



Vol 13. Issue 6  
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# INTO THE WEST

*Bi-monthly magazine of the Connacht GAA Council*

## St Brigid's back on top!



**Ballinamore are heading to Croke Park!**

Page 60



**Farewell to the Hayshed**

Page 20



Connacht GAA Council  
wishes all Gaels a  
Happy Christmas and  
a prosperous New Year



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE  
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY CONNACHT GAA AIR DOME

**OFFICIAL GAA PUBLICATION**

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# Nóta an Uachtaráin

Dear friends,

AS we approach the festive season, it's the perfect time to reflect upon our recent provincial championships. While St Brigid's from Roscommon are a traditionally strong club, Corofin would be considered seasoned campaigners and yet St Brigid's came through to win our Senior Football title. They were worthy winners, too, while on the Intermediate side, Castlerea St Kevin's won a good Final against Monivea-Abbey, and Lahardane MacHales claimed the Junior title in what was a very good match against Owenmore Gaels.

It was interesting to note across the competitions that you had some very entertaining matches in the Junior and Intermediate grades, with a more cautious approach at Senior level, which doesn't lend itself to spectator-friendly games. Perhaps one to ponder over the fire at Christmas time.

In the Connacht Intermediate Hurling Final, Tooreen won another title, for the third year in a row, and it's their fourth title successive title when you consider that they also won in 2019, prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. They beat Ballinderreen in a very good game, while Easkey won back-to-back Junior titles and after reaching Croke Park this year, they're on the march again. That's a very decent spread of winners across the province and while Galway clubs missed out on the men's front, we have Kilkerrin-Clonberne preparing for an All-Ireland Ladies Senior Football Final, while Sarsfields will compete in the Camogie decider. Best wishes to both of them, while we have Ballinamore Sean O'Heslins and Claremorris ready for their All-Ireland Intermediate and Junior Club Football Finals, while Athleague will represent Roscommon and the province in the Junior camogie final. Best wishes to all teams competing and to our men's teams who will fly the flag in the AIB All-Ireland series in the New Year.

The Connacht Intermediate Football Final was the last game played in front of the iconic hayshed stand at Tuam Stadium. Dressing rooms were redeveloped there a couple of years ago and now it's time for the stand to go, which was well past its sell-by date, old and dilapidated. A donation of €350,000 from the late Joe and Helen O'Toole of O'Toole's, Tuam, who committed to supporting refurbishment works in 2018 is available to aid this project and the GAA can very grateful for that. The Association in general is now approaching a situation where stadia, such as Tuam, across the country, along with Centres of Excellence built ten or twelve years ago, now need to be sustained and that's a challenge. Venues in continuous use run down quicker than county grounds and that's something the GAA needs to be extremely careful about and any work into the future needs to be sustainable, I would stress.

Before I finish, I would like to wish readers a very Happy Christmas, while also expressing Connacht Council's pride in our success in the Inspirational Sustainable Energy Community Category at the recent SEAI awards. It's a good positive that we are doing a lot right and we have plenty more to look forward to in 2024.

**John Murphy**  
Uachtarán Chomhairle Connacht



**JOHN MURPHY**  
Connacht GAA President

# Nóta an Rúnaí

A chairde,

**SUSTAINABILITY** is the name of the game and, as noted by my colleague John Prenty in his notes, we were thrilled to be honoured at the Mansion House at the 20th Annual SEAI awards recently.

Connacht GAA won in the Inspirational Sustainable Energy Community Category and to pick up on John's notes, this award is something we should rightly shout from the rooftops about. The benefits of our ability to export solar energy from the Connacht Centre of Excellence and contribute to the solar grid are multi-fold. Solar power, as we're informed, is a renewable and infinite energy source that creates no harmful greenhouse gas emissions and in an era where climate change is a hot topic, we're delighted to play our part in some small way.

On the playing fields, congratulations to our various clubs from across Connacht who were recently crowned as provincial champions. On this page, John has referred to them in some more and at this risk of entirely mirroring what he's referred to, from a purely nostalgic point of view, we say goodbye to the Tuam Stadium hayshed stand and usher in a new era. It was time for change at Tuam Stadium and they're going about it the right way on a piecemeal basis with incremental improvements in time. Of course, and John has also alluded to this, the superb generosity of a benefactor in the stand renovations is a big help.

Writing in the last issue, I spoke about the sense of pride and sheer excitement that greets the crowning of county champions across the province. Now, these teams that have moved on and won Connacht titles have more silverware in the bank, and opportunity knocks in the New Year. They can sit back now and take a well-earned break, although I'm sure there will be training sessions planned during the festive season, and the turkey and ham portions may be smaller than usual. In the meantime, we may have Ladies Football and Camogie silverware secured before we chat again in the New Year, with Connacht counties involved in all three All-Ireland Ladies Club Football Finals, while there is also Connacht representation in the All-Ireland Junior and Senior Camogie Finals. All of the Ladies Football and Camogie action, barring replays, will be concluded over the weekend of December 16/17.

Recent weeks have also seen the publication of various convention reports from across the province and beyond. Spending seems to be a big talking point once again and the price of success, or otherwise, is something that we may look into in the New Year. Needless to say, it's vital that counties live within their means and we are acutely aware of that as a provincial body.

As the page turns on 2023, and all that came with it, we look ahead to 2024 with a renewed sense of hope and optimism. All clubs and counties will start the New Year on the proverbial 'blank page' and there's fresh history to be written. Who will write that history remains to be seen but needless to say, no stone will go unturned in the quest for success. Recent financial reports in our counties have revealed how much it can take to prepare inter-county teams but the investment needs to be smart and not just expenditure for the sake of it.

Best wishes to all of you over this coming festive season and wishing you a happy and healthy 2024.

Is mise, le meas

**John Prenty**  
Rúnaí, CLG Cuige Connachta



## 'Into the West'



**Keep yourself in the loop. Sign up today for your free electronic copy of the magazine - emailed directly to your inbox. To sign up, email [magazine@connachtgaa.ie](mailto:magazine@connachtgaa.ie)**

'Into the West' is produced by the Connacht GAA Council.  
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• Deadline for advertising and copy will be announced on the Connacht Council website - [www.connachtgaa.ie](http://www.connachtgaa.ie).

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Ava Lambert and Lisa Scahill receive the Rose Nixon Cup following Westport's victory.



Ryan Cup glory for University of Galway

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**ST BRIGID'S BACK ON TOP**

3 December 2023: St Brigid's players, from left, Brian Stack, Seán Trundle and Pearse Frost celebrate after their side's victory in the AIB Connacht GAA Football Senior Club Championship final between St Brigid's, Roscommon, and Corofin, Galway, at Dr Hyde Park in Roscommon. Photo by Piaras Ó Midheach/Sportsfile

**BALLINAMORE ARE HEADING TO CROKE PARK!**

2 December 2023: Abbi Sweeney of Ballinamore Sean O'Heslins reacts at the final whistle after the Currentaccount.ie All-Ireland Ladies Intermediate Club Championship semi-final match between Ballinamore Sean O'Heslins of Leitrim and Steelstown Brian Ógs of Derry at Páirc Sheáin Uí Eislín, Ballinamore, Leitrim.

Photo by Ben McShane/Sportsfile

**FAREWELL TO THE HAYSHED**

22 November 2015: A general view of Tuam Stadium. AIB Connacht GAA Senior Club Football Championship Final, Corofin v Castlebar Mitchels. Tuam Stadium, Tuam, Co. Galway. Photo by Piaras Ó Midheach / SPORTSFILE



3 December 2023: St Brigid's celebrate after victory in the AIB Connacht GAA Football Senior Club Championship final between St Brigid's, Roscommon, and Corofin, Galway, at Dr Hyde Park in Roscommon.

Photo by Piaras Ó Midheach/Sportsfile



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE  
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# FIBD

## **FBD INSURANCE CONNACHT GAA SENIOR FOOTBALL COMPETITION 2024**

All games in University of Galway Connacht GAA Air Dome

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**QUARTER-FINAL 1** - Friday, 5th January, 2024

**MAYO v LONDON**

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**QUARTER-FINAL 2** - Sunday, 5th January, 2024

**SLIGO v ROSCOMMON**

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**SEMI-FINAL 1** - Friday, 12th January, 2024

**GALWAY v LEITRIM**

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**SEMI-FINAL 2** - Saturday, 13th January, 2024

**SLIGO/ROSCOMMON v MAYO/LONDON**

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**FINAL** - Friday, 19th January, 2024

**Winner Semi-Final 1 v Winner Semi-Final 2**

## **CONNACHT HURLING LEAGUE**

All games in University of Galway Connacht GAA Air Dome

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**PRE LIM:** Monday, 1st January, 2024

3pm: **NEW YORK v LEITRIM**

5pm: **ROSCOMMON v SLIGO**

7pm: **MAYO v LONGFORD**

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**SEMI-FINALS:** Wednesday, 3rd January, 2024

5pm: **MAYO/LONGFORD v SLIGO/ROSCOMMON**

7pm: **NEW YORK/LEITRIM v GALWAY DEVELOPMENT**

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**FINAL:** Saturday, 6th January, 2024

5pm: **SHIELD FINAL**

7pm: **CUP FINAL**

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**EXTRA TIME AND FINISH ON THE DAY, IN ALL GAMES**

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# Sustainable Energy award for Connacht GAA

CONNACHT GAA were delighted at the Mansion House to be named the winners in the Inspirational Sustainable Energy Community Category at the 20th Annual SEAI Awards.

The Connacht GAA Sustainable Energy Community (SEC) joined the Network in 2019. It started out as an initiative aimed at understanding our bills and educating staff on daily energy efficiency behaviours which then evolved into developing our their Energy Master Plan which has a 10-year

vision for the Centre.

As the world's largest Airdome (The University of Galway Connacht GAA Air Dome), powered by solar energy, this project is a showcase to our over 150,000 annual visitors. The University of Galway Connacht GAA Airdome is now exporting solar energy with the first category B export licence to go live in Ireland. The centre and its programmes have led to us being an intrinsic part of the newly Launched GAA Green Club

programme. Connacht GAA SEC supports the programme with messaging, awareness and education to the 2000+ clubs and members. The initial roadmap has brought us on a journey of change, from installing successful projects, through to culture change and community leadership beyond Connacht.

We would like to thank all our sponsors and partners in helping us to this fantastic award, your help and support as always is greatly appreciated.





# Ryan Cup glory for University

## RYAN CUP FINAL:

**University of Galway ....0-15**  
**Ulster University .....0-9**

ONE of the coldest nights of the season greeted football followers to the GAA Centre in Abbottstown as old rivals UG and UU met once in the Ryan Cup final with UG emerging successful in bridging a 44-year gap since the 1979 success that was followed up the 1980 Sigerson/Fitzgibbon double for the college.

In recent seasons they met at the same stage and on that occasion, the Ulster kingpins were in the winner's enclosure. As is the norm unlike years previous both colleges were missing key players who will be featuring for their counties in the 2024 league and championship. However, those from both colleges who had worked hard to get their sides to this stage had the ideal opportunity to stake a place for Sigerson Cup action in mid-January. In the semi-finals, University of

Galway had too much for St Mary's Belfast whilst Ulster University edged past UL by the minimum to set up this eagerly awaited decider.

Wides were not in plentiful supply in Abbottstown as controlled play and indeed good accuracy once both sides got into the groove did ensure that a low-scoring first half did evolve into a positive second half albeit dominated in the main by the Western College. Clare man Mark McInerney opened the scoring for the Galway lads after seven minutes before the hardworking Danny Fullerton equalised for UU after 11 minutes.

Ryan O'Donoghue edged UG in front after 17 minutes, only for Rory Canavan to level moments later. Maigh Cuilinn midfielder James McLaughlin, who played an influential role in the second half, then replaced the injured Diarmuid Kilcommins and a defence-dominated opening half ended with Danny Fullerton adding two scores for UU before Cian Monaghan had the final score of the first half, leaving Ulster University ahead at half-time 0-4 to 0-3.

Two minutes into the second half Ryan Monaghan levelled the game and with Evan Lyons and Canice Mulligan dominating in the central defensive positions, UG began to take control. Ryan O'Donoghue, James McLaughlin and Tommy Conroy all landed superb points to put UG three ahead and even though Danny Fullerton pulled one back for UU, Ryan O'Donoghue kicked two more in the space of three minutes to leave UG 0-9 to 0-5 ahead by the end of the third quarter. A superb score from UU center-back Ryan McGill gave hope to Paul Rouse's men and Danny Fullerton did narrow the gap to two points soon after, but it was all University of Galway in the closing stages as the hardworking Liam O'Conghaile and McLaughlin once more were on target to leave UG 0-12 to 0-8 clear entering the final eight minutes.

Cian Monaghan and Rory Canavan traded points and the final two scores of the game went to UG substitutes Daniel O'Flaherty and Cillian O'Curraoin to seal a deserved six-point win. Best for the winners included Conor Corcoran, James



# of Galway

McLaughlin, Canice Mulligan, Rory Egan, Paul Kelly, Liam O’Conghaile, Ryan O’Donoghue, and the Monaghan brothers. Ulster University have players such as Conor Glass, Ethan Doherty and Darragh Canavan to bring back to the panel so it will be a far stronger side that they will bring to championship fare. Following the game chairperson of third-level GAA Michael Hyland, a native of Salthill, presented the Ryan Cup to University of Galway captain Cathal Sweeney.

**SCORERS - University of Galway:** Ryan O’ Donoghue (0-4), James McLaughlin (0-3), Cian Monaghan (0-2), Liam O’ Conghaile, Ryan Monaghan, Tommy Conroy, Dan O’ Flaherty, Cillian O’ Curraoin, Mark McInerney (0-1) each.

**Ulster University:** Danny Fullerton (0-6), Rory Canavan (0-2), Ryan McGill (0-1).

**UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY:** Liam Brady, (Ramor United, Cavan), Conor Dunleavy, (Balla, Mayo), Evan Lyons, (Shamrock Gaels, Sligo), Colin Murray, (Mountbellew/Moylough), Rory Egan, (Edenderry, Offaly), Canice Mulligan, (St. Patrick’s, Sligo), Cian Monaghan (Oughterard), Diarmuid Kilcommons (Annaghdown), Paul Kelly (Maigh Muilinn), Liam Ó Conghaile (An Spidéal), Tommy Conroy (The Neale, Mayo), Ryan



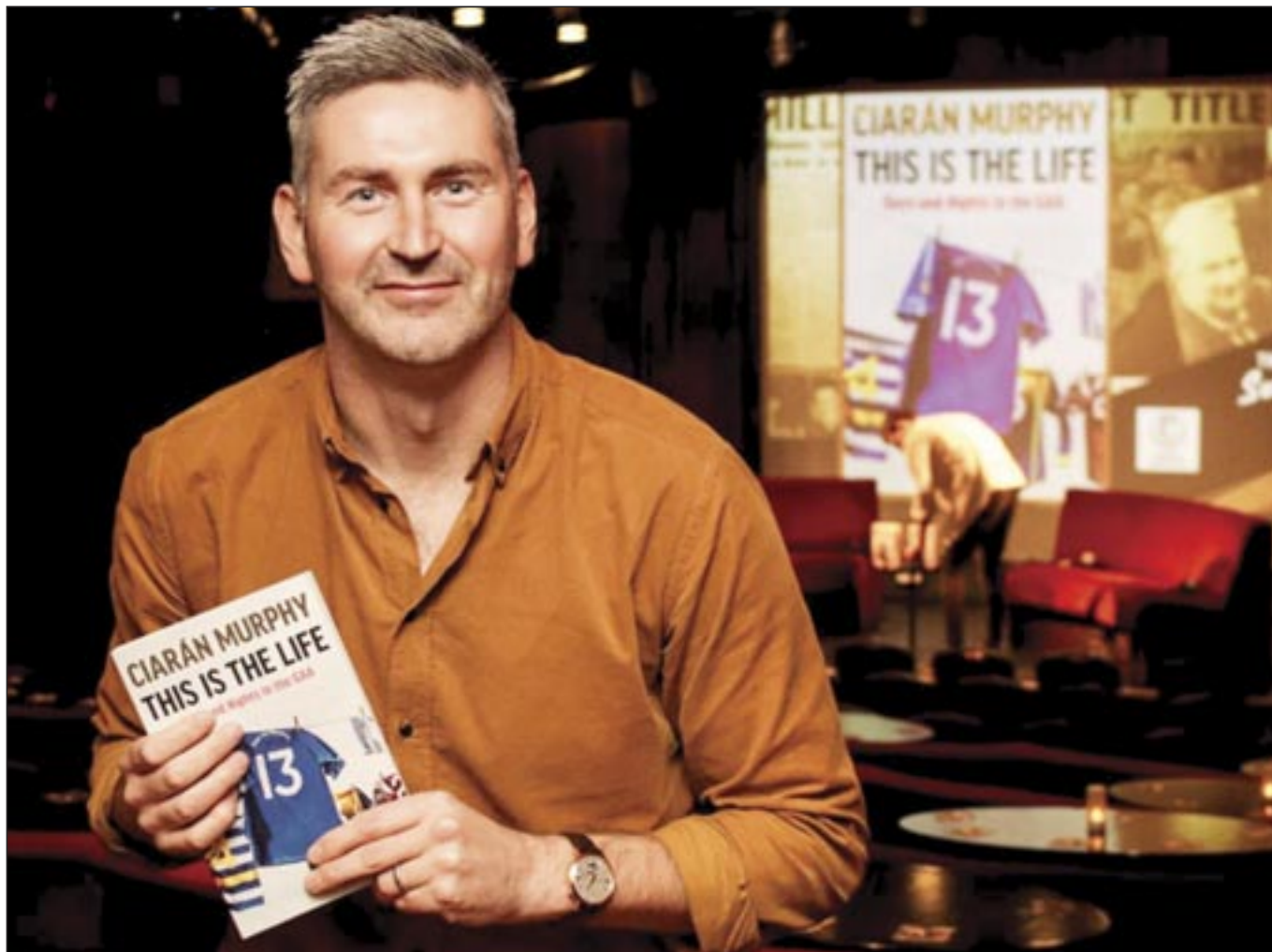
Monaghan (Oughterard), Mark McInerney (Eire Óg Ennis, Clare), Ryan O Donoghue, (Belmullet, Mayo), Cathal Sweeney, (Salthill Knocknacarra, Galway Capt). **Subs:** James McLoughlin (Maigh Cuilinn) for Kilcommins, Cillian O Curraoin (Michéal Breathnach) for McInerney, Conor Corcoran (Maigh Cuilinn) for Dunleavy, Dan Flaherty (Salthill Knocknacarra) for R Monaghan.

**ULSTER UNIVERSITY:** Ronan McGeehan, Darragh Curran, Ronan Boyle, Seamus Kelly, Finian O’Brien, Ryan McGill, Peadar MacCartan, Bertie McCarron, John Cunningham, John Ellis, Cathal Diamond, Oisín McCann, Conor Cush, Rory Canavan, Danny Fullerton.

**REF:** David Gough (Meath).



# ‘This is the Life’ is the GAA Museum Book Club book for December/January



**Author Ciarán Murphy with his recently published book, 'This is the Life'.**

THE GAA Museum is delighted to announce the return of its Book Club just ahead of Christmas. After a brief hiatus, they're back with a fantastic choice to read for December and January. Their choice is *This is the Life* by Ciarán Murphy.

Rather than focusing on the greatest players or intercounty teams, this book is about the other 99 percent. It is a witty and provocative look at grassroots GAA by a pundit who is also a passionate club player. *This is the Life* looks at the plight of clubs that are losing their players to big cities, and examines a world in which it's normal to cheer on your county's star players but then tog out alongside or

against them in a club game. The book also reflects on what it feels like to take to the field with your friends and neighbours and to try to squeeze one more year out of your ageing body!

Ciarán Murphy is an acclaimed podcaster with *Second Captains* and a columnist with the *Irish Times*. In his own words he is an 'ageing Gaelic footballer' originally with Milltown in Co. Galway and latterly with Templeogue Synge Street in Dublin. *This is the Life* is his first book. Those wishing to get involved with the GAA Museum Book Club can sign up for free at [www.crokepark.ie/bookclub](http://www.crokepark.ie/bookclub). The GAA Museum team regularly choose a well-known GAA book to read and review.

The museum team also interview the author and release the video to all members.

If you don't have or can't borrow a copy of *This is the Life*, it's available to buy online at the GAA Museum Gift Shop. Visit the shop at <https://crokepark.ie/shop/shop-home>. You can explore their catalogue of GAA Museum Book Club choices and author interviews on their website. There, you'll find chats with authors including Paul Rouse, David Hannigan, Tadhg Coakley, Siobhán Doyle, Niall McCoy, Michael Foley and Eimear Ryan. Previous book choices might also inspire some Christmas gift ideas!



# Connacht counties to the fore in Joe McDonagh awards

THE prestigious Fondúireacht Sheosaimh Mhic Dhonncha recognition awards were presented at a special ceremony in Croke Park on Friday night, 1 December 2023. This year 55 clubs from all over the country won bronze, silver or gold medals for their efforts, work and commitment for the promotion of the Irish language. Sports and entertainment broadcaster Gráinne McElwain presided over the ceremony and announced the 7 clubs that won Gold Medals, the 15 clubs that won Silver Medals and the 33 clubs that won Bronze Medals this year. (See full list below)

Representatives from the clubs were present at Croke Park to proudly accept their awards, symbolising their dedication to promoting the Irish language both within their clubs and in their broader local communities.

Fondúireacht Sheosaimh Mhic Dhonncha is a collaborative initiative between Glór na nGael and the GAA. The partnership is dedicated to enhancing the presence and usage of the Irish language across GAA clubs nationwide. These medals serve as a testament to the clubs' ongoing efforts in integrating the Irish language into their activities and fostering its growth among their members and communities.

This event not only acknowledges individual club achievements but also reinforces the importance of preserving and promoting the Irish language through sport.

## CONNACHT

The event saw four Galway clubs being honoured for their outstanding contributions CLG Oileáin Árann, Baile an Dóirín, Gaeil na Gaillimhe and Cumann Camogaíochta Cois Fharraige.

**MAYO** - The event saw three county Mayo clubs being honoured for their outstanding contributions. Kiltimagh GAA and Mayo Gaels were recognised with silver medals. Notably, Castlebar Mitchells achieved the distinction of being one of only seven clubs to receive a Gold Medal.

**ROSCOMMON** - The event saw one Roscommon club achieving a silver medal – a massive accomplishment – Cumann Phádraic Mhic Phiarais.



<b>Clann Éireann</b>	<b>Ard Mhacha</b>
<b>Naomh Peadar CLG An Lorgain</b>	<b>Ard Mhacha</b>
<b>Tír na nÓg Port an Dúnáin</b>	<b>Ard Mhacha</b>
<b>CLG-CC Naomh Colum Cille, Oileán agus Cluain</b>	<b>Tír Eoghain</b>
<b>CLG Mhic Uidhir, An t-Iompú Deiseal</b>	<b>Fear Manach</b>
<b>Beart CLG</b>	<b>Dún na nGall</b>
<b>Gaeil Mhuigh Eo</b>	<b>Maigh Eo</b>
<b>Coillte Mach</b>	<b>Maigh Eo</b>
<b>An Tulach Mhór CLG</b>	<b>Uibh Fháilí</b>
<b>Átha Troim CLG</b>	<b>An Mhí</b>
<b>Cill Mochuda na Crócaigh</b>	<b>Átha Cliath</b>
<b>Atháin CLG</b>	<b>Luimneach</b>
<b>An Daingean</b>	<b>Ciarraí</b>
<b>Mainistir na Corann</b>	<b>Corcaigh</b>
<b>Cumann Phadraig Mhic Phiarais</b>	<b>Ros Comáin</b>
<b>Oileáin Árann CLG</b>	<b>Gaillimh</b>
<b>Gaeil na Gaillimhe CLG</b>	<b>Gaillimh</b>
<b>Baile an Dóirín CLG</b>	<b>Gaillimh</b>
<b>Cumann Camogaíochta Chois Fharraige</b>	<b>Gaillimh</b>
<b>Lochra Loch Lao</b>	<b>Aontroim</b>
<b>Mistéalaigh Caisleán an Bharraigh</b>	<b>Maigh Eo</b>
<b>Cumann Caid Ban Chorca Dhuibhne</b>	<b>Ciarraí</b>

# Galway and Mayo to kick off GAA GO coverage in 2024



**4 December 2023; In attendance at the 2024 GAAGO match schedule launch at Croke Park in Dublin are, from left, Aaron Kernan, GAAGo commentator Mike Finnerty, Michael Murphy, GAAGO Host Gráinne McElwain, GAAGO sideline reporter Aisling O'Reilly, Paddy Andrews and Marc Ó Sé. Fans can avail of 38 exclusive matches in Ireland for €69 up until December 31st".** Photo by Sam Barnes/Sportsfile

GAAGO has announced at Croke Park its exclusive 2024 GAA Championship broadcast schedule, a new midweek show and the addition of seven-time hurling All-Star Richie Hogan to its analysis team.

Fans will access 38 live and on-demand matches in broadcast quality for a special pre-Christmas pass price of just €69 up until December 31st, before it moves to €79. Within the 38-game schedule twenty-two Sam Maguire cup, nine Liam Mac Carthy Cup and seven Tailteann Cup ('Game of the week') matches will be streamed.

The announcement comes after a successful inaugural season operating in the Irish market when a range of live matches that would not ordinarily have been shown to viewers were aired and

analysed by a stellar line-up of former players. The platform introduced a fresh player-led analysis to its content offering this season and its unique 'access all areas' presentation style will return in 2024.

Individual pay-per-game matches will be available for €12, a '3-for-2' bundle deal will cost €24 and GAA members will receive 10% off any full price (€79) subscription. GAA clubs will be able to avail of a group pass for €150 and caregiving locations will again watch for free using complimentary login codes.

Live coverage from all six provincial championships as well as extensive All-Ireland series football championship action will be brought to viewers in Ireland and around the world for 19 match days across

13 weekends. Exclusive coverage begins on April 6/7th in Ruislip and Gaelic Park as Galway and Mayo travel to play London and New York respectively.

Defending hurling and football champions Limerick and Dublin will feature across the match schedule, as will four provincial football semi-finals including Kerry's tie against either Cork or Limerick on April 20th. Cork's Munster hurling championship round 3 clash against Limerick is also included in the line-up. The platform will carry nine Munster and Leinster hurling round robin matches, all four All-Ireland series football preliminary quarterfinals and two All-Ireland series football quarter-finals.

Like 2023, GAAGO coverage will include full outside broadcast treatment for

nearly 30 games with live presentation, panel analysis and multi-camera setup. In addition to the full match production, in-game digital highlights will be distributed to fans across GAAGO's social media channels for the first time and a new midweek show will also provide more insight and debate during the Championship (more details to follow).

Multiple access points will play a key role in the service's 2024 distribution strategy with virtually all internet-enabled devices being supported by GAAGO.ie and iOS or Android apps enabling casting to a TV screen. Fans may also enjoy accessing GAAGO directly on TVs via Apple TV, Amazon Fire TV, Google TV, ROKU or connected Samsung and LG smart TVs.

Speaking at a GAAGO match schedule launch event, Larry McCarthy, Uachtarán Chumann Lúthchleas Gael, said "We are delighted to confirm the 2024 schedule for GAAGO and some enhancements to the offering including the addition of Richie Hogan to an already stellar line up of analysts and the very welcome addition of a new midweek GAA programme to complement the weekend coverage.

"We have worked hard to strike the balance between those games which will be shown by our broadcast partners RTÉ and BBC and those which will be shown on GAAGO. It's worth re-stating, if these games were not broadcast by GAAGO, they would not be available to view anywhere.



**4 December 2023; Uachtarán Chumann Lúthchleas Gael Larry McCarthy speaking at the 2024 GAAGO match schedule launch at Croke Park in Dublin. Fans can avail of 38 exclusive matches in Ireland for €69 up until December 31st".**  
Photo by Sam Barnes/Sportsfile

## 2024 GAAGO Match Schedule

### April 6th

CSFC Quarter-final: London v Galway

### April 7th

CSFC Quarter-final: New York v Mayo

### April 13-14th

LSFC Quarter-final: Kildare v Westmeath / Wicklow

### April 20th

MSFC Semi-final: Kerry v Cork / Limerick

### April 21st

MSHC RR1: Waterford v Cork

### April 27th

LSHC RR2: Antrim v Wexford  
USFC Semi-final (Fermanagh / Armagh v Down / Antrim)

### April 28th

MSHC RR2: Cork v Clare  
LSFC Semi-final: Kildare / Westmeath / Wicklow v Louth / Carlow / Wexford

LSFC Semi-final: Dublin / Longford / Meath v Off / Laois

### May 4th

MSHC RR3: Waterford v Tipperary  
LSHC RR3: Wexford v Galway

### May 11th

MSHC RR3: Cork v Limerick  
LSHC RR3: Carlow v Kilkenny  
Tailteann Cup Rd 1 game

### May 18th

Round Robin SFC Rd 1 x 2 games  
Tailteann Cup Rd 2 game  
LSHC RR4: Dublin v Kilkenny

### May 25th

Round Robin SFC1 x 2 games

### May 26th

LSHC RR5: TBC v TBC

### June 1st

Round Robin SFC Rd2 x 2 games  
Tailteann Cup Rd 3 game

### June 8th

Tailteann Cup Preliminary  
Quarter-finals x 2 games

### June 15th

Round Robin SFC Rd 3 x 2 games  
Tailteann Cup Quarter-finals x 2 games

### June 16th

Round Robin SFC Rd 3 x 1 game

### June 22nd/23rd

AISFC Preliminary Quarter-finals x 4 games

### June 29th

AISFC Quarter-finals x 2 games

"GAAGO strives to make access as easy as possible and will once again work with care facilities and our clubs through the offer of special packages.

Noel Quinn, Head of GAAGO, said: "GAAGO is focused on providing an extensive schedule of live and on-demand matches to our fans in Ireland and around the world and today's schedule announcement once again showcases this commitment. Producing thirty-eight matches, nearly 30 of which will receive full outside broadcast treatment, will ensure fans have a host of extra games to choose from next year and at a very compelling season pass price point.

"Thanks to comprehensive engagement with existing GAAGO subscribers since the end of our 2023 exclusive coverage, we recognised the need to introduce additional content and is why we are delighted that 2024 will see a new midweek show made available free of charge. The introduction of in-game digital highlights on GAAGO's social media channels also aims to meet GAA fan demand for shorter-form match content which aligns to global sports consumption trends. Finally, we look forward to welcoming back our very popular presentation and match analysis team, which this year sees the addition of Richie Hogan with more names to be announced".



Minister of State with responsibility for Public Health, Wellbeing and the National Drugs Strategy Hildegard Naughton, right, is pictured with, from left, Stuart Moloney, GAA Regional Community & Health Co-Ordinator, Brid O'Dwyer GAA Healthy Club Coordinator, College President Dr Amanda McCloat, Trevor Cohen, Sligo Health and Wellbeing Committee Chair, TD Frank Feighan and Tim O'Malley, Sligo GAA Health and Wellbeing Committee member during the Recipes for Success booklet launch event at St Angela's College in Sligo.

# GAA and St. Angela's College relaunch 'Recipes for Success'

THE GAA is excited to announce the relaunch of the 'Recipes for Success' programme in partnership with St. Angela's College. The project is the result of a unique partnership between the GAA, the Home Economics Department at St. Angela's College, Sligo, and the ATHE (Association of Teachers for Home Economics). This collaboration aims to empower individuals with sports nutrition and the skills to prepare healthy, nutritious food to support healthy living and optimise esports performance. First launched in 2015, Recipes for Success has been reviewed and updated to keep it up to date in the world of sports nutrition. The

programme was relaunched on October 26th in St Angela's College Sligo by Minister for Public Health, Wellbeing and Drugs Strategy, Hildegard Naughton.

The GAA's Recipes for Success booklet is filled with tasty, healthy, performance enhancing recipes that are easy to make and aims to support GAA players and members in making the right choices. Cooking for yourself is something you can only truly learn by doing. That's why the unique partnership behind Recipes for Success facilitates bringing teams together to enhance not only their nutritional knowledge but also their practical cookery skills, one of the most important

life-skills any player can develop.

Recipes for Success has two elements; a "hands on" kitchen-based cookery workshop and a Recipes for Success toolkit which is filled with tasty, healthy, performance enhancing recipes that are easy to make.

Research carried out on the programme by St Angela's College (REF) indicated that those reported increased nutritional knowledge alongside knowledge regarding best nutrition practice during training and pre- and post-match. 92% of participants indicated that what they learned in Recipes for Success would influence them to make healthier food



choices in the future. Recipes for Success is aimed at minor and U20 players, with the aim that these players will carry the knowledge and skills to support their own nutrition through to their adult playing careers.

Minister for Public Health, Wellbeing and Drugs Strategy, Hildegarde Naughton, commented: As Minister with responsibility for public health I am delighted to see the GAA partner with St. Angelas in the "Recipe for Success" initiative, which encourages young people to engage in healthy lifestyle behaviours: healthy eating with activity. The Healthy Ireland framework, launched back in 2013, supports a multi sectoral approach to health promotion and prevention, which is at the core of this community scheme. By educating young teenagers on the value of cooking healthy, homecooked meals with good quality ingredients and ongoing participation in sport, we are empowering future generations to enjoy good health with their families and in communities throughout life.

An Uachtarán Cumann Lúthchleas Gael, Larry McCarthy, said: "I am delighted

to see this book revised, updated, and made available to our players. Playing sport is a key to a healthy lifestyle and it can be further enhanced by a healthy and nutritional approach to food. I want to thank our partners in St Angela's College for their assistance with our Community and Health Department in delivering this book which is packed full of advice and information to assist players of all levels."

President of St Angelas College Sligo, Amanda McCloat said: "We know that adequate nutrition and food skills in young athletes are vital not only for optimal athletic performance but more importantly for their growth, development and overall health as they move through an important physiological stage of life. Recipes for success aims to improve not only Nutritional knowledge among players, but also self-efficacy and improvement in cooking skills, food literacy.

The success of the research is testament to the collaborative approach that was inherent in the project from the outset. It involves Home Economists, health promotion professionals and athletes which led to a multidisciplinary approach to the initiative. Although the project has evolved, research relationships have further developed over the years. \_

To find out more about this programme or to get your club involved please visit <https://www.gaa.ie/my-gaa/community-and-health/healthy-eating/recipes-for-success>.

**Minister of State with responsibility for Public Health, Wellbeing and the National Drugs Strategy Hildegarde Naughton, right, is pictured with College President Dr Amanda McCloat, Aoife Quirke from Whitegate Co Clare and Aaron Keane from St Mary's Co Sligo during the Recipes for Success booklet launch event at St Angela's College in Sligo.**





**5 December 2023; In attendance, from left, University of Galway footballer Tommy Conroy, University of Limerick hurler Gearóid O'Connor, Aiste Petraityte, brand and sponsorship manager at Electric Ireland, Uachtarán Chumann Lúthchleas Gael Larry McCarthy, Higher Education GAA chairperson Mike Hyland, University of Limerick hurler Colin Coughlan, University College Cork footballer Dylan Foley and Maynooth University hurler Billy Drennan before the draw for the Electric Ireland GAA Higher Education Championships at Croke Park in Dublin.**

Photo by Piaras Ó Mídheach/Sportsfile

# Connacht third-level teams learn New Year fate

THE draws for the Electric Ireland GAA Higher Education Championships were made by Uachtarán CLG Larry McCarthy at Croke Park earlier on Tuesday December 5.

Matches start early in the new year and the finals will be hosted by MTU Kerry from February 13th-18th. There was much excitement in the Sigerson Cup with reigning champions UCC being drawn against Ulster University, with other interesting ties such as Queen's University v DCU DE and last year's runners up University of Limerick facing ATU Donegal. The Fitzgibbon Cup, which is initially a round-robin competition, sees University of Limerick facing ATU Galway and TUS Midwest as they seek a third title in a row.

Uachtarán CLG Larry McCarthy said: "These Electric Ireland Higher Education

Championships are an integral part of our competition calendar. These competitions have a proud history and heritage in our Association and have grown to offer the opportunity to play to more and more students and are valued by all who play in them. I want to thank Electric Ireland for their continuing support, and I look forward to watching the battles for these prestigious cups unfold in the new year and look forward to seeing the excellent facilities in Tralee host the concluding stages."

Mike Hyland, Higher Education Chairperson, commented:

"The Electric Ireland Higher Education GAA Championships are amongst the highlights of the GAA calendar. We are really looking forward to such a strong programme of games across hurling and football in Tralee with teams competing at

various levels outlining the strength of participation and performance in Higher Education GAA. We are delighted that Féile CA will take place in MTU Kerry from 13th-18th February. We are very thankful to Electric Ireland for their outstanding commitment to the Higher Education Leagues and Championships."

Sarah Sharkey, Group Sponsorship & PR Manager at ESB and Electric Ireland, commented: At Electric Ireland, we are always thrilled to see the return of the Electric Ireland GAA Higher Education Championships, signalling the beginning of a new GAA season. These competitions are an exciting way to kick off the new year, rekindling fierce rivalries between county teammates. We look forward to watching as players progress through these brilliant competitions and wish each



college and player the very best of luck this season.”

## SIGERSON CUP 2024

### Round 1

- (A) Queens v DCU – Tues 09/01/24 at 19:00
- (B) SETU C v TUS ML – Wed 10/01/24 at 19:00
- (C) UU v UCC – Tues 09/01/24 at 19:00
- (D) ATU G v UCD – Wed 10/01/24 at 19:00
- (E) Maynooth v MTU Cork – Tues 09/01/24 at 19:00
- (F) UL v ATU D – Wed 10/01/24 at 19:00
- (G) UoG v TUD – Tues 09/01/24 at 19:00
- (H) ATU S v St Mary's – Wed 10/01/24 at 19:00

### Round 2A and 2B

- (I) Winners A v Winners B – Tues 16/01/24 at 19:00
- (J) Winners C v Winners D – Tues 16/01/24 at 19:00
- (K) Winners E v Winners F – Tues 16/01/24 at 19:00
- (L) Winners G v Winners H – Tues 16/01/24 at 19:00
- (M) Losers A v Losers B – Wed 17/01/24 at 19:00
- (N) Losers C v Losers D – Wed 17/01/24 at 19:00
- (O) Losers E v Losers F – Wed 17/01/24 at 19:00
- (P) Losers G v Losers H – Wed 17/01/24 at 19:00

### Round 3

- Winners of Round 2B v Losers of Round 2A – Tues 23/01/24 at 19:00

- Winners of Round 2B v Losers of Round 2A – Tues 23/01/24 at 19:00
- Winners of Round 2B v Losers of Round 2A – Wed 24/01/24 at 19:00
- Winners of Round 2B v Losers of Round 2A – Wed 24/01/24 at 19:00

### Quarter-Finals

- Winners of Round 2A v Winners of Round 3 – Tues 30/01/24 at 19:00
- Winners of Round 2A v Winners of Round 3 – Tues 30/01/24 at 19:00
- Winners of Round 2A v Winners of Round 3 – Wed 31/01/24 at 19:00
- Winners of Round 2A v Winners of Round 3 – Wed 31/01/24 at 19:00

### Semi-Finals

- TBC v TBC – Tues 06/02/24 at 19:00
- TBC v TBC – Wed 07/02/24 at 19:00

### Final

- TBC v TBC – Wed 14/02/24 at 19:00

## FITZGIBBON CUP 2024

### Group A

- 1. M1CL 2. Maynooth 3. UCC

### Group B

- 1. UL 2. ATU Galway 3. TUS MW

### Group C

- 1. SETU W 2. DCU DE 3. MTU Cork

### Group D

- 1. UoG 2. SETU Carlow 3. UCD
- First team named has Home Advantage.

### Round 1

- GA Team 2 v GA Team 1 – Wed 17/01/24 at 19:00
- GB Team 2 v GB Team – Wed 17/01/24 at 19:00
- GC Team 2 v GC Team 1 – Thurs 18/01/24 at 19:00
- GD Team 2 v GB Team 1 – Thurs 18/01/24 at 14:00

### Round 2

- GA Team 1 v GA Team 3 – Wed 24/01/24 at 19:00
- GB Team 1 v GB Team 3 – Wed 24/01/24 at 19:00
- GC Team 1 v GC Team 3 – Thurs 25/01/24 at 19:00
- GD Team 1 v GD Team 3 – Thurs 25/01/24 at 19:00

### Round 3

- GA Team 3 v GA Team 2 – Wed 31/01/24 at 19:00
- GB Team 3 v GB Team 2 – Wed 31/01/24 at 19:00
- GC Team 3 v GC Team 2 – Thurs 01/02/24 at 19:00
- GD Team 3 v GD Team 2 – Thurs 01/02/24 at 19:00

### Quarter-Finals: (Group Winners at Home\*)

- (1) Winner A Runner up B Wed 07/02/24 at 19:00
- (2) Winner B Runner up A Wed 07/02/24 at 19:00
- (3) Winner C Runner up D Thurs 08/02/24 at 19:00
- (4) Winner D Runner up C Thurs 08/02/24 at 19:00

### Semi-Finals: Week commencing 12th February

- 1 v 3 at TBC in TBC
- 2 v 4 at TBC in TBC

- Final: Saturday 17th February – at TBC – in MTU Kerry

## ELECTRIC IRELAND FERGAL MAHER CUP 2024

### Group A

- 1. St. Marys, 2. UU Magee/ Coleraine, 3. DKIT

### Group B

- 1. ATU Sligo, 2. ATU Connemara, 3. ATU Donegal

### Group C

- 1. RCSI, 2. TUD Tallaght, 3. Marino
- First team named has Home Advantage.

- Round 1 – Week commencing 15th January
- St Mary's v UUC/UUM – Wed 17/01/24 – 7pm
- ATU Sligo v ATU Connemara – Wed 17/01/24 – 7pm

- TUDT v RCSI – Wed 17/01/24 – 7pm

### Team 3 BYE

- Round 2 – Week commencing 22nd January
- DKIT v St Mary's – Wed 24/01/24 – 7pm
- ATU Donegal v ATU Sligo – Wed 24/01/24 – 7pm

- RCSI v Marino – Wed 24/01/24 – 7pm

### Team 2 BYE

- Round 3: Week commencing 29th January 2023
- UU C/M v DKIT – Wed 31/01/24 – 7pm
- ATU C v ATU D – Wed 31/01/24 – 7pm
- Marino v TUDT – Wed 31/01/24 – 7pm

### Team 1 BYE

- Quarter-Final: Week commencing 5th February
- Group B Runner Up v Best Place Runner Up from Groups A & C

### Semi-Finals

- Winners of Groups A, B & C qualify for Semi-Finals and joined by Preliminary Winner.
- Repeat pairing avoided where possible.

- Semi-Finals (Friday 16th) and Finals (Saturday 17th) played at Féile CA (depending on Corn Na Mac Leinn Semi Finalists).

## ELECTRIC IRELAND CORN COMHAIRLE ARDOIDEACHAIS 2024

### Group 1

- 1. TUD B 2. TUDT 3. The Law School 4. DIFE

### Group 2

- 1. Mayo College 2. ATU Connemara 3. Monaghan Institute

- First team named has Home Advantage.

- Round 1: Week commencing 15th January
- TUD B v TUD T – Thurs 25/01/24 – 7pm
- DIFE v The Law School – Thurs 25/01/24 – 7pm
- ATU C v Mayo College – Thurs 25/01/24 – 7pm

### Monaghan Inst BYE

- Round 2: Week commencing 22nd January
- The Law School v TUD B – Thurs 01/02/24 – 7pm

- TUD T v DIFE – Thurs 01/02/24 – 7pm

- Monaghan Inst v ATU C – Thurs 01/02/24 – 7pm

### Mayo College BYE

- Round 3: Week commencing 29th January
- TUD B v DIFE – Thurs 08/02/24 – 7pm
- The Law School v TUD T – Thurs 08/02/24 – 7pm

- Mayo College v Monaghan Inst – Thurs 08/02/24 – 7pm

### ATU C BYE

- Semi-Final: week commencing 5th February
- Winner Group A v R-Up Group B
- Winner Group B v R-Up Group A
- Subject to avoiding repeat pairings where possible.

- Final: Venue TBC – Week commencing 12th February



# National Hurling Action plan to grow hurling nationwide

THE GAA Strategic Plan - Áontas 2022-2026 commits to growing Hurling as a key objective for the Association. The creation of a National Hurling Action Plan is designed to support this objective and expedite the growth and development of hurling across the country.

A National Hurling Action Plan Workgroup has been established and held their first meeting on Saturday, 2nd December. The Workgroup is chaired by Colm Nolan of Maynooth GAA and includes personnel from all tiers of hurling. To understand the challenges facing hurling, it is imperative that the Workgroup is made up of players, administrators, coaches and staff from counties from across hurling and includes representation from the Camogie Association.

Following on from the first meeting of the Workgroup on Saturday, a survey has been created to allow all those interested in the game to have a say on how hurling might be grown and developed. Responses will be factored into the key goal of agreeing a three-year action plan for the growth of the game.

This survey is open until Friday 15th December at 5pm.

Welcoming the formation of the group, Uachtarán CLG Larry McCarthy said: "The formation of this group has been in process since late summer and to ensure that the Association can put in place a series of actions to develop the game of hurling, it is important that those involved are reflective of all the tiers of hurling. As an Association, it is important that any actions coming out of this plan are realistic and I am delighted with the composition of the Workgroup. All are passionate about the development of hurling, and I look forward to their recommendations. It is also important that we work alongside the Camogie Association, as we face similar challenges and can support each other in creating new opportunities to grow our games."

The purpose of the Hurling Development Plan Workgroup is to facilitate the formulation of a three-year action plan to sustain and grow Hurling in line with the overarching vision and goals set out in the GAA Strategic Plan - Áontas 2022-2026 and in accordance with the following terms

of reference:

1. Conduct a review of the findings and recommendations of previous plans, reports, action statements on the game over the past 15 years.
2. Conduct a review and analysis of current hurling activity at Club, Primary, Post Primary, Higher Education and Inter-County levels across all tiers of the game - but with a special focus on the game in Joe MacDonagh, Christy Ring, Nickey Rackard and Lory Meagher counties.
3. Review the current Hurley and Helmet Scheme.
4. Consult with key stakeholders as required.
5. Work with Camogie Association identify areas/projects of common interest and cooperation for inclusion in the plan.
6. Explore and identify ways in which the Camogie Association, the GAA can maximise the UNESCO Intangi-

ble Cultural Heritage status for the games of camogie and hurling in supporting the implementation of the plan.

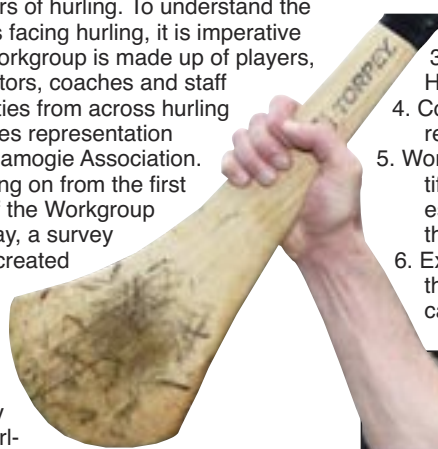
7. Produce a plan for presentation to Central Council on its findings, recommendations, and a roadmap for implementation.

## Hurling Development Plan Committee members

1. Colm Nolan- Kildare- Chairperson
2. Éibhear O'Dea- Limerick
3. Kieran Farmer- Fermanagh
4. Keith Higgins- Mayo
5. Darragh Cox- Sligo
6. Joey Carton- Waterford
7. Kevin Kelly- Derry
8. Paddy Scales- Offaly
9. Ryan Gaffney- Armagh- Camogie Representative

## Colm Nolan - Chairperson

Growing up in Dublin Colm played with the St. Oliver Plunkett's Owen Rua Club



**31 July 2021: Keith Higgins of Mayo celebrates after the Nicky Rackard Cup Final match between Tyrone and Mayo at Croke Park in Dublin.**

Photo by Harry Murphy/Sportsfile





**6 March 2023: In attendance is Connacht GAA Games Promotion Officer Darragh Cox at the 2023 Táin Óg & CúChulainn launch at Croke Park in Dublin.** Photo by David Fitzgerald/Sportsfile

before moving to Maynooth, Co. Kildare. A member of the Maynooth GAA Club over 3 decades he has served in many coaching, team management and administrative positions.

Elected Chairman of Maynooth GAA Club between 2008 and 2013, he led the club in the design and installation of a much needed 20-acre new pitch development and ball wall.

He has served as a member of Bord na nÓg Chill Dara and on the Management Committee of the Kildare County Board. He was County Hurling Chairman between 2017 and 2021 and was involved in the development and implementation of the "Kildare Hurling Action Plan".

He has been involved with a number of County hurling squads as a Coach and Selector and is currently head of performance analysis with the Kildare Senior Hurlers. Colm is still Hurling with the Maynooth Dads & Lads social hurling team.

### Éibhear O’Dea

Éibhear is from the Kiltelly Dromkeen club where he was Treasurer, Secretary and Chairman before becoming Development Officer of the Limerick County Board in 2008. He chaired a group that drafted an underage plan for Limerick Hurling in 2009 and acted as Secretary of an Implementation Committee that oversaw the

implementation of the plan and the Limerick Underage Hurling academy for many years. Éibhear has also been a member of the Officer Development Committee for the last 6 years and was Secretary of a Munster Development committee for two terms.

### Kieran Farmer

Kieran farmer is a former Fermanagh Hurling Secretary and current Vice-Chair of the Ulster Hurling Committee. Kieran is currently the Fermanagh U20 manager and has been manager/ coach of the Lisnaskea senior hurlers and Fermanagh Celtic Challenge team.

### Keith Higgins

Keith is a highly distinguished dual player who represented the Mayo Senior Hurlers from 2004 – 2022, winning two Nickey Rackard cups and a number of league titles and represented Mayo Senior Football team from 2005 – 2020, winning eight Connacht titles, four All-Star awards, one National League and one All-Ireland u21 in 2006.

Keith is a Qualified Financial Advisor and has recently taken up a new role as Work Based Learning Programme Development Manager Sport/Fitness Industry, with Atlantic Technological University in April 2023.

### Darragh Cox

Darragh Cox won the Rackard Cup as a player and the Lory Meagher Cup as a manager with his native Sligo, and also won four Connacht Junior titles with his club, Calry/St Joseph's. He is the hurling development officer in Sligo and Leitrim.

### Joey Carton

Joey is the current Games Development Manager for Munster GAA with responsibility for Hurling in the province. He comes from the De La Salle club in Waterford City where he has served in many coaching and administrative roles. Joey has managed all Waterford hurling sides from underage to Senior level, winning an u21 All Ireland in 1992. He has been working within Games Development since 1992.

### Kevin Kelly

Kevin Kelly is the current Hurling Development Manager with Ulster GAA and hails from the Baile na Scrine club in Derry. Kevin has played and coached Hurling at club and county level at all age grades and managed Derry Senior Camogie team at the age of 21.

Kevin has a 1st Class Honors degree in sport coaching and has been working in GAA Development since 2004.

### Paddy Scales

Paddy is currently the Central Council Delegate for Offaly and a member of Offaly Management, a Member of Comhairle Laighean and a member of Leinster CCC. Paddy became Chairman of Leinster Post Primary Schools Committee in 2023, representing Leinster on the All-Ireland Post Primary Schools Committee. Paddy is also the Chairman of St. Rynagh's Hurling Club Offaly.

### Ryan Gaffney

#### - Camogie Representative

Ryan is from Middletown GAC, Co. Armagh and is the current Participation and Growth coordinator for Ulster Camogie. Ryan has over 14 years' experience working within Gaelic games with specific focus on developing hurling and Camogie across developing Counties. Ryan has played for Armagh for 16 years captaining his county to Nicky Rackard success in 2012 and won a division 2B National League title in 2016.

In 2020 Ryan graduated from IT Carlow with a Masters in Performance Analysis in Sport where he conducted research examining determinants of success in elite level hurling. Ryan is also currently completing a Professional Doctorate in Human performance and Innovation at the University of Limerick where he is conducting research into determinants of successful attacks in Hurling.



# Whelan claims All-Star award for Galway

GALWAY hurler and PhD candidate Conor Whelan is concerned that student athletes are being driven away from Gaelic games due to excessive demands on their time.

Whelan is a qualified secondary school teacher who is currently doing a full-time PhD on third-level student well-being, having completed a master's in psychology last year.

He is specifically looking at GAA student athletes and how they "balance 40 hours of academia with another 20-30 hours of sporting commitments."

"I've noticed that players are coming to the age of 18, 19 and packing it up," he told 2fm's Game On. "Seventeen to 19-year-olds are the highest rate of dropout across sport in Ireland.

"The game has gone very physical and there's a major emphasis put on S&C but I think sometimes it is overkill. There is any amount of strength and conditioning, gym sessions and running sessions. As a young lad it was all about playing the game and enjoying it. I'm not so sure where it's going, particularly at younger age groups.

"Some players I've looked at are playing for five teams, between Fitzgibbon or Sigerson, senior and U20 club and county.

"If you feel like it's a tough slog all the time, it's very difficult for people to stay going. Enjoying your sport, at whatever



17 November 2023; Conor Whelan of Galway with his PwC GAA/GPA All-Star Award during the 2023 PwC GAA/GPA All-Star Awards at the RDS in Dublin. Photo by David Fitzgerald/Sportsfile



17 November 2023; Conor Whelan of Galway is presented with his PwC All-Star award by Uachtarán Chumann Lúthchleas Gael Larry McCarthy, in the company of Gaelic Players Association chief executive Tom Parsons, left, and PwC managing partner Enda McDonagh during the 2023 PwC GAA/GPA All-Star Awards at the RDS in Dublin. Photo by Brendan Moran/Sportsfile





# hurling

## Ward nominated for 2023 TG4 All-Star but Dublin dominate selection

age you are, I think is the most important thing of all. That's what keeps you going and keeps you coming back."

Whelan, who recently turned 27, feels that student athletes of his era at least had the first few months of the academic year to enjoy college life.

"I've been very vocal on not having the GAA as your sole identity and having different outlets," he said.

"When I came through we used to get November and most of December off [from sport]. You were guaranteed to get a semester in college and that was enough to enjoy yourself and then go back.

"I was part of a group competing for Leinster and All-Irelands so I was very privileged but I think it would be harder now. If you're a young kid, going to college and starting to making friends, and you're having to choose whether to stay in or go out and enjoy yourself, it's probably a no-brainer why younger people are falling away."

The Kinvara man noted that it's not just students who are in need of a break from the demands of modern hurling.

"Seeing the likes of Austin Gleeson, a major talent, step away, that's very sad for the sport. There are lots of others. Chris Crumme is out in Australia as well, Paudie Foley from Wexford. That would indicate there is a problem there.

"I'm not so sure the split-season is working as well as people say it does. I've seen the likes of Conor Cooney and Shane Cooney going for 12 months straight [with St Thomas].

"The round-robin could be tweaked a bit, to let players take some down time after games. The league is not being treated with the respect I think it deserves because teams are looking at the round-robin and saying they can't go as hard.

"I think overall hurling is in a pretty decent place but student athletes are a group that need to be looked after."

Following a brilliant 2023 season, Whelan was selected at corner forward on the PwC Hurling All Star team.

In 2017, Whelan started at at right corner-forward when they won their first All-Ireland in 29 years after a 0-26 to 2-17 defeat of Waterford in the final.

He ended the season by winning an All-Star award as well as being named Young Hurler of the Year.

The 2023 award marks Whelan's second All Star and he was the sole Galway recipient on the annual selection.

GALWAY star Nicola Ward was her county's sole nominee for a prestigious 2023 TG4 All-Star award.

All-Ireland senior champions Dublin led the way with eight representatives on the team. Dublin's haul eclipses their previous all-time best of seven players on the annual selection, which was achieved twice in 2018 and 2019.

The 2023 team was revealed at the annual TG4 All-Star awards banquet, in association with Lidl, as the Bonnington Dublin Hotel.

Dublin's eight winners are goalkeeper Abby Shiels, defenders Leah Caffrey, Lauren Magee and Martha Byrne, midfielder Jennifer Dunne, and forwards Orlagh Nolan, Hannah Tyrrell and Carla Rowe.

Tyrrell was named Player of the Match in the 2023 TG4 All-Ireland Senior Final, as Rowe had the honour of lifting the Brendan Martin Cup as team captain.

TG4 All-Ireland Finalists Kerry have been rewarded with five All Star award winners, namely defenders Eilís Lynch and Cáit Lynch, midfielder Lorraine Scanlon, and forwards Niamh Carmody and Louise Ní Mhuircheartaigh.

Cork forward Ciara O'Sullivan and Mayo defender Danielle Caldwell have also received 2023 TG4 All -Star awards.

The team is comprised of four first-time award winners, with Dublin's Abby Shiels, Martha Byrne and Jennifer Dunne joined by Kerry's Eilís Lynch as inaugural recipients.

Six players picked up their second awards on the night – Mayo's Danielle Caldwell, Dublin's Lauren Magee, Orlagh Nolan and Hannah Tyrrell, and Kerry's Lorraine Scanlon and Niamh Carmody.

Kerry's Cáit Lynch is now a three-time TG4 All-Star award winner, while the Kingdom's ace forward Louise Ní Mhuircheartaigh and Dublin's Carla Rowe are both honoured for a fourth time.



15 July 2023: Nicola Ward of Galway during the TG4 Ladies Football All-Ireland Senior Championship quarter-final match between Galway and Mayo at Pearse Stadium in Galway.

Photo by Sam Barnes/Sportsfile

Cork's Ciara O'Sullivan is now a five-time winner, and she bridges a five-year gap after winning her fourth award in 2018.

There are four players who featured on the 2022 TG4 All Star team named on this year's selection, as Mayo's Danielle Caldwell and Kerry trio Cáit Lynch, Niamh Carmody and Louise Ní Mhuircheartaigh receive the prestigious individual accolades once again.

The 2023 TG4 All Star team also contains three players from the Castleisland Desmonds club in Kerry – Eilís Lynch, Cáit Lynch and Lorraine Scanlon.

Two players from the Cuala club in Dublin are also honoured – Martha Byrne and Jennifer Dunne – while there are also two awards for the Na Fianna club in the capital, with Leah Caffrey and Hannah Tyrrell included in the annual 15.

### 2023 TG4 Ladies Football All-Star team:

Abby Shiels (Dublin) - 1st award

Eilís Lynch (Kerry) - 1st award

Leah Caffrey (Dublin) - 4th award (previous in 2016, 2017 and 2021)

**DANIELLE CALDWELL (MAYO) - 2nd award (previous in 2022)**

Lauren Magee (Dublin) - 2nd award (previous in 2018)

Martha Byrne (Dublin) - 1st award

Cáit Lynch (Kerry) - 3rd award (previous in 2012 and 2022)

Jennifer Dunne (Dublin) - 1st award

Lorraine Scanlon (Kerry) - 2nd award (previous in 2017)

Niamh Carmody (Kerry) - 2nd award (previous in 2022)

Orlagh Nolan (Dublin) - 2nd award (previous in 2021)

Ciara O'Sullivan (Cork) - 5th award (previous in 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2018)

Hannah Tyrrell (Dublin) - 2nd award (previous in 2021)

Carla Rowe (Dublin) - 4th award (previous in 2015, 2016 and 2019)

Louise Ní Mhuircheartaigh (Kerry) - 4th award (previous in 2012, 2013 and 2022)

**County by county breakdown: 8 Dublin, 5 Kerry, 1 Cork, 1 Mayo.**





# Iconic hayshed stand at Tuam



WORKS to demolish the iconic hayshed stand at Tuam Stadium have commenced.

The Connacht Club IFC final between Castlerea St Kevin's and Monivea-Abbey was the last game to be played under the old stand.

The roof on the stand is to be replaced as part of a major revamp which has been made possible thanks to a donation of €350,000 from the late Joe and Helen O'Toole of O'Toole's Tuam, who committed to supporting the refurbishment in 2018.

Crowds huddled under the old 'hay shed' roof for the last time before the latest phase of the work to improve the venue got underway.

The old roof will be replaced by a new steel-framed cantilever roof while an upgrade of seating for 1,500 spectators is also being undertaken.

The stand has been in place, in its present form, since 1958 and has played host to crowds for numerous Connacht football finals, most recently Mayo's dethroning of then Connacht and All-Ireland champions Galway in 1999.

When Galway won their All-Ireland three-in-a-row in the 1960s, the 1964 and 1965 Connacht finals, against Mayo and Sligo, were both played in Tuam Stadium with an estimated 30,000 attending the 1964 final.

In recent years a terrace has been constructed with some financial support from the company of the late Tommy Varden, who was Galway's main sponsor when they won their All-Ireland football titles in 1998 and 2001. The terrace is now named after him.

Separate to the roof and seating overhaul, further work, funded in part by a Sports Capital grant, will see dressing-rooms, a referees' room and other facilities developed.

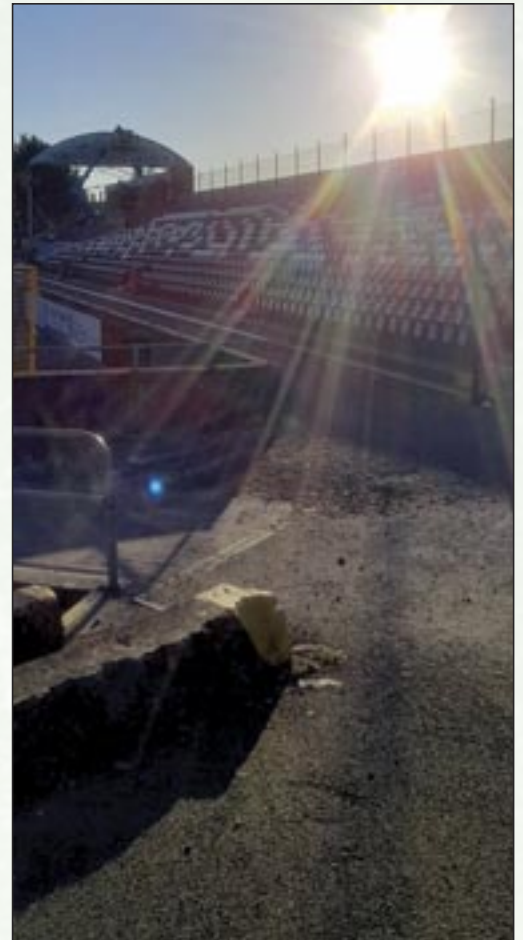
Tuam Stadium has not been as prominent since Galway redeveloped Pearse Stadium in Salthill in the early 2000s but it is still a hub for many local football championship games, provincial underage inter-county games and will invariably host at least one game in Galway's league programme.



Photos courtesy Ian Doyle (Tuam Stars).



# Stadium to be demolished





**8 July 2023::** The Galway squad before the GAA Hurling All-Ireland Senior Championship semi-final match between Limerick and Galway at Croke Park in Dublin. Photo by Piaras Ó Midheach/Sportsfile

# Galway spend close to €2.5m on team preparation

By **JOHN FALLON**

GALWAY, which last year became the first county to spend over €2m on the preparation of their teams, has seen spending this season soar close to €2.5m.

But despite the spend of an extra €288,238 on Galway inter-county teams, the county still shows a profit of €367,430 for the year.

A total of €2,449,735 was spent on the six Galway teams, most of which was spent on Padraic Joyce's senior footballers and Henry Shefflin's senior hurlers.

The breakdown of the spend will be presented to delegates at next Monday's Galway annual convention.

The amount spent does not include €191,010 which was spent on a team holiday for the Galway senior footballers which they recently went on, in recognition of reaching last year's All-Ireland final.

Galway chairman Paul Bellew, who has led a restructuring of the GAA in the county in the past few years, has consistently stated they will not skimp on funding their players, teams and facilities and increased funding will be found to finance them.

To that end, income in Galway in 2023

jumped by over €1.3m to €5,869,684.

Expenditure has also increased by over €1.3m, leaving an overall profit of €367,430 which is down by €43,000 on last year's surplus.

A big drive on fundraising — Galway are currently raffling a house — has seen a big rise in income and expenditure in this sector with the profits set to boost next year's figures, while sponsorship increased from €700,613 to €824,594.

Gate receipts for club matches in Galway has again topped €1.1m during the year, while income from the live streaming of club games has jumped from €98,798 to €257,963.

 **CONNACHT**  
GAA



Connacht GAA Council  
wishes all Gaels a  
Happy Christmas and a  
prosperous New Year



# Galway star Walsh guides Kilmacud to more glory

By JOHN FALLON

**2 December 2023: Shane Walsh of Kilmacud Crokes celebrates after scoring his side's first goal during the AIB Leinster GAA Football Senior Club Championship final match between Kilmacud Crokes, Dublin, and Naas, Kildare, at Croke Park in Dublin.**

Photo by Daire Brennan/Sportsfile



GALWAY star Shane Walsh led the way as Kilmacud Crokes became the first side to capture three successive Leinster senior club football title when they pulled away in the closing stages to defeat Naas by 1-14 to 0-10 at Croke Park.

Walsh, who has now won two Dublin and Leinster medals and an All-Ireland title since his move from his native Kilkerrin-Clonberne last year, shot 1-8, which included five frees.

In the process the Dublin champions join St Vincent's and Portlaoise at the top of the roll of honour with seven Leinster titles and they will now turn their attentions to retaining their All-Ireland club crown.

It was a disappointing conclusion for a Naas side who were only a point adrift going into the closing eleven minutes but they did not score again as they fell for the third year to Kilmacud in the Leinster championship.

The sides were level three times in the opening half but Kilmacud Crokes got an edge and led by 0-9 to 0-7 at the break.

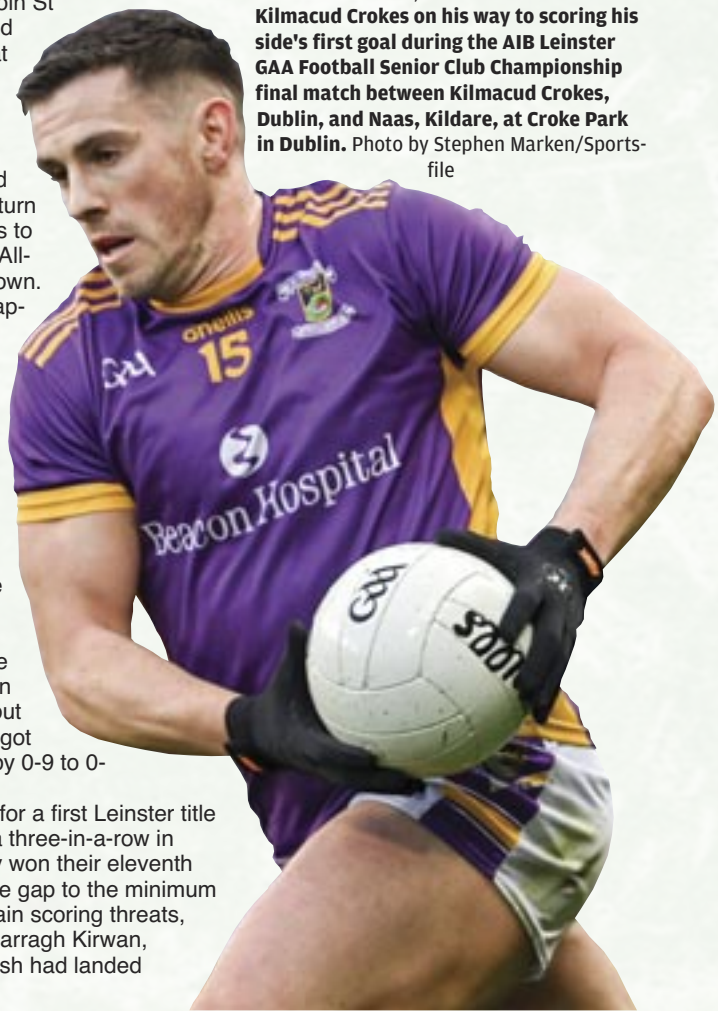
Naas, bidding for a first Leinster title after completing a three-in-a-row in Kildare when they won their eleventh county title, cut the gap to the minimum when their two main scoring threats, Alex Byrne and Darragh Kirwan, pointed after Walsh had landed another free.

Walsh and Paul McDermott exchanged points to leave it 0-11 to 0-10 after 49 minutes but that was as close as Naas got and they didn't score again despite a couple of good goal chances.

Kilmacud, with Dublin's Craig Diaz winning some key ball, pushed the lead out to three points with a couple of Walsh points before Rory O'Carroll curled over the insurance score in stoppage time.

The day finished badly for Naas when their best player Byrne picked up a second yellow card and Kilmacud countered from deep for Walsh to shoot into an empty net in the dying moments.

**2 December 2023; Shane Walsh of Kilmacud Crokes on his way to scoring his side's first goal during the AIB Leinster GAA Football Senior Club Championship final match between Kilmacud Crokes, Dublin, and Naas, Kildare, at Croke Park in Dublin.** Photo by Stephen Marken/Sportsfile





# Harrison retires from

**25 January 2020: Brendan Harrison of Mayo during the Allianz Football League Division 1 Round 1 match between Donegal and Mayo at MacCumhaill Park in Ballybofey, Donegal.**

Photo by Oliver McVeigh/  
Sportsfile



FORMER All-Star defender Brendan Harrison has announced that he has retired from intercounty football.

In a statement issued by Mayo GAA, the 31-year-old Aghamore man confirmed his retirement after various injuries which reduced his involvement with Mayo to six league and one championship appearance since 2020.

He made his Mayo senior debut in the National Football League against Kildare and played 67 times for the county, including 32 championship games.

He contributed 0-5 points from play for Mayo during his playing career and forged a reputation as a stylish and teak-tough defender.

Harrison also played Minor and Under-21 for Mayo and played key roles in the All-Ireland senior finals in 2016 and

2017 and in the Allianz National Football League final in 2019.

He was a member of five Connacht winning football panels with Mayo – 2013, 2014, 2015, 2020 and 2021 - and won a PwC All-Star in 2016 at right corner-back. Harrison was also nominated for an All-Star in 2017 and made two appearances for Ireland against Australia in the International Rules Series in the same year.

His last game for Mayo was also against Kildare in the Allianz National Football League in Carrick-on-Shannon in 2022.

In a statement, Harrison described playing for Mayo as something he 'always treasured.'

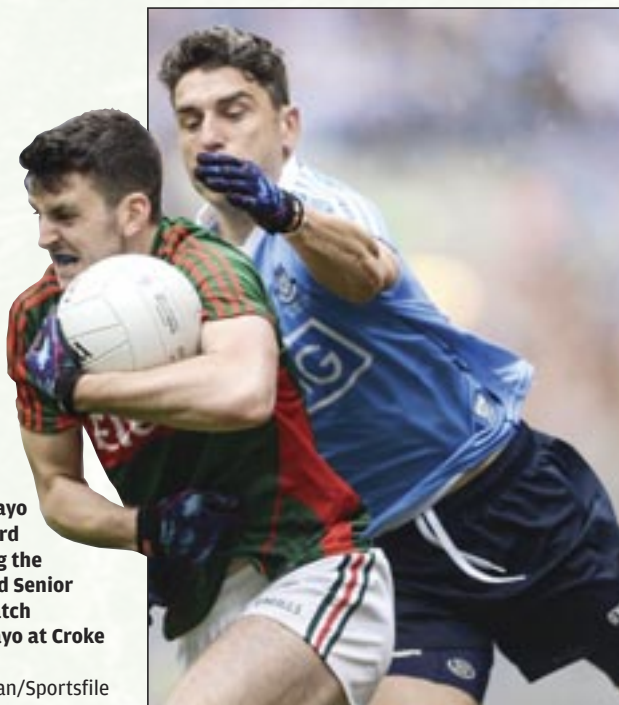
"From the very first day I pulled on the jersey at underage level, I was conscious of the honour it was to wear the green and red. I played alongside brilliant players and under outstanding management teams and I thank each and every one of them for everything they did," he said.

"I had my problems with injuries over the past five seasons and while that was frustrating, I look back on my time with Mayo with very happy memories. Injuries mean that I cannot continue to train at the required level. I thank my club Aghamore and my local community of Kilkelly for their support at all stages and my wife Natasha and my entire family who made many sacrifices so that I could play for Mayo.

"I look forward to being around for the

**18 September 2016: Brendan Harrison of Mayo in action against Bernard Brogan of Dublin during the GAA Football All-Ireland Senior Championship Final match between Dublin and Mayo at Croke Park in Dublin.**

Photo by Eóin Noonan/Sportsfile





# inter-county football



**14 August 2021: Brendan Harrison of Mayo with his children Fiadh and Fionn following the GAA Football All-Ireland Senior Championship semi-final match between Dublin and Mayo at Croke Park in Dublin.**  
Photo by Ramsey Cardy/Sportsfile

many milestones ahead for our three young children," he added, before wishing Mayo 'every success in 2024.'

Mayo GAA Cathaoirleach Seamus Tuohy thanked Brendan for his 'unwavering commitment and dedication to Mayo GAA' and wished him well in his retirement.

"Brendan wore his heart on his sleeve, he was brave, committed and always gave 100 percent," said Touhy. Brendan was one of those players supporters loved. He was exciting to watch, and he lit up Hastings Insurance MacHale Park and Croke Park on so many occasions."

Mayo manager Kevin McStay paid tribute to Harrison's 'masterful' displays in the 2016 and 2017 All-Ireland finals.

"Brendan Harrison walks away from intercounty football with his head held high," said McStay.

"He was always a beautifully balanced footballer who combined real attacking flair with a penchant for the tighter confines of man marking.

"Injuries played havoc with his career, alas. We had hoped he would come back in 2024. At 31, he is young enough to continue playing on. Unfortunately, his injuries mean he has to call it a day. It was a pleasure to work with him during 2023 and he was a highly regarded and deeply popular figure in the Mayo panel," concluded McStay.

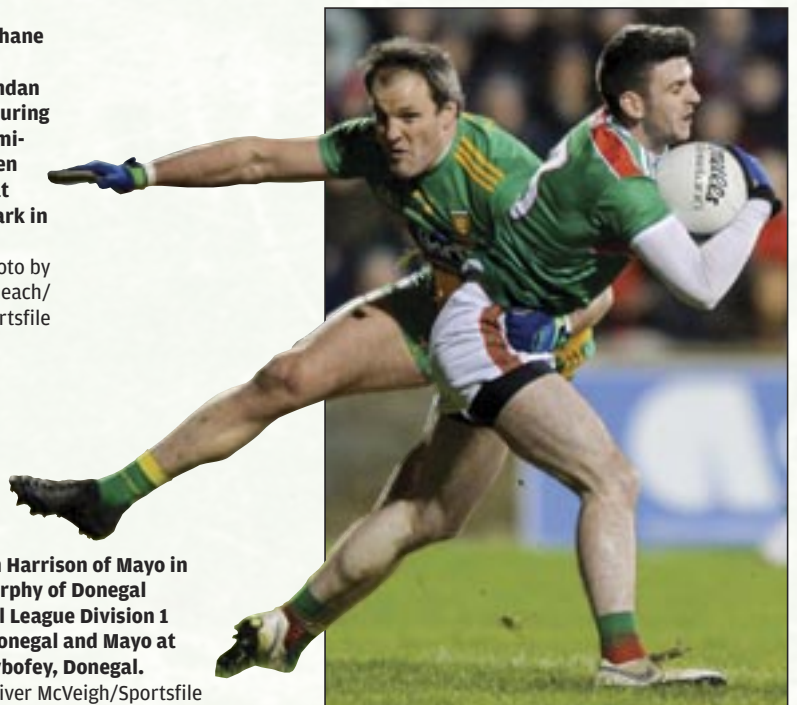


**12 January 2020: Shane Walsh of Galway in action against Brendan Harrison of Mayo during the FBD League Semi-Final match between Mayo and Galway at Elverys MacHale Park in Castlebar, Mayo.**

Photo by Piaras Ó Midheach/Sportsfile

**25 January 2020: Brendan Harrison of Mayo in action against Michael Murphy of Donegal during the Allianz Football League Division 1 Round 1 match between Donegal and Mayo at MacCumhaill Park in Ballybofey, Donegal.**

Photo by Oliver McVeigh/Sportsfile





# Second TG4 All-Star for Mayo ace Caldwell

DANIELLE Caldwell has been named on the TG4 Ladies Football All-Star team for the second year in a row.

The Castlebar Mitchels defender received her award at a ceremony at the annual LGFA TG4 All-Star awards banquet, in the Bonnington Dublin Hotel, where she was the only Mayo woman to receive such an honour.

Caldwell put in several eye-catching displays this season as the Mayo ladies won their first Connacht title since 2017 and reached their third All-Ireland semi-final in a row.

Clodagh McManamon, Ciara Needham, Kathryn Sullivan and Sinéad Cafferky, were the other Mayo players to be nominated on the night.

Speaking to The Mayo News, former Mayo manager Michael Moyles said he was not surprised to see the 26-year-old win her second All-Star.

Moyles cited her Connacht final and All-Ireland semi-final displays against Galway and Kerry as two of her best performances of the 2023 season.

“Even when things were going against us, I look back on that Kerry game in the All-Ireland semi-final, it was Dani that took the fight along with a few of her teammates, to Kerry. She always drove forward and she was a line-breaker for us,” said Moyles.

“I just think she’s fearless. The way the modern game is now you are nearly given more leeway to carry the ball in attack from a central position in the backline than you are as a wing-forward,” he added.



**18 November 2023: Danielle Caldwell of Mayo is presented with her TG4 LGFA All Star award by Ard Stiúrthóir TG4 Alan Esslemont, left, and Uachtarán Cumann Peil Gael na mBan, Mícheál Naughton during the TG4 All-Ireland Ladies Football All-Stars Awards banquet, in association with Lidl, at the Bonnington Dublin Hotel.**

Photo by Brendan Moran/Sportsfile

“A wing-forward, you have to come back and around and be more defensive. Where Dani is coming from deep, coming

off shoulders, breaking game lines, and she’s fearless when it comes to tackling or going into tackles, she doesn’t hold back.”



**18 November 2023: TG4 LGFA All-Star award winners, back row from left; Abby Shiels of Dublin, Eilís Lynch of Kerry, Bernie Caffrey who was representing her daughter Leah Caffrey, Danielle Caldwell of Mayo, Lauren Magee of Dublin, Martha Byrne of Dublin, Cáit Lynch of Kerry, Sarah Dunne who was representing her sister Jennifer Dunne and Lorraine Scanlon of Kerry, and front row from left; Niamh Carmody of Kerry, Orlagh Nolan of Dublin, Ciara O’Sullivan of Cork, Louise Ní Mhuircheartaigh of Kerry, Carla Rowe of Dublin and Hannah Tyrrell of Dublin with Ard Stiúrthóir TG4 Alan Esslemont, left, and Uachtarán Cumann Peil Gael na mBan Mícheál Naughton during the TG4 All-Ireland Ladies Football All-Stars Awards banquet, in association with Lidl, at the Bonnington Dublin Hotel.**

Photo by Brendan Moran/Sportsfile



# Conroy looks ahead to new year with college and county



TOMMY Conroy watched the 2024 Sigerson Cup Final draw in Croke Park like a hawk.

Now in his final year in the University of Galway, this is his last opportunity to win one of the most coveted medals in Gaelic games.

He already has one from 2022, but the Mayo star doesn't quite feel like he won it because he tore his cruciate ligament in the quarter-final of the competition that year.

"It was brilliant to win but it was tough at the same time looking on from the sideline," says Conroy.

"Terrific win, but it is my final year in Sigerson and it would be nice to win one on the pitch, even though I have the medal. When you are not playing in the final or semi-final it's slightly bittersweet."

That knee injury put paid to Conroy's 2022 season, but after a year back now playing for club, county, and college, his career is very much back on track again.

"Thank god, touch wood it's feeling great now and I don't really think about it anymore, I've built that confidence again," he says.

"I think gradually throughout the season more so than anything, the confidence just starts coming back.



**5 December 2023: University of Galway footballer Tommy Conroy poses for a portrait with the Sigerson Cup before the draw for the Electric Ireland GAA Higher Education Championships at Croke Park in Dublin.**

Photo by Piaras Ó Mídhéach/Sportsfile

"Even just in training like, we have some really good defenders so when you are marking some of them in training, it really tests you.

"By the time you get back into playing games, you kind of know you are ready."

Conroy thinks his enforced break from the game might ultimately have done him some good. He came back feeling fresher and with a renewed appetite for playing football at the highest level.

"I suppose it kind of gives you that step back from the intensity of kind of going from training session to training session all the time especially when you are 21, 22, you are playing with so many teams as well.

"There is very little time to step back from sport. It did give me that bit of breathing space.

"I think the big thing I took away from it was how privileged you are to be playing at the highest level, because once it's all taken away from you, you kind of realise how cool it is to be playing football at the highest level. It's only really when you step back and you start missing it, that's when it starts dawning on you."

Conroy started back training with Mayo last weekend and is looking forward to trying to right some of the wrongs of an up and down 2023 season that saw them beaten heavily by Dublin in the All-Ireland SFC Quarter-Final.

"We were definitely disappointed at the end of the season," he says.

"I suppose looking back on it, we were going really well in the League.

"Disappointed against Roscommon. I think we regrouped really well after that. Went into the Kerry game down in Killarney, done really well down there, done okay against Louth.

"I think the big slip up really was we didn't finish well against Cork, lost that game and that put us in a tough position I suppose to approach the rest of the season. We had to play three games in three weekends.

"That probably made it tough on ourselves. We have definitely a lot of learning to take from last year.

"There are a lot of younger lads there too that will be that bit more experienced this year.

"So, yeah, I think we will hopefully go into the year a bit stronger."



**25 June 2023; Cian Hennon, left, and Jack Glynn of Galway block a shot by Tommy Conroy of Mayo during the GAA Football All-Ireland Senior Championship Preliminary Quarter Final match between Galway and Mayo at Pearse Stadium in Galway.**

Photo by Brendan Moran/Sportsfile





# Conroy relishing Lahardane MacHales journey

EDDIE CONROY laughs about the madness of it all. Football is always on the agenda. Just when Conroy thought he might get a break from sport, Lahardane MacHales hooked him back in.

Not that Conroy needed too much persuading. There was just something about Lahardane that appealed to him.

"They got me involved, I don't know how, I was humming and hawing, then I said I'd give it a go, that is where we are now," he remarks. "You have to enjoy these days and to enjoy life, as much as you can. This is just another one of these days that you will enjoy."

Conroy and Lahardane have connected. "It probably is a good fit," he acknowledged ahead of the AIB Connacht Club JFC Final against Sligo's Owenmore Gaels at Hastings Insurance MacHale Park.

"I liked the way when I was talking to the chairman Derek Sheridan - the way he was talking, I said I'd give it one year, to see how we go. I didn't know anything about them.

"All I knew was that they went down from intermediate last year. After Christmas I met the lads, we had a plan going forward what we would do. It just clicked after the league. When the league was over we clicked together.

"We had a plan in place, we said the league didn't go the way we wanted, let us just focus on championship. Every team is like that. When the league is over, you concentrate on your championship. That is what we did and it is where we are now."

Conroy has relished the Lahardane adventure. "I played football for Breaffy, I'm originally from Charlestown, I played senior football with Charlestown," he explains.



"I left Charlestown early and I was then with Breaffy. I spent longer with Breaffy than Charlestown, where I played all my underage football. I played one year senior and I moved to Castlebar after that and joined Breaffy. Then Lahardane came calling, so I've three clubs now that I'm attached to."

Two decades ago Conroy featured in a successful campaign for Breaffy at this level. "We were junior when I joined, Charlestown were senior," he recalls. "I was going giving up football until Breaffy came calling.

"I stuck with Breaffy right up until I was 44, I played adult football right up until I

was 44. With Breaffy we won the junior and intermediate one year after one another. Breaffy haven't gone down since - once we went senior."

In recent times Conroy has been a key figure in Mayo Masters teams. "I played right up until this year, I'm 48, but I said it was my last year playing football," he chuckles. "I did my shoulder in my last game, so I said I'm finished with playing - staying on the sideline. It might be easier, but it isn't easier."

Conroy, though, has still found a way. Football peppers the conversations in Mayo, but in Lahardane there is a real sense of optimism once more. "It is great





any time you get to a final, especially for a small community like Lahardane," Conroy comments.

"It is a tight knit community, so it is great for them to look forward to another day out. That is all we are looking at, it is another big day out for them."

Following a relegation it can be a demanding time for a club. Undoubtedly it was a challenge to get Lahardane motor-ing again, to instil belief and generate momentum. "It is very hard," Conroy responds.

"I've seen many a team struggle. I said to the boys that it is very hard when you go down, you can get stuck down for three or four years before you get out of it. So, it was a thing that was in my head, if we were going to do it, we were going to do it this year.

"We've done it, we've come out of the junior, but it is very hard. Even for players, to motivate themselves, thinking do we give it another year to get back up.

"In fairness, we held off training until April and that has kinda stood to us in the later stage. We didn't start training until April and I think that has benefited us more than anything else. We seem that bit more sharper."

Through winning matches and having fixtures on the agenda the winter is being shortened. "Christmas is around the corner, and you are thinking are we still playing football?," Conroy says enthusiastically.

"When we were training the last night I was saying t the boys, who would have said at the beginning of April that we'd be still training at the end of November?

"You take it. There isn't many teams out there still training in November so we are lucky in a way, that we are still involved in a competition. I think it is great.

"You have two teams left in Connacht, somebody has to lose at the weekend, but it is a great achievement to get where we are after what happened last year."

Opportunities to perform on the Castle-bar stage must be relished. Playing games against unfamiliar opposition in the province adds another layer of intrigue. "There is a big excitement," Conroy admits.

"At senior level everybody is trying to cancel each other out. At junior level you are trying to see what they do or who are their best players? At the end of the day, you just have to mark up with who you have.

"I think they just have to go out to enjoy themselves more than any other team. That is my motto, the next day, to just go out, enjoy it, hope for the best. If it works out, it works out.

"If it doesn't, we are unbeaten in Mayo for the year and we got to a Connacht final, that is a great achievement for the lads."

That approach has worked nicely for Conroy and Lahardane MacHales.

# Mulderrig takes the reins in Ballintubber



**MAYO giants Ballintubber have named Tom Mulderrig as their new senior football manager.**

The former Bohola Moy Davitts player and manager fills the vacancy left by joint-managers Damien Coleman and Cathal Hallinan, who stepped down in the wake of Ballintubber's Mayo SFC quarter-final extra-time defeat to Castlebar Mitchels.

"Ballintubber GAA Club are pleased to announce the appointment of Tom Mulderrig as the new senior team manager for 2024. We wish Tom, his backroom team and all our players the very best of luck in 2024," the club said

in a Facebook post.

"Tom's appointment comes following the recent departure of Damien Coleman and Cathal Hallinan from their managerial roles.

"We would like to thank Cathal, Damien, their coaches and backroom team for all their hard work, dedication and professionalism shown throughout the past year," Ballintubber GAA stated.

"We look forward to one day working with them again within the club and wish them all the very best for the future."



# All-Star delight for Roscommon and Enda Smith



17 November 2023; Enda Smith of Roscommon with his PwC GAA/GPA All-Star Award during the 2023 PwC GAA/GPA All-Star Awards at the RDS in Dublin.

Photo by David Fitzgerald/Sportsfile

ENDA SMITH has become Roscommon's first All-Star since 2001.

Smith was named on the 2023 PwC selection at left half forward – the only Connacht player on the annual 15.

He is the first All-Star from the county since Francie Grehan from St. Aidan's was chosen at centre-back in 22 years ago.

He becomes the 12th Roscommon player to win an All-Star, following in the footsteps of Mickey Freyne (1972), Dermot Earley (1974, 1979), Pat Lindsay (1977), Harry Keegan (1978, 1980, 1986), Danny Murray (1979, 1980), Tom Heneghan (1979), Gerry Connellan (1980), Paul Earley (1985), Tony McManus (1989), Enon Gavin (1991) and Francie Grehan (2001).

Smith has since revealed how a change of heart at the last minute may well have saved his career over 16 months ago.

The Boyle player revealed that he was just about to board a plane to the USA at Dublin Airport in July 2022 in the aftermath of Roscommon's defeat to Clare in the All-Ireland qualifiers when he had to turn back on the advice of Dr. Martin Daly.

"I had my bags put through. I was through security heading for US customs. I had a scan on (an injury) the Monday, and this was the Thursday. Then I saw the phone ringing. It was Martin Daly.

"We had a bit of small chat. Then he told me that I couldn't go to America. I had a stress fracture in my pelvis. He made it very clear that things would not end well if I went over and played football on it.

"I was caught between two stools. I had told the club over there that I was going. But I turned around and came back. I suppose I went with my gut instinct, but I was in bits. If you saw me in the airport at that moment, you'd think that something shocking had happened to me," he recalled.



17 November 2023: Enda Smith of Roscommon and Jean Flanagan on arrival at the 2023 PwC GAA/GPA All-Star Awards at the RDS in Dublin.

Photo by Seb Daly/Sportsfile



17 November 2023; Enda Smith of Roscommon is interviewed by MC Marty Morrissey during the 2023 PwC GAA/GPA All-Star Awards at the RDS in Dublin.

Photo by Brendan Moran/Sportsfile





# Triple-whammy for Roscommon footballers



**24 June 2023: Conor Daly of Roscommon during the GAA Football All-Ireland Senior Championship Preliminary Quarter Final match between Cork and Roscommon at Páirc Uí Chaoimh in Cork.**

Photo by Tom Beary/Sportsfile



**26 February 2023: Roscommon selector Mark McHugh during the Allianz Football League Division 1 match between Monaghan and Roscommon at St Tiernach's Park in Clones, Monaghan.**

Photo by Ramsey Cardy/Sportsfile



**24 June 2023: Cian McKeon of Roscommon during the GAA Football All-Ireland Senior Championship Preliminary Quarter Final match between Cork and Roscommon at Páirc Uí Chaoimh in Cork.** Photo by Tom Beary/Sportsfile

THE Roscommon senior football camp has suffered a triple-whammy with the loss of selector/coach Mark McHugh and two of their regular starters, Conor Daly and Cian McKeon, for the coming season.

McHugh, an All-Ireland-winner with Donegal in 2012, won't be involved in the Rossies' management team as Davy Burke embarks on his second year at the helm.

The Roscommon Herald reported the story, citing a Roscommon GAA spokesperson who confirmed that McHugh wasn't in a position to be part of the 2024 set-up because of the travel commitments involved.

The 2012 All Star was a key member of Burke's management team as they finished third in Division 1 and ambushed Mayo in Connacht before eventually

succumbing to Cork in an All-Ireland SFC preliminary quarter-final.

Another outgoing selector, former Sligo footballer Gerry McGowan, had already departed the fold. His place has been filled by Lar Wall, who led The Downs to last year's Westmeath SFC title and a Leinster club final appearance against Kilmacud.

Meanwhile, the Herald revealed that Daly and McKeon are heading to Australia for the foreseeable future, while quoting Burke as saying the door will remain open for a return if they come back to Ireland in the short term.

On a more positive note, Ultan Harney and Ronan Daly (brother of Conor and Niall) are due to return home in the coming weeks and will then rejoin the inter-county fold. Both players missed the past season after venturing overseas.



# Family affair for Sligo star Duffy

By DAIRE WALSH

IT WILL very much be a family affair for Leah Duffy when she attempts to secure a Connacht LGFA Intermediate Club Championship title in the colours of Eoghan Rua against Ballinamore Sean O’Heslins of Leitrim at Markievicz Park later today (throw-in 1pm).

A regular starter for Sligo throughout 2023, the TUS Athlone student is the daughter of former inter-county referee Marty Duffy. A member of the GAA’s National Referees panel for several years, he took charge of the All-Ireland senior men’s football championship decider between Munster rivals Kerry and Cork in 2009.

Although he has served as chairperson of the Connacht referees committee and the referees’ appointments committee since hanging up his whistle in 2017, the past few years has also seen Marty maintaining a passion that long preceded his time on the inter-county scene.

Since its early inception as an LGFA club for players from Castleconnor, Enniscrone and Easkey, he has been heavily involved with the aforementioned Eoghan Rua.

When they won the 2020 Connacht LGFA junior crown at the expense of Galway’s Naomh Mhuire – in a final that was actually played in June 2021 – Marty was one of the team’s selectors, while Leah started at left half-forward and amassed a personal haul of 2-3. The father-daughter combo remain in these respective roles over two years later and will be hoping for another provincial success later this afternoon.

“He’s one of the coaches. He’s not the main man, but he’s there and it’s very special being there with him. I just take his advice more than anyone and I love going home, and having a chat with him. Analysing everything with him,” Leah explained.

“He’s been in and out of Eoghan Rua since the very beginning, since they started up. I think when they started up he was one of the main guys there. Throughout the years, from coming up from U12, and even when I was playing with the

boys U10s or whatever, he’d be involved. Everyone loves having him around. He’s a great coach, in fairness to him.”

In addition to her father, Duffy’s uncle Michael was also a highly-regarded GAA referee in the past. He was in the middle for Kerry’s All-Ireland U21 football final triumph against Kildare in 2008 and the All-Ireland minor football showpiece between Tyrone and Cork two years later.

Michael’s sons Brian and Gavin have also represented Sligo on the playing field in recent years and they are all expected to cheer on Leah when she takes to the pitch for today’s final.

“We are a very proud family and we’re such a GAA-based family. My cousins and everything are playing with Sligo. These big occasions, my family just love it. Everyone is involved and my aunt and uncles, and everybody will be there. We’re a very proud family and we’re a very supportive family,” Leah said.

By progressing to this current stage of the club championship, Duffy and Eoghan

Rua have defied the odds to a certain extent. Viewed as outsiders heading into a Sligo intermediate championship showpiece with Drumcliffe-Rosses Point, they survived a late rally from their opponents to record a 3-13 to 3-10 victory.

Similarly, Eoghan Rua were expected to be up against it when facing Salthill/Knocknacarra in a Connacht IFC semi-final last Sunday week – given their counterparts enjoyed a clean sweep of junior club silverware in 2022 and went on to claim second-tier honours within Galway this year.

Yet the West Sligo women were confident in their own abilities and finished with two points to spare (2-13 to 1-14) in an enthralling encounter that went all the way to extra-time in Salthill.

**Leah Duffy scoring a goal from a penalty during the All-Ireland U16 ‘C’ Championship Final 2019 match between Louth and Sligo at Mullahoran in Co Cavan.**

Photo by Oliver McVeigh/  
Sportsfile







**24 July 2019: Leah Duffy of Sligo scoring a point despite the tackle of Amy Farrell of Louth during the All-Ireland U16 'C' Championship Final 2019 match between Louth and Sligo at Mullahoran in Co Cavan.**  
 Photo by Oliver McVeigh/Sportsfile

"We saw what they had done in the junior last year. We know that they were probably favourites going into Sunday, but I think almost going in as underdogs, it helped us a lot. I don't think anyone was expecting us to come out on top.

"It definitely encouraged us more, we'd almost have a point to prove. I think they were meant to be favourites for the intermediate. It definitely encouraged us more than anything to kick on and to upset the competition a bit.

"I think even in Sligo, I don't think people would have expected [us to win]. We're West Sligo, we're smaller than a lot of the clubs in Sligo town and I just don't think people would have expected us to come out with that result on the day [against Drumcliffe-Rosses Point]. We just love upsetting the bigger teams. It encourages us more and drives us on."

Whereas their game with Salthill/Knocknacarra went right down to the wire, Ballinamore Sean O'Heslins come into today's fixture on the back of an emphatic 4-12 to 1-9 win over Mayo's

MacHale Rovers in the competition's other semi-final. That said, Duffy is hopeful that coming through a tighter contest will stand to Eoghan Rua once the ball is thrown in for a novel occasion at the home of Sligo GAA.

"It's not every day that you have a Sligo/Leitrim Connacht final either. I'm hoping maybe that because we had the tight game and we had the extra-time, that we might just have that bit of an upper hand when things do get tight in the final. Definitely both teams are going to be

coming in swinging, so we'll see."

When you consider she played Sligo's opening game in Division 3 of the Lidl National Football League against Clare back on January 22 – and was a mainstay for the Yeats County in the months that followed – it has been a year of non-stop action for Duffy. There is every chance her season could be extended into December if Eoghan Rua can make it beyond the provincial club championship, but she has been more than happy to put her shoulder to the wheel.

"It was very full on this year, between club and county. It was quite hard at times. There was a few times where I wondered what the hell I was doing! It is hard work and especially coming into the winter months, it is hard work, but it is worth it in the end," Duffy added.

"Hopefully we can kick on towards December as well after the Connacht final. We'll be back again with county soon as well. Not much of a break, but hopefully now it will be worth it in the end."



**24 July 2019: Leah Duffy of Sligo in action against Caitlin O'Reilly of Louth during the All-Ireland U16 'C' Championship Final 2019 match between Louth and Sligo at Mullahoran in Co Cavan.**

Photo by Oliver McVeigh/Sportsfile

# St Brigid's back on



**3 December 2023; Eddie Nolan of St Brigid's in action against John Cunningham, right, and Michael Lundy of Corofin during the AIB Connacht GAA Football Senior Club Championship final between St Brigid's, Roscommon, and Corofin, Galway, at Dr Hyde Park in Roscommon.**

Photo by Piaras Ó Mídheach/Sportsfile

## **AIB CONNACHT SENIOR CLUB FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL**

### **St Brigid's (Roscommon) ..1-13 Corofin (Galway) ..... 2-5**

A LOCKDOWN defensive display from Brian Stack and 1-07 from Ben O'Carroll at the other end of the pitch were the key ingredients for St. Brigid's as they recorded their fifth ever AIB Connacht senior club football title, and their first since 2012.

On that occasion, the Kiltoom and Cam club went on to win their one and only All-Ireland and they'll be considered as strong contenders to do the same again this time around, based on the quality of this display.

The 1-6 to 1-2 interval lead for the Roscommon champions only served to flatter Corofin, who registered their goal through Liam Silke with the last play of

the half to give themselves a lifeline.

A seven-point lead would have only been a fair reflection of St. Brigid's dominance, which stemmed from their outstanding man on man defending in front of goal. Aside from Brian Stack taking control of his battle with Sice, Pearse Frost was outstanding up against Jack McCabe, who was man of the match in the semi-final between Corofin and Castlebar, while Robbie Dolan was also very effective on both sides of the ball, winning several turnovers.

The home supporters started to believe that a good day was in store when Ben O'Carroll fired in a penalty in the 12th minute, capitalising on a foul on Alan Daly by Bernard Power. Corofin replied with a thunderous shot from Conor Cunningham that crashed off the cross bar, following up with a couple of points to cut the five point lead to three, 1-2 to 0-2. However St. Brigid's took over again in the second quarter, with O'Carroll adding most of their scores.

Silke's goal gave Corofin cause for hope and they were rejuvenated after half-time, with Patrick Egan and Conor Cunningham playing well while Kieran Molloy gave them a jolt of energy off the bench. The Galway side were back within a point when after eight minutes of the second half a long spell of possession down the left ended with Michael Farragher setting up Dylan McHugh on the run, and the Corofin wing back duly added the final touch with a clever and accurate flick of the ball in the air.

That would have tested the resolve of many teams, but St. Brigid's only got better from then on, and they added five of the next six points to establish a commanding lead once more. Brian Stack rounded off a stellar defensive display with a point of his own and another powerful run that set up a Ciarán Sugrue score, while O'Carroll and Ruaidhrí Fallon added further points from play to conclude a memorable afternoon for the South Roscommon side, who now advance to

# top in Connacht

an All-Ireland semi-final clash with the Munster champions.

**SCORERS - St. Brigid's:** Ben O'Carroll 1-7 (1-0 pen, 0-4f), Bobby Nugent 0-3f, Brian Stack 0-1, Rúaidhrí Fallon 0-1, Ciarán Sugrue 0-1.

**Corofin:** Liam Silke 1-0, Dylan McHugh 1-0, Jack McCabe 0-2, Gary Sice 0-2 (0-1f), Darragh Silke 0-1 45.

**ST BRIGID'S:** Cormac Sheehy; Robbie Dolan, Brian Stack, Pearse Frost; Ronan Stack, Alan Daly, Ruaidhrí Fallon; Eddie Nolan, Shane Cunnane; Bobby Nugent, Paul McGrath, Conor Hand; Ben O'Carroll, Brian Derwin, Ciarán Sugrue.

**Subs:** John Cunningham for Hand (51), Conor Gleeson for Derwin (57), Seán Trundle for McGrath (60+1)

**COROFIN:** Bernard Power; Ross Mahon, Conor Cunningham, Liam Silke; Brian Cogger, Dylan McHugh, Gavin Burke; Patrick Egan, Ciarán Brady; Dylan Wall, Darragh Silke, Michael Farragher; Jack McCabe, Gary Sice, Micheál Lundy.

**Subs:** Kieran Molloy for Wall (half-time), Conor Newell for D Silke (43), Daithí Burke for Farragher (48), Glen McHugh for Burke (53), Tony Gill for Egan (58)

**REF:** Barry Judge (Sligo).



3 December 2023: Ben O'Connor of St Brigid's in action against Gavin Burke of Corofin during the AIB Connacht GAA Football Senior Club Championship final between St Brigid's, Roscommon, and Corofin, Galway, at Dr Hyde Park in Roscommon. Photo by Piaras Ó Mídeach/Sportsfile



3 December 2023; St Brigid's goalkeeper Cormac Sheehy celebrates with wife Anne, his daughters Emily, front, and Annie after victory in the AIB Connacht GAA Football Senior Club Championship final between St Brigid's, Roscommon, and Corofin, Galway, at Dr Hyde Park in Roscommon.

Photo by Piaras Ó Mídeach/Sportsfile



3 December 2023; Gary Sice of Corofin in action against Brian Stack of St Brigid's, 3, during the AIB Connacht GAA Football Senior Club Championship final between St Brigid's, Roscommon, and Corofin, Galway, at Dr Hyde Park in Roscommon. Photo by Piaras Ó Mídeach/Sportsfile



# ST BRIGID'S: Connacht



**3 December 2023: Ben O'Connor of St Brigid's is with his AIB man of the match award by Cian Harmon of AIB after his side's victory in the AIB Connacht GAA Football Senior Club Championship final between St Brigid's, Roscommon, and Corofin, Galway, at Dr Hyde Park in Roscommon.**

Photo by Piaras Ó Mídheach/Sportsfile

# Senior Club Champions



**3 December 2023: St Brigid's celebrate after victory in the AIB Connacht GAA Football Senior Club Championship final between St Brigid's, Roscommon, and Corofin, Galway, at Dr Hyde Park in Roscommon. Photo by Piaras Ó Mídheach/Sportsfile**



**3 December 2023: St Brigid's joint-captains Mark Daly, left, and Paul McGrath lift the Shane McGettigan cup after their side's victory in the AIB Connacht GAA Football Senior Club Championship final between St Brigid's, Roscommon, and Corofin, Galway, at Dr Hyde Park in Roscommon. Photo by Piaras Ó Mídheach/Sportsfile**



# Young bull McCabe is master of Corofin's field

**CONNACHT SENIOR CLUB FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP SEMI-FINAL**

**Corofin (Galway) .....0-16**  
**Ballina Stephenites**  
**(Mayo)..... 0-12**

**By JOHN FALLON**

THERE are 20 years in the age difference between Gary Sice and Jack McCabe but the two inside forwards worked the young bull and old bull routine to perfection for Corofin as they saw off Ballina Stephenites in this Connacht SFC club semi-final in difficult circumstances at Pearse Stadium.

With Sice, the holder of 13 county senior medals, seven Connacht titles and four All-Ireland club crowns, admonishing



**18 November 2023: Gary Sice of Corofin during the AIB Connacht GAA Football Senior Club Championship Semi-Final match between Corofin, Galway, and Ballina Stephenites, Mayo, at Pearse Stadium, Galway.**

Photo by Ray Ryan/Sportsfile



**18 November 2023: Darragh Silke of Corofin in action against David Tigue of Ballina Stephenites during the AIB Connacht GAA Football Senior Club Championship Semi-Final match between Corofin, Galway, and Ballina Stephenites, Mayo, at Pearse Stadium, Galway.**

Photo by Ray Ryan/Sportsfile

McCabe for cheeky chip pick-ups and praising him for fisting over points than trying to go for goals, the 19-year old turned in a remarkable display.

He landed five points from play, shooting off both feet and racing through to punch two keys scores just when Ballina were rallying in the second-half, in what is turning out to be a superb debut season at senior level for a forward who featured for the Galway U-20s this year and is on Padraic Joyce's radar.

Sice was busy too, not just dictating the flow but picking off 0-5 himself, three of them from play as the 39-year old turned into another superb display for a Corofin side with a great mix of youth and experience as they go in search of their eleventh Connacht title and sixth All-Ireland crown.

McCabe said afterwards that the exploits of Sice and his generation had inspired him when he was growing up in Corofin.

"We went around to the primary schools after the county final a couple of



**18 November 2023: Daithi Burke of Corofin is congratulated after the AIB Connacht GAA Football Senior Club Championship Semi-Final match between Corofin, Galway, and Ballina Stephenites, Mayo, at Pearse Stadium, Galway.** Photo by Ray Ryan/Sportsfile



**18 November 2023: Ballina Stephenites goalkeeper David Clarke during the AIB Connacht GAA Football Senior Club Championship Semi-Final match between Corofin, Galway, and Ballina Stephenites, Mayo, at Pearse Stadium, Galway.**  
Photo by Ray Ryan/Sportsfile

Two pointed frees from Sice and one apiece from captain Dylan McHugh and midfielder Patrick Egan — another youngster making a huge impression — pushed Corofin 0-4 to 0-0 in front before Frank Irwin opened Ballina’s account at the end of the opening quarter.

Wing-back McHugh and Egan again went forward for points as Corofin built a six points interval advantage, although Evan Regan gave the Mayo champions hopes when he landed his third free less than a minute after the restart.

Ballina managed to get the gap down to a goal with over ten minutes remaining but McCabe killed the contest when he burst through and both times fisted a point.

“Maybe I could have gone for goal but we probably needed the points as they had just got a few scores so I tapped them over and kept the scoreboard ticking over,” added McCabe. “The lads out the field did all the hard work and the ball coming in was excellent.”

**COROFIN:** J McCabe 0-5, G Sice 0-5 (0-2f), D McHugh 0-2, P Egan 0-2, M Lundy 0-2.

**BALLINA STEPHENITES:** E Regan 0-5 (0-4f, 0-1m), F Irwin 0-3 (0-1f), J Irwin 0-1, C Boland 0-1, M Birrane 0-1, C McStay 0-1.

**COROFIN:** B Power; L Silke, D McHugh, C Silke; M Farragher, C Cunningham, G Burke; P Egan, Ciaran Brady; B Cogger, M Lundy, T Gill; G Sice, D Wall, J McCabe. **Subs:** O Burke for Power (half-time), D Silke for Wall (half-time), R Mahon for C Silke (38), G McHugh for Farragher (48), Colin Brady for Gill (52), D Burke for Ciaran Brady (59).

**BALLINA STEPHENITES:** D Clarke; L Golden, G Cafferkey, S Callinan; C Boland, D Tighe, S Regan; L Feeney, M Murray; N Feeney, C Treacy, F Irwin; E Regan, J Irwin, C McStay. **Subs:** J Doherty for Cafferkey (11), M Dirrane (0-01) for Treacy (41), D Thornton for Murray (41-52), C Sweeney for J Irwin (56).

**REF:** Barry Judge (Sligo)

weeks ago,” said McCabe. “Eight years ago I would have been in sixth class looking up at the Gary Sices, Daithi Burkes, Ronan Steedes and these lads and now for me making it into the team it’s a privilege to be honest. Sicey and the boys, they are a breath of fresh air. They’d put an arm over your shoulder and just guide you through a game. It’s unbelievable.

“Work rate comes first and then we can play ball after that. That’s what we build ourselves on. There is a serious panel building there and lads are chomping at training. Training on Tuesday night will be interesting now with lads mad for road for a Connacht final.

“Connacht final is where we want to be. You get over a county final, we knew we needed to tune in for this one and now we have two good weeks of training to look forward to a Connacht final.”

Ballina gambled by opting to play against the strong breeze and while they restricted Corofin to just a point in the closing eight minutes of the opening half, they were in trouble when they went in trailing by 0-9 to 0-3.



**18 November 2023: Gary Sice of Corofin signs autographs for young supporters after the AIB Connacht GAA Football Senior Club Championship Semi-Final match between Corofin, Galway, and Ballina Stephenites, Mayo, at Pearse Stadium, Galway.**  
Photo by Ray Ryan/Sportsfile

# St Brigid's survive Mohill test

## CONNACHT SENIOR CLUB FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP SEMI-FINAL

**St Brigid's (Roscommon) .....1-7**  
**Mohill (Leitrim) .....0-8**

A STUTTERING, hesitant finish from St. Brigid's almost allowed Mohill to snatch a most unlikely victory at Dr. Hyde Park this afternoon, but the Roscommon champions just about held on to secure a place in the AIB Connacht senior final alongside Corofin next month.

Despite the low scoring, the contest followed a script that would have suited the home side perfectly over the first 50 minutes. Mohill played with the aid of a strong breeze in the first half and some impressive early points from Keith Beirne gave their travelling supporters something to shout about, even if St. Brigid's did a good job of holding possession for long spells and winding down the clock.

Mohill led by the odd point in five when they were hit with a hammer blow in the shape of a black card for intercounty midfielder Domhnaill Flynn after 16 minutes, but the period when he was off the pitch proved uneventful, with both sides seemingly happy to keep ball in hand and play around the fringes of the opposition defence.

Jordan Reynolds squeezed over a point from a tight angle before Ben O'Carroll replied with a free in the closing minutes of the first half, but such was the strength of the breeze that it was St. Brigid's who would have been marginally the happier team at the interval.

With Cormac Sheehy directing kick-outs very well and Mohill struggling to



**6 August 2021: Bobby Nugent of Roscommon during the Electric Ireland Connacht GAA Minor 2021 Final match between Roscommon and Sligo at Dr Hyde Park in Roscommon.**

Photo by Piaras Ó Mídeach/Sportsfile



**14 October 2018: Ciaran Sugrue of St. Brigid's in action against Michael Kelly of Castlereagh St. Kevin's, during the Roscommon County Minor Club Football Championship Final match between Castlereagh St. Kevin's and St Brigid's at Dr Hyde Park, Roscommon.**

Photo by Barry Cregg/Sportsfile

create and convert chances into the breeze, St. Brigid's were comfortably the better team in the second half, even allowing for their poor accuracy. Four of their first five shots of the second half went astray with Ronan Stack the only one to hit the target, but they looked to have established a winning position when Brian Derwin fisted the ball over the bar from close range and then they scored the game's only goal, Ciarán Sugrue applying the finish after a slick move up the pitch that started with Bobby Nugent fielding another laser-like kickout from Sheehy.

A majestic strike from Domhnaill Flynn in reply was Mohill's first point of the second half but Brigid's handled that setback well, and points in reply from John Cunningham and Bobby Nugent left them five points up with ten minutes to play.

Suddenly, the momentum of the contest shifted decisively, as Flynn and Conor Quinn took over at midfield, while an uncharacteristic element of chaos and panic crept into St. Brigid's play.

Quinn found the target in the 56th minute, Ronan Kennedy finished off a spell of pinball close to the St. Brigid's goal with a hooked kick to reduce the gap to a goal, and the stage was set for a dramatic finale when Keith Beirne struck his fourth point in the first minute of stoppage time.

Brian Stack's emergence off the bench despite his injury last week was a sign of the nervousness of the St. Brigid's side and the South Roscommon club had to deal with a couple of high balls into their full back line in the closing minutes, but none of those yielded the goal chance that Mohill needed to secure what would have been their first ever win in the Connacht senior club football championship.

**SCORERS - St. Brigid's:** Ciarán Sugrue 1-0,

Bobby Nugent 0-3f, Ben O'Carroll 0-1f, Ronan Stack 0-1, Brian Derwin 0-1, John Cunningham 0-1.

**MOHILL:** Keith Beirne 0-4 (0-1f), Jordan Reynolds 0-1, Domhnaill Flynn 0-1, Conor Quinn 0-1, Ronan Kennedy 0-1.

**ST BRIGID'S:** Cormac Sheehy; Luke Griselain, Seán Trundle, Pearse Frost; Ronan Stack, Alan Daly, Ruaidhrí Fallon; Eddie Nolan, Shane Cunnane; Robbie Dolan, Paul McGrath, Conor Hand; Ben O'Carroll, Ciarán Sugrue, Bobby Nugent. **Subs:** Brian Derwin for Trundle (half-time), John Cunningham for Hand (50), Mark Daly for Sugrue (56), Brian Stack for Nugent (60+4).

**MOHILL:** Pádraig Tighe; James Mitchell, Seán Harkin, Ryan Bohan; David Mitchell, Shane Quinn, Alan Tuthill; Domhnaill Flynn, Conor Quinn; Ronan Gordon, Keith Beirne, Keith Keegan; Jordan Reynolds, Ronan Kennedy, Evan Harkin. **Subs:** Alan Armstrong for D Mitchell (37), Éanna Madden for Gordon (41), Tadhg Mulligan for Harkin (51), Caillin Canning for Tuthill (51).

**REF:** James Molloy (Galway).



**20 September 2020: Ronan Stack of St Brigid's during the Roscommon County SFC Final match between Padraig Pearses and St Brigid's at Dr Hyde Park, Roscommon.**

Photo by Harry Murphy/Sportsfile



# Provincial glory for Castlerea St Kevin's



Castlerea St. Kevin's captain Michael Conroy lifts the Gene Byrne Cup to confirm his side as Connacht champions at Tuam Stadium this afternoon.

## CONNACHT INTERMEDIATE CLUB FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP - FINAL

**Castlerea St Kevin's**  
(Roscommon) .....**2-4**

**Monivea Abbey**  
(Galway) .....**0-8**

CASTLEREA St. Kevin's produced another famous performance from a Roscommon team at Tuam Stadium to be crowned Connacht intermediate football champions.

In keeping with their season, Dara Bruen's side unleashed a defensive masterclass to stun Galway champions, Monivea-Abbey, and bring the Gene

Byrne Memorial Cup back to West Roscommon.

The 2-4 to 0-8 success was built on that defensive solidity alongside two goals from Eoghan O'Connell and substitute Nathan Bligh at the right times.

O'Connell gave the Roscommon challengers a dream start after four minutes, and by the midway mark, the provincial champions in waiting were 1-3 to 0-3 to the good, having frustrated their opponents.

Two quick Monivea-Abbey scores on the resumption hinted at a tight and tense second half, and that's exactly how it transpired.

Nathan Bligh's 37th minute goal handed Castlerea a cushion they wouldn't relinquish when his speculative shot from

40 metres was dropped into the net by Monivea-Abbey goalkeeper Denis Farragher.

Try as they might, Monivea-Abbey couldn't reel in their opponents as Castlerea, led by Jack Keane, David Finneran, Thomas Callaghan, Shane Keenan and Seán Joyce, held firm. Captain Michael Conroy was everywhere, while goalkeeper David Farrell made an incredible save to deny the Galway side the goal they needed.

In what was the last game before the "hayshed" in Tuam is demolished, it was fitting that the famous old stadium witnessed another historic Roscommon success.

The last dance was indeed one of the sweetest.

# St Brigid's survive Mohill test

**CONNACHT INTERMEDIATE CLUB FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP SEMI-FINAL**

**Castlerea St Kevin's (Roscommon) .....2-6**  
**Easkey (Sligo)..... 0-9**

CASTLEREA St. Kevin's have qualified for the Connacht club intermediate football championship final following a 2-6 to 0-9 victory against Easkey at a damp and dreary Markievicz Park.

Two goals from Adam McDermott in the opening half laid the platform for victory, and although Easkey were back on level terms early in the second half, the West Roscommon side found their second wind with the impact off the bench, once more, making the difference.



Adam McDermott

Castlerea relied on the oxygen of Adam McDermott's two goals in the 13th and 18th minutes to keep them afloat during the opening half.

Easkey were the better team in the first half, with full-forward Andrew Kilcullen leading the line excellently, but by the midway mark, the Sligo champions were 2-1 to 0-5 behind at the break.

When Ryan Gillespie and Kevin Duffy found the target to bring the sides level after 33 minutes, all the momentum was with the home side.

But an inspirational point from substitute Nathan Bligh kickstarted a glut of scores for Dara Bruen's side, which were followed by points by the impressive Donal Brennan and another substitute, Niall Connaughton.

They maintained that buffer until the end to qualify for a Final against Monivea Abbey or Kilmeeena.

# Farragher saves the day for Monivea-Abbey

**CONNACHT INTERMEDIATE CLUB FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP SEMI-FINAL**

**Monivea-Abbey (Galway) .....1-8**  
**Kilmeeena (Mayo). 0-10**

MONIVEA-ABBEY are treading new ground as they qualified for the Connacht Club Intermediate football championship final for the first-time ever following a nerve shattering one point semi-final win over Mayo champions Kilmeeena in Tuam Stadium.

With the old stand due to be demolished at the hallowed ground, it was lucky to survive the day as the roof was almost lifted off by the volume of cheering from Monivea-Abbey supporters when goalkeeper Denis

Farragher saved a late penalty to allow them maintain their slender margin and a passage to the decider against

Castlerea St Kevin's.

Having weathered somewhat of a storm from the visitors in the closing quarter, Francis Roche's charges were living off scraps and hanging on as the clock wound down. Then with time almost up a Darragh Slattery pass released Sean Ryder behind the defence and as Farragher advanced quickly off his line, he was adjudged to have fouled the attacker and a penalty was the award.

Darragh Keaveney had the option to go for a point to level matters and send the game to extra time or take his chance on getting the better of Farragher and get the match winning goal. While his penalty was not the most powerful effort, Farragher guessed correctly when moving to his left to push the shot away from the danger area.

However, the ball was not cleared and Keaveney got another bite of the cherry, but on this occasion his first-time shot flew across the face of goal and wide of the far post.

The long final whistle moments later saw an invasion of players and supporters down to the Monivea-Abbey goal area where they mobbed Farragher and afterwards the modest goalkeeper was taking it all in his stride.



Keith O'Reilly of Monivea-Abbey

# Lahardane hold their nerve in penalty shoot-out

CONNACHT JUNIOR CLUB FOOTBALL  
CHAMPIONSHIP SEMI-FINAL

**Lahardane MacHales**  
(Mayo) .....0-12  
**Menlough (Galway)** .....1-9  
(AET) Lahardane win 5-3 on penalties

LAHARDANE MacHales manager Eddie Conroy found it hard to find the words to explain what had been a rollercoaster of a Connacht semi-final in Castlebar.

"I can't describe that game. We never fully got going in the first-half and in the second, we were playing into a stiff breeze. We had to dig deep, and to come from five points down at one stage to get back into the game, just displays the character that is in this team. There is also great resilience in this panel of players.

"Everyone has bought into this project and what we are trying to do for the team and the club. I am delighted for every one of them (players) and also the community," said Conroy who admitted he felt it harsh that Menlough had to exit the championship because of a penalty shoot-out.

"For me a penalty shoot-out is not part of Gaelic football and a replay would have been better for the two teams. However, they are the rules and we have to play by them and we are where we are now and will prepare for a Connacht final."

Lahardane already have experience of winning the Connacht junior championship having done so in 2017 just after they won the county title for the first time in their history. John Maughan was in charge then and now it's Eddie Conroy who is hoping the club can regain the provincial prize.

"We are kind of used to the wet and windy conditions at this stage. We are in a Connacht final and this is where we want to be at this stage of the season.

"We found out during the final moments of extra-time that we were the only Mayo team left in the club championships and we wanted to put some pride back in Mayo football. I heard someone this week talking rubbish that we are cocky people in Mayo. We are not cocky and we don't have to be cocky. We are from Mayo and we are proud to be Mayo people.

"We find ourselves in a Connacht final and we are going to look forward to it."

Originally from Charlestown but



A general view before the Connacht GAA Football Senior Championship Quarter-Final match between Mayo and Roscommon at Hastings Insurance MacHale Park in Castlebar, Mayo.

Photo by Ramsey Cardy/Sportsfile

synonymous for his years spent playing with Breaffy and Mayo's over-40s team, Eddie Conroy admitted to being wary of the threat that will be posed next time out by Sligo champions Owenmore Gaels.

"We can't play as bad in the Connacht final as our first-half display today. However, if we display the same resilience and doggedness that we showed today, then we will stand a good chance. Sligo football is on the up and neither team will be the raging hot favourite going into the final. It will probably be the toughest battle that we have faced all year.

"After today we have four or five injuries and they will take time to heal."

The manager concluded by saying that days like last Sunday should be savoured and noise that the Lahardane MacHales supporters brought to Mayo football HQ.

"Enjoy moments like this, as you never know what is around the corner. The lads will have a few pints tonight and then we are back on the training field next week.

"In the lead up to the Connacht final, no doubt the parish of Lahardane will be buzzing. As I said earlier, I am delighted for the community and they were here in force today to cheer us on to victory."

THE most unassuming of penalty kicks from Mickey Murphy booked Lahardane's place in the Final.

The game that could have been won by both teams, who coughed up several chances in wet and windy conditions that weren't conducive to slick football.

Despite not scoring from play until the 43rd minute, Lahardane did just enough to force the game to extra time and subsequently to penalties – where they scored all five of their spot-kicks.

Lahardane were dealt a hammer-blow

in the eighth minute when Donal Loftus saw his shot blocked before Kevin Reilly executed a superb rebound finish.

Despite the aid of a strong wind, Eddie Conroy's men did not score until James Maughan pointed a straightforward free in the 18th minute.

Frees from James Maughan (2) and Shane Loftus were all that Lahardane had to show for a first half where they failed to score from play.

Leading 1-5 to 0-3 at the break, Menlough only managed one point in the next 20 minutes as they lost substitute Seán Naughton to a black card.

There were chances aplenty for both sides in extra time, who had several misses and errors in the wet and windy conditions.

Despite valiant efforts all around, neither team could break the deadlock as normal time finished level.

A glorious goal chance when astray for the Galway men when Donal Loftus crashed a penalty kick off the crossbar seconds into extra-time.

Lahardane added two to their tally from an outside-of-the-boot effort from Mickey Murphy and Eoin Fergus – who fisted over a bouncing ball to level in the 76th minute.

James Maughan had the chance to win it with the very last play of the game, but he ballooned his effort way off to the right before referee Ronan Hughes blew the whistle to herald a penalty shootout.

Maughan and Chris Rowland both converted their kicks before Menlough's Robert Hughes sent his effort into the sky.

Menlough buried their next two kicks, as did Lahardane's Shane Finnerty and Matthew Maughan before Mickey Murphy booked their place in the provincial decider.



# Lahardane Gaels claim Co



## AIB CONNACHT JUNIOR CLUB FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

**Lahardane MacHales**  
(Mayo) .....3-10  
**Owenmore Gaels**  
(Sligo) .....1-12

OWENMORE Gaels put up a valiant fight with Mayo champions Lahardane MacHales in the AIB Connacht Junior Club football final and despite a never-say-die performance, ran out losers on a four point margin in Castlebar.

This was the Sligo champions' first ever Provincial final at this grade and they really put it up to their opponents.

As the throw-in time approached, there was speculation around MacHale Park whether or not this Provincial decider would go ahead at all, visibility extremely poor due to heavy fog and orange footballs being used to make things easier, however the fog somewhat lifted in the second half.

Three goal chances in the first half for Gary Mullen's side and a couple as the game entered injury time could have changed the outcome dramatically for the Sligo side.

An early chance went wide for the Mayo outfit as Sligo intercounty player Mark Walsh then had the first of the game's chances on goal shortly after

throw-in, a great run seeing Lahardane MacHales keeper Joe Queenan making a decent save as the hardworking Kyle Mullen was fouled and brother and free-taker Aaron stepped up to convert the game's opening score on eight minutes.

Matthew Maughan won and pointed a mark three minutes later for Lahardane MacHales and they took the lead on 13 minutes through James Maughan from play. Again Kyle Mullen did well to win

another free-in and Aaron converted midway through the half, both teams with two points each.

Dillon Walsh, superb throughout, ran the length of the pitch offloading to Conor Davey whose goal shot was just wide. Daire Callaghan who was impressive for Owenmore Gaels did brilliantly to point after a pass from Stephen Fallon.

Lahardane MacHales responded with Shane Finnerty on target, Callaghan then pointing a foul on Fallon as Owenmore Gaels went in front again.

The Mayo side then hit the net, good work out the field seeing a long ball into Matthew Maughan who palmed to the net on 22 minutes, in front by two. Man-of-the-match Kyran Jordan overturned and pointed from play as a goal separated them.

Mark Walsh did well and sent a quickly taken free into the path of his brother Dillon who sent over a lovely score, back to a two point game. Then, Lahardane MacHales pounced for their second goal, Adrian Leonard finding Jordan who ran from distance and goaled on 24 minutes. Owenmore Gaels' keeper Shaun O'Boyle picked up an injury after the goal and had to leave the field of play, Jason Farrell coming in to replace him. Callaghan did brilliantly overturning and winning a free in which the hardworking Ryan Quigley sent into Fallon which just went narrowly wide. Aaron Walsh won another free in for the Sligo side and Mullen sent a long high ball over the bar, the Owenmore Gaels



# Connacht Junior Club glory



supporters cheering as four points separated them.

Then, Owenmore Gaels had another goal chance, their third of the half, Garrett Lavin offloading to Mark Walsh who sent a dangerous ball into the path of the

onrushing Conor Davey, Queenan punching away, the rebound falling to Dillon Walsh who pointed, Owenmore Gaels behind by 0-7 to Lahardane MacHales' 2-4 at the interval.

The Mayo side pointed a minute after the resumption, Adrian Leonard on target and they went further in front, Jordan linking up with Mark Noone who got his first of two. Six points separated them after a huge point from Darragh Walsh on 38 minutes.

The excellent Callaghan responded for Owenmore Gaels on 41 minutes as moments later they had another goal chance, Kyle Mullen doing brilliantly to overturn and Dillon Walsh had two shots on goal, the first saved and the rebound off the line, Mullen then pointing a foul on Kyle Mullen on 42 minutes, back to a four point game and Owenmore Gaels reducing the deficit.

Benny Joyce linked up with Noone for his second midway on 45 minutes and the Mayo side then scored their third goal, Noone offloading to Shane Finnerty who scored their third goal on 47 minutes, putting them in front by eight.

Many teams might have thrown in towel, but Mullen responded immediately with a fine score from play, Jordan adding another for their opponents, their second last score of the game.

Mullen added another foul on Fallon with ten minutes to go and then Owenmore Gaels did hit the net. Dillon Walsh

on a blistering run with the goal in sight and his shot rattled the roof of the net on 52 minutes, back to four point game as the intensity levels were huge.

Owenmore Gaels brought it back to a goal after good work from Mark Walsh and Ryan Phillips saw Mullen pointing the free. Adrian Leonard added another point for Lahardane MacHales as Aaron Mullen had a goal shot which was defended and he followed with a free deep into injury time trying to drop into the danger area, but it went out wide, Fallon was then shown a second yellow. Owenmore Gaels kept pressing however Lahardane MacHales had done enough but were given a big test by Mullen's side.

**LAHARDANE MACHALES:** Joe Queenan, Barry Leonard, Cathal Finnerty, Kieran Lynn, Aaron Murphy (C), Keith O'Malley, Aodán Cronin, Kyran Jordan (1-2), Shane Finnerty (1-1), Shane Loftus, James Maughan (0-1), Mark Noone (0-2), Matthew Maughan (1-1 m), Adrian Leonard (0-2), Darragh Walsh (0-1)

**Subs:** Jarlath Maughan for B Leonard (18 inj), Benny Joyce for Cronin (43), Mickey Murphy for Loftus (48), Keelan Dyra for Lynn (58), Eoin Fergus for Matthew Maughan (58)

**OWENMORE GAELS:** Shaun O'Boyle, Roan Conneely (JC), Liam Gilligan, Mark Anderson, Kyle Mullen, Jamie Callaghan, Ryan Quigley, Aaron Walsh, Mark Walsh, Daire Callaghan (0-3 1f), Aaron Mullen (0-7 5f), Dillon Walsh (1-2), Garrett Lavin, Stephen Fallon, Conor Davey (JC)

**Subs:** Jason Farrell for O'Boyle (28), Pa Murphy for Lavin (38), Ryan Phillips for Davey (45).

**REF:** Christopher Ryan (Galway).



# Owenmore Gaels advance to Connacht decider

**CONNACHT JUNIOR CLUB FOOTBALL  
CHAMPIONSHIP SEMI-FINAL**

**Owenmore Gaels**  
(Sligo) .....0-14

**Glenfarne Kiltyclogher**  
(Leitrim) .....1-8

OWENMORE GAELS' footballers are into the AIB Connacht GAA Club Junior Football final after victory over Glenfarne Kiltyclogher in Began.

Gary Mullen's side will face Lahardane MacHale's in the decider, the Mayo outfit defeating Menlough 5-3 on penalties after the sides couldn't be separated after extra-time.

The Sligo Junior champions were given a big test by the Leitrim runners-up, who led at the interval in a blustery Began. There was a sizeable support for Owenmore Gaels in the Connacht Centre of Excellence, with the game being

switched from Carrick-on-Shannon following a pitch inspection on Saturday.

Aaron Mullen was sensational for the Sligo side, hitting eight frees during the hour, with Sligo U20 footballer Dillon Walsh causing their opponents plenty of bother in the second half as Owenmore Gaels took control of the game.

However, it was anything but plain sailing particularly in the opening half, with Tom O'Reilly's side playing with the aid of the breeze.

The Leitrim side led by three points at the break, the excellent Patrick Gilgunn hitting the net on ten minutes, earlier on seven minutes in teammate Padraig Sweeney saw his goalbound effort brush off and over the crossbar.

Joint captain Conor Davey got the Sligo side off the mark on 2 minutes through a free after the lively Stephen Fallon saw his effort drop into the goalkeeper's hands. Sligo intercounty player Mark Walsh saw his goal chance saved on five minutes as Glenfarne Kiltyclogher captain Fergal Clancy, impressive

throughout, sent over a free after Neville McDermott was fouled.

They overturned possession and Sweeney was bounding towards goal, his effort bouncing over the crossbar. A foul on Ronan Sweeney saw Mullen hit his first of eight on nine minutes with Kyle Mullen then moments later setting up Dillon Walsh who sent over a good point as Owenmore Gaels took the lead.

It was shortlived however as Glenfarne Kiltyclogher came racing up the field, possession falling to Gilgunn who blasted into the net. Owenmore Gaels responded and it was Garrett Lavin who did well to overturn possession finding Ryan Quigley who passed to Kyle Mullen who sent over a good score.

It was level midway through the half with Dillon Walsh finding Jamie Callaghan who added Owenmore Gaels fifth point. Two minutes later, the Leitrim side edged in front again, good work from Niall Clancy linking up with Sweeney.

A good effort from a placed ball saw Gilgunn putting them two in front on 19



**Began Pic 2: 6 March 2022; A general view of the pitch, which is located beside the NUI Galway Connacht GAA Air Dome, before the Lidl Ladies Football National League Division Division 1A, Round 3 match between Mayo and Donegal at Connacht GAA Centre of Excellence in Began, Mayo.**

Photo by Sam Barnes/Sportsfile

minutes playing with the breeze. Another free in saw Clancy's effort just drop short.

A free in for Owenmore Gaels saw Mullen's effort sweeping to the right and wide, however referee Ian Monaghan gave a free in as Fallon was adjudged to have been fouled, an easy tap over for Mullen .

The excellent Clancy sent a fantastic ball into Clancy who sent over a brilliant point on 25 minutes as it was end to end stuff in front of a good crowd.

A good run from Fallon saw Ronan Sweeney with a point attempt seeing the effort drift wide, down the other end the influential Gilgunn got the last score of the half for the Leitrim side, which seen them in front by three, 1-6 to 0-6.

Glenfarne Kiltyclogher started the second half well, Clancy winning a free in which Gilgunn mishit and it was the same two players involved in their next score. Good work from Clancy to find Gilgunn with a goal chance on and the ball went over the bar as their lead increased to four.

Dillon Walsh did well to win a turnover and a free in which Mullen duly sent over on 37 minutes. Again it was Walsh again who was fouled with Mullen on target as two points separated them on 43 minutes.

A push on Lavin saw Mullen again on target with the free as the Leitrim lead was being chipped away. Owenmore Gaels were showing more composure



and Fallon did well to overturn and win a free, Mullen sending over a huge score to the delight of their support as it was back level.

Jamie Callaghan did well to win another free in for the Sligo side, Mullen again showing composure to give Owenmore Gaels the lead on 51 minutes. A foul on Glenfarne Kiltyclogher's Sweeney was quickly taken and Clancy was then fouled with Gilgunn slotting over as it was back level again on 53 minutes.

Quigley won a free down the other end for Owenmore Gaels on 55 minutes, who else but Mullen converting. Niall Clancy

winning a free for Glenfarne Kiltyclogher which Fergal Clancy sent wide.

The point of the game arrived then from Mark Walsh of Owenmore Gaels from an acute angle. Jamie Callaghan overturned and won a free in with the ball then being recycled and a dangerous ball fell straight into the path of Niall Clancy who could have went for goal, a let off as Owenmore Gaels managed to defend.

Fallon was unlucky to see his attempt hit off the post and out wide with Davey then showing great leadership to score Owenmore Gaels' 14th point deep into injury time as Glenfarne Kiltyclogher were trying to find the goal they needed but it was Owenmore Gaels who held on and will face Lahardane MacHales in the decider.

**OWENMORE GAELS:** Shaun O'Boyle, Roan Conneely (JC), Liam Gilligan, Mark Anderson, Kyle Mullen (0-1), Jamie Callaghan (0-1), Ryan Quigley, Aaron Walsh, Mark Walsh (0-1), Stephen Fallon, Aaron Mullen (0-8 8f), Dillon Walsh (0-1), Garrett Lavin, Ronan Sweeney, Conor Davey (JC) (0-2). **Subs:** Daire Callaghan for R Sweeney (37), Aaron Jones for Lavin (52).

**GLENFARNE KILTYCLOGHER:** Stephen McPartland, Barry McDermott, Robbie Broughton, John McLoughlin, Cathal Cullen, Brian Fox, Dermot Harkin, Niall Clancy, Cian Rock, Neville McDermott, Fergal Clancy (C) (0-2 1f), Padraig Sweeney (0-2), Patrick Gilgunn (1-4 2f), Diarmuid Clancy, Hugh Clancy. **Subs:** Francis Keane for McDermott (38), Darren Murray for Hugh Clancy (45).

**REF:** Ian Monaghan (Roscommon).



28 January 2023; A general view of the Dome at the 2023 Lidl Ladies National Football League Division 1 Round 2 match between Mayo and Kerry at the NUI Galway Connacht GAA Centre of Excellence in Began, Mayo.

Photo by Piaras Ó Mídheach/Sportsfile

# Tooreen reign supreme



## CONNACHT INTERMEDIATE CLUB HURLING CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

**Tooreen (Mayo) .....0-21**  
**Ballinderreen (Galway) .0-19**

TOOREEN are the AIB Connacht club IHC champions for the third year in a row and the fifth time in the last six championships, after they came through an immensely entertaining battle with Ballinderreen of Galway.

Six years ago, Tooreen's run of success began with a win over the same South Galway opposition, but in terms of quality, there was no comparison between that fixture and this rip-roaring contest. Tooreen have matured as a group while still introducing some incredibly talented young players, and Ballinderreen arrived

at this game far more aware of the threat posed by their Mayo opponents, while also endowed with a team of ample physical power and raw hurling ability.

Despite suffering a serious loss when full-back Robbie Lane had to be helped off the field with injury in the second minute, the Galway side hit the ground running and exploded into an 0-4 to no score lead after ten minutes, the pick of the scores a peach of a strike on the run from midfielder Robbie Meehan.

Tooreen lined out with Stephen Coyne operating as a sweeper in front of his full-back line but Ballinderreen still caused problems close to goal where Niall Coen and Kieran Ryan were excellent targets for high balls, and that in turn opened up space further out the pitch, allowing the men in green to pick off a series of good points from 50 to 70 metres out.

A brace of dead ball scores from Seán Kenny settled Tooreen, but it was only

after Fergal Boland dropped back from wing forward to shore up things just behind midfield that they really found their feet in the game.

Once they did, they exploded into life, turning an 0-5 to 0-2 deficit into an 0-9 to 0-6 lead. Man of the match Eoin Delaney was a livewire close to goal, picking off two points in the space of 20 seconds at one stage, but it was their defensive solidity that allowed them to lead by two points at half-time.

Robbie Meehan again roused the substantial Ballinderreen crowd with a majestic strike off the right wing to start the second half, but Tooreen were about to embark on another purple patch, and this time they established a lead that was enough to see them through.

Delaney and Kenny Feeney both pointed, Shane Boland added three frees, and it took some outstanding play from former Galway underage hurler Niall Coen



# in Connacht again



Tooreen captain Shane Boland accepts the AIB Connacht IHC cup from John Murphy, Connacht GAA chairperson.

to drag his team back into the game. The rangy attacker was on target with three superb scores as the rain started to fall, the third of which reduced the gap to a single point.

When it came to contributions off the bench however, Tooreen manager Ray Larkin was able to dial up more impact, even though he left it late to call on his reserves. Brian Morley struck a good score with his first touch, Seán Regan made a meaningful impression on proceedings, and all of that helped Eoin Delaney to really stamp his class on matters late on, picking off two further points and helping to set up other scores as well.

A couple of late misses threatened to derail Tooreen as they left Ballinlerreen in the game going into stoppage time, and when David Harrison picked up a red card immediately after coming in off the bench, Ballinlerreen had an extra man on the

pitch to help with their chase of a late goal.

They had their chances too. David Mannion floated a high ball into the goalmouth with Evan Morgan missing his attempted double, but they were handed a second opportunity when Johnny Murphy awarded a 20 metre free.

Bobby Douglas did well to parry Roy Lane's initial effort but ultimately the contest swung on a swing of the ball that could have gone anywhere. Kieran Gill was sharpest to react to the breaking ball in heavy traffic and he got a clean strike on the sliotar, only to watch it sail over the bar and for Murphy to blow the long whistle with two points still between the sides.

Tooreen now advance to an All-Ireland semi-final clash with the Munster champions, as they continue their bid to finally win national honours at this level.

**SCORERS - Tooreen:** Eoin Delaney 0-5, Seán Kenny 0-5 (0-3f, 0-1 65), Shane Boland 0-5 (0-

4f), Liam Lavin 0-2, Oisín Greally 0-1, Kenny Feeney 0-1, Fergal Boland 0-1, Brian Morley 0-1.

**BALLINDERREEN:** Roy Lane 0-6 (0-5f), Niall Coen 0-4, Kieran Ryan 0-2, Kevin Lane 0-2, Robbie Meehan 0-2, Shane Larkin 0-1, Evan Morgan 0-1, Kieran Gill 0-1.

**TOOREEN:** Bobby Douglas; Gary Nolan, Michael Morley, Conal Hession; David Kenny, Seán Kenny, Joe Boyle; Daniel Huane, Liam Lavin; Oisín Greally, Kenny Feeney, Fergal Boland; Eoin Delaney, Stephen Coyne, Shane Boland.

**Subs:** Seán Regan for Boyle (48), Brian Morley for Feeney (50), John Cassidy for Huane (60+2), David Harrison for S Boland (60+2).

**BALLINDERREEN:** Michael Kelly; Brendan Burke, Robbie Lane, Hugh Moylan; Matthew O'Connor, Kieran Meehan, David Mannion; Kevin Lane, Seán Meehan; Robbie Meehan, Shane Larkin, Evan Morgan; Niall Coen, Kieran Ryan, Roy Lane. **Subs:** Seán Collins for Robbie Lane (2), Pádraig Lafferty for Ryan (42), David O'Connor for S Meehan (42), Kieran Gill for Burke (48), Stephen Mannion for Larkin (55)

**REF:** Johnny Murphy (Limerick).



# Easkey claim another Connacht Junior Club Hurling title

CONNACHT JUNIOR CLUB HURLING  
CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

**Easkey (Sligo) .....1-18**  
**Ballinasloe (Galway) .....2-12**

EASKEY hurlers have retained their Connacht Junior Hurling crown after a big battle with Galway's Ballinasloe in Began.

The Sligo champions, who reached the All-Ireland final in January 2023, put in a polished display but Ballinasloe kept fighting and a mere goal separated the sides at the full-time whistle in front of a big crowd at the Connacht Centre of Excellence.

The Sea Blues, despite their eldest player being 26, showed great maturity on the pitch and frustrated their opponents, freetaker Andy Kilcullen hitting 1-11 including a penalty with Fionn Cawley, back from injury, putting in a huge performance throughout the hour and hitting three of his side's scores.

It was Ballinasloe that got off to the better start with their freetaker Cathal O'Hanlon getting his first of seven after an early free on two minutes. John Coughlan added with a huge point from play as it was a good start from the Galway side.

Cawley got Easkey off the mark with a fantastic point on four minutes, O'Hanlon again converting a free down the other end on eight minutes. Kilcullen hit his first from a placed ball a minute later. O'Hanlon again adding a free on 12 minutes as moments later Ballinasloe had a goal chance, Evan Hayes with a superb pass to Coughlan whose effort skirted to the left hand side and out wide.

Kilcullen added another free midway through the half and then a great ball in saw Joe McHugh's goal chance tipped out for a '65, Kilcullen doing the honours as it was level at four points each.

Another good ball in to the full-forward line saw Kilcullen bundled to the ground and referee James Judge awarded the penalty, converted by Kilcullen as Easkey took the lead for the first time.

O'Hanlon added another free for a push on Michilin Fogarty as Aodhan Connaughton added a super score from play as it was back to a one point game on 24 minutes.

The midfield pairing of Mikey Gordon and Fionn Cawley were winning a lot of possession for Easkey as it was end to end stuff.

Fogarty with a point from play brought the game level with Easkey defending another chance. Gordon set up Cawley



**14 January 2023: Eoghán Rua McGowan and James Weir, 3, of Easkey in action against Seán O'Sullivan of Ballygiblin during the AIB GAA Hurling All-Ireland Junior Championship Final match between Ballygiblin of Cork and Easkey of Sligo at Croke Park in Dublin.**

Photo by Piaras Ó Midheach/Sportsfile

for an excellent score as Easkey won the puckout and again Cawley sent over a brilliant point, his third as Easkey led by two.

A good move involving Fionn Moylan set up Thomas Cawley for his first of two to loud cheers from the Easkey support as halftime approached. They extended their lead with Rory McHugh on target and a Kilcullen free after Joe McHugh was fouled. Easkey had a goal chance saved by the Ballinasloe keeper just before the break as they were in front by five at the interval, Easkey 1-9 Ballinasloe 0-7.

Ballinasloe needed a goal to get back into the game and shortly after the resumption they did just that. A dangerous ball in being flicked to the net by Evan Hayes after a scramble, the referee consulting his umpires and the goal given, back to a two point game. Kilcullen responded with two more frees as they were back five in front on 42 minutes, good defensive work from Dónall Hanley and Cawley setting up Joe McHugh who was fouled, Kilcullen pointing, Ballinasloe in need of another goal which did come.

Craig Keighery doing well under pressure and kicking the ball into the net, again back to a two point game and a cracker for any neutrals watching.

Kilcullen added another foul with Coughlan then sending over a fantastic point from play after a pass from Fogarty. O'Hanlon added another free as two

separated them, Kilcullen adding another as a goal separated them with ten minutes to go.

Two frees from O'Hanlon saw it back level with five minutes to go as both were battling hard. Another Kilcullen free pushed Easkey in front as a good ball in from Fionn Cawley to his brother Thomas saw the Ballinasloe keeper do well to avert danger. A foul on Fionn Cawley off the ball was converted by Kilcullen which was followed by a fine score from Joe McHugh.

Thomas Cawley adding another good score for Easkey, Jack Dillon also pointing for Ballinasloe as O'Hanlon lobbed a late free into the goalmouth area, Easkey keeper Jimmy Gordon doing well as Easkey win back to back titles.

**EASKEY:** Jimmy Gordon, Eoghán Rua McGowan, Gavin Connolly, Dónall Hanley, Niall Kilcullen, Rory McHugh (JC) (0-1), Ronan Molloy, Mikey Gordon, Fionn Cawley (0-3), Fionn Moylan, Joe McHugh (0-1), Kevin McGee, Thomas Cawley (0-2), Andy Kilcullen (JC) (1-11 10f '65), Fionn Cawley. **Subs:** James Weir for McGowan (54), Adam Rolston for Moylan (55),

**BALLINASLOE:** Shane Reynolds, Eoin Coleman (JC), Conor Coleman, Alan Caulfield, Craig Potter, Jack Dillon (0-1), Alan Reynolds, Michilin Fogarty (0-1), Cormac Casey, John Coughlan (0-2), Cathal O'Hanlon (0-7 7f), Aodhan Connaughton, Evan Hayes (1-0), Craig Keighery (1-0), Jason Cunningham. **Subs:** Adam Potter for Casey (44), Jack Mitchell for Connaughton (53), David Gavin for Cunningham (60)

**REF:** James Judge (Mayo).

# Easkey on the march again

## CONNACHT JUNIOR CLUB HURLING CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL MATCH REACTION

EASKEY have won back to back Provincial deciders after a big battle with Ballinasloe in Bekan.

The Sea Blues marched the whole way to the All-Ireland final in Croke Park in January 2023 and they are on course to return to GAA Headquarters once again after overcoming a strong Galway side.

Managers Michael Conway, Enda Moylan and Brian Healy were all delighted at the full-time whistle as Easkey won back to back titles, no mean feat by any means.

Michael praised the entire team for eking out the win. Speaking to the press afterwards he said it was a classic game; "Yeah, it was fairly close there in the second half with their goals but in fairness to our lads, they reacted well every time they got a goal.

"Especially in the last five minutes there, I thought we fought really hard, we had turnovers for overcarrying that Andy put over the bar and it was a great workrate."

He said his side possibly weren't playing at their best but there was no fault in their workrate.

"On reflection, we probably didn't play our best.

"But to be honest they didn't die, the workrate was there, some of the points and the scoring, free flowing hurling that we normally have wasn't there, but the

workrate was there and that's what stood to us in the end," he said.

Joint manager Enda Moylan said Ballinasloe really put it to them but the experience of being in games such as these stood to the Easkey lads.

"They gave us a very tight game and I think the experience stood to the lads. They were here before, they know what was wanted and the two goals at the start of the second half could have been a downfall for another team but it wasn't for us.

"The boys dug in and they knew what they had to do. Missed a few scores but they all dug deep and they all put in a big performance."

There were huge performances from Finnian Cawley, Rory McHugh and Andy Kilcullen to name a few but Moylan said it was about the team of players as a group.

"All of the guys stood up, every man of the field. It was a team performance and they all dug deep and they all knew what was required.

"This Ballinasloe team were here for one reason, they wanted to win.

"They wanted to go to Croke Park.

"We have been there before and we want to go there again.

"We played here last year, played against Ballygar and it was a totally different game, totally different day. Today was a good day for good, open hardy hurling and there was good hitting out there.

"At the end of the day, the lads to a man just stood up as a team they really pushed it on. They could have wilted there with the two goals."

This Easkey team despite being young

show admirable maturity on the field.

"They are a young team, the oldest is 26 years of age. They were talking about the Ballinasloe lads being young but we are a very young team. There are guys there with huge maturity, great leaders on the field and off the field.

"They deliver when you want them and that's what you want and I have to say they gave a great performance."

Michael added that the week previous there was disappointment for the west Sligo club's footballers who were beaten in the semi-final but the lads regrouped and focused on the game.

"St Farnan's I know they got relegated in Senior, but they had a long season as well. These fellas were playing in Croke Park in January and a lot of them were back in with the county a week after the All-Ireland final, either with the footballers, Mikey and Finnian or all the hurlers.

"They are going since Croke Park essentially and I'm delighted that they got their reward here today.

"They have put in serious sacrifices down through the year and it was disappointing on the football last week, played reasonably well and left a few scores behind us but it's good to be back up to Senior next year as well," Michael added.

What it means to the Club as a whole was evident with the supporters out in their blue and yellow, Enda said.

"Look around here, it's days like these any club lives for. All the children are out with their huris. It's a huge achievement for a small club and to achieve this again it's not by accident we are back again

"Looking forward to the next one now."



14 January 2023; A general view of the pitch before the AIB GAA Hurling All-Ireland Junior Championship Final match between Ballygiblin of Cork and Easkey of Sligo at Croke Park in Dublin. Photo by Piaras Ó Mídheach/Sportsfile



# Easkey claim final spot with comprehensive win

CONNACHT JUNIOR CLUB HURLING  
CHAMPIONSHIP SEMI-FINAL

**Easkey (Sligo) .....3-25**  
**Carrick (Leitrim) .....1-6**

AN energetic and effervescent Easkey swatted aside the challenge of a Carrick at Markievicz Par to progress to the Connacht Junior Club Hurling Final.

The Leitrim champions were no match for the men from west Sligo, who claimed a comprehensive semi-final win.

Apart from Easkey's silken skills and wonderful finishing from the talismanic Andy Kilcullen, the huge difference between the sides was the much greater level of fitness in the Easkey side.

Kilcullen finished with a mammoth tally of 2-14 as the west Sligo men strolled to the easiest of victories.

For a totally outgunned County Leitrim side, veteran Clement Cunniffe hit 0-6 from placed balls .

And centre back Conor Beirne first-time a loose ball to the net in the dying minutes. But that was the slightest of aberrations in a confident victory march for Sligo's finest. The winners deservedly led by 1-13 to 0-3 at the break and continued their relentless march to victory in the second half.

Easkey were on top from the off and easily outpaced and out hurled their ponderous opponents.

By the 10th minute, they had jumped into a 0-7 to 0-0 lead thanks to points from the irrepressible Kilcullen, Thomas Cawley and Joe McHugh.



**18 October 2020: Andrew Kilcullen of Sligo during the Allianz Hurling League Division 3B Final match between Sligo and Leitrim at the Connacht Centre of Excellence in Began, Mayo.** Photo by Harry Murphy/Sportsfile



**10 January 2023: Bernard Feeney of Easkey, Sligo, pictured ahead of the AIB GAA All-Ireland Hurling Junior Club Championship Final, which takes place this Saturday, January 14th at Croke Park at 5pm. The AIB GAA All-Ireland Club Championships features some of #TheToughest players from communities all across Ireland. It is these very communities that the players represent that make the AIB GAA All-Ireland Club Championships unique. Now in its 32nd year supporting the GAA Club Championships, AIB is extremely proud to once again celebrate the communities that play such a role in sustaining our national games.** Photo by Ramsey Cardy/Sportsfile

It got even better for Easkey in the 17th minute when a great run from Niall Kilcullen resulted in a fine save from Carrick keeper Lorcan Donnellan.

But the ball broke to the lurking Andy Kilcullen who finished to the net to put Easkey into a 1-7 to 0-0 lead and already, this game was well over.

Cunniffe opened the visitors scoring with a well taken side-line cut but that did little to stem the Easkey tide.

And the points continued to flow from Kilcullen and Thomas and Fionna Cawley as they led by 1-13 to 0-3 at the break.

The second half was a real canter for Michael Gordon's men, as both sides made a raft of substitutions.

Kilcullen grabbed his second scrambled goal in the 50th minute while Joe McHugh grabbed a third five minute from time. In between Kilcullen and impressive sub Mikey Gordon continued to hit the target. Cunniffe converted a few frees for Carrick, but this is a display they will want to forget.

Easkey now meet the winners of the

Galway final between Ballygar and their conquerors of last year from Salthill/Knocknacarra in the Connacht Junior final.

That will be the ultimate test of their greatness!

**EASKEY:** Jimmy Gordon; Shane Molloy, Gavin Connolly, Daniel Rolston; Ronan Molloy, Eoghan Rua McGowan, Donal Hanley; Finian Cawley, Niall Kilcullen; Fionn Moylan, Rory McHugh (0-1), James Weor; Thomas Cawley (0-4) Andrew Kilcullen (2-14f) Joe McHugh (1-3).

**Subs:** Bernard Feeney for Eoghan Rua McGowan, Fionn Connolly (0-1) for Donal Hanley. (h-time), Mikey Gordon (0-2) for Tomas Cawley (40), Ian Cawley for Niall Kilcullen (41), Emmett Brennan for Rory McHugh (48).

**CARRICK:** Lorcan Donnellan; Hughie Glancy, Paul Earley, Cian French: Shane Crowe, Conor Beirne (1-0), Cian Mallon; Brendan Delaney, Enda Moreton, Donal Moreton. Clement Cunniffe (0-2) Tom McNabola; Sean O'Riordan, James McNabola, Liam Phelan. **Subs:** Dessie Beirne for Cian Mallon (24), Paddy Keane for Cian French (34), Pierce Kenny for Donal Moreton (42), Fergal Gilmartin for Shane Crowe (45), Ralph McKeon for James McNabola (56).

**REF:** Matthew Farrell (Roscommon).

# Sarsfields book their place in another All-Ireland Final

**AIB ALL-IRELAND SENIOR CLUB CAMOGIE CHAMPIONSHIP SEMI-FINAL**

**Sarsfields (Galway) .....2-10**  
**Sarsfields (Cork) .....1-6**

BACK-TO-BACK defending champions Sarsfields of Galway moved on to yet another AIB All-Ireland club senior camogie championship final after battling past Sarsfields of Cork in Mallow.

Seeking three-in-a-row All-Ireland titles against Dicksboro of Kilkenny on December 17, they are clearly hungry for more, and it was their superb second-half showing that ensured their progress.

A brace of goals from Siobhán McGrath and Klara Donohue at the three-quarter mark were vital to the outcome.

After a mere 30 seconds, player-of-the-match Klara Donohue and Clodagh McGrath nudged Sarsfields of Galway into an early advantage. Those opening stages suggested the Connacht side were up for the fight.

Lucy Allen, who took over the free-taking from the absent Kate Fennessy due to illness (she was introduced in the second-half), put her side on the scoreboard in the third minute from a '45.

But, the Galway team's desire shone through once more, and by the quarter hour mark they were 0-5 to 0-2 ahead.

A worry for them though was a leg injury picked up by their captain and full-back Laura Ward, who appeared to run it off over the hour.

Sarsfields of Cork worked their way back into the game, and with five minutes to go to half-time, fine individual scores from Hollie Herlihy, Lucy Allen (free) and Orlaith Mullins left it a one-point match, 0-6 to 0-5.

Defiant defending it must be said too from the Cork club's back line, denying Shannon Corcoran a chance at goal.

Both sides were being penalised by referee Ray Kelly for illegal hand-passes, the Kildare whistler was very strict on this rule.

In the four minutes of added time, Caoimhe Kelly from an extremely tight angle, and Lucy Allen from a '45, exchanged white flags to leave the bare minimum between them after a closely fought opening half, 0-7 to 0-6 in favour of Sarsfields of Galway.

Klara Donoghue restarted the second-half just like she did the first, and then Siobhán McGrath, who had a great duel with Lucy Kelly, her low drive was pushed



**24 March 2023: Siobhán McGrath of Sarsfields, Galway, who was today crowned the 2021/2022 AIB Camogie Club Championships Player of the Year. McGrath is one of a host of #TheToughest players who will be honoured for their performances at the AIB Camogie Club Player Awards at Croke Park on Saturday evening, March 25th, where both the 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 AIB Camogie Club Teams of the Year, Provincial Players of the Year and Players of the Year will be recognised.**

Photo by Seb Daly/Sportsfile

out for a '45 by Molly Lynch - but they got no return from the placed ball.

The atmosphere was fiercely intense, as Siobhán McGrath set up Caoimhe Kelly to put her team two in front in the 40th minute.

Next came a moment of magic from Siobhán McGrath, her talent shining through as she raced through the opposing defence to fire an unstoppable shot to the top corner of the net.

No sooner had the celebrations died down when substitute Kate Fennessy replied for the Cork champions, 1-6 to 1-9.

Top-level defending denied an abundance of scores at either end, but when the next flag was raised, it was an important score from Klara O'Donoghue in the 52nd minute, who accepted Rachel Murray's pass to rattle the Cork net.

At this juncture, the Sarsfields of Galway defending was hugely effective, Cork's Sarsfields had to go for goal, but each time they were repelled.

A job well done by the Galway champions.

**SCORERS - Sarsfields (Galway):** K Donohue and S McGrath (0-1 free) (1-2 each), S Corcoran and C Kelly (0-2 each), Clodagh McGrath and R Murray (0-1 each).

**Sarsfields (Cork):** L Allen (0-4, 0-2 frees, 0-2 '45s), K Fennessy (1-0), O Mullins and H Herlihy (0-1 each).

**SARSFIELDS (GALWAY):** L Glynn; R Kelly, L Ward (Capt), K Gallagher; T Kenny, M Cooney, J Daly; Clodagh McGrath, S Spellman; K Donoghue, O McGrath, R Murray; S Corcoran, S McGrath, C Kelly. **Subs:** C Kenny for C Kelly (55), Ciara McGrath for L Ward (59), C Cahalan for R Murray (60).

**SARSFIELDS (CORK):** M Lynch; L Dunlea, L Kelly, E Murphy; C Lynch, O McAllen, N O'Callaghan; A Fitzgerald, E Twomey; O Mullins, H Herlihy, L Allen; C Mullins, E Woods, K Sheehan. **Subs:** R Roche for L Kelly (bs 20-23), K Fennessy for E Woods (36), R Roche for C Lynch (45), M McCarthy for K Sheehan (51), C O'Donovan for H Herlihy (54).

**REF:** Ray Kelly (Kildare).



# Captain Ward expecting



6 March 2022: Laura Ward of Sarsfields in action against Leanne Nolan, left, and Una Leacy of Oulart the Ballagh during the 2021 AIB All-Ireland Senior Camogie Club Championship Final between Oulart the Ballagh, Wexford, and Sarsfields, Galway, at Croke Park in Dublin.

Photo by Piaras Ó Mídheach/Sportsfile

## By DARAGH Ó CONCHÚIR

LAURA WARD knows Croke Park pretty well now. She knows what it's like to win and lose there, with club and county and returns to HQ on Sunday week, December 17 as captain of the Sarsfields team that attempts to complete an AIB All-Ireland senior club championship three-in-a-row.

As long-serving manager Michael 'Hopper' McGrath revealed however, they have first-hand knowledge of the challenge Dicksboro will provide.

Ward is an inspirational figure for the champions and there was considerable concern when she went down injured in the first half but she recovered to provide her trademark calm and assured performance in defence, as Sarsfields saw off their namesakes representing Cork and Munster, by 2-10 to 1-6 in Mallow on Saturday.

"The magic spray did the job and got us through," joked Ward when speaking to Galway Bay FM after the game. "The girls were brilliant and we needed everyone to get us over the line.

"It's unreal to be back in another All-

Ireland final. The scoreline doesn't show it but it was an absolute dogfight, up and down the field and we're just delighted to be back in an All-Ireland."

It was 0-7 to 0-6 at half-time and all to play for. Siobhán McGrath's 42nd minute goal opened some daylight for the Galway girls but Kate Fennessy responded two minutes later to give the Leesiders hope.

Clara Donohue put an exclamation mark on an excellent performance with another goal for the westerners and they held out from there.

"Clara has hurled so well for us all year," said Ward of the player that provided the definitive score. "It was massive and a well-deserved goal for her. It was brilliant for her to get the end result as she sets up so much as well. The forwards worked so hard, there was no easy ball coming down on top of us (in defence). It was brilliant.

"A lot of people say they're best friends and what not, but we honestly are a group of best friends. We get on so well. We've been together all the way up along. And when you're going out there on the pitch with a group of best friends like that, you don't want to let them down. You're going out to try your best. You do it for each

other and you keep going."

That spirit is a key element of the team's success according to the manager, although he admitted that his charges were far from perfect, perhaps due to a six-week break since the county final.

"There were times in that game it seemed to be going away from us but I think we put in a great second-half performance," McGrath noted

"We picked up a bit in the second half. Maybe at the start, we did leave players isolated, weren't quick enough in to support at times and maybe that comes from not playing games from the last five or six weeks. One thing you're always getting from the girls is fierce work rate. We done some silly things but I suppose their character and will to win shone through in the finish.

"There were seven points in it for a finish but whether we were seven points better than them is open to question. They missed a few goals in the last four or five minutes but it was all about getting over the line and getting a ticket to the final.

"We know we've a huge challenge against Dicksboro in the final. We played them earlier on in the year, before the championship stared. At that stage we'd a

# fierce Dicksboro test

full outfit and they beat us seven or eight points in a challenge. They're massive, they're a mature team and we know they're probably the team that's standing out in this campaign all along.

"When you have to come down into the middle of (the opposition), down into their territory and they had fierce support, and there were times when we probably thought we didn't get the rub of the green out there as well... Between the jigs and the reels, when it's all over, it's lovely to get a win down here."

In their semi-final at Donaghmore Ashbourne, Dicksboro overturned a five-point interval deficit to book their first appearance in the decider and the first for any Kilkenny team since, ironically given what will be at stake, St Lachtain's completed their three-in-a-row in 2006.

A goal from the outstanding Caitrin Dobbin put last year's runners-up, Loughgiel Shamrocks in the box seat at half-time but they only managed two points in the second half, while Asha McHardy pounced for two goals to propel the 'Boro into the decider on a 2-13 to 1-10 scoreline.



**6 March 2022: Laura Ward of Sarsfields in action against Una Leacy of Oulart the Ballagh during the 2021 AIB All-Ireland Senior Camogie Club Championship Final between Oulart the Ballagh, Wexford, and Sarsfields, Galway, at Croke Park in Dublin.**

Photo by Piaras Ó Midheach/Sportsfile

The senior final will be played as part of a double header with the intermediate decider and that will be contested by former junior champions Clanmaurice (Kerry) and Na Fianna (Meath).

The girls from the Kingdom continue to raise their standards and beating Galway opponents Shamrocks was another considerable scalp as they advanced courtesy of a 1-12 to 2-5 scoreline yesterday. Na Fianna had to dig very deep to chisel out a 1-9 to 0-9 victory over Tyrone side, Eglishe on Saturday.

The junior semi-finals were also held and Granemore (Armagh) came out on top of a thriller with Knockanna (Wicklow) by 3-12 to 3-6. They will play Roscommon's Athleague, who edged out St Joseph's Doora Barefield of Clare by 2-6 to 0-9.

The junior B final will be between Crossmaglen Rangers (Armagh) and St Munna's (Westmeath) at NGDC Abbotstown on December 16. Cross were far too strong for Roscommon Gaels in their semi-final, leading by 3-7 to 0-2 at half-time before cruising to a 7-12 to 1-3 success.



**17 December 2022: Catrin Dobbin of Loughgiel Shamrocks in action against Cora Kenny, 12, and Laura Ward of Sarsfields during the AIB All-Ireland Senior Camogie Club Championship Final match between Sarsfields of Galway and Loughgiel Shamrocks of Antrim at Croke Park in Dublin.**

Photo by Stephen Marken/Sportsfile



# Historic camogie title for Westport



The players and management of Westport following their victory in the Rose Nixon Cup camogie final at the Connacht GAA Air Dome in Began.

## CONNACHT CAMOGIE ROSE NIXON FINAL

**Westport (Mayo) .....3-17**  
**Carnmore (Galway) .....2-9**

WHEN joint-captains Ava Lambert and Lisa Scahill raised the Rose Nixon Cup, to rapturous applause from family and supporters, it was a mark that something special had just unfolded in the Air Dome at the Connacht GAA Centre of Excellence in Began. An impressive Westport outfit produced an exhibition of camogie throughout the sixty minutes, to be crowned Connacht junior club champions in an historic first for the club.

If ever there was a complete performance, this was it. A young team who were disciplined, extremely well organised and focused, were a step ahead of their Carnmore opponents throughout. From the moment the sliothar was thrown in, Westport set about dismantling the opposition in what was to prove a powerful performance from start to finish.

The opening quarter saw the teams trade scores, with Westport just edging it by a single point thanks to scores from player of the match Fionnuala McLaughlin, Meabh Tunney and Lisa Scahill. In the 16th minute however, a well-taken goal from Ava Lambert seemed to spark a reaction from the Carnmore girls. The revival proved somewhat shortlived though, and a further goal and two points from lively midfielder Fionnuala McLaughlin added further to the first-half supremacy of the girls in blue.

At the interval, Westport led by 2-5 to 0-6, and with just two of Carnmore's scores coming from play it was obvious a diligent Westport defensive unit were to the fore. Goalkeeper Ruth Crowley was

ably assisted by a tight and tenacious full-back line comprised of Ruby Lambert, Katlyn McGreal and Heidi O'Malley. The deployment of Eimear Geraghty as sweeper paid dividends, in offering support to a half-back line who were keen to push up on their opposition at every available opportunity.

The dream start of the first-half was mirrored by another blistering start to the second. An impressive run from midfielder Emily Kelly found Lisa Scahill who raised another green flag, less than a minute after the throw-in. Sustained pressure from Kate Scahill, Molly Tunney and Niamh Twohig resulted in a series of turnovers in the Carnmore defence, while wing-backs Megan O'Malley and Annie McGreevy were winning their individual

battles in impressive fashion. A Carnmore goal signalled a potential comeback, however, the hopes of the Galway girls were shortlived, with Westport in no mood to surrender. The introduction of substitutes Lisa Hastings, Christina McEvelly and Mary Kate McHale were timed to perfection, with all three bringing renewed energy when it was required.

In the final quarter, a collection of scores from Fionnuala McLaughlin, Lisa Scahill, Ava Lambert, Meabh Tunney, Emily Kelly and Kate Scahill saw Westport finish the game out in style, resulting in an emphatic victory.

There is no doubt it was this young Westport side's skill level, work-rate and honest endeavour which led to an historic victory.

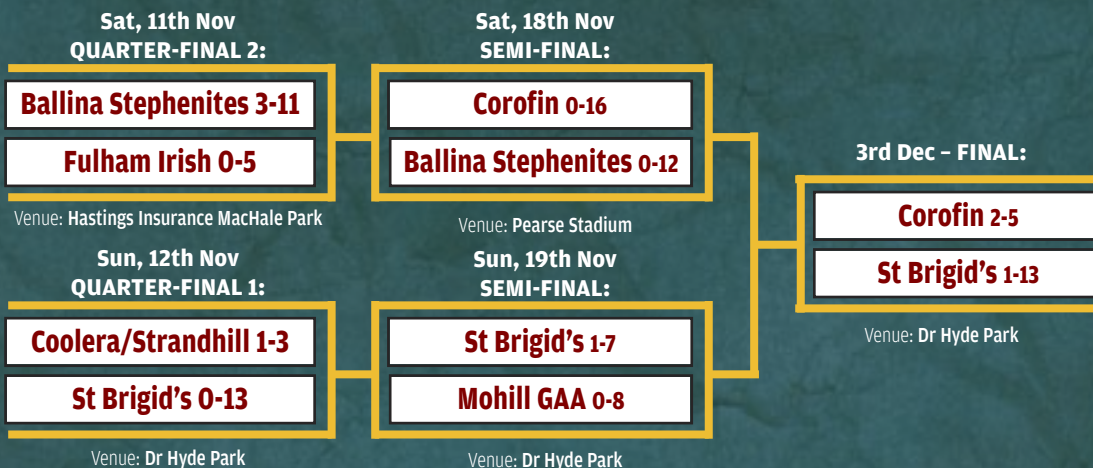


Ava Lambert and Lisa Scahill receive the Rose Nixon Cup following Westport's victory.



# AIB CONNACHT GAA CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP 2023

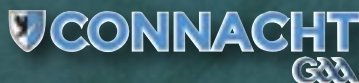
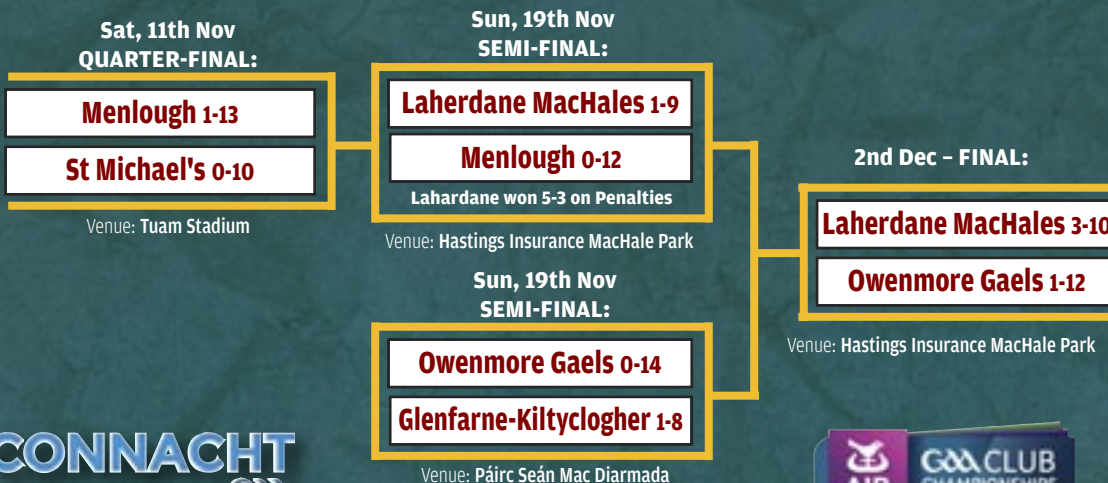
## CLUB SENIOR FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP 2023



## CLUB INTERMEDIATE FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP 2023



## CLUB JUNIOR FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP 2023



# Kilkerrin-Clonberne remain

**CURRENTACCOUNT.IE ALL-IRELAND LADIES SENIOR CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP SEMI-FINAL**

**Kilkerrin-Clonberne**  
(Galway) ..... **0-15**

**Kilmacud Crokes**  
(Dublin) ..... **1-10**  
**AFTER EXTRA-TIME**

**By DAIRE WALSH**

DEFENDING champions Kilkerrin-Clonberne will face Ballymacarbry in the currentaccount.ie All-Ireland Senior Club Championship decider as points from Meave Flanagan and Olivia Divilly helped them to overcome Kilmacud Crokes after extra-time in a pulsating semi-final encounter at Parnell Park.

Inseparable from their Dublin counterparts at the end of normal time, Kilkerrin-Clonberne – whose manager Willie Ward was absent for the game due to illness – had that little extra in reserve during the



**3 December 2023: Niamh Divilly of Kilmacud Crokes during the Currentaccount.ie All-Ireland Ladies Senior Club Championship semi-final match between Kilmacud Crokes of Dublin and Kilkerrin-Clonberne of Galway at Parnell Park, Dublin.**  
Photo by Matt Browne/Sportsfile

additional periods to keep their dreams of a third consecutive All-Ireland crown alive.

Following traded frees between Kilkerrin-Clonberne's Eva Noone and Kilmacud half-forward Niamh Cotter in the early stages, the title holders created some daylight with quickfire points courtesy of Eva Noone and Miskell. Crokes were eager to outline their intent, however, and their midfielder Grace Kos bagged an 11th minute goal after her initial strike was saved by opposition netminder Lisa Murphy.

This left Paddy O'Donoghue's Metropolitan charges with a slender cushion, which remained intact following traded scores between Eva Noone and Crokes inside forward Eabha Rutledge.

Yet Kilkerrin-Clonberne didn't panic and found themselves two points ahead as a result of Hannah Noone, Louise Ward and Olivia Divilly kicking unanswered scores. However, Crokes duo Rutledge (free) and centre half-back Kate Murray also found the range to leave the sides on level terms (1-4 to 0-7) at the interval. The Stillorgan women got the second half scoring underway on 39 minutes when Julia Buckley split the posts and while Lynsey Noone responded at the opposite end, Cotter (free) and Mia Jennings were on target to leave Crokes 1-7 to 0-8 in front on the third-quarter mark.

Although this threw down the gauntlet to Kilkerrin-Clonberne, they dug deep in



# on course for three-in-a-row



**3 December 2023: The Kilkerin-Clonberne squad before the Currentaccount.ie All-Ireland Ladies Senior Club Championship semi-final match between Kilmacud Crokes of Dublin and Kilkerin-Clonberne of Galway at Parnell Park, Dublin.** Photo by Matt Browne/Sportsfile



**3 December 2023: Louise Ward of Kilkerin-Clonberne during the Currentaccount.ie All-Ireland Ladies Senior Club Championship semi-final match between Kilmacud Crokes of Dublin and Kilkerin-Clonberne of Galway at Parnell Park, Dublin.**

Photo by Matt Browne/Sportsfile

the spirit of true champions and moved back into the driving seat when Eva Noone, Olivia Divilly and Louise Ward raised white flags in quick succession. The Tribeswomen looked set to prevail by the skin of their teeth when Eva Noone broke through a gap for a point off her weaker right foot, only for Cotter to display nerves of steel to convert a free deep into stoppage-time.

The teams appeared on course to remain inseparable at the end of the opening period of extra-time – Eva Noone and Murray both adding to their tallies – but a fine point from substitute Flanagan gave Kilkerin-Clonberne a 0-14 to 1-10 lead on the stroke of 70 minutes.

The Galway side held onto this buffer as the final whistle approached, until Olivia Divilly's free on 82 minutes left them with two points to spare.

**SCORERS – Kilkerin-Clonberne:** E Noone 0-6 (5f), O Divilly 0-3 (2f), L Ward 0-2, H Noone, L Noone, C Miskell, M Flanagan 0-1 each.

**Kilmacud Crokes:** N Cotter 0-3 (3f), E Rutledge 0-3 (2f), G Kos 1-0, K Murray 0-2, M Jennings, J Buckley 0-1 each.

**KILKERIN-CLONBERNE:** L Murphy; C Costello, S Gormally, C Dunleavy; K Mee, N Ward, L Finnegan; S Divilly, H Noone; O Divilly, L Ward, L Noone; E Noone, C Miskell, N Divilly.

**Subs:** A Madden for Miskell (40), M Flanagan for Finnegan (50), Caoimhe Boyle for S Divilly (84).

**KILMACUD CROKES:** R Fleming; P Greene, E Sweeney, C Regan; S O'Donoghue, K Murray, A Kane; L Magee, G Kos; N Cotter, A Davoren, M Jennings; J Buckley, M Davoren, E Rutledge.  
**Subs:** C Sultan for O'Donoghue (54), A Conroy for Buckley (57), E Kane for A Davoren (65), A Bedford for Greene (73), A Davoren for M Davoren (74-77),  
**REF:** Patrick Smith (Waterford).



**3 December 2023: Kilkerin-Clonberne players, from left, Chloe Costello, Hannah Noone and Katelyn Mee celebrate after the Currentaccount.ie All-Ireland Ladies Senior Club Championship semi-final match between Kilmacud Crokes of Dublin and Kilkerin-Clonberne of Galway at Parnell Park, Dublin.**

Photo by Matt Browne/Sportsfile



# Dramatic finish books All-Ireland Final

**CURRENTACCOUNT.IE ALL-IRELAND LADIES  
INTERMEDIATE CLUB FOOTBALL  
CHAMPIONSHIP SEMI-FINAL**

**Ballinamore Sean O'Heslins**  
(Leitrim) .....1-10

**Steelstown Brian Ógs**  
(Derry) .....1-8

**By PJ LEDDY**

BALLINAMORE Sean O'Heslins scored a dramatic victory over Steelstown in an exciting currentaccount.ie All-Ireland Intermediate Club Championship semi-final when Aoibheann Flynn crashed the ball to the net deep into added time.

Steelstown enjoyed a 1-8 to 0-9 lead as the clock hit the hour mark but Ballinamore plucked victory out of the jaws of defeat in added time with Roisin McHugh firing over a point before Flynn struck for winning goal after 63 minutes.

Ballinamore took the lead following winning possession from the throw-in with centre forward McHugh getting in shooting range to fire over after just 15 seconds. The home side continued to be sharper in front of goals with McHugh converting a free after Laura O'Dowd was fouled four minutes later.

A 19th minute Eimear O' Doherty goal put Steelstown ahead after the Derry side had enjoyed the better of the exchanges in most of the exchanges up to this stage. Leah McGeough and Aoife Collins added points to put Steelstown further ahead.

But points in reply from Laura O'Dowd and McHugh (free) kept Ballinamore in the hunt. Collins pointed for Steelstown to put the Derry side ahead by 1-3 to 0-3 at the break.

After the restart McHugh put over two Ballinamore points by the 34th minute to put her side on level terms. It was nip and tuck after that for the remainder of the game.

Dara McKeever edged Steelstown ahead with a well taken point on 39 minute mark. But McHugh hit back with a Ballinamore point a minute later to level the match again.

McHugh put Ballinamore ahead when she split the Steelstown posts on the 44 minute mark. In response Orla McGeough edged Steelstown back in front over the following eight minutes with three points on the trot.



After that McHugh and McGeough traded points to leave the Derry champions two ahead but Ballinamore then produced their stunning finish to advance to the All-Ireland final.

**SCORERS - Ballinamore:** R McHugh 0-9 (6f); A Flynn 1-0; L O'Dowd 0-1.

**Steelstown:** L McGeough 0-5 (3f); E O'Doherty 1-0; A Collins 0-2f; D McKeever 0-1.

**BALLINAMORE:** L Flynn; D McGourty, A Sweeney, E Honeyman; L Maguire, M Murphy, G Prior; M McGovern, C O'Dowd; L O'Dowd, R McHugh, L Moran; A Flynn, S McLoughlin, L Murphy. **Sub:** C McGoldrick for L Maguire (38).

**STEELSTOWN:** M McBride; O McGough, A McGough, N Friel; M Devine, K Canavan; K Holly; E O' Doherty, L McGonagle; E Doherty, E McGough, C McGurk, D McKeever, A Collins, C O'Kane. **Subs:** A Boyle for A O'Doherty (38); T Burns for Friel (45); L Casey for McGurk (55); n Gilmore for O. McGough (61).

**REF:** Gus Chapman (Sligo).



# slot for Ballinamore Sean O'Heslins



The Ballinamore Sean O'Heslins squad before the Currentaccount.ie All-Ireland Ladies Intermediate Club Championship semi-final match between Ballinamore Sean O'Heslins of Leitrim and Steelstown Brian Ógs at Páirc Sheáin Uí Eislín, Ballinamore. Photo by Ben McShane/Sportfile



2 December 2023: THE GOAL - Aoiheann Flynn of Ballinamore Sean O'Heslins scores her side's first goal, in stoppage time, with the last kick of the game to win the Currentaccount.ie All-Ireland Ladies Intermediate Club Championship semi-final match. Photo by Ben McShane/Sportfile

# Claremorris goal blitz sees Mayo

**CURRENTACCOUNT.IE ALL-IRELAND LADIES JUNIOR CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP SEMI-FINAL**

**Claremorris (Mayo) .....5-4**  
**Lavey (Derry) .....2-11**

**By OISÍN MCGOVERN**

A LATE comeback from Lavey wasn't enough to stop a goal-hungry Claremorris team from reaching their first ever currentaccount.ie All-Ireland Junior Club Championship final.

Despite going seven points behind at one stage, the Ulster champions narrowed the gap to a goal at a time in a second half of this semi-final where they were more dominant at Canon Gibbons Park Claremorris.

But it was a good start from Claremorris that proved crucial as they struck for 2-2 inside the opening five minutes with Nina Wallace scoring both goals after being set up each time by Rebecca Kean.

The Mayo girls had countless more chances as Lavey struggled to cope with their pacy attacking play.

The Derry side managed six points through Carla Collins (two frees), Sinead McGill, Maria Rafferty and Aoife Shaw (two frees) before Claremorris captain Laura Kelly buried the ball in the roof of



**3 December 2023: Bree Hession of Claremorris shoots to score her side's fourth goal during the Currentaccount.ie All-Ireland Ladies Junior Club Championship semi-final match between Claremorris of Mayo and Lavey at Canon Gibbons Park, Claremorris, Mayo.** Photo by Harry Murphy/Sportsfile

# side through to All-Ireland decider



**December 2023: The Claremorris squad before the Currentaccount.ie All-Ireland Ladies Junior Club Championship semi-final match between Claremorris of Mayo and Lavey of Derry at Canon Gibbons Park, Claremorris, Mayo.**

Photo by Harry Murphy/Sportsfile

the net in the 25th minute.

Leading 3-4 to 0-6 at half-time, Claremorris looked comfortable.

However, two quick goals from Lavey had Aidan Brennan's charges on the ropes in a third quarter that produced four goals. The first came when corner-forward Aoife Shaw saw a point attempt curl over the head of Claire Keane and into the back of the Claremorris net.

A very similar one came four minutes later when Carla Collins went for a point which was parried down by Keane before being nestled home from point blank by Noeleen McBride. The Derry girls were now level, but not for long.

Within two minutes, Mayo minor Bree Hession crashed a goal in off the upright to put Claremorris three ahead.

The visitors almost levelled again, but Sinéad McGill's fisted goal was ruled out for a square ball a minute later. Claremorris added yet another goal when teenage corner-forward Ashleagh Sammon sent a sublime chip over Niamh's McKenna's head in the 42nd minute.

It proved to be Claremorris' last score of the game as Lavey fought back to narrow the gap to two points.

However, points from Carla Collins (three frees), and an effort from Aoife Shaw weren't enough to overturn a Claremorris team that had lost Alana Fitzpatrick to a yellow card.

Claremorris face O'Donovan Rossa from Skibbereen in the currentaccount.ie All-Ireland Junior Club Championship final on December 17.

**SCORERS - Claremorris:** N Wallace 2-0, B Hession 1-2, A Sammon 1-0, L Kelly 1-0, R Kean 0-2 (1 free)

**Lavey:** A Shaw 1-3 (2 frees), C Collin 0-5 (5 frees), N McBride 1-0, S McGill, M Rafferty, C Toher (1 free) 0-1 each.

**CLAREMORRIS:** C Keane, S Dee, E Maguire, Aisling Cummins; Amy Cummins, S McNulty, S Hughes; A Fitzpatrick, J Regan; M Cawley, R Kean, B Hession; A Sammon, N Wallace, L Kelly (capt.). **Subs:** S Kelly for Wallace (49), K O'Brien for Amy Cummins (51), D Horkan for Sammon (57), I Phillips for Regan (57).

**ERIN'S OWN LAVEY:** N McKenna; C Diamond, L Scullion, M Mullholland; A Mullholland, A Rafferty, C Lynn; S McGill (0-1), M Rafferty (0-1); E Toner, S Rafferty, C Toner (0-1); A Shaw (1-3, 2f), C Collins (0-5, 5f), N McBride (1-0).

**Subs:** B Kelly for Diamond (18), E Murphy for E Toner (50).

**REF:** Paul McCaughey (Westmeath).



**3 December 2023: Deirbhile Horkan, right, and Siomha McNulty of Claremorris embrace after their side's victory in the Currentaccount.ie All-Ireland Ladies Junior Club Championship semi-final match between Claremorris of Mayo and Lavey of Derry at Canon Gibbons Park, Claremorris, Mayo.**

Photo by Harry Murphy/Sportsfile

# UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY CONNACHT GAA AIR DOME



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GAA

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