

KILKENNY

GAA YEARBOOK 1979

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Editorial



PETER HOLOHAN
EDITOR

WE WILL never want to see a repetition of the scenes that marred the county senior hurling final replay but wishing that they will not recur is not enough and is not the answer to what is a very serious problem. This is more than a local problem. They have occurred elsewhere but that is not a justification for what happens here.

Unruly conduct on the field must be tackled seriously by the association at top level. It is easy to draft rules to prevent unsportmanlike acts but drafting rules does not mean that the unsportsmanlike acts will be prevented unless the rules are so framed that they will be a deterrent. There is no room for laxity. If hurling becomes a dangerous game its future is at risk.

It is understandable that people become emotive about games; the trouble is that some people allow their emotions to run away with them and they lose their sense of proportion. Referees are sometimes powerless to deal with a situation when things get out of hand.

It is more important now than ever before to make safe for those participating. If this is not done young people will turn to other sports. This is particularly true of the province of Leinster. It is true that Kilkenny is comparatively free from unruly behaviour on the field. The drawn game in the county final was a fine display of good hurling and good sportsmanship. All our games must be the same. If not hurling will be the loser.

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Cover Caption: Galway full-forward Noel Lane gets in his shot despite the determined blocking efforts of Joe Hennessy and Fan Larkin in the All-Ireland final.

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What right have we to succeed?

By
John Knox

SUCCESS in sport has always been earned by what we put into our preparations, or so we have been led to believe. It has always been that way, and unless there is a new set of values to arrive with the eighties, then it will continue so.

It was this very thought that occupied the mind one day this year leaving Dr. Cullen Park after Kilkenny had lost a match there. The game was the under-21 hurling Leinster final and Wexford had proved successful in a game that started in a low-key, but finished in the best tradition of Kilkenny/Wexford clashes.

Supporters from the Nore-side voiced their disappointment that the team had lost, and this only a provincial decider. Hurling defeats are more accepted by Kilkenny folk after national finals, more so than in lesser matches. That is one thing county supporters are peculiar for.

But looking deeper into that game, one had to ask, what right had Kilkenny people to expect the team to win? Sure, there were a few big name men on that team, namely county senior, Paddy Prendergast, Eamon Mahon, Syl Hennessy, John Lawlor,

Liam Fennelly and Michael Nash, but where did they all come out of to make up this Kilkenny under-21 team?

It certainly wasn't from the local under-21 championship from the same year, because it wasn't finished. Neither was it completed the year before. In fact, the under-21 championship has been one that has not been found too easy to complete during the past couple of years. Still, people look to the county championship side for success.

That in itself is a tremendous compliment to the players who make up the county under-21 sides, because even without a properly run championship, the general supporter has enough faith in the players to think they can win something. And they have in the past, under the same sad circumstances. And most likely, they will again in the future.

Not proper

Is it proper though, that a team challenging for all-Ireland honours should have its players groomed in grades totally different from the one they hope to win a national ti-

tle in? It can help in some ways, but players brought along the right way are always the best ones. So to jump to either junior, intermediate or senior grade after the minor grade is not a proper graduation for any player.

Because it caters for an in-between age group, the championship is very difficult to run-off. But two years have passed now and the championship has not been finished, and the same years the county team missed out as well. Could there be a connection?

Kilkenny opened jittery enough in the first match against Laois at Portlaoise. They won handsomely enough, but the manner in which they did so was not that pleasing. It was at the same venue and against the same opposition the previous year that they had been bundled out of the competition in the opening round. The shock of that one made Kilkenny extra careful this year.

After that, the Noresiders entertained Meath at Nowlan Park. The opposition was very

poor, and the home side won looking back, around them, and anywhere they wanted. It was hardly worth the effort.

Then it was into the Leinster final against Wexford at Carlow. The first game was a rip-roaring affair and featured a nail-biting finish which saw Kilkenny grab a dramatic late, late equaliser.

Everyone expected them to be warned by that let-off, but that was not enough, and in the replay, the Slaneysiders won through by a single point. The winners were subsequently beaten in the semi-final by Galway, who were hammered by Tipperary in the final. So where does that leave Kilkenny?

It would leave them a considerable way down the field without much of an excuse. The under-21 county championship will have to be given its fair crack of the whip if Kilkenny are to re-live the wonderful successes of 1974 (v Waterford), 1975 (v Cork) and 1977 (v Cork again).

The Leinster final side was: E. Mahon, P. Brophy, M. Meagher, P. Prendergast, T. Brennan, J. Lawlor, P. Murphy, S. Fennelly, P. Brennan, E. Deegan, R. Murphy, S. Hennessy, M. Nash, L. Fennelly, J. Wall. Subs: J. Power and B. McEvoy.

Tullaroan lead in Senior titles

OF THE 90 county senior hurling championships have been decided Tullaroan lead with 23 followed by Mooncoin with 16, the two sides that dominated the campaign in the earlier years. The championships were won as follows:

Tullaroan (23): 1887; 1889; 1893; 1895; 1897; 1899; 1901; 1902; 1904; 1907; 1910; 1911; 1912; 1915; 1916; 1919; 1924; 1925; 1930; 1933; 1934; 1948; 1958.

Mooncoin (16): 1888; 1900; 1906; 1908; 1909; 1913; 1917; 1918; 1921;

1922; 1929; 1932; 1936; 1965.

Bennettsbridge (12): 1890; 1952; 1953; 1955; 1956; 1959; 1960; 1962; 1964; 1966; 1967; 1971.

Carrickshock (6): 1931; 1940; 1941; 1942; 1943; 1957.

The Fenians (6): 1914; 1970; 1972; 1973; 1976; 1977.

James Stephens (5): 1935; 1937; 1969; 1974; 1975.

Eire Og (4): 1939; 1944; 1945; 1947.

Dicksboro (3): 1923; 1926; 1950.

Threecastles (2): 1898; 1903.

St. Lactain's (2): 1961; 1963.

Confederation (2): 1894; 1896.

Thomastown (1) 1946; Graigue (1); 1949; Slieverue (1), 1954; The Rower-Inistioge (1), 1968; John Lockes (1); 1957.

The six titles won by The Fenians include the 1914 final won by Johnstown.

There was no county senior hurling championship final played in 1891, 1982 and 1920.

The oldest medal winner

Still hale and hearty at 97 John T. Power is probably the oldest all-Ireland medal winner in hurling or football. He won his first medal with Kilkenny as goalie.

One of his most unusual souvenirs — and he has many of them — is the ball used in the 1910 Leinster final between Kilkenny and Dublin at New Ross. He was ready to puck out when the final whistle blew and he slipped the ball under his jersey. Nobody bothered to inquire about its whereabouts.

Boardroom ending to final

THIS year we had a rare spectacle of the county senior hurling final being decided in the boardroom. Co. Board delegates played-out the final act in the play that was the senior championship and Shamrocks cast in the role of victors.

Their opponents, Erin's Own (Castlecomer) were left in the unusual position of having lost the decider without having been beaten. Before a decision was reached delegates exchanged cogent reasons for a ruling in line with their way of thinking.

But acting Co. Board chairman, James Walsh (Slieverue) played the last card in a drama that had dragged on for two weeks. Erin's Own lost the boardroom battle.

It is to be hoped that in the weeks and months ahead the pain will be forgotten and the true Kilkenny spirit of understanding will prevail.



ABOVE: Making 'Comer's Case . . . Erin's Own team manager Kieran Meally appealing his team's and Mick Brennan's case at the County GAA Board meeting on Tuesday night. In the background is Kevin Fennelly, Chairman, of the Shamrock's and in the foreground is Martin Coogan, Captain, Erin's Own.



LEFT: Reading Ref's Report . . . James Walsh, Slieverue (left) acting Chairman and County Board Secretary, Paddy Grace, reading the referee's report at the meeting on the unfinished county final between The Shamrock's (Ballyhale) and Erin's Own (Castlecomer).

Out the window goes 'Game of the Year'

Give someone too much of the one thing and they get fed up of it! So they tell us. So it must be bearing this in mind that that much attacked sect, 'the powers that be' of the G.A.A. sat down and cried halt this year.

They cried halt, and out the window went the showpiece of provincial hurling, indeed national hurling . . . the Leinster final. The one game that was a guaranteed hurling feast with Kilkenny and Wexford, the two principal actors, will not be part of the calendar for 1980.

There will be a provincial final on the East coast. But it will feature only one of the teams that have delighted hurling fans for decades. Kilkenny or Wexford will be in the decider, but both of them will not.

The draw has been so designed that the counties will meet prior to the final, so one must lose out. The idea is that some of the other counties will get a chance of winning Leinster honours, and the hope is that hurling in the province will benefit.

Over the past decade, and more, the Leinster final has been THE GAME of the year, apart from the odd all-Ireland classic. But in good weather and bad, hurling fans from any part of the country could travel each year to Croke Park for the Leinster final and they were guaranteed a cracking hurling match. Oh, what memories those games have left.

This year was a case in point. The teams were the same. So too was the fare. And everyone, even including gallant losers Wexford, went home happy because no more could have been witnessed in the one hurling match.

The final score was 2-21 to 2-17 in favour of Kilkenny, and each of those 42 scores left a different joyous memory with the lucky 25,000 people who cheered every one. The 70 minutes were crammed with all that is best in hurling, and seven times in all the sides were level.

VICTORY

Wexford with Colm Doran, Ned Buggy, Martin Quigley, Sean Kinsella and Mick Butler particularly prominent, at one stage led by six points. Kilkenny then had to perform a bit of magic, and the rabbit that came out of the hat had victory written all over him.

Frank Cummins started at centre-forward for Kilkenny that day, but the big Blackrock man later moved back to midfield, and that made a huge difference. So too did the juggling with the defence. Mick Crotty was outstanding in attack, and from the moment he set up Mick Brennan for the first point, this pair were destined for great things.

Joe Hennessy, Liam O'Brien, Noel Skehan, Ger Fennelly and Richard Reid also showed rare craft and skill, but then they had to, because Wexford were providing the opposition.

It's an irony that in order to further hurling, the best hurling match of the year had to be axed. Sure 'tis a quare world we live in.

And it is that surely. For who would have believed when watching Wexford and Kilkenny struggle to beat Offaly and Dublin respectively in the semi-finals at Athy that they would go on to perform the way they did at Headquarters on July 15.

The Dubs really put it up to the Noresiders, and led by blond haired Mick Holden at full-forward they nearly stopped the favourites in their tracks. Providing back-up for Holden that day were Frank Cummins, Joe Cunningham, Frank Spellman, George Hayes and Peadar Carton and they won the heart of many a neutral supporter by their gutsy performance.

Kilkenny won in the end by 4-15 to 4-11 to keep on course for the O'Keeffe Cup. They led by 3-5 to 0-6 at half-time and later went 10 points up, but it was then the Dubliners began to hurl. Lucky for the Noresiders they didn't hurl throughout with the same accomplishment because if they had, that 21st dream would have turned into a nightmare.



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***It was
a good
year,
despite
the finish***



Tommy Malone . . . his good form with the Rower-Inistioge won him a deserved call-in to the county panel.

THE SADDEST aspect of the Kilkenny senior hurling championship this year was its conclusion. Usually the end of the championship throws up the greatest and most lasting memories. Not so 1979. Still, it was a good year.

From the time 10 teams kicked off in the first series of matches on May 6 up to, and including, the semi-finals, 86 games later, the hurling was generally good and was spiced here and there with the odd surprise result.

Despite the four who appeared in the semi-finals, most clubs can look back on the year and say yes, we did this or that. O'Loughlin's and Muckalee/Ballyfoyle Rangers are two who finished outside the top four who can look back on a good run.

James Stephens ran through the championship and only bent their knee once. But that was in the semi-finals against fast improving Erin's Own (Castlecomer) and it was curtains for The Village. But Stephens blooded a few new players like Billy Walton and Martin Hennessy and along with fine regulars like Phil 'Fan' Larkin, Niall Morrissey, Joe Hennessy, Mick Crotty, Paddy Neary and Mick Moore they should be among the challenging bunch again next season.

The Fenians (Johnstown) were the other side to fall at the semi-final hurdle. They lost to Shamrocks (Ballyhale) who were eventually crowned champions. The Johnstown men were victims of the aging process and some of their great servants of the past like Billy Watson and Nicky Orr called it a day early on.

Again new, promising players were introduced, the most eye catching being county minor, Billy Purcell who looked good beside Pat Delaney, John Henderson, Ger Henderson, Joe Ryan and Billy Fitzpatrick in the last match.

Erin's Own and Shamrocks served up terrific fare in the drawn



Joe Ryan . . . his accuracy from long range frees often lifted the Fenians (Johnstown) who lost out in the semi-final.

final, and it was the **Regret Of The Year** that this pair were unable to decide the destiny of the ultimate prize on the field, rather than at a Co. Board meeting.

GLORY LOST

Both only lost one match in the preliminary round of the competition, and with quality hurlers on both sides, either would have carried the Kilkenny colours with distinction in the all-Ireland club championship. As it turned out, all the glory was lost from the crown and the Shamrocks made an undistinguished exit from the club championship in the opening round against Kinnitty (Offaly).

Muckalee-Ballyfoyle Rangers just missed out on making the cut. They proved the biggest crowd pullers in the championship and their prize was a bonus in the region of £1,000 as their cut of the 'gates'. Patsy Moran, Jim Moran, Dick Nolan, Johnny Brennan, Tom Moran and Danny Coonan enjoyed a good season and this could be a side for the future.

O'Loughlin's too went near to getting into the semi-finals in their

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It was a good year, despite the finish

Continued from page 7

first season back in the top flight. They played James Stephens in the first round 'derby' in decades and stood up well generally to the rigours of senior fare.

The St. John's Park outfit will point to when they fell to Mooncoin on May 27 as the decider for them not getting through to the last four. Still, Richard Delaney, John Martin, John Mulcahy, Ollie Bergin and Dermot Tyrrell should be better for the year's experience and it might make all the difference in the 1980 championship.

The Rower-Inistioge were an up and down side this year. They confused the entire championship by beating Muckalee/Ballyfoyle in a Sunday evening match, after an undistinguished game previously. They always got the best out of players like John Lyng, Willie Murphy, Billy Kennedy, Tommy Malone and Eddie Keher.

Their Southern neighbours, Graignamanagh always struggled, but a late start in the championship did them no good at all. They never gave up trying and made many new friends because of their honest endeavour.



Pat Lawlor . . . the former All-Star ('72) and Kilkenny player was very prominent when Bennettsbridge enjoyed a good mid-season run of results.

BIG REVIVAL

Bennettsbridge, with Noel Skehan, Seamus Cleere, John Holohan, John Kinsella, John Dowling Richard Marnell and Pat Lawlor showing good form enjoyed a good mid-season run. But they bowed out of the big race when they lost to Shamrocks at Thomastown on June 17.

The year marked the big revival in senior hurling in Mooncoin where Fr. Liam Barron C.C. started things moving again. They promised more than they achieved, but

they gave a warning for the future. They are on the way back.

Conahy Shamrocks and Galmoy introduced some new players to the senior grade. Galmoy called on a number of their under-21 side of last season, and with tried and trusted regulars like Joe Doherty, Stephen Delaney, Jack Phelan and company, they gave as good account of themselves as expected.

Conahy, with Nicky Brennan establishing himself as a county player, are in the process of team building. Some of the intermediate championship side of 1977 as good as stepped down this year, but they finished on a high note.

The surprise packet – for the wrong reason unfortunately – of the campaign was St. Lactain's (Freshford). After promising nothing but good the previous season, they never figured this time and finished well down the field. This was surprising seeing that they had good young players like Martin Kennedy, Brian Waldron, Martin O'Donnell, Gordan Ryan, Tom Lannon and Ned Lannon to dove-tail with established and steeled players.

For Kieran Purcell's Windgap the season was one bad result after another. At the end of the season they had to fight against relegation and it could take them some time to organise again.

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Pádraig Puirseál



PÁDRAIG PUIRSEÁL, G.A.A. reporter with the "Irish Press" for a long number of years died earlier this year and with his passing went one of the best known personalities in Irish sports journalism. He devoted his talents mainly to Gaelic games. A past pupil of St. Kieran's college he was well known in Kilkenny.

Paddy Purcell, after a brilliant career in the National University began work as a sub editor with the "Irish Independent" and later with the "Irish Press". He was features editor of the "Irish Press" for a period but eschewed a literary career to work in sport.

His penchant for Gaelic games prevailed as might be expected from a Mooncoin man. He grew up in the palmy days of Mooncoin hurling and it was natural that he should become deeply devoted to the game.

He had an almost encyclopaedic knowledge of G.A.A. history, gleaned from extensive research work and his amazingly retentive memory.

Like most hurling men of his generation Paddy Purcell also had a keen in-

terest in coursing and was coursing correspondent for the "Irish Press" for a few years. Sevenhouses was one of his favourite meetings. He met many of his hurling friends there.

If he had wanted it that way, Paddy Purcell had all the qualifications to pursue a career in literature. Author of several books his first, "Hanrahan's Daughter" was probably his best. It was a best seller. It had a strong local flavour. Indeed it could have been a story of the life and love affair of a Mooncoin hurler.

A man of great kindness and even temperament he was never critical or if he was it was always in a constructive sense. His knowledge of both hurling and football — he played both games — enabled him to write authoritatively about them. His articles were always read with great interest by Kilkenny people. He also wrote impartially and his natural prejudice in Kilkenny's favour never interfered with his objectivity.

An outstanding Kilkennyman in the best sense of the term he contributed significantly to the progress of the games he loved so dearly.

This is the eight year of the Kilkenny G.A.A. Year Book and for the first time Paddy Purcell is missing from the contributors. From the start he was a source of great help and encouragement to me. Not only did he contribute two articles but his unlimited sources of information were always readily available.

A staunch and loyal friend he will be sadly missed, particularly by those of us who knew him for so long. May his gentle soul rest in peace.

Peter Holohan.

Medal Winners

STRANGE as it may seem, hurling skill does not seem to run in families to all that great extent. The Doyle brothers of Mooncoin, Dick, Mick and Eddie have between them 18 all-Ireland senior hurling medals. This is a family record unlikely to be equalled, never mind surpassed.

Not too far behind, come the Larkins. The late Paddy Larkin won four all-Ireland medals and his son, Phil 'Fán' won five.

As far as Kilkenny is concerned, the only other father and son to have played on all-Ireland winning teams are Matt Gargan who won medals in 1907, 1909, 1911, 1912 and 1913. His son Jack was on the Kilkenny team that beat Cork in the 1939 all-Ireland final.

Sean Clohosey, who was on the successful Kilkenny team in 1963 is son of the late Pat Clohosey who was a sub for Kilkenny between 1904 and 1913, but did not play.

Paddy O'Brien, was a sub on the Kilkenny team that beat Cork in 1947, while his

son, Liam won all-Ireland medals in 1972, 1974, 1975 and 1979.

This year the Henderson brothers, John and Ger created a bit of history when they won medals on the same senior team. With their big brother, Pat, the Hendersons have now won 7 medals overall. Pat won his in 1963, 1969, 1972, 1974 and 1975.

The first Inter-Provincial

THE first inter-provincial hurling game between Munster and Leinster was played at Stamford Bridge, London (now the Chelsea Soccer Club headquarters) on April 6, 1896 (Easter Monday). Munster won by 5-7 to 2-8. Kilkennymen on the Leinster side were: Pat ('Fox') Maher and Jim Grace (Tullaroan) and Pat Foley (Mooncoin).

An international football game was also played between Ireland and London exiles which Ireland won easily. Only Kilkennyman on the Ireland side was Dick Kealy.

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AT THE present time tele-communications are a live topic. Let us throw our minds back to 1896 when Kilkenny

played Tipperary in the all-Ireland final and the result did not reach Tullaroan until three days after the game.

Talented handball sextet

By Tommy O'Brien

THE HIGHLY successful 1979 season belongs in the main to a talented sextet who won National Honours in real style. There was a father-son combination; a pair of brothers; and two handball specialists who have given great service to their partners and to handball.

Like father, like son

In the Bourke family, father Jim and son Billy are proud of each other. They set an unique record of both winning titles in the same year. Certainly, in any father and son competition they would be unbeatable.

Billy Bourke is undoubtedly the greatest juvenile player ever. Since juvenile handball started in 1966, no player has come through his six years unbeaten in singles play – except Billy Bourke. This meant that he had to beat about 60 players in a row without ever having an off-day.

Actually, he did have some off-days but his skill and determination, allied no doubt to his off-putting reputation, won through even on those few days.

He won under 12 singles in 1974 (v Limerick) and 1975 (v Mayo); Under 14 in 1976 (v Tipperary) and 1977 (v Kerry); Under 16 in 1978 (v Waterford) and 1979 (v Galway). This 1979 achievement would have marked the year out as a very special one for Billy, but he stepped up two years to challenge the minors of the country and never slipped.

He partnered Mark Cantwell to Minor Doubles in both the National sized court (v Sligo) and International courts (v Antrim) and then came the climax of a magnificent year when he won the Premier Minor Singles title (v Sligo) leaving his experienced opponent in a state of shock.

One can never judge whether or not a young player has the ambition and dedication to continue playing, but if Billy takes after his father, Jim, he certainly will.

Jim has always been to the forefront of Kilkenny handball since the early days of St. Mary's Club and he is still one of the top junior players in the country. He qualified this year for a crack at the 'Masters' division and what an initial impression he made!

He teamed up with Christy Young and found the going tough even before he left Kilkenny. As the campaign progressed, however, the duo improved in combination and fitness and raced through Leinster to face the Masters Champions, hitherto unbeatable Kearns brothers from Kerry.

This clash in Clonmel was the highlight of the year's Masters Handball and with Kilkenny winning 2-0 they were well on their way to the title. They met Galway in the final but it was a clash of different classes and Kilkenny finished easy winners.

So, a great father and son achievement came to be. Will it ever be equalled? Doubtful – even by current maestro Pat Kirby. All his children are daughters!

Brothers are best

Most handball followers would say that the Ryans of Tipperary and the Downys of Kilkenny are the best young handball brothers in action today. Strangely enough, the Downys would not have been mentioned in this context a year ago, but their rocketing to prominence has brought them back firmly into the limelight.

Both Eugene and John Downey were star juveniles from a very tender age. Eugene was first to gain prominence and won titles in Under 12, 14, and 16. John looked as if he would never quite make it to the top. He got great chances in Under 12 and 16 but failed when the big occasion arose. Even Eugene faded after Under 16 and it looked as if great potential was going to be lost forever to the game.

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Talented handball sextet

◁ Continued from Page 11

A bitterly cold February night in Enniscorthy and the Under 21 Championship first round changed all this. Facing Wexford on home ground is no joke – when they are the previous year's champions, it becomes something of a nightmare. But it was Wexford's nightmare that night when the Downeys began the first step of their climb back into the Champions Stakes by beating their rivals 2-1. All their wins through Leinster were just as hard fought but they pulled through, even against hot favourites Meath.

They were given little chance against Kerry but once more pulled out all the stops to score the easiest win of their campaign and a tough tight final game against Galway gave them the title they had fought so hard for.

The corresponding 60 x 30 title looked within their grasp now but Wexford returned the early-year compliment by ousting them but Eugene went on to win the Singles in fantastic fashion, with his semi-final win over Tony Ryan the highlight, not alone of the Under 21 Championship, but indeed of the entire year.

So, the Talbot's Inch brothers came back with a bang – and it looks as if they are here to stay.

Perfect partners

It is hard to partner a star. Mark Cantwell must have wondered after many of his great minor doubles wins this year if he was part of the partnership at all! Billy Bourke is a player who will always command the limelight, but Mark Cantwell won an equal divide of that limelight from knowledgeable handball followers.

Mark began his career, coincidentally, by beating Billy Bourke in St. Mary's Court in 1973 and he has had something of a chequered career since. Although he played singles in the first year of his competitive career, his forte has always been doubles – and with good reason.

Most handball stars make their name playing the left side court but the much more difficult right side court has been graced by few who can make an impression. In present day handball, Cantwell joins Ollie Harold, Seamus Buggy and Mick Hogan as players who can be brilliantly at home on the right.

A student in Waterford Regional College, Mark found little time for handball training but this never showed in his play all year. He began on a low note by losing the first round of the minor singles championship to Wexford but when he teamed up with Billy Bourke, his great attributes came to the fore.

Billy's youth made him vulnerable to strong play but Mark soon took care of that and I have no hesitation in saying that Cantwell was the strongest player in the 1979 Championship. A player with no time for doubtful tactics, Mark ensured that his rivals played it clean too! One opponent tried to blunt his brilliance by standing too close to him during play. When the referee failed to take action, Mark did and his opponent thought it best to stay behind him for the rest of the game! – Since Mark's best offensive shot is a kill around the right corner, the foul tactic turned fouler still!

Although Mark has Under 16, Colleges, titles to his credit, his interest was waning somewhat at the start of 1979. How things have changed – he began the 1980 season by dethroning the 1979 Under 21 Champion!

To Christy Young, every game is the same. One of handball's real gentlemen, Christy enjoys a midweek bash-around as much as an all-Ireland final. I suspect, however, that his Masters Doubles all-Ireland victory with Jim Bourke was something very special.

Christy had already won an all-Ireland title (Intermediate Doubles 1973 with Anthony Greene) and had played some great, some not so great games in Senior ranks since. Many of his admirers felt that if he could transfer his brilliant midweek exhibitions to the big weekend games, he would make it to the top.

This year Christy had a choice of opting for either Senior or Masters. He decided to give Masters a go for 1979 and what a choice it was. He was most determined from the very



OLLIE HAROLD

start and with Jim Bourke equally determined, it was obvious that it would take a great pair to beat them.

They met some great pairs, but the extra skill told on the day and no victory pleased Christy more than that over hot favourites Kerry.

Unusual for Christy, he approached over confident for this game. The Kerry pair had been his opponents in that 1973 Intermediate win and he did not wish them to think they had overhauled him since. Christy's huge confidence was well placed, however, and the Kilkenny pair won a tough game.

If the most important thing in handball is to enjoy the game, then Christy Young should be taken as a National Example. He exemplifies all that is good in handball and aspiring Masters Contenders can forget about that title for many years to come.

Not forgotten

Some other achievements in 1979 merit highlighting but if they have not made the headlines, they are far from forgotten.

Willie Pratt became the first Kilkenny player to win a 40 x 20 Junior title and he was unfortunate that Tony Ryan was Munster Champion. Ryan made his way into senior ranks so the door is now open for Pratt.

Pat O'Keeffe won the Leinster Masters title in 40 x 20 and, but for the long journey he had for the All-Ireland semi-final (from New York to Ballymacelligott, Kerry!) he would certainly have won national honours.

Seamus and Michael Reade, Eugene Downey, Anthony Greene, and Ollie Harold won the Leinster Senior 40 x 20 title and in juvenile Michael Walsh (Under 14 Gold medal doubles, Bronze medal singles); Joe Walsh (Under 14 Gold medal doubles, Bronze medal doubles), and Michael Purcell (Under 14 Bronze medal doubles) were our top players with Tomás Sloyan, James Buckley, and Tom Hennessy winning Leinster Under 12 titles; Tomás Sloyan and Michael Wall winning bronze Under 13 medals.

Kilkenny's 21st.

By Paddy Grace

THE YEAR 1979 was the one in which Kilkenny took the McCarthy Cup into their possession for the 21st time. After winning the first 75 years ago, this was the one everyone had been waiting on. The 19 victories in between were all great in their own right, but the coming of age success made this year one apart.

The county must continue to be proud of the men who wear the county colours. Proud of what they have achieved, and proud of what they will do in the name of Kilkenny hurling in the future. For the aim must be to continue on winning, in the proper spirit, as has been the county's hallmark from the beginning of the Gaelic Athletic Association.

Winning is not everything.

But in Kilkenny, victory in an all-Ireland senior final is like a hearty meal to a working man, it fortifies us for the winter until the championship comes round again and it is time to start all over again. As long as the game is played, it will always be the same.

But in Kilkenny the on the field exploits are not the beginning and end of everything. For the second year running, Feile na nGael was staged in our county.

The best young sportsmen and women from all over the country contested these games on pitches all over Kilkenny. They climaxed with the finals at Nowlan Park, and on a glorious Summer afternoon people were able to see the future hurlers and camogie players of Ireland. In our city, too, they saw the future hand-

ballers of Ireland. And they could not but be impressed.

The staging of Feile na nGael was a gigantic undertaking, and the Steering Committee in Kilkenny proved they were masters. They had done so the previous year when they also staged Feile, but Feile '79 was bigger and better than it had been the previous year. It was like the men had served a good apprenticeship and Feile was all the better for it.

While the senior all-Ireland win was the highlight of the 12 months, there was much to be pleased about in the under-age divisions. From the Schools' Board up through the Under-16 Board and through minor, under-21, junior and intermediate grades the games continued to prosper. This was because

right down the line there are dedicated men working. The county owes them a huge debt.

Our headquarters at Nowlan Park was also improved and the erection of nets behind both goals was a bigger task than most people might feel. It cost in the region of £3,500 to complete the work, but it is money well spent and in the long run clubs will benefit when at least one of their bills — that for hurling balls — will decrease.

Gaelic games will be as strong tomorrow in Kilkenny as the under-age games are today. Youngsters must always be encouraged to play the games, and with the proper people to guide them, the county will go on and win another 21, and more, senior all-Ireland titles.

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YOUNG IRELAND'S CELEBRATE



Members of the Young Ireland's (Gowran) minor hurling team who won the Barrow Valley league pictured at the club's annual dinner in Springhill Hotel. Included in the picture are Jim Fitzgerald (Club Chairman), Charlie Carter (Trainer) and Pat Treacy (Selector).



Members of the Young Ireland's (Gowran) under 21 hurling team who the county B hurling championship pictured at their annual dinner in Springhill Hotel. Included are Mr. Mick O'Neill (County G.A.A. Chairman), Rev. John O'Brien C.C. and Mr. Tom Carroll (officials).

Avonmore's record may not be equalled



AVONMORE - WINNERS OF INTER-FIRM ALL-IRELAND 1976

Back Row: Eddie Clancy, Michael Walsh, John Bourke, John Dunne, Eamon Quirke, Michael Lanigan, Mick Fogarty.
Front Row: Nicky Brennan, Jim Fogarty, Mick Bolger, Martin Fitzpatrick, Patsy Trait, Jimmy Skehan, John Lacey, Paudie Mulhall.

AVONMORE Creameries created hurling history recently when they won the all-Ireland Inter Firm hurling title for the fourth year in succession. This is a feat never before achieved. In addition the junior hurlers of Avonmore have qualified for the all-Ireland in their grade and if they are successful in their match against Syntex (Clarecastle) then Avonmore will have a record never likely to be equalled.

Indeed Avonmore came within an ace of taking all the Kilkenny inter firm titles when their footballers failed by one

point to Derrinlough Briquette Factory (Birr) in the final on a score of 0-7 to 1-3. Since then Derrinlough have also qualified for the all-Ireland final in which they meet Gaeltarra Eireann (Galway).

The dedication of the Avonmore senior hurlers has to be admired. They have gone 30 games without defeat, yet their appetite is still there and under the guidance of Martin Fitzpatrick they trained for the recent all-Ireland with as much enthusiasm as they did when they took their first title in 1976.

Commercials of Waterford were Avonmore's opponents in their first win. They came to Nowlan Park with a big reputation and after holding Avonmore to two points at half time 1-5 to 0-6 they were out-manoeuvred, out-ran and out-hurled in the second half.

Avonmore although short their star forward Billy Fitzpatrick, who was in Australia when the final was played ran out winners by 4-13 to 1-9.

All of Commercials scores came from frees. Avonmore's scorers in this final were Mick Walsh (0-8), Eamon Quirke, Jimmy Skehan, Paudie Mulhall and Pat Dunphy (1-0 each). Mick Fogarty (0-2), Nick Brennan, Johnny Bourke and Eddie Clancy (0-1 each).

Avonmore took their second title in Thurles when they beat their great rivals Tynagh Mines - Loughrea Marts (Galway) after two hectic games. The first clash between the sides was a classic and referee John Moloney, who expertly, handled both games said it was one of the finest games of hurling that he ever saw.

The Galway outfit with all-star hurler Iggy Clark in great form at midfield pulled ahead to lead by 1-6 to 0-7 at half time. At the end of the third quarter the sides were level Avonmore 0-10 Tynagh Mines - Loughrea Marts 1-7. The title seemed to be heading westward when Tynagh led by three points.

Jimmy Skehan levelled the scores with a goal eight minutes from time. Two further points to Tynagh Mines - Loughrea Marts seemed to have them safely through but in a thrilling finish points by Billy Fitzpatrick and Sean Connery levelled the scores 1-12 each.

Scorers for Avonmore were: Billy Fitzpatrick (0-5); Jimmy Skehan (1-1); Sean Connery (0-2); Eamon Quirke (0-2), Pat Dunphy (0-1), Paudie Mulhall (0-1).

The replay was also as exciting with the two sides locked together for the hour. Avonmore led by 0-7 to 0-6 at half time. A great goal by Billy Fitzpatrick after half time seemed to herald an easy win for Avonmore but Tynagh Mines - Loughrea Marts whittled down the lead and at the three

Continued on page 19 ▷

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Avonmore's record may not be equalled

Continued from page 17

quarter stage the sides were level again at 1-10 to 0-13 and when Iggy Clark pointed the westerners into the lead with six minutes to go the cheering could almost be heard in Loughrea.

Michael "Blondie" Lanigan who had come on as a sub scored a capital point to square the game — Billy Fitzpatrick pointed Avonmore into the lead and after Tynagh Mines forced a '70' which Jimmy Cooney drove wide and Avonmore came back for the final point by Jimmy Skehan to run out winners by 1-13 to 0-14.

The man of the match award which was sponsored by P. J. Butler of the Ormonde School of Motoring and which has been a regular feature of all recent all-Ireland finals, thanks to Mr. Butler, was won by Nicky Brennan who just shaded it over Martin Fitzpatrick. Willie Murphy and Billy Fitzpatrick.

Scorers for Avonmore were Billy Fitzpatrick (1-4); Mick Walsh (0-2); Eamon Quirke, Jimmy Skehan, Paudie Mulhall, John Bourke, Michael Lanigan, and Pat Dunphy (0-1 each).

Avonmore's third in a row was their easiest victory. Commercials of Waterford were again their opponents and although the game was played in Walsh Park the losers had no answer to the power of the Avonmore side. From the 13th minute of the first half John Mulcahy blasted a penalty to the net the writing was on the wall for the losers.

At half time Avonmore led by 2-6 to 0-2 and ran out comfortable winners by 4-17 to 0-7.

John Mulcahy won the man of the match award and the scorers for Avonmore were John Mulcahy (1-4), Billy Fitzpatrick (0-6), Liam O'Shaughnessy (1-0), John Bourke (1-1), Jimmy Skehan (1-0) Johnny Brennan (0-2), John Martin, Mick Walsh, Michael Lanigan and Nicky Brennan (0-1 each).

Avonmore's fourth success was undoubtedly their greatest. A gale force wind blew down the field in Bansha as they faced their great opponents Tynagh Mines - Loughrea Marts. The Galway outfit won the toss and played against the breeze in the first half.

Avonmore went into a 2-6 to 0-1 lead after 15 minutes but Tynagh Mines then took over and looked well on the road to victory when they were just two points behind at half time: on a score of 2-6 to 2-4.

The Galway men were overjoyed leaving the field at the interval. They hugged one another as if it was full time.

They had, however, reckoned without the great spirit of this Avonmore team. Although they levelled the scores at 2-7 each and again at 2-8 each, they could never take the lead and when Jimmy Ruth goaled for Avonmore to which John Martin added a point, they took fire and in a brilliant 10 minutes they went ahead by 5-10 to 2-8.

It was Avonmore's finest half hour and with Mick Walsh dominant at midfield, he won the man of the match award.

John Mulcahy, Jimmy Ruth, Johnny Brennan, Johnny Bourke, Jimmy Skehan and Billy Fitzpatrick were all in brilliant form and gave a display of forward hurling rarely seen.

The fact that they scored five goals and four points against a gale force wind speaks for itself.

At the back Jim Fogarty, Nicky Brennan and Mick Fogarty played storming games.

When the full time whistle sounded Avonmore supporters were delirious with joy while Tynagh Mines could not understand what happened to them.

The final score was Avonmore Creameries 7-10, Tynagh Mines - Loughrea Marts 4-9.

Avonmore's scorers were Jimmy Skehan (3-0); Jimmy Ruth (2-0), Mick Walsh (1-4), John Mulcahy (0-5), Johnny Brennan (1-0), John Martin (0-1).

Jimmy Skehan holds the unique honour of having scored in each of the five all-Ireland finals played by Avonmore.

This is just a brief review of the Avonmore success story. What the future holds, no one can tell but the message must

go out loud and clear that this Avonmore team will not easily give up their laurels.

They are still as keen as ever and while father time might be catching up with some of their defenders, they have a potent forward division who will not be easily checked.

They have brought great credit to the Inter Firm league and built up high support. Maybe it will be their own juniors who will knock them out. Whatever the future holds, they must be classed as the most powerful combination ever to have graced the inter firm arena.

The following is Avonmore's record of success:

1976: Beat Teachers 4-12 to 1-8; beat Army 1-15 to 1-7; beat Smithwicks 6-12 to 0-5; beat Moss Peat 1-9 to 1-4; beat Wexford Marts 3-16 to 3-10; beat E.S.B. (Dublin) 2-9 to 1-7; beat Tynagh Mines (Galway) 1-9 to 1-5; beat Commercials (Waterford) 4-13 to 1-9.

1977: Beat Products / Comer Mills 4-8 to 2-7; beat Moss Peat 1-14 to 3-6; beat Roadstone / Runtalrad 6-12 to 4-8; beat Clover Meats (Waterford) 7-13 to 2-6; beat Wexford Marts 7-16 to 3-6; beat P & T (Dublin) 6-14 to 1-6; drew Tynagh Mines - Loughrea Marts (Galway) 1-12 to 1-12; beat Tynagh Mines - Loughrea Marts (Galway) 1-13 to 0-14.

1978: Beat Wexford Marts 2-11 to 1-9; beat Derrinlough Briquette Factory (Birr) 3-8 to 1-7; beat Roadstone - Runtalrad 6-14 to 1-7; beat Local Services (Kilkenny) 2-13 to 1-8; beat P & T (Dublin) 3-13 to 3-1; beat Commercials (Waterford) 4-17 to 0-7.

1979: Beat Commercials (Kilkenny) 2-11 to 1-6; beat Clover Meats (Waterford) 2-14 to 2-6; beat Green Isle (Banagher) 2-10 to 3-2; beat Public Services (Kilkenny) 2-6 to 1-6; beat Commercials (Kilkenny) 6-7 to 3-7; beat Tara Mines (Meath) 2-10 to 1-10; beat Lyons Estate (Dublin) 4-13 to 1-2; beat Tynagh Mines - Loughrea Marts (Galway) 7-10 to 4-9.

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Top . . . All Together, Up: Conor Hayes (G) and Mick Crotty (14) fight an aerial duel in the all-Ireland final while Sean Silke (G) and Billy Fitzpatrick (11) await the outcome.



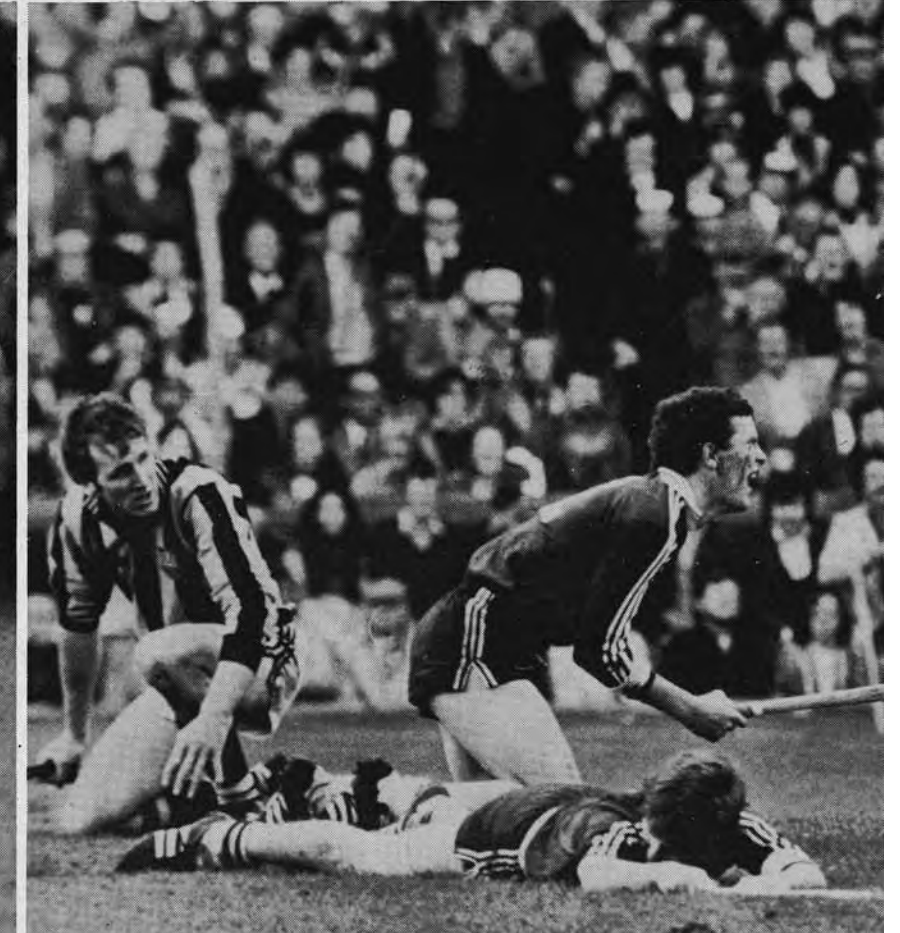
Top . . . Follow The Ball: Everyone wants the small sphere but it seems to want to go its own way. Giving chase are Ger. Henerson (6), Phil 'Fan' Larkin, Noel Lane, Richard Reid and Joe Connolly.

ALL IRELAND FINAL ACTION

Bottom . . . We're Hurling In The Rain: Niall McNerney and Matt Ruth feel like doing anything but singing as they contend with more than each other in the all-Ireland final.

Bottom centre . . . Nicky Brennan (Conahy Shamrocks) clears the Kilkenny lines with Frank Cummins looking on.

Bottom right . . . What's all the fuss about? Joe Connolly (centre) cries in pain while his team-mate, Noel Lane, lies prostrate on the ground, while Paddy Prendergast seems to be wondering what all the shouting is about.





KILKENNY

ALL-IRELAND HURLING CHAMPIONS 1979

BACK ROW (left to right): Paddy Prendergast, Nicky Brennan, Matt Ruth, Richard Reid, Billy Fitzpatrick, Frank Cummins, Mick Crotty, Fan Larkin.
FRONT ROW (left to right): Joe Hennessy, Liam O'Brien, Noel Skehan, Ger Fennelly (captain), Mick Brennan, John Henderson, Ger Henderson.

KILKENNY
GAA YEARBOOK 1979



Well done, Fan . . . Kilkenny's oldest player, Phil 'Fan' Larkin (38), is congratulated by jubilant supporters.



SKEHAN'S △ PENALTY SAVE WAS VITAL

SKEHAN STARS . . . Noel Skehan makes that vital penalty save from John Connolly in the all-Ireland final. Watching and waiting to help are Phil 'Fan' Larkin and Ger. Henderson.

Top left . . . A word to heal the pain: Dejected minor team selector, Ollie Walsh (Dicksboro), leaves the field after Kilkenny had lost to Cork, and Dr. Kieran Cuddihy offers a word of consolation.

Bottom left . . . Hold On, There: Niall McInerney (G) tests the texture of Matt Ruth's jersey and finds that, like Kilkenny, it is in top order.

Middle right . . . So Near And Yet So Far: These might be the words from Mick Brennan as he attempts to prevent goalkeeper, Seamus Shinnors, from clearing his lines.

Right — The Cat Out Of The Bag: Loyal Kilkenny supporters reveal all before a ball is even struck in the all-Ireland final.



Martin Coogan – great hurler great sportsman!

By Peter Holohan

DOWN through the years the county senior hurling championships have produced their share of surprises and 1979 was no exception. The general presumption was that the holders, The Shamrocks and James Stephens would contest another final. The most that was expected from Erin's Own was that they would make it hot for the Village.

One man who did not go along with this view, however, was former county star, Martin Coogan, who was looking for something more than a 'gallant losers' tag and his optimism, implied perhaps rather than expressed, was obvious when I spoke to him a week before the semi-final.

As things turned out Martin Coogan was right; how right was even more convincingly demonstrated by the great battle Erin's Own put up in the subsequent county final drawn game.

Most of the crowd that saw the final agreed that the Martin Coogan's charisma had an awful lot to do with the Castlecomer upsurge. Only a man of his inspiring genius could have brought about such a remarkable transformation in a side that was hardly seriously considered earlier in the campaign.

Left handers are not strictly in the Kilkenny hurling tradition. But despite this we have had many outstanding 'ciotógs'. John Sutton, Paddy Moran, Frank Cummins, Mick Crotty and Martin Coogan himself come readily to mind.

It is interesting to note, too, that Martin's near neighbour, club colleague and county star Mick Brennan is also a left-hander. Martin Coogan was not only one of the most outstanding hurlers of his generation but one of the most popular and in the opinion of a great many people inside and outside this county one of the most under-rated.

Four All-Irelands

Martin Coogan won four all-Ireland senior medals with Kilkenny and starred in all four. While a great many Kilkenny people will hail his display in the 1969 final against Cork as his greatest game, he made as big, if not a bigger, impact when he came on as a sub in the 1972 final at a stage when Cork were eight points ahead and looked like coasting to an easy victory. It was difficult situations like this that brought the best out of the Erin's Own man; he was always cool, calm and collected and always played with great spirit.

A proud record

MARTIN Coogan was on nine Kilkenny all-Ireland sides: 1963, 1964, 1966, 1967, 1971, 1972 and 1973, being included as a sub in 1972 and 1973. He won four all-Ireland medals – 1963, 1967, 1969 and 1972.

He won eight Leinster medals; one National league medal (1965-66); three Oireachtas medals; five Railway Cup medals and won a Carrolls All-Stars award in 1971.



A fine action study of Martin Coogan.

Now a veteran in the hurling sense, Martin Coogan has been hurling since he was able to carry a hurley and his potential was first noted when he played on the Castlecomer under 16 side. He graduated from there to the county minor team. He was on the Castlecomer junior side in 1958 and played on the senior team the following year.

Castlecomer's prominence in the senior championship in recent years co-incides with his rise to the top; that they are still there is in large measure due to his inspiration. He played a big part in bringing them successfully through this year's campaign after what can only be described as a comparatively lean period.

Premature end

Martin Coogan's inter county career ended after 1972 — prematurely, in the view of a great many people. If it hadn't so ended things might have gone differently for Kilkenny. Even now, seven years later he is still as enthusiastic about the game as ever and though he might not now be up to his former stature in the county jersey he has certainly helped to bring about a remarkable revival in his own club.

He has contributed significantly to Kilkenny hurling and has derived great satisfaction from it. The fact that he might have reaped a greater reward from it doesn't worry him. He played the game for the love of it and there is nothing surer than when Martin Coogan's hurling days are over he will continue to take an active interest in it.

He clashed with great forwards like Jimmy Doyle of Tipperary, Jimmy O'Brien of Wexford, Seanie Barry of Cork and another Tipperary man, Francis Loughnane and figured on a Kilkenny half-back line that included such brilliant defenders as Seamus Cleere, Ted Carroll and Pat Henderson.

Fan Larkin

He doesn't think inter county hurlers should give up at the end of their inter county careers. "I don't think Fan Larkin for instance, should give up hurling", he said.

"We can encourage young players. When they see veterans like us in action they will be keen to emulate us".

While he is all in favour of giving the game every encouragement he does not believe in buying hurleys for young boys, particularly if their families can afford to buy them.

"Any young boy that is interested enough in the game should be prepared to show his interest in a practical way. They shouldn't have to be coaxed".

Caretaker of Castlecomer Vocational School, this outstanding hurler won universal admiration not alone for his delightful hurling skill but for his genial, unassuming manner and his great sense of sportsmanship. His dedication to the game is an example to all young hurlers.

Early days, but Joe has a proud record

IN HIS LOVE for sport and his ordinary everyday avocation Joe Hennessy followed in his father's footsteps and while Paddy Hennessy's interest in hurling was in the administrative field Joe has taken a more active role. He also carries on the family fuel merchant's business.

Paddy Hennessy and his wife died in 1974 within a short time of each other. They left a young family largely teenagers. To the credit of the young Hennessys they overcame the double loss with commendable courage and successfully fashioned their own way in life.

Paddy Hennessy was one of hurling's most enthusiastic and most dedicated supporters. He devoted a lot of attention to the development of the games among the teenagers in the city and was one of the game's most popular officials. It is sad to think that he did not live to see his son win all the honours the game has to offer.

Joe Hennessy started his hurling career with the Kilkenny C.B.S. under 12 team. He has come a long way since.

He has the unusual distinction of being selected for two different positions in successive years on All Stars sides. That is a fine tribute to his versatility. He was a half back on the Carrolls All Stars team in 1978 and for midfield on the Bank of Ireland All Stars this year.

His selection for the midfield role this year is all the more interesting because it was only in a contingency situation that he was chosen for midfield by the Kilkenny selectors – his usual and his most favoured position is right half back.

But it was easy for Joe Hennessy so well versed in the skills of the game to adjust to the new role. He hasn't weight or height to give away but what he lacks in this respect is more than compensated for by his perfect style.

At 23 Joe has hardly reached the prime of his career. He has plenty of time to improve – that is if there is room for improvement. He can look even in these early days on a very proud record.

He won his first all-Ireland medal with the Kilkenny minors in 1973, an under 21 medal in 1975 and a senior all-Ireland medal in 1979.



Style of an All-Star . . . Joe Hennessy (James Stephens) shows the strain and concentration of battle in this fine action shot.

He won a National League medal as a sub with Kilkenny in 1975-76. He won Leinster senior medals in 1978 and 1979 as well as winning minor and under 21 Leinster medals.

His first local championship medal came in 1971 when he won county minor honours with James Stephens. He won a Leinster junior colleges medal when Kilkenny C.B.S. beat St. Peter's, Wexford. Another honour much coveted by inter-county players – a senior county championship – came his way when James Stephens triumphed in the 1975 campaign and again in 1976 and he won an all-Ireland club championship medal with 'The Village' in 1975. Joe's prowess is not confined exclusively to hurling. He has won minor and senior county football championship medals with James Stephens.

Though operating at centrefield now, Joe prefers the half back position – the position where he began his career.

His favourite players when he was playing with the county was Martin Coogan. The best players he has played against are Martin Quigley, Wexford and his county colleague, Ger Henderson.

He has been chosen this year for the Smithwick's Sports Stars award.

One of the most popular players in the game today he is admired for his exemplary conduct on the field and is a big favourite with his hurling colleagues.

His delightfully free style puts him into the top class; he is a hurler in the best Kilkenny tradition. He has courage and determination to match his great skill.

Peter Holohan



Receiving the Bank of Ireland All-Star awards from Mr. Jack Lynch are Joe Hennessy, Liam 'Chunky' O'Brien and Ger Henderson.

KILKENNY'S BANK OF IRELAND ALL-STARS

OVER 150 people, including the Mayor of Kilkenny, Councillor Tom Martin, Most Rev. Dr. Peter Birch, Bishop of Ossory, the entire Kilkenny All-Ireland winning team and friends gathered in the Springhill Hotel on Wednesday, October 10, to honour Kilkenny's Bank of Ireland All-Stars — Liam O'Brien, Mick Brennan, Ger Henderson and Joe Hennessy.

Welcoming the distinguished gathering on behalf of the Bank, Mr. Cecil O'Driscoll, manager of The Parade Branch, said 'the Bank does not regard this as the first year of the Bank of Ireland All-Stars but as the ninth year of the All-Star scheme which was initiated by the Gaelic Games correspondents and initially sponsored by Carrolls'.

He went on to refer to the splendid contribution which Kilkenny has made towards promoting the ideals of the G.A.A.

Mr. O'Driscoll then made reference to the manner in which Kilkenny teams have successfully adapted their style of hurling to the revised playing rules, which many opposition counties have witnessed to their regret. This ability helped the senior teams which represented Kilkenny during the past decade to bring many honours to the county and he congratulated the present team on winning the McCarthy Cup for the 21st time last September.

In addition to the many team successes achieved in recent years, individual players also won

many awards for themselves and for the county. Since the All-Stars scheme was inaugurated in 1971, Kilkenny players have won 40 awards which is eight more than their nearest rivals. This year Liam 'Chunky' O'Brien was winning his fourth award, Mick Brennan his third, and Ger Henderson and Joe Hennessy two each, with many more awards promised.

The Bank of Ireland, said Mr. O'Driscoll, were proud of being associated with the All-Star scheme and the Bank would ensure that the status which the scheme had already achieved would be preserved and, hopefully, improved further.

Each of the All-Stars was then presented with a specially-crested All-Star blazer and kit bag by Mr. Frank McDonough, Regional General Manager.

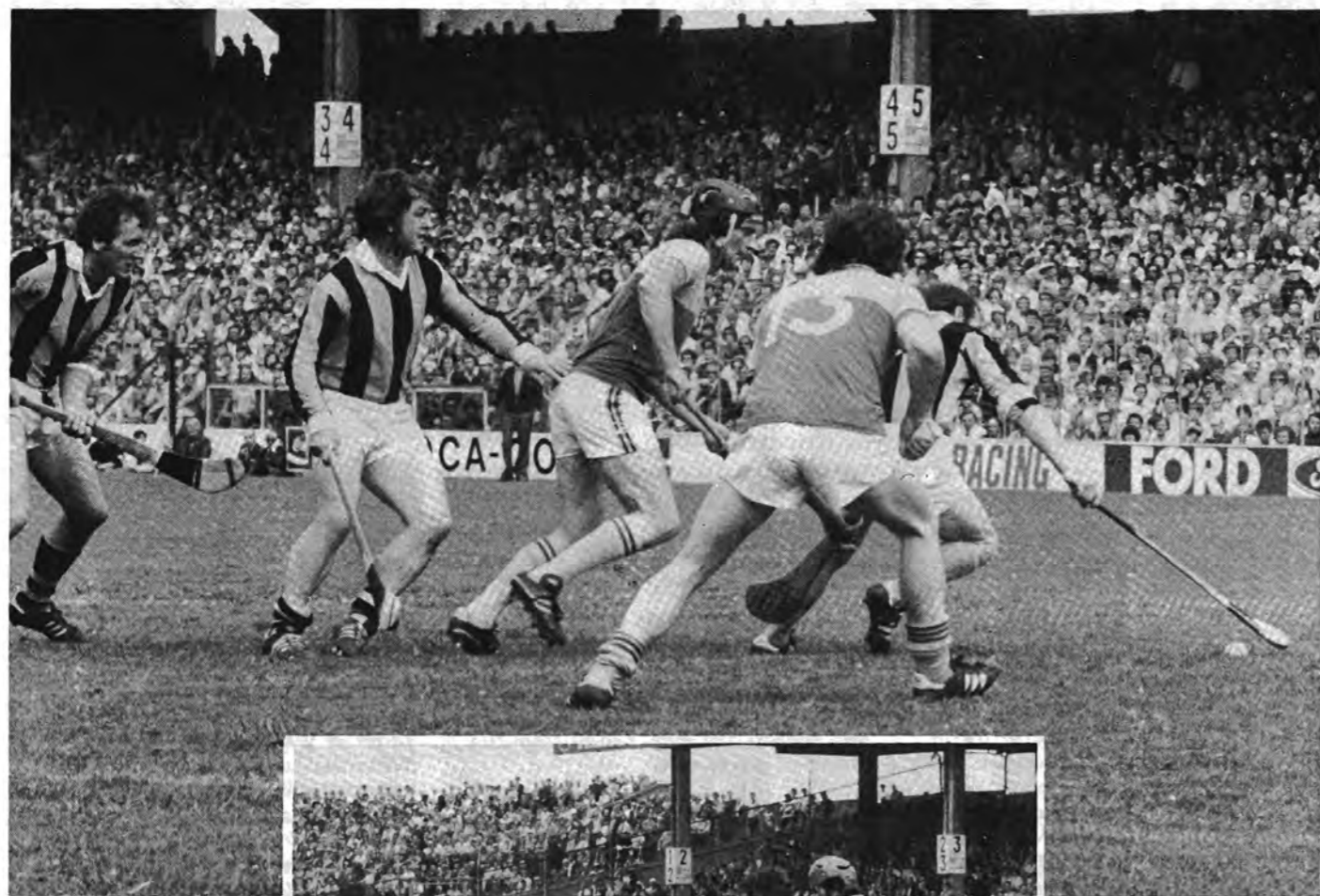
Mr. Liam Hayes, Manager of Parliament Street branch, then spoke on behalf of the Bank and made reference to the unique spectator atmosphere which only hurling matches are capable of producing. He concluded by presenting a cheque to the County Board towards defraying the expenses of the Kilkenny touring party.

Mr. Nickey Purcell accepted the cheque on behalf of the County Board and thanked the local managers for their generous contribution and praised the Bank for choosing Kilkenny as one of the counties where local receptions were held in honour of the All-Stars.

The formalities of the evening were concluded by the Mayor, Councillor Tom Martin, thanking the Bank on behalf of all present. The evening ended with a buffet and dance.



Kilkenny hurlers who were selected for Bank of Ireland GAA All-Stars awards pictured at a reception in Springhill Hotel before the American trip. In the picture are (from left): Joe Hennessy, Liam Hayes (Manager, Bank of Ireland, Parliament Street), Ger Henderson, Frank McDonough (Regional Manager, Bank of Ireland), Liam O'Brien, Cecil O'Driscoll (Manager, Bank of Ireland, The Parade) and Mick Brennan.



Above: Fan Larkin about to collect a loose ball closely followed by Sean Kinsella and Ned Buggy. Paddy Prendergast and Nicky Brennan watch anxiously.



Inset: Declan Rowsome, Paddy Prendergast and Ger Henderson in a chase for the ball watched by referee Gerry Kirwan

Below: Nicky Brennan and Sean Kinsella tussle for a ground ball. Tony Doran, Paddy Prendergast and Ned Buggy watch anxiously.



Noel Skehan defies Wexford's corner forward Christy Keogh as he taps the ball out the wing as John Henderson comes back to help out.

LEINSTER FINAL ACTION



Captain Ger Fennelly proudly holds aloft the Bob O'Keeffe cup after Kilkenny's great victory.

It was a satisfactory year

THIS was a very satisfactory year for Kilkenny. Any year in which you win an all-Ireland title must be regarded as satisfactory. We must always be conscious of the fact that only two of the 32 counties can win a senior all-Ireland (hurling or football) and to win one is something to be proud of.

If anything this year's all-Ireland victory was all the more satisfactory because it was rather unexpected. Certainly our National League performances did not suggest that we would be in Croke Park on September 2 contesting and winning the hurling final.

We can be a bit unpredictable at times, I suppose. But victory is all the sweeter when it is unexpected. That is not to



By
Michael O'Neill
Chairman, Co. Board

suggest that we did not win on merit. After scrambling

through a first round tussle with Dublin who put us to the pin of our collar to scrape home we went on to give a dazzling display against Wexford in the Leinster final.

The stage was then set for what everyone thought would be a final confrontation with Cork but for the second time in four years Galway upset the apple cart.

Galway looked so good against Cork that they were fully bent on disposing of the Kilkenny 'bogey' and they came to Croke Park on all-Ireland final day confident and fully determined.

There is no need to re-tell the story of the game. We won by a comfortable seven points and chalked up our 21st all-Ireland senior title.

We must now set our

sights on getting upsides with Cork and Tipperary. We are only one behind Tipp and three behind Cork. The task is a formidable one and it will take our full resources, effectively marshalled, to achieve this ambitious target.

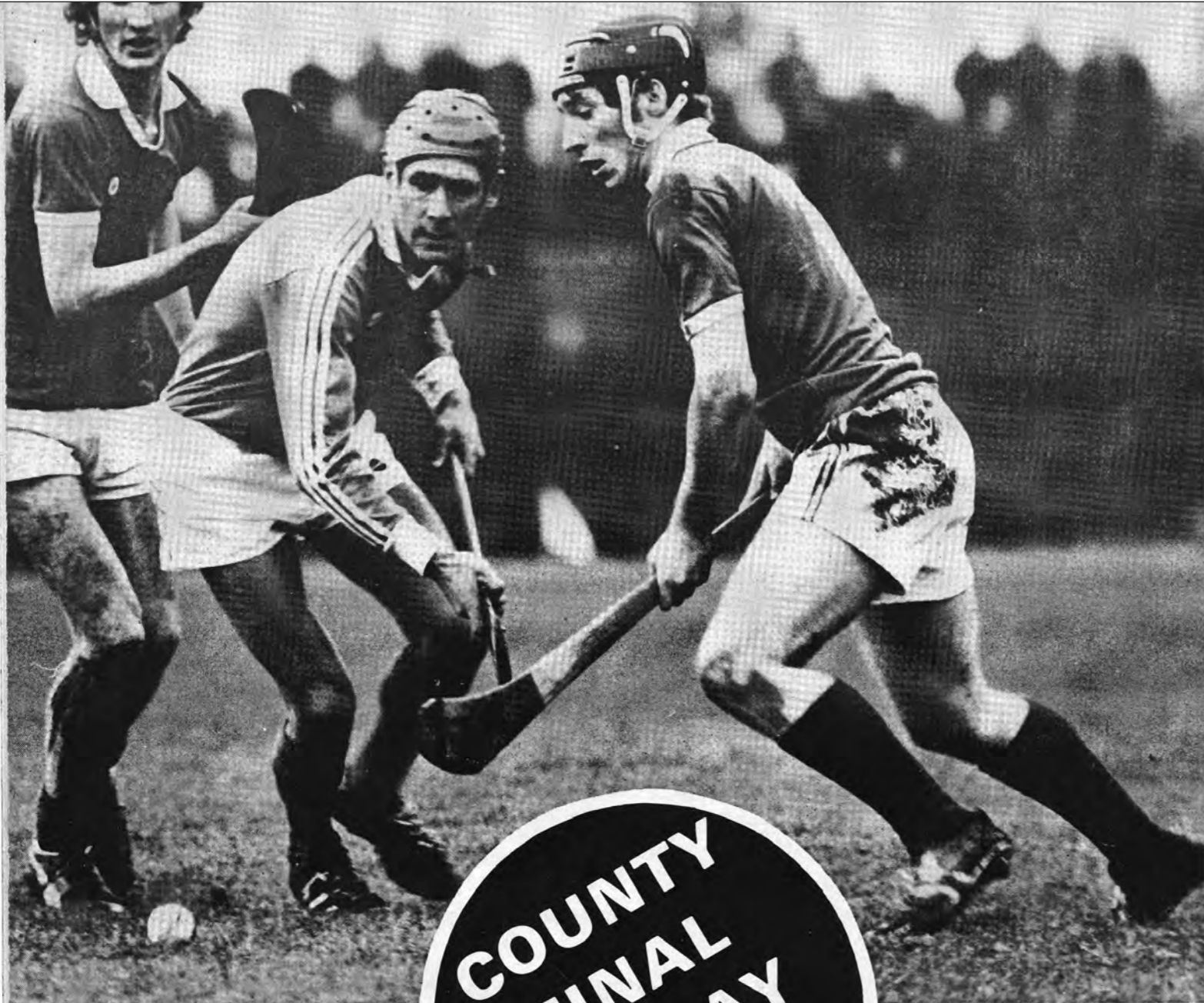
Mick O'Neill's recovery

Every hurling supporter in the county will be glad to learn that Mick O'Neill is making good progress after his recent illness. He is back at work again and everyone will be looking forward to a resumption of his duties as County Board chairman.

THE SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIP CAMPAIGN IN DETAIL

- May 6:** O'Loughlin's 5-7, Galmoy 3-6.
Muckalee/Ballyfoyle Rangers 1-9, St. Lactain's 1-7.
The Fenians 2-17, Mooncoin 1-9.
Erin's Own 0-14, The Rower-Inistioge 1-6.
James Stephens 1-11, Conahy Shamrocks 1-4.
- May 13:** Galmoy 2-15, Mooncoin 3-8.
- May 20:** James Stephens 1-16, The Fenians 3-6.
Erin's Own 0-13, Bennettsbridge 0-7.
The Rower-Inistioge 5-9, St. Lactain's 2-6.
Conahy Shamrocks 5-9, Windgap 2-8.
Muckalee/Ballyfoyle 5-9, Shamrocks 2-12.
- May 27:** Mooncoin 4-10, O'Loughlin's 3-7.
James Stephens 5-7, Windgap 2-6.
Bennettsbridge 1-7, The Rower-Inistioge 1-6.
- June 3:** The Fenians 3-11, Galmoy 2-5.
The Rower/Inistioge 3-10, Muckalee/Ballyfoyle 0-17.
- June 10:** James Stephens 0-16, Mooncoin 0-10.
O'Loughlin's 3-12, Windgap 2-8.
Bennettsbridge 2-9, Graignamanagh 2-5.
The Fenians 2-12, Conahy Shamrocks 1-9.
Erin's Own 5-10, St. Lactain's 5-9.
- June 17:** James Stephens 1-10, O'Loughlin's 0-10.

- Erin's Own 3-8, Muckalee/Ballyfoyle 2-8.
Shamrocks 3-10, Bennettsbridge 1-5.
Conahy Shamrocks 3-10, Mooncoin 0-10.
Galmoy 2-6, Windgap 2-4.
The Rower-Inistioge 6-17, Graignamanagh 1-8.
- July 1:** Muckalee/Ballyfoyle 1-13, Graignamanagh 0-12.
Shamrocks 4-10, St. Lactain's 2-3.
- July 22:** Muckalee/Ballyfoyle 4-12, Bennettsbridge 2-7.
Conahy Shamrocks 2-14, Galmoy 1-10.
The Fenians 3-7, O'Loughlin's 2-8.
Shamrocks 3-11, Erin's Own 2-4.
St. Lactain's 2-10, Graignamanagh 1-10.
- July 29:** Shamrocks 2-12, The Rower-Inistioge 1-8.
The Fenians 6-7, Windgap 0-5.
Erin's Own 1-14, Graignamanagh 2-1.
Bennettsbridge 2-4, St. Lactain's 1-6.
O'Loughlin's 2-17, Conahy Shamrocks 0-7.
James Stephens 2-15, Galmoy 0-7.
- Sept. 23:** Semi-finals: Shamrocks 3-11, The Fenians 1-8.
Erin's Own 0-9, James Stephens 0-8.
- Oct. 7:** Shamrocks 0-14, Erin's Own 0-14.
- Nov. 14:** Shamrocks 3-12, Erin's Own 1-6.
(Abandoned after 50 minutes).
- Dec. 2:** Mooncoin 3-8, Windgap 1-6.
(Relegation play-off).



**COUNTY
FINAL
REPLAY
ACTION**



Opposite page (top) . . . Eyes on the ball: Martin Coogan (Erin's Own) and Michael Kelly battle for possession with Liam Fennelly (S) ready to pounce.

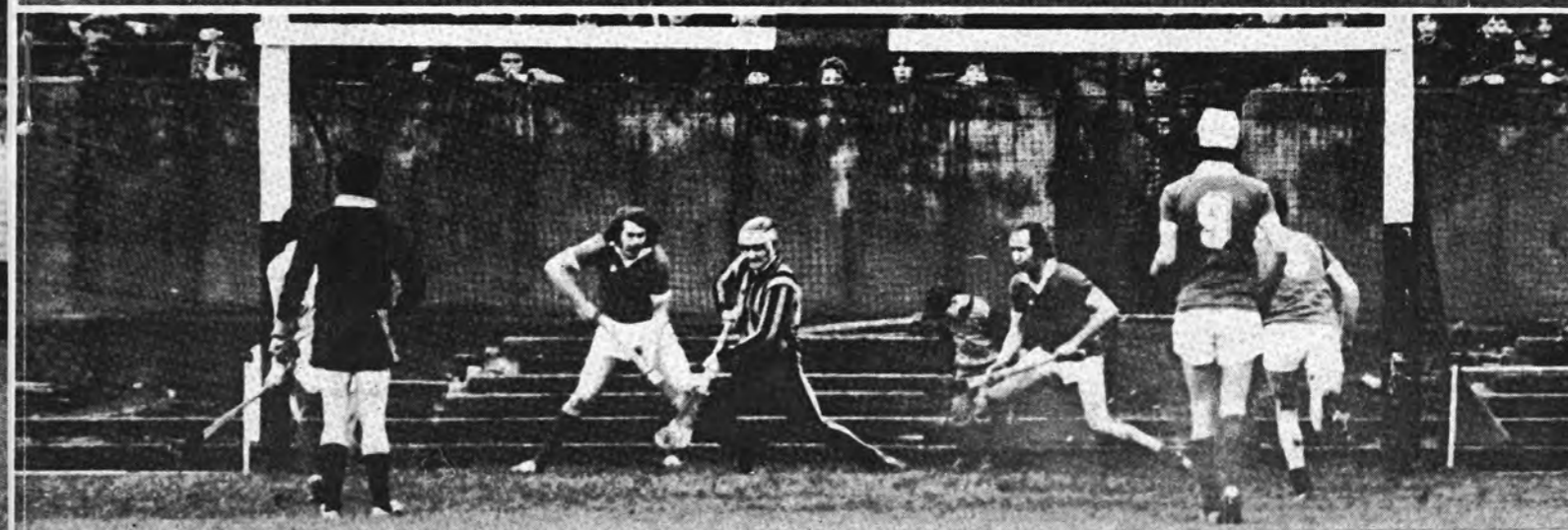
Opposite page (bottom) . . . There she goes: Martin Coogan sends the ball goalwards and Erin's Own are on the attack again. Also in picture are Johnny Walsh, Seamie Coogan, Martin Fogarty, Liam Dalton, Michael Brennan, Frank Holohan, Maurice Mason, Peter Boran (6), Richard Reid and Liam Fennelly.

Top right . . . Specially for the spectators: Spectators got a birds eye view as Shamrocks defend their goal. Fighting for the ball are Ger Fennelly (12), Seamie Brennan, Michael Brennan, Martin Fogarty, Eamon Wallace, Kevin Fennelly (stripes), Frank Holohan), Seamie Brennan, Johnny Walsh, Eamon Brennan, Mick 'Cloney' Brennan and Declan Connolly.

RIGHT: C-R-A-S-H . . . Michael Nash (Erin's Own) stretches every muscle as he puts his all into an attempt to goal.

Below . . . Come to me: Eamon Brennan seems to be calling the ball to himself as he is harassed by Maurice Mason, Sean Fennelly (helmet) and Patrick Holden. Eamon Wallace, James Murphy (referee), Seamie Brennan, Frank Holohan and Tommy Grincell (umpire) are also pictured.

Bottom of page . . . Get it away: Kevin Fennelly has saved a penalty from Michael Nash and Maurice Mason (r) seems to be telling him to push it away. Liam Dalton, James Murphy (referee), Sean Fennelly and Frank Holohan are also featured.



There is a future for football

*Says Football Board Chairman,
Nicky McGrath*

THE present position of football is reasonably healthy if certain aspects are taken into account — the primary schools; post primary schools; under 16 level and club level.

The inter-county scene has now taken a definite turn for the better. A panel of players train on Tuesday nights and games are being arranged for every week-end when there are no National League fixtures. If this trend continues I look forward to a definite improvement in results in 1980.

The county championships are nearing completion in all grades but the under 21 could be over now if clubs played their games in April when fixtures were first made. This is the first year with the fixtures committee in operation so we must give it a chance. Only good can come from it.

There are more people

playing football now and enjoying it than ever before. In the schools, students are looking for football to be played and players seem to get tremendous satisfaction from it.

Football in this county has a bright future. Given the proper structures and a healthy attitude to the game, it must go from strength to strength.

Football can be improved by the introduction of the one parish rule and seven-a-side tournaments could also be introduced, if necessary.

The Football Board must be given a status within the county in line with its responsibilities, remembering that the Football Board is responsible for running all the championships from minor to senior for the whole county as well as inter county and National League games. Yet it has only the same powers as the Northern and Southern Boards.

The divisional boards are only responsible for minor, under 21 and junior hurling. Representation for football on the County Board must also be on these lines. The Football Board should be made self-sufficient. They should be given sufficient money to run their own affairs.

Coaching committees must be set up and special incentives should be offered to young players who put themselves at the disposal of the coaching committees.

Football can only improve if the clubs change their attitude to the game and try to make a go of it. If everybody involved in the G.A.A. wants it to improve then it will improve.

Enthusiastic officials are required to run the Board — officials who are prepared to work hard without much hope of getting any appreciation for it. Then and only then can it improve.

Changing Times

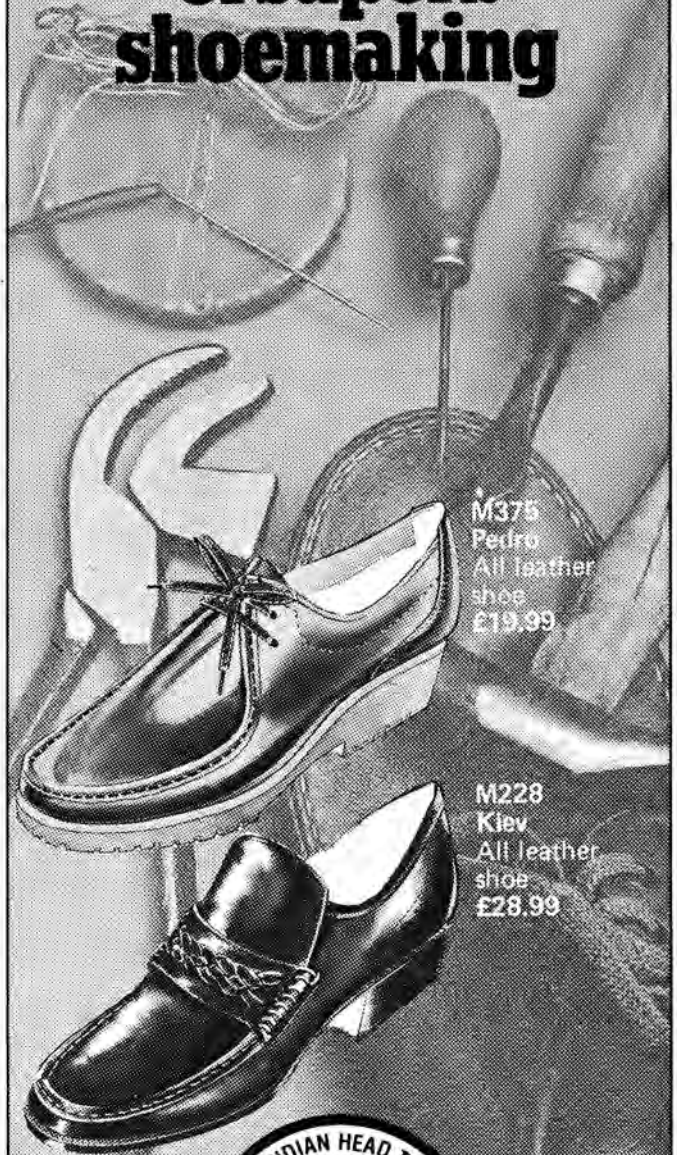
STRANGE as it may seem hurling and football were popular around the middle of the 1700's and no less a personage than the wife of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland was a frequent attender at the games.

The Countess of Northumberland who attended a hurling game at the Curragh in 1763 described it as "the most noble and manly exercise in the world. There is nothing like it in Europe".

The Countess of Westmoreland described a hurling match she saw in the Phoenix Park in 1792 as a game "displaying agility and athletic contention". The game ended abruptly when the crowd invaded the pitch.

As is well known about 100 years ago hurling and football were banned by Dublin Castle.

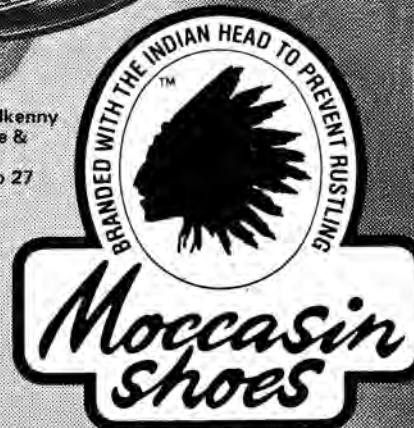
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Is talent in minor hurling well running dry?

By JOHN KNOX

ORDINARILY a minor hurling All-Ireland championship defeat suffered by Kilkenny would not even cause an eyebrow to be raised. But two dismal defeats in a row presents a different situation altogether.

That is what happened Kilkenny in the 1978 and '79 championships. Not only were they beaten by Cork, but the teams went down without much fight, and certainly without showing the skill that Noreside teams are renowned for.

Some say the county has reached a valley period and the rich well of talent is beginning to run dry. With the under-16 and schools' competitions being run so smoothly and expertly in the county it is hard to go along with this trail of thought. But something went wrong in the past two years!

Last season the Leesiders lowered the black and amber in a fair enough game, but this year they collected their 14th title with more ease than one expects in an All-Ireland final. Kilkenny have struggled to fire themselves into orbit off the 11-title mark, and all the time they have stayed on the launching pad.

The final scoreline in the 1979 decider was 2-11 to 1-9, but the home challenge was so feeble that only because the winners were no wonderful team themselves Kilkenny were saved from a sound thrashing.

The losers only managed to gain a 0-5 to 0-4 lead in the opening half when playing with the advantage of the wind, so, at the break, the writing was on the wall. In the second half the Leesiders

tacked on a goal and a point within minutes, and after that Kilkenny were always struggling while their opponents grew in confidence.

There was not an awful lot to admire about the Kilkenny challenge, but one or two individuals did manage to show exceptional talent, and consequently give hope for the future.

Has what it takes

One of them was goalkeeper Michael Walsh, son of the famous Ollie. He seems destined to follow in the illustrious footsteps of his father, who was a selector with the team. Young Michael is a progeny of James's Street C.B.S. and in this and subsequent matches with his club, Dicksboro, he showed himself one to keep an eye out for in the future. He would seem to have what it takes to make it all the way to the top.

Another goalkeeper, Billy Walton this time, who chose to play outfield this year, was another youngster to catch the eye, even though he only substituted in the final.

John Mahon, Jimmy Holden and Paddy Heffernan were others who were able to match the best of their opponents and deserved better reward for their efforts.

Of course, when examining Kilkenny's form in the All-Ireland, it must be kept in mind how they managed to get there in the first place. Over the past few years, the opposition the Noresiders have encountered in Leinster has been very poor, and this has been commented upon by



Goalkeepers together . . . just after winning his seventh all-Ireland senior hurling medal Noel Skehan is congratulated by Michael Walsh who figured on the losing county minor team. Could Walsh be one to figure in goal in years to come?

many high ranking officials.

This year was a case in point. Kilkenny got to the final without much bother. The only fuss they encountered was against Wexford, who gave them a rare old fright in the provincial semi-final in Carlow. Apart from that, they had to contend with very limited, hurling-wise, opposition.

Reorganised

That Wexford match is worth recalling in a bit more detail. It was blow for blow right up to the third quarter and then Wexford nosed ahead. They seemed booked for the Leinster final when they led with just minutes remaining. Then a late, late goal carried the day for the Marble City boys.

This was the stoutest opposition Wexford had mounted in the minor championship for years. And by all accounts they have reorganised their forces at this level on the Slaneyside, so while that is good news for them, it is bad for Kilkenny. The days of the easy victories at minor level over Wexford are over.

In the end, this will be a good thing for the game, and Kilkenny too, because they will go into the final better

prepared for the challenge that will come out of Munster.

In the local minor championship, the standard of games is certainly as high as any around the country. And there is a constant flow of young players coming out of the schools and colleges. So the talent must be there, although there are many more attractions for youngsters today than there were years ago.

So the fight to keep young lads playing hurling must be an on-going one, and the effort must never be relaxed, rather reinforced.

What happened Kilkenny in the All-Irelands over the past two years was that they had a poor crop of players. But as sure as day follows night, the county will produce another side next year that will have the potential to go all the way to the top. Whether or not they will could depend an awful lot on the test they receive in Leinster.

The Kilkenny team against Cork was — M. Walsh, P. Ryan, E. Aylward, J. Holden, L. Hennessy, P. Heffernan, M. Gaffney, J. Moriarty, J. Mahon, W. Purcell, J. O'Dwyer, S. Tyrrell (capt.), P. Phelan, J. Murphy, T. Moylan. Subs.: B. Walton and S. Roche.

It's the basic skills that count

EVEN though the crowds that turned out to greet the champions on their return home, broke all records Kilkenny's success in this year's all-Ireland final did not have the profound impact that one normally associates with an all-Ireland victory. For some strange reason there wasn't the same euphoria as in other years.

It may well be that the sense of elation normally felt was tinged with regret that Galway had been dealt another cruel blow, again at the hands of Kilkenny for the second time in four years. For few people in Kilkenny would have been all that deeply disappointed if Galway had won.

Outside Kilkenny the whole country was hoping for a Galway win; hoping that the years of frustration had at last come to an end and that Galway players like John Connolly would reap a just reward for their years of fruitless labour.

Another factor that tended to rob the final of its usual

glamour was that after Kilkenny had beaten Wexford in a rip-roaring Leinster final and Cork had again hoisted their flag in the Munster campaign another Cork-Kilkenny confrontation was in the offing.

Cork were determined and strongly fancied to win a record-breaking four in a row and Kilkenny were equally determined to foil them in their bid. Cork had beaten Kilkenny in 1978 and Kilkenny had a score to settle. The stage was set, or so it seemed, for a battle royal.

Calculations upset

The calculations were upset, however, and a Galway side playing superb hurling took the Leesiders by storm and finished up convincing winners — more convincing than in their last vital semi-final clash in 1975.

Could it be that Galway had at last arrived? They last won the all-Ireland senior hurling title in 1923 — their only success — and surely victory could not continue to

elude them. They had come through a hard National League campaign and the standard of their hurling in the semi-final left nothing to be desired.

Further, they were up against a Kilkenny side that had barely escaped relegation in the National League. Also, it was fairly generally agreed that the Kilkenny side of 1975 was stronger than in 1979.

Wrong approach?

There are those who say that Galway adopted the wrong approach and that conditions were against them. Conditions were the same for both sides and it may well be that the fundamental difference between the teams was that Kilkenny mastered the conditions better.

There are those who say that if John Connolly had scored a goal from the penalty which Noel Skehan saved Galway would have won. That's a purely speculative argument. Kilkenny had seven points to spare at the end and

if the Galway goal had come it could have stirred Kilkenny to greater effort. Even if the goal had been scored Galway would still have a big task on hand.

True Galway missed several scoring chances early in the game but missed chances often result from astute defence tactics. Though Galway had the better of matters in those early stages Kilkenny played it cool and gradually got on top of their work.

Kilkenny got two easy goals but these are part and parcel of every game. A game is determined by the way the scoreboard reads at the end.

One fact that emerged very clearly from this game was the vital role that tradition plays in an all-Ireland final. In the rough and tumble of a hurling final tradition can often mean the difference between victory and defeat.

Allied to that is the fact that a team must have the basic skills. And Kilkenny have the basic skills.

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St. Kieran's – the G.A.A. connection

THE CRADLE of hurling in Kilkenny was formerly a rugby stronghold. It is not probably widely known that St. Kieran's college which produced so many hurling stars was once an exclusively rugby school.

However the G.A.A. connection with the college goes back a long time. St. Kieran's which has six of its former hurlers among the present all-Ireland champions, began its association with Gaelic games as far back as the early 1900s.

The first official connection was in November 28, 1910, when the Leinster Colleges council was founded. Actually the first chairman of the council was the then St. Kieran's president V. Rev. John Doody.

Before that Gaelic games were played at St. Kieran's but they took second place to rugby and soccer. It was only around 1910 that hurling, gaelic football and handball began to be played with other colleges.

The Kilkenny college soon made a big impact on the G.A.A. scene. In 1922 they won the Leinster cup in both hurling and football. There were no all-Ireland finals in those days. Between 1925 and 1929 the college set a record when they won the Leinster senior cup in hurling five times on the trot. Incidentally it was in 1924 that the present colours (black and white) were adopted.

Before that the teams played in white jerseys with green collars and cuffs, bearing the college crest on the breast. They repeated their five in a row Leinster titles between 1937 and 1941. This was a star studded era with such household names as Wex-

ford's Nicky Rackard and Fr. Tommy Maher, now president of the college.

The College's All-Ireland hurling competition was inaugurated in 1946 and St. Kieran's won the title when they defeated a much fancied St. Colman's, Fermoy team in 1948 in Croke Park by 2-12 to 2-2. This competition was suspended from 1948 to 1957, but was revived in 1959 when St. Kieran's scored another dramatic win over St. Flannan's, Ennis, in a game which first saw Eddie Keher's scoring power to effect.

Subsequent titles were won in 1959, 1961, 1965, 1971 and 1975.

Recent years has seen a revival of Gaelic football in the college. Their only success in this field was in 1967 when they won the Leinster senior football B.

St. Kieran's has produced many hurling stars for Kilkenny. Among the St. Kieran's former hurlers on the present All-Ireland champions side are Paddy Prendergast, Nicky Brennan, Richard Reid, Billy Fitzpatrick, Mick Crotty and captain Ger Fennelly.

However the college's association with Kilkenny's all-Ireland victories are not confined to the present day. Among the household names in the past were Dick Grace, Martin White, Liam Reidy, Mark Marnell, John Maher, Fr. Tommy Maher, Ted Carroll, Eddie Keher to name but a few. St. Kieran's contribution to hurling was not confined to Kilkenny as the Rackard brothers (Nick and Billy) also picked up their hurling skills in the Kilkenny college.

Dermot Healy.

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Winners of Smithwick's Sports Stars awards for Gaelic Games receive their trophies from Mr. Bobby Howick at the annual dinner in Springhill Hotel. They are (from left): Joe Hennessy (Hurling), Mary Canavan (Camogie) and Billy Bourke (Handball). The president of the Smithwick's Sports Stars committee, Mayor Tom Martin is also in the picture.



Billy Bourke who received the Smithwick's Sports Stars award for handball pictured with relatives, friends and handball officials at the dinner in Springhill Hotel.

Hurling final highlights

How vital was the John Connolly missed penalty, coming as it did at a crucial stage in the second half of the hurling final with Kilkenny just managing to keep their nose in front? The end result means that it would have made no difference. Even more important — how vital the missed Galway chances in the early stages?

The cumulative effect of both must have unsettled the Galway rhythm and they never raised their game to a degree that seriously threatened Kilkenny's hopes of chalking up their 21st title.

It was a tactical success for Kilkenny who led by 1-5 to 0-4 at half-time even though playing against the wind. Kilkenny led by 1-10 to 1-8 when Galway were awarded the penalty which Noel Skehan saved brilliantly and Phil Larkin got the ball out of the danger area.

Kilkenny came away immediately for Liam O'Brien to tack on a point and the Galway resistance crumbled at this point.

Kilkenny had two easy goals. Four minutes from the break Seamus Shin-

nors attempted to catch a ball that was going wide but it dropped out of his hand for a '65' which Liam O'Brien sent to the net.

Shortly after this a 45 yards shot from Mick Brennan went all the way to the Galway net.

In the first half the scores were level in the 3rd, 6th and 26th minutes. In the second half a Noel Lane goal put the Tribesmen ahead but Kilkenny hit back quickly with points by Liam O'Brien and Mick Brennan to level the scores at 1-8 each.

The Kilkenny defence were excellent and doubts or suspicions that might have arisen from previous performances were wiped out. The decision to switch Nicky Brennan and Richie Reid was a master stroke and the almost total eclipse of P. J. Molloy, one of Galway's greatest scoring hopes, by John Henderson completely upset the Galway attack.

Ger Henderson was brilliant at centre half and Phil Larkin and Paddy Prendergast teamed up in splendid style.

Another factor that had a big bearing on the outcome was Frank Cummins' power at midfield. As in 1975 he stymied John Connolly with the Galway star exercising comparatively little influence on the game, Galway's morale suffered severely.

Joe Hennessy waited until the second half to give his best hurling.

This was a game that Liam O'Brien will like to look back on. It was his best performance since the 1972 final against Cork and completely wiped out the unhappy memories he carried away from last year's decider.

Mick Brennan, Mick Crotty, Ger Fennelly, Billy Fitzpatrick and Matt Ruth and Kevin Fennelly when he came on, all played their part in the attack and Dick O'Hara was a good sub for Paddy Prendergast when he came on eight minutes from the end.

Seamus Shinnors had a dismal day in the Galway goal but no fault could be found with the hurling of Sean Silke and Iggy Clarke.

Noel Lane, Finbarr Gantley and P. J. Molloy were Galway's most dangerous forwards.

Scorers for *Kilkenny*: Liam O'Brien (1-7, goal from '65', four points from frees); Mick Brennan (1-1), Joe Hennessy, Billy Fitzpatrick, Mick Crotty, Kevin Fennelly (0-1 each).

Galway's scorers: P. J. Molloy (0-3, 0-2 from frees); Noel Lane (1-0); Finbarr Gantley (0-2 from frees); Steve Mahon (0-1).

Kilkenny: N. Skehan, P. Larkin, P. Prendergast, J. Henderson, R. Reid, G. Henderson, N. Brennan, J. Hennessy, F. Cummins, G. Fennelly (captain), B. Fitzpatrick, L. O'Brien, M. Brennan, M. Crotty, M. Ruth. Subs: K. Fennelly for M. Crotty; D. O'Hara for P. Prendergast.

Galway: S. Shinnors, N. McInerney, C. Hayes, A. Fenton, J. McDonagh, S. Silke, I. Clarke, S. Mahon, John Connolly, B. Forde, F. Burke, Joe Connolly, P. J. Molloy, N. Lane, F. Gantley. Subs: S. Linnane for B. Forde; M. Whelan for F. Burke.

Mr. G. Ryan, Tipperary, refereed.

Brow Rangers Athletic Club

DURING the last twelve months Nicksey Comerford watched with pride the athletic achievements of his trainees in Brow Rangers A.C. For a man who can look back over 40 years' outstanding service to Kilkenny athletics this year's successes surpass previous records.

Murty Kelly, representing Ireland in the Eight Nation Track and Field International event in Portugal in 1978 returned home with the silver medal in the discus. Since then he has taken the gold in

the same event in the Leinster championships but had to be contented with the silver in the All-Ireland.

Murty's efforts in the shot were no less rewarding, taking the gold in the Leinster and the silver in the All-Ireland. He also won the silver in both the 16 lbs and 35 lbs hammer and went on to take the bronze in the All-Ireland.

Murty who is current Irish junior power lifting champion and Munster junior champion featured second in the Munster senior cham-

pionships in the power lifting event.

Due to the fact that it was his first year competing in the Leinster championships, Pat Maher had a sensational win with a throw of 28' 6" in the 56 lbs. However, he failed to achieve this magnificent record in the All-Ireland and had to be satisfied with the silver, his All-Ireland shot falling 6" short of his previous best.

Coupled with his distance throw he maintained a similar

performance 'over the bar' taking the silver here also.

Like Pat, Joe Kelly won many prizes in open sports during the year. In addition to this his other achievements were second in the 56 lbs for distance in the Leinster championships and also second in the pole vault in the Leinster championship.

With these great achievements behind them Nicksey Comerford and his dedicated team can look forward to continued success.

Under-16 hurling goes from strength to strength

FROM strength to strength. That is the story of hurling at under-16 level in Kilkenny.

Over 720 boys took part in the various competitions which were organised by the County Under-16 Board during the year, and after 107 games the competitions were completed last September.

This must certainly speak for itself. The amount of organisation and work involved at this level is huge. However, all credit is due to the Under-16 Board and the various clubs.

Since the formation of the Board in 1951 the standard of hurling in this grade has made great progress. However, it was only in 1973 that the Board really came to life under the guidance of **Georgie Leahy** and **Tom Ryall**.

In 1973 there were only three competitions. Today the number has increased to 10.

Four teams shared the honours in the six competitions in 1978 — Thomastown, Glenmore, Castlecomer and Lisdowney.

THOMASTOWN

After a thrilling final Thomastown defeated St. Patrick's (Kilkenny) by 1-9 to 2-1 in the A championship. This was Thomastown's eighth success even though it had been 7 years since they won the last title.

The final produced some first class hurling and the southerners had to pull out all the stops to overcome the city side. It was only in the closing stages that they pulled away.

Thomastown opened the scoring with a **John Donnelly** point in the opening minutes. Donnelly soon gained possession again and slammed the ball to the net to give the southerners a 1-1 lead.

St. Pat's came more into the game when corner forward **Liam Mullan** scored their first goal. The southerners had further points from **Harry Murphy** and John Donnelly to give them a 1-3 to 1-0 lead at the interval.

The city boys gained much more control in the opening stages of the second half. **Eddie Brennan** pointed and **John McCarthy** put them into the lead when he picked off a very opportunist goal to leave the score 2-1 to 1-3.

However, the losers failed to raise another flag and Thomastown's forwards were very accurate as they picked off some long range points which secured victory for them.

Thomastown had some fine players in Michael Donnelly, Liam O'Neill, John Donnelly, Harry Murphy and Billy Doyle.

Thomastown: J. Kirwan, M. Donnelly, C. Murphy, A. Roche, K. Power, B. Doyle, L. O'Neill, H. Murphy, B. Ferrell, P. Hoyne, D. Hoyne, J. Dunphy, J. Donnelly, M. Cody, G. Walsh. Subs: J. O'Hara, S. O'Hara.

GLENMORE

Glenmore won their first under-age title when they scored an impressive victory (1-10 to 2-4) over Mooncoin in the final of the Roinn A League.

After a very exciting game at Mullinavat there was only the puck of a ball between the sides. It was a very close encounter throughout with the lead changing hands on several occasions.

Glenmore's victory was due to a great team effort and especially the efforts of Frank Kirwan, Pat Phelan, Richard Duggan, Ned O'Connor, Ray Heffernan, Liam Walsh, Dick Hennessy and Jim Roche proved vital to their victory.

Glenmore: R. Kirwan, J. O'Connor, P. Phelan, R. Cass, R. Duggan, M. Murphy, N. O'Connor, R. Heffernan, L. Walsh, D. Murphy, J. Roche. Subs: P. Davin, G. Cass, W. Mullally.

CASTLECOMER

Castlecomer came back into the limelight having been in the doldrums for some years.

Castlecomer won their first title in Roinn B when they captured both the league and championship titles. This was their first win in this grade having won Roinn A in 1965.

Their opponents in both finals were Piltown. Having overcome Piltown rather easily in the league the Northerners found it much more difficult to secure victory in the championship final.

Having gone into an early lead Castlecomer had a struggle throughout the remainder of the game to hold on to their lead. Were it not for the efforts of Willie O'Shea, Paul Rice, Ray Brennan, Jamsie Brennan, Brian Young and Martin Brennan, they would have been in grave danger.

Castlecomer: W. O'Shea, M. Daly, R. Brennan, R. Ryan, W. Dooley, P. Rice, P. Healy, S. Coogan, J. Brennan, J. Ring, J. Boran, J. Brennan, S. Holden, M. Brennan, B. Young.

LISDOWNEY

Lisdowney won their first under-16 title when they easily defeated Dunnamaggin (8-12 to 1-3) in the Roinn C championship final. This completed the double for Lisdowney as they had already won the league.

Having been beaten in this competition in 1953 and '65 it was a case of third time lucky for the northerners. Young Gerry Henderson must have created a record in this final with a personal tally of 6-9.

Lisdowney: T. McEvoy, L. Maher, P. Brennan, J. Sullivan, J. Brennan, N. Wall, R. Rudkins, L. McEvoy, N. Grace, T. Carroll, J. Fogarty, L. Downey, S. Downey, G. Henderson, M. Carroll.

UNDER-16 BOARD OFFICERS

Chairman Georgie Leahy (St. Patrick's); *vice-chairman* Ted Carroll (Lisdowney); *secretary* Tom Ryall (Graigue/Ballycallan); *Representative on Co. Board* James Delahunty (Mooncoin).

Where the hurling titles have gone

1887: At Birr, April 1, 1888 (21 aside): Tipperary 1-1, Galway 0-0. The actual score was: Tipperary, one goal, one point and one forfeit point.

1888: The championship was unfinished because of the American 'invasion'.

1889: At Inchicore, Dublin, November 3, 1889: Dublin 5-1, Clare 1-6.

1890: At Clonturk, Dublin, November 16, 1890: Cork 1-6, Wexford 2-2. The game was unfinished but the match was awarded to Cork.

1891: At Clonturk, February 28, 1892: Kerry 2-3, Wexford 1-5. An extra hour was played in this final.

1892: At Clonturk, March

26, 1893: Cork 2-4, Dublin 1-1. The game was unfinished, Dublin withdrawing after 50 minutes.

1893: At Phoenix Park, June 24, 1894: Cork 6-8, Kilkenny 0-2.

1894: At Clonturk, March 26, 1895: Cork 5-20, Dublin 2-0.

1895: At Jones's Road, Dublin, March 15, 1896: Tipperary 6-8, Kilkenny 1-0.

1896: At Jones's Road, March 27, 1898: Tipperary 8-14, Dublin 0-4.

1897: At Tipperary, November 20, 1898: Limerick 3-4, Kilkenny 2-4.

1899: At Jones's Road, March 24, 1901: Tipperary 3-12, Wexford 1-4.

1900: At Jones's Road, August 26, 1902: Tipperary 2-5, London Desmonds 0-6. Home final at Terenure, Dublin, September 21, 1902: Tipperary 5-7, Galway 0-1.

1901: At Jones's Road, August 2, 1903: London 1-5, Cork 0-4. Home final at Carrick-on-Suir, June 14, 1903: Cork 2-8, Wexford 0-6.

1902: At Cork, September 11, 1903: Cork 3-13, London, 0-0. Home final at Tipperary, July 17, 1904: Cork 2-4, Dublin 0-1. The teams played a draw, 1-7 each, at Tipperary on July 3.

1903: At Jones's Road, November 12, 1905: Cork 3-14, London 1-1. Home final at Dungarvan, July 16, 1905: Cork 8-9, Kilkenny 0-8.

1904: At Carrick-on-Suir, June 24, 1906: Kilkenny 1-9, Cork 1-8.

1905: At Dungarvan, June 30, 1907: Kilkenny 7-7, Cork 2-9. In a game at Tipperary on April 14, 1907, Cork won by 5-10 to 3-13 but a dispute arose and a replay was ordered.

1906: At Kilkenny, October 27, 1907: Tipperary 3-16, Dublin 3-8.

1907: At Dungarvan, June 21, 1908: Kilkenny 3-12, Cork 4-8.

1908: At Athy, June 27, 1909: Tipperary 3-15, Dublin 1-5. The sides played a draw (Tipperary 2-5, Dublin 1-8) at Jones's Road, on April 25.

1909: At Cork, December 12, 1909: Kilkenny 4-6, Tipperary 0-12.

1910: At Jones's Road, November 20, 1910: Wexford 7-0, Limerick 6-2.

1911: Kilkenny got a walk-over from Limerick who refused to replay the match at

1912: At Croke Park, November 17, 1912: Kilkenny 2-1, Cork 1-3.

1913: At Croke Park, November 2, 1913: Kilkenny 2-4, Tipperary 1-2. Teams were reduced to 15 a-side and Kilkenny wore the official

black and amber jerseys for the first time.

1914: At Croke Park, October 18, 1914: Clare 5-1, Laois 1-0.

1915: At Croke Park, October 24, 1915: Laois 6-2, Cork 4-1.

1916: At Croke Park, January 21, 1917: Tipperary 5-4, Kilkenny 3-2.

1917: At Croke Park, October 28, 1917: Dublin 5-4, Tipperary 4-2.

1918: At Croke Park, January 26, 1919: Cork 6-4, Dublin 2-4.

1919: At Croke Park, September 21, 1919: Cork Selection 6-4, Dublin Collegians 2-4.

1920: At Croke Park, May 14, 1922: Dublin 4-9, Cork 4-3.

1921: At Croke Park, May 4, 1923: Limerick 8-5, Dublin 3-2.

1922: At Croke Park, September 9, 1923: Kilkenny 4-2, Tipperary 2-6.

1923: At Croke Park, April 27, 1924: Limerick 7-4, Donegal 0-1.

1924: At Croke Park, December 14, 1924: Dublin 5-3, Galway 2-6.

1925: At Croke Park, October 24: Cork 4-6, Kilkenny 2-0.

1926: At Croke Park, October 24, 1926: Cork 4-6, Kilkenny 2-0.

1927: At Croke Park, September 4: Dublin 4-8, Cork 1-3.

1928: At Croke Park, September 1: Cork 4-9, Galway 1-3.

1929: At Croke Park, September 1: Cork 4-9, Galway 1-3.

1930: At Croke Park, September 7: Tipperary 2-7, Dublin 1-3.

1931: At Croke Park, November 1: Cork 5-8m Kilkenny 3-4. On September 6 the teams played a draw 1-6 each and they played another draw 2-5 each on October 11.

1932: At Croke Park,

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September 14: Kilkenny 3-3, Clare 2-3.

1933: At Croke Park, September 3: Kilkenny 1-7, Limerick 0-6.

1934: At Croke Park, September 30: Limerick 5-2, Dublin 2-6. The teams played a draw (Limerick 2-7, Dublin 3-4) on September 2.

1935: At Croke Park, September 6: Limerick 5-6, Kilkenny 0-3.

1936: At Croke Park, September 6: Limerick 5-6, Kilkenny 1-5.

1937: At Killarney, September 5: Tipperary 3-11, Kilkenny 0-3.

1938: At Croke Park, September 4: Dublin 2-5, Waterford 1-6.

1939: At Croke Park, September 3: Kilkenny 2-7, Cork 3-3.

1940: At Croke Park, September 1: Limerick 3-7, Kilkenny 1-7.

1941: At Croke Park, September 28: Cork 5-11, Dublin 0-6.

1942: At Croke Park, September 6: Cork 2-14, Dublin 3-4.

1943: At Croke Park, September 5: Cork 5-16, Antrim 0-4.

1944: At Croke Park, September 3: Cork 5-3, Dublin 2-11.

1945: At Croke Park, September 2: Tipperary 5-6, Kilkenny 3-6.

1946: At Croke Park, September 1: Cork 7-5, Kilkenny 3-8.

1947: At Croke Park, September 7: Kilkenny 0-14, Cork 2-7.

1948: At Croke Park, September 5: Waterford 6-7, Dublin 4-2.

1949: At Croke Park, September 3: Tipperary 3-11, Laois 0-3.

1950: At Croke Park, September 3: Tipperary 1-9, Kilkenny 1-8.

1951: At Croke Park, September 2: Tipperary 7-7, Wexford 3-9.

1952: At Croke Park, September 2: Cork 2-14, Dublin 0-7.

1953: At Croke Park, September 4: Cork

1954: At Croke Park, September 5: Cork 1-9, Wexford 1-6.

1955: At Croke Park, September 4: Wexford 3-13, Galway 2-8.

1956: At Croke Park,

September 2: Wexford 2-14, Cork 2-8.

1957: September 1: Kilkenny 4-10, Waterford 3-12.

1958: At Croke Park, September 7: Tipperary 4-9, Galway 2-5.

1959: At Croke Park, October 4: Waterford 3-12, Kilkenny 1-10. The teams played a draw (Waterford 1-17, Kilkenny 5-5) on September 6.

1960: At Croke Park, September 4: Wexford 2-15, Tipperary 0-11.

1961: At Croke Park, September 3: Tipperary 1-16, Dublin 1-12.

1962: At Croke Park, September 2: Tipperary 3-10, Wexford 2-11.

1963: At Croke Park, September 1: Kilkenny 4-17, Waterford 6-8.

1964: At Croke Park, September 6: Tipperary 5-13, Kilkenny 2-8.

1965: At Croke Park, September 5: Tipperary 2-16, Wexford 0-10.

1966: At Croke Park, September 4: Cork 3-9, Kilkenny 1-10.

1967: At Croke Park, September 3: Kilkenny 3-8, Tipperary 2-7.

1968: At Croke Park, September 1: Wexford 5-8, Tipperary 3-12.

1969: At Croke Park, September 7: Kilkenny 2-15, Cork 2-9.

1970: At Croke Park, September 6: Cork 6-21, Wexford 5-10. This game was the first 80 minutes game.

1971: At Croke Park, September 5: Tipperary 5-17, Kilkenny 5-14.

1972: At Croke Park, September 3: Kilkenny 3-24, Cork 5-11.

1973: At Croke Park, September 2: Limerick 1-21, Kilkenny 1-14.

1974: At Croke Park, September 2: Kilkenny 3-19, Limerick 1-13.

1975: At Croke Park, September 3: Kilkenny 2-22, Galway 2-10.

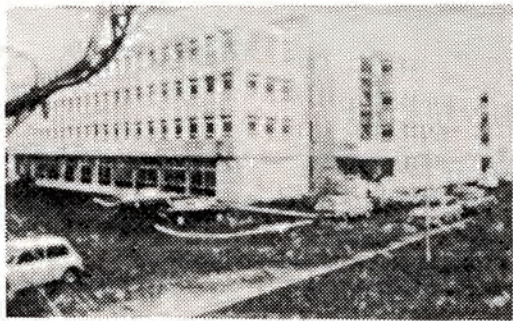
1976: At Croke Park, September 3: Cork 2-21, Wexford 4-11.

1977: At Croke Park, September 4: Cork 1-17, Wexford 3-8.

1978: At Croke Park, September 3: Cork 1-15, Kilkenny 2-8.

1979: At Croke Park, September 2: Kilkenny 2-12, Galway 1-8.

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FRONT ROW (left to right): Conor Hayes, Sean Silke, Iggy Clarke, Joe McDonagh (captain), P. J. Molloy, Joe Connolly, Bernie Forde, Finbarr Gantley.*

KILKENNY
GAA YEARBOOK 1979

Carrickshock make no mistake

IN the hurling doldrums for 25 years Carrickshock celebrated the silver jubilee of their last victory when they scored a decisive (3-11 to 2-7) win over Graigue/Ballycallan in the junior hurling final at Nowlan Park in October.

Carrickshock, who have a long and proud hurling tradition, have shaken off the shackles of defeat. Having suffered defeats in their last two final appearances in 1975 and 1976 the southerners made no mistake as they set out to capture that elusive title this year.

The 1979 final will perhaps go down as one of the best junior finals in recent years. Both teams produced some excellent hurling and the standard was such that many senior clashes would have to take second place.

No doubt this victory revived many memories of Carrickshock's victories in the past. They have a proud tradition having won 7 senior titles and four junior titles.

This was a game which produced top class fare. Both teams were well drilled and disciplined. There was no room for any slipshod approach as each player set about the task on hand with great drive and determination.

IMPRESSED

It was Graigue who impressed in the opening stages and looked as if they were on the road to victory as they picked off some fine scores from near impossible angles.

However Carrickshock stemmed the Graigue attack as they gradually came into the game and a **Dixie Burke** goal just on the call of half-time gave them a 2-5 to 1-5 lead.

The Carrickshock supremacy continued in the second half and the losers faded somewhat as their hurling was not as slick as in the opening 15 minutes.

Hurling skill was very much the name of the game for both teams and the players were so determined to get the upper hand of their opponents that they hadn't time for any off the ball activity. They had learned the lesson that fouls don't pay.

FAST AND FURIOUS

Hurling was fast and furious in the opening 15 minutes and even the huge crowd got involved in the excitement right from the start. Exchanges were close and the losers led by 1-2 to 1-0 in the early stages.

The winners made desperate attempts to pull the game out of the fire as they made some dangerous attacks. Their penetration was insufficient as the losers' defence was rock solid and refused to yield to the might of the southerners.

Midway through the first half the winners began to take control of the game. They added four points and two minutes before the interval Dixie Burke struck to give them a 2-5 to 1-5 lead.

Both teams were locked in battle during the opening 10 minutes of the second half. Graigue attacked strongly but their forwards were off target and a little over anxious.

The opening stalemate was broken when **Milo Hennessy** shot over a point in the 11th minute. However that was to be their last score until the 20th minute and the winners began picking off long range points and hurled with a winning confidence.

HOPES RAISED

However Graigue's hopes were raised when their injured captain **Pat Brennan**, who came on as a substitute rattled the net from a 21 metre free. However from the puck-out the Carrickshock captain, **Martin Ragget**, gained possession and rallied his team with a fine solo run and point to leave them in the lead by 3-10 to 2-6.

During the closing stages **Jim Walsh** and **Maurice Power** exchanged points and the men from the south ran out easy winners.

The winners had some outstanding players in John Poole, Pat Power, Brendan Ragget, Dixie Burke, Maurice Power and Richard Power. Best for Graigue/Ballycallan were Billy Ronan, Jim Walsh, Nicky Hoyne, Joe Brennan, Kieran Hoyne, Kevin and Milo Hennessy.

THE SCORERS:

Carrickshock: R. Power (1-3); B. Ragget (0-3); D. Burke and W. Power (1-0 each); N. Maher and M. Power (0-2 each); M. Ragget (0-1). **Graigue/Ballycallan:** J. Walsh (1-2); M. Hennessy (0-4); P. Brennan (1-0); J. Brennan (0-1).

THE TEAMS:

Carrickshock: J. Poole, W. Broderick, P. J. Roughan, P. Brennan, M. Phelan, P. Power, M. Dwyer, J. Brennan, B. Ragget, J. Ireland, D. Burke, M. Power, R. Power, N. Maher, M. Ragget (captain). Sub. W. Power for J. Ireland.

Graigue/Ballycallan: J. Ryan, L. Byrne, M. Burke, N. Hoyne, J. Ryan, J. Brennan, B. Ronan, K. Hennessy, J. Walsh, P. Hayes, K. Hoyne, M. Dunne, M. Hennessy, G. Hennessy, J. Walsh. Sub. P. Brennan for M. Dunne, J. Dunphy for J. Ryan.

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Disappointed Spectators . . . a section of the big attendance at the unfinished county final.

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The Board would like to express its sincere thanks to the many firms and individuals who contributed large and small amounts and to their loyal followers for their kind patronage during 1979.

Their kind support is deeply appreciated.

P. de Grás, Runaí

'For Martin Coogan's sake' . . .

But it was not to be



Referee Jim Murphy

SHAMROCKS supporters apart; Kilkenny hurling followers generally were hoping for an Erin's Own success in the county final . . . 'for Martin Coogan's sake'.

Uncommitted supporters of the game would have dearly loved to see the Castlecomer man win the only honour that has eluded him.

It was not to be, however, and the manner in which the replay ended must have saddened the man who was so much admired for his exemplary conduct on the field during his brilliant career — so much admired for his sportsmanship as for his hurling prowess.

The last thing that Martin Coogan would want was anything savouring of unsportsmanlike conduct and it would be impossible not to have sympathy for him over the manner in which the game ended.

Already quite enough has been spoken and written about this debacle but what took place cannot be swept under the carpet and just forgotten about. There was fault on both sides and people will apportion the blame in their own way.

It would be an over simplicity to suggest that scenes like these do not occur in Kilkenny. They do, not as bad or anything like it. They occur everywhere and in most sports. Here we have learned to take a beating. We have been at the losing end in more all-Ireland hurling finals than any other county because we have played in more.

The standard in the local senior championship has been very high. The drawn game was a very fine exhibition of hurling at its best.

For these reasons the blot on our escutcheon had nationwide reverberations. This was the most unpalatable feature of the whole thing. That it should occur in a year in which we won all-Ireland honours makes it all the sadder.

Hurlers like everybody else are human and have human emotions and in the excitement of the game these

emotions can boil over. But even allowing for this it is still impossible to justify what happened. They are not really typical of Kilkenny and everything possible must be done to ensure that they will not recur.

It is sad to think that a man like Martin Coogan should, unwittingly, of course, be caught up in it even though he took no part in it, particularly since it could well be that it was the last opportunity he might have of winning a county senior medal.

How the game went

As for the game itself, what hurling there was, while not in any way approaching the standard of the drawn game, was quite good. Shamrocks led by 3-12 to 1-6 when it came to an abrupt end after 50 minutes but it is fair to say they were somewhat flattered by the extent of the margin. There was no room for doubt, however, that on this occasion they were the better-side.

While many of their scoring movements were efficiently executed some of their scores were just too ridiculously easy.

Shamrocks played with a strong wind behind them in the first half and had built up a 2-11 to 1-5 lead at the half-way stage. Up to this point they did not have too much difficulty in containing the Erin's Own attack which, Michael Nash apart, was well below expectations.

Ger Fennelly, his confidence refurbished after his scoring feats on the American tour, hit four splendid points during the early Shamrocks supremacy with Mick Kelly, probably the most improved player on the Shamrocks side, scoring two and Brendan Fennelly adding another to give them an 0-7 to 0-4 lead after 12 minutes.

Michael Nash, Erin's Own only scorer, had contributed four points and he maintained the solo effort up to half time, adding a goal from a free and a point with Shamrocks adding two goals and four points.

The Castlecomer side suffered their first big setback when Johnny Walsh

The aftermath

MAURICE MASON has been toying with the idea of retiring and Mick Brennan has decided to call an end to his inter-county career. This is the sad aftermath of the county final replay; an aftermath that will cause grave disappointment to every sincere supporter of the game.

Maurice Mason has proved himself one of the county's outstanding club hurlers over the past few years and played a big part in the rise of the Shamrocks to the top. He has also figured on the county team and distinguished himself on the American tour.

Mick Brennan is in a different category. He figured prominently on successful Kilkenny teams in all-Ireland finals and has won all the honours the game has to offer.

In addition he suffered severely from injuries sustained on the field but showed great courage in coming back.

Maurice Mason would be a big loss to the Shamrocks and it would be tragic if Mick Brennan had to bow out in this way. He has still a lot to offer as a county hurler.

drove a line ball into the goal area and when it screwed off the defender Michael Fogarty's hurley, Liam Fennelly hit it across the goalmouth and Kelly tapped it cleverly to the net.

Erin's Own were dealt another severe blow when a nice drive by Brendan Fennelly was stopped by Tom Brennan but the ball dribbled into the goal. Earlier Ger had tacked on a point. Michael Fennelly also had a Shamrocks point but Castlecomer came back into a challenging position when Michael Nash goaled from a penalty and pointed from a free.

The real crunch came when Liam Fennelly finished a centre by Ger for a goal.

At this point Erin's Own pulled out all the stops and even though encamped in the Shamrocks goal area for a sustained period their only reward was a point by Michael Nash. Their deteriorating situation was further aggravated when Kevin Fennelly saved a penalty by Nash.

Conditions were all against good hurling and it was a pity that some of the young players, particularly on the Erin's Own side, who figured so prominently in the drawn game did not flourish to anything like the same extent.

The Shamrocks' defence was almost impenetrable; that was the key to their success. The Erin's Own attack was given limited room to manoeuvre. On

Continued on page 57 ▾

Under the caption "Praise for All in Kilkenny Thriller" Paddy Downey of the 'Irish Times', one of Ireland's top sports journalists, describes the drawn county final in which Shamrocks (0-14), Erin's Own (0-14), ended on level terms.

Praise for all in Kilkenny thriller



Paddy Downey

The words of Patrick Kavanagh's Monaghan blacksmith could be echoed in praise of the two teams who played a thrilling draw in the final of the Kilkenny county hurling championship. "Bravo", roared the blacksmith as he watched the men of neighbouring parishes, all customers at his forge, battle for victory in a football match, "come on, thirty good men".

Shamrocks, the reigning Kilkenny champions, and Erin's Own, Castlecomer, deserve the highest praise for a different reason. They delighted more than 9,000 spectators with an excellent exhibition of skilful hurling and none but the most partisan supporters of either side will say that a dead-heat was not a fair result.

Shamrocks, a club formed as recently as 1972, and winners of the county title for the first time last year, were hot favourites to retain the trophy, but Castlecomer challenged them with skill and determination and it was Shamrocks who were required to come

It was not to be . . .

the other hand the Shamrocks' attack showed a perfect understanding and Ger Fennelly got a very big measure of support from his brothers and from Mick Kelly.

The tension that prevailed almost from the start must also have had an effect on the players, particularly as the game progressed and hurling the ball seemed to be a secondary consideration.

Mick Kelly (1-1); Ger Fennelly (0-6, 0-3 from frees); Brendan Fennelly (1-1); Liam Fennelly (1-1); Michael Fennelly (0-1) scored for Shamrocks and Michael Nash (1-6, 1-4 from frees) scored for Erin's Own.

Shamrocks: K. Fennelly, L. Dalton, F. Holohan, M. Healy, W. Phelan, M. Mason, R. Reid, J. Walsh, S. Fennelly, M. Fennelly, P. Holden, G. Fennelly, B. Fennelly, L. Fennelly, M. Kelly. Sub: D. Connolly for M. Healy.

Erin's Own: E. Mahon, T. (Cloney) Brennan, M. Coogan, D. Dunne, T. Brennan, P. Boran, M. Fogarty, E. Wallace, B. Brien, E. Brennan, M. (Cloney) Brennan, S. Brennan, M. Nash, M. (China) Brennan, T. Brennan. Subs: S. Coogan for B. Brien; J. Shea for M. (China) Brennan.

Mr. James Murphy, Tullogher, refereed.

from behind and score the equaliser — a task performed by Ger Fennelly from a 21 yards free in the last seconds of the game.

The Shamrocks' line-out contained six Fennelly brothers, all of whom figured on the score sheet — Ger, Kilkenny's captain in the All-Ireland final, being the team's ace marksman with seven points.

Castlecomer, founded in 1887, but still waiting for their first senior championship crown, had the sympathy of most unattached observers; and much of that sympathy went out to 39-year-old Martin Coogan, Kilkenny's great left half-back of the 1960's, who has been the inspiration of his club for twenty years.

Craft and skill

Coogan displayed all the craft and skill of an old master when playing at full-back. His covering was excellent, his catching of the high ball secure and he relieved his lines many times with lengthy clearances. The only performance to match Coogan's came from Ger Fennelly and another county player, Richie Reid, who played a marvellous game at left half-back for Shamrocks in the second half.

Others who caught the eye more often than their colleagues were Sean Fennelly, Maurice Mason, Brendan Fennelly and Kevin Fennelly for Shamrocks and for Castlecomer Donald Dunne, Tommy Brennan, Eamonn Wallace, Seamus Brennan and Mick "China" Brennan.

Mick "Cloney" Brennan, the only 1979 All-Star on the field, shuttled between centre-forward and full-forward throughout the hour but his influence was not significant, in spite of much whole-hearted work.

Castlecomer played the first half with the aid of a strong sun and stiff wind but took almost 15 minutes to settle down. Having done so, however, they played very efficiently and, with Wallace in good form at midfield, set up several strong attacking moves. Five good points in the last six minutes of the half gave them a lead of 0-8 to 0-3 at the interval.

Shamrocks, whose deft stickwork

contrasted with the stronger striking of Castlecomer, scored three points in as many minutes after the restart. But the proof of Castlecomer's spirit came quickly in the shape of three more points to restore a lead of five — 0-11 to 0-6.

Shamrocks continued to attack strongly, however, and between the tenth and sixteenth minutes of this period wiped out their arrears and edged into a minimal lead.

From there on the exchanges were fast and furious. The scores were level twice before Castlecomer were awarded a free puck fifty yards out with less than a minute to play. Michael Nash sent the ball over the bar for what seemed the winning lead, but Shamrocks fought back and were awarded a free on the 21-yard line. Ger Fennelly made sure that this chance was taken to draw the game.

Castlecomer almost conceded a goal in a heart-stopping moment for their supporters eight minutes from full time.

A ground ball, struck from a long way out, was a couple of yards off the target as it approached the waiting goalkeeper, Eddie Mahon. Instead of striking it away, with plenty of time, the goalkeeper waited for the ball to trickle over the end line, but so slow was its pace that it was stopped just short of the line by a tuft of grass, whereupon the Shamrocks' full-forward, Liam Fennelly, nipped in and before the astonished Mahon could move, struck it across the open goal.

The ball failed to curl in for a goal, however, and there was no other forward there to send it home. Castlecomer's followers gasped with relief as Martin Coogan raced in and swept the ball away from the far post.

Shamrocks — O. Harrington; L. Dalton, Holohan, M. Healy; W. Phelan, M. Mason, R. Reid; J. Walsh, S. Fennelly (0-1); K. Fennelly (0-3), M. Fennelly (0-1), G. Fennelly (0-7, 4 from frees); B. Fennelly (0-1), L. Fennelly & 1) M. Kelly. Subs: P. Holden for Walsh 46th min. D. Connolly for Phelan 55 mins.

Castlecomer — E. Mahon; Tom "Cloney" Brennan, M. Coogan, D. Dunne; Tommy Brennan, P. Boran, M. Fogarty; E. Wallace (0-1), J. O'Neill; M. Nash (0-5 from frees), Mick "Cloney" Brennan, S. Brennan (0-2); E. Brennan (0-1), Mick "China" Brennan (0-2), T. Brennan (0-1). Subs. — S. Coogan (0-1) for O'Neill 35 mins. 1 — J. Murphy (Tullogher).

Camogie — the future looks bright!

KILKENNY failed to make any impression on the inter-county championship this year but with 21 clubs in the county, compared to four or five a few years ago the game has made tremendous progress and the future looks bright.

Miss Mary Fennelly, secretary of the County Board states that it is evident from this experience, particularly in the lower grades that the county teams will have to get together earlier in the year so that a proper atmosphere will be created between the players.

However, Kilkenny had the honour of having seven players on the Leinster side which won the senior provincial title and Bridie Martin was the team captain.

Many new clubs were formed in 1979 but the steady progress may not continue unless the clubs get the support they require. At the moment some well establish-

ed clubs are on the decline. Apart from competition, clubs must also have the help of administrators, referees and coaches. There is an abundance of talented and experienced people in the county and their services should be availed of.

Miss Fennelly says that there is a serious shortage of people willing to take up administrative positions at club and county level.

The intermediate championship leaves a lot to be desired. There is a complete vacuum at this level. If this competition is not made more attractive there is a chance that players will be lost. This could have serious short-term and long-term effects.

The establishment of divisional boards is likely to come up at the convention. This could be a good idea if experienced people are willing to take on the extra responsibility.

There is a great need for coaching and proper refereeing. If the game is to be fostered it is vital that players are properly coached in all aspects of the game, Miss Fennelly emphasised.

"Camogie is a very skilful game and the aim of every player should be to master all the skills. If this could be achieved the game itself would have nothing to fear in the future", she said.

The under-14 minor and junior championships were successfully completed. St. Brigid's, Ballycallan are under 14 champions while Thomastown beat Ballycallan in the minor championship. Mooncoin won the junior championship with Tullogher runners-up.

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INTERMEDIATE CHAMPIONSHIP



ST. PATRICK'S (Ballyragget): County Intermediate Champions 1979

Back Row (left to right): Shem Brophy, Matt Ruth, John Treacy, Ted Ruth, Tom Phelan, Pat Gannon, Ned Brophy, Aidan Brophy, Martin Fitzpatrick (trainer). Front Row (left to right): Kevin O'Shea, John Holland, Eugene Ruth, Mick O'Shea, Patsy Trait, Noel Callinan, Jimmy Ruth.

Ballyragget – The courage of champions

HAVING GAINED a confidence that comes only with success, St. Patrick's (Ballyragget) added to their 1978 junior hurling title when they decisively defeated a fancied Dicksboro in the Intermediate hurling final at Nowlan Park early in October. Powered by inter-county sharpshooter **Matt Ruth**, Ballyragget left no one under any illusions about their superiority and hurling ability.

Having entered the annals of Kilkenny hurling history for the first time in 1978, they opened a second chapter in their rise to fame this year. Such was their displays throughout the year and certainly in the final that many senior teams shuddered at the thought of meeting the newcomers to the senior championship in 1980.

St. Pat's are a team that are not easily ruffled by defeats or close encounters. Having only managed two

draws in their first two outings in the intermediate championship they refused to be downtrodden as many were beginning to write them off as a championship winning side.

Instead, with the courage of champions, they bounced back and spelt out danger for the other teams in this grade when they decisively beat Young Irelands in the following round.

Having again fallen from the crest of the wave to the bottom of the sea when they were beaten by Dicksboro, they again surfaced to the top as they fought their way back for a second crack at the city boys by reaching the final.

Newcomers, St. Pat's, faced one of the oldest teams in this grade when they faced Dicksboro. The city side were not alone the oldest team in the grade but they were perhaps also the team with the most experience of final

appearances. Having been defeated in two previous finals in 1976 and 1977 by Graignamanagh and Conahy Shamrocks, they must certainly have learned something from these outings

Good use

However, Ballyragget had little experience but what they had they made good use of. Having scored a decisive win over Clara in the semi-final, they refused to be flattered by that win.

Having used some unorthodox tactics against Clara, the playing of a roving full-forward, they were quick to revert back to the orthodox line-out aware that the same tactic never worked twice.

Nowlan Park was certainly no place for Ballyragget men with weak hearts on final day as their heroes took the place by storm even as they raced onto the green sod.

Their determination and

enthusiasm was epitomised in their trainer, Martin Fitzpatrick, who, despite a severe ankle injury, hobbled onto the pitch on crutches. Martin, who plays with the Fenians, also led the Ballyragget men to victory in the junior final in 1978.

Having suffered defeat by Dicksboro in the earlier stages of the championship, St. Pat's were determined to avenge that defeat and were under no illusions about the task that faced them.

In defeating the city side, Ballyragget showed their vast superiority both on and off the field. Their mentors played a vital part and some shrewd switches which resulted in a **Kevin O'Shea** goal just before the interval put them on the road to victory.

St. Pat's were a team of stars and the star of stars was, no doubt, All-Ireland

Continued on Page 65



DICKSBORO: County Intermediate Finalists 1979

Back Row (left to right): Pat Keating, Joe Phelan, Jimmy McGarry, Tom Gaffney, John Devane, Seamie McGarry, Sam Dunlop, John Knox. Front Row (left to right): Tom Maher, Benny McGarry, Ger Devane, John Marnell, Michael Walsh, Joe Foley, Paddy Grace.

Ballyragget: The courage of champions

Continued from page 63

medallist Matt Ruth, who notched 10 points of his side's total.

The game lacked excitement, and after leading by 1-10 to 0-3 at the interval, St. Pat's soon ended the game as a contest when they piled on the scores early in the second half.

Dicksboro lacked the same drive and commitment which was so evident in the winners. The northerners, a well-drilled and disciplined side, had power and strength throughout the field. The city side lacked power up front and this was sadly reflected on the scoreline and their single point from play tells its own story.

St. Pat's junior win of the previous year certainly boosted their hopes and instilled a new confidence in their players. Following in the footsteps of their neighbours, Muckalee and Conahy Shamrocks, they will certainly make their presence felt at senior level.

Ballyragget, who began the championship on a very low key, improved with each out-

ing. Their shrewd mentors seem to know what competitive hurling is all about as they built their side on a gradual basis and peaked on final day.

St. Pat's made the minimum of changes with the maximum effect. The switching of **Pat Gannon** and **Jimmy Ruth** allowed Gannon to dominate midfield while Ruth quickly subdued the rampant Ger Devane.

Another switch which proved quite effective was the moving of **John Holland** to the opposite wing where he got more into the game and opened up the 'Boro defence.

Dicksboro impressed in the early stages and spectators were anticipating a thriller. But their players soon became frustrated as they were unable to penetrate a solid St. Pat's defence. Their failure to combine up front was also a big contributing factor to their frustration.

With Eugene and Matt Ruth very accurate up front, and their half-back line ably led by **Noel Callinan** dominating in defence, Ballyragget gradually took control.

Having led by 10 points at the interval, the winners never lost that lead and had 14 points to spare at the call of time. Dicksboro went into their one and only lead when **Paddy Grace** pointed his first free in the third minute. Their lead was short-lived and within two minutes Matt Ruth equalised.

Exchanges were close during the first quarter and it was not until midway through the opening half that St. Pat's sounded a warning note when Matt Ruth grabbed the ball and dashed through the middle and sent a sizzling shot which was deflected over the bar by 'Boro goalie **Michael Walsh**.

Further points were exchanged by Matt Ruth and Paddy Grace before **Aidan Brophy** sent Matt Ruth clear but his shot was deflected for a 65m. free. Pat Gannon pointed from the free and almost immediately Paddy Grace replied for the losers.

It was at this stage with five minutes remaining in the half that St. Pat's came with a bang and shook the city side.

John Holland soloed through for a fine point. Within a minute red-haired Kevin O'Shea grabbed a Matt Ruth pass, made a devastating run through the 'Boro defence and made no mistake as he sent the ball crashing to the net. A minute later he added a point to leave

them in a 1-10 to 0-3 lead at the break.

In the opening minutes of the second half the losers made a desperate rally to pull the game out of the fire. However, their effort was short-lived as all they could manage to achieve was a single point.

Ballyragget came back and the writing was on the wall for the city side long before the final whistle.

The St. Pat's team all played their part. But Matt Ruth, Noel Callinan, Jimmy Ruth, Pat Gannon, John Holland, Eugene Ruth and Kevin O'Shea starred.

The scorers:

St. Patrick's: M. Ruth (0-10), K. O'Shea (1-1), P. Gannon (0-3), J. Holland (0-2), A. Brophy and E. Ruth (0-1 each).

Dicksboro: P. Grace (0-6), J. Knox (0-1).

The teams

St. Patrick's — P. Trait, N. Brophy, S. Treacy, T. Ruth, M. O'Shea (captain), N. Callinan, S. Brophy, J. Ruth, P. Gannon, J. Holland, E. Ruth, K. O'Shea, T. Phelan, A. Brophy, M. Ruth.

Dicksboro — M. Walsh, J. Phelan, P. Keating, T. Maher, J. McGarry, J. Marnell, T. Gaffney, G. Devane, B. McGarry, S. McGarry, J. Knox, S. Dunlop, J. Devane, J. Foley, P. Grace. Subs: P. Hickey for J. Knox, M. Manning for J. McGarry, J. Cahill.

The famine and growth of G.A.A. in Chicago

THE great famine in Ireland reached its peak in 1848. During the 40's more than one million people left Ireland, with at least 800,000 coming to the United States. Many died in the long Atlantic crossing.

Irish immigrants brought the games of the Gael, hurling, Gaelic football and handball with them as they arrived in Chicago between 1850 and '60. In that decade the Irish born population of Chicago, approximately 6,000, exceeded the Germans. They settled along the east bank of the Chicago river close to the present day Chicago Centre, or "Loop".

After having erected their two churches, St. Patrick's on Desplain's Street between Washington and Randolph Streets and St. Bridget's at Archer Avenue they set about organising the playing of Ireland's national pastimes, hurling and football. Soon the many prairies surrounding Archer Avenue and other locations re-echoed to the clash of the ash and the thud of the football.

My parents who were married in Chicago in 1890 often recalled having attended hurling and football matches on Sunday afternoons and later joining in Irish ceili dancing and singing on platforms in the parks. By 1900 the Irish numbered over 200,000, making



By PAT HENNESSY

them the largest ethnic group and certainly the most influential. Seven-predominately Irish parishes were organised between 1870 and 1900, and now the Irish had spread out to form other neighbourhoods, Bridgport (the home of Mayor Daley), McKinley Park, Brighton Park, Near Northside and South Chicago.

Despite many attempts to be recognised by the ruling body in Ireland, it was not until 1911 that Chicago became known as a GAA centre. That historic year, 12 Chicago hurlers, with a similar number from New York, toured Ireland as the "First U.S. invasion". They received hearty receptions in Kilkenny, Tipperary, Wexford and Dublin. The late "Carbery"

describing the visit said, "the visitors ground hurling was strong and robust. They played a dashing game." The Yanks lost to Kilkenny and Tipperary, drew with Wexford and defeated Dublin.

Chicago-Irish had always maintained a strong love for their native land and after the Easter Rising in 1916 a renewed national pride swept the Irish-American communities. Now on Sunday afternoons in addition to seeing hurling and football games, "patriots" from Ireland such as Eamon De Valera, Harry Boland and others on U.S. speaking tours appealed for financial and other support. Shortly after having returned to Ireland after one of these tours, Dublinman, Harry Boland was killed in Civil War activities and his many Chicago friends named a hurling and football club in his honour.

During the twenties, hurling and football made great progress in Chicago and one of the leaders of those days was a Mooncoin man, Rev. John Fielding, who not only could swing the old caman with the best, but also was a fine administrator. All-Ireland champions Tipperary and Kerry visited here during that decade and made a great impact. The Tipperary team which included the famed Martin Kennedy won over a Chicago selection

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at Gaelic Park, 47th and Damen, and the Kerry team, also winners, played a local selection at Soldier Field.

Faithful few

A major recession, a World War and restrictive U.S. immigration laws almost killed the promotion of the Irish games here during the 30's and part of the 40's. As a student in Chicago during the mid-thirties, I witnessed the fight to keep the games alive by the faithful few. Great Gaels like Galwaymen, 'Evergreen' Mike Mulryan, Paddy Walsh, Tipperaryman Frank Burke, Jimmy Connalan, from the Banner County, Paul Burke, and others gathered every Sunday at parks like Washington, Marquette and others to "puck the ball around" and to pray for the day that young Irishmen and women would again come to the Windy City.

Their prayers were answered in 1948 when immigration opened and young gaels like Jimmy McCormack (Tipperary), John Brennan (Kerry), Dick Daly (Kildare), Frank Callaghan, and the Kilroy brothers, Joe and Jimmy, Mike Fahy and Mike Kenny (Galway), and many more made Chicago their homes. Soon Washington Park on the city's southeast side was the mecca of gaeldom on Sunday afternoons and Carpenters hall resounded to the sound of céilí music.

In 1949 when I arrived back, Chicago had four good clubs – Harry Bolands and Austin Stacks in hurling and St. Brendan's and St. Pat's in football. At the G.A.A. Convention in December, I had the honor of being elected the first chairman of the Board, a position which I held for three years. During that time, Chicago became affiliated with the Central Council in Dublin, and midwestern cities Cleveland, Ohio, Detroit, Michigan, Pittsburgh, Penna, and Hartford, New York were organised with Chicago into the first ever U.S. Provincial Council. The late Michael Keogh (Wexford) who was then President of the G.A.A. came to our city to confer this honour in 1951. Chicago hurlers and footballers won the first provincial titles.

Over the next 10 years hurling and football made tremendous strides and new clubs like Wolfe Tones, St. Vincent's, Eire Og, Limerick, Erin's Own, came on the scene. Shrewbridge Stadium at 74th and South Morgan Street was the location for the games, hurling and football every Sunday from April until November and large crowds thrilled to some excellent games. Later the venue moved to Rockne Stadium at Roosevelt and Central and despite the fact that many young gaels went into the U.S. army to fight in Korea and Vietnam, keen rivalry helped to keep the games going.

Later football teams like St. Mels, John McBride's and Connemara Gaels added much prestige to the G.A.A. and officers like Kilkennyman, Liam O'Brien, Mike Scanlon from the Shanonside, and others were instrumental in making bold moves like "getting a Gaelic park of our own". A big fund raising effort to get a quarter of a million dollars to finance such a park is now being promoted here and hopefully it will succeed.

During the '60's All-Ireland hurling champions Kilkenny and Tipperary visited here and on each occasion were accorded civic receptions by the late Mayor Richard J. Daley who often said that "hurling is the finest stick game in the world". On the occasion of the first Kilkenny visit here in 1964 he told me that looking at such a clean cut bunch of young men made him proud to be Irish. Cork, all-Ireland champions and the Carrolls All-Stars came here a few years ago and their games under the lights and on astro turf attracted a large attendance.

The recent visit of All-Ireland hurling and football champions Kilkenny and Kerry with the Bank of Ireland All-Stars was covered live by two Chicago television stations. The games under the lights provided thrilling encounters for Chicagoans – a far cry indeed from 130 years ago and the prairies of Chicago.

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O'Loughlin's/Gaels – set for a new era

O'Loughlin's/Gaels G.A.A. Club took a major step forward when on Sunday, August 26, 1979, the President of the Gaelic Athletic Association, Pádraig MacFloinn opened their new £60,000 complex at St. John's Park.

This would be seen to be a major achievement for any club, but it is all the more praiseworthy, when one considers that the club was only reformed ten years ago after being out of existence for over forty years. The O'Loughlin's / Gaels now has over five hundred members mainly being drawn from St. John's parish which covers part of the city and the rural areas of Dunmore and Johnswell.

1970 was the first year in which teams from the newly reorganised club fielded in the local championships. The number of teams that year was six and this has now grown to fourteen, catering for hurling and football and ranging from under-12 to senior in both codes.

Championships have been won in each grade up to senior in both codes and this year the club's Special Junior hurlers brought the number of championships won to a remarkable twenty out of twenty five county finals contested.

It was only in 1975 that O'Loughlin's came to buy their own grounds. After using St. John's Park as a training centre for a number of years, the club sought and were granted permission to buy back this ground which had been taken over by the Central Council ten years earlier. The club now had a base and after spending a large sum of money on drainage etc. the playing area was on a par with anything in the country.

Such was the response to the various fund raising activities, that with the park debt almost paid off, the members decided to go ahead with plans to build, what is now this magnificent complex.

The work which took just under twelve months to complete was done mainly by the voluntary labour of club members and others who wished to see a building which would provide social and other amenities for the young and old of the club. At this time further improvements were being carried out on the playing pitch such as railing and walls around the perimeter, new goal posts, gates, etc.

The new building comprises a 40 x 20 handball alley which is covered and has a maple floor. There is a gallery which will accommodate around eighty people. A bar and lounge which seats 200 people. The lounge can also double as a function room as it also has a maple floor dancing area, with a kitchen built alongside. There are dressing rooms for both field games and handball, all complete with showers. There is also a referees dressing room and stores, etc. The complete building is centrally heated.

It was hoped that with the opening of this complex a new era would dawn within the club, in regard to a better social outlook for all club members, not just players alone, but others such as ex players, mothers and fathers, wives, girl friends etc. This has certainly happened in no uncertain way and there has been a magnificent response in the line of support by all. People from outside the club have been more than welcome to sample the facilities such as the many teams who played at St. John's park since opening day and after a hard game could take a shower and have a drink at the bar, all under one roof.

More recently the county footballers have been training there under lights and teas are provided after matches, training sessions, etc. when arrangements are made with the ladies committee. This committee has done tremendous work since opening and are always available to lend a hand.

But co-operation is the key word within the club and all members provide a helping hand and work unselfishly for the betterment of the club. Many important games of handball have been played at the alley and on opening day, two leading exponents of the game, Pat Kirby and Peadar McGee gave a delightful exhibition. The number playing the



Frontal view of the magnificent new pavilion.



LADIES' COMMITTEE

Back: Mrs. Bridget O'Driscoll, Mrs. Eileen Cleere, Mrs. Ann Galvin, Mrs. Bridget Byrne, Mrs. Mary Fitzpatrick, Mrs. Kay Keher, Mrs. Kay Skehan, Mrs. Mae Doyle. Front: Mrs. Geraldine Roche, Mrs. Marie Roche, Mrs. Esther Maher, Mrs. Teresa Byrne, Mrs. Maura Leahy.



A view of the modern lounge with kitchen to the left.

game within the club is unprecedented and the alley is booked at almost all times.

The fund raising has received tremendous support and without this what has now been achieved would never be possible. It is now hoped that with co-operation, good will and loyalty, O'Loughlin's Gaels will go to even greater heights in the years ahead.

The following officers were elected for the coming year: Chairman Jim Riche, vice-chairman Luke Roche, secretary Sean Casey, finance Eamon Doyle, pavillion Pádraig Leydon, grounds Andy O'Driscoll, hurling Jim Rice, football Michael Nolan, under-age Fr. Thomas Murphy, handball Thomas O'Brien, social and cultural Mrs. M. Leahy, also Edward Brennan and Thomas Gregg, public relations Martin Brennan.

American experience good for the team

CASTING off like an old coat the near disastrous form shown in the National League last season when championship time came around, Kilkenny went on to don the executive suit of all-Ireland hurling champions before the year finished.

It was a sudden change in style that not everyone accepted. Kilkenny, they pointed out, had been too bad early on in the year to suddenly become a good team. And sure, they only beat Galway in the all-Ireland. They got it soft.

That was the way a lot of opinion ran after the September final. It was felt by many that to really win an all-Ireland you had to beat either Cork or Tipperary, or Kilkenny if you were from another county.

The very bad start the all-Ireland champions have made in the current League has added substance to this line of thought. You can forget about Kilkenny, they're not much good, a lot of people are saying. But they were never so wrong!

It can be too easy to explain away Kilkenny's poor form at present by saying they are not a League team. That is not entirely true. It's more correct to say the National Hurling League is not a competition for Kilkenny. The reason is simple. It is played at the wrong time of the year.

When speaking of Noneside teams, past and present, the team of the early part of the decade is always used as a yardstick to measure the worth of this side or that. That is hardly a fair comparison, because on their day, that team could wipe the floor with any side. Still, they only won one League title in 1976.

Suffice

The present Kilkenny panel has the ability to go on to win several more all-Irelands. Whether or not they are as good as the team of the early part of the decade means nothing. If they are good enough for what is around the country at present, then that is suffice. They can be all-Ireland champions for as long as they like.

Victory over Galway this year, and more importantly, the trip to America have done untold good for Kilkenny. The side that collected the county's 21st crowd was hastily put together after avoiding relegation at the expense of Wexford and Waterford.

But during the matches against the Bank of Ireland All-Stars in the United States, the present panel did something it hadn't time to do while in Ireland — it grew up and matured. Everything was so cut-and-thrust in the championship the selectors hardly got time to really get to know their players. They were given that opportunity in the States.

Like a final

Some players improved so much it was hard to credit. John Henderson, who has a strong hurling background, as one such player. The Fenians defender had a great all-Ireland against P. J. Molloy, but the next time they meet it will be a case of how the Galwayman against Henderson.

Ger Fennelly is another who has crashed on the scene this year and in America, where the pitches were a lot firmer than they are during the League at home, he set new peaks of per-

formance everytime he went out on the field. Patsy Moran, Dick O'Hara, Paddy Prendergast, Tommy Malone, Richard Reid, Nicky Brennan, Martin Kennedy, in fact one could go through the whole panel, benefitted from the American experience.

The games in New York, Chicago (under lights), San Francisco and Los Angeles were played in a spirit far removed from their exhibition billing. Each one was more like a final, which was borne out in Chicago when neither side was satisfied to settle when the match ended all square.

It was in such an atmosphere, and by being together for so long, that sometime indefinable, grew up among the Kilkenny players. This unity, if you like to call it that, was manifest in the final match in Los Angeles where the All-Stars were saved from a comprehensive defeat by a late goal which came following a disputed penalty.

That day Kilkenny played with more understanding, and unity of purpose, than they ever did, even including the all-Ireland. And they did it all without regular midfielder, Frank Cummins who was unable to make the American tour because of business.

With Noel Skehan, Phil 'Fan' Larkin, if he wants to, Frank Cummins, Liam O'Brien and Mick Crotty, all deciding to continue their inter-county activities and dove-tailing with the young players, then Kilkenny can retain the McCarthy Cup. In far away Los Angeles they gave evidence of this, but there was too few people there to witness what they were doing.



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