepped up and got game time, which was important for their development. Look, it's been a strange year with a big break in the middle of it - on a few occasions it looked like we may not even get a championship - so we are delighted where we are and we cannot wait for Saturday night."

While the season was broken into two, the players never stopped working towards a comeback.

"There were a few weeks where the championship looked like it was going to be cancelled, but the girls were working away on their own," he said. "There was a stage where we had to tell them to stop and pull it back a small bit as we didn't know if it was going to go ahead or not and you wouldn't have the energy if it did as a result."

"When we did get official word that it was going back, the girls were absolutely buzzing for it," the manager

said. "The last few weeks have been unbelievable as they train together and play these big matches."

"For family at home to be able to watch the matches has been a big plus," he added. "The televised coverage of hurling and camogie has been brilliant over the last few weeks."

The break gave Dowling the opportunity to welcome back the likes of Anna and Meighan Farrell into the panel and with Kellyann Doyle getting extra time to recover from injury the enforced stoppage definitely had some positives for the Kilkenny camp.

"If the championships had gone ahead as normal maybe Katie Power would have been involved, but Kellyann Doyle wouldn't have been available," he said. "Anna and Meighan Farrell weren't part of the panel at the start of the year either, so there was positives and negatives."

"We have the players we have and we are very confident in them," he added. "It's obviously very disappointing that we don't have everybody on board, but that's the way it is now - every

"We can't keep looking back to the past," said Dowling. "We can't be worrying about what happened last year."

team has injuries and we just have to get on with it. However we'd be confident in the 15 girls that start and the ones that come on for us."

Kilkenny sealed their place in the All-Ireland final with a hard fought victory over Cork. Despite being slow out of the blocks in the semi-final they still found a way to come out on top, with Denise Gaule having a huge bearing on the result.

"I was frustrated with the way we started against Cork," said Dowling. "It shocked me really, as I was expecting a huge performance from us going down there."

GREAT CHARACTER

"After 10 minutes we just didn't hit the ground running and I don't know the reason why either - was it from a lack of big championship games? Whatever it was, the girls showed great character to

turn the game around. Even by the first water break I thought we had turned it around and we were getting on top of Cork at that stage."

"While Denise Gaule did miss a couple of scores, great players are able to come back from that and she refocused and nearly scored every free after that and added on a couple of points from play."

"She (Denise Gaule) also won a ball near the end that



Kilkenny manager Brian Dowling

Galway captain Dervan looking to fend off Kilkenny attacking threat

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For the second year running Galway and Kilkenny will contest the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship final.

It may be three months later than usual but the two teams will again renew acquaintances with Galway looking to land the O'Duffy Cup again after emerging victorious in last year's final on a 3-14 to 0-17 scoreline. Sarah Dervan captained

Galway to that third ever success and she will lead her side out once more against Kilkenny and knows the challenge that awaits her side on Saturday evening.

"Kilkenny are a brilliant team and it's their fifth final in a row," Dervan said.

"It's massive for a team to be consistently competing in the All-Ireland final but I suppose we can't really focus too much on them."

"We can only think about ourselves and what we can bring to the game. They have some unbelievable players

but you can't get caught up in that and worry about what they do."

Kilkenny come into the game on the back of a two point victory over Cork in the semi-final where they netted two goals and Galway will have to stop that scoring threat.

"Kilkenny were very impressive against Cork in the semi-final and they seemed to have their match-ups right," she said.

"They have a new management team in place and look very fresh so we are

going to have to bring our A game - we can't wait for them to attack us."

"We have to go at it straight away because if we don't start right we won't be able to live with Kilkenny after 10 or 15 minutes."

The experienced full-back is leading Galway into uncharted territory as they look to win back to back titles for the first time ever.

The defending champions beat Kilkenny in both the 2013 and 2019 finals so they know what it takes to win. The games between the two



Galway captain Sarah Dervan chases Denise Gaule (Kilkenny) during the 2019 All-Ireland final
PICTURE: BRYAN KEANE/INPHO

also tend to be high scoring affairs and while Galway will

go in as favourites a close game is still expected.

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Anna Farrell
THOMASTOWN



Anne Dalton
ST LACHTAIN'S



Aoife Doyle
PILTOWN



Aobha O'Gorman
DICKSBORO



Claire Phelan
LISDOWNEY



Collette Dormer
BARROW RANGERS



Danielle Morrissey
CONAHY SHAMROCKS



Davina Tobin
EMERALDS



Katie Nolan
ST MARTIN'S



Katie Power
PILTOWN



Kellyann Doyle
PILTOWN



Mary O'Connell
CLARA



Meighan Farrell
THOMASTOWN



Michaela Kenneally
WINDGAP



Michelle Teehan
JAMES STEPHENS



Miriam Bambrick
BARROW RANGERS



Aoife Prendergast
DICKSBORO



Catherine Foley
WINDGAP



Ciara O'Shea
DICKSBORO



Ciara Phelan
DICKSBORO



Edel Coonan
ST MARTIN'S



Edwina Keane
ST MARTIN'S



Emma Kavanagh
ROWER-INISTIOGE



Grace Walsh
TULLAROAN



Laura Murphy
O'LOUGHLIN GAELS



Laura Norris
PILTOWN



Lucinda Gahan
DICKSBORO (CAPTAIN)



Lydia Fitzpatrick
ST LACHTAIN'S



Niamh Deely
JAMES STEPHENS



Noreen O'Keeffe
CONAHY SHAMROCKS



Sophie O'Dwyer
JAMES STEPHENS



Steffi Fitzgerald
YOUNG IRELANDS



Miriam Walsh
TULLAROAN



Denise Gaule
WINDGAP



Aoife Norris
PILTOWN



Laura Hegarty
LISDOWNEY

Cats are recharged and ready for final

Trevor Spillane
tspillane@kilkennypeople.ie

You know it's been a strange year when it's the middle of December and Denise Gaule is talking about Kilkenny's drive to lift the O'Duffy Cup.

The timing for the senior camogie All-Ireland final may have changed, but the urge to be champions is the same.

"Strange is one word for it," the Windgap player said as she looked forward to a final in the depths of Winter. "However, if someone told us we were going to be back in an All-Ireland we would have taken the hand off them, no matter the time of year."

Starting the new season under a new management regime meant Kilkenny were heading into the unknown, but their time together was cut short when the league was cancelled midway through.

"I don't know if it was good or bad as our league form hadn't been the best, but come championship everything is different," said Gaule. "When we got back to training we were all keen to push things on and drive on. We were happy to be back and to get the chance to compete for an All-Ireland."

Coupled with all the

change throughout the year, being back with their clubs before embarking on an intercounty championship was a novel experience for the players.

"It was nice having the time with the club," she said. "At times it feels like you with them a week here and there, you never really get the time to bond with the girls you play with. We got a lot closer with the girls from the club and it was great to be there for the whole of the championship."

"There are three of us from the club on the senior panel - Gaule, Catherine Foley and Michaela Kenneally - so it was great to be there to drive things on."

"Everyone wants to go well with their club first and foremost," she continued. "The way the games were played was brilliant as it made for an exciting championship - it probably didn't go the way we wanted in Windgap, but it was great to be able to get back with the club and to give the time back to where we started."

Being back with their clubs gave the players an extra spring for intercounty. Gaule reckoned.

"Club training is so different from one club to the next, but the break from the

county did us all the world of good," she said. "A lot of us are on the go with Kilkenny for a long time without taking a real break from it, so when we came back I think we were all refreshed and ready to give it our all. Everyone was buzzing to be back, especially with everything that was happening."

"It's where we wanted to be," she added, "going down training with your team-mates. It's something simple, but it was brilliant."

That recharged energy has been apparent in Kilkenny's performances this year. The Cats roared through their games, beating Waterford (0-15 to 0-8) and Westmeath (6-23 to 1-7) in the group stages of the championship.

"We went well in the group," she said. "We had a tough game against Waterford on the opening day, especially in the first 40 minutes, but we ground it out. We really performed in the Westmeath game, playing as best as we could against a confident side who had just come up to the senior grade."

Coupled with a 2-16 to 0-8 win over Limerick, that 100% record saw them skip the quarter-finals and go straight through to the final four and a meeting with Cork.



The midseason break gave Kilkenny a chance to recharge, reckoned Denise Gaule

"The game with Cork was strange as we had been written off before it," she said. "That didn't put any pressure on us, but it did give us extra motivation to perform. Where else would you want to beat Cork only in Cork?"

Kilkenny didn't have the best of starts - they trailed by six points after just eight minutes - but the team dug deep for a battling win.

"That was the type of game we might have lost in the past," she said. "It was a brilliant win. I don't know how our backs (Kilkenny came through a tough spell of Cork pressure as the Rebels

chased the game in the second half) but they put in some performance. After the final whistle the relief we felt at winning was something else. However, we know there is a bigger challenge ahead. It took a big performance to get to grips with Cork and we know that if we make a similar start against Galway things may not go our way."

The win over Cork, not to mention how they've overcome the hurdles put in place by the sporting upheaval caused by the coronavirus pandemic, typified the character in the Kilkenny ranks.

"We needed a performance like that," said Gaule. "We hadn't played as well as we can; it wasn't a free-flowing game we played, but sometimes grinding out a win like that is better. You can learn more about yourselves from a game like that."

"It gave us a big learning curve," she said. "You want to take something from every game you play. A day like we had in Cork shows the character that's in the team, everyone was pulling for each other. Now we have to bring that momentum and workrate into the final."

Kilkenny lost last year's final to Galway, but the players won't dwell on it.

"There have been so many years that if you were to look back now it wouldn't do anything for you," she said. "You have a bit of hurt that you want to carry in, but it's a new year and feels completely different. We have things to learn from last year's final, which is important, but for me a lot of it is about how things go on the day. Hopefully we'll get the performance we need from everyone because Galway are a serious team. We'll have it all to do, but it should be a good match. We both want to go out and just play and give our best."

The game might be in an empty Croke Park in December, but that won't deter Gaule and her team-mates from their aim to secure the O'Duffy Cup.

"As long as it's not snowing we'll be alright!"

Dormer hails squad effort ahead of Croke clash

Robert Cribbin
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Collette Dormer has been there and done that in a Kilkenny jersey but the Paulstown star is not finished yet.

The wing back was a driving force in helping Kilkenny to their last All-Ireland title in 2016. And, despite the change in date for this year's final, she is ready as she always is.

"Preparing for an All-Ireland final in December is very different to a Sunday afternoon in September, but we are looking forward to it," she said.

"We are very fortunate to be still playing. I think everyone understands and appreciates how fortunate we are as a group to be still playing and to be even getting out on the field."

The injuries to Kellyann Doyle and Katie Power have shown us how fortunate we are to be playing and not to take any games for granted."

Doyle has since returned from her cruciate ligament injury and appeared as a second half sub against Cork but with the likes of Power and Michelle Quilty unavailable the team does have a changed look about it.

The side wasn't fancied to reach the final in many areas but they remain unbeaten after impressing in their four games thus far.

Victories over Waterford, Westmeath and Limerick in the group stages arrived before goals from Anne Dalton and Miriam Walsh helped the Cats to a two point victory over Cork in the semi-final in Páirc Uí Chaoimh.

"I think the championship has gone well," said Dormer. "We had three tough games in the group. Going into the Cork game we were slow out of the traps, but it went well for us in the end. Hopefully on Saturday we can all click together and perform."

"Cork was a huge marker for us and it kind of told us



Collette Dormer is looking to win a second All-Ireland on Saturday

where we were at because we had the three week layoff between matches. To get back up to that level is great for us."

All of Kilkenny's games have been played with little or no spectators present. While it was strange for the players at first it's something they have slowly got used to.

"To us playing in front of no crowds hasn't really

affected us hugely," she said. "The only time it really had an impact was after the Cork game as we didn't know what to do with ourselves as we had to get out of the dressing rooms as quick as we could but yet we didn't want to leave each other's company."

Kilkenny are more than familiar to the occasion of All-Ireland finals after competing in the last five.

While it will be different this year they still won't be lacking for motivation ahead of a tilt at the defending champions Galway.

"It's a shorter run in to the final this year and getting there for the fifth year in a row really shows the resilience in the panel and the driving force that we have in there," Dormer added.

"If we can go out and perform we can show any young girls that dreams can happen for you and if you stick at it and work hard it will happen."

"Going into every All-Ireland final you always have the motivation. We've had tough battles with Galway down through the years and it's been tit for tat with each other so it's about us getting up to the level and performing on the day," she added.

A major positive for both sides ahead of the final is the fact that the GAA and the Government have both given the green light to full panels

being present in Croke Park after only the matchday squad was permitted over the last few weeks.

The news came as a shock to Dormer, but it's something the whole squad is delighted with.

"It's huge to have everyone there," she said. "It was heartbreaking last week not having some players in attendance and it was awful for Brian and even the girls themselves watching on so you just wanted to win in Cork for them and make sure that they will be there the next day."

"It's a full panel effort and you need everyone pushing, so with the way this year has gone anybody could be starting. That's the way it is with everyone pushing each other and it's giving the management team a headache on who to select."

"We are looking forward to it. We know Galway is going to be a tough game so we need to bring a performance and hopefully things go well."



UP FOR THE CUP: Galway defender Sarah Dervan at a photocall ahead of Saturday's All-Ireland Senior Camogie final at Croke Park.

Picture: INPHO/Dan Sheridan

Cats skipper Gahan still can't believe All-Ireland final dream is coming true



All-Ireland Senior Camogie final
Galway v Kilkenny

Saturday: 7pm, Croke Park
Referee: Owen Elliot (Antrim)
TV: RTE

Eoghan Cormican



Lucinda Gahan can't quite believe that this Saturday evening she will captain Kilkenny in an All-Ireland senior camogie final.

The disbelief dripping off almost every word uttered by Gahan is more than justified when you consider Kilkenny's captain for the 2020 campaign went the first seven years of the last decade without playing a single game of camogie.

A talented underage player who won three All-Ireland minor medals between 2005 and 2007, adding intermediate silverware in 2008, Gahan emigrated to Cardiff in 2010 and there began an almost eight-year stretch where camogie was not part of her sporting pursuits.

"I spent six years in Cardiff. But they



Lucinda Gahan: 'When I went away at 20 or 21 years of age, I never would have imagined that I would be back at this level.'

Picture: INPHO/Dan Sheridan

had no camogie clubs so I did a bit of Gaelic football there. I got involved in running then and did some marathons. I needed to get involved in something else when camogie wasn't there," Gahan recalls of her time away from the game. After Cardiff, I did a year in Australia.

"My time there was short enough so I mainly focused on travelling. I wasn't sure I was going to come back to Ireland, so I never imagined I'd be back playing camogie again.

"I only came back to Ireland in 2018,

but when you come back it's great to get back involved. It was my brothers who put the idea in my head to join the local team and they've been very welcoming."

That local team is Dicksboro and when the club edged out Piltown in last year's Kilkenny senior camogie final, Gahan was not only called up to the Kilkenny panel, she was handed the captaincy for 2020.

"I just can't believe I'm here as captain of the Kilkenny senior camogie team.

"It's what you dream of when you are a young girl. You are brought up playing camogie, all you do is play camogie.

"When I went away at 20 or 21 years of age, I never would have imagined that I would be back at this level.

"I'm 31 now and you question when you come back: 'Oh, I'm too old to come back.' You never are. And there's still a lot to achieve at that age. It's never too late.

"Even just settling back in again, getting to know people again, all the social inclusion.

"It's good for your mental health, physical health — there's just so many benefits.

"I'm delighted to be back playing and it's a dream come true to have come this far."

Gahan has been unable to break onto the starting team during Kilkenny's run to a fifth consecutive All-Ireland final appearance and doesn't see much relevance in the final heartache endured by her team-mates in 2017, '18, and '19.

"We've a new management and a new panel. We haven't really dwelled on last year.

"The focus is all on this year and we're just staying positive. The past is the past.

"We're all just so determined to get there this year. It's been a long time [to Kilkenny's last title in 2016]. It's 2008 when I won my last All-Ireland so it's a very long time ago."

Wedding plans twice hit by lockdown but Dervan hopes final goes off without a hitch

Dec.
2020



All-Ireland Senior Camogie final
Galway v Kilkenny

Saturday: 7pm, Croke Park
Referee: Owen Elliot (Antrim)
TV: RTE

Eoghan Cormican



Last Friday's Zoom call with Sarah Dervan threw-in at 2pm.

The conversation was roughly 25 minutes old when the Galway camogie captain revealed that instead of sitting in front of her laptop fielding questions on this first Friday of December, she should be standing at a church altar getting married.

The Galway full-back and her partner had initially planned to tie the knot on March 28, but lockdown number one put paid to those plans and so Friday, December 4 was settled on as

their new wedding date.

Having discussed the postponement of her first wedding date early in the Zoom call, Dervan, most understandably, did not immediately volunteer the fact that she should be celebrating her wedding day instead of chatting to a laptop screen full of journalists. That was until this writer asked had a second date been tried for in 2020.

"I was hoping to avoid that question," she says, with a laugh.

"My second day was supposed to be today. I've never been so thankful that I have something else to think about in camogie. I'm thrilled I have an All-Ireland final to look forward to rather than thinking about this."

The decision to postpone for a second time, Dervan explains, was taken back in August amid the uncertainty of where the country might be in the first week of December and what the day itself would look like.

"I just got so sick of watching the news, seeing the numbers, and then only going the wrong way. The pressure of trying to decide what to do, will you have your suppliers and all that again?"

"Making the decision was probably one of the hardest things to do, but there was nothing but relief once it was made. It was great to have it off your shoulders. I just threw myself into camogie and I'm delighted to be able to

have it to keep me going."

The couple will try again for a third time in November of 2021.

"You just get so worn out planning, so I just wanted a break from it all. We were happy enough to move it out, so that's what we did."

"There are plenty of players who had to [postpone their wedding dates]. There's Niamh Kilkenny and a couple on the Kilkenny team. That's life, you can't change it. I'll look forward to it again when it comes around."

Through all the planning and postponing, the long-serving player — who stands one hour from becoming the first camogie player in 54 years to captain her county to back-to-back All-Irelands — was so incredibly grateful to have camogie.

Even during the "very lonely" period of GAA inactivity, the six-time All-Star never relented, never stopped training.

"I've never appreciated something in my life as much as I have camogie this year, because it's really taken me through the lows of the year."

"You kept telling yourself camogie would be back because if you doubted it for a second, you wouldn't do anything. With the mental side of things, to be able to go out and do a running session or a bodywork session at home, you feel so much better afterwards."

"Lots of people told me I was mad, but

I just took it that camogie would be back. Anyone who told me differently, I just stayed away from them. So I lost myself in that and kept going, kept myself ticking over through lockdown. And now, to be in an All-Ireland final, it's unreal."

Of course it wasn't easy being removed from the team environment, particularly when you've been pulling on the Galway shirt at senior level since the end of the noughties.

"Pucking off a wall on your own just isn't the same as going down to the pitch, meeting the girls and having a bit of craic. When you're in a routine like that, when you get up every morning, go to work, come home, go training, that's your life. So for everything to be taken away, I struggled for the first few weeks to figure out what I was supposed to be doing. It was really kind of lonely."

"You had your up days when you thought, 'yeah, it'll go ahead, stay doing what you're doing', but then you'd have your low days when it felt like too much of a struggle to run around your lawn and not have anyone to talk to."

"One thing that really stood out through Covid was how we kept our communication going. We kept each other going. They are a special bunch of girls, we look after each other. It's a lovely set-up to be involved in. I'm lucky to be captain."

'It's hard, even though we know we're lucky,'

Daragh Ó Conchúir

THE sirens wailing on the other end of the line, as Collette Dormer navigates her way through the Waterford city traffic to find a spot to pull in and chat, are mercifully neither to lock her away nor provide urgent medical assistance.

It has been that kind of year, when health and safety are foremost in most people's minds. With her mother, Ann, having survived a two-year cancer ordeal, her welfare in the midst of a global pandemic was the absolute primary concern.

After that, there was the planned wedding to Liam Barron. Actually, scratch that. The wedding was third, after camogie. Postponed nuptials have been part of Covid-19's collateral damage.

Indeed two of the Kilkenny defender's Galway opponents in tomorrow night's Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship final at Croke Park, Sarah Dervan and Niamh Kilkenny, were in a similar boat. So too Chloe Drain, who lined out for Antrim in last Saturday's intermediate decider.

While most of the postponements were due directly to the heavy restrictions in place due to Covid, it was the restructure of the camogie championships that forced this rearrangement.

"Our first date was November 20, but we postponed it months ago when we found out the camogie was going ahead. It's funny, people think it was Covid that I had to postpone for."

She pauses to giggle. "But technically, it was because of the camogie."



A Tullogher-Rosbercon man, Liam gets it. So November 2021 it is. It is illustrative of the commitment of Dormer (above) and her peers at elite sporting level.

The 31-year-old architect technician is putting far more into camogie now than she did when brought into the senior squad 14 years ago as a superb talent with two minor and one U-16 medal already packed away.

The full set was completed with the addition of intermediate and senior mementos, the latter in 2016 twinned with a second All-Star as the Paulstown ace established herself among the top echelons of backs.

There have been six senior final losses too, and though many of her former colleagues have fallen away for different reasons, she is feeling better than ever.

"We're not that old now," she exclaims. "Myself and (Anne) Dalton are pushing all the young ones! You're only as young as you feel or as old as you feel."

Kilkenny ace Dormer happy to play the waiting game



All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship Final
Galway v Kilkenny

Tomorrow: Croke Park, 7pm
Referee: Owen Elliot (Antrim)
TV: RTE

Daragh Ó Conchúir

Kilkenny camogie star Collette Dormer has surfed the changes and challenges of the coronavirus pandemic like thousands of others.

With her mother, Ann, having survived a two-year cancer ordeal, her welfare in the midst of a global pandemic was the family's primary concern.

After that, there was the planned wedding to Liam Barron. Actually, scratch that. The wedding was third, after camogie.

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It is illustrative of the commitment of Dormer and her peers at elite sporting level. The 31-year-old architect technician is putting far more into camogie now than she did when brought into the senior squad 14 years ago as a superb talent with two minor and one U16 medal already packed away. The full set was completed with the addition of intermediate and senior titles, the latter in 2016 twinned with a second All-Star for the Paulstown ace. The levels of preparation came into line with high performance sport and though many of her former colleagues have fallen away, she is feeling better than ever.

"We're not that old now," she exclaims with a laugh ahead of tomorrow's All-Ireland final with Galway at Croke Park.

"Myself and (Anne) Dalton are pushing all the young ones. You're only as young as you feel or as old as you feel. I'm fairly good and happy to stay going. When the body starts breaking down you can start thinking about stepping away but I'm delighted to be still contributing this year."

Kilkenny had just nine of the team that started last year's All-Ireland final defeat by Galway starting against Cork in the semi-final at Páirc Uí Chaoimh 13 days ago.

That is significant turnover and given that so many less experienced players have come into the fold, it seems, you venture, a considerable feat to have reached another All-Ireland given the concerns raised in some quarters about this team's waning powers. "When the final whistle went, the feeling was savage. You're 14 months trying to get back to Croke Park to try right the wrongs of last year. That game was pure emotional for us. Kelly

Kilkenny's Collette Dormer says semi-final clash with Cork was emotional for squad.

Ann Doyle coming on with 15 minutes to go. Who could have predicted in March, that she would have been playing in an All-Ireland semi-final? It was against Cork that she did her cruciate just before lockdown and to come on in that game was huge. It just shows the hard work and dedication that she put in."

Afterwards, many of the players made their way to Katie Power, the star attacker who has ruled out by a broken knee cap.

"Many of us are playing with Katie since we're 12, 13 years of age — it was just heartbreaking that she wasn't on the field with us. At the same time she was trying to push us on the best she could. She was all positive. It wasn't about her it was about the team. That's the person she is."

It speaks of a united group and that comes through again, as Dormer discusses her mother first in the current climate, before speaking about the new challenges of playing amid restrictions. She is aware how fortunate they are to play this championship. But it is tough mentally and that the full squads will be permitted to attend Saturday under the relaxed guidelines is a relief. But that family won't, is a disappointment that must be parked.

"You just can't be too careful with Mam with Covid but she's the heart of the family. She's driving us on. It's heartbreaking for her, and for myself... if you were playing a Mickey Mouse match in the field, she'd be the first one there," she added.

admits Cats' Dormer

"I'm fairly good and happy to stay going. When the body starts breaking down you can start thinking about stepping away but I'm delighted to be still contributing this year."

Kilkenny had just nine of the team that started last year's All-Ireland final defeat by Galway starting against Cork in the semi-final at Páirc Uí Chaoimh 13 days ago. That is significant turnover and given that so many less experienced players have come into the fold, it seems, you venture, a considerable feat to have reached another All-Ireland.

"When the final whistle went (against Cork), the feeling was savage. You're 14 months trying to get back to Croke Park to try right the wrongs of last year. That game was pure emotional for us."

Afterwards, many of the players

made their way to Katie Power, the star attacker who has ruled out by a broken knee cap. It speaks of a united group.

"We know we're so fortunate and so lucky to be training and playing at this time of the year, for our lives to be a little bit normal. But even after the game, we didn't know what to do with ourselves. We go home! And after the final, is that the same?"

"Whoever wins and loses, you're not going to want to go off the field, you're not going to want to leave the group because that's it. It's just so different and it's hard, even though we know we're lucky."

A reminder that these players and mentors deserve our gratitude and admiration, whoever gets the O'Duffy Cup.



Kilkenny look to put run of final pain behind them against Galway



Mary Hannigan

Both sides are built around watertight defences but Kilkenny's attack looks to hold an edge

Today
Galway
v Kilkenny
Croke Park, 7.0pm, RTE 2

There might have been nothing typical about the last 12 months, but for Kilkenny there's a familiarity to how their year is ending, the county having reached its fifth All-Ireland camogie final in a row and, remarkably, its seventh in eight years.

They have, though, suffered a whole heap of heartache in Croke Park during that spell, losing five of their last six finals,

including the last three, and if they're going to get their hands on the O'Duffy Cup on Saturday night, they will have to get the better of the team that beat them last year - Galway.

Kilkenny manager Brian Dowling, who succeeded Ann Downey when she stepped down after the 2019 final, has, though, been able to name a side that includes eight of their starting line-up from their 2016 success, including two former players of the year in Ann Dalton and Denise Gaule. So, there's no shortage of pedigree nor players who know Croke Park doesn't always have to be a bleak house.

Troubles

They haven't been without their troubles this year, losing the hugely influential Katie Power to a broken kneecap sustained in a training match in October, while Kellyann Doyle only returned to action in the semi-finals after suffering a cruciate ligament injury.

But Dowling will take heart from a, thus far, unbeaten Championship campaign. Kilkenny topping their group with three wins out of three before ousting a fancied Cork side in the semi-finals. They showed plenty of steel in that display too, having trailed by six points in the early stages, a gutsy defensive effort in the final quarter giving them a two-point victory.

"When the final whistle went, the feeling

was savage," said Collette Dormer, another of the team's 2016 winners. "You're 14 months trying to get back to Croke Park to try right the wrongs of last year. That game was pure emotional for us."

But Galway have suffered their fair share of Croke Park woes too, last year's success their first since 2013, which was only the county's second ever camogie All-Ireland title, their maiden triumph coming in 1996 - having lost all nine of their pre-

"You're 14 months trying to get back to Croke Park to try right the wrongs of last year"

vious final appearances.

They're now aiming for their first two-in-a-row which, if they succeeded, would make Sarah Dervan the first captain to raise the O'Duffy Cup in consecutive years since Dublin's Kathleen Ryder achieved the feat in 1966.

Dervan is at the centre of a full-back line, with Shauna Healy and Heather Cooney either side, that didn't concede a goal to either Cork in the group stage of this year's Championship or to Tipperary in the semi-finals, six points their winning margin, the captain the player of the match in that encounter. Nor did they ship a goal to

Galway captain Sarah Dervan with Kilkenny's Denise Gaule in last year's final. Dervan is aiming to be the first captain to lift the trophy in consecutive years since 1966. PHOTOGRAPH: INPHO

Kilkenny in last year's final, despite being up against a usually prolific set of forwards.

That contest will, then, be key again to the outcome of this final, as will the one between a Kilkenny defence that was so resolute in their semi-final against a Galway attack that saw all six starting forwards get on the scoresheet against Tipperary. Not to mention the midfield battle, Galway's featuring the 2019 player of the year and the player of the match 14 months ago, Niamh Kilkenny.

Whatever the outcome, it will be a unique occasion, played under the lights at Croke Park. A little bit of brightness at the end of a dark year.

GALWAY: S. Healy, S. Healy, S. Donnan (capt), H. Cooney, E. Healy, S. Gardner, T. Kenny, A. Donohue, N. Kilkenny, C. Dolan, C. Cormican, R. Hennessy, A. O'Reilly, N. Hanniffy, D. McGrath, Subst: L. Glynn, S. McGrath, N. Coen, R. Black, C. Murphy, A. M. Starr, C. Finerty, N. McGrath, S. Spellman, L. Casserly, D. Higgins, S. Coen, L. Ryan, C. Donohue, M. Mannion.
KILKENNY: A. Norris, M. Teehan, C. Phelan, D. Tobin, C. Dormer, M. Farrell, G. Walsh, A. Farrell, L. Murphy, M. Walsh, A. Dalton, A. Doyle, M. O'Connell, D. Gaule, R. Nolan, Subst: E. Kavanagh, N. Deely, S. Fitzgerald, L. Fitzpatrick, K. Doyle, C. O'Shea, D. Morrissey, A. Prendergast, L. Norris, C. Foley, C. Phelan, L. Gahan (capt), M. Bambrick, M. Kennelly, E. Coonan.

'I was delighted because I didn't want to disappear'

"You are putting on a brave face the whole time, to be honest," says Katie Power, a most frank admission from the sidelined Kilkenny forward.

Power is long acquainted with All-Ireland camogie final week. Since the summer of 2009, which began with her sitting the Leaving Cert and finished with her lining out at centre-forward in the All-Ireland senior final, there haven't too many Septembers where she wasn't mentally and physically preparing herself for involvement in camogie's biggest day.

And while the end result has only once fallen her and Kilkenny's way in their last seven attempts, the week leading into the All-Ireland is, she says, her favourite of the year. The only other week that comes close is Christmas.

A somewhat welcome coincidence is that the latter is only around the corner given Power will not pull on the black and amber jersey at Croke Park this evening as Kilkenny make their latest bid for glory.

Six days before Kilkenny's championship opener in mid-October, the 29-year-old's season came — quite literally — tumbling down. During the second-half of an in-house game at the O'Loughlin Gaels ground, Power set off in pursuit of Miriam Bambrick.



All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship Final
Galway v Kilkenny

Today: Croke Park, 7pm
Referee: Owen Elliot (Antrim)
TV: RTE

Eoghan Cormican



Katie takes up the story from here given she's replayed it in her mind on countless occasions.

"She was going to strike the ball and she obviously saw me gaining on her to try and hook her so she changed direction. I then went to change direction too and I just heard a crack. I'll never forget it, it was horrific. I never want to go through anything like that again."

The diagnosis was a broken kneecap, ending Power's involvement in Kilkenny's 2020 campaign. The corrective surgery has already been undergone, with the four-time All-Star facing a seven-month spell out of action.

Keen to retain her services and presence at training and

on matchdays, the Kilkenny management added the half-forward to their backroom team. And while incredibly grateful to be part of the travelling party to GAA HQ today, it has not been the easiest week for the Piltown native.

Along with fellow 2009 survivors Denise Gaule, Anne Dalton, and Collette Dormer, this should be Power's eighth All-Ireland final appearance. Instead, she finds herself on the "periphery".

"The week of the All-Ireland is always like my favourite time of the year. It is just the excitement, the buzz around home, the flags being up. You are waking up in the morning and you just can't wait for the day to come, so it is like Christmas."

"You just miss all that. Everything about it you miss. There's nothing you'd not miss because it is a special time."

"This week, it has been strange, difficult at times. You just try to put that to one side when you go up to training with the girls because you can see the buzz that's there."

Power's brave face remark at the top of the piece is tied to her determination not to bring an ounce of negativity into a camp preparing for a fifth consecutive All-Ireland final, the most recent three of which



A broken knee cap ruled Kilkenny star Katie Power out of Championship 2020. But she has remained part of the backroom set-up. 'I do think this team is special,' she says.

ended in defeat.

"The lads wanted me to stay around after the injury and I was delighted because I didn't want to disappear. I said to myself, when I am going to be around the girls, I am going to be as positive as I can because it is not an environment I want to bring negativity into or a pity party."

In the minutes after the county's semi-final win over Cork, the television cameras caught sight of Kilkenny players Denise Gaule, Davina Tobin, Anna Farrell, and Claire Phelan up in the Páirc Uí Chaoimh stand embracing an emotional Power.

"There is kind of a hardcore

More online

Go to irishexaminer.com/sport/gaa/arid-40188972 for more coverage of today's All-Ireland senior camogie final. Therese O'Callaghan breaks down the key battlegrounds plus you can read profiles of all the players in both the Galway and Kilkenny squad.

group of us who have been there together for a long number of years and some of them seen me hobbling down the steps on my crutches and came over.

"It was emotional for them, as well. To share their joy with them straight after the game was lovely."

Can there be more joy this evening?

"I don't think we deserve to win because of the amount [of finals] we have lost. But I do think this team is special. I know maybe people would question us at times, but the strength within the group to keep coming back year after year to try to make up for it instead of giving in and giving up and blaming everyone, that is special to me."

"It would be fantastic to end this year of all years with another medal."

CLIONA FOLEY



A FLOODLIT All-Ireland final on a Saturday night two weeks before Christmas is something Meighan Farrell never dreamed she'd be playing.

Not just because of the date, but also because she genuinely didn't expect to be in the country today.

Covid-19 has proven the ultimate 'ill wind' for Kilkenny camogie as she had planned to head to Australia, where her sister Shelly is, last spring.

"I really intended to go but couldn't. You're giving a lot of years to camogie and there's never a good time to go, so you just have to go for it," the 25-year-old revealed.

"I was heading to Sydney to Shelly. Our brother and sister are getting married next year so this year would have been an ideal time to go."

If pandemic travel restrictions hadn't put a stop to her gallop, Anna would have been the only remaining member of the brilliant Thomastown siblings who have been so important for Kilkenny in the past decade.

They lost her sister Shelly to Oz last year and even Down Under she is still wielding considerable ash for Craobh Phádraig, this year's New South Wales champions.

Grins

"Yeah, she's playing for St Pat's and just got Player of the Year," her younger sister grins.

The Farrells are as inseparable from their hurls and sliotars as Kilkenny have been from recent All-Ireland camogie finals.

Tonight is their 25th since their first in 1970 and they've won 13.

It's also their seventh in eight years but the fact they've only won one of those (2016) and lost the last three in a row hangs over them like the Sword of Damocles.

Or does it?

Farrell reckons Covid-19 has helped remove that huge pressure from them.

"The losing final record, everyone would usually say that to you, but this year just feels completely different," she notes.

"It's been such a strange year. We couldn't play for so long, then we didn't know if the championship would go ahead so it feels like no one is expecting that much."

"I actually think that's given us a

Farrell feels there are no bad final omens for Cats this year

LIBERTY INSURANCE ALL-IRELAND SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

GALWAY v KILKENNY

Croke Park 7pm, Owen Elliot (Antrim), Live RTE 2 (6.10pm) (Replay date: December 19).

PATHS TO THE FINAL

Galway

Galway 5-17 Wexford 3-9

Galway 3-13 Offaly 0-3

Galway 0-15 Cork 0-13

S-F: Galway 1-11 Tipperary 0-8

Scored 9-56. Conceded 4-36

Kilkenny

Kilkenny 0-15 Waterford 0-8

Kilkenny 6-23 Westmeath 1-7

Kilkenny 2-16 Limerick 0-8

S-F: Kilkenny 2-10 Cork 1-11

Scored 10-64. Conceded 2-34.

LAST 5 FINAL MEETINGS

2019 All Ireland final: Galway 3-14 Kilkenny 0-17

2019 Div 1 League final: Galway 0-16 Kilkenny 2-8

2016 Div 1 League final: Kilkenny 2-7 Galway 0-7

2013 All Ireland final: Galway 1-9 Kilkenny 0-7

2008 Div 1 League final: Kilkenny 3-11 Galway 0-17

MATCH FACT:

In their seventh final in eight years Kilkenny are looking to avoid being the first county to lose four consecutive finals while champions Galway have never won two in a row.

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Davina Tobin (Kilkenny) v Aoife Donohue (Galway)

Tobin can play anywhere from nine to two, is the Cats' best one-on-one marker and her favourite warm-up tune, tellingly, is Tom Petty's 'I Won't Back Down'. Did a huge marking job on Amy O'Connor last time out but expect to see her in midfield. Niamh Kilkenny starred in last year's final but Tobin's likelier target is Aoife Donohue whose ability to score or split open a defence with a run is vital. Stop Donohue and you're half-way there.



PROBABLE TEAMS

Michelle Teehan	Aoife Morris	Davina Tobin
Orlaith McGrath	Chaire Phelan	Ailish O'Reilly
Collette Dormer	Niamh Hanniffy	
Rebecca Hennelly	Meighan Farrell	Grace Walsh
Anna Farrell	Catrina Cormican	Carrie Dolan
Laura Murphy	Aoife Donohue	Niamh Kilkenny
Miriam Walsh	Aoife Doyle	
Tara Kenny	Anne Dalton	Emma Helebert
Mary O'Connell	Slobhan Gardiner	
Heather Cooney	Denise Gaule	Katie Nolan
	Sarah Dervan (c)	Shauna Healy
	Sarah Healy	

lot more freedom. You can just play and enjoy every minute of it because, really, no one knows what's going to happen next!"

Kilkenny have certainly played with some brio this year and the steely resolve in their semi-final comeback against Cork, after conceding an early 1-3, was noticeable.

Whether that's down to this year's unique circumstances or their new management is debatable, but Brian Dowling has certainly made changes and one of them is anchoring Farrell firmly in defence.

She's always had the engine to drop back or gun forward; a prototype modern player.

She was one of Kilkenny's best

performers in last year's final loss to Galway when she wore number eight but she usually plays centre-back for the club and now fills that onerous role with the Cats.

Conceding three first-half goals this time last year is something Dowling has addressed, with Philly Larkin and Pat O'Neill among the former Kilkenny greats he has brought in to sharpen them up defensively.

"It's funny the way people look back on that game and think the three goals went in in the first five minutes," Dowling muses.

"One went in after a minute but by the 25th minute on we were two points up. It was the two goals then before half-time that were the killers

because the second half was seven apiece. We know we just can't afford to give Galway goals."

Almost 25,000 were in Croke Park for last year's high-scoring spectacle.

Tonight's big rematch will be played out in an eerie emptiness - this All-Ireland final will be like none other in history.

Even the rhythm of the day has been dramatically altered.

They'll go up this afternoon in two separate buses and no matter who wins, the O'Duffy Cup won't come home with anyone. Kilkenny will leave Croke quickly afterwards, grab a quick bite in the Red Cow Hotel and return to the city and their families with none of the usual welcome.

Yet the restrictions placed by the pandemic have also brought home to them that they are appreciated.

When they set up a Go Fund Me page last week to make up for the enforced absence of their usual fund-raising events, they set a target of €5,000.

Within six days it had passed the €11,000 mark and at last count was close to €13,500.

"We can't believe it really," Farrell says.

"When you're going to a match you're paying for a ticket, but people really don't have to do this, but are doing it so that has been really special for us and something we didn't expect."

Galway's Kenny hoping to make up for missing out on last year's decider

Daragh Ó Conchúir

WHEN Tara Kenny walks out of the dressing-room, jogs from the tunnel and sprints out on to the grass of Croke Park tonight, there may just be a temptation to smile and exhale a little sigh of relief, before resuming focus on what unfolds within the white lines and her job in nullifying the threat of the Kilkenny attack.

This time, she will have made it. Last year, Kenny severed her anterior cruciate ligament in Galway's last in-house game, 10 days before the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland senior camogie championship final.

Having progressed along with Aoife Donohue, Shauna Healy, Catriona

Cormican, Orlaith McGrath and Rebecca Hennelly to the senior squad after the intermediate triumph of 2013 - the O'Duffy Cup was also bedecked in maroon-and-white ribbons that day - Kenny had endured a number of near misses but excelled as Galway got the upper hand on the Noreiders in the league final six months earlier at HQ.

Cruelly, on the biggest day, she was forced to watch, helpless on the sideline, as Cathal Murray's crew hit the Cats for three first-half goals to claim the ultimate championship victory after a seven-year hiatus.

Then last March, just before the first lockdown, she returned to Croke Park and watched from the stands as her club Sarsfields put two previous

final defeats behind them to claim overall honours.

"I can picture it, just like it was yesterday", says Kenny of the incident that robbed her of career zeniths.

"It was something simple, five minutes into the game. Nothing unusual. We did the same warm-up and everything. I was just running in a straight line to the ball with Ailish O'Reilly and the two of us - I wouldn't even call it a tackle - we just bounced off each other and whatever way... my knee didn't fancy it and just jerked.

"I didn't know. I got up and walked off and iced it. Then it started getting stiff. I didn't hear any pop and that's usually what people say you'd hear. It was the first thing I

asked Becky (Hennelly), who has done the cruciate twice. 'How would you know if you did it?' She was like, 'You'd know. I think I was just oblivious.

"I went for the scan the next morning. A kick in the teeth. I wasn't thinking about the nine months out. I was like, 'Oh my God, I'm missing the match.'"

"The club All-Ireland was just as sickening. We had been trying to get there so long. But everything happens for a reason, hopefully."

Having ticked every recovery box throughout rehab, she had been supposed to return to contact training on St Patrick's weekend. When lockdown was announced, she was disappointed, having been

looking forward to that singular feeling she had missed so much. There hadn't been an ounce of anxiety about her knee.

"I don't think about my knee at all. It doesn't bother me at all. When you do the work, you're not wary."

The 27-year-old has sympathy for Katie Power, whose broken kneecap robs Kilkenny of a supreme talent.

"Another freak injury. I know how she's feeling this week," she said.

Kenny insists that retaining their title will be no easy task, with an opposition buoyed by their semi-final defeat of Cork and a cause in the form of Power's injury-enforced absence.

By lining out this evening, she is a winner already.

2020 Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Championships Finals

17



KILKENNY SENIOR TEAM

Cill Chainnigh - Dubh & Omra



IONADAÍ

- 16 Emma Kavanagh
E. Ní Caomhánagh
Power Instodge
- 17 Niamh Deely
N. Ní Dúghaill
James Stephens
- 18 Steffi Fitzgerald
S. Ní Gearailt
Young Irelanders
- 19 Lydia Fitzpatrick
L. Ní Golla Phádraig
St. Lachtain's
- 20 Kellyann Doyle
C. Ní Dúghaill
Piltown

- 21 Ciara O'Shea
C. Ní Sheá
Dicksboro
- 22 Danielle Morrissey
D. Ní Muirgasa
Conahy Shamrocks
- 23 Aoife Prendergast
A. de Phiondragáis
Dicksboro
- 24 Laura Norris
L. Ní Nóireáil
Piltown
- 25 Catherine Foley
C. Ní Fhoyleáigh
Windgap

- 26 Ciara Phelan
C. Ní Faoláin
Dicksboro
- 27 Lucinda Gahan (C)
L. Gahan
Dicksboro
- 28 Miriam Bambrick
M. Bambrick
Barrow Rangers
- 29 Micheala Kenneally
M. Ní Cennauláin
Windgap
- 30 Edel Coonan
E. Ní Chonáin
St. Martin's

TEAM OFFICIALS

- Manager: Brian Dowling
- Coach: Tommy Shefflin
- Selector: Ray Challoner
Philly Larkin
Pat O'Neill
- Logistics: Breda Holmes
Angela Downey
- Performance Analysis: Sarah Burke
Philip Connors
James Fitzgerald
- Physio: Nicola Aylward
- Doctor: Dr Martin O'Brien
- Chairperson: Sheila Norris
- Secretary: Theresa Aylward

Additional panel members: Aobha O'Gorman, Laura Hegarty, Noreen O'Keefe, Sophie O'Dwyer.



GALWAY SENIOR TEAM

Gallimh - Marún & Bán



IONADAÍ

- 16** Laura Glynn
L. Ní Fhloinn
Sarsfields
- 17** Siobhán McGrath
S. Ní Craith
Sarsfields
- 18** Noreen Coen
N. Ní Chadraín
Athenry
- 19** Róisín Black
R. Ní Dhuibh
Oranmore Morra
- 20** Clara Murphy
C. Ní Mhurchú
Clarinbridge

- 21** Anne Marie Starr
A. M. Starr
Kilmer
- 22** Catherine Finnerly
C. Ní Fhionnachta
Mountbellow
- 23** Niamh McGrath
N. Ní Craith
Sarsfields
- 24** Sarah Spellman
S. Ní Spealláin
Sarsfields
- 25** Lisa Casserly
L. Ní Casarláigh
Ballindereen

- 26** Dervla Higgins
D. Ní Uiginn
Athenry
- 27** Siobhán Coen
S. Ní Chadraín
Ballindereen
- 28** Lorraine Ryan
L. Ní Rian
Kilkerdaly
- 29** Clara Donohue
C. Ní Dhonnacha
Mullagh
- 30** Mollie Mannion
M. Ní Mhannáin
Mountbellow

TEAM OFFICIALS

- Manager:** Cathal Murray
- Selectors:** Orla Kilkenny
- Coach:** John Connor
- Strength & Conditioning:** Robbie Lane
- Goalkeeping Coach:** Aidan Ryan
- Backroom Team:** John Manton
Conor Ryan
John Duggan
- Kit Men:** Micky Grealish
Frank Duane
- Physios:** Clodhna Costello
Sharon Morris

Additional panel members: Fiona Ryan, Rachael Hanniffy, Tegan Canning