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ALL-IRELAND CAMOGIE

September 12, 2008

SPECIAL

Greats differ on the final verdict



LINDA MELLERICK

TWO FORMER camogie greats will sit in the stand next Sunday.

One will have a passing interest in the outcome, the other more emotionally involved.

Ann Downey, the former Kilkenny great, holder of 12 All-Ireland senior medals and current manager of the Kilkenny senior squad, and Sharon Glynn, a member of the 1996 Galway side that defeated Cork in the final.

Sharon coached Galway two seasons ago and continues to actively follow their progress. The well-known pair have contrasting opinions on Sunday's final.

Ann Downey feels that Sunday is Cork's day. "I think that Cork will be favourites. They've the experience of the big day and on balance probably have better forwards."

"Galway are a little bit over-reliant on Jessica Gill and probably Veronica Curtin."

"On top of that I think that any team that has Gemma O'Connor are on a winner. She's just a powerhouse no matter where she plays."

"I think her best position is probably in the centre of the field but having said that it's great to have an attacking half-back too."

"But at midfield, especially in Croke Park, if you let her loose there, the way she works up and down the field is unbelievable."

"I don't think there is anyone in the country at present who can match Gemma."

In Ann's eyes can she see any Cork weaknesses?

"I suppose I don't really. They have a powerful goalie as well."

Aoife Murray has a great puck out, she's a great ball stopper and she commands her area. The

full-back line are sticky and not a lot goes through the half-backs."

"I think that Galway will have to come up with some sort of a plan. I don't think that the normal 15 v 15 is going to work for them."

"Although their half-back line is good as well, Ann Marie Hayes and Sinead Cahalan are good players and Aine Hillary can work very well between the two 45s."

Ann feels that Galway are an easier opposition for Cork than Wexford.

"We played both and we were the only team to beat Galway in the championship. We found Galway

easier to handle than Wexford."

"But when you get to an All-Ireland final it's always 50/50, though I can't see beyond Cork."

Naturally, Tribeswoman Sharon Glynn has a different perspective! "Of course I'm hoping we win it. I think it's our best chance of winning an All-Ireland."

"I don't think it's the best Cork team that ever lined out but having said that they'll still be hard-beaten because whatever it is about the mentality in that part of the country you're just hard people to beat in general."

What about Jessica Gill, are Gal-

way too reliant to her?

"No, I don't believe they are. I've been to all of Galway's games and, no disrespect to Jessica, she certainly has an important input but while she might grab the headlines I would put us reaching the final down to many other players."

Amazingly, while Ann Downey lists Cork's forward division as a strong factor, Sharon feels it is Cork's weakest link.

"Cork's forwards aren't as lethal as they used to be. I expect the Galway backs to win the battle. But likewise I expect Cork's defence to be very difficult to break down."

Sharon also mentions Gemma O'Connor as a major threat and that Galway will have to counter-act her in some way.

"Croke Park is the perfect venue for good hurriers. I think that will suit Galway. I see a difference in this team. This side is not far off the one I coached two years ago but something is coming from inside that they never had before."

"They were always missing the will to win, always missing that desire to win. They have it now. If they stand up, if they give it their all, and play as well as they can, then I believe Galway can win."



Cork captain Caitriona Foley and Galway captain Sinead Cahalan get to grips with the All-Ireland trophy.

Picture: NPHG/Lorraine O'Sullivan

It's all gone according to plan for O'Connell

By LINDA MELLERICK

Cork camogie latest

WHEN CORK manager Denise Cronin phoned Lynda O'Connell and asked her to rejoin the Cork panel little did the St Finbarr's player think that she would be lining out in the number two jersey in an All-Ireland senior final just eight months later.

"When Denise phoned me last January and asked me on to the panel I wasn't too sure.

"When she told me who was involved I agreed. How it's worked out has been great, it's what I hoped for.

"I said to Denise that I wanted to be told in April or May if it wasn't going to work out.

"I didn't care, I just wanted to play. I'd prefer to be playing with the intermediates than be sitting on my backside with the seniors.

"The first game was against Wexford and I felt that this was a game I could get hammered in but it worked out."

Surprisingly corner-back is a position Lynda doesn't really enjoy playing in. "I don't like playing corner-back but it's better than not playing.

"I love playing centre-back with the Barrs. But Con Malone told me at the outset that I wasn't going to be centre-back, that if I was going to be anywhere it would be in the corner.

"So I just put the head down and got on with it."

Lynda always felt, with players waiting in the wings to come in, that one mistake and she was out. "I think when you're a fringe player you only get one chance and if you mess up you're gone."

But does that feeling not bring with it a nervous approach which could be detrimental to your game?

"Yeah I suppose but so far so good anyway."

With two senior medals already in the bag as a member of the panel, Lynda feels that until she wins a medal on the field of play she hasn't won any at all.

"Until I do that I'll feel that I haven't really made it."

Hopefully this great Cork servant will feel that she has made it come 5.15pm on Sunday.

Lynda O'Connell will start at corner-back.



LINDA MELLERICK

SUNDAY
Gala All-Ireland Senior Camogie Final
Cork v Galway,
Croke Park, 4pm (RTÉ 2)
GALWAY'S running style is something that Cork will have to be wary of on a pitch of Croke Park's size.

It was the running ploy to spread Cork wide devised by Wexford 12 months ago that had a big bearing on that outcome.

Wexford played a two-player inside forward line of Michelle Hearne and Ursula Jacob. Wexford knew they had the speed up front on one-to-one marking.

Galway's style is that they run at the defence and take them on. Croke Park sets the perfect scene.

Cork's corner-backs Lynda O'Connell and Joanne O'Callaghan are tight-marking, dependable defenders. But to leave them completely exposed and possibly competing against the lightning-fast Veronica Curtin and lethal Jessica Gill would be playing into Galway's hands. Cork will need to cut off that supply.

Galway could well play a four-player half-forward line and try to draw out full-back Cathriona Foley. Intended puck-outs for midfield will be gathered and lobbed in over the Cork half-back line. Cork can't fall into the trap.

Foley should hold her position at all times. Galway's fourth half-forward could in fact be then left out of the game or if Cork have to drop back from midfield and further forward then so be it.

Galway will try something, I'm sure. They will be of the mindset that they have to, that one-on-one won't win the title for them.

However if their plan, whatever that may be, goes wrong they could well be too inexperienced to learn how to deal with it during the pace of an All-Ireland final.

Cork tend to play as is the norm. I don't see that changing for the final.

Galway's half-back line is strong. Ann Marie Hayes and Sinead Cahalan had good games against Wexford in the semi-final.

We must stop the Tribe's running game

Defence has to be on guard

While Aine Hillary had a quieter outing, she won't be found wanting. Galway's full-back line weren't significantly tested.

In championship to date they have conceded 7-59, scoring a massive 12-85. Jessica Gill has accounted for incredible 6-40.

Cork have notched up 15-90 and conceded 2-51. Based on those statistics, Cork are going to win this All-Ireland final comfortably.

But statistics go out the window in an All-Ireland final.

Once again, it'll possibly go down to who wants it most. Wex-

ford improved between the semi-final and final last year.

Expect Galway to do the same. The team who dives, blocks, hooks and chases the most will take the title.

Galway's biggest threats are their forwards and half-back line.

Cork's entire defence are strong, indicated by only conceding two goals in the championship to date.

Cork could get caught for pace in the half-back line on a pitch like Croke Park. Gemma O'Connor is Cork's gem in that crucial

line of the field. Lining out at right half-back could see her presence limited, however.

A centre-back role where she has the pace and stamina to sweep both left and right and ensure participation is an option.

Galway will be very much aware of her influence and could well keep the supply away from that wing as much as possible.

Should Brieghe Corkery start at midfield alongside Orla Cotter, then expect Cork to win the mid-field battle. It is vitally important that they do and this is the duo to

MARY NEWMAN LOOKS AT THE FACTORS THAT WILL DECIDE

THIS ONE will go down to the wire as Galway strive to take the county's second senior camogie crown.

Their only title came 12 years ago when they denied a Cork side that contained current manager Denise Cronin and Mary O'Connor.

For many years they have been knocking on the door but they have failed to add to their collection. Now the moment of truth has finally arrived but do they have the strength to deny Cork their 23rd title?

It remains to be seen if Galway are good enough, let's take a look at a few of the areas Cork need to target to deny them.

Jessica Gill

In Jessica Gill, Galway have a potential matchwinner. Cork will need to close her down from the throw-in. Against Wexford she contributed 1-6 of Galway's total, grabbing the winning goal in injury time. Big and strong, she will cause problems but

only if she is allowed to do so, Cork will have this well sussed out and if, as expected, Gill takes up her usual role at full-forward, Cork captain Cathriona Foley will be equal to her.

Good Start

A good start is vital as Cork cannot afford to be playing catch up, they must stamp their authority on the game and dictate matters from the throw-in.

The first 10 minutes will be crucial and if

Galway's Jessica Gill



Cork can pick off a few early scores, they can put Galway on the back foot. Cork have the names for the big occasion, Gemma O'Connor, Brieghe Corkery, Joanne O'Callaghan, Sile Burns, Cathriona Foley and Rachel Moloney are among the finest camogie players in the country.

Defence

The Cork defence has been magnificent all year but Sunday is their greatest test. They must close down Galway and not allow them an inch of space. Orla Kilkenny, Therese Maher, Veronica Curtin

and Jessica Gill will relish the open spaces of Croke Park if allowed to roam. Galway love to play a running game but Cork must put a stop to this.

Nerves

No doubt there will be nerves on the day, Croke Park does that to players and mentors alike. With the magic of the occasion, the crowd and the atmosphere, added to the attraction of the U21 hurling final as a curtain-raiser, there's no doubt the butterflies will start. Cork know the drill and have been there so many

Briege Corkery

**CLOUGHDUV
STONEMASON**

Holder of three Cork county senior championship medals as well as minor, intermediate and senior All-Ireland and Munster honours. Is also a prominent footballer and won an All-Ireland medal at senior football. Was named as national female sports person of the year in 2005 following superb performances both in camogie and football. Briege is also a dual All-Star, she was recently announced as 963FM Rochestown Park Hotel award winner for month of August following splendid dual displays.

Orla Cotter

**ST CATHERINE'S
STUDENT**

Captain of Cork minors in 2006, Orla holds honours with her club from U14 to junior championship and won an All-Ireland U16 medal in 2003. She won her first senior medal in 2006 and holds provincial honours with Cork and has won All-Ireland junior colleges honours as well as senior and junior national league medals. Became the first player to play in two senior All-Ireland finals in the same year (2006). Has won senior and senior B All-Ireland medals. Sister Finola was on the Cork U16 team this year.

Lucy Hawkes

**VALLEY ROVERS
STUDENT**

Holds two All-Ireland senior medals as well as a junior All-Ireland medal, has won an Ashbourne Shield with CIT as well as provincial honours at senior and junior with Munster. Was on the Carrigrohoun team that took the county senior title in 2004 and holds underage honours with Cork at provincial levels. The current secretary of the Carrigrohoun division board, she also holds underage championship honours with her club as well as Sciath na Scol and Munster colleges honours.

Elaine O'Riordan

**MILFORD
STUDENT**

Holder of All-Ireland junior minor and senior championship medals, holds eight All-Ireland colleges with Charleville, also holds Senior B championship with Milford as well as underage championship honours.

Also a prominent footballer and has won numerous honours in code, including All-Ireland underage and senior medals.

Marion Murphy

**KILBRITTAIN
STUDENT**

First year on panel, represented Cork in the National Féile na nGael skills competition in 2000, holder of All-Ireland under 16 championship honours, also holds Munster underage and senior championship honours.

Aoife Murray

**CLOUGHDUV
QUANTITY SURVEYOR**

Aoife has junior, intermediate, minor and senior medals as well as Munster championship honours. Won three Cork county senior championship medals with Cloughduv, who she captained in 2005 to their third county title. Sister of former Cork intercounty senior hurler Kevin Murray, who won an All-Ireland medal with Cork in 1999, she won a camogie All-Star award in 2004.

Joanne O'Callaghan

**CLOUGHDUV
BUSINESS DEV REP
LUCOZADE SPORTS**

Captained Cork to All-Ireland title in 2006. Is in her eighth season on the senior team. Has minor, intermediate and senior All-Ireland championship medals to her credit as well as Ashbourne Cup and Gael Linn honours. Holds three Cork senior county championship medals with her club Cloughduv.

Una O'Donoghue

**CLOUGHDUV
FOOD ANALYST**

Captained Cork to All-Ireland glory in 2002 and also led her club to their first senior county championship title in 2001. Holder of Ashbourne Cup and league honours with UCC as well as All-Ireland senior and national league medals with Cork. Has also won three senior county championship medals with Cloughduv.

Rosarie Holland

**BARRYROE
IT DEVELOPER**

Holder of senior, minor and junior All-Ireland medals as well as Ashbourne Cup with UCC. Also holds senior national league honours at club level and senior B and underage championship honours.

Just returned to the panel following a serious injury which sidelined her for most of the campaign.

Jenny Duffy

**ST FINBARR'S
CAMOGIE DEVELOPMENT
OFFICER**

Camogie Regional Development officer in Leinster. A former student at Cork Institute of Technology, she is the holder of All-Ireland and league medals with CIT as well as senior and junior All-Ireland championship medals and national league. Won a senior county championship with her club.

Captained CIT to Ashbourne shield title in 2006.



Joanne O'Callaghan, Eimear O'Sullivan and Sile Burns take shelter from the inclement weather during the press night for the Cork senior camogie team.

Picture: Damien Quirke

Sile Burns

**ROCKBÁN
PHYSIOTHERAPIST**

Daughter of former Cork senior hurler Denis Burns, who won All-Ireland medals with Cork. The holder of All-Ireland minor and intermediate medals as well as Sciath na Scol. Won a senior county championship medal with divisional side Muskerry last season and holder of junior championship honours with her club.

Catriona Foley

**ROCKBÁN
STUDENT UCC**

Holder of All-Ireland senior and minor medals as well as provincial honours at minor, junior and intermediate. Holds Junior B county championship with her club. Won a senior county championship medal with divisional side Muskerry last season. Her father, Dan Joe, won All-Ireland minor and under 21 honours. She was honoured last year with an Allstar award. Has lined out with UCC in Ashbourne Cup.

Julia White

**DOUGLAS
STUDENT**

First year on senior panel, captained the minor team this year, holds Féile na nGael All-Ireland honours as well as provincial underage medals, won an All-Ireland senior B colleges medal this year with Christ the King, captained the Cork minor team that lost the All-Ireland semi-final to Kilkenny earlier in the year.

Gemma O'Connor

**ST FINBARR'S
MEMBER OF DEFENCE
FORCES**

Captain in 2007, was on the All-Star Camogie team in 2004, '05, '06 and '07 and is the holder of All-Ireland minor and senior medals. Represented Cork in Féile na nGael skills in 1998 and is also the holder of senior and junior league medals as well as provincial honours. Has won one county championship medal. Camogie player of the year in 2005.

By MARY NEWMAN
Cork camogie latest

STEEPED in GAA tradition, Cork coach Jim McCarthy holds an impressive CV.

He captained Glen Rovers to national Féile na nGael honours, a feat also accomplished by his brothers Dave and Liam. He coached his club, St Nick's, to the Cork U21 county championship title in 2003.

Having being involved with the Glen and St Nick's minor teams that achieved the championship double in 2002, he also acted in that capacity with the club's senior football and hurling sides, while uncle Jimmy Lynam won All-Ireland hurling honours with Cork.

Having worked with Pa Finn on the backroom team that guided Cork to glory in 2002, Jim knows what is required to win an All-Ireland, but now it is his head on the block.

Just days away from leading his charges to Croke Park, McCarthy never envisaged this time last year that he would be parading the sidelines in Croke Park come All-Ireland camogie final day 2008.

"Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would be involved, it was one of the furthest thought from my mind to be honest," he says.

"I was involved for two years some time back but after 2003 I went back to college at night and I just had to give up, it never crossed my mind that I would return.

"Denise Cronin contacted me and, to be honest, I gave it lots of thought before I decided to give it a go."

Is the pressure greater this time?

"The workload is the same really as it was in 2002 and '03. The team has to be prepared and that is my job, they are superb to work with and nothing is too much trouble, they are committed and focused and deserve to win the All-Ireland."

The strength of camogie is something that is pleasing and Jim is not slow to point out that Cork camogie is on the up and up.

"Since I returned to coaching this year I have seen a huge growth in the game. In previous years, really just two teams, Cork and Tipp were in the running, but now six counties were serious contenders up to the final round of the championship.

"All the counties are putting huge efforts and the players are very much in tune with sport and what is required to reach the top."

"Counties such as Dublin are making huge progress and camo-

Rachel Moloney

**COURCEY ROVERS
NUTRITIONIST**

Holds Ashbourne cup medals with UCC as well as minor and senior All-Ireland championship honours with Cork. Has won interprovincial honours with Munster and is the holder of All-Ireland honours at senior, intermediate junior and minor levels as well as provincial honours. Rachel was named on Camogie All-Star team in 2005 and is coach to Courcye Rovers' U14 team.

he came back



Jim McCarthy, trainer and Denise Cronin, manager at the official press night for the Cork senior camogie team.

Picture: Damien Quirk

gie's graph has risen dramatically in the last five years.

"Even on the club scene, all games very competitive, the teams are very evenly matched and the club games are generating huge interest and that is good for the game in the county.

"Aside from the fantastic new facilities that are coming on stream with the county board just having opened the new pitch, the game has come on leaps and bounds and that is something that augurs well."

McCarthy knows Galway will pose a huge challenge to his side's dream of taking the title.

"Galway have won one All-Ireland in 1996 so they will be incredibly motivated to win, they will be hard to beat, they will have the same type of hunger Wexford had last year.

"I think last year Cork may have been a bit hyped by the three-in-a-row and that may have been a factor. Already this year we have lost to Galway, on the day we took

our eye off the ball a bit they are a good side and they hunt in packs.

"Their style of play may be a bit harder for them to apply in Croke Park but we will not underestimate them."

At the start of the year Cork lost the services of some of their finest players but McCarthy is pleased with the players who have come through.

"This year a lot of players who would have been fringe players stepped up to the mark and it is

great to see such competition for places.

"We lost some of the counties finest players such as Anna Geary and Emer Dillon but the girls really put in the effort and the improvement through the whole panel has been superb."

Jim is looking forward to Sunday and is hoping to add yet another line to his already overflowing list of coaching achievements.

All of us here in the *Evening Echo* sport team wish him well.

Mary O'Connor

KILLEAGH
NATIONAL DEV OFFICER
CAMOGIE ASSOCIATION

Mary works with the camogie association as development organiser she was previously an underage coach with the East Cork GAA board. Also a well-known footballer. Holds senior All-Ireland and national league medals as well as county provincial and All-Ireland club medals with Granagh/ Ballingarry of Limerick. Overall winner of 96/103FM Rochestown Pard award in 2006 after Cork's double win. Holds All-Star awards in camogie and football.

Amanda O'Regan

DOUGLAS
TEACHER

Recently took up a post in Kanturk, the former UL student, where she won three Ashbourne Cups, she is the holder of All-Ireland minor, junior and senior medals. Also has provincial honours at junior and U18 level. She is also an accomplished basketball player. Father Michael won an All-Ireland minor football medal while mother Christine is the holder of junior All-Ireland medals also won senior B and league medals with her club.

Eimear O'Sullivan

BALLINHASSIG
STUDENT (CIT)

A sister of All-Ireland medallist Linda, Eimear holds All-Ireland Senior B honours as well as national league and provincial medals. Won the Ashbourne Shield with CIT and won a senior county championship medal with Carrigdhoun in 2004. Has won junior county championship with her club. She comes from a family who are all actively involved with Ballinhassig, her father John is chairman while brothers John, Paul, Brian Declan and Kevin and all play.

Denise Cronin

BALLINCOLLIG
STUDENT

Sister of Cork senior hurler Patrick Cronin. This is her first season on panel.

Lined out with Cork minor team last year and won a senior county championship with divisional side Muskerry when they beat St Finbarr's in last year's decider.

Michelle Browne

MALLOW
STUDENT

This is her first year on senior panel. She was on the senior B team last season that lost the All-Ireland final to Limerick. Holder of provincial honours as well as a Gael Linn interprovincial medal, she will also line out with the Intermediate team in the All-Ireland final on October 4.

Regina Curtin

MILFORD
STUDENT

Holder of All-Ireland senior and intermediate camogie medals as well as All-Ireland ladies football honours.

Also holds national league honours in both codes.

She is also a member of the senior B team that will contest the All-Ireland final in October.

Sara Hayes

COURCEY ROVERS
LAB ANALYST

Sara is the holder of All-Ireland senior and minor medals as well as Ashbourne Cup with UCC and senior B championship with her club.

Having played at underage level with Cork from U16 to minor, she has won national league and interprovincial honours.

Emer O'Farrell

SARSFIELDS
MARKETING

Holder of All-Ireland junior and senior medals. Was a member of the CIT team that won the Purcell Cup in 2001. Holds Munster medals at senior, junior and intermediate. Emer is secretary of her club and recently married Emmett Fennell, meaning she was due to miss the semi-final against Tipperary because as she was on honeymoon but due to game being postponed because of weather conditions she arrived home in time for the re-fixtue and came on.

Lynda O'Connell

ST FINBARR'S
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT

Captained Cork to junior national league title in 2005 and is a holder of two Ashbourne Cup medals with UCC as well as senior, intermediate and junior All-Ireland medals. Also holds Munster championship honours with Cork as well as senior county championship with her club and inter-provincial honours with Munster.

Captained Cork to junior national league title in 2005.

Eimear White

BARRYROE
STUDENT

Holder of national league and provincial medals, this is her second year on the senior panel. Holds underage honours with her club Barryroe as well as under age colleges honours. Has won Munster and Cork colleges medals with Sacred Heart Clonakilty as well as Munster Junior Championship with Cork. Won an under 16 championship with her club and is also a prominent hockey player.

Rena Buckley

INNISCARRA
PHYSIOTHERAPIST

Holder of All-Ireland senior and national league and provincial medals in camogie and ladies football. Also the holder of All-Ireland minor medals as well as intermediate and junior Munster championship. Fifth year on the senior team, was selected on the colleges centenary Allstar team and is also a dual Allstar. Was the Corkman/ Spring Fort Hall Sports Person of the Year in 2006.

Linda Dorgan

GRENAGH
STUDENT

A sister of former Cork senior footballer Aidan, she holds All-Ireland senior B and intermediate medals as well as Munster honours with Cork and Gael Linn with Munster. Captained the Cork Colleges of further Education team to Maher Shield title in 2005. Won a senior county championship medal with divisional side Muskerry last season and captained Cork to Munster intermediate title in 2008.

Margaret O'Herlihy

EIRE ÓG
STUDENT

First season on the senior panel, won a senior county championship with Muskerry last year, holds underage honours with her club as well as colleges honours, her sister Ellen won All-Ireland honours with Cork.

Briege chasing

BRIEGE CORKERY recently had a William Wallace moment.

In one of the more light-hearted moments in *Braveheart* the Scottish forces are fleeing in the face of an overwhelming English attack when Mel Gibson - aka Wallace - rides to the front and announces himself: "I'm William Wallace".

"You can't be," is the retort. "William Wallace is seven feet tall and kills Englishmen by the hundreds."

Briege isn't seven feet tall, doesn't kill people by the hundreds and is more giggly and giddy than Gibson's grumpy character.

But, in person she is very different from her on-field persona with both the Cork senior camogie and ladies football teams.

This was brought home to her recently when she had difficulty convincing a fan that she was THE Briege Corkery.

"Yes, it's actually happened a few times. We were doing a wall in Valley Golf Club and this man and his son came down asking was Briege Corkery working."

"I was like, 'It's me, that's me', but he was having none of it! 'He was going on, 'I'm here to see Briege from the Cork teams' and he wouldn't believe it was me."

"When eventually I convinced him that it was me he was like, 'You look like a monster on the telly!'"

"I was like, 'Oh jeepers almighty...'"

It's not hard to understand the man's hesitancy in believing that Briege is actually the same person who stars for both the camogie and football teams.

On the pitch, she is a ball of energy, feisty, dedicated, determined, stubborn and unyielding in her pursuit of excellence.

She is the veritable heart-beat of the football team and is one of the undisputed stars of the camogie side.

But her occupation and on-field persona contradict the giggling, relaxed, fun and engaging person she is face-to-face. It's extraordinary, but that's what marks her out from the crowd.

She is a star of both codes, a multiple All-Ireland winner in both and a dual All-Star (camogie in 2006 and football in 2005 and '07) but she is also one of those rare sports stars who can walk away once a match and season are over.

Sport is a big part of her life but she doesn't live for it.

"I suppose, on the pitch I'm just a completely different person," agreed Briege.

"When it comes to a match I do get serious. Out of that though I take things more lightly. It's called sport for a reason. If we lose a game I really try not to let it get me down."

"My attitude is that's just life. There has to be one loser so get over it."

"Playing, I expect to go in, give my 100% and after that I can't do anymore. If I don't give 100% I would be disappointed as that's what I want to give every time I go onto the pitch."

And few can quibble with that assertion. And anyone who sees her play quickly realises that she never gives less than 100% - explaining her importance to Cork.

Growing up, Briege was tagged early on as a talent, making her debut with the footballers as a 13-year-old and the camogie team as a 15/16-year-old in 2003.

"I was brought onto the senior camogie panel in 2003 and actually came on as a sub in the final that year so that was a nice introduction to senior camogie!"

"The football? Ah, I'm going with them years."

"I played a relegation league match with them when I was 13. Then the following year I was in the team."

That she talks of her impressive sporting pedigree in such off-hand terms and without ego is exceptionally refreshing and gives a glimpse into her true character.

As she says, sport is in her life, but it's not her life.

"To me I just played growing up."

"And, to be honest, I feel that I'm very lucky to come up along with such good players."

"I've come up when Cloughduv and St Val's were going well and Cork underage were going well."

"I find myself lucky that way and I've also been involved with teams that are being trained well."

"I'm there for the craic. If I'm not enjoying it I play badly but I don't take it ultra seriously."

"I don't like when things get too serious because I'm not enjoying it when the fun is driven out of it."

For the moment, Briege is happy playing both codes, especially with two All-Ireland finals to look forward.

At just 21, tiredness isn't part of her vocabulary, although she does see the day approaching when she will



Stonemason laying foundations

be forced into making a choice between the two, a decision she is not looking forward to having to make.

"It's great so far (her hectic schedule). The two boards get on well and it makes it so much easier for us when they're communicating well together, but I guess they'll make us choose at some stage."

"It's not something I've thought about and I'm not looking forward to the day when I have to choose."

Since she first broke on the Cork teams, Briege has been involved in an All-Ireland final almost every year but far from becoming blasé about it, she still has the infectious enthusiasm of a debutante for the games.

"No way, I wouldn't take finals for granted."

"In football, Juliet Murphy was there for years and nothing was coming her way."

"Even at underage level she wasn't getting to finals with Cork and she stuck at it. There are years where we haven't gone great and the same with the club, so you never take it for granted."

"I'm looking forward to this weekend's game as much as I was my first final and that will never change."

"It's hugely enjoyable, to have the opportunity to do it. There are so many people who can't do it and you



CONOR GEORGE

have to make the most of the opportunities.

"Sometimes you take maybe your health for granted but I'm lucky enough to be able to do it."

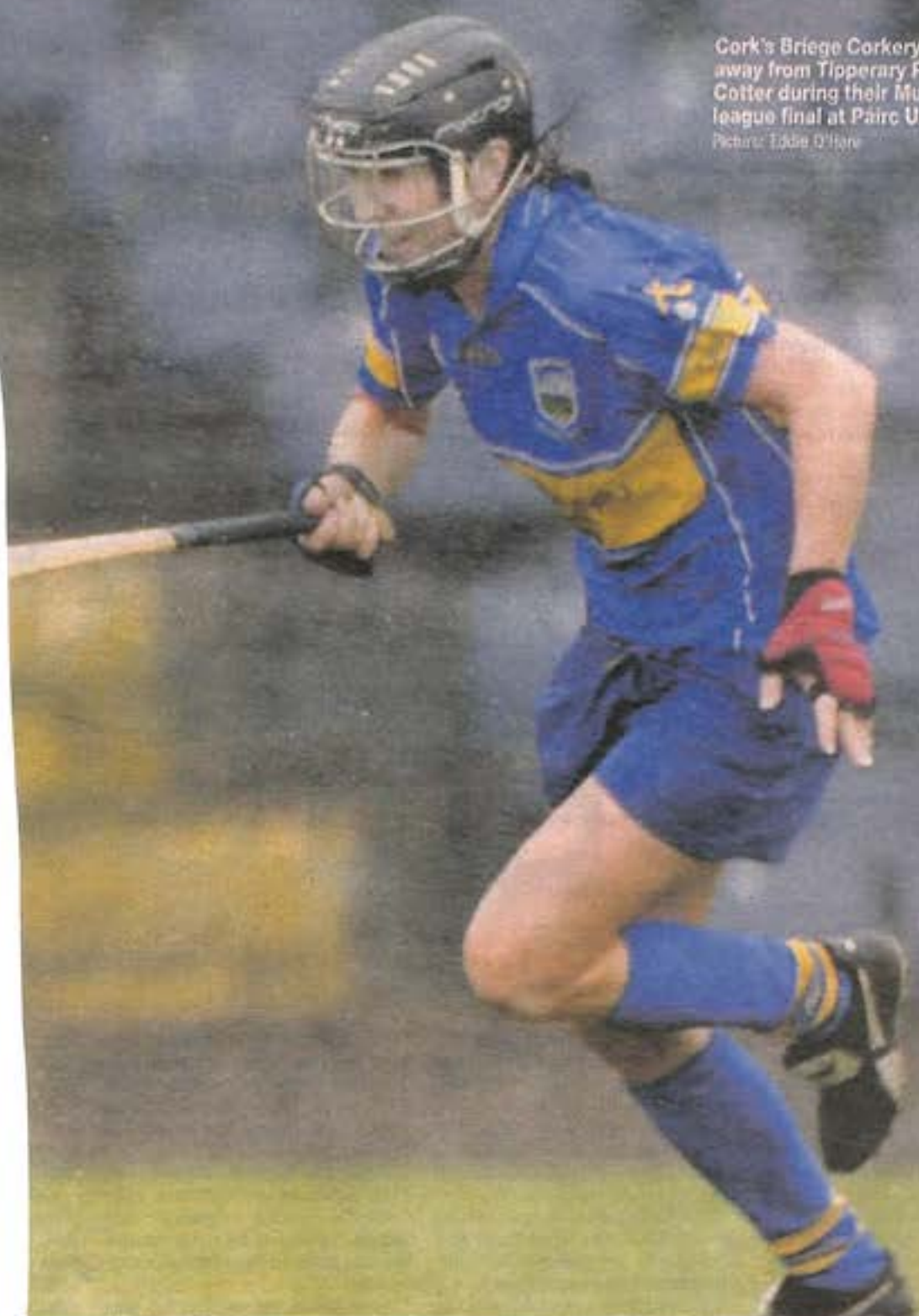
This weekend she will get to strut her stuff against a Galway side who she insists Cork are hugely respectful of, especially as they already beat Cork in the championship round-robin series.

"They beat us in Páirc Uí Rinn. It was a disappointing coming off the pitch and that shows that they're a great side and we have to keep our heads down."

"They're hungry, fast and skilful. They're extremely fit. We're going to have to focus on our own game and

the dream

Cork's Briège Corkery gets away from Tipperary Philly Cotter during their Munster league final at Páirc Uí Rinn.
Picture: Eddie O'Hare



for success

not worry about them.

"We lost the final to Wexford last year and feel that we didn't do ourselves justice that day so we have the chance to put that right on Sunday."

Briège's boundless energy is a huge part of her personality and she harnesses that into her profession as a stonemason. Not the job most women would choose, but one she absolutely loves.

"I'm an outdoors person. I couldn't stand being in an office. I tried it and I didn't like it."

"I was in O'Mahony/Walsh Auctioneers for a year and I didn't like it. One of my friends worked as a stonemason with my brother-in-law and went out on his own and I asked could I start with him and I stuck with it."

"The main thing in life is to enjoy yourself in whatever you do and this makes me happy."

There are downsides to her chosen profession, however, not least being that she finishes her day covered in dirt and grime with her clothes destroyed from the job. It wouldn't have bothered her a few years ago...it is a downside now though!

"When I was younger I was a real tomboy and maybe it wouldn't have cost me a thought."

"Now I'm very girly. I love getting dressed up, putting on the make-up and things like that."

"I come home now during the week with filthy clothes, dust in the hair, looking like a 90-year-old, so it's nice to straighten my hair, wash the day off and put on some nice clothes."

This Sunday, though, the dust in the hair will be forgotten about as she takes her place on the Cork team bidding for All-Ireland glory.

Over the years she has played wing-back, midfield, wing-forward and in the semi-final she found herself at corner-forward. It's not her favourite position but if Cork can win she won't care where she plays.

"I don't think it's the place for me, I prefer the more open areas but if they're happy, I'll go along with it."

"I don't really mind once we win."

"We want to win. It's going to be tough and once you get on the team it really is the main thing."

"Hopefully whatever happens we can rectify last year's final performance and come out of top this weekend. Hopefully."

Whatever the result, the one certainly about Sunday is that Briège Corkery won't come off the field looking for excuses or not having tried her best and left everything out on the Croke Park turf.

She'll have given her everything in the pursuit of a Cork win. That's her way.

Denise is taking the top job in her stride

By MARY NEWMAN

Cork manager's view

BEEN THERE, done that with the medals to prove it, enter Denise Cronin. Without a doubt one of Cork's finest former players, the Glen Rovers star annexed six All-Ireland senior championship medals, nine senior county championship, four All-Ireland club and nine Munster club.

Having retired from the intercounty stage in 2003, she played for two years at club level before calling it a day. Little did she expect to be centre stage three years later as Cork battle to take a title last held in 2006.

"When I was approached and asked to help out I thought about it and decided to give it a go. Sitting in the stand at last year's final I had nothing but admiration for Fiona O'Driscoll and the job she was doing and I felt if I could help carry that on I would give it my best."

A relative novice in the management role Denise had little experience coming into the job. She did coach her club's U13s for two years before coaching the U18s to a championship and while this could not be compared to her present role it did help prepare her.

"When I looked after the club's underage teams I really enjoyed it and certainly there was a great buzz being involved at this level. I learned a lot from the great trainers and selectors I played under and I am learning all the time."

Denise, always a cool player under pressure, is looking forward to Sunday. "It's tremendous to be in the final and we are looking forward to it, it's a huge bonus we took it one game at a time and this was our aim to reach the final now we must deliver."

It will be different going to Croke Park as manager rather than as a player.

"Without doubt I definitely will be a little bit emotional the last time I stepped out on the pitch was as a player, it's a different focus and preparation and definitely the pressure is immense making sure everything is on order and that the girls are well prepared."

Cool and calm in all her side's outings up to this, Denise does admit to being a little nervous about Sunday.

"Yes I suppose tonight it has hit home here at the press night when I saw the huge amount of interest from the media it has made me a little nervous."

"To be honest we are just used to one or two regular media people at our games, so it's great to see the interest from a few more in the lead up to the final the girls deserve all the attention they have put in a huge effort."

Cork senior camogie manager Denise Cronin.





CLIONA FOLEY

Camogie

TWELVE years after being one of the starry-eyed kids who ran onto the pitch and celebrated Galway's only senior camogie title, Sinead Cahalan (22) leads her county into Sunday's Gala All-Ireland final vowing not to make the mistakes of the past.

Even the Tribeswomen's visit to HQ last Sunday proved instructive and not just because the team got to walk the pitch and acquaint themselves with highly unfamiliar territory, 10 years since the county's last final appearance.

Having watched their own minor hurlers being robbed by Kilkenny and Waterford's seniors being overcome by the occasion, Galway's camogie players have resolved not to let big-day nerves get the better of them.

"We are totally aware of Cork's experience after being in every All-Ireland since 2002 and it is a huge occasion," the Galway captain said.

Drive

"But while we might be lacking experience we have everything else. There's such drive and determination in the team and we've done everything we can to prepare."

And it was the team they pipped thanks to a late Jessica Gill goal six minutes into injury-time in a momentous semi-final that has inspired this season's return to the limelight.

"Most of us were up last year to watch our U-21 hurlers and were on the field after the camogie final and we recognised a lot of similarities between ourselves and Wexford," Cahalan revealed.

"Like us, Wexford appeared to come from nowhere, they'd no experience of the big day and we said if they can do it so can we, and we absolutely gave it hell for leather this year."

Several other factors contributed to Galway's long-awaited return to camogie's big stage. Many of this side were



Cork captain Cliona Foley (L) and Galway's Sinead Cahalan hope to step out of the shadows in Sunday's All-Ireland camogie final

Cahalan's Tribe use Model triumph to fuel hopes of glory

involved when they beat Clare (in a replay) to win the 2003 junior title, followed by an intermediate victory in 2004.

Still playing is the brilliant Veronica Curtin, who was involved in 1996 aged just 16.

And they've got a new management team of big-name former players who have been very influential.

They include Curtin's hus-

band Damien Coleman, former Galway keeper Liam Donoghue and Ann Broderick (sister of Kevin) who starred for the county for many years and was at full-back when they lost to Cork in the 1998 final.

This trio have inspired a run that has seen Galway beaten by only one team (Kilkenny) this season and, noticeably, they beat Cork in their round-robin

championship meeting.

"We got a late goal against Cork down in Páirc Uí Rinn but there was nothing between us," the Mullagh star said. "The team has changed since then and improved but so have they."

"It's going to take an unbelievable effort but every one of us is willing to do it for 60 minutes and hopefully it'll pay off."

Her fifth class pupils in Balli-

nasloe are not the only ones getting behind the county who have had such little return from big days in Croke Park recently.

"No matter where you go people are behind us," Cahalan enthused. "Galway hasn't won too much in recent times but it is a great sporting county, everyone is going to be supporting us and we'd really love to do it for the whole county."

Joanne is keen to atone for last year

By LINDA MELLERICK

Cork team latest

CONCEALING a heavily-stitched ear after suffering a nasty gash in Cloughduv's championship clash with St Finbarr's the previous week, Joanne O'Callaghan's only concern was that she had to miss out on a couple of nights' training.

A member of the Cork senior panel since 2001, Joanne has experienced both the highs and lows of All-Ireland finals.

She reflects on Cork's defeat to Wexford last year sombrely.

"I suppose going into last year's final there was too much talk between the girls of the three-in-a-row and I think that's what caught us."

"At the end of the day we kept wondering if we would win the three-in-a-row. This year we're concentrating more on Galway and what we've got to do to beat them."

Is the hunger greater this year?

"Definitely. Even at the beginning of the year when we got together you could see that last year had really hurt everyone."

"We felt that we hadn't played to our potential and only lost by two points so if we had played any bit at all the way we could we'd have beaten them."

What of Galway?

"I think Galway are a more physical side than us. Jim (coach) over the past few weeks has worked on toughening us up a bit so hopefully that will help. "We'll have to watch Jessica Gill. I think she's the highest scorer in the championship."

Cork have also worked on counteracting anything Galway might throw at them in an attempt to break up their defence.

"I think no matter what is thrown at us this year we're prepared for it."

Joanne is quick to praise the new players introduced to the panel this year.

"They've all been great. The likes of Lynda O'Connell for example is playing and is as settled as players who've

been there for years. They too are so motivated to win that it rubs off on the rest of us."



Cork's Joanne O'Callaghan is fired up for Sunday's clash with Galway.



Liz Howard, President of Cumann Camogalochta na nGael, Gary Desmond, CEO of Gala, with Cork vice captain Sheila Burns and the O'Duffy cup at the launch of the Gala All Ireland Senior Camogie Championships, Croke Park, Dublin.

Picture: Stephen McCarthy / SPORTSFILM

O'Connor eyes shot at



Fintan O'Toole

TALK of three-in-a-rows may be rampant at the moment in GAA circles, but for Gemma O'Connor, the mention of that fabled feat is a reminder of anguish.

Last September, Cork were within touching distance of a third successive All-Ireland camogie title after their impressive successes in 2005 and 2006. O'Connor had the captaincy honour bestowed upon her for the 2007 decider yet Wexford came along to scuttle Cork's dreams.

"I don't know was it complacency or

what but it didn't work out on the day for us," states O'Connor.

"Unfortunately for us, the bad game that we played was in an All-Ireland final. To be fair Wexford were good and were up for it. It was hard for us to match their intensity."

Next Sunday, Cork brace themselves for their seventh successive All-Ireland showdown when they face Galway, and O'Connor is glad at the chance for redemption.

"After last year, losing to Wexford, we're happy to get that opportunity again to feature. We have been there for the last couple of years, winning three and losing three. We know what it's like to win in Croke Park and we know what it's like to lose in Croke Park. We're back to try and win it this year. We want to redeem ourselves and bring the trophy back to Cork."

The operation to rehabilitate Cork's



Gemma O'Connor: captained Cork when they lost to Galway last year.

camogie fortunes this season saw a new commander at the helm. The golden tenure of John Cronin and Fiona

O'Driscoll drew to a close when they departed at the start of the year.

Into that managerial void stepped Denise Cronin, as celebrated and trophy-laden a player as Cork camogie has produced.

"Denise Cronin is probably one of the camogie players that people idolise," enthuses O'Connor. "I grew up looking at her playing and I actually got the opportunity to play with her for a few years before she retired. We knew Denise would be a great person to approach and it was great to have her on board."

"Last year we had Fiona O'Driscoll for a few years, another excellent former player, and someone who has great experience. Now we've another past player in Denise Cronin. People will be looking to win it for them as much as for ourselves. You can relate to these coaches."

Curtin: Last time we won, Jessie Gill was only six



Therese O'Callaghan

TWELVE long years have passed since Galway etched their name on the O'Duffy Cup, but the wait is finally over. At least the first leg is — they're back in Croke Park this Sunday.

Veronica Curtin feels it more than most. She is the only link with the team of 1996 (Aine Hillary was on the panel). Veronica has had two other visits to Dublin's northside but they were unsuccessful, in 1997 and 1998.

Aged 28, and one of the more senior members of the team, naturally enough she feels a sense of duty, especially to the younger players. And she's ready to lead the way.

"I was in their situation when I started out," she says. "I was 16. Jessie (Jessica Gill — top scorer in this championship with a whopping 6-40) is 18. When I was 18 I would have loved to have got encouragement. Even though I had played in three All-Ireland senior finals, I was taken by the enormity of the occasion."

"No matter how many times people tell you not to be looking at the cameras, you will get caught up in the hype. You have to be fully focused."

"I am going to pretend to be running out onto my own pitch in Kinvara. That's what I will be telling the other players."

Veronica's other achievements are minor and junior All Irelands in 1994, but it's been a bumpy road back.

"That time in Croke Park, it never dawned on us we wouldn't be there for a long time again. Each year since has

been so different. I took two years out when I was in college, I needed the break, there were so many other things going on in my life. I came back when Sharon Glynn took over. It was more professional. Now, we are giving it everything under Liam (Donoghue). It is brilliant."

However, a couple of months ago injury threatened to disrupt Veronica's destiny.

"What probably was my worse year could yet turn out to be my best year! I tore ligaments in my ankle, damaged my Achilles and my instep against Kilkenny. It was our fourth game. I had been injury-free up to then. I couldn't train for the All-Ireland semi. I played that day with little done."

"Since the Wexford match I strained my quad in the same leg. I came back doing intensive training trying to keep up with everyone else. I knew I only had a few weeks for the final, but I should have broken myself in lightly. I am fine again thanks to our medical team."

Cork are formidable opponents and, like Galway, have brushed aside most opposition this summer.

"You have to think about Cork to an extent. You have to know who your opposite is going to be. I played wing-forward when we met in the championship (Galway won by three points) and I was marking Gemma O'Connor. If we meet again, I know I will be challenged. But, I will be 100% concentrated on my own game."

With the exception of Sligo hurlers (Nicky Rackard Cup) Galway are the only adult team from Connacht to contest an All-Ireland final in 2008. A victory would be a boost to the province, but would mean so much to the county.

"Absolutely everything. I am playing with Galway 12 years, but there are other girls playing nearly as long. The children here would have 15 players to aspire to."

"The last time we won, Jessie Gill was only six. She doesn't remember any of it. A win would bring so much pride to Galway camogie, which is needed big time."

Veronica's husband Damien (Coleman), director of hurling in Connacht, is a selector on the team. There is no fall-out yet on the domestic front.

"Put it like this," says Damien. "The vibes are mostly positive, there are no major complaints, and the marriage is very definitely on track."

redemption

"We'd a totally new management this year and we'd lost a few players as well, so I don't think people gave us as much of a chance. I think we used the league well in trying out new players. Come the championship, then we were building up nicely. There's a lot to be said now for how we've done, reaching an All-Ireland final means we can't have been doing too badly."

The obstacle that Cork have to surmount on Sunday is a novel one, with Galway showing up on the All-Ireland radar for the first time since 1998. On that occasion, Cork claimed the honours at their expense and 1996 still stands out as Galway's solitary crown. O'Connor acknowledges that Galway will carry plenty motivation with them into Sunday's game and their recent renaissance has not surprised her.

"Galway have been coming up over

the last few years. They've been slowly getting there. I'm not too surprised with their performances this year. They've really come on. After beating Wexford they have a great chance of winning it out now. It'll definitely be hard to beat them."

"We lost against them in the league and in the championship so we know what they're about. They've some very good forwards who can score freely. We know what to expect from them and they will put it up to us."

"Half the country will be against us because we've been around so long, they want to see someone new winning the O'Duffy Cup. But we've a lot of new players after coming up, so as well as team hunger there is a lot of individual hunger there as well. That then works for us as a team. I think we're capable now of going out and getting the job done."

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Cork captain Caitriona Foley with Galway captain Sinéad Cahalan and the O'Duffy Cup. Picture: INPHO/Lorraine O'Sullivan



Veronica Curtin: She's ready to lead the way.

Hope springs eternal for Galway stalwart

Camogie

Cliona Foley

ANNE BRODERICK shook the dust off the video of the 1996 All-Ireland camogie final last Monday night and enjoyed more than a giggle or two.

She couldn't believe how old-fashioned it appeared; the gear, the 12-a-side game, and the big helmets that "looked like bird cages on us".

"I'd even forgotten a lot about the actual match," she admitted. "We were down by seven points and scored three goals in the second half."

It is now a particularly cherished memory in Galway because 12 years later it is still their only senior title.

Broderick, who lined out at wing-back, made her name at the opposite end of the field from her famous brother Kevin.

And starring for the opposition defence back in 1996 was Denise Cronin, the Glen Rovers star who won six senior titles with Cork and played for 11 years before retiring after the 2003 final.

Opposing

So it seems particularly apt that they are both back in Croke tomorrow, playing central roles in opposing management teams.

Galway's 2005 hurling captain Liam Donohue roped Broderick in. She has five county titles but suffered the agony of losing three All-Ireland clubs. She finally quit playing last year but still coached Davitts to the county final and then Donohue persuaded her into the set-up as joint manager.

"I'm getting married at Christmas and it's been a bit of a mental year but it's also been great fun," Broderick said of helping himself and Damien Coleman to get Galway back to their first All-Ireland since 1998. Coleman is married to Veronica Curtin



Offaly captain Marion Crean, Clare captain Deirdre Murphy, Galway skipper Sinead Cahalan and her Cork counterpart Caitriona Foley at a photocall last week ahead of tomorrow's Gala All-Ireland Senior and Junior Camogie finals PAUL MOHAN/SPORTSFILE

who, like Therese Maher, has survived since the 1990s to provide great leadership.

Cronin was similarly approached from left-field by current wing-back Gemma O'Connor, after Cork suddenly found themselves in limbo last winter.

After contesting nine of the last 11 finals and winning five of them, the Rebelettes found themselves without a management team and a host of big-name retirements.

After starting when she was 12 and coaching club underage teams during her lengthy inter-

county career, Cronin was coming off a complete two-year break from camogie, though she rarely missed a match as a spectator.

After she was talked around, she brought in Con Malone and Pat Murray with her and set about filling in the playing vacancies left by superstars like Angela Walsh, Emer Dillon and Jennifer O'Leary.

"In some ways it was easy because there was a wealth of talent in Cork for the last few years," Cronin said.

"You had subs who never got their chance and were getting it now, so what people thought

might be a bad thing has actually turned out to be a good thing.

"I was lucky too because I rang Fiona (O'Driscoll, the last manager) and she gave me a lot of help. She put in so much effort over the last three years, you'd hate to drop the ball after that."

"But I didn't realise it would be so time-consuming. As a player you just turn up, play and go home."

Yet it is Galway's return to centre stage that has been camogie's story of 2008.

"I honestly don't really know why it's taken us so long because there are strong schools and

clubs here," Broderick said.

"It just always seemed like the management couldn't get it together and we just couldn't get past a semi-final. That's why beating (defending All-Ireland champions) Wexford was such a big thing for us."

"We'd have to give all the credit to the players."

"They have done everything we've asked and I think that's probably the difference. Compared to Cork and Tipperary, that didn't always happen in Galway before, but this year the girls have given it absolutely everything."

O'Riordan to start in final

ELAINE O'RIORDAN has been sensationally selected to start in the Cork team for Sunday's All-Ireland camogie final against Galway, writes LINDA MELLERICK.

The Milford attacker makes her debut in a dramatic move by the selectors.

Sunday will be a huge day for O'Riordan and her North Cork club, who lost a recent county quarter-final to Muskerry.

She is named at right corner-forward but could well move throughout the hour.

Unfortunately for Emer O'Farrell, she has failed to win her place back after

missing the semi-final while on honeymoon.

Amanda O'Regan replaced O'Farrell that day and retains her place as Linda Dorgan loses out to O'Riordan.

Other than that the Cork team remains the same in personnel to that which defeated Tipperary in the semi-final.

Breige Corkery and Orla Cotter are at midfield, after starting the semi-final at corner-forward and midfield respectively.

CORK: A. Murray; L. O'Connell, C. Foley (capt), J. O'Callaghan; G. O'Connor, M. O'Connor, S. Hayes; B. Corkery, O. Cotter; A. O'Regan, U. O'Donoghue, E. O'Sullivan; S. Burns, R. Moloney, E. O'Riordan.

Cork girls head to Croke Park on Sunday

ALL roads lead to Croke Park on Sunday as Cork and Galway come head to head in the Gal All Ireland senior camogie final. It has been a fairy tale journey for the Cork backroom team of Denise Cronin Pat Murray Con Malone and Jim Mc Carthy who took charge of the side at the start of the season and now with their charges just one game away from lifting the title they are determined to end the season on a winning note.

Cork lost out to Wexford in last year decider as their bid to make it three in a row was quenched by a lively and determined opposition. The new backroom team used the league to help unearth new talent and to date Cork have suffered just one defeat ironically at the hands of Galway on a 1-9 to 0-9 score line when the sides met in the round robin stages of the champions in July. Galway booked their place in

the semi finals having lost out in just one game to Kilkenny, in the semi-finals Cork recorded a good victory over old rivals Tipperary whilst Galway knocked out champions Wexford.

Galway have been around a while last year they lost out to eventual champions Wexford at All-Ireland semi-final stage they made great strides and are a side not to be underestimated Liam Donoghue and his fellow mentors Damien Coleman and former player Ann Broderick have worked hard.

They lost out in the National League Final to Kilkenny but they represented Connacht in the Gael-Linn Inter-Provincials this year where they took the title for their first time in eight years.

They area strong side Jessica Gill, Veronica Curtin who played on the only Galway side to win an All-Ireland title in 1996, goalkeeper Susan Eamer



Cork Players L to R Mary O'Connor, Breige Corkery, Amanda O'Regan Eimear O'Farrell

Niamh Kilkenny, the experienced Ann-Marie Hayes and captain Sinead Cahalan will give it everything as the county seek their second senior crown.

Cork have taking each game as it came this year and the mood in the camp is a very positive one, the new backroom team have settled in well and have a great rapport with their charges, manager Denise Cronin has been there herself and she knows what is required she is very focused on the game and her enthusiasm and drive is coming through in her charges, her fellow selectors Con Moloney and Pat Murray

are shrewd and know their stuff, while coach Jim Mc Carthy has the side in peak condition.

Gemma O'Connor, Eimear O'Sullivan, Orla Cotter, Amanda O'Regan, Eimear O'Farrell Rachel Moloney and captain Caitriona Foley are experienced campaigners who will rise to the challenge that Galway will pose, many of them have done it all before and their experience is be invaluable to the side.

Rena Buckley missed out on two months of Corks championship campaign as she was out of the country but she has now returned

and while not expected to be in the starting fifteen when the selectors name their team a player of her calibre is an invaluable to have on the bench.

Galway will be tough no doubt about that Cork will not be found wanting the are relaxed and ready and they will give it everything to be the first team to bring an All Ireland title Leaside in 2008, let's hope they achieve their ambition, Best of luck to Denise her fellow selectors Pat con and Jim and to all the girls here's hoping to see ye all on Monday night with the O'Duffy cup on the South Mall

Cork gunning for glory over Galway

ALL IRELAND CLUB CAMOGIE FINAL

At Croke Park, Dublin

Sunday, September 14 at 4pm

Cork v Galway

by Mary Newman

CORK and Galway meet on Sunday to decide the destination of the Gala All Ireland senior camogie title. Twelve months ago Cork lost out to Wexford who breached a thirty nine year gap but its back to headquarters again as they bid to bring the O'Duffy cup home for the twenty third time.

At the start of the season a new selection committee was put in place after the outgoing who had given tremendous service retired former player Denise Cronin from Glen Rovers took on the role of selector joined by Muskerry's nominee Con Malone and Bishopstown's Pat Murray both hugely experience administrators. The trio brought on board as trainer Jim McCarthy who helped Pa-

Fin guide the county to glory in 2002 and so the back room team was in place.

2008 also brought a new sponsor for the team with Bord Gáis Networks coming on board and the company have proved to be very hands on with the county team and the county board with people such as former Cork All Star goal keeper Ger Cunningham, John Barry and John Mullins showing huge interest and support to the side something which county chairperson Marion McCarthy and her team is very appreciative of. "We are delighted to be returning to Croke Park and Bord Gáis have provided huge support to our team on that journey, we hope on Sunday that their faith in us will be rewarded."

With players such as Anna Geary, Eimear Dillon and Jen-

nifer O'Leary unavailable this year the backroom team used the league to help unearth new talent and come championship they had their panel in place. To date for Cork the only team to defeat Cork has been Galway who they lost out to on a 1-9 to 0-9 score line when the sides met in the round

robin stages of the champions in July.

Galway booked their place in the semi-finals having lost out in just one game to Kilkenny, in the semi-finals Cork recorded a good victory over old rivals Tipperary whilst Galway knocked out champions Wexford. Galway have been

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They area strong side Jessica Gill, Veronica Curtin who played on the only Galway

side to win an All-Ireland title in 1996, goalkeeper Susan Earner Niamh Kilkenny, the experienced Ann-Marie Hayes and captain Sinead Cahalane will give it everything as the county seek their second senior crown.

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mood in the camp is a very positive one, the new backroom team have settled in well and have a great rapport with their charges, manager Denise Cronin has been there herself and she knows what is required she is very focused on the game and her enthusiasm and drive is coming through in her charges, her fellow selectors Con Moloney and Pat Murray are shrewd and know their stuff, while coach Jim McCarthy has the side in peak



Cork captain Catriona Foley, left, and Galway captain Sinead Cahalan during a Gala All-Ireland Senior and Junior Camogie Championship Finals Photocall

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Gemma O'Connor, Eimear O'Sullivan, Orla Cotter, Amanda O'Regan, Eimear O'Farrell Rachel Moloney and captain Catriona Foley are experienced campaigners who will rise to the challenge that Galway will pose, many of them have done it all before and their experience is be invaluable to the side.

Rena Buckley missed out on two months of Corks championship campaign as she was out of the country but she has now returned and while not expected to be in the starting fifteen when the selectors name their team a player of her calibre is an invaluable to have on the bench.

Galway will be tough no doubt about that but with the defeat of 2007 still fresh in the minds Cork do not want a repeat and they will not what to stand by as another crop of new kids on the block climb the steps of the Hogan Stand on Sunday. Let's hope its Catriona Foley lifting the O'Duffy cup in the air.

CORK PANEL: Aoife Murray Cloughduv, Linda O Connell St Finbarrs, Catriona Foley Rockbar (c) Joanne O Callaghan Cloughduv, Mary O Connor Killeagh, Sarah Hayes Courcy Rovers, Gemma O Connor St Finbarrs, Briege Corkery Cloughduv, Amanda O Regan Douglas Cloughduv, Una O Riordan Millford, Elaine O Donoghue Cloughduv, Eimear O Sullivan Ballinhassig, Sila Burns Rockbar, Rachel Moloney Courcy Rovers, Orla Cotter St Catherine's, Eimear White Barryroe, Jenny Duffy St Finbarrs, Eimear O Farrell Sarsfields, Lucy Hawkes Valley Rovers, Linda Dorgan Grenagh, Marion Murphy Kibrittan, Michelle Brown Mallow, Margaret O Herlihy Eire Og, Denise Cronin Ballincollig, Julia White Douglas, Regina Curtin Millford, Rosalie Holland Barryroe, Rena Buckley Iniscarra

PICTURE: PAUL MOHAN / SPORTSFILE

Liam's mission to revive the

All-Ireland Senior Camogie final



Cork v Galway

Tomorrow: Croke Park, 4pm (RTE Two)

Referee: E Browne (Tipperary)

Bet: Cork 4/1 Draw 9/1 Galway 5/2



Therese O'Callaghan

LIAM DONOGHUE'S appointment as manager of the Galway senior camogie team, along with selectors Damien Coleman and Anne Broderick, has brought an upsurge in the county's fortunes.

One of 12 hurling goalkeepers featured in Christy O'Connor's 'Last Man Standing', the new boss will be hoping to add the final piece to the jigsaw and crown a season that has raised the expectation of supporters. And while Cork pose a huge threat, Donoghue will do all in his power to thwart the Rebels' bid for title number 23.

He departed the inter-county hurling scene when Ger Loughnane took over a couple of years ago, but he is still involved with his club Clarinbridge.

He was first to arrive at the Galway All-Ireland media night in the Raheen Woods Hotel in Athenry last week, having come straight from a training session at Kenny Park.

Looking fit, his own impressive CV includes captaining the Galway senior hurling team in the 2005 All-Ireland final, an All-Ireland minor title in 1992, won along with twin brother Michael, an U21 medal in 1993 as sub goalkeeper, NHL, Oireachtas and Railway Cup medals, and a county championship with Clarinbridge in 2001.

Tomorrow he faces a very different challenge in his first taste of county management, guiding a side making their first All-Ireland final appearance in 10 years and eyeing only their second All-Ireland senior title ever.

"Why did I get involved? Well, this is a whole new experience for me. I did a bit of coaching with the girls last year but Wexford beat us in the semi-final. The county board asked if I would be interested in getting involved. I met with Damien and Anne and decided to go with it.

"As a player you are always critical of management, but when you are on the other side of the fence you realise how hard a job it is. My role has been made a lot easier by the positive approach of the girls. In January we met over 70 players, which was a huge plus being able to pick from such big numbers.

"There was massive enthusiasm. We put a structure in place. The girls got stuck in. We had a good run in the league, (got to the final) and Galway, representing Connacht, won the senior Gael Linn (inter-pro championship).

Galway's sole triumph came in 1996, and this could well be last chance saloon for some.

"I understand how neutrals would see us as favourites after beating the All-Ireland champions but we don't really see it that way. Wexford found it very hard to come back with the same enthusiasm they had last year. It would be fair to say we had a lot more hunger in the semi-final.

"Cork have loads of experience, but for a lot of our girls this is their first



major final and it will be their first time playing in Croke Park. But we are here on merit and we want to do ourselves proud. It is brilliant for Galway. Camogie is a huge sport here and the mind boggles when you think we haven't been in a final since 1998. We are back where we should be, contesting for All-Ireland glory."

The route to the final involved four wins, one loss, and one draw, played through an extremely competitive round-robin series.

"The format is very tough. I suppose it gives everyone a fair chance, but we literally had five games in five weeks. It was very important to get points on the board as early as possible. Our first

few matches were against Wexford and Cork so we had to find a settled team. We suffered one defeat — to Kilkenny away — but we knew fatigue was going to be a factor at some stage."

For now, at least, there is good news — for the first time this year they have no injury worries and will have a full panel to pick from.

Focused Foley determined to taste final success again

by Jim O'Sullivan

CATRIONA FOLEY had to make a decision about her continuing involvement with Cork in camogie and ladies football after three years as a dual player at the highest level. Captaining Muskerry to win the county senior camogie championship title and assuming the role with the county meant that it was a relatively easy choice. Quite simply, she made up her mind that the commitment required for the two teams would be too much.

Not that she has any regrets now, but she never managed to gain a starting

place in the football side for the past three years (during which time she won three All-Ireland medals). She wasn't being given the same opportunities she was getting with the camogie team.

A bio-chemistry student in UCC (and heading into her fourth year), she joined the camogie squad five years ago, making an appearance as a sub for the second half of the final against Tipperary — and losing. She was sidelined in 2004 after suffering a cruciate ligament injury and although she returned the following season she took no part in the campaign (even though she ended up winning a sub's medal). Then, her luck changed in 2006. In her 'first starting year' she was part of the winning team against Tipperary, excelling at full-back against the talented Deirdre Hughes.

"The elation after winning was unbelievable," she says. However, it was a very different story last year when they their title to Wexford.

Getting back to another final with a much-changed team — resulting mainly from a number of key players going abroad — is indicative of the talent available to the new management team headed by former star Denise Cronin. "There were girls on the bench that were just as good as those out on the pitch. They were given the chance to prove themselves



Ready for final action, Cork trio Amanda O'Regan, Eimear O'Sullivan, and Lynda O'Connell at Cork Camogie Grounds.

Picture: Damien Quirke

this year and they have really impressed everyone," she commented.

"That was what we used the League for — trying out people in new positions and trying to integrate the new girls. It was about building the team at that stage. Our aim all the time was on the championship.

"At the start of the year we had no sponsor and no management. Luckily Bord Gáis came on board and new management has done very well. They really believed in us and that belief was seen in a lot of the performances the girls have given on the pitch. They built our confidence as a team."

Going into Sunday's final, they have the incentive of making up for last

year's defeat and the fact of their only loss in six championship games being to Galway has given them an added motivation. And, she says that they won't make the mistake of thinking that Galway's relative inexperience may be to their advantage.

"Wexford hadn't been there in a good few years and they managed to catch us on the hop. We'll be taking that into consideration. And any game we have played against Galway in the last few years has always been close, no more than one or two pucks of the ball.

"We'll be very wary of them. We'll be concentrating on our own strengths and trying to counteract them."

Tribe

Manager Liam Donoghue with the Galway squad at training in Kenny Park, Athenry.

Picture: Ray Ryan

THREE KEY ELEMENTS

OCCASION

This is whole new territory for Galway. Croke Park can become a disaster if they get caught up in the occasion and forget the real reason why they are there. Cork are seasoned, but still they must be prepared for Galway to start in whirlwind fashion.

EXPERIENCE

The list is endless, but if experienced hands like Aoife Murray, Joanne O'Callaghan, Gemma O'Connor, Mary O'Connor, Briege Corkery, Una O'Donoghue, and Rachel Moloney stamp their authority early on, Galway will find it extremely hard to get a foothold in this game.

HUNGER

Advantage here to Galway. Only one player — Veronica Curtin — has played in an All Ireland senior final win — their only one in '96. A few more girls were on the teams on '97 & '98 who lost two All-Irelands in-a-row. There has been very little to write home about since then. Twelve years is a long time to wait. This should work to the Tribeswomen advantage.

Therese O'Callaghan



Catriona Foley: joined the camogie squad five years ago.

CORK SENIOR camogie manager Denise Cronin received the Montenegro Hotel Sports Star of the Month award for August at a function yesterday afternoon, in the company of family and friends.

Camogie supporters will hope that it is the early start of a good weekend for the former Cork captain, as she and her selectors lead the county into Sunday's All-Ireland final against Galway at Croke Park.

Denise was selected for the August award after she guided Cork to an All-Ireland semi-final win over Tipperary at Nowlan Park. The Leesiders came from behind at the break and, with the help of three second-half goals, made it through to the decider.

Cronin was presented with her award by the Montenegro Hotel general manager Gail White, a Galway woman who said she wished the Cork boss the best of luck in the future, but not on Sunday.

It is a fine achievement for Denise to reach the final in her first year in management, but it is no surprise to many because of her tremendous record as a player over the years for her club Glen Rovers and Cork.

On the field she had tremendous pace and energy and starred in several positions, in defence, midfield or attack, and she would cover every blade of grass.

Denise won numerous county and provincial medals with Glen Rovers as well as four All-Ireland club titles with the Blackpool side.

She went on to win a fantastic six All-Ireland senior medals with Cork, including captaining the side to a famous 1995 win over Kilkenny.

At yesterday's function she was joined by fellow Cork selector Pat Murray (Bishopstown), Sile Golden the Cork camogie board secretary, Mary Newman (PRO) and former team-mate and Cork All-Ireland winning captain Linda Mellerick, who now does tremendous fundraising work for the county squad with the supporters' club.

Before yesterday's presentation lunch ended, Denise spoke graciously about her family and the great support they have given



Gail Whyte, general manager Montenegro Hotel presents Denise Cronin, Cork senior camogie coach, with the Montenegro Hotel Northside Sports Award for August, pictured with Billy Barry and Pat McAuliffe, judges; Tony Ryan, financial controller Montenegro Hotel and John Coughlan, judge. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

Denise hopes award is only the beginning

By PAT McAULIFFE

Camogie latest

her in the game since her childhood.

She also thanked her fellow selectors and players for all the hard work they have put in this year so far.

The young woman who grew up in Parklands and took her first pucks of the sliotar in the nearby Fair Field, before going on to captain her county to All-Ireland glory, is now just one match away from managing an O'Duffy Cup winning side.

Denise did not want the Cork players at the presentation yesterday, as they are preparing for Sunday.



Denise Cronin, Cork senior camogie coach, winner of the Montenegro Hotel Northside Sports Award for August, with father John Cronin, boyfriend Conor Kelleher, sister Ann Hourigan, and niece Aoife and nephew Matthew Hourigan. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

Kelly's heroines ready for Banner test

by Jim O'Sullivan

AFTER having had his arm twisted to train All-Ireland junior camogie finalists Offaly — by his daughter Aoife — double All-Ireland medal winner Joachim Kelly quickly found out what he had let himself in for.

He has taken them to Croke Park for this Sunday's decider against Clare having realised that it would require much more than utilising the experience he gained playing with the county and managing in Westmeath and Wexford.

And he wasn't just talking about organising the things that don't really bother any inter-county GAA manager, like raising sponsorship or providing meals after training where possible. Although a former Garda and married, he had to brush up on his inter-personal skills too.

"You can't off and blind as much," he joked. "They're a bit different. With the fellas you can really get stuck in. But you have to take a step back from the girls."

Aoife had been a member of the team for a few years and when she and a few friends asked him 12 months ago if he would give them a year, he was initially very reluctant. But, he relented and set about putting a management team in place which includes former Offaly team-mate Mark Corrigan (who also has a daughter in the panel).

"They were last in the final in 2001 when Tipperary beat them fairly comprehensively. Last year they were very poor," he commented.

One of his first priorities was to have a sufficiency of new sliotars for training on a regular basis and, of course, plenty of hurleys.

"I was manager, but I was also trying to get a bit of sponsorship. We raised money ourselves rather than trying to go to the County Board. It's a big thing to try and run a county team, but things have improved since we got to the final."

In training, the concentration was on improving their hurling — more so than working on their fitness.

"We worked fierce hard on our skill levels and competitive matches in training and we increased the panel to 30. We wanted to have 15-a-side in training."

Interestingly, the panel features a 13 year-old, Debbie Flynn, who also has a sister in the panel. From the Kilcormac club, she has won medals all the way up to under-18 and senior 'B' level.

Returning to GAA headquarters this Sunday will rekindle a lot of happy memories for him, his last appearance being in the 1993 Leinster final against Kilkenny. "I finished my last ten minutes on DJ (Carey). He scored nothing," he says proudly.

Having lost to Clare already in Ennis by three points, he's encouraged by improvements. And they have been boosted by the return from America of one of Tina Hannon. "She's very good and very fast. Just like Eddie Brennan!"



Denise Cronin, Cork senior camogie coach, winner of the Montenegro Hotel Northside Sports Award for August, with Mary Newman Cork County camogie board PRO; Pat Murray, Cork selector and Sheila Golden secretary, with Linda Mellerick, Glen Rovers and Vivenne Harris, St Finbarr's. Picture: Eddie O'Hare



SEPT 2008



PAT MURRAY (Bishopstown)
Selector

Manager:
Denise Cronin
(Glen Rovers)
Selectors:
Pat Murray
(Bishopstown)
Con Malone
(Eire Og)
Trainer:
Jim McCarthy
(Glen Rovers/
St Nicholas)



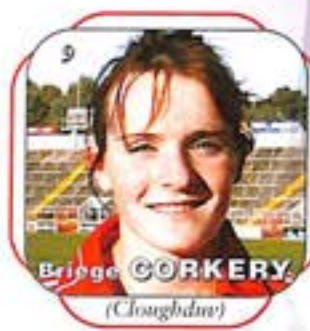
DENISE CRONIN (Glen Rovers)
Manager



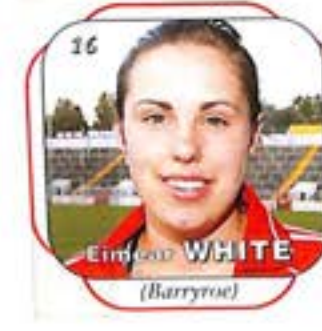
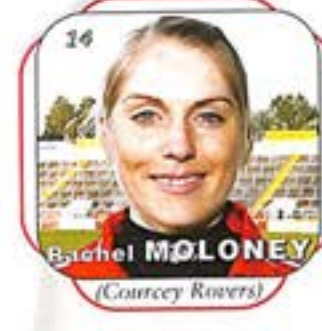
CON MALONE (Eire Og)
Selector

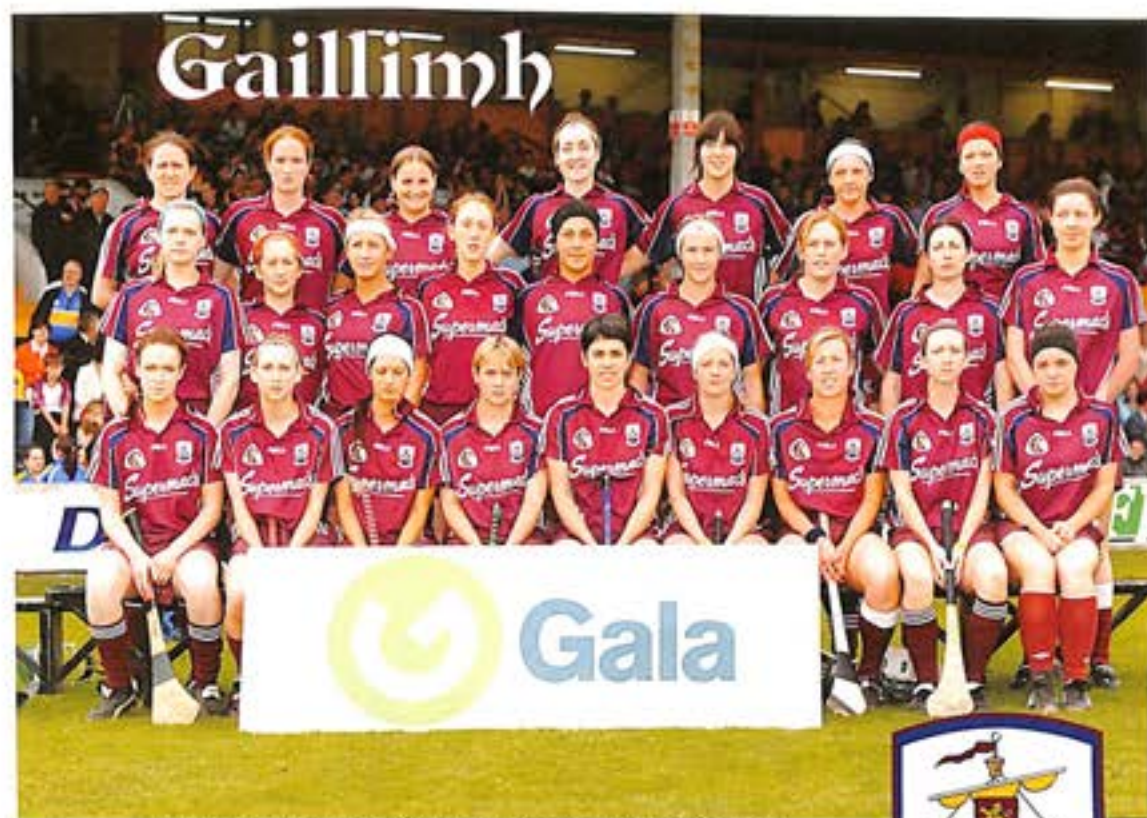


JIM MCCARTHY (Glen Rovers/
St. Nicholas) - Trainer



Corcaigh





Back row: Lizzie Flynn, Sarah Noone, Brenda Kerins, Catriona Cormican, Paula Kenny, Susan Keane, Clodagh Glynn.
 Second row: Sarah Dervan, Therese Manton, Aine Hillary, Ailbhe Kelly, Jessica Gill, Therese Maher, Susan Earner, Sandra Tannion, Lourda Kavanagh
 Front row: Lorraine Ryan, Niamh Kilkeny, Deirdre Burke, Molly Dunne, Ann Marie Hayes, Veronica Curtin, Sinéad Cahalan, Orla Kilkeny, Caroline Kelly.



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DAMIEN COLEMAN (Portumna)
Team Management



ANNE BRODERICK (Davitts)
Team Management



LIAM DONOGHUE (Clarinbridge)
Team Management

ISLAND
LEAGUE
CHAMPIONSHIP



CAPTAIN

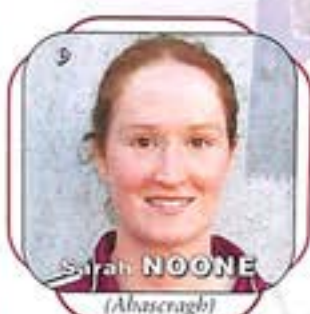


Sinéad CAHALAN
(Mullagh)

Gaillimh



Susan EARNER
(Eyrecourt)



Sarah NOONE
(Ahascragh)



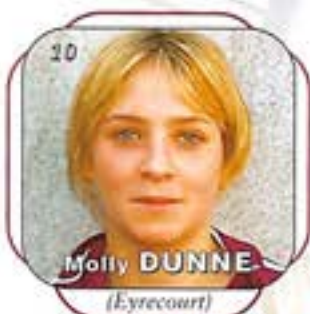
Lorraine RYAN
(Killmordaly)



Sandra TANNION
(St. Thomas's)



Ann-Marie HAYES
(Killmor)



Molly DUNNE
(Eyrecourt)



Orla KILKENY
(Pearses)



Deirdre BURKE
(St. Thomas's)



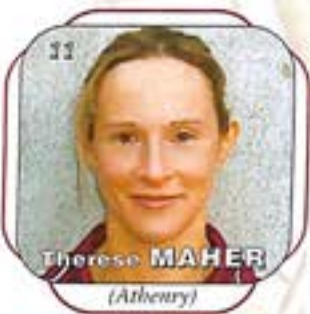
Clodagh GLYNN
(Kiltormer)



Ailbhe KELLY
(Davitts)



Niamh KILKENY
(Pearses)



Therese MAHER
(Athenry)



Jessie GILL
(Athenry)



Lourda KAVANAGH
(Davitts)



Lizzie FLYNN
(Davitts)



Therese MANTON
(Mullagh)



Aine HILLARY
(Pearses)



Veronica CURTIN
(Kinvara)



Brenda KERINS
(Andrabhan)



Catriona CORMICAN
(Cappanaghe)



Sarah DERVAN
(Mullagh)



Susan KEANE
(Killmor)



Caroline KELLY
(Davitts)



Paula KENNY
(Eyrecourt)

Craobh Chomórtas na Sinsear 1932-2008

Gala All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship

ROLL OF HONOUR

When Dublin won the inaugural All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship it stayed with the Dubs until Lil Kirby took home the title for Cork for the first time in 1934.

Since then the rebels have

lifted the O'Duffy cup a total of 22 times.

Galway are looking for only their second All-Ireland title, having lifted the O'Duffy Cup in 1996. They last appeared in a final in 1998 where they were beaten by Cork.

ROLE OF HONOUR:

Dublin	26
Cork	22
Kilkenny	12
Antrim	6
Tipperary	5
Wexford	4
Galway	1

ALL-IRELAND SENIOR FINAL MEETINGS:

1939:	Cork	6-01	Galway	1-01
1940:	Cork	4-01	Galway	2-02
1993:	Cork	3-15	Galway	2-08
1996:	Galway	4-08	Cork	1-15
1997:	Cork	0-15	Galway	2-05
1998:	Cork	2-13	Galway	0-15
2008:	Cork		Galway	



Cathriona Foley (Cork) and Sinéad Cahalan (Galway) met in Croke Park last Tuesday ahead of today's Gala All-Ireland Senior Final. Who will lift the O'Duffy Cup today and add to the roll of honour?

CORCAIGH

Dathanna: DEARG agus BÁN



1

Aoife Murray
A. Ni Mhuiri
Cloughduv

2

Lynda O'Connell
L. Ni Chonaill
St. Finbarr's

3

Cathriona Foley
C. Ni Fhoghlú (Capt.)
Rockbawn

4

Joanne O'Callaghan
S. Ni Cheallacháin
Cloughduv

5

Gemma O'Connor
G. Ni Chonchúir
St. Finbarr's

6

Mary O'Connor
M. Ni Chonchúir
Killeagh

7

Sara Hayes
S. Ni Aodha
Courcy Rovers

8

Orla Cotter
O. Nic Oltir
St. Catherine's

9

Briege Corkery
B. Ni Chorca
Cloughduv

10

Amanda O'Regan
A. Ni Riagáin
Douglas

11

Una O'Donoghue
Ú. Ni Dhonnchú
Cloughduv

12

Eimear O'Sullivan
E. Ni Shuilleabháin
Ballinbassig

13

Síle Burns
S. Ni Bhroin
Rockbawn

14

Rachel Moloney
R. Ni Mhaolomhnaigh
Courcy Rovers

15

Elaine O'Riordan
E. Ni Riordáin
Millford



GAILLIMH

Dathanna: MARÚN agus BÁN

1

Susan Earner
S. Ni Saolaigh
Eyrecoort

2

Sandra Tannion
S. Ni Thanaidheáin
St. Thomas's

3

Ailbhe Kelly
A. Ni Cheallaigh
Davitts

4

Therese Manton
T. Ni Mhantáin
Mullagh

5

Ann-Marie Hayes
A. M. Nic Aodha
Killimor

6

Sinéad Cahalan
S. Ni Chathaláin
Mullagh

7

Niamh Kilkenny
N. Nic Giolla Chionnaigh
Pearses

8

Aine Hillary
Á. Ni hIghile
Pearses

9

Sarah Noone
S. Ni Nuádheir
Ahascragh

10

Molly Dunne
M. Ni Dhoinn
Eyrecoort

11

Therese Maher
T. Ni Mheachair
Athenry

12

Veronica Curtin
V. Ni Chuirín
Kinvara

13

Orla Kilkenny
N. Giolla Chionnaigh
Pearses

14

Jessica Gill
S. Nic an Ghaill
Athenry

15

Brenda Kerins
B. Ni Chéirín
Ardahan

16 EIMEAR WHITE E. de Faoite Barryroe	18 ROSARIE HOLLAND R. Ni hAoláin Barryroe	20 LINDA DORGAN L. Ni Dheargáin Grenagh	22 JULIA WHITE S. de Faoite Douglas	24 DENISE CRONIN D. Ni Chroinin Ballinacolly
17 JENNY DUFFY S. Ni Dhulagh St. Finbarr's	19 RENA BUCKLEY R. Ni Bhualachalla Iniscarra	21 EMER O'FARRELL E. Ni Fhearáil Sarsfields	23 MARION MURPHY M. Ni Mhurchú Kilbrittan/Timoleague	25 LUCY HAWKES L. Hawkes Valley Rovers

16 SUSAN KEANE S. Ni Chatháin Killimor	18 LOURDA KAVANAGH L. Nic Chaomhánaigh Davitts	20 CAROLINE KELLY C. Ni Cheallaigh Davitts	22 CLODAGH GLYNN C. Ni Ghloinn Kiltormer	24 SARAH DERVAN S. Ni Dhoirbháin Mullagh
17 DEIRDRE BURKE D. de Búrca St. Thomas's	19 CATRIONA CORMICAN C. Ni Chormacáin Cappataggle	21 LORRAINE RYAN L. Ni Rian Killmordaly	23 LIZZIE FLYNN E. Ni Fhloinn Davitts	25 PAULA KENNY P. Ni Choinnigh Eyrecoort

ROGHNOIRI: Liam Donoghue (Manager), Damien Coleman, Anne Broderick

Síle BURNS

By: JACKIE CAHILL

CORK'S ace corner forward Síle Burns is hoping to capture her first Gala All-Ireland senior camogie medal ON the field of play this afternoon.

Burns was a panel member in 2002 when the Rebel County defeated Tipperary in the final but the Rockbawn star missed out on the 2005 and 2006 successes.

The 22-year-old smiles and reflects on a "complicated history" with the game as the travel bug and studies meant that she was unable to fully commit to the county cause in recent years.

Burns was a star-struck 16-year-old in the company of players of the calibre of Eithne Duggan and Linda Mellerick when she first broke through to the senior squad in 2002.

And she explained: "I was a panel member then but in 2003, I was doing my Leaving Cert and took a year out. I was back in 2004

when we lost but I wasn't a regular starter.

Burns was marked out as a special talent coming through the underage ranks

"In 2005, I went to America for the summer and in 2006, I was in Castlebar for the summer with physio and wasn't able to play with Cork either. Two thousand and seven was my first year starting consistently but we lost to Wexford in the final."

Burns is now a fully-qualified physiotherapist and has just started work at Skibbereen Community Hospital.

Life is pretty good on all fronts as Cork prepare for this afternoon's showdown with Galway, the only team to record a victory over the in-form Munster outfit during the round-robin stage of

this year's competition.

With a second half point against Tipperary in the recent semi-final, Burns took her

championship tally to 3-10 and she's gunning for more against Liam Donoghue's Galway.

Cork's second half display against Tipperary makes them many people's fancy to reclaim the title but Burns insisted:

"I wouldn't see it that way. Galway have beaten us already and are going very well. They beat the All-Ireland champions and if I was a betting person, I'd put Galway in as favourites."

Supporting Síle in the background is her ever-supportive father Denis, a former Cork panelist during the glory days of the late 1970s and captain of 1978 All-Ireland club hurling champions St. Finbarr's.

Síle said: "He's always been very encouraging and after a match, he's the first person I go to, asking if I'd played well."

Relishing the prospect of this afternoon's showpiece

Burns was marked out as a special talent coming through the underage ranks as she tasted All-Ireland success with Cork at U14 and U16s levels, as well as two Munster minor crowns.

She's a decent footballer too and won All-Ireland underage medals with Rockbawn from U14 through to minor.

But it's the small ball that has captured her heart in more recent times and she's relishing the

prospect of this afternoon's showpiece Gala decider.

Burns reflected: "This year the level of expectation was not as high in Cork. A few players had gone from the panel but there's a great strength in depth and we played very well in the round-robin, only losing to Galway at Páirc Uí Rinn."

"It's all about getting to Croke Park and there's nothing worse than not being there. It makes all of the training worthwhile because since February, it's been three nights a week with your life on hold. But you do it because you love it and the O'Duffy Cup is why the holidays and weekends away are sacrificed."

Síle Burns scores for 2008 Gala Camogie All-Ireland Senior Championship

0-1 v Wexford	
Wexford.....	0-5
Cork.....	3-6
0-1 v Tipperary	
Cork.....	1-16
Tipperary.....	0-10
0-7 v Limerick	
Cork.....	2-21
Limerick.....	1-6
2-1 v Wexford	
Kilkenny.....	0-7
Cork.....	5-11
Total:	2-10

SEPT.

2008

Gala All-Ireland Senior Championship – O'Duffy Cup PATHS TO THE FINAL

	GALWAY		CORK	
Round 1:	Galway.....	4-18	Limerick.....	1-06
Round 2:	Galway.....	1-12	Wexford.....	2-04
Round 3:	Cork.....	0-09	Galway.....	1-09
Round 4:	Kilkenny.....	1-13	Galway.....	1-09
Round 5:	Galway.....	3-10	Dublin.....	0-06
Round 6:	Tipperary.....	1-14	Galway.....	2-11
Semi-final:	Galway.....	1-13	Wexford.....	1-10
FINAL:	GALWAY.....		CORK.....	

FINAL GROUP TABLE					
	P	W	L	D	Pts
Cork	6	5	1	0	10
Galway	6	4	1	1	9
Wexford	6	4	2	0	8
Tipperary	6	3	2	1	7
Kilkenny	6	3	3	0	6
Dublin	6	1	5	0	2
Limerick	6	0	6	0	0

Una O'Donoghue, Cork, in action against Tishy O'Halloran, Tipperary in the Gala All-Ireland Senior Camogie Semi-Final at Nowlan Park, Kilkenny.



Therese MAHER

By: JACKIE CAHILL

GALA All-Ireland senior camogie final day – it's the reason why Therese Maher is still here and still going strong.

The 27-year-old former underage star was strongly considering her inter-county future before this season but something gnawed away inside, telling her to hold tight, this might just be the year.

A National League final appearance against Kilkenny, a meaningful championship assault and a dramatic semi-final victory over Galway has Maher dreaming again.

A holder of two All-Ireland minor medals (one of those collected as captain), two National Leagues, two Gael-Linn medals with Connacht and an All-star – an O'Duffy Cup success is a major omission from a glittering CV.

But she's finally here again and for Maher, who has

been a member of the Galway senior panel since 1997, today marks a third All-Ireland senior final appearance against Cork.

"You watch and you see the sheer joy. I want to get that feeling"

She was a substitute in 1997 and played at midfield in 1998 but was left with tears for souvenirs on both occasions.

Those heartbreaking defeats were in stark contrast to 1996, when she looked on proudly as sisters Dymphna and Gretta collected precious All-Ireland medals.

Therese reflected: "You watch and you see the sheer joy. I want to get that feeling and surely everybody deserves one?"

The family is steeped in GAA, (brothers John and Vincent wore the maroon jersey at underage level) and the fact that Therese is just one of three survivors from the 1998 vintage, along with

Aine Hillary and Veronica Curtin, is testament to her dedication. Maher can bring valuable experience and the

I've been saying to the younger girls that it's taken me ten years to get back. You might only get one opportunity and it's important not to get caught up in the occasion. It's about one hour, one game, one chance."

Maher has played at centre back, midfield and centre forward for Galway and is an invaluable cog in the wheel with her ability to win

she did." Maher acknowledges that Galway have come a long way since their National League final defeat against Kilkenny but she is under no illusions about the scale of the task facing the Westerners at Croke Park this afternoon.

Galway may have beaten Cork at Páirc Uí Rinn in the round-robin stage but Maher insisted: "We're

hard ball and lay it off to attacking colleagues.

The Galway mix looks good all over the field and Maher paid tribute to the management team of former county goalkeeper Liam Donoghue, Damien Coleman and 1996 All-Ireland medallist Anne Broderick.

Maher believes that Broderick's presence could prove crucial as the former playing star commands instant respect.

"It's very important to have Anne there. A lot of the girls have never been to Croke Park and while 12 years have passed since Anne was there, she's lived that dream and savoured that feeling. When she talks about it, we'd love to achieve what

"It's about one hour, one game, one chance"

underdogs going into this game. They were very disappointed that day but in the last two years, we drew with them and broke through this year. But they have the experience and have been in the last number of All-Irelands. It's a big challenge for us."

Having come this far and waited this long, you can be sure that Therese Maher will tackle it head on....

SEPT.

2008

Craobh Chomórtas na Sinsear 1932-2008 Gala All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship TOP SCORERS

NAME	County	Goals	Points	Total
JESSICA GILL	Galway	6-40	58	42
RACHEL MOLONEY	Cork	2-42	48	25
CLAIRE GROGAN	Tipperary	2-42	48	26
UNA LEACY	Wexford	7-15	36	0
SINÉAD MILLEA	Kilkenny	3-21	30	20
URSULA JACOB	Wexford	6-10	28	0
KATE KELLY	Wexford	0-27	27	17
LOUISE O'HARA	Dublin	1-19	22	17
SÍLE BURNS	Cork	3-10	19	0
EILEEN O'BRIEN	Limerick	1-15	18	15

SEMI-FINALS REPORT

By: JACKIE CAHILL

Cork and Galway will lock horns in the Gala All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship final today after coming through their semi-finals with varying degrees of difficulty at Kilkenny's Nowlan Park.

Last year's beaten finalists Cork proved far too good for Munster rivals Tipperary in the first game of an entertaining double bill, played out in front of some 4,000 spectators.

Cork ran out 3-14 to 0-10 winners against the Premier County and will start as favourites against Galway in what will be a repeat of the 1998 decider.

The Tribeswomen last reached the final ten years ago but they will provide stiff opposition for Cork after digging deep to secure a dramatic 1-13 to 1-10 victory against last year's winners Wexford.

Jessica Gill scored a sensational winning goal for Galway, with almost four minutes of stoppage-time played.

The Athenry star took her championship tally to an incredible 6-40 with her dramatic match-winner, just as Wexford looked to have salvaged a replay after coming from four points down to draw level in the closing stages.



JESSICA GILL
(Galway)

A GUARANTEE OF AN EPIC CONTEST IN STORE

By: JIM O'SULLIVAN, 'Irish Examiner'

AT first glance, one of the more striking features of the current Cork senior camogie team is the number of familiar faces that are missing from recent years, most noticeably dual All-Ireland winners Rena Buckley and Angela Walsh. And, while there is also a new management in place, it's an indication of the strength of the game that the Rebels are back in Croke Park.

That 13 points win over Tipperary in the semi-final was all the more impressive against the background of six finals shared between 2000 and 2006. So was the form they displayed earlier in the season when Galway were the only team to beat them in the championship.

Supporters of the team take pride in their competitive spirit and high level of skill which has seen the county maintain a special place in the annals of the game.

Then again, that's hardly surprising considering the rich vein of hurling talent which has always existed in Cork and the spin-off effect this has had in promoting camogie. To be fair, the size of the county and the big number of clubs gives them a pronounced advantage when it comes to meeting

the standards to be successful.

Supporters of the team take pride in their competitive spirit and high level of skill

Angela Walsh opted out at the start of the year to concentrate on football. Rena Buckley went travelling and Anna Geary likewise, while Emer Dillon (now Dublin-based) and Jennifer O'Leary (also abroad) are other notable absentees.

On the credit side, Briege Corkery has been able to maintain her commitment to the two Cork sides with a level of fitness that is quite remarkable while some of

promising young players have made the step up from under-age. Mary O'Connor (who is doing excellent work as Director of Camogie Development) has been able to continue with her career after injury.

Compared to the team which lost to Wexford in a terrific final last year, only two of the starting forwards lined out in the semi-final win over Tipperary - Una O'Donoghue and Síle Burns.

Amanda O'Regan, who lost her place at corner-back after picking up an injury, bounced back in style with two goals when positioned at full-forward against Kilkenny in the round-robin series, while former captain Gemma O'Connor has made the transition from midfield to wing-back.

The managerial baton has been handed on to Denise Cronin, a newcomer to management but the proud holder of six All-Ireland medals.

Whether it will be title number 23 for the Rebels or a second win for Galway it is difficult to say. But, based on their respective semi-final performances, there is at least the guarantee of an epic contest and one to showcase the game in the best possible manner.

THE ACORNS OF BELIEF BEGINNING TO GROW

By: STEPHEN GLENNON, 'The Connacht Tribune'

It has been a while since the Galway senior camogie team danced fleet footed, hurls in hand, around the boulders in September, in preparation for a tilt at the O'Duffy Cup.

Yet, that is the sporting landscape the Galway management and players has been surveying these past few weeks - ever since Athenry's Jessica Gill struck for that late injury-time goal to snatch a dramatic victory against reigning All-Ireland champions Wexford in a pulsating semi-final at Nowlan Park.

In many respects, though, the Tribeswomen's sojourn began far earlier - way back when the Slaneysiders stunned the camogie world with their lionhearted victory over kingpins Cork in the All-Ireland.

Director of Connacht Hurling, Damien Coleman - husband of Galway All-Star Veronica Curtin - was at Croke Park to watch the Galway U21 hurlers defeat Dublin. However, it was after witnessing Wexford's superb winning performance at first hand that he began to ask: 'Why not us?'

Over the ensuing months, Coleman, former Galway captain Liam Donoghue and Davitts stalwart Anne Broderick, the former Galway defender who played a key role in the county's senior win in

1996, formed a managerial alliance and on a cold evening in early January, the trio, along with the intermediate management team, met potential players in the Meadow Court Hotel, Loughrea.

The landscape of Galway camogie is changing

A precise plan was unveiled. The following morning, the Galway seniors knuckled down to early season training, including strength and conditioning sessions under Connacht fitness coach Des Ryan.

Galway stormed to victories over Limerick and Tipperary to secure a place in the National League final against Kilkenny. Unfortunately, the concession of goals cost the Tribeswomen, losing to the Cats 3-11 to 0-17.

Still, the foundation had been laid and when Galway, representing Connacht, won the senior interprovincial in May, this proved the perfect tonic. The acorns of belief were

beginning to grow.

This was reflected in Galway's championship campaign. Victories over Limerick, Wexford, Cork and Dublin were punctuated by a surprise defeat to Kilkenny and a dramatic final day draw against Tipperary.

Gill was to the fore again in that game against Tipp when the Athenry starlet converted a late penalty in emphatic fashion to tie the game.

This never-say-die attitude was again apparent in their All-Ireland semi-final defeat of Wexford. Indeed, along with a steely determination and succinct focus, this is the currency this Galway team now deals in.

They now expect to win these games and today is the day when they will finally seek to cash in those hard-earned chips which they have been stacking since last January - and in some cases a lot longer.

For today is the day. The day when the class of 2008 roll the dice against the queens of camogie, Cork. The day when their belief will be tested, their skills soulfully examined and their stamina severely stretched.

Yet, whatever today brings, whatever today holds, it is safe to say the landscape of Galway camogie is changing. All going well, it will be for the better.

Burns the heroine as Cork reclaim title

	Cork	2-10
	Galway	1-8

SÍLE BURNS was the two-goal star as Cork reclaimed the O'Duffy Cup with a five-point victory over Galway in yesterday's Gala All-Ireland senior camogie championship final at Croke Park.

Beaten finalists last year, Cork returned to the top of the pile as they collected a 23rd senior title to move just three behind Dublin on the all-time honours list.

This hard-earned win was Cork's first success since 2006 but their fourth victory in this competition in seven seasons, a testament to their remarkable consistency.

Galway were appearing in their first final since 1998, when they were also beaten by Cork, having achieved a last-gasp semi-final victory over last year's winners, Wexford.

Jessie Gill was the goal heroine on that occasion and the Athenry teenager was in good form from placed balls yesterday in front of 18,727 spectators at GAA headquarters.

Gill scored eight points, seven from frees and a 45, but she was unfortunate to see a second-half penalty saved by Cork's brilliant goalkeeper Aoife Murray.

Galway centre forward Therese Maher was fouled by Cork full back and captain Caitríona Foley and Gill's resultant penalty was blocked by Murray at a crucial stage in the match.

Murray may have felt under pressure to redeem herself after allowing Áine Hillary's speculative shot to drop into the far corner of the net three minutes before half-time.

Hillary's effort for a point from the left wing deceived the otherwise flawless Murray for Galway's only score from play of the entire game.

Cork led by just two points, 2-5 to 1-6, prior to the penalty award and moved three clear again when the impressive Rachel Moloney converted a point from play in the 39th minute.

That goal handed Galway a real lifeline before half-time as they went in just a point behind at the break, 1-5 to 2-3.

Galway opened the game with four unanswered points in the opening 10 minutes from Gill, three frees and a 45, before Cork gradually settled.

Rachel Moloney's free after 11 minutes was Cork's opening score

but all of Galway's good early work was undone when the lethal Burns scored the first of her two goals with 17 minutes on the watch.

When Eimear O'Sullivan's ball in from the left touchline broke between Galway corner back Sandra Tannion and Cork's Elaine O'Riordan, Burns was onto it in a flash and the Rockbáns star's finish found the bottom corner.

Four minutes later Burns was on target again, this time blasting home from a 21-yard free.

The tireless Briege Corkery added a point from play, Moloney converted a 45 and Cork had turned a four-point deficit into a two-point advantage in the space of nine minutes.

Galway kept plugging away in the second half but their lack of scores from play proved a hindrance as Gill kept the Westerners in touch with some brilliant free-taking. The penalty miss was a crucial turning point but equally, Susan Earner in the Galway goal was kept busy with saves from Una O'Donoghue and Burns.

At the other end, Murray produced a superb save from Deirdre Burke deep in stoppage time, somehow deflecting a shot from close range when the Galway sub looked certain to score.

That was Galway's last salvo as Cork held out for the victory they craved after suffering the heart-



Cork captain Caitríona Foley lifts the O'Duffy Cup after victory over Galway at Croke Park yesterday. - (Photograph: Dara Mac Donnell)

break of final defeat against Wexford 12 months ago.

SCORERS: Cork: R Moloney 0-7 (4 frees, 2 45s), S Burns 2-0, O Cotter, B Corkery and E O'Sullivan 0-1 each. Galway: J Gill 0-8 (7 frees, 1 45), A Hillary 1-0. CORK: A Murray, L O'Connell, C Foley, J O'Callaghan, G O'Connor, M O'Connor, S Hayes, O Cotter, B Corkery, A O'Regan, U O'Donoghue, E O'Sullivan, S Burns, R Moloney, E O'Riordan.

SUBS: E O'Farrell for O'Riordan (39/1), R Buckley for O'Connell (40m), L Dorgan for O'Regan (57m). GALWAY: S Earner, S Tannion, A Kelly, T Manton, A-Marie Hayes, S Cahalan, N Kilkenny, A Hillary, S Noone, M Dunne, T Maher, V Curtin, O Kilkenny, J Gill, B Kerins. SUBS: L Kavanagh for Dunne (39/1), C Corrigan for Noone (48m), D Burke for Kerins (58m). Referee: E Browne (Tipperary).

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CHAMPIONS: The Cork team which defeated Galway in the All-Ireland Senior camogie final at Croke Park yesterday.

Picture Dan Linehan

Murray seals Cork's No 1 spot



Cork..... 2-10

Galway 1-8

WE can only speculate on what might have happened if Galway had managed to score from any one of three serious goal chances in the last 20 minutes in Croke Park yesterday. But, without question, the magnificent point-blank save which outstanding goalkeeper Aoife Murray made in the third minute of injury-time ensured Cork regained the Gala All-Ireland senior camogie championship yesterday in a terrific contest.

Because she also stopped a 37th minute penalty taken by the competition's leading scorer Jessica Gill, the Cloughduv girl's contribution merits special recognition. But, in truth, Cork claimed their 23rd title because they had the composure to survive a poor start and the confi-

dence — reflected in the skill of Sile Burns — to get vital goals in the 17th and 21st minute.

Cork looked a little out of sorts early on, when Gill scored half of her total.

But, within a seven-minute period Cork were on level terms and were never to fall behind again.

Rachel Moloney, whose free-taking was on a par with Gill's accuracy, hit over a 55 yards free and out of the blue, Sile Burns had the ball in the net. And, in the short time between then and the second goal — also from Burns — five minutes later, there were clear signs all over the field of a rapid Cork recovery.

Former captain Gemma O'Connor personified it with her superb play at right half-back, Mary O'Connor came into her own in the centre and captain Catriona Foley, while put under pressure at times by Gill, was very steady at full-back. Significant too was the high work-rate of midfielders Orla Cotter and dual star Brieghe Corkery. And while the forwards began to see much more of the ball — with Amanda O'Regan doing good work on the right flank — and Rachel Moloney always probing at full-forward — it was a tribute to Galway's strong play at half-back that they successfully limited their scoring opportunities.

But, for a team contesting the final for the first time in ten years, Galway showed admirable courage

in rebuilding their challenge, inspired by the powerful play of left half-back Niamh Kilkenny and the leadership of captain Sinead Cahalan in the centre. And, they took a lot of encouragement from a brave tackle by Sandra Tannion when she denied Gemma O'Connor a definite goal in the 23rd minute.

Even more heartening, they hit back with a goal at an opportune time, just three minutes before the break. Aine Hillary had just moved to left half-forward (in a bid to curb the dominance of O'Connor) when she gained possession from a clearance from Niamh Kilkenny. On the run she hit over an angled shot which deceived the Cork keeper and ended up in the far corner of the net. It saw Cork just a point in front at the break, 2-3 to 1-5.

Cork quickly got a grip on the changeover. They could point to some excellent defending (with Corkery making a massive contribution), allied to the fact that Galway found it so hard to get scores, even after Gill was moved out to right half-forward.

Conversely, while they were unfortunate Gill's goal attempt from a 37th minute penalty was stopped by Murray (and cleared by the impressive Joanne O'Callaghan), they still maintained a vigorous challenge.

Gill went close to goaling in the 56th minute and shortly after that scare Cork were out of luck themselves when Amanda O'Regan

didn't put away a goal chance and Una O'Donoghue failed to finish better from an opening created by Rachel Moloney.

However, while the outcome remained uncertain all the way to the finish, Cork gained a psychological advantage when Moloney converted a '45 (resulting from goalkeeper Susan Eamer's save from O'Donoghue) to give them a four points lead with eight minutes on the clock. Remarkably, there was no further scoring during this period, although Sile Burns came close to getting her hat-trick.

But at the start of four minutes of additional time a Moloney free eased Cork nerves and when Murray made that marvellous save it was all over.

*Eamonn Browne refereed the game firmly and very fairly and overall did a good job.

Scorers: Cork — R. Moloney 0-7 (0-5 frees, 0-1 '45); S. Burns 2-0; O. Cotter, B. Corkery and E. O'Sullivan 0-1 each.

Galway: J. Gill 0-8 (0-7 frees, 0-1 '45); A. Hillary 1-0.

CORK: A. Murray, L. O'Connell, C. Foley (capt.), J. O'Callaghan; G. O'Connor, M. O'Connor, S. Hayes; O. Cotter, B. Corkery; A. O'Regan, U. O'Donoghue, E. O'Sullivan; S. Burns, R. Moloney, E. O'Riordan.

Subs: E. O'Farrell for O'Riordan (second half); R. Buckley for O'Connell (40th minute); L. Dorgan for O'Regan (57th).

GALWAY: S. Eamer; T. Manton, A. Kelly, S. Tannion; A.M. Hayes, S. Cahalan (capt.), N. Kilkenny; A. Hillary, S. Noone; B. Kerins, J. Gill, O. Kilkenny.

Subs: L. Cavanagh for Dunne (second half); C. Cormican for Noone (48th minute); D. Burke for Kerins (58th).

Attendance: 18,727.

THE 60 SECOND REPORT

The key moment

FOUR minutes from the end of normal time, with four points separating the teams, Galway sharpshooter Jessica Gill missed a great chance of a goal. It proved to be their last real chance of saving the game.

The Tactics

GALWAY succeeded in their objective of hitting the ground running, except the scoring yield was negligible. And, while it wasn't anything approaching 'blanket defence,' Cork's deployment of both midfielders deep in defence during the most competitive phase over the last 20 minutes proved critical to their triumph.

Player of the Match

IT could have been Gemma O'Connor, Orla Cotter, Rachel Moloney or Aoife Murray on the Cork side, or Galway defender Niamh Kilkenny. I thought Brieghe Corkery's indomitable defensive covering under pressure in the second half personified her team's absolute determination to avoid a second consecutive defeat.

Referee Watch

EAMONN Browne combined firm refereeing with fairness and common sense, but he would be the first to acknowledge the sporting approach of both teams.

What's Next?

FOR Cork it will be about defending their title — once more — and while it won't be easy, Galway face the more difficult task with a young team in getting back to another final quickly. Damien Coleman says they are 'very self-motivated' and that they 'will be back.'

Words: Jim O'Sullivan

Manager points to Aoife's saving grace

by Jim O'Sullivan

AOIFE Murray was the name on nearly everybody's lips afterwards, not surprising because she had such a major influence on the outcome after having, by her own admission, messed up in the first half.

Denise Cronin, victorious in her first stint as Cork manager, praised Murray, while Galway selector Damien Coleman admitted that the goalkeeper had broken their hearts.

"Aoife was outstanding," said Cronin afterwards. "She was very disappointed with the goal that went in. We know she is one of the best players in the country and I think she proved that."

Murray praised captain Catriona

Foley for helping her to get over the disappointment: "She came in and picked me off the ground. At the end of the day my job is to keep the ball out of the net. If I have to pick it out of the net it has to be a good shot and it has to be a good goal. In fairness I messed up," she said. And, before she made that marvellous save near the end, she feared she was going to have to take another ball out of the net. "It was halfway in my head... 'oh

Cork's Sile Burns celebrates her goal against Galway.

Picture: Dan Linehan



no!' I was delighted that I stopped it, but it was crowded and so hard for her (Deirdre Burke) to get the shot in. I think I was very fortunate."

Coleman, for his part, was not only regretful of the chances which Murray denied them, but agreed top scorer Jessica Gill's goal miss was a further blow. "Maybe she lifted the ball too far in front of her and she had to reach for the strike. But goals win

matches. Cork had the two early goals and it told. We just feel we might have left that game behind us but there are no blame games."

Coleman conceded the failure of any of their forwards to score from play cost them.

Brieghe Corkery, a member of the Cork Ladies Football team which will be chasing an All-Ireland four-in-a-row on September 28, agreed that it had been a tough game to come out on top in.

"Galway gave us everything. They gave us 'belting and skelting' but we gave the same back."

"Our defence has been unreal all year. The girls were outstanding... you'd imagine they never won an All-Ireland before!"

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Last-gasp
Enright
hands title
to Banner

CLARE	2-8
OFFALY	1-10

SHÓNAGH Enright scored an injury-time winning goal for Clare as the Banner County claimed the Gala All-Ireland junior camogie crown for the first time since 1986.

Clare bounced back from the heartbreak of three final defeats in the previous five seasons to finally record a fourth All-Ireland crown.

Offaly were left devastated as Enright, introduced 12 minutes after half-time, handpassed the sliotar to the net with a minute and a half of stoppage time played.

Battling Offaly, who led by 1-7 to 1-3 at half-time, looked to have weathered a second-half storm but only to be caught right at the death by Enright.

Twice Clare fought back to within a point of their opponents in the second half while at the other end, 'keeper Denise Lynch kept the Munster outfit in the game with two superb saves.

Enright's late clincher was harsh on Offaly, who bounced back from a poor start to lead by four points at the half-way point.

Clare star Carina Roseingrave netted after just five minutes but Offaly hit back with a run of points and the sides were level twice before the mid-way point in the first-half.

Offaly assumed almost complete control before the break and Arlene Watkins found the net 10 minutes before half-time, showing great skill to control captain Marion Crean's lengthy delivery before cutting through on goal.

Two further points opened up a 1-7 to 1-2 lead for Offaly before Claire Commune hit back for Clare with the final score of the half, her side's first point for 16 minutes.

A brace of Laura Linnane frees after half-time brought Clare right back into it before 'keeper Lynch was called upon to keep out Claire Nevin in the 43rd minute, and Jean Brady just three minutes later.

Those saves proved crucial for Clare and although Offaly led by three points - 1-10 to 1-7 - with eight minutes remaining, Linnane's fourth point of the second-half offered a glimmer of hope before Enright struck.

SCORERS - Clare: C. Roseingrave, S. Enright 1-1 each; L. Linnane 0-4 (0-3F); S. McMahon & C. Commune 0-1 each; Offaly: T. Hannan 0-4; A. Watkins 1-1; S. Flannery 0-2 (0-1F); M. Moran 0-2 (0-2F); F. Stephens 0-1.
CLARE - D. Lynch; C. Hall; S. Lafferty; A. McInerney; K. Lynch; D. Corcoran; J. Scallan; C. Mone; D. Murphy; C. Roseingrave; S. McMahon; L. Linnane; A. Ryan; C. McMahon; C. Commune. **Subs:** F. Lafferty for Mone (23); S. Enright for Ryan (42m); Ryan for S. McMahon (48).
OFFALY - A. Kennedy; A. Kelly; E. Damod; K. Brady; S. O'Sullivan; M. Moran; L. Sullivan; M. Cronin; F. Nugent; S. Flannery; T. Hannan; M. Davis; F. Stephens; N. McCabe; A. Watkins. **Subs:** J. Feighery for K. Brady (22); L. Keena for Kelly (47); E. Brady for Davis (38); A. Corrigan for Flannery (50); A. Kelly for J. Brady (50).
REF - U. Kearney (Antrim).

Majestic Rebels rise again

Leesiders' experience to the fore as Galway rookies fall just short



CLIONA FOLEY

Cork 2-10

Galway 1-8

All-Ireland Camogie final

WHAT A DIFFERENCE a year makes.

Just 12 months after the heartbreak of losing the three-in-a-row, Cork's revamped camogie team and management bounced back to win their 23rd Gala All-Ireland senior title yesterday but it is probably fair to say the Rebelettes have never worked harder for one.

A rookie Galway team, with only one title to their name and back in their first final for 10 years, tore into them right from the start and contributed hugely to a game whose combined skill and ferocity made it one of the greatest the game has ever seen.

Apart from the sheer brilliance of the hurling, it veered so dramatically at times that it was like an out-of-control rollercoaster.

Ultimately, Galway's brilliant young side, left weeping at its climax, will forever rue not taking any of the three great goal chances that came their way - including a penalty - in the second-half.

But in the end Cork's big-day veterans, not least goal-keeper Aoife Murray, held them fast and it was a great shame that only a disappointing crowd of 18,727 was there to witness such an epic.

When the chips were down, and especially in the final quarter, already legendary Cork players like Briege Corkery, Gemma and Mary O'Connor and Joanne O'Callaghan led a sensational defensive shut-out, conceding just three scores in the second half and keeping

Galway completely scoreless for the final 20 minutes.

But that's not to say the Tribeswomen didn't have chances and Murray, in particular, was emblematic of Cork's phenomenal resilience.

After a particularly shaky start, which saw Galway's top-scoring teenage full-forward terror Jessica Gill (18) quickly fire them into an unanswered four-point lead, Cork's self-possession was rescued by two brilliant goals from Sile Burns, the first after 17 minutes and the second just three minutes later.

Suddenly, the vastly experienced Munster side - who had contested eight of the last 10 finals and won four of them - had completely reversed that lead and looked in serious danger of pulling away.

But then Murray made a blunder that could have left her with a lifetime of doubt and regret.

Her failure to read the flight of an Aine Hillary long-range effort off the left-wing saw the ball dip into the net over her head, leaving Galway trailing by just a point (1-5 to 2-3) at half-time.

It was, noticeably, only Gal-



way's first score from play and it would transpire to be their only one of the match which was, ultimately, their Achilles heel, but it certainly gave them every reason to hope and believe.

Rattled

It was only the third goal Cork had conceded all summer and the sort of error that could have completely rattled a 'keeper.

But her blunder only served to inspire Murray who went on to have a remarkable second-half, saving three point-

blank shots to keep her team safe while Galway, to their huge credit, piled on huge pressure and never once contemplated giving up.

Their first second-half chance came just six minutes after the re-start when a sublime Gill sideline cut saw brilliant Galway veteran

Therese Maher field a fantastic high catch only to be brought down by Caltriona Foley and Joanne O'Callaghan for a penalty.

But Gill, who had shot five from five placed balls before

Cronin revels in Cork's crowning glory

Cliona Foley

SHE IS NOT just the best dual star in women's Gaelic Games, with an engine that could make Roy Keane look sluggish, but Briege Corkery is also quite a character.

Asked if she would put her celebrations on hold because she is also playing in the women's football final in a fortnight, the impish stonemason, fresh from carving her terrifying image on the collective Galway camogie psyche, grinned and revealed: "Not tonight...

but from tomorrow!"

Few Rebelettes deserved to celebrate more though delighted Cork manager Denise Cronin, the woman who had just seen their so-called 'transitional' side back to glory, felt one deserved special mention.

"She brought off three point-blank saves and you can talk about a lot of reasons why we're celebrating, but I'm talking about Aoife Murray as the main one," Cronin said.

"But defensively they were all fabulous. Joanne O'Callaghan in the corner was like a little leech! And

when you have a half-back line that already contains Gemma and Mary O'Connor, with Sarah Hayes coming into it, you know you're going to limit people," she added.

For one of Galway's three co-managers Damien Coleman, whose wife Veronica Curtin lined out at half-forward, there was no shame in the way they lost.

"Maybe you have to feel what we feel today to harden you, they're a very young panel, are very self-motivated and committed and they will be back," Coleman said.

"It's easier stick together in victory but we'll stick together in defeat and this will define this team.

He added: "We had a very definite period of dominance at the start but only went 4-1 up and I felt that should have been 1-6.

"When you don't take your opportunities you can suffer later.

"And Aoife Murray broke our hearts!" he admitted.

"She got her hurley to three vital saves, full credit to her, and goals win matches. Cork got those two early goals and it told in the end."



Cronin: delight

Main Pic: Cork's Sile Burns celebrates after scoring her side's first goal in Croke Park yesterday; (right) Briege Corkery attempts to get away from Galway's Aine Hillary while (below, right) Shonagh Enright of Clare celebrates after scoring her side's winning goal in injury time in the Junior Camogie final

BY MACMANUS PAT MURPHY/STEPHEN MCCARTHY SPORTS ILLUSTRATION



the break, didn't quite get her considerable power behind it and Murray deflected it to safety.

Cork had already snuck two points clear thanks to Rachel Moloney and brilliant midfielder Orla Cotter, the latter on hand again minutes later to solo through and lay on another score for Moloney to put them three points clear.

With Rena Buckley (who had summered in America) arrived off the bench at that stage, you could see the Rebelettes romping home, especially as fellow

sub Emer O'Farrell was also so strong.

But to their credit, Galway, led by Therese Maher and a brilliant half-back trio, especially Niamh Kilkenny, simply refused to wilt.

Intervention

Cork maintained their three-point lead with a particularly brilliant long-range point from Emer O'Sullivan followed quickly by a vital intervention by Corkery to dispossess Therese Maher deep in the Rebel defence.

A second '45 from free-taking ace Moloney pulled them four points clear with seven minutes left but for a long time there was only two points between the sides.

With four minutes of proper time left, Galway got a gilt-edged chance in front of goals, again set up by Niamh Kilkenny, but veteran Veronica Curtin fluffed her chance to finish it and Gill belted the follow-up wide.

Minutes later Galway's own 'keeper Susan Earner made another of several good saves

from Burns to keep them still battling and, when four minutes of added-time was called, they steelled themselves for one last push.

No sooner had another brilliant long-range score from Moloney pulled Cork five points clear than the ensuing puck-out saw a scramble in the Rebels' goalmouth and substitute Deirdre Burke flashed a brilliant snap-shot at Murray.

But, in what must rank right up there for hurling's 'Save of the Season', the Cloughduv star somehow got her hurl across

her body to deflect it to safety and copper-fastened an extremely hard-earned victory.

Magnificence

Ultimately, Galway had only two scorers and only scored once from play but those cold statistics tell nothing about the depth of their challenge or the magnificence of Cork's response, particularly their defence - bolstered by Corkery and Cotter - in those dying stages of a stunning final that proves today's players have

truly brought the game to a new level.

SCORERS - Cork: R Moloney 0-7 (4fs, 2'45s); S Burns 2-0; O Cotter, B Corkery and E O'Sullivan 0-1 each. Galway: J Gill 0-8 (7fs, 1'45s); A Hillary 1-0.

CORK - A Murray 8; L O'Connell 7; C Foley (capt) 8; J O'Callaghan 8; G O'Connor 9.5; M O'Connor 8; S Hayes 7; O Cotter 10; B Corkery 10; A O'Regan 7; U O'Donoghue 7; E O'Sullivan 7; S Burns 8; R Moloney 8; E O'Riordan 6.

Subs - E O'Farrell 8 for O'Riordan (half-time); R Buckley 7 for O'Connell (40); L Dorgan 6 for O'Regan (57).

GALWAY - S Earner 8; S Tannon 8; A Kelly 6; T Manton 6; A H Hayes 8; S Cahalan 8 (capt); N Kilkenny 9; A Hillary 7; S Noone 6; M Dunne 6; T Maher 9; V Curtin 7; O Kilkenny 6; J Gill 8; B Kenna 7. **Subs** - L Kavanagh 6 for Dunne (half-time); C Cormican 6 for Noone (45); D Burke 6 for Kenna (58).

REF - E Browne (Tipperary).

The game at a glance

Player of the Match

Orla Cotter (Cork)

CORK had any number of contenders, not least Gemma O'Connor, Briege Corkery and heroic goalkeeper Aoife Murray but for her consistency and leadership throughout, and especially when they struggled in the first half, midfielder Cotter just shades a tough call.

Turning point

Cork's first goal. They went nearly 10 minutes without an opening score and had only registered one free when Emer O'Sullivan and Elaine O'Riordan combined to put Sile Burns through after 17 minutes. With their tails up, Burns rattled the net again within three minutes, which completely settled

their nerves.

Talking point

The ferocity and bravery of Galway's challenge but ultimately their inability to take their three open second-half goal chances. After chasing goals for so long, they failed to put away any of them, due, in no small part, to Aoife Murray's brilliant reflex shot-stopping.

Ref watch

Eamonn Browne (Tipperary) gave an inordinate amount of throw-balls but that was largely due to the tigerish marking on all sides. He generally let the play run very well, was consistent and got all the big decisions, like the penalty, right.

They Said:

Donise Cronin (Cork manager)

"You might be surprised but I wasn't really worried because we

haven't started well all year. So the fact that we started playing after 10 minutes and got two quick goals to get back to level pegging, I'd say that must have knocked Galway back a small bit."

Damien Coleman (Galway co-manager)

"We feel right now that we just might have left it behind us but there's no blame game because those girls gave us a massive commitment all year and maybe some time you have to feel these feelings before you come out the right side so this'll harden our group. They're very young and will be back."

Match statistics

Wides: Cork 5 (2); Galway 5 (2). **Frees:** Cork 13 (7); Galway 16 (7). **Yellow Cards:** Cork 0; Galway 0. **Attendance:** 18,727.



Cotter: outstanding



Cork players celebrate after defeating Galway in the Gala All-Ireland senior camogie final at Croke Park yesterday.

Camogie as Cork and Clare win LEAD 'WAY



Martin CRUMMY
reports

Cork 2-10 Galway 1-8
All-Ireland Camogie final

CORK ladies are at it again — winning their fourth All-Ireland title since 2002.

Last season, in the All-Ireland senior Camogie final the Rebels felt heartache against Wexford, but yesterday they put some ghosts to rest with a five-point win over Galway.

However, just over 18,000 people witnessed Cathriona Foley lifting the trophy.

But they had to give a lot of thanks to their goalkeeper Aoife Murray for as she pulled off four saves in the second half to dent Galway's comeback.

Her parry from Jessica Gill's penalty was crucial, as was two saves from Deirdre Burke shots in the dying minutes and her quick reactions when Veronica Curtin was in on goal sealed the win for Cork.

Galway failed to break down the Cork defence all evening and when they did Murray was there to keep them at bay.

Cork have only conceded two goals in this year's championship and yesterday's goal against them from Aine Hillary was more to do with luck than design.

"Aoife Murray broke our hearts," was how Galway manager Damien Coleman summed up the goalkeeper's contribution.

"Credit it to her, maybe Jessica (Gill) lifted the ball too far in front of her and had to reach to strike the penalty.

"Aoife got her hurley to those crucial balls and goals win matches, Cork had the two early and they told in the end."

Praise

Victorious Cork manager Denise Cronin also had high praise for the 'keeper.

"She put her hand up in the dressing room at half time and was very disappointed with the goal that went in," said Cronin.

"But she is one of the best players in the country.

"She pulled off three point-blank saves and she is the only reason we are celebrating."

Despite a bright opening by Galway, their scores dried up and all day their own score from play was Hillary's 27th-minute goal.

Jessica Gill scored all their points from frees and one '45'.

The high paced Galway opening — in their first All-Ireland senior Camogie final in 10 years — surprised many as they raced into a four-point lead by the 10th minute.

Freetaker Gill was their ace scorer as she lobbed over three frees and one '45' in the opening minutes.

The 18-year-old was in inspired form all evening and even when she was moved out to wing forward, she still proved a threat to the Cork ladies.

Galway's opening though was washed away when Rebel corner forward Sile Burns caught fire, notching two great goals in a four-minute spell.

After Rachel Moloney got their first score of the game from a free in the 11th minute, Cork began to dominate the midfield sector.

The goals were coming, but the manner in which Burns took both strikes on, showed the danger of the Cork inside forward line.

Another Moloney score gave them the lead in the game for the first time in the 21st minute, and Burns second goal added to their lead.



FRUSTRATION: Galway 'keeper Susan Earner reacts to a missed chance and (inset) former ref Jimmy Cooney



PLAYER OF THE MATCH



AOIFE MURRAY (CORK)

THREE point-blank saves and a penalty stop is all in a day's work for Cork 'keeper Aoife Murray. She was caught badly by the flight of the sliotar for Galway's only goal and score from play. But she redeemed herself in the second half. She was instrumental in Cork lifting the O'Duffy Cup.

But Galway are a side who refuse to lie down and Hillary's fortuitous goal three minutes before the break, left the sides with a point between them at the break.

Cork looked more assured after half time and a free from the impeccable Rachel Moloney and one from play by Orla Otter, opened up a three-point lead.

Galway have a lot of heart and clawed their

way back into it, but they were still too reliant on Gill's frees as a way of getting scores.

Finish

And despite a spirited finish Coleman's team didn't score from the 45th minute until the end.

In contrast, Cork's Eimear O'Sullivan got the score of the game from under the Hogan Stand and Moloney kept knocking the frees over to secure

the win. They also worked Galway 'keeper Susan Earner, who pulled off a super save from Una O'Donoghue half blocked shot, which seemed destined for the bottom right hand corner, until Earner shifted her weight and pushed it around the post for a '45.

At the other end, though, Murray was the busier, but the Cork defence bravely held out for the win.

CORK: A. Murray; L. O'Connell, C. Foley, J. O'Callaghan; G. O'Connor, M. O'Connor, S. Hayes, D. Cotter (0-1); B. Corkery (0-1); A. O'Regan, U. O'Donoghue, E. O'Sullivan (0-1); S. Burns (2-0); R. Moloney (0-7) 4 frees, 2 '45's; E. O'Riordan. Subs: F. O'Farrell for O'Riordan (HT); R. Buckley for O'Connell (40 mins); L. Dorgan for O'Regan (57 mins). Booked: None. Sent off: None.
Galway: S. Earner; S. Tannion, A. Kelly, T. Manton; A. Marie Hayes, S. Cahalan, N. Kilkeny; A. Hillary (1-0); S. Noone; M. Dunne, T. Maher, V. Curtin; O. Kilkeny, J. Gill (0-8) 7 frees, 1 '45; B. Kerins. Subs: L. Kavanagh for Dunne (HT); C. Cormican for Kelly (48 mins); D. Burke for Kerins (59 mins). Booked: None. Sent off: None.
Referee: E. Browne (Tipperary)



WINNER: Enright

Enright Sho-s Banner the way

■Clare 2-8 Offaly 1-10
Junior Camogie final

AN injury-time goal from Shona Enright denied Offaly a first Gala All-Ireland Junior Camogie title, as Clare ended a 22-year wait with a one-point win at Croke Park.

The Midlanders led by 1-7 to 1-3 at the interval, but it was Clare who made the early in-roads.

A fourth minute Corina Roseingrave goal got Clare off to the perfect start, and although Offaly equalised with points from Siobhán Flannery (2), Tina Hannon and Fiona Stephens, Roseingrave ensured the Banner took a 1-2 to 0-4 lead by the 12th minute.

But Clare's joy in the first half was short lived, as corner-forward Arlene Watkins crashed the ball to the net for a 21st minute goal to give Offaly the upper hand.

Gap

Points from Watkins and Hannon opened up a significant advantage two minutes before the interval, but a Claire Commene score cut the gap to four points by half-time and the game was right back in the melting pot.

Clare piled on the pressure in the third quarter, and held Offaly scoreless during that spell, with Laura Linnane hitting a trio of points, while goalkeeper Denise Lynch pulled off two superb saves.

Despite Offaly hitting three of the next four points, Clare were now placing the Faithful's defence under huge pressure, and delivered on their promise with Enright's late, late goal, after an initial save from a Roseingrave effort, ensuring a fourth-ever

CROWN.
CLARE: D. Lynch; C. Kelly, S. Lafferty, A. McInerney; K. Lynch, D. Concoran, J. Scanlon; C. Money, D. Murphy; C. Roseingrave (1-1); S. McMahon (0-1); L. Linnane (0-4, 39); A. Ryan, C. McMahon, C. Commene (0-1). Subs: F. Lafferty for Money (22); S. Enright (1-1) for Ryan (42); A. Ryan for McMahon (47).
OFFALY: A. Kennedy; A. Kelly, E. Darnoddy, K. Brady; S. O'Sullivan, M. Morkan (0-2, 35); L. Sullivan, M. Creen, K. Nugent; S. Flannery (0-2, 11); T. Hannon (0-4); M. Davis; F. Stephens (0-1); N. McCabe, A. Watkins (1-1). Subs: J. Feighery for McCabe (22); L. Keena for Kelly (HT); J. Brady for Davis (37); A. Cormican for Flannery (49); A. Kelly for Nugent (49).
Referee: Una Kearney (Armagh)

Cork show resolve to bounce back



Therese O'Callaghan

COMMENT

THE spotlight is very much back on Cork camogie.

Twelve months ago they suffered the heartbreak of missing out on the three in-a-row All-Ireland senior camogie wins. Yesterday, even though they had to fight tooth and nail, their 23rd title is safely in the bag. They also managed to keep the 18,727 spectators on tenterhooks as Galway suffered the pain of losing in their first final appearance in 10 years.

Hard to believe this Cork team found it hard to tie down a manager at the beginning of the year. It also says a lot about the resolve within the county to turn around last year's defeat to Wexford.

Credit the Westerners though for despite being at the receiving end of a bitter loss, they didn't let themselves down. The have potential — they confirmed this with a gutsy display — but their inability to convert possession into scores was their big downfall. Eighteen-year-old Jessica Gill scored all of their eight points, while Aine Hillary netted the goal.

Co-manager Damien Coleman was nonetheless proud of his charges: "We just feel right now we might have left that game behind us, but there are no blame games," he insisted afterwards. "Those players are serious girls and they gave us massive commitment all year."

Cork, on the other hand, played so well in most areas, and unlike their opponents were more free-flowing in attack. The end result was a five-point gap and this was a true reflection of the game.

The powerhouses behind this Rebel victory are mostly well-known names — Gemma O'Connor, Briege Corkery, Rachel Moloney, Mary O'Connor and two-goal hero Sile Burns.

Denise Cronin enjoyed her first final patrolling the line along with Jim McCarthy, Pat Murray and Con Malone, but quipped, "it is more nerve-wracking knowing you can't do anything but it is a great feeling at the end of the day."

Aoife Murray, the Cork custodian, was caught off guard for the Galway goal and put her hand up at half-time, but she more than made up with her acrobatic saves later on — particularly one towards the end and a superb penalty stop in the second half.

Galway keeper Susan Earner also had a day to remember and could not be faulted for the agonising loss.

Even when they raided the subs bench, Cork's hand was never weakened. Emer O'Farrell, who missed the semi-final having just returned from her honeymoon, impressed after her introduction at half-time and Rena Buckley was brought on with 20 minutes to go — the Inniscarra lady having taken time out this summer to go travelling.

But, when Cork needed a leader, it was Briege Corkery who rallied the troops in true Rebel fashion and her player-of-the-match award was richly deserved.

Galway look sure to be back. Yesterday was a bridge too far but they will benefit from the experience.

SEPT. 2008

REBELS



DELIGHT: Eimear White, Briega Corkery and Michelle Browne



JOY: Gemma O'Connor celebrates with Sara Hayes and Cathriona Foley (left) with cup

Congratulations to Cork's Senior Camogie team on their All-Ireland victory



Fuelling Cork's passion for Camogie

proud sponsors of the Cork Senior Camogie team

BORD GÁIS NETWORK

Rebel yell

SEE PAGES 82-83

REFEREES

EAMONN BROWNE

Eamonn Browne from the Knockavilla/Donaskeigh Kickhams club officiates at his first All-Ireland senior camogie final. He is a well known hurling referee in the Premier County and has refereed North American hurling, football and camogie finals, Boston International camogie finals and Shinty Camogie Internationals. He previously took charge of the All-Ireland Junior Camogie Final in 2003. He has officiated at various National League camogie finals, inter-county championship semi-finals, and senior and junior club finals.



UNA KEARNEY

Una Kearney is a member of the St. Brenda's Ballymacrab Club where she still plays senior camogie. She has been refereeing since 1999 at all levels in the game and was in charge of the 2004 Senior Final and the 2005 Junior Final. Una is a primary school teacher in Armagh and is also chairperson of the Referees Committee.



O'Duffy glory



Cork's Mary O'Connor with the O'Duffy Cup after defeating Galway in the Gala All-Ireland senior camogie final at Croke Park yesterday.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

Síle burns Galway's defence



LINDA MELLERICK

Cork 2-10
Galway 1-8

CORK were crowned queens of camogie again yesterday as they recaptured the O'Duffy cup.

It was obvious the players missed the coveted prize, their second-half display testament to how much they wanted to bring it back to Leeside.

After a shaky start, a spirited team performance saw Cork take the lead after 17 minutes and hold it until the final whistle.

Two stunning goals from Síle Burns turned the tide however, and inspired by the Trojan effort of Brieghe Corkery in midfield, they worked tirelessly to limit the Galway attack conceding just one score from play.

The players must have felt a little déjà vu as Galway raced out of the traps into a four-point lead with just nine minutes gone. It was Cork's slow start last year which caught them against Wexford.

A heavy rain teeming down resulted in a greasy Croke Park surface. Galway started with a minuscule wind advantage while Cork looked nervous. They lost possession, dropped the ball and fouled repeatedly in the opening 10 minutes.

Galway strove to race from the traps, and three frees and a 45 were on the board before Cork had even mustered an attack.

The Rebels were losing centre field and their back line was under immense pressure as they found it difficult to get to grips with the pace of Galway.

Sinéad Cahalan was a very influential attacking half-back. Flanking her, Ann Marie Hayes and Niamh Kilkenny were dominant.

With the possession stats heavily tipped in Galway's favour, a positive from Cork's perspective was that, despite this, Galway still hadn't managed to score from play.

A Rachel Moloney free on 10 minutes registered Cork's opening score. And 13 minutes in Cork began to settle.

Gemma O'Connor won everything down her wing and Orla Cotter stepped up around the centre of the field when Cork needed a leader.

Una O'Donoghue and Amanda O'Regan switched to right half-forward and centre-forward. O'Donoghue won possession and passed a low ball inside. Elaine O'Riordan flicked to the running Síle Burns who struck beautifully to the bottom right-hand corner to draw

Cheer on camogie heroines

CONGRATULATIONS to the Cork team on their great win in yesterday's Gala-sponsored All-Ireland senior camogie final. There were many great individual moments to savour; amongst them a two-goal salvo from Síle Burns and two magnificent saves from Aoife Murray, one in the third minute of injury time which was right out of the top drawer. But in truth the win owed as much to a great team effort as it did to individual flashes of brilliance.

The team will now have a well deserved rest, but next year will be back again planning to narrow the gap between themselves and Dublin for most O'Duffy cups won.

Dublin have 23, Cork 20. Yesterday's win was Cork's first win in the competition since 2006, but their fourth All-Ireland in seven years.

So with this level of consistency there are great grounds for believing the gap between themselves and Dublin will be eroded in years to come.

The team arrives at the Imperial Hotel at 8pm; they deserve a great turnout.

They have done themselves, their families and the county a great service.

It is the least they are entitled to.

Enjoying a triple treat at Croke

THE triple decker at Croke Park on Sunday produced three very exciting games, and for camogie in particular they can be well pleased with the standards and commitment of the ladies to our ancient game.

Clare dramatically won their junior All-Ireland with a last minute goal scored by super sub, Shonagh Enright. This was a deserved break for Banner GAA. It may be upwards and onwards now for the county.

Cork showed typical Rebel mettle and determination by recapturing the O'Duffy Cup in style. With Brieghe Corkery in midfield covering acres and acres to great effect, the Cork girls just weren't going to be beaten. This Galway team is a promising one and won't have to wait long for All-Ireland glory. So camogie is in good health and made massive strides during the presidency of Liz Howard.

The U21 hurling final saw Kilkenny complete the unique grand slam. Hats off to the Cats. They have raised the bar for everyone else.

Now it's up to other counties to match and overcome them.

Player of the Match

With many great individual performances the accolade goes to Brieghe Corkery who was Cork's heartbeat yesterday.

Score of the Match

Both of Cork's goals were quality but Rockbáin's Síle Burns' second goal is up there with the best of them.

Turning Point

Burns' two first-half goals in four minutes after Galway had dominated followed by the saved second-half penalty.

Referee Watch

Too many throw-ins, many of them unnecessary. Eamonn Ryan could have let the game flow more considering the conditions.

for red shirts

WHAT THEY SAID

'Upheaval at start of year pulled us together'

DENISE CRONIN

CORK manager Denise Cronin just about kept the tears from flowing as she embraced her many well wishers after Cork's magnificent victory yesterday.

The former Rebel star was quick to heap praise on her management team of Jim McCarthy, Pat Murray and Con Malone.

Only minutes after the final whistle was it too much to expect that the magnitude of Cork's victory had sunk in?

"It's just a feeling of relief at present. The euphoria will hit later," she said.

Was Denise worried at any stage, particularly with Cork's slow start?

"No I wasn't really. We're always slow to settle. We could take 10, 15 minutes, even 20 but I know there's always a spell where Cork hit a purple patch and we dominate.

"It happened today and we had Galway on the rack. We let them back in with that goal and Aoife Murray was cursing herself at half time but it was just one of those goals. And she was brilliant after that.

"Our defence along with Aoife have been excellent all year. We only let in two championship goals before today. We could have made switches in the opening 15 minutes but we knew it was a settling period and gave it time.

"Sile's goals were crucial, we needed them at the time and you could see Galway's heads drop a little, and Breige covered every blade of grass again."

CATRIONA FOLEY

WHAT a day for Rockbawn club — with their first ever All-Ireland winning captain returning to her club tonight.

Catriona Foley was understandably 'over the moon' as she faced the press after Cork's All-Ireland victory yesterday.

"It's relief more than anything; it was so tense for the last 10 minutes or so and with the likes of Jessica Gill and Veronica Curtin inside you can't take your eye off the ball for a second."

Reflecting on the year, Catriona felt that all the upheaval only made the victory all the sweeter.

"It means an awful lot. There was so much doubt at the beginning of the year with the lack of sponsorship, lack of management and the loss of players.

"But when your backs are to the wall people do really gather together and we rallied as a team."

"We met every challenge. We got sponsorship from Bord Gáis, we got a great management team and we pulled together as a team."

Commenting on Cork's slow start Catriona said that it was a team trait they seem to have inherited but their composure saw them through.



Cork's Breige Corkery racing through the Galway defence during the Gala All-Ireland senior camogie final at Croke Park yesterday.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

THREE REASONS WHY CORK WON

1 THE GOALS
Sile Burns' two goals inside four minutes rocked Galway after they had dominated the opening 15 minutes. It was clinical finishing and Galway were always going to struggle to recover from those hammer blows.

2 AOIFE MURRAY
Absolutely fantastic! After leaving in a soft goal, she delivered a near perfect performance. Her composure, bravery and alertness provided confidence and leadership. Total control in around the square.

3 HUNGER
Cork's hunger and desire to make up for last year was hugely evident. Breige Corkery epitomised this. She was everywhere and set the tone. Cork hunted in packs and no Galway defender cleared without pressure.

Cork level.

Breige Corkery, also starting to gain momentum, pointed a minute later and suddenly Cork led by one against the run of the opening 17 minutes play.

Galway heads would only drop further when for the next 10 minutes Cork slipped into fifth gear and it was the Tribe who now struggled to keep up.

Rachel Moloney hit a 45. It was followed with a lethal, powerful strike from Burns as once again she spotted half a chance and struck home.

One sensed that it was going to be Cork's day. They led 2-3 to 0-5 after playing second fiddle for most of the half. Ominous signs for Galway.

Gemma O'Connor split the Galway defence right down the middle minutes later only for Aibhne Kelly to deny her at the death.

With the game slipping from them Galway needed a lifeline. They got it with four minutes to the break.

A seemingly harmless Aine Hilary strike from the left wing dipped under the crossbar and defied brilliant goalkeeper Aoife Murray. It gave Galway renewed hope as the bare minimum separated the sides.

But the signs still looked good for Cork. Galway were relying too much on Jessica Gill who had to play deep into her own half to gather possession. She was never going to pose too much of a threat that far out and Galway weren't getting the return they needed from Veronica Curtin, Molly Dunne or Therese Maher.

Cork started the second half strongly. Emer O'Farrell replaced Elaine O'Riordan and at right half-forward got immediately involved.

A Moloney free and a good Cotter point put three between the sides. Gill pointed another free. Five minutes in Therese Maher caught a high ball, turned and headed for goal. Catriona Foley shouldered her

and the penalty was given.

Gill stood up. She struck hard and straight at Murray. The country's top goalkeeper wasn't going to be caught with that.

Her save deflected to Joanne O'Callaghan who confidently cleared.

The Cork defence and midfield grew stronger. Hunting in packs they smothered Galway at every opportunity.

Joanne O'Callaghan had her best game this season winning and clearing a large amount of ball.

Mary O'Connor had a tremendous second half and Sarah Hayes also had one of her finest days.

Breige Corkery played midfield and defence. Her stamina, drive and passion breaking up many a Galway attack.

Galway had chances, many of them, but they persisted too much with attacks on goal, ignoring point opportunities.

Murray had a busy afternoon and oh how she relished it.

Quick off her line, saving a penalty and an acrobatic save of the year two minutes into injury time, the highlights of a near perfect performance.

Debutant Eimear O'Sullivan pointed and Moloney's accuracy saw Cork take a five-point lead into injury time.

It was never going to be Galway's day once Burns had hit the mark. They relied too much on Gill who on the day scored impressively from placed balls but whose contribution in general play was snuffed out by a hard working Cork defence.

It was down to Cork's grit and hunger that the stats read as they did.

When one considers the topsy-turvy start they had to 2008, all involved deserve to take a bow.

Scorers for Cork: R Moloney 0-7 (0-4 f, 0-2 45), S Burns 2-0, B Corkery, O Cotter, E O'Sullivan 0-1 each.

Galway: J Gill 0-8 (0-7 f, 0-1 45), A Hilary 1-0.

CORK: A Murray, L O'Connell, C Foley, J O'Callaghan, G O'Connor, M O'Connor, S Hayes, O Cotter, B Corkery, A O'Regan, U O'Donoghue, E O'Sullivan, S Burns, R Moloney, E O'Riordan.

Subs: E O'Farrell for E O'Riordan (h-t), R Buckley for L O'Connell (40), L Dorgan for A O'Regan (56).

Galway: S Eamer, S Tannion, A Kelly, T Manton, A M Hayes, S Cahalan, N Kilkenny, A Hilary, S Noone, M Dunne, T Maher, V Curtin, O Kilkenny, J Gill, B Kerins.

Subs: L Kavanagh for M Dunne (h-t), C McCormick for S Noone (47), D Burke for B Kerins (58).

Ref: Eamonn Browne (Tipperary).

PLAYER RATINGS

AOIFE MURRAY

Made a mistake for Galway's goal but didn't let it bother her and brought off three top-class saves to ensure Cork emerged as the winners. 8

LYNDA O'CONNELL

Had a tough battle with Orla Kilkenny but kept the corner-forward scoreless. Was substituted in the second-half having played her part in the win and can be proud of her display. 7

CATRIONA FOLEY

Was marking Galway danger woman Jessica Gill and played a captain's part by keeping her from scoring from play over the hour. Also made a number of great blocks at crucial times. 8

JOANNE O'CALLAGHAN

In the words of her manager, Denise Cronin, she was like a terrier over the hour and it said it all when her opponent was substituted in the second-half. Won't have many better days in a Cork shirt. 7

GEMMA O'CONNOR

When things weren't going Cork's way early on she visibly upped her game and lifted all those around her. Tigerish in her defending she was also instrumental in setting up many of Cork's attacks. 8

MARY O'CONNOR

Solid and kept all the defence on their toes. Combined well with midfield to clear breaking ball. Drove forward on a number of occasions to inspire those around her. 7

SARA HAYES

Took a while to settle but once she did, she couldn't be faulted. Was marking a tough opponent, Molly Dunne, and 15 minutes in she had got the better of her and never looked back from there. 7

BRIEGE CORKERY

Must have covered every blade of grass on the pitch. Was back in defence and then seemed to be up in the forward line to collect the ball she cleared. Deserving winner of Player of the Game award too. 9

ORLA COTTER

Again took a while to settle but like her midfield partner went on to have an outstanding game. Worked back to help the defence and won more than her fair share of midfield possession. 8

AMANDA O'REGAN

Didn't score but that didn't matter in the overall context. Moved to centre-forward early on to quash the threat that Sinéad Cahalan was posing and this helped. 7

UNA O'DONOGHUE

Showed in the second-half why she is in this Cork side. Even when things didn't go her way early on, she kept battling. 7

EIMEAR O'SULLIVAN

A thorn in the Galway side all afternoon. Got a great point in the second-half to keep three between the sides and made some great runs to set up scores for others. 7

SILE BURNS

Scored Cork's two goals but should be applauded for more than this. Her constant movement made it difficult for the Galway defence to mark her and was instrumental in Cork's win. 8

RACHEL MALONEY

Her scores from frees played no small part in Cork's win. Had a great second-half and work tirelessly and made life difficult for her marker, Ailbhe Kelly, throughout. 8

ELAINE O'RIORDAN

Replaced at half-time as they decided to freshen up the forward line. Can't be faulted for her display and this young player is sure to have many more days at Croke Park. 7

SUBS

Emer O'Farrell

Came on at half-time added some pace and physical presence to the attack. 7

Rena Buckley

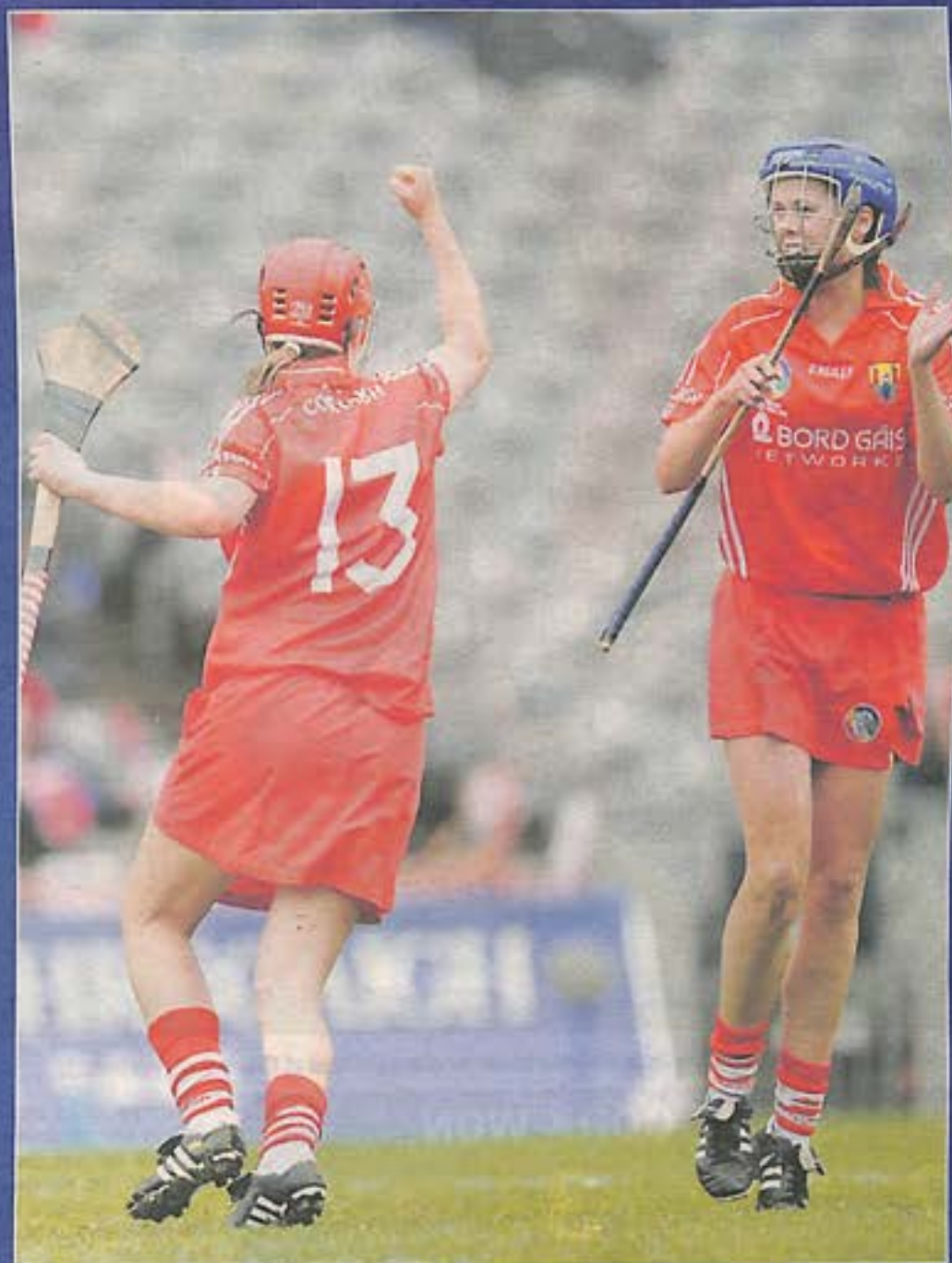
Came on after 40 minutes and ensured a solid defence stayed so. 7

Linda Dorgan

On for the last four minutes, but not long enough to be rated.

Aoife makes

BURNS IS GOAL HERO FOR REBELS

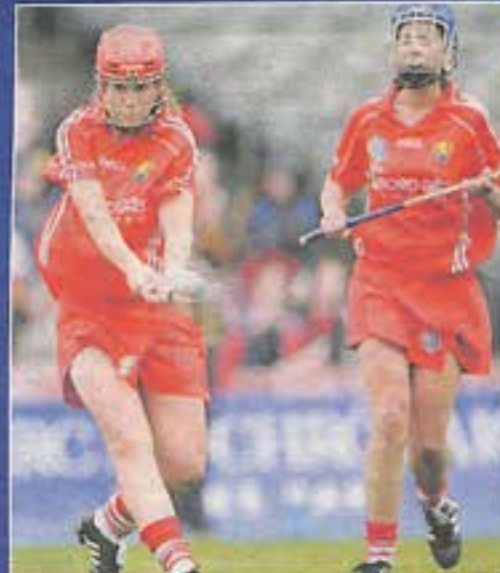


Sile Burns celebrates her second goal with Eimear O'Sullivan against Galway during the Gala All-Ireland senior camogie final at Croke Park yesterday.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare



Sile strike one.



Sile strike two.

Teammates praise goalie Murray for her bravery

By RORY NOONAN

At Croke Park

IT takes great character to stand up in a dressing-room at half-time in a game and admit you made a mistake.

Donal Óg did it for the Cork hurlers after he was sent off against Galway and his speech saw them drive on for a famous victory.

Yesterday, his camogie counterpart, Aoife Murray, found herself in a somewhat similar situation.

With just three minutes to go to half-time she made an uncharacteristic error which saw the ball drop over her head into the back of the net to put Galway within a point of Cork.

A lesser player would have let this get to them, but not Aoife. She showed her true strength when she held her hand up, said she made a mistake, and then went on to make



A happy Aoife Murray after she had made up for her mistake.

three outstanding second-half saves to play a major part in Cork's win.

"We always knew it as going to be a tough game as Galway are a strong and skilful side and we were never going to get anything easy from them," said Aoife.

"It didn't help when I let the ball drop over my head into the net. It was my mistake and mine alone, and I knew at half-time that I had let all the girls down.

"That's the thing about this panel, we are all in it together and I knew that in the second-half I would have to go out, pull my socks up and make up for it."

And that's exactly what Aoife did. Just five minutes into the second-half Galway were awarded a penalty and up stepped dead ball specialist Jessica Gill to test Aoife.

Coming so early in the half, and with her error so late in the first, it must have been on her mind, but she saved superbly with Joanne O'Callaghan clearing the breaking ball.

Had they goaled, Galway would

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the super saves



Cork's Aoife Murray saves a penalty by Jessica Gill of Galway.

Picture: INPHO/Lorraine O'Sullivan

have gone in front and this save proved inspirational for Cork.

Late on in the game, with Galway putting the Cork defence under pressure as they tried for goals to get back into the match, Aoife came to her side's rescue again.

Veronica Curtin looked like she was going to score as she raced onto a long ball in, but Aoife was quick off her line to clear the danger and deny Galway.

Again, had they scored this time it would have levelled the game and swung the momentum in Galway's favour.

Save three came in injury-time when sub Deirdre Burke was clean through on goal but Aoife got her hurley to her shot to push the ball away and the danger was cleared.

True to her character she was quick to put her hand up for her mistake, but slow to take credit for the saves she made.

"I wouldn't agree at all that my saves won the match for us. There is 29 on this panel and all have played their part in our win.

"I don't think you could attribute the win to any one person out there and I have to say from my point of view it was the biggest honour ever to put on the same jersey and represent Cork with those girls.

"Our defence was great today, they were so mean and we went out there with the attitude that we wouldn't give them anything and that's how it turned out.

"The only score they got from



Cork's Briege Corkery racing through the Galway defence.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

play was the goal and that was down to me and not them. In fairness they lived up to what they said beforehand."

However, her coach Denise Cronin was full of praise for her.

"I thought Aoife was outstanding for us today," said Denise.

"She put her hand up in the dressing-room at half-time and it showed how disappointed she was with the goal she conceded.

"We know Aoife is one of the best goalkeepers in the country and I think she proved it out there today.

She brought off three point-blank saves and the only reason we are celebrating it because of those saves.

"I could talk about Aoife all day and can't praise her high enough for her contribution to our win, not just today but over the entire championship," she added.

Midfield general Briege Corkery was also full of praise for the keeper and the back line in general.

"I thought they were all outstanding, they are just unreal. They play like they have never won an All-Ire-

land before and are always hungry for more success.

"Aoife is simply outstanding and her three second-half saves, along with others throughout the campaign, have played a massive part in our success," she said.

Full-back and captain of the side Catriona Foley was also full of praise for the Cork shot stopper.

"Aoife got caught for the first goal and it was unusual as she is such a great keeper," said Catriona, "but to her credit she held her hand up and was determined that she wasn't go-

ing to be beaten again and that's exactly how it turned out."

She also paid tribute to the defence in front of Aoife and the major part they also played in the win.

"We managed to keep Galway scoreless from play, bar the goal, for the entire game and I think that shows how much we wanted to win.

"Briege and Orla (Cotter) dropped back to help us out when we were under pressure in the second-half and with their help we managed to keep them out.

"In attack I thought we were magnificent and Sile (Burns) got two great goals in the first-half for us. Rachel (Moloney) worked tirelessly all day as did all of them over the hour.

"This is not just about 15 players, it's all about the panel and we win or lose together and on this occasion thankfully we won.

"Our management team, especially Denise, put an awful lot of work in over the year and they deserve a huge amount of praise and credit for this win, without them we wouldn't be celebrating tonight," concluded Catriona.

But as they look back on this magnificent achievement of winning their third All-Ireland in four years, the name of Aoife will be on their lips as those three top-class second-half saves are recalled and how vital they were to Cork's win.

Debutant Eimear is delighted

DEBUTANT Eimear O'Sullivan was overjoyed at the full-time whistle and celebrated her first trip to Croke Park in style coming away with an All-Ireland senior medal in her back pocket, writes MARY NEWMAN.

"To be honest I am absolutely thrilled and glad it's all over. All week the build-up has been fantastic and we just tried to stay focused on the game."

"Once the ball was thrown-in and the game was underway we knew what we needed to do."

"Galway got a great start and went four points ahead but once we got our first score we settled."

"Sile got the goal and it was vital to get the game. This was great for us because from there on Galway had to chase us and once we kept ahead we were dictating the game."

Even with the lead it was a tough, grinding battle.

"Yes it was tough. The first 10 minutes were very hard but we came to terms with it and got on with the job. Our defence was magnificent as they have been all year."

"Again today they let nothing past them and they were brilliant. Every time Galway threatened they closed them down and never gave them any room."

"They were inspirational and they lifted the team when we needed it and everybody responded. We are just delighted to have won and it makes up for last year's defeat."

'Nothing compares to this'

FOR many years Sara Hayes has endured her fair share of heartache but yesterday was her day winning her first medal on the field of play and the feeling was one which gave her a huge thrill, writes MARY NEWMAN.

"Without a doubt, this is the best feeling ever. Absolutely nothing compares to winning on the field and starting and finishing the game on the field and I am so delighted. This win meant so much to me."

"At the start of the year I made my mind up to give it everything I had and I wasn't going into it, unless I could do that. It has definitely paid off and without doubt it has been the best year I have ever had."

"I was holding my own and when I saw my marker coming out I said to myself 'Hayes girl there is no way she is getting ball off of me, not one'."

"I was on her until she moved with about three minutes to go and then I think it was Veronica Curtin who arrived but at that stage I was delighted as time was nearly up."

"Today each and every one of us played for each other and it was a great team display and it really means so much to us all."

Faith gets

Champions deserving of a bow

By MARY NEWMAN

Big match view

THEY started the year without a sponsor and struggled to put a backroom team together, but boy did this Cork camogie team end it on high.

Former All-Ireland winning captain Denise Cronin took over the reins as manager along with selectors Con Malone and Pat Murray and brought Jim McCarthy on board as coach.

Bord Gáis Networks put their faith in the side with an impressive sponsorship deal and the final piece of the jig saw was completed yesterday when Catriona Foley lifted the O'Duffy Cup to the sky for the 23rd time.

This team really repaid the confidence shown in them. When the going was tough at the start they held their heads and never panicked, slowly stamping their authority all over the pitch.

From goalkeeper Aoife Murray out they were tremendous. Murray injured her back last week and was in some distress in the days leading to the final, but she put it behind her to turn in a stunning performance.

Her save from Jessica Gill's second-half penalty one of the game's turning points, while another late in the game will surely be in the running for save of the year in both camogie and hurling.

Galway showed nerves of steel as they got off to a great start and they set the pace with four early points.

Once Rachel Maloney got Cork's first score they settled though. Inside 16 minutes they hit the front, Sile Burns nipping in quick as a flash to nestle the ball in the corner of Susan Eamer's net and Cork were level.

This was the score the game needed and we were treated to a superb contest.

Briege Corkery was a powerhouse in midfield and showed the determination in this Cork side when she raced through, brushing aside challenge after challenge and fired to ball over the bar to give Cork a lead they would never relinquish.

Maloney and Gill again traded points but another rasper from Sile Burns opened up a four-point advantage. Galway threw everything at the Cork defence but they stood firm as they have done so many times this year.

With three minutes to the break they were thrown a lifeline when Aine Hillary's attempted point effort deceived Aoife Murray.

If Galway were to have an chance of getting back into this game they needed a similar start to the second half as they had to the first. But now Cork were wary and they stamped their authority on proceedings from



Cork players celebrate with the O'Duffy Cup after defeating Galway in the Gala All-Ireland Senior Camogie final at Croke Park yesterday.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare



Cork goalkeeper Aoife Murray making the penalty save on her knees against Galway during their Gala All-Ireland Senior Camogie final at Croke Park.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare



Cork players race on to the field at the final whistle to claim the Gala All-Ireland Senior Camogie title.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

rewarded



The Cork team celebrate after defeating Galway in the Gala All-Ireland Senior Camogie final at Croke Park yesterday.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

the off, with Rachel Maloney and Orla Cotter striking two points within the restart.

Galway dug deep and Gill again pointed a free but they were still without a score from play. The Cork defence were not going to allow them any more space however. Seven minutes into the half and Jessica Gill stood over a penalty.

The buzz of anticipation reverberated around Croke Park but Aoife Murray, Gemma O'Connor and Joanne O'Callaghan stood tall as Murray saved and O'Callaghan cleared to safety.

Twice the sided swapped points but Cork were in control.

The O'Connors, Mary and Gemma, were magnificent. Sarah Hayes, winning her first medal on the field, showed little nerves as she confidently dealt with anything Galway threw at her, including having to handle Jessica Gill for three quarters of the game.

Captain Catriona Foley led by example and never put a foot

wrong. Lynda O'Connell played her heart out and contributed to Cork's success.

Youngsters Eimear O'Sullivan and Orla Cotter played as if the trip to Croke Park was a weekly excursion, while Rachel Maloney, who failed to make the starting 15 last season, ended the game with an impressive seven points.

Stalwart Una O'Donoghue, who down through the years has been one of Cork outstanding servants, held her composure and worked tirelessly up front breaking the hearts of the Galway defence.

Amanda O'Regan caused plenty of problems for the Galway defence.

Cork also had a strong bench and players of the calibre of Eimear O'Farrell, Rena Buckley and Linda Dorgan rose to the challenge when called upon.

Galway came into this final in a rich vein of form, after an impressive semi-final victory over champions Wexford.

But Cork stood up and were counted in every line of the field.

They were well prepared and focused and never allowed the heads to drop. When Galway hit the front they were composed and quickly gained the upper hand.

When Galway applied the pressure they knew how to respond and for this Jim McCarthy must take huge credit.

His professionalism and dedication in preparing his side for the task shone through and every one of his panel believed in themselves.

This shone through the dark overcast skies yesterday in Croke Park, their sponsors advertisement logo told us that they fuelled the passion for Cork Camogie.

Certainly yesterday this team showed just how much it meant to them to restore Cork camogie to top of the pile and they did it in superb fashion.

Take a bow girls — you are true champions.

Experience stood to us admits Jim

By MARY NEWMAN

Reaction

IT'S HARD to remain serious when speaking to Cork coach Jim McCarthy but behind the laughing face is a very serious side.

Yesterday in Croke Park at 6pm the smile on McCarthy's face told the story, as he beamed from ear to ear and basked in his side's success, and heaping praise on his team his first words were all about them.

"It's all about the team they were superb. They did what was required and I am thrilled for them.

"We knew Galway would be tough and we were prepared for anything they would throw at us. They got a great start but we never panicked.

"Our defence was magnificent and we got the goals at the right time and we built on our lead.

"To be fair, Galway settled quickly and for a team playing in their first final showed little nerves. Everybody thought we would be the ones to make the early running but they put it up to us from the throw-in."

The goals of course were crucial argued Jim.

"In Síle Burns we have an exceptional goalpoacher and we knew today that she would grab every chance she got, the goals helped give us a vital grip and we built on them."

McCarthy felt that not reaching the latter stages of the league didn't do his side any harm come September.

"Looking back, the poor start to the year helped take the spotlight off of us and we had two months to ourselves to regroup. "People presumed that maybe the hunger was gone from Cork and that suited us, we worked away and were ready for the championship."

"I think overall our experience stood to us out there today and at the finish it was probably the difference. That was a good Galway side and I'm sure they will be back."



Cork trainer Jim McCarthy with the O'Duffy Cup

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

Cork take 23rd All Ireland Title

CORK 2-10

GALWAY 1-8

SÍLE Burns was the two-goal star as Cork reclaimed the O'Duffy Cup with a five-point victory against Galway in Sunday's Gala All-Ireland senior camogie championship final at Croke Park.

Beaten finalists last year, Cork returned to the top of the pile as they collected a 23rd senior title to move just three behind Dublin on the all-time honours list.

This was Cork's first success since 2006 but this hard-fought win marked their fourth victory in this competition in seven seasons, a testament to their remarkable consistency.

Galway were appearing in their first final since 1998, when they were also beaten by Cork, having achieved a last-gasp semi-final victory over last year's winners Wexford.

Jessie Gill was the goal heroine on that occasion and the Athenry teenager was in good form from placed balls in front of 18,727 spectators at GAA HQ.

Gill scored eight points, seven from frees and a 45, but she was unfortunate to see a second half penalty saved by Cork's brilliant goalkeeper Aoife Murray.

Galway centre forward Therese Maher was fouled by Cork full back and captain Catriona Foley and Gill's resultant penalty was blocked by Murray at a crucial stage in the match.

Cork led by just two points, 2-5 to 1-5, prior to the penalty award and moved three clear again when the impressive Rachel Moloney converted a point from play in the 39th minute.

Murray may have felt under pressure to redeem herself after allowing Áine Hillary's speculative shot to drop into the far corner of the net three minutes before half-time.

Hillary was shooting for a point from the left wing but the flight of the sliotar deceived the otherwise flawless Murray for Galway's only score from play of the entire game.

That goal handed the Tribeswomen a real lifeline before half-time as they went in just a point behind at the break, 1-5 to 2-3.

Galway, the only team to defeat the Leesiders in the round-robin stage, opened the game with four unanswered points in the opening ten minutes from Gill, three frees and a 45, before the Rebels settled.

Rachel Moloney's free after eleven minutes was Cork's opening score but all of Galway's good early work was undone when the lethal Síle Burns scored the first of her two goals with 17 minutes on the watch.

Eimear O'Sullivan's ball in from the left touchline broke between Galway corner back Sandra Tannon and Cork's Elaine O'Riordan; Burns was onto it in a flash and the Rockbawn star found the bottom corner.

The tireless Bríge Corkery added a point from play, Moloney converted a 45 and Cork had turned a four-point deficit into a two-point advantage in the space of nine minutes.

Galway kept plugging away in the second half but their lack of scores from play proved a hindrance as Gill kept the Westerners in touch with some brilliant free-taking.

The penalty miss was a crucial turning point but equally, Susan Earner in the Galway goal was kept busy with saves from Una O'Donoghue and Burns.

At the other end, Murray's save from Deirdre Burke deep in stoppage time topped the kit, a breathtaking stop as the Galway sub looked certain to bulge the net.

That was Galway's last salvo as Cork held out for a victory which they craved after suffering the heartbreak of final defeat against Wexford 12 months ago.

Cork scorers: R Moloney 0-7 (4f, 2 45s), S Burns 2-0, O Cotter, B Corkery & E O'Sullivan 0-1 each.

Galway scorers: J Gill 0-8 (7f, 1 45), A Hillary 1-0.

CORK: A Murray; L O'Connell, C Foley, J O'Callaghan; G O'Connor, M O'Connor, S Hayes; O Cotter, B Corkery; A O'Regan, U O'Donoghue, E O'Sullivan; S Burns, R Moloney, E O'Riordan.

SUBS: E O'Farrell for O'Riordan (h/t), R Buckley for O'Connell (40m), L Dorgan for O'Regan (57m).

GALWAY: S Earner; S Tannon, A Kelly, T Mantor; A-Marie Hayes, S Cahalan, N Kilkenny, A Hillary, S Noone; M Dunne, T Maher, V Curtin; O Kilkenny, J Gill, B Kerins.

SUBS: L Kavanagh for Dunne (h/t), C Connican for Noone (48m), D Burke for Kerins (58m).

Referee: E Browne (Tipperary)

Super Síle gets her medal

SÍLE BURNS has always had an eye for goal and she delivered two vital strikes on the biggest stage of all in Croke Park yesterday, writes MARY NEWMAN.

The Rockbawn goalpoacher was deadly with her two chances and her reward was an All-Ireland medal to make up for last year's disappointment.

"Words cannot describe how I really feel — this means so much to me. It's my first senior medal and after the disappointment of last year's final, it means so much to have won this one.

"To just compare this time last year to today, I just cannot describe the feeling of sheer joy. Last year we felt the bottom had fallen out of our world but now it's fantastic.

"We knew at the start of the year it was going to be a big year for us, a few players were not available but the girls who made the step up had been on the panel for a few years and it was great to see them make the breakthrough.

"I am delighted for all the girls who got their chance and grabbed it with both hands and proved

just how good this panel is and it shows just how strong camogie is in Cork.

"Now hopefully the game will continue to grow and flourish.

Síle has an All-Ireland winning pedigree of course, her father Denis, is a former Barrs stalwart and an All-Ireland medal holder.

"To be honest I never thought about it. I suppose down through the years I have always been known as Denis Burns' daughter but now that I have the medal maybe I will just be known as Síle Burns," she smiled.

CORK PLAYERS CELEBRATE THEIR GREAT VICTORY WITH THE FANS



Cork's Mary O'Connor shows the cup to the fans after Cork had defeated Galway in the Gala All-Ireland Senior Camogie final at Croke Park yesterday. Picture: Eddie O'Hare



Cork's Aoife Murray and Mary O'Connor celebrate with the trophy after defeating Galway in the Gala All-Ireland Senior Camogie final. Picture: INPHO



Cork manager Denise Cronin and Rena Buckley embrace after victory over Galway in Croke Park yesterday. Picture: Eddie O'Hare



Cork's Orla Cotter celebrates with fans after defeating Galway in the Gala All-Ireland Senior Camogie final at Croke Park yesterday. Picture: Eddie O'Hare



Cork's Julia White is mobbed by fans after they defeating Galway in the Gala All-Ireland Senior Camogie final at Croke Park yesterday. Picture: Eddie O'Hare



Cork manager, Denise Cronin and goalkeeper, Aoife Murray enjoy the moment of victory after defeating Galway in the Gala All-Ireland Senior Camogie final at Croke Park yesterday. Picture: Eddie O'Hare



CUP OF CHEER: Cork keeper Aoife Murray and Mary O'Connor celebrate the team's victory in the senior All-Ireland Camogie final at Croke Park yesterday.

Picture: Dan Linehan



CORK: (clockwise from left) All smiles for goal hero Sile Burns after defeating Galway in the Gala All-Ireland senior camogie final at Croke Park yesterday; outstanding goalkeeper Aoife Murray clears; Brieghe Corkery and Rachel Moloney celebrate.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare



SEPT

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Four-midable

THERE were heroes all over the pitch for Cork yesterday in their 2-10 to 1-8 win against Galway in the All-Ireland camogie final.

But none more so than keeper Aoife Murray, midfielder Brieghe Corkery, goal poacher supreme Sile Burns and free taker Rachel Moloney.

These four were instrumental in Cork's win and will get a hero's welcome when they return to Leaside with the O'Duffy Cup tonight.

Moloney helped to settle Cork with her pin-point accuracy from frees after a nervous start by them.

Credit must go to Murray, who made three outstanding saves to en-

By RORY NOONAN

Camogie

sure the cup is back home after going on loan to Wexford for a year.

Just before half-time, and she was first to admit it, she made a mistake which saw the ball drop into the back of the net from a long ball in by Aine Hillary.

Half-time came at the right time for Aoife and it gave her a chance to re-group. This was an uncharacteristic error by a top-class keeper but Aoife was determined to make it up to her team-mates — and that she did.

Three second-half saves, including one from a penalty, played no small part in Cork's win and in the end her

team-mates were as thankful to her as she was to them at half-time for the support.

Dual star Corkery, along with Mary O'Connor, won't have as much chance to celebrate as they will be back in Dublin again in two weeks time as they attempt to collect their seventh All-Ireland medal in four years as the footballers go for four-in-a-row.

Yesterday Corkery's Roy Keane-like performance influenced all those around her and Brieghe must have covered every blade of grass on the pitch. When needed she was back in the full-back line clearing the danger as she blocked and tackled as if her life depended on it.

Before the start of the game Brieghe

spent some time with one of the subs practicing blocking and it was no great surprise she did so on numerous occasions with such attention to detail.

From defence she drove forward and the Galway defence found it difficult to cope with her running. She was brought down on several occasions which Rachel Moloney punished with her accuracy from frees.

Every team needs a goal-poacher and in Sile Burns Cork has one of the best in the country. Give her half a chance and the ball is in the back of the net. The first put Cork back on level terms and the second put Cork into a four points in front, a lead they were never to lose.

● See pages 2-8 for more:



Marian McCarthy, chairwoman Cork County Camogie Board with Brieghe Corkery, winner of the Player of the Match award, at last night's homecoming celebrations. Picture: Gerard Bonus



Deputy Lord Mayor Cllr Patricia Gosch and Cork captain Catriona Foley, hold up the O'Duffy Cup at last night's homecoming for the victorious Cork senior camogie team. Picture: Gerard Bonus



Cork camogie players Rena Buckley and Sile Burns at last night's celebrations in the Imperial Hotel. Picture: Gerard Bonus

Rebels celebrate one of the most satisfying All-Irelands

By ÉAMONN MURPHY
Camogie

AFTER one of the most satisfying All-Ireland camogie wins ever, the O'Duffy Cup was back on Leaside last night.

In the first leg of what could be the third double in four years — the four-in-a-row chasing footballers take on Monaghan on Sunday week — Catriona Foley and her team received a heroes' welcome.

Earlier in the year an All-Ireland wasn't considered a realistic prospect. The management team were late appointments, while a host of players including sharpshooter Jennifer O'Leary were away.

After failing to reach the league final there was a feeling the group, who were denied three in a row by Wexford last September, would struggle to recapture previous glories.

But with a handful of new players and the desire to avenge last year, Cork powered through the knock-out stages. After a



Grainne, Anna and Chaoimhe Hannon from Courcsey Rovers with Cork camogie captain, Catriona Foley and the O'Duffy Cup. Picture: Gerard Bonus

sluggish start they were always in control in a 2-10 to 1-8 win over Galway on Sunday.

Following a visit to Our Lady's Children's Hospital in Crumlin yesterday morning, the panel and management

travelled back to the People's Republic, stopping off in Mallow on route.

The All-Ireland champions were greeted by a passionate crowd of loyal fans, before heading out to Carraig na bhFear,

where bonfires lit the way to the village of the captain Catriona Foley. There were raucous scenes of celebration in the village, which captured a first every Imokilly JAHC title on Saturday night.



Cork fans Kira and Mary O'Sullivan, Brian Dillon's Camogie Club, welcome home the Cork team at the train station last night. Picture: Gerard Bonus



Cork captain Catriona Foley shows off the O'Duffy Cup with Chaoimhe O'Donoghue, Ciara McCarthy and Emily O'Donoghue. Picture: Gerard Bonus



Cork senior camogie players Michelle Browne, Eimear O'Sullivan and Linda Dorgan at the reception in the Imperial Hotel last night. Picture: Gerard Bonus



Emer and Jack O'Farrell, Eadaoin Looney and Ryan Riordan from Ballincollig, Blackrock and Glanmire at last night's homecoming for the Cork camogie team. Picture: Gerard Bonus

O'Connor savours Rebelettes' return

by Jim O'Sullivan

MARY O'CONNOR was all smiles yesterday, thinking how differently she felt after Cork lost to Wexford in last year's Gala All-Ireland senior camogie final — and how an injury a week later kept her out of the All-Ireland Ladies Football final and all but finished her playing career.

Most of all, she was pleased with the character and organisation of the team to bounce back and beat Galway on Sunday, after failing in their bid to complete the three-in-a-row in 2007.

"Somebody said after the Wexford final that 12 months wouldn't be long coming around, and it's true. It was a great team performance," she commented.

Now, she is in line to win her fourth medal with the footballers on Sunday week. "I wasn't going to play after I came back from the injury but then I said I'd give it a go again. It's just unfortunate that Laura McMahon is out injured. I have filled in and hopefully the 28th will go the same way as Sunday.

"We have often spoken over the last couple of years about the strength of camogie in Cork and the strength of the Cork panel and that was brought to fruition yesterday. We lost five players — three of them Allstars — from last year's team and the new management that came in, freshened things up and got us enjoying camogie and thinking a lot about the game.

"All credit must go to Jim McCarthy, Denis Cronin, Con Malone and Pat Murray because

it wasn't easy inheriting a group of players on the road a long time, who had won a lot and were very disheartened after last year.

"It's very difficult to win an All-Ireland. The Camogie Association is well over 100 years old and Cork have won only 23 senior titles. For a county like Cork, people would say that's not enough. We are a very proud hurling county and a very proud camogie county and when we get to Croke Park we want to win those finals. They are hard-earned because and a lot of things go on behind the scenes.

"You have to make hard choices, away from the field as well as on it. Camogie is your priority for nine or 10 months." O'Connor, who is National Director of Development with the Camogie Association, feels Galway will benefit from their first appearance in a final in 10 years and views Clare's success in winning the junior championship as a further positive step in promoting the game in the Banner county.

"I think the way the format of the (camogie) championship has changed over the last few years is going to help Galway develop their players.

"That's the challenge. Talent alone won't win All-Irelands. It takes an awful lot of hard work.

"It was fantastic for Clare and especially their older players to see them win the junior title. They have been knocking on the door for years and what they have is an underage structure that has really benefited them."



SEPT. 2008

Cork heroes welcome for our homecoming queens



Fans show their support at the homecoming party for Cork's All-Ireland Camogie Champions. Picture: Ger Bonus

Camogie stars rejoice as they bring home the O'Duffy Cup

THE Cork camogie players were given a triumphant welcome home last night.

Led by captain Catriona Foley, the team were first feted in Mallow where their train arrived at 7.30pm.

The team then travelled to Kent Station, from where they were paraded through the city centre to the South Mall on an open-top bus.

A special reception was held outside the Imperial Hotel, where Deputy Lord Mayor Cllr Pat Gosch welcomed the team home. Her praise for the team's gallant display on Sunday against Galway in Croke Park was echoed by the Bishop of Cork and Ross, Dr John Buckley.

"They gave great joy to Cork people at home and abroad. Their names will remain indelible in the annals of the sporting history of Cork," he said.

The team then headed to Carrig na bhFear, the home of Catriona Foley and vice captain and goal-scoring heroine Sile Burns, who both play with their local club Rockbawn.

Hundreds of supporters welcomed them there, where locals were also celebrating the victory of their men's team



Catriona Foley with the O'Duffy Cup last night. Picture: Ger Bonus

By ANN MURPHY

on Saturday night in the East Cork Junior Hurling final.

Catriona and Sile both had connections to that game, with their fathers and brothers all involved.

Three members of the camogie team — player of the match Brieghe Corkery, Rena Buckley and Mary O'Connor — will have to put their celebrations on hold until later this month.

They are now looking ahead to September 28, when they will line out in the senior ladies football final.

● See page 52 for more.



Players Sara Hayes, Gemma O'Connor and Joanne O'Callaghan at the reception in the Imperial Hotel. Picture: Ger Bonus



Team-mates Margaret O'Herlihy and Denise Cronin celebrating being All-Ireland Camogie Champions. Picture: Ger Bonus



Lucy Hawkes and Una O'Donoghue at the Imperial for the homecoming party for the Cork camogie champions. Picture: Ger Bonus



Players Catriona Foley, captain; Julia White, (youngest player on the team) and Emer O'Farrell at the Imperial. Picture: Ger Bonus

Hanley hopes to learn from past finals

Eoin Brennan

CLARE manager Colm Hanley's track record at this level speaks for itself. Two years, two All-Ireland Junior finals but after suffering heart-break in injury time of last year's decider against Derry, the road to recovery for Clare this year has been rather smooth. That's not to say that there weren't scares along the way, there was in the form of Sunday's opponents Offaly, Antrim and Laois but the initial aim has now been achieved and after a year's more experience, Hanley reckons that his side are better equipped this season.

"The aim for the year as I have said in the past was to get back to Croke Park and once we got there, then to take care of business. There is a massive difference between last year and this year. We are a stronger team this year, there is no doubt about it. The likes of Laura Linnane and Claire McMahon coming back into it are massive additions and not just them alone. Also the likes of Carina (Roseingrave), Kate (Lynch) and Chloe Morey and the rest of the minor girls who are now a year older again after playing last year. It has stood to them massively. You can see it even in their minor performances. They are as good a player as there is anywhere in the country. We might have fallen over the line in the semi-final but overall as a team, they are flying it. We also have Fiona Lafferty back after injury and things are falling into place at the right time and hopefully



that is a good sign."

One of those scares came in their opening championship game against Offaly when they were sternly tested by the resurgent 2001 finalists. Clare eventually weathered the storm in the final quarter and emerged 0-10 to 0-07 winners but Hanley feels that this game was the making of Clare this year as they found an extra bat-

ling dimension that hadn't existed previously.

"There is no doubt that we were lucky to come out of that game. Without a shadow of a doubt, the performance wasn't great and it wasn't helped by the fact that there was a twelve week lay-off between the league final and that game and without competitive matches, it is tough to raise your

game but the performance wasn't up to par and the girls know that. However, the great thing that we found out that day that we hadn't last year was this fighting spirit that they produced. The last five or ten minutes they dug in and carved out a result. Last year and maybe in years gone by, things have come a bit too easy for them. Leading into last year's

final, we had a very handy route to the final, winning games by ten or twelve points so when it was put up to us in the final, we couldn't deliver because we weren't used to being in that situation.

"This year, every single game has been tough with maybe the exception being the Down match and we have had to grind out results. We travelled to Antrim and had to really dig in and eventually came out with a seven point win, although it was a much tighter game than that. Again in the semi-final, Laois played similarly to Offaly and made it fierce awkward for us but again we managed to win."

And that new found appetite has carried them back to Croke Park for the second successive year and Hanley is determined to finish the job this time around.

"Everyone in the county knows that this team has the hurling, and massive ability but now they have found this bit of bite and desire and that comes from hunger. After years of losing finals and losing finals, it has to come right eventually and I have no doubt that it will on Sunday."

His confidence and positivity is consuming. And to think he even had to re-apply for his position at the start of the year.

Above: Eoghan and Colm Hanley with Catherine O'Loughlin and John Nihill at the junior Clare camogie training in Clarecastle on Saturday morning.

Yvonne Vaughan

Hunger is the key says Catherine

Catherine O'Loughlin knows what it's like to win an All-Ireland in Croke Park, having done it in camogie and football. On Sunday she hopes to be a winner on the sideline. Joe O Muircheartaigh reports.

CATHERINE O'Loughlin is Clare's most decorated camogie player – an All Star and linchpin of the county team for over 20 years. Last year she stepped quietly into retirement, but it was never going to be a step back.

Instead, she now prowls the line as a selector, doing whatever she can to push Clare over the winning line that has proved so elusive this decade. She was out on the field in 2003, 2005 and again last year, experiencing the same tearful emotions as everyone else.

Now she's ready for some happy emotions, but is fully content that if Clare final slay their All-Ireland bogey she'll be celebrating as a sideline mentor and not a free scoring forward.

"I would still do the training and I know exactly what the girls are going through. In match situations it's fine if we're winning and it's great to see some of the stuff we've done

on the training ground come out in matches," she says.

"Where it's hard is when we're losing or when games are tight. You'd be thinking that you could go on and do something. But, there comes a time when everyone's career has to finish.

"The last few years I've been saying I'd give it one more year, but in fairness there's a good crop of players coming through and there's a good bit of experience there as well. I think it was time to give the younger ones their chance."

And, they've taken their chance as this year's panel boasts seven players from the under 18 All-Ireland final team, while Chloe Morey is still an

under 16. Then there are the experienced performers such as captain Deirdre Murphy, Laura Linnane, Cathy Halley and Deirdre Corcoran.

"The key is having a mix and we have that," says O'Loughlin. "It would be great for Clare to win the junior and move up to senior ranks. The under 16 and under 18 teams have been playing at senior level so they are well used to the higher standard, while the experienced players could play against the best in any county.

"It's going to take a lot of hard work – we saw the minor team against Kilkenny. They did really well all year but came up a really good Kilkenny team. We should be looking to get up

to those standards."

But O'Loughlin is under no illusions that Offaly provide serious opposition – as formidable a team as Galway, Dublin or Derry who provided the opposition in the finals of 2003, '05 and '07.

"Offaly put down their marker this year by training very hard for this championship – they won the Division 3 league and the game against us in Cusack Park was their first championship match of the year. To come so close to us was a good thing for them and they're undefeated since," warns O'Loughlin.

"We were coming off a Division 2 league win and then had a break for exams – that day didn't go too well for us. But they haven't knuckled down and put in a lot of hard training. When it goes to Croke Park it's 15 against 15 and no doubt Offaly will be tough opponents. If Clare go out and play the way they're capable of doing they can win the match.

"Seeing the minors lose showed how there is a big difference between winning and losing so that inspires you. There's no reason why we can't go out and do it. I think the hunger is there to go on and win."

On the matter of hunger, Clare must have the edge. All thanks to 2003, '05 and '07. They don't want to experience the same emotions in '08.



Left: Catherine O'Loughlin in action.

Path to the Final

Round 1

Clare 0-10 Offaly 0-07

Clare: Denise Lynch, Amy Collieran, Siobhan Lafferty, Aimee McInerney, Kate Lynch, Dee Corcoran, Jane Scanlon, Chloe Morey, Laura Linnane (0-2), Carina Roseingrave (0-2), Deirdre Murphy (0-2 1-45), Aine O'Brien, Aoife Ryan (0-1), Sharon McMahon, Claire Commene (0-3 3f) Subs: Claire McMahon for Ryan, Stephanie Moloney for McMahon, Helen McMahon

Round 2

Clare 6-12 Down 1-03

Clare: Denise Lynch, Cathy Halley, Siobhan Lafferty, Aimee McInerney, Kate Lynch, Dee Corcoran, Jane Scanlon, Chloe Morey, Deirdre Murphy (C) (1-5, 1-45, 2f), Aoife Ryan, Sharon McMahon (0-1), Shona Enright (0-1), Carina Roseingrave (2-4), Claire McMahon (2-1), Claire Commene Subs: Aine O'Brien (1-0) for Commene, Aileen O'Shea for Scanlon, Aoife Griffin for Morey, Danielle Sheedy for C. McMahon

Round 3

Antrim 0-13 Clare 2-14

Clare: Denise Lynch, Cathy Halley, Siobhan Lafferty, Aimee McInerney, Kate Lynch, Dee Corcoran, Jane Scanlon, Chloe Morey, Deirdre Murphy (C) (0-1 1f), Aoife Ryan (0-1), Sharon McMahon, Shona Enright (0-2), Carina Roseingrave (1-2), Claire McMahon (1-3), Claire Commene (0-2 2 f) Subs: Laura Linnane for Ryan, Aileen O'Shea for Scanlon, Aine O'Brien for S. McMahon

All-Ireland Semi-final

Clare 1-9 Laois 1-8

Clare: Denise Lynch, Cathy Halley, Siobhan Lafferty, Aimee McInerney, Kate Lynch, Dee Corcoran, Jane Scanlon, Chloe Morey, Deirdre Murphy (C) (0-1 1f), Carina Roseingrave (0-2), Sharon McMahon (0-1), Shona Enright (0-1), Claire Commene (0-1 1f), Claire McMahon (1-1), Laura Linnane (0-2, 1f) Subs: Amy Collieran for Halley (1f), Aoife Ryan for Corcoran, Aine O'Brien for S. McMahon, Dee Corcoran for Scanlon (1f)

Scorers for Clare

Carina Roseingrave 3-10; Claire McMahon 4-5; Deirdre Murphy 1-12; Claire Commene 0-6; Shona Enright 0-4; Laura Linnane 0-4; Aine O'Brien 1-0; Sharon McMahon 0-2; Aoife Ryan 0-2;

Total scored 9-45 Total against 2-31

Average scored 2-12 Average conceded 0-9

Banner girls will finally claim the title

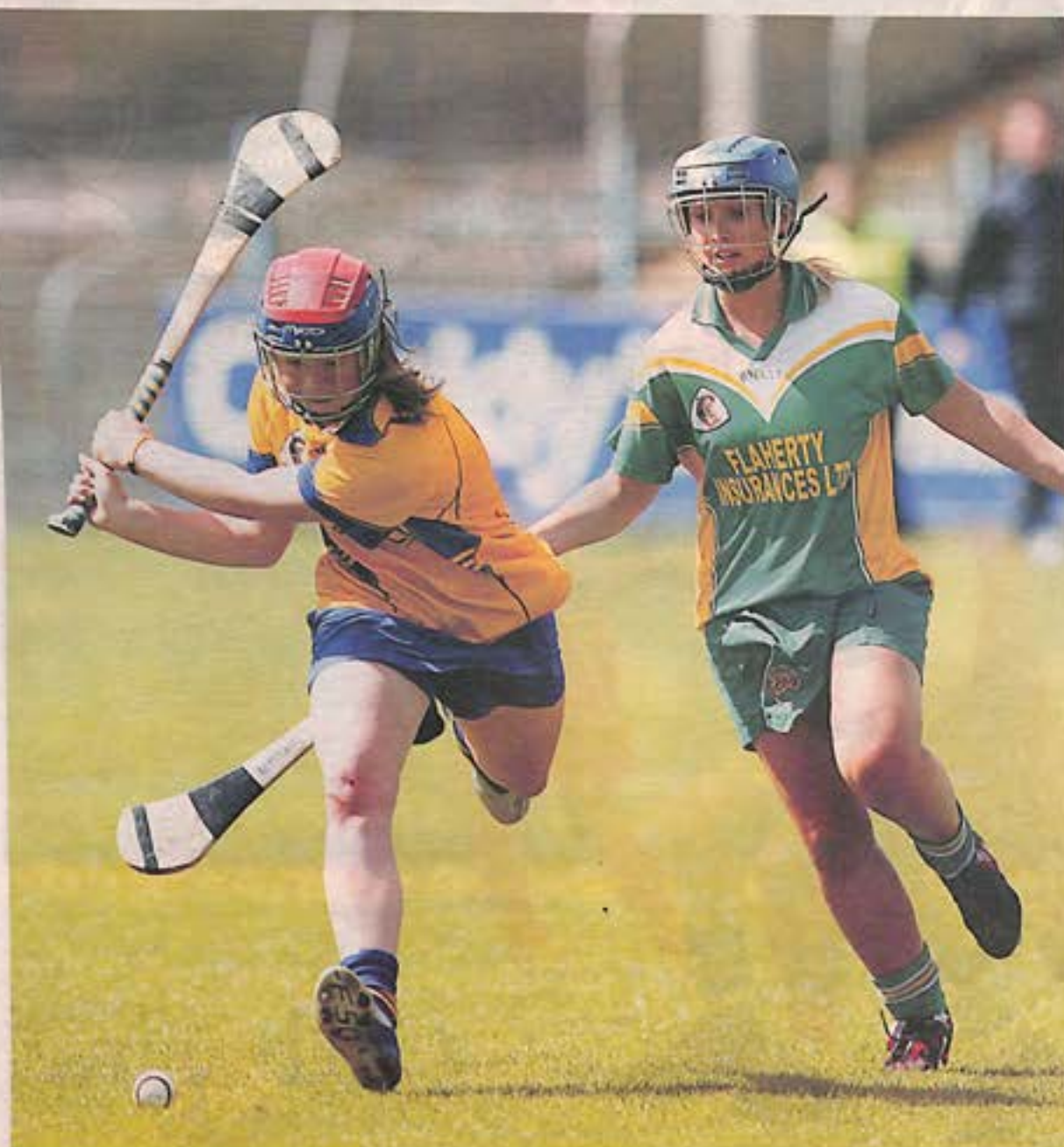
Orla Considine

THIS is the Banner side's fourth attempt at winning this final since 2003. Having drawn two of those deciders in Croke Park to Dublin and Galway only to lose in the replays and who in the camogie world will forget the heartbreak of last year's defeat to Derry when Clare looked to have the work done. They were unable to hold out though for the eight minutes of injury time played on the day and a lucky shot from Derry found the net to deny Clare their moment in the sun.

Clare though will take note of the determination of last year's victors. That was Derry's second attempt at the final in successive years, having lost the previous year. Clare have now managed to do what Derry did last year and despite some tough battles this year, the Clare girls are back again in Croke Park. That was the aim from the start of the year to get back to the ultimate stage and then take things from there. Clare have worked hard in this quest. The Banner took a step up in the League campaign choosing to go from Division 3 to Division 2. This was in search of games that would test the squad and get competition going early in the year to build strength, both physically and mentally. This move has certainly paid off so far as Clare went undefeated in the League beating Cork, Kilkenny and Waterford on their way to the final where they had a hard fought win over last year's victor's Derry. This gave silverware to the girls, exacted some revenge for last year's All-Ireland defeat and provided encouragement for the rest of the year.

Clare have remained unbeaten since. They have had tough encounters but have always managed to grind out that win. With group wins over Offaly, Down and Antrim and a semi-final win over Laois, the Banner girls now find themselves back in Croke Park facing first round opponents Offaly.

Clare had a tough opening round game against the girls from the faithful county, who this year have been working under Joachim Kelly. Clare found the Offaly girls hard to shake off but did in the end come out three



point winners. Clare will know going into this final that they will not have things all their own way from the opposition. Offaly had a strong win over Waterford in their semi-final and have a lot of hard work put into this campaign. They also have six of their minor side who recently won the minor B All-Ireland final over Waterford. This will give Offaly a huge boost going into the game and while they will be ranked as under-

dogs, they know that they will have nothing to lose on the day and will throw all they have at the Banner. They were unlucky to have been defeated in the replay of the Division 3 league final to Antrim but have grown in strength and determination since then.

Clare for their part have the experience of playing in Croke Park last year. While last year was not the first time in recent years for the Banner to

be participating on All-Ireland final day, it was the first time for a large number of the panel. Those new members will now have last year's experience to build on and also have suffered a second final defeat just two weeks ago to the hands of Kilkenny in the U18 A final. These girls will not want to repeat that losing feeling and with a very useful challenge game against Cork intermediates under their belts, the final touches

will have begun in earnest within the Clare camp.

On thing is for certain. Clare captain Deirdre Murphy has stood in the winning and losing dressing room on final day twelve months ago and will not want to have to sense the losing dressing room from a Clare perspective this time round. She will be using all within her to lead by example and help to drive the team forward. Murphy has been the building block on which a lot of hard won victories for Clare have been built on this year and her presence will help to steady those around her. The team as a whole are very focused this year on what they want to achieve and with the groundwork done, there is just 60 minutes separating Clare and that Junior title which has eluded them so often over the last number of years.

Clare will know that to overcome that final hurdle, all members will have to perform to their best. Down the middle Siobhan Lafferty, Dee Corcoran Sharon McMahon and Claire McMahon have worked well this year with Laura Linnane, Claire Commene, Shonagh Enright and Carina Roseingrave adding strength and pace to the wings. Deirdre Murphy has worked well with Chloe Morey at mid-field and the half back line has worked hard with Kate Lynch and Jane Scanlon flanking Corcoran. Competition for places is intense in the full-back line with Any Collieran, Aimee McInerney and Cathy Halley fighting it out for the two corner positions and whoever loses out will be unlucky to do so. They also have several options on the bench with Aoife Ryan, Fiona Lafferty, Aine O'Brien, Aiveen O'Shea and Aoife Griffin able to help out in any sector and adding the depth that is needed to any team in winning an All-Ireland title.

Clare will certainly be hoping to put the thoughts of last year out of their heads and will be hoping that they will be returning home as All-Ireland champions next Monday.

Verdict: Clare

All-Ireland Junior Camogie Final @ Croke Park, Sunday, 12 noon

Above: Chloe Morey in action against Offaly back in June.

Yvonne Vaughan



Name: Deirdre Murphy
(Captain)
Club: Clooney
Age: 27



Name: Sharon McMahon
(Vice-Captain)
Club: Newmarket-on-Fergus
Age: 22



Name: Jane Scanlon
Club: Clarecastle
Age: 24



Name: Denise Lynch
Club: Kilmaley
Age: 24



Name: Amy Collieran
Club: Clooney
Age: 25



Name: Dee Corcoran
Club: Simlebridge
Age: 28



Name: Claire McMahon
Club: Kilmaley
Age: 24



Name: Danielle Sheedy
Club: Broadford
Age: 19



Name: Siobhan Lafferty
Club: Kilmamona
Age: 21



Name: Cathy Halley
Club: Wolfe Tones
Age: 35



Name: Aimee McInerney
Club: Newmarket-on-Fergus
Age: 19



Name: Kate Lynch
Club: Kilmaley
Age: 17



Name: Laura Linnane
Club: Athlone
Age: 23



Name: Aoife Ryan
Club: St Vincents
Age: 25



Name: Claire Roseingrave
Club: Kilmamona
Age: 18



Name: Claire Commene
Club: Corofin
Age: 25



Name: Aiveen O'Shea
Club: Simlebridge
Age: 16



Name: Aine O'Brien
Club: Newmarket-on-Fergus
Age: 18



Name: Fiona Lafferty
Club: Kilmamona
Age: 19



Name: Aoife Griffin
Club: Clarecastle
Age: 18



Name: Chloe Morey
Club: Simlebridge
Age: 15



Name: Shonagh Enright
Club: Kilmaley
Age: 17

Uíbh Fháilí

SEPT.

2008



Back row (l-r): Grace McRedmond, Elaine Sullivan, Claire Birmingham, Claire Nevin, Audrey Kennedy, Karen Nugent, Sheila O'Sullivan, Elaine Darmody, Michaela Morkan, Emma Carey, Anne Dignan, Natalie McCabe, Amie Dooley, Lorraine Keena, Marion Crean.
Front row (l-r): Shauna Flynn, Debbie Flynn, Aoife Corrigan, Arlene Watkins, Linda Sullivan, Karen Brady, Michelle Davis, Fiona Stephens, Ailsa Hughes, Jean Brady, Siobhan Flannery, Aoife Kelly.
Missing from photo: Tina Hannon.



MARK CORRIGAN (Kinnitty)
Selector

Manager:
Joachim Kelly
(Lusmagh)

Selectors:
Mark Corrigan
(Kinnitty)
Ger Fogarty
(St. Rynagh's)
Catherine Byrne
(Toomevara)



JOACHIM KELLY (Lusmagh)
Manager



CATHERINE BYRNE (Toomevara)
Selector



GER FOGARTY (St. Rynagh's)
Selector



LAND
IE
IONSHIP



Marion CREAN
(Shinrone)

Uíbh Fháilí



Karen NUGENT
(Drumcullen)



Audrey KENNEDY
(Birr)



Aoife CORRIGAN
(Kinnitty)



Aoife KELLY
(Lusmagh)



Sheila O'SULLIVAN
(Birr)



Siobhan FLANNERY
(St. Rynagh's)



Fiona STEPHENS
(Drumcullen)



Anne DIGAN
(Kinnitty)



Claire SULLIVAN
(Lusmagh)



Elaine DARMODY
(Drumcullen)



Michaela MORKAN
(Shinrone)



Tina HANNON
(Naomh Bríd)



Natalie MCCABE
(Innamore)



Lorraine KEENA
(Kilcomac/Killoughy)



Amie DOOLEY
(Naomh Bríd)



Karen BRADY
(St. Sinchill's)



Linda SULLIVAN
(Lusmagh)



Michelle DAVIS
(Shinrone)



Arlene WATKINS
(Birr)



Jean BRADY
(St. Sinchill's)



Shauna FLYNN
(Kilcomac/Killoughy)



Emma CAREY
(Naomh Bríd)



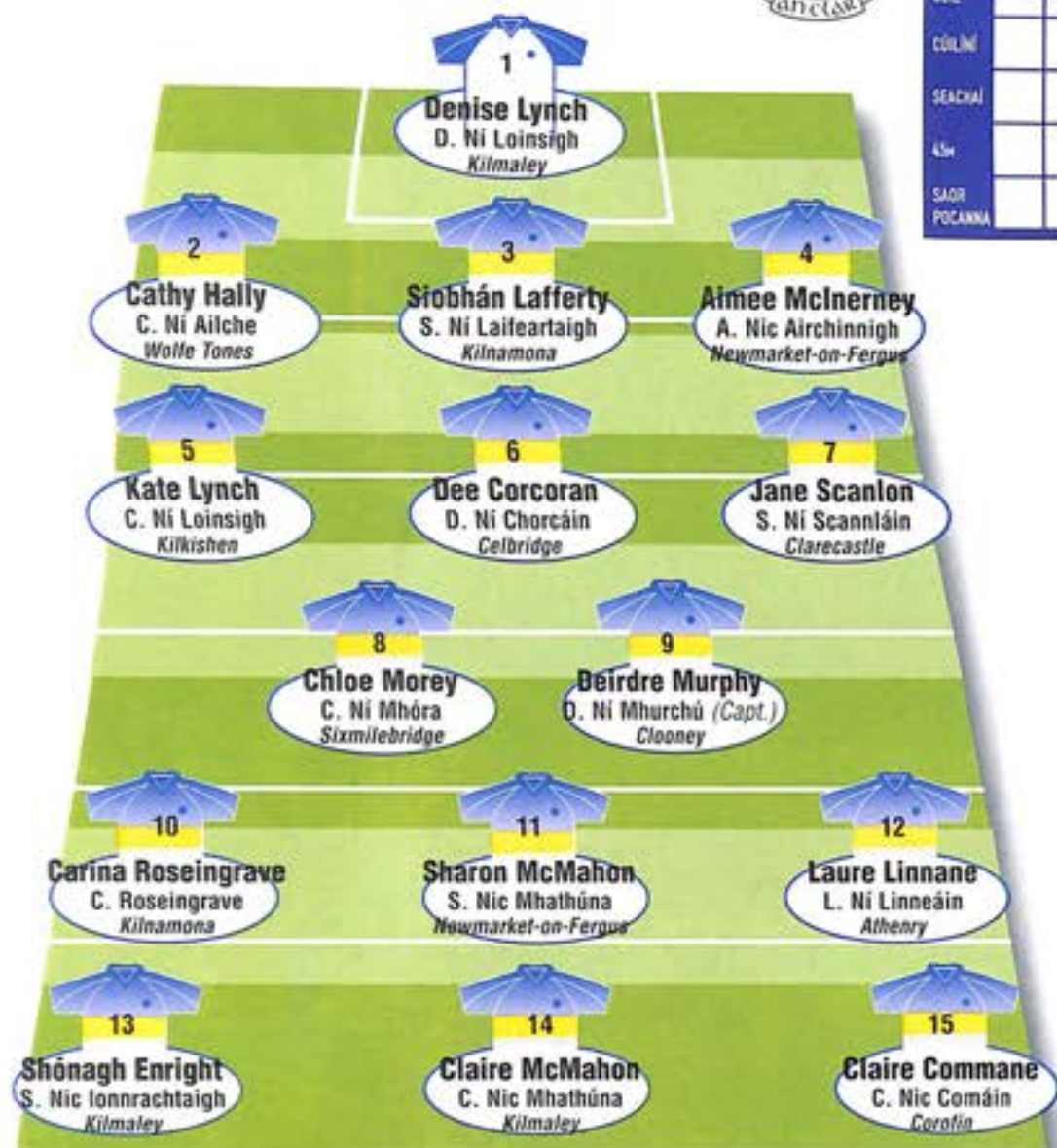
Claire NEVIN
(Kilcomac/Killoughy)



Ailsa HUGHES
(Innamore)

AN CLÁR

Dathanna: GORM agus ÓR



16 DANIELLE SHEEDY D. Ni Shioda Broadford	18 AOIFE RYAN A. Ni Riain St. Vincent's	20 FIONA LAFFERTY F. Ni Laifearthaigh Kilnamona	22 AOIFE GRIFFIN A. Ni Ghriofa Clarecastle
17 ÁINE O'BRIEN A. Ni Bhrian Newmarket-on-Fergus	19 AMY COLLERAN A. Ni Chiallaidin Cloonery	21 AIVEEN O'SHEA A. Ni Shé Sixmilebridge	

ROGHNOIRÍ Manager: Colm Hanley Trainer: Eoghan Hanley Selectors: John Mihil, Catherine O'Loughlin Goalkeeper Coach: Ciaran McDonagh

2008



UÍBH FHÁILÍ

Dathanna: GLAS agus ÓR



EMMA CAREY E. Ni Chiara Naomh Bríd	18 LORRAINE KEENA L. Nic Cionailth Kilcormac/Killoughey	20 CLAIRE NEVIN C. Orláinnhin Kilcormac/Killoughey	22 ELAINE SULLIVAN E. Ni Shúilleabháin Lusmagh	24 SHAUNA FLYNN S. Ni Fhloinn Kilcormac/Killoughey
ANNE DÍGAN A. Ni Dhulgeannáin Kinnitty	19 JEAN BRADY S. Ni Cheallaigh St. Sinchill's	21 AOIFE CORRIGAN A. Ni Chorráin Kinnitty	23 AMIE DOOLEY A. Ni Dhulaíoch Naomh Bríd	25 AILSA HUGHES A. Ni hAodha Tullamore

OGHNOIRÍ Joachim Kelly (Manager), Mark Corrigan, Ger Fogarty, Catherine Byrne

GALA ALL-IRELAND JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP - NEW IRELAND CUP

FINAL GROUP TABLE

	P	W	L	D	Pts
Clare	3	3	0	0	6
Offaly	3	2	1	0	4
Antrim	3	1	2	0	2
Down	3	0	3	0	0

ALL-IRELAND TITLES

CLARE				
1974:	Clare	3-02	Dublin	3-00
1981:	Clare	3-02	Antrim	0-07
1986:	Clare	1-13	Kildare	3-04

OFFALY

Offaly are bidding for their first All-Ireland title.
Only one previous appearance in an All-Ireland final
2001: Tipperary 4-16 Offaly 1-07

Gala All-Ireland Junior Championship - TOP SCORERS

NAME	County	Goals	Points	Total
JANE ADAMS	Antrim	2	24	30
CORINA ROSEINGRAVE	Clare	3	8	17
CLAIRE McMAHON	Clare	4	4	16
MICHAELA MORKAN	Offaly	1	13	16
DEIRDRE MURPHY	Clare	1	10	13

ROLL OF HONOUR

Down and Cork contested the first All-Ireland Junior Championship final in 1968.

Cork	7
Galway	7
Dublin	5
Derry	4
Clare	3
Down	3
Kildare	3
Limerick	2
Tipperary	2
Antrim	1
Armagh	1
Kilkenny	1
Louth	1

CARINA ROSEINGRAVE
(Clare)



SEPT 2008

An Clár



Back row (l-r): Sharon McMahon, Danielle Sheedy, Shoragh Enright, Laura Linnane, Dee Corcoran, Jane Scanlon, Aine McInerney, Amy Colleran, Aileen O'Shea, Fiona Lafferty, Denise Lynch, Aoife Ryan.
Front row (l-r): Kate Lynch, Emma Roseingrave, Aine O'Brien, Aoife Griffin, Chloé Morey, Claire Commene, Emily Bailey, Deirdre Murphy (Capt), Claire McMahon, Siobhan Lafferty.

Manager: Colm Hanley
Trainer: Eoghan Hanley
Selectors: John Nihill, Catherine O'Loughlin
Goalkeeper Coach: Ciarán McDonagh



From left: Trainer - Eoghan Hanley (Wolfe Tones); Manager - Colm Hanley (Wolfe Tones); Selectors - Catherine O'Loughlin (Kilnamona), John Nihill (Sixmilebridge).

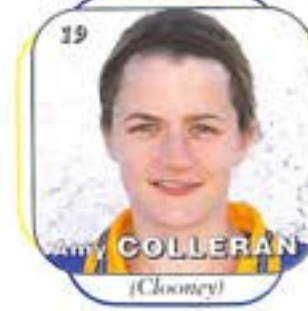
ALL-IRELAND
CAMOGIE
CHAMPIONSHIP
FINALS



CAPTAIN



An Clár



OFFALY'S RETURN DIDN'T HAPPEN BY ACCIDENT

By: ALAN WALSH, 'Offaly Express'

DURING his illustrious inter-county hurling career, Offaly's Joachim Kelly was renowned for his immense fitness, dedication and enthusiasm.

An All-Ireland SHC medal winner in 1981 and '85 and an All-Star recipient in 1980 and '84, Joachim's pedigree made him an obvious choice to manage the 'Faithful' camogie side and today his charges will be hoping for a historic first Gala All-Ireland junior triumph at Clare's expense.

Joachim was in the midfield engine room in '81 when Offaly first captured the Liam McCarthy Cup and 14 years later, as a selector in a management quintet led by Eamon Cregan, he witnessed an Offaly loss to Clare in the All-Ireland senior decider so he'll be determined to avenge that loss in this latest 'Faithful versus Banner' showdown.

Offaly and Clare have crossed paths already this season in the championship, with the 'Banner' girls shading a hard fought contest in Cusack Park, Ennis. However, Offaly camogie received a massive boost last Sunday week as their U18's captured All-Ireland Minor 'B' glory for the first time at Waterford's expense, 4-13 to 2-7.

Coincidentally, Offaly also overcame the 'Déise' in the All-Ireland junior semi-final by 1-14 to 1-3 at Leahy Park, Cashel. Six of the girls that played in the U18 final - Michaela Morkan, Siobhán Flannery, Jean Brady, Ailsa Hughes, Shauna Flynn and Debbie Flynn - are also members of today's junior squad.

In addition to that U18 success,

Offaly juniors were crowned League Champions in 2002. Offaly claimed Leinster and All-Ireland U16 'B' glory in 2005, while at U14 level Offaly have been Leinster 'B' champions for four of the past five years.

On the secondary school's scene, St Rynagh's CC Banagher won the All-Ireland 'B' Colleges' title in 2004, while St Brendan's CS, Birr and Sacred Heart School, Tullamore contested the All-Ireland Colleges 'C' Finals of 2007 and '08, respectively. On the club front, Drumcullen contested the inaugural All-Ireland Junior Club Final in 2003 only to succumb to Crossmaglen Rangers of Armagh, while Kilmac/Killoughey enjoyed much success in All-Ireland Féile na nGael and Community Games competition.

So as you can see, Offaly's eagerly awaited return to Croke Park didn't happen by accident. It is the result of dedicated endeavour and intensive coaching, placing faith in youth and it would put the icing on the cake if captain Marion Creen had the honour of

climbing up the steps of the new Hogan Stand to collect the New Ireland Cup.

Joachim Kelly heads up an experienced back-room team that includes Mark Corrigan, Ger Fogarty and Catherine Byrne. Joachim and Mark hurled together, and they both have daughters, named Aoife, in the Offaly panel.

Selector Catherine Byrne played in the 2001 All-Ireland Final and other playing links with seven years ago are today's captain Marion Creen, Michelle Davis, Elaine Dermody, Audrey Kennedy and Sheila Sullivan. Drumcullen's Elaine Dermody captained the 2001 team and goalkeeper Audrey Kennedy is the sister of Brian Hennessy, an All-Ireland medal with Offaly in '94.

Coming on the back of the U-18's achievement, confidence is high among Offaly camogie fans that they can complete the double by taking Clare's scalp today. But no matter what the outcome is, the future of Offaly camogie looks very bright indeed.



Captains Michaela Morkan (left) and Alison Bradley from the 'Faithful' after Offaly's All-Ireland Minor 'B' Championship Final win.

FOURTH TIME LUCKY FOR CLARE?

By: SEAMUS HAYES, 'Clare Champion'

A fourth All-Ireland junior final appearance in six years suggests that the game of camogie is in a fairly healthy state in Clare. Add to this a first ever All-Ireland minor A final appearance two weeks ago, and one can rightly say that Clare is moving up the ladder in terms of being a force.

These achievements are all the more praiseworthy when one realises that there are but a small number of clubs in the county. There is no camogie club in West or North Clare which is predominantly a football area.

When assessing Clare's prospects in today's final, all involved with the game in Clare will point to the fact that in the county's last three junior final appearances they have failed to bring home the top prize.

In the finals of 2003 and 2005 Clare drew with Galway and Dublin respectively before losing out in both replays. There was more heartbreak in 2007 when a last minute goal helped Derry to victory. After that, many Banner followers wondered if this group of players would bounce back.

They may have struggled in a couple of their games but they are back in the final and Clare followers will make their way to Croke Park today hoping to see

Deirdre Murphy receive the trophy.

While the Clare County Board now has a supporters club which is raising finance to help develop the game further, a shortage of funds has been a problem for many years. Tremendous credit is due to all the players who have travelled from various corners of the county to train and play for their county at their own expense.

One of the reasons for Clare's progress must be the success at secondary school level. Teams representing Coláiste Mhuire, Scariff Community College, St. Joseph's Tulla and St. Caimin's Shannon have captured Provincial and All-Ireland honours in recent times while, St. Flannan's College has also done well.

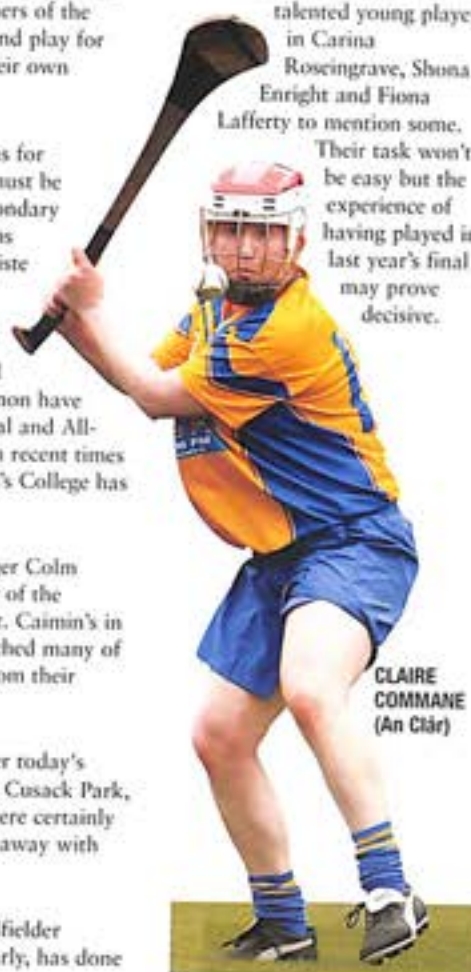
Clare team manager Colm Hanley, a member of the teaching staff at St. Caimin's in Shannon, has coached many of the current side from their juvenile days.

Earlier this summer today's finalists clashed in Cusack Park, Ennis and Clare were certainly fortunate to come away with victory.

Former Offaly midfielder Joachim Kelly, clearly, has done

a lot of work in coaching the midlanders and there is no doubt but that this final will be a good advertisement for the game.

Deirdre Murphy, Laura Linnane, Denise Lynch, Cathy Hally and Claire McMahon provide the experience in this Clare side which includes talented young players in Carina Roseingrave, Shona Enright and Fiona Lafferty to mention some. Their task won't be easy but the experience of having played in last year's final may prove decisive.



Banner super sub secures fourth title

All-Ireland Junior Camogie final
Jackie Cahill
Croke Park

Clare 2-8

Offaly 1-10

Clare's Aimee McInerney and Kate Lynch celebrate at the final whistle after victory over Offaly in the All-Ireland Junior camogie final at Croke Park yesterday.

Picture: Inpho



SHÓNAGH ENRIGHT scored an injury-time winning goal for Clare as the Banner claimed the Gala All-Ireland junior camogie crown for the first time since 1986.

Clare bounced back from the heartbreak of three final defeats in the previous five seasons, including last year's heartbreaking loss to Derry, to finally record a fourth national crown at this grade.

Offaly, who were chasing a first success in this competition, were left devastated as Enright, introduced 12

minutes after half-time, handpassed the sliotar to the net with a minute and a half of stoppage time played.

Offaly, who led by 1-7 to 1-3 at the interval, looked to have weathered a second half storm from Clare but they were caught right at the death by Enright.

Twice Clare fought back to within a point in the second half while at the other end, goalkeeper Denise Lynch kept the Munster outfit in the game with two superb saves.

Enright's late clincher was harsh

on Joachim Kelly's Offaly, who recovered from a poor start to lead by four points at the halfway point. Clare star Carina Roseingrave netted after just five minutes but Offaly hit back with a run of points and the sides were level twice before the midway point in the first half.

Offaly assumed almost complete control before the break and Watkins found the net ten minutes before half-time.

Two further points opened up a 1-7 to 1-2 lead for the Faithful

County before Claire Commene hit back for Clare with the final score of the half, her side's first point for 16 minutes.

Two Laura Linnane frees after half-time brought Clare back into contention before keeper Lynch denied Claire Nevin in the 43rd minute, and Jean Brady just three minutes later. Those saves proved crucial and although Offaly led by three points, 1-10 to 1-7, with eight minutes to go, Linnane's fourth point of the second half offered hope before Enright struck.

Scorers for Clare: C. Roseingrave & S. Enright 1-1 each, L. Linnane 0-4 (3f), S. McMahon & C. Commene 0-1 each.

Scorers for Offaly: T. Hannan 0-4, A. Watkins 1-1, S. Flannery 0-2 (1f), M. Morkan 0-2f, F. Stephens 0-1.

Clare: D. Lynch; C. Hally, S. Lafferty, A. McInerney, K. Lynch, D. Corcoran, J. Scanlon; C. Morey, D. Murphy; C. Roseingrave, S. McMahon, L. Linnane; A. Ryan, C. McMahon, C. Commene.

Subs: F. Lafferty for Morey (23), S. Enright for Ryan (42), Ryan for S. McMahon (48).

OFFALY: A. Kennedy; A. Kelly, E. Dermody, K. Brady, S. O'Sullivan, M. Morkan, L. Sullivan; M. Creen, K. Nugent; S. Flannery, T. Hannan, M. Davis; F. Stephens, N. McCabe, A. Watkins.

Subs: J. Feighery for K. Brady (22), L. Keena for Kelly (41), J. Brady for Davis (38), A. Corrigan for Flannery (50), A. Kelly for J. Brady (50).

Referee: U. Kearney (Armagh).

CAMOGIE ALL-IRELAND JUNIOR FINAL

Enright's goal comes at just the right time

CLARE
OFFALY

2-8
1-10

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Enright's late clincher was harsh on Joachim Kelly's Offaly, who bounced back from a poor start to lead by four points at the

halfway point of an entertaining encounter.

Clare forward Carina Roseingrave netted after just five minutes, but Offaly hit back with a run of points and the sides were level twice before the midway point in the first half.

Offaly, with Arlene Watkins and Tina Hannon in good form, assumed almost complete control before the break and Watkins found the net 10 minutes before half-time, showing great skill to

control captain Marion Creen's lengthy delivery before cutting through on goal.

Two further points opened up a 1-7 to 1-2 lead for the Faithful County before Claire Commene hit back for Clare with the final score of the half, her side's first point for 16 minutes.

A brace of Laura Linnane frees after half-time brought Clare right back into contention before goalkeeper Lynch was called upon to keep out Claire Nevin in the 43rd minute, and Jean Brady just three minutes later.

Those point-blank saves proved crucial for Clare and although Offaly led by three points, 1-10 to 1-7, with eight minutes remaining, Linnane's fourth point of the second half offered a glimmer of hope before Enright struck with that last gasp winner.

CLARE: D Lynch, C Hally, S Lafferty, A McInerney, K Lynch, D Corcoran, J Scanlon, C Morey, D Murphy, C Roseingrave (1-1), S McMahon (0-1), L Linnane (0-4, 3 frees); A Ryan, C McMahon, C Commene (0-1). Subs: F Lafferty for Morey (23 mins), S Enright (1-1) for Ryan (42 mins), Ryan for S McMahon (48 mins).

OFFALY: A Kennedy, A Kelly, E Darmody, K Brady, S O'Sullivan, M Morkan (0-2, 2 frees), L Sullivan, M Creen, K Nugent, S Flannery (0-2, 1 free), T Hannon (0-4), M Davis, F Stephens (0-1), N McCabe, A Watkins (1-1). Subs: J Feighery for K Brady (22 mins), L Keena for Kelly (half-time), J Brady for Davis (38 mins), A Corrigan for Flannery (50 mins), A Kelly for J Brady (50 mins). Referee: U Kearney (Armagh)



Clare's Deirdre Murphy lifts the All-Ireland junior camogie cup

Clare snatch victory in thrilling final

CLARE 2-8

OFFALY 1-10

JACKIE CAVELL AT CROKE PARK

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CLARE: D Lynch, C Hally, S Lafferty, A McInerney, K Lynch, D Corcoran, J Scanlon, C Morey, D Murphy, C Roseingrave, S McMahon, L Linnane, A Ryan, C McMahon, C Commene.

SUBS: F Lafferty for Morey (23m), S Enright for Ryan (42m), Ryan for S McMahon (48m).

OFFALY: A Kennedy, A Kelly, E Darmody, K Brady, S O'Sullivan, M Morkan, L Sullivan, M Creen, K Nugent, S Flannery, T Hannon, M Davis, F Stephens, N McCabe, A Watkins.

SUBS: J Feighery for K Brady (22m), L Keena for Kelly (h/t), J Brady for Davis (38m), A Corrigan for Flannery (50m), A Kelly for J Brady (50m).

Referee: U Kearney (Armagh)

All-Ireland Junior Winning Captains 1968-1987

The All-Ireland Junior Camogie Championship was first

introduced in 1968 and today we honour the All-Ireland Junior winning captains from 1968 to 1987.

In the first twenty years of this competition Dublin, Galway and Clare took the title three times, Cork four times, Derry and Down twice and Kildare, Limerick and Louth once.

This is the first time that the Junior All-Ireland Winning captains have been honoured in Croke Park.

Junior Winning Captains 1968 - 1987

TEAM	CAPTAIN	YEAR
Down	Maura Caldwell	1968
Derry	Kathleen O'Hagan	1969
Dublin	Vera Feely	1970
Dublin	Pat Morrissey	1971
Galway	Nona McHugh	1972
Cork	Nancy O'Driscoll	1973
Clare	Margaret O'Toole	1974
Dublin	Brigid Kennedy	1975
Down	Marion McGarvey	1976
Limerick	Carrie Clancy	1977
Derry	Brigid McLoughlin	1978
Galway	Marion Freeney	1979
Cork	Betty Joyce	1980
Clare	Clare Jones	1981
Louth	Vivienne Kelly	1982
Cork	Bernie Murphy	1983
Cork	Irene O'Leary	1984
Galway	Ena Cannon	1985
Clare	Maura McNicholas	1986
Kildare	Geraldine Dwyer	1987

Síle Wallace

Síle Wallace, Ardstiúthóir, retired from Cumann Camógaiachta na nGael recently following twenty-two years service.

Síle, who is a member of the Cuala Club, is a former Dublin player. She represented her county at junior and senior level and captained her side in 1976 when Kilkenny defeated the Dubs.

We acknowledge Síle's contribution to Camogie as a player, club member and as Ardstiúthóir.



KILKENNY

All-Ireland Minor 'A' Champions 2008

By: LEANN FENNELLY*

ON behalf of the Kilkenny Minor Camogie Team - All-Ireland champions for 2008 - I would like to wish the Kilkenny U21 hurling team best of luck in today's All-Ireland final.

Kilkenny camogie may not be represented here today, but this year has been very good for our county. Kilkenny won a senior

National league title, they completed a massive four All-Ireland U16 victories in a row and claimed three minor All-Ireland titles in succession.

Callan secured an All-Ireland senior colleges win, and the Intermediate team is through to contest the Gala All-Ireland final against Cork. So, the future looks bright for Kilkenny camogie and it will not be long

before a Kilkenny senior team will once again line out here in Croke Park on All-Ireland final day.

*Leann Fennelly was a member of the historic three-in-a-row All-Ireland winning minor team and also played a crucial role in Callan's success. She also has an All-Ireland U16 medal. She is daughter of well-known All-Ireland hurling winner Liam Fennelly.



KILKENNY - All-Ireland Minor 'A' Camogie Champions 2008.

“Once you get good at striking, try to develop hitting off both sides as it will help your game greatly”

JESSICA GILL



STAR FILE!

Name	Jessica Gill
Team	Galway
Age	18
Debut	2005 v Wexford
Position	Full-Forward
Honours	1 All-Ireland Minor title, 2 Galway Senior titles, 2 Kilmacud 7s titles, Young Player of the Year 2007.
Club	Athenry
Fav Food	Bacon and Cabbage
Fav Book	Oisín McConville "The Gambler"
Fav Film	Walk The Line
Fav TV	Eastenders
Hobbies	Racquetball and swimming
Occupation	Student

Still only 18, Galway sharp-shooter Jessica Gill is no stranger to All-Ireland success.

Since tasting victory with the Minor team in 2004, she has developed into one of camogie's most dangerous forwards, with the ability to pick off scores from any angle.

In 2007 she was picked as the Young Player of the Year after some great games for the maroon and white of Galway. This year, she played in her first All-Ireland final, some achievement for a player so young! A hard fought semi-final victory over 2007 All-Ireland winners Wexford, set them up for their first September showdown since 1998 when they also played Cork. Jessica played a major role in the semi-final chipping in with a goal and 6 points, the goal coming 4 minutes into injury-time and proving the difference between the sides. A player to watch for the future!

What is your greatest moment in sport?

My greatest moment in sport was when we beat Wexford in this year's semi-final. It was

fantastic to beat the reigning champs but also great to get to our first All-Ireland final since 1998. It was an amazing day for me as I scored the goal that decided the game with 4 minutes of stoppage played.

What is the toughest team you have come up against?

They are all tough but Cork and Wexford are definitely at the top of the pile.

Who was the toughest opponent you ever played against?

There are a lot of top players but Wexford's Catherine O'Loughlin and Catherine Foley of Cork are two I would rate highly.

Which player do you admire the most?

My county team-mate, Therese Maher, is a fantastic player. She is one of the most dedicated players I have ever known and she has a great will to win.

Who were your heroes when you were growing up?

Sharon Glynn who played for Galway when we won the 1996 All-Ireland. She was a deadly full-forward and she also won 3 All-Ireland Club titles with Pearses of Galway.

GALWAY

What club do you play for and who are your biggest rivals?

I play for Athenry and our biggest rival on the club scene is definitely Killimor.

What is the most important skill?

Striking is so important, you can't beat hitting the ball cleanly. Once you get good at it, try to develop hitting off both sides as it will help your game greatly.

What advice would you have for young players?

Train hard and always listen to your trainers.

What are your hopes for the future?

It's been a fantastic year for us and I hope we can build on it for the future. I want to reach as many All-Irelands as possible with both Club and County.

Cúl Fact!

She made her debut in 2005 as the youngest player on the team and she is still the youngest.

Clare are the champions

Clare 2-08 - Offaly 1-10

at Croke Park, Dublin

Andrew Hamilton

WHEN it comes to All-Ireland finals, Clare certainly cannot be labelled bland. Dramatic turns in the finals of 2003 and 2005 were followed by an injury time heartbreak to Derry last year but finally on Sunday, they reached the promised land.

It may not have been their greatest display but this side have definitely learned the hard way that it's better to win scrappy than to lose a classic. Getting over the line was the only priority and getting there by any means necessary was essential for the county to blossom.

Nevertheless, they certainly left it late, so late in fact that many had given up hope of a recovery but if last year's final taught them anything, it's that the game is never lost until the final whistle is blown. The Derry defeat also developed a spirit and character in the players that had not previously existed and they needed all that mental fortitude to overcome a very stubborn Offaly side.

It wasn't as if Clare didn't know what to expect as Offaly had already provided stiff opposition in Clare's opening game of the championship at the beginning of the Summer. The Banner eventually overcame the Faithful County on that occasion but a combination of nerves and perhaps overeagerness to impress on Sunday almost derailed Clare for the fourth final in six years.

It didn't happen though thanks to a last minute goal from Shónagh Enright, who followed up fellow substitute Fiona Lafferty's rasping shot which was initially saved by goalkeeper Audrey Kennedy, to put pressure on full-back Elaine Darmody and handpass to the net.

It was apt that it was a substitute

that handed the game to Clare as it was the clever use of substitutions and switches in the line-up that ultimately dragged Clare back into this game in the second period. Fiona Lafferty and Enright's introduction were key elements in the turnaround of this contest along with the inspired switch of Kate Lynch to centre-back, who had an outstanding second half.

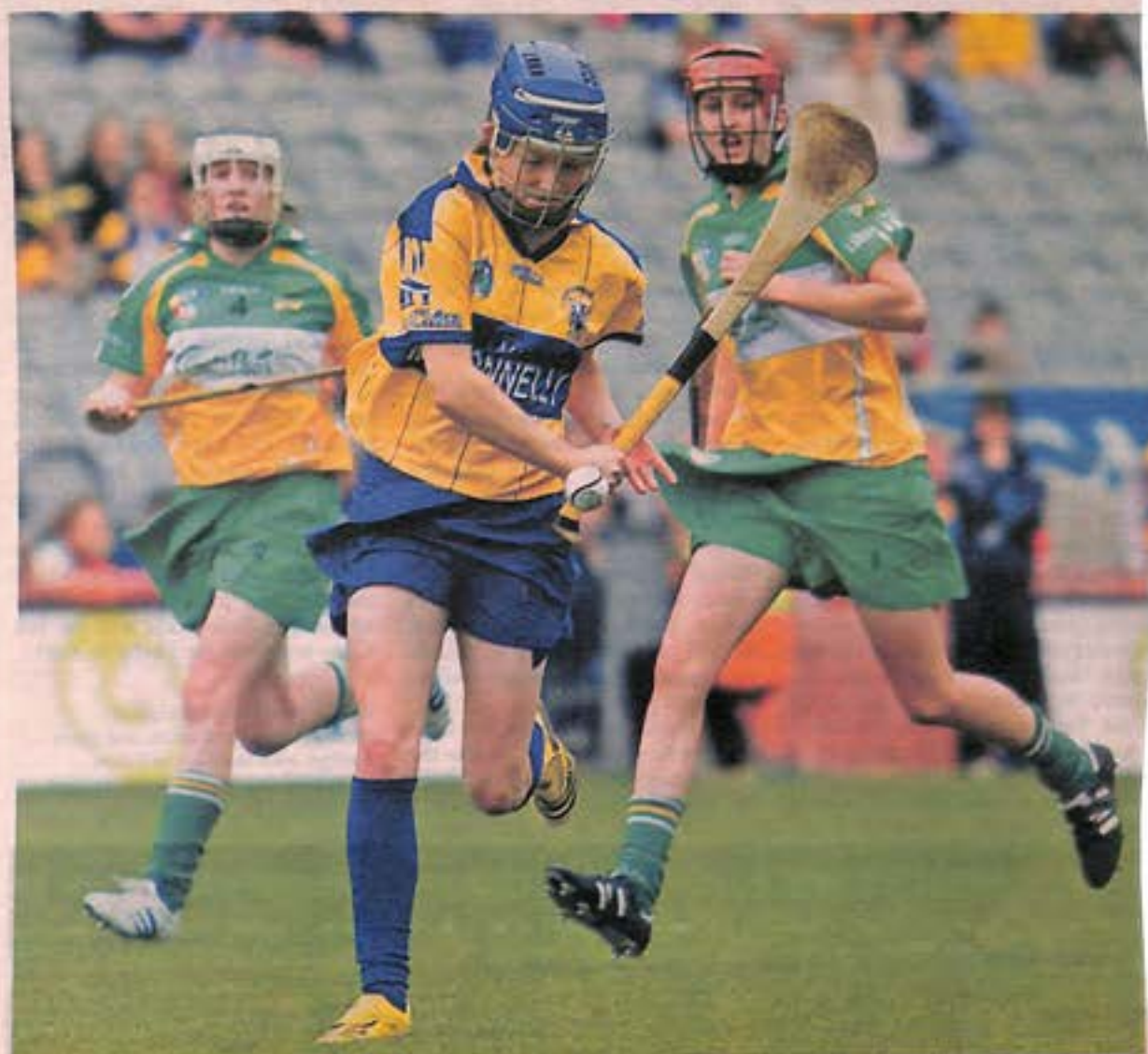
Although Offaly's Siobhan Flannery got the opening score after only a minute, Clare quickly replied in the best possible way when a defensive free was gathered by Laura Linnane and when her solo run attracted defenders, she offloaded to the unmarked Carina Roseingrave who roofed to the net.

It should have settled Clare but with Offaly's half-back line and midfield getting on top, Clare were unable to feed their forwards and Offaly began to reel in the Banner. Siobhan Flannery and Sharon McMahon traded points before Tina Hannon and Fiona Stephens levelled up the game by the 10th minute.

Offaly were smothering Clare and after Roseingrave and Morkan swapped scores, Clare were hit with a hammer blow in the 19th minute when Offaly's midfielders combined to supply the now full-forward Arlene Watkins who held off two defenders before dispatching to the net.

It was at this point that Colm Hanley decided to introduce Fiona Lafferty and her influence almost secured a goal before the break after soloing through from halfway but her shot off the hurley drifted agonisingly wide. Half-time could not come soon enough for Clare though who trailed by 1-7 to 1-3 at the break.

Clare emerged a different side on the resumption but luck didn't seem to favour them early on as shots from



both Claire McMahon and Fiona Lafferty rebounded off the right upright within the first minute. However, with Kate Lynch's switch to centre-back and Deirdre Murphy continuing to forage around the centre, Clare be-

gan to halt Offaly's penetration. The scores were slow in coming but eventually by the end of the third quarter, Clare had the deficit back to only the minimum after three unanswered points from Laura Linnane.

It wasn't all plain sailing though as Clare had to withstand some serious pressure from Offaly who suddenly found another gear. Twice goalkeeper Denise Lynch produced outstanding stops to deny substitutes Janette Feighery and Jean Brady. Tina Hannon then stretched the lead to two before Shónagh Enright replied with her first touch and she also had a goal chance pulled just wide only minutes later after Sharon McMahon had missed the previous effort.

So when Micheala Morkan and Tina Hannon put Offaly two clear by the 54th minute to put daylight between the sides, the Clare support feared the worst. Laura Linnane did pull back a free in the 56th minute to put just two between them but as the clock ticked down, Offaly had thought they had weathered the storm with some heroic defending.

Then came Enright's goal that could possibly be the most important goal ever scored in Clare camogie. It was desperately cruel on Offaly who probably deserved at least a draw but Clare certainly earned their slice of good fortune at Croke Park. GAA headquarters is no longer the graveyard of Clare camogie and as captain

Deirdre Murphy proclaimed in her speech it is up to everyone involved 'to ensure that this is the start of a new beginning for Clare camogie'. Getting over this obstinate hurdle was essential but now that this has been achieved, the future opens up for this side. After such a long wait, it might take a while for this title to finally sink in.

Above: Carina Roseingrave scores a goal for Clare.

Left: Aiveen O'Shea Shona Enright and Kate Lynch celebrate Clare's victory. Ray Keogh

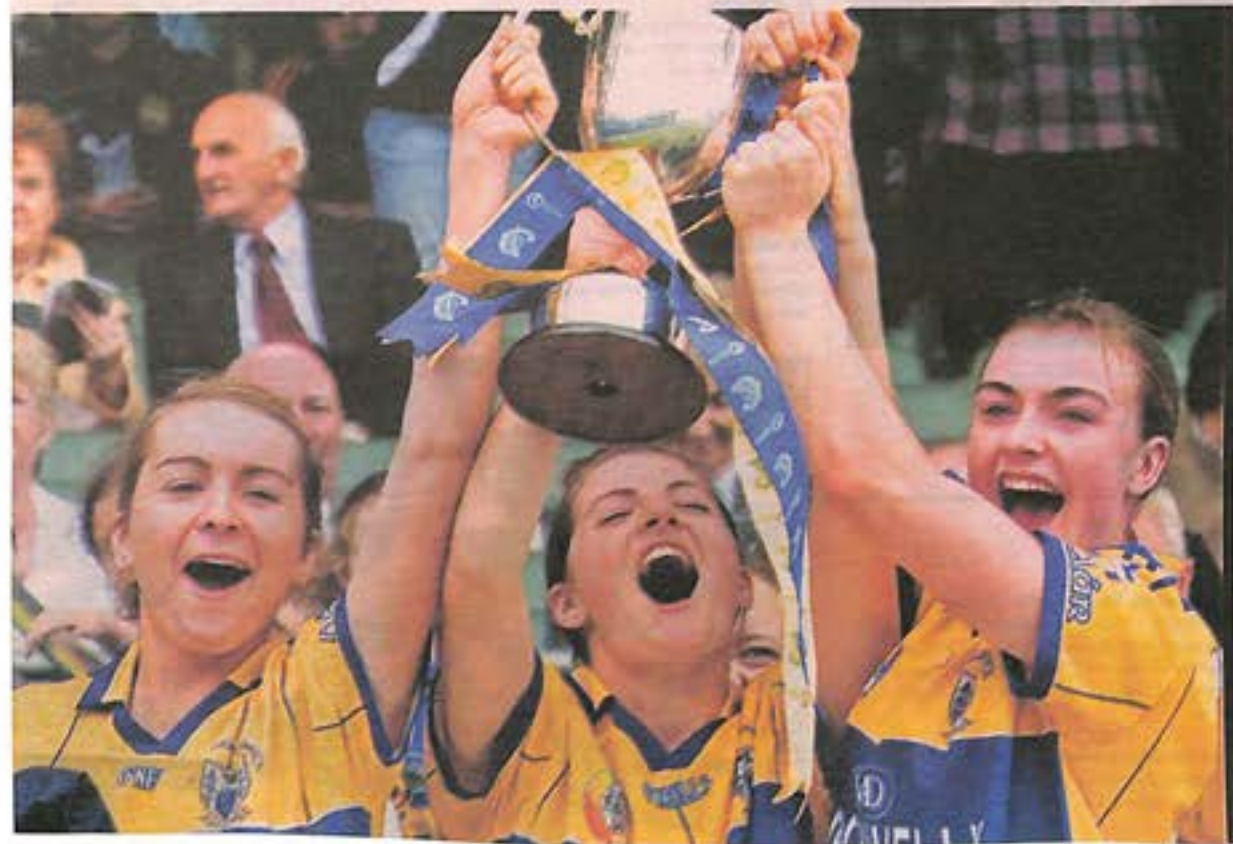
Match Details

Clare Denise Lynch, Cathy Hally, Siobhan Lafferty, Aimee McInerney, Kate Lynch, Dee Corcoran, Jane Scanlon, Chloe Morey, Deirdre Murphy, Aoife Ryan, Sharon McMahon (0-1), Laura Linnane (1-4 3f), Carina Roseingrave (1-1), Claire McMahon, Ciara Commene (0-1) Subs: Fiona Lafferty for Morey, Shónagh Enright (1-1) for Ryan, Aoife Ryan for C. McMahon

Offaly Audrey Kennedy, Aoife Kelly, Elaine Darmody, Karen Brady, Sheila O'Sullivan, Micheala Morkan (0-2), Linda Sullivan, Marian Creen, Karen Nugent, Siobhan Flannery (0-2) Tina Hannon (0-4), Michelle Davis, Fiona Stephens (0-1) Natalie McCabe, Arlene Watkins (1-1) Subs: Janette Feighery for McCabe, Lorraine Keena for Kelly, Jean Brady for Stephens, Aoife Kelly for J. Brady, Aoife Corrigan for Flannery

Player of the Game Kate Lynch (Clare)

Match Official Una Kearney (Armagh)



Hanley's relief to take title

Eoin Brennan

FOR a team that has been on the brink of All-Ireland success so many times this decade, finally winning the title was understandable a flood of emotion for all involved. However, the dramatic manner of the win brought a mixed bag of both relief and elation as the players attempted to take in the achievement.

After the heartbreak of last year's defeat to Derry, another defeat would have been almost unthinkable but fortunately Clare persevered and finally got their hands on the elusive New Ireland Cup after a interminable gap of twenty two years.

And there was no-one more relieved than manager Colm Hanley.

"It's unbelievable. After all that has happened over the last couple of years, the fact that it's done now and

we have achieved what we set out to do is fantastic and full credit to the girls, they were absolutely amazing so I'm delighted."

Despite being behind for the majority, Clare never gave up the ghost and kept chipping away at Offaly's lead but even near the death, Hanley never felt that the game was lost.

"No. To be honest with you, we kind of felt that we always stuck in there."

"They didn't really pull away from us at any point. They went four points up and five points up but we stayed hanging in there and got the few important scores. They never got away from us so as long as that was the case, there was always a chance. I suppose with two minutes to go, it was more out of hope than anything else that we were thinking but we did feel they were capable of pulling it

out of the bag and thankfully they did."

Tactically, Clare's switches were all important with Shonagh Enright and Fiona Lafferty playing an important role in the decisive goal and Kate Lynch dominating from centre-back but Hanley feels that it was the whole side's second half effort that earned Clare this victory.

"At the end of the day, you make decisions and thankfully they went right yesterday but there is no guarantee of anything."

"Shonagh in fairness to her obviously made a massive impact, Kate Lynch moving to centre-back really turned the tide and deserved to get the player of the game award but the whole team really put their shoulder to the wheel for the second half and pulled out the result so we are delighted."



What a day for the Banner

Orla Conside

AS WORRY and thoughts of heartache turned to sheer relief, delight and eventually elation on this Monday, the work, sweat and tears that this bunch of girls and management have been through to achieve what has been a long time coming is slowly becoming a reality.

Twelve years have passed and only Catherine O'Loughlin survives that success. These have been twelve hard years though and the work that has gone in at all levels from county to clubs to schools is now coming to fruition. After many attempts at falling at the final hurdle and a Minor All-Ireland final appearance, Clare have come back to Ennis as Junior All-Ireland champions.

For this team of girls (save for some) and management and myself, indeed this has been (maybe compared to others) a short journey. But one with as many twists, turns, lows and eventual highs as any road or journey may have.

Being with the girls in the early months of last year and to see the commitment which they put into the game and their preparations and the dedication which they gave to each other, the team, their management, clubs and all aspects of life, it was total heartbreak to see them defeated last year in the final in Croke Park. And how that broke their hearts.

There is always a flip side though and the character that these girls possess brought them through what was a dark hour. Through the depths of Winter, these girls got together and with steely determination resolved with a frankness that they were going to get back to business and would do whatever it would take to bring back glory to the Banner and camogie.

This proclamation began to come to fruition as the team delivered the National League Division 2 Title, Munster U18 Title and an All-Ireland final appearance. Delivery came in the final two minutes of an agonizing game in Croke Park on Sunday. A

game that I will have to say I am yet to watch again and when I do, I may be able to enjoy it as each minute was sweated out with baited breath in the rafters of the Hogan Stand.

To say that the moment was enjoyed would be a stretch but each moment since has been a joy to the reaction of the players and the management. The tears of relief and joy and the humility behind it all and the work that they along with others have put in to become All-Ireland Champions. I can only salute the work and dedication that they have because they have overcome many difficult obstacles and lost team-mates along the way to injury and other commitments and it is this huge family of players and backroom staff that we salute.

Thanks for all the memories and well done!

Above: Sharon McMahon gets away from Offaly's Karen Nugent during their All-Ireland victory in Croke Park on Sunday. Ray Keogh

PLAYER RATINGS ►► Clare

By Andrew Hamilton

Denise Lynch (Kilmaley)

Firmly put aside the heartbreak of last year with an outstanding performance between the sticks. Swept up cleverly in the first half and produced two vital saves in the second with a double save from substitute Janette Feighery a highlight. Rating 8



Cathy Hally (Wolfe Tones)

A solid performance from the veteran. Kept main threat Arlene Watkins quiet in the first half and although substitute Janette Feighery caused her some concern, she broke even in the battle. Rating 7



Siobhan Lafferty (Kilnamona)

After an impressive opening in which she nullified Natalie McCabe, Arlene Watkins was switched to full-forward and proved a real handful, grabbing Offaly's goal but Lafferty got to grips with her more as the game progressed. Rating 7



Aimee McInerney (Newmarket-on-Fergus)

Produced some vital interceptions and clearances especially when the pressure was on in the second half. The fact that her marker only scored one point meant it was a good afternoon for the Newmarket player. Rating 7



Kate Lynch (Kilshen)

Didn't see much ball in the first half but when switched to centre-back for the second period, the minor came into her own and gave an exhibition that turned the game for Clare. Must have a pain in her arm from pucking so much ball. Rating 8



Dee Corcoran (Cellbridge)

Was caught for pace against the lively Tina Hannon in the first period but looked far more comfortable on the wing in the second half. Put her body on the line on several occasions and stopped the Offaly supply. Rating 7



Jane Scanlon (Clarecastle)

Batted and cleared almost everything that came her way over the hour. Didn't really put a foot out of place which was demonstrated when her marker was substituted late in the game. Rating 7



Chloe Morey (Summerville)

Did nothing wrong but was the victim of Offaly's dominance around the half-back line and midfield. Anyone of five could have been withdrawn but at only 15, she will certainly learn from this experience. Rating 6



Deirdre Murphy (Clooney)

Another inspirational display from the captain who always seemed to attract the ball. By her own high standards, she will be disappointed with her free-taking but her perseverance paid off at the death when she crossed for the goal. Rating 8



Aoife Ryan (St Vincents)

Was in and out of the game in the first half and never seemed to get to the pitch of the ball. Was withdrawn midway through the second half but was more influential when reintroduced three minutes later. Rating 6



Sharon McMahon (Newmarket-on-Fergus)

Got Clare's first point in the eighth minute and had a real battle with centre-back Micheala Morkan. Moved to full-forward in the second half and maybe should have grabbed a goal. Rating 7



Laura Linnane (Atherry)

Set up Roseingrave's goal after only four minutes when she ran at the Offaly defence and scored four points herself, three successive scores in the second half to chip away at Offaly's lead. Rating 7



Carina Roseingrave (Kilnamona)

Dangerous as ever when she was fed possession but Offaly had their homework done and ensured she was well manhandled. Still was able to grab 1-1 and earned a crucial free near the end. Rating 7



Claire McMahon (Kilmaley)

Tried hard but never really got any ball in the first half. Moved out the field in the second period and had a shot come off the upright early on but was withdrawn midway through the half. Rating 6



Claire Commans (Corofin)

Fed on scraps for the majority but got the last score of the first half to reduce the deficit to four. Also won a free early in the second half to continue Clare's fightback. Rating 7



Subs

Fiona Lafferty (Kilnamona)

Made an immediate impact when introduced late in the first half and almost yielded a goal when she ran at the Offaly rearguard. Fought hard and crucially had the initial shot for Shonagh Enright's winning goal. Rating 6

Shonagh Enright (Newmarket-on-Fergus)

It's every player's dream to come on in a final and score the winning goal and that's exactly what the county minor did when she handpumped to the net in the final minute. Also grabbed a great point with her first touch. Rating 8

What a difference a year makes

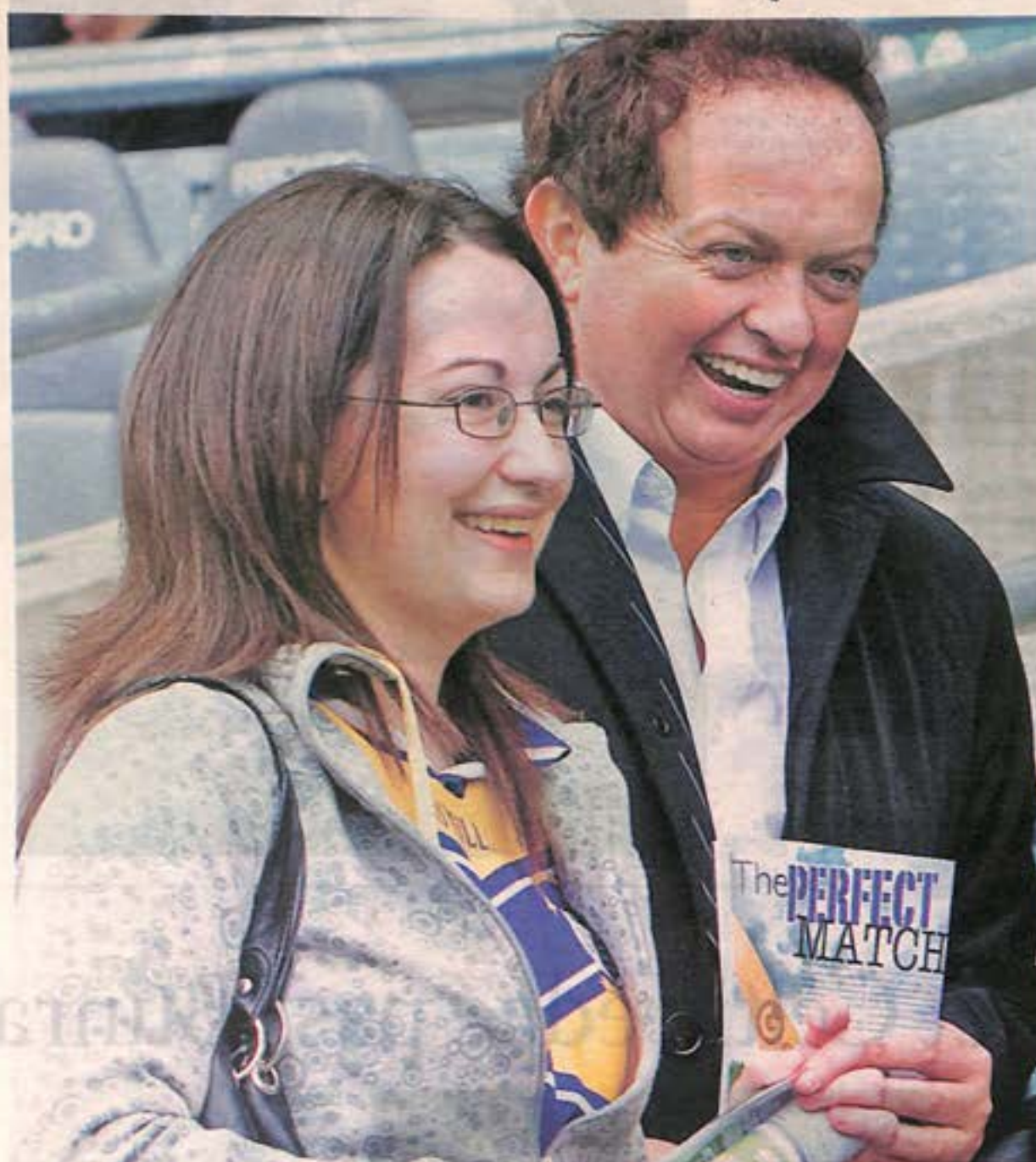
I HAVE often wondered what life would be like if we didn't have Sport. Used positively it can keep us fit and healthy but also it can bring communities together and give each of us a sense of place. Conversely it can cause rows and disagreements that can last a lifetime. Sadly some people can go to their graves and meet their Maker holding a grudge about some match that was played 30 or 40 years earlier or some individual that they felt did them an injustice. It runs that deep. It can be that emotional.

Within twelve months and a few days Clare Junior Camogie players and their mentors experienced the whole spectrum of human emotion associated with sport. We all cried a year ago as Derry players went up the steps of the Hogan Stand to receive the Cup that they snatched with a late goal. This was total Banner devastation. This was car crash Clare Camogie style. We hoped our words of consolation and a gentle hug here and there helped a little but I think most of us present in the deep and dark environs of the dressing rooms that awful day just felt hopelessly incompetent. No words seemed to slow down the floods of tears that flowed down the corridor.

The faint yelps of joy from the Derry dressing room down that dark tunnel only made the pain worse. A tightening of the chest, the swelling up of the tear ducts and that terrible sense of loss never leaves you and last Sunday we came very close to that negative but understandably emotional outburst again. I remember trying to console Clare captain Deirdre Murphy last year on the passageway leading out to the pitch in Croke Park. I remember her heartbreak. I remember her fear of never returning to Croke Park to win that coveted All Ireland medal. She posed rhetorical questions... "How would we ever get them all together again... how would we set sail on that long journey again?"

Although she stood in Croke Park at that precise moment her mind was obviously over 100 miles away... back in Clare. There was silence sometimes as she reflected quietly to herself on what had just happened while Peter O'Connell and myself do what most men do... run out of words and so, say nothing. It was cold that day in Croke Park and as she shivered in her Clare jersey and skirt I'm sure she pictured the lonely dark nights of wind and rain when training would be called and the desire of playing again in Croke Park would be just a fading memory like a flickering old black and white movie. Would they or could they pick themselves up off the tear drenched floor and try once more... for themselves and for their county? Would they or could they ever believe again in themselves?

I thought of Deirdre Murphy more than anybody else last Sunday as time



ticked away and Clare's fate seemed destined for another heartbreak. I didn't think this team, their management or the few faithful Clare people present could take losing again. As I looked and prayed for Clare with time ticking away I could see a red helmet and a No.9 everywhere. Midfield... then half back... then half forward line... then back in the full back line. She blocked, hooked, pressured, hit and I'm sure shouted with all her might. It was Deirdre. If we lost I had decided I couldn't meet Deirdre or the girls. I don't think I would have had any words to console the girls.

I also thought of goalkeeper Denise Lynch who probably blamed herself every day for twelve months for not stopping Derry's late winner in September 07. She was wonderful last Sunday.

The Kilmaley goalkeeper made at least three brilliant saves at crucial times in the second half. Any goal

would have killed the Banner. All it needed for an Offaly victory was one green flag.

It didn't happen because Denise Lynch showed tremendous agility combined with an ability to read situations well. I remember twelve months ago, she crying her eyes out in the Canal End goalmouth when the final whistle blew. She was inconsolable. I hope the Clare people realise today that coming from there and that moment in Croke Park a year ago to where she is today classifies her as a woman apart. She is a woman of great strength and is a hero for herself, her family, her club and for Clare camogie.

Truthfully Offaly were really good and desperately unlucky. In Sheila O'Sullivan and Michaela Morkan and to a lesser extent Linda Sullivan, they had players of quality. A good half back line is still an essential ingredient for success and Offaly had it in these three players. You will hear

more about these girls in the years ahead. At half time Offaly led by 1-7 to 1-3.

Centre forward Tina Hannon was outstanding for the Faithful girls in the first half and unless the Clare Management would or could rectify her penetrating runs, then the Banner were going to be in deep trouble. To their great credit the Management read the situation well and moving Kate Lynch to centre back was the changing of the game. She curtailed Hannon's runs and suddenly Clare began to dominate in crucial areas. Unfortunately this wasn't reflected on the scoreboard as Offaly defensively were outstanding.

I thought Clare's chances were done and dusted when a Clare forward perfectly positioned in front of goal miscued her shot completely and ultimately the ball was driven wide. I thought game over... the Gods are against us... again!

With injury time upon us Offaly

led by 1-10 to 1-8 when substitute Shonagh Enright got the ball. In a mirror image of last year's Final but thankfully only in reverse this time Clare struck for the match winning goal. This was despite an absolutely brilliant save by the Offaly goalkeeper Audrey Kennedy moments earlier.

You could argue that Enright threw the ball into the net with some justification although Shonagh told me in Jury's Hotel late on Sunday night, she did not throw the ball into the net at all...

Thus an emotional day came to an end. It was heartbreaking for Offaly and everybody associated with Clare will understand their pain today. Joy for Clare and a first title in 22 years and a victory after four Finals in five years. How come we do things the hard way in this county? But then maybe... we appreciate them all the more.

This Offaly team will be back and I confidently predict they will win this title next year and I'm also sure on mature reflection they won't begrudge the Clare team this hard earned victory.

I visited the team hotel when I finished working on Sunday night and I think the general reaction was one of sheer relief. The "monkey on the back" syndrome had finally been lifted and hopefully Clare Camogie can build on this wonderful success. Carina Roseingrave's early goal seemed to set Clare up nicely but it was a mirage as every player, every member of Management had to think and work hard to achieve success.

The defence were truly tested but Cathy Hally, Siobhan Lafferty, Aimee Mc Inerney, Kate Lynch, Dee Corcoran and Jane Scanlon came through with reputations enhanced.

Chloe Morey tried hard while the forwards like Laura Linnane and Claire Commene contributed neatly to the scoreboard. Sharon and Claire Mc Mahon looked threatening all day while Fiona Lafferty and Aoife Ryan added a bit of dash and speed when introduced.

I salute and congratulate the Clare Management of Colm Hanley and his brother Eoghan who trained the team while John Nihill and Catherine O'Loughlin were team selectors.

This was a huge achievement and I'm delighted the team were being given a Civic Reception last night in Ennis.

So... where would we be without Sport? Lost and bored. We could all have done without last year's experience but then maybe this year and last Sunday was all the sweeter and richer for all of us. Either way Clare is a far happier place today thanks to the Clare Camogie team.

Above: Marty shows his delight at the All-Ireland Junior Camogie Final in Croke Park on Sunday.



CHLOE MOREY



DEIRDRE CORCORAN



KATE LYNCH



SIOBHAN LAFFERTY

The Clare junior panel

THE members of the Clare panel for Sunday's final are:

Denise Lynch (Kilmaley); Aimee McInerney (Newmarket-on-Fergus); Siobhan Lafferty (Kilnamona); Cathy Hally (Wolfe Tones); Kate Lynch (Kilkishen); Dee Corcoran (Colbridge); Jane Scanlon (Clarecastle); Chloe Morey (Sixmilebridge); Deirdre Murphy (Cloonoy); Shona Enright (Kilmaley); Laura Linnane (Athenry); Sharon McMahon (Newmarket); Claire Commene (Corofin); Clare McMahon (Kilmaley); Carina Roseingrave (Kilnamona); Danielle Sheedy (Broadford); Amy Colleran (Cloonoy); Aoife Ryan (St Vincent's); Aine O'Brien (Newmarket); Aileen O'Shea (Sixmilebridge); Aoife Griffin (Clarecastle); Fiona Lafferty (Kilnamona).

CLARE JUNIOR CAMOGIE TEAM 2008



**AIMEE
MCINERNEY**



**AINE
O'BRIEN**



**AMY
COLLERAN**



**AOIFE
RYAN**



**CARINA
ROSEINGRAVE**



**CATHY
HALLEY**



**CLAIRE
COMMANE**



**CLAIRE
MCMAHON**



**DANIELLE
SHEEDY**



**DEIRDRE
MURPHY**



**DENISE
LYNCH**



**JANE
SCANLAN**



**LAURA
LINNANE**



**SHARON
MCMAHON**



**SHONA
ENRIGHT**



**AIVEEN
O'SHEA**



**FIONA
LAFFERTY**



**AOIFE
GRIFFIN**



■ Clare's Carina Roseingrave is chased by Offaly's Marian Crean

Roseingrave



years old.
20 on our pan-
next year. The
didn't reflect
play all year.
casion got to
people but
will be back
year," she
said.

A c -

■ Captain of the Clare minor camogie team, Carina Roseingrave. Photograph by John Kelly



Cork camogie players Sile Burns, Caitriona Foley and Amanda O'Regan with the O'Duffy Cup at Scoil an tAthair Tadhg, Carrignavar, after their All-Ireland senior camogie victory over Galway at Croke Park on Sunday.

Picture: Darragh Kane

Rebel girls are back in town

THE girls were back in town last night and this time they did not come empty handed — they brought the O'Duffy Cup with them to the delight of their families, friends and followers.

"Where would we be without the women," declared Bishop John Buckley in his address to the thousands of faithful who turned out in red and white to welcome home the Cork all-Ireland Senior Camogie stars.

Bishop Buckley got the second loudest cheer of the night — the first going to captain Caitriona Foley carrying the silverware on high — "rarely has a display of this standard been seen in Croke Park. That was the real all-Ireland hurling final being played yesterday."

On Sunday, almost 19,000 spectators in Croke Park watched Cork win the prize.

And while there might not have been as many people attending their homecoming in the city last night, the level of rebel cheers and yells for the conquering heroines seemed to belie that fact.

Deputy lord mayor, Cllr Patricia Gosch, referred to the champions as "the best possible role models for sporting youth in this country".

The team and their entourage left Dublin yesterday afternoon for the homecoming which was eagerly anticipated since the final whistle blew on Sunday's stunning display.

SEPT
2008

O'Duffy cup returns leeside

A TREMENDOUS day on Sunday last in Croke Park as the Cork senior team teams defeated Galway to take the Gala All Ireland senior championship title for the twenty third time.

Following on their victory over Wexford many pundits had installed Galway as favourites but the cork girls stood up and were counted and showed the tag of favourites meant little.

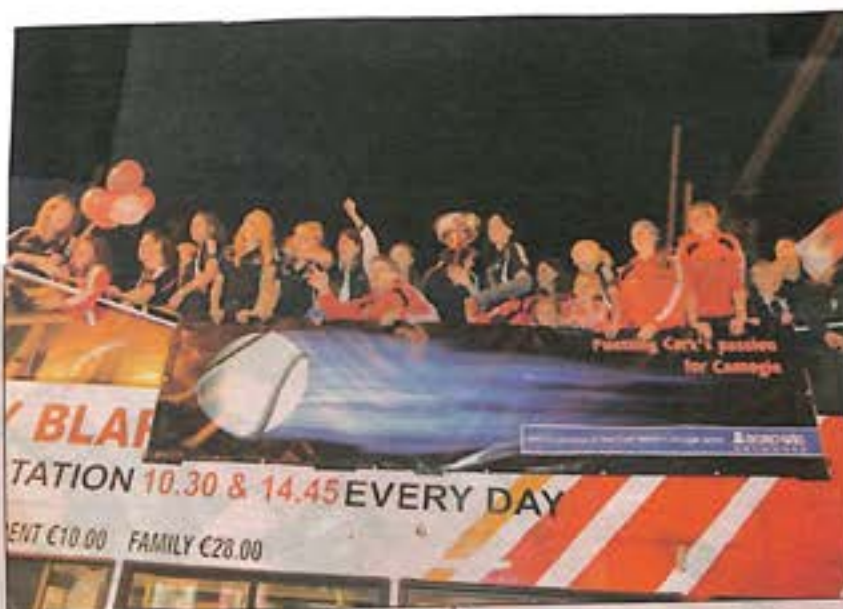
Galway got off to a good start with four early points but once Sile Burns hit them with a double goal blitz Galway found it hard to break Cork. All over the pitch Cork had start young Orla Cotter and Brieghe Corkery were superb at mid field, the Cork defence absorbed huge Galway pressure but stood firm to such an extent that they only conceded one score from play all the Galway points coming from frees.

Up front the Cork for-

ward worked tirelessly grabbing every chance that came their way while the strength of their subs bench was evident given the performances from the three substitutes when introduced.

A huge amount of praise must go to the Cork backroom team, at the start of the season Cork found it hard to put a management team in place but slowly it came together and selectors Pat Murray Con Malone and Denise Cronin brought Jim McCarthy on board as coach and the group got down to business.

The enthusiasm shown by all four helped in no small way to bring the title home well done to all concerned. In the coming weeks the attention will focus on the Intermediate team as they strive to make it an All Ireland double when they play Kilkenny on October 5.



Captain Caitriona Foley and players arrive in Patrick Street Cork with the O'Duffy Cup after the Cork Camogie team's All-Ireland win.

www.donaghjavin.com

Back to the championship

IT'S back to championship game this weekend and a full programme has Bishopstown meeting Killeagh on Saturday at 5pm at the camogie grounds Castle Road Blackrock, on to Sunday in the senior championship at Catherine and Douglas replay their quarter final in Ballinlough at 1.45 and this is followed by the semi final meeting between Ballygarvan and St Finbarrs. In the Senior B championship Rockban

and Glen Rovers meet in Castle Road while Ballinacorney and Valley Rovers are also in action venue to be announced. The Junior B championship semi final Brian Dillon's versus Grenagh is at 12 noon venue to be arranged. Tracton and Clonakilty meet in a play off game in the Junior A championship, while Ballinacorney and Castle-magner meet in the Junior C semi final in Coachford at 12.

Results round up

ST VINCENT'S took the Seandun under 11B title when they defeated Douglas last weekend, while in the senior B championship an injury time goal from a Colette Desmond free gave Newcestown the points in a close Senior B Championship game against Glen Rovers.

Cork stick it to Galway to win 23rd All Ireland senior camogie title

All-Ireland Senior Camogie Final

CORK 2-10
GALWAY 1-8

SÍLE Burns was the two-goal star as Cork reclaimed the O'Duffy Cup with a five-point victory against Galway in Sunday's Gala All-Ireland senior camogie championship final at Croke Park.

Beaten finalists last year, Cork returned to the top of the pile as they collected a 23rd senior title to move just three behind Dublin on the all-time honours list.

This was Cork's first success since 2006 but this hard-fought win marked their fourth victory in this competition in seven seasons, a testament to their remarkable consistency.

Galway were appearing in their first final since 1998, when they were also beaten by Cork, having achieved a last-gasp semi-final victory over last year's winners Wexford.

Jessie Gill was the goal heroine on that occasion and the Athenry teenager was in good form from placed balls in front of 18,727 spectators at GAA HQ.

Gill scored eight points,

seven from frees and a 45, but she was unfortunate to see a second half penalty saved by Cork's brilliant goalkeeper Aoife Murray.

Galway centre forward Therese Maher was fouled by Cork full back and captain Caitriona Foley and Gill's resultant penalty was blocked by Murray at a crucial stage in the match.

Cork led by just two points, 2-5 to 1-6, prior to the penalty award and moved three clear again when the impressive Rachel Moloney converted a point from play in the 39th minute.

Murray may have felt under pressure to redeem herself after allowing Áine Hillary's speculative shot to drop into the far corner of the net three minutes before half-time.

Hillary was shooting for a point from the left wing but the flight of the sliotar deceived the otherwise flawless Murray for Galway's only score from play of the entire game.

That goal handed the Tribeswomen a real lifeline before half-time as they went in just a point behind at the

break, 1-5 to 2-3.

Galway, the only team to defeat the Leesiders in the round-robin stage, opened the game with four unanswered points in the opening ten minutes from Gill, three frees and a 45, before the Rebelettes settled.

Rachel Moloney's free after eleven minutes was Cork's opening score but all of Galway's good early work was undone when the lethal Síle Burns scored the first of her two goals with 17 minutes on the watch.

Eimear O'Sullivan's ball in from the left touchline broke between Galway corner back Sandra Tannion and Cork's Elaine O'Riordan; Burns was onto it in a flash and the Rock-bán star found the bottom corner.

The tireless Briege Corkery added a point from play, Moloney converted a 45 and Cork had turned a four-point deficit into a two-point advantage in the space of nine minutes.

Galway kept plugging away in the second half but their lack of scores from play proved a hindrance as Gill

kept the Westerners in touch with some brilliant free-taking.

The penalty miss was a crucial turning point but equally, Susan Earner in the Galway goal was kept busy with saves from Una O'Donoghue and Burns.

At the other end, Murray's save from Deirdre Burke deep in stoppage time topped the lot, a breathtaking stop as the Galway sub looked certain to bulge the net.

That was Galway's last salvo as Cork held out for a victory which they craved after suffering the heartbreak of final defeat against Wexford 12 months ago.

CORK SCORERS: R Moloney 0-7 (4L, 2 45s), S Burns 2-0, O Cotter, B Corkery & E O'Sullivan 0-1 each.

GALWAY SCORERS: J Gill 0-8 (7L, 1 45), A Hillary 1-0.

CORK: A Murray, L O'Connell, C Foley, J O'Callaghan, G O'Connor, M O'Connor, S Hayes, O Cotter, B Corkery, A O'Regan, U O'Donoghue, E O'Sullivan, S Burns, R Moloney, E O'Riordan. **Subs:** E O'Farrell for O'Riordan, R Buckley for O'Connell, L Dorgan for O'Regan.

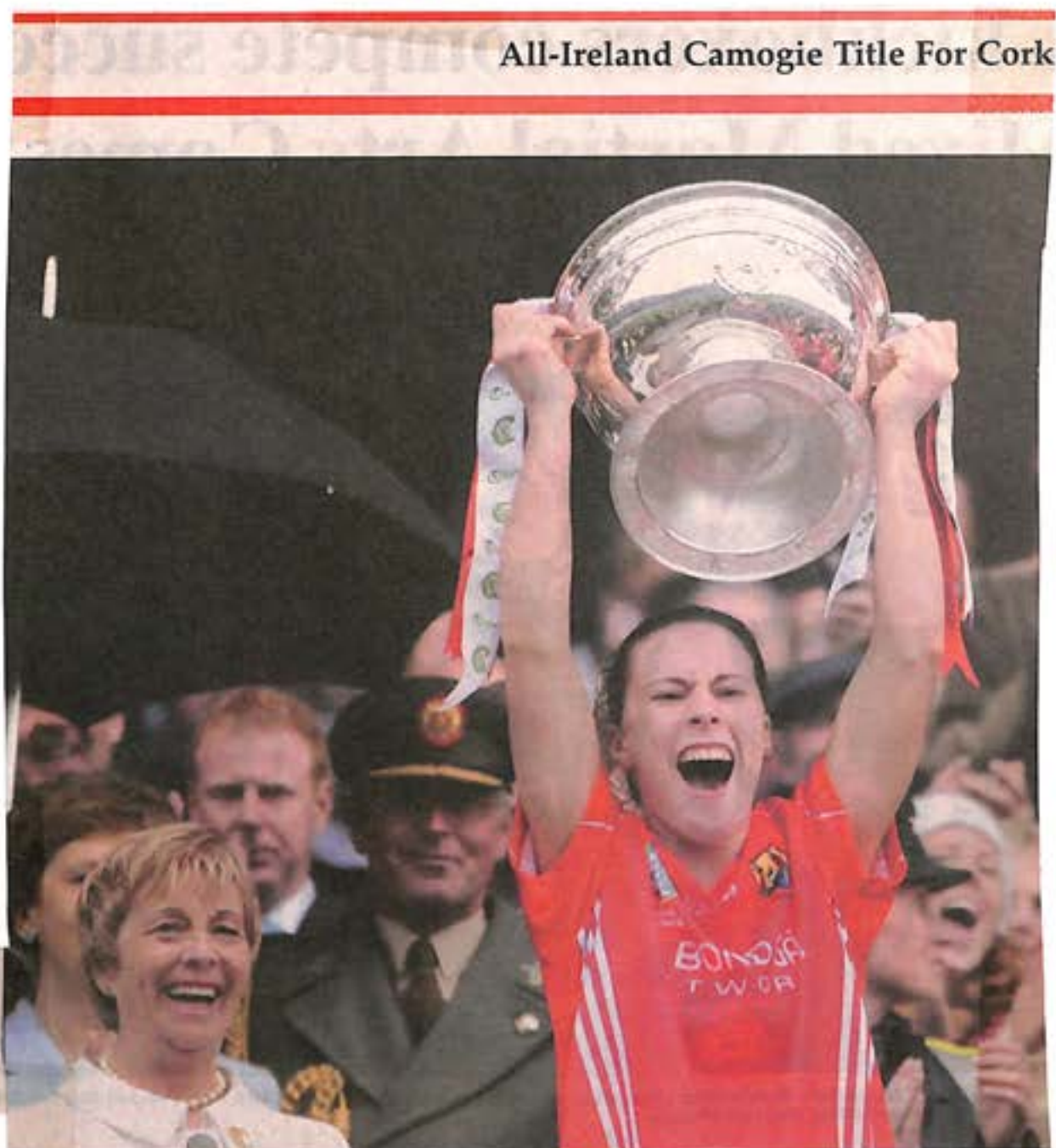
GALWAY: S Earner, S Tannion, A Kelly, T Manton, A-Marie Hayes, S Cahalan, N Kilkenny, A Hillary, S Noone, M Dunne, T Maher, V Curtin, O Kilkenny, J Gill, B Kerins. **Subs:** L Kavanagh for Dunne, C Cormican for Noone, D Burke for Kerins.

Hennebry (Cork): On September 19, 2008, after a long illness bravely borne, MAUREEN (nee Cashman), (E.de.M), Capwell, beloved wife of Michael and loving mother of Michael, Eileen, May, Thomas and Edward. Deeply mourned by her loving husband, sons, daughters, brother, sisters, sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, grandchildren, great-grandson, relatives and friends. May she rest in peace. Reception Prayers at 7.30pm on this (Saturday) evening at Christ the King Church, Turners Cross. Requiem Mass on Monday at 2.30pm. Funeral afterwards to St. Joseph's Cemetery. Family flowers only. Donations, if desired, to Marymount. *Ar dheis Dé go raib a h-anam dílis*



Lauren Brown greets her sister, Michelle Brown, member of the All Ireland winning Cork camogie team on the platform of Mallow Railway Station when the team returned in triumph on Monday evening. Photo by Gerry Murphy

Cork captain Caitriona Foley lifts the O'Duffy Cup following her team's victory over Galway in the All-Ireland senior camogie championship final at Croke Park on Sunday.



All-Ireland Camogie Title For Cork

Prescribing the winning formula

by PETER O'CONNELL

CLAIRE McMahon has had to specialise lately in planning ahead. Otherwise, the junior doctor would have trouble getting time off to represent Clare on the camogie field.

The Kilmaley girl qualified as a doctor in June but now has to work as an intern for 12 months.

These days, Dr Claire is based in the surgical department at the Mid-Western Regional Hospital in Ennis. After Christmas she will be heading to Galway, where she studied for her medical degree, for a further six-month medical internship. Seventy-five hour working weeks can play havoc with a sporting career but Claire will be absent from the wards this weekend. She has booked time off from Friday until Tuesday. The plan is to return with an All-Ireland medal to accompany the stethoscope.

A year away from the inter-county team left Claire very keen to get back involved.

"I missed out on last year. I went away for a month doing volunteer work in Central America. So it's nice to be back involved again this year. Even the build-up to playing in Croke Park, I really missed that last year. It was nice to get

a call back this summer," the Clare forward said.

Throughout her six years of medical studies, Claire wasn't always certain that she wanted to be a doctor. However, that changed when she qualified and started working.

"I think everyone that goes into medicine wants to be there. It wasn't really the same for me. I wasn't really sure if I wanted to do it at the start. I just stayed at it until I was finished. I'm enjoying it now though. It's different when you're out working. Last year was savage with the study and obviously wasn't enjoyable but this year is nice," she explained.

Claire hasn't yet mapped out where her career will take her but she has an inkling that her love of camogie will sidle into her thoughts.

"I'm not fully sure but maybe I might work as a GP for a bit of a life afterwards and to fit in a bit of training," she predicted.

On Sunday, Claire will be on call in Croke Park as Clare seek to win an All-Ireland junior title at the fourth attempt this decade. They have lost finals in 2003, 2005 and 2007. Although not part of the set-up last year, Claire played in the earlier final replay defeats. Before Sunday though, there is the matter of being on call at Ennis hospital to deal with.

"I'm on call tomorrow,"



■ Dr Claire McMahon of Kilmaley at work in the A&E department of Ennis hospital.

Photograph by John Kelly

she noted on Sunday evening. "So I go in at 8am and finish Tuesday evening at 4pm. You have to stay in the hospital and you can't leave it at all. You'll get a few hours sleep but you still have to be in there for two

days."

Claire doesn't deny that she badly missed hurling for Clare in 2007. If Clare had beaten Derry in the All-Ireland final, she would have been delighted

for everyone involved but disappointed at her own absence.

"I remember even thinking last year, if they win now I'll miss out on a medal. Not being selfish about it but when

you've been trying for that long, you want to be one of the ones who has a medal. It would mean a huge amount to be part of that team that won the medal in Croke Park," Claire acknowledged.

Every sports person in Ireland would give their last ounce to play in Croke Park. Participating in an All-Ireland final played in Dublin 3, is the ultimate for all sports people.

"I remember the first year we were there, it was just amazing. Even the noise is something you don't get used to. You'd be used to playing in Cusack Park maybe at best and you can hear people in the crowd even. In Croke Park, you can't hear who's next to you. That was very intimidating the first year but the next time we were there, we were aware of it," Claire, who has scored 4-5 thus far in the championship, recalled.

Claire's sister Helen and brother Diarmuid also represent the county, while her brothers Conor and Brian hurl for Kilmaley. Still there's often a battle to secure a hurley in the McMahon household.

"We're a bit scarce at home for hurleys most of the time," Claire joked. "So you do well to scrape one or two together. I got a hurley off Damien Hayes on Friday. I used it today and I'll have a go at that again. Even in your own head, if you're going out with a new hurley, you're a bit iffy. But when you've played a match with it, you don't have that extra worry," she explained.

Clare's motivation on Sunday is twofold. They want to make up for the three they have lost but equally significantly, they have ambitions of playing senior camogie in 2009.

"It has been mentioned plenty of times," Claire says

of the three final losses since 2003. "It's not something we shy away from. For most people, this is their third or fourth effort at it. Everyone is just striving to get that monkey off the back and win it this time," she said.

On a broader note, Claire is adamant that interest in camogie has increased manifold since she started playing for the county earlier this decade.

"I remember starting playing with Clare, you'd have no-one knowing about the matches and definitely no-one going to them. Now all GAA circles know about it," she believes.

If Claire is afforded a few idle moments at work this week, they'll be filled with images of Croke Park and of her Offaly opponent. It's impossible not to let the mind wander.

"I definitely think about it for a week or two before hand. I think it's better to think about it as opposed to blocking it out and then you're landed with it. Even watching the All-Ireland final, you're looking at Croke Park, thinking 'I'll be there.'"

If Claire heads back to work grasping an All-Ireland medal next Tuesday, those 75-hour working weeks will fly by. First though, along with her playing colleagues, Claire must prescribe a winning remedy for their latest Croke Park call.

Douglas tipped for victory in semi-final

SUNDAY
Evening Echo Cork County Senior Camogie semi-final
St Catherine's v Douglas
Ballylough, 1.45pm

THIS Sunday will provide possibly the two most exciting games of this year's Cork County Senior Camogie Championship, with a mouth-watering double-header in Ballylough, writes LINDA MELLERICK.

St. Catherine's and Douglas meet again to decide who will advance to the semi-final after a hugely entertaining draw three weeks ago, while developing rivals Ballygarvan and St. Finbarr's meet for the second time this season, after the Batts had defeated Bally in the opening round.

The drawn encounter on August 31 between Douglas and Catherine's was a humdinger. In truth, Douglas should have won, but Catherine's refused to surrender, which gave them a deserving draw, a goal by Jill Hurley four minutes into injury time resulting in a second chance.

Douglas were immensely impressive, their pace and skill belying their young years. But the scores didn't come as fast and a resilient Catherine's held their nerve. They slowly crept up on Douglas and a powerful opening three minutes of the second half saw them draw level.

Cork senior panelist Julia White is a name for the future and was one to watch at right half forward. Karina Mackey and Maria Harkin at midfield and centre forward and Amanda O'Regan at centre back means that Douglas are very strong between the two 45s.

Orla Cotter had a fine game last time out and covered miles. She will need more assistance from her teammates in the replay. The Twomey sisters always looked dangerous when in possession, but the Ballynue side will need more of a return from them on the scoreboard. North Mulcahy was excellent at full back and kept Catherine's in the game when the pressure was on.

The pitch in Ballylough may suit St. Catherine's more than Douglas, but that is just grasping at something that we think might separate these sides. Douglas look to have more scoring forwards, but if the Twomeys hit form then the sides become more balanced.

It's a big occasion for both clubs when one considers that St. Catherine's are only playing at the top since 2007 and Douglas are debutants in this year's championship. Based on the previous outing one would have to tip Douglas.

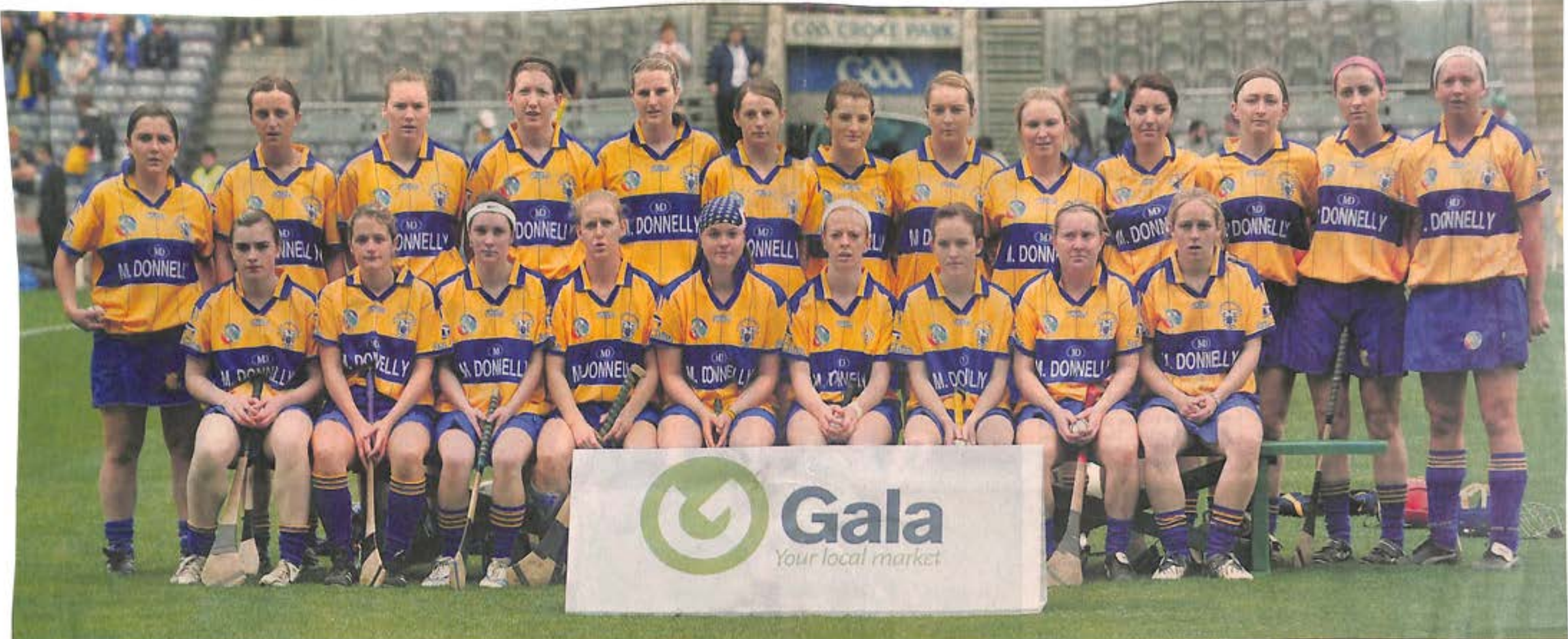
But don't be surprised if this goes to the wire again and Catherine's nip it. Verdict: Douglas.

● Three games are also down for decision in the Evening Echo Senior B championship this weekend.

Tomorrow, Bishopstown and Killeagh meet at 5pm at the Camogie Grounds, Castle Road, Blackrock and both have been making good progress in the series. They go into the clash level on three points each from three games.

Valley Rovers will be hoping to continue their good run when they meet Ballylough in Ballylough on Sunday at 5.30pm. Rockham and Glen Rovers meet in Castle Road on Sunday at 4.30pm.

Sept. 2008



■ ALL-IRELAND CHAMPIONS: (back from left) Clare McMahon, Laura Linnane, Fiona Lafferty, Denise Lynch, Siobhan Lafferty, Amy McInerney, Shónagh Enright, Aiveen O'Shea, Aoife Ryan, Aoife Griffin, Dee Corcoran, Jane Scanlan, Sharon McMahon. (Front from left) Kate Lynch, Amy Collieran, Aine O'Brien, Cathy Hally, Chloe Morey, Deirdre Murphy, Carina Roseingrave, Clare Commane, Danielle Sheedy. Photographs by John

Camogie comes back from the brink

YEARS of service in the saffron and blue were rewarded on Sunday as Deirdre Murphy finally captained her county to a coveted All-Ireland title.

For most of the game it looked like she was going to be on the wrong side yet again, but things eventually worked out for her and for Clare.

"There's O'Callaghan captained Cork three times and three times Cork didn't win. Personally I would have found it very hard to captain Clare three times and not lead them to silverware. I'm so delighted that we did it for a finish," she said afterwards.

Intangibles like spirit and determination were vital she felt. "Some days it just comes down to work and heart and determination and that was it today. It wasn't pretty. But we were beaten in a classic last year and there was no medals for that," she said.

The Clare captain had praise for Offaly but felt that the Banner side had got some long overdue breaks. "All over the field they played a fantastic brand of hurling. But we dug in, we got the scores at vital times and we had the bit of luck that we never had before."

Another All-Ireland defeat could have been the end for the current Clare side, she said, but the win provides a great boost to the game in the county. "For Clare camogie this is huge. The age profile of our team is quite young but it would have been very, very hard to come back from a defeat today, even for the girls in their early twenties. We have underage players who have just been to a minor final. Clare camogie is in a very good state if we can push on. It's a brilliant place for Clare camogie to be."

She felt that Clare's desperation to finally win an All-Ireland might have actually counted against them in the first half. "I think we wanted to win so badly that we nearly forgot that you have to go out and hurt every ball on its merits. We were very calm in the dressing room at half time and we knew we hadn't done ourselves justice and we were determined to put that right."

Carina Roseingrave's early strike had kept

Late goal seals it for Newcestown

AN injury time goal from a Colette Desmond free saw Newcestown pip Glen Rovers at the post to take the points on offer in an exciting Evening Echo Senior B Championship contest.

The Glen girls led 1-8 to 1-3 at the interval, Denise Luby hitting early goal to which Colette Desmond replied. Cornelia Short extended the lead with a points before Newcestown came storming back, and two goals from Desmond drew them level. Luby gave Glen back the advantage with a long range effort, before Desmond's free edged Newcestown in front with full time looming.

Killineigh got the upper hand on Bishopstown in the second half of their meeting after a close opening half where Killineigh held the edge at the break as they led 2-5 to 0-6, thanks to goals from Angela Walsh and Gillian Cunningham. Bishopstown kept in touch through the accuracy of Maeve Scannell and Eileen Foyle. Killineigh upped the pace from the restart, and with Noelle O'Donovan, Clare Keohane and Stephanie Beausing striking points they stretched their advantage when a third goal from Angela Walsh saw them victorious.

Rockham made a great start and led by 2-4 with goals from Elaine Casey before Glen Rovers' Karen O'Connell got her side on the scoreboard with a point. Since O'Halloran grabbed a Glen goal with Denise Luby adding a point, but it was Rockham who led 3-7 to 1-2 at the break with Silé Burns and Sarah Coleman on target.

Clare in the match, even though the Banner side were under the cosh throughout the first half. "Carina is a fantastic player and it was a fantastically worked goal. Offaly dominated for the next half an hour so if we hadn't had that goal they would probably have been out of sight. It kept us close in scores even though we were being beaten off the field."

The Clare captain would have empathised with the sadness and disappointment of her Offaly counterpart Marion Crean.

The midfielder was very emotional and hugely disappointed with the late turnaround.

The character of the Clare side had been a major factor, she felt. "They were relentless, they weren't going to give up, I was watching the clock, there was about ten seconds to go and they got the bloody goal. I couldn't believe it. I thought we'd get the ball back up to the other end but it wasn't to be."

She felt that the Faithful deserved the spoils they didn't get. "We could have won it. We were the better team but it wasn't to be today. I know how Clare felt now because as a friend of mine said it was an exact replica of last year. My heart goes out to the girls there who are blaming themselves. We gave it everything and I hope we did Offaly proud. We did the best we could do anyway."

Like the Clare players last year, she felt the result was an injustice. "I feel like we were dealt an unfair hand because it was ours. You could nearly taste the victory. It just shows it's not over until the very, very end."

She said that Sunday's defeat will motivate Offaly. "Really next year I'd predict an Offaly-Antrim final. We'll be in it. We'll fight tooth and nail to get back here. I want to do it before I retire. I don't care who picks up the cup, but I want to be part of it and my number between 1 and 30 will do me."

From the start of the second half the Glen upped the tempo and inside 15 minutes they had eaten into Rockham's lead and now just two points separated the sides as Glen, with Siobhán O'Halloran and Luby on target, fired home 2-3 without reply. Rockham were hanging on and were grateful to the accuracy of Silé Burns who pointed two free to give them breathing space as they put four points between the sides, and the same player saw her long range effort end in the net to extend the Rockham lead.

They looked to have weathered the storm, but the Glen girls battled back, and two Denise Luby pointed free kept them within striking distance with four minutes remaining, however, it was Rockham who finished stronger with Cara Coleman grabbing an injury time goal to seal victory after a hard fought battle.

An Asling O'Brien goal on the stroke of full time gave Ballinacorney the points in a close battle with Valley Rovers in Belgooly. Never allowing Valley's settle, Ballinacorney led 0-3 to 0-2 at the interval. Valley's began to gain a grip, but Ballinacorney never allowed them out of sight and a Deirdre Murphy helped Ballinacorney stay in contention. Clodagh Fleming kept them in the game with a superb last minute save to deny Valley's before O'Brien struck in the last minute. In the junior B championship semi-final Brian Dillon's booked their place in the final against Douglas when they defeated Carrigrohane.

Bermuda Sports Munster Colleges Championships



LINDA MELLERICK

SENIOR A: (15 A Side) quarter-finals by October 24: Coachford v Christ King, Cork, St Caimin's v Ursuline's, Thurles.

Final: Saturday, January 17

Semi-finals by November 14: Charleville v Nenagh, St Caimin's (th) Ursuline's v Coachford/Christ King

SENIOR B (15 A Side) first round by October 10: Bandon v Tulla; BCS Lismore v Borrisoleigh

Semi-finals by November 14: St Mary's, Mallow v Carrig On Suir; A v B; C v D.

Quarter-finals by October 24: A. Bandon / Tulla v Colaiste Choilm, Cork; B. Cashel v BCS Lismore / Borrisoleigh.

Final on Saturday, January 17: C. Mallow/Carrig On Suir v Borrisokane; D. St Flannan's v Clonakilty

SENIOR C Denis Kelly Cup (15 A side) first round by October 10: Colaiste, Ennis v Dromcollogher.

Semi-finals by November 14: Carrignavar v St Angela's, Cork; A v B; Hospital v Laurel Hill; C v D; Cahir v Middleton; Carrigtwohill v Doon; Mercy, Waterford v Pres, Thurles; Carrigaline v Kinsale; Fermoy v Youghal. Final on Saturday, January 17.

Quarter-finals by October 24: A. Ennis / Dromcollogher v Carrignavar / St Angela's; B. Hospital / Laurel Hill v Cahir / Middleton; C. Carrigtwohill / Doon v Waterford / Thurles; D. Carrigaline / Kinsale v Fermoy / Youghal

JAC (15 a side) quarter-final by October 31: Charleville v Bandon; Nenagh v Christ King

Semi-finals by November 21, final on January 24.

Coachford v Charleville / Bandon; St. Caimin's v Nenagh / Christ King

JBC: (15 a side) first round by October 24: Cashel v Carrig On Suir; Ursuline's, Thurles v Borrisoleigh; BCS Lismore v Kinsale; St Mary's, Mallow v Loretto, Fermoy

Quarter-finals by November 21: A. St. Flannan's v Carrigaline; B. Cashel / Carrig On Suir v Mallow / Fermoy; C. Borrisokane v BCS Lismore / Kinsale; D. Col Choilm v Thurles / Borrisoleigh

Semi-finals by December 12, final on January 24.

A v B C v D

JCC (15 a side) first round by October 24: Hospital v Colaiste, Ennis; Roscrea v Dromcollogher; Pres, Thurles v Laurel Hill; Carrignavar v SMI Newcastlewest; Waterford v Youghal; Passage v St. Angela's, Cork.

Quarter-finals by November 21: A. Roscrea / Dromcollogher v Waterford / Youghal; B. Hospital / Ennis v Passage / St. Angela's; C. Clonakilty v Carrignavar / SMI; D. Thurles / Laurel Hill v St. Patrick's, Cork

Semi-finals by December 5, final on January 24.

A v B C v D

THE week after winning an All-Ireland is fantastic!

The feeling of contentment is hard to put into words unless you've experienced it.

It's funny, but I never really got huge enjoyment from the night of a final. Possibly because I was always too drained. But I would be buzzing on the Monday.

The Tuesday was always my favourite though. It was only about then that the victory hit home.

The Monday rushing around, the homecoming, the trip to the captain's club was always brilliant but extremely tiring.

The players looked just about ready to fall down last Monday night in Rockban.

At that stage most had probably only had a few hours sleep in 36 hours but the adrenaline keeps you going.

Tuesday is great. Visiting the schools hasn't possibly started yet, typically the Wednesday or Thursday so Tuesday is your own day.

We used to meet for lunch and then just take it from there. It was nice to sit and discuss the match, events of the weekend and the championship in general.

It's a camaraderie that only people involved in sport can fully appreciate.

Looking back on the game and the victory I must say I got immense satisfaction out of it. Maybe it was because Denise Cronin was manager and I was thrilled for her.

I thought it was a great team effort. Even those who might not have had grabbed the headlines fought for every ball and did their bit and it's a while since I've seen the entire team do that on a given day.

Aoife Murray proved what I have been saying for three years now; that she is the best goalkeeper in the country. To think that this player has yet

Buzz is still there week after victory



Cork's Mary O'Connor celebrates after defeating Galway in the last week's All-Ireland senior camogie final at Croke Park. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

to win an All Star is a sin. I'm delighted that she showed herself for what she is on the biggest stage of them all.

Lynda O'Connell once again gave it all she had, a trait we have become accustomed to with her, and her player remained scoreless.

Catriona Foley had a tough hour but her square was her territory and no one was get-

ting through.

Her fair shoulder I thought (but I'm bias) which led to the penalty was admirable. Joanne O'Callaghan had her best hour in a Cork jersey in a long time.

She was excellent. To star in an All Ireland final is every player's dream.

Gemma O'Connor at right half back! What can I say

about this player that I haven't said before? She has it all.

She was one of Cork's first players to settle after the team had a shaky start and won every single ball. I've no doubt that if she were in a more central position she would have been even more influential.

Mary O'Connor had a tre-

mendous second half. Her reading of the game was excellent and as always she swept up a huge amount of breaking ball.

Sarah Hayes is possibly the unsung heroine in this line of defence. Filling the gap left by Anna Geary, Hayes stepped up to the challenge and her final display mirrored her performances all year. Rena Buckley, when introduced, was as dependable as ever.

I said before the game that midfield needed to be won and Brieghe Corkery and Catriona Foley were the ones to ensure it happened.

Foley first; she was brilliant. It was Catriona who got to grips with the game first. She settled Cork, along with Gemma. Her performance for the hour was the best I've seen her play since her introduction to the senior panel three years ago.

It has been great watching her grow into the player she is today. And she's only a quarter of the way there yet. Brieghe Corkery!

I don't need to say anything about Brieghe because the whole country is doing that for me. She is on the tip of everyone's tongue and is a household name at 21.

Cork's forward line had it tough against a very good defence. But each and every one fought for every ball. No Galway defender cleared easily.

The long deliveries witnessed in the semi-final weren't happening for Galway last Sunday.

Amanda O'Regan, Una O'Donoghue and Elaine O'Riordan might not have made the scoresheet but that matters little.

They did their bit. Emer O'Sullivan had a very commendable All Ireland debut and that's not easy. Rachel Moloney's free taking was crucial and Sile Burns' goals were out of the top drawer. Such confidence!

Emer O'Farrell added a huge physical presence when introduced and hit good ball.

Jim McCarthy had the team in top physical condition. It truly was a great performance and well done to all involved.

CAMOGIE CLUBS ROUND-BY-BY MARY NEWMAN

ST CATHERINE'S Club Sponsor Cork Builders Providers All Ireland Victory

Congratulations to the Cork panel of players and management team on a tremendous victory over Galway in this year's All-Ireland Final which took place in Croke Park on Sunday, Sept 14. Regarded by many as one of the finest games of camogie played in Croke Park it was a very special for our club as Orla Cotter lined out at midfield for Cork.

In her third season with Cork, Orla has experienced the highs and lows of All-Ireland final day in Croke Park having come on as a substitute in the 2006 final when Cork were victorious and lining out at full-forward in 2007 when Wexford deprived Cork of the three-in-a-row.

On Sunday last, however, there was no denying Cork as, despite Galway's best efforts, the Rebels were not going to be beaten.

Orla had a fine game in her favourite midfield position and also got on the score sheet with an excellent second half point. A large crowd of supporters travelled by bus to Croke Park to support the rebels. A great day was had by all.

Senior Championship replay

Tomorrow, Sunday, at 1.45pm, in Ballinlough, our girls renew rivalry with Douglas with a county semi-final shot awaiting the victors. Having come back from a seemingly impossible position in the drawn game to snatch a last minute reprieve our girls will need to settle early and take the game to

Douglas from the start. We have the ability to win this game but must play to our full potential to do so as Douglas are formidable opposition as they proved in the drawn game.

U16 Championship
Our U16 team are in the semi-final of this competition and await the winners of Clonakilty and Ballinascorthy. This game will take place in the near future and our girls preparations are on-going.

St Finbarr's

Congratulations to Gemma O'Connor, Lynda O'Connell and Jenny Duffy who won All-Ireland senior medals in Croke Park last Sunday. Our girls were part of a tremendous Cork outfit that suppressed the Galway challenge and claimed the O'Duffy Cup for the 23rd time. Gemma must in line for another All-Star award which would place her at the top of the Roll of Honour with five.

At the homecoming on Monday night, Pat Murray posed the question: is Lynda O'Connell the only player to win All-Ireland medals on the field of play in Junior, Intermediate, Senior B and Senior grades? Having checked my records, the answer is; yes. However, if the minor grade was substituted for the senior B grade, both Rachel Moloney and Rosalie Holland would qualify as they won All-Ireland medals on the field of play in four different grades.

It is back to serious business on the club front for Gemma, Lynda and Jenny with the semi-final of the Cork senior championship against Ballygarvan down for decision on Sunday. The Barrs played Ballygarvan in the

opening round and registered a narrow 0-14 to 0-11 win. On that occasion some of our players allowed themselves to be distracted from the task in hand and nearly paid the price.

In the meantime, the Barrs recorded an impressive 2-13 to 1-9 win over Cloughduv with a great display of camogie. We have the talent to progress to the final. With complete concentration on the job in hand, we should steer a passage to the county final.

St Vincent's

Well done to the U11 B team who were victorious over Douglas on Saturday last in the Seandun final. Best of the luck to the U11 premier team in their final today V Douglas at the 3.30pm in the new camogie pitch Castle Road, Blackrock.

U11 B Final

The Seandun Evening Echo U11 B final lived up to expectations giving the large attendance a rip roaring game full of excitement with St Vincent's coming out on top in a seven-goal thriller. The game started off with both teams displaying nerves both sets of players playing in their first final. Douglas opened the scoring on ten minutes. This score seemed to drive St Vincent's on and after a period of concerted pressure Chloe O'Shea goalied to leave the team's level at the short whistle. St Vincent's started where they left off piling on the pressure on the Douglas defence this paid off with a goal from midfielder Teigan Russell. St Vincent's were now dominant but could not add to their lead. On a rare break Douglas scored and on the next

pick out Douglas won the ball and scored another goal. St Vincent's upped their game and got a well deserved equaliser with five minutes on the clock from Russell. Vincent's now were hurting well all over the field but were finding the Douglas defence a hard nut to crack. It took a bit of special skill to unlock the Douglas defence. This came from wing forward Dion Manning who picked the ball on halfway and soloed all the way to the Douglas net scoring what was a great individual goal.

St Vincent's: Megan O'Callaghan, Lydia Conway, Amy O'Regan, Lydia Culien Anderson, Lorna Coffey, Amy O'Regan, Emma O'Leary, Teigan Russell, Taylor Duggan, Dion Manning, Lauren Homan, Shelly O'Hanlon, Karen Daly, Chloe O'Shea, Carrie Fitzgerald, Emily O'Callaghan, Chloe Lingwood, Niamh Connolly, Louise Sheehan, Emma McAuliffe, Teigan Cunningham, Rebecca Harris, Yvonne Brady.

A special thanks to Ger Sheehan who officiated the game at short notice. Go rainm mile maith agat.

GLEN ROVERS

Today Saturday our U14 A team contest the county semi-final when they meet Valley Rovers in Coachford at 11.30am we wish them well in their quest for a place in the final.

Both of our U16 teams have important games coming up as both contest the league semi-finals shortly while our minor team have two games to play in their championship series and we are endeavouring to get

these game with Mallow and Killeagh fixed shortly and we await confirmation of dates from our opposition.

Tomorrow, Sunday, our senior team will play the third game in their championship when they face Rockban in the new camogie pitch at Castle Road, Blackrock, throw in at 4.30pm.

Well done to the Cork senior team on bringing home the O'Duffy cup on Sunday last special congratulations to our own Denise Cronin who is manager with the Cork side and to Jim McCarthy from Glen/St Nick's who was coach to the teams. Denise was a tremendous player totally committed and dedicated to her training and she instilled her spirit and determination into the Cork side, without doubt the contribution from both Denise and Jim paid a big part in the team's success and we extend a big word of praise to both. On Thursday last members of the Cork team paid a visit to our local schools with the O'Duffy cup and they received huge welcomes in Scoil Oibier, St Brendan's and St Aidan's. Hopefully the visit will encourage many young girls to take up camogie in the months ahead.

Training Times

U6 to 12 year olds Sunday morning 11.45am

and Tuesdays 5.45pm to 7pm.

U13/ 14 teams Monday and Friday at 5.30pm.

Senior/ Junior/ Minor Monday and Wednesday 6.30pm.

We look forward to welcoming everybody and invite new members to come along.

AT LONG LAST

Classy Barrs can beat fierce rivals

SUNDAY

Evening Echo Cork County Senior Camogie Championship semi-final
St Finbarr's v Ballygarvan
Ballinlough, 3.45pm

THE gate receipts will be doubled on Sunday afternoon as the clash of Ballygarvan and St Finbarr's has drawn huge interest from the camogie-following public, writes **LINDA MELLERICK**.

The intensity and physical aspect to the opening game shows a strong rivalry exists between the sides.

Both teams no doubt felt the affect of a bruising encounter last June and once it doesn't get out of control it will be exciting to watch. St Finbarr's, looking to reach their third final in as many years, eagerly want another showdown with Muskerry after last year's final defeat.

That may not happen as Muskerry have yet to play the winners of Douglas and St Catherine's but all St Finbarr's can do is trek their own path and await the outcome. Ballygarvan stand in their way of atoning for last year.

Ballygarvan though may prove to be not as balanced as the Barrs. They rely too heavily on Emer Dillon and Catriena Kell — if there is a slight off day for either player the results often does not go Ballygarvan's way.

Losing by three points to the Barrs, they availed of the back door system and regrouped, accounting comfortably for Inniscarra but struggling against Courcy Rovers. If they had another Emer Dillon in the middle of the pitch and another top-scoring forward to partner Kelly they would be a serious team. They also lost the services of Mary Ellen O'Donovan in goal for the season through injury and this hasn't helped their cause.

Ballygarvan won't go down without a fight though and are the team who continuously rock the favourites year in and year out since their step up to senior status. St Finbarr's look to have the winning of this game on paper and the return of Orla O'Sullivan further strengthens the side. Her 1-2 against Cloughduv in the quarter final was instrumental in their advancement.

Vivienne Harris will punish any wrongdoing on Ballygarvan's behalf with her accuracy from placed balls but likewise Kelly will do the same.

The Barrs have quality players in every line of the field.

With Lynda O'Connell, Jenny Duffy and Gemma O'Connor back from senior inter-county duty — and Harris, O'Sullivan, Trish Doyle and Ber Maher all extremely good club players — it is hard to look beyond St Finbarr's.

Verdict: St Finbarr's.

