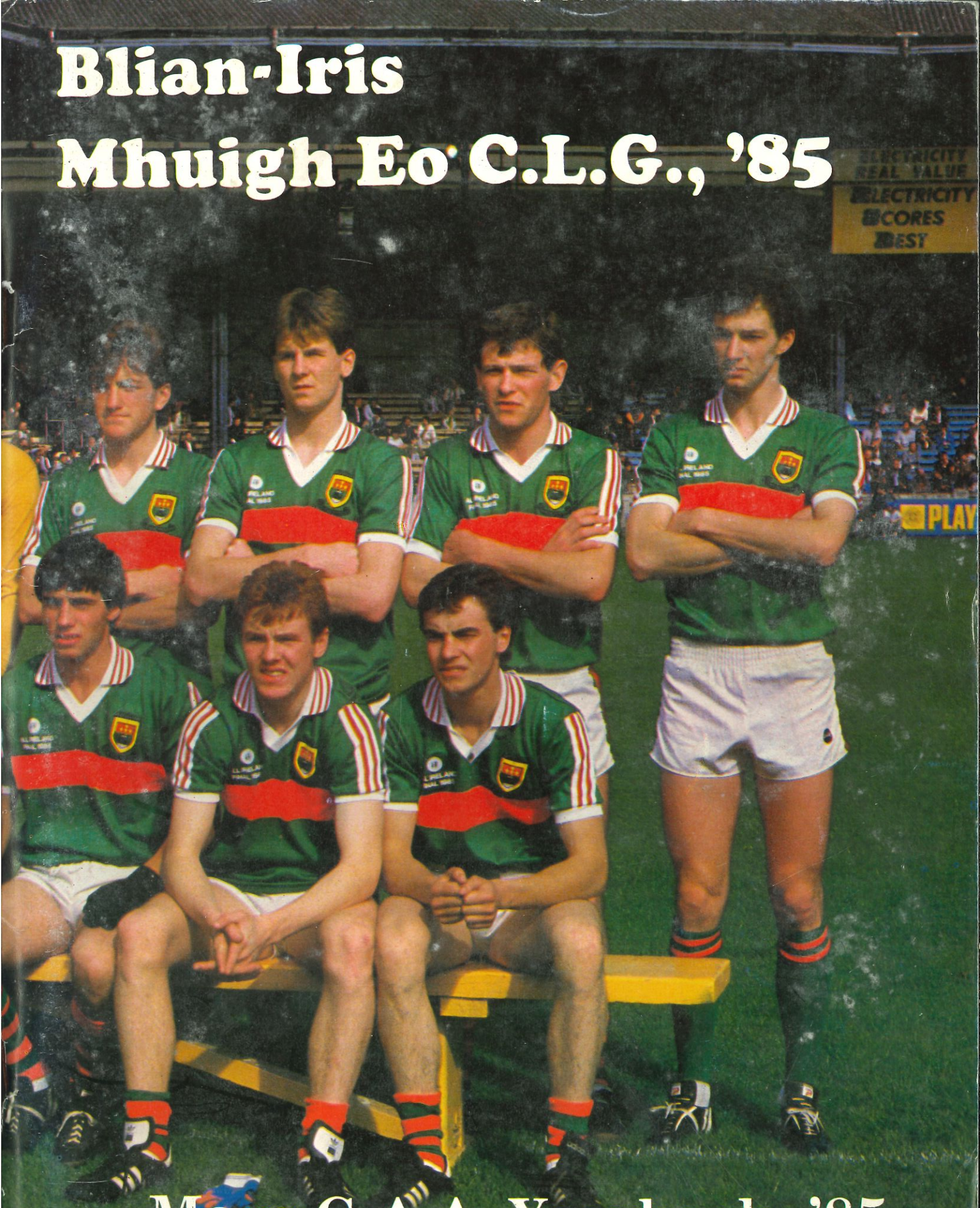
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BEST OF LUCK IN 1986 TO ALL MAYO GAA TEAMS

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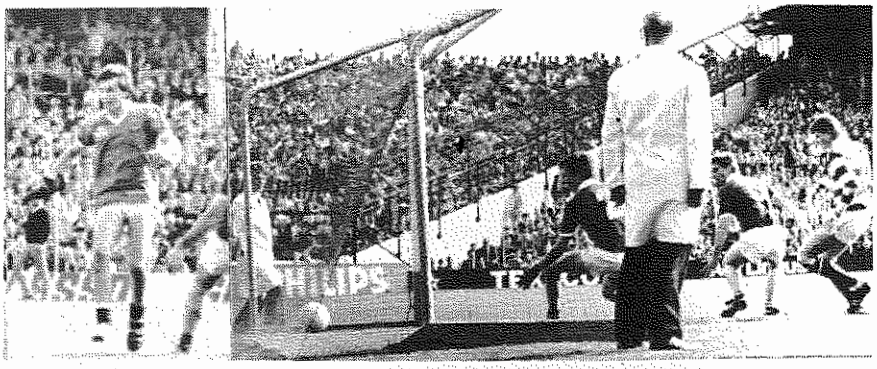
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MAYO G.A.A. YEARBOOK '85

This Yearbook is published by Coisde Condae Mhaigheo C.L.G. and printed by the "Western People" Ltd., at their offices, Francis Street, Ballina. The publishers wish to acknowledge the support of their sponsors and advertisers and to express appreciation to all those who contributed articles. Photographs in this publication are courtesy of the "Western People" Photographic Department.

● ***Cover caption — The Mayo 1985 All-Ireland Minor team. Back row, le ft to right: Greg Maher, Martin Coyle, David Fitzgerald, John Commins, Pat Kirrane, James Gallagher, Enda Gilvarry, Pat Walsh. Front, le ft to right: Johnny French, Tony Munnelly, Thomas Grady, Michael Fitzmaurice (capt.), M. J. Mullen, Kevin Beirne, Declan Burke.***

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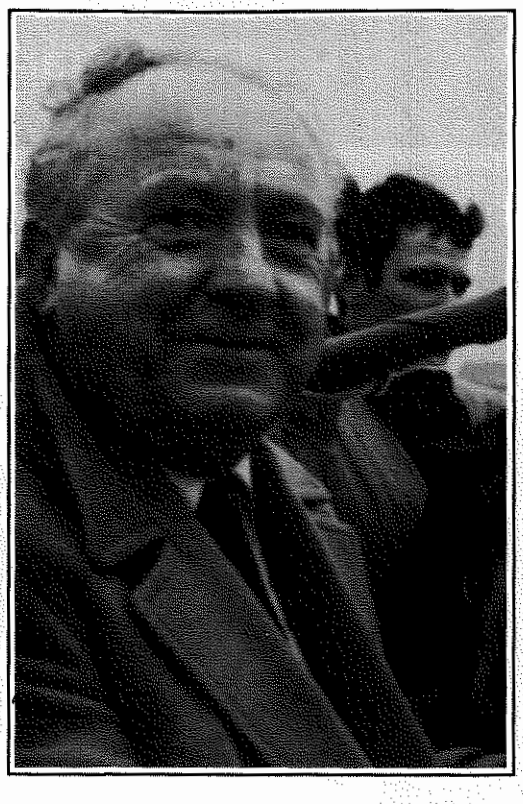
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Foreword



TÁ sé d'onoir agam mar Cathaoirleach Cumann Luthchleas Gael, Coisde Condae Mhaigh Eo, seanfhocal a scriobh don leabhair seo a thugann eolas duínn faoí na hlachtrai go leir a tharla sa chondae i mbliana.

1985 has re-introduced our year book after a lapse of some years and I want to congratulate all the members responsible for this decision. I wish to express a special word of thanks to all our advertisers and to our two major sponsors, NCF and the Beaten Path, for their generous contributions.

I want to say go raibh míle maith agaibh to the many individuals who contributed articles and collected advertising. We owe a deep debt of gratitude to Criostoír O Lachtnaín for piloting the venture to a successful conclusion.

This year will hold a special place in the history of the county. The success of our teams brought new hope to our many supporters. They rekindled a flame in the hearts of all Mayo people at home and abroad. May the example of our players on and off the field and the dedication of our officials serve as an inspiration to the younger generation to carry on the work of developing our Association and guiding it through its second century.

The election of Dr. Mick Loftus as President of the Gaelic Athletic Association at the 1985 Annual Congress in Ballina was another first for the county and to quote from the President's exact words when he addressed Congress on that historic day:

"This is not so much my day, this is Mayo's day."

Dr. Loftus we wish you well during your term.

To the many administrators, officials, players and club members, past and present, who have earned the esteem and highest respect for their unselfish work for the Association, I dedicate the following few lines from Críostoír O'Flynn's new book:

"For those who at the meeting sat
and served unnamed and for all those
unnamed whose glory is the cause,
the love and serve from year to year,
to God's own heart such neames are
dear."

Ar agaidh linn le cheíle,

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A Year Of Green And Red

– BY JOHNNY MULVEY.

I am very glad that a decision was taken recently to produce a Mayo G.A.A. Yearbook this year and I feel privileged to be asked to contribute to it. There were so many memorable moments during 1985 that it was fitting they should be recorded in print. Ballina had the honour of staging the 1985 Congress and Mayo people were privileged to see one of their own from nearby Crossmolina elevated to the Presidency of the Association. Well respected Mick Loftus has given nearly forty years' service to the Association, and his election to the highest honour in the Association was enthusiastically received when he was installed in office on the Sunday.

The occasion was not to be completely joyful, however, because only three hours later came the shock news that Limerick footballers had beaten Mayo in the Centenary Cup. That result dampened enthusiasm more than somewhat and we were to hear about it many times in the following months.

Roscommon finished our league ambitions when beating us by a point in Charlestown; yet, it was our victory over the same opposition in the Phil Gannon Memorial Cup, in May, that lifted our heads a bit. Another boost followed when the Dubs. were defeated in Westport at the official re-opening of St. Patrick's G.A.A. Park. Further victories in challenge games followed and we travelled in confidence to meet Leitrim at Carrick-on-Shannon. We have had a salutary lesson or two in that venue in past years, but on this occasion Mayo won with something in reserve. Roscommon, having beaten London, held Galway to a draw in Hyde Park, and won the replay so impressively in Tuam that they became warm favourites to take the Provincial title. The Mayo players had a thorough preparation and were quietly confident of regaining a title they last held in 1981. Mayo followers were not so sure, however, and a goal and six points had been put on the board to their credit before they could believe what they were seeing.

The Mayo Minors much maligned after two indifferent displays against Sligo gave another apparently mediocre display against Galway in the curtain-raiser before winning the Minor title by 0-6 to 1-1. The Seniors went on to beat Roscommon convincingly and Captain, Henry Gavin, was presented with the Nestor Memorial Cup to make it a memorable afternoon. Seven days later our Under-21 team made it a record treble when beating Galway 2-6 to 0-7 in the final at Ballinasloe.

UPSURGE IN COUNTY

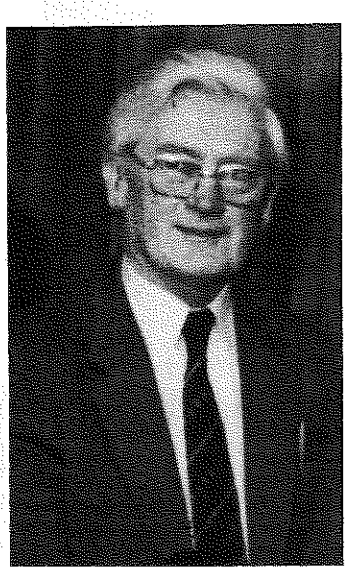
About this time an upsurge of enthusiasm was felt all round the county with considerable numbers viewing the training sessions. The Co. Board held its first Church-Gate Collection for some years and £17,000 was contributed. This was to increase to £24,000 later on when voluntary subscriptions of £200 to £500 were given at training sessions in Balla, Charlestown, Ballina and Westport.

For the first time in over thirty years the county was about to have two teams in Croke Park on the one day, and as they left for Dublin Mayo colours were evident everywhere along the way. Our "exiles" in Meath and Westmeath nailed their colours to the garden gate, too, and the teams received a rapturous reception from an approximate 50,000 crowd in Croke Park.

By general consensus our Minors were given only an outside chance against Meath, but they left their Connacht form behind and won by 2-12 to 2-8. The Mayo support was, therefore, in fine voice when the Seniors came out to do battle with Dublin. With the Hill in similar form all the ingredients for a memorable occasion were there — and a memorable occasion it turned out to be, with Croke Park debutant Noel Durcan finding the Dublin net with his very first kick. Dublin, however, recovered their poise quickly and went ahead with the breeze at their backs and while Mayo fought with great spirit a Dublin goal in the very last minute before half time left them with an uphill battle on their hands. Those who were there will long remember how near Mayo came to climbing the mountain in the second half as T. J. Kilgallon knocked over the equalising point with a minute or so left for play and the Dublin rearguard with its back to the wall. It ended at 1-13 each and Mayo had regained much of its pride.

A little over 20,000 people attended the drawn semi-final between Kerry and Monaghan — the first time both semi-finals were drawn since 1955 — but twice that number turned up for the replay.

Central Council decided to make the Dublin v. Mayo semi-final replay an all-ticket affair sensing the upsurge in interest throughout the country, generally. In Mayo, however, enthusiasm knew no bounds. On the Thursday before the game £77,000 worth of tickets were sold in the county within a period of 7 hours. Every coach in the county was booked and coaches had to be brought in from neighbouring counties. Over 700 people travelled by train from Castlebar alone, and extra trains had to be provided from Ballina, Westport and Claremorris. I doubt



if any other rural county brought as big a following to Croke Park on semi-final day as nearly 13,000 tickets were sold in the county.

Mayo were not victorious on the day, but they put up a very creditable show and showed that the West was still awake. The players were very disappointed but very few supporters expressed disappointment.

"They gave us a memorable year" was the phrase most often heard in the week that followed, and any of them who could get tickets were back in Croke Park on Final Day to see the Mayo Minors upset the odds once again and bring a sixth Minor title to the county with a hard-earned victory over Cork.

WARM WELCOME

And what a wonderful welcome those Minors received on their return to Mayo after the final. The warmth with which they were received was, I think, not only a reflection of the county's gratitude to them, but also a reflection of the county's pride in the achievements of the Senior and Under-21 teams also.

UNDER-21s NOT FAR AWAY

The Under-21 squad, too, contributed their share to our 1985 pleasures. Indeed, they had only themselves to blame when Derry equalised in the last minute of the semi-final at Carrick-on-Shannon. The replay at Enniskillen was just as close with victory going to Derry in the end by 3-9 to 3-6.

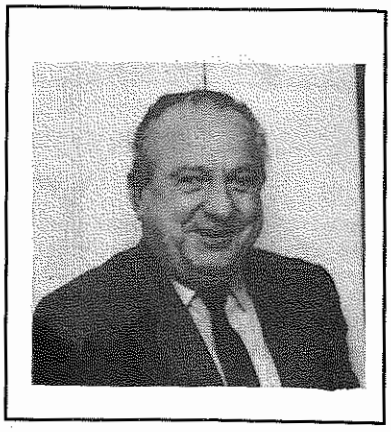
Yes, it was a memorable year for Mayo in many ways and now that it's nearly over let us say — Well done, lads — keep it up!



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Paddy Muldoon ... Leading By Example



Profile by Geraldine Collins

PADDY MULDOON is a very ordinary man and proud of the fact. He does not create or encourage controversies and prefers to "work things out" or compromise if minor hiccups do arise. He likes plain sailing and gets somewhat ruffled if the boat is rocked. He would never, of course, be the cause of the disturbance himself.

He has not broken any records in his time or amassed a wealth of trophies, medals or awards. And now at 44 years of age he does not expect to change that pattern. Nor does he want to. He was never a headline seeker and has no ambitions to become one. But in his own quiet unassuming manner he remains after five years in office, a popular and well-regarded Chairman of the County Board. It is perhaps his very ordinariness which appeals to the grassroots of the GAA in Mayo. He is not exactly "one of the boys" but he has the common touch.

DEMANDING JOB

He takes pride in the fact that he is Chairman of the Mayo GAA Board and consideres it an honour. It is a demanding job that requires solid commitment which he gives without question. His involvement with the GAA began, as it does for most, as a youngster who played football. He proudly tells of wearing the green and red as a County Mayo minor and while he will not rate with the "greats" of footballers who excelled on the field of play, he has in other areas given unbroken service to the county over the past quarter of a century.

In recalling his playing days he is clearly chuffed in talking of medals he collected with his first club, Islandeady, and West Mayo back in 1959 and '60. After that and up to the present day his club was and is Westport.

He is no stranger to the position of "chair" in that he held the post for the Mayo Minor Board during the memorable 1970-'80 decade. During that time he also had the dual role of senior and minor selector. All of which gave him the edge on experience to successfully find himself where he is today.

OFF THE FAGS

About the most extraordinary thing he has achieved over the past year is giving up cigarettes. It is a personal triumph and one which contrary to his nature, he boasts of. He feels it has improved his image, not to mention his health and he is glad that the cloud, literally, under which he found himself for years, has now lifted. The Chairman was practically a chain smoker, a habit which he feels was contradictory for the "boss" of a sporting organisation. The camera always caught him, he says, with a cigarette in his mouth. But he adds that even if a photographer wanted to be kind, it was seldom he wasn't puffing.

"I was aware of the bad image it was creating apart altogether from health considerations," he says, and then adds that he is "dying for a smoke". He kicked the habit on New Year's Day last which was no mean feat for a 60 to 100 a day man.

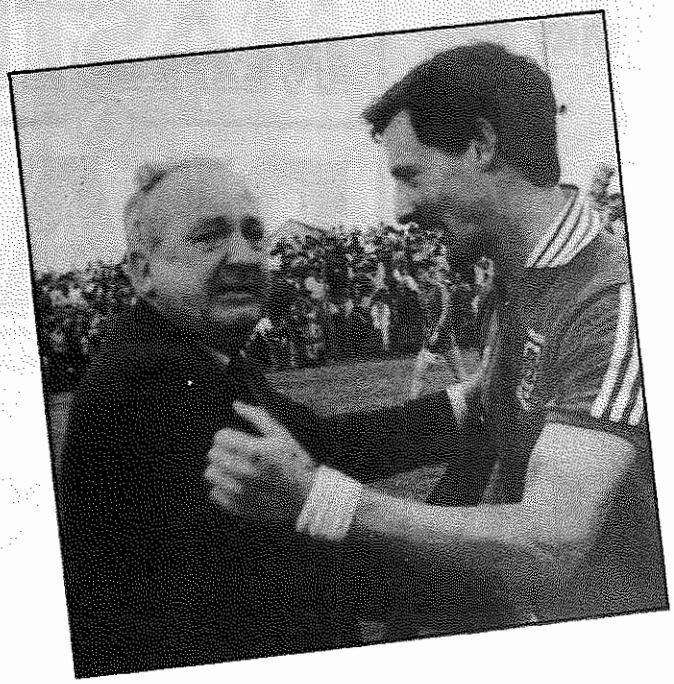
It was a tough year to be off the cigarettes. Mayo were doing well, the pressure was on, and when it eased the inclination was towards celebration. Either way he lost out since he does not imbibe alcoholic beverages. But for all that the clean cut image better befits the sartorial neatness of the Chairman.

THRIVING BUSINESS

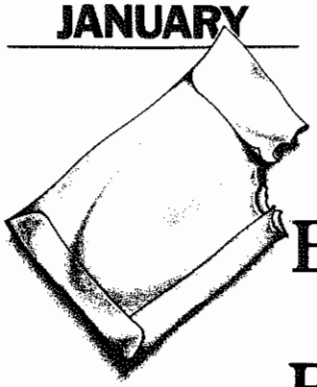
He turns his attention to the GAA in the context of Mayo and listening one could be forgiven for thinking he had no other concerns. He spends considerable time in the pursuit of GAA activities, several nights a week on occasions along with Sundays, sometimes Saturdays and evenings.

However, his singlemindedness about the GAA belies the fact that he manages to combine with that the responsibilities of family life and a thriving business. He says he is lucky to have an understanding wife and he endeavours whenever possible to include Judy and their two children, eleven-years-old Edward, and eight-year-old Sinead. "They opt to go along to matches rather than wait at home."

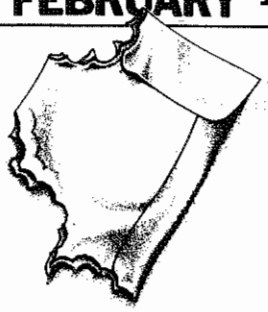
Trying to combine a domestic situation with the round-the-clock demands of sport is not easy. The GAA is almost a full-time occupation where sometimes family interests are



JANUARY



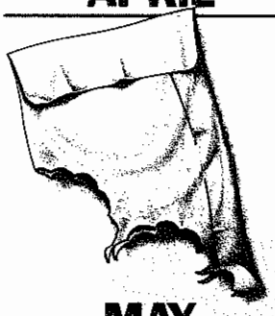
FEBRUARY



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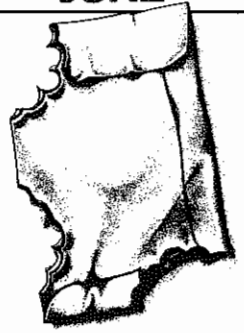
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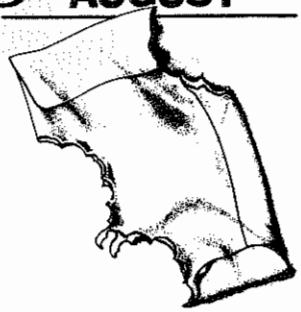
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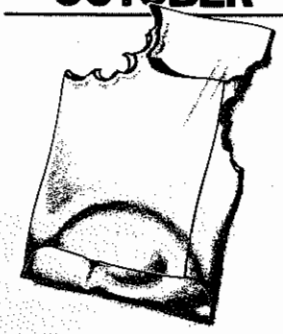
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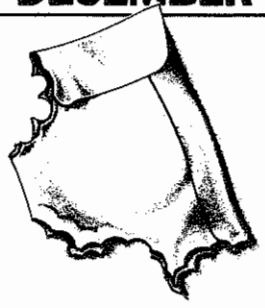
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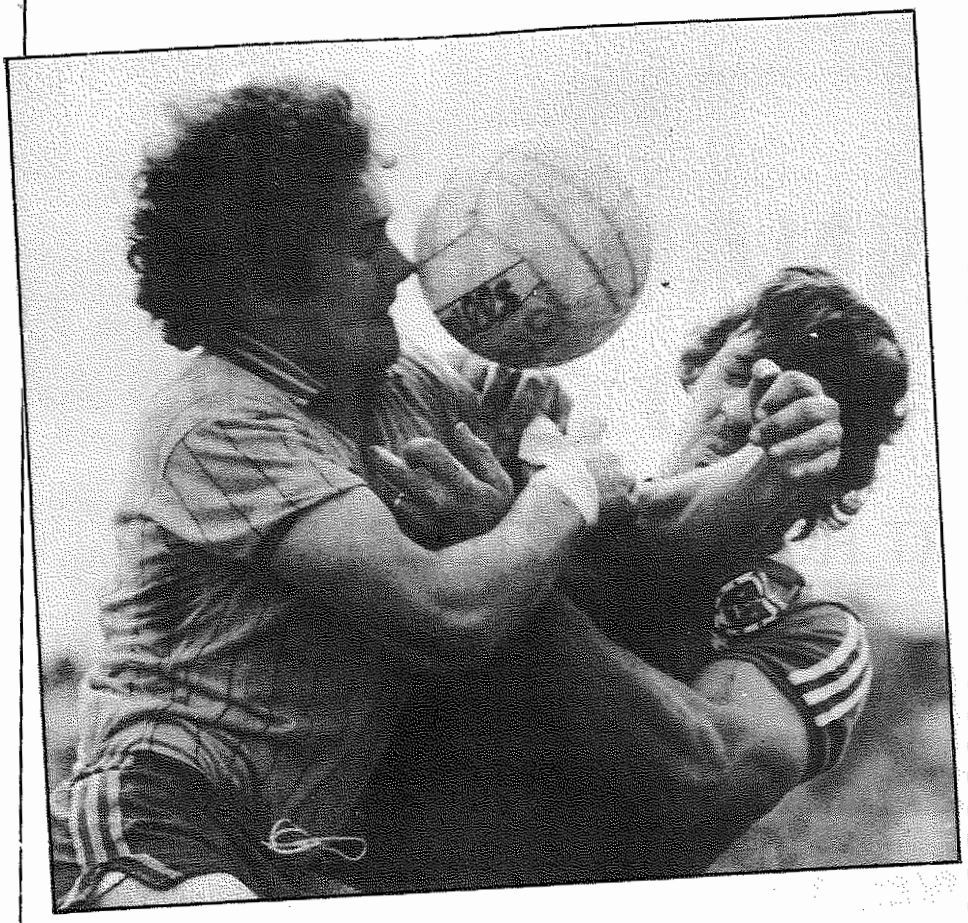


NOVEMBER



DECEMBER





sidelined in favour of yet another meeting, training session, game or function. He finds it regrettable but believes that since the Association has shown faith with him he has to give it his all. Part of that responsibility means he travels on average 20,000 miles a year in a bid to keep in touch with the grassroots which keep the association ticking over.

It is a measure of his ability that while never neglecting either the GAA or his family, his business interests continue to escalate. As Insurance Broker he has recently taken on a new dimension as local manager of a building society. That, too, is testament to his popularity.

He, himself, is dismissive of the difficulties involved in keeping family, business and his GAA interest running smoothly. He points out that the commitment he must give as Chairman is no greater than the dedication shown by any other official or player. It is vital for a voluntary organisation such as the GAA.

"If anyone involved cannot give a full commitment then they should make up their mind to resign. If an official, selector or player is not giving that or feels someone is not giving it then he will not stand idly by."

THANKLESS JOBS

But having said that he is adament that success on the field requires efficiency at administrative level. The workload gets heavier annually and he feels the need for a full-time officer becomes more apparent accordingly. He feels that the work of Secretaries, not alone at County Board level but at Divisional and club level, is often thankless and unseen. There are always the few who will carry the majority.

Regarding criticisms which may be levelled at the County Board he says he welcomes constructive criticism. "But," he adds, "the board is as good as the delegates put forward." He says the Board is viewed as having a conservative image and of being slow to change but he succintly comments "It has to be said it is working."

WORRIED ABOUT HURLING

He feels that sometimes the general public sees nothing beyond a senior team which represents the county in terms of the Association. But he emphasises the importance and concern with football at every grave and with hurling, the poor relation in the context of Mayo.

The Chairman worries about the hurling situation. It is the first official game of the GAA but in Mayo it is confined to just two clubs. That is an unhealthy situation despite the dedicated people who are endeavouring to keep it alive. He feels that perhaps if there was more encouragment to get school children playing hurling there might be some hope.

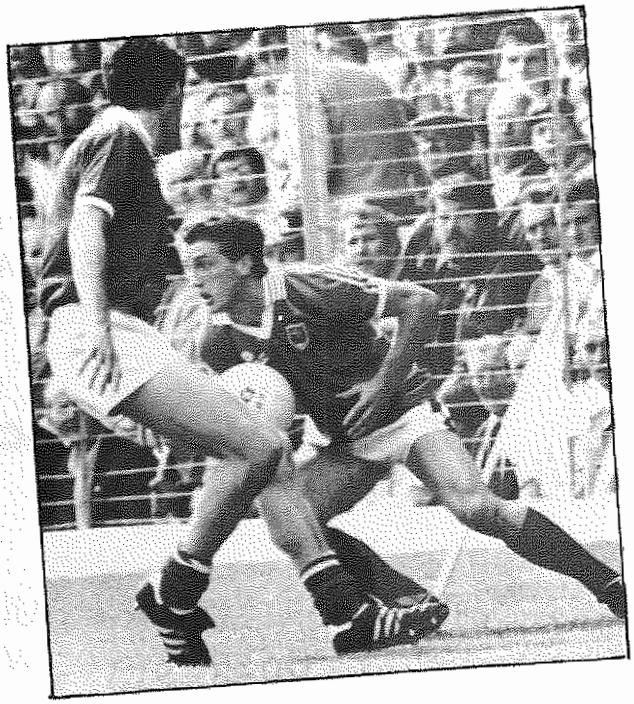
After a decade of direct involvement with the Minor Board he is still passionately concerned that the importance of underage and minor football is not taken for granted.

He, too, like so many who have followed Mayo football over the years, muses on the "disappearance" of numerous excellent minor players. He points out that a suggestion was made at some stage that there was sufficient material for a book under the heading, "Where Have All The Minors Gone."

"We have had more than our share of first-rate minors and a proud record of victories at that level. But the county does not seem to have reaped the rewards."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL FACTOR

Even today, he ventures with a quiet acceptance, that a lot of the "loss" has to do with geographical factors. Young



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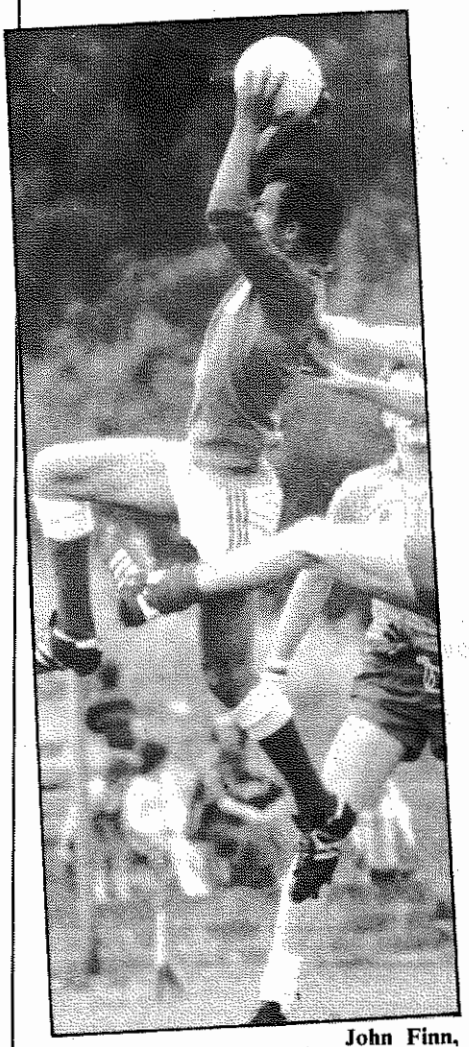
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John Finn,

lads drift away from home for work or education and consequently drift out of Mayo football while others he believes do not have the commitment when they reach their early twenties and give of their time, and all it entails, to county football. "For some, one All-Ireland medal is enough and they don't have the drive to push themselves beyond that."

Regarding football in general he reaches across the ocean to recommend a formula for injecting greater enthusiasm and pride into county teams. He says that if players lining out at home could see how eagerly their fellow county men in America await results and follow championship campaigns, they would take a second look at their own pride in their performance.

G.A.A. IN U.S.A.

On a visit to the States, he was overwhelmed by the depth of feeling that Mayo emigrants had for county games at home. The farther away the nearer in spirit. "They wait expectantly for the local papers out there and read and re-read the contents of the sports columns. They have tremendous pride in their county and clubs." He believes that if players knew of the immense pleasure they were bringing to emigrants by playing a good game they would call on all their reserve to keep the pride of the club and county to the fore.

"Players oftentimes are so tied up in their game that they cannot imagine the pride they bring to Mayo people outside the county at championship time particularly the pride they bring to our emigrants. There is a very vibrant link there. The commitment I saw and the amount of time and effort invested in the games in America is just unbelievable."

He would urge Mayo people who get an opportunity to travel to America to look up their "local" club and see for themselves just how alive the Association is among emigrants.

Looking back on the years of his involvement with the Association to date he would nominate 1985, the year just past, as a very memorable one. He considers it one of the best years in his short lifetime (a twenty-five year involvement makes him only a "ladeen" in terms of GAA activity). The county took three provincial titles and impressed at the next stage at two levels.

"It was a good year. As it turned out we were in there with a great chance with all our teams and particularly in view of the fact that a lot had been predicted for them."

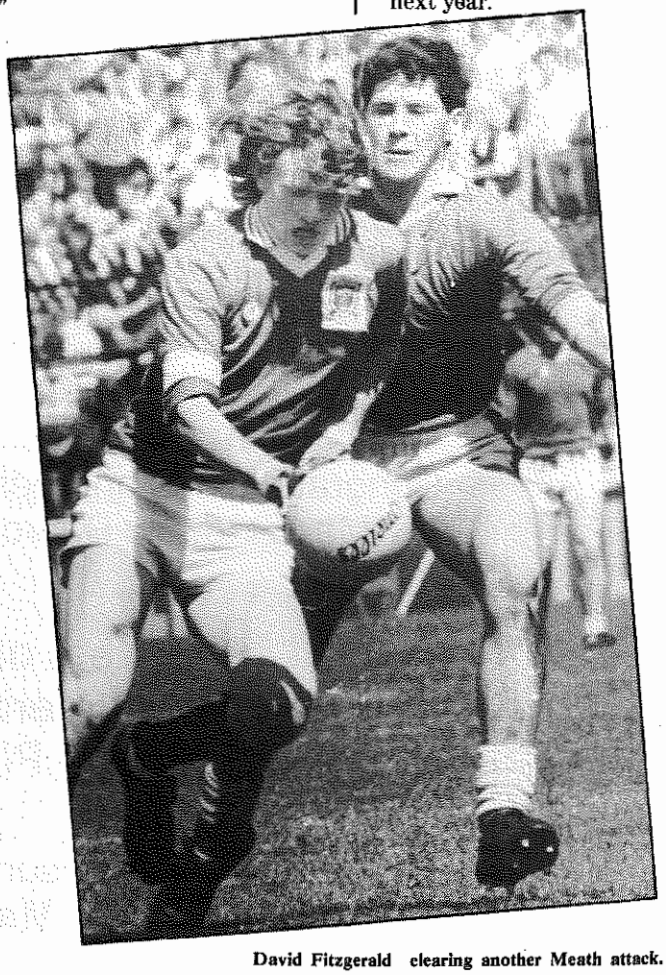
He points to the fact that it took a replay at both Under-21 and Senior level to knock out the county in the All-Ireland semi-finals as a sign that Mayo were on the upward trend. "It showed a new determination in the players."

TREMENDOUS GOODWILL

And while the teams were impressing on the field the Mayo supporters who had been gasping for a chance for years rowed in enthusiastically behind them. "There was a new spirit in the county this year. It was wonderful to see the Mayo people flocking to Croke Park and not only that but they turned up in hundreds at training sessions throughout the county.

"I think we have at the moment a tremendous goodwill in the county. It was reflected in the way that ordinary people commited themselves financially and dug deep in their pockets at church gates and at training sessions (as much as £400 was collected on nights from sometimes up to 600 supporters who went to training to encourage the players). The county showed that it was prepared to back and support any team that showed any semblance of success. That is a good omen for the future. It is a healthy and hopeful sign."

But ever cautious the Chairman warns against getting carried away on a wave of euphoria. "Whatever about the new spirit and hope we mustn't forget that we have to go back to the beginning again next year. It is a new campaign all over again. We cannot rest on the laurels we won this year or on the other successes we achieved. We have to put that behind us and work even harder still in order to be able to take that vital step further next year."



David Fitzgerald clearing another Meath attack.

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HURLING ROUND-UP:

Hurling . . . A Struggle, Yes, . . . But The Game Goes On

– BY MICHAEL COMMINS.

Tooreen may be a long way from places like Buffers Alley and Rower-Inishtioge, place-names that conjure up visions of sweet hurling on the plains of Wexford and Kilkenny. But the passion for the game of hurling can be just as strong in the East Mayo Village once the home of the best known dancehall in Ireland.

Hurling in Mayo is now synonomous with Tooreen. The Club has won the last eight Mayo senior titles on the trot. And there would appear to be no new challengers to de-throne the champions in the near future.

Mayo's current League campaign in Division 3 has, at the time of writing, been something of a surprise. Two wins over Carlow and Derry put them well up the League Table. They were denied an historic win over Kildare when the Lilywhites scored a last-minute goal. Tooreen players number thirteen on the present Mayo side with Castlebar's Dave Sinnott and Christy Conlon filling the other two places. That, in itself, tells its own story.

TOOREEN RULE ROOST

The Tooreen "Express" continued on its merry journey when they trounced Castlebar in the Senior Final. Score — Tooreen 7-17, Castlebar 1-5.

The 1985 final was little more than a formality. One-way traffic. Here was a fluency born from "togetherness", hewn from the soil and spirit of a Mayo village.

Castlebar found themselves hopelessly adrift . . . they were out of their depth . . . floundering as wave after wave of Tooreen pressure washed them onto the rocks.

Joe Henry and Johnny Cunnane, two of the finest hurlers in Mayo, had a field day. Cunnane scored 1-8 with Henry close behind on 1-6.

It was ironic that the best goal of the game was scored by Castlebar. Mayo goalie, Davie Sinnott, playing at full-forward in the County Final, scored a marvellous goal before the interval. He played well . . . and the only other Castlebar players to feature were Michael Killeen, Tom Kavanagh, Niall O'Shea and Leo Doherty.



Dr. Mick Loftus, President of the GAA, presenting the cup to John Joe Hoban, captain of the victorious Tooreen team.

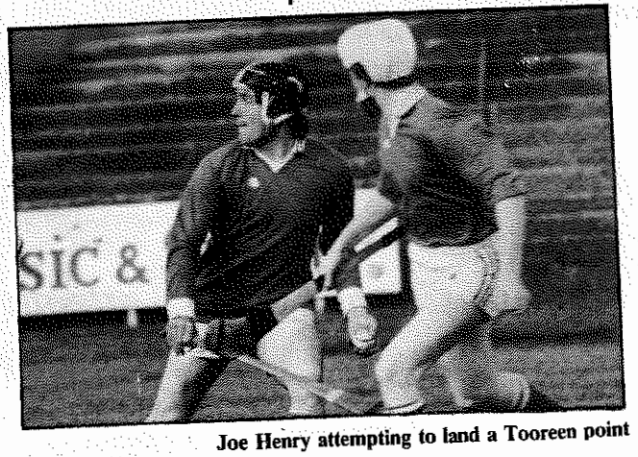
And in an era when referees come in for much criticism (and often deserved, too), Seamus Brennan from Galway handled the game in an exemplary manner.

Tooreen went on to defeat Tourlestrane in the Connacht Championship, but went under to Ballygar on a 3-7 to 1-7 scoreline in the semi-final.

MINOR GRADE

Claremorris and Castlebar are to contest the 1985 Minor Final. Both teams served up one of the finest games ever seen at minor level when they met in an earlier round at Garrymore. Claremorris won on a 4-8 to 2-7 scoreline.

Hero of the Claremorris victory was Kevin Beirne, who scored 3-7. Kevin is a brilliant young hurler and he also won an All-Ireland media with Mayo



Joe Henry attempting to land a Tooreen point

Gay, Carmel and staff of

The Beaten Path

wish to congratulate the Mayo G.A.A. Board on a marvellous year and especially the Minor, Under-21 and Senior teams on their successes in the Championship.

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Minor football team a few months ago playing at right full-back.

UNDER-16 . . . CLAREMORRIS TOPS

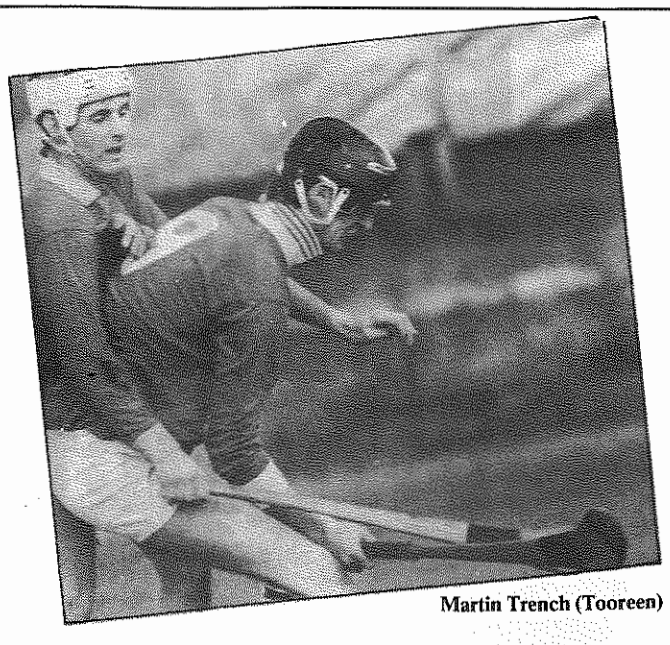
Claremorris and Castlebar were engaged in yet another "drama" at under-age level. The Under-16 Final went to a replay after a fiercely-contested game at Garrymore. But Claremorris learned most from the drawn game and came back to capture the title in style winning by 2-6 to 1-1. Mark Gibbs was instrumental in orchestrating this fine win. Padraig Maher and Michael Keady scored the goals, while Anthony Joyce and David Delaney
were much to the fore.
Seamus Devaney was Castlebar's most impressive player with the McSharry brothers, Kevin Lydon, Pat Waldron, Declan Kilkelly and Declan Fitzgerald also to the fore.
Claremorris were defeated by Tremane in the Connacht semi-final on a 1-4 to 1-2 scoreline. The game was played at Athleague and David Delaney was "Man of the Match".

UNDER-14 TOOREEN ON FORM

Tooreen won the Under-14 title when they edged out Castlebar. The home of hurling has had a rather lean few years at under-age level and this was a welcome title
from the point of view.

WESTPORT ON THE WAY UP

Certainly the most encouraging aspect to hurling in Mayo in Mayo has been the emergence of Westport as an up-and-coming force at under-age level. Over sixty young players are involved in the game in the seaside town and it's only a matter of time until they make the breakthrough.



Martin Trench (Tooreen)

DIVISION RESULTS

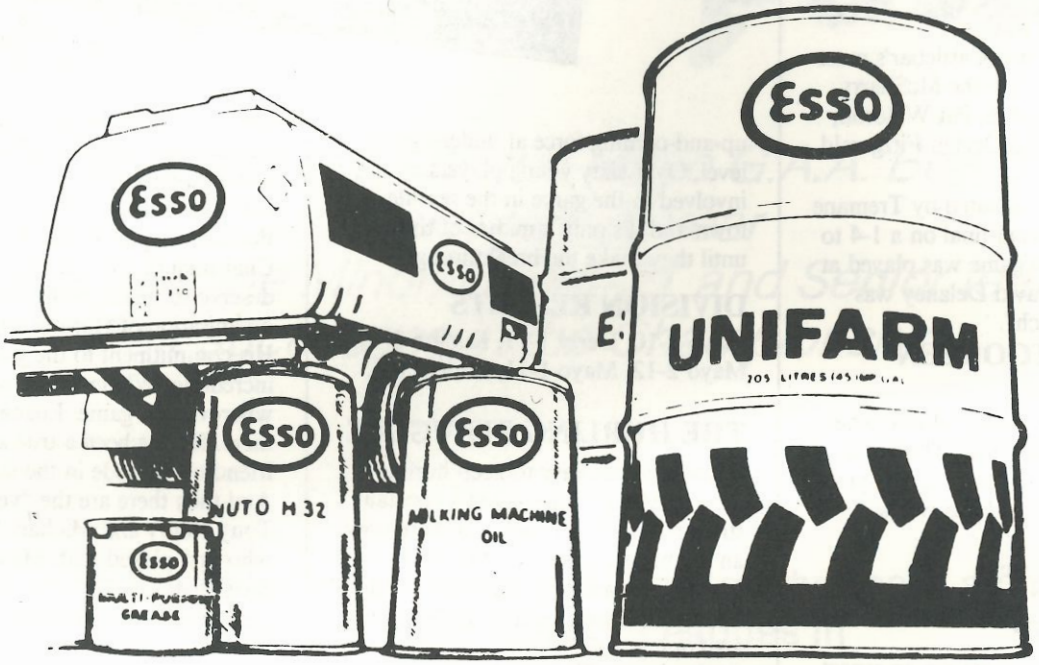
Mayo 2-10, Derry 1-11; Kildare 2-14, Mayo 2-12; Mayo 1-11, Carlow 0-8.

THE HURLING STRUGGLE

It has not been easy to keep hurling alive in Mayo. It has taken a constant struggle. Only in Tooreen is there now an established tradition. The other Clubs like Castlebar, Claremorris and Westport, have an uphill battle . . . but are coping well.
1985 was the first year in a long, long time that Ballinrobe Club failed to enter the Championship. Ballinrobe had a proud record in Mayo hurling and all associated with the game hope that they will be back again in 1986. Perhaps it's people like Eugene O'Shea, Chairman of the Hurling Board, that deserve so much credit for the organisation of Hurling within Mayo. His commitment to the game is incredible. Whatever the weather and wherever the game, Eugene will be there. He has been a true and loyal friend of the code in the last few years. And then there are the "veterans" like Tony Henry and Michael Nolan, men who first played with Mayo in the early 'sixties
and are still hurling away.
Hurling . . . a struggle, yes,
. . . but the game must go on. ●



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Summerhill, Summer, Colleges' Final and Croke Park

By

T. J. Kilgallon

WHEN I look back on 1985 and look at the year from a football sense there are two things that stand out quite clearly, one it was a busy year and, two, it was quite a successful year.

Along with club and county activities I was also involved with fellow county player Peter Ford in the management and training of the Summerhill College team which reached the All-Ireland Colleges' final for the first time and failed narrowly to Coloiste Christ Rí, of Cork City. That assignment took up most of my spare time in the early part of the year but I must say that I enjoyed every minute of it and it also gave me some thrilling moments which will always last in my memories.

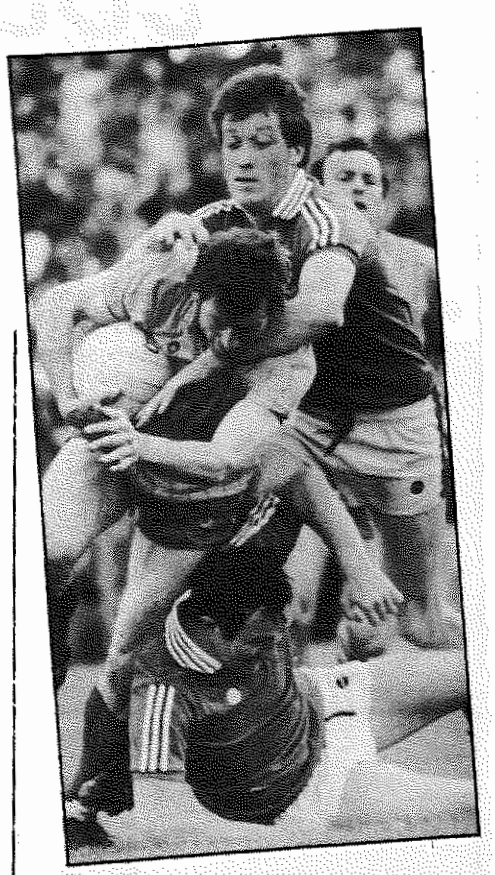
Summerhill's achievement may seem quite remarkable to some people but when one considers the amount of time and effort given by the panel of players in question, then their results became more understandable. Returning after the Christmas break we immediately sat down and organised a training programme. At that stage we had topped the table in the Northern section of the league and had qualified for the Connacht semi-final. This was our third successive year qualifying for the semi-final. On the two previous occasions we had failed miserably at the semi-final stage. These past failures proved a blessing in disguise for it made everybody concerned more determined to make amends for past failures. The commitment in training was very encouraging and wholehearted and it helped to build up a fantastic team spirit and loyalty to each other. Training progressed through all types of weather. Peter and I tried to vary the training as much as possible, from gym and circuit training early on in the campaign, to concentrating on the different skills of the game, to general physical fitness to challenge games.



So by the time the Connacht semi-final came around on March 3rd, we felt we were well prepared. at the same time we realised we were meeting a Roscommon CBS fifteen who were quite promising all year and were very keen and hungry. After dominating the game early on we were relieved at the finish to win by the narrowest of margins, 2-7 to 3-3. We realised that much work had to be done, especially with our defence, but we also knew that at long last we had broken the barrier that stood in our way.

One other major asset we had was that our players showed little regard for reputations. That in itself helps to explain much of the story of the Connacht final. Here Summerhill met St. Jarlath's — the Kerry of Colleges' football and the reigning All-Ireland champions. Showing no nerves Summerhill settled very quickly and raced into a two goal lead after fifteen minutes. Jarlath's dominated much of the second half but our defence, having tightened up considerably, held firm and Summerhill collected their first Connacht title in ten years by 3-4 to 1-5.

When the euphoria died down after a few days it was very much back to business again. Fellas soon realised that winning a Connacht title was not enough in itself. Ahead lay a new challenge of trying to qualify for the All-Ireland final for the first time ever. For, on the five previous occasions that Summerhill had won the Connacht title, they had failed each time at the semi-final stage. Players confidence remained high and training continued right through the Easter holidays. By this stage Peter and I had become quite attached to the team. It was now April and Mayo had also commenced training for the Connacht



championship. Practically every evening of the week was taken up with football practice. Peter, Eugene McHale and I made the journey to Castlebar every Tuesday and Thursday for county training and the other evenings were designated to the college team. Having a dual role in relation to the college team and the county training proved complementary. We were determined not to miss any training session with Mayo because, perhaps for the first time we now realised what it meant for a team management to have all the members of a squad present for training. We were also able to get some training in along with the school squad and that really helped us when it came to the hard championship training with Mayo. But, above all, we were enjoying the experience — enjoying working with the school squad and enjoying the varied programme schedule which Billy Fitzpatrick, the team trainer, and Liam O'Neill, the team manager, were putting us through.

On April 21st Summerhill won the All-Ireland Colleges' semi-final against the Leinster champions,

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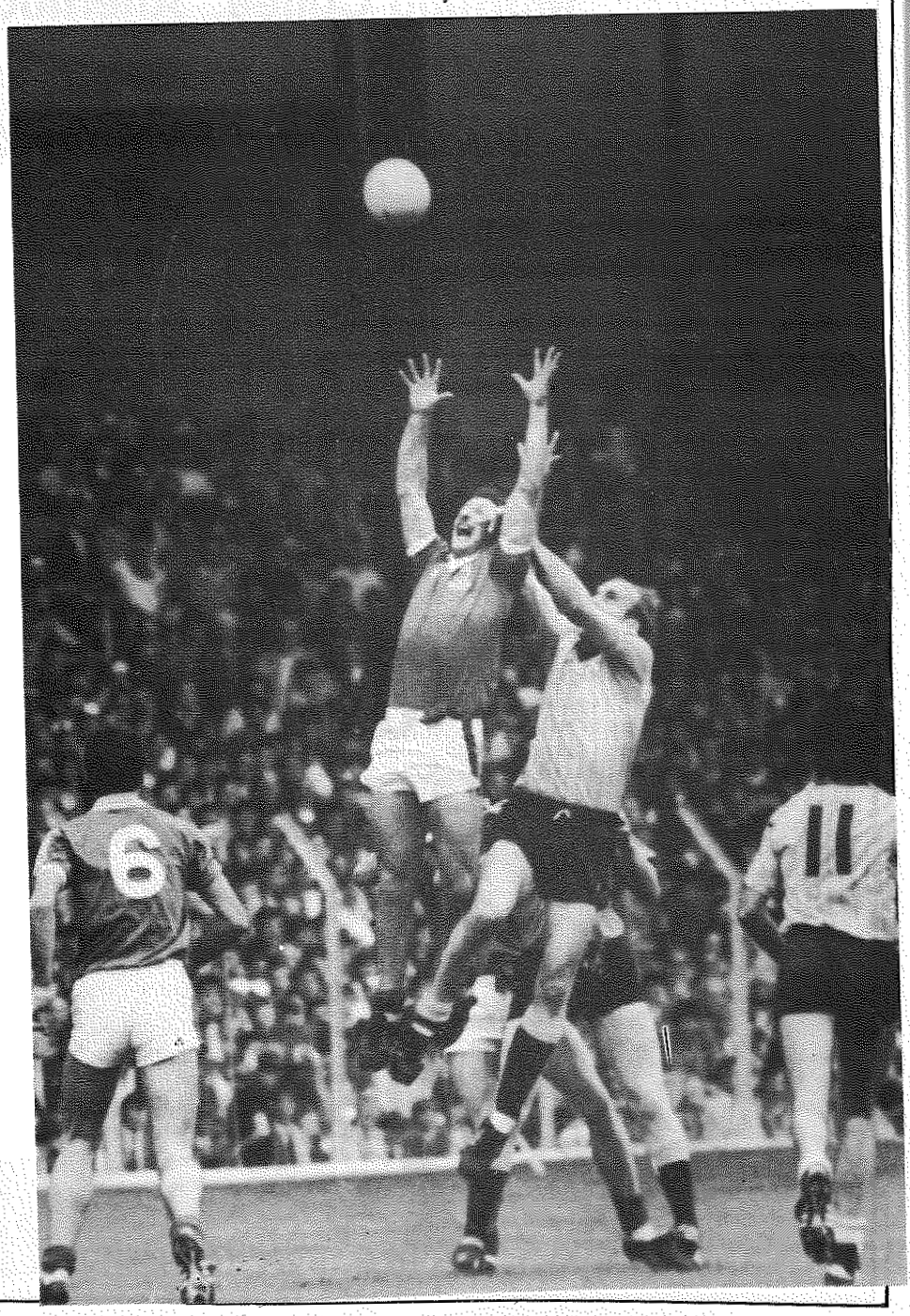
Dundalk CBS, by 1-10 to 0-8. We had cleared another obstacle and now looked forward to the final. Our opponents would be Colaiste Christ Rí, of Cork, who have become a strong force in colleges football in recent years. By this stage our championship run had become a major talking point in Sligo football and our support for the final in Portlaois, eventhough the game was televised live, was unprecedented. The game itself, before a thrilling atmosphere, proved to be of a high standard. Alas we failed narrowly to win and lost to a late goal by 1-9 to 0-9. It had been a hectic few months with over fifty training sessions for the college team alone, but it also had been a most rewarding and enjoyable period. After the final defeat all one could wish for was to get the opportunity again to be involved in an All-Ireland Colleges' final and, perhaps, take the title home. Because in the final analysis there are very few Gaelic football sporting occasions that surpass a Colleges' final.

After the college season had finished we now looked forward to the forthcoming Connacht championship with Mayo. The objective here was to win the Connacht title. In relation to achieving this objective our determination knew no bounds. For many of the panel had been involved in the previous three Connacht finals, all of which we had lost. We realised that we were facing a do or die situation regardless of who we were to play. Eventhough we were not given much of a chance by many of our supporters, we knew ourselves as a group of players that we could achieve our aim. Our training had gone very smoothly since March and excellent commitment was exerted by everyone concerned. The management committee of Liam O'Neill, Billy Fitzpatrick, Seamus Gallagher and Brian McDonald left no stones unturned in having the panel organised and properly prepared for the championship. In our first match against Leitrim in Carrick-on-Shannon we eventually got our act together and won comfortably in the end by 2-11 to 0-5. Numerous doubts remained and many people travelled to Roscommon for the Connacht final more in hope than in confidence. On the day everything went right for us and we won comfortably by 2-11 to 0-8.

That victory gave new belief to many loyal Mayo supporters. Interest in the county and eslewhere among Mayo people was quite unbelievable. Players realised and appreciated this support. Never before had any of the panel witnessed hundreds turning up for our training sessions in Ballina and elsewhere. Everywhere one went, one was faced with people who wanted to discuss football. The bad Summer of '85 was clearly pushed into the background temporarily at least.

On August 18th we faced Dublin in the All-Ireland semi-final. After a good start we faded and Dublin dominated most of the first half. But we were more resigned to the fact that they would be no surrender and gradually we clawed our way back into the game to snatch an equaliser in the dying moments. Many people seemed quite content with a draw but we were determined to come back and win the replay. That we failed to do three weeks later, mainly due to some of our inadequancies and lapses in concentration rather than Dublin's brilliance. And so ended our championship run. It had been a reasonably successful campaign. Praise for that must go to our management and panel of players who put in such an effort since we started training collectively in early March. In all we trained together on over seventy occasions and most players trained with their clubs and on their own as well. That is an example of the kind of effort that is required if one is to achieve his objective in modern-day football.

1985 has been a overwhelming year for Mayo football. Followers have a new faith in the team's future. Hopefully the years ahead will be even more prosperous. Everybody concerned realises that this will only occur with even more effort and commitment. We now have set a new standard for ourselves and more objectives lie ahead, whether they will be realised or not will only be answered in time.



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A View From The Corner

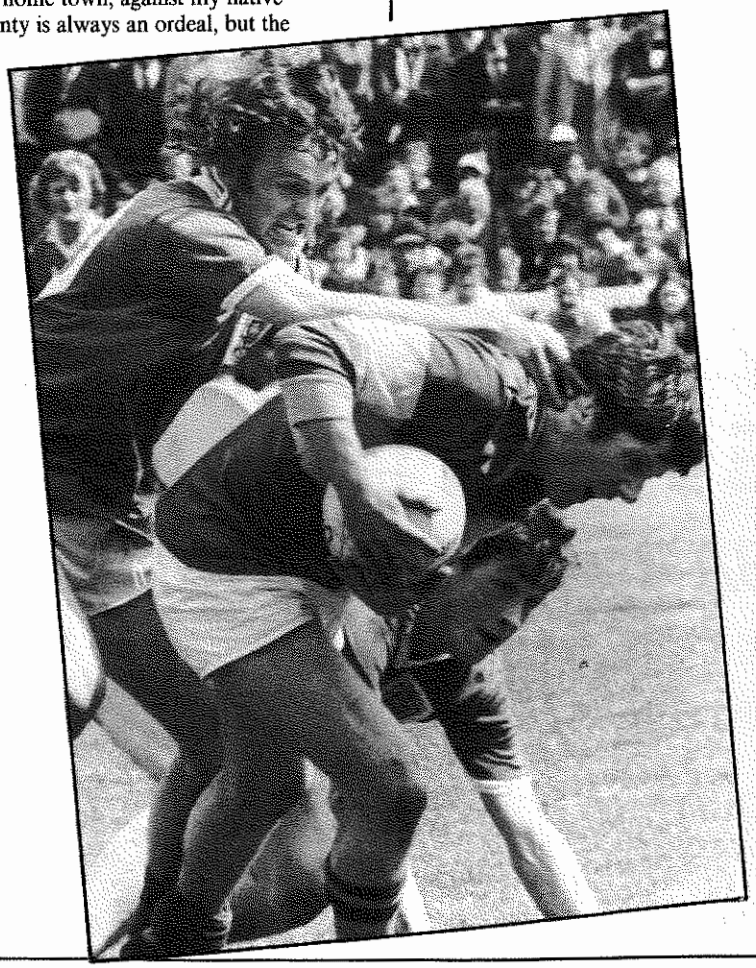
– BY MARTIN CARNEY

IN early March Liam O'Neill remarked on a performance by Kieran Keeney in an open draw match between Donegal and Cork. Keeney, a recognised forward, who had given outstanding service to Donegal for more than a decade, performed with aplomb as a corner-back in that game. In retrospect, this display by Keeney may have fertilised the idea in Liam's mind that I could revert to a defensive position and fulfil a role that he had in mind.

Two weeks later prior to a weekend series of games against Donegal and Fermanagh, the Boss told me of his intention to experiment by playing me at corner-back in one of the games. I was dumbfounded. Already I had harboured doubts about my availability for the games due to my wife's pregnancy, but on learing this news I resolved that there wasn't any way I could travel. Playing in Ballyshannon, my home town, against my native county is always an ordeal, but the thoughts of making a fool of myself in an unaccustomed position didn't appeal. Anyhow, domestic responsibilities assumed more importance and so I wasn't in the party that travelled to Bundoran.

MAN-TO-MAN MARKING

The training grind continued through April. Gruelling two-hour sessions, twice a week, in Castlebar, strengthened limbs, improved endurance and developed the confidence of the team. Repeatedly in the nightly ten-a-side games I was asked to play in the defence. I tried hard to impress but found man-to-man marking onerous and strange. Perhaps I was suffering from self-delusion, but I still considered I had something to offer as a forward. After all, I reasoned, I had played adequately in four out of five of our League games. I felt I was reasonably accurate if given an opportunity and as I had been clear of the dreaded hamstring injury for two years I felt healthy enough to do myself and the team justice in the attack.



BACKS WERE SOLID

May was unseasonably wet and cold. My uncertainty increased when I wasn't chosen for the Phil Gannon Memorial game, in Castlerea, in the middle of the month. That Sunday evening I was impressed by the character of the team and the manner in which a narrow victory was achieved. I began to dread the thought of another Summer bench and wishing to be in there playing with the team. The backs that night were solid and with Sean Lowry excelling at full-forward the team seemed to have taken shape.

THE NARROW-BONED FRIESIAN

The June Weekend gave us a tempting taste of Summer. The scorching sun raised our hopes for a prolonged spell of good weather. Dublin were our opposition in Westport, and I eventually got a chance to claim a position on the Championship team. Nevertheless, my selection as a corner-back surprised me. I hadn't any experience of the position. I thought of the archetypal corner-back; big men; rippling muscles; strong tacklers and tight markers. Visions of Jimmy Deenihan, Tom O'Hare, Paud O'Shea and Enda Colleran, flitted through my mind. I was in total contrast to these players. Johnny Monaghan had once compared me, in jest, to a "narrow-boned friesian", referring to my lack of weight, and when Joe McNally approached me at the commencement of the game I began to fear the worst. To say that he was bulky would be an under-statement, so my battle plan was simple. Get to the ball first and reduce the number of occasions where I'd have to tackle him. We won the game by a point and I felt a sense of achievement in holding my man scoreless. My career as a corner-back had begun.

HARD-RUNNING FOOTBALL

All along, perhaps, I had been too diffident in assessing my possibilities of success at corner-back. Defensive football wasn't totally new to me. I had played most of the 1974 Ulster Final drawn match against Down, at centre half-back, with some degree of success. Later that year, as Captain of U.C.G., I played the entire University League and the Sigerson Cup competition at number six. In fact, in a previous Singerson in 1972 I played at right half-back against U.C.C. in the final. We were beaten by a Moss Keane, Paud and Brendan Lynch - inspired side but, nevertheless, I enjoyed the freedom to attack that the new position offered me. The hard-running football style of the mid-'70s had yet to evolve and many forwards in the early years of that decade didn't bother to follow a defender who went attacking. Championship was just three weeks away. We followed up the Westport game with a challenge against Cork in Parke. Whatever confidence the Dublin game had engendened ebbed somewhat

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with the six-point defeat against an under-strength Cork team. The knives were out. Scalps, scapegoats, heads and tails were sought by some of the media. Critcism is always hurtful. At times I saw it damage the morale of individuals and undermine the confidence of the team. We sometimes regard sports journlists as people with scant knowledge and little feel for the game but in all objectivity we deserved a pasting after this game.

ALAMO UNDER SIEGE

The team that faced Leitrim in Carrick felt under extreme pressure. They are always a difficult team to beat. Everyone in Mayo expects a victory over Leitrim. If that victory is marginal then you sign the team's obituary, whereas if the winning margin is decisive the usual quip is that you **only** beat Leitrim. The first half of that game was the hardest I experienced all Summer. At times our half resembled the Alamo it was under seige so much. Three points all at half time. I slumped into the dressingroom at half-time, winded, exhausted, sore and fearful of what was yet to come. Peter Forde saved me. As a man well versed in combat of another kind he felt that Leitrim had thrown all they could at us in the half and had nothing in reserve. How right he was. A fine second-half performance by Padden and Kilgallon, ably-supported by some great scores by Henry Gavin, saw us notch up a decisive victory. Relief was the dominant emotion among the players as we assembled afterwards in the County Hotel. We were happy with the win, but the manner of victory still hadn't been of the quality that gave promise of something better.

My record in Connacht Finals was anything but impressive. As the Yanks say a record of one and five isn't something to leave one feeling sanguine about the outcome of number seven. I travelled to Tuam to see the Roscommon / Galway replay and as a detached observer enjoyed the excitement and quality of the game. The result disappointed me. Most of the team wanted to play Galway. The previous year's defeat was something that we wished to avenge and the bonus of a Connacht Final, in Castlebar, is always worth a few scores to us.

WEMBLEY ICE RINK

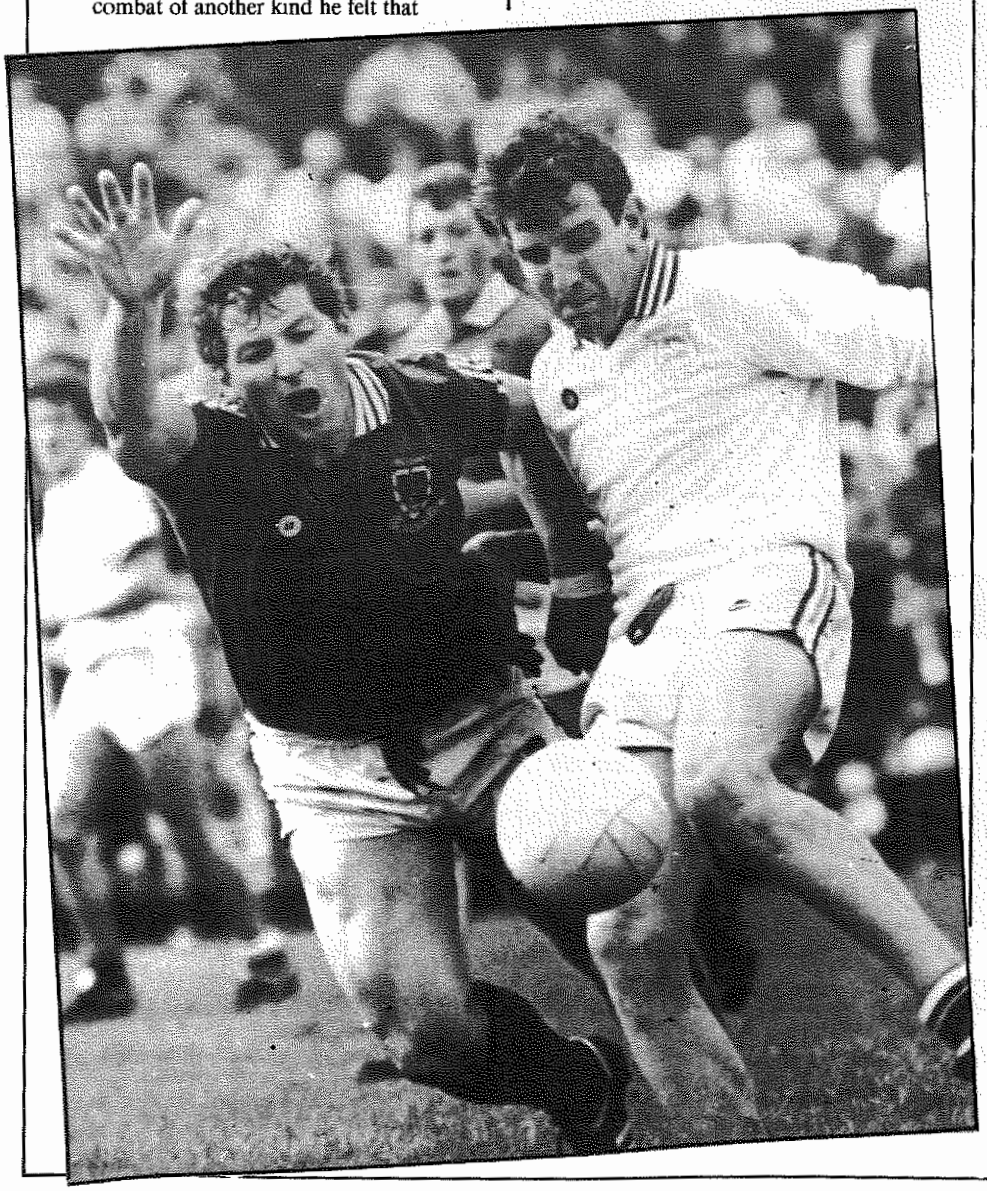
As Billy Fitzpatrick later remarked he sensed a "savage determination" in our approach to training for the final. The solitude and beauty of our training ground in Balla stood out in stark contrast to the frenzied efforts of the team in training. Liam saw to our skill requirements; Billy drove us harder; Brian hectored, teased and cajoled, and Seamus organised our extra training requirements.

We met in Carramore House, on the outskirts of Roscommon, at one o'clock on the day of the game. The attitude was good. Players were relaxed and determined. I was the exception. My poor stomach regurgitated the paltry breakfast eaten earlier. Sean Lowry's presence reassured and relaxed me. Henry Gavin and I watched fifteen minutes of the Minor match. Hyde Park resembled Wembley Ice Rink. A heavy shower created conditions where players skated, slipped and lost balance. Back in the dressingroom many of us adjusted the length of the stud we were to wear. Our early arrival on the pitch meant that by throw-in time we had absorbed the atmosphere and lost the pre-match nerves. Roscommon conceded wind-advantage on winning the toss and an excellent attacking display meant that by half time we were virtually assured of victory. I spent the first twenty minutes cagily marking Eamonn McManus without ever getting a kick at the ball. On one occasion I had to cover back most of the pitch to get in a tackle which resulted in my getting a free-out. I knew after this incident that the gods were on our side because, in fairness, I had been the transgressor. Eamonn had every right to feel aggrieved.

Paul Early's near-miss at the commencement of the second half deprived Roscommon of the platform they needed to cut back our lead. At the full-time whistle I felt numb rather than elated. Peter Forde shared my sentiment. Perhaps the absence of competitive bite in the last twenty minutes contributed to the sense of anti-climax. Dermot Flanagan's display in the full-back line was such that neither of his partners there had much to do.

IN THE STATES

I spent the next two weeks in the States with my Club team, Castlebar Mitchels. It was a pleasure to train there with sun on one's back. Much of the pressure for the All-Ireland semi-final escaped me. All of the team wanted to play the Dubs in Championship football. Personally, I envied teams who had the pleasure of playing in front of **"The Hill"**. Atmosphere can enhance the performance of a team. I knew that with our supporters trying to out-shout the Dubs we were due a gala occasion. I didn't feel the same tension before the semi-finals as I had previously experienced in the Championship. This was due, in part, to the team staying together in Dun Laoghaire on the night before the game. Players mixed freely and no-one was isolated enough to allow pre-match nerves upset him.



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DECIBLE BURSTING SOUND

Running onto Croke Park in the drawn game was the greatest highlight I ever experienced in football. The sea of colour, decible bursting sound and the sheer excitement will remain a life-long memory. The noise was overwhelming. In our earlier games verbal communication on the field had saved many potentially damaging situations. Here it was impossible. Nevertheless, the sound emanating from the jaws of the Hogan Stand was an inspiration in itself. The first-minute goal by Noel Durcan was just the start we needed, and as the game progressed Dublin started to score freely, but their superiority didn't worry me. Our goal provided us with a marvellous cushion and their six-point interval lead wasn't unsurmountable due to the wind's strength.

In truth, Dublin should have buried us just after the interval. We seemed lathargic, incapable of mounting a sustained effort. I started to worry, but felt confident that if we got scores we could claw our way back. Great character emerged in our team during the last twenty minutes of the game. We nibbled back a point or two, doubt was replaced by hope and, finally, belief. The old virtues of toil and effort were rewarded with T. J.'s last-minute point. We had participated in a game where much was learned.

SENSE OF DISAPPOINTMENT

My sense of disappointment was acute after the game. I felt that the impetus of the last twenty minutes should have ensured victory. There wasn't any consolation in the fact that we had mounted a wonderful comeback. The "Big Apple" loomed large and we didn't pick it.

Officially, there were 23,000 extra in the attendance for the replay. Personally, I thought there were fewer. In contrast to the drawn game, where the Hogan Stand was an exclusive Mayo enclave, in the replay the support seemed more scattered and not as vociferous.

PRESSURE TOO FURIOUS

Our defence hadn't much to do in the first half. Padden and Kilgallon saw to that. The inter-switching of the Dublin forwards wasn't as indiscriminate as it had been in the drawn encounter. Legs felt strong, the body was relaxed and I was confident that our half-time lead would be extended and maintained. Liam's frantic interval exhortation was ringing loudly in my ear as the second half begun. I had moved out to mark Kieran Duff in the half-back line. Our pressure was intense but maybe too furious. Frank Noone sailed forward and scored a grand point. Then the unthinkable happened. Willie Joe fumbled; Flano mis-kicked; I "lost" Duff in the race goalwards and in the next instant the onion bag bulged. Peter, Dermot, Frankie and the two Johnnies encouraged one another. Keep plugging, don't panic! Mullins scored a slow-motion point. Five minutes later my hamstring snapped. I didn't see Brogan's goal. I limped ashore to be replaced by Henry Gavin!

The result was a dreadful disappointment. Was there ever a team with our territorial possession that squandered so much? Whatever the outcome, it would have been a wonderful experience to have contested an All-Ireland final. It would have consummated a magnificent Summer's football.

GRATEFUL

On a personal level the campaign had given me a new and refreshing start in football. The beauty about defending, I found, was that you didn't depend on others to play you into a game. I found that the degree of concentration needed was greater than that required in the forward line. I am grateful to the team management for choosing me at a time when many people had written me off. I'd also like to convey my gratitude to my team-mates, especially my fellow-defenders, for contributing to the enjoyment of playing. The level of support we received exceeded all my previous experience and I hope that next year we can go a step further and, perhaps, capture the elusive "Sam".

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1985 . . . A Rags To Riches Year For Mayo Minors

– BY IVAN NEILL

WHEN Mick Burke took over the Management of the Mayo Minor Football team, in March, there were many who said that he was as well trying to knock down a wall with his head, as the young talent was not around it was claimed. But as time went by support for the young heroes gradually grew in massive numbers and this volume of support was reflected in Croke Park, on September 22nd, the day the Burke-managed / Martin Connolly-trained unlikely heroes won the admiration of everyone for their tremendous battling qualities and "never-say-die" attitude.

There were many others, too, who even asked the question — "Who is Mick Burke?" — when it was announced that he was to be the new Minor Team Manager. Not many people were aware of the fact that it was the Kilmeena native Vocational School Teacher, who mapped out the road to All-Ireland glory for the Mayo Vocational Schools' team in 1982, defeating no less a side than the "Bomber" Liston-trained Kerry team in the final, at Killarney. Mick, of course, is not a man who seeks headlines in newspapers, instead, he prefers to see his successful teams getting all the recognition they deserve. "They are the ones who have to do it when the day arrives," he often said.

He used the Connacht Minor League as his testing ground for players and, fair play to him, he gave a lot of players an opportunity to prove themselves. The team met with more defeats in the League than victories. Two of those set-backs were against Sligo and Galway, the same two counties Mayo defeated in the Connacht Championship.

True, Mayo were put through many moments of panic in the first game and in the replay against Sligo in the Championship before qualifying for the final against Galway. The replay at Castlebar will, for me anyway, always remain a game of games, as the Mayo youngsters were rocked by five goals — four of them in the first half — before emerging victorious.

The Team Manager is a great one for doing "homework" between games. Both Sligo and Galway were confident of beating Mayo in the Championship after the drubbing they handed out to Mayo in the League during April and May. Between the League and the Championship, Mick Burke was doing his homework and this was an important factor which the opposition apparently did not take into account. The Minors made hard work of it in beating Galway in the Connacht Final and had only two points to spare at the end of a low-scoring game in terrible conditions. The most important fact to emerge from the Connacht Final was that the Mayo defence, which had been ripped asunder by Sligo in the Semi-Final Replay, had knitted itself into a solid united force.

The fact that the Senior team also came through a few dark years that same day at Dr. Hyde Park, Roscommon, it pushed the under-aged team's great win into the shade. To try and keep a low profile would always have been the Minor Team Management Committee's wish anyway, and the Senior team's victory provided them with the real opportunity to do so. They arranged their own training sessions two and three nights a week without much publicity and, in fact, played a number of challenge games up and down the country against other counties without anybody knowing. All the plotting and planning on how to master a cocky Meath side in the All-Ireland Semi-Final took place behind closed doors.

MEATH DUMBFOUNDED

On August 18th, at Croke Park, the whole truth became known when the Burke plan was put into operation. Meath were dumbfounded by the determination of the Mayo youngsters from the very beginning of the game. The Leinster champions' much-feared attack did not have a hope against the once-ragged Mayo defence. At midfield, too, Michael Fitzmaurice, the team captain, and Greg Maher were masters of the area while, up front, the joker in the pack, Michael John Mullen; James Gallagher, Tony Munnelly, Pat Walsh, Michael Mullaghy and Tom Grady, were putting the Meath defence through a nightmare. The great character of this Mayo team really surfaced in the second half when, after Meath hit an early second-half goal, Michael John Mullen walloped home two goals to really kill off their opponents.

Even after that victory over Meath nobody, except those closest to the team, gave Mayo much chance in the Final against Cork. Cork had beaten Kerry in the Munster Final and a strongly-fancied Donegal outfit in the All-Ireland Semi-Final, and that was the reason why the Munster team carried the burden of favouritism into the decider, on September 22nd, at Croke Park. Shortly after the game got under way, though, the Cork youngsters were beginning to feel the breeze as the Mayo heroes out-paced them in almost every sector of the field. It was a day, also, when the Mayo defence proved themselves beyond a shadow of a doubt. John Cummins was excellent between the posts and got excellent cover from Enda Gilvarry, David Fitzgerald, Johnny French, Declan Bourke, Martin Coyle and Kevin Byrne.

Yes, 1985 was a rags to riches year for the Mayo Minors, and a year of great satisfaction for Mick Burke, Martin Connolly and the entire Selection Committee. A very Happy Christmas to all of ye and, hopefully, a very bright 1986.



The Mayo team during the presentation ceremony.

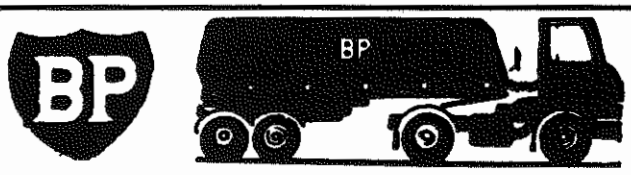
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"1985 — A Player's Perspective"

— Dermot Flanagan

1985 is a year of contrast for the senior team. From the anguish of Askeaton to the crescendo of Croke Park ... a year of mixed emotions, but disappointment is easily forgotten and we savour the good times, the excitement and newly-found spirit within the county.

Where did it all begin? Our league performances were mixed, probably a reflection of the unsettled team and unsettled style of play. But our performances against Dublin and Monaghan (who went on to win the National League), showed bits of team work and determination. If only we could be consistent. I was most satisified after the Mayo-Monaghan game in Castlebar (a draw). We were 11-9 down and recovered to draw the game 12 points all. The manner of our comeback was satisfying: good moves, well taken scores, resolute defence. Then back to our "old" ways against Roscommon on a day when anti-freeze should have been given to all the players before the game (not, I suggest, to weaken us but only to protect us on a bitterly cold day!).

And so our Winter League campaign had finished for 1984/'85. The team was beginning to learn about itself. We realised our efforts just weren't good enough, that our level of commitment to the game and to one another had to increase twofold if we were to function on all cylinders — a few things had to be put right.

EXPERIENCE OF HUMILIATION

THE Centenary Cup followed — the games are well recorded — easy victory over Kilkenny (no, not at hurling!), and the Limerick lynching (not literally, of course, although it might have occurred to some supporters to to it). It has often been said that a team must experience, not talk of, humilitation before it will really respond. For the Mayo team the Limerick match was such a humilitation — our attitude for the game was wrong and the result told us that. We then knew nothing in football should be taken for granted and that it would be a long, hard slog to put things right. However, a players' meeting before the Mayo-Kilkenny game was the most productive I had ever attended. In a frank and forthright discussion some players outlined the need for a personal commitment from everybody to the county team as the pre-requisite for progress. It was agreed that the county team would take priority in our training preparations over club for the championship and that each club would be



informed of the need for such single-mindedness. Furthermore, we realised that we would have to redouble our efforts on and off the field. We were also introduced to the new selector — Brian MacDonald, who, like myself, has connections with Dublin. From the beginning he was straight talking and prepared to argue a point with anyone. He certainly knocked the sensitivity out of me. He was also a dab hand at physical training. Things were taking shape: Liam O'Neill had completed his management team with each selector having a different role — now it was down to the players — time was ofthe essence!

WEEKEND IN DONEGAL

ALTHOUGH I was based in Dublin, my weekend trips to Mayo showed me that a positive attitude was in the camp. Strong indications were the full attendance at training and an ability to discuss our strengths and weaknesses amongst ourselves. No progress is made without knowing what we have and where we're going. A weekend in Donegal in April did much to galvanise the spirit of the squad and further self analysis took place. On the one hand the players requested that the team should be settled in as many positions as possible with the minimum of personnel changes. In return, the management encouraged us to develop a style of play. Two challenge games in May showed that the defence was now a very effective unit, with Martin Carney's return to defence (where he starred as a student in UCG), a striking success; John Finn's rapidly maturing game catching the eye and my own return to left full-back after a Winter campaign at centre half-back. Although I enjoyed playing at No. 6, I quickly established a fine understanding with Peter Ford and John Finn (in front of me). In fact, the hallmark of the defensive unit was our ability to cover one another when in possession. A funny incident comes to mind — Peter Ford described the incident when Paul Earley narrowly missed scoring a goal at the beginning of the second half of the Connacht final.

PETER'S FAITH

PAUL Earley got possession on the 21 yard line and faced Peter. My man raced inside Peter and I followed. Peter on seeing me race past him decided that even if he (Peter) failed to stop Paul Earley, then I would. As things turned out, Paul narrowly missed scoring. Such confidence in me by Peter is very complimentary when looking back on the game but a bit nerve-wracking at the time! Further along the field, both T. J. and Willie Joe were continuing to work well together — T. J.'s running game and Willie Joe's fielding being perfectly suited. Indeed, our reserve midfielders, Sean Maher and Padraig Brogan, reflected the talent we had at our disposal.

LOWRY'S INFLUENCE

AS always, the forward play was the most difficult to get right. The need to convert possession into scores was clearly evident. Noel Durkin was showing the same cool temperament as at Under-21 level; Kevin McStay was scoring from play, as well as frees, but as a unit the forwards were not clicking. And so enter Sean Lowry. Sean joined us around March, I think. Although he had a few injury problems early on, his experience and knowledge of the game was to prove an enormous benefit to the team.

Here was a player with three All-Ireland medals who was prepared to throw his weight behind our championship campaign. He had as much to lose as to gain. His calmness when in possession steadied the players around him and his influence in the dressingroom, especially before the Connacht final, will be remembered by all the players. I would compare his influence on us with that of Brian Mullins on the Dublin team. We needed Sean in order to win the Connacht championship and we did it.

Sean was deeply disappointed when he had to make way for Tom Byrne for the All-Ireland semi-final replay — it's an indication of his great dedication to us. Perhaps if we had been able to use his guile and skill in the drawn game to greater effect, things would have been different for him. However, he knows the appreciation and thanks of the squad go with him for his contribution.

COUNTER ATTACKS

AND so to the championship campaign proper. Our approach to the Mayo-Leitrim game was straightforward. We had beaten them convincingly the previous year in Castlebar

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I take this opportunity to thank sincerely our county players - senior, under-21 and minor - for the enjoyment they have given us during the year. My thanks, also, to selectors, coaches, team managers, board members and to all who gave of their time and energy freely and wholeheartedly in the preparation and training of the players in each grade.

I am prouder now than ever before to belong to the Gaelic Athletic Association and to follow the Green and Red.

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— JOHN HANLEY.

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and a similar performance was required now in Carrick-on-Shannon. This would be achieved by showing determination from the throw in. The first half was characterised by occasional passing movements by Mayo leading to scores, followed by Leitrim raids originating in the half-back line. However, their attacks did not show cohesion, merely enthusiasm which the defence was able to handle.

Furthermore, defence interceptions in particular by Martin Carney and John Finn led to excellent counter attacks from deep in defence — a feature of our game that improved throughout the campaign. We had missed quite a few opportunities and, at half time, I felt uncomfortable at our slender lead. Heading for the dressingroom Peter Ford remarked to me that Leitrim had thrown everything at us in that opening period, and this was borne out by our ability to stretch away from them quite easily in the second half. For me the highlight of the game was a move involving me which culmininated in our second goal. The ball broke at midfield (where I had been brought by my opponent), I collected it, played a one-two with Sean Lowry and soloed to the 14 yard line before passing to Kevin McStay. His shot was blocked but Henry Gavin, following up the move, scored.

The game was over at that stage. For the players the result was satisfying in that we had beaten Leitrim in their home ground by 11 points. We were aware that we had work to do but at least we had a target now — the Connacht final. One footnote on the game in Carrick — a half time talk really sparked us for the second half — the response by the players on the field was very encouraging.

I returned to Dublin to prepare for the Connacht final, I didn't mind whether we met Roscommon or Galway. I had suffered two successive Connacht final defeats and I was determined (like so many others with the same experience), to get things right for 1985. Our training came to a climax on the Saturday, eight days before the Connacht final.

UNREAL GAME

THIS session proved to me the high level of fitness of the team and of the quiet determination and healthy spirit within the camp. All we could do was wait for the game. The Connacht final was an unreal game. From the throw in our determination was matched only periodically by Roscommon. Yet we failed to convert possession to scores until ten minutes into the game. Suddenly scores flowed for us. At the same time the infrequent Roscommon attacks were repulsed. We kept the pressure up and went in nine points up at half time, an unexpectedly wide margin. We were aware of the danger of sitting on our lead and openly said so in the dressingroom.

CLINICAL FINISH

THE second half opened with a short flourish by Roscommon, especially Paul Earley's goal attempt. The second half was a cat and mouse affair, Roscommon trying to get the goal that would revive their chances; Mayo closing down the gaps and trying to snatch a few scores. Sean Lowry's goal, surely the most clinical finish in our year (sorry Padraic, I could describe your Croke Park goal as spectacular, not clinical), finished the game as a contest and, thus, we were Connacht champions at my third attempt. Late in the game my nose was broken when I tackled a Roscommon foward, fell awkwardly as he kicked the ball and left my face exposed, I survived but couldn't stop thinking of my father, whose nose was broken twice in his career — that means I have one to go! Maybe history will repeat itself in other ways? The joy of victory was ours that night.

I began to realise that the county needed such a boost and that everyone shared in our success. From a player point of view the match showed up a fine full-back line; a superb individual display by John Finn in eclipsing Dermot Earley, and resolute half-back play. Our midfield was always in control. Perhaps our forwards surprised most. Eugene McHale and Kevin McStay buzzed around; Sean Lowry was always a match for Pat Lindsay; Jimmy Bourke added strength to the half-forward line and our wing forwards were very mobile, scoring excellent points. Our thanks to Henry Gavin for leading us into the game when medically advised not to do so. His hamstring went near half time. It certainly didn't help his preparations for the All-Ireland semi-final.

THE BUILD-UP

INTEREST in football reached a new high for me in the weeks up to the All-Ireland semi-final. Not alone was the team under scrutiny from journalists, but also from the county at large — as shown by the large crowds attending training. My preparations for the drawn game did not go smoothly. I missed two weeks training — necessary to overcome the effect of the nose operation — I did some extra training in the fortnight coming up to the match. Physically, my fitness was not in doubt but mentally I had still to get over the operation. I found myself unable to get built-up before the game (when compared to the replay). Also, it was a new experience for me and I did not know how to approach it. Experience is a valuable asset, something we will need to use next year in defending our Connacht crown.

Yet again, our training climaxed on the Saturday, eight days before the All-Ireland semi-final. Once again our level of physical fitness was impressive. Perhaps the real source of inspiration lay in our mental approach — we had a healthy respect for our opponents but, above that, we were determined to get the best out of ourselves in order to find out where we stood as a footballing county. Also, we decided to approach the problem of our debut as a team in Croke Park with an open mind. This was characterised by Liam O'Neill's advice — "You might even see Kevin Heffernan togged out", i.e., expect anything. It was a sensible approach and we were not ruffled by the last minute switches in personnel on the day of the game by Dublin. Thus the fear of failing to get into the game and being white-washed never happened (a fear of any first visit team), because we concentrated on the important things — the ball, and ourselves, not on peripheral considerations like press or our opponents.

GOAL NEVER THREATENED

WHAT of the game itself. Dublin started more comfortably — a sign of their own familiarity with Croke Park. Yet we counter attacked dangerously and caused panic in the Dublin defence leading to "soft" frees for us. Dublin, with the assistance of a stiff breeze, rattled over some long-range points — two from defenders. I wasn't too perturbed at this stage. Our goal hadn't been threatened and I hoped we could keep the long-range scores to a minimum. However, some sloppy tackling by us led to easy scores for Dublin which accelerated their score rate. Noel Durkin's well-taken goal, the first of the entire campaign past John O'Leary, was just what we needed. It settled us and cut Dublin's advantage. Kevin McStay's neatly taken frees kept us within shouting distance of Dublin.

The real setback for us was the goal we conceded on the point of half time — a critical time to score. It stretched Dublin's lead to four points and gave them a psychological advantage going in to the dressingroom.

FINN'S BROKEN JAW

THE goal was typical Dublin — defensive interception and passes to Tommy Conroy, a beautiful lob pass (helped by the wind, claimed Peter Ford), and a typical Rock opportunist goal. I was very near to the situation and felt that Peter and Eugene would thwart Rock's attempt. In hindsight, I should have fouled Rock for a penalty. We are all wise after the event. The first half was overshadowed by two incidents which affected our defence: John Finn's broken jaw and Frank Noone's broken thumb. In all, we played with 14 men for six minutes in the first half. Fortunately, we had the ability to re-organise. It's a tribute to both players that they returned to the field. Frank had the opportunity to play again (with tumb repaired), in the replay.

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INDICTMENT

FOR me the tradegy of John Finn's injury was that he was deprived of using his great talent in both games (draw and replay), to their fullest. Here was a player in his prime (man of the match in the Connacht final to many people), who could not make his real contribution to our efforts. It caused John much pain and anguish not to be involved in the replay and it is an indictment on the control of the playing of the game that such an injury should occur or the playing field.



It is some consolation that the control of the game at official level has changed dramatically since John's injury. We look forward to John's return to the playing field to continue playing his role in Mayo's future.

INTO THE FRAY

THE second half was probably the most exciting football by Mayo since the 'fifties (at senior level at least). Dublin began the second half convincingly and stretched their lead to seven points. At that point it was all or nothing for Mayo. I moved to centre half-back to steady the centre of the defence and we threw everything at Dublin. A feature of our comeback was that we scored every 3-4 minutes. The momentum kept building as we drew closer to Dublin. A few near misses by Dublin fuelled our resurgence. Padraic Brogan and Tom Byrne were thrown into the fray — Padraic to add dash to our midfield; Tom to add power to our forwards — both worked well. Dublin were tiring rapidly but still managed a point from a typical lightning move. Five minutes to go, Mayo two points adrift. Billy Fitzpatrick's cooly taken point took us perilously close. Suddenly, Dublin could have finished us off. Anto McCaul found himself in possession on the edge of the square and turned to shoot. Eugene Lavin raced out, McCaul tried to round him, lost balance and, with Eugene biting his shoelaces, shot wide. Then came the equaliser — a catch by McStay, quick realease to T. J. and his great bopping stride took him to the 21 yard line, he steadied and converted (1-13 apiece). The kickout was won by Mayo, found its way to Tom Byrne who passed to Kevin McStay. The ball slipped tantalisingly from his grip and the whistle blew. Overall a fair result. Dublin's craft was matched by Mayo's character and determination.

In the second half Tom Byrne made a run for goal from 50 yards out. Suddenly Mick Holden appeared in his path. Tom, with the roar of the crowd behind him, kept going and flattered Mick Holden. I've since been told by a Dublin player that, at the time, Mick Holden was determined to flatten the Mayo player who was approaching him. He should have looked up to see who it was — Mayo's version of Rambo. It might have changed his mind.

NEW CONFIDENCE

OUR comeback fuelled a new level of interest in this team. Supporters were seeing a renaissence in the fortunes of our footballers — a new spirit, new confidence, new belief, which older supporters last saw in the 'fifties. We felt confident for the replay. We thought only half the team played well in the drawn game. We wanted to get back to Croke Park. Looking back, the replay was a game of missed opportunities — Tom Byrne's goal attempt early on, countless shots for points that went narrowly wide. Even though we were ahead at half time, a greater lead would have put us in control. We dominated the opening ten minutes of the second half yet still failed to extend our lead to 6-7 points.

VULNERABLE

FROM my position I knew an uphill battle faced us. In these games a team must build up a lead when it is dominating a game because your opponents will eventually come back at you. It is vital to have a lead to defend. We did not have that lead and thus left ourselves vulnerable to a "soft" goal. Both Dublin goals were "soft". For the first goal I had possession twenty-five yards out only for Rock to knock the ball out of my grasp. I looked around



to see three Dublin players moving in at speed to collect the ball and score — very quick reactions.

The second goal was even softer. Peter Ford called me to stay down as a ball dropped on the 14 yard line. He caught it, it slipped from his grasp and Joe McNally ran onto it. I prevented McNally shooting, he kicked the ball sideways and Duff converted. The game was over.

WILLIE JOE'S FIELDING

ALTHOUGH we were deeply disappointed, the reception we got from the crowd after the game gave us a message — stick together and return again (with the same magnificent support no doubt!). Looking back on the game, Willie Joe Padden's fielding was an unforgettable sight. My switch to mark Rock worked insofar as he did not score from play. However, my contribution to the team effort might have been greater if I remained at wing back, especially with our problems in getting constructive play going in the forwards. Such lessons are hard-earned. Martin Carney's loss in the second half threw the defence off balance as well. To be fair to Dublin they put our forwards under more pressure in the replay and, under such pressure, our forwards were not able to get the same free-flowing moves going. Perhaps this is a key to our near misses — Mayo players shooting under pressure.

CONCLUSIONS

WHAT conclusions can be drawn from the year? The players now know what is required in terms of commitment in order to succeed. The management have experienced leading a side into Croke Park on two occasions. Hopefully, the experiences of both team and management this year are the solid foundation on which five years of success can be built. The future will tell its tale. To finish this review my thoughts go out to my fellow players; to the new lease of life for Eugene Lavin and Martin Carney, the growth of Frank Noone and John Finn into more accomplished players; to the strength and tenacity of Ford, Maughan, Monaghan in defence. No one has put more effort, nor enjoyed the experience of Croke Park more that T. J. and Willie Joe at midfield. We have yet to see the full promise of Noel Durkin, Padraic Brogan or Tom Byrne. Jimmy Bourke enjoyed the freedom of a half-forward position and Eugene McHale scored at vital times for us in the campaign. Kevin McStay had a great year and is learning to cope with the burden of the "scorer-in-chief" tag. Once again, our thanks to Sean Lowry. For the rest of the panel, my thanks for helping the first fifteen to keep maintained standards (and keep you off the team!), long may you continue in the same fashion and take any chances offered to you.

To the future!

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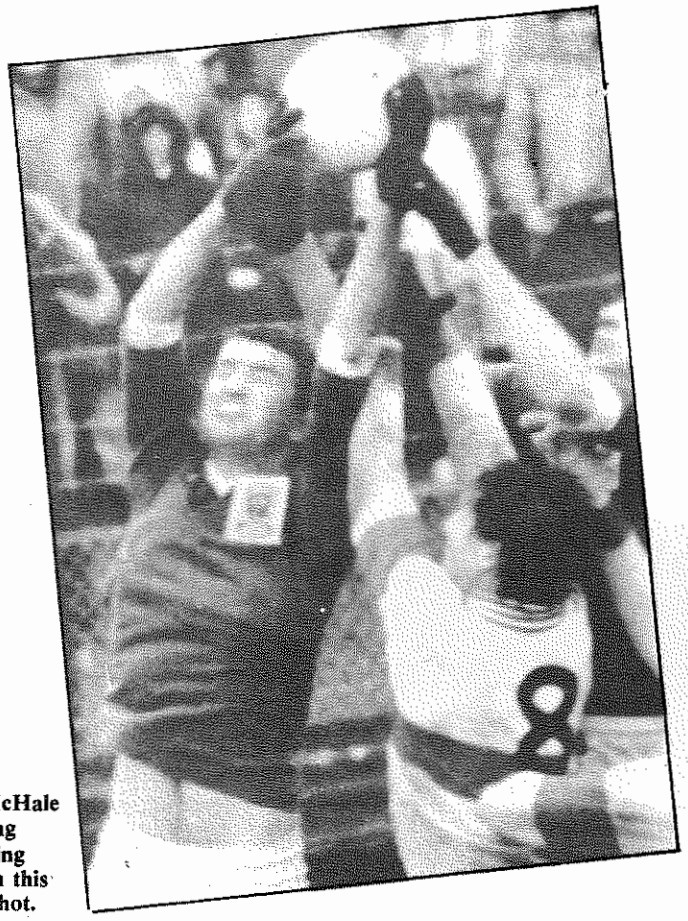
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By John Melvin

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Liam McHale displaying his fielding ability in this action shot.

IT COULD be argued that the Mayo Under-21 grade was left very much in the shadows of Mayo football during 1985 due to the success of the county Senior and Minor sides.

The Under-21s had carried the Mayo banner so high and so proudly for the past three years and were very much the team which kept the county morale up, when at times, it threatened to hit an all-time low due to the failure of the county to make an impact on any other grades.

TURBULENT WATERS

And this year the Under-21 side were unfortunate to the extent that they were first to be forced to test the turbulent waters outside the province.

Still the Under-21 squad can reflect on a good campaign from their opening match against Leitrim in Carrick-on-Shannon to their defeat in the All-Ireland semi-final replay against Derry at Enniskillen.

CREDIT DUE

Credit is also due to the management and selectors and, in particular, team manager, Tommy O'Malley, who only last year accepted the reins from John O'Mahoney who stepped down.

O'Mahoney had brought the team to an All-Ireland title in 1983 with a side that contained such names as John Finn, Kevin McStay, Padraig Brogan, John Maughan and Peter Ford — all of whom are now regular members of the Mayo senior squad.

In '84 they went as far as the All-Ireland semi-final to be denied by Cork. A similar situation arose last year.

FIRE POWER

Going into the '85 championship Mayo had big expectations of going all the way boasting eight of the previous year's panel.

And in the opening round against Leitrim at Carrick-on-Shannon they showed plenty of fire power scoring 2-15 to which Leitrim replied with 1-4.

That brought them straight through to the Connacht final where they were pitted against Galway in Ballinasloe.

HIGGINS' GOALS

Very few turned up to see history being made. It may not have been achieved in spectacular fashion as Mayo were forced to struggle against a Galway side who kicked wide after wide.

In the end it was two goals by Claremorris player Pat Higgins in the second half which pushed the issue out of Galway's reach.

And so it was on to the All-Ireland semi-final and another clash with the Northern kingpins, Derry. Memories of '83 came flooding back when, at Carrick-on-Shannon, Mayo stood on the verge of taking the All-Ireland title only to be denied by a last minute Derry goal.

Amazingly history was almost about to repeat itself. Once again with only minutes remaining Mayo were hanging on grimly to a two points lead with two minutes remaining. In that time Derry hit two points to force a replay in Enniskillen.

OVER THE BORDER

The doubts about the true ability of the Mayo side were now beginning to creep in. They had been kept out of the game for long periods and could only manage one point for the entire second half.

So, once again Mayo were forced to go over the Border in search of the ticket to meet Cork in the All-Ireland final. It was a beautiful crisp afternoon and a large Mayo following had made the journey.

What met them in the early stages of the game almost sent them home immediately as Mayo appeared in dire straights conceeding two early goals and trailing by eight points.

DERRY HIT BACK

However, any doubt about the character of the side was dispelled by the manner in which they fought back doggedly to go level midway through the second half.

Unfortunately that was all they could manage. Derry hit back with their third and critical goal and although Mayo still plugged away Derry had that reserve of stamina in the final few minutes to win by three points.

It was a game that will still bring back memories of some great goals and splendid performances. In particular Liam Niland's thirty-five yard pile-driver and the display of Ballina man, Liam McHale, at midfield.

The Mayo team which played in the Connacht final was: G. Irwin; S. Finnegan, J. Gilmore, K. McCormack; A. McGarry, M. Walsh, P. Corcoran; L. McHale, J. Dooley; B. Kilkelly (capt.), L. Niland, M. Butler; P. Higgins, J. Malone, T. Pidgeon. Subs.: M. Molloy (for Pidgeon); P. Brogan (for Butler).

The team that lost the All-Ireland semi-final replay to Derry was: G. Irwin; S. Finnegan, J. Gilmore, K. McCormack; A. McGarry, M. Walsh, P. Corcoran; L. McHale, J. Dooley; T. Pidgeon, P. Brogan, L. Niland; B. Kilkelly, J. Malone, P. Higgins. Subs.: N. Loftus (for Pidgeon); M. Molloy (for Dooley); M. Butler (for Corcoran).

Scorelines:

1st round — Leitrim 1-4, Mayo 2-15.
Connacht Final — Galway 0-7, Mayo 2-6
All-Ireland Semi-final — Mayo 2-3, Derry 0-9.
All-Ireland Semi-final Replay — Derry 3-9, Mayo 3-6.

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Mayo Senior Manager Liam O'Neill On:

The New Awareness In Mayo

When we began the National League, in October, last year, I was fully aware of the task that confronted us. It was vital that we should produce the goods. The goods was a Connacht Championship at least. I felt that pressure more from sections of the County Board than from supporters and I think some of the players felt it, too. We were on our last chance.

It was understandable in a way. Mayo have been waiting a long time to get to an All-Ireland final, but the prospects could be nothing other than remote when they were not even winning Connacht titles. There was, therefore, a growing impatience for such a victory.

We used the League to try to get the best positions for players. We needed new players, too, so some were given an opportunity. But as the League progressed with some good and not so good performances we found that some of those to whom we had given reasonable time to impress were not quite ready for the important breakthrough.

Consequently, we had to fall back on other more experienced players. It became a matter of getting a team together that could win the Championship no matter what age or where they were from. That was one of the reasons why I decided to avail of Sean Lowry and Billy Fitzpatrick.

We did have a few good results from the League such as the win over Dublin, at Ballina, and over Offaly, at Tullamore, and the draw with Monaghan, who went on to win the League. But we would have done better if sufficient personal preparation was done by all the players.



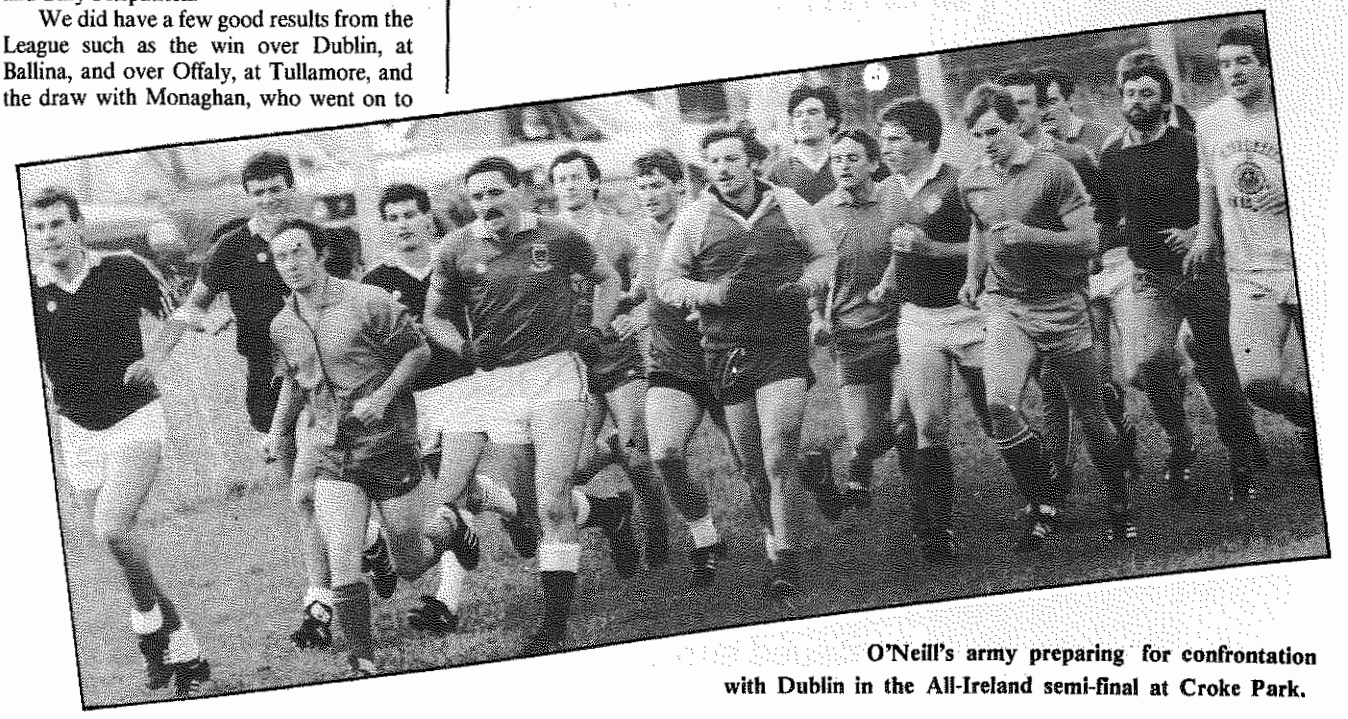
We cannot bring the team together for three or four nights each week during the Winter so the level of fitness a player attains depends on his amount of unsupervised training. That is difficult to do on one's own in the middle of Winter, but it is what success demands. It is the price of victory.

After the conclusion of the League I felt luck was with us when we were drawn against Kilkenny in the first round of the Open Draw competition. And it looked too good to be true when Limerick were our opponents in the second round bringing us to the quarter-final. But, of course, we did not get there and if that shock defeat by Limerick did anything for us, it made us stop to think.

We were forced to take stock, to re-examine commitments, seriously and honestly. To do that, I felt, demanded a weekend away from the country for the whole side. We went to Donegal, played the home county and Fermanagh, and talked. The discussions were on a player-to-player basis, reflective and direct. They were straight from the shoulder. Everyone contributed in that frank, open atmosphere, and there was a general release of pressure from everyone.

We had already commenced our Championship preparation and on returning from Donegal intensified it. I noticed a rising level

◗



O'Neill's army preparing for confrontation with Dublin in the All-Ireland semi-final at Croke Park.

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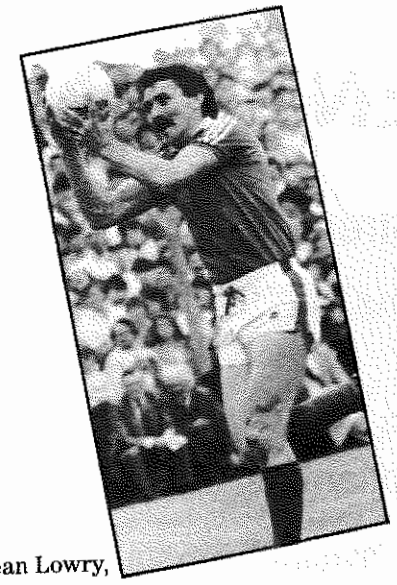
Liam O'Neill, Seamus Gallagher and Billie Fitzpatrick, three members of the Mayo Team Management.

of commitment during the following weeks and as the schedule became tougher and tougher the commitment of the players became firmer.

There were some in the panel who could not apply themselves to this standard of preparation for certain valid reasons. Some were very good players with the potential to make the team, but because of their circumstances just could not give the required commitment.

The preparation consisted of four days each week every week in addition to Sunday. That was the stringent course we had drawn up and for those who question the omision of some very good players from the panel, it was for no other reason than that they could not give themselves to that programme.

The fruits of that training began to appear in the team's success over Roscommon in a tough challenge at Castlerea and in their win over Dublin, at Westport. A ray of light was, at last, to be seen and among the big contributors were Billy Fitzpatrick and Sean Lowry. It was important to get wins irrespective of whom we played. These two were helping us to get them.



Sean Lowry,

OUR BEST DISPLAY

Well, the Championship game against Leitrim proved, as expected, to be a tough one, but we came through and were looking forward to renewing old rivalry with Galway in the final. It did not turn out that way and we had to re-adjust our sights to Roscommon. It suited us because little was expected from our team and as a result there was very little pressure on us other than more that exerted by ourselves.

I felt it was one of our best performances. The back line moved well; midfield produced their best-ever display and the forward line proceded to get the scores. It was the type of overall performance I had been working towards and there was a certain satisfaction watching it being carved out on the field.

Despite what has been said there was no great pressure on us before the game with Dublin in Croke Park. There is always, of course, the pressure one brings on oneself to do well on the big occasion. Because it was their first semi-final, some players did not know of the atmosphere. Those who did, may have undergone a little pressure, but their experience had taught them to cope with it.

The rest is history.

What was gained? The experience alone should be a vital asset. And quite frankly it disappointed me in the League game against Donegal that the team failed to reflect coolness and maturity in the last minutes when Donegal began to come back.

A BETTER SIDE

Nevertheless, I have no doubt they will be a better side because of Croke Park's lessons. You cannot get that type of experience from talks. You have to play before an All-Ireland crowd to become part of it. It is vital.

The current League is now important in order to keep up the momentum. But the Championship is, once more, the major competition. Our first game is against London and we must get down to brass tacks for that game. We will take every game as it comes.

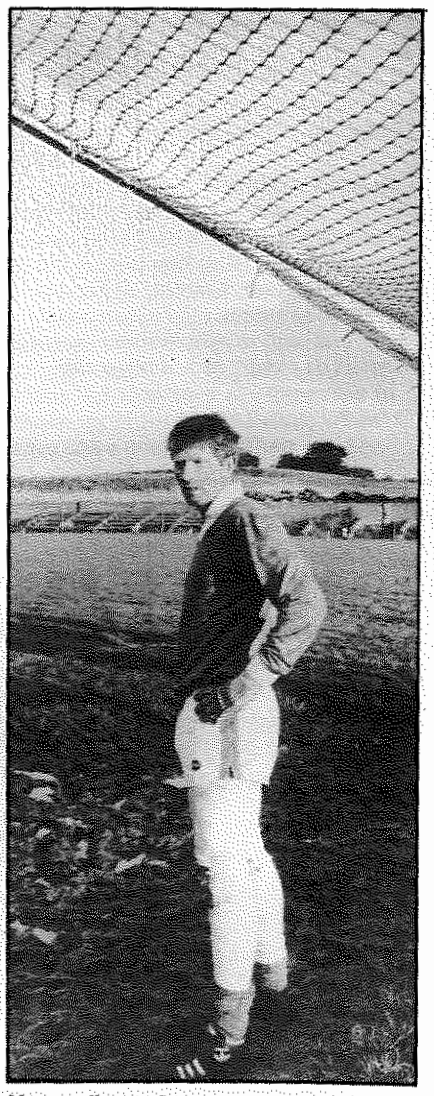
The winning of the Connacht Championship, last season, and Mayo's good performances, in Croke Park will, I hope, renew the interest of those players who could not give the required amount of time to training. They might now see that endeavour as worthwhile. I have sensed a new interest and I hope the players will give it serious thought.

NOTHING GUARANTEED

I have been asked why I have not tried some of those players in the League. The simple answer is that they are not just now at the level of fitness required to join the panel. I have given them two months to get themselves into condition and I am hoping they will respond with their own preparation. We have got to strengthen the panel, for the stronger the substitutes the better all round will be the team.

Nothing is guaranteed at all for next year. We are now in the position, where every other team in the Province will be aiming at us. We are the side to beat. How well we do will depend on the extent of the preparation.

Players now feel a new awareness among supporters about the team and their efforts. It came from the tremendous support they got during the year. I have never seen anything like it. The players can now identify with the supporters. That is a good thing. It puts them under pressure to do well for the supporters and, therefore, I expect to see even greater commitment from them in the months ahead.

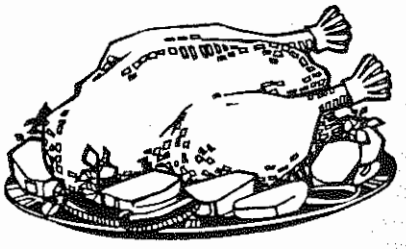


Mayo goalkeeper, Eugene Lavin, pictured at a training session in Ballina,

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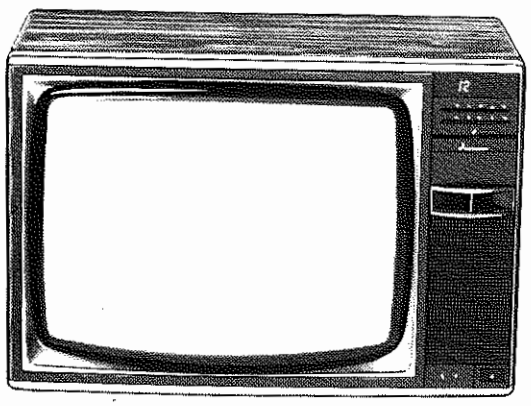
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Coaching No Longer A Dirty Word

By Terry Reilly & John Kenny

THREE years ago, the Mayo County Board, in one of its soul-searching moments, identified lack of coaching as one of the greatest deterrents to progress.

County team mentors had often made the point that far too much time was being taken up teaching players the rudiments of the game when this work should have been done at club level.

It was time to act, and the County Board did by calling a meeting of selected people to discuss the situation and take whatever steps were needed to qualify people as coaches.

The first meeting was constructive. It was decided to press ahead with a three-year programme designed to get as many people qualified as possible. A trip was undertaken to Kerry to examine their coaching set-up, and links were established with former Kerry captain, Mickey O'Sullivan, who was to give valuable advice. In fact, Mickey was to supervise the first two county courses, in Claremorris in '82 and '83, and his experience and professionalism was of tremendous benefit. By the third year our own Richie Bell had taken over this role.

Attempts had been made to get courses off the ground previously, usually with disastrous consequences, but this time the Coaching Committee made person-to-person contact with those involved with club teams and received a commitment which surpassed even the wildest expectations.

GREAT RESPONSE

Almost one hundred attended the first course which set a record for the rest of the country, and over the following two years this application was maintained: indeed, so successful were the courses that they attracted would-be coaches from other counties!

Certificates and badges were presented following each course to minor and club coaches who passed the test, and, gradually, the notion that coaching was something which didn't apply to the GAA began to disappear. There was now an acceptance that coaching was required, that it was beneficial and that it could produce results.

At the end of the three-year cycle, te Mayo Coaching Committee made a submission to the newly-formed Connacht Coaching body urging that a Teamwork scheme be undertaken whereby young coaches would visit schools throughout the province over a six-month period and impart the skills of the games of football and hurling.

This met with an instant response and last September twenty-six coaches, spread around the province, sprang into action. In Mayo the personnel are Frank Noone (supervisor), Brendan O'Loughlin (Ballinrobe), Paul McGrath (Kiltimagh), Eamon O'Boyle (Ballina), Sean Mangan (Crossmolina), and Padraic Corcoran (Knockmore), and they are now working on a weekly basis with over 2,000 young national school pupils.

Indeed, so successful has been the project that an application is now to be made to the Department to have it extended for another six months! The present scheme is being backed to the tune of £60,000 by the Government, topped up with a contribution of £10,000 from the Connacht Council and a helping hand from the AIB.

Of course much more needs to be done in the realms of coaching, both in Mayo and in the province at large, but a start has been made. Coaching is no longer looked upon as a dirty work by traditionalists!

STATISTICS

(a) Over the past three years 113 people received coaching certificates.

(b) In North Mayo 17 clubs have a total of 27 coaches. Of these 27 only 10 have the club coach award, the balance are minor coaches. In this division 6 clubs did not participate at all.

(c) In East Mayo 9 clubs have 29 coaches of these 17 have the club coach award and the balance have minor coach awards. One club did not participate at all.

(d) In South Mayo 12 clubs have to Coaches. Of these 12 are club coaches and 4 clubs did not participate at all.

(e) West Mayo have 32 coaches with 12 clubs. 15 are club coachs and 1 did not participate at all.

No. of Clubs with Coaches		No. of Coaches Awarded Certs.	No. of Club Coaches
North Mayo	17	27	10
East Mayo	9	29	17
South Mayo	12	20	12
West Mayo	15	32	15
Totals:	53	108	54
Others from outside Mayo		5 Total: 113	

(f) So after the question is asked are those who attend these courses still involved in coaching of teams in their own clubs. At its recent annual meeting the Mayo Coaching Committee went through the complete list of qualified coaches and examined each one to establish if they were involved with their teams at home. From this examination it was established that:

In North Mayo 85% of the qualified are involved.

In East Mayo 85% of the qualified are involved.

In South Mayo 50% of the qualified are involved.

In West Mayo 88% of the qualified are involved.

It was felt that the above returns were excellent. In the lowest, i.e., South with 50% it was agreed that this figure is still quite good. In fact, it should be pointed out that in this division some who attended the courses were students that at present were not available to their clubs but that they are expected to make an input in the future when they have completed their studies.



GAA President, Dr. Mick Loftus, and the Minister for Forestry, Fisheries and the Gaeltacht, Mr. Paddy O'Toole, T.D., pictured at the launchin of the Connacht Council's Coaching Scheme in the Beaten Path. The coaching project, which incorporates all five Connacht counties, is held i conjunction with the National Teamwork Scheme, and co-sponsored by A.I.B. Also included, seated, left to right: Paddy Muldoon, Chairman Mayo County Board; Denis Chambers, A.I.B., Castlebar; Frank Fahy, Connacht Council Chairman, and P. J. McGrath, and John Kenny Chairman and Secretary of the Connacht Coaching Council. Standing, left to right: John O'Mahoney, Mayo Coaching Committee; Terry Reilly Chairman, Mayo Coaching Committee; Eamonn O'Boyle, Sean Mangan, Padraic Corcoran, Frank Noone, Coaching Supervisor; Paul McGrath Brendan O'Loughlin, John Brennan, A.I.B., Balla, and County Secretary, John Prenty. Pic. 'Western People'







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The Steeling of Mayo

THIS time it was easier, the farewell made bearable by the promise of imminent return. That is change indeed. Departures from the championship over the past few decades have been fraught with despair in Mayo, have bred a fear of the competition, distaste even. So many hammerings, so much hope gone up the spout, so much of players' efforts and dreams strewn in fragments across so many fields.

For Willie Joe Padden and Henry Gavin, Martin Carney, Jimmy Bourke, Eugene McHale and T. J. Kilgallon in particular who have survived some dreadful defeats in the past and emerged unscathed from the consequent inevitable criticism, Croke Park in August must have been a lovely place, years of misery dissolved in one gilded half hour of football. Not for thirty years had a Mayo team come so close to an All-Ireland final.

SPIDERS IN A BATH

It was what the players had promised themselves earlier in the year. It was scarcely what most people expected. Like all Mayo performances there had been some good and bad results in the season that started with the League the previous October.

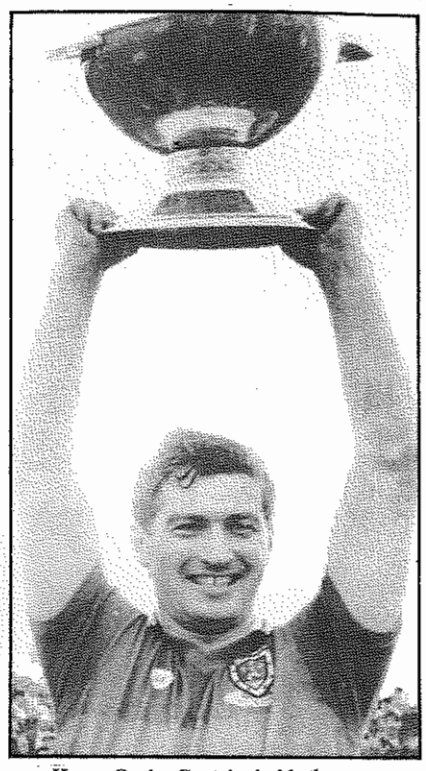
Their early performance triggered no great hope. Mayo would drift on, it seemed, as they always have done neither succeeding nor sinking, trapped in defeatism ... like spiders in a bath.

Wexford had been doing well in Leinster, so Mayo's draw with them in the first round of the league was a reasonably good result. In the corresponding game the previous year they had been beaten in Wexford. Fair enough. The team fielded in Crossmolina was, except for one or two positions, the same pipped by Galway in the Connacht final a few months earlier. Faith in existing players was being given a fair chance to survive.

That faith was to be put to the test when Mayo faced Donegal in the next round of the league two weeks afterwards at Ballyshannon. Their resistance was so feeble against the home side that a sense of inadequacy crept through not just the team but the handful of supporters who made the journey as well. They were beaten by eight points and that, by any standard, is comprehensive.

UNLIKELY CLASH

And yet the situation was not hopeless. It never has been with Mayo people so long as their team



Henry Gavin, Captain, holds the cup aloft after the Connacht Final.

bobbed in uncertainty. The straw to which they clung was provided in the most unlikely of clashes ... that with Dublin at Ballina, for which the expectation could have been nothing other than ominous.

Liam Nyland was centre half forward that day and Tom Grogan full-forward. Martin Carney was left half-forward, Dermot Flanagan, centre half-back, flanked by John Byrne and John Finn. John Monaghan, Peter Ford and Frank Noone made up the full-back line with Mick Webb in goal. Kevin McStay and Henry Gavin were on the right wing of the attack and Eugene McHale was left corner-forward.

Dublin did not have Barney Rock. Brian Mullins was full-forward, Joe McNally centre half-forward. A few others ... Des McGrath, Tom Byrne, Kieran Sutton, Maurice O'Callaghan and Tom Cassin, who were playing for Dublin that day did not figure in the All-Ireland semi-final. Plainly they were building for the championship. And, of course, so were Mayo.

As so frequently happens in such situations Mayo turned in an excellent performance. There was bite in their play, defiance and no little confidence, and having won by two points people left Ballina happy with the overall display and, in particular, with that of the two youngest players, Liam Nyland and Tom Grogan, who had been a handful for Dublin's Gerry Hargan.

HIGH NOTE

No one was surprised at that ephemeral form of Mayo. It has always been part of Mayo character. Yet their defeat in the following game against Louth was regarded as a loss of good luck rather than of good form. They had played well, but lost.

Still they ended the season on a reasonably high note with victory over Offaly at Tullamore. It was a satisfactory result brought about by good movements, good defensive work and good scores, and it left them in a reasonably secure position on the league table.

The work that each of the players would do on his own over the two-month break that followed was what concerned Liam O'Neill and could determine the outcome of their two remaining games in February. The extent of their commitment would be gauged from the amount of unsupervised training each undertook and that in turn would reveal itself in their performances.

It did, positively, in their first game after the resumption against Monaghan, the eventual National League and Ulster champions, with whom Mayo drew at Castlebar. But a week later at Charlestown they experienced defeat again by Roscommon, who were promoted along with Monaghan to Division 1.

STARK REALISATION

So league promotion was out. But there was still the Open Draw competition to come as championship preparation. Not that Kilkenny or Limerick promised much opposition in the early rounds. The stiffer tests would come in the final rounds.

Kilkenny, if the National League was any indication, were the worst team in Ireland, and Mayo did not have much bother in winning. Limerick, whom they were to meet in the next round, a little better, no more. Mayo had to travel to Limerick for the game. The result was a shock fourteen points defeat and, as if they had not already been aware, the stark realisation that here they were at the end of March, having completed the League campaign, still firmly entrenched in the 30-year recession.

T. J. Kilgallon was later to say that somehow Mayo were in no way affected by that experience, that in some inscrutable way whings would come right. Among the few who had to travel farthest three days each week to training and to give more to preparation, Kilgallon may have been best placed to recognise the effect of that defeat and the extent to which the whole team was prepared to go to have the memory of it overshadowed by other events.

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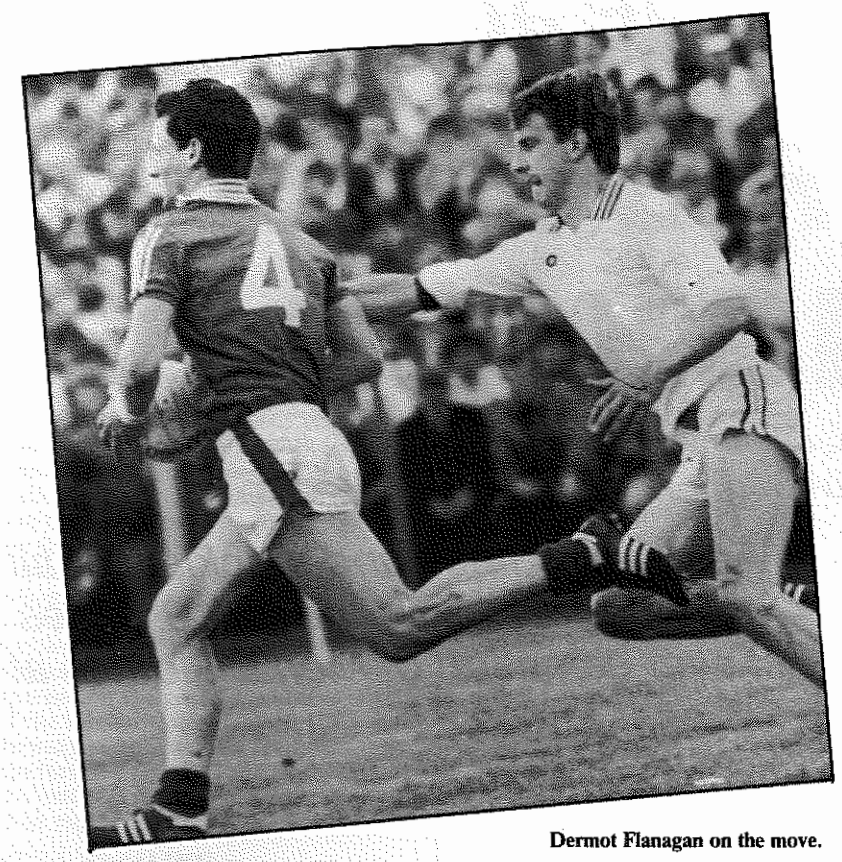
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The Steeling of Mayo



Dermot Flanagan on the move.

BONE CRUSHING STUFF

Late in the year as it was, no clear fifteen had emerged. All of the panel were fighting for places even after a trial in April. But there were some signs of settlement in defence and midfield and when Mayo played Roscommon in the Phil Gannon Tournament in Castlerea in the middle of May, some questions had been resolved. It was a tough, hard game, the type of exchanges in which Mayo football never prospered. No quarter was asked or given. It was bone crushing stuff. Mayo survived it, won narrowly, but more than anything else proved to the delight of the selectors that their steeling process had begun to take effect.

There was further evidence of progress when they met Dublin at the beginning of June to mark the opening of Westport's revamped grounds. A certain confidence had been acquired in the defence which Dublin could not manage to break down. A new role had been found for Martin Carney at right corner-back in which he appeared to revel, playing with the zest and urgency of one in a hurry to make up for lean days.

LACKED LEADERSHIP

There was no doubt about the shortage of that element in the Mayo attack. The young men Mayo had tried were not without courage or determination. But they did not have the experience to take advantage of midfield creativity, the time punched in that would help them concentrate in the face of a critical crowd. In essence the forward line lacked leadership.

That is what Sean Lowry was called upon to provide. He had earned that property with Offaly, had won two All-Ireland medals with his native county. And although many were not quite satisified with his performance against Leitrim, he appeared to me an essential addition, lacking in pace perhaps, but compensating with his quality of distribution and reading.

It was no game on which to build any great mountain of confidence for any further progress than had been known for some years. Leitrim, as they are wont to do, held a tight rein on the Mayo men and there was some anxiety among supporters that they could do no more than draw level with the home side by half time.

Mayo won all right, but they set no hearts ablaze. They would still be underdogs to emerge from Connacht in the light of the exciting draw which Roscommon and champions, Galway, played at Hyde Park, and Roscommon's considerable achievement in overcoming the fancied Galwaymen in the replay at Tuam. All along Mayo had been expecting to meet Galway in the final and it was towards that specific objective their preparations had been geared. Roscommon's emergence changed all ... not the physical preparations, but the mental strategy. The game would be in Hyde Park, not Castlebar as anticipated. It was a much tougher prospect.

TOUGHNESS PERMEATED

The manner in which Mayo responded to the challenge on July 13th gladdened every Mayo heart. Nothing like it had been seen for many a long year ... no victory so comprehensive over Roscommon in a final. Long, lonely nights were at last being counterbalanced.

Toughness permeated Mayo's performance. Everyone became a star. With T. J. Kilgallon and Willie Joe Padden winning the midfield battle hands down, John Finn neutralising Dermot Earley in his last game for Roscommon, Peter Ford allowing no inch to Paul Earley at full-forward, Jimmy Burke operating with renewed vigour on the 'forty', Sean Lowry leading the attack with elan and John Maughan composed and confident at centre-half back, Mayo's backbone was firmly in place.

The others just fitted into place. Eugene Lavin in goal, untested; Martin Carney, Dermot Flanagan, Frank Noone completing a smart, efficient competent defence; Henry Gavin, the captain, whose point from the right wing in the first half, when full authority had not been exerted, set an example; Noel Durkin, the one who had made the greatest strides during the year, scoring a vital goal; Kevin McStay checking his tendency to over elaborate and being a much better player for it, scoring points from all angles, and Eugene McHale battling with similar commitment.

LOWRY'S DISPLAY

The display of Lowry became, perhaps, the finest feather in the hat of Liam O'Neill. He was the linch-pin of the forward line and the main link with midfield. Hit him with the ball was the strategy, and avenues would be created for the others. It worked well. And when, near the end, Jimmy Bourke returned the compliment to Lowry with a marvellous cross from the left wing, the Offaly man crowned his performance with a fine goal.

That, of course, was expected to be the summit of Mayo's achievement. They faced Dublin in the semi-final and a fate, it was said, worst than anything ever suffered. Dublin had reached the final the previous year and were impatient for another tilt at Kerry. Mayo was no more than an obligatory engagement on the road to that objective.

No where were they favourites. A county of stylish players but with little heart was the general image, nothing really to write home about. Was theirs not a litany of failure for decades? Four times they had emerged from the province over the past thirty years. Four times they were beaten. Why should this occasion be any different?

Well it was different. There was something new about this Mayo. You could sense it everywhere. Their performance in the Connacht Final, one in which no element of fluke could be attributed unlike some previous victories, had set the tone of optimism. A confidence had been instilled in the team by the backroom

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men. A new fibre was evident. They were the talk of the county.

HILL OUT-SHOUTED

From every corner of Mayo they came in their thousands to Croke Park. From other counties, too, young and old. The stands became alive with Mayos and Dubs, with blues and green-and-reds, a sea of marvellous colour on which even a rare sun shone. And for once the Hill was out-shouted, Mayo people buoyed by the unexpected victory of their minors over Meath.

The senior game had hardly begun when they got more to roar about, a goal executed by Noel Durkin in a manner which had done Dublin justice on the best of days. Yet that was the sum of Mayo's satisfaction in the first half.

Nothing went quite right for the following thirty minutes or so. Dublin succeeded in their spoiling tactics at midfield, bunching for the high ball, breaking it and, because they were sharper on the ground, winning most of the breaks. Consequently, the forward supply was severed. Many of the forwards came down in search of the ball, but movements broke down, their rhythmn ruptured.

STILL TRAILING

Still, they were trailing by only three poiints less than a minute before half time when Barney Rock gathered a high ball centred by Tommy Conroy, and in an instant the ball was hugging the net. Mayo hopes began to nosedive.

Dublin went seven points ahead shortly after the resumption and the scales had tipped firmly in their favour. It was then the selectors introduced Padraic Brogan in a marvellous piece of timing. He went to midfield with T. J. Kilgallon moving into the half-forward line.

The sudden transformation of Mayo was of almost stunning proportions. It was as if someone somewhere had thrown a giant switch. Mayo were at last winning midfield and Dublin were caught unawares. This was not the Mayo they had expected. The Mayo they knew would have surrendered by now. Yet here they were, this new Mayo, fighting back, Brogan mastering midfield, Kilgallon making himself available in the forward line. All of them ablaze.

RELIEF ALL ROUND

Point by point the lead was reduced. Now Tom Byrne was in the full-forward line and Billy Fitzpatrick, at 42, in too, playing major roles in Mayo's resurgence. Kevin McStay Noel Durkin were not alone anymore as the best Mayo forwards.

That final equalising point by T. J. Kilgallon brought as much relief to Dublin as it did to Mayo for although they had come close to scoring, following a couple of quick breaks, you knew by the way they sought the sideline for defensive relief that the pressure on Dublin was becoming intolerable.



As this picture reveals, there was no inspiration flowing from these faces as they watched the senior team training during the build-up to the Dublin game.

Mayo were happy with the draw. It was the best result in three decades. Years of desolate defeat had at last come to an end. A long, painful path to an All-Ireland final still remained to be trodden, but a vital breakthrough had been achieved.

SALUTE

So let us salute the man who achieved that breakthrough. Some on the day played better than others. All of them, however, helped, each in his own way, to restore the county's pride in a game it had once dominated, but now for so long has been bereft of honours.

The team was: Eugene Lavin; Martin Carney, Peter Ford, Dermot Flanagan; Frank Noone, John Maughan, John Finn; T. J. Kilgallon, W. J. Padden; Kevin McStay, Jimmy Bourke, Noel Durkin; Henry Gavin, Sean Lowry, Eugene McHale.

Subs.: Padraic Brogan, Tom Byrne and Billy Fitzpatrick.

And tributes, too, to Liam O'Neill, Brian McDonald, Billy Fitzpatrick and Seamus Gallagher for their unceasing efforts in the cause of Mayo football.

The football was no less exciting in the replay, the crowd even larger, colour and tension everywhere. It was an all-ticket affair and had an All-Ireland atmosphere. And for a long time Mayo were more than a match for Dublin.

FINN'S FRACTURE

They dominated midfield where Willie Joe Padden gave an exhibition of fielding rarely seen in Croke Park nowadays. But, alas, there was no Sean Lowry to take advantage of that superiority. He had been dropped and the forward line thus lacked leadership.

Despite some inaccuracy, however, Mayo were leading by a point at the interval and by two shortly after the resumption. A defence, without John Finn, whose jay had been fractured in the first game and who courageously continued to play with the injury all through the second half, had been holding out well until the Dublin forwards switched, and the Mayo backs did likewise. Martin Carney, who had been doing so well at right corner, was out at left half, Dermot Flanagan at full-back and Peter Ford at right corner. It did not quite work.

But just when hopes were fading Mayo produced the move of the match that ended with a screaming goal into the right-hand top of the Dublin net by Padraic Brogan in what was the goal of the match, one of the best seen at Croke Park for many a long day.

It brought Mayo to within a point of Dublin. But in the end there were eight points between them. Experience had won out. Dublin were calmer under pressure. Yet their winning scores had come not from any creativity on their own part but from mistakes by Mayo, still in the learning process.

REMEDY IN SIGHT

The gap in the end was wide. An eight points margin did not do justice to Mayo's efforts, but that sentiment will not alter the record books. And when championship time returns in a few months the memory of their performances will not be sufficient to sustain Mayo.

They have now become the target in Connacht for other aspirants. In all of their other four successes they bowed to such pressure the following year, have never in fact won two Connacht titles in a row for thirty-four years. This season's success is no guarantee that a remedy is in sight. But it was still the best championship performance in thirty years. That memory alone will keep us warm throughout the Winter months.

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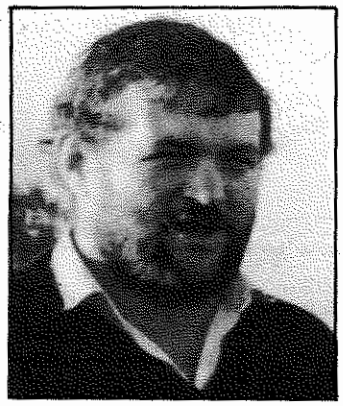
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LUNCHES SERVED DAILY

From Underdogs To Pedigree Champs

WHEN I became manager of the 1985 minors an All-Ireland was a faraway aspiration. I had been involved in All-Irelands with the County Vocational Schools' teams in the late 'seventies and early 'eighties. The success and experience gained was invaluable in 1985. When we, the selectors, got together in February we were all a little apprehensive, some of us had not met before. Sean Reilly, County Minor Secretary since 1972, was the wise man of the party. We had heard that the prospects for 1985 were not great. As manager I had hoped to give every aspiring player a chance, so between challenge matches and the league we tried out many players — I'm sure one or two got away. We paid the price in the league losing most matches. I remember the one against Longford in particular. They trashed us — this must have given Longford great hope for the future, we then picked our panel (which was open-ended right up to the All-Ireland), and trained hard three times a week.

As is tradition at the end of May we played Kerry in Clare, a fair test. Kerry won by a point. Their manager, Paudie Weirlehy, had fair hopes for his side in the championship, so on that form that game left us with some foundation. May went by with training and a challenge match or two. The Leaving Certificate exam came along, a major obstacle in life for some, the minors took it in their stride — a good sign.



Sligo, based on the Summerhill side, were our first major test. In the game at Ballymote we played with great courage though not yet with great unity and were lucky to come away with a draw. Pat Walsh's point near the finish was a pressure point, he also showed as a centre forward, great defensive qualities when needed. Man of the match was McNicholas, of Moy Davitts, at left corner-back. Unfortunately for him and the minors he broke his leg later on in a club match — he played his part none the less.

REPLAY

The replay at Castlebar was a comedy of defensive errors. John Commins, our goalkeeper, must have thought that the defenders were gone home, the score at half time, Sligo 4-0, Mayo 1-2. On my way to the dressingroom at half time I had what you could call organised panic in my mind. We re-organised our team for the second half, the players showed the self-belief and determination that they had in that heart-stopping second half and the final score read 3-12 to 5-0. There were many heros in the comback, notably Tony Munnelly, Michael Fitzgmaurice, Greg Maher and James "Yank" Gallagher. The danger man for Sligo was Donie McDonagh, a class forward, however, he met his match on both occasions in Martin Coyle. We concentrated on defence and it showed against Galway. The half-back line in particular of French, Fitzgerald and Burke were brilliant on that day. From a scoring point of view we were a bit of a disaster, 16 wides in all. Still the minors had qualified for the All-Ireland semi-finals, the first time since 1980.

ALL TUNED IN

It was a great day for Mayo in Roscommon especially that the seniors also won in such fine style. At this stage we needed a professional touch in preparing for Meath. Martin Connelly filled that role. His approach to training was always thoughtful, enthusiastic, never boring! We were all tuned in on the same note. Between training and challenge matches we were ready for Meath and with the seniors coming on after us, there was an extra incentive there for the minors — tus maith leath na h-oibre. When the team came onto Croke Park the Mayo cheer was heart-warming to say the least.

We played with the wind in that first half and after a solid display we led by five points. In the first eight minutes of the second half there were shades of Sligo again. We surrendered our lead to one point. The character of our side was not tested, they responded in fine style. Tom Grady's and Tony Munnelly's solo runs from deep inside their own half were clear answers to those who would do away with this great individual skill. Those runs inspired the whole team. Michael John Mullen threatened Sligo and Galway. He turned it on against Meath, his two goals and point showed what a finisher he is. Most of his goals this year, and there were many between championship and challenge matches, were off the ground — who cares once they go in the net? Every one played their part in that semi-final in particular Capt. Fitzmaurice, Greg Maher at midfield. The defence though unsteady at times came good in the finish.

BUS DRIVER'S HYPE

September came, we were still in the championship! Cork, our opponents, were a talented outfit, many of them with All-Ireland college medals. Their goalkeeper won this year with Cork Under-21s. There was a great tension and atmosphere there on All-Ireland final day. To make sure we were hyped up our bus driver took us on a guided tour on the way to Croke Park.

We were still in O'Connell Street. When we should have been in our dressingroom! Getting into that dressingroom was like getting into Fort Knox — three different tickets to get to the pitch — bureaucracy gone wrong. In the final itself we got off to a slow start. They scored first, then Mullen scored one of the goals of the year. I never felt as tense as I did in that final. We wasted many chances and almost allowed Cork back into the game. On the day they defenders were outstanding, every man. Enda Gilvarry at full-back, had his ups and downs during the year, in that final he gave a solid display. This inspired Kevin Byrne and Martin Coyle to play their best games of the year. John French, at right half-back, proving that there are good deeds in small men, was inspirational in all he did. Dave Fitzgerald, at centre back, showed great character in his play. Perhaps, he was a misfit at centre back early in the year, in the finish he made the position his own. Declan Burke, at right half-back, was never beaten in a championship match, in the final he gave a sterling display. Michael Fitzmaurice, our Jacko, was brilliant in the final and was a great captain on and off the field during the year. His sideline point late in the second half showed the confidence you need to win an All-Ireland. Greg Maher, "gammy" knee and all, improved with every game. In the final itself he played a powerful game, especially in the last ten minutes when he was most needed in defence. Up front we missed many chances, still the forwards played with great determination and did enough to win. I thought the final whistle would never come, it was sweeet music when it did.

THE CELEBRATIONS

From the beginning of the year I had great faith in this team and, as we know, faith can move mountains. The week after the final was hectic, bonfires, late nights and learning the geography of Mayo, from Kiltane to Claremorris, Kilmaine to Lacken. The commitment in terms of time, mileage and effort given by everyone connected with this team was enormous. I would like to thank them all.

I want also to thank the Mayo Club teams, Tur-Mhic-Each, the Mitchels, Davitts, Irishtown, Lacken, Ballaghaderreen for the sporting games they gave us during the year. Finally it was the players who played the games and won their All-Ireland, this panel of players made my task as a manager an easy one, whatever they do in the future they can look back on 1985 as their year in football. Tá suil agam go mbeidh a leitidí ann arís.

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1985 will be remembered as the wettest year in our history. It was year of sodden pitches and tight schedules. The general air of gloom was lifted by the outstanding performances of the Mayo Minor, Senior and Under-21 teams. Even though our fixture list had to be considerably altered, it was a pleasure to do so, since we do not savour victories too often. Clubs responded to the alterations magnificently and made the activities committee job easier.

West Mayo '85

ISLANDEADY has qualified for the County Junior Final and beat Lahardane, in what was an exciting final.

The season opened in the West with the commencement of the Minor League. This year clubs had the option of participating in the Divisional League or County League.

Balla, who have a great record in this competition, set the standard, and once again took the honours. Kilmeena put i some great performances to qualify for the final, and showed that they have a nucleus of a good side for Under-21 level over the next few years.

The Minor Championship, which was played on a league basis this year, produced a few surprises. It was generally expected that Castlebar and Balla would do well, but as the competition progressed, it became clear that Achill and Ballintubber had other ideas. Achill created a big surprise when they defeated Castlebar in the semi-final in Newport. Ballintubber on the other hand had difficult time in wearing down a stubborn Burrishoole outfit at Castlebar.

BALLINTUBBER RALLIED

The stage was set for the final at Newport. Ballintubber were pre-match favourites, but the game was not long in progress when it became clear that Achill was determined to take the trophy to the island. Showing greater appetite for the game than their rivals, they proceeded to take the Ballintubber defence apart. At half-time Achill were well ahead. Ballintubber rallied in the second half, and when Jimmy Murphy scored a great goal it looked as if they might pull it off. However, Achill held out and were deserving winners. Final score was Achill 2-8, Ballintubber 1-5.

Goalkeeper, Enda Scanlon; full-back, Brendan Corrigan, and wing-back, Cathal Gielty, played well throughout the championship. Brian Joyce put in some great performances at midfield. Eoin McNamara was the star of the attack receiving good assistance from J. J. McNamara and James Gallagher.

Ballintubber's best players were Pat Walsh, Pat McCarthy, Michael Malone, John Horan and Jimmy Murphy.

In the Under-12 'A' competition there were only two entries and Castlebar and Westport played one game. Westport put up a good performance, but it wasn't enough to halt the Castlebarmen.

The Under-12 'B', as always, produced good football, and teams that are well pre



BY SEAN FEENEY

pared, do well. Balla and Breaffy contested this final. Breaffy were pre-match favourites, but Balla had the edge and won well in the end. Best for Breaffy were, B. Higgins, R. O'Hagan, Des. Jennings, G. O'Reilly, and for Balla, R. Golding, David Nestor, Ed. Connolly, A. McEllin.

The Under-14 'A' produced a novel pairing for the final, i.e., Achill and Balla, and it took two matches to decide who would qualify for county semi-finals. The experience gained by Balla at Under-12 level was the deciding factor. We had some outstanding performances from Kevin Neary, Donal Flaherty, Enda Cunnane, John Loftus, G. McDonnell. Achill's best players were M. McGinty, John Lynch, K. McGinty, Ml. Gallagher, D. Murray.

At Under-14 'B' level Parke, the outgoing champions, were again to the fore, and it was no surprise when they again qualified to meet Ballintubber in the final. It took three games to decide the eventual winners. Ballintubber's greater physical strength told in the end. Big Joe Glynn was the powerhouse in the Ballintubber team, and he received good assistance from Vinny Keane, James Horan, James Donovan, M. Sheridan and J. Murphy.

Parke were well served by Pat McDonnell, Ml. Mulderrig, J. McMorrow, K. Joyce, P. Flynn, M. Mulderrig, Tom David.

The Under-16 competition did not seve up the same quality entertainment as the other grades. Castlebar took the Under-16 'A' — defeating Westport in the final. Paraic Devanney, Conor Waldron, Kevin Lydon and Declan Kilkelly excelled for the Mitchels.

Balla proved too strong for Burrishoole in the Under-16 'B' final. This competition suffered from a decision to transfer the final to an earlier date. For years it was played as a curtain raiser to the junior final. This was reflected in the gate for the junior final. Tadhg McNicholas, goal; Patrick Coleman, Martin Cawe, Peter Armstrong, Conrod Golding, starred for the winners.

The National Schools' competition was a long drawn-out affair, and the final was played in the month of July. Ballintubbere defeated Westport C.B.S. in the final, which was watched by a large attendance. Heroes for Ballintubber were James Horan, Vinny Keane, Franny Glynn.

JUNIOR

The Junior competition was, as usual, the main attraction. The 'A' and 'B' sections provided plenty of good football and schedules were adhered to.

Breaffy were strongly fancied in some quarters to take the title, and confirmed their favouritism by finishing top of section 'A', closely followed by Islandeady. Kilmeena ended up in third position. Ballintubber and Burrishoole contested the Junior 'B' final on a wet evening in July. Ballintubber succeeded in containing a strong Burrishoole team in the end.

Kilmeena easily dismissed Div. 'B' runners-up, Burrishoole, and thus qualified for a semi-final showdown with old rivals, Islandeady. In a very low scoring game Islandeady emerged the stronger, and qualified once again for the final.

Breaffy had no difficulty in defeating a disappointing Ballintubber outfit in the second semi-final.

INTRIGUING FINAL

The stage was set for an intriguing final between Islandeady and Breaffy. Islandeady were fit and ready for the big occasion. A few early attacks sent shivers through the Breaffy team, and when Stephen Sweeney almost knocked Breaffy goalkeeper, Pat Tuohy, into the net with a pile-driver, it was only a matter of time before the Breaffy defence was breached. Referee, Martin Walsh was in the spot to see a square infringement. From the resulting penalty, Brendan McCormack blasted the ball to the net.

Breaffy were down, but not out, and when Vincent McDonagh fisted the ball to the net, it looked as if they might make a fight of it. However, Islandeady with a slight wind advantage in the second half, lost no time in wrapping this one up. Stephen Sweeney was the target man in action, and he proceeded to show how points should be taken. The final score was Islandeady (2-7), Breaffy (1-5).

Islandeady's best performers were Michael Herity, the evergreen John Fitzgerald, speed merchant, Paraic Rice, Pat Moylette and Michael McCormack. Breaffy lacked ideas, but still Stephen Kelly, Eugene Cawfield, Sean Skeffington, Pat Tonra and Paraic Walsh did their best to stem the tide.

Congratulations to Micheal De Burca on managing an All-Ireland winning team in his first year in the position. We had some wonderful performances from Tomas O'Grady, Burrishoole, and some clinical free-taking by Pat Walsh, Ballintubber.

Tommy O'Malley did a superb job as trainer of the Under-21 team.

Sam for Mayo in 1986!

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The Minor Achievements

From 1970—1985

AS I look back on fifteen years as Secretary of the Mayo County Minor Board, the memories come flooding back — memories of famous victories; of bitter disappointments; of great displays; of lacklustre performances, and above all, of the lasting friendships and companionships that it has been my pleasure to form during that time.

"Naturally, one tends to remember the "good times" when success was our lot, but in so doing let us not forget that many Mayo teams during this period gave of their best, and never reaped just reward for their efforts. If in the following few lines I tend to dwell on success more than on the times when things did not go well, I do not intend, in any way, to cast aspersions on the teams, or the mentors who did not go all the way. The vast majority of them gave of their best, and nobody can ask for more.

The Late Paddy Waldron

I first became Secretary of the County Board in 1970, when the late Paddy Waldron from Ballyhaunis was chairman. As I was new to the job Paddy gave me every help and encouragement that was possible, and certainly made the road much smoother for me. His untimely death left a great void in the County Board, one that has been very hard to fill. May he rest in peace.

Joe Mulrooney was my immediate predecessor, and he also left me with a difficult act to follow. Mayo did not distinguish themselves in 1970, being ousted from the Connacht Championship by Galway.

Distinguished T. J.

Paddy Waldron was chairman in 1971, one of Mayo's glorious years. Having won through to the All-Ireland final, we faced Cork in the decider. I remember that day, and the great displays given by Ger Feeney, Con Moynihan, 'Tick' Higgins and J. P. Keane (captain). T. J. Farragher (selector) distinguished himself, both on and off the field, and it took us some time to find him during the celebrations that night in the hotel.

Happiness Is . . . Sean Duffy's Face

Mick Griffin minded the net that day, and he was later to become a selector. It was my first experience of being part of an All-Ireland winning team, and the look of joy and happiness on fellow selector, Sean Duffy's face is a thing not easily forgotten. Cork put up a stubborn resistance, but in the end we won through.



BY SEAN REILLY,
Minor Board Secretary.

"Another "first" for me was the cavalcade of cars from Dublin on the Monday afternoon. I will always remember the rousing receptions we got going through every town and village in Mayo that night. It certainly made all the hard work and sweat worth it.

History Repeat?

Our next appearance in the final was in 1974, when once again we were pitted against Cork. Playing against the breeze in the first half we were happy to turn over only two points in arrears, but an unfortunate second half injury to Stephen Sweeney was the cause of our downfall, and Cork extracted revenge for 1971.

During this year's (1985) final when Cork were also two points to the good at half-time, I had a flashback to 1974, and I was worried that history was going to repeat itself. One disappointing note about 1974 was that while staying in the Burlington Hotel were surrounded by supporters and well-wishers on Saturday night, but on Sunday night they were not in evidence, but I suppose to the winners the spoils.

Big Tom

I will now skip forward to our next All-Ireland appearance in 1978. It will be remembered for Tom Byrne's two great goals, which swung the game around, and left both the Dublin team and supporters gasping in disbelief. However, the game was also memorable on other accounts. One asks the question, would those great scores have come about if Jimmy Lyons had not been injured allowing 'Big Tom' in as substitute? How many people remember that Sean Warde got "save of the year" for his effort against a Kieran Duff blockbuster?

The great display of captain Adrian Garvey will long be remembered. Many of the present Dublin team played in that match, and this prompts the question how many of our minors of that day are at present doing duty on our senior squad? Paddy Muldoon was chairman that year, with A. Garvin as team trainer, and to me the highlight of the whole thing was the marvellous way that the people of Achill, ably directed by fellow selector, Padraig Seoghe, welcomed home their heroes, O'Malley and Warde.

Barren Years

Again in 1979 we were into the semi-final, and again Dublin were the opposition. In my opinion we had a better team than in 1978, but luck was not with us on the day, and Dublin extracted revenge by one point for the defeat of the previous year.

1981-1984 were "barren" years for Mayo's young footballers, for not once during that time did we capture a Connacht title. We had many fine players during this period, but a mixture of ill-luck and players being off-form on match days, left us without a Connacht crown for those years.

What can I say of 1985? It was the year that an unfancied Mayo team went all the way, guided by Mick Burke, Seamus Cox, Val Bryne, Sean Clarke, John Hopkins, Tom Nevin, P. J. McGrath, Mick McHugh, Eamonn Munnelly, J. J. Tolan and company. It is hard to believe that the same Mayo team who struggled so hard to overcome Sligo in the first round, and Galway in the Provincial decider, could "up their game" so much to run out worthy All-Ireland winners. Nobody "in the know" really believed, at the outset, that they could do it, but such is the power of commitment, dedicating and self-belief that in the end they captured the ultimate minor honour. To Michael Fitzmaurice and his men, to trainers, Mick Burke and Martin Connolly, and to the other unsung heroes, a hearty 'comhgairdeachas'.

Criticisms

One of the criticisms that have long been laid at the feet of the Mayo minor selectors is that they tend to choose their players from the bigger, more successful colleges. It has been said that all a young man has to do is pull a St. Jarlath's jersey over his head and he is an automatic choice on the minor team. Other players, it has been said, are equally good, but because their club teams are not as successful, they have very little chance of selection. I utterly refute this allegation, and I can say, without fear of contradiction, that if he is good enough, regardless of whether he plays for St. Jarlath's, St. Nathy's, St. Colman's or for the smallest rural club — that player will get his place.

Another criticism is that the selectors tend to favour their own sons or relatives to the detriment of others. If a selector has a son or relative in contention for a place, the selector is asked to leave the room while that position is being filled. There is nothing parochial about the Mayo Minor Selectors — long may it continue to be so.

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in 1986.

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STEPHENITES CELEBRATE — By SEAN RICE

Urban Rule, O.K.

ONE would not have given tuppence for their championship chances. Almost two decades had passed since the senior trophy last rested on a Ballina sideboard. In the intervening years the once proud Stephenites touched a historic nadir, depressed, disjointed, discouraged ... dismissed from every championship by almost everyone they met.

Ironically, the club itself flourished. Facilities were improved for the greater comfort of players and patrons. Events like the GAA Congress and the Association's Centenary Welcome Home Week were hosted with enviable professionalism. Yet their football floundered in apathy. To enter their centenary year as senior football champions would have been the wish of every Ballina person, but scarcely the expectation.

OLD GLORY RENEWED

It must, therefore, have been something special for those who watched old glory renewed at Charlestown a few weeks ago when the Stephenites clawed their way back to the top with victory at its narrowest over Ballaghaderreen. It was their thirtieth title and won against the odds.

Quite frankly in not one game were they firm favourites, not even when they met Aughamore in the first match of the competition. Over the past decade or so the championship had been dominated by rural teams ... mainly Garrymore and last year's champions, Knockmore. Rural rule had become the norm. Urban teams like Ballina, kingpins of Mayo for the first thirty years of this century, and Castlebar Mitchels, who won five titles in a row in the 'fifties, like Claremorris even, were overshadowed by the upsurge in rural standards.

GARRYMORE RECEDE

It was evident for the past couple of years that Garrymore, although always a formidable force, were receding as the old established players bowed out one by one, and this year they were beaten by finalists Ballaghaderreen.

But holders, Knockmore, showed no signs of diminishing form when they beat Hollymount at MacHale Park. They looked a good bet to take their third in a row with all the old reliables, including even Peter Hughes well into his forties, lacking nothing in spirit.

There were other sides to be considered also ... maybe not for the top spot, but perhaps for a place in the shake-up. Belmullet, Castlebar, Kiltane, Lacken, Crossmolina, Ballintubber ... all had shown signs of progress, of maturity and appetite. And all but Crossmolina and Kiltane got over their early rounds.

THE PRELIMINARIES

Tourmakeady had beaten Mayo Gaels in the preliminary round but were themselves beaten by Ballintubber in the first round proper ... a Ballintubber side that showed flashing signs of advancement, having now qualified for the quarter finals.

In that same preliminary round Ballaghaderreen beat Parke, and Ballinrobe surprised Crossmolina at MacHale Park. And in the first round proper, Belmullet elbowed out Kiltimagh. Lacken accounted for Claremorris, and Castlebar, back from their American trip, defeated Kiltane rather narrowly in a replay.

In that first round also Ballyhaunis almost surprised Davitts, and the two finalists, Ballina and Ballaghaderreen, qualified for the quarter-finals at the expense of Ballinrobe and Garrymore.

THE QUARTER-FINALS

It was in those quarter-finals that the mighty took a tumble. Belmullet, with Willie Joe Padden in regal form, created the biggest surprise by dethroning Knockmore comprehensively. Tired limbs had for once refused the summons of willing minds. Old soldiers began to fade. Some may be back again next year, but if not, they'll be remembered. The McHales, the Wards, the O'Neills, the Hughes ... they have served the club well.

Although they were still rather suspect there was, to be sure, an element of surprise in Ballina's win over Davitts and it was in that match for the first time that a flicker of hope flared for Ballina. They had done pretty well to overcome Davitts.

ALARM BELLS

So, too, had Ballaghaderreen in crushing Castlebar's expectations. In almost every championship for the past five or six, the Mitchels' promise has far exceeded their achievements. They have striven to regain their old dignity, but some



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The men who almost downed The Dubs!



The Mayo senior team and substitutes, defeated by Dublin in the 1985 All-Ireland semi-final replay at Croke Park on Sunday, September 8th. Back row, left to right: Sean Lowry, P. J. McGarry, Tom Byrne, Peter Ford, Martin Carney, Willie Joe Padden, Jimmy Bourke, Eugene Lavin, Frank Noone, Padraig Brogan, Liam McHale, Sean Maher, Gabriel Irwin, Billie Fitzpatrick. Front, left to right: Des McGrath, Eddie Melvin, Henry Gavin, Kevin McStay, Dermot Flanagan, John Maughan, T. J. Kilgallon, Noel Durkin, Eugene McHale, Johnny Monaghan, Anthony Finnerty, Liam Nyland, John Finn. *(Western People Photo).*

Maigh Eo - The Connacht



MAIGHEO: The Mayo team which won the 1985 Connacht title. Laistiar: Sean Lowry, Pet

T. J. Kilgallon. I dtosach: Kevin McStay, Noel Durkin, John Maughan, Henry Gavin (C

Senior Champions of '85



er Ford, Martin Carney, W. J. Padden, Eugene Lavin, Frank Noone, Jimmy Bourke,
apt.), Dermot Flanagan, Eugene McHale, John Finn.

Maigh Eo - U-21 Champions of Connacht



Brian Kilkelly (captain) pictured with some of the U-21 panel after winning the Connacht title. Other members of the panel were unavailable when this picture was taken.

vital element has failed to fuse with their existing preparations. The alarm bells must by now have been heard.

The fourth game ended in a draw between Lacken and Ballintubber but when they met again Lacken were seen to have benefitted better from the drawn game and their victory was less than difficult.

Lacken, county finalists the previous year, looked certain to make it again this season when they led Ballaghaderreen by two points with only a few minutes left in their match. They had been the more imaginative side at Charlestown, lacking nothing, it might be said, except perhaps a little good luck.

EFFECTIVE POLICING

With P. J. McGarry effectively policing Noel Durkin and Anthony McGarry, Tony Kearney, Michael Collins, Sean Clarke and Joe Collins in great form the North Mayo side were set for victory.

But then, in a twinkling, Noel Durkin struck with a great goal forcing Lacken to search for a draw which they got when Joe Collins kicked a point from a free ... leaving them deadlocked at 1-8 each.

The game between Ballina and Belmullet also ended in a draw at six points apiece. A late resurgence by Belmullet earned them a replay but their form never reached the standard they had set in defeating Knockmore and they were glad to get the chance to try again.

Nor did they regain that form in the replay despite some good performances by Willie Joe Padden, Tom Reilly, John Gallagher, Michael Togher, Eugene Walsh and Dave Donoghue and they succumbed to the better all-round performance of Ballina Stephenites.

CLOSE ENCOUNTER

The other replay was another close, exciting affair with Ballaghaderreen demonstrating their capacity for survival, having won greater return in scores for less possession. Lacken failed to convert their outfield dominance into scores and paid a pretty heavy price in the end, losing by a single point ... 1-7 to 0-9.

Thus it became a final between two of the oldest clubs in the county ... although one far outweighed the other in success. Ballina had won 29 titles, most of them in the early decades. Ballaghaderreen had won one ... in 1972. Yet it was the East Mayo side who looked the stronger. They had done better over the last nineteen years since Ballina recorded their last title. If somewhat overshadowed by teams like Garrymore and Knockmore, they were still higher on the estimate table than Ballina.

BALLINA'S GOALS

Each had a brace of Mayo stars: Kevin McStay and Liam McHale for Ballina; Dermot Flanagan and Noel Durkin for Ballaghaderreen. The balance still pointed towards the East Mayo team. But it was the newest Mayo star, Liam McHale, who was to make the biggest impression. His performance was the cornerstone of their victory.

Ballina's goals, however, or three of them, came more from defensive errors by Ballaghaderreen than from Stephenites' creativity. Those three, scored inside four minutes, shattered the Ballaghaderreen dream at the beginning of the second quarter. It was as if the gods had conspired against them. Not for one moment over the first fifteen minutes did such an eventuality look remotely possible.

The losers were then playing like winners, authoritative, competent everywhere but in marksmanship. A single point was their sum total in that period and, although they were playing against the wind, it was a niggardly return.

Then came the three Ballina goals, each a surprise, each a painful stab in their hopes, but a welcome boost to Ballina's confidence. Kevin McStay, Brian Molloy and Brian Williams were the scorers and they lifted the Stephenites from a point behind to eight in front.

McBRIEN GOAL

It was a sitaution that demanded immediate redress. But by now Liam McHale had begun to shine at midfield, to field cleanly, to set up movements, to link back and up front; in short, to become the central figure in the game and a barrier against Ballaghaderreen's resurgence.

For all that the East Mayo team did come to within a point of Ballina, mainly through a goal by Tony McBrien. And having done so they had plenty of time to bridle their urgency, to take stock.

But even then the shock tremours of those three goals had not abated, concentration not fully restored. And as if sensing that vulnerablity, Ballina struck again, this time with the best goal of the match. A centre by Martin McGrath; possession by Paul McStay, a shift to the right and a blistering left-footed shot. A fine goal.

Ballaghaderreen came back again near the end. Two mighty points had been scored by Dermot Flanagan; Noel Durkin was playing his heart out at midfield, and Martin Towey, the O'Mahoneys, Neilis Foley and Declan McGarry in defence. They deserved to draw level. And it looked as if they might forge ahead. But the Stephenites had come too close to let it slip now. In those last few minutes all of them played with renewed confidence. And Kevin McStay's last point from a free proved decisive.

STRONGEST SECTOR

If that victory was unexpected it is to Ballina's credit that they approached each game as if it were the last, learning from it as they went, using the knowledge and a growing confidence to clear other obstacles. Their backline of Padraic Ward, Gerry Leonard, Michael Kelly, Peter Heffernan, Eddie Melvin, Tommy Lyons and Liam Higgins was their strongest sector and that they were able to curtail the opposing forwards without giving away frees is a tribute to their discipline.

Jimmy Browne's last few minutes were his best, and most vital, just when Ballaghaderreen were beginning to gain a grip, and Liam McHale had begun to tire.

And if the forwards did not figure too highly on the points list their vigilance paid off. The McStay brothers, Kevin and Paul, with two vital goals, Brian Molly and Brian Williams the other goal scorers, Ivan Heffernan and Martin McGrath ensured a victory that was welcomed in almost every corner of the county. Yes, it is nice to see them back.

But spare a thought, too, for Ballaghaderreen whom the gods spurned. They have it tougher than any other, down there in the Roscommon town, cut off almost from the rest of the county. This looked to be their year. Fate decided otherwise. They deserve a turn at the top. ●

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VOCATIONAL SCENE

PATSY NOONE, P.R.O.

FOR the past decade and a half the highlight of Vocational Schools football has been the performances of the county team. In that 15-year period (1971-1985) twelve Connacht inter-county titles have been annexed, and All-Ireland honours on three occasions — 1971, 1975 and 1982.

Although the 1985 side regained the Connacht title after a lapse of one year, they failed to maintain the high standards set by their predecessors. In the Connacht semi-final they were unimpressive when making heavy work of beating Galway by 0-7 to 0-5 at McHale Park.

In the Connacht final played at Ballina they showed that they had the individual talent, but not the team work when they struggled to overcome Sligo by 1-9 to 0-5.

Their All-Ireland semi-final opponents, Cork, had shown impressive form when winning through in Munster. Fears expressed beforehand that Mayo might suffer a heavy defeat were well-founded as a fitter and better prepared Cork side dominated the game to run out easy winners by 0-17 to 0-3. Long before the end Mayo had accepted the inevitable but players like Declan Moran, Pat Naughton, Padraic Garrett, Conor O'Reilly, Tomas Grady and John Kenny battled bravely to the final whistle. A great effort will be required in 1986 from all concerned if Mayo are to challenge for All-Ireland honours.

On the domestic scene, however, all was not doom and gloom. The senior A championship provided some memorable games. Crossmolina and Castlebar got the better of Achill and Lacken respectively in the semi-finals to qualify for a repeat of the previous year's final, which Castlebar won, thanks to a late goal.

FULL-BLOODED

Before a large crowd in James Stephens Park, Ballina, both teams served up a full-blooded display, neither of whom spared themselves in seeking to capture the Archdeacon Reilly Cup.

With four minutes remaining Crossmolina seemed poised to exact revenge for last year's defeat, but little did they realise that history was about to repeat itself. Castlebar's Michael McNicholas was hauled down as he careered towards goal, and referee, Bobby O'Connell, had no hesitation in pointing to the penalty spot. Up stepped McNicholas to take the kick, and amidst all the tension he cooly slotted the kick to the corner of the net, to take a two-point deficit into a one-point winning margin.

In fact, shortly after the interval, Crossmolina held a seven points advantage, but the Castlebar comeback was inspired by an earlier goal from their scoring hero, McNicholas.

CASTLEBAR STARS

Castlebar had other stars in Kevin Fadden, Wally Flynn, Jimmy McHugh, Ger Duffy, Eugene Caulfield, Dara Dunne, Ollie Cunningham and team captain, Pat McHale.

There may be some compensation for a gallant Crossmolina side in that they provided the man of the match in Sean Mangan. Others to shine included Kevin and Michael Heffernan, Pat Naughton, Johnny Leonard, Vincent Loftus and T. P. Leonard.

In the Connacht semi-final Castlebar faced the holders, Tuam, and although they played reasonably well, they went under by 3-8 to 1-6 to a better endowed Tuam side.

THE DOUBLE

Davitt College made it a Mayo double, when their juveniles (Under-15) defeated Lacken at Knockmore. With players of the calibre of Tom Gibbons, Declan Staunton, Val Jennings, Padraic Lunn, Pat Ludden, Declan Kilkelly, Walter Conway, John Flannery, the Castlebar school should be challengers for further honours next year. Again the losing side provided the man of the match. On this occasion it was Lacken's full-back, David Kelly.

In the junior (Under-16) grade, Kiltimagh edged out Lacken after a titanic struggle. It took three games to decide the destination of the title. Kiltimagh have promising players in Michael Carroll, Ger McNicholas, Paul Gallagher, George McNicholas; while Kevin Maguire, Padraic Keane, Pat Bilboe and Kevin Mahady were the Lacken stars.

In the Connacht final Kiltimagh had to bow to the superior strength of the Galway City side, Moneenageisha. They can feel proud of their efforts that they can compete against, and beat schools with many more students on their rolls.

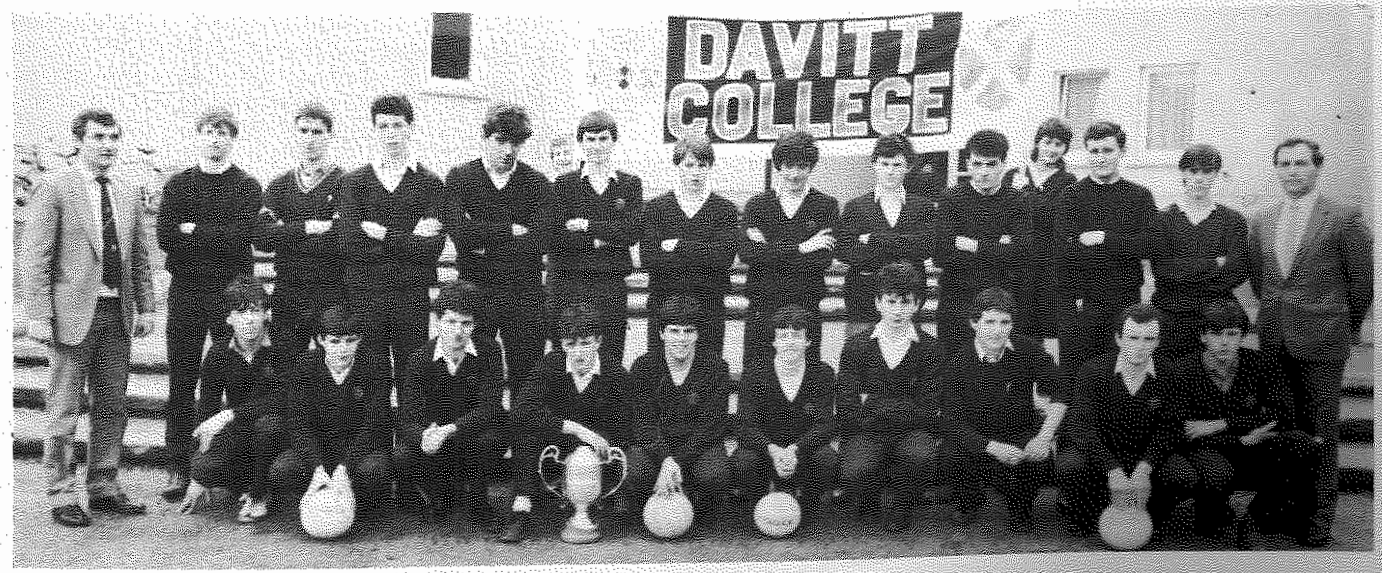
HOUR OF GLORY

In the 1st year competition Belmullet retained their title at the expense of Westport, and it is expected that they will challenge for junior and senior titles over the next few years. Belmullet made it a double with victory in the senior B competition.

Swinford enjoyed their hour of glory when capturing the juvenile B crown, defeating Rossport in the final.

Finally, all Vocational Schools extend their congratulations to the Mayo Minor team on their All-Ireland success, and to Manager, Mick Burke (teacher in Kiltimagh). We are proud that our students are contributing to the successes of Mayo teams, and in particular, minor captain, Michael Fitzmaurice, and team members, Tomas Grady, Padraic Garrett and Declan Moran.

Officers: 1985/1986: Chairman, Fr. Michael Flynn (Lacken); Vice-Chairman, J. J. McNamara (Achill); Secretary, Michael Herr (Crossmolina); Treasurer, Paddy Walsh (Ballina); P.R.O., Patsy Noone (Castlebar).



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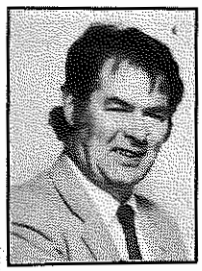
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Mayo, God Help Us:

Kerryman Micheal Ó Mhuircheartaigh says Mayo will win All-Ireland soon!



I often heard the expression "Mayo, God help us" in Kerry but I never succeeded in my efforts to trace its origin. Perhaps the county's poor record in the All-Ireland roll or honour — three senior titles in one hundred years, would do as the explanation in an emergency but would hardly stand up to close scrutiny. For some reason Mayo's name is always linked with the best in football and certainly in the year under review their standing in the order of merit is closer to the top than at any time since the heavenly days of the late 'forties and early 'fifties.

I was fortunate enough to witness many of Mayo's exploits during those great years. My first All-Ireland final was that of '48 — Cavan at their best, struggling to hold out against the coming team, Mayo. My stand was Hill 16 and what a place to be that day with the greatest gale that ever blew on All-Ireland day blowing directly from Canal to Railway. Naturally, most of the action took place around the Railway goal and I can still "see" Tony Tighe's two first half goals in the area and Mayo's four in the second half. But my most vivid memory of the day is of the late close-in free awarded to Mayo when they trailed by one point, 4-5 to 4-4. I "see" Padraig Carney standing back as the referee placed the ball on the 14 yards line a little to the right of the posts. All of Cavan was camped in the goal line in anticipation of a 'short' free. As I gazed down from the Hill Carney seemed the essence of coolness as he sidled up the ball. It rose, was heading 'home' until Mick Higgins stepped forward to intercept and save the title for Cavan. My sympathies were very definitely on the side of Mayo and I have leanings towards the county ever since — a case of first impressions being lasting!

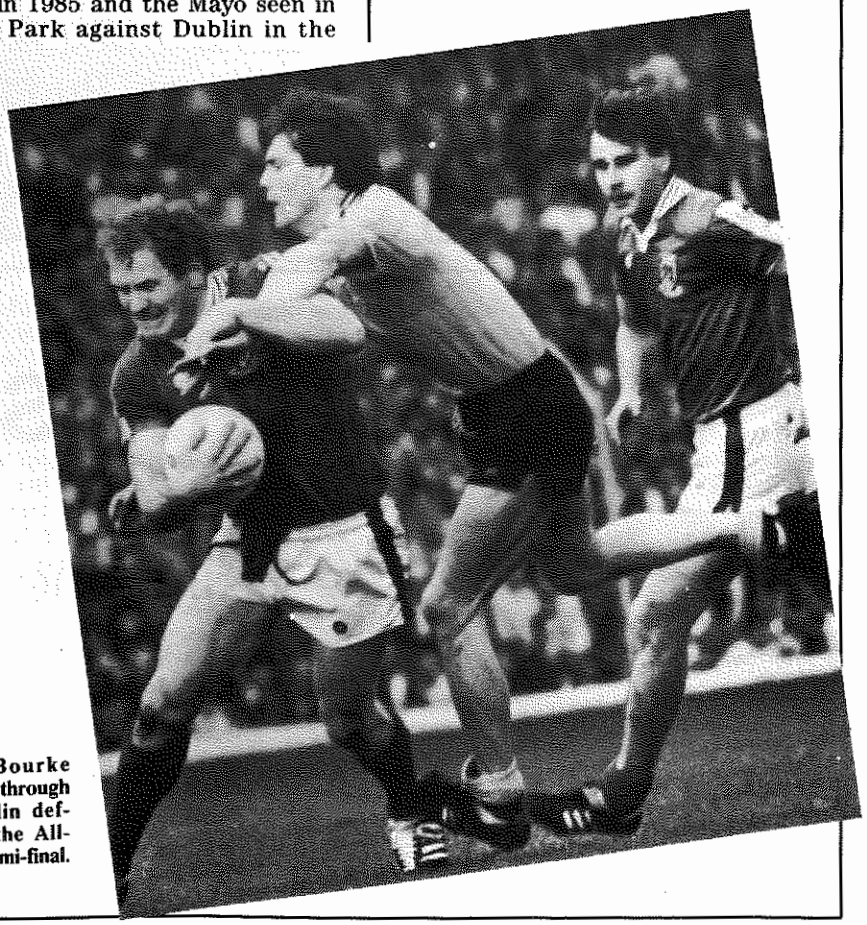
Curiously, I have thought of that day on many occasions during the past few months as it has many parallels with 1985. Football-wise both '48 and '85 ended in glorious failure for Mayo and as the former had happy sequels in '50 and '51, I cannot resist the temptation to forecast that Mayo "God help us" will soon capture the senior All-Ireland title once more.

The Mayo men of that early era had an abundance of skill and more importantly the spirit to fight back when all seemed lost. They displayed these traits frequently and the setback of a loss was always deemed temporary and used later as a spur to greater effort. These qualities made them great champions in 1950 and '51 and Kerry were one of their victims along that glory road. The counties met in the semi-final of '51 and they played a thrilling draw. The much-envied replay record of the Kingdom did not prove a deterrent to Mayo on the second attempt as men like Tom Langan, Paddy Prendergast, Padraig Carney, Sean Flanagan, Mickey Flanagan and a host of other stars endeared themselves to the public with a brand of fast exciting football that they themselves obviously enjoyed as well.

The modern breed showed themselves to be worthy of special attention this year. Often in the immediate past I had heard it said that Mayo teams were "soft touches" once they came outside Connacht and were generally content with the title of good losers. That theory has found its grave in 1985 and the Mayo seen in Croke Park against Dublin in the drawn and replayed All-Ireland semi-final had the skill and steel of earlier generations. Progress to the very top is a distinct possibility provided they accept the challenge of even greater endeavour. There must be no looking back in satisfaction — only as a source of inspiration and it is worth recalling that many of the great champions tasted cruel defeats before gaining top awards by refusing to quit.

There is no scarcity of examples — Down won their first-ever Ulster title in 1959 but were routed by Galway in the semi-final. Yet in '60 and '61 they were hailed as the greatest champions in decades. The equally talented Galway three-in-a-row team of '64 to '66 were All-Ireland final losers in '63 and when Offaly made their initial breakthrough in '71 they had the experience of a 1969 final defeat as a powerful ally and such a force was once more with the Offaly bunch that snatched the 5-in-a-row from Kerry as

▶



Jimmy Bourke breaking through the Dublin defence in the All-Ireland semi-final.

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Best wishes to Mayo team.

recently as 1982. No need to dwell any further on that aspect — the future for Mayo is bright if they yearn for it with sufficient conviction.

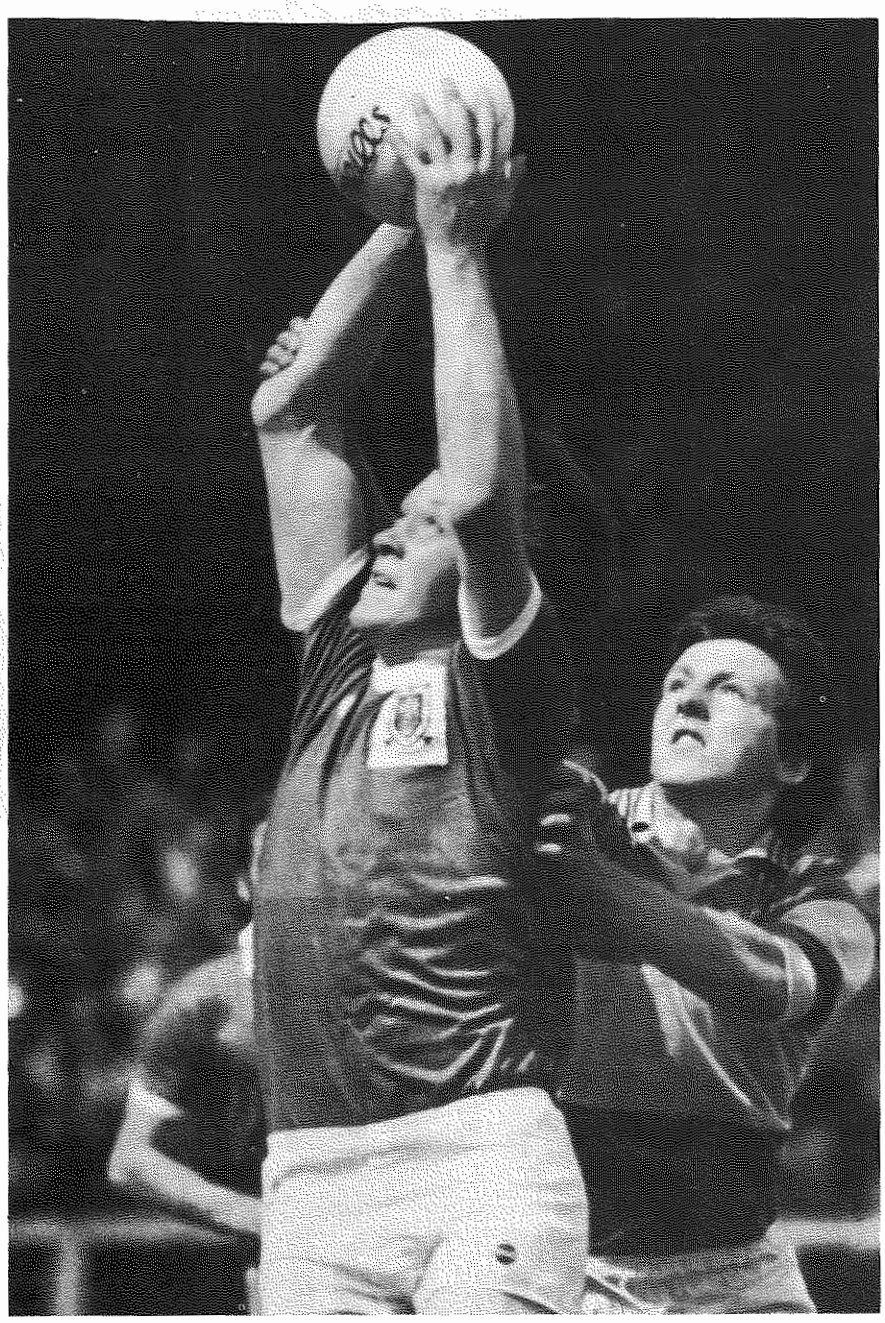
Looking forward in confidence has always been part of the Kerry make-up. Harking backwards, nursing ifs, buts and might have beens is seldom indulged in as reality is respected and allowed to rest in the knowledge that nothing will alter it anyway. But the future can be manipulated and planned for and it is never too early to commence. For the sake of the self proclaimed "best supporters in the land" I hope that Mayo are already a few strides ahead of the pack in pursuit of the infinite truth of football — the All-Ireland senior title of the approaching year.

During the past two years I have had a little connection with Mayo's rejuvenation process. For some time I have been in charge of Kerry players exiled in Dublin and during the past ten years alone such stars as John O'Keeffe, Ger Power, Pat McCarthy, Charlie Neligan, Paud O'Mahony, Jack O'Shea, Mick Spillane and Vincent O'Connor have come under my care. A lot of hard training has been their lot over the years but an understanding that it had to be enjoyable and jovial was ever present. Football as a means to a greater quality of life was the theory that pushed these thoroughbreds to the heights of excellence achieved. We never harboured secrets that were worth concealing and so several lesser known lights "worked out" with us from March to September each year.

TRAINING SPINS

SOMETIME in the Spring of '84 I was approached by one Dermot Flanagan concerning the possibility of a few Mayo 'lads' joining us in training. Being a believer that a good lawyer is an advantage to any squad I and the other stable members agreed and so Dermot Flanagan, big Tom Byrne, Kevin McStay and a few other stragglers entered our ken. From the outset they fitted in like a pair of good gloves. It is a well accepted fact that Mayo people possess a high level of intellectual capacity and so it did not take long for the new boys to figure out when we were serious in what we said and when we were not. Our propensity to talk about September in March was quickly understood and, indeed, hijacked by themselves in the Spring of this year. This in itself was a good indication of Mayo's intent at the start of this year and I have a distinct notion that it will be stronger come next Spring.

At any rate, the presence of Mayo players at our sessions during the past two seasons has been an incalculable value to the Kerry lads. They brought competition to the elements of training and heading Dermot Flanagan in a sprint became an item for the diary and such as Tom Byrne's prowess at contesting the high ones with Jacko that we seriously spoke one night (in his absence!) about the possibility of having him transferred to Kerry at a future date. And, indeed, any one that ever watched the amazing skills of Kevin McStay will realise why Mick Spillane often wished that the diminutive army officer be sent to the Lebanon or elsewhere for the duration of the football season.



T. J. Kilgallon displaying his fielding ability.

And so during that time great friendships developed, with each taking a big interest in the progress of the others and helping one another in the affairs of life, as well as football. They have yet to confront each other in serious contest but I have no doubt that when the occasion arises it will be enacted in the true spirit of sport. Perhaps that occasion will come in September, 1986. Kerry have already identified a motive — 3-in-a-row, a feat achieved by the county on only three occasions in the past and that is not good enough anymore they say!

Could Mayo be the final opponents on the third Sunday of September? It is a possibility well worth considering and it is also worth remembering that victory for Mayo would make their players welcome in the Kingdom for ever more as Kerry's conquerers of the past will readily assert. It is a philosophy of play not easily understood in many places but it is part of the county's tradition by now. Mayo, God help us, may be the next to join the band — after all have not all other leading counties conquered Kerry in a final at some time or other!

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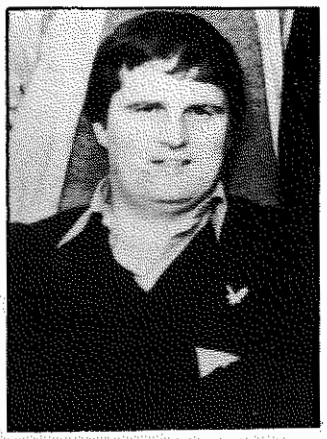
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The Purchase & Development Of A Football Field



THE purpose of this article is to provide a guideline concerning the purchase and development of a playing field. This may seem elementary, and unnecessary to many people, but speaking from my own experience with Garrymore, which immediately brought me into contact with many other Clubs experiencing similar problems and obstacles in purchasing and developing their Football Field.

BY JIM NALLY (Garrymore).

The Garrymore saga began in the early '70s when a six-acre field was purchased from the Land Commission. It contained free draining soil of mainly clay and gravel. It was left undeveloped until 1982 when a Committee was set up to monitor the development. They received a number of tenders from contractors. The first wise decision taken was to ignore the costing but to put emphasis on the quality of work likely to be carried out by the contractors. By coincidence the highest tender happened to be the contractor who had the best knowledge of pitch development as distinct from land reclamation.

EXPERT ADVICE

Our pitch contained 4" to 5" of topsoil, underneath a layer of gravel and stones. Work began in May, '82, the topsoil was skimmed off in one heap and re-spread over the playing area to a depth of 6" and levelled to a gradient of 1 in 200 to one angle in field to facilitate drainage. This was completed in approximately one week. We had a beautiful surface for seeding in June. A number of incidents occurred which were to have an important bearing on the long-term condition of our pitch. It rained heavily for a few days which caused flooding in a few spots. The surface lacked bounce and seemed rigid, we were told by some experts that time and the work of earth worms would loosen up the soil. But we sought the advice of John Mulqueen and Pat Finnerty of An Foras Taluntais for their professional assessment. They dug trial holes to test permeability, etc. Their recommendation was to rip the whole field a meter deep and meter spacing as the machinery had caused compaction of the soil. After much discussion and a strong wave of opinion to refrain from ripping, after all the field was ever free draining, but we persisted and followed the expert advice and had the field ripped.

We proceeded to remove the stones, weeks and weeks of work went into removing the stones. Exactly 14 months later the pitch was again ready for seeding which was duly completed in September, '83. Lime and 10-10-20 were applied and the field was rested until May, '84. (Grass mixture 50 lbs. Pyr. Rye Grass / Acre; 50 lbs. Rough Stalk / Acre, or 50 lbs. Smooth Stalk / Acre).

PRICELESS LESSON

Despite the inconvenience and the delay in completion we learnt a priceless lesson that silenced our most ardent critics, it was simply that if we ignored the expert advice our pitch would have ended up ponding and we would eventually have had to rip the field at extra expense and inconvenience. Today we have one of the best playing fields in the county, able to endure any adverse weather and playable for twelve months of the year.

The moral of the story is:—

(1). Select a responsible person or persons to supervise your pitch development.

(2). Examine all the required types of work, i.e., drainage, levelling, outfall, fertiliser requirements and the final basic dimension of the pitch and its exact location incorporating dug-outs, press box, scoreboard and dressingrooms. We caused ourselves some inconvenience by not examining the exact location of our dug-out in our initial plans and it made for some unnecessary work and expense.

(3). Seek professional advice on the type of work required to make the best possible playing surface and, most of all, stick by that advice.

The pitch is 170 yards by 90 yards. We then built our dressingrooms, referee's room — off the main Community Hall. A wire fence was erected around the field 4'6" high and 6" off the ground to facilitate grass-cutting. A tubular barrier 30' high and 50' wide was erected behind the goal with adequate supports, 2" diamond wire was used.

GRASS MANAGEMENT

A grass-cutter was purchased to mow the grass, again this is an area that is over-looked, the impression that any machine is adequate to cut the grass is a grave mistake. Unless the grass is cut regularly, especially the first season after seeding down, then you will end up with a poor carpet of grass which will have an affect on the playing surface and why go to so much trouble in surface preparation if such an elementary job as grass management is overlooked.

Permanent tubular pipes are inserted underground along the sideline for flags at the appropriate marks. The goal posts are also inserted in tubular pipes to facilitate removal for the closed season. The G.A.A. do not pay enough attention to ground presentation and these small, but important facilities, make the preparation of grounds a much more simple task.

The next problem we encountered was the legal ownership of the pitch. Even though we had got the field for 12 years we were still not the legal owners due to the many trials and tribulations of dealing with the Land Commission. It took an awful amount of pressure from many angles to finally obtain the deeds in 1984. Our entitlement to grants were dependent on legal ownership. This is a common problem for clubs and it can prove a costly affair legally apart from the hold-up in grants. Again we delegated one person the job of supervising the deeds and grants. It is necessary to appoint one or two persons for this enormous task, because of the complications, it takes fierce dedication to handle the numerous data and details with the legal profession, Land Commission, last but not least, our G.A.A. Authorities in Dublin.

BIG MISTAKE

The next big mistake that Clubs repeat regularly concerns land purchase and the "legal right of way". This may seem elementary again, but just examine the matter and it's unbelievable that Clubs fork hard-earned money for a pitch and then discover that they have not got a "legal right-of-way". They are trapped and end up paying out thousands for a "legal-right-of way", not to mention the legal wrangle that can sometimes result in Law. The next legal point concerns the access or right-of-way to the nearest out-flow or stream if drainage is necessary. Without this facility a pitch can be rendered useless, again big money may exchange hands for such rights and most astonishing of all is that this out-flow may not be accessable or available. Elementary, you may say, but I know a Club snookered after almost completing their field because of these complications. Again, the moral of the story is to examine all the implications, i.e., location, soil type, deeds and legal access to pitch, cost required to develop the field.

Appoint a select Park Committee to handle the task with the leadership qualities to "get things done". Don't get tied up in Club bureaucracy — you will encounter plenty of that along the line with the various agencies. Set yourself targets and meet these targets and tell yourself that your pitch is going on par with any park in Ireland and, finally, extract these leadership qualities from your Club, "get things done", and then your Club's life-long dream will be realised.

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The Intermediate Championship

— by Tom Kelly

Kilmaine Kingpins

THERE are twenty-five good reasons why Kilmaine emerged this season to be crowned the county's Intermediate champions for the third time since the series was introduced in 1965.

For that was the precise number of points they had to spare over the opposition on the way to the title. Kilmaine, a quality football side that possessed character and resolve, brought down The Neale, Swinford, Bonniconlon, Carramore and Burrishoole before capturing the magnificent James Sweeney Memorial trophy.

In the process they recorded an impressive scoring tally of 4-51 as opposed to conceding 5-23, a difference of 25 points.

It was a long and arduous haul for the South Mayo club before their objective was realised and, apart from their attributes of skill and power, they could not be said to have been consistent in terms of the level of performances they produced at every stage.

DERBY

Local adversaries, The Neale, were expected, in the preliminary round, to test them severely in a "derby" confrontation. Instead Kilmaine conjured a degree of excellence as they mowed down their hapless rivals by a crushing eleven points.

Hungry Swinford, however, were quite a different proposition in a gripping first round encounter at Claremorris. They were grossly determined, fast to the ball and slick in their use of possession. But unlike Kilmaine they were haunted by a significant failing ... the capacity to press home their territorial advantage in telling terms.

Although Kilmaine had less of the ball on that occasion they made better use of it and, in the final analysis, their ability to score from long-range was a critical factor. In fact it was a converted 35 yards free in the dying moments by cool-headed Mark Butler that swung the issue by the narrowest of margins.

UNCONVINCED

That they had survived Swinford was in itself a testimony to the potential of Kilmaine, but their followers were scarcely convinced at that juncture that their side had the stuff of which champions are made.

Kilmaine also bordered close to the edge of oblivion in the quarter-final showdown with Bonniconlon, finalists the previous year, on a sodden surface in Castlebar.

They stuttered and stammered in search of some sort of rhythm as passes went pathetically astray and shots at the target were abysmally poor. The critical period of the game was the final ten minutes, for Kilmaine, with a series of scores early in the second half, seemed to be coasting to victory until Bonniconlon substitute John O'Donnell finished a neatly-worked goal. The score reduced the margin to a point and for a while it seemed Bonniconlon, galvanised by the goal, would take the initiative and stamp their authority on the issue.

SHREWD McGRATH

Yet Kilmaine, to their credit, held out under the pressure and sealed the matter before the end with a long-range point from Joe McGrath, the side's most influential figure who used his experience and shrewd head to great effect.

It was with more than a small degree of trepidation that Kilmaine faced Carramore, a side that had been making a name for itself in the league and previous round championship wins over Castlebar and Ardnaree, in a much-awaited semi-final clash.

But the match fell flat on its proverbial face, with Kilmaine hammering out a handsome nine-point triumph. They could never have expected it to have been so easy, but they were by far the better balanced and more accurate shooters. Again Joe McGrath had been the star but, even after winning by such a margin, Kilmaine were hardly busting with enthusiasm and confidence for the final.

FORMIDIBLE BURRISHOOLE

And, in any case, they could never have afforded to have approached the final in such a good mood, for they were to face a side with a formidable attacking formation ... Burrishoole.

The Newport-based outfit had knocked away a remarkable total of 10 goals 21 points on the road to the decider against Balla, Achill and Louisburgh. Despite having played one game less than Kilmaine, they had still scored two points more, and only a fool could ignore such evidence. Kilmaine, however, had a slightly better defensive record than Burrishoole in statistical terms, although the margin was so small as to be irrelevant.

And those who prescribed to the thinking that there would be very little between the sides at the end of the final hour were absolutely correct ... Kilmaine's margin of triumph was just two points. It was as good



Kilmaine, County Intermediate Champions, 1985.

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and exhilarating a final for which could be hoped, played on a crisp day in Castlebar's lush-green MacHale Park.

Burrishoole, who did not win the title since 1966, got off to an explosive start and were 1-2 clear before Kilmaine mustered their first point in the 13th minute. Then the class of Joe McGrath surfaced again. He crashed away a spectacular goal, followed only minutes later by a Frank Macken drive which ended in a corner of the net to give his side the lead at the break.

MIDAS TOUCH

Kilmaine continued to rampage early in the second half and the midas goal-scoring touch of Michael J. Mullen struck once more. The effect was shattering for Burrishoole but, from somewhere deep inside, they found the inspiration to battle back five brilliant points in rapid succession to reduce the gap to a point with just six minutes remaining.

But their enormous efforts were all in vain as Kilmaine, exhibiting both nerve and concentration, held firm in the face of adversity to clinch a memorable success with a converted long-range point by Mark Butler under pressure.

Kilmaine, in the end, were worthy champions and, quite honestly, they left nobody in doubt of the fact.

Joe McGrath with 2-13, and Mark Butler on 0-19 shared the side's top scorer's honour in the series. The others on target were Des McGrath 0-6; Frank Macken and M. J. Mullen 1-1 each; Eamon Walsh 0-4; Mickey Murphy, Jimmy Dooley and Mick Burke 0-2 each; and M. J. Hughes 0-1.



Michael Sweeney presenting the James Sweeney Memorial Cup to the Kilmaine Captain, P. J. Hughes. Watching the historic presentation is Mayo County Board Chairman, Paddy Muldoon.

SURPRISE PACKETS

The biggest surprise packets of the campaign were, perhaps, Louisburgh whose achievements in reaching the semi-final stage raised a few eyebrows. They demonstrated great determination, application and technique in defeating Ballina convincingly in the opening round, and Killala by 1-6 to 1-3 in the quarter-final.

A lot of teams, too, were probably expected to do better by their clubs. Moy Davitts might have been worth a good run, but they came up against the strength of Bonniconlon in the preliminary round and must have been bitterly disappointed by their single point defeat.

Westport also fell short of expectations, slipping to Killala in the opening round at Knockmore, while Charlestown suffered a shock when outmastered by Achill.

The only match to be replayed involved Kilmovee Shamrocks and Ardnaree with the latter coming through in the second match. Glenamoy and Balla were also forced to endure early exits, victims of Achill and Burrishoole respectively. ●

SOUTH MAYO SCHOOLS, 1985

KILMAINE HALL was the venue on March 19th this year for the meeting which revised the format and rules for the schools' competitions, 1985. Many teachers and delegates present expressed reservations about the structure of the competition as it had operated, which had led to a decrease in schools taking part. A completely new system was devised, thus (a) All schools were to be grouped according to the number of teachers in the school; (b) Only two schools could amalgamate; (c) Three divisions were set up, and schools had the choice of competing on their own or amalgamating with another school.

Division I

This division was for individual schools with five teachers or more, and for two amalgamated schools with a total of five teachers or more. Teams were 15-a-side with all G.A.A. rules applying.

Division II

This division was open to individual schools with three to four teachers, and for amgalmated two-teacher schools. This competition was 11-a-side. Any three or four-teacher school not wishing to play individually could amalgamate, but must move up to Division I.

Division III

This competition was for individual one to two-teacher schools, and was a 7-a-side competition. Any two-teacher school could amalgamate, and would move up to higher divisions, depending on the size of the amalgamation.

It was decided to run Division II and III on a blitz system, on a smaller pitch and with juvenile goalposts. The goalkeeper was also given the choice of taking the kick-out from his hands inside the small square, or from the ground on the 14-yard line after a score. During the year, many people expressed satisfaction with the new system.

Division I of the schools' competitions was probably the least competitive of all, with Ballinrobe winning their fifth title on the trot. However, the final scoreline of 6-5 to 0-3 does not do justice to Claremorris N.S., who were very much in the game entering the final quarter. Ballindine / Irishtown also competed in this division.

Division II in contrast was very competitive, and supporters saw some great games in Ballinrobe on Sunday, May 12th, and Thursday, May 16th, involving Gortjordan, Taugheen, Cong, Robeen, Neale, Shrule, Kilmaine, Mayo Abbey / Facefield and Roundfort. Most onlookers picked Robeen and Mayo Abbey / Facefield as potential champions, and what a sparkling game these teams did produce in the final. Experience and a vintage performance from their midfielders brought the cup to Robeen again, the final score being 2-7 to 2-2

Division III was also very competition, with Ballycushion, Gortskehi, Lehinch, Glencorrib and Cloonliffen in contention. Many favoured Glencorrib to take the title, but they were shocked by an excellent Ballycushion team in the semi-final. Ballycushion never reached the same heights in the final v Gortskehi, but proved the old saying that a game is never over 'til the final whistle correct with three late goals to win the final in an electrifying atmosphere. Gortskehi, clearly the better team on the day, will be anxious in 1986 to bring this cup home.

Many problems are still in existence at school level. Division I was very unsuccessful, and it is a pity that the Bord na nOg would not take a look at the possibility of organising a schools' competition at county level between the larger centres of population. Many schools in South Mayo are not taking part in the competitions, and clubs have a responsibility to look after schools in such areas. Attendances at schools' meetings are dismally low, and this is tragic, as new ideas are always needed. Schools' competitions could also be used in pilot schemes for the success or otherwise of new rules in the G.A.A. I would finally like to compliment all the teachers who donate so much of their time to schools' competitions, those who helped in the refereeing of the games, and those people from clubs and parent bodies who help to train teams, year in, year out.

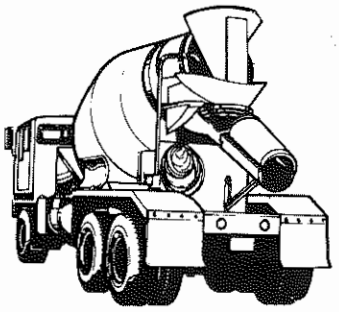
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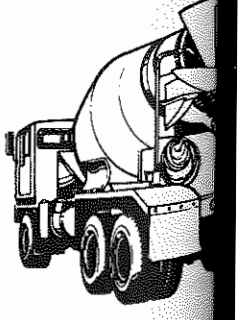
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Under-21 Team Manager, Tommy O'Malley

From County Player To Coach

MY first reaction to this request was that it was easier to train a team than to write about them. However, the persistent Christy Loftus allowed no room for escape, if I say anything amiss please hold my "esteemed" editor responsible.

As my playing days are drawing to a close it was a privelege to be asked to continue making a contribution to the welfare of Mayo football. Consequently, I was pleased to accept the invitation of Christy O'Haire, Chairman of the Mayo Under-21 Board, to act as trainer of the Under-21 team, while at the same time mindful of the fact that it was a formidable assignment bearing in mind that the county had figured so prominently at national level in recent years.

Following a series of trials a panel of twenty-six players were selected and training began on a weekly basis in April, increasing to twice weekly for May and June in preparation for the first round fixture against Leitrim on 28th June. Leitrim did not provide very strong opposition and while Galway might bemoan missed chances in the Connacht final, being able to take your scores as the Mayo attack did on that occasion is a key element in fashioning victory. Derry ended our championship hopes but it took the Ulster champions 120 minutes to do so.

While I was deeply disappointed that we did not win an All-Ireland title, my experience as a coach has given me a new awareness of the dedicated work and commitment of the Under-21 Board. People like Christy O'Haire (Chairman), Mick Devanney (Treasurer), Willie Kelly, Pat Healy (PRO), Muriel Garvey, John Moran, Vincent Walsh (Secretary), cannot be commended highly enough for their services rendered so unselfishly. As a former county player I feel their contribution is not always given full recognition.

VERY CO-OPERATIVE

ALTHOUGH Liam O'Neill and his fellow selectors had a very busy season themselves I always found them very co-operative and helpful and this is essential if Mayo football is to progress in the right way. It would also be a grave ommission if I failed to thank Breaffy GAA Club for putting their facilities at our disposal at all times.

I found that sitting on the sideline in an official role is totally different from being involved as a player. Being unaccustomed to that role it is only natural that I feel I erred on one or two occasions. Conscious of the threat posed by Galway it is possible that the team might have peaked too soon.



Mr. Frank Kenny, President of the Connacht Council, presenting the cup to Mayo team captain, Brian Kilkelly.

The major problem I encountered was not one of my own making. The harsh economic realities mean that many of our players, who are third level students, have to emigrate during the Summer months to find employment and Mayo suffered accutely in this respect. Employers with the interest of Mayo football at heart might keep this fact in mind next year.

WORTHWHILE GRADE

WHILE there is a strong lobby advocating the abolition of the Under-21 grade I firmly believe that it serves a worthwhile purpose, by giving players a suitable grounding for senior level.

Finally, I have reserved my final comments for the players for whom I have the highest admiration. I found it uplifting that young men displayed such self-discipline in a world where the making of sacrifices is often frowned upon. Such commitment makes me feel that the future of Mayo football is in secure hands. ●



Mayo Under-21 team

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CLAREMORRIS MINORS:

A Class Apart

– BY TOM KELLY.

A substantial difference in class existed between Claremorris and the "also-rans" in the Mayo Minor Championship series.

Of the ten titles accomplished by the Club at Minor level, the team of '85 could scarcely be considered to have experienced a rough ride on the road to glory.

It was their all-round quality, strength in depth, and clinical finishing power that made it so.

Not even their most optimistic of supporters could have expected them to bring down the challenge of the holders, Crossmolina, with such handsome ease as 3-9 to 0-4 in the final at Charlestown.

On an occasion when the rewards were high for honest endeavour, Claremorris were, by far, the superior in virtually all areas.

And they wrapped up the issue in magnificent style with three goals during a dramatic five-minute spell near the end of the first half.

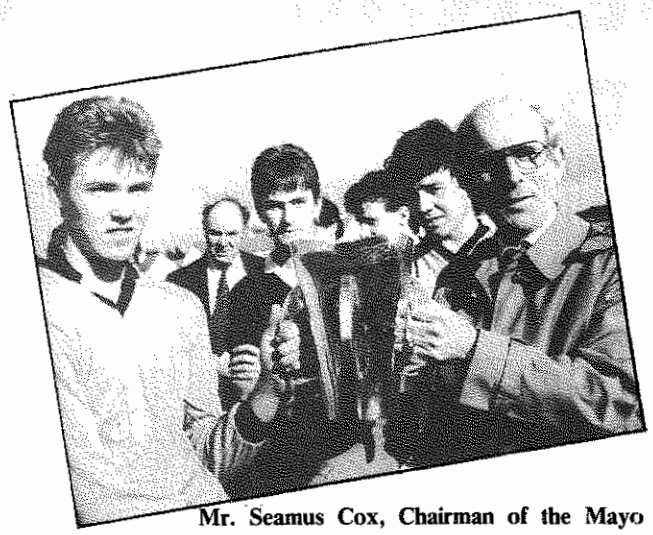
Little John French, a skilful and hungry player with considerable promise, launched the landslide when he slotted away a penalty-kick in impeccable style.

It was a blow that severely undermined the confidence and composure of Crossmolina, who had matched the opposition ball-for-ball until the twenty-third - minute score.

Now they began to slip badly, and another Claremorris goal by sharp John Merrick, finishing a sweet move involving Greg Maher, John Cummins and Paul Morley, pushed the holders deeper into trouble.

But Claremorris, tempering determination with craft, were not finished exploiting the vulnerability of their rivals under pressure.

Powerful John Cummins, converted to centre half-forward from his more popular role of minding the net for the county's All-Ireland Minor champions, displayed his technique and expertise in front of the target when he booted a goal of real quality.



Mr. Seamus Cox, Chairman of the Mayo Minor Board, presenting the Cup to Kevin Beirne, Captain of the Claremorris team.



The Claremorris team which defeated Crossmolina in the Mayo Minor Football final, at Charlestown.

It represented the last straw for Crossmolina and even when Claremorris were reduced to fourteen men for the last ten minutes when Michael Jennings was sent to the line for a dangerous tackle, the North Mayo side were unable to lift their game.

Part of that failure, of course, was Claremorris's determination not to yield an inch and, in that respect, the backline exercised a particularly influential role.

Indeed, it was a testimony to the sturdy and efficient nature of young men like 'keeper, James Brennan; Sean Slattery, Noel Creighton, Donal Murphy, in the full-back section, and half-backs, Frank Murphy, Michael Jennings and Kevin Beirne, that they only conceded six points between the final and semi-final.

The midfield combination of Greg Maher and Tom Quinn was a key factor in the success story, and they were both very creative and adventerous in their play.

John Cummins, Mark Gibbs and John French formed a half-forward line of punch and aggression, while full-forwards, Paul Morley, John Merrick and Anthony Joyce, displayed traits of greatness during the Championship campaign.

Claremorris had emerged out of the South section by crushing Davitts (Irishtown), in the Divisional Final, while they defeated Achill by 2-7 to 0-2 in the County Semi-Final.

One of the contentious aspects of the campaign regarded the poor showing by Crossmolina in the Final, for they had appeared a very strong outfit in ousting Swinford in their semi-final match by 3-11 to 3-3.

Congratulations to the Mayo G.A.A. teams on their success during 1985.

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South Mayo Scene

– BY SEAN MURPHY.

WHILE the central interest was focused on the exploits of the county's seniors and minors the playing fields of South Mayo also furnished moments of entertainment in 1985. Four Clubs, Hollymount, Claremorris, Davitts and Kilmaine had particular cause to be grateful as they recorded doubles.

The year's happenings began with the playing of the opening round of the Under-12 Championship, on Friday, March 29th, and the view that Ballinrobe, the reigning county champions, would be difficult to dislodge was fully vindicated when they overwhelmed The Neale in the final, by 10-5 to nil. Brendan O'Loughlin's charges went on to retain their county title by defeating Crossmolina by 1-11 to 1-6 at Kiltimagh and in mentioning the contributions of Michael Myers, Tony Walkin, Fergal O'Loughlin, Alan Flannery, the Captain, and Joe Lyons, one is deeply conscious of the fact that the achievement was basically a team effort.



Christy O'Haire, South Mayo Chairman.

A one-point defeat at the hands of Ballinrobe in their initial outing did not deter Hollymount from powering their way to an emphatic victory over Claremorris in the Under-14 decider. The importance of fostering the game at primary school level was fully borne out have and it occasioned no surprise that Ardil Jennings, Kevin Vahey, Noel Costello, Seamus Grier, Thomas Costello and Michael Cannon were the stars of the winning side. Hollymount supporters were in a jubilant mood again on the evening of August 5th, when the Club's Under-16 representatives mastered Garrymore by 2-7 to 1-4 in the 'B' final. The outcome of this encounter furnished one of the major upsets of the year in the division as Garryymore playing on their home ground and having beaten their opponents by 4-20 to 1-0, in an earlier round, were firmly fancied to prevail. On this occasion, however, Hollymount were a vastly different proposition, and the best endeavours of Garrymore's T. P. Clarke, Padraig Heaney, Michael Coleman, Jimmy Heffernan and John Slattery were nullified by the talented displays of Jarlath Jennings, at midfield; Joseph Varley, Kevin Varley, Geroge Stagg, Michael McEveney and Michael Costello.

A comprehensive win over Ballinrobe in the first round — 8-10 to 0-1 — was an early indicator that Claremorris were more than adequately served in the Under-16 'A' Championship and subsequent happenings bore out the truth of that viewpoint. Kilmaine, as is their want, provided spirited opposition in the final, at Garrymore, but in the end the skills of Anthony Joyce, a forward, who makes capital use of his chances; Mark Gibbs, Michael Keady, Kevin O'Brien and Noel Mulkeen fashioned a nine-point Claremorris success — 1-11 to 0-5. The Minors, fortified by the presence of four of the county side, Greg Maher, the consistent Kevin Beirne; Johnny French and Johnny Cummins, earned Claremorris their second title, with a resounding victory over Hollymount — 5-8 to 0-2 — in a lack-lustre final at Garrymore. The South champions, who were given their most searching test by Ballinrobe, in the quarter-final, went on to annex the county title at the expense of Crossmolina.

Davitts won the Minor League title for the third successive time, beating Kilmaine, who were badly hampered by the absence of Michael John Mullin, the free-scoring Mayo full-forward, by 1-10 to 1-4, in the decider, at Hollymount. This was no mean achievement in itself, but it must take second place to the performance of the Under-21 team in retaining the Divisional and County Championships. Mayo Gaels put up a brave show before succumbing in the semi-final, at Hollymount, by 1-10 to 0-7, and Davitts, playing with characteristic nerve and tenacity, ousted a disappointing Claremorris side by 3-7 to 1-4, in the final, at Garrymore. The dynamic Bertie Penny, Liam Niland, Michael Mitchell, Martin French and the Tracey brothers figured prominently for the victors and it certainly was not the fault of the wholehearted James Gilmore that Claremorris faltered.

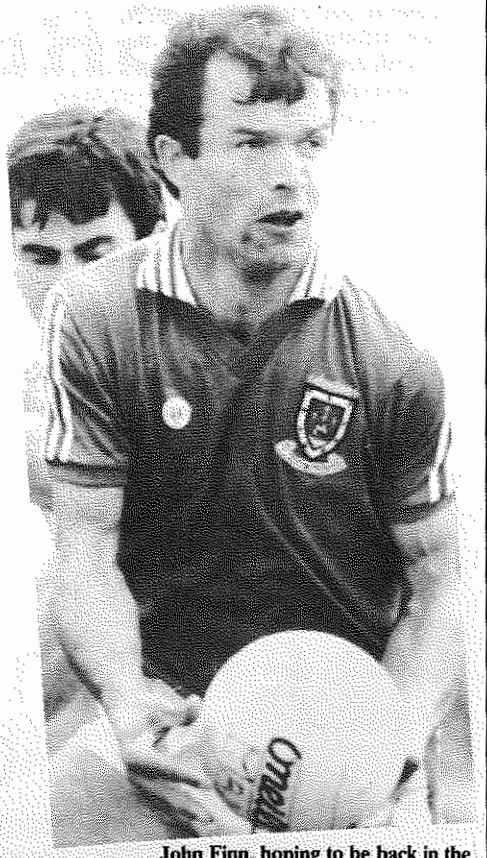
PROBLEM CHILD

The Junior Championship has become the "problem child" of South Mayo competitions in recent times and while the introduction of a losers's section, this year, did generate a bit more enthusiasm the situation is still far from being satisfactory. Shrule, the beaten finalists in 1984, were the general fancy and the anticipated happened when they beat Kilmaine by 1-10 to 1-3 in the decider at Cong. A twenty-fourth-minute goal by Shrule's Tony Mullin was the highlight of the hour and Dominic Craddock, the Captain; Ger Butler, Brendan Martyn, Tom Gibbons and Sean Frehan were also well to the fore in fashioning the victory. Better luck attended Kilmaine's effort in the losers' final and telling displays by the experienced Brendan Heneghan, Tom Macken, John McGrath, John Hughes and Tom Kelly proved the way for the eclipse of The Neale by 1-6 to 0-3. This was the second leg of a Kilmaine double which was initiated with a clear-cut win over Hollymount in the Og Sport decider, at Claremorris, on Monday, July 8th.

MATCH OF THE YEAR

The match of the year for the writer was the O'Mara Cup final, at Hollymount, on the first Sunday in October. This was one local "derby", where the reality matched the expectation, as fancied Hollymount and Carramore completed with zeal, befitting Kerry's Paudie O'Shea. Defiant Carramore came out on top by the narrow margin of two points — 0-6 to 0-4 — and as a smiling Johnny Burke received the trophy afterwards from Christy O'Haire, Chairman of the South Board, one sensed that the memory of the dismal performance against Kilmaine in the semi-final of the Intermediate Championship, the previous Sunday, had been relegated to the limbo of forgotten things.

It was a fitting climax to the year's activities.



John Finn, hoping to be back in the action in the New Year.

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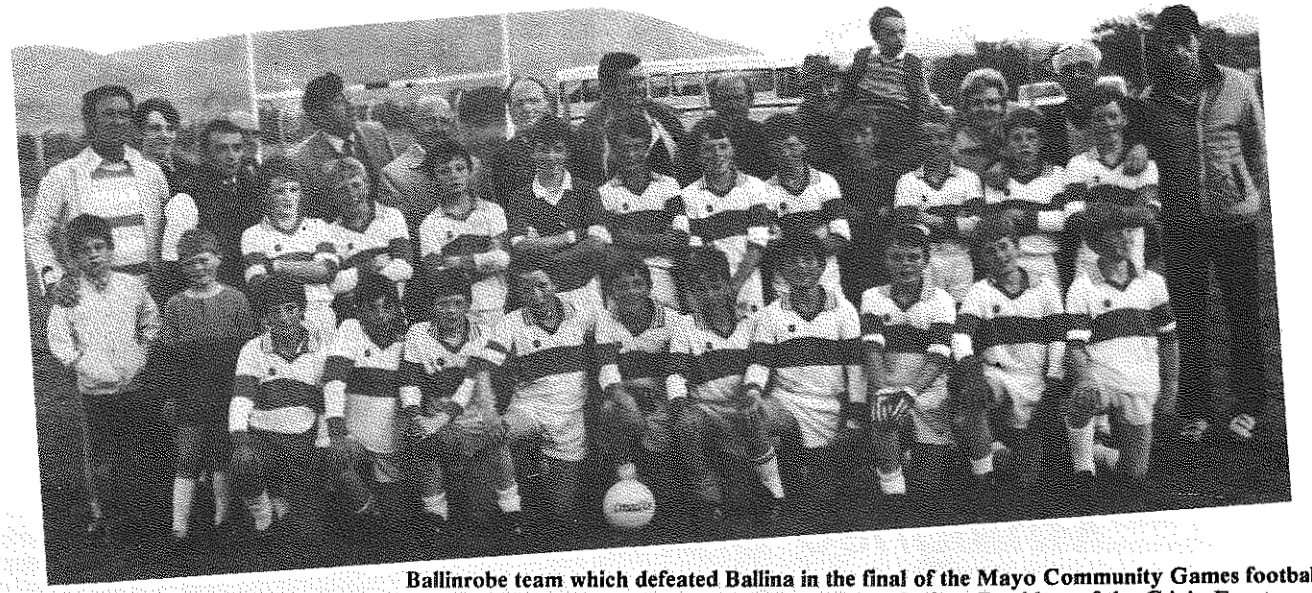
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Ballinrobe team which defeated Ballina in the final of the Mayo Community Games football competition at Foxford, refereed by Dr. Mickey Loftus, President of the GAA. Front row, left to right: D. Hughes, P. Jennings, F. Costello, J. Gannon, C. Jennings (Capt.), K. O'Toole, C. Moran, A. Flannery, F. Moran, J. Lyons. Middle row, left to right: T. Harnesse, M. Durcan, M. Myers, R. Kelly, P. Ward, F. O'Loughlin, D. Costello, T. Walkin, C. Finnerty, R. Devereux. Back row, left to right: K. Neary, P. Walkin, M. Keane (trainer), P. Hughes, C. O'Loughlin, J. O'Malley, D. Mickey Loftus, GAA President; J. Moran, Fr. M. Caulfield, T. Walkin, H. Sheehan, Irene Walkin, Br. L. McNamara, B. O'Loughlin.

UNDER-age football was given a tremendous boost during 1985 as the various Championships threw up some of the most exciting games as one could wish to see. Indeed, they were a far cry from some of the Senior, Junior and Intermediate games.

What was most gratifying about the competitions was that the honours were spread throughout the county and this can only be good for the game. To have some teams dominating the Championships only lessens the interest of weaker teams. It was an historic year, as well, for under-age football, as the Mayo Bord Na nOg organised a Fifteen-A-Side Minor League, won by Claremorris. They also organised an Under-14 League.

The Final was contested by Ballyhaunis and Claremorris, at Kiltimagh, and while Claremorris were well in control in the first half, the game turned out to be a very exciting one when Ballyhaunis came back at their opponents in the second half.

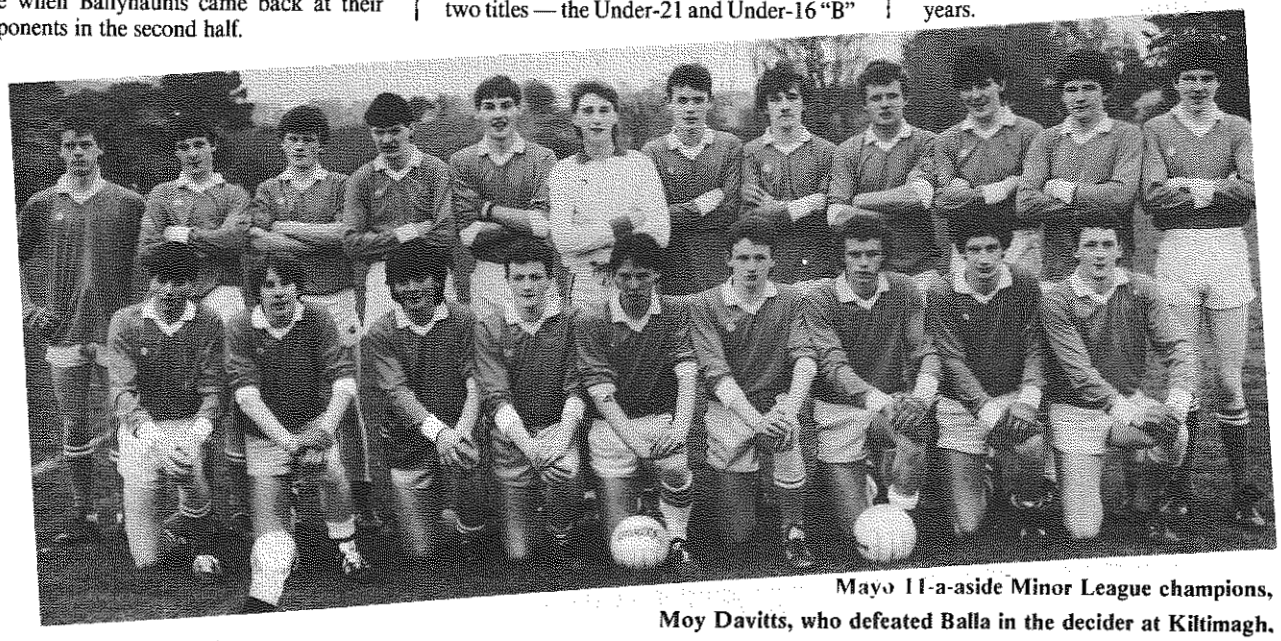
The Eleven-A-Side Minor League Final was also played that evening, at Gilmartin Park, Kiltimagh, between Moy Davitts and Balla. The East Mayo Club, who had won several N.S. titles over the previous number of years, came good in the decider and recorded a great victory over Balla.

Castlebar had to battle hard to pip a Moy Davitts outfit in the County Under-16 "A" Championship. The only pity was that the game was completed in almost complete darkness and this was very unfair to both teams for the large number of people who turned up for the game.

It was a year, too, which saw Balla take two titles — the Under-21 and Under-16 "B" titles. This was the first year that the Under-12 Championship was extended beyond the Divisions. Balla, of course, have been dominating the Under-12 "B" competition in West Mayo for the past three years.

The Under-14 League Final, at Ballina, between Crossmolina and Castlebar, was a thriller from start to finish. Indeed, the Mayo Bord Na nOg are to be complimented for having organised such a competition to cater for the footballers at this level.

Ballintubber won the Under-14 "B" Championship and this victory will give the young players of the area every confidence to try and build on the success in the coming years.



Mayo 11-a-aside Minor League champions, Moy Davitts, who defeated Balla in the decider at Kiltimagh.

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North Mayo, '85

– *BY LUKE FITZMAURICE*

1985 proved to be a very busy year, both on and off the field to d-Tuairscairt Muigheo. Our activities began at the annual general meeting in Ballycroy last December. Seamus O'Connor, the former Co. and Provincial left full-back of the 1960s was elected Chairman of the Division. The guest speaker was Dr. Loftus, President-Elect of the G.A.A.

North Mayo appeared in many national events in '85 — (a), Crossmolina Senior Scor Quiz team were narrowly beaten in the All-Ireland final and Feile na Gael Award won in Cork; (b), Knockmore 7-A-Side lost the All-Ireland final in September; (c), Terry Reilly won the National "Clubman Of The Year Award", and was also appointed to a Croke Park Committee (on Australian G.A.A. link); (d), Belmullet won the All-Ireland Gaeltacht Award for the second time in-a-row; (e), Ballina Stephenites hosted the G.A.A. COngress in '85; (f), North Mayo contributed its share of Minor, Under-21 and Senior players to the county teams in '85 that competed in the All-Ireland semi-final and final series; (g), The crowning glory for the Division came in March with the election of Dr. Mickey Loftus as Uachtaran, C.L.C.G., as Dr. Mickey was a former North Board Chairman.

The Board's Activities included publishing the monthly Club Newsletter, the annual Fixtures Diary and the high standard of the North Junior Championship Final programme. The policy of rotating the monthly Board meeting between the 17 clubs continued. A special Referees' Committee was organised and proper match report cards were issued in '85. The North Board Coaching Video for National Schools is on its rounds in the Division. In October another attempt was made to get hurling "off the ground" here, when the Co. Hurling Chairman and the Connacht Hurling Officer visited the Division. In November the annual Club Secretaries' Seminar was held. The speakers included John Prenty, Johnny Mulvey and Luke Fitzmaurice.

Club development is, I believe, a good barometer of Club strength; on this basis I can say that much progress has being made in 1985 in our 17 clubs. Belmullet has opened their dressingrooms; Ardagh opened its new pitch; Kilfian and Lacken have purchased land for development; Ardnaree has re-opened its football field and dressingrooms; Ballycastle and Kilfian captured their first-ever Bord na nOg titles in '85; Ballina, Moygownagh, Knockmore and Crossmolina have completed work on their stands. The North Club contribution towards the '85 training fund was £3,838. All Clubs were active in fielding teams in all grades of competitions in football. While Ardagh and Moygownagh dominate Camogie in the Division new Clubs will participate in the '86 Championship. Killala and Bonniconlon collected All-Ireland Handball titles again this year.

North Mayo sadly lost two excellent footballers in the past year. We extend sincere sympathy to the Mahady family and Killala Club in the sudden death of Michael Mahady. To the Loughney family and Lacken Club we offer our condolence on the untimely death of Joseph Loughney.

While the playing of our games is the first objective of every Club not all can share in the winning of the top honours. Listed below are the 1985 North Mayo champions (Referees in brackets) — National Schools' "A" — Ballina (John Cosgrove); National Schools' "B" — Killala (Willie Gordon); Under-12 "A" — Crossmolina (J. Herbert); Under-12 "B" — Ballycastle (Noel Murphy); Under-14 "A" — Crossmolina (John Irwin); Under-14 "B" — Ballycastle (C. Collins); Under-16 "A" — Knockmore (J. J. Tolan); Under-16 "B" — Kilfian (P. Rooney); Under-18 "A" Championship — Crossmolina (S. MacEil); Under-18 "B" Championship — Ballycastle (J. McAndrew); Under-18 Minor League — Crossmolina (J. Herbert); Under-21 — Ballina (S. O'Connor); Junior Winter League — Crossmolina (John Harkin); Junior Exclusive Cup — Moygownagh (J. Cosgrove); Junior "B" Championship — Ballycroy (P. J. Gilmartin); Junior "A" Championship — Lahardane (P. J. Gillespie).

In 1985 we began in North Mayo the Second Century of the Association's history by playing of Irish games and promoting our culture. We have urged players and officers to obtain the highest standards in sportsmanship and administration. In the North we enjoyed our Gaelic games in a spirit of healthy rivalry and comradeship between clubs.

Bua agus Beannacht on dTuairscairt.



Lahardane, North Mayo junior football champions.

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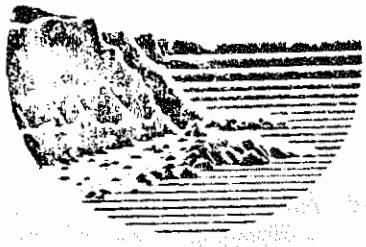
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Camogie In Mayo

THE year 1985 was a successful year for camogie in Mayo. Championship competitions for senior, U-16, U-14, N.S. and Secondary School grades were run off smoothly and efficiently. County teams took part in inter-county competitions at junior and underage levels.

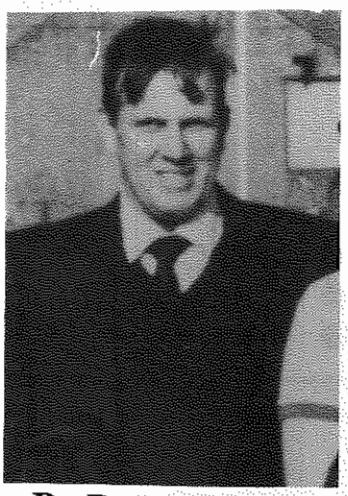
The county was represented by Marie Flanagan, Balla, in the Gradam Tailte Super Star competition held in Kilkenny in July.

Mayo represented Connacht in three events in the All-Ireland CCD talent contest. Clubs affiliated to the county board include Achill, Louisbrugh, Westport, Balla, Knock, Moygownagh and Ardagh. Camogie is also played in Gortnor Abbey, St. Mary's, Ballina; Mercy Convent, Westport; Louisburgh, Achill and Ballycastle Secondary Schools. Schools intending to promote the game in the coming year include The Quay, Ballina; Bofield, Kilmurray, Breaffy (Castlebar); Parke and Kiltimagh.

On the playing field two clubs, Ardagh and Moygownagh, dominated the county scene. Adragh winning the senior, Under-16 and Community Games titles. Moygownagh winning the Under-14 and N.S. titles. Mercy Convent, Westport, captured the Secondary Schools' competition.

At this stage one might ask what the future holds for camogie in Mayo? Can we achieve the glory of the Mayo teams of the 1950s when they won five Connacht senior titles in a row, 1953-'57; they also won the Connacht title in 1959 and went on to meet Dublin in the All-Ireland final. The last Connacht title was won in 1967. In recent times Mayo won an All-Ireland Feile na nGael competition in 1983. We have the talent in the county at the moment, but, alas, the county board have not the finance or the personnel needed to project this talent.

On behalf of the County Board I would like to thank all the GAA clubs who made their pitches and facilities available to the camogie teams during the year; the referees who officiated at games, the press and the organisers of this magazine for spotlighting the game of camogie.



By Bernie Finan

Mayo Camogie Board officers, 1985: Chairman, Bernie Finan; Vice-Chairperson, Mary McGreal; Secretary, Julie Loftus; Asst. Secretary, Mary Hefferon; Treasurer, Mary McGreal; PRO, Kathleen McAndrew.



Mayo Minor Camogie team, 1985 — front row, left to right: Maura McGreal, Fiona McDonnell, Grace Finan (capt.), Ann O'Shea, Stephnie Hope, Frances Staunton, Sheila Bredin. Back row, left to right: Angela Finnerty, Bernadette Staunton, Sandra Davis, Caroline Loftus, Sharon Herbert, Fiona Murray, Ursula Durcan.

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"Roll On September And The Sam Maguire"

– BY BRIAN McDONALD.

WHILE reading through some old Mayo Yearbooks here are some of the comments used in connection with the state of Mayo football — "Mayo Slump Again"; "Mayo Cling Too Much To The Past"; "The Disappointments Of The Past Have Been Many".

These comments reflected the Mental State of Mayo football until this year's performances came along and started the reversal of this line of thought.

Every year the Management of the team (at this time), put pen to paper and tell of their hopes for the New Year, and this has happened every year for as long as I can remember, however, the hope now has a real basis. This new hope has been evident throug-out the county and the optimism of the supporters has a very beneficial effect on the performance of the team on the field and in training. This upsurge of confidence in the players by the supporters reflects in their attitude on and off the field, and as we saw in Croke Park they play much better with that massive support behind them. This also makes the job of managing the team and planning its future development much easier — for instance — we now have players queuing up to join the panel and willing to undergo a number of weeks' training before we decide who is suitable. This will produce a more committed player, willing to work hard and give of his best, even though he may have to sit on the subs' bench for a period of time. The only promise that we can make to any player is that he will get a number of chances to prove himself.

Seamus Gallagher, Billy Fitzpatrick and Liam O'Neill work very hard to produce the right blend and we believe that if the basic fitness is there we can add the rest. The supporters may like to know that there were over 60 training sessions from March to October. There were a number of meetings — to discuss tactics — analyse matches — review training, etc., and all of these take up plenty of time. I am sure they can appreciate that this effort is geared to one thing and that is to bring the Sam Maguire Cup to Mayo.

What do we feel we have achieved this year? We have turned the corner in the sense that the team now believe in their great potential. We are thrilled to see personal improvement in each player on the panel — some have achieved spectacular gains. This increased performance level has to be maintained and we are determined not to let the bad old days creep back. If you speak to any of the players you will find a new awareness, both of themselves and of the task ahead. Nobody under-estimates the difficulties and we realise that the rehabilitation of Mayo football has a good way to go. We will certainly continue on the road that we have chosen and, after all, if Monsignor Horan can put an airport at Knock — in spite of dungeon, fire and sword (as the Hymn says), surely we can bring "Sam" back to the Plain of the Yew Tree.

The frustrations of Mayo football were evident this year as in many others. The low point of the year was in Limerick. Nobody will dispute that. Would you have liked to be on the Team Management or the Executive of the County Board then? — We were asked for an explanation and we had to face some hostile criticism. It is strange how out of such a reverse came a change in the relationship between the Team Management and the Executive of the County Board. This relationship is also something that has blossomed and became strong during the year. It is fair to say that the involvement, and I mean active involvement, of Sean Murphy and Mick Higgins, together with John Prenty and Chairman, Paddy Muldoon, has been an encouragement to the team and, as such, is more than welcome. This year will be remembered by one remarkable thing and was the conversion of the "knockers" to "helpers" — all sorts of helpful advice and interest was freely available — a most welcome change.





Kevin McStay

Another wonderful experience was the reception given to the players at training prior to the semi-final and the replay. This was a wonderful boost to morale. There was another reason for changing the venues around — we decided to vary the types of surfaces after using Balla Pitch all Summer — Charlestown (very dry); Claremorris and Westport (very greasy); Ballina (good surface — plenty of grass). Mr. McGee of the "Sunday Tribune", described this exercise as a "circus" — perhaps if he were humble enough to ask he might have had a different comment.

Christmas is a time for predictions. Naturally, I am not going to pull back now. We are on the road back and we intend to drive out the phantoms of the past and set up our own myths. In 1986 we will win the "Sam Maguire" — Roll on September.

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Showbiz And The G.A.A.

BY MICHAEL COMMINS

WHEN **Christy Loftus** asked me to write a few lines about the showbiz scene and the G.A.A., the first thing that came to mind was the **Jimmy Magee All-Stars.**

It's hard to believe that it's twenty-one years now since Jimmy started a "team" which has toured all counties and raised countless thousands of pounds for various charities into the bargain. Magee is an expert on sport. A bubbling character, who sparkles with brilliance.

The Magee All-Stars have included such familiar names as **Gene Stuart, Ian Corrigan, Doc Carroll, Brendan Bowyer, Dickie Rock, Brendan O'Brien, Erol Gill, Butch Moore, Joe Dolan;** members of **The Indians Showband; Larry Cunningham, Harry Ramsbottom, Brian Coll, Tommie** and **Jimmy Swarbrigg; Fr. Brian D'Arcy, John Glenn, Paddy Cole, Brendan Shine, Pat McGuigan** (Barry's dad), and many more.

The All-Stars reached such phenonmenal heights at one stage that a record, "Show-Ball Crazy", was brought out and topped the Irish Charts. It featured a commentary by **Michael O'Hehir.**

And, I'm told, the real crack was always at the after-match "cabarets". Even here, **Jimmy Magee** can always manage to steal the limelight. He's a born natural when it comes to "holding" a crowd . . . the wit and timing make him unique. I don't know the man personally, but I saw him in action at Paschal Mooney's wedding in Killarney. Magee knows his stuff okay!

DERMOT'S GLORY

Another very obvious G.A.A. connection is that of Dermot O'Brien, who captained Louth to their only All-Ireland success in 1957. Dermot had his own band for many years prior to emigrating to America last year. He is now in great demand in New York.

SIAMSA COIS LAOI

Siamsa Cois Laoi is probably one of the finest "new" examples of showbiz and the G.A.A. mixing together. The annual August Concert attracts huge crowds from all parts of the country and the profits to towards clearing the debt on Pairc Ui Chaoimh.

Oliver Barry, Manager of The Champions, Wolfe Tones and Bagatelle, is the chief organiser of the Siamsa . . . and, of course, he is a Corkman, too.

BIG TOM AND MONAGHAN

Big Tom McBride is one of the truly great giants of Irish showbiz. The extremely affable Monaghan man is a "holy terror" for G.A.A. games. At Tom's home, at Oram, a few miles outside Castleblaney, you'll find a big framed photo of the Armagh team that reached the 1977 All-Ireland Final. The Armagh border is only a mile away.

But back in the early 1960s Big Tom was an accomplished Gaelic footballer. He played a few games for the Monaghan Junior team. Suddenly, he got a "call-up" for duty with the Senior team. He had been selected at centre-field.

Tom takes up the story. "At that time, I was playing with Ken Kennedy's Band. We were beginning to "move" and there was a lot of travelling creeping into it as we had to go to other counties. I was selected on the Monaghan team, but didn't bother turning up! Not that I wouldn't have liked to continue playing football. It was just getting impossible to keep both going . . . and when it came down to a decision, I opted for showbiz".

Big Tom's loss to football was certainly Country Music's biggest gain. Tom McBride went on to become, possibly, the greatest attraction in Irish showbiz. Twenty years later he is still the most sought-after entertainer in the country.



Dublin's Brian Mullins and Mayo's Willie Joe Padden clash in this action picture, while Eugene McHale awaits the outcome between the two midfielders.

DIFFICULTIES

Football and Hurling, with regards to actual participation, can present enormous difficulties to people in showbiz. You can't, too well, go on stage with a broken shoulder bone, black eye or cut face!

But some of the top people in showbiz are great supporters of G.A.A. teams. **Tommie Flynn** of **The Conquerors** can always be found at Clare Hurling games; **Brendan Shine** is a "martyr" for Roscommon footballers; **John Glenn** is an avid Armagh supporter; **Big Tom & The Travellers, Paddy Cole** and **Pat McGuigan** can be seen at most Monaghan games; **The Furey Brothers, Paddy Reilly, Pete St. John, Brush Shiels** and **Wolfe Tones** are "big" into Dublin. They tell me **Dan The Streetsinger** and **Kevin Prendergast** follow Mayo. So, too, does **Ray Kennedy** of **Platform,** and **Vincent** and **Frank Gill,** and **Doc Carroll** of **The Royal Blues. Gene Stuart** and **Tony Allen** are strong Kerry supporters. **Paschal Mooney** is deeply involved with the Leitrim G.A.A. scene. **Gina, Dale Haze & The Champions** always rally to the Cork call, as does **Tony Stevens.**

Certainly, there is a very strong link between the showbiz fraternity and the G.A.A. Much of this also goes back to the days of the big Marquees, when G.A.A. Clubs usually ran their own Dancing Festivals and engaged the top bands and groups in the country. Many G.A.A. Clubs still book the top acts for their fund-raising dances.

In recent times **Neil Diamond** and **U-2** have played in Croke Park. Perhaps the G.A.A. also realise there's no business like showbusiness!

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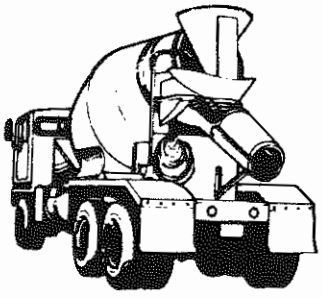
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O bunaíoch an comortas i ndeire na seascadaí tá cuairt tugtha aige ar mhoran chuile cheantar Gaeltachta, ce aisteach go leor nach raibh se i Maigh Eo fos. Ní i bhfad uainn an lá ach oiread go gcuirfear an sceal sin ina cheart, b'fheidir, mar gur leirigh cupla cumainn i Maigh Eo suim an comortas a eagrú le blianta beaga.

Ag cuimhniu siar anois air is gearr na blianta ag sciorradh tharainn. Ta se do-chreidte go bhfuil an Comortas os cionn 15 bliain ar siul agus é níos do-chreidte fos go bhfuil muid sa 3u gluin peileadoirí i saol an Chomortais fhein.

Is cinnte nach bhfaca na daoine oga a theann ag na cluichí faoi Chincis anois na chead-laochra a ghlac pairt ann ag imirt. Leithidí Aontoin O Cearuil agus Neillí Uí Ghallchoir as Gaoth Dobhair, Seamas Mac Gearailt, Liam O h-Uigínn agus Micheal O Se as Corca Dhuibhne, Gearoid O Finneadha as Baile an Tobair, agus Micheal O Scanaill agus Diarmaid O Luasa as Baile Mhuirne abair.

Bheadh cuimhne-eicint acu ar an ngluin-lair, mar a thabhartas muid orthu, ach mar a bhí ó thus tá gluinn eile peileadoirí Gaeltachta tagtha ar an lathair a bhfuil oiread aithne orthu ar fuid na tire, de bharr a bheith ag caitheamh geansaithe a gcontae, agus ata ina bparoistí fhein.

Bíonn na fir sin iad fhein le feiceail ar phairc na himeartha trath a dtagann an Chincis agus an Comortas Peile agus dar ndoigh roimhe sin sna comortais inmheanacha sna contaethe eagsula. Níl aon ghá Paidí O Se, Stiofan Seoighe, Stiofan O Connabha, Mairtín Beag Mac Aodha, ná Liam Seosamh Mac Phaidín a chuir in aithne do aon duine cineal suim ar bith aige sa bpeil Ghaelach.

Ta foirne Mhaigh Eo pairteach sa gComortas Peile on tus, ta se chomh maith dhuit a rá. Ar an gCeathru Rua sa mbliain 1973 bhuaigh siad an Chraobh Shinsir agus ar an bhfoireann sin bhí Tomas O Maille agus Gearoid O Finneadha, beirt a bhí ar fhoireann sinsir Mhaigh Eo ag an am agus a bhí le cheile arís ar fhoireann Chonnacht a bhuaigh chomh fada le cluiche Ceannais Chomortais an Bhothair Iarainn sa mbliain 1977.

Níor bhuaigh Maigh Eo an Chraobh Shinsir sa gComortas Peile arís go dtí an bhliain anuraidh, nuair a bhuaigh Beal a Mhuirthead i Rinn á gCuanach, choinnigh siad greim ar an gCorn aris i mbliana i gCorca Dhuibhne, ach fagfaidh muid an chuid sin den sceal ina ndiaidh, go dtí ar baillín.

Mura raibh foirne Mhaigh Eo chun cinn ó lae na seachtoidí go dtí tus na hochtoidí i Roinn na Sinsir i gComortas Peile na Gaeltachta, ní mba é sin sa Roinn soisir a bhí curtha ar bun anois agus iarracht á dheanamh feabhas a chur ar chaighdean na himeartha.

Smaoineamh eile bhí anseo ar eirigh leis agus ar cheann de na foirne a ndeachaigh se chun sochair doibh bhí boireann Thuar Mhic Eadaigh.

Ar dhuine díobh siud a bhí i bhfeidhil fhoireann mionuir Mhaigh Eo a bhuaigh Craobh na hEeireann i mbliana. Ag cuimhniú-siar duinn ar chuid de na cluichí a d'imir Tuar Mhic Eadaigh an uair sin, duirt duine de mo chuid comhleachaithe anseo i Raidio na Gaeltachta le gairid gurbh é Micheal a chead-smaoinigh ar dtus ar an gcineal stíle a chleacht Eoghan "an Bomber" de Liostun ina dhiaidh. Níl a fhios agam an bhfaca fear Bhaile an Bhuinneanaigh an Burcach i mbun oibre ar imeall na cearnoige do Thuar Mhic Eadaigh ariamh, ach cinnte níorbh iad a meid, a neart agus an meigeall an t-aon chosulacht a bhí eatarthu.

Bhí stíl-deas peile ag buachaillí Thuar Mhic Eadaigh na blianta sin, laidir mear sna cuil agus i lar na pairce agus glic dá reir sna tosaithe. Agus os rud a go raibh imreoirí de chaighdean Thomais Uí Eanachain agus Adrian O Gabhain acu níorbh iontas gur bhuaigh Tuar Mhic Eadaigh Corn Ghael Linn dhá bhliain as a cheile.

Siad Beal a Mhuirthead a sheas cliú do Mhaigh Eo sa gComortas Peile le cupla bliain anuas. Facthas leargas ar a sprid agus ar a ndíogras i nGaoth Dobhair sa mbliain 1982 nuair a bhuaigh siad chomh fada leis an gcluiche ceannais ait ar bhuaigh Baile Mhuirne as Corcaigh orthu.

Bhí siad i dTír Chonaill arís an bhliain dar gcionn agus chuaigh siad chomh fada leis an gceuiche ceannais. Ach arís eile ba í an teip a bhí i ndan doibh nuair a bhuaigh na Dunaibh as Tír Chonaill orthu theis am-breise.

Bhrisfeadh seo croí moran foirne, foirne nach mbeadh an mhisneach na an teacht-aniar iontu ata i bhfoireann Thuaisceart Mhaigh Eo.

Sa mbliain 1984 ba i Rinn á gCuanach i bPort Lairge a bhí an Comortas Peile. Ní raibh aon lag-mhisneach ar Bheal a Mhuirthead an t-aistir fada a dheanamh agus is cinnte nar airigh siad an bealach abhaile chomh fada agus Corn Aire na Gaeltachta agus Craobh Shinsir Chomortais Peile na Gaeltachta buaite acu don chead uair.

Ba mhó ná sin an gaisce a rinne siad a mbliana i gCorca Dhuibhne i gCorca Dhuibhne i gCiarraí nuair a choinnigh siad greim ar an gCorn sin agus nuair a bhuaigh siad ar fhoireann as Corca Dhuibhne a bhí ag imirt sa mbaile agus a raibh os cionn leath na foirne acu a bhuaigh an Chraobh Shinsir i gCiarraí anuraidh agus arís i mbliana.

Facthas an miotal a bhí i mBeal a Mhuirthead i gceart an Luan Cincíse sin ceann den breagan laethanta breatha athainig, mbliana Tomas Rua O Raghallaigh ag tiomaint na liathroide i bhfad thar lar na pairce ó imeall na cearnoige uair i indiaidh uaire... Sean O Gallchoir ag gríosadh a chuid fearaibh on líne leathchuil... Willie Joe ag eirí sna scamaill i lar na pairce . . . agus sna tosaithe Micheal O Tuathail ag leiriu go mb'fheidir go ndearna foireann an chontae botun agus dearmad a dheanamh air chomh luath agus a rinne.

I mbliana beidh Beal a Mhuirthead ag iarradh Craobh Shinsir Chomortais Peile na Gaeltachta a bhuachan don 3u bliain as a che-ile. Fear ar bheagan ceille a dearfadh nach n-eireoidh leo sin a dheanamh.

●

Congratulations to Mayo Minor, Under-21 and Senior Footballers on their magnificent achievements in 1985.

Wishing Mayo G.A.A. continued success in 1986.

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Making Greater Use of Irish Language

BLIAN MHAITH

Nach íontach an Bhliain a bhí ann. Níl barr an chnoic sroichte againn fos ach le cunamh Dé níl sé ró-fhada uainn.

Comhghairdeas ar dtus leis na mionuirí. Ba é an chead chluiche i gcoinne Shligigh ba dheacra. Uaidh sin amach níor chuir siad cos mícheart o thus go deireadh. Bhí muinín acu astu fein agus d'eirigh leo.

Bhuaigh Maigheo Craobh na h-Eireann Faoí 21 i 1983 agus bhuaigh na mionuirí i mbliana. Not bad!

I dteannta leis sin roghnaíodh an Dr. Micheal O Lachtnain mar Uachtaran agus Terry Reilly mar All-Ireland G.A.A. Clubman of the Year.

Bhí an dá lá ghrianmhara sin i bPairc an Chrocaighh go hAlainn. Tá alan i Maigheo ag suil go mbeidh dha dheireadh seachtaine againn ann arís an bhliain seo chugainn. Is cinnte, afach, nach dtabharfaidh Roscomain, Sligeach, Gaillimh, Liathdroim na Londain ticead saor don fhoireann sinsearach.

Tá bron orainn uilig nar ligeadh do Shean O Finn an taitneamh ceanna a bhaint as an dá lá i bPairc an Chrocaigh.

AN GHAEILGE

In a 1984 scientific survey conducted by the Irish Linguistics Institute (O Riagain agus O Gliasain), showed that 82% of respondents would like to use at least some Irish each day. The G.A.A. in Mayo is playing its role at Club, Divisional and County Board level with the help of the Oifigigh Gaeilge.

OIFIGIGH NA GAEILGE

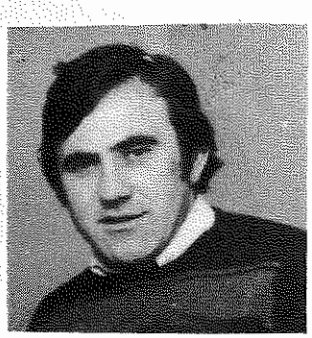
By the end of Bliain an Cheid, 1984, 70% of the Clubs within the county had appointed an Oifigeach Gaeilge. His or her role is to assist other Club officers and members, where necessary, in their efforts to use Irish on Club notepaper, advertisements, tickets, publications, tracksuits, clubhouses, pitches, and at meetings, functions, social gatherings, matches, training sessions, Irish nights, Scor na nOg and Scor Sinsearach events.

The Divisional Oifigigh Gaeilge are — Padraig O h-Ealaí (Tuaisceart Mhaigheo); Micheal O Cathasaigh (Iarthar Mhaigheo); Diarmaid O Cathain (Deisceart Mhaigheo); Gabriel O Laimhin (Oirthear Mhaigheo).

AN CLUB GAELACH

This competition, which was initiated by Proinsias O Maolmhuaidh, the previous Oifigeach Gaeilge an Chontae, has been adopted by Pairc an Chrocaigh and organised on a national level. The Gaeltacht Club and non-Gaeltacht Club within the county which make the greatest effort to use the Irish language and to promote Irish culture receive this award, i.e., £100 each. These two Clubs then represent Maigheo in the All-Ireland competition.

The closing date for this year's competition has been extended to 13ú Mí na Nollag and entry forms are available from the Oifigeach Gaeilge. Previous winners and runners-up in this competition are



GABRIEL O LAIMHIN,

Clar Chlainne Mhuiris, Beal an Mhuirthead, Daibheidigh na Muaidhe, Beal an Atha, Beal Atha h-Amhnais agus An Phairc.

AN SPORTLANN GHAELACH

The Club, whose clubhouse, dressingrooms and club pitch, display the greatest number of Irish language signs receives this award (£100). Ma's maith is mithid. Such signs are easily available at reasonable cost within the county.

The closing date has been extended to 13ú Mí na Nollag. Clubs who wish to enter must notify the Oifigeach Gaeilge. In the past Bealach an Doirín and Beal an Atha won this award.

AN SCOR IS FEARR

This award is presented to the Club which uses the most Irish when hosting the Divisional or County Scor na nOg Final. Marks will be awarded to the host Club under the following categories — Use of Irish Signs and Posters in the Hall; Use of Irish in the Scor Programme; Use of Irish by the Fear á Tí and Irish Language Atmospphere, i.e. use of Irish by officials, helpers, ticket-sellers, audience, siopa, tearoom, etc.

Winners to date include, Baile an Roba, Beal Atha h-Amhnais, Clar Chlainne Mhuiris agus Cill Mheain.

OIRTHEAR MHAIGHEO

Bord Oirthear Mhaigheo on the suggestion of Micheal O h-Uiginn (Cathaoirleach), will, this year, provide £50 and plaque to the Club within East Mayo, which does most to use Irish during the year.

GAEILGEOIR NA BLIANA

The "Western People" sponsor this award which acknowledges the efforts of the recipient to promote a greater use of the Irish language within his or her Club. The closing date has been extended to 13u Mí na Nollag. Nominations for Gaeilgeoir na Bliana, along with a resume of the nominee's efforts to promote a greater use of the Irish language, should be sent to the Oifigeach Gaeilge.

Mayo GAA Banner Competition Winner



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Former winners of this award are — Colman O Raghallaigh (Clar Chlainne Mhuiris); Sean O Gallchoir (Beal an Mhuirthead); Criostoir O Lachtnain (Burios Umhail); Proinsias O Maolmhuaidh (Clar Chlainne Mhuiris).

Tá an Coiste Chontae an-bhuioch don "Western People" as urrachas a thabhairt don chomortas seo. Congratulations to the "Western People" on recently winning a well-deserved Duais Speisialta in Glor na nGael.

THE PRINTED WORD

The Coiste Chondae advertises its matches in Irish and has tickets for functions printed in Irish. Chuir Criostoir O Lachtnain tus leis an nos seo agus ta Sean O Prionntaigh agus Micheal O h-Uiginn ag leanuint leis.

SEICLEABHAR GAEILGE

The Coiste Chontae uses an Irish language cheque book. Cuirfidh me geall libh go nglacann Padraig Bascuil le seiceanna as seicleabhair Bhearla freisin!

COMORTASAI EILE

The Coiste Chontae has also organised a Comortas Aiste and a Comortas Postaer.

Comortas Meirge (Banner Competition) — The winner of the Comortas Meirge (£100), organised by the Coiste Chontae, was Mr. Pat Commons, Clar Chlainne Mhuiris, with the manna — "Ta An Pheil Fior-Bheo i gContae Mhaigheo". Chabhraigh Mr. Adrian Garvey leis. Runners-up prizes were won by Muintir Mhic Gearraidhe, Be-al Atha h-Amhnais with the manna — Muigheo Ar Mhuin (Win) Na Muice"; Michael Kelly and Noel Howley, Rooskey, Beal Easa, with the manna — "Oscloidh Sam an t-Aerfort", and Proinsias O Duarcain, Cathair na Mart, with the manna — "Ta Leoin Liam Ocrach Structha o '51".

B'iad an t-Ath. Leon O Morchain, Ard Chomhairle, Criostoir O Lachtnain, Comhairle Chonnachta agus Uinseann Breathnach, Oifigeach na nOg a rinne moltoireacht ar an gcomortas.

GO RAIBH MAITH AGAIBH

I wish to thank Geraldine Collins (Mayo News); John Melvin (Connacht Telegraph); Terry Reilly and Ivan Neill ("Western People"); Sean Rice (Connacht Tribune); John Healy (Mayo Post), and an t-Uas Martan O Ciardha (Radio Na Gaeltachta), for the excellent coverage which they give our Irish language competitions.

BLIAINIRIS

Molaim na fograitheoirí sa bhliainiris seo a d'usaid Gaeilge ina bhfograí, go hairithe, O'Hara's Bakery, Barrett's T.V. agus Joyce's Bookshop as mo bhaile fein.

RADIO AGUS TEILIFIS

It was very heartening to hear live commentary on Radio Na Gaeltachta of the Beal An Mhuirthead v. Beal An Atha Senior Championship match. You might be interested to know that Radio Na Gaeltachta gives a run-down of Sunday fixtures on Saturday, at 11.30 a.m.; reports from Mayo Inter-Club matches during its Sunday afternoon programme and results of Mayo Inter-Club matches on its sports results programme at 7 o'clock, on Sunday evenings.

We should try to ensure that the commentaries for the televised All-Ireland Colleges' Finals should be in Irish because most of those involved have a good knowledge of Irish.

IT'S A SMALL WORLD

Tharla go raibh me ar chuairt chuig mo ghaolta i Chicago i righ an t-samhraidh. Bhí a fhios agam go mbeadh Mistealaigh Caislean a' Bharraigh ann thart faoin am ceanna ach ní raibh aon choinne agam go mbuailfinn leo. Shiuil me isteach in ostan agus ce bheadh ann romham ach leath Caislean ab Bharraigh. Dearfainn go raibh an-spraoi acu.

AG USAID GAEILGE

It's a great sign of the times to see our County Councillors advocating greater use of Irish at their meetings.

SUPPORT

When I became Oifigeach Na Gaeilge I didn't expect the marvellous support and goodwill which exists towards the use of Irish. This has been made evident to me in many ways. To mention one — all those who are prepared and eager to use the cupla focal at meetings, games or on the 'phone. As Padraig O Maolduin (Cathaoirleach), said to me the other day when we discussed displaying the winning banner in Aras Nally — "Ma bhionn beithioch le díol agat biodh se i lar an aonaigh agat".

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Mayo Sub P. J. McGarry On:

Tension And Ecstacy In The Dug-Out



IF anyone told me in January of this year that I would be on the Mayo panel, in this year, and win a Connacht Senior medal, I would have said they were crazy. As usually at the beginning of every year I was planning my annual trip to the United States, and this one was no different, having booked my flight to Chicago at Easter. Then, one Saturday morning, to my complete surprise, Liam O'Neill called, asking me to join the panel. To be honest, I was taken aback and could not give him a definite "yes" or "no" answer there and then. I asked him to contact me on Monday when I would have made up my mind.

I knew what I would have to miss, the commitment that I would have to give from the time I was playing with Mayo teams in the past, and the fact that the team was showing little prospect of winning a Connacht Senior Championship. So on Monday when Liam ran I said "yes", going by my heart, rather than my mind. My first introduction was to be a tournament match against Roscommon in Castlerea, and I was pleasantly surprised by the welcome of the other players who made me feel at ease. One felt a new air of commitment about the team, and a sense of loyalty, and I knew at this stage I had made the right decision to stay.

FROM CARNDONAGH WITH HOPE

IT was now down to hard training sessions which, for the first two weeks, were hell, sprints, all types of exercises, laps, etc., began to ache muscle one never knew existed. It did not help, at this stage, that the long travelling from Carndonagh had to be put up with, as driving tends to drain you mentally as well as physically. Still, the holidays were just around the corner. The preparation for the Leitrim match was going ahead nicely, with a number of challenge matches with other counties, as well as the usual training sessions. One of these challenge matches against Dublin, in Westport, will stick out in my mind, not only that we beat them, but that Martin Carney played a "blinder" at corner-back, and had carved out for himself a new niche in this new position — a position I suppose I myself had set my sight upon. So this was to be the beginning of my substitute career.

LEITRIM was to be our first match in the Championship in Carrick-on-Shannon, and the first half of this game left a lot to be desired. Flashes of defeat by Leitrim passed through my mind, and it was a great relief when the team put their act together in the second half. I can remember on that day how the Manager and Selectors did not get upset or lose the cool in that opening half, and had that faith in the team that eventually everything would come good in the second half, a faith that passed throughout the team, certainly to me from that day onwards.

ANXIOUS WAITING

NEXT the anxiety of waiting to know who we were playing in the Connacht final as Galway and Roscommon played a draw, with Roscommon the eventual winners, and everything from then on was geared to beating them in their own back yard. Training intensified with Billy and Liam putting us through our paces. Then we had a challenge match against Cork, in Limerick, in which Martin Carney received a leg injury, and I was called on as a substitute for the first time. To tell the truth, I was never as nervous coming onto a field, and it showed in that I fumbled the first few balls that came my way, but with the encouragement of the players around, especially Eugene Lavin, I began to settle in and enjoy myself.

LOWRY'S SPEECH

THE Connacht Final was a great occasion, and before the match we knew we were going to win, and Sean Lowry's speech before going out onto the field was as inspiring as anyone could ask to hear. The excitement in the dug-out was tremendous, so much so that some of us could have been concussed by jumping up in moments of ecstacy and hitting our heads off the top of the dug-out. There were none of the subs who wouldn't have given their right arm to get a run in that final, and I suppose we all envied Billy Fitzpatrick when he came on in the last quarter.

NOW the training started in earnest for the semi-final against Dublin. Crowds of people began to show up to our training sessions and this trend continued for the rest of the campaign. Then we drew the attention of the national press, and the maddening thing about them was the same question they all asked — "Surely we didn't think we'd beat Dublin"? — as if, by some divine right Dublin shouldn't be beaten by lowly Mayo and get into an All-Ireland Final. I can remember Noel Durkin in one such interview saying in passing that he hadn't been to Croke Park on any occasion, and knew once he had said it that they would make a meal of it after.

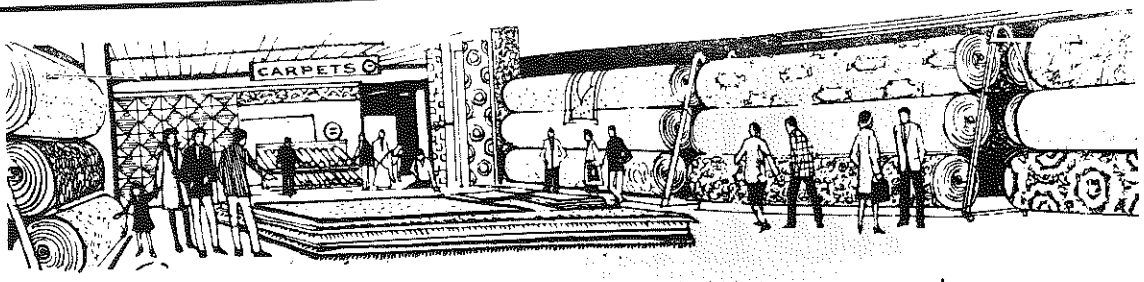
TRAINING FOR A PLACE

THE semi-final was a real nerve-wracking affair for anyone on the bench. You were more aware than the players of the crowd, their comment, and the cameras, and the early injury to John Finn was an added strain, as we were not sure he would last the remainder of the game, which he did courageously. This plus the closeness of the exchanges left one mentally drained after the game, as T. J. Kilgallon's last point gave us another chance.

WITH the replay and John Finn's position vacant, as well as a number of forward positions, training took on a new impetus. A lot of the players in the drawn game had not played to their full potential, and were out to correct this in the replay. Competition amongst the subs grew as well, as we became more aware of our importance to the team effort, and although we never know the day or the hour we must be ready and able if the situation warrants.

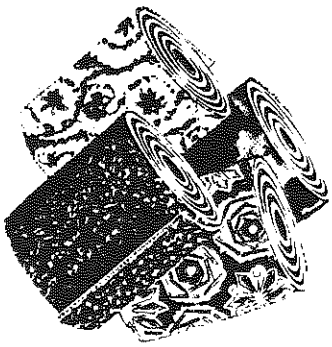
TRAINING NOT IN VAIN

JOHNNY Monaghan, Eddie Melvin and myself were all in line for John's position, and although Johnny was the most likely choice it was never certain, and it is great credit to him that he went out on Croke Park, in the replay, and played such a prominent part. This tends to give the rest of us subs a hope that the sacrifice, training, etc., that we make, are not in vain and will pay-off some day. Maybe like my team-mate from days in Croke Park, Ger Lynch of Kerry, who spent his fair share of time on the bench. It will be worthwhile, and help bring the Sam Maguire Cup across the Shannon for a well-earned sojourn in Mayo, in the not-too-distant future.



Congratulations to Minor, Under-21 and Senior teams.

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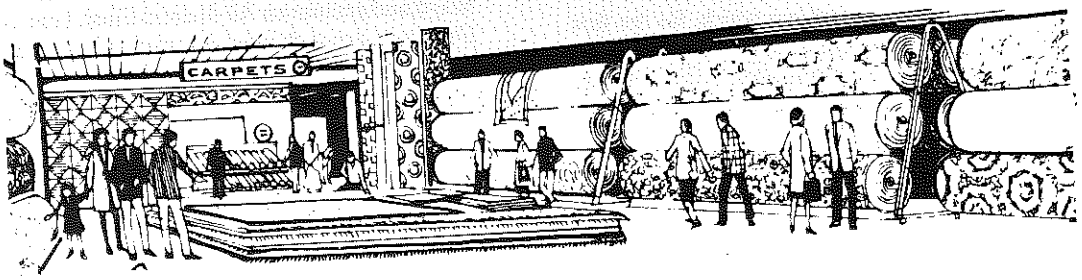
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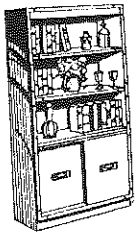
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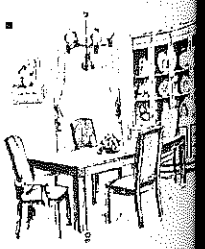


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Mayo Handball, '85

– BY FINBARR MASTERSON (Runai).

MAYO took the lion's share of Provincial titles this year with a total tally of eighteen for both 40 x 20 and 60 x 30 handball. In 40 x 20 handball nine titles came to the county and this was capped by the achievements of Martin Hennigan and Mickey Walshe, and Gus Daly, who captured the Senior Singles All-Ireland and the Golden Masters' Doubles titles, respectively.

In the Senior Singles Final, in Pearse Stadium, Galway, on May 11th, Martin Hennigan completely overpowered Billy Bourke, Kilkenny, in two straight games — 21-13, 21-8. This was Martin's second All-Ireland title, having won it first in '84. On the same programme Gus Sweeney of Ballinrobe, played in the Junior Final agaiinst the brilliant Ducksie Walshe from Kilkenny. Nobody gave Gus a hope of winning but he played the match of his life and took Walshe to the third game, which Walshe won and thus took the title.

Mayo's Juvenile players were responsible for three of the Connacht 40 x 20 titles. The Bofield Club provided three winners, with Colin Judge winning the Under-12 Singles and B. Howley and J. Judge taking the Under-14 Doubles. Killala Club gave us the Under-16 Singles winner, M. Kavanagh.

Mickey Walshe and Gus Daly wound up the 40 x 20 season by winning the Golden Masters' Doubles All-Ireland title for the sixth time. In early May they beat Dublin in the final, two games to one.

The following won 40 x 20 Connacht titles for Mayo in '85 — Under-12 Singles — C. Judge; Under-14 Doubles — B. Howley and J. Judge; Under-16 Singles — M. Kavanagh; Novice Singles — F. McNeela; Minor Singles — D. Moloney; Minor Doubles — D. Moloney and S. Beirne; Junior Singles — Gus Sweeney; Senior Singles — Martin Hennigan; Golden Masters' Doubles — Gus Daly and Mickey Walshe.

In the 60 x 30 Handball Mayo, again, took nine Connacht Finals, but failed to take an All-Ireland title in spite of the best efforts of our Novice Singles player, Martin Cronin from Killala, and our Over-50s team, Daly and Walshe who reached their respective All-Ireland Finals. The Minor Doubles pairing of David Moloney and Seamus Beirne, Charlestown, also qualified for the All-Ireland Final, but had to give best to Meath on the day. A special word for David and Seamus as they played their final in the very unfamiliar glass court in Croke Park and gave of their best.

Mayo players who won Connacht titles in 60 x 30 Handball in '85 — Under-12 Singles — C. Judge; Under-14 Doubles — B. Howley and J. Judge; Under-16 Singles — M. Kavanagh; Under-16 Doubles — K. McGuire and P. Gorman; Golden Masters' Doubles — M. Walshe and G. Daly; Novice Singles — M. Cronin; Minor Singles — D. Moloney; Minor Doubles — D. Moloney and S. Beirne; Junior Doubles — J. McCormick and C. Quinn.

A special word of praise for David Moloney, Charlestown, who travelled all over the country to represent his county during the year.

The highlight of the year was the Senior Open 40 x 20 tournament in Castlebar, on the 19th and 20th of October. A selection of Ireland's best players took part, and the standard of play and sportsmanship was a joy to watch. Mayo was represented by three players, Martin Hennigan, Peter McGee and Gus Sweeney (who came in as a substitute for M. Walshe, Roscommon). The remainder of the line-up included the most famous names in the land — "Ducksie" Walshe, Tony Ryan, Billy Duggan, all of them All-Ireland champions. Shock results were the norm, with Martin Hennigan going out to Billy Bourke; Peter McGee almost caused the upset of the day when he took All-Ireland long court champion, "Ducksie" Walshe, to the breaker, going under by just two aces. This was classic handball and was followed by an exhibition in the semi-finals when John Duggan and Tony Ryan each got through to what was an epic final. Duggan took the winner's trophy on the tie-break score of 11-7. His perfect side-arm "kill-shots" were just too good for Ryan on the day. The trophies were presented by the President of the Irish Handball Council, Tommy O'Brien.

Court construction continues within the county, with Belcarra having opened their new 60 x 30 court recently.

Last, but by no means least, we come to Girls' Handball in Mayo. Here again Killala lead the way with numerous All-Ireland and Community Games victories to their credit. The following young girls have been successful this year — Geraldine Kilgannon, Mary Durcan, Orla, Elaine and Denise Garvey; Sharon Nealon, Martina Farrell, Marie Gallagher and Rosemary Mitchell.

1985 ALL-IRELAND HANDBALL CHAMPIONS



Gus Daly, Belmullet, winner of the 1985 All-Ireland Over-50s 40 x 20 Doubles Title with Mickey Walshe, Charlestown. (Mickey was not available when this photo was taken). Martin Hennigan, Killasser, winner of the All-Ireland 40 x 20 Senior Singles Title in 1985, for the second time.


LIAMS LIONS
ARE HUNGRY
STARVED

A Year in the life of a County Secretary ...

Kissing Poles, Terrace Tickets and Reporters



—By JOHN PRENTY

LITTLE did I realise on becoming County Secretary that I was letting myself in for one of the busiest years in the history of the County Board. After Convention I had a long chat with my predecessor, Christy Loftus, who "educated" me on the number of problems and pitfalls connected with the position. Only for his help and guidance in the early months I could very easily have got bogged down in the job. I remember one of his words of advice was to get a large wastepaper basket — I did and it's nearly always full.

One of the first major tasks was the preparation for the Congress in Ballina. While most of the work was at an advanced stage I was involved in a number of meetings with Croke Park officials and the organising committee which gave me an insight into the workings of the Association.

My first impression of dealings with Croke Park was that they were very eager to get their own way. This impression has not changed very much. I was very honoured to be a delegate for the installation of Dr. Loftus as Uachtaran. While at Congress I often wondered if I was in the right place at all as most of my fellow delegates seemed to belong to a different generation. However, when the result of the Ford Cup game came through from Limerick I aged about 20 years. The "high" of the Mayo Congress certainly came back to earth with this defeat and it was definitely the low point of my year.

BRAINWASHING

As preparations for the Connacht senior championship commenced I began to get to know the players and team management better and to develop an understanding of their plots and schemes. In watching Brian McDonald brainwashing and psyching up players I knew that if I did not watch myself he would be at the same kind of thing with me in looking for more concessions from the County Board. I think that overall I just about kept a step ahead.

The Connacht Championship itself provided lots of highlights. The game v Leitrim started very poorly and by half time I was glad to be going on holidays immediately after the game — I would be missing for the abuse that seemed imminent. However, we got our act together in the second half and the rest is history.

After the Connacht final it was obvious from the crowds attending training that there was a new euphoria being built up within the county. There was a great spirit of comradship betwen players and officials and all were determined to defeat the Dubs. Arrangements having been made for the semi-final I was continuously amazed at the lengths people would go to find out where the team was staying. On the day of the game I was mostly taken up with the senior team and the only part of a great minor victory I saw was a goal which I later found out to have been disallowed.

SELLING A DUMMY

The semi-final having been drawn there arose a new problem — tickets. Long lost friends now resurfaced and the phone could ring at any time of day or night. Most people seemed to be satisified although I did have one person return two Canal End tickets because they were not consecutive. As County Board officials acted as unofficial stilesmen selling tickets at training sessions, etc., the atmosphere in the county was building up to feverish pitch.

While it would be impossible to recount all that happens on an All-Ireland semi-final weekend one memorable event was the Peace Vigil in White Friar Street Church. PRO, Mick Higgins, had been contacted to provide two people from the party to bring up the gifts at the Mass. The team manager having sold a dummy Mick Higgins and Sean Murphy were delegated to perform the duty with mise as driver. The job, guaranteed to last five minutes, lasted three hours and I finished up reciting a decade of the Rosary with Dublin players John O'Leary and Tommy Conroy, and rugby internationals Rory Moroney and Mick Quinn. After the Vigil a Polish photographer asked me for a ticket for the game and when I produced a Canal End ticket my payment was a kiss — I would have preferred to have got the cash. While we were disappointed at losing the semi-final, we left Croke Park determined to be back as winners.

HIGHLIGHT

The winning of the minor All-Ireland was the highpoint of the year and was a richly deserved honour for the players and selectors. It certainly was a proud day to be associated with Mayo football.

The post of County Secretary is a wide and varied one. As well as the normal minute taking at County Board and Executive level, and trying to answer the queries of the backbenchers, there is the task of looking after affiliations, transfers, correspondence to and from clubs, Connacht Council and Corke Park. There are the problems of trying to accommodate players and selectors and, of course, the distribution of tickets. On taking up office I was warned not to let the fellows on the ticket committee pull the wool over my eyes, it's a difficult task but we're getting on fine. As regards selectors the past year has proved that it is possible to get twelve people into eight places — ask the minors and they will tell you how it can be done.

EARLY INTERVIEW

Away from football my first year as Secretary gave me an awareness of how to deal with people — be they Radio Eireann getting me out of bed at 7.30 a.m. for an interview or press men asking probing questions and usually getting fairly non-commital answers. I have learned to be most careful in dealing with the press who have an unhappy knack of putting a slant on an issue that was never intended.

Overall I have been very lucky that my first year as County Secretary co-incided with such an upsurge in the fortunes of Mayo football. It has its good days and its bad ones but it is a very fulfilling and rewarding task and I am delighted to have had the chance to fulfill the role. While one does not look for or expect compliments in the role I think that the greatest compliment paid to me during the year was when refusing some request from a certian club I was accused of being "worse than Loftus".

I look forward to 1986 when there is the promise of more success and when the Chairman will be more used to being off the fags.

Every success to all involved with Mayo G.A.A. in 1986, and well done on your achievements during 1985.

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Wishing all the best for 1986.

Muigh Eo Abú.



Beaten Path Hotel Senior Leagues Review

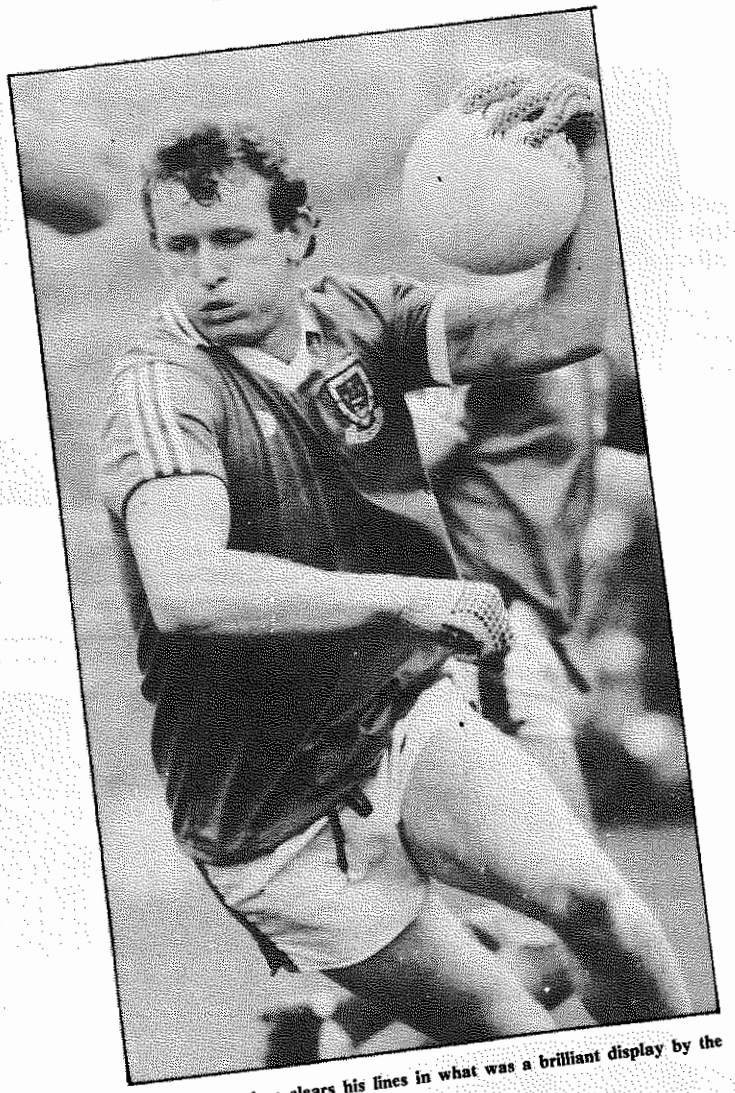
BY IVAN NEILL

A total of forty-eight teams competed in the four divisions of the Beaten Path Hotel-sponsored Mayo G.A.A. Leagues in 1985. A total of five hundred and thirty-six games were down for decision — one hundred and eighty-two in Division One; one hundred and thirty-two in Division Two and Three, and ninety in the Fourth Division — but some of them were not played.

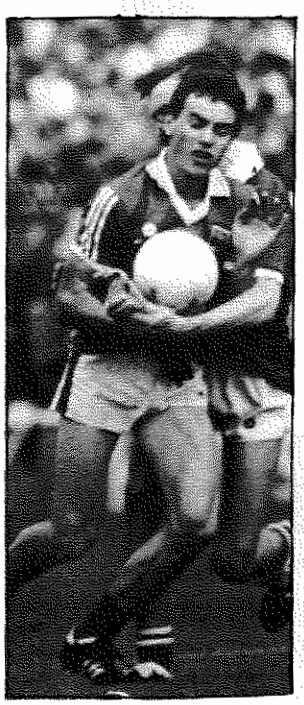
All teams put in a great effort at the commencement of the Leagues, but after a few weeks things became unsatisfactory due to some games not being played for some reason or another. Some teams also failed to turn up at venues without going to the bother of notifying the opposing team or the referee.

The County Activities Committee will have to take a stand on this trend in future years, otherwise chaos will creep in. Heftier fines on teams who fail to play games without acceptable reason will have to be imposed. The threat to throw teams out of the League for failing to play is not being taken seriously, and only when some team is debarred will it sink home to other Clubs that the fixture-making body means business.

There was the situation in 1985 where five teams were in danger of being demoted to the Second Division at the three-quarter stage of Division One. However, some of those teams shot up the Table in a matter of a few weeks by being awarded the points in the case of teams not fulfilling the fixture. It was less expensive paying the £20 fine than making a round-trip of about eighty miles for the game, it was claimed.



Johnny Monaghan clears his lines in what was a brilliant display by the replacement for the injured John Finn.



Left half-back, Johnny French, clears his lines.

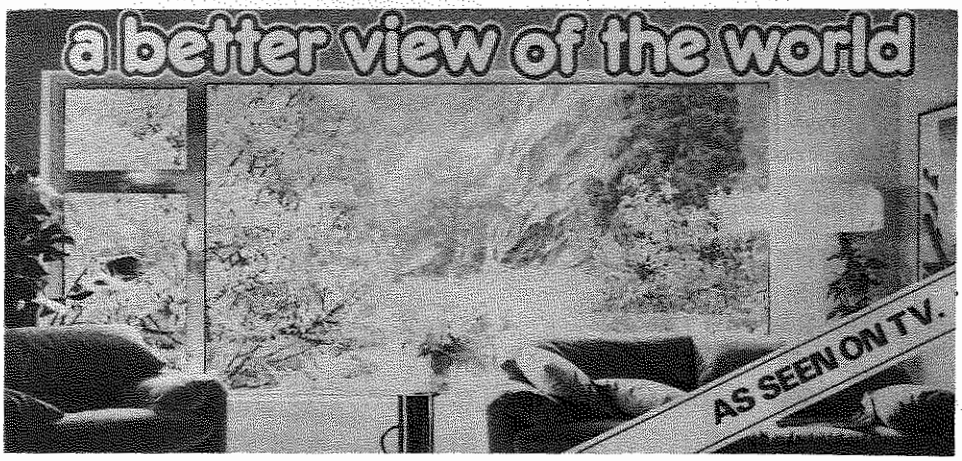
Crossmolina set the pace from the start in Division One — just as they had done in 1984 — but were forced into a battle with Ballaghaderreen and Lacken before taking the honours by defeating Castlebar in their final round game. They could have the title wrapped up earlier, but lost to Davitts in Ballindine. At the time of writing, Crossmolina are in the Final of the Super League against Claremorris, both finalists having wins over Ballaghaderreen and Aughamore in the Semi-Finals.

Charlestown and Tourmakeady will be operating out of Division Two next season and will be replaced in Division One by Claremorris and Aughamore.

Claremorris and Aughamore fought out a great battle for the honours in Division Two before Claremorris emerged victorious. Swinford, Moy Davitts and Ballintubber were always in contention up the remaining few rounds. Balla and Ballyhaunis were the teams to finish up at the bottom of the Points Table and will be replaced in the Division next year by Carramore and Burrishoole.

Carramore were the all-the-way winners in Division Three, but could not afford any slip-up as Burrishoole were always breathing down their necks. Shrule came through in Division Four.





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Scor (Festival Of Gaelic Culture) In County Mayo

— BY KATHLEEN CORCORAN (County Mayo Scor Secretary).

COUNTY Mayo has been deeply involved in Scor for many years. Each Club in the county organise their own competitions in Figure Dancing, Recitation, Solo-Singing, Novelty Act, Question-Time, Instrumental Music, Ballad Group and Set Dancing. The winners go forward to represent their Club in the Divisional Finals and County Finals. It has been a very welcomed development in the county, and has shown the great talents which exist within the areas. Capacity crowds at local Scors and Divisional and County Finals have proved not only enjoyable but financially rewarding for all concerned.

But this does involve a great deal of hard work on the part of Club and Co. Officers, parents and teachers.

We have a very good record for participation and, indeed, year-after-year some of our competitors win their way to the All-Ireland Finals.

1984-'85 has been a very successful year for Scor and for the county.

At the Scor Na nOg Finals in Ballinrobe a great night was enjoyed by all. The South Mayo Committee worked hard to make sure that everything was in order.

Michael Coyne, on this occasion and, indeed, every time as Fear An Ti, did a tremendous job.

Mr. Paddy Muldoon thanked Mr. Pat Lynch for his service as Scor Chairman for the last few years.

He wished Mr. Paul Judge every success in the coming years as Co. Chairman. The Competitions were of very high standard.

The Figure Dancing teams were — Balla, Kilmaine, Aughamore and Ardagh. A very enjoyable competition, all dancers were very interested, and really enjoyed themselves.

The Recitation was contested by Davitts, Aughamore, Lahardane and Castlebar. Whilst Kilmovee Shamrocks, Ballina, Louisburgh and Garrymore were in the Solo-Singing.

The Novelty Acts were hilarious with the large crowd enjoying every moment of them all. Moygownagh, Achill, Hollymount and Aughamore were the great entertainers of the night; Castlebar Davitts, Moy Davitts and Moygownagh were the teams for Question Time. One had to be there on the night to believe the standard of the Instrumental Music. The Adjudicators had a very hard task in selecting a winner. The teams from Kilmaine, Moy Davitts, Ballycastle and Burrishoole were all so pleasant to listen to.

Kilmovee Shamrocks, Ballycastle, Tourmakeady and Garrymore contested the Ballad Group Competition. The night was finished off with Traditional Set Dancing with groups from Ballycastle, Tourmakeady, Ballinrobe and Aughamore, all well used to stepping it out.

The winners on the night were: Figure Dancing — Ardagh: Aisling Murray, John Moore, Patsy Foy, Brian Finan, Sandra Murphy, Gerard Howard, Marcella Walsh and Kieron Mongan. Recitation — Aughamore: C. O Murchu. Novelty Act — Aughamore: Caobhan O Murchu; Sean O Dubhthaigh, Gearoidin Ni Dubhthaigh. Solo-Singing — Garrymore: Edel Heaney. Instrumental Music — Ballycastle: Ann Marie, Edel and Deirdre Munnelly. Question Time — Castlebar: Francis Shoblain, John Shoblain and Andrew Ryan. Ballad Group — Tourmakeady: Maureen Lydon, Grace Mulqueen, Aine O'Malley, Lentra O'Malley and Deirdre Molloy. Set Dancing — Ballinrobe: Maryy Coyne, Dymphna Conway, Catriona Magrath, Geraldine Feerick, Urnan Naughton, Shane Kelly, Declan Burke and Tom Treacy. The winning teams represented Co. Mayo at the Connacht Finals in St. Mary's Hall, Carrick-on-Shannon.

Ballinrobe were the Connacht winners and represented Co. Mayo at the All-Ireland Finals, in Galway.

Senior Scor was held in Ballycastle. The host Club was admired for the way the competition was organised — South, West and North were all represented — while the East did not participate in 1984-'85. It's hoped that they will be taking part in all 1986 competitions.

Garrymore, Breaffy and Moygownagh contested the Figure Dancing. Recitation — Castlebar, Breaffy and Hollymount. Solo-Singing — Castlebar, Crossmolina and Mayo Abbey. Novelty Acts were by Ballinrobe, Ardagh and Tourmakeady. Question Time — Claremorris, Tourmakeady and Crossmolina. Instrumental Music — Ballina, Mayo Abbey and Castlebar. Ballad Group — Ballintubber, Ballina and Hollymount. Set Dancing — Ballinrobe, Tourmakeady and Lahardane.

The winners of the competitions represented the county at the Connacht Finals in Ballinrobe.

Figure Dancing — Moygownagh: E. Finnerty, G. Heffron, M. Staunton, E. Staunton, A. Finnerty, P. Staunton, J. J. Heffron, M. Moyles. Recitation — Lahardane: Kathleen Browne. Solo-Singing — Norma Cronin, Crossmolina. Novelty Act — Tourmakeady, M. Costello, B. Gibbons, P. Dolan, M. Conway and M. J. Casey. Question Time — Crossmolina: J. McLoughlin, J. Cosgrove, B. Conway. Instrumental Music — Mayo Abbey, M. Hughes, T. Henry, U. Henry. Ballad Group — Hollymount: A. Carney, A. Thornton, T. McGovern, B. Kelly, D. Hughes. Set Dancing — Tourmakeady: C. Heverin, M. Gibbons, B. Dolan, C. O'Toole, P. Munroe, K. Heverin, J. Power, G. Mulrooney.

The Connacht Scor in the Town Hall will be remembered for a long time. The Hall was packed to capacity — even some, sadly, had to be turned away.

The Connacht Committee were very pleased with the organisation. They thanked all concerned. Tourmakeady Set Dancers and Crossmolina Question Time team emerged winners and proudly represented Co. Mayo at the All-Ireland Finals, in the National Stadium, Dublin.

Before I conclude I wish to thank the Condae Mhaigheo Cumann Luthchleas Geal for their support and encouragement of the competitions Scor and Scor Na nOg.

One can see for themselves that it is well appreciated byy all the numerous Clubs that have participated.

Remember, the older generation are surely proud of our continuous use of our Irish Dance and Music.

My final message to the people of Mayo is — if you have the talent, use it. Your help, your ideas, your good example, and your guidance is all important. Let our children live with a real healthy, Irish tradition and we will not only be good, but the best in the land.



Sharon Nealon, Killala Handball Club, winner of the All-Ireland 30 x 60 Under-16 title at the All-Ireland Juvenile Games Finals in Roscommon.

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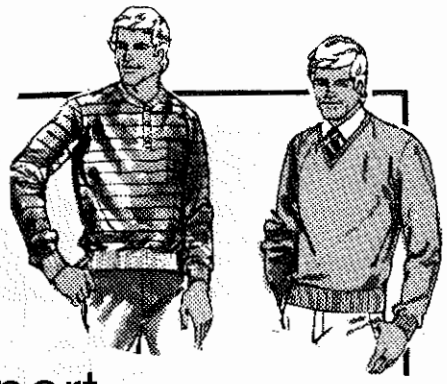
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Cursai Iomaniochta 1985

BY EUGENE O'SHEA (Chairman, Mayo Hurling Board).

UP to the commencement on October 6th of the 1985-'86 National Hurling League the year had been a very disappointing one for the County Senior team. One of the main reasons for the poor showing throughout the 1984-'85 National League had been the non-availability and departure of several players who had been so prominent for the previous couple of years. However, the old grit and determination returned when it was needed most. This occurred in the relegation play-off against Longford in Athleague, on March 10th, when Mayo had a convincing win to maintain their place in Division III.

In the Open Draw, Mayo had the ill-luck to have to face Waterford at home in Dungarvan and the Decies men had a facile victory though Mayo had contained them for the first half fairly well. In the All-Ireland "B" Championship Armagh had a good victory playing at home in Armagh. Again on this occasion Mayo was well below full strength.

In the Connacht Junior Championship Mayo was somewhat unlucky in failing to Leitrim by a three points' margin in Carrick-on-Shannon, on June 16th, Leitrim had unexpectedly beaten Sligo and the Mayo Junior team had to exclude all players who had played in the All-Ireland "B" Championship.

The Senior Championship in the county was confined to only two teams and Tooreen were decisive and deserving winners over Castlebar Mitchels. In these circumstances it is evident that an effort must be made to have more teams involved and for a start it is hoped to have a special Junior Championship commenced in early 1986 with teams of eleven or twelve-a-side participating. Details will be given early in the New Year.

At Minor level the county did well in the Special All-Ireland competition. Fermanagh were defeated in MacHale Park, on June 13th. Mayo were unlucky to be held to a draw with Longford in Carrick-on-Shannon in the semi-final and Longford won by a point in the replay at Athleague. The county final is to be contested between Claremorris and Castlebar.

The Under-16 Special All-Ireland saw Donegal defeat Mayo in Ballybofey. The County Championship provided good games with four Clubs involved — Claremorris, Westport, Tooreen and Castlebar Mitchels. The final between Claremorris and Castlebar was won in a replay by Claremorris after the thrilling draw in Garrymore. Some sessions had been held in accordance with the Christy Ring School of Hurling Scheme. Sincere thanks are due to P. J. Qualter, the Hurling Officer from Galway for all his aid in these sessions.



In the Under-14 age group Tooreen emerged supreme in the competitions, winning both the Feile na nGael competition and the Championship. Tooreen performed well in their Section of the Feile competition in Wexford, in June.

A very encouraging feature in this age group is the growth in strength of Westport where there is a large number of juveniles playing. With the guidance of a dedicated number of mentors it seems certain that Westport will be a formidable force in all Juvenile competitions over the next few years.

With the prospect of a revival in hurling in North Mayo in sight, it is hoped the base will broaden in 1986. Again, P. J. Qualter is anxious and willing to help in that area.



Islandeady, County Junior Champions, 1985.

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Thanks to the Mayo teams, their mentors, management and supporters who gave such great memories during the past year, reminiscent of former times!

Keep up the good work in 1986.

— from —

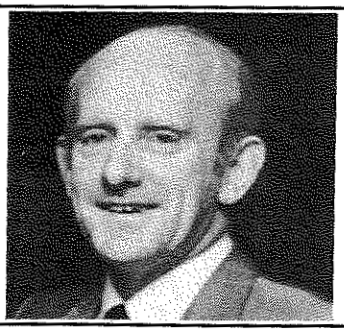
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Sponsorship And Its Benefit To Gaelic Football

By Michael Higgins
(PRO, Mayo GAA Board).

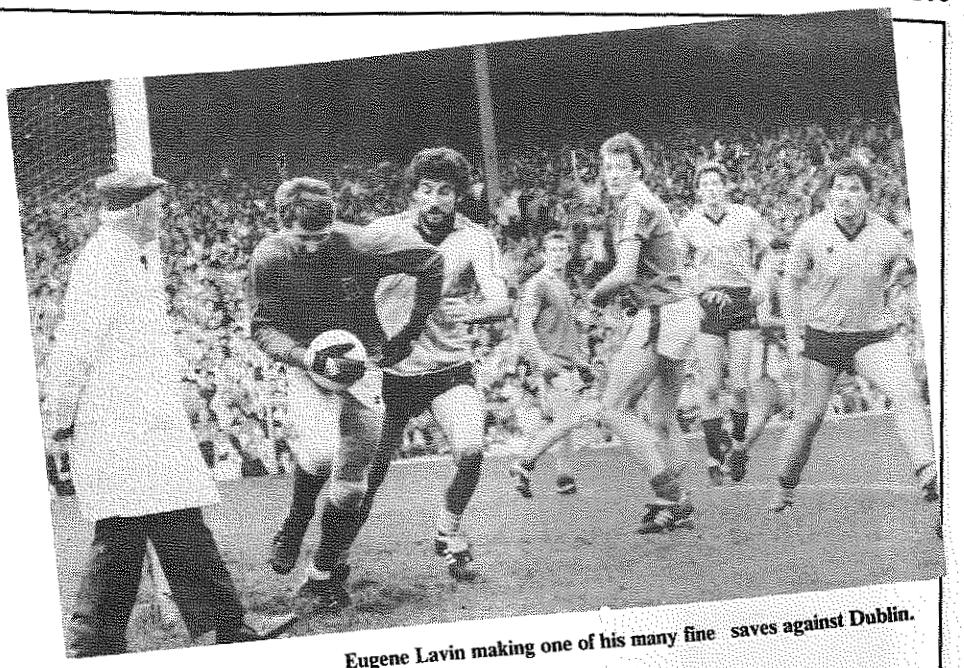


THERE has been an awful lot of talk in recent times about sponsorship in the GAA. There is also a lot of wild talk that the increase in sponsorship in the promotion of Gaelic football will, in the long run, lead to professionalism among players. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, sponsorship is good for the game and we in Mayo have come to realise the benefit of sponsorship in the running of our county leagues for the past number of years. Teams have also great respect for the league since sponsorship was introduced.

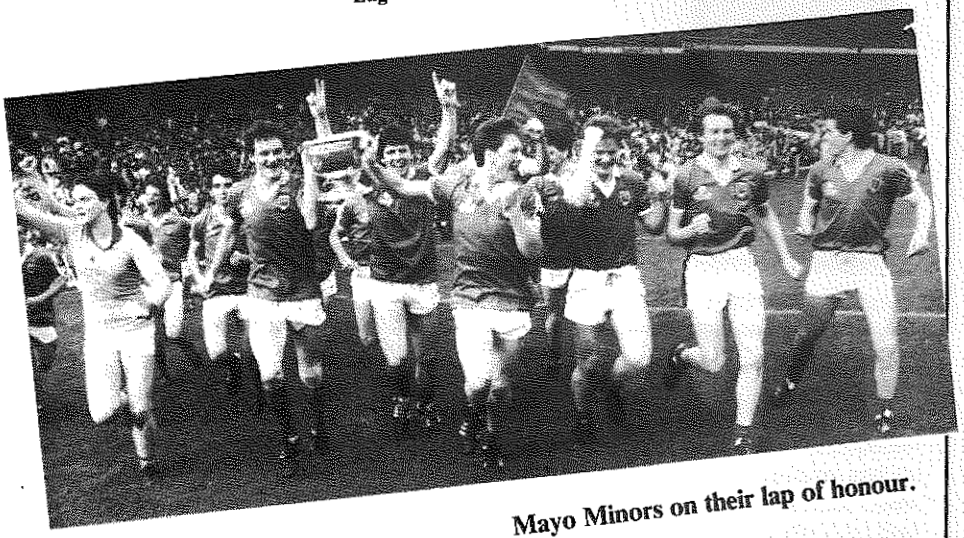
Two years ago we approached Gay Nevin, of the Beaten Path Hotel, about sponsorship and he readily gave us £1,500. That has since been increased to £2,000. Sponsorship is a wonderful incentive for teams to get out and play in the league for, if successful, there is a £500 development grant for the winners of Division One. The winners of the Super League final, not played at the time of writing, will also receive a £500 development grant. The winners of Division Two will receive a cash grant of £300; the winners of Division Three will get £200, and the Fourth Division winners will receive £100. The Referee of the Year award is also sponsored by Sportswear, Ballina.

With the exception of drink and cigarette firms, sponsorship is always acceptable to the GAA if properly used. This year Mayo teams received boots, togs and jerseys to the value of £2,000 in sponsorship. It cost over £30,000 to prepare three teams for the different championships, two of them reaching All-Ireland semi-finals, while the third team reached and won the All-Ireland final. Over £25,000 of the cost was raised mainly through a church gate collection and the fund-raising committee are grateful to all those firms and individuals who contributed so generously to the collection.

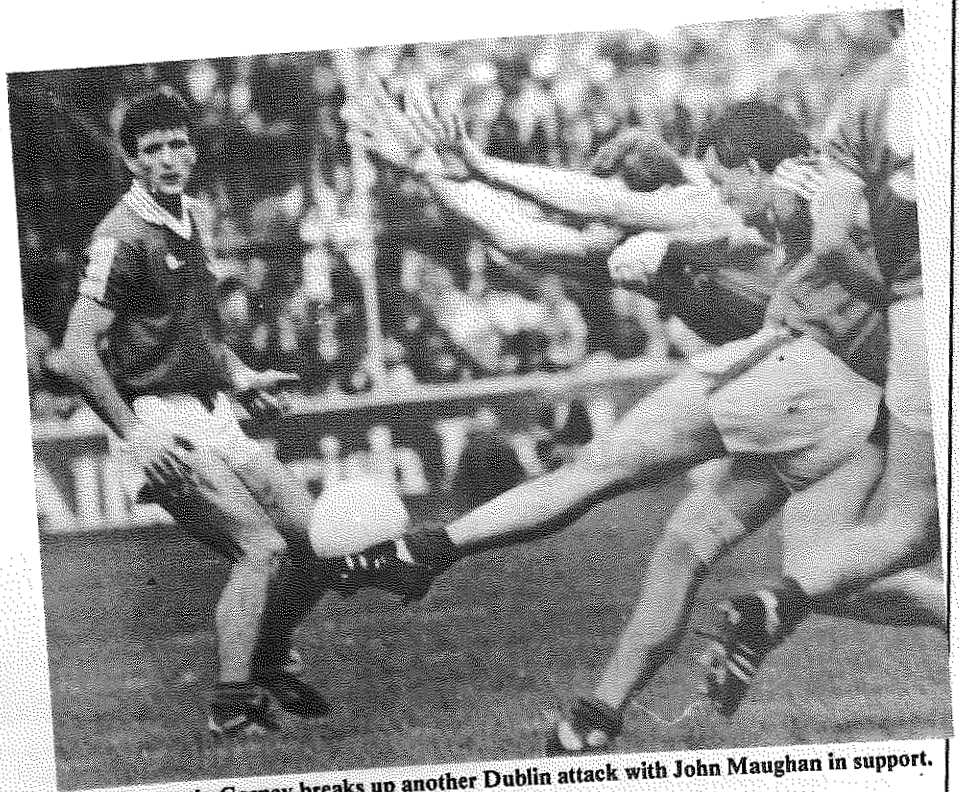
Sponsorship will always be available and the more successful a team is the more sponsorship there is to be had. I have no doubt but Mayo will win the All-Ireland senior football title in the next couple of years and I can safely say that there will be £20,000 available in sponsorship if the market is properly tapped.



Eugene Lavin making one of his many fine saves against Dublin.



Mayo Minors on their lap of honour.



Martin Carney breaks up another Dublin attack with John Maughan in support.

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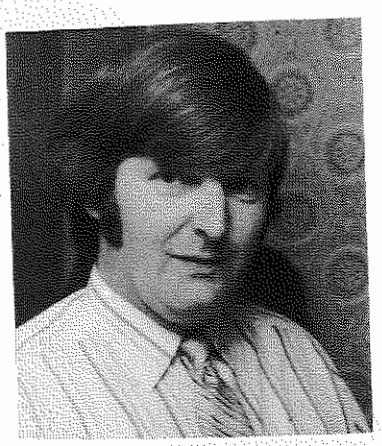
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The Role Of The Referee

BY SEAN MURPHY.



THE important role played by the referee in the running of our games has long been appreciated by the Gaelic Athletic Association. Indeed, the referee has the responsibility of handling the game in such a way as to make it the shop window of our Organisation.

This can only happen, however, when referees are presented with a clear and concise set of rules not open to different interpretations, but clearly stating when a foul has been committed and clearly outlining the penalty attached to such a foul. Allowing the advantage rule sometimes makes for a better game and is tempting for some referees to allow, but in the interests of uniformity of refereeing must be dispensed with.

Until such time as there is a general tightening-up in the application of the playing rules we are going to have confusion amongst players, referees and the general public who come to watch our games.

Turning to the state of refereeing within our own county I think must be conceded that things have improved enormously in recent years. This, I think, can be traced back to decisions made by County Conventions.

STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

The first of these came when the appointment of referees was handed over to the newly-formed Activities Committee some years ago. This was a step in the right direction as it cut the power of clubs to have a say in the person they wanted appointed for a particular game and as a result more referees were appointed to important games.

This placed a responsibility on the referees as a body to raise their standards and as a result a Referees' Committee was set up in the late '70s. The purpose of this was to hold periodic meetings addressed by such national figures in the code as John Maloney of Tipperary and Paddy Collins of Westmeath to keep them in touch with changes in the rules, etc.

Out of those meetings came agreement amongst referees to insist that clubs would prepare their pitches for games as laid down by the rules.

On the other hand referees are expected to be very careful in their appointment of umpires and linesmen and to report accurately to the Activities Committee any transgression in the rules that takes place during any games. This has worked to the advantage of everybody involved in the promotin of the game within the county as the County Board is steadfast in its backing of all referees who take charge of our games.

Officers Referees' Committee, 1985 — Chairman, Sean Murphy, Ballinrobe; Secretary, Jimmy Walshe, Carramore.

1985 Championship and League Referees — Under-12 — Bob Fox; Under-12 "B" — John Moran; Under-14 League — Joe Mulhern; Under-14 "A" Championship — Tony O'Connor; Under-14 "B" Championship — John Hopkins; Under-16 "A" — Championship — Richard Heneghan; Under-16 "B" — Bob Fox; Minor League 15-A-Side — Sean McHale; Minor League 11-A-Side — Tony Geraghty; Minor Championship — Martin Walshe; Under-21 Championship — Willie Kelly; Junior Championship — Denis Canning; Intermediate Championship — John Harkin; Senior Championship — Jimmy Walshe; Super League Final — Sean McHale; Masters' Final — Mick Devaney.



Referees who refereed West Mayo GAA finals , pictured in the Clew Bay Hotel, Westport, after receiving their trophies from Fr. Noel Forde, Chairman, West Board. Front: Tony Mulroy, Mick Devaney, Fr. Forde, Michael John O'Connor, Richard Heneghan. Back: Kevin O'Toole, Michael O'Grady, John Reynolds, Ger Murphy, Tommy Moylette, Willie Kelly, Sean Feeney, Secretary, West Board.



Sean Mac Eil, Sportswear, Ballina, presents the sponsorship cheque for the "Referee of the Year" scheme to Activities Committee Chairman, Mick Higgins. Also included are County Chairman, Paddy Muldoon; Tony Geraghty, "Referee of the Year", and County Secretary, John Prenty.

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Best wishes to all Mayo teams

in 1986.

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A section of the large attendance at a training session in Ballina.



Mayo's T. J. Kilgallon and Frank Noone denying a Galway forward a path to the target.



We'll be back — a defeated but unbowed Dermot Flanagan thanks the Mayo supporters.



Centre half-forward, Pat Walsh, blasts home his penalty kick with Cork goalkeeper, Jerome O'Mahony, left clutching the air.

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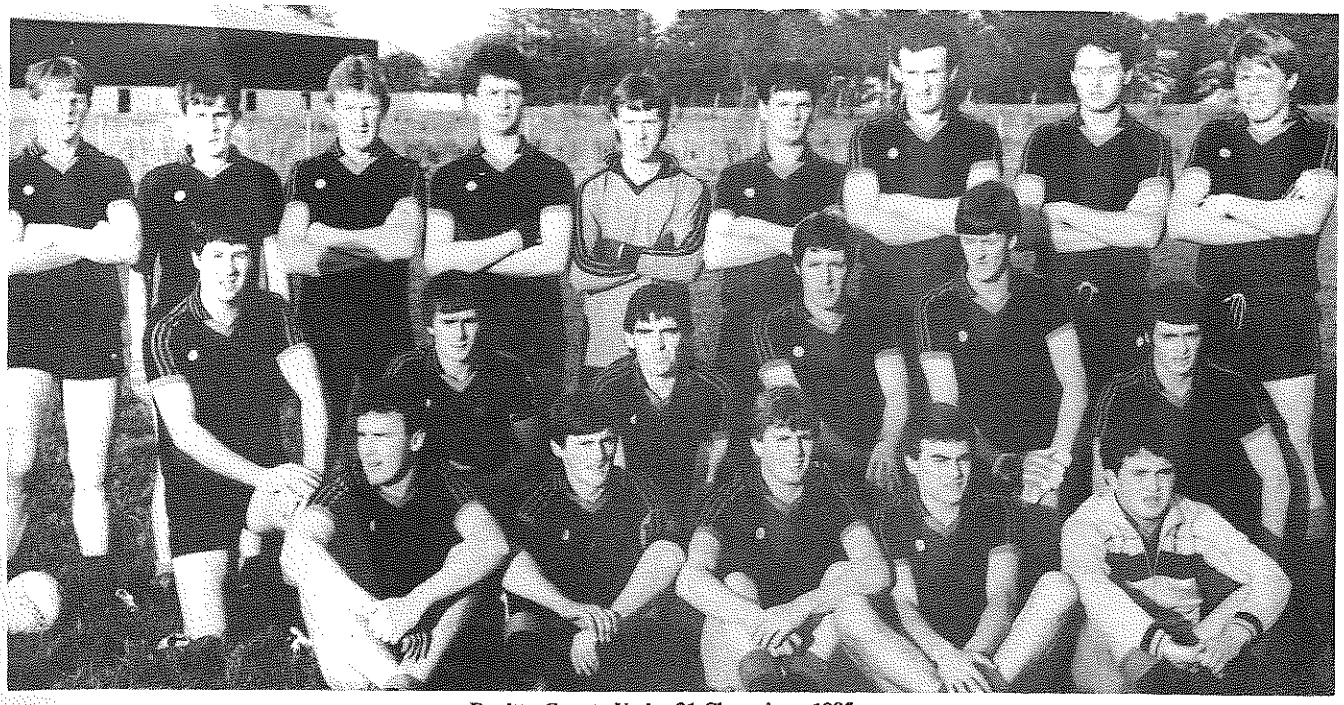
Best wishes and continued success to
Mayo teams.

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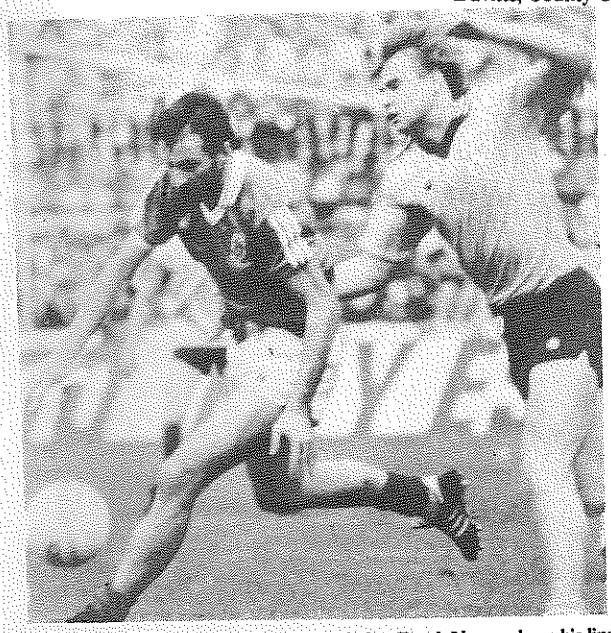
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Davitts, County Under-21 Champions, 1985.



Dublin's Jim Ronayne is left behind as Frank Noone clears his lines.



Full-back, Peter Forde, and Joe McNally in one of their many tussles.

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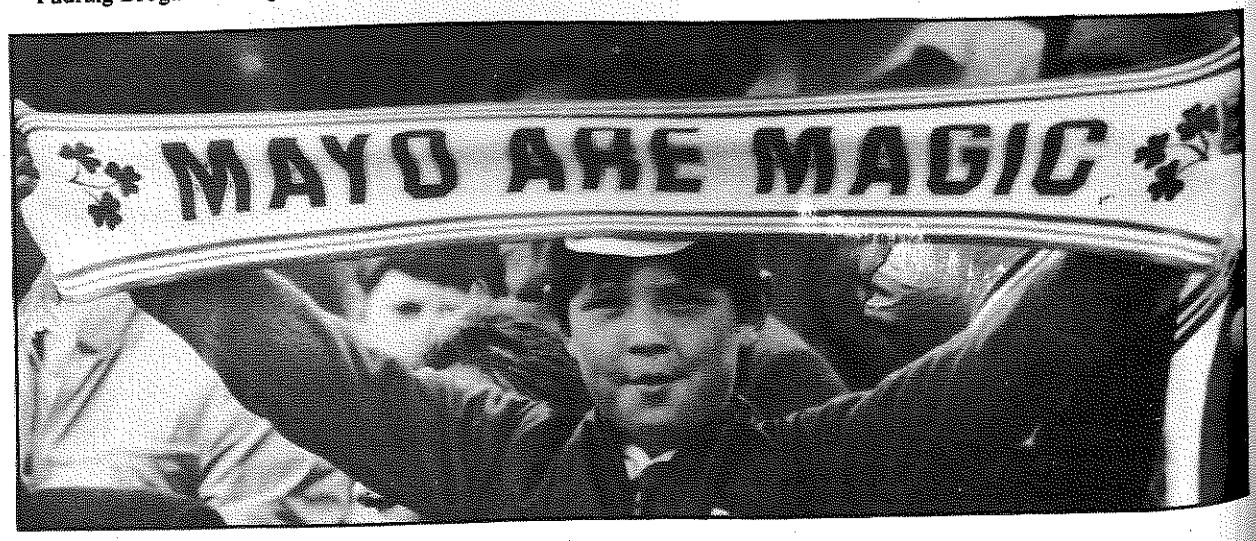
David Fitzgerald, centre half-back, getting in a clearance against Meath



Mayo minor half-forward, Pat Walsh, is down but not out.



Padraig Brogan winning vital possession for Mayo, as half-back, John Maughan, attempts to hold off a Dublin player.



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