



# Sheedy's Men Munster's Kings



photo: SPORTSFILE

Part one

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Hello Hurling Fans,

With the Munster Final, the 2 qualifiers, the Christy Ring, Nicky Rackard and Lory Meagher Cup Finals along with a special interview with one of the greatest living legends of the game Micky 'The Rattler' Byrne we are diving this week's issue into 2 PDF's.

In that way we can keep the resolution of the photos high and the size of both sections will be less than one megabyte. Part one is the magazine section and part two is the weekend roundup.

The three Cup Finals in Croke Park provided some fine hurling but the crowd was just under 4,000 so it is probably back to the drawing board for those finals. Each needs to be played as a curtain raiser to a game from the Liam McCarthy Championship to create the right atmosphere.

The Munster Final had patches of fine hurling and some fine individual displays but lacked the intensity of former classics. Both teams Tipperary and Waterford are continuing to make progress. Tipperary still look the best challenger to the champions but Waterford battled with heart and could yet make a final four berth.

Best wishes 'til next week from Hurling World.



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# Rattle 'em Mickey!

Mickey 'The Rattler' Byrne from Thurles Sarsfields, held down the right fullback position for Tipperary for 12 championship seasons between 1949 and 1960 and was a substitute on the All-Ireland winning team of 1945. He played in 4 All Ireland Finals winning medals in 1949, 1950, 1951 and 1958 and 4 Munster Medals in those years also. He added 8 National League and 14 County Medals to a comprehensive collection of various other medals and awards. Recognized as one of hurling's great raconteurs he recently spoke to Hurling World about his career. He sets the record straight about his nickname around which there has been an obvious misconception throughout his career. He has some outspoken views on the direction hurling has taken in recent years.

## You grew up in Thurles Mickey, it is sometimes called the home of hurling?

The GAA was founded in Hayes's Hotel here in Thurles and that was the kernel of it all. And then you had 'A giant of a man' the great Tom Semple that built the stadium, he captained the old Thurles Blues. They changed their name to Thurles Sarsfields. I knew him well, 2 of his sons played with me, Johnny and Tommy, never made the county but were good club men.

## What was hurling like when you were playing?

It was all first time pulling. I remember bouts of play sometimes 10 minutes long where the ball never touched the ground. It was all ground hurling unless you caught it or it hopped in front of you. If you put down your hand for the ball that time you would count your fingers when you took it up.

## When did you get on the Tipp panel first?

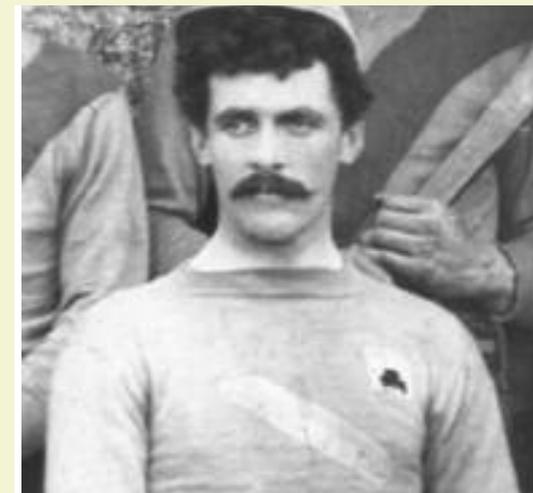
1945. The selectors held a trial match about 3 weeks before the Munster Final between the Probables and the Possibles. Didn't we beat the lord out of the probables and I was a sub for the Munster Final.



Above: Christy Ring and Mickey Byrne. Right: Tom Semple, Tipperary All Ireland winning captain in 1908 and founder of Semple Stadium.

## What do you remember about 45?

We stayed in Blackrock College. Johnny Leahy was very shrewd. He knew the president of the college. He knew that if we stayed in a hotel the





entire crowd would be there and it might be tempting for some of the players to have a drink. After the match we stayed in Barry's hotel. There was a great Dublin Hurler, Tommy Moore. He had a pub in Dublin. The cup would have to be brought down there on a Sunday night and I need not tell the rest!

### What was the greatest win you had in Munster?

Well in 49 we played Cork the semi-final in Limerick. The first day a draw, the second day a draw so they decided to play an extra half an hour. Now Jim Barry had kept the Cork lads out on the field in the scorching sun. The grass was burnt that summer it was unreal. We went into the dressing rooms and the Blake brothers the masseurs brought down this famous churn of spring water. We stripped down and got sponged with this famous spring water it was a "Kitty the Hare Story" if you like. Then those Blakes had their own concoction, winter green, olive oil you name it rubbed us up we came out for the last half an

hour and Cork didn't know what hit them. Shure it was stupid of Cork because if you sit down you get stiff don't you?

### Did you ever play against Mackey?

I did, but I saw Mackey playing here in Semple Stadium against Cork in a Munster final. Mackey's game always was that he would get the ball outside and would solo in towards the goal. He would have a man running off him that he would lay off the ball to but he would stay going for the re-



**Left: 22 year old Pat Stakelum (Under the Tipperary umbrella) leads the Tipperary team in the Munster final of 1949 followed by Tony Reddan and Tommy Doyle.**

**Right: Mick Mackey**

turn. That day Dick Stokes was running off him Mackey gave him the ball and whatever fooling he was doing, he drove the ball wide. Now there were 70,000 there that day but Mackey went over and he struck him and left him flat on the ground. Mackey's brother John played as well, a big blondie head on him. A tough 'whore' he was too.

### Who were the great Limerick players of the time?

Of course Mackey was number one. John Roache, Timmy Ryan the great centrefielder, Paddy Clohessy a brilliant centre back and Dave Clohessy his brother at corner forward and Dick Stokes, Dick was brilliant and the goalie Paddy Scanlon. Scanlon was one of the best I would put him next to Reddan and fearless and maybe I shouldn't be saying this now but he couldn't go out and play a match he was a ball of nerves. He had to get 5 or 6 halves of whiskey before he went out on the pitch and he would stop caraway seed after that!

### Had you ever any run in with Mackey?

I was playing full back one day in Limerick and Mackey was full forward. We had a small goalie that time 'A small Lemonade' little Jimmy



Maher of Boherlahan, the goalie in 45 a small little lad and he used to wear a big cap. Cornally the usual full back was injured so they put me in at full back. Mackey ran in before the ball was thrown in and he said to me Mickey did ye bring the little goalie at all today. All he wanted to do was to rise Jimmy. Jimmy used to run out and hit him across the a\*\*\* with the hurley. If Jimmy let in a goal he would go in and say to Jimmy "Jezus

that was an easy one you should have stopped that one" and Jimmy would give him the hurley going out.

### Have you many county titles?

I have 14. it's the record here in Tipperary. The Tipperary Cup was presented by Dan Breen the freedom fighter. That's it there in the photo. The year I was captain Dan himself presented it. Normally he would be

**Dan Breen, Mickey Byrne with the Dan Breen Cup, Bishop Cunnane and Phil Purcell after a Tipperary County Final.**

away. I had my hand around him, Noel Morris from Borrisokane the former chairman of the county board was here one night and I showed him the photograph. He said "Mickey you're the only man that laid a hand on Dan Breen and lived to tell the tale."



**Far left: Action from the 1949 Munster Final in Killarney Tony Readdan goes high while Tony Brennan covers Mossy O'Riordan as Mickey Byrne comes in to help.**

**Left: Mickey Byrne is in control of the situation the 1950 Munster Final.**

### You played against Jack Lynch?

In a National League game down in Cork and we had the little goalkeeper little Jimmy as I told you. As Micheal O'Hehir used to say there was a She-mozzle in our goal and Little Jimmy was bundled into the net and they pulled the cap down over his eyes. He got up and he lifted up the cap and here he saw Lynch running out to the 21 and he followed him out. Jack told this now himself several times. He followed him out and he left the boss of the hurley under his windpipe and he said "By Jezus Jack if you come in there again there will be another bi-election. (Laughter) You know that Jack Lynch got into the Dail in a bi-election. In those 6 years we won 3 and Cork won 3 there was only the puck of a ball between us.

### What was the hardest Munster Final you played in?

The 1950 final in Killarney. The crowd was in on the pitch from the goal out to the two corners a ball was going wide and a spectator kicked it back in Lynch hit it in to Reddan it hit the post and went over the line. Reddan was waiting for the umpire to flag it wide. Didn't he put up the flag for a goal. We met the umpire afterwards he said if he didn't flag for a goal the Cork crowd wouldn't let him leave Killarney alive. They were in around me and around Doyle in the other corner and here they were throwing orange skins in on top of Reddan in the goal. That was some experience it was the toughest Munster Final of them all that I was in.

## Where did you get the name the 'Rattler'?

(Assuming like most of the hurling fraternity that when forwards come for the goalie in the defence, when the Tipp backs met them you could hear their bones rattle)

I did an interview for Tipp FM with Eamonn Dwyer last week for his programme 'Down your Way'. My son Noel was sitting in that chair now and when the interview was over. Noel said "Eamonn you never asked him where the name 'The 'Rattler' came from." So I told him. There was an old cinema here in Thurles called Delahunty's. They ran a serial when I was 10 or 11. We all went to Delahunty's every Saturday. It was 3 pence to get into the pit at the front with the hard seats. The serial was a western and it had a 'Baddie Cowboy' in it. He robbed the stagecoach and rustled the cattle and what have you. When he came on the screen I would jump up cheering for him all the rest of the lads with me were against me so the name stuck.



**Above:** The wall of Legends on Barrett's Bar in Kickam Street, Thurles. **From the Left:** Pat Stakelum, John Doyle, Jimmy Doyle, and Mickey "The Rattler" Byrne.

**Left:** The 'Rattler' himself played by Edmund Cobb has captured the Good Guy and the Damsel in Distress in the 1934 Western 'Mystery Mountain'.

You can read part two of Mickey Byrne's interview in next week's issue. Part of Mickey Byrne's interview for the Blue and Gold DVD is on YouTube at Tipperary Hurling Mickey 'The Rattler' Byrne on Helmets HURL0035



# The Whistler on the Ditch

## Some Rules of Hurling Explained

PJ Ryan of Kilkenny was penalised for pucking the ball out from behind the end line during their recent Leinster Hurling Final victory against Dublin.

Was the referee correct?

From the GAA Official Guide - Part 2 (2008):

### RULES OF FOUL PLAY - TECHNICAL FOULS

4.15 To take the puck-out from outside the small rectangle.

PENALTY - 65m free opposite where the foul occurred.

This is a classic example of the sparsity of the GAA rule book, where some rules' strict interpretation is up to the referee, or the current prevailing culture of the game, at the time.

If the player isn't in the small rectangle (more commonly known as the square), he is outside it?

What does it mean to be outside the small square? In Ryan's instance, it was very clear-cut: he was never in the small square to start with so the umpire - and thereafter the referee - had a very straightforward decision to make.

Of course, the counter-example is that of the Clare goalkeeper, Donal Tuohy from Crusheen, in last year's Munster U-21 Hurling Final when he was penalised twice during the course of that game for taking his puck-out from outside the small square. In both cases some of his body was inside the small square - his trailing foot! - while the sliothar was certainly hit a good metre outside the small square.



**The umpire explains rule 4.14 to PJ Ryan in the Leinster Final. Alan McCrabbe pointed the resultant 65m free.**

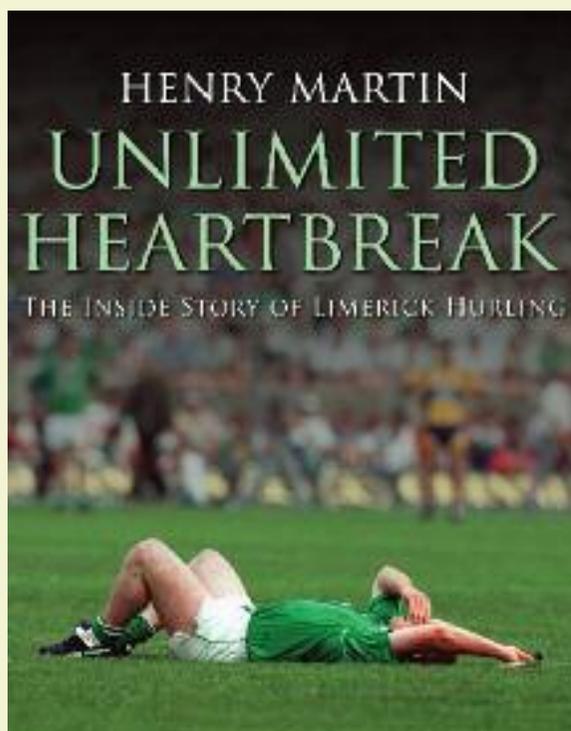
Of course, the referee was technically correct in penalising the Clare goalkeeper but how many other goalkeepers have gotten away for years with much greater infringements of this rule without censure.

The moral of the story is to make sure that the ball is struck inside the small square, as I'm sure the spirit of rule 4.15, albeit opaquely, implies.

# UNLIMITED HEARTBREAK

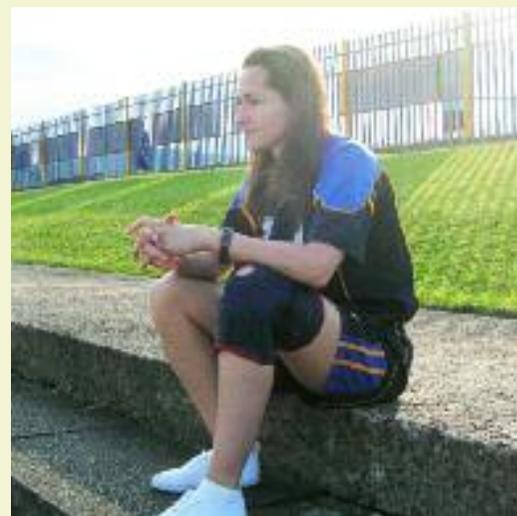
The inside story of Limerick Hurling

Following their win over Wexford, Limerick Hurlers play Laois next and should make the quarter finals. The county has had just one success in 69 years since 1940. There have been a number of failures and collapses in recent times. The greatest puzzle of all for hurling fans across the country is why hasn't the county's 3 All Ireland U-21 successes in row 2000, 2001 and 2002 not brought the Limerick senior team to the pinnacle. Recently some early chapters and the cover of a new book on Limerick Hurling has reached us here at Hurling World. It looks like being a facinating read when it is released at the end of September. The writer Henry Martin seems to have explored very close to the bone of this sporting mad county. If the comment by former manager Tom Ryan is anything to go by. We will review the book further when it reaches the shelves.



**'The standard of coaching, standard of hurling and standard of discipline have been a disgrace since my departure.... The public image of the team has been rock bottom. Really and truly it has been a shameful period for Limerick Hurling.'**  
*...Tom Ryan*

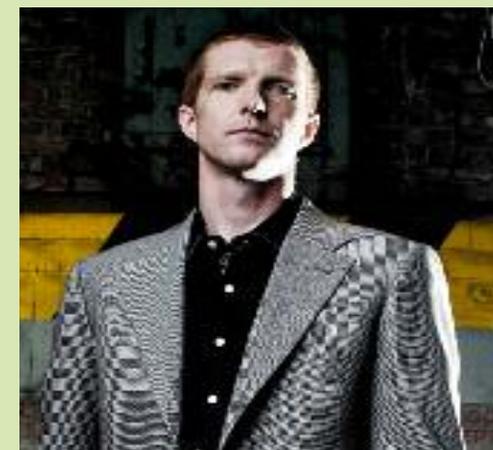
## An Evening with the Stars



**All Star, Jane Adams joins Joe Brolly, Eoin Kelly, Martin Rogan, and Glen Ferguson at an 'Evening with the Stars' for the O'Donovan Rossa GAA Club in the Ramada Hotel on July 31st.**

O'Donovan Rossa are hosting a "Evening with the Stars" on the 31th of July at the Ramada Hotel belfast. It would be a great chance to ask any question you would have to the panellists for the evening they include Joe Brolly Derry, Eoin Kelly Allstar Tipperary, Martin Rogan Commonwealth Boxing Champion. Jane Adams Camogie Allstar and Also Glen Spike Ferguson Ex Linfeild super star. The evening will have waitress service and it would be great if you could come along. I have attached a poster it would be great if you could print it out and ask your clubs, football hurling camogie or even boxing fans would they like to come along. Tickets are £10 and its starts at 8 to late.

News on the podcast scene from [www.kilkennygaa.ie](http://www.kilkennygaa.ie) this weekend concerns a five star display by Henry Shevlin against Young Ireland's scoring 4-6 out of a Shamrock's total of 6-18. Other Kilkenny stars to cut loose in the championship were Carrickshock's John Tennyson, Dalton, Reid and company against Tullaroan. You can tune into the full programme from Tuesday.



## EXPRESS YOURSELF



**John Mullane expresses himself at yesterday's Munster Final Photo SPORTSFILE**

One of the Irish man's less endearing traits is the one whereby he is emotionally inept. The Irish man struggles in areas where his counterparts further south thrive. He can't use words like passion or beauty. He can't sip a glass of wine and sit looking into a woman's eyes for lengthy silent moments. Nor can he easily (or soberly) tell a woman how beautiful she is or how her radiant smile lights up his every day.

Towards his friends he is guarded, hiding emotion at the pit of his very being. He is wary of the ribbing he

will get if he breaks from the fashion norms of brown shoes, jeans and Tommy shirt. To hide his own insecurities, he will seek out the less mainstream to be the butt of his jokes, scoffing at their willingness to show feeling or break from Gaelic social norms.

Maybe, this is why a large section of G.A.A. fans are voicing their displeasure with the behaviour of Eoin Kelly, John Mullane, Dan the Man and Co lately. You know the picture. Knees slightly bent, leaning slightly back and pumping their fists into the air with emotion sweeping

across their face and veins bulging. The Waterford fans stand and roar back their approval. It's a scene you can commonly associate with the trio and their colleagues in recent years. As common as the badge grabbing and kissing we see as they bear down on the Town End in Thurles or The Hill further North.

Those opposed to the gesticulation will cite an ever growing trend to adopt unwanted practices which are laden in the games of our foes across the sea. A hint of diving has approached our shores as has the encouragement to referees to dish out appropriate punishment for misdemeanours. It's felt this dampens the purity of our games and is a road we dare not travel.

Showmanship is rife in the world of soccer and is viewed with glee by the receiving fans. Personally I detest it and see it as merely another avenue to boost a player's advertising appeal and popularity. The examples are in no short supply. Wayne Rooney, boyhood diehard Everton fan. Within a month of arriving at Old Trafford he was kissing his new badge after scoring against Fenerbache. Ronaldo has fulfilled a boyhood dream by joining Madrid and took a nice new packet with it. Robbie Fowler is known to celebrate his goals by sniffing white lines on the Anfield

pitch. What do these actions mean? Are the individuals credible?

Manchester United fans, from Ireland, London and maybe even Manchester, see Rooney's gesture as an expression of pride in the new clobber and their knees shake as he woos them. In this sense, I can understand why our Members look on with suspicion when the mavericks from the South-East reel away and erupt in emotion.

I love it though. When Setanta rounded Lohan in 2004, eventually shook off his shackles before rattling the net in Thurles, he charged the terrace whilst nearly ripping the geansai off himself with the clench of his rebel crest. It was a moment when he became one with the Cork fans. Just like when Mullane or Donaghy spin away after raising another flag.

Why is it different? Because it is genuine. It is highly likely that Mullane will catch the eye of a friend or club man when he looks to the stand. His emotion is returned with interest. He is expressing his pride in where he's from, the fans are expressing their pride in where they are from. They'll be there if their team collapses in the qualifiers and they'll be there.....