

Cork ace Amy O'Connor is still relishing every minute of inter-county life as a new-look Rebels team finds its groove

BY KIERAN MCCARTHY

AMY O'Connor's enthusiasm for the sport she loves is contagious.

Now in her 13th season, the Cork stalwart's passion hasn't waned. In fact, it's the opposite.

'I love it. I absolutely love it,' she beams.

'I love going to training. I love the feeling when you are playing in Thurles, Croke Park and Páirc Uí Chaoimh. That hasn't changed.

'I probably do appreciate it a bit more. Thinking back to the 2014 and 2015 All-Ireland finals, I was only 17 or 18 years old.

'I enjoy it now and love it as much as ever.'

The six-time All-Ireland winner is the perfect Cork camogie ambassador.

She's been there, done that and still wants to contribute to the cause, stressing that she has more to give.

So too does the game itself, O'Connor insists. New rules have improved the sport, both for players and supporters. It's a stronger product overall.

'The game is in a much better place,' the Cork forward says.

'There are games now where we are scoring more than hurling games. The matches are much more free-flowing. Our players are so athletic and physical now.

'It's been a massive change, but brilliant. It's exactly what we want to see.

'Years ago, we would have played in an All-Ireland final and it might have finished 0-9 to 0-8, whereas now it's much more high-scoring, and that's positive.

'The game is in a really good place.'

Look at Cork's opening two games in Group 1 of the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Championship. The Rebels beat All-Ireland champions Galway by 0-18 to 1-8 away from home in their opener. On the road again, Ger Manley's team beat Tipperary 0-21 to 0-18 in a shoot-out.

So, is camogie on the cusp of a boom?

'I think it will be massive, but only if the eyes are on it. But how do we get the eyes on it? That's a massive chal-

'I love it. I absolutely love it'



LEFT: Amy O'Connor celebrates a score in Cork's senior championship win away to Galway.

campaign and an all-too-short Munster championship, the Rebels are showing that class is permanent.

'We're delighted. We had a tough

league and a tough Munster campaign, so it was good to get back to winning ways,' O'Connor says.

'We put in a good performance against Galway and, against Tipp, we probably didn't play exceptionally well but still did enough to get over the line.

'It's a very positive start to the campaign.'

That away win in Athenry against Galway that kickstarted Cork's championship looks ever more important with each passing week.

'I think so, and it didn't really matter who it was against because we had such a tough league campaign and tough Munster, so it was good to get back to those winning ways,' she says.

'Even if we didn't win, putting in that good performance was very important to us.'

'The game is in a really good place'

The challenge now is to keep this winning streak going and build momentum ahead of the knock-out stages. The home game against Waterford is an opportunity to make it three wins in a row.

'We aren't under any illusions. It was great to get the two wins but there is a lot to improve on,' O'Connor explains.

'Being consistent is super important for us. Can we continuously improve and put in those consistent performances? Going out against Waterford, the first two games will mean nothing if we don't put in a good performance.

'They will be tough opposition. They had a good win against Tipp in the first game and were close to Galway last week. There is nothing between the four teams in the group, so you can get quality games every week.'

The new format in this year's senior championship means Cork, and all four teams in Group 1, are guaranteed a place in the knock-out stages. The top two go directly into the All-Ireland semi-finals, while the third and fourth-placed

CAMOGIE GROUP 1

	P	W	L	D	F	A	Pts
Cork	2	2	0	0	39	29	6
Waterford	2	1	1	0	29	29	3
Galway	2	1	1	0	27	31	3
Tipperary	2	0	2	0	31	37	0

teams move into quarter-finals to face the top two from Group 2.

In one sense, there is no jeopardy in the Group 1 games because all four teams, who were semi-finalists last season, know they will progress regardless of results.

But O'Connor sees the structure as a positive.

'It's a funny one. When you are trying to explain it to people, they struggle to wrap their heads around it,' she says.

'From our perspective, being in a group with the top four from last year has been really positive because every week you are playing top-quality opposition and preparing yourself well for the knock-out games.

'Whether or not it will be seen as a positive across the board, I am not sure. We will only know that at the quarter-final, semi-final and final stages.

'We are getting top-quality games every week and that helps you figure out where you are at from very early on.'

For Cork, after what hap-

Amy O'Connor at Croke Park as PwC announced an extension of their title sponsorship of PwC GAA/GPA All-Stars and Camogie All-Stars for a further three years. (Photo: Sam Barnes Sportsfile)

pened in the league and in Munster, playing Galway, Tipp and Waterford is just what they needed to rediscover their mojo.

'It's good to know where you are at,' O'Connor says.

'It's not that the league or Munster didn't necessarily go to plan. Obviously, we want to win every game, but we have to be realistic too about where we were at - we lost 14 players from last year, which was massive.

'In our first couple of league games, we had only two or three starters from last year's All-Ireland final, which is a huge turnover. Every team in the country, men or women, would struggle with that.

'Yes, it was tough in the league and in Munster, and we would have liked to have been a bit better, but it just wasn't to be. So getting the opportunity to play against the top teams will show us where we are at and where we need to improve.'

The signs so far are encouraging, with O'Connor leading by example as always.

Contenders ready with all to play for on the last day



Muireann Duffy

Galway and Waterford seek semi-final berths, while Kilkenny have secured their quarter-final spot

If this week's heatwave wasn't a sure enough sign, the summer has certainly arrived, and with it, jeopardy comes knocking on the door of the All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship.

With one round of games remaining in the group stages, potential paths to the O'Duffy Cup are starting to reveal themselves, while the relegation trapdoor is also waiting to fall open for one unfortunate county.

In Group 1, reigning All-Ireland champions Galway will need to back up their win over Waterford last time out as they look to secure the remaining semi-final berth on offer.

In a replay of last season's All-Ireland semi-finals, the Tribeswomen host Tipperary at Kenny Park while the Déise go to Páirc Uí Rinn, also in the reckoning for that place in the final four. Their hosts Cork, off the back of a seven-point win in Athenry and victory away to Tipp a fortnight ago, have already secured a direct route to the semi-finals, while the Premier County know they'll have to go the long road via the quarter-finals after picking up two defeats in the group.

Who joins Cork in the semi-finals will come down to which county picks up more points on Sunday.

Should Waterford and Galway end the day level on points, Cathal Murray's side will take the semi-final place on the head-to-head result, Galway having come away from Walsh Park with a 1-13 to 0-13 win in the second round.

There are more moving parts in the six-team Group 2, from which the top-two finishers will qualify for the quarter-finals and the bottom two teams face a relegation playoff.

Perfect run

Two counties already know where they're headed. Kilkenny guaranteed their progression to the knockout rounds with a game to spare after beating Clare last weekend to continue their perfect run, while their opponents today Wexford are on the opposite end of the table,



Dervla Higgins of Galway is tracked by Bevin Bowdren of Waterford. Both their counties have a chance to make the semi-finals. PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID RIBEIRO/INPHO

already booked into the relegation playoff.

Eugene Foudy's Clare side are in control their own fate when they travel to play 2025 intermediate champions Offaly this afternoon. The Banner's sole, albeit chastening, defeat of the campaign was that 4-14 to 1-8 loss to Kilkenny, so a quarter-final spot is theirs if they avoid defeat in Birr.

Only a Clare defeat would open the door for Limerick and Offaly to remain in contention. If the Faithful can bag a win, they'll join the Banner on 9

points and would go ahead because of the head-to-head rule.

However, if Offaly and Limerick both get wins - Limerick hosting Dublin in Cappamore - then the three counties will have 9 points apiece, and the quarter-final place will be decided on scoring difference. Clare are currently out in front on that count, -3 compared to Limerick's -13 and Offaly's -14.

The two mid-table sitters also have the added motivation of knowing that if they avoid defeat, they'll be safe from an

unwanted place in the relegation playoff.

Dublin are in the greatest danger of joining Wexford, their 1-18 to 0-8 win over Gerry McQuaid's side being their only win so far in the All-Ireland series, and a draw or defeat in Limerick would seal their fate. The county that comes out on the losing end of the relegation playoff will drop down to the intermediate ranks for 2027.

Once the weekend's business is wrapped up, the draw for the two All-Ireland quarter-finals will be held on Monday during Morning Ireland on RTÉ Radio One. To avoid repeat pairings from the group stages, the two counties that qualify out of Group 1 will be drawn against the two counties from Group 2.

The quarter-finals will be played as double-headers with the All-Ireland SHC semi-finals at Croke Park on Saturday, July 4th and Sunday, July 5th.

WEEKEND FIXTURES (all 3.30pm)

Saturday
Group 2: Wexford v Kilkenny (Wexford Park); Offaly v Clare (St Brendan's Park, Birr - Live on the Camogie Association's YouTube channel); Limerick v Dublin (Cappamore GAA).

Sunday
Group 1: Galway v Tipperary (Kenny Park, Athenry); Cork v Waterford (Páirc Uí Rinn - Live on the Camogie Association's YouTube channel)

Cork's perfect record books direct route

All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship

Cork	1-13
Waterford	0-10

Therese O'Callaghan
Páirc Uí Rinn

The results might not have been as good as they would have liked earlier in the season, but Cork have rediscovered their winning formula just in time.

With 10 of last year's All-Ireland final starting team, they secured a direct passage to the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship semi-final courtesy of victory over Waterford in Páirc Uí Rinn.

By winning all three games in Group 1, they boast a 100% record. Galway occupy the second semi-final spot.

Waterford, meanwhile, will discover their opponents in the quarter-final on today's

The league and provincial runners-up, as well as Tipperary, will be drawn against either Kilkenny or Clare, who completed Group 2 in first and second place, respectively.

The Déise will have to plan without former All-Star Niamh Rockett, who received a straight red card for a challenge on Laura Hayes in second-half stoppage time.

"It was a tough game, there was a lot of hard tackling," acknowledged Cork manager Ger Manley. "Camogie has changed quite a bit."

"We had a very hard game up in Galway. Tipp were the same. We're four very even teams."

"Niamh isn't a dirty player, nobody goes out to hurt anybody. Laura is a small bit sore, but she will be fine."

Amy Lee's seventh-minute goal was an important moment - the goalkeeper dispatched a monster delivery after a one-two with full-back Libby Coppinger, and the sliotar bounced high into the



Cork's Sorcha McCartan gets away from Waterford's Laoise Forrest at Páirc Uí Rinn as Cork secured a direct passage to the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship semi-final. Picture: INPHO/Stephen Heaney

"I'll never hear the end of it," Manley smiled.

"We were trying to be direct with the wind, use the ball well. Look, it took a bad bounce for Brianna [O'Regan] but it was very important for us as it gave us a bit of a cushion."

That cushion was a 1-5 to 0-5 interval advantage.

"We didn't go well in the first half. Our forward line looked dangerous when they got the ball, we just didn't get enough in. I thought Waterford were very good coming out with it, they worked it well, they had runners coming through the middle and it took us a while to adjust. And when we did, Ashling [Thompson], Laura Hayes, and Mille Condon came right into it."

"We were outstanding in the second half against a very strong wind."

Player of the Match Sorcha McCartan was a real thorn in Waterford's side, especially her three points in the first half, while Amy O'Connor

Teenager Kelly stars as Galway power into semi

Kevin Egan

All-Ireland champions Galway enjoyed a comprehensive 3-17 to 0-15 win over Tipperary in Athenry to book their semi-final spot.

Sarsfields teenager Caoimhe Kelly made an immediate impact with 1-1 in the opening minutes, getting 1-4 in all, while Niamh McPeake bagged two goals.

Eimear McGrath shot 0-11 for Tipperary.

In Saturday's action, Clare

The game also marked a return from injury for captain Méabh Cahalane as well as Ashling Thompson, and both stalwarts proved their worth during what was a tense and tight battle.

Even though Waterford face

picked up a 0-16 to 1-8 win over Offaly in Birr, Limerick landed a stoppage-time equaliser to force a 3-12 to 1-18 draw against Dublin, and Kilkenny overcame a slow start to beat Wexford despite making 11 changes.

Those results now mean that Dublin and Wexford will contest the relegation final, Clare and Kilkenny will both go into the quarter-final draw, and they will each play one of either Tipperary or Waterford.

a quick turnaround to be ready for next weekend's quarter-final in Croke Park, Mick Boland has plenty of reasons to be optimistic. If you remove the goal, they are not far away.

Through top-scorer Beth

Carton, fit-again captain Lorraine Bray, and Keeley Corbett Barry, you get a real flavour of how strongly motivated they are to succeed.

Being league and provincial finalists, they are not short on motivation either.

Scorers for Cork: A O'Connor (0-6 frees), A Lee (1-0), S McCartan (0-3), S McCarthy (0-2 frees), A Thompson and O Cahalane (0-1 each).

Scorers for Waterford: B Carton (0-4, 0-2 frees), N Rockett (0-1 free) and A Fitzgerald (0-2 each), B Bowdren and M O'Brien (0-1 each).

CORK: A Lee; I O'Regan, L Coppinger, M Cahalane (Capt); A Fitzgerald, M Murphy, I Sheehan; M Condon, L Hayes; S McCarthy, A Thompson, E Murphy; S McCartan, O Cahalane, A O'Connor.

Subs: N McNabola for E Murphy (58), H Ryan for L Hayes (67 temp).

WATERFORD: B O'Regan; V Falconer, L Forrest, A McNulty; C Carroll, K Corbett Barry, R Walsh; O Hickey, A Flynn; E O'Neill, B Carton, B Bowdren; A Fitzgerald, M Gostli, M O'Brien.

Subs: L Bray (Capt) for M Gostli (half-time), A O'Sullivan for B Bowdren (temp 32-36), N Rockett for M O'Brien (35), A O'Sullivan for O Hickey (55), R Kirwan for A Fitzgerald (58).

Referee: Donnacha O'Callaghan (Limerick).

Tipp set up Cork showdown

Daragh Ó Conchúir

For the winning quarter-finalists of the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship, having something to look forward to on July 25 was what it was all about.

The draw, carried out immediately after the conclusion of Tipperary's 3-20 to 3-13 victory over Clare at Croke Park yesterday, pitched the Premier County against Cork in the semi-finals, while champions Galway will take on Kilkenny, who edged out Waterford by 2-19 to 1-19 after extra time at HQ on Saturday.

Both those games will take place at Semple Stadium; for Tipp manager James Heffernan, that was his primary focus.

"We're at home, we're delighted to be in Semple Stadium," said Heffernan, who is in his first year in the job.

"Cork and Galway will go in as massive favourites, we know that, and on the form line, that's deserved. They have been way out in front for the last couple of years, and the form line is showing this year that that is the same.

"So, we're glad we have the three weeks, because we need it to go up against either of those two teams. But the fact that we'll be at home, it's a big, a big bonus, as we should have a massive Tipp crowd there, hopefully. So I can't wait for it."

Kilkenny's Laura Murphy, who recovered from jarring her knee and looking in serious pain in the first half to deliver four points and much more in a player-of-the-match performance, was of similar mindset, albeit that she had no idea who lay in store in the aftermath of their game.



A STEP AHEAD: Tipperary's Celine Guinan challenged by Clare's Roisin Begley during the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship quarter-final at Croke Park yesterday. Picture: Tom O'Hanlon/Inpho

"One of them is as good as the other, it's all the one to us at this stage," Murphy contended reasonably. "We're just glad to be there and training for another three weeks."

Tipp led by six points at half time yesterday but Clare had nine wides in that opening period and it took them until the 24th minute to get off the mark, via Andrea O'Keeffe.

Róisín Howard goaled from the restart for Tipp and when player of the match Caoimhe Stakelum — a minor star in

2025 — rifled to the net with the purest strike you will ever see, it was over. Clodagh McIntyre raised a third green flag in the 45th minute to put 16 points between them.

Clare battled hard, as Heffernan withdrew the likes of Eimear McGrath and McIntyre, substitute Aine O'Loughlin grabbing 1-2, and Ellen Casey lashing home two goals from a free and penalty respectively, but their wastefulness and Tipp's economy meant that they had too much

to do.

"We felt we probably had enough done with 15 minutes to go... disappointing alright to concede a couple of goals towards the end," Heffernan said. "But overall, it was a good performance. We scored 3-15 from play, which is important, because we probably hadn't been doing that the last couple of weeks."

"The goal was to get into semi-final. We're home now in Semple Stadium for the semi-finals, so it's very positive."

"There's just loads of talent there, and it's getting that message across that we need everyone to contribute and they contributed well there today, but it is important that you have scores coming from deep, especially midfield, half-back line, that kind of stuff."

"I thought we did that well today, that we got our midfielders forward, which is important."

"There's loads of good young players on the squad, and they've brought a lot of

Cork to face Tipp in semis

The draw for the Camogie Championship semi-finals has pitted Munster rivals Cork and Tipperary together in the last four. Tipp cruised to a quarter-final win over Clare at Croke Park on Sunday. In the second semi-final, Galway will meet Kilkenny, who overcame Waterford after extra time on Saturday in Croke Park. The semi-finals will take place in a double-header in FBD Semple Stadium on Saturday, July 25 (live on RTE). Galway-Kilkenny will throw in at 4pm, followed by Cork-Tipperary at 6pm.

energy and freshness to the to the set-up this year.

"We definitely feel like we have the scoring power up front, but it's not enough to just have those players on the pitch. You have to get good ball into them, and you need to work really hard as well to stop the opposition of getting a run on us as well, and so it's just to put that together in a big game."

"We're definitely looking forward to that challenge. The girls aren't training since November to only go that far."

Elsewhere, Dublin turned around their Leinster final defeat by Wexford to secure senior level next year, while the Yellowbellies will be operating at intermediate level as a result of the 0-17 to 1-10 verdict.

In the second tier, Armagh will play Meath and Kerry will play Laois in the semi-finals. A goal in extra time by Kaylee O'Keeffe snatched a 1-15 to 3-6 victory for Laois over Down, while Meath edged out Derry by 0-15 to 0-12.

Kilkenny book semi spot and purge last year's loss

All-Ireland Camogie SC quarter-final

Kilkenny	2-19
Waterford	1-19

(AET)

Therese O'Callaghan
Croke Park

Kilkenny celebrated an All-Ireland camogie quarter-final victory at Croke Park on Saturday, purging memories of 12 months ago when they suffered at the hands of Tipperary.

It will be their first semi-final since they won the All-Ireland in 2022.

Katie Nolan was the game-changer. A former dual All-Star, she is now excelling as an impact sub, and grabbed both Kilkenny goals, one in each period of extra time.

It would take a lot to outshine her, but MVP Laura Murphy was wonderful, too, despite picking up a first-half knee injury.

Murphy said: "It is just an unbelievable feeling right now. It means so much. It's

just incredible to finally get over the line.

"The heartbreak of last year: We were in the same situation, went to extra time, and came out the losing side. I'm so proud of the girls and the shift they put in."

"People have been talking about us being in transition, and it can be a little insulting, but if you look at it, we have fallen short at this stage the last two years."

The Kilkenny supporters were relieved to see the scorer of four inspirational points carry on.

"I jumped and landed awkwardly and sort of hyper-extended my knee, and for 30 seconds the pain was fairly bad, but I got a bit of treatment and the lads strapped me up well and I got through it fine."

"To be able to bring on someone as classy as Katie Nolan says a lot about the kind of panel we have. No better woman than her to come up with the goals."

"And we had those young girls pushing it on, too."

Free-taker Aoife Prendergast was unerring for James



Kilkenny's Laura Murphy is fouled by Waterford player Alannah McNulty in the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship quarter-final at Croke Park. Picture: James Lawlor/Inpho

Meagher's side.

Waterford will have regrets, after leading 0-9 to 0-7 at the interval. Beth Carton's fourth

point tied the game, 0-15 each, at the end of regulation time. And while they pulled back a goal in the 78th minute, from

sub Maggie Gostl, they were wasteful. Also, a Carton penalty, following a foul on Abby Flynn, inched wide of the left post before half time.

Manager Mick Boland said: "We're obviously disappointed. We came here to win, but you couldn't have any arguments with the result. The girls worked hard and fought hard all year. They have great character. There were a lot of tired and sore bodies after the game against Cork last week. That was only six days ago, and that was difficult."

"But, again, I wouldn't be making any excuses. Kilkenny played last weekend, too, and deserved their win."

"Niamh Rockett [red-carded against Cork] was a massive loss. She's a free-taker as well. Beth missed two or three frees today."

"But from Niamh's point of view, it was probably a clumsy tackle last week. She's been an ambassador for camogie for so long, I thought it was disappointing that she got a three-match ban."

"Go back to the lads sent off in the GAA in the last few

weeks, and they got a one-match ban. And then you see some in the last three or four years and people get off on a technicality, but I can't do anything about that now."

Kilkenny's semi-final opponents will be either Cork or Galway, to be played in an FBD Semple Stadium double-header on July 25.

Scorers for Kilkenny: A Prendergast (0-9, 0-7 frees, 0-1 45), K Nolan (2-0), L Murphy (0-4), S Barcoe (0-3), L Greene, A McHardy and C Doherty (0-1 each).

Scorers for Waterford: B Carton (0-9, 0-8 frees), M Gostl (1-0), A Fitzgerald (0-3), O Hickey and E O'Neill (0-2 each), M O'Brien, L Bray and R Walsh (0-1 each).

KILKENNY: A Norris; A Brett, T Fitzgerald, C Dowling (Capt); A Carroll, N Deely, M Teehan; L Greene, L Murphy; A Prendergast, C Keher Murtagh, A McHardy; E Shortall, S Fitzgerald, S Barcoe.

Subs: K Nolan for Shortall (44), C Doherty for McHardy (53), R Dowling for Barcoe (61-63 temp), R Phelan for Keher Murtagh (60+8), R Dowling for Barcoe (70+4).

WATERFORD: B O'Regan; V Falconer, L Forrest, A McNulty; C Carroll, K Corbett Barry, R Walsh; O Hickey, E O'Neill; L Bray (Capt), B Carton, B Bowdren; A Fitzgerald, L Bray, M O'Brien.

Subs: A O'Sullivan for O'Brien (45), R Kirwan for Bowdren (51), M Gostl for Forrest (59), S Lacey for O'Neill (70+4).

Referee: Joe Mullins (Clare).



GPA Lifetime Achievement Award recipient former Cork camogie player Fiona O'Driscoll, left, with her wife Deirdre Roberts, during the GPA Hurling and Camogie Legends Lunch at Croke Park in Dublin.

Picture: Seb Daly/SportsfileVD

GPA honours Cork's O'Driscoll for incredible camogie career

Former Cork and Fr O'Neill's camogie star Fiona O'Driscoll was the recipient of the GPA Lifetime Achievement Camogie Award on Friday last in Croke Park.

In a career laden with honours, Fiona was a superb player for club and county.

She had extraordinary skills, and she was the heartbeat of every team she represented. She was an inspirational player, who always gave everything she had on the pitch.

She was a lethal forward and a goal poacher around the square and, without doubt, a nightmare for all defenders.

She was also a superb free taker who showed her accuracy time and time again as Cork enjoyed huge success and her pace and skill were second to none.

Her list of achievements is huge.

In a career marked with huge success, she won six All-Ireland senior championship medals with Cork.

She was named National Camogie Player of the Year in 2002.

The holder of eight National League medals, including an incredible seven-in-a-row from 1995 to 2001, she added an eighth national league medal in 2003.

She was a huge player and leader for her beloved Fr O'Neill's and, without doubt, one of her proudest moments came in 2003 when Fr O'Neill's finally captured the Cork senior county camogie championship after years of heartbreak in county finals.

This was a victory that meant so much to her, as they finally got over the line to be crowned senior county champions.



Cork camogie Player Fiona O'Driscoll receiving her Vodafone Player of the Month award for April.

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

She played on the University of Limerick team that won Ashbourne Cup titles in 2004 and 2005, and was honoured by them in 2007 as the recipient of their outstanding contribution to sport Alumni Award.

Following her retirement from playing, Fiona has continued to make an enormous contribution to the game in several capacities, as a coach, selector, administrator and volunteer.

She coached Cork to All-Ireland titles in 2005 and 2006 before returning as a selector with the 2024 All-Ireland winning team, and her work with the younger generation of Cork players shone through as she drove them on with the same passion she showed as a player.

She has held various roles in administration, including roles as president of the Camogie Colleges Association, chairperson of the National Coaching Committee, and chairperson of Fr O'Neill's Camogie Club, helping to shape the next generation of players and coaches.

A huge role model in her beloved Fr O'Neill's, Fiona has continued to inspire countless young girls to dream big, believe in themselves, and wear both their club and county colours with pride.

This honour is richly deserved for one of Cork's finest ever camogie players.

Fiona was joined at the event by family and friends, as she was honoured alongside former Clare hurler Johnnie Callinan, who was the recipient of the GPA Lifetime Achievements Hurling award.

ADULT SUMMER CUP

The adult summer cup competitions proved to be very competitive and ensured players had games in June and July.

In the senior semi-finals, Sarsfields came through to meet Inniscarra, with Eire Og taking on Aghabullogue.

In the intermediate grade, Kilbrittain and Timoleague will meet on Wednesday next at 7.30pm in Castle Road.

Midleton played earlier this week and are in the final.

In the Junior grade, Nemo Rangers and Rockbar will



TRIP TO TIPP: Tipperary's Eimear McGrath and Cork's Sorchá McCartan at the launch of the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Camogie Championship semi-final double header at FBD Semple Stadium.

Picture: James Crombie/Inpho

Cork bid to reach sixth final in row

Cork head to FBD Semple Stadium tomorrow for the semi-final of the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior camogie championship.

They will face Tipperary at 6pm, in the second semi-final, with Galway and Kilkenny on before them at 4pm.

Manager Ger Manley has named an unchanged side from their clash with Waterford as they bid to reach their sixth final in a row.

But their minds will only be on tomorrow's game as they know they are in for a tough evening.

Ahead of the game, Manley confirmed that Ava McAuliffe, Aoife O'Neill, Clare Kingston, and Keava McCarthy are all out injured.

The most serious is McCarthy, who did her cruciate in a challenge game and is out for at least 10 months, more likely a year.

But on the plus side Orlaith Mullins is back in the squad having returned from studying abroad and Rachel Murphy has also been added to the panel.

Cork are taking on Tipp for the fourth time this season and the record stands at one win each and a draw in the league.

But it will be the third time they have played them at Thurles, a distinct advantage for Tipp as they play at their home patch.

No doubt Tipp will be hoping that their supporters will turn out in numbers as they aim to make home advantage count to their benefit.

Cork will also be hoping their supporters make the trip to Thurles in numbers as they will need all the support they can get, for what will be their toughest challenge of the season so far.

In their league tie Tipp finished strongly as Cork were hanging on for the draw, having played superbly in the first half.

Their next clash was in the Munster championship and it was a game that the Rebels will want to forget as they lost out by 1-18 to 2-9, as Tipp went on to be crowned champions.

That game, in many ways, was a turning point for Cork as they put the heads

CAMOGIE



Rory Noonan

Their first game was against Galway, where the Tribeswomen had home advantage and were firm favourites to win.

But the Rebels were outstanding that day to get off to a winning start, ahead of their third clash of the season with Tipp, again at FBD Semple Stadium. This time, after another battle, Cork headed home with the points after a 0-21 to 0-18 win.

The Rebels will need to be at their best defensively as they try to stop the likes of Eimear McGrath, Grace O'Brien and Clodagh McIntyre.

But Cork's new look half back line of Ava Fitzgerald, Meabh Murphy and Isobel Sheehan has grown in stature with every game and they will need to put in another top-class showing tomorrow.

Laura Hayes and Ashling Thompson are a midfield pairing that is more than a

match for any in the country and up front Cork have plenty of quality players to trouble any defence.

The full forward line of Sorchá McCartan, Orlaith Cahalane, and Amy O'Connor are a handful and add in others like Saoirse McCarthy, who has a habit of picking up player of the game awards in ties like this.

"We know this is going to be a massive challenge as Tipp are a great side," said Manley, "we have had a few battles with them already this season and it's going to be another one tomorrow."

"They have quality players all over the pitch, but so have we and we will need every one of them to put in a performance if we are to come out on top."

"But our players are up for the challenge and will give it everything and hopefully that will be enough to reach another final and we will only think about that then once we are there."

CORK: A Lee (Na Piarsaigh); I O'Regan (Ballygarvan); L Coppinger (St Colums); M Cahalane (St Finbarr's); A Fitzgerald (Sarsfields); M Murphy (Ballinora); I Sheehan (Eire Og); L Hayes (St Catherine's); A Thompson (Milford); M Condon (Ballinascorthy); S McCarthy (Courage Rovers); E Murphy (Glen Rovers); S McCartan (St Finbarr's); O Cahalane (St Finbarr's); A O'Connor (St Vincent's).



Cork's Isobel Sheehan in action against Tipperary's Lorna Ryan earlier this season. Sheehan is one of the new look half back line that is growing in stature as the season progresses.



Cahalane: Cork are battle-ready

Méabh Cahalane feels Cork are stronger for early-season struggles ahead of Tipperary showdown in semi-final

BY GER MCCARTHY

CORK captain Méabh Cahalane is relishing the opportunity to reach a sixth successive All-Ireland camogie championship final provided Tipperary are overcome on Saturday.

Ahead of the semi-final showdown in Thurles, it's fair to say that this Cork camogie senior panel has endured a year of transition.

One win from five Division 1 league fixtures saw Ger Manley's side avoid relegation by finishing one point ahead of Antrim.

A 1-18 to 2-9 loss to Tipperary ended the Rebels' Munster aspirations at the quarter-final stage. Tipp would go on to lift the provincial trophy.

But Cork were forced to field experimental line-ups throughout both of those competitions. This was due to a lengthy injury list as well as many of Cork's most experienced players choosing to either retire or take extra time off following last year's All-Ireland final defeat to Galway.

Ahead of facing Tipperary for the fourth time this year, Cork senior captain Méabh Cahalane believes the Rebels are all the better for overcoming those early-season struggles.

'We probably had a difficult league campaign all right and then there

was a bit of a hangover into Munster,' Cahalane told *The Southern Star*.

'We had a couple of weeks to get together and to really work on what we thought we didn't do well throughout that league campaign.'

'Thankfully, we came through the championship and went the direct route to the semi-finals. Everyone is ready to get going and ready to face Tipperary.'

Cahalane's observation is a fair one considering the manner in which a revitalised Cork went on to defeat Galway, Waterford and Tipp in the group stages of the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Championship.

The return of established stalwarts, most notably Ashling Thompson, helped Ger Manley's side book a semi-final berth.

There has also been a huge upside to fielding so many newcomers since the start of the year. Ava Fitzgerald, Meabh Murphy, Aislinn Egan and Isobel Sheehan have thrived in the Cork senior jersey this term.

'In fairness to the younger players, the learnings that



Tipperary's Eimear McGrath and Cork's Sorcha McCartan ahead of the 2026 Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Camogie Championship semi-final double header in FBD Semple Stadium. (Photo: James Crombie/INPHO)

'The younger players have brought the energy and they're the standard-bearers at all our training sessions now'

they've taken out of the league campaign have been huge,' Cahalane added.

'The same is true of ourselves, the more experienced players, who've been here for the last few years.'

'That (squad) dynamic, obviously that's grown over the years and we've gotten to know

each other both on and off the field that bit more.'

'I think the Cork U23 campaign with the girls, it really brought them closer together. Since coming in, they are a really close, tight-knit group.'

'The Cork senior panel has soldiered together for many years and we are also very close. I definitely think there is that bit of camaraderie both on and off the field now. We've had a good couple of weeks together and the build-up for the All-Ireland semi-final has been very good.'

'The younger players have brought the energy to it and they're the standard-bearers at all our training sessions now.'

In fairness to them, they've really taken the learnings out of the league and Munster campaigns.'

Semple Stadium will host both All-Ireland senior semi-finals on Saturday. Reigning champions Galway face Kilkenny in the curtain-raiser at 4pm. Then, it is part four of Cork and Tipperary's 2026 rivalry at 6pm.

Thankfully, playing at one of the GAA's most iconic venues is nothing new to the Cork seniors. 'It is a great stadium,' Cahalane said.

'We've created some great memories there but at the same time, it is a home advantage for Tipp. So, a good bit of buzz

will come from playing there for them.'

'We are just really relishing the opportunity. It probably is that bit of an extra challenge that we are playing them in their home ground in Thurles again.'

'Tipperary are a great side and they've really come on this year. So we know what's ahead of us.'

'We need to focus on ourselves, focus on what we can bring to the game and anything but a full team performance won't do. We know that.'

'We're just really looking forward to it and, hopefully, when we go up there, everyone will be buzzing and ready to go.'



Cork camogie ace Méabh Cahalane.

Rebels can reach sixth All-Ireland final in a row

Cork finding best form at right time of the season

BY MATTHEW HURLEY

CORK are bidding to reach their sixth All-Ireland senior camogie final in a row, and their 11th in 13 years.

This championship has been dominated by the Rebels, Galway and Kilkenny, and both All-Ireland finalists have been two of these three counties in all but one of the last 11 years. Even then, that was in 2023

when all three dominant figures were on the same side of the draw.

Ger Manley's team face Tipperary in Saturday's All-Ireland semi-final in Semple Stadium, Thurles (6pm), with Tipp hoping to reach their first decider since 2006.

Many will tip Cork to progress to the final again, despite Tipp beating Manley's team in the Munster championship earlier in the year (1-18 to 2-9).

The context for that game is key. Cork were missing seven starters from their All-Ireland final defeat to Galway in 2025 and the new players were tak-



ing time to adjust.

Ashling Thompson and Amy O'Connor were injured at that stage. Aoife Healy and Hannah Looney have gone down to Australia to play AFLW. Pamela

The return of Ashling Thompson from an elbow injury is a big boost.

and Katrina Mackey are not involved this year while Laura Tracey retired.

Even among the substitutes used in the 2025 All-Ireland final, Clodagh Finn, Kate Wall, Orlaith Mullins or Cliona Healy have taken part in any action this year.

Both sides have had contrast-

ing fortunes in the All-Ireland series since the provincials. Cork won all three of their Group 1 matches against Galway, Tipp and Waterford by an average margin of five points.

But Tipp's comfortable 3-10 to 3-13 victory over Clare in the All-Ireland quarter-final was their only win in their last four games.

Despite their recent upward curve, Cork's concern has been their lack of goals. In the All-Ireland series, only goalkeeper Amy Lee has managed to find the net from her own puck-out against Waterford.

Amy O'Connor (0-19) and Saoirse McCarthy (0-13) have found their range but they will need more three-pointers to

win this weekend.

While not hitting full tilt yet, Orlaith Cahalane, Emma Murphy and Sorcha McCartan are those that can up their game in the semi-final.

For Tipp, Eimear McGrath (1-26), Eimear Heffernan (0-11), teenager Caoimhe Stakelum (1-7) and Grace O'Brien are players the Rebels need to watch.

The Premier did fall short in the previous meeting between the sides in Group 1 (0-21 to 0-18) but were still within a score of the Rebels.

If Cork can continue their resurgence, they can win a fourth game in a row and suddenly there will be belief will grow that they can win a 31st O'Duffy Cup.



'Knockout brings the best out of this team'

Cork bidding to qualify for sixth All-Ireland senior final in a row

BY KIERAN MCCARTHY

GER Manley has been around the Cork set-up long enough to know how much his players love knock-out camogie.

This Saturday, the Rebels are bidding to qualify for their sixth Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior camogie championship final in a row. That's remarkable consistency at the highest level, but it doesn't surprise the Cork boss.

'We're into knockout territory now, so the intensity goes up,' Manley notes.

'They're trying harder, working harder and preparing better themselves. It just comes out of them, that competitive edge when we get to this stage. The camogie girls especially seem to have that edge and training has had that edge for the last few weeks since the group stage.'

The Rebels powered through an unusual group stage where they were guaranteed progression to the knockout stages whatever the results. But Cork meant business. They beat Galway (0-18 to 1-8), Tipperary (0-21 to 0-18) and Waterford (1-13 to 0-10) to advance directly into the All-Ireland semi-finals. And it's Tipp again as they battle in the last-four showdown at Thurles on



'I think knockout does bring the best out of us. There were a lot of doubters out there early in the year and, look, we doubted ourselves at times too. But we always felt that once the summer came we'd have a lot of players back,' Manley explains.

The struggles in the league and Munster championship need context – Cork were missing a host of key players. But the return of stalwarts like Ashling Thompson and Meabh Cahalane have boosted the squad at the right time of the season.

'Ashling had a very bad injury (elbow), so we didn't think we'd get her back for the group stages. We were hoping we'd have her for a quarter-final or semi-final, but she's back ahead of time. Hopefully she'll be sharper again the next day. She's five weeks back training now, so she'll benefit from that,' Manley says.

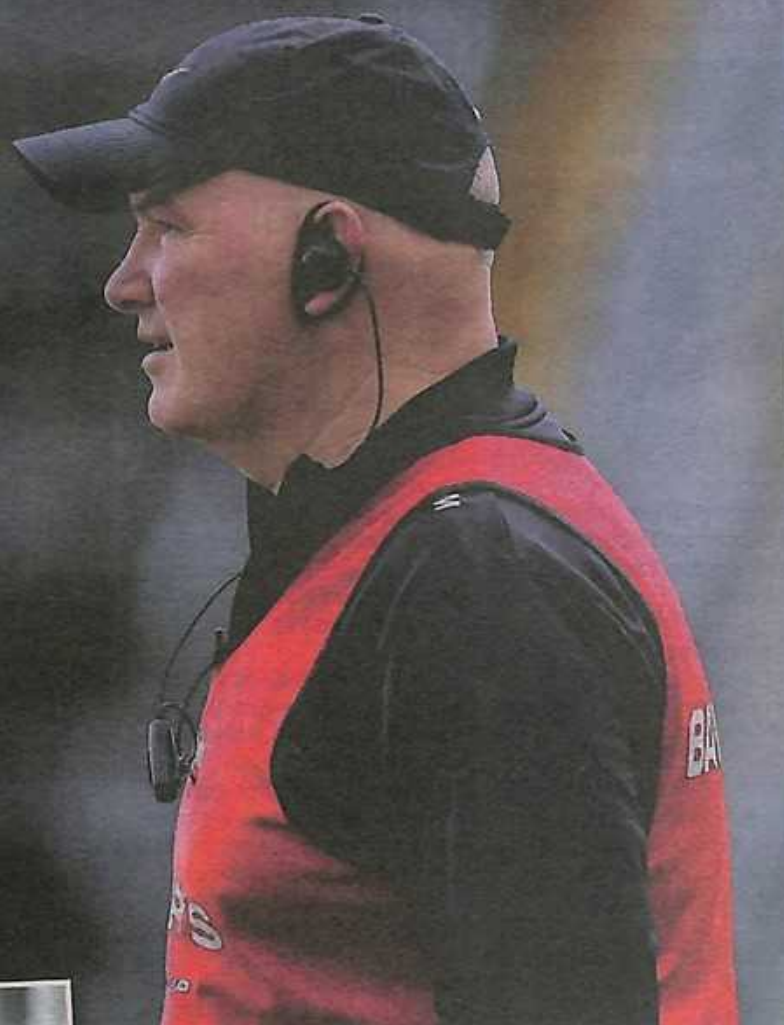
'Meabh Cahalane is the same. She had a very long year last year, had a couple of niggly

one this year. But she's going well in training now as well. It's great for competition for places.'

Manley can see it in training too – there's an extra bounce as the season races to the business end. This is familiar ground for Cork who have won their last five All-Ireland semi-finals, beating Kilkenny (2021 and 2022), Waterford (2023 and 2025) and Galway (2024). It's impressive consistency.

'Look, nobody is entitled to win matches. Their belief is what drives it on. It's very much player-driven. I've been involved a few years now and I probably didn't realise just how much the players drive it themselves,' Manley says.

'They're a fantastic bunch to work with and they're always looking to improve, even if it's only small bits all the time. We probably overthink things at times. You'd love to go out and blow teams away, but most games take their own path. The big thing with us is con-



Cork camogie manager Ger Manley. (Photo: Ben Brady/INPHO)

Cork's Emma Murphy battles with Karin Blair of Tipperary in their Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship Group 1 tie in Thurles. (Photo: Dan Clohessy/INPHO)

trolling what we can control. The players put in an incredible amount of work. By the time you get to this stage of the year it's about winning, but they've put a huge amount into it.

'At the end of the day, it's about work rate. There's probably very little between ourselves and Tipp, so it'll come down to work rate, a bit of luck and hopefully we'll be in the right place.'

Given their consistency and big-game experience, Cork will back themselves to make it six All-Ireland senior finals in a row. But Tipp will have other ideas. These two know each other well, having already played three times this season – in the league, Munster, and All-Ireland group stage.

In the league, it was honours even at Páirc Uí Rinn, 2-8 to 1-11. Tipperary beat the Rebels in a Munster quarter-final, 1-18 to 2-9 at Semple Stadium. But when they met in Group 1 of

the All-Ireland championship in Thurles last month, Cork won 0-21 to 0-18.

'There's not much between us,' Manley says.

'The league game was a funny one. We were on top early and they took over in the second half, so we were probably lucky enough to come away with the result.

'They gave us a right rattle in the last ten minutes of the Munster game and were well on top. We probably weren't playing that well at the time because we were trying to get more game time into a few players.

'But I thought we played quite well against them in the championship game when there were only three points in it. They probably have a bit of an advantage with it being in Thurles, but Cork teams like playing there, whether it's camogie, hurling or football. It's a fabulous pitch and we're looking forward to it.'

LAST TEAM STANDING

The Cork camogie team is the last senior inter-county Rebels' team left standing this season.

With the men's footballers and hurlers falling at the All-Ireland quarter-final and semi-final respectively, and Joe Carroll's ladies footballers losing an All-Ireland last-eight tie, the Cork camogie team carries the hopes of the county.

'We had a great crowd in Galway and a huge crowd down in Páirc Uí Rinn for the Waterford game. We've been well supported over the last couple of years and we're hoping for another big support,' Cork boss Ger Manley says.

'Thurles isn't too far up the road, people are well used to travelling there, so hopefully the clubs will get behind us.'

McCartan: Shackles off this weekend

REWIND to the summer of 2025 when all the talk in the world of camogie was about Cork's bid for three All-Ireland titles in a row.



Cork forward Sorcha McCartan.

The Rebels' quest was the story of the summer. But, unfortunately, they fell at the final hurdle to Galway. That defeat coupled with the huge overhaul in the squad last winter left Cork in a different place at the start of the season.

A disappointing league campaign, by Cork's own high standards, and a shorter-than-wanted Munster championship saw the Rebels slip down the pecking order ahead of the All-Ireland series.

Since then, Cork's form has enjoyed a major upturn. With the pressure lessened in this championship, the players have delivered performances good enough to send them straight into the All-Ireland semi-final. And it's Tipperary next on Saturday.

'I was actually thinking there during the week about the last two (All-Ireland) semi-finals, we've come away with relief. At the final whistle, it's like a weight off our shoulders,' Cork forward Sorcha McCartan says.

'Whereas I feel like this year, it would just be absolutely unbelievable if we could put on a performance and get a win. It wouldn't be relief, it would be excitement. It's definitely got a different feel.

'But that obviously reduces the pressure, and I think that's what this team needs. When you go into games with a weight on your shoulders, you probably underperform.

'I think just shackles off this weekend now and go out and bring a huge intensity.'

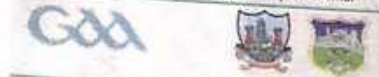
FBD Semple Stadium, Thurles, will host a mouth-watering double-header on Saturday, with Galway taking on Kilkenny at 4pm before Cork and Tipperary face off at 6pm. Both matches will be broadcast live on RTÉ.

With a place on All-Ireland finals day at Croke Park on Sunday, August 9th, at stake, there is no margin for error as the remaining four contenders bid to keep their championship dreams alive.

New leaders emerging in Cork camogie, says McCartan

**More GAA:
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All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship semi-final



Cork v Tipperary

Saturday: FBD Semple Stadium, 6pm

Referee: Barry Nea (Westmeath)

TV: RTE2

Eoghan Cormican



Cork were on the cusp of the three-in-a-row. They were unbeaten in 17 All-Ireland championship games. They were reigning league champions. They were favoured to go where no Cork camogie team had gone in 53 years.

August 10 of last year was supposed to be the afternoon their greatness was enshrined. It was the afternoon they would become a generational force. It was the afternoon they would colour completely red the game's outstanding rivalry between themselves and Galway.

Fast-forward to February 21 of this year. Antrim, of all counties, had come to Bishopstown and inflicted a second successive league defeat on the hosts.

No three-in-a-row was ever achieved. They never ascended to generational status.

One third of that beaten All-Ireland final team — Laura Treacy, the Mackey twins, Aoife Healy, and Hannah Looney — either retired or signed up to the AFLW during the off-season; 21 All-Stars and 28 All-Ireland medals gone out of the dressing room in one devastating swoop.

There was then the elbow injury to another key pillar, Ashling Thompson, which threatened to remove the midfielder from the red conversation for most of 2026.

From near untouchable to dethroned and thrown into a rebuild.



BACK ON TRACK: Cork's Sorcha McCartan at FBD Semple Stadium ahead of the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Camogie Championship semi-final against Tipperary.

Picture: James Crombie/Inpho

Cork entered the final round of league action in danger of being relegated to the second tier. They entered and swiftly exited the Munster championship, Tipp comprehensively besting them at the quarter-final juncture.

Cork camogie wasn't so much spiralling as it was temporarily lost.

The lurch from what they thought would be a four-in-a-row bid to an almighty dip in form had utterly disarmed them.

Cork forward Sorcha McCartan starts with the personnel who stepped away and charts their turbulent year from there.

"To lose those players is massive because that's like taking five or six of the Limerick hurling starters out and you're left with people that don't have much exposure to these games or much experience, so it was always going to be difficult," begins the Down native.

"We had a panel there, we had to work with what we had, and it's not that anyone's any less talented than the girls that have left but they just aren't as experienced."

"It was just about getting as much exposure to big games and hard training sessions. For a lot of girls, it was about trying to step up

as best we can and lead that, lead the standards at training."

"Look, there are still voids. Those players are irreplaceable. They're iconic. But, for us, it's been about building slowly and trying to get confidence into every player on the pitch."

Confidence and victories came at crawling pace. Four of their opening six games in 2026 ended in defeat.

"There obviously was a panic within the group. Maybe it went unspoken but management, in fairness, have always told us that they believed in us. No matter if we were doubting ourselves or having harsh

conversations, they never ever doubted us or doubted what we could do. We reaped the rewards, obviously, with our All-Ireland round-robin games," continued the 25-year-old.

"We had to grow and evolve. A lot of players that maybe weren't ready had to take on leadership roles and a lot of players that maybe didn't see themselves starting are now starters, have got an opportunity, and have proven themselves en masse."

"So, look, it has been a completely different year to any year that I've been involved or any year that anyone in this panel has been in-

involved. But that's the challenge you want."

The corner was turned at Kenny Park, Athenry. The crowd who ended Cork's three-in-a-row bid and maybe fast-tracked an off-season departure or two were bullied and beaten in their own backyard.

Cork were back. Or rather, new-look Cork had arrived. That much was absolutely certain.

"We trained for six weeks unbelievably hard beforehand, we got really fit, and I think the question was asked: Was Cork camogie finished? Was that it? Was that it over? Were we going to end our year without trying?"

"And I think we just went into that Galway game fearless and kind of backed ourselves. Threw the shackles off. It just took one performance to build a bit of momentum."

McCartan's memories of that June 6 season-starter and season-turner focus more on the journey than what they produced at the destination.

"On the bus up, I could feel there was a difference in energy. Getting back on after the stop in Ennis, I knew there was a shift. In the changing room, it was more serious than usual. No joking, everyone was locked in."

Waterford and Tipp were subsequently downed. Cork finished atop Tier 1. Ava Fitzgerald, Isobel Sheehan, and Millie Condon are growing in those earlier mentioned voids. They're 60 minutes from a sixth successive All-Ireland final appearance.

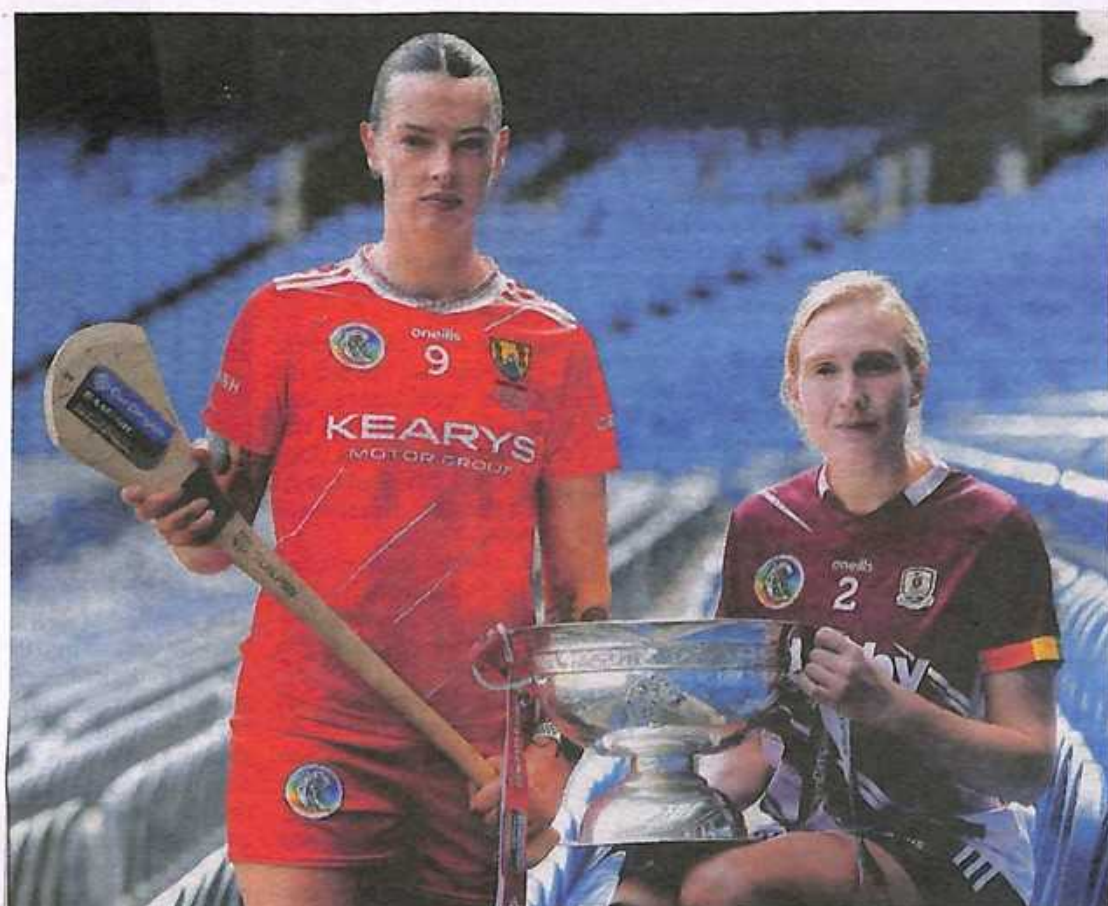
Should we ever have doubted them?

force

to the quarter-finals. It means that next season, even if their group campaigns go disastrously, Cork and Galway (as well as Kilkenny and Tipperary) will be just one jeopardy tie away from returning to the semi-final mix.

But while they may represent the old guard, Cork and Galway's appetite to compete year in, year out has set the standard. Collectively they've claimed seven of the last 10 senior titles, 12 of the last 20 — no kindly draw or favourable championship structure will gift you that kind of dominance.

Challengers to the throne will have to remove them by force, and then the work begins towards standing the test of time.



OLD RIVALS: Cork's Ashling Thompson and Galway's Shauna Healy at the 2026 Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Camogie Championship Final Media Day at Croke Park. The final takes place on Sunday, Cork's sixth final in a row. PHOTO: INPHO/JAMES CROMBIE

Champions Galway are back in final showdown

Galway 1-14
Kilkenny 0-11

By **Daragh Ó Conchúir**

IN SEMPLE STADIUM

balls to move the scoreboard, however, and the Dicksboro sharpshooter was pretty spot on, adding to her opening brace with two from just inside the Galway half.

When Sarah Barcoe provided Kilkenny's first score from play in the 21st minute, the sides were level on 0-5 each.

It was Galway that finished better though, Kelly slotting her second point and Dolan her side's first from a free to make it 0-7 to 0-5 at the change of ends.

Disaster struck for the Noreiders with the concession of that penalty within a minute of the restart, when Greene shouldered Dolan off the ball, after the midfielder had just failed to gather a lovely Kelly stick-pass when through on goal.

Kilkenny had the ball cleared though, so it was needless and Dolan punished them with a low drive beyond Aoife Norris.

Prendergast responded with another free from distance and though Donohue left the fray with a knee injury, her replacement Shannon Corcoran provided the assist for a beautiful Kelly point immediately after.

Galway were going through the gears now, having shaken off the rust of a four-week break and their greater physicality and know-how was on full display.



MAROON STRIVE: Galway's Carrie Dolan is blocked by Laura Murphy of Kilkenny

Caoimhe Keher-Murtagh did make one careering run through the middle and though Sarah Healy blocked her kick, a free was awarded that Prendergast sent fizzing over the crossbar.

But they just could not make any real impact on the meanest defence in the game.

Róisín Black, Hickey and Dervla Higgins were outstanding, the lat-

ter even going forward to score a fantastic point.

She went off after suffering a knee injury though and if there was one concern for Cathal Murray, it was those injuries, as Sabina Rabbite also left in a lot of pain.

Galway had to play the last 10 minutes or so with just 14 players and a heavily limping Dolan at full-forward.

GALWAY: S Healy, R Hanniffy, R Black, K Manning, D Higgins, C Hickey, K A Porter, A Hesnan, C Dolan, N McPeake, A Donohue, A O'Reilly, A Keane, N Niland, C Kelly. **Subs:** S Corcoran for Donohue (41), A Kelly for Keane (54), S Rabbite for Kelly (54), M Dillon for Niland (54), L Kelly for Higgins (57). **Scorers:** C Dolan 1-4 (0-3fs); C Kelly 0-3; N Niland, N McPeake 0-2; D Higgins, A O'Reilly, A Kelly 0-1. **KILKENNY:** A Norris, M Teehan, T Fitzgerald, N Deely, A Carroll, A Brett, C Dowling, L Greene, L Murphy, A McHardy, A Prendergast, E Shortall, S Fitzgerald, C Keher-Murtagh, S Barcoe. **Subs:** K Nolan for S Fitzgerald (37), C Dochery for Shortall (40), R Phelan for McHardy (49), R Dowling for Carroll (60). **Scorers:** A Prendergast 0-8fs; S Barcoe, R Phelan, C Dochery 0-1 each. **REFEREE:** Andy Larkin (Cork).

CHAMPIONS Galway are back in the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior camogie final, a Carrie Dolan penalty goal in the opening minute of the second half ensuring a comfortable progression against a hard-working but less experienced Kilkenny unit.

As expected, given her excellent marking jobs all season and most recently on Waterford's Beth Carton, Ava Brett had the task of picking up another player of the year, Aoife Donohue.

With Niamh Mallon unavailable after suffering a recurrence of a persistent shoulder injury, the Cats would have been really hopeful of their chances if they could neutralise the diminutive Mullagh dynamo.

This they managed, but Caoimhe Kelly, Niamh Niland and Niamh McPeake were constant threats, and did more than enough to pick up any slack.

It was two points apiece after 10 minutes but though Kilkenny were playing with the wind, they were unable to circumvent player of the match Ciara Hickey. And as Kelly, Ailish O'Reilly and McPeake racked up points before the end of the first quarter, there were some worrying signs for Jimmy Meagher's crew.

The response was encouraging, as Kilkenny's full-back line began to impose themselves, with Tifanie Fitzgerald prominent, and Brett doing her job on Donohue.

Laura Murphy and Laura Greene worked their way into the fray too around the middle, meaning Galway were not making such easy inroads with their runners.

They needed Aoife Prendergast's radar to be in from placed

Goal double propels Cork to sixth final in a row



FOUR POINTS: Emma Murphy (r) and Karen Kennedy

FIRST-HALF goals from Amy O'Connor and Millie Condon ensured that Cork progressed to a sixth straight Glen Dimplex All-Ireland final.

With a record crowd for a semi-final double header of 10,311 at FBD Semple Stadium, Tipp got off to the type of start they would have hoped for, winning the throw-in and then drawing a free, converted by Eimear McGrath.

Three minutes later, Clodagh McIntyre got on the end of a flowing move and drove the sliotar between the posts without breaking stride.

The riposte from Ger Manley's Cork side was notable however, Emma Murphy slotting the first of her four points from play in the opening period and the hugely influential Sorcha McCartan following up.

Cork 2-16
Tipperary 0-17

By **Daragh Ó Conchúir**

O'Connor rifled home the first of the Rebels' two first-half goals in the seventh minute, with McCartan the provider.

McGrath kept Tipp in touch from frees and Casey Hennessy floated over a super score but Murphy, McCartan, Laura Hayes, Saoirse McCarthy, O'Connor and Orlaith Cahalane all pointed from play.

Condon got in on the act with a rocket of a goal in the 21st minute, and Cork were ahead by 2-11 to 0-8 at the interval.

You felt that the home team would need a goal early in

the second half to enthuse their supporters but the Cork defence was resolute, Méabh Murphy reading the play well as sweeper.

Grace O'Brien did make some menacing runs and was only denied a goal by a sensational diving save from Amy Lee, after the Nenagh/Eire Óg attacker unleashed a powerful shot.

The Premier were buoyed somewhat by that and points by McGrath from the resulting 45, O'Brien and a first from teenage star Caoimhe Stakelum, made it a two-goal affair entering the final quarter.

Cahalane stretched it to seven but points by Eimear Heffernan and Karin Blair kept it in the melting pot.

It was all about the goal. Would it come? It did not, nor did they carve out another

chance, despite doing so well defensively and in the middle third.

A numerical advantage in this sector, meant that they were at a disadvantage up top, however, and they were always going to be up against it.

It was a fantastic effort by James Heffernan's charges, but a couple of late points from Orlaith Mullins sealed the deal.

CORK: A Lee, I O'Regan, IL Coppinger, M Cahalane, A Fitzgerald, M Murphy, I Sheehan, A Thompson, L Hayes, E Murphy, S McCarthy, M Condon, A O'Connor, S McCartan, O Cahalane. **Subs:** O Mullins for Murphy (52), H Ryan for Thompson (56). **Scorers:** A O'Connor 1-3 (0-2fs); E Murphy 0-4; S McCartan 0-3; M Condon 1-0; O Cahalane, O Mullins 0-2 each; L Hayes, S McCarthy 0-1 each. **TIPPERARY:** L Leenane, A Quinlisk, M Eviston, E Loughman, C McCarthy, K Kennedy, C Guinan, K Blair, C Hennessy, E Heffernan, R Howard, C McIntyre, C Stakelum, E McGrath, G O'Brien. **Subs:** L Purcell for Hennessy (48), K Ralph for McIntyre (51), C Quirke for Loughman (51), N Treacy for McGrath (60). **Scorers:** E McGrath 0-8 (6fs, 2 45s); G O'Brien 0-3; E Heffernan, C Stakelum (11 0-2 each); C Hennessy, E Heffernan, C McIntyre 0-1 each. **REFEREE:** B Neo (Westmeath).



Muirgheal MacSwiney Cup winners Bishopstown at Ballinlough.

Bishopstown regain Muirgheal MacSwiney Cup at Ballinlough

Bishopstown 2-12
St Finbarr's 2-5

CAMOGIE

■ John Leonard

Bishopstown regained the Cork City Council Muirgheal MacSwiney Cup as they defeated holders St Finbarr's in the decider at Ballinlough.

In a game which produced an evenly contested opening half, St Finbarr's had an early goal disallowed. The second half was one-sided as Bishopstown restricted St Finbarr's to 1-1 from placed balls.

Playing with the aid of a slight breeze in the opening half, St Finbarr's Aoife Byrne-O'Riordan got the game's opening point. Bishopstown's Eirne Ni Dheasmhunaigh equalised.

In the fourth minute, Byrne-O'Riordan turned over possession to score the game's opening goal from a considerable distance, but it was ruled out by the referee for a square ball infringement.

St Finbarr's continued to have Bishopstown on the defensive as persistent fouling was proving to be Bishopstown's undoing. Byrne-O'Riordan put the Toghher side back in the lead with the game's first pointed free.

The tide turned in Bishopstown's favour as Eirne Ni Dheasmhunaigh put her side in the driving seat, with two unanswered points. Byrne-O'Riordan levelled matters at three points apiece, with her second point from play at the water break.

Bishopstown began to have St Finbarr's pinned back as Niamh Stevens put Bishopstown back in the driving seat with a point from play.

In the 25th minute, Bishopstown stretched the margin to four points when Fiona Kinsella set up Niamh O'Donoghue for the game's opening goal. Julie Scally and Emily O'Donoghue each added further points to increase Bishopstown's lead to 1-6 to 0-3.

St Finbarr's brought themselves with in touching distance as a free by Byrne-O'Riordan set up Farrah Geasley for the Toghher side's first goal. Geasley and Eirne Ni Dheasmhunaigh swapped points approaching the break. This left the half-time scoreline reading 1-7 to 1-4 in Bishopstown's favour.

With the elements in their favour for the second half, Bishopstown seized the initiative. Within two minutes of the restart, Emily O'Donoghue got Bishopstown's only goal from a free.

Bishopstown continued to have St Finbarr's on the back foot as Scally embarked on a solo run after turning over possession, to set up Niamh O'Donoghue for their side's second goal. This gave Bishopstown a lead of 2-8 to 1-4.

Scally and Maeve Scannell each tagged on points from play to increase Bishopstown's lead to 2-10 to 1-4 at the second half water break.

With the game over as a contest, Byrne-O'Riordan slotted over a long-range point from a free for St Finbarr's in the 49th minute. Scannell and Lily O'Flynn each got points for Bishopstown, before persistent fouling was proving to be costly in the closing stages. Byrne-O'Riordan drilled home St Finbarr's second goal, direct from a free with four minutes remaining.

Scorers: Bishopstown: N O'Donoghue 2-0, E Ni Dheasmhunaigh 0-4, E O'Donoghue 0-2 (0-1 f), J Scally, M Scannell 0-2 each, N Stevens, L O'Flynn 0-1 each.

St Finbarr's: A Byrne-O'Riordan 1-4 (1-2 f), F Geasley 1-1.

BISHOPSTOWN: M O'Neill; S Walsh, A Ni Dheasmhunaigh, C Broderick; K Sommers, F Kinsella, A Walsh; E O'Donoghue, E Ni Dheasmhunaigh; A Bohan, N O'Donoghue, J Scally; N Stevens, M Scannell, C Branagan-Villalba.

Subs: L O'Flynn for Branagan-Villalba, J Cronin for Broderick (both ht).

ST FINBARR'S: O Keane; E O'Donovan, A O'Herlihy, G Fitzgerald; K Cahalane, I Keegan, C Callanan; E Wiggington-Barrett, E O'Brien; N Varian, M Fitzpatrick, A Byrne-O'Riordan; F Geasley, C Keating, C O'Neill.

Subs: C Twomey for Keating, H Fitzpatrick for O'Neill (both ht), S McTiernan for M Fitzpatrick (39), K Lee for Geasley (49).

Referee: John Horgan (Gleann na Laoi).



Bishopstown winning captain Aifric Walsh with the Muirgheal MacSwiney Cup, flanked by Seandún chairman Mick Buckley and Des Cahill, representing the Lord Mayor, at Ballinlough.



Cork's Emma Murphy is challenged by Tipperary's Eimear Heffernan in the All-Ireland semi-final at Semple Stadium.

Picture: INPHO/Tom Maher

Cork are relishing final Galway clash

Emma Murphy said Cork are already relishing another crack at Galway after the Rebels powered into the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship final with a 2-16 to 0-17 victory over Tipperary in Thurles.

CAMOGIE

Rory Noonan



The Glen Rovers player was one of Cork's standout performers at FBD Semple Stadium, firing over four first-half points as Ger Manley's side produced a scintillating opening-half display to silence the home support and secure a return to Croke Park on Sunday, August 9.

Awaiting them are old rivals Galway, who overcame Kilkenny in the day's other semi-final and will now face Cork in what will be a fourth All-Ireland final meeting between the counties in six seasons.

"We love playing Galway and I know they like playing us too," Emma said.

"It's easy to get up for it. We know what we're getting in two weeks' time and we just have to match it and even go beyond it. Hopefully, we can come out the right side of it."

While another final appearance may appear routine from the outside, Emma stressed that this year's achievement feels particularly significant, given the transition Cork have undergone since last season.

The Rebels have had to rebuild after losing 14 players from last year's panel and were not widely regarded as certainties to reach the final.

"I suppose, the last couple of years we've been privileged enough that we have got there," Emma added.

"This year, it was never a guarantee. Obviously, it's not a guarantee every year, but this year in particular I think we really had to rebuild."

"We've lost 14 players from last year, so it's that extra bit special this year, getting there with this group."

"There are so many young girls who haven't played in an All-Ireland final and who haven't been on the panel before. It's a good buzz now going into the next two weeks."

Murphy's own contribution was immense. Having scored just twice previously in this year's championship, the industrious midfielder popped up with four scores before the break as Cork tore into Tipp with the aid of a strong breeze.

The 2023 All-Star insisted, however, that individual tallies mean little in a group that has built its campaign on work-rate and collective effort.

"Some days they just go over," she laughed. "I'm happy that I got a couple of scores on the board, but it's everyone's job. We don't just look at who scores."

"It's about the work-rate, first and foremost, and then the scores come after that."

Cork's clinical first-half display was all the more impressive, given their four-week wait since the group stages. Rather

than leaving them rusty, the pause appeared to sharpen their hunger.

"We put in a good four weeks and waited a long four weeks for a match," Emma said. "Everyone was really ready and really hungry to get out there. We've had a tough year and we prepared ourselves well. We knew the bank of work we'd put in, and we were delighted to come away with the win."

Murphy also highlighted the impact of Cork's strength in depth after the Rebels weathered a second-half fightback from a Tipperary side backed by a partisan home crowd.

With a record attendance of more than 10,000 for the semi-final double-header, Cork's bench played a key role in helping the visitors regain control.

"The bench has been massive all year," Emma said.

"It really is one to 34. The girls have pushed each other on in training all season and you saw the impact they made when they came on."

The Rebels were also buoyed by a sizeable travelling support that turned sections of Semple Stadium red despite Tipp enjoying home advantage.

"It was amazing to have the crowd," Emma said.

"You could hear them when we were running out and they really were like a 16th player today."

There may be celebrations this weekend after booking another final appearance, but she knows the focus will quickly shift towards Galway and the chance to reclaim the title.

"We'll celebrate tonight and enjoy it, but tomorrow it'll be all focus on two weeks' time."



Cork's Millie Condon and Izzy O'Regan after beating Tipp.



Cork's Millie Condon celebrates with her family after the game.



REBELS ADVANCE: Ava Fitzgerald is challenged by Clodagh McIntyre of Tipperary during Saturday's Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship semi-final at Semple Stadium. Cork to set up a n All-Ireland date with Galway.
PHOTO: ©INPHO/TOM MAHER

Cork delivered but more will be needed at Croke decider

When asked, in the match programme, for one word to describe her team-mates, Méabh Cahalane offered "relentless". It certainly played out that way in an All-Ireland semi-final where Cork translated their first 13 shots for a magnificent first-half tally of 2-11.

By contrast, Tipperary captain Caoimhe McCarthy characterised her team as "resilient". That showed, too, as the Premier clawed back 10 of the final 15 points, but still fell five short.

Cork's class shone through as they were more easily and consistently able to score from play, totalling 2-14 to Tipp's 0-9.

It was a full team effort. In the first half, goalkeeper Amy Lee and each of the full-back line, Izzy O'Regan, Libby Coppinger, and Cahalane, chipped in with an assist for a point on top of their defensive efforts.

Their midfield, as expected, was the engine room. For a 16th-minute point, both started on their own 45.

Ashling Thompson, playing through a hamstring injury, swept up the sliotar and switched it to the opposite flank. Two passes later, Laura Hayes was coming forward to slot between the posts from under the New Stand.

The quality of the scoring was top-notch. A cluster of five points came from that pocket out by the left sideline.

Their first pair had come on the run wide on the right. They probed down the right for their third score, too. Méabh Murphy, Thompson, and Isobel Sheehan came surging out of defence before Orlaith Cahalane clipped a clever heads-up pass into the corner for Sorcha McCartan.

Her reverse ball was well weighted for Amy O'Connor to take it on the run with a silky first touch, weaving past her marker and the Tipp sweeper with a smooth shimmy before stitching a perfect finish inside the far post.

The second goal originated with an O'Regan catch from the opposition puck-out. McCartan was again the target for Saoirse McCarthy's ball in. She was out in front to sweep the sliotar back for O'Connor. The four-time All-Star's angled delivery was aimed for Orlaith Cahalane,

CAMOGIE

■ Stephen Barry

but she smartly let it run for the onrushing Millie Condon.

The Ballinascarthy workhorse was more commonly spotted covering on her own 21, but her spinner had too much for the keeper. Post-match, McCarthy hailed Condon for making "some statement".

Their defence had to stand up in the second half. Their intensity was shown early doors as four Cork players, Coppinger, Méabh Murphy, Thompson, and corner-forward Orlaith Cahalane, who tracked the move all the way back to her own 21, forced Grace O'Brien to overcarry the sliotar.

A few minutes later, O'Brien was denied by a vital Lee save to preserve Cork's lead.

The two players we haven't mentioned in all that were two of the strongest contenders for Coppinger's Player of the Match award. Wing-forward Emma Murphy was unmarkable in the first half with four points from play.

Ava Fitzgerald, meanwhile, must've been steeled by tagging Murphy in training. Assigned the task of pursuing Tipp's breakout star Caoimhe Stakelum, Fitzgerald never gave her room to breathe and got a series of flicks on the ball for covering defenders to mop up.

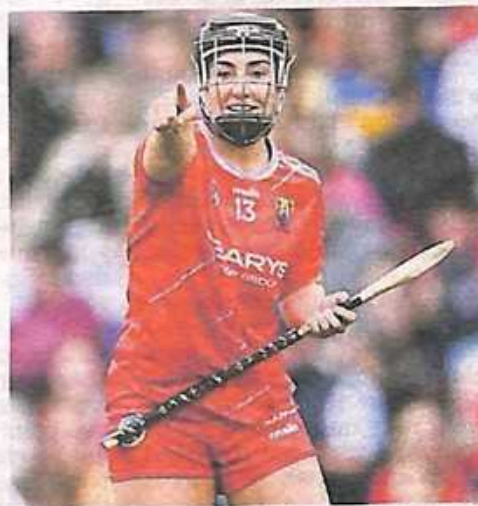
Both subs were also impactful. Slotting back into the squad, Orlaith Mullins contributed the final pair of clinching points, with one teed up by Hayley Ryan.

For all the benefits of the camogie championship restructure, this was Cork's first game with real jeopardy since April.

Coming off a four-week break, McCartan described them as being like "caged animals". Their first-half sharpness proved they're in a good spot, even if they had to grit their teeth against the wind. As the post-match soundtrack blared out, 'I'm still standing'.

Galway's victory over Kilkenny

It was an evening that emphasised the defensive solidity of Cork and Galway. The Rebels' only goal conceded was a conso-



Amy O'Connor of Cork celebrates after scoring her side's first goal at FBD Semple Stadium.

Picture: Piaras Ó Midheach/Sportsfile

lation strike in beating the Tribeswomen. Galway have yet to allow a goal in four championship games.

When their captain Aoife Donohue was asked for one word to sum up her team, she settled on "hardworking". They kept the starting Kilkenny side to just one point and four shots from play. To close out the game, Sarah Healy deliberately pumped a couple of stoppage-time puck-outs over the Old Stand sideline to pin the Cats back inside their own half.

Where full-back Coppinger was named Player of the Match for Cork, Galway centre-back Ciara Hickey picked up their award.

That said, injuries to two-time Player of the Year Donohue, free-taking captain Carrie Dolan, Dervla Higgins, and Sabina Rabbittie will be concerns.

All told, Cork-Tipp provided the higher standard of camogie in front of a record 10,311 semi-final crowd at Semple Stadium. That marked a 45% increase on last year's double-header at Nowlan Park.

Tipp's resilience will be called upon again after their 10th semi-final loss since last reaching the final. Following their sixth consecutive semi-final success, Cork's relentless edge will be needed for another fortnight.

Higgins is on red alert for the biggest battle of all

Darren Kelly

AMID the swarms of young supporters in Kenny Park looking for an autograph and a chance to meet their hero, Athenry's ambassador embraces those who will be wearing maroon and cheering the team again in Croke Park on Sunday.

It's been an incredible year for Dervla Higgins. A first All-Ireland title in four years last August was followed by leading her club to national silverware at the beginning of the year. And she's hoping for more of the same.

"I'd a great year last year," acknowledges Galway's vice-captain. "It's hard to believe that it's coming around to this stage already."

"We're just knuckling down before the All-Ireland comes around. Happy to be back in it. We're going to try our best to hopefully get over the line."

Cork are the opponents again and while Galway have had success against their Munster rivals, they've also taken the blows, including the opening game of this year's championship.

"Everyday can't be a perfect day," said Higgins when asked about their 0-18 to 1-8 defeat in June. "You're always trying to build and improve on bits."

"And as a championship builds, your performances get better and better. And the main thing is to be building to peak at the right time."

"It's a new game. It's obviously an All-Ireland final. Circumstances are going to be that little bit different. You're just trying to look forward. You'll obviously look back on the game and learn from it and take what you can from it."

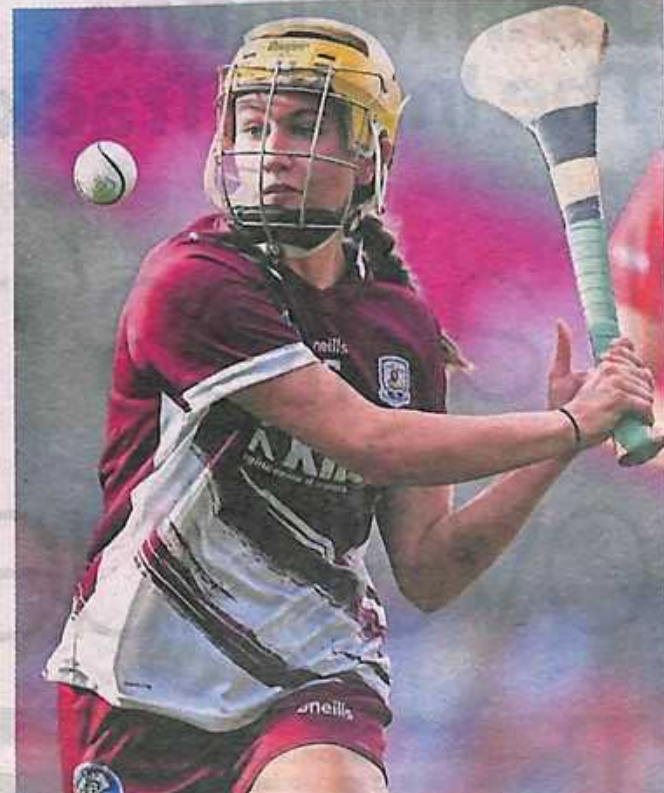


Galway's durable defender Dervla Higgins.

All-Ireland Senior Camogie Final



Galway's Aoife Donohue comes under pressure from Libby Coppinger of Cork during last year's All-Ireland Senior Camogie Final at Croke Park.



Galway's in-form corner forward Caoimhe Kelly.

Champs Galway can reign supreme again

● Murray's charges are equipped to withstand likely fierce challenge from Cork

Darren Kelly

THE inter-county season ends this Sunday when Galway and Cork collide in a third consecutive All-Ireland senior camogie final (Croke Park, 4.15pm).

Considered by many as the best of the title deciders across all four codes in 2025, these two heavyweights are likely to provide another fitting instalment following one win each in their last two showdowns.

Cork were winners in 2024 (1-16 to 0-16) when Galway fell to a questionable Katriona Mackey goal. Mairead Dillon found the net for the Tribeswomen 12 months ago before everyone in Croke Park held their breath as Carrie Dolan put over the winning free (1-14 to 1-13).

This may be deemed the rubber match but there's more to Cork versus Galway this decade than those two finals. Both are in their sixth decider in the 2020s and Galway beat Cork in 2021 thanks to Siobhán McGrath's winning goal.

Add three league finals (Galway won in 2022 and 2023, Cork in 2025) and it's simply a case of the irresistible force meeting the immovable object. With both having claimed two All-Irelands over the last five years, the stage is set for the ultimate title bout.

Defending champions Galway will be without Sabina Rabbittie

(broken thumb) who left the field injured in the semi-final victory over Kilkenny. Niamh Mallon and Jennifer Hughes remain major doubts but there's hope that Aoife Donohue, Dervla Higgins and Niamh McPeake will be ok to take part.

Donohue and Higgins are vice-captains while McPeake, after returning from an ACL injury, was player of the month for June. Their leadership is vital especially if Mallon doesn't play.

Galway's starting personnel will likely see six changes from the 2025 final. Katie Manning and Katie Anna Porter have slotted into defence; Ally Hesnan now owns a midfield jersey; while Áine Keane, McPeake and Niamh Niland are regulars up front.

Former captain Shauna Healy is back in the squad while Dillon and Mallon are options for manager Cathal Murray. Olwen Rabbittie is injured with Siobhán Gardiner and Annmarie Starr not involved this year.

Sarah Healy provides experience in goal. Manning, Roisin Black and Rachael Hanniffy form the full back line behind Porter, Ciara Hickey and Higgins. The defence have not conceded a goal in four championship matches. Hesnan has Dolan for company in the middle.

McPeake is Galway's second highest scorer behind Dolan (1-15) and leads the attack from

centre forward alongside Caoimhe Kelly (1-8), Ailish O'Reilly, Donohue (1-3 each), Niland (0-4) and Keane (0-3). O'Reilly and Donohue are both chasing a fifth All-Ireland medal.

Shannon Corcoran, Dillon, Kayla Madden, Aoibheann Barry and Alannah Kelly are other strong options open to the girls in maroon.

Cork have also gone through multiple changes as well, with retired trio Laura Treacy and the Mackey sisters (Pamela and Katriona) all stepping away. Aoife Healy and Hannah Looney are now plying their trade in Australia's AFLW.

Ger Manley's crew experienced a difficult league, losing at

home to Antrim. They also exited the Munster championship at the quarter-final stage but have returned to their best since.

The Rebelettes laid down a marker against Galway in June with an impressive 0-18 to 1-8 win in Kenny Park. Saoirse McCarthy delivered four exceptional frees on a windy day while Amy O'Connor returned with four points from play.

They also took down Tipperary (0-21 to 0-18) and Waterford (1-13 to 0-10) before beating the former 2-16 to 0-17 in the semi-final thanks to goals from O'Connor and Millie Condon.

O'Connor (1-22) and McCarthy (0-14) lead an attack that includes Siorcha McCartan (0-11), Emma Murphy (0-6), Orlaith Cahalane (0-4) and Condon. The latter two plus Ava Fitzgerald and Meadhbh Murphy were part of Cork's all-conquering under-23 winners this year.

Those two players plus Isobel Sheehan form a new half back line with Izzy O'Regan, Libby Coppinger and Maebh Cahalane behind them. Amy Lee is the assured presence between the sticks.

And while there are concerns over Ashling Thompson (hamstring), the 2015 winning captain is expected to play midfield with Laura Hayes. Hayley Ryan, Aisling Egan and Rachel Murphy are other go-to players.

Galway recovered from their

first day defeat to Cork with an impressive victory away to Waterford (1-14 to 0-14) before beating Tipperary (3-17 to 0-15) to book a direct semi-final spot. Dolan's early second half penalty helped run out 1-14 to 0-1 winners over Kilkenny.

This is a 50-50 contest! Both teams have dangerous inside lines that will thrive on possession. Hickey, providing McCarthy's not allowed to roam free and Thompson will likely play holding roles to limit the supply.

If Galway's midfield alliance holds their own, they have the experience to create opportunities. Hanniffy and Black will likely be deployed to curtain O'Connor and McCartan while Higgins will keep an eye on Murphy. If successful, Galway can exploit the inexperience of Cork's half backs.

After the ladies football success last week, Galway are going for a first ever double, something Cork has done six times. For camogie, it's a chance to win back-to-back O'Duffy Cups for the first time ever after coming up short in 1997 and 2020.

These players won't be thinking about that. They'll just be focused on trying to beat Cork, sentiment shared by their opponents. Nothing that's happened before matters. And while they have to earn it, this Galway group are well equipped to cement their place in history.

“The Rebelettes laid down a marker against Galway in June with an impressive 0-18 to 1-8 win in Kenny Park

Search for fifth All-Ireland takes on extra meaning for O'Reilly

Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Camogie final



Cork v Galway

Sunday: Croke Park, 4.15pm

Referee: Gavin Donegan

TV: RTÉ2

Eoghan Cormican



APRIL 12 was the afternoon Ailish O'Reilly's 2026 sporting calendar switched and flipped. Not a seamless flip, mind. The fuel protests made sure of that.

When you've served for as long as O'Reilly and shown up as often as she has, no manager is going to demand you present yourself for the muck, rain, and cold of December and January pre-season slog.

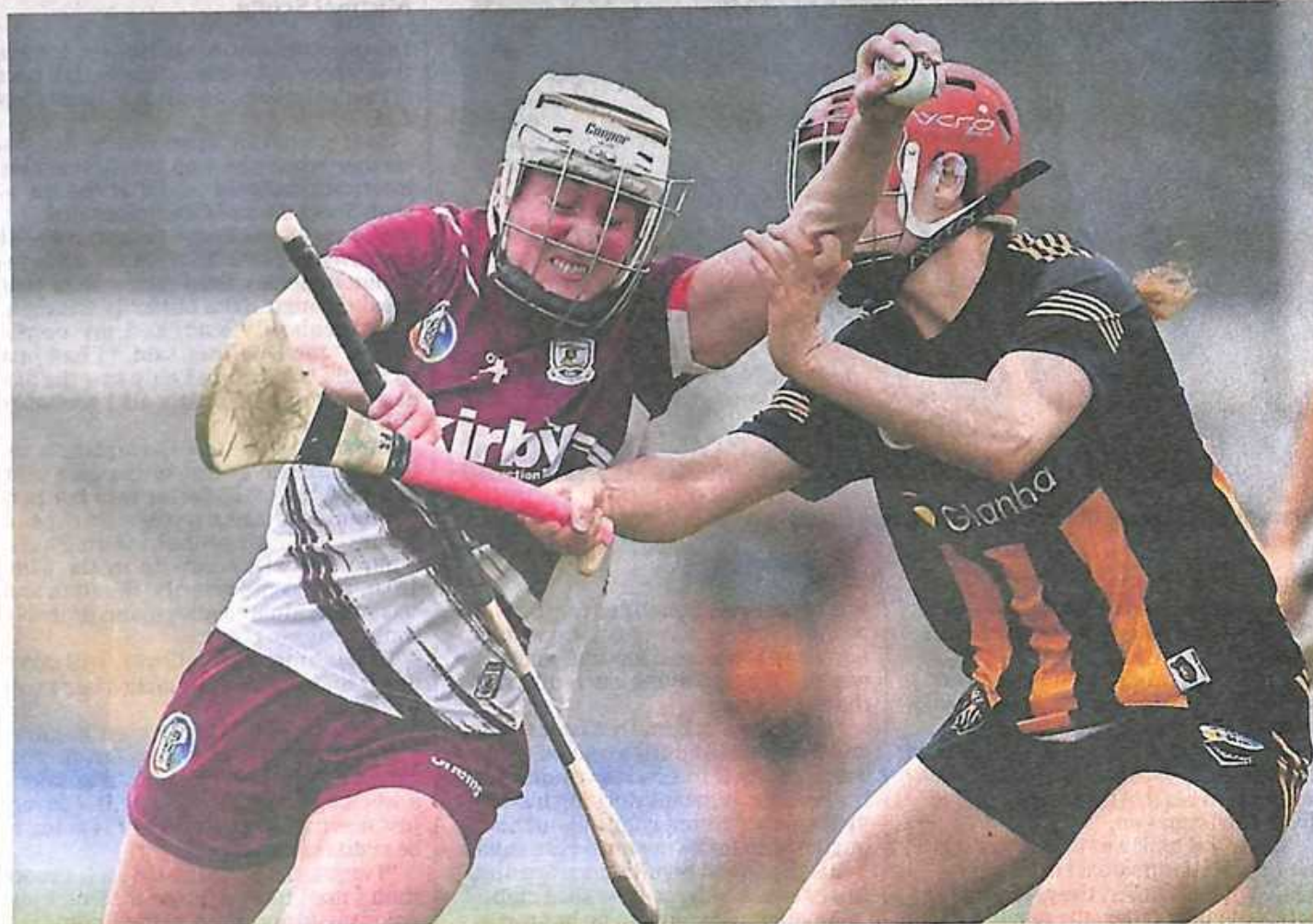
Her green and white flag contribution across four of Galway's five All-Ireland wins means O'Reilly is at the stage in her maroon existence where she gets to write her own pre-season and spring.

The melting of 2025 into 2026 was no different. She did as she so often does during the winter months. The camogie field was traded for the basketball hall.

Where once it was the high altitude of the Women's Super League she would operate, it's been the lower step of the Basketball Ireland Development League (BIDL) where Ailish has kept her eye in since returning to the game in November 2023 for the first time post-covid.

The Claregalway outfit she is a leading figure of went all the way to the concluding day. O'Reilly did not want to abandon this journey to begin her 2026 Galway journey. The National League threw in and O'Reilly continued throwing baskets elsewhere.

During Galway's team holiday to New York at the end of February, Cathal Murray was informed that she and the body still required a couple more weeks. Buying time, perhaps, while still contemplating if there would be an inter-county campaign No. 14.



CHARGING FORWARD: Galway's Ailish O'Reilly drives past Angela Carroll of Kilkenny in last month's All-Ireland camogie semi-final at FBD Semple Stadium. O'Reilly's big-day record is unrivalled.

Picture: Piaras Ó Midheach/Sportsfile

"With the basketball, we happened to be progressing quite well and ended up in an All-Ireland final, so I said, do you know what, I am just going to concentrate on actually getting to train with them and try and put my best effort into it."

"Once I am in a team, I want to give my best effort, and Cathal said, look, if you come back at the end of March, we knew I still had until the end of June, end of July to get myself right," O'Reilly recalled this week.

Basketball is both a passion and welcome change of sporting landscape.

"I have been playing it a long, long time, even before I picked up a hurl. It is just a complete change of scenery when

the camogie is finished. The training is less stressful. The level I am playing now, you could nearly call it junior. It is just the craic, really. It's just a release, a release of energy for a couple of months," continued the 32-year-old, who knows that at her age and with the mileage she's clocked across both codes, she could do with lightening the year-round schedule of Galway, Oranmore/Maree, and Claregalway.

"The body needs a break, and I don't give myself a break. But it's funny because the basketball doesn't hurt or ache me whatsoever. It's once I come onto the soggy pitches and then the hard ground, it is completely different. I'll be long enough not being able to play

so I'll keep going while I can."

Fr Matthews proved too strong in the April 12 All-Ireland decider, O'Reilly bagging seven points in the 74-45 defeat. From the National Stadium, she pointed the car for Nowlan Park and the Division 1 League final against Waterford.

"I only came back in with Galway the week of the league final, but I didn't tog because I was playing basketball the same day. It was a rush from Tallaght to Nowlan Park, got caught in a couple of fuel protests, so missed most of the first half."

"When I came back, I was asking: 'God, have I left it way too late to come back?' I was playing catch-up. Then if I

am back too early, my body is nearly breaking down by the end of summer, so it is a balance I have to get right. I am still very, very rusty."

Murray, for this part, would rather have the five-time All-Star rusty and racing to catch-up than not have her at all.

"She's a big character around the place and she did mention the word retirement. I felt this time that she would be walking away, and maybe if you pushed it and said, well, we're going back in January, she mightn't, but it's brilliant to have got her back," said the manager.

There are three Galway players — O'Reilly, Aoife Donohue, and AnnMarie Starr — in possession of four All-Ireland senior medals. O'Reilly is the sole member of this group to have started all four.

Her big-day record is unrivalled. She delivered the sole goal of the 2013 decider, she delivered two of their three goals in the 2019 win, she assisted the winning goal in 2021, and last August top-scored from play with 0-3 while involved in another 1-2.

From inside tormentor to half-forward threading, O'Reilly's role has been reshaped in recent years. From exclusive provision of green flags in the collection of her first two medals to exclusive provision of white in doubling that collection.

"I don't have the same movement or mobility as I had five or six years ago. You see the likes of Caoimhe Kelly and Niamh Niland, and the pace they have to burn. The last day I was very far out the pitch, but I don't mind. You're using your experience and finding those pockets of space more so than being in the inside line."

The hunt for a fifth carries special motivation — and it ain't back-to-back. Her granny, Mary O'Reilly, died in May. A constant supporter and spectator since starting out in maroon at U16.

"My biggest supporter. I can still see her sitting up in that stand. She'd be the first person I'd call after a game. Hopefully, she'll be looking down on us. If I can make her proud on Sunday, that's enough for me."

"Look, if there is one good performance in me, I'll take it."

Given her track record, there usually is.

'We lost 14 players but in Cork, the talent is there,'

Daragh O'Conchúir

Ger Manley is talking about his new-look Cork camogie panel, but emphasising that the bottom line has never changed. The need for the majority to do the basics well, rather than a reliance on two or three box-office operators to constantly perform miracles.

The Rebels boss is in full flow looking ahead to the Leesiders' sixth straight Glen Dimplex All-Ireland final on Sunday, and a third on the trot against Galway, who scuppered their three-in-a-row bid last year.

He is delighted by the semi-final victory over Tipperary at FBD Semple Stadium, not just because it earned a reunion with the Tribeswomen at Croke Park, but because of the collective development of the group.

And unprompted, he throws another name out there.

"Look at Emma Murphy," Manley as-

serts. "What a performance. Four points, and she's gone better and better this year. Like, she's a senior player now. The amount of running she did. The first point she got was on the right side. The next point she got was inside the 21. Next point she got from the left. Next thing she was receiving a ball from (goalkeeper) Amy Lee."

"But it's her work rate. And look, it's confidence. I was a confidence player. We're all confidence players and Emma is playing with confidence. When things go right it's great. But the thing about Emma now, that I think has changed, is that (when) one or two bad plays or things go against her — 'Nah, it doesn't matter.' She just gets on with it."

Her contribution in the All-Ireland semi-final in Thurles was pivotal, yielding those four points from play in the first half as Cork clinically availed of all 13 of their scoring opportunities to lay the platform for a five-point win.

But it was the continuing graft that stood out, the selflessness, and when Orlaith Mullins came on in her stead with a little more than eight minutes of regulation time remaining, it was because management felt the petrol gauge was beginning to blink after another Duracell Bunny display.

"The A v B (games), as I've been saying all year, we've really put in a good bank of work and we knew we had girls to come off the bench," Murphy declares.

"Orlaith Mullins was away at the start of the year but she came in there the last couple of weeks and again, just pushing every girl on in training. It really is 1 to 34 and I can't say enough about everyone and the work they have put in."

"This is my seventh year in the team but we've had some really hard days this year so it just made the semi-final win all the more sweet. We know where

we're at now. We're rebuilding our own team."

"You saw the young girls there — the likes of an Ava Fitz(gerald), the likes of Millie Condon, Izzy Sheehan. They're coming in and making a mark. And the impact of our bench. Our A v Bs have just went from strength to strength the last few weeks. That's a testament to how the Bs have been in training, that we were ready to start the way we did (against Tipp). And the impact of the subs that came on, it shows that we have just been pushing each other on."

Seven years in and around the elite of the sport cannot but have a positive impact, if you are of a mind to learn. With such an overhaul of the squad, it places Murphy in and around veteran status.

"I'm only 24!" she protests. "I think this year is the first year where I kind of thought I'm a bit older but it's been a great year. It's been a different year for me but it's been great."



Cork's Emma Murphy shields possession from Tipperary's Karen Kennedy.

The considerable turnover in players, with a third of last year's team gone and nearly half the panel, has placed demands on everyone. There was a loss to Antrim in the league and then defeat to Tipp at Semple Stadium

Cork chase 31st O'Duffy Cup



Finbarr McCarthy

With the club championships on a weekend break, the focus this weekend is on the big one - the All-Ireland Senior Camogie Final - Cork v Galway in Croke Park on Sunday while the divisional and colleges section of the county championships reach their conclusion.

Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Camogie

Cork v Galway on Sunday in Croke Park at 4.15pm

"Delighted to be back in the final given the difficulties we had at the start of the season; it just shows the resilience within the group," Cork manager Ger Manley said before Sunday's final.

Back in April Cork lost to Antrim in the league for the 1st time in many years and relegation from D1 was a possibility but what changed?

"Well we did not get relegated and gradually the injury worries we were dealing with cleared; we lost to Tipperary in the Munster Championship, but played well and then we got down to work."

The team had "a very good block of training ahead of the 1st round of the All-Ireland against Galway in Athenry".

It was an emphatic win and it changed the dynamic of the group phase.

"Without a doubt and now we were looking at a semi-final which we then targeted and that gave us time again to get more work done and any niggling injuries cleared up."

Was it a season changing result?

"I suppose you could say it was as it instilled belief in the players that we were - as I always felt we were - contenders again."

It's a 6th successive final for Cork and for the 3rd final in a row, Galway are in the opposite corner, a team Ger has huge respect for.

"Look they're the All-Ireland champions and also won the league and have

some very good players, but look we have equally good players and are really looking forward to Sunday."

Ger is clear on the strengths of Galway, saying they are "well balanced" with "good players in every line, but we have played each other often enough to know to expect from them and they from us".

Captain's view

Meabh Cahalane is captain and the hurt from last year is still there. "A bit yet but look that is in the past now and it's nearly a new team we have but the desire within the group is strong and that is important."

Meabh is delighted at the way the new players have fitted into the team and while the start of the year was tough, it has improved greatly as the season evolved. "They have been brilliant and when you consider the players that we lost for a variety of reasons, it shows the depth within the squad that we are back in the final."

Winning the Under 23 All-Ireland was very important: "It was - it gave the new players confidence and they brought that into training and we all benefited from that."

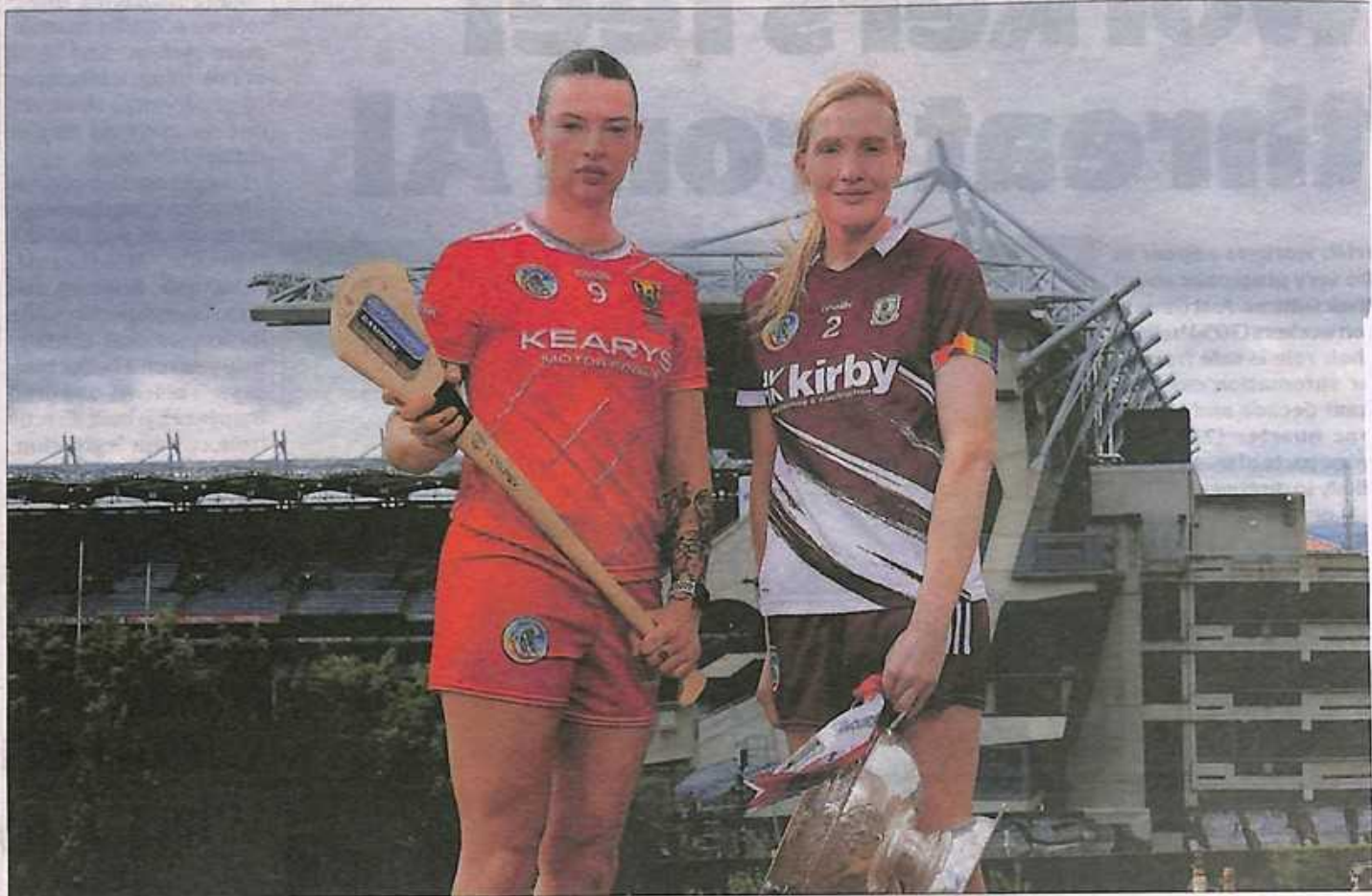
Going direct to the semi-final was huge in terms of preparation. "Yeah once we beat Galway in Athenry, we kinda knew we could get there and that allowed us a good run into the semi-final which was ideal."

As for the semi-final, it was very much a game of two halves - very good 1st half and a patchy 2nd period.

"Yeah the first half was the best we played all year and we knew Tipperary would come at us especially with the strength of the wind, but we dug in and got the job done."

That was two weeks ago and for Meabh her routine for the final has changed little over the years; well they have been doing it now for the last 6 years!

"Well the first few days are recovery and after that we focus on ourselves and Galway, and then wind



Cork's Ashling Thompson and Galway's Shauna Healy at the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Camogie Championship Final Media Day at the Maldron Hotel Croke Park. PHOTO: INPHO/JAMES CROMBIE

down after the training is over, relax get a few jobs done and then it's match day before you know it."

Does she still have nerves before a final?

"Ah a bit but look every player in the country wants to begetting ready for the All-Ireland Final and they would gladly swap with us, but we delighted to be back in the final and really looking forward to it."

Rebel support

One thing both Ger and Meabh agreed on was the level of support the team are getting.

"Incredible and the way they got behind us in Thurles was a factor is getting us over the line and I know it will be just as strong on Sunday."

Galway made it to the semi-final with wins over Tipperary and Waterford having recovered from the opening round loss to Cork.

In that semi-final they were comfortable winners over a Kilkenny side that were making the last four for the first time in two years; overall it was a poor

game but that did not trouble the champions.

What will trouble Cathal Murray is the number of injuries they have picked up; reports would suggest that a few players will miss out.

Key player Sabina Rabbittie is ruled out while Niamh Mallon is rated doubtful as are Niamh McPeake and Jennifer Hughes, but Aoife Donohue and Dervla Higgins both of whom departed early in the semi-final are expected to be fit to take their place.

For all that, the champions still have quality players in ace free taker Carrie Dolan - it was her point that won last year's final - Roisin Black, Niamh Niland, Ciara Hickey, Ally Hesnan, Aine Keane and Caoimhe Kelly as they bid to do something they have not done before - retain the title.

Cork are almost certain to go with the 15 that started the semi-final, in which they scored 2-11 in the 1st half, 2-10 from play and no wide at all.

Amy Lee made a couple of top class saves particu-

larly in the 2nd half as Tipperary battled to get back into the game.

The defence were excellent in that half, Libby Copping got the POTM gong, but it could very easily have gone to Meabh Murphy who was outstanding at centre-back.

Izzy O'Regan, Meabh Cahalane, Ava Fitzgerald and Isobel Sheehan were solid and dependable all through and they will need to be as good again on Sunday.

Ashling Thompson worked as hard as ever in midfield and her tenacity will help even if she is carrying a slight knock, while alongside is Laura Hayes who is a key player. Her pace, work rate and accuracy have proved crucial when it matters in big games - she rarely fails to deliver.

As referenced 2-11 in the 1st half, but only 5 points in the 2nd period, although the wind was a factor.

Emma Murphy was outstanding with 0-4, Sorcha McCartan and Amy O'Connor delivered big scores as did Millie Condon.

Saoirse McCarthy and Orlaith Cahalane worked hard but that was not reflected in their scoring return and they will look to improve on that come Sunday.

The bench too could be important as Orlaith Mullins clipped over 2 points on her introduction.

Galway will start as favourites, rightly so as champions, yet in last year's decider Cork played the entire 2nd half with 14 after Hannah Looney's red card just before the break and only a late free denied Cork at least a draw, which would suggest it will be as close again.

Cork will also have a number of players starting their first final - will that be a factor?

It's a hard one to call, Cork will need to get a good start help the newcomers settle, be disciplined as Dolan rarely misses a free, as we know to our cost.

Cork though have a lot of pace and the wide open spaces of HQ will help; I also feel there's big games coming from key players

O'Connor, McCarthy and Orlaith Cahalane among them.

Get that and Cork will be on their way to their 31st title.

Go for it girls, and hopefully a homecoming to celebrate on the Grand Parade on Monday night.

The match is live on C103 and the Onic Player.

Healy joins Galway's back-to-back push weeks after giving birth

NIALL MCINTYRE

Shauna Healy is part of the Galway camogie panel taking on Cork in Sunday's All-Ireland final despite having given birth to her daughter Pippa just four months ago.

The Ardahan defender has lauded Galway manager Cathal Murray, their strength and conditioning team and her support network at home for helping her join the county's bid for back-to-back ti-join the county's bid for back-to-back ti-join the county's bid for back-to-back ti-

"It was a big thing for him [Murray] to ask me to go back again," she said at the launch of the finals in Croke Park. "I was just saying to the girls you're long enough sitting down and being retired. So when the body is able we'll give it another go."

"To be honest, I'm more so there now to help and encourage the younger girls. If I can offer something to them, then happy days. If I can offer something on the training field and put a bit of pressure on someone to make them better, then that's my job done then."

Healy points to the example of Irish rugby star Amee Leigh Costigan who kept up her training regime for most of her pregnancy, documenting her journey on Instagram.



Galway's Shauna Healy

The Galway star, who also has a two-year-old son Billy, says childbirth shouldn't be a barrier to participating in sport though acknowledges she had to work hard to regain peak fitness.

"Amee Leigh Costigan had twins not so long ago. She was training right up until they were born. She's incredible. Women are amazing, the body can do amazing things."

"I got back with the club before this, got a couple of sessions under my belt, played a couple of matches. I re-joined the Galway panel then about seven or eight weeks ago. It was hard work [getting back into training] but I would have kept it [exercise] up throughout the pregnancy, when I was able."

"I enjoy it. When you enjoy it, you're not kind of thinking too much about being gassed. That happened plenty of times but it's part and parcel of it."

Healy's support network includes her

husband Darragh Burke, a two-time All-Ireland club winning hurler with St Thomas, as well as her parents who have "been roped in" to babysitting duties.

The three-time All-Ireland winner, who works as a podiatrist, says seeing the Galway ladies footballers end a 22-year drought at the weekend has led to "a lovely buzz around the county" and emphasised the importance of having a big Galway support in Croke Park.

"I'd say that's what got us over the line last year, the Galway crowd really got behind us. When you hear that, it's lovely to know that people have taken their day and come up here to support us. When they get behind you, you're like, let's give them something."



CORK



Therese O'Callaghan



1. Amy Lee (Na Piarsaigh)

Her importance as goalkeeper is clear to see, with her contribution going beyond being a shot-stopper. As was demonstrated in the Waterford championship game when she scored a wondrous goal after a one-two with Libby Coppinger that landed in the opposing square and bounced all the way to the net. With camogie constantly evolving, the green flag turned out to be decisive.



2. Izzy O'Regan (Ballygarvan)

The loss of Izzy to an ACL injury in 2025 was a serious blow to Cork, not alone because of her versatility but she is considered to be one of her side's more experienced players. Travelling that long road back required dedication, and slotting in at right corner-back in a position that was filled by the impregnable Pamela Mackey, she's grabbed the opportunity with both hands.



3. Libby Coppinger (St Colum's)

Was named the official Player of the Match in the All-Ireland semi-final victory over Tipperary, her tactical awareness is one of her best traits and her reading of the game. It would appear having decided to play one code this year at inter-county level (played as a forward in football), while a difficult one, is something that she is benefiting from. Any injury setbacks she has put behind her.



4. Méabh Cahalane (St Finbarr's)

Captain of the team for a second successive year, and as a leader she performs her duty with great focus. Was forced to sit out the first two rounds of the All-Ireland championship due to a calf injury, and this coming after an extended season with her club that also ended in All-Ireland heartbreak following a replay in January, was a blow. Her younger sister Órlaith is a threat up front.



5. Ava Fitzgerald (Sarsfields)

First start for Ava in an All-Ireland senior final but she's seen it all at club level, especially with Sars' journeys through the Munster and All-Ireland championship in recent times. A minor two seasons ago, she is one of a cohort of players that claimed All-Ireland U23 honours earlier this year, and as it happens, that turned out to be a breakthrough moment for the senior squad.



6. Méabh Murphy (Ballinora)

Another of the Cork U23 successful group that brought that winning feeling with them. The retirement of Laura Treacy left big boots to fill, so in taking over that pivotal position, she has done an extremely good job. Credit to management and the potential they saw in trusting her with the number six jersey. She had a very good semi-final.



7. Isobel Sheehan (Éire Óg)

A first All-Ireland senior final appearance for the Éire Óg club woman, but she is not short on talent, nor is she short on pedigree. Hard work is part of the Sheehan and Dunlea DNA. She needed to be patient before tying down the wing-back position, and she is now the third cog in what is a totally new Rebel half-back line.



8. Ashling Thompson (Milford)

Unfortunately the midfielder has had a grueling season that has been affected by injury. A serious elbow injury sidelined her for over three months, and then this was followed by a hamstring tear she sustained in the days running up to the All-Ireland semi-final that required further rehab. Not the ideal preparation for the big day, but she's lion-hearted and will want to play her part in an 11th senior final.



9. Laura Hayes (St Catherine's)

When they soldier together, Laura and Ashling form a really formidable midfield partnership. Relentless commitment and drive is what you will get from these two stalwarts. In part, while this is a new-look Cork team, Hayes has established herself as one of the finest and her reputation precedes her. She is someone you can always rely on. Received Player of the Year gong in 2024.



10. Emma Murphy (Glen Rovers)

She leaves everything on the pitch, as epitomised not alone by her regular scoring returns but by her unyielding work-rate. One of the standout performers in the All-Ireland semi-final, it was her four points from open play in an electrifying first half that established the mood. Her running game is particularly effective, and she is ready and willing to exploit any space she can find.



11. Saoirse McCarthy (Courcy Rovers)

Entrusted with leading the line of attack from centre-forward - but you could find her in any of the half-forward positions - where she brings an element of calmness and level-headedness. A very good long-distance free-taker as well, and these conversions are crucial and can go a long way in deciding tight matches. Shortlisted for senior Player of the Year for the third year in-a-row in 2025.



12. Millie Condon (Ballinascorthy)

A mainstay throughout the championship, she is the third Cork player that will be lining out in her first All-Ireland senior final. A vital cog in the Cork U23 winning team, it is her endless drive and vitality that shines through, as was shown in the goal she nailed in the first half against Tipp in the semi-final. A confident 21-year-old.



13. Amy O'Connor (St Vincent's)

One of Cork's longest-serving players along with Ashling Thompson, she is no stranger to appearing in All-Ireland finals. As winning captain in 2023, she has already brought the O'Duffy Cup home, a year when her three-minute hat-trick still gets talked about. Hit by injury and missed the start of this year, but she is back to herself.



14. Órlaith Cahalane (St Finbarr's)

A Cork U23 All-Ireland medallist. She has pace and zip that keep most defenders on their toes. Another very good attribute is her team-play, always willing to look up and find a colleague if her route to goal is not clear. Well able to source a green flag of her own too. Will do all in her power to help sister Méabh get her hands on the silverware.



15. Sorcha McCartan (St Finbarr's)

Her greatest asset is being able to shoot points from the most difficult of angles, which can be a real crowd-pleaser. Strong and physical, she won't let anyone get the better of her easily. She has settled well into what is considered to be a strong inside line for Cork, although you could see her wander out the field as well, which underlines her ability to adapt to different situations and different tasks.

Player-by-player guide



Management

Ger Manley and his backroom turned the year around when it appeared to be going south, so getting back to the All-Ireland final following the departure of a number of key personnel speaks volumes for the work they've done. Having been involved with Matthew Twomey for a few years, this is Manley's third term as manager, and that experience has been put to good use. He has highlighted what Dónal O'Grady (analyst) brings to the table. He has good men and women around him - Séan Crowley, James Nyhan, Gemma O'Connor (all coaches), John Hartnett (goalkeeping coach) and John Paul Ivers (S&C). Not to mention an extended team where Jennifer Mehigan (female liaison officer) and Marian McCarthy (county board liaison officer) make sure it all runs smoothly.

They're all singing off the same hymn sheet. And they'll need to be.

Subs

It's not just from the starting 15 that Cork lost players, but their bench was also impacted with the likes of Kate Wall moving to Australia after the All-Ireland club final with St Finbarr's. While it was noticeable that management only used two subs in the All-Ireland semi-final - Órlaith Mullins and Hayley Ryan were brought on late in the second half - that probably has more to do with trusting the players on the field of play. We saw what Aisling Egan can do in some of the earlier rounds. Ciara O'Sullivan is another who is capable of making an impact. And any of the U23s, who gave the squad so much of a lift following their success. Last year's minor captain Rachel Murphy is one to watch out for.

THREE KEY PLAYERS (AND WHO MIGHT STOP THEM)

Eoghan Cormican

Ciara Hickey (Galway)

From 13 possessions in last year's final to 12 in the first half alone during the semi-final two weeks ago. For one so young, Hickey's command of the sweeper role and her ability to read deliveries emerging from the opposing defence is remarkably impressive. She is Galway's launchpad. Same as the championship opener between the counties, Galway midfielder Ally Hesnan will pick up centre-forward Saoirse McCarthy so as to allow Hickey sit in the pocket and intercept. What is the Cork counter here? The Rebels management, which includes 2004 All-Ireland winning hurling boss Dónal O'Grady, must come with a plan to nullify Hickey's hovering. Could one of the other half-forwards be tasked with standing beside the centre-back? Could No.12 wearing Millie Condon be

brought back out to midfield, where she was for all three round-robin games, and the hamstring-blighted Ashling Thompson instructed to push up and frustrate Hickey? Whatever the move, Cork cannot present Hickey with a free runway.

Laura Hayes (Cork)

Initially viewed as Laura Treacy's successor, Hayes was handed the No.6 shirt upon returning to inter-county fare for the League's closing rounds. The centre-back role, though, is stifling to a player of such athleticism, drive, and expression as Hayes. Cork realised such in the seven weeks between the Munster quarter-final defeat to Tipp and All-Ireland opener above in Athenry. And so when Liz Dempsey threw in the sliotar at Kenny Park, Hayes was in front of her as part of Cork's midfield pairing.





GALWAY



Eoghan Cormican

All-Ireland
Senior Camogie
final
Cork v Galway
Croke Park, 4.15pm
Referee: Gavin Donegan
TV: RTE2



Management

Whether it was or wasn't his motivation in returning for a ninth season, masterminding Galway's first-ever O'Duffy Cup back-to-back would be Cathal Murray's crowning legacy. In light of the defensive and middle-third absences, his success to date in 2026 has been stitching a team together

of U23-winning newcomers, cruciate returnees, and coaxed-back experienced heads. Proved on the eve of '25 final that he is capable of sizable calls. Dropped Emma Helebert in favour of Siobhan Gardiner, with the latter turning in a superb final showing. Depending on the well-being of Niamh Mallon's shoulder, does he throw her in for a first start in nine weeks to again strengthen his final

line-up?

Subs

If Niamh Mallon doesn't start, and there are strong suspicions from certain quarters that she will, the Down import then becomes Galway's main bench asset. Sabina Rabbittie is a monumental loss. She was a relieving outlet 12 months ago where under-pressure defenders could just fire the sliotar in her general direction and know that she would hold up, if not hold onto possession. The bustling physicality of 2025 final goalscorer Mairéad Dillon means she is well suited to the expectant fare. Shannon Corcoran, who started the League final and opening two rounds of championship, is another inside forward option. Shauna Healy, who gave birth to her second child in April, could be called upon as defensive back-up, what would be her first involvement since last year's final.

She and Saoirse McCarthy were to the fore in Cork's very nearly comeback last August. Encapsulating the increased responsibility on them in 2026, they're tearing and terrorising has been moved in from the left flank to centre stage. This is her first All-Ireland final where the Catherine's clubwoman won't be constrained by marking duties. She can thrive in this freedom.

Aoife Donohue (Galway)

Two minutes into the second half of last year's final, Aoife Donohue took on five Cork players. She succeeded in getting past Aoife Healy, Sordha McCartan, Emma Murphy, and Ashling Thompson. It took the fifth red shirt, that of Laura Treacy, to eventually halt her march.

The play perfectly captured the difficulty Cork have in tying down Galway's everywhere-all-at-once dynamo.

The six-time All-Star has had a quieter summer than usual, but never disappoints or disappears on the concluding Sunday, especially when the opposition is Cork. Just look at the opening half-hour of last year's final: scored 0-2, won two converted frees, assisted the goal, and stopped a certain Cork goal, albeit by illegal means. The two players detailed onto Donohue in the last two finals - Hannah Looney and Aoife Healy - are now in Australia. The latest Cork pick must track her all the way up to Sarah Healy's goal-line. When Donohue departed injured in the semi-final, the surprise was that Ava Brett didn't walk off the field with her, such was the velcro approach of the Kilkenny defender. Cork, pay heed.



1. Sarah Healy (St Thomas)

Has yet to be beaten in Championship 2026. So much of that clean sheet is her own doing. Denied Caoimhe Keher-Murtagh from close range in the semi-final. Produced superb saves to deny Orlaith Cahalane and Saoirse McCarthy on June 6. Cork have only twice bested her across last three championship meetings, and one of those was a Katrina Mackey throw.



2. Rachael Hanniffy (Oranmore-Maree)

Top of the class when the brief is to shadow and subdue a wrecking corner-forward. When Healy goes short, Hanniffy is her favoured outlet. Came out with an amount of ruck ball in semi-final. Marked Amy O'Connor in the 2024 final, Katrina Mackey last year. Presumption is she'll pick up Orlaith Cahalane, having done so for June 6 opener.



3. Róisín Black (Oranmore-Maree)

She and Amy O'Connor danced together on the opening day of summer, but will Galway want a repeat of this match-up? O'Connor was prioritised to such an extent 12 months ago that the No.8-wearing AnnMarie Starr went back to track her. Black was superbly solid the same day. A two-time All-Star the opposition know is infuriatingly difficult to breach.



4. Dervla Higgins (Athenry)

Along with Aoife Donohue, she is the harrying and hounding embodiment of Galway's bullying work ethic. In your face from first whistle to last. Wears No.4 but the expectation is that we'll again see her raise the temperature in the half-back line. Captained Athenry to All-Ireland club honours last January. All-Star recipient the last two seasons.



5. Katie Manning (Mullagh)

2022 All-Ireland intermediate winner. 2025 All-Ireland U23 winning captain, 2026 half-back line newcomer, albeit she's spent plenty of summer at corner-back. While clocking a fine semi-final, her reference point this past fortnight will have been the Round 1 first-half against Cork where Sordha McCartan scored 0-2 off her and won two converted frees off her.



6. Ciara Hickey (Davitts)

Despite 2024 being her first summer as a starter, the 22-year-old has accelerated at such a rate that she has been camogie's outstanding No.6 this year and last. Invaluable is her competency under the headings of game-intelligence, positioning, and reading of the play. 12 possessions in the first half of semi-final alone. Feasts on loose deliveries and breaking ball.



7. Katie Anna Porter (Davitts)

Another 2022 All-Ireland intermediate winner, 2025 All-Ireland U23 winner, and 2026 half-back newbie. Clubmate of Hickey, this familiarity has smoothed Porter's senior transition. Quietly and effectively gone about her business. Significant examination is approaching. If Cork put a forward on Hickey's toes, could Porter wind up as the spare defender?



8. Ally Hesnan (Shamrocks)

An injury-time sub in the last two deciders, this will be her first final start. Jennifer Hughes was initially favoured as Carrie's midfield colleague, but a mid-season injury saw Hesnan promoted for championship. Being swarmed and turned over by two Cork players at the throw-in of their June 6 clash was an instant topflight welcome. Will again follow Saoirse McCarthy.



9. Carrie Dolan (Clarinbridge)

Galway have benefited immeasurably from her relocation from inside forward to midfield leader. Has steered the maroon title defence. Delivered the levelling and lead points late in League final win. Assisted 0-2 in All-Ireland semi-final, central in the creation of a third, won and converted penalty, as well as raising four white flags herself. Top-scorer with 1-15.



10. Aine Keane (St Thomas')

Her cruciate went two minutes into the 2025 championship. Her return was the 2026 championship opener against Cork. Into the wind, Sarah Healy repeatedly sought to find her to achieve retained possession. Caught three puck-outs clean. Must be more impactful than in semi-final. Failed to finish any of their four championship outings.



11. Niamh McPeake (Liam Mellows)

Thus far, a mightily impressive return from the cruciate injury that wrote off McPeake's 2025. Her 2-9 positions her as Galway's top-scorer from play. Player of the match recipient for round-robin victory over Waterford. Took Tipp for two goals a fortnight later. Anonymous in 2024 final, so will be determined to imprint herself in latest Galway-Cork decider.



12. Aoife Donohue (Mullagh)

The one player Galway need to surge. The one player Cork have to stop. Galway's outstanding performer in '24 and '25 finals, the red shirt rouses the 33-year-old like no other. Tables suffocating intensity. Thrives on turnovers. Workload unmatched. Subbed off in two of their three round-robin outings. Donohue was unusually subdued in League final, championship opener, and semi-final.



13. Niamh Niland (Clarinbridge)

A first All-Ireland final start. The sister of Evan and Aaron fell out of the first 15 towards the end of spring, as well as first two championship games. Promoted for Round 3 against Tipp. 0-2 in semi-final and assisted a third. Only one of first four semi-final deliveries into her stuck, significantly improved hold-up required on Sunday.



14. Ailish O'Reilly (Oranmore-Maree)

If any other player was coming into Sunday with just three and a half games under their belt for 2026, and finished only one of the three they started, there'd be a degree of concern. Not with O'Reilly. Not with her track record. Only had three possessions in semi-final second half, but 0-2 came off them. Astuteness personified.



15. Caoimhe Kelly (Sarsfields)

Didn't start the League final. Came off the bench to clip two points, including the clincher. Remained outside of the first 15 for opening two games of championship. First summer start was against Tipp, where she struck 1-4 from play. Added 0-3 against Kilkenny last time out. Similar tally required from the teenager here.





Cork's Aoife Barrett and Daire O'Brien celebrate after Tipp game.
Picture: INPHO/Tom Maher

A year on and back in Croke but a lot has changed for Cork side

Here we go again. We are Croke Park bound on Sunday. Despite all the doubts and worry that things were not going their way, Cork are 48 hours away from another All-Ireland senior camogie final appearance.

Twelve months have flown by since we were in Croke Park, but with a lot of new faces and changes to the panel we go again to savour that special atmosphere that only All-Ireland final day can bring.

Everyone is ready to hit the road. Be it by rail, car or bus, some are already on their way with several Cork clubs heading to participating in the Kilmacud Crokes All-Ireland sevens tomorrow.

All-Ireland final days in all codes are special, and the atmosphere generated by the supporters can be felt all over the ground.

Hopefully, Cork will have a big following when they run out on the pitch at 4.15pm on Sunday.

It's a day that gives families an opportunity to savour the Croke Park atmosphere without the hassle of grappling for tickets as was the case for the hurling and football finals this year.

For years, the camogie championship has been dominated by the big names from the 1930s right through to the 1960s.

Dublin, Cork and Antrim were the dominant forces early on.

Wexford took two titles in 1968, and 1969 and then a golden era for Cork from 1970 to 1973, before a new force emerged as Kilkenny took centre stage for a while and were dominant before Cork returned to the top.

In between, Antrim and Dublin took a title and again Cork and Kilkenny dominated until Tipperary burst on the scene to take their first title and they proceeded to dominate annexing five titles in six years.



Cork celebrate winning against Tipp.

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

Finally, Cork bounced back and regained control but we failed to make it three in a row and Wexford seized their chance to grab the title.

Many fancied Kilkenny to return to the big stage after huge underage success but it didn't happen.

Wexford had their reign of dominance.

Galway took a title in between in 2013.

Cork bounced back to make it back-to-back wins in 2014 and 2015, but were stopped making it three in a row by Kilkenny in 2016.

Back we came in 2017 and defeated Kilkenny with a last gasp winner.

It was the same story in 2018, again a last second winner. Cork had to look on in 2019 as Kilkenny overcame Galway and again we sat it out in 2020 as Galway reversed that result.

Cork lost back-to-back finals in 2021 to Galway and 2022 to Kilkenny.

2023 and 2024 were contrasting finals as Cork defeated Waterford comprehensively in 2023, but only a goal separated Cork from Galway in 2024.

Last year was heartbreak for Cork.

We looked to be heading for a draw, but a last minute foul by a Cork player gave Carrie Dolan an opportunity to grab a winner and she did it with a superbly struck free to give Galway the title.

Galway have never done back to back, can they do it on Sunday?

Cork might have a lot of new players in their team, but to date, they have shown they are able for the task.

Just one good 60 minutes is needed to get over the line.

Let's hope for good result as they bid for All-Ireland title number 31.

Best of luck to Ger Manley and the girls.



Cork's Libby Coppinger challenges Galway's Shannon Corcoran during their league clash at Kenny Park earlier in the season.

Picture: INPHO/Tom O'Hanlon

Libby leading way for new-look Rebels

There was a point earlier this year when an All-Ireland final seemed a long way from Cork camogie's horizon.

Defeats to Waterford and Antrim in the league, a relegation battle looming, and a painful Munster championship exit at the hands of Tipperary suggested that a rebuilding season lay ahead for a panel that had been reshaped by retirements and departures to Australia.

Yet for the sixth year in a row, Cork will line out in an All-Ireland final when they face Galway at Croke Park on Sunday, August 9, chasing a first title since 2023 and seeking revenge for last year's defeat to the Tribeswomen.

For full-back Libby Coppinger, the journey back to headquarters has made this year's final appearance feel even more significant.

"You start out every year and this is where you want to be," she said.

"We're very lucky to be from a very proud county where this is the expectation and the goal every season. But I think our hope was tested a little bit at the start of the year.

"We probably underestimated how much work was going to be needed because we lost incredibly talented players and leaders from the dressing room. We had some new management, new players coming in and probably hoped the transition would be seamless. It just took a little bit more work."

That work has transformed Cork's season. The warning signs arrived early. A narrow opening-round defeat to Waterford was disappointing, but the loss at home to Antrim in February proved a pivotal moment.

"I think it was a wake-up call," Libby added. "We were very disappointed with our showing. It seemed like there needed to be a lot more work put in and it was definitely an eye-opener. It probably kick-started our season in a way."

There were still bumps in the road. Cork managed only a draw with Tipperary during the league but a crucial victory away to Kilkenny helped preserve their Division 1 status.

"It was one of the most up-and-down leagues I can remember," says Coppinger.

"Coming into the last day, teams could have made the final or been relegated. A lot of teams were finding their feet and we were definitely one of them."

If survival was the first objective, belief



CAMOGIE

Rory Noonan

arrived later.

Few gave Cork much chance when they travelled to Galway for the opening round of the All-Ireland championship in June. They had already suffered an emphatic nine-point defeat to the same opposition in the league and were coming off a chastening Munster exit.

Instead, Cork delivered one of the performances of the season, winning 0-18 to 1-8 and signalling that reports of their decline had been greatly exaggerated.

"Going up that day, we just wanted a performance," Libby said. "The result was a bonus because we got both. Losing to Tipperary in Munster was hugely disappointing but, looking back, it probably gave us one of our best blocks of training. We had six weeks where we could really focus on ourselves, bed down how we wanted to play and the attitude we wanted to have."

"I think Galway was a release. We just went out and played with freedom."

The victory became the catalyst for a run that has brought Cork all the way back to Croke Park.

Championship wins over Waterford and Tipperary followed before another meeting with the Premier County in the All-Ireland semi-final. Cork were virtually flawless during a devastating first half, converting all 13 of their scoring opportunities to establish a commanding lead.

"I had heard that stat alright," Libby laughs.

"That was down to being selfless in possession, taking the right options and really going after the game. We were like caged animals in that first half hour. Thankfully it went the right way."

While the forwards grabbed the headlines, the defence had its own job to do after the break as Tipperary attempted a comeback with the benefit of a strong wind.

Led by Coppinger and anchored by goalkeeper Amy Lee, Cork stood firm.

"The girls up front set the tone with their work rate," she says. "That made life easier for the backs because the ball coming in was under pressure."

"In the second half we had to do our de-

fending and I think everyone contributed. Having Amy behind you is huge. She's cool, calm and collected no matter what's happening."

One phrase echoed throughout the Cork camp after the final whistle in Thurles.

The players weren't talking about the All-Ireland final. They were talking about getting back training on Tuesday evening.

For Coppinger, that mindset has been one of the defining characteristics of this group.

"We've been really focused on the next game all year. If you look too far ahead, you'll get caught. We knew exactly what challenge Tipperary would bring. Getting back training on Tuesday meant you were where you wanted to be."

The remarkable thing is that Cork's latest final appearance has come during a season many expected to be transitional.

This will be the county's 11th All-Ireland final in 13 years and sixth in succession – a record that underlines the extraordinary standards maintained by successive generations of Cork camogie players.

"You can't focus on what happened last year because that's not going to get you anywhere this year," said Libby.

"We're a completely different team. There's a core group still there but there are so many girls for whom this will be their first All-Ireland final."

"It just shows the talent that is in Cork. The players before us set the standard and we're trying to raise it every year."

Next comes Galway, the reigning champions and familiar rivals. The counties have contested the last three All-Ireland finals, with Cork winning in 2023 and Galway triumphing last season.

"You can't focus too much on last year because if you're focused on the hurt, it'll only get you so far. It's about the motivation for this group and leaving everything out there on the field. There rarely seems to be much between us and I don't think this year will be any different."

As for preparations, there is one tradition Coppinger never skips.

Before matches she calls to visit her grandmother, who sends her on her way armed with holy water and a blessing. No thing too elaborate, she insists.

Just enough to bring a little bit of comfort before the biggest games of all.

And if that ritual helps guide Cork to another famous day at Croke Park on Sunday, there will be very few Rebels complaining.

Picture: INPHO/Tom Maher

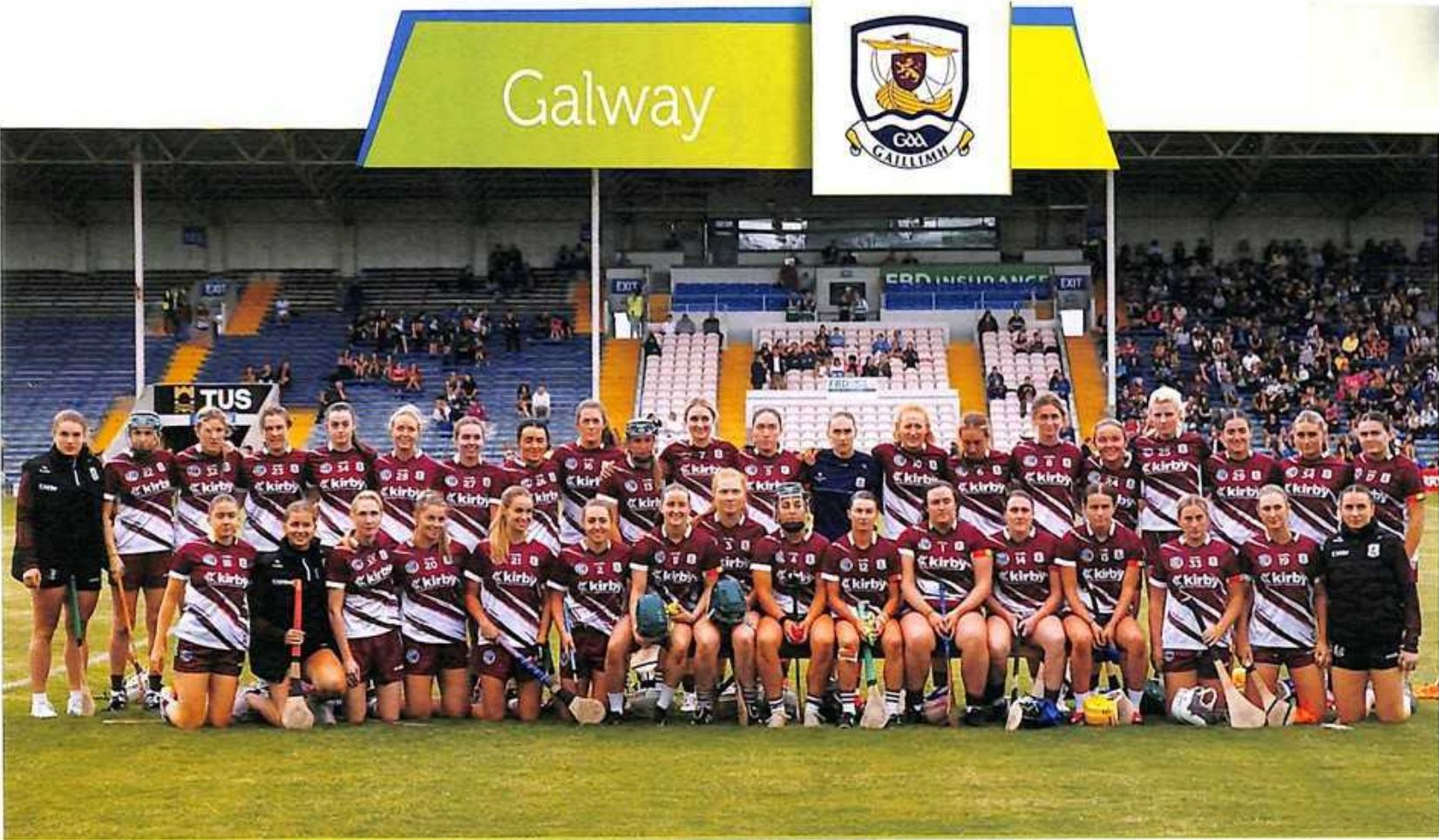


Back Row (L-R) Ava Fitzgerald, Avril Cashman, Rose Murphy, Sorcha McCartan, Orlaith Mullins, Ashling Thompson, Niamh McNabola, Rachel Murphy, Anna Kearney, Eimear Duignan, Cliona O'Callaghan, Keeva McCarthy, Hayley Ryan, Aisling Egan, Maedhbh de Búrca, Middle (L-R) Orlaith Cahalane, Izzy O'Regan, Amy McCarthy, Aoife O'Neill, Claire Kingston, Daire O'Brien, Isobel Sheehan, Orlaith Cremin, Aoife Barrett, Amy Sheppard, Daire O'Brien, Isobel Sheehan, Front (L-R) Amy O'Connor, Libby Coppinger, Ava McAuliffe, Millie Condon, Méabh Murphy, Méabh Cahalane (Capt.), Amy Lee, Emma Murphy, Laura Hayes, Saoirse McCarthy, Ciara O'Sullivan



IONADAITHE

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 16 Anna Kearney, Aine Ni Chearnaigh, Blackrock | 21 Avril Cashman, Avril Ni Chiosáin, Youghal | 26 Rose Murphy, Rose Ni Mhurchú, Ballinora |
| 17 Hayley Ryan, Hayley Ni Rain, Blackrock | 22 Ciara O'Sullivan, Ciara Ni Suilleabháin, Newcestown | 27 Cliona O'Callaghan, Cliona Ni Cheallacháin, Blackrock |
| 18 Aisling Egan, Aisling Nic Aogáin, St. Finbarr's | 23 Orlaith Mullins, Orlaith Ni Mhicéil, Sarsfields | 28 Daire O'Brien, Daire Ni Bhriain, Enniskene |
| 19 Orlaith Cremin, Orlaith Ni Croimin, Eire Og | 24 Amy Sheppard, Amy Ni Sheppard, Cloughduv | 29 Rachel Murphy, Rachel Ni Mhurchú, Ballinora |
| 20 Niamh McNabola, Niamh Mac Na Conbuaile, Cloughduv | 25 Aoife Barrett, Aoife Ni Barroid, Ashling | 30 Maedhbh de Búrca, Maedhbh de Búrca, Carrigtowhill |



Back Row (L-R)

Joanne Daly, Niamh Mallon, Katie Lawless, Laura Kelly, Laura Freaney, Aoibheann Barry, Niamh McInerney, Shannon Corcoran, Fiona Ryan, Niamh Niland, Katie Anna Porter, Katie Manning, Carrie Dolan, Áine Keane, Ciara Hickey, Ally Hesnan, Mairéad Dillon, Sabina Rabbittie, Tegan Canning, Alison Greaney and Réitseal Kelly.

Front Row (L-R)

Ava Crowe, Aoibhe Carr, Shauna Healy, Kayla Madden, Ava Lynskey, Rachael Hanniffy, Niamh McPeake, Róisín Black, Dervla Higgins, Aoife Donohue, Sarah Healy, Ailish O'Reilly, Caoimhe Kelly, Emma Madden, Alannah Kelly and Jennifer Hughes. Missing from photo: Emily Brogan.



IONADAITHE

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 17 Réitseal Kelly, Réitseal Ní Cheallaigh, Sarsfields | 24 Laura Kelly, Laura Ní Cheallaigh, Salthill Knocknacarra | 29 Jennifer Hughes, Jennifer Ní Aodha, Carrmore |
| 18 Ava Crowe, Ava Ní Conchra, Carrmore | 25 Shannon Corcoran, Shannon Corcoran, Sarsfields | 30 Shauna Healy, Shauna Ní hEilidhe, Ardahan |
| 19 Alannah Kelly, Ailáine Ní Cheallaigh, Portumna | 26 Niamh McInerney, Niamh Mac an Airchinnigh, Shamrocks | |
| 20 Kayla Madden, Kayla Madden, Athenry | 27 Aoibheann Barry, Aoibheann de Barra, Kinvra | |
| 21 Ava Lynskey, Eabha Loingsigh, Ardahan | 28 Tegan Canning, Tegan Ní Caimín Mullagh | |
| 22 Niamh Mallon, Niamh Mallon Sarsfields | | |
| 23 Mairéad Dillon, Mairéad Ní Dhiolún, Kilsieron | | |



CORK - PLAYER PROFILES



Amy Lee
Na Piarasigh
Senior Client Associate



Ashling Thompson
Milford
Prison Officer



Izzy O'Regan
Ballygarvan
Account Executive



Laura Hayes
St. Catherine's
Marketing



Libby Coppinger
St. Colum's
Depositary Senior Officer



Emma Murphy
Glen Rovers
PE and Maths Teacher



Méabh Cahalane
St. Finbarr's
Accountant



Saoirse McCarthy
Courcy Rovers
Marketing Executive



Ava Fitzgerald
Sarsfields
Primary Education



Millie Condon
Ballinascorthy
Student



Méabh Murphy
Ballinora
PE and Maths Teacher



Amy O'Connor
St. Vincent's
Project Manager



Isobel Sheehan
Éire Óg
Teacher



Orlaith Cahalane
St. Finbarr's
Coaching Science and
Sports Pedagogy

Senior TOP SCORERS

Top Scorers – Senior Championship

1.	Aoife Prendergast (Kilkenny)	3-36	(1-0 pen, 28f, 2 '45)
2.	Róisín Begley (Clare)	4-28	(17f, 1 '45)
3.	Eimear McGrath (Tipperary)	1-33	(1-0 pen, 26f, 3 '45)
4.	Chloe Cashe (Wexford)	1-30	(25f, 2 '45)
5.	Clodagh Leahy (Offaly)	2-25	(16f, 2 '45)

From Play

1.	Sarah Barcoe (Kilkenny)	5-10	
2.	Roisin Begley (Clare)	4-10	
3.	Aisling Gannon (Dublin)	2-14	
3.	Laura Southern (Limerick)	3-11	
5.	Katie Nolan (Kilkenny)	4-4	



CORK TOP SCORERS

Cork Top Scorers – Senior Championship

1.	Amy O'Connor	1-22	(17f)
2.	Saoirse McCarthy	0-14	(5f)
3.	Sorcha McCartan	0-11	
4.	Emma Murphy	0-6	
5.	Laura Hayes	0-4	
5.	Orlaith Cahalane	0-4	

Cork Total Scored: 3-68 (19.25 per game)

Total Conceded: 1-53 (14.0 per game)



GALWAY TOP SCORERS

Galway Top Scorers – Senior Championship

1.	Carrie Dolan	1-15	(1-0 pen, 13f)
2.	Niamh McPeake	2-9	
3.	Caoimhe Kelly	1-8	
4.	Aoife Donohue	1-3	
4.	Ailish O'Reilly	1-3	

Galway Total Scored: 6-52 (17.5 points per game)

Total Conceded: 0-57 (14.25 points per game)

	Sorcha McCartan St. Finbarr's Barista		Orlaith Mullins Sarsfields Student		Keeva McCarthy St. Finbarr's Qualified Person
	Anna Kearney Blackrock Student		Amy Sheppard Cloughduv Student		Aoife O'Neill St. Finbarr's Student
	Hayley Ryan Blackrock PE & Irish Teacher		Aoife Barrett Aghabullogue Student		Ava McAuliffe Castlemartyr Student
	Aisling Egan St. Finbarr's Technical Operations Engineer		Rose Murphy Ballinora Primary School Teacher		Eimear Duignan Mallow PE and French Teaching
	Órlaith Cremin Éire Óg Student (PE and Irish)		Cliona O'Callaghan Blackrock Primary School Teacher		Claire Kingston Newcestown Master of Education UCC
	Niamh McNabola Cloughduv Business Information Systems		Daire O'Brien Enniskeane Engineer		Amy McCarthy Clonakilty UCC Engineering
	Avril Cashman Youghal Teacher		Rachel Murphy Ballinora Student		
	Ciara O'Sullivan Newcestown Accountant		Maedhbh de Búrca Carrigtwohill Student PE and Irish		



GALWAY - PLAYER PROFILES

AUG. 2026

Path to the Final (Senior)



Sarah Healy
St. Thomas'
Manufacturer



Ally Hesnan
Shamrocks
Student



Rachael Hanniffy
Oranmore Maree
Primary School Teacher



Carrie Dolan
Clarinbridge
Secondary School Teacher



Róisín Black
Oranmore Maree
Primary School Teacher



Áine Keane
St. Thomas'
Student/Baker



Dervla Higgins
Athenry
Gym Instructor



Niamh McPeake
Liam Mellows
Sales Analyst



Katie Manning
Mullagh
Trainee Garda



Aoife Donohue
Mullagh
Secondary School Teacher



Ciara Hickey
Davitts
Student



Niamh Niland
Clarinbridge
Primary School Teacher



Katie Anna Porter
Davitts
Student



Ailish O'Reilly
Oranmore Maree
Primary School Teacher

Saturday 25th Jul 2026
Glen Dimplex Senior Championship - Semi-Finals
Cork 2-16 v 0-17 Tipperary
Galway 1-14 v 0-11 Kilkenny
Sunday 28th Jun 2026
Glen Dimplex Senior Championship - Group 1 - Round 3
Cork 1-13 v 0-10 Waterford
Galway 3-17 v 0-15 Tipperary
Sunday 14th Jun 2026
Glen Dimplex Senior Championship - Group 1 - Round 2
Tipperary 0-18 v 0-21 Cork
Waterford 0-13 v 1-13 Galway
Saturday 6th June 2026
Glen Dimplex Senior Championship - Group 1 - Round 1
Galway 1-08 v 0-18 Cork



Caoimhe Kelly
Sarsfields
Student



Laura Kelly
Salthill Knocknacarra
Student



Aoibhe Carr
Clarinbridge
Student



Laura Freeney
Athenry
Student



Mairéad Dillon
Kilconieron
Secondary School Teacher



Katie Lawless
Portumna
Student



Réitseal Kelly
Sarsfields
Student



Sabina Rabbitte
Athenry
Student



Emma Madden
Salthill Knocknacarra
Primary School Teacher



Ava Crowe
Carnmore
Student



Shannon Corcoran
Sarsfields
Student



Alison Greaney
Clarinbridge
Student



Alannah Kelly
Portumna
Occupational Therapist



Niamh McInerney
Shamrocks
Student



Shauna Healy
Ardrahan
Podiatrist



Kayla Madden
Athenry
Student



Aoibheann Barry
Kinvara
Student



Fiona Ryan
Ballinderreen
Student



Ava Lynskey
Ardrahan
Primary School Teacher



Tegan Canning
Mullagh
Student



Joanne Daly
Sarsfields
Student



Niamh Mallon
Sarsfields
Nutritionist



Jennifer Hughes
Carnmore
Physiotherapist



Emily Brogan
Carnmore
Student

CORK

2-14

GALWAY 0-19

8

1. Amy Lee
(Na Piarasigh)

Dealt with a dropped ball in the first half and with the help of Ava Fitzgerald cleared the line. Good variety with her puck-outs. It was her restart in the 46th minute that found SORCHA MCCARTAN, who fed Orlaith Cahalane for Cork's second goal. Kept a clean sheet.

7½

2. Izzy O'Regan
(Ballygarvan)

Solid. Missed 2025 due to ACL injury. Tagged Ailish O'Reilly at the throw-in and while she kept her scoreless in the first half, O'Reilly was fouled for a free and set up Dervla Higgins for a point. O'Reilly was substituted in the fourth quarter.

8½

3. Libby Coppinger
(St Colum's)

Picked up Caoimhe Kelly at the start. Kelly notched three lovely first-half points but didn't register in the second half. The number three is such a sticky defender and repeatedly cut out a lot of ball and got in one vital interception.

7

1. Sarah Healy
(St Thomas)

Saoirse McCarthy's 40th-minute goal was the first time she was bested this summer. Of the two conceded, this is the one that'll annoy her. Called forward to strike the potentially match-winning free. Blasted over from 30 metres out. Two excellent first-half puckouts to find Aoife Donohue and Caoimhe Kelly in space, points followed.

6½

2. Rachel Hanniffy
(Oranmore-Maree)

Matched up with Amy O'Connor. Very little ball travelled into their Eircode in first half. Of the five frees O'Connor converted, none were of Hanniffy's doing. She was, however, occasionally jittery. Drove forward to win 67th minute free that Healy struck the wrong side of the crossbar.

5

3. Róisín Black
(Oranmore-Maree)

An awful afternoon for the Galway full-back. Along with the four points SORCHA MCCARTAN took her for, McCartan also provided the flicked assist for Cahalane's goal. Black was also sold a dummy for Saoirse McCarthy's opening goal Cork goal.

8

4. Méabh Cahalane
(St Finbarr's)

Started on Niamh Niland but couldn't prevent the corner forward from scoring two first-half points. Got to grips with it thereafter and her work-rate was immense. The victorious captain set the tone.

8½

5. Ava Fitzgerald
(Sarsfields)

Appearing in her first All-Ireland senior final, Ava was tasked to mark Aoife Donohue. Donohue scored three points but the rookie defender was full of energy all through. Dictated the tone.

8

6. Méabh Murphy
(Ballinora)

Played sweeper, and played it to perfection. Had a dry run in this role in the All-Ireland semi-final victory over Tipperary. Part of a newly constructed half-back and did her job superbly.

7

4. Dervla Higgins
(Athenry)

As she's been doing all summer, Higgins operated at wing-back. Her marker, Emma Murphy, had only one first-half shot. Higgins herself pointed on the half hour, having forced the turnover for that score. Murphy pointed early in the second-half, but didn't see out the hour. Higgins had a 57th minute shot skim the post.

7

5. Katie Manning
(Mullagh)

The corner-back thundered into her debut final. Bar one late foul, she bested Orlaith Cahalane across first-half. Manning's turnover led to Galway's second point, provided the delivery for their third, stopped Cahalane for their fourth, and caught a Cork clearance for their ninth. Surprise substitution on 42 minutes.

7

6. Clara Hickey
(Davitts)

Monumental loss when forced off injured on 45 minutes. Bore all the hallmarks of the dreaded cruciate. Cork's deliberateness in hitting the flanks in the opening half meant Hickey didn't sweep as much as normal. Showed superb vision to pick out Carrie Dolan for first-half point.

8

7. Isobel Sheehan
(Eire Og)

As an All-Ireland senior final debutant, had Niamh McPeake for company at throw-in, but she didn't put a foot wrong. Used the ball very well and looked very much at home in her first Croke Park outing.

8

8. Ashling Thompson
(Milford)

Recovered from a hamstring injury to line out at midfield. In the thick of the action and always looked dangerous in link-play. Gave her all. It is her midfield partnership with Laura Hayes, they fit so well together.

9

9. Laura Hayes
(St Catherine's)

Was the link around the middle third and good at gaining possession in this area. Won a few frees. Moving her to the number nine jersey this year has made a massive difference. Scored a brilliant point to level the game early in the second half.

5

7. Katie Anna Porter
(Davitts)

Didn't follow her assigned Cork forward, Millie Condon, who operated from deep. Condon was by far the more influential of the pairing. Porter lacked for assertion in this her first senior final involvement.

6

8. Ally Hesnan
(Shamrocks)

Same as the June 6 opener between the counties, Hesnan's brief was to shadow Saoirse McCarthy so as to allow Hickey sit and sweep. She fouled McCartan for Cork's opening score. Successful in that McCarthy didn't have a first half shot. Second half an altogether different tale. No joy in containing Cork No.11.

8½

9. Carrie Dolan
(Clarinbridge)

Her heavy challenge on Laura Hayes set the physical tone. Led right through. Hurling on the edge. Outstanding mistake was going short to Kelly with a 57th minute free. Two narrow second-half wides. Superb fetching on Healy's puck-out. Assisted 0-2 in first-half. Won two of the four frees she coveted.

7½

10. Emma Murphy
(Glen Rovers)

Clipped a second-half point straight from the restart. It was a rousing score that started the Rebel comeback. Relentless running is a huge part of her game. Substituted five minutes from time.

8

11. Saoirse McCarthy
(Courcsey Rovers)

Immense in the second half. Her goal was of the inspirational type and set Cork on their way. Had to get around a couple of defenders before nailing a brilliant shot into the left corner in the 40th minute. The goal came from a lengthy delivery.

9

12. Millie Condon
(Ballinascorthy)

In her first start in an All-Ireland senior final, she was everywhere, full of running. Settled into the game from the off. Won a lot of dirty ball. Didn't score, but like Gearóid Hegarty in the hurling final, she didn't have to.

5

10. Niamh Mallon
(Sarsfields)

A late promotion to the line-up, in place of Aine Keane. This was Mallon's first start since coming off injured 30 minutes into Galway's championship opener on June 6 - and it showed during the 15 minutes she was on the field before her shoulder went once again. Fouled Laura Hayes for Cork's second point.

5

11. Niamh McPeake
(Liam Mellows)

Anonymous first half. Millie Condon operating in her vicinity, on top of Isobel Sheehan tagging presence, discommoded her. Fouled Amy O'Connor for converted Cork free on 52 minutes. One second-half point, another attempt short. Failed to replicate earlier championship form.

8

12. Aoife Donohue
(Mullagh)

Rose to the occasion. No surprise there. Saved her outstanding performance of the championship for the decider. Forced her usual tray of turnovers. Clipped over three points, won the turnover for another. So busy in the maroon comeback effort.

7½

13. Amy O'Connor
(St Vincent's)

Arrowed over five frees, four were in the first half and some from tricky positions. Came into the final as Cork's top scorer with 1-22, seven of these from frees.

9

14. Órlaith Cahalane
(St Finbarr's)

Her move in nearer the posts in the second half was pivotal. Has great awareness of where her teammates are. She and SORCHA MCCARTAN are club mates and have a huge understanding of each other's play. Initial ball for the goal came all the way from Amy Lee.

9½

15. SORCHA MCCARTAN
(St Finbarr's)

A quality player and made for the big stage. She slotted four points from play and was fouled for some more. Her ability to catch cleanly, turn and strike over the shoulder is a real crowd-puller. Subbed in the 60th minute with a broken finger.

8

13. Niamh Niland
(Clarinbridge)

Galway's breakout performer. Provided her team's opener after three Galway efforts inside opening two minutes came to nought. And while her second point attempt fell short, Niland doubled her tally on 22 minutes. Top-scorer from play with 0-4. Won the turnover for their 11th. Hit a pair of momentum-sapping wides in injury-time.

6

14. Ailish O'Reilly
(Oranmore-Maree)

A first All-Ireland final that simply did not go for the long-serving 32-year-old. None of the smart influence that defined her four winning-final displays. One of two Galway forwards not to score. Was fouled for a converted free. A pair of white flags came from her turnovers won. Withdrawn on 53 minutes.

8

15. Caoimhe Kelly
(Sarsfields)

The teenager repeatedly stepped up to the mark. Ultra-productive when fed. Three fabulous first-half points. Had Libby Coppinger in serious bother. Assisted Galway's 12th point and won the free for their 17th.

SUBS: Cork called up two subs late on. Orlaith Mullins came in for Emma Murphy (55) and Hayley Ryan came in for an injured SORCHA MCCARTAN (60). Not on long enough to be rated.

By Therese O'Callaghan

SUBS: Jennifer Hughes (5) for Niamh Mallon on 15mins. Hughes' first involvement since the league final win in April as injury had sidelined her summer. Ineffective in constraining Laura Hayes. Was eventually taken back off. Aine Keane (5) replaced the injured Hickey. Shauna Healy (5) came in for her first involvement since 2025 final. Mairéad Dillon (6) and Shannon Corcoran (6) were driving and impactful forwards when sprung. The former should have goaled.

By Eoghan Cormican

Armagh end Croke Park hoodoo and fairy-tale Cavan run

ARMAGH 0-17
CAVAN 0-15

PREMIER JUNIOR CAMOGIE FINAL

Armagh finally ended their Croke Park hoodoo but were made to sweat by a Cavan side that hadn't even fielded a team at the start of the year.

There was not a whole lot between the sides in an outstanding game but the Armagh defence held firm when Cavan threw caution to the wind in the closing 10 minutes.

In particular, a phenomenal hook by Eimear O'Kane and a point-blank save by Ciarraí Devlin denied Niamh Keelaghan two golden goal opportunities that would have turned the game on its head in those chaotic final stages.

In terms of scoring, the game was won at the end of the first half and start of the second, as PJ O'Mullan's balance of youth and experience transformed a two-point deficit five minutes before the break to a five-point lead within 10 minutes of the resumption.

From there, and thanks to the resistance of their stout rearguard, they were just about able to keep the Bredniewomen at arm's length.

The first half was a high-octane affair, with great handling and huge intensity. Cavan had beaten Armagh by nine points in the group stages, and began extremely confidently with a couple of early points.

Eimear Brady got them under way with a monstrous score from outside the 65 and the magnificent Róisín O'Keeffe supplemented that quickly.

It was nip and tuck for the rest of the first half once Sinéad Quinn and Corinna Doyle brought Armagh level for the first time. Cavan did re-establish another two-point advantage when O'Keeffe added to a point by Shanise Fitzsimons in the 23rd minute.

Gear

Armagh picked up a gear though and scored eight of the next nine points. Eimear Hayes, from a free, gave them a 0-9 to 0-8 interval advantage.

Quinn, Trainor and Doyle all split the posts after the restart and it was 0-14 to 0-9 by the 40th minute.

Armagh would not score for another 15 minutes however, as Philip Brady's squad dug deep.

Ciarraí Geoghegan reacted well to double a point after Emma Mulvaney saved from Quinn to end the rot and though Brady brought her tally seven from a free, Armagh then stretched the gap out to four again, Trainor and Doyle on target.

Keenaghan did get a point to leave the prospect of a smash-and-grab goal but Armagh held out for a deserved victory.

SCORERS: Armagh: R Trainor 0-6 (3f, 145); S Quinn 0-4; E McGeary, C Doyle 0-2 each; E Hayes, C Geoghegan, C Hill (f) 0-1 each. Cavan: E Brady 0-7 (6f); R O'Keeffe 0-3; N Keenaghan 0-2; S Fitzsimons, H Fitzsimons, C O'Reilly 0-1 each.

ARMAGH: C Devlin; M McCone, G McCann, M O'Hare; E O'Kane, F Loughran, A McEntee; K Convie, C Hill; E McGeary, C Doyle, E Hayes; R Trainor, C Geoghegan, S Quinn. Subs: N Forker for Hill (41-46); Forker for Geoghegan (56).

CAVAN: E Mulvaney; R Fitzsimons, R Crowe, McKeever; C Shalvey; E O'Sullivan, F Fitzsimons, A Tierney; D Kaledok, N Keenaghan; E Brady, A Coyle, S Fitzsimons; A O'Sullivan, R O'Keeffe, A Conaty. Subs: C O'Reilly for Coyle (30-1-h-4), O'Reilly for A O'Sullivan (h-1), O Flynn for Conaty (43), K Tierney for Kaledok (48), E Plunkett for E O'Sullivan (56).

REF: S Foley (Carlow)

Cork survive late final drama to complete remarkable rebuild job

CORK 2-14
GALWAY 0-19

DARAGH Ó CONCHÚIR
ALL-IRELAND SENIOR CAMOGIE FINAL

Cork are back on the summit of the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior camogie championship, goals in the 39th and 46th minutes by Saoirse McCarthy and Orlaith Cahalane propelling the Rebels to a 31st title in front of a record crowd of 33,419.

It seems a long time ago now since they lost in the league to Antrim on home territory, though the Saffrons illustrated their calibre by sauntering to the intermediate crown earlier in the day. Still, it has been a serious rebuilding job by Ger Manley and Co.

That said, at the interval, as they trailed by 0-9 to 0-7, you would have said that the better team were in front.

Galway, who prevailed when these sides met in last year's final, had come into the game with injury concerns and the gamble of starting Niamh Mallon did not pay off as the Sarsfields ace aggravated a shoulder inflicted initial-

ly against the same opponents in the group stages early on. She departed in the 14th minute.

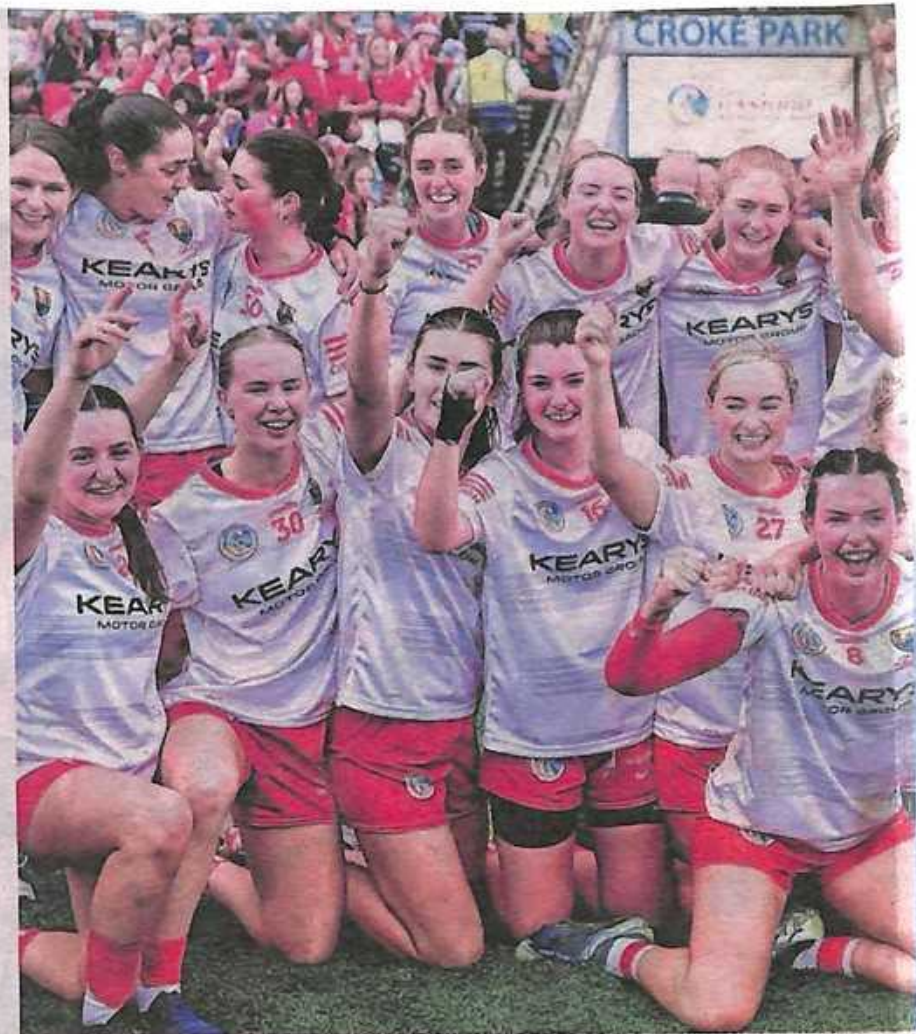
The hugely influential Ciara Hickey suffered a knee injury in the second half and that certainly had an impact when she left the fray at the three-quarter mark.

Cork had hit the front by then, one should note, McCarthy slamming to the roof of the net after an audacious hop of the sliotar off the sod to make it 1-11 to 0-11.

The excellent Niamh Niland pointed at the other end but from Amy Lee's lengthy puck-out, the fantastic Sorcha McCartan got a flick on. Orlaith Cahalane had taken the chance and with that heavenly touch she possesses, controlled first time, and once the ball was in her paw, she was always going to find that gaping far corner. Low and deadly.

Five points was now the margin and with Hickey gone, the supply to Niland and the equally outstanding Caoimhe Kelly had dried up.

They created a couple of half-chances of goals but nothing really gilt-edged. As ever, Carrie Dolan would not accept defeat. Aoife Donohue brought the war-



rrior mode too but Dolan was truly heroic, winning primary possession, carrying, holding back the tide.

Cork were more than happy to give away frees, which she would convert, rather than allow her to build up a head of steam. They had earned that right by building an advantage.

Given some of the collisions she had been involved in – receiving and inflicting – it was a marvellous effort by the Galway skipper, but in truth, that could be said of many others, including Cork's Laura Hayes. And when that duo met, the sparks flew. It was wonderful to watch.

Point by point, Galway edged back. Isobel Sheehan, looking like a veteran rather than someone playing her first final, had been so poised throughout and came up with a massive hook to prevent a shot on goal.

An injury to McCartan was a factor at the other end, even though the minimum five minutes of injury time – it

finished at seven – was just about to begin when she had to be substituted. Cork led by four at that juncture, however, and lost four long puck-outs in that period.

At the death, another foul and Galway had a free just outside the arc. Cathal Murray gave goalkeeper Sarah Healy the call. It was a one-in-a-million shot, with 28 players between her and the rigging.

Unfortunately for her, she got under the shot as she went for power and it flew over.

With that, Gavin Donegan blew the whistle and delirium ensued.

The ferocity of the first half was what we have become accustomed to, but it still made you wince and think of D'Unbelievables. If Cork were knocked out of their stride this year, they were ready for the war this time.

They were finding little change in attack, though, particularly once Hickey settled into proceedings and started

Classy Antrim hit turbo to shake off Laois

ANTRIM 1-22
LAOIS 0-11

ALL-IRELAND INTERMEDIATE CAMOGIE FINAL

A ruthless second-half performance that saw Antrim land 13 out of their 16 attempts on goal from the 34th minute onwards, was enough to draw a line under the county's one-year stint outside the senior championship and send them back up to top tier camogie for 2027.

Róisín McCormick and Eobha McAllister landed five scores from play apiece over the course of the hour with McCormick firing in the only goal, and on top of that, a string of precision dead-ball strikes that put clear daylight between the sides.

Yet when Laois started the second half with three of the first four points the underdog win was there to be seized.

The Saffrons did threaten to overwhelm their opponents early on, firing close-range points through Lucia McNaughton and McAllister.



Róisín McCormick

Meanwhile, the Antrim full-back line didn't concede a score from play while Shannagh Hegarty was as firm as a tidal wall on the 45, blocking down three Laois attempts on goal.

Still, there was nothing the Antrim defence could do when Gráinne Delaney and Clodagh Tynan fired points to settle the O'Moore County and level the tie.

The infrequency of their scores meant that Laois continued to be on the ropes and Catherine Kirby's reaction when she failed to test the 'keeper from the edge

of the square, merely drawing a white flag, was a clear indication that she knew they needed to land a haymaker or two.

McNaughton intercepted a pass to set up McCormick and McAllister struck another sublime point on the run in two highlight reel plays for Antrim in the second quarter but despite leading 0-9 to 0-5 at half-time, they were far from out of sight.

Points from Tynan, Aimee Collier and Delaney in the first four minutes of the second half further heightened the tension, and Antrim faced into the most critical half hour of their entire season.

With that pressure on their shoulders, Elaine Dowds' team produced a masterclass in creation and execution in front of the posts to explode past the opponents.

Jane McIntosh got the ball rolling with a neat finish, McAllister took possession in the corner and put a point on a plate for Hegarty with a sublime pass, and the gradient of the mountain that Laois had to climb was multiplied in the 42nd minute when the breaking ball fell

perfectly for McCormick to scoop it up on the run. A sidestep was enough to open up the goal chance, and the Loughgiel attacker put the sliotar in the corner.

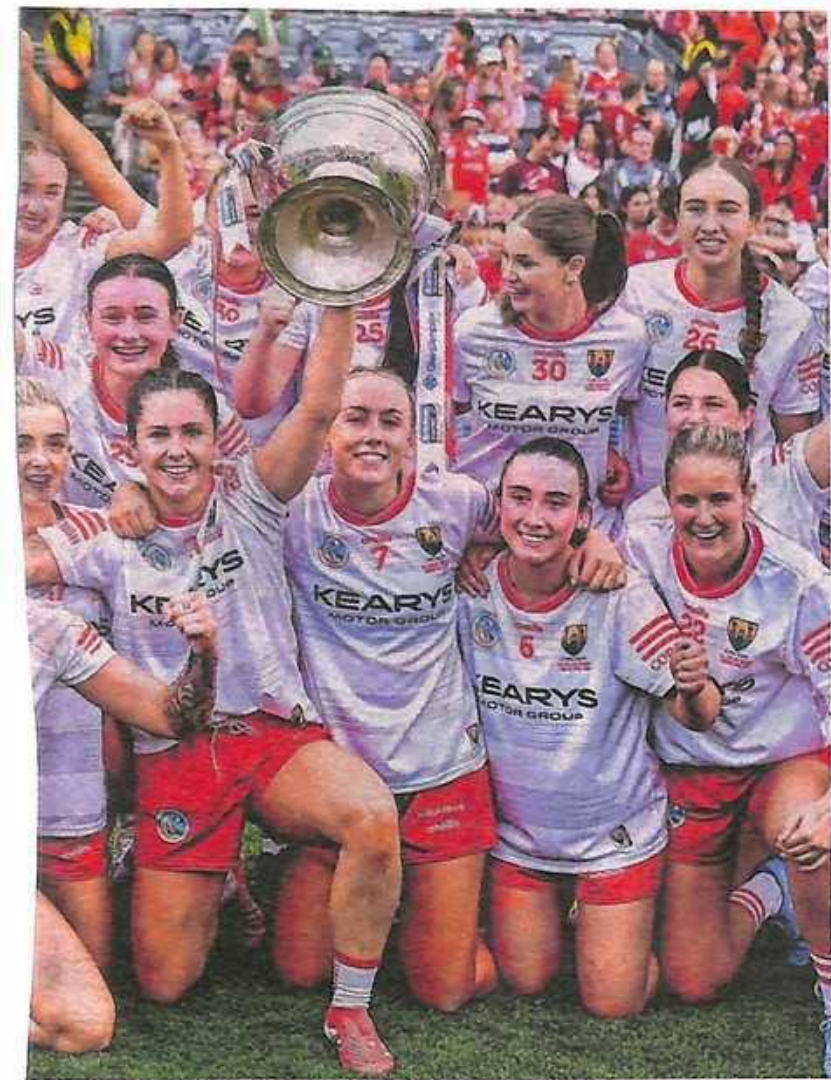
Tynan added two more points but that forlorn chase for goals left the midlanders stretched at the back and Antrim kept adding points, shooting five in the last 10 minutes to emphatically confirm that senior championship camogie is their natural home, one they will happily revisit next summer.

SCORERS: Antrim: R McCormick 1-11 (0-5f, 0-2-45); E McAllister 0-5; M Kelly 0-3; L McNaughton, J McIntosh, S Hegarty 0-1 each. Laois: C Tynan 0-4 (2f); G Delaney 0-3; A Collier 0-2 (2f); C Kirby, K O'Keeffe 0-1 each.

ANTRIM: C Graham, C Patterson, C Conlon, C McNaughton; C McKillop, K Molloy, S Hegarty; A Boyle, L McNaughton; M Kelly, R McCormick, N McAtamney; J McIntosh, C Griffin, E McAllister. Subs: S O'Neill for Molloy (h-1), E McIntosh for J McIntosh (48), O McAllister for McAtamney (48), D Dobbin for Patterson (56), A Ferris for McNaughton (56).

LAOIS: A Lowry, L Finlay, A Finlay, K Whelan, L Conroy, C Tynan, R Deegan, S Creagh, J Bergin; K O'Keeffe, G Delaney, C Kirby, K Keenan, A Collier, S Delaney. Subs: E Hassett for Kirby (36), A O'Dea for Keenan (45), A Lacey for Deegan (52), S Fleming for O'Keeffe (57), A Carroll for Whelan (57).

REF: Joe Mullins (Clare)



The Cork squad celebrate with the O'Duffy Cup after their victory in yesterday's Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior camogie final. Piaras Ó Midheach/Sportsfile

'It's devastating to lose, they put so much into it'

NIALL SCULLY

It was just after the Angelus bell when Cathal Murray arrived into the press room deep in the Hogan Stand.

It was a hard place to be. Galway had just lost the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior camogie final.

Yet he was gracious, and as honest as the day was long.

"Goals win games," he announced. "Cork got two of them. And that's what decided it."

"There are no gripes from me. The two best teams get to the All-Ireland final, and Cork were the best team on the day," he added following the Munster side's 2-14 to 0-19 success.

"We are disappointed, but you have to hold your hand up to Cork. We were in a good spot. It was a case of keeping doing what we were doing."

"But Cork got a purple patch. And they are really good when they get momentum. They got some serious scores during that period. And the second goal they scored was a real sucker punch for us."

"If you had told me at the start of the day that we'd get 19 points in the All-Ireland final, I would have taken it."

"But, as I said, it was the goals that were the difference."

Murray praised the resolve of his side. "The players died with their boots on. We are very proud of them."

"We are a young team. For a lot of players, it was their first All-Ireland final. They really stood up."

"Those young players are going to be great players for Galway going forward. And that's what you want to see."

"Niamh Mallon and Ciara Hickey going off injured were massive blows to us. But we are really proud of the way the team reacted. They kept going. They battled on."

"We went 2-14 to 0-14 down, but Cork did not score after that."

"We managed to score the next five points. We really brought the game to them in the last 10 minutes, but it wasn't enough."

"This group has always shown resilience. We showed such resilience to get back into the game."



Galway player Ava Lynskey, left, and Katie Anna Porter sit on the Croke Park pitch after the final. Piaras Ó Midheach/Sportsfile

feeding balls, left and right. Kelly and Niland were unerring and Dolan lofted a stupendous score from tight to the Hogan Stand touchline, following a deft side-step.

Cork needed frees to stay in touch, four from Amy O'Connor and one from McCarthy but McCartan was a big outlet, showing well, and her ability to make a nonsense of angles and distance got her the Rebels' only scores from play in that period.

Trailing by two points at the break was probably a win for the Leesiders, and they thundered out of the traps on the resumption, the tireless Emma Murphy beginning a run of four out of five points for her side.

Suddenly, they were ahead and Niamh McPeake needed a lovely finish to bring the teams level on 0-11 apiece.

It was from that tuck-out though, that McCarthy goaled with typical genius and Cork put the pedal to the metal. At

the same time, they were beginning to exert pressure in the middle third and further back, Libby Coppinger was a model of consistency. Cahalane's green flag put clear daylight between them.

Galway were always going to come back but they had left themselves too much to do. That they gave this game so much will be of no consolation to them, however.

To the victors, the spoils.

SCORERS — Cork: S McCarthy 1-2 (0-1f); A O'Connor 0-5fs; S McCartan 0-4; O Cahalane 1-1; L Hayes, E Murphy 0-1 each. Galway: C Dolan 0-5 (4fs); N Niland 0-4; C Kelly, A Donohue 0-3 each; N McPeake, D Higgins, M Dillon, S Healy (f) 0-1 each.

CORK: A Lee; I O'Regan, L Coppinger, M Cahalane; A Fitzgerald, M Murphy, I Sheehan; A Thompson, L Hayes; E Murphy; S McCarthy; M Condon; A O'Connor, S McCartan, O Cahalane. Subs: O Mullins for E Murphy (56), H Ryan for McCartan inj (60+1).

GALWAY: Sarah Healy; K Manning, R Black, R Hanniffy; D Higgins, C Hickey, K A Porter; A Hesnan, C Dolan; A Donohue, N McPeake, N Mallon; N Niland, A O'Reilly, C Kelly. Subs: J Hughes for Mallon (temporary 17), A Keane for Dolan (17-19), Shauna Healy for Manning (42), Keane for Hickey inj (45), M Dillon for O'Reilly (52), S Corcoran for Hughes (57). REF: G Donegan (Dublin)

"We have our regrets, but every losing team has. It just wasn't to be for us today, but it's well done to Cork. They are a terrific team."

"We missed a few chances by inches. That's the way it goes. That's where All-Ireland finals are won and lost."

The Galway boss was pleased that the 33,419 attendance got such an exciting duel. Cork and Galway is the big modern-day rivalry of the sport.

"We seem to bring the best out of each other," he reflected. "It was a brilliant advert for camogie. It looked like an unbelievable game from where I was standing on the sideline, and I hope that was the case."

"Camogie has gone to new levels now. With the strength and conditioning and the physicality. It's brilliant to see."

"I spoke to the referee [Gavin Donegan] after the match, and I thought he did a really good job."

"There was plenty of challenges and physicality out there, but he let the play go. And that is what we want. That is what we have been crying out for."

"By the end of the game, both sides

had several U-23s out there, so there are two super groups coming through.

"We are proud of the consistency we brought to the season. We felt we had a huge performance brewing, and we certainly got that performance."

"It's devastating to lose an All-Ireland final. Gut-wrenching. The players work so hard. They put so much into it."

"It was just one of those games. We had our chances coming down the stretch."

"There's always what-ifs, but I'm sure Cork had what-ifs last year."

"We must have had eight or nine U-23s on the field at the end of the game. This will be a huge learning curve for them."

"We want to be competitive. We want to be here every year. "We had the garda escort today coming into Dublin. When you do that once, you want it every year."

"But that's sport. That's life. You have to live with it."

"You have to get up and go again. And hopefully our hunger will make us an even better team next year."

Camogie All-Ireland Senior Championship Final



Orlaith Cahalane celebrates scoring Cork's second goal. Below: Cork captain Méabh Cahalane lifts the O'Duffy Cup. Photographs: Ben Brady, James Crombie/Inpho

Cork hold on



Sorcha McCartan faces the odds. Picture: Piaras Ó Midheach/Sportsfile

Cork Player Ratings: McCartan and Hayes power Cork to victory

Amy Lee (Na Piarsaigh): Galway largely sat off on puckouts, which meant Lee was tempted to go short regularly. There was more variety to her restarts in the second half. Both goals came from long deliveries. 8

Izzy O'Regan (Ballygarvan): In the thick of the action from the throw-in, though Galway were extremely dangerous up top. Settled well, as did the rest of the younger guns. 7

Libby Coppinger (St Colum's): Niamh Niland and Caoimhe Kelly clipped some super first-half points, but there was little their markers could do as Galway were finding them in pockets of space. Had to make some last-gasp tackles, and fouls, coming down the stretch. 7

Meabh Cahalane (St Finbarr's): Captain and one of the most experienced Rebels on the big stage. Made her presence felt as the game wore on. 7

Ava Fitzgerald (Sarsfields): Drove out with possession time and again. Involved in three scores by breaking past the halfway line. Disciplined defensively. 8

Meabh Murphy (Ballinora): The young centre-back took a while to find her feet, with Galway spreading the play out wide. Very effective as the sweeper in the closing 35 minutes. 8

Isobel Sheehan (Éire Óg): Worked hard. Like the rest of the defence, came to the fore in the second half. 7

Ashling Thompson (Milford): Typical leadership around midfield from the veteran in her 11th senior All-Ireland. Moved up to centre-forward in the second half to squeeze Galway, and was re-

CAMOGIE

■ Éamonn Murphy

warded with a remarkable seventh medal. 7

Laura Hayes (St Catherine's): Put in and took some monster hits in the first half, getting fouled for two converted frees. Scored a neat point after the break, and was an absolute warrior. 9

Emma Murphy (Glen Rovers): Had to operate too deep initially to be a scoring threat. Opened the second half with a classy point, and tackled ferociously. 7

Saoirse McCarthy (Courcy Rovers): Nailed a huge free and showed flashes of her class early on without imposing herself. Completely upped the ante from there, including a sensational goal. Quality point to push Cork six ahead late on, which turned out to be match-winning. 8

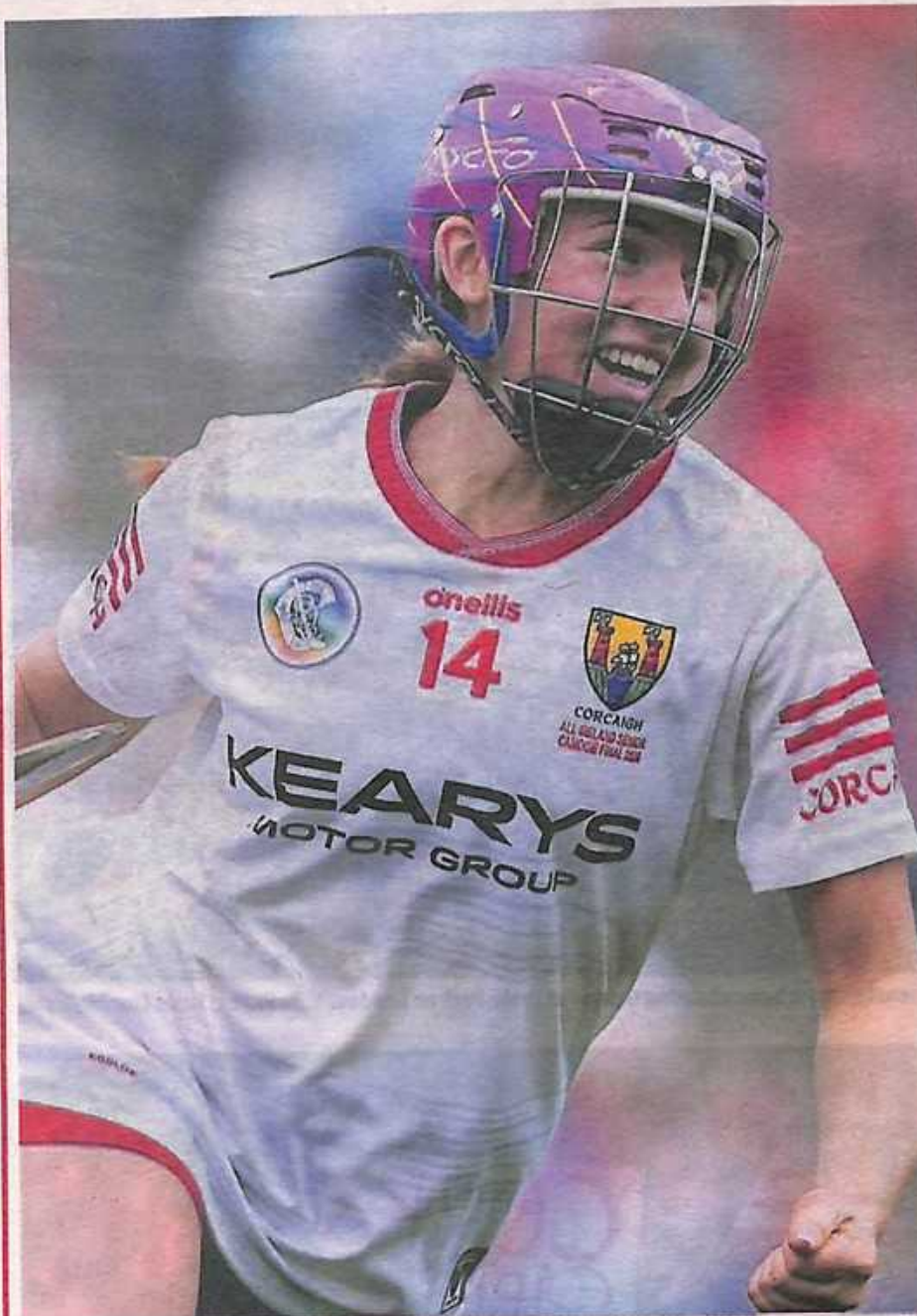
Millie Condon (Ballinacorney): Another newcomer. Very energetic and ran herself to a standstill. 7

Amy O'Connor (St Vincent's): Clinical from frees, but on the fringes from play early. Had some key involvements in the second half. 7

Orlaith Cahalane (St Finbarr's): Set up a point and fouled for a free in the first half, but too often starved of ball. Ice-cool finish for Cork's second-half goal. 8

Sorcha McCartan (St Finbarr's): Bagged a pair of exceptional points in the opening 30 minutes when scores from play were very hard to come by. Her flick led to Cahalane's goal, and was fouled for two frees. My Player of the Match. 9.

Subs: Orlaith Mullins and Hayley Ryan on late.



Cork's Orlaith Cahalane celebrates scoring her side's second goal.

Picture: Ben Brady/Inpho

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

Cork	2-14
Galway	0-19

In front of a record-breaking attendance of 33,419, Cork regained the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland title after a heart-stopping five minutes of added time, where they had to withstand a late Galway rally before a stunning victory.

Against all the odds, after losing so many key players before the season, Cork are champions again for the 31st time. They had a slow start, but were superb in the second half, powering two goals ahead after stunning strikes by Saoirse McCarthy and Orlaith Cahalane.

Up 2-14 to 0-14 after 57 minutes, Galway scored the last five points, including a goal-bound free in the last play which keeper Sarah Healy came up to take, but got under to slam it over the bar.

The final whistle went on that note, Ger Manley's side deservedly holding on to reverse last year's defeat which denied the Rebels' three in a row.

Cork looked nervous in the opening minutes before Niamh Niland split the posts. Frees from Amy O'Connor and Saoirse McCarthy edged Cork in front, but Galway responded well with two Caoimhe Kelly points and one from Carrie Dolan.

Meabh Murphy and Ciara Hickey operated as sweepers, but Galway were still finding it easier to score from play in the first 30 minutes. The tension was high, and there was a lot of high tackling and heavy hits. Galway captain Carrie Dolan saw yellow after 16 minutes for a high challenge on Millie Condon.

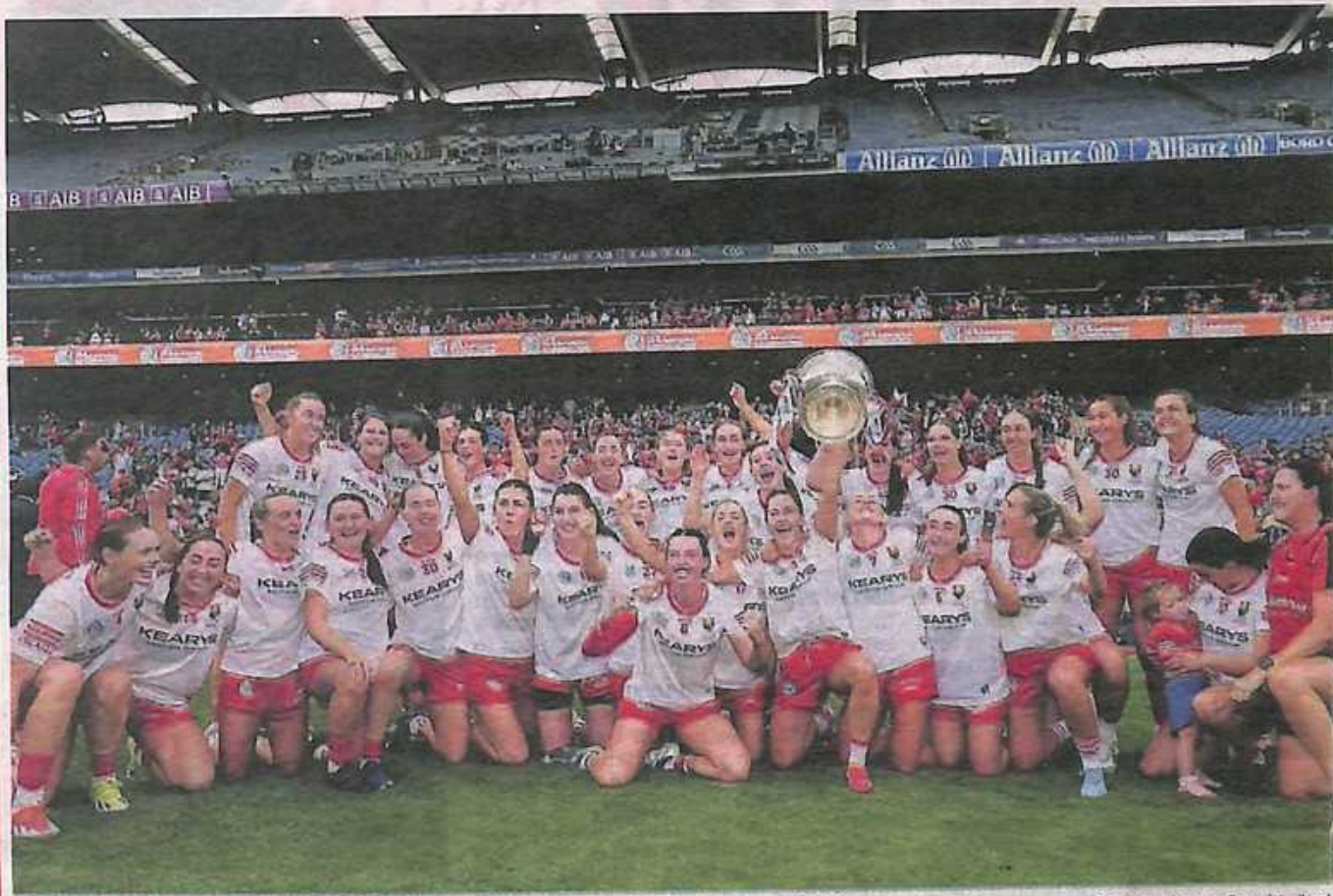
McCarthy converted the resulting free, and a Sorcha McCartan point levelled. Cork were twice turned over as Dolan and Niland grabbed the initiative.

Amy O'Connor pointed a free after another heavy hit on Laura Hayes, but McCartan slotted over from an acute angle to level matters for the third time.

Galway were looking sharper, and their experience was showing. Aoife O'Donoghue, Dolan, and Caoimhe Kelly



Ava Fitzgerald breaks past Rachael Hanniffy. Picture: Ben Brady/Inpho



REBEL YELL: The Cork team celebrate with the O'Duffy Cup at Croke Park after beating Galway.

Pictures: James Crombie/Inpho

for 31st title



Cork's Millie Condon takes on Carrie Dolan and Niamh Niland of Galway.

Picture: Tom Maher/Inpho

had them 0-9 to 0-6 in front before another O'Connor free two minutes into added time.

Cathal Murray's side could have been more than two points up, given their intensity, work-rate, and classy scores.

Cork hit the ground running on the restart, though. Emma Murphy and Hayes tied it up again within three minutes. Now pressing hard, Cork were asking big questions of Galway's defence.

Dolan and Orlaith Cahalane traded scores to leave it 0-11 each.

Goals win games, and Cork snatched two in the space of six minutes.

The first came after Saoirse McCarthy grabbed a long Amy Lee delivery, turned down an easy point, and fired a rasper past Shauna Healy to give Cork a lead which they held to the finish.

Now playing with confidence, this young Cork side went for it. Niland, sister of Galway hurlers Aaron and Evan, pulled a point back; but, gathering another long Lee pass, Orlaith Cahalane finished to the net after a terrific first touch.

O'Connor nailed another free, and McCartan's fourth from play pushed Cork six in front.

Niland and McCarthy swapped points after Dolan turned an easy point from a free to chase a goal.

That turned out to be a mistake, because Galway threw everything they had at Cork defence, and four successive points had the margin at two in the final minute of added time.

Cork worked the puckout up the pitch cleverly, but then lost possession in the middle third, which ended with the free just outside the arc.

Lee was summoned to try to blast a match-winning goal with every other player in front of the slotar.

To the Rebels' relief, her shot was too hard and rose over the bar for a point; that didn't deny Cork an All-Ireland title



Galway's Caoimhe Kelly challenges Amy Lee of Cork.

Picture: Tom Maher/Inpho

that looked highly unlikely back in the spring when their new-look side was in a league relegation battle.

Scorers for Cork: S McCarthy 1-2 (0-1 f), A O'Connor 0-5 f, S McCartan 0-4, O Cahalane 1-1, E Murphy, L Hayes 0-1 each.

Scorers Galway: C Dolan 0-5 (0-4 f), N Niland 0-4, A O'Donoghue, C Kelly 0-3 each, D Higgins, N McPeake, M Dillon, Sarah Healy (f) 0-1 each.

CORK: A Lee; I O'Regan, L Coppinger, M Cahalane (c); A Fitzgerald, M Murphy, I Sheehan; A Thompson, L Hayes; E Murphy, S McCarthy, M Condon; A O'Connor, O Cahalane, S McCartan.

Subs: O Mullins for E Murphy (55), H Ryan for S McCartan (60).

GALWAY: S Healy; R Hanniffy, R Black, D Higgins; K Manning, C Hickey, KA Porter; A Hesnan, C Dolan (c); N Mallon, N McPeake, A Donohue; N Niland, A O'Reilly, C Kelly.

Subs: J Hughes for N Mallon (17 in), S Healy for K Manning (40), A Keane for C Hickey (45 in), M Dillon for A O'Reilly (52), S Corcoran for J Hughes (57).

Referee: Gavin Donegan (Dublin).



Cork's Méabh Murphy and Galway's Caoimhe Kelly.

Picture: Paul Phelan

Condon: Experienced players have been supporting us all year

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

Having just won her first senior All-Ireland camogie medal, Millie Condon was one of the last to leave the hallowed Croke Park field as she savoured the whole occasion.

The Ballinascorthy dynamo's work rate was incredible. She more than played her part in Cork's 31st All-Ireland by overcoming rivals Galway.

"It's a surreal feeling, to be honest, I cannot believe we've done it," Condon said.

"We knew we had it in us and that Galway would really put it up to us, but we had faith in our own ability and I suppose that stood to us in the end."

Condon came into the senior starting 15 late in the season, having earlier in the year landed an U23 All-Ireland.

"It was a great year with the U23s and, in fairness, there was no pressure from the senior management."

"We played away with the U23 team and it was brilliant to win that, and now today to win the senior title is really a dream come true."

Condon paid huge tribute to the more experienced players on the side and how they helped the younger players — not just in the final but all season.

"The senior girls are unreal, to be fair to them. They supported us and helped us all year," she said.

"Anything we needed to know or wanted to ask any of them, they are always there for us."

"They encouraged and supported all the players who came in this year."

"I was on the panel last year and I suppose that helped me as I was learning all the time."

"To get an opportunity to make the team this year was

something I really appreciated."

"Every one of the senior players helped and encouraged me and all the other new girls who made the step up this year."

"When you have players like that around you, it makes all the difference, and it helps you settle into the squad."

While it wasn't her first time in Croke Park with a Cork side, it was her first time starting in a final, but the occasion really didn't get to her at all.

"The walk around before the game really helped you get the feel of the atmosphere and what to expect during the game."

"The crowd were there for the intermediate final and the atmosphere was building up all afternoon, and I knew what it was going to be like."

The parade was very much enjoyed by the West Cork ace.

"Yes, it was really enjoyable and, to be honest, I wasn't really that nervous. I suppose, as I said, having come out earlier and had the walk around, it helped settle the nerves."

Giving a solid performance in the No 12 jersey, she played a roving role, coming out around the middle, winning a lot of ball, and helping to break up a lot of Galway's forward play.

"I suppose we knew we had to work hard and win the 50-50 balls and, after a shaky start, we did that in the second half."

"I'm just delighted to have been part of this Cork team of great players, and so delighted for us that we made up for last year and won this year."



Cork overcame losing a multitude of players earlier in the season to claim their 31st title.



Millie Condon passes Niamh McPeake. Picture: Piaras Ó Midheach/Sportsfile

Nobody stopped, nobody blinked in epic instalment of ferocious rivalry



Denis Walsh
at Croke Park

McCartan was outstanding player on the field despite playing with a broken finger

On this see-saw, neither of them can let go. Cork won barely when it looked for a while like they would win easily and just like every game that has mattered in this rivalry over the last seven years, they looked each other in the eye and held the stare. Nobody blinked. Nobody would dare.

Nothing was resolved until the eighth minute of stoppage time. Galway won a free outside the Cork D and Sarah Healy was summoned from the Hill 16 end with her shooting hurley. Just like in the Hollywood Westerns she was faced with the gunslinger's imperative: one shot.

Galway trailed by two points and every outfield player was massed between her and the Cork goal. From where Healy stood, about 33 metres out, no route was coming up on sat nav. The ball left her hurley with force but it flew over the bar. Finally, that was it.

It had been an extraordinary endgame. Cork led by six points with three minutes of normal time left, and having controlled the second half, the game was in the palm of their hand. But they couldn't make a fist and Galway kept coming.

As the game swooned into five minutes of indicated stoppage time, Galway rattled over four points in as many minutes and didn't give up on a goal. Carrie Dolan, Galway's outstanding captain, tried to manufacture a chance with a short free to Niamh Niland and a couple of minutes later Dervla Higgins came up from wing back and fired a shot that whistled across the Cork square.

Cork's game management in the last 10 minutes was loose, and their decision making was clouded. They played short puck-outs to open targets inside their own 45, but they carried it into congested areas, and some passes didn't go to hand. Those turnovers renewed Galway's momentum.

Massive deliveries

Ultimately, though, the game swung on two second-half goals. Just like hurling, camogie is full of short passes now and premeditated means of managing the ball, but both of Cork's goals came from massive deliveries by their goalie Amy Lee. Both times, she played a one-two with Libby Coppinger and let fly.

For the first goal, Saoirse McCarthy made a terrific catch about 40 metres out and ran straight for the Galway goal. She bounced the ball once off the ground to put a few coins in the meter and then hit a shot that might not have beaten Sarah Healy every time.

For the second goal, Healy had no chance. The outstanding Sorcha McCartan deflected Lee's towering



“

Cork led by six points with three minutes of normal time left and the game was in the palm of their hand. But they couldn't make a fist and Galway kept coming

delivery into the path of her clubmate Orlaith Cahalane and she found the net with a fierce drive that bounced into the far corner.

Galway had not conceded a goal in this year's championship, but Ger Manley said that Cork had goals on their mind. In last year's All-Ireland final, all three of Cork's inside forwards were replaced by the 48th minute, but this time they were the difference.

"We were disappointed in the first half that we didn't get the ball into our full-forward line," said Manley. "We have an exceptionally good full forward line. McCartan is not far off Player of the Year, she's been so good. Amy O'Connor is lethal. Orlaith Cahalane, we call her Messi, she has time on the ball constantly. You saw the goal she got – did she panic? No, she sauntered in and flashed it into the corner."

McCartan played the game with a broken finger that she had picked up in the opening 10 minutes of the semi-final a fortnight ago but it was no impediment.

Each of her four points was struck from distance and from an angle and with elegance. By a mile, she was the outstanding player on the field.

Cork won the tactical battle too. At the beginning of the second half Ashling Thompson was switched to centre forward where she reduced Ciara Hickey's influence. Young Millie Condon, starting her first All-Ireland, picked up Dolan and didn't take a backward step. Laura Hayes, though, bestrode the middle third with her athleticism and her drive. She scored two points, but made an assist for four others, an astonishing contribution from a centrefielder.

Evolved

As a spectacle, it was a vivid specimen of the modern game. It is only eight years since an All-Ireland final was strangled by thirty-six frees and by then the game had evolved beyond the competence of its rules.

Some of the rules are different now but nothing has changed more than attitudes. The referee, Gavin Donegan, ignored obvious fouls in a way that often happens in the biggest hurling championship matches, but nobody was giving out or screaming for frees. For a referee, that is always a high-wire act. Both teams were conditioned for contact and were steeled for a fight.

The ferocity that has characterised this rivalry in recent years was evident from the beginning and never abated. Dolan should have been booked for a frontal tackle on Laura Hayes after a few minutes when, perversely, not even a free was awarded. Midway through the half, though, she was booked for a tackle on McCarthy and in the end, there were five yellow cards.

Nobody stopped. Nobody blinked.

Rival managers call for team holiday fund for finalists

Camogie Association urged to make contribution as rivalry raises profile

GORDON MANNING
at Croke Park

Galway manager Cathal Murray has called on the Camogie Association to contribute to a team holiday fund for the All-Ireland finalists every year.

The GAA provides €150,000 to the All-Ireland senior football and hurling finalists annually to help fund team trips, but the sides appearing in the camogie decider receive no such subsidies.

"I think Cork and Galway have been unbelievable the last

three years, and they've brought camogie to a different level," said Murray after watching his side lose by a single point at Croke Park.

"When we won the All-Ireland last year, we were out fundraising, the same when we won the All-Ireland in 2019 – going around to club matches with buckets, asking people for fivers, asking people for tenners, asking people for change.

"I think it was 1993 when Eddie O'Connor spoke in the Hogan Stand and talked about

the GAA providing money for a holiday. I know the GAA are looked after now – €150,000.

"I think these girls deserve [better], they don't need to go collecting money in the next few weeks to go on a holiday.

"We talk about integration, we talk about closing the gap and it was brilliant to hear Brian Molloy [Camogie Association president] canvassing for these players. I think that needs to be done now. I think camogie deserves some money to be put into a fund for a holiday for the players, and not to have them go out raising money over the next few weeks.

"Cork were the same way in 2024, we were that way last year. The two teams have done so much for camogie and so much for promotion of the



“**There's nothing between the two teams. We played them in 2023, a puck of the ball; 2024, a puck of the ball; last year a puck of the ball; this year a puck of the ball – Cork manager Ger Manley**

sport that there should be some financial link there for them and some money put in. You're not looking for an awful lot of money – €20,000-€25,000 would do so much for us."

'The girls deserve a break'

Cork manager Ger Manley agreed with Murray's sentiments.

"Oh, totally. I suppose we're lucky enough with the sponsors we get, but I'd agree that the girls deserve a break," said Manley.

As for Cork's victory, Manley admitted afterwards his side had set out to deny Galway the oxygen of goals while aiming to raise a few green flags themselves at the other end of the field.

"There's nothing between

the two teams. We played them in 2023, a puck of the ball; 2024, a puck of the ball; last year a puck of the ball; this year a puck of the ball," he said.

"We did target goals. We've only conceded one goal [in the championship], it was against Galway and it was late.

"But we target goals all the time. We pushed up in the second half, we pushed up on Ciara Hickey, put Ashling Thompson on her and I think that nullified her a good bit.

"We felt if we got a goal that our backs are tight and they didn't look like getting a goal.

"If the ball is away from your goals and down the other end of the field and you have good forwards you have a huge advantage – and we have good forwards."



Ava Fitzgerald and Amy O'Connor take a selfie. Picture: Tom Maher/Inpho

O'Connor on turning season around: 'I never doubted it for a second'

For Amy O'Connor, Cork's dramatic Glen Dimplex All-Ireland camogie final victory over Galway was more than just another title.

It was vindication after a difficult start to the season, proof of the belief that never wavered within the dressing room, and, perhaps most importantly, the sweetest success of them all.

While many outside the camp questioned Cork's prospects after a rocky league and championship campaign that included an unexpected defeat to Antrim, O'Connor insists she always believed the Rebels would be standing on the steps of the Hogan Stand as champions.

"I think so, definitely," she said when asked if this was the sweetest victory of her career. "Obviously we had an awful start to the year, everyone knows that."

"But I literally, and people might laugh because it sounds so cliché, I didn't doubt it for a second that we'd be here."

"I've been saying it since the start. Even on the days when we were beaten by Antrim and things weren't going well, I knew we'd be here."

Cork had to overcome one of the toughest defences in the country to reclaim the O'Duffy Cup.

Galway had conceded just a single goal all year before the final, but Cork struck twice when it mattered most.

"We hadn't scored a whole pile of goals this year compared to previous seasons, but that was partly down to the structure and the way we were playing as well," O'Connor said.

"We knew we had a good inside line and brilliant runners coming off the shoulder from

CAMOGIE

■ Rory Noonan

the half-forward line.

"We probably didn't get the ball in there as much as we'd have liked today, but we knew if it did go in that we were lethal inside."

O'Connor believes Cork's willingness to meet Galway head-on was crucial.

"They bring a huge physicality to the game, and I think when we stand up to that, we can match them," she said.

The Cork forward admitted memories of last year's final heartbreak provided additional motivation, but she was adamant that belief within the squad never diminished.

"Definitely, yeah. Jesus, after last year this is very sweet," she said. "As I said, we never doubted it for a second."

While Cork's goals grabbed the headlines, O'Connor was equally proud of the defensive work and relentless effort shown throughout the team.

"Galway love to crowd the middle third, and it can be horrible to play against, to be honest," she explained.

"But we knew if we could stop them coming out with quality ball and disrupt things there, they'd be less likely to get good ball into their inside line. That's what we tried to do."

As celebrations began and the reality of Cork's triumph started to sink in, O'Connor's overwhelming emotion was not satisfaction, but relief.

"I'm delighted, but relieved as well, to be honest," she said.

"As I said, it might sound mad to some people, but I didn't doubt it for a second."

"I'm just delighted that we got over the line today."

How Cork beat Galway to regain the All-Ireland title

CAMOGIE

■ Stephen Barry

Cork's 31st All-Ireland camogie title will rank among the county's sweetest for the nature of their 2026 turnaround, the player turnover, and the rivalry with Galway.

The lingering image of the Rebels' 2025 final defeat was Laura Hayes and Saoirse McCarthy sat together in tearful devastation on the Croke Park turf.

It was an entirely different scene as the teammates who have driven each other on to greater heights since the age of 13 celebrated, with McCarthy lifting a jubilant Hayes onto her shoulders at the Davin End before raising the O'Duffy Cup together in the Hogan Stand.

Cork did it with a mere two-point swing from last year, swapping the agony of a one-point defeat for the ecstasy of a one-point victory.

It's a rare occasion for two teams to meet in a repeat final and for one to flip that result.

Cork have done it just four times, most recently against Kilkenny in 2017. Prior to that, their predecessors in the red jersey achieved the same feat against Tipperary in 2005 and Galway in 1997.

That rivalry fed into the record-breaking 33,419 attendance and it showed on the field, with big hits starting early and continuing throughout the game.

It makes all the difference when Cork reflect on a sequence of six consecutive finals to have now won three of the past four, and the most recent pair after all-out battles.

Ashling Thompson's glittering career links the 2014-18 era of success with this latest abundant spell. As a testament to her longevity and Cork's production line of talent, her seven All-Ireland medals were won playing alongside 44 different teammates on the field of play in those finals.

February's home loss to Antrim is long in the rearview mirror now and the talented gems uncovered this year could become the foundation for another rich seam of Rebel success.

Difference-maker

Ultimately, Cork had to put two goals past the previously unbeaten Sarah Healy to hold just enough of a cushion into the frantic finale.

After a first half where Cork had pointed just twice from play, those green



Cork stars Saoirse McCarthy and Laura Hayes celebrate the final whistle after beating Galway to recapture the O'Duffy Cup. Picture: INPHO/Tom Maher

flags rounded out a dominant third quarter which swung 2-4 to 0-3 in their favour.

Not many teams have managed to pick apart sweeper systems in finals. Cork had five goals in 2023 and Galway three in 2019, but no other team has raised more than one green flag since 2014.

Cork's half-back line, featuring a newly converted centre-back and two rookie wing-backs, stood up to Galway's long puck-outs.

Méabh Murphy, Isobel Sheehan, and Ava Fitzgerald, while also marking Aoife Donohue, were the source of many Cork turnovers. They were also, enough of the time, able to negotiate the ball through the lines from Amy Lee's short restarts.

The goals were key in that regard. Cork's 2-3 from their puck-outs contrasted with Galway's 0-3.

Whereas they often attempted to work the sliotar out short, Lee's route-one deliveries had the biggest pay-off. Both times, she played a quick one-two to get the extra yards on those long pucks.

Saoirse McCarthy's high catch, having cleverly got in behind her marker, was a goal befitting any All-Ireland final.

adorned with her hopping the sliotar off the turf and sidestepping a defender in one flowing motion.

Then, Sorcha McCartan showed superb awareness to guide the dropping ball into Orlaith Cahalane's path. Her Barrs teammate knew where the space was and blasted home for the second consecutive All-Ireland final.

It didn't help the Westerners that Galway had lost their sweeper, Ciara Hickey, to injury in between those goals. Whereas they were forced into changes, with Niamh Mallon withdrawn earlier, Cork kept them to a minimum.

High press

Galway's lifeblood was Cork turnovers. They had 13 of their 19 points from that source. Six of those turnovers were earned in the opposition half.

Cork had their own successes with nine points from turnovers. Two came from Murphy's effective sweeping.

They pressurised Galway clearances for advanced turnovers for another three. McCartan led the way. Her hard graft led to Cork's fifth and ninth points without ever getting possession of the sliotar.

When she did, her four points were of dazzling quality.

Laura Hayes was another standout. Her midfield switch has paid off with omnipresent performances.

She won two frees among Cork's first five points. She assisted two of McCartan's scores and another for Cahalane, slotted one of her own, and was all over every goal-hunting Galway attack in the final chase.

In that chaotic finish, Galway pressed up, picked off some puck-outs and turnovers, and reeled off the last five points.

Had the excellent Carrie Dolan not gambled by going short to Caoimhe Kelly from a 56th-minute free, which Méabh Cahalane and Sheehan closed down, before countering for a McCarthy point, who knows how it all would've ended?

Last year, it was Cork rueing those fine margins. This year, they are celebrating every small effort.



Victory for Cork, but heartache for Galway. Picture: James Crombie/Inpho



Saoirse McCarthy, Laura Hayes and Ciara O'Sullivan after the shattering loss to Galway in 2025. Picture: Ramsey Cardy/Sportsfile

Cork edge out Galway in gripping decider



Gordon Manning
at Croke Park

Goals by McCarthy and Cahalane prove game changers

Cork 2-14
Galway 0-19

Camogie's great trilogy goes to Cork as the O'Duffy Cup travels back to Leaside for a record 31 visit after a history-making day in Croke Park.

Two second-half goals fired Cork to victory over rivals Galway in what was another gripping and physical All-Ireland senior camogie final between the two current heavyweights of the game.

Cork beat Galway by three points in the 2024 decider, the Tribeswomen gained revenge with a one-point victory in 2025 and only the minimum separated the sides again this year with the Rebels edging a contest played in front of 33,419 – the largest attendance on camogie All-Ireland final day.

Galway led 0-9 to 0-7 at half-time, but goals by Saoirse McCarthy and Orlaith Cahalane changed the complexion of the game and left the defending champions chasing a six-point gap midway through the second half.

Galway went out on their shield though, scoring the last five points and testing Cork's mettle in a frenetic injury-time period.

Unashamedly clear

Two Cork players were booked in injury-time after they dragged down Galway attackers trying to force goal opportunities. The message was unashamedly clear, thou shall not pass.

In the seventh minute of five added on, and with two points between the sides, Galway were awarded a free just outside the small arc, directly in front of the Cork goal.

Galway manager Cathal Murray raced out to the pitch and beckoned his goalkeeper, Sarah Healy, to come down the field and hit the free. As she eyed the posts, every player on the pitch was standing between her and the Cork goal.

position to kick on and claim back-to-back titles.

Ciara Hickey was orchestrating so much of their play in her role as sweeper and Cork couldn't seem to find a way to curtail her influence.

With Hickey playing as a sweeper, Ally Hesnan dropped to centre back and Niamh Mallon started in midfield. With Carrie Dolan showing her prowess in the air and Caoimhe Kelly and Niamh Niland popping over some nice scores, Galway were full value for a two-point interval advantage.

But during the break Cork decided the match would not be played on the same terms in the second half. The decision to push Ashling Thompson on top of Hickey was game-changing.

Suddenly, Galway's highly effective sweeper was no longer afforded the time and space to cut out passes or create chances further down the field. Cork hammered the hammer.

The move might not have necessarily rattled Galway but they were visibly less comfortable with the new terms of engagement and as the Tribeswomen tried to adjust, Cork made hay.

Real brilliance

In the 40th minute, McCarthy produced a moment of real brilliance – sidestepping Róisín Black before skipping away from both Katie Anna Porter and Hesnan to smack the ball beyond Healy, 1-11 to 0-11.

Moments later Hickey suffered what appeared to be a serious knee injury and she had to be substituted.

In the 46th minute, a route one ball down the field was deftly knocked down by the imperious Sorcha McCartan for Cahalane, who flicked the sliotar up without breaking stride and arrowed it to the far corner of the Galway net, 2-11 to 0-12.

Galway were taking on water, they had shipped two goals in six minutes, in between which their playmaking sweeper had been forced off injured. They had also lost Mallon to a shoulder injury in the first half.

Cork had all the momentum. Laura Hayes appeared to be like a magnet to the ball around the middle of the field, Amy O'Connor was buzzing around everywhere, but McCartan was the difference maker.

She produced a tour de force, finishing the game with four fantastic points but also having emptied herself with a display of hard tackling, hard hitting and raw aggression. McCartan competed for every possession as if each one was the last play of the game.

But Healy didn't catch her shot on the money and the ball rose high and sailed over the crossbar – the final whistle sounding immediately.

"You probably saw me on the field jumping and roaring but it was the last puck of the game, we were told it was the last puck of the game," said Murray afterwards.

"There wasn't even an option of passing the ball, it just had to go and score direct. Look, obviously Sarah Healy has a serious shot in her. Fair play to her for going up and fair play to her for going for it. It just didn't work out.

"We probably had chances before that just to leave the minimum between the teams. That's the way it goes. I'm really proud of the character we showed, especially in the last 10-15 minutes and get back into the game."

And yet at the interval Galway looked in a strong

Outrageous

She didn't even bother to look at her outrageous over the shoulder fourth point sailing across the crossbar late on, instead the Cork forward stared towards the Hogan Stand and celebrated. It epitomised her drive and belief all afternoon.

"Sorcha McCartan played with a broken finger today," revealed Cork manager Ger Manley afterwards.

Perhaps that, actually, is what epitomised Cork in this final. The defeat to Galway last year didn't break their spirit.

At the final whistle, Galway players fell to their knees while "The Banks" started to play around Croke Park. The O'Duffy Cup is on its way to Leaside once more, Cork are back as camogie's standard bearers. It didn't take long.

CORK: Amy Lee; Izzy O'Regan, Libby Coppinger, Méabh Cahalane, Ava Fitzgerald, Míabha Murphy, Isobel Sheehan, Ashling Thompson, Laura Hayes (0-1), Emma Murphy (0-1), Saoirse McCarthy (1-2, 11), Millie Condon, Amy O'Connor (0-5, 5f), Orlaith Cahalane (1-1), Sorcha McCartan (0-4). Subs: Orlaith Mullins for Murphy (55 mins); Hayley Ryan for McCartan (60 mins).
GALWAY: Sarah Healy (0-1, 11), Róisín Black, Katie Manning, Rachael Hanniffy, Dervla Higgins (0-1), Ally Hesnan, Katie Anna Power, Carrie Dolan (0-5, 4f), Niamh Mallon, Ciara Hickey, Niamh McPeake (0-1), Aoife Donohue (0-3), Niamh Niland (0-4), Ailish O'Reilly, Caoimhe Kelly (0-3). Subs: Jennifer Hughes for Mallon (18 mins); Shauna Healy for Manning (42 mins); Aine Keane for Hickey (45 mins); Mairéad Dillon (0-1) for O'Reilly (53 mins); Shannon Corcoran for Hughes (57 mins).
Referee: Gavin Donegan (Dublin).

Worn-out Thompson will think about future

Paul Keane

Ashling Thompson, the sweat still barely dry since she won her seventh All-Ireland senior camogie medal, isn't sure about going again with Cork in 2027.

"It's hard to know where I'm at, when you've spent an entire season injured," says the 36-year-old midfielder. "Because everyone is like: 'Will you give it another go?' And if you asked me now, and I am this tired, I'd probably say: 'No'.

"But I know that injury has dictated a lot of my season this year and probably is the reason that I feel so fucking worn out; burnout at times. So I'll have a think over the winter.

"A fella said to me the other day: 'If you think about it, that means you still want it. If it's a straight-up 'no', that's when you know it's over'. So I'll see. If I'm hungry for it again in the winter, it'll be back on."

Thompson's struggles with a badly broken elbow in March, and a hamstring injury upon her return midway through the championship, are well known.

Less well-known is that she also battled a calf-muscle tear.

She says: "There was a 1B tear in the hamstring the Tuesday before the semi-final. I actually had a 1B tear in my calf as well, but, luckily, that was asymptomatic. So I kind of just kept that under wraps, to be honest with you.

"I was very unlucky it was the same session I did both. But, look, I managed to keep it in one piece in the last two weeks."

The payoff was playing a central role on All-Ireland final day – her switch to the centre-forward position for the second-half was significant in terms of hammering Galway's hammer and dulling Ciara Hickey's influence – and ultimately capturing another medal.

"Croke Park is a mental game more than physical," says Thompson, explaining the psychology behind an All-Ireland decider. "I always relate it to going into a UFC ring – there is no way out, and it's completely mental.

The physical kind of looks after itself.

"Psychologically, you need to stay clued in, because you saw it there, a six-point lead at one stage and it came down to the wire again, one point in it."

Despite how close it was in the end – after Galway reeled off the last five points of the game – Thompson still felt comfortable in that closing quarter-hour or so.

Over the season, she has learned to trust a group full of new players and fresh faces.

She saw the nerves in Ava Fitzgerald, Isobel Sheehan, and Millie Condon on Sunday morning, before the game, but wasn't worried. She told them she felt the same.

She saw the huge impact former All-Ireland-winning Cork hurling manager Donal O'Grady had on the group, too.

"Massive," says Thompson. "What a cool man, just cool as a cucumber, cool as a breeze. He has the one-liners; he's brilliant with the one-liners. Even when things seem like it's a panic and the management might come in and it's panic or, you know, they might feel like they need to get us motivated, but it's always just the smallest, simplest piece of information that Donal will give you. And it just makes you feel nice and calm."

O'Grady set the Cork players a challenge on Sunday morning, to bring them all together.

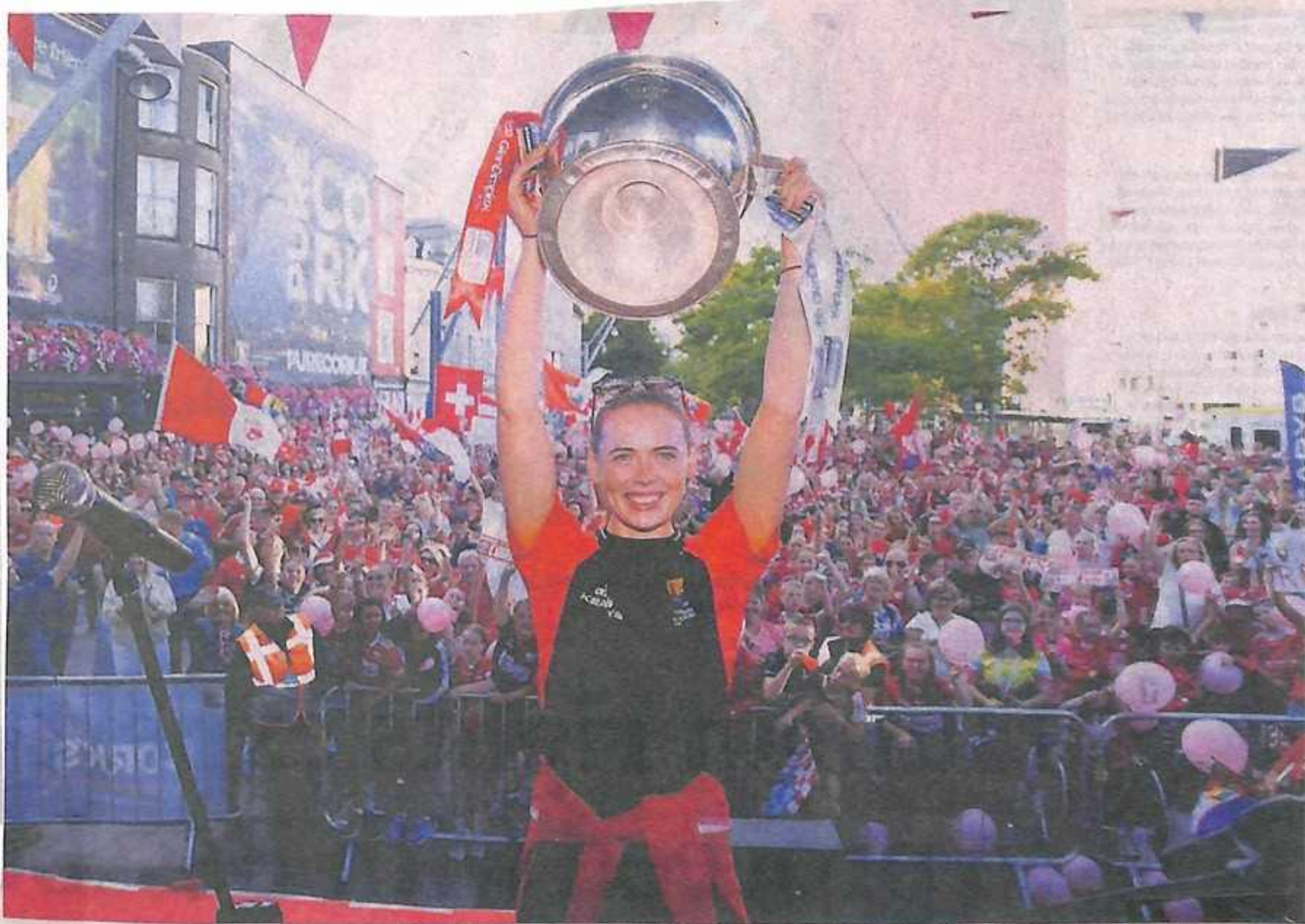
"We all had to take a pledge that we were all going to be Northsiders for the day," says the Milford icon.

"It was just simple things like that, to take your mind off the game, and everyone took the pledge! We were all Northsiders for the day together. Ah, Donal's been brilliant, and, on analysis as well, he took that over. Just a key man."

Thompson's personal tale from the 2026 final was a half spent at midfield, followed by that important switch to the half-forward line after the break.

"I suppose, anyone in general might think: 'Oh, she's not getting on the ball'," says Thompson, referencing how spectators might have interpreted her switch to attack.

"And they also were thinking we



Cork camogie captain Méabh Cahalane lifts the O'Duffy Cup on Grand Parade yesterday. SEE: Pages 3 & 24

Picture: Tom Maher/Inpho



UP WITH THE CUP: Cork's Libby Coppinger with the O'Duffy Cup at last night's homecoming celebrations on Grand Parade.

Picture: Tom Maher/Inpho

Cork in white proves an irresistible combination

Therese O'Callaghan

A huge crowd gathered in Cork yesterday evening to welcome home the newly-crowned All-Ireland senior camogie champions, with captain Méabh Cahalane of the famed St Finbarr's club bringing the O'Duffy Cup to the banks of the lovely Lee for a record 31st time.

In the latest chapter of this great sporting rivalry, the Rebels defeated title-holders Galway by the slimmest of margins.

The game ended in a single point score difference the year before too.

This was a new-look Cork in more ways than one. Transitional because of the departure of key players and the introduction of rising stars, but also because of a kit change.

Opting to switch jerseys from red to white to avoid a colour clash with the westerners made Ger Manley's squad stand out from the moment they entered the Croke Park stadium.

ed the Croke Park stadium.

Crucially though, their values remained the same.

It got us thinking of Mayo a couple of weeks ago, who also wore a white-inspired jersey against Kerry. It was the same colour jersey they donned when they won their previous title in 1951.

A happy coincidence.

The camogie strip alteration was a throwback to the early part of the new millennium when the uniform changed from white to red.

However, and regardless of the colour, the county's consistency is unchanged.

Since the beginning of the noughties, Cork have won the O'Duffy Cup 12 times and they've been runners-up on nine occasions.

Doing the maths, over a period of 27 years that is an incredible 21 visits to GAA headquarters on All-Ireland final day.

For the present group, Sunday will surely go down as one of the most endearing. The panel turnover has been well highlighted in recent weeks, with no less than 14 players not available for selection.

Yet, Manley describes the current squad as one of the best.

"I was involved in hurling teams most of my life. This is probably the best team I've coached. And tactically, they're so good. Like, Dónal O'Grady is one of our backroom team. Seán Crowley has been involved in winning All-Ireland teams. James Nyhan is involved in senior teams in Cork. Gemma O'Connor will be a brilliant coach. She is a brilliant coach."

Combining youth with seasons of experience is the winning mix. Goalscorer Saoirse McCarthy sums it up perfectly.

"I think a lot of people said we would never do it this year. Even people from

Cork were saying it. We knew what we had, and we stuck to that, and here we are now, and we just couldn't be happier. I actually can't believe it."

The magnitude of the achievement will take a while to sink in.

Twelve months ago it was Cathal Murray and Galway who had that winning feeling when Carrie Dolan brought the cup back across the Shannon.

Murray said in his post-match interview two days ago that his team died with their boots on, and it wasn't an exaggeration.

A week earlier Galway were crowned All-Ireland ladies senior football champions, and what a nice touch to see them en bloc back at the Jones Rd venue to support the camogie team.

You win some, and you lose some. That's how sport works.

For now, the celebrations have started on Leaside and they will continue for a long time to come.

need a bit more firepower up front, but I knew Ciara Hickey was getting on oceans of ball as the plus one, and she was doing the same against Kilkenny in the semi-final."

Thompson added: "She's a great player, she got on loads of ball and I knew she was making it quite difficult for our inside forward line to get that delivery in.

"So, I think, yeah, the idea in my head — and the management were kind of giving me free rein — but in my own head I decided that I was just going to stick with her and force her up the field

to mark me, basically, and that forced them to kind of sit somebody else back who I knew wasn't so comfortable and that completely opened our forward line, which was perfect."

Cork's heroes 'inspire new generation'

■ Donal O'Keeffe

The 2026 All-Ireland senior camogie champions were welcomed back to Leaside by thousands of fans yesterday evening, and there was no telling how many future stars were in the crowd.

The Rebels defeated Galway 2-14 to 0-19 in Croke Park on Sunday.

The crowd on Grand Parade was close to 5,000 strong, but earlier a few dozen clever fans, most of them young girls, avoided the crowds and went to Kent Station to greet their heroes, shaking hands and chatting with their heroes.

Taoiseach Micheál Martin thanked the players for the lift they had given both city and county, and told them their victory would inspire generations to come.

■ News: 2



The Cork panel that won the All-Ireland senior camogie championship final at Croke Park celebrate with the O'Duffy Cup in front of a crowd of thousands on the Grand Parade yesterday evening.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare



Back Row (L-R)

Aimee Ferris, Cliona Griffin, Sarah Fyfe, Cassie McArthur, Niamh Cosgrove, Nicole McAtamney, Janey McIntosh, Caoimhe McNaughton, Amy Boyle, Clare McKillop, Sarah O'Neill, Lucia McNaughton, Aisling O'Donnell, Shannagh Heggarty, Orlaith McAlister, Elen McIntosh.

Front Row (L-R)

Colleen Patterson, Katierose Bell, Erin Coulter, Laura Black, Maeve Kelly, Caitriona Graham (Capt), Caoimhe Conlon, Becky Ellis, Dearbhail Dobbin, Eobha McAllister, Katie Molloy.



IONADAITHE

- 16 **Becky Ellis**, Becky Ellis, MacUilín Ballycastle
17 **Orlaith McAlister**, Orlaith Níe Alastair, Ruairi Og Cushendall
18 **Sarah O'Neill**, Sarah Níe Neill, Erin's Own Cargin
19 **Elen McIntosh**, Elin Níe an Toisigh, MacUilín Ballycastle
20 **Laura Black**, Laura Níe Dhuibh, Ruairi Og Cushendall

- 21 **Aisling O'Donnell**, Aisling O'Donnell, St. Mary's Ahoghill
22 **Aimee Ferris**, Aimee Níe Fheiris, Pádraig Sáirséil
23 **Dearbhail Dobbin**, Dearbhail Níe Dobáin, Geraldines Portlennone
24 **Erin Coulter**, Erin Níe Chultair, Bridini Óga Glenravel
25 **Katierose Bell**, Katierose Níe Bheill, Naomh Pól

- 26 **Sarah Fyfe**, Sarah Níe Fhiach, Bridini Óga Glenravel
27 **Cara Burns**, Cara Níe Bhron, Geraldines Portlennone
28 **Eva Lee**, Eabha Níe Laoi, St. John's Camlough
29 **Cassie McArthur**, Cáisi Níe Artair, Cúchulláin Dunloy
30 **Niamh Cosgrove**, Niamh Níe Oiscáir, MacUilín Ballycastle



Back Row (L-R)

Grace Foxe, Aisling O'Dea, Fiona Scully, Shona Jones, Lucy Conroy, Rachael Bergin, Clodagh Tynan, Gráinne Delaney, Aimee Collier (capt.), Rachael Deegan, Aedin Lowry, Kristen Keenan, Sarah Fleming, Jade Bergin, Aoife Carroll, Sinéad Slevin.

Front Row (L-R)

Eimear Hassett, Julie Ann Bennett, Karla Whelan, Kaylee O'Keeffe, Susie Delaney, Sarah Creagh, Aoife Finlay, Laura Finlay, Alice Walsh, Aoibheann Stynes, Amy Lacey, Catherine Kirby, Aoife Gee. Missing from Photo: Ellen Conroy.

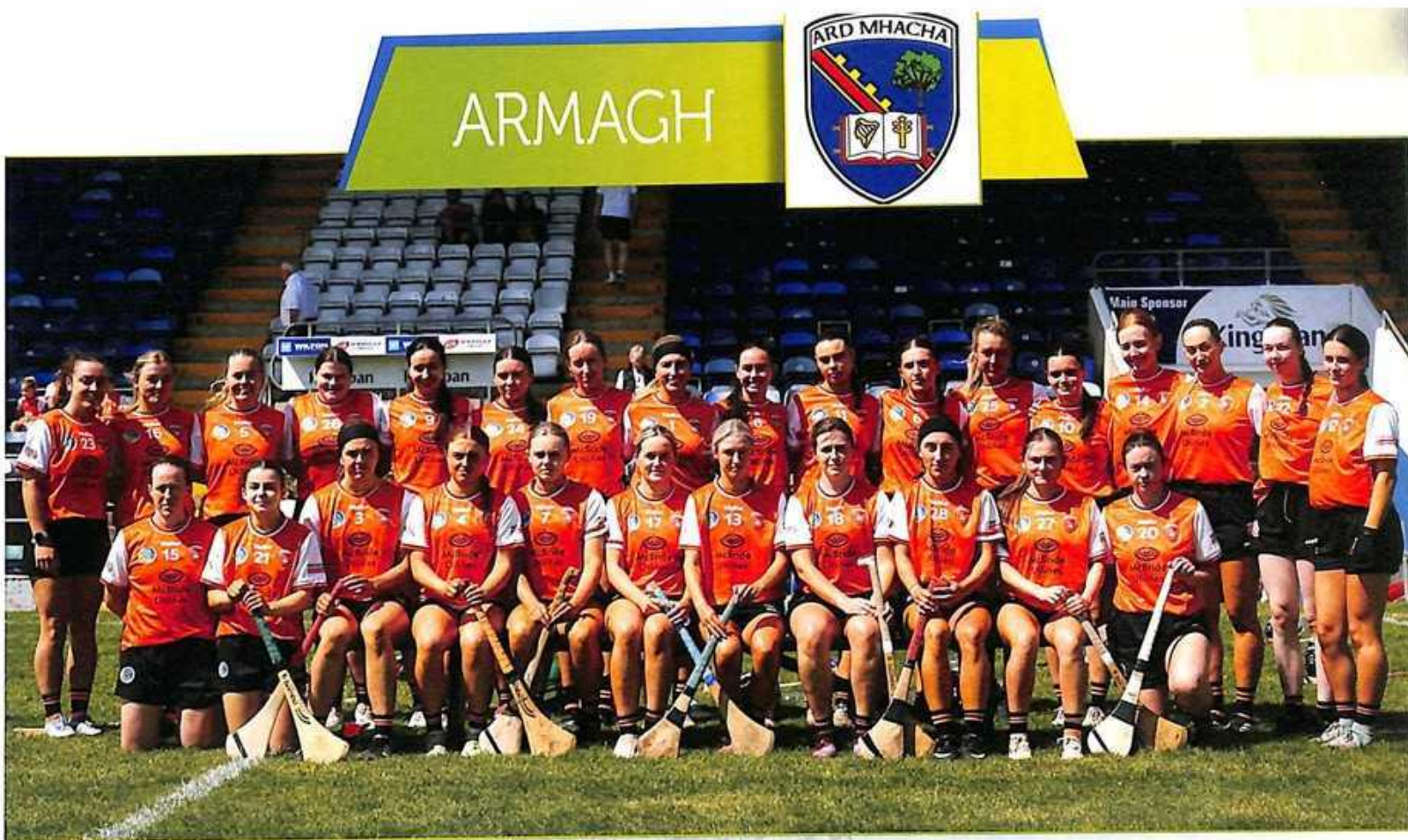


IONADAITHE

16 Grace Foxe, Gráinne Ni Sionnaigh, St Lazarian's
17 Aisling O'Dea, Aisling Ni Dhea, St Brigid's
18 Eimear Hassett, Eimear Hassett, St Brigid's
19 Amy Lacey, Amy Ni Léis, The Harps
20 Aoife Carroll, Aoife Ni Cearbhull, St Brigid's
21 Sarah Fleming, Sorcha Fleming, Portlaoise
22 Julie Ann Bennett, Julie Ann Mac Beirnead, O'Moore's

23 Fiona Scully, Fiona Ni Scolal, Camross
24 Aoife Gee, Aoife Ni Aodh, The Harps
25 Rachael Bergin, Rachael Ni hAimhirgin, The Harps
26 Sinéad Slevin, Sinéad Slevin, Banrion Gaels

27 Shona Jones, Shona Jones, St Brigid's
28 Alice Walsh, Ellis Breathnach, O'Moore's
29 Aoibheann Stynes, Aoibheann Stynes, Banrion Gaels
30 Ellen Conroy, Ellen Conroy, O'Moore's



Back Row (L-R)

Lucie Loughran, Claragh Lenaghan, Eimear O'Kane, Naoise Hughes, Ciara Hill, Lucy Doyle, Ellen Lavery, Ciarraí Devlin, Katie Convie, Corinna Doyle, Fiadhna Loughran, Molly Fegan, Niamh Forker, Sinéad Quinn, Michelle McCone, Laoise McConnell and Eimear McGeary.

Front Row (L-R)

Ciara Geoghegan, Jessica Traynor, Gemma McCann, Méabh O'Hare, Alanna McEntee, Clodagh McClelland, Rachael Trainor, Eimear Hayes, Tierna Maxwell, Rionagh Lenaghan and Hannah Gray.



IONADAITHE

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| 16 Hannah Gray, Hannah Ní Cathail Riabhaigh, Madden | 21 Jessica Traynor, Jessica Ní Threinfhír, An Port Mór | 27 Rionagh Lenaghan, Rionagh Ní Linnacháin, Crossmaglen |
| 17 Claragh Lenaghan, Claragh Ní Leannacháin, Crossmaglen | 22 Laoise McConnell, Laoise Ní Dhomhnaill, Middletown | 28 Tierna Maxwell-McKeever, Tierna Ní Iomhair, St. Brigid's |
| 18 Clodagh McClelland, Clodagh Ní Giolla Aolain, Granemore | 23 Lucie Loughran, Lucie Ní Luachraín, Keady | 29 Eimear Smyth, Eimear Nic Gabhann, Ballymacnab |
| 19 Eimear McGeary, Eimear Ní Gadhra, Madden | 24 Lucy Doyle, Lúisai Ní Dhuaghail, Granemore | |
| 20 Ellen Lavery, Eibhlín Ní Labhra, Granemore | 25 Molly Fegan, Máirín Ní Faogáin, Ballymacnab | |
| | 26 Naoise Hughes, Naoise Ní Aodha, Ballymacnab | |



Back Row (L-R)

Aideen Coyle, Eimear Brady, Orla Flynn, Aisling Sexton, Michelle Ellis, Emma Mulvaney, Amy Kerrigan, Daria Kaleddek, Siún O'Sullivan, Alannah Tierney, Aoibhe Conaty, Emma Plunkett, Aela O'Sullivan, Katie Tierney, Kate McSeain.

Front Row (L-R)

Ciara Shalvey, Eavan O'Sullivan, Rebecca Fitzsimons, Niamh Keenaghan, Róisín O'Keeffe (C), Shanise Fitzsimons, Hannah Fitzsimons, Nomonde Majola, Aimee McIntyre, Rosie Crowe-McKeever.



IONADAITHE

- 16 Michelle Ellis, Michelle Ní Eillis,
Lacken
- 17 Amy Kerrigan, Amy Ní Ciaragain,
Denn
- 18 Aisling Sexton, Aisling Ní Seasnain,
Laragh Uid
- 19 Kate McSeain, Cáit MacSheain,
Ballinagh

- 20 Katie Tierney, Cáit Ní Thiarnaigh,
Laragh Uid
- 21 Aimee McIntyre, Aimee Mac an tSaoir,
Lacken
- 22 Orla Flynn, Orlaith Ní Fhloinn,
Crosserlough
- 23 Siún O'Sullivan, Siún Ní Suilleabhain,
Baileboro

- 24 Nomonde Majola, Nomonde Majola,
Denn
- 25 Emma Plunkett, Emma Ní Plunkett,
Denn
- 26 Erinn Galligan, Erinn Ní Gealagain,
Crosserlough
- 27 Christina O'Reilly, Cristiona Ní Raghallaigh,
Crossmaglen



Condon highlights Cork U23 influence in All-Ireland final win

BY GER MCCARTHY

BALLINASCARTHY'S Millie Condon was thrilled to play a significant role in helping her county overcome defending champions Galway at Croke Park last Sunday.

Getting her hands, in her own words, on her first 'proper' All-Ireland senior medal, Millie Condon paid tribute to the members of the Cork U23 squad that moved up to senior panel over the past 12 months.

'I got one medal in 2024 as well but this one is the first proper one (laughs),' Condon said.

'Like, those championship group matches stood to us. All the U23s came on. The majority of that U23 starting team were on this senior panel as well.'

'I feel we kind of took that back into the dressing room, the All-Ireland win for the U23s.'

As well as injection of youthful enthusiasm, Condon pointed to some sage advice from an experienced campaigner that inspired the Ballinascorthy dynamo.

'I remember after the All-Ireland final last year, when we lost, I remember Laura Hayes coming up to myself and Ava Fitzgerald, who had a super game today,' Condon explained.

'Laura came up and she said, "Lads, where you make the Cork starting 15 is in the first round of the National League. You just have to get your position and just don't let it go".'

'I suppose, Ava and myself have spoken about it since so many times. That's (taking Laura's advice) what we did, thank God.'

Condon also believes Cork's critics were too quick to write off the Rebel County's chances after a disappointing showing in this year's National League.

'I suppose everyone kind of wrote us off at the start of the year, everyone, when the league didn't go quite right for us,' the Ballinascorthy midfielder stated.

'That seven-week training block we put in after the league did so much for us. I didn't even see the progress myself as it was happening.'

'It was only when we came up against Galway in that first championship match that we realised how much we had actually come on.'

'We were so much closer as a group. We wanted every single thing that we got. That bond got so, so close.'

Condon's sentiments were echoed by her manager, Ger Manley.

'We've such a good group, a tight group,' the Cork senior manager added. 'It's been a very hard year. We knew a couple of weeks out from championship that we had something, and they put everything in — the players, the management, the whole lot.'

'This is what we're here for, winning All-Irelands. The girls put so much into it. We had girls who came back from bad injuries. We did doubt ourselves a small bit but we have so much talent. It all came together.'

Manley also took time to single out Orlaith Cahalane for her terrific goal and even made a comparison with an Argentinian sporting icon.

'There was nothing between the two teams,' Manley confirmed. 'Goals win matches and we were saying that to the girls all week.'

'Orlaith Cahalane is probably the Messi in our team. She has so much time and look, we were so good today.'



Cork's Millie Condon is challenged by Carrie Dolan and Niamh Nilland of Galway. (Photo: Tom Maher / INPHO)

Another day to remember for Cork camogie at Croke Park

A wonderful Glen Dimplex All-Ireland camogie finals day was highlighted by shuddering tackles, a record attendance, and revenge for the Cork seniors at HQ

BY GER MCCARTHY

THE O'Duffy Cup is coming home. Ger Manley's side erased the memory of last year's heart-breaking loss to Galway by overcoming their great rivals for the second time in three years.

The third part of a trilogy of All-Ireland final meetings between the country's top inter-county teams delivered yet another intense and physical battle.

Some of the tackles, including those involving Cork's Laura Hayes and Galway's Carrie Dolan, had supporters wincing in the stands.

Cork and Galway know no other way.

In a season defined by defences, Galway entered Croke Park yet to concede a senior champi-

onship goal. Cork were not far behind, their net breached only once, by Galway, on the road to this year's decider.

It was fitting that two moments of attacking magic swung the result in Cork's favour.

Orlaith Cahalane was well marshalled by Galway's full-back line for the majority of the game. That was until the forward, compared to Lionel Messi by her manager, brilliantly found the bottom corner after 34 minutes.

A rare Amy Lee long puck-out zeroed in on Saoirse McCarthy six minutes later.

The Courcy Rovers star plucked the sliotar from the air, galloped through her opposing defence and fired beyond goalkeeper Sarah Healy.

Two goals of the highest quali-



Cork's Ashling Thompson celebrates with the O'Duffy Cup after their win over Galway. (Photo: James Cromble / INPHO)

ty and on the biggest stage of the championship.

Yet, they were barely enough to hold off a rampaging Galway fightback as the champions went down swinging. You would expect nothing less from a Cathal Murray team.

Yet, the champions will have regrets about the manner in which they mismanaged the closing stages. Over five min-

utes of injury time was an ample period in which a dominant Galway could have picked off enough scores to level.

Instead, wayward shooting preceded a last puck of the game opportunity for Sarah Healy. Granted, Galway's free was a long way out from goal but Healy's attempt flew too high and with it, her team's last chance to salvage a draw.

Amy O'Connor salutes Cork's super work rate and intensity

BY GER MCCARTHY

LONG after the final whistle, standing beneath the bowels of Croke Park, Amy O'Connor cut a simultaneously satisfied and breathless figure.

So, was her county's recapturing of the O'Duffy Cup one of the sweetest All-Ireland final wins of her illustrious career?

'I think so, definitely,' O'Connor admitted to *The Southern Star*.

'Obviously, we had an awful start to the year, everyone knows that.'

'I know people will laugh now, and it's so cliché, but I didn't doubt it for a second that

we'd be here (All-Ireland final).

'I'm saying it since the start, even on the days when we were beaten by Antrim and other teams, and things weren't going well, I knew we'd be here.'

As ever, long-time rivals Galway brought an intensity that Cork had to match before seeing out a dangerous closing spell in which Cathal Murray's side reduced the deficit down to a single point.

'I think we bring out the best in each other,' O'Connor answered. 'We are two very physical teams. They like to bring that physicality and I think when we stand up to it, we can match them. So, yeah, that was

a big part of how we prepared for today.'

'They are a tough team to play against but I knew what we had in the dressing room. I knew what we were capable of.'

'Galway love to crowd the middle and it can be horrible to play against, to be honest. We knew that if we could kind of stop them coming out and disrupt there, they'd be less likely to get good quality ball into their inside line. So, that's kind of what we tried to do.'

Winning manager Ger Manley admitted in his after-match press conference that 20 points was his team's assigned winning total.

Scoring the first two goals that Galway have conceded in this year's All-Ireland senior championship went a long way to achieving that target.

'We definitely targeted goals today, yeah,' said the Cork corner-forward, scorer of five points in the final.

'We hadn't scored a whole pile of goals this year in comparison to other years. That was, I suppose, due to the structure and stuff like that as well.'

'We knew we are a really good inside line and, obviously, the runners off the shoulder from the half-forwards linked up so we could get the ball in there.'



Cork celebrate winning the O'Duffy Cup after their victory over Galway. (Photo: Ben Brady/INPHO)

Relief, elation and pure joy at the final whistle for a Cork panel that rebounded from an awful start to the season before picking up their 31st All-Ireland senior title.

This was an equally positive day at the office for the Camogie Association.

A record attendance of 33,419 for a standalone camogie All-Ireland final owed much to the organisation's increased marketing and clever use of social media.

The colour six different counties brought to Croke Park enhanced an already excitable atmosphere, especially in the closing stages of the senior decider.

It is fair to say that Cork and Galway's box office rivalry has helped market the camogie championships to a new and growing audience. The quality of Armagh and Cavan's Premier Junior final (won by Armagh) plus Antrim and Laois' intermediate decider (won by Antrim) were also a pleasant surprise at a packed Croke Park.

Make no mistake, the gap in physicality, speed and scoring ability between the senior finalists and the two games that took place beforehand was stark.

That statement is true of most senior inter-county teams as well.

Cork and Galway continue to set the bar in camogie. It is up to others to match them.

So far ahead of the chasing pack are the Rebels and Tribeswomen that few would complain if they met in a fourth consecutive All-Ireland final next year.

Ger Manley and his players were not thinking about that prospect whatever time they woke up on Monday morning.

An 11th All-Ireland appearance in the last 13 seasons and sixth consecutive final underlines the Rebels' remarkable consistency.

Of all Cork's All-Ireland senior successes in recent times, 2026 must rank as one of the sweetest.

Consider the fact Manley's much-depleted squad suffered National League losses to Wa-



There was a record attendance for this year's camogie finals. (Photo: Tom Maher/INPHO)

terford, Antrim and Galway before exiting the Munster Championship to Tipperary earlier this year.

A seven-week concentrated block of training before the All-Ireland group stages proved pivotal.

The work done during that period, along with the return of experienced personnel, helped Cork overcome Waterford, Tipperary (twice) and, most notably, Galway.

Add to that the sight of a rebuilt half-back line consisting of Ava Fitzgerald, Méabh Murphy and Isobel Sheehan withstanding Galway's late onslaught.

Player of the match Sorcha McCartan scored four points, all from play and each of the highest order. Ger Manley's admission that McCartan played with a broken finger only added to drama.

Credit, too, to Manley and his management team for moving Ashling Thompson to centre-forward and allowing Millie Condon roam free late in the second half. It was an important tactical shift.

It was also another memorable day in the history of Cork camogie but, even more importantly, a memorable occasion for the Camogie Association.



Cork's Ashling Thompson waves to the crowd after their All-Ireland final win. (Photo: Ben Brady/INPHO)

Thompson: This is one of the sweetest All-Ireland wins

BY MATTHEW HURLEY

CORK stalwart Ashling Thompson has won seven All-Ireland titles, but the latest is up there as one of the best.

The Milford woman had fought so hard to return from dislocating her elbow back in March to feature in Cork's All-Ireland campaign.

So when the Rebels ended up on the right side of a Titanic battle against Galway, there was understandable emotion from the 36-year-old.

'It's definitely up there,' Thompson said after being asked if 2026 was the sweetest victory.

'It was a well fought battle. The year itself took on a story of its own. We had some trouble in the league and in Munster but the way these girls built themselves in the championship campaign has been incredible. Galway fought back but to get there and dog it out shows the character of this team. What exceptional players they are.'

In an inter-county senior career spanning over 15 years, Thompson has been the constant for Cork's midfield. From playing as a youngster to thriving in the experienced role, she has really seen it all.

Thompson notes that she couldn't have achieved what she has already without some key cogs in Cork teams down the years.

'I have played with some exceptional players over the years. I have been through a few generations at this stage.'

'I'm exceptionally fortunate but at the end of the day, this is all about now. This All-Ireland is definitely up there given how hard the girls worked all year. It's been unbelievable,' she added.

Sorcha McCartan received the Player of the Match award having hit 0-4 from play, converting all but one of her attempts. It was a great performance, and no better day to produce it.

In the All-Ireland semi-final against Tipperary, she hit 0-3 too, converting all her shots in that game. She was a player that hit form at the right time. Much like her teammates.

However, even after another polished display, the St Finbarr's player was in disbelief.

'We did that background work all year but sometimes it wasn't paying off. We always put in the same amount of effort but as the year went on, we bonded so well,' McCartan explained.

'There was a lot on the line being the last game of the season. We had a bit of motivation with Aisling Egan's father unfortunately passing away. I think that bonded us more. We wanted to get over the line for her, so I'm just so happy. I can't believe it. I'm speechless to be honest.'

When the team were going through a run of one win in their first six games this year, some may have thought that the Leesiders could underachieve in 2026.

There was an internal belief in the group that things would start to click eventually, however.

They just needed the confidence. They got that at the right stage of the season and reaped the rewards.

'The young girls were struggling. We were saying to ourselves that we weren't hitting the heights we should be. Those young players must have been thinking, "We're trying our best here".'

'I think it took time to bond and to build that cohesion within the group. They are all brilliant girls. We're all as happy as Larry. When we go to training, we train hard. We would hit each other as if they were a Galway woman. We just drove each other on,' the Cork forward added.



Cork's Ava Fitzgerald and Amy O'Connor take a selfie with supporters. (Photo: Tom Maher/INPHO)

'We made a switch at half-time and moved Ashling (Thompson) to centre-forward, and that really paid dividends

for us. Millie (Condon) got herself out around the middle and Millie's a busy body (laughs). She gets around the ground so

quickly. 'So yeah, I'm just delighted that we, the whole team, got over the line today.'

'Probably didn't get the ball in there today as much as we would have liked, but we knew that we were a still threat inside if we needed to be.

'We never let up. Saoirse and Orlaith got two great goals.'

Cork's incessant work rate was another factor in returning the O'Duffy Cup back to Leeside.

'I suppose it (work rate) has to be there,' O'Connor stated. 'That's kind of the bread and butter of being an inside forward. Now, usually it's some people think of it as scoring goals, scoring points, but I suppose working hard off the ball is a massive part of it as well.'

'So, I saw Ryan O'Donoghue a couple of weeks ago for Mayo in the All-Ireland football final. The inside forward is not judged solely on goals and points now. They are judged on their ability to get back and work for the team as well.'



TALKING POINTS

SWEET REVENGE

Last year's All-Ireland final defeat would have been hard to take for Cork, especially given Carrie Dolan's last minute free to win the title for Galway, 1-14 to 1-13. This year, to win the O'Duffy Cup for the 31st time would be extra sweet given the margin of victory and to deny Galway their first ever back to back triumph. Cork have now met Galway in an All-Ireland final or semi-final in the last four years. The Rebels have won three of those big games. In a big rivalry such as this, that is a serious stat. Another reason why these are great times for Cork camogie.

SUPER SAOIRSE

Before Courcey Rovers' Saoirse McCarthy hit the back of the net, Cork were level at 0-11 apiece but that major gave the Rebels a lead that they held from there to the end. Cork's second top scorer in the championship with 1-16, McCarthy is the consistent performer that inspires the Rebels. It's well known that she is a key player for the Leesiders at this stage but it's amazing how the Ballinspittle woman steps up in the big moments. She was nominated for the camogie player of the year award for the last three seasons. Don't be shocked if she is shortlisted again after an incredible campaign.

GOALS WIN GAMES

It was the ultimate difference between the sides. Cork had 26 shot attempts compared to Galway's 31. The Rebels had 18 efforts from play compared to Galway's 24 but crucially Ger Manley's side had two goal chances and Galway had one. Cork converted both through Saoirse McCarthy and Orlaith Cahalane while the Connacht county's forward Mairead Dillon fired over the bar. In a game of tight margins and the fact that both sides conceded one goal between them coming into the decider, this was always going to be crucial. Galway had kept a clean sheet in every game leading up to last Sunday but Cork found a way for goals.

TIMING THEIR RUN

Back in April, Cork had just lost their fourth game in their first six of 2026 as Tipperary comfortably beat them 1-18 to 2-9 in the Munster championship. That followed a league campaign where they fell to Antrim, Waterford and Galway. With Katrina and Pamela Mackey, Laura Tracey, Hannah Looney and Aoife Healy no longer part of the panel, this looked to be a transitional phase for Ger Manley's troops. However, five consecutive victories over Galway (twice), Tipperary (twice) and Waterford have propelled them back to the top of the camogie ladder. Considering the absences and the amount of players getting their first chance with the seniors, this has been a remarkable recovery. Perhaps the most unlikely All-Ireland wins in Cork camogie's history.



Cork's Sorcha McCartan hit 0-4. (Photo: Tom Maher/INPHO)

YOUNG GUNS

For Millie Condon, Ava Fitzgerald and Isobel Sheehan, this was their first time starting in an All-Ireland senior final and they didn't look one bit out of place. All three players played the full 60 minutes too, showing the belief Ger Manley has in these players. Considering who these young players replaced in Hannah Looney, Aoife Healy and Laura Tracey, the step up they have made has been remarkable. Condon and Fitzgerald were part of the county's All-Ireland U23 win back in May too which gave them confidence and a winning feeling. Not a bad first season to start for your county and there is plenty more to come from this contingent.

BY MATTHEW HURLEY

Saoirse McCarthy shines brightest on All-Ireland final day

BY GER MCCARTHY

COURCEY Rovers' Saoirse McCarthy capped another stellar Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Camogie senior final display with a brilliant goal.

Forty minutes were on the Croke Park clock when McCarthy collected possession and engaged her afterburners en route to Galway's goal.

The Courcey Rovers star had only one thing on her mind and expertly placed the ball beyond goalkeeper Sarah Healy for the second of two crucial Cork goals.

'I was just happy Amy Lee finally sent one puck-out long to be honest (laughs)!' McCarthy told *The Southern Star*.

'She'll kill me for saying that, but look, the opportunity was there. I was lucky enough to get on the end of it and absolutely delighted to see it go in.'

'I decided to go for it. I'd say the girls probably didn't expect me to pass it because it is something I would normally go for anyway.'

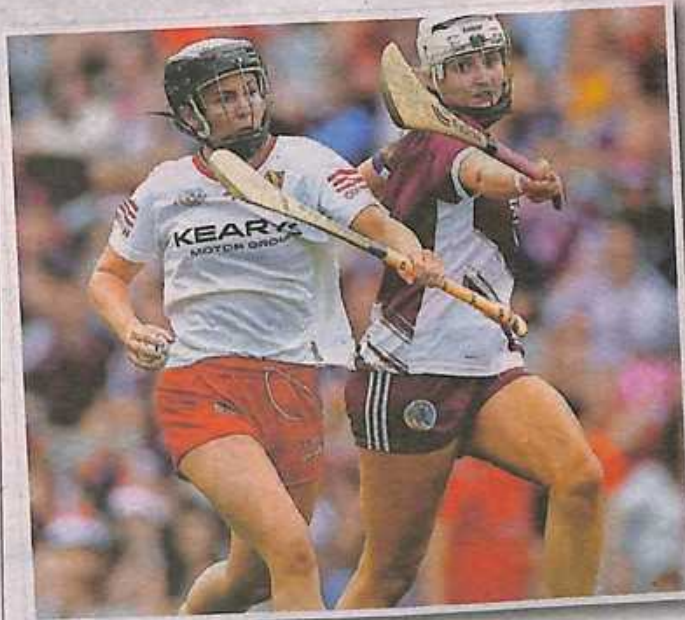
'Thank God it went in. We'd be talking about something else if it didn't! It was our second goal too, so it was really impor-

tant when it came.'

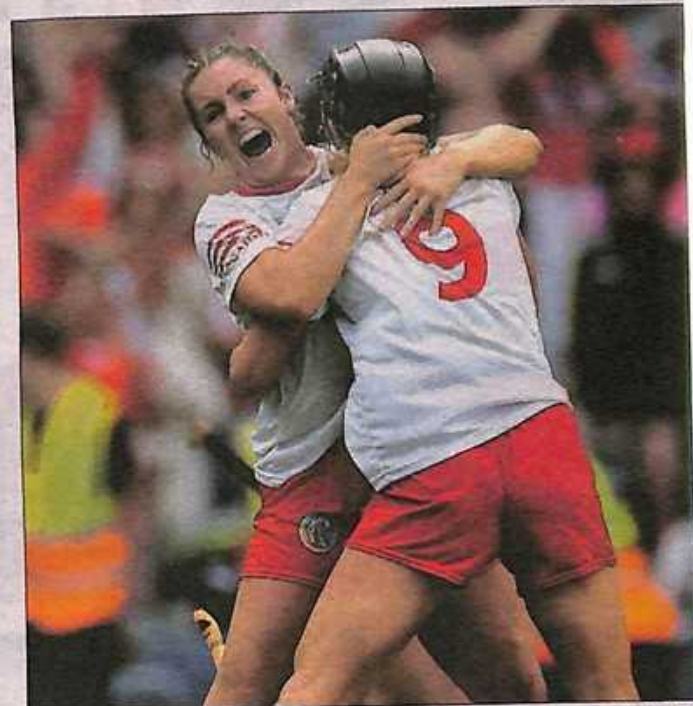
The relief on McCarthy and her fellow Cork squad members faces at the final whistle underlined the effort needed to overcome reigning champions, Galway.

'I'm just absolutely delighted for every single one of us,' McCarthy said. 'I suppose it was nerve-wracking there towards the end alright. I'm just delighted the final whistle went and we were on the right side of it.'

'There were 15 girls out on that pitch today ready to die.



Cork's Saoirse McCarthy on her way to scoring her side's first goal of the match. (Photo: James Crombie/INPHO)



Cork's Saoirse McCarthy and Laura Hayes celebrate their All-Ireland senior camogie win over Galway last Sunday. (Photo: James Crombie/INPHO)



Cork celebrate with the O'Duffy Cup. (Photo: Ben Brady/INPHO)

Look at the block that Izzy O'Regan made there right the end of the match. That would have been a Galway goal but she put her body on the line to stop it.

'That's Izzy's first All-Ireland final in Croke Park as a starter too.'

Turning their season around following disappointing National League and Munster campaigns, Saoirse McCarthy states that an injection of youth from the county's U23 squad proved a timely boost.

'I think the girls playing Cork U23 and winning was a massive boost for our senior panel during the year,' the Courcey Rovers player stated.

'There were a lot of girls who won the Ashbourne Cup as well back in February. That winning mentality, coming into the panel and as a group, I think it spread to some of the older players.'

'Look, the vibes have been really good. We've stuck at it and stayed believing.'

'There were definitely some dark nights there in January, February and March where you were looking around and saying, "God, I don't know if this is going to come together!"'

'Look, it did and that's testament to the management as well and bringing all that together.'

McCarthy didn't hesitate to answer when asked if Galway

brought the best out of Cork.

'Always, and I think we are the same in that I think we bring the best out of them,' the Cork forward admitted.

'You see the way they came back into it. And look, there's no love lost. They said it in a lot of interviews beforehand. I suppose they came out of the traps last year wanting to get us and this year was no different.'

'I think we knew what we were facing into today. The first half probably was a bit cagey, a bit flat to be honest. We knew at half-time that we hadn't played our best.'

'So, it was a big third quarter for us and we were just happy to get over the line. I don't care what the match was like (laughs).'

Finally, McCarthy believes playing numerous challenge matches during a seven-week block helped Cork prepare for a third final meeting in as many years with Galway.

'We played a lot of challenge matches,' McCarthy concluded. 'I think we played Clare, Limerick, Laois and we even played Newtownshandrum U16 boys at one stage!'

'It was where we gelled together, getting game time into the younger girls. It was a massive boost for us to get those games in during that big gap. Those (challenge) games were the making of us.'



TALKING POINTS

SWEET REVENGE

Last year's All-Ireland final defeat would have been hard to take for Cork, especially given Carrie Dolan's last minute free to win the title for Galway, 1-14 to 1-13. This year, to win the O'Duffy Cup for the 31st time would be extra sweet given the margin of victory and to deny Galway their first ever back to back triumph. Cork have now met Galway in an All-Ireland final or semi-final in the last four years. The Rebels have won three of those big games. In a big rivalry such as this, that is a serious stat. Another reason why these are great times for Cork camogie.

SUPER SAOIRSE

Before Courcsey Rovers' Saoirse McCarthy hit the back of the net, Cork were level at 0-11 apiece but that major gave the Rebels a lead that they held from there to the end. Cork's second top scorer in the championship with 1-16, McCarthy is the consistent performer that inspires the Rebels. It's well known that she is a key player for the Leesiders at this stage but it's amazing how the Ballinspittle woman steps up in the big moments. She was nominated for the camogie player of the year award for the last three seasons. Don't be shocked if she is shortlisted again after an incredible campaign.

GOALS WIN GAMES

It was the ultimate difference between the sides. Cork had 26 shot attempts compared to Galway's 31. The Rebels had 18 efforts from play compared to Galway's 24 but crucially Ger Manley's side had two goal chances and Galway had one. Cork converted both through Saoirse McCarthy and Orlaith Cahalane while the Connacht county's forward Mairead Dillon fired over the bar. In a game of tight margins and the fact that both sides conceded one goal between them coming into the decider, this was always going to be crucial. Galway had kept a clean sheet in every game leading up to last Sunday but Cork found a way for goals.

TIMING THEIR RUN

Back in April, Cork had just lost their fourth game in their first six of 2026 as Tipperary comfortably beat them 1-18 to 2-9 in the Munster championship. That followed a league campaign where they fell to Antrim, Waterford and Galway. With Katrina and Pamela Mackey, Laura Tracey, Hannah Looney and Aoife Healy no longer part of the panel, this looked to be a transitional phase for Ger Manley's troops. However, five consecutive victories over Galway (twice), Tipperary (twice) and Waterford have propelled them back to the top of the camogie ladder. Considering the absentees and the amount of players getting their first chance with the seniors, this has been a remarkable recovery. Perhaps the most unlikely All-Ireland wins in Cork camogie's history.



Cork's Sorcha McCartan hit 0-4. (Photo: Tom Maher/INPHO)

YOUNG GUNS

For Millie Condon, Ava Fitzgerald and Isobel Sheehan, this was their first time starting in an All-Ireland senior final and they didn't look one bit out of place. All three players played the full 60 minutes too, showing the belief Ger Manley has in these players. Considering who these young players replaced in Hannah Looney, Aoife Healy and Laura Tracey, the step up they have made has been remarkable. Condon and Fitzgerald were part of the county's All-Ireland U23 win back in May too which gave them confidence and a winning feeling. Not a bad first season to start for your county and there is plenty more to come from this contingent.

BY MATTHEW HURLEY

Saoirse McCarthy shines brightest on All-Ireland final day

BY GER MCCARTHY

COURCSEY Rovers' Saoirse McCarthy capped another stellar Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Camogie senior final display with a brilliant goal.

Forty minutes were on the Croke Park clock when McCarthy collected possession and engaged her afterburners en route to Galway's goal.

The Courcsey Rovers star had only one thing on her mind and expertly placed the ball beyond goalkeeper Sarah Healy for the second of two crucial Cork goals.

'I was just happy Amy Lee finally sent one puck-out long to be honest (laughs)!' McCarthy told *The Southern Star*.

'She'll kill me for saying that, but look, the opportunity was there. I was lucky enough to get on the end of it and absolutely delighted to see it go in.'

'I decided to go for it. I'd say the girls probably didn't expect me to pass it because it is something I would normally go for anyway.'

'Thank God it went in. We'd be talking about something else if it didn't! It was our second goal too, so it was really impor-



Cork celebrate with the O'Duffy Cup.

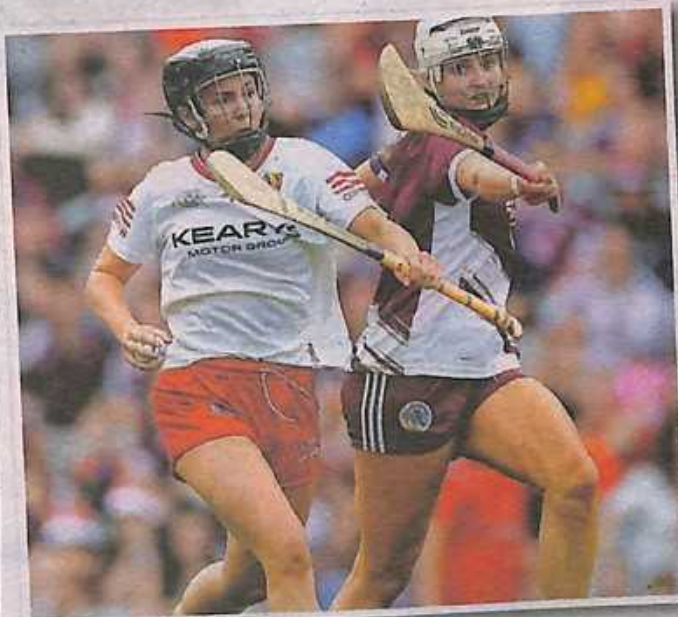
(Photo: Ben Brady/INPHO)

tant when it came.'

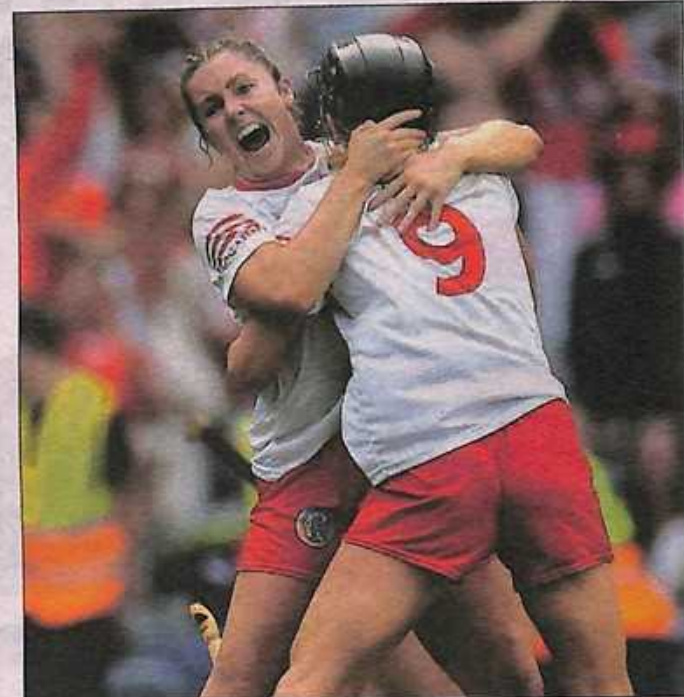
The relief on McCarthy and her fellow Cork squad members faces at the final whistle underlined the effort needed to overcome reigning champions, Galway.

'I'm just absolutely delighted for every single one of us,' McCarthy said. 'I suppose it was nerve-racking there towards the end alright. I'm just delighted the final whistle went and we were on the right side of it.'

'There were 15 girls out on that pitch today ready to die.'



Cork's Saoirse McCarthy on her way to scoring her side's first goal of the match. (Photo: James Crombie/INPHO)



Cork's Saoirse McCarthy and Laura Hayes celebrate their All-Ireland senior camogie win over Galway last Sunday.

(Photo: James Crombie/INPHO)

Look at the block that Izzy O'Regan made there right the end of the match. That would have been a Galway goal but she put her body on the line to stop it.

'That's Izzy's first All-Ireland final in Croke Park as a starter too.'

Turning their season around following disappointing National League and Munster campaigns, Saoirse McCarthy states that an injection of youth from the county's U23 squad proved a timely boost.

'I think the girls playing Cork U23 and winning was a massive boost for our senior panel during the year,' the Courcsey Rovers player stated.

'There were a lot of girls who won the Ashbourne Cup as well back in February. That winning mentality, coming into the panel and as a group, I think it spread to some of the older players.'

'Look, the vibes have been really good. We've stuck at it and stayed believing.'

'There were definitely some dark nights there in January, February and March where you were looking around and saying, "God, I don't know if this is going to come together!"'

'Look, it did and that's testament to the management as well and bringing all that together.'

McCarthy didn't hesitate to answer when asked if Galway

brought the best out of Cork.

'Always, and I think we are the same in that I think we bring the best out of them,' the Cork forward admitted.

'You see the way they came back into it. And look, there's no love lost. They said it in a lot of interviews beforehand. I suppose they came out of the traps last year wanting to get us and this year was no different.'

'I think we knew what we were facing into today. The first half probably was a bit cagey, a bit flat to be honest. We knew at half-time that we hadn't played our best.'

'So, it was a big third quarter for us and we were just happy to get over the line. I don't care what the match was like (laughs).'

Finally, McCarthy believes playing numerous challenge matches during a seven-week block helped Cork prepare for a third final meeting in as many years with Galway.

'We played a lot of challenge matches,' McCarthy concluded. 'I think we played Clare, Limerick, Laois and we even played Newtownshandrum U16 boys at one stage!'

'It was where we gelled together, getting game time into the younger girls. It was a massive boost for us to get those games in during that big gap. Those (challenge) games were the making of us.'



Cork's Laura Hayes and Saoirse McCarthy celebrate winning the camogie All-Ireland final. Picture: Tom Maher/Inpho

Half-time reality check is what sparked the second-half Cork surge

Laura Hayes was drinking it all in after Cork's victory over Galway in Sunday's All-Ireland camogie final. What a difference a year makes.

"I get emotional thinking about it because, of course there were doubts this year," said the former player of the year.

"Like, I'm telling you now, we were in the trenches at the start of the year, and for a team that's so used to getting to finals, I've never been so excited and grateful for the build-up, and I just wanted to go out there and have this team let the shackles off.

"And I don't think we did in the first half. And we were sitting in the dressing room at half-time, and like we were not even out of breath, and we were like, 'What are we fucking doing?'"

"Right? And we just came out in the second half, and that was a Cork performance."

It was Hayes's brilliant point in the 33rd minute that drew them level, after defending champions Galway turned with a 0-9 to 0-7 advantage.

"They brought it last year, and we probably weren't ready for it, and we said we're not going to get caught like that this year again, and we were so up for this game."

"We just spoke about this year. And Gemma O'Connor said to us in the first round [of the group stages] against Galway [which Cork won], she said, 'People are questioning our identity. Is the Cork camogie empire falling?'"

"We built our own empire." Manager Ger Manley said Cork went after goals in Sunday's All-Ireland senior camogie championship final. Galway hadn't conceded

CAMOGIE

■ Therese O'Callaghan

any green flags in their three Group 1 championships outings against Cork, Waterford, and Tipperary, and had also kept a clean sheet against Kilkenny in the semi-final.

The winners hit two, both in the second half of a gripping showdown in Croke Park.

"We did target goals," the victorious manager acknowledged.

"We've only conceded one goal in the championship. It was against Galway [group] and it was late."

"We probably should have got four goals, it was above in Athenry, we were exceptionally good that day."

"We got a couple against Tipp. We target goals all the time. Turnovers and targeting breaks."

"We were disappointed in the first half, we didn't get the ball into our full-forward line."

"We have an exceptionally good full forward line. [Sorch] McCartan is not far off player of the year, she's been so good."

"Amy O'Connor is lethal. Orlaith Cahalane, we call her Messi, she has time on the ball constantly."

"You saw the goal she got - did she panic? No, sauntered in and flashed it into the corner."

"Saoirse McCarthy [for the first goal] caught a great ball in front of me and she just went, like the Red Sea they separated, and she went straight. Nobody touched her. I couldn't believe it for a Galway team to let her through."

"We felt there were goals against their full back line."



Cork's Sorch McCartan with the Glen Dimplex Player-of-the-Match Award for the All-Ireland final. Picture: INPHO/Tom Maher

Hung on. Held on. Not quite in haunted territory, to borrow from their own Cork vernacular, but not far off such a conclusion either.

CAMOGIE

■ Eoghan Cormican

The empire struck back and then the empire just about stayed upright.

The endgame was a scene of maroon momentum. Having eventually abandoned their defensive set, Galway pushed all chips forward on the table.

No more containment and counter. The necessity for green dictated such. It was either embrace risk or accept regret.

Saoirse McCarthy's 57th minute white flag for a six-point Cork advantage was their last of this bitty-to-brilliantly-dramatic decider.

It was they who assumed the maroon role of previous finals of running out of flags as the clock ran down.

In the 10 minutes of chaotic theatre that unfolded after McCarthy's point, Cork managed one shot at Sarah Healy's posts.

That again came from the stick of the Courcy Rovers centre-forward well into the five allotted injury-time minutes.

Galway outshot the red corner eight to one in them 10 final minutes. Five unanswered points.

One of those a Mairéad Dillon goal opportunity bulldozed over. The remaining three were wide. All were eminently gettable. None came from standing atop sideline paint.

Neither should we forget that Cork's last score emanated from a Carrie Dolan free sent short to Caoimhe Kelly.

A rare moment of poor decision-making from the nobody-spared Galway captain.

All of the above is to present in black and white the reality that Cork, from a position of six up and their opponents' conductor crying injured in the stand, didn't go and win this with traditional red swagger and silk. Not even close.

On this occasion, the how was so irrelevant for Cork. Get back to the summit, climb over whoever you have to.

The total disregard for how had a multitude of fathers.

The winter-long sting of being caught physically off-guard in the 2025 final.

The departure of Laura Treacy, the Mackey twins, Hannah Looney, Aoife Healy, and Cliona Healy. The injury to Ashling Thompson and the uncertainty when she'd be back. If she'd be back.

The horrendous league form. The newbies receiving an opening-day education below in Walsh Park. Losing at home to Antrim.

Requiring results elsewhere to avoid relegation. The absolute no-show against Tipp in the Munster quarter-final.

The questioning of their identity. The questioning of their ability. The curiosity if the many voids were too sizable to fill.

The chatter of a fallow period for Cork camogie. A fallow period for the county that had contested the last five All-Ireland finals. The cheek of those to even contemplate such.

A seven-week gap followed their early elimination from the provincial championship. Seven weeks that ultimately reshaped their season.

"We played Limerick, in Doneraile, in a challenge match a couple of weeks out from the first Galway game and we played some hurling. It doesn't matter to me the opposition, it's how you play and your attitude," said Ger Manley, before Cork's breakout final performer Millie Condon picked up on the mid-season rewrite.

"The seven-week training block we put in did so much for us," she said.

"I didn't even see the progress myself as it was happening. It was only when we came out against Galway in that first championship match that we realised how much we actually had come on. We were so much closer."

The red empire was reblocked and relaunched on June 6 in the backyard of the champions. The red empire kept adding fresh and higher floors all the way to the 54th minute of Sunday's final when the fist-pumping and free-wheeling Sorch McCartan fired over her fourth to complete a 15-minute spell of Cork outgunning Galway by 2-2 to 0-2.

The eight minutes after half-time they won 0-4 to 0-1.

"I remember when we lost against Antrim in the League. It was a fairly low point, but after the match they came in and they said that our empire has not fallen and it's only going to be a matter of time until we prove people wrong, which we've done," Condon continued.

Cork's first-half won them no All-Ireland. It just made sure not to allow their opponents too far up the road.

Manley's charges didn't score from play until the 18th minute. Only two points from play - and from the same player - by half-time.

Their third quarter, same as two years ago, was deafening. Orlaith Cahalane

who, acting on sideline instruction, had operated too far out in the opening half, pushed in closer to the bullseye.

The link-up telepathy between herself and Barrs clubmate McCartan was poetry.

The latter, we were told, hurled with a broken finger. Further impressiveness onto the Down native's final takeover.

A third gripping Cork-Galway decider. A record crowd of 33,419. The biggest losing total since Cork's 5-6 in 1955 was insufficient.

Cathal Murray sought out Gavin Donegal at full-time. He wanted to thank the ref. Here was his reasoning.

"That's the way we want to see camogie being played. It was a brilliant, brilliant advertisement. The physicality, the strength and conditioning, the level it's gone to is brilliant to see."

"It had to be an unbelievable game because it looked an unbelievable game for me on the sideline. There's plenty of tackles let go and plenty of physicality let go. Listen, that's what we're crying out for."

But after an endless stream of Cork-Kilkenny finals in the middle of the last decade that were ruined by whistle-obsessed referees, have we now lurched too far towards the other extreme?

The spectacle shouldn't come before basic policing. The spectacle shouldn't come before safety.

Five yellow cards were shown. It is a wonder how that number wasn't higher. The cynicism so evident in the closing stages now also requires accommodation in the rulebook.

What Murray also wants is a proper holiday fund for the two All-Ireland finalists. President Brian Molloy wants integration.

Manley's ask was the simplest of the lot. "They don't get the recognition," he said.

"That's three fabulous finals with Galway. And I'm not knocking the hurling. These games, I know we're not as fit, as strong - but you have to say, the camogie is after improving buckets the last four or five years."

"And it is levelling out. It's grand to say Cork and Galway are there all the time, but it's up to the other counties to catch up."

New faces are always welcome, but if we're back here in 12 months' time marveling at another bruising, abrasive, and captivating Cork-Galway concluding Sunday, won't we be only delighted at a fourth instalment.



Galway manager Cathal Murray shakes hands with Cork manager Ger Manley after the match. Picture: Ben Brady/Inpho



Cork All-Ireland camogie winning players Saoirse McCarthy and Laura Hayes in full voice at the homecoming in Cork. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

A moment to savour for a team that was written off by many

Where do we begin?

What more can we say about Cork's win over Galway in the All-Ireland camogie final that hasn't been written or said this week? But, that was some performance from a Cork side that were written off by so many at the start and midway through the year. What a moment to savour as 'The Banks' rang out loudly in Croke Park on Sunday last. There have been so many disappointing days over the last 12 months as our county hurling, football and ladies football sides lost out, but on Sunday last, the county of Cork finally enjoyed their day in the sun. As the league and provincial competitions progressed the word was that Cork would not be in the shake-up come championship time. Too many players were gone, retirements, injury, and players moving abroad looked to have hit hard, and it was time to rebuild and this would take time. Ger Manley, a teak tough player in his day, wasn't going to step away from the challenge and he set about his task. He got his back room team together and assembled his new-look panel. Meanwhile, Jerry Wallace and his U23's were working away preparing for their championship campaign, and with this competition being held early in the season it gave Ger time to run his eyes over the players and over the weeks he brought them in and out to his training sessions and this helped them find their feet at a higher level. This was to prove vital as they got to know the more established players and to their credit these girls guided them along and helped them get a taste of

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

what was required to reach the next level.

With the U23's winning a superb All-Ireland title it was time to get down to senior business and with his panel full assembled, Manley and his back room team got to work.

The league was not a good one, but Cork survived on the final day thanks to a Kilkenny win, and whilst losing out in Munster was seen by many as a disaster, it didn't worry the Cork management too much as they had seven weeks to get it right and they set about their task of getting ready for the All-Ireland series.

They played challenge matches against other counties and gradually it began to come together. The huge work that went in in those weeks as they prepared for the big challenge of taking on Galway on their home turf showed when they confidently travelled and got their championship campaign off to a brilliant start as they shocked the champions, and it must be said that minus established players through injury on the day Cork turned in a brilliant performance. Suddenly, people were talking about Cork again only now it was, 'how did that happen?' It happened because Ger Manley and his backroom team instilled a belief in their players and they responded to it.

The work they put in and got on with their preparations. The spirit this team showed to reach the heights on Sunday last cannot be underestimated. To lose 14 players off a panel from the year before, including five starters, and to go on to be crowned All-Ireland champions is an unbelievable achievement and one that must be applauded.

The supporters were part of the journey as well and the backing shown to the team all year was incredible they really got behind this team and it helped. Páirc Uí Rinn was thronged as Cork took on Waterford in the last of the group stage games. Thurlus was a sea of red and white as the Cork supporters outnumbered the home side for the semi-final and the chants of Rebels could be heard loudly all over Semple Stadium and again in Croke Park.

The icing on the cake was on Monday night last when over five thousand people gathered on the Grand Parade and gave a Rebel Welcome to our champions.



Cork's Ashling Thompson at the homecoming in Cork. Picture: Eddie O'Hare



Cork's Laura Hayes is tackled by Galway's Niamh Niland and Niamh Mallon during the Glenlex All-Ireland camogie final last Sunday. Picture: INPHO/James Crombie

From league lows to All-Ireland glory

There are All-Ireland triumphs that are easier won than others arrive and there are those that are earned the hard way.

For Cork camogie, this was very much the latter.

When the Rebels went through a disappointing league campaign earlier this year, few could have predicted that by August they would be climbing the Hogan Stand to bring the O'Duffy Cup back to Leeside after a dramatic 2-14 to 0-19 victory over Galway in the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior camogie final.

Yet that is exactly what happened.

It was a season that tested belief, resilience and character in equal measure. There were difficult afternoons, frustrating performances and searching questions. But rather than fracture, Cork grew stronger.

Lessons were learned, players developed and Ger Manley and his management found solutions as they never lost faith in their players.

And when it mattered most, Cork produced their finest displays of the year.

A key turning point came during the championship when management reshuffled the spine of the team. The switch of Méabh Murphy to centre-back and Laura Hayes to midfield proved to be key moves as it brought energy, drive and physicality to the heart of the side.

Murphy became the defensive anchor around which Cork's backline thrived. Hayes, meanwhile, flourished in her new role, helping Cork compete in the crucial middle-third battles that so often decide championship contests.

As summer progressed, confidence returned, helped by an U23 All-Ireland title, which brought a new energy to the senior panel with a number of them involved in that success.

The team that had struggled to find con-

CAMOGIE



Rory Noonan

sistency in the spring suddenly looked capable of challenging anybody.

The ultimate examination awaited against Galway in Croke Park. Cork had beaten them in the first group game of the All-Ireland series, but they knew that wouldn't count for much in the final itself.

Predictably, there was little between the sides. Galway pushed Cork all the way in a pulsating contest that remained in the balance until the closing moments.

Trailing by a point at the break, Cork produced a decisive second-half surge, powered by two goals that ultimately swung the contest in their favour.

First came Saoirse McCarthy's, a score that injected belief and momentum into the Rebels. Then Orlaith Cahalane struck for Cork's second goal, another vital contribution that gave Galway an even steeper mountain to climb.

Those green flags proved the difference as Cork edged home on a 2-14 to 0-19 scoreline, surviving a fierce Galway finish to finally get their hands on the title.

For Laura, the victory was especially sweet after the heartbreak of falling short 12 months earlier.

"Obviously, very special day on Sunday," she said during the team's homecoming celebrations.

"It's unbelievable. I think just obviously we didn't get over the line last year, but you'd be all the more grateful today. And just the way that people turned out in their numbers to support Cork camogie, it's incredible."

In many ways, the final was a fitting reflection of Cork's entire season. Nothing came easy.

"We knew it was going to be tight with Galway," Laura said.

"We like to keep it exciting, you know, and leave it go down to the wire. As Sean (Crowley, coach) said there, there is resilience in this team and it's something we spoke about so much in the two weeks leading up to the match and that's what was getting us over the line on Sunday."

"It was just unbelievable and we knew if we could just hold out, not concede the goal, we'd get over the line and we did that."

That resilience became the defining characteristic of Cork's campaign.

Rather than allowing a poor start to dictate the season, they responded. Players adapted to new roles. Injuries were overcome. Confidence was rebuilt, one challenge after another was met head-on.

Laura believes that journey makes this title special.

"I know every year has a reason for its purpose, but I just think this year we have come through so much," she said.

"Individually as players we've grown up. People have overcome things mentally, physically, injuries and just turn it around and actually get over the line to win an All-Ireland is incredible."

There will be time now for reflection and celebration. Laura joked as they savour their success.

After all, this was a team that endured the setbacks, absorbed the criticism and refused to abandon belief. A team reshaped by key positional switches, carried by unwavering resilience and inspired by crucial goals when the championship was on the line.

A team that turned one of the most difficult starts imaginable into the sweetest of endings.

The league disappointment feels a long way away now.



Meabh Murphy's move to centre-back played a huge part in Cork's All-Ireland win. Picture: INPHO/Laszlo Geczo



Saoirse McCarthy celebrates after scoring Cork's first goal in the All-Ireland final. Picture: INPHO/Ran Bradu

Meabh 'proud' of team as they are welcomed home



Cork All-Ireland winning camogie captain Meabh Cahalane raises the O'Duffy Cup at the home coming at the Grand Parade.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

The scenes on Grand Parade last night captured what this All-Ireland camogie title meant to Cork players and fans.

Just 12 months after enduring the agony of defeat to Galway, captain Meabh Cahalane stood before a sea of red and white, the O'Duffy Cup in her hands, as she and her teammates celebrated with more than 4,000 supporters who had come to welcome them home.

The St Finbarr's defender admitted the contrast with last year's journey home from Croke Park could not have been more stark.

"It's just the difference between winning and losing," Meabh said.

"After coming down from Dublin last year, it was a long road home and facing into, I suppose, a long winter. To have the chance to get back there, we just didn't take it for granted. We knew it was going to take everything and more to get over Galway.

"Those two goals really stood to us. I

CAMOGIE

■ RORY NOONAN

think they were the difference, and we just felt that if we didn't concede a goal coming down the home stretch that it would put us in a good position.

"I think we had everyone on the edge of their seats and giving people heart attacks, but that's just the nature of the game. When it is Cork and Galway, it always goes down to the wire, and we're just happy to come out on the right side of it."

The win sparked emotional scenes at Croke Park on Sunday, and those celebrations continued last night as thousands packed the city centre to salute Cork's latest All-Ireland winners.

For Meabh, the support the team has received throughout the championship has been one of the most rewarding aspects of the journey.

"All year, I feel like since the championship started, the crowds have grown.

"Even the last day above in Thurles after we beat Tipp in the semi-final, the crowds that came on to the pitch afterwards, I couldn't believe it. I'd never seen that in a semi-final before.

"On Sunday, you could hear them just get behind us when we went ahead, and we really needed that.

"To see them and so many young girls and boys out in their red and white, it's just so special to see. There are so many role models in the group, and if they can inspire any of these girls or boys to pick up a hurley and start playing, they've done their job."

Cork's championship campaign was far from straightforward. Following early-season setbacks, many outside the panel questioned whether they could challenge for the All-Ireland. Cahalane believes the management team deserves enormous credit for ensuring belief never wavered within the camp.

"I think management have to take huge credit for that.

"There were times during the year when we didn't believe in ourselves, and they did. They still felt that we had

the best collective team and collective panel in the country.

"Ger Manley, (manager) in fairness to him, always instilled confidence in us every time we put on a Cork jersey. He backed us.

"Above in Galway before the first championship game, Gemma (O'Connor, selector) spoke to us before we went out of the dressing room, and I think it just hit us.

"After that, we just didn't look back. We felt that we had put ourselves in a good position to maybe go the direct route and qualify straight for a semi-final, and once you're there, all you want to do is get back to the final.

"We're just so lucky to have this opportunity. We took it with both hands, and we just wanted to put in a performance worthy of getting a result.

"I'm so proud of each and every one of those girls. I know how hard we trained this year.

"It was something I've never seen before. Huge credit to them.

"We will enjoy this celebration for a few days now," she concluded.

SPORTSTAR OF THE WEEK

**ELLEN WALSH,
SORCHA MCCARTAN
& AARON MCKENNA**



Player of the match Sorcha McCartan scored four points and set up a goal to fire Cork to a revenge win over Galway in the All-Ireland camogie final on Sunday. Hours earlier in Dublin, there was world title success for Aaron McKenna with his unanimous victory over Etinosa Oliha to seal the IBF middleweight belt. On Wednesday, Ellen Walshe was crowned the new European 400m individual medley champion after delivering an Irish record of 4:34.42 in Paris.

