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Cully's Catastrophe

The Rattler Interview part 2

Trinity Hurling



Galway's Joe Canning with Niall Healy and Cork's Eoin Caddigan
Photo: SPORTSFILE

Cully's Catastrophe

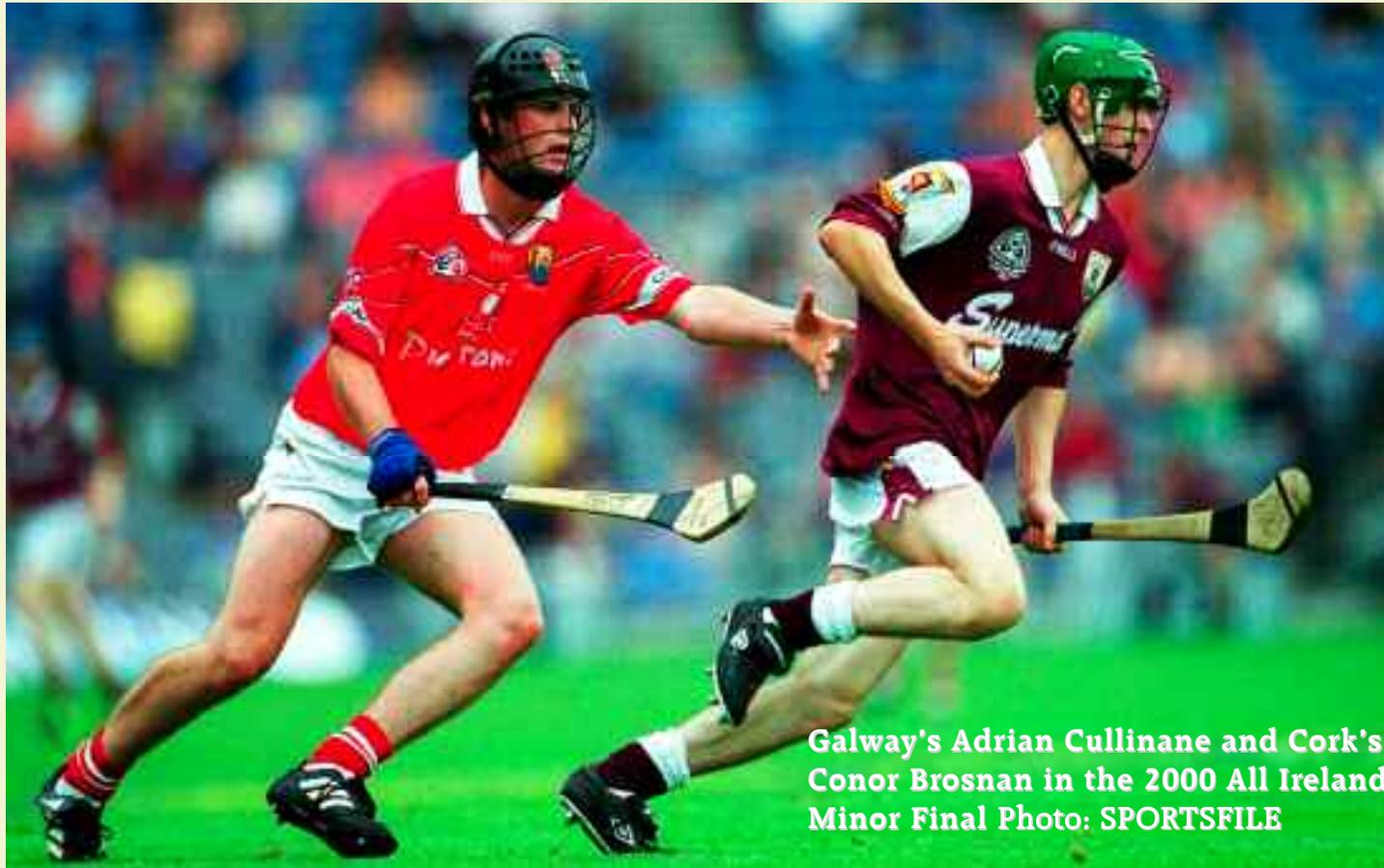
“It doesn't look good,” Said the radiologist in Galway's Bons Secours Hospital to Galway's flying wing-back Adrian Cullinane on Monday morning as he looked at the MRI film of his right knee. “I know the knee is a bit swollen but there's a problem with the cruciate and there seems to be some cartilage damage as well,”

“I know it's common enough but that's the last thing you want to hear in the middle of the summer.” said Adrian when he spoke to hurling world during the week. Trying to console himself he continued “The main thing is to get it done right I suppose. I will know better when I go to Waterford on Friday.” He explained that he was going to meet the highly respected orthopaedic surgeon Dr Tadhg O'Sullivan in the Whitfield Clinic on Friday morning. I am lucky that McIntyre is there. I will get the best of treatment. Well I know Dr O Sullivan also because he was our team doctor on our weekends away when I played with Waterford IT. He has a great interest in hurling. I think he won an All Ireland U-21 medal with Cork so I am in good hands.”

On how it happened he says “I just felt it pop and then when I tried to put pressure on it, I knew there was a problem. Coming off the field was the hard part. This is the time of the year with a lot of



Clare's Tony Carmody and Galway's Adrian Cullinane
Photo: SPORTSFILE



Galway's Adrian Cullinane and Cork's Conor Brosnan in the 2000 All Ireland Minor Final Photo: SPORTSFILE

big games coming up. You have only a few years at this level and I am 26 now."

Its difficult for Adrian to see any positives in the situation this week and at 26 if one thinks about the teenagers this year at 19 or 20 such as Kilkenny's Richie Hogan and Tipperary's 18 year old Noel McGrath one can see his point of view. On the other hand, players such as Cork's Tim Crowley and Galway's Brendan Lynskey were shaving for quite a few years before arrived on the scene and still had long intercounty careers.

Adrian was just 17 when his outstanding display in the half back line (facing a Cork half forward

line including Tomás O'Leary and Setanta O'hAilpín) in the minor final of 2000 helped Galway to a 3 point win over the rebels.

"He is taking it badly this week" according to club manager Craughwell's Kieran Rabbitte. "He is a major loss to the club. He has been a great clubman over the years. He has backboned all our great underage successes from U-12, U-14, U-16, minor and U-21. We were beaten in a Féile semi-final by Tullaroan of Kilkenny back around 1997. Tommy Walsh was Tullaroan's key player then. He is a big loss to us this year in the club. We have a very young team. The average age is 22. Apart from

Fergal Healy he is the oldest and he is only 26. 8 of our panel are on county panels so we cannot even think about training at the moment. We are fighting relegation this year so his loss is immense."

No manager knows him as well as Kieran, "We played Intermediate together when I was finishing and he was starting off. We have always had a good relationship. He has made a huge effort this year. He has a lot of time for John Hardiman (Galway selector this year), John was minor manager in 2000."

Kieran is well aware of his qualities. "Apart from his skill and his speed and balance, Cully's main strength is his temperament for the big game. It doesn't faze him. He might as well be going down to the pitch for a training session. For his own sake hopefully he will be back next year. I suppose in a way he is lucky that John McIntyre's setup has another year to run and we certainly need him in the club."

Following his visit to Waterford Adrian is due to have his operation in mid August. All going well he will be back in the maroon and white next summer.



Borrisoleigh's Jimmy Finn bring's home the McCarthy Cup in 1951

Mickey 'The Rattler' Byrne interview (Part two)

When did you retire?

In 1960 we beat Cork by a few points in the League Final in Cork and about 3 weeks later we played Cork in a tournament in Birmingham. I said to Paddy Leahy in the dressing room "Paddy this is my last game I am getting a bit slow in the foot." "Oh Jezus he said "hang on you are throwing away an All Ireland stay on until the championship."I

said no my mind was made up. He made me captain for the day and that was my last game with the county. I played on with the club till 1965 and won 5 more championships. 3 in the 40's, 8 in the 50's and 5 in the 60's.

Did players move around the field in those days?

I played Railway Cup with Ring. Ring used to say there are 15 patches on the field. "When the ball isn't in your patch it doesn't matter but when the ball comes into your patch you must be there."

What is your impression of hurling today?

Ah sure Jezus they are not playing hurling at all now. They have a 'Pansies Game' made out of it. I didn't see a hurley broken in 40 years and before I don't know how many hurls would be broken by half time and there was good ash that time. They wouldn't break an egg cup now. No overhead striking no shoulder to shoulder. A hurley would last you a lifetime. Do you see that photo on the wall there from the 1950 All Ireland Final, Do you see the man on the ground that's Kilkenny's Tom Walton he was the first to bite the dust and Reddan coming towards me with ball. Reddan always came out my side and that's the full back Tony Brennan outside there. The man with the hurley going for Reddan is Jack Mulcahy but I have





Tipp in training

Top: Mickey Byrne sprints with the Tipp panel.

Above right: Pat Stakelum chats with Phil Purcell.



Ye had great fun on the trips to America with Tommy Doyle and all the lads?

Tommy used to be very nervous you know. I don't know how many times he went to Dublin but if you left him off in Huston Station he would get lost. We were coming down in the lift in the hotel (in New York). We were always told to go down in 7 and 8's and 10's you know. Tommy forgot something and he went back up on the lift to the room to get it. We mooched out of the hotel and we marched down a bit. Sean Kenny said hey lads we will slip into a doorway here. And Tommy came out Jezus he was like a rabbit with the mixie his eyes were outside his head and he was looking around. This cop was standing on the kerb swinging a big long baton. "Excuse me ghuard" he said Tommy used talk through his nose "Did you see Mickey Byrne or any of the lads passing down there" Sean said "Come on lads or he might run him in" so we stepped out then.

Talk a bit more about Ring?

Cork beat us in a League Final. Cathal McGlaughlin from Dublin was the referee The game was level and there was a line ball 65 years out on the old stand side. Christy went over to take it. The referee told him that the time was up, it was the last puck of the game. Christy took 3 steps back and cut the ball straight between the posts. The whistle went and Cork had won. We were into Barry's hotel afterwards, having the bit of grub. The Cork lads came in. Jim Barry and Christy and I said "Christy do know what? we will have to shot you." Christy said "Well Mickey ye tried everything else."

Your full back line had a tough reputation?

Willie John (Daly of Cork) said you might get in sometimes but getting out was the problem. He said to Reddan (The Tipperary goalkeeper) it's easy for you and you having a fullback line there, it's like having full comprehensive insurance.

Where did Mackey get his nickname?

It was in a Railway Cup and that time the players used to line up at the centre of the field. The referee used to go around and he would count the players. When he came around to Mackey, Mackey said "Ara for feic sake through in the feicin ball ref and then keep out of the way" That was a nickname that was on Mackey 'Feic' everything with Mackey was 'Feic'.

my hurley on his windpipe. There no ground hurling now they are all out the fe***** field Doyle would ramble out the field all right.

What do you think of rugby and soccer?

Well Denis Conroy was on the Saturday radio with Monica 'What's her name' Denis was a staunch republican but she was trying to trip him up. She said "Now Denis what would you say if your son went off next Saturday and played rugby" Denis replied "Well now Monica I would go home and ask his mother who his father was. Hey! End of story." (Laughter)

Forwards could charge the goalkeeper in your time!

I showed you that photograph there now with hurley under the lads windpipe Jack Mulcahy 'a hardy one' was coming in to behead Reddan. That time a high ball would be coming in out of the sky - right - and it was legal that time. The forwards could charge the goalie before the ball. They could have the goalie hanging within on the back latt before the ball could come at all. So it was up to the back men to keep out the forwards. Paddy Barry was interviewed there one time. Donnacha O'Dulaing was asking him about the Tipperary fullback line. Well-said Paddy "We are there to get the scores and the Tipperary backs are there to stop us. So draw your own conclusions he said," I would think now that forwards are over protected now and Damian Martin of Offaly came to visit me recently and he said it. Reddan used to be his idol and he used to love standing behind Reddan's goal "My mouth was open looking at Reddan going out through a forest of hurleys and clearing that ball and knocking two or three lads along the way." Reddan was as strong as an ox. You see the hurley now there in the photo. You could hardly lift it of the ground. There was a big poll on it and there was enough tin and galvanize on it to roof a henhouse.

What was Leahy like as a manager?

Leahy was a very shrewd man and he took no nonsense. It didn't matter if you played an outstanding game the last day, it meant nothing today is the day. Now things would be going wrong and we would go into the dressing room and as we



Mickey 'The Rattler' Byrne still in a hurley swinging pose at his home in Thurles

would be ready to go out on the field and you know the old stool that was in the dressing room he would stand up on that and he used to wear a hat and he used to shove back the hat on the Kildare side. "Listen" he would say "Are ye Tipperary men? Is there any Tipperary blood in ye? What about all the great Tipperary men that went before ye? They would turn in their grave looking at ye. What about all our exiles all over America and everywhere? Are ye going to go out there and be beaten?" Well be Jezus we would go our that door and we were like reindeers. We had a new

lifeline. If Cork got a goal he would come around the back of the goal and he would say Jezus lads ye would need to drop the blade another couple of inches."

Tipp had a barren spell from 1971?

Oh ye there was an 18-year spell. There was a great character from Cork Denis Conroy he was nearly on crutches when they made him chairman of the Cork County Board right. He had a son married here in the town. They had a pub there in

the town Glasheens pub out the factory road and he used to come up at the weekend to the pub there. In 1989 when Tipp won Conroy was in the pub and this crowd of lads came in they were cursing and swearing about how they were held up in traffic. It took us 6 hours to get down. Denis was there with the pipe sure he said that wasn't too bad didn't it take ye 18 years to get there.

(Laughter!!)

The hurleys were much narrower in your day Mickey?

Oh God aye, look at Reddan's there it's no wider than a golf stick. He had a very wide boss. Ah sure 'tis like a frying pan now Jesus and Mary, sure Olly Walsh used to have a hurley a barn door and Noel Skeehan the same way. The size of the hurley doesn't matter at all. Reddan's proves it.

Was hurling tougher in your day?

If you put up your hand that time you would be counting your fingers when you brought it down. Well if the ball is there you are entitled to pull at the feicin ball. Its not like you were here first you may have the ball. As I told you before I often broke fingers I often got 9 or 10 stitches after a game. My jersey used to be red but I never lay down or left the field in my life. We cannot understand this birdcage. A birdcage that's what I call it a feicin birdcage. And then they have a plaster across the nose what's that for? Then the gloves beat all. The first I saw wearing one of them was DJ. DJ Carey. Now I saw a match up there (in Semple Stadium) and DJ ran in 50 yards from the



Kilkenny DJ Carey in full body armour with Cork's Wayne Sherlock Photo: SPORTSFILE

middle of the field with the ball on his hurley and tapped the ball into the net. Well in the name of Jesus sure that's not...Sure you wouldn't even do it in Rugby. You will hardly do it in soccer will you? I can't just understand it.

What was club hurling here in Tipperary?

Well we played a local team here now Moyne/Templetuohy. They're out there a bit - all hatchet men. We played them in a mid final up here in Semple Stadium. There were lads with ears hanging down and noses gone this way and eyelashes hanging you know the usual blood and what ever. About 10 of us arrived down at this doctor's surgery he was an old doctor, Doctor

Cummins. He had played hurling in his younger days with UCD. So we were all sitting around and in he comes into the surgery and he looked around and he didn't say anything for a few minutes. Then he spoke "Will ye tell me one thing boys, did ye have any ball at all"

(Now 86 years young, Mickey 'The Rattler' Byrne is hale and hearty and still living in his hometown of Thurles. There is nothing he likes more than a visit or letter from some of his old comrades and fans. All at Hurling World wish him good health and happiness in the coming years.)

The highlights of this interview are on YouTube at Mickey 'The Rattler' Byrne - The Life and Times - Tipperary Hurling part 1 HURL0035

Part 2 HURLOO39

The story of Trinity Hurling

In the year of the 125th anniversary celebrations we are encouraged to reflect on the importance, strength and growth of our most famous national sporting organisation. It might be considered strange or even unusual to some that Ireland's oldest and most prestigious university has a deeper Gaelic sporting history than the GAA itself.

Trinity College has had a curious relationship with the GAA and Gaelic games for more than a century. The Trinity College Hurley Club, as it was then known, predated the founding of the GAA by about 20 years and the playing of hurling in college park is documented as early as 1810. In 1879 the first meeting of the Irish Hurling Union was held in House 17 of Botany Bay in Trinity College. Those present at the meeting aimed to establish a set of rules to be played by all clubs in the Union and to foster the development of the game of hurling in its native country.

At this early stage not many clubs were established therefore games were played in College Park between such teams as, the Internals and Externals, the Medicals and Non-Medicals and, the First Team and the Philosophical Society. One who was to have a deep influence on the history of modern Ireland, Edward Carson played in the game of Externals and Internals in 1877. The



Ulster Unionist Edward Carson played hurling in Trinity and during his summer visits to his mother's family, the Lamberts of Castle Ellen near Athenry in County Galway.

original club colours were green and black but in later years the hockey club was founded out of the club and they still wear the green and black colours today.

Both the attitudes and actions of Trinity Hurley Club are considered important factors influencing Michael Cusack to initiate the establishment of Cumann Lúthcleas Gael in 1884. Cusack himself was a respected figure in college since his arrival in the capital in 1873.

Despite the early promise, the GAA did not take root in college until the 1950's. The GAA's strong association with the Catholic Church, its ban of foreign games and the policy of the college of barring Catholics from attending, all inhibited the development of Gaelic games. However in these



DUBLIN UNIVERSITY HURLING TEAM 1880.

**Back Row: G.Y. Dixon, W.L. Gilliland, -----, J.H. Bernard. Wm, Alex. Carte.
Front Row: C.W.O'Hara Mense, T.H. Abrahall, C.W. Welland, W. Shaw, G.H. Garrett,
R. Bradshaw, A.H. Shaw.**

circumstances brave men established a GAA club in Trinity. The name most associated with the foundation of GAA in Trinity is one Colm Kennelly. Kennelly went on to become a Kerry All-Ireland star in 1953 and 1954. Along with Dr. Ed Stuart of the Chemistry Department, a new club within college was formed.

The year 1962/63 marked a watershed in the history of Gaelic games at Trinity. It was reported in the Irish Times of November 26th that indeed Trinity were admitted to the Fitzgibbon Cup competition on a unanimous decision. As well as entering the national competition, the hurlers from Trinity were establishing overseas links with the Scottish Universities and a shinty game was arranged between both sides in 1964. The success

of the game strengthened a link that has seen Trinity return to Scotland over the decades, the last successful trip to Edinburgh was in 2007.

This was a new dawn for the club. Trinity were now in with the big boys and had to act like it. The club needed a new set of jerseys for their first outing in the Fitzgibbon Cup. As the colours of the club (red and black) are also the colours of county Down, the Down county board was approached in the hope of procuring an old set that may have been discarded. Instead the Down County Secretary arranged for some Down supporters to donate a set of new jerseys to the club. The progress of the club was added to by the acquisition of club grounds in Santry that catered for hurling and football.

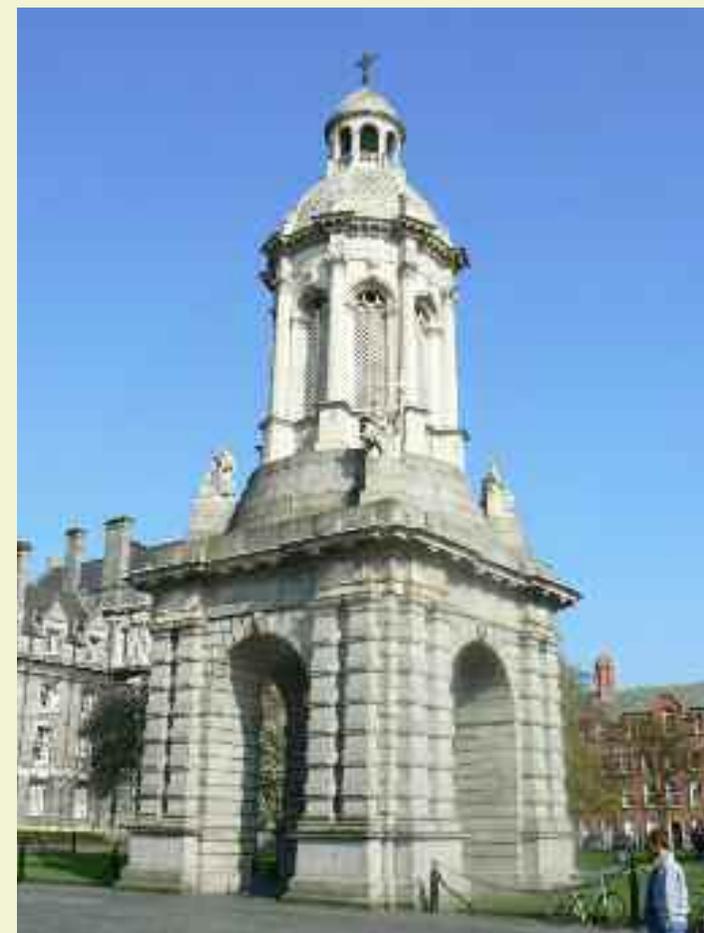
A real milestone had been reached in the affairs of Gaelic Games at Trinity. The foundations had been laid for development and growth of an ambitious GAA club. Trinity built on this platform when in 1966/67 it hosted the Fitzgibbon for the first time. The staging of the event clearly gave the club a much greater profile within the sporting life of college. Affiliation to the Dublin County Board was sought in 1962 and Trinity played in the Dublin Senior County Championship in 1967, 68, and 69. The late 70's proved a successful era on the field as the hurlers won the Fitzgibbon Shield on three occasions 1975, 76 and 81. One outstanding player who captained and coached the hurlers was the Westmeath dual star Pat Bradley.

Following their League success the previous year Trinity Hurling Club took its first step into inter-county hurling in style in 2007. The club competed in the Kehoe Cup, the secondary hurling competition in Leinster. This proved to be a major positive move for the Trinity hurlers, and in 2008



they recorded their first inter-county win over the men of Louth.

Gaelic games has now a firm footing within this venerable institution. One wonders what the members of the hurley club of 1879 might think about the Trinity of today and those who play the ancient games of which they were obviously so proud.



Photos show scenes from Trinity College



The sound of silence!

To understand, you need to have experienced the build up, the anticipation, the excitement and the anxious nerves that come with the run in to Championship. Preparations usually

conclude two or max three days prior to the main event. However, from a week or so out, you'll be speculating on the selection with your teammates, fielding questions from the locals and gathering some of their opinions too!!

You can be sure that the build-up won't go without hitch. Suspensions and injury concerns can let doubt creep in if not managed properly. There will be lads not togged at the final sessions

as they buy some recovery time. For every one of them there will be a couple more sweating on their places. Assuming you have navigated past or through back doors the enormity of the consequences of defeat preys on your mind. It would bring a shuddering halt to your summer, whilst victory could potentially catapult you to the places of your dreams.

In the preceding days you will look after yourself like a professional. Sleep, hydration, diet all to the fore. Anything interfering with your pattern will be scoffed at. The productivity of those at work will take a sharp decline. Students will be trying to stay out of the sun, not frazzle their mind too much on the playstation and generally try and stay out of harms way.

As you prepare to pack your bag the day of the match, your focus has narrowed. All that occupies your thoughts are getting your game right; beating your man and supporting your teammates in their tasks. Big guy, small guy...fast or slow...tricky or direct. You will be hatching a plan for each, running through the different scenarios you may find yourself in. Your parents will have lived through the mood swings that come with the week of Championship and be very glad to see you out the door.

Over in the field lads will be spread in different pockets, some serious, some more relaxed. Everyone will be eager to get their hands on the ball. Again, you can sense the focus and steely determination that grips the group. Often they will be called into the dressing room for a brief chat and to name the team. Some will be disappointed that they haven't got the nod, others elated. Once the job is done, all will filter out, bottle of water in hand, to fill the cars and head to the venue.

Sometimes you will arrive to a curtain raiser so maybe the warm-up is at a nearby pitch. The team goes through its warm-up rituals as silence descends on the group. The occasional yelp of encouragement can be heard from those who can't contain it. The handling and striking is fine tuned, the confidence in the touch rubber stamped. Back to the main venue and there is still time to kill. Players will peer out at the preceding game from windows and door steps. Inside the dressing room you hear balls rebounding of the shower room walls, muscles getting the final slaps in a rub down, rolls of tape unravelling and the can of deep heat doing its thing. This is probably the toughest moment as players become concerned about the gap between the warm-up and the throw in, about any imperfections in the pitch or unfavourable weather conditions.

Then the seconds tick down and you are huddled together, alone for the final time with your teammates and the captain's voice for company. He drills in his message, the players knit tightly together. The referee's impatient whistle is the signal to break open the door and release the men to the unmistakable clatter of studs on concrete and approval of the crowd.

The next hour or so will swing from end to end on the playing field and in the emotional stakes. There will be balls won and lost, great acts of bravery and uncharacteristic errors. When the final whistle goes, all those acts will be summed up and on the balance sheet there will be one winner. For those, the gate to the autumn has crept open further. For the losers, they will lie on the idled field wallowing in defeat. Their summer is over. Many months in the doldrums await until they



Clare's Deirdre Murphy (seen here with Joan O'Flynn President of the Camogie Association) scored the winning point in Clare's win over Limerick on Saturday.

can relaunch their assault. Its a totally devastating feeling. There will be an irreplaceable hole to fill through the new year.

I watched a selection of these scenes unfold this week as I ventured home for a few days. In this case, I was watching my old teammates fall to defeat and I can feel the disappointment that must run through them. As I walked out of the ground

**Munster Camogie Council
Annual Golf Classic
Friday July 31st
Dundrum Golf and Country Club,
Dundrum Co. Tipperary**

Teams of four €250 Tee Boxes €50

This has been a very successful annual event for the last number of years it has greatly helped with the promotion of Camogie within the province and is a great day out for all golfing and sporting enthusiasts.

Prizes include Green Fees for 4 at Dromoland, Mallow, Charleville and Woodstock.

Please support this event and circulate this notice to others whom may be interested.

Entries or Information from
Eamon Browne 087 1256025
Marion Graham 087 2764856

my eye was drawn to the gap in the dressing room door and my ear tuned into the silence which engulfed the room. Its a morbid place to be. It is of little consolation to them that they are lucky just to be able to contest the battles. The time will come when they are not and that will leave a greater hole than any defeat.

Is Yours the Best Club Under The Sun?



Nicky English at the launch of 'The Best Club Under The Sun'



Portumna's Chunky Hayes and Nicky English

Speaking about the competition Beatrice Cosgrove, Etihad Airways Country Manager Ireland said "The GAA is part of the fabric of Irish society and at its heart is the local club. The idea of this competition is based around what local GAA clubs give back to their community. Not necessarily the one with the most trophies, and we want to recognise and reward these clubs for this input. Last year's competition was a great success and hopefully 2009 will be bigger and better with clubs from every corner of the country entering The Best Club Under The Sun."

To enter this year's competition just log onto www.etihadgaa.ie and fill out the form to nominate your club. You can also follow the competition on TG4's Seó Spóirt, presented by Dara Ó Cinnéide, which airs every Friday at 8.30p.m.

Last year's competition received a phenomenal reaction, with over 3,000 votes cast with in the first few days. By day five there were 17,000 votes and by the closing day the competition had received 64,584 votes with Portumna emerging as the winners. Could 2009 see your club voted "Best Club Under The Sun"?

Etihad Airways, the UAE's national airline and sponsor of the GAA Hurling All Ireland Senior Championship, are once again looking to find Ireland's Best Club Under The Sun. The search on www.etihadgaa.ie is based around what local GAA clubs give back to their to their community and Etihad want to reward these clubs and the people that make up what it means to be part of that community; with the training camp of a life time.

Last years winners, Portumna, spent four days in

April at a special training camp in Abu Dhabi courtesy of Etihad Airways. The team including the Canning brothers, trained each day, in the sun, with GAA legend Nicky English putting them through their paces at the Zayed Sports Stadium. As part of Etihad's sponsorship of the GAA All Ireland Senior Hurling Championship 2009. Every club in the country is invited to nominate itself and outline why it is "The Best Club Under The Sun" and the public will then be asked to vote for the club they feel deserves to win.

What Collectors Collect (Part I)

There are almost as many competitions to collect and ways of collecting as there are collectors. Every collector accumulates programmes slightly differently. Likewise, no two collectors are identical in their collecting habits or their individual taste in programmes.

From a personal perspective, I have a real grá for Limerick-related stuff only and while I appreciate all other programmes, I have no desire or need to collect them in the same way that other collectors have to acquire all finals of all competitions as far back as they can. That is not to say that I will not take on rare or interesting programmes if I think I could do a deal involving them with another collector, who might have something of interest to me, but that's a tale for another article!

All general collectors collect All-Ireland football and hurling finals! It is trivial to get back to 1975 in both codes, once contact is made with appropriate sources: eBay, friends or family etc. It starts getting a bit tricky from there back, though if one is

motivated enough, getting back to 1960 is very attainable with sufficient money, perseverance and time. No All-Ireland finals over the last 50 years are rare and all are available in collectible quantities. All '50s All-Irelands are rare but not impossible to get – the rarest is probably the 1952 replay (football, of course!). Getting back into the '40s is very difficult for the beginner or even intermediate collector. Only the very serious collectors can talk with any authority about finals pre-1945!

All-Ireland semi-finals are collected by most collectors. Football semi-finals are easily sourced right back to the late-70s. Ditto hurling semi-finals, with a number of semi-notable exceptions in the mid-80s. Again football semi-finals in the '70s are available but may take time as there were at least two semi-finals each year in football, whereby there may have been only one in hurling!

There are some very rare hurling semi-finals in the early-70s, which some serious collectors I know still have not acquired - this was the era when both Ulster and Connacht were very weak and such semi-finals attracted very small crowds, even when held in Croke Park, which wasn't always the case. All-Ireland footballs semi-finals in the '60s are also rare and will take the beginner many years to acquire a full set. Any set of 20+ items of any sort from over 40 years ago will take time and effort to put together! There were also no hurling semi-finals during this era, with Galway having disappeared into the Munster Championship gulag between 1959 and 1969 and Antrim dropping down to Intermediate during the same time. Most very serious collectors consider 1955 as the high-water mark for All-Ireland semi-finals in both codes. Everything before this date is extremely rare, while everything after this is, in theory,



available, even with great difficulty.

Most collectors also indulge themselves with national league finals, and some are masochistic enough to collect national league semi-finals likewise. Again the same general rules apply for finals through the years, with material from the

early-70s onwards being collectible, albeit with some effort. Finals in the '60s in both codes do pop up from time to time, with a number of very rare exceptions, many involving New York in the full finals of both the national league football and hurling - the "home" final was between the best two counties with the winners playing in the "full" final against New York for nearly a decade in both codes.

Anything pre-1960 in either code is going to be very rare and building a full collection of them from scratch will be a very long-term project.

National league semi-finals are available with little to medium difficulty right back to the early-1980s. There are some very rare - though not always expensive - semi-finals in the 1970s, especially towards the earlier end of that decade. National league hurling semi-finals pre-1975 are extremely rare for a number of reasons. Personally, I'm missing 7 of the 8 national league hurling semi-finals Limerick played between 1964 and 1973.

A number of serious collectors can boast of strong collections of national league football semi-finals right back to the early-60s. Hurling league semi-finals are a relatively recent phenomenon, only starting on an annual basis in the mid-60s i.e. two per year every year.

Provincial finals in both codes are a favourite of most collectors with most being able to boast almost full sets of the major deciders for the four provinces right back to early-70s. Some provinces are slightly easier to collect than others but this can be relative to the geographical location of the collector. Obviously it will be difficult for a collector located in the Glens of Antrim to be very strong in early Munster football finals but that

won't stop him (or her!) from trying with the right contacts and swaps.

The advent of the souvenir programme made provincial deciders bulkier and more likely to survive mis-handling or destruction. The pre-souvenir programme era is much more difficult to collect, though Ulster football and Munster hurling seem to be slightly more common than the other provinces. Both these provincial championship finals seem to be the most strongly collected likewise. Note: the Ulster hurling final was only re-instituted in the late-80s after a long interval while Connacht hurling only survived for a few years in the mid-90s.

James Lundon - jameslundon@yahoo.co.uk.

Believe it or not!

Things didn't look good to the old Thurles Sarsfield legend in the dressingroom at half time in a championship game in the 1940's. They had been in many tight scrapes before but the gap was never this wide!

At half-time in the past, after he smoked a cigarette some inspiring gem would always come to him and in a minute he could whip up a frenzy that would win the game.

This time the Sars were six goals down and playing terrible. All eyes and ears were on the him and waiting for the spake. It didn't look good when he lit a second and kept the head down. Eventually the captain said to him "Will we go back out"

He finished his cigarette and said 'While we stay here we are still in the championship.'

At the final whistle Sarsfields were in the next round.



Galway through to quarter-finals



Galway manager John McIntyre celebrates his side's win over Cork on Saturday. Photo: SPORTSFILE

Galway 1-19
Cork 0-15

Substitutes' fortunes in the goal stakes was the difference between Galway and Cork in the phase 3 qualifier game in Semple stadium. Cork's Niall McCarthy missed an open goal chance when he cut through the Galway defence towards the end of the game with just 4 points between the teams while Galway substitute Joe Gantley smartly found the net when the ball rebounded from Donal Og Cusack's hurley in the 62nd minute. (Read the full report and watch the match highlights at www.hurlingworld.com later)



Limerick manager Justin McCarthy
Photo: SPORTSFILE

Limerick 0-20
Laois 1-14

Justin McCarthy's Limerick had to battle all the way to get over Laois in Semple Stadium in the phase 3 qualifier on Saturday.

(Read the full report and interviews at www.hurlingworld.com later this week)



Clough-Ballacolla's Willie Hyland scored 8 points against Limerick for Laois on Saturday in Semple Stadium. Photo: SPORTSFILE

Tipperary get back on track

THREE weeks after being beaten by Kilkenny in their opening group game of the Gala All Ireland senior camogie championship, Tipperary showed there is plenty of fight left in the Premier County with their 2-12 to 1-10 victory over Dublin at Parnell Park on Saturday. The victory sets them up for their final group tie which will be an All-Munster affair against champions Cork at Páirc Uí Rinn on August 1.

With the Blues entertaining Kilkenny on the same day, there are many permutations as to who will qualify for the All Ireland semi-finals, especially if the Dubs can build on Saturday's display. At one stage the home side were behind by 12 points, but a determined fight back in the closing quarter saw them hit 1-5 to Tipperary's single point.

The sides were level on three occasions in a competitive opening half, but a cracking goal from Mairead Luttrell in injury time gave the visitors a distinct advantage going to the dressing room, 1-7 to 0-3. Upon the resumption, Dublin had to withstand a lot of pressure, however points from Rachel Costello and Emer Lucey kept them in touch.

Tipperary struck again when Emily Hayden's shot dipped under the crossbar to put them in a 2-11 to



Dublin's Eimear Brannigan in full flight was part of Dublin's fightback that fell 5 points short against Tipperary on Saturday.

Photo: SPORTSFILE

0-5 lead. But Dublin, putting in one of their best performances in a while, stepped up to the challenge magnificently. A goal from Jean Murphy ignited the comeback followed by a flurry of points to leave them just five adrift, and plenty to ponder on.

Elsewhere, Clare collected their first set of points (since being promoted to the senior ranks) this year when they saw off Limerick by the narrowest of margins in Cusack Park, 2-8 to 1-10. This was a closely fought match, with just a point the difference as well at half time, 2-4 to 1-6.

A brace of goals from Fiona Lafferty and Claire Commane contributed to a strong first half for the Banner ladies, but Joanne Clifford ensured the Limerick girls were not too far off the mark with her green flag. It was nip and tuck for the closing 30 minutes, with the home team managing to hold out.

Clare are at home to Wexford in two weeks time and while the Slaneysiders will be favourites to go through to the penultimate stages along with Galway (who host Limerick), it will make for an interesting climax.