

71 *this issue*
GAA

**Exclusive
interview with
Australian
team manager**



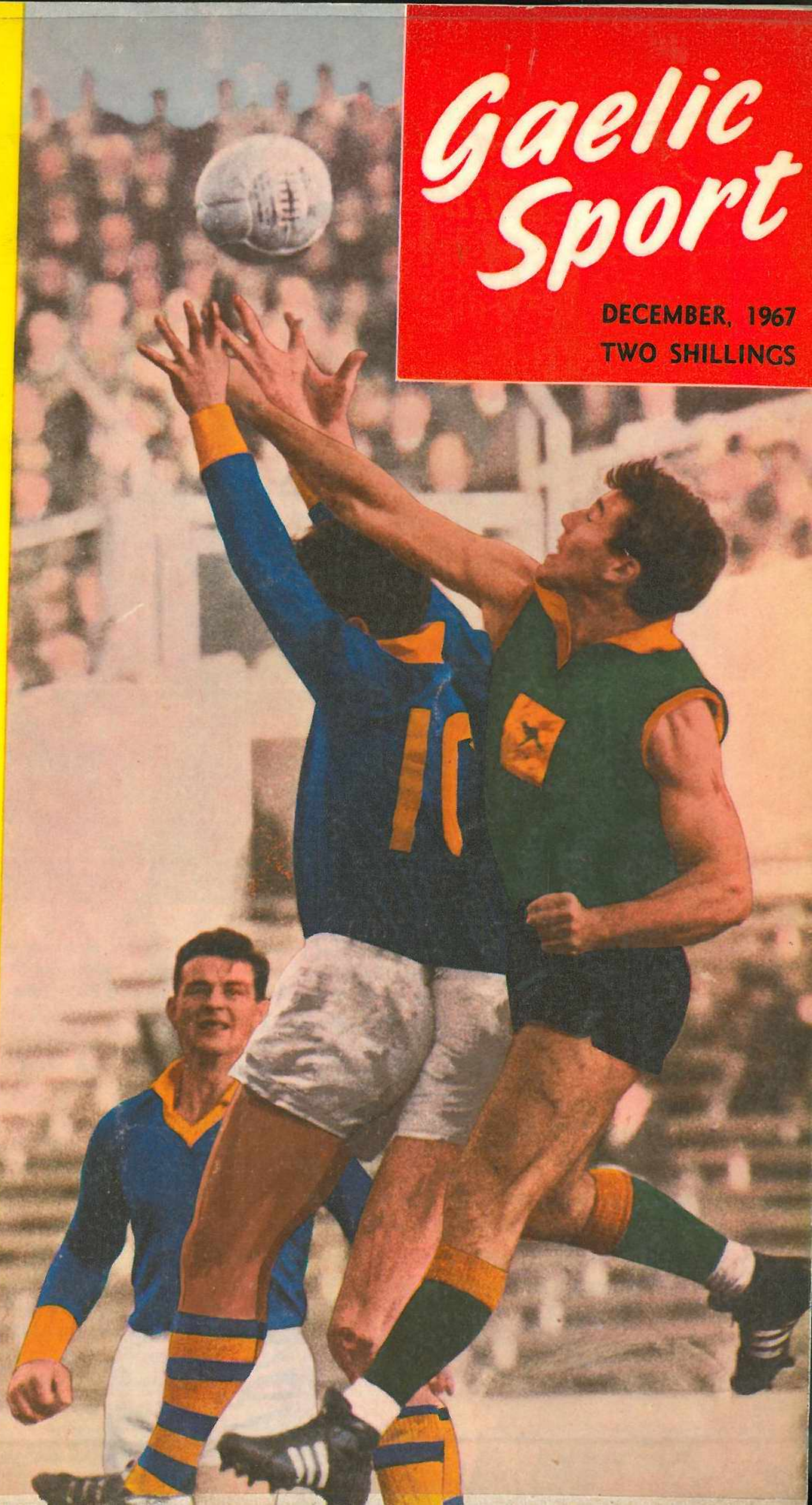
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Gaelic Sport

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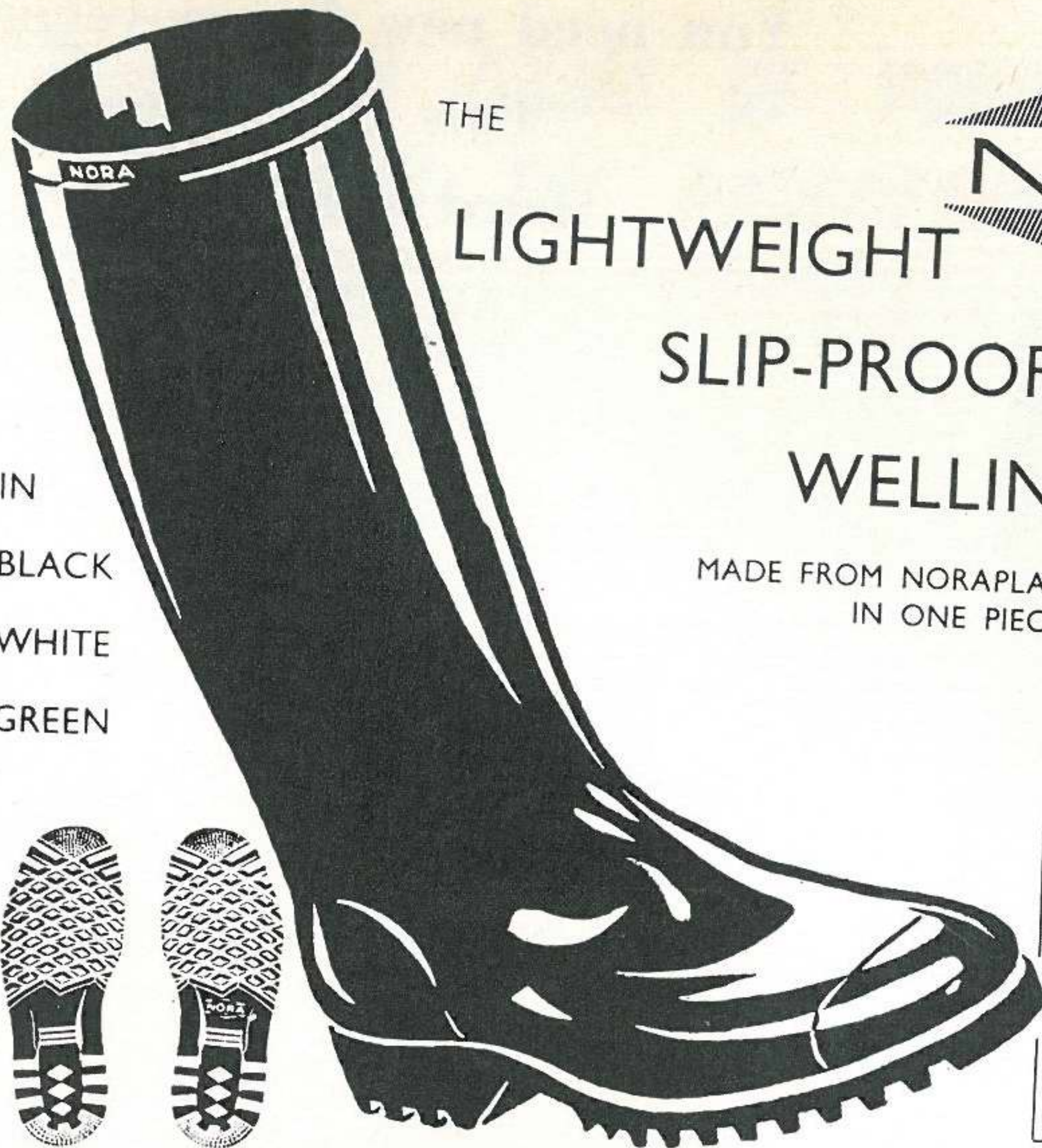
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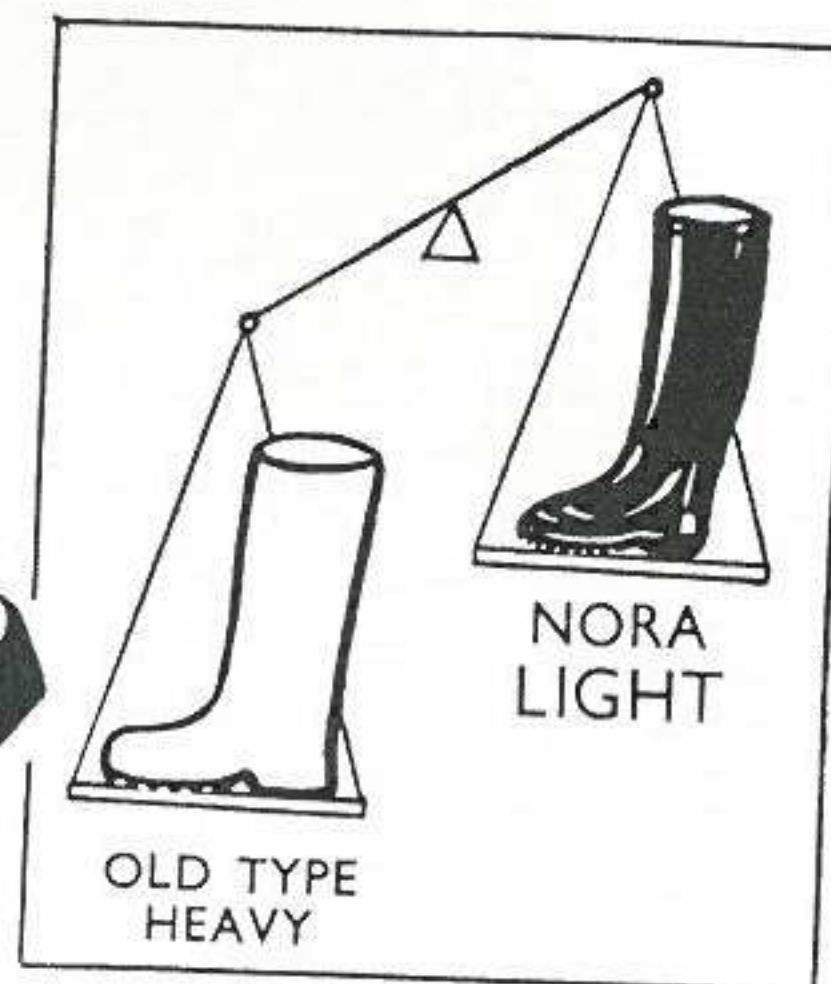
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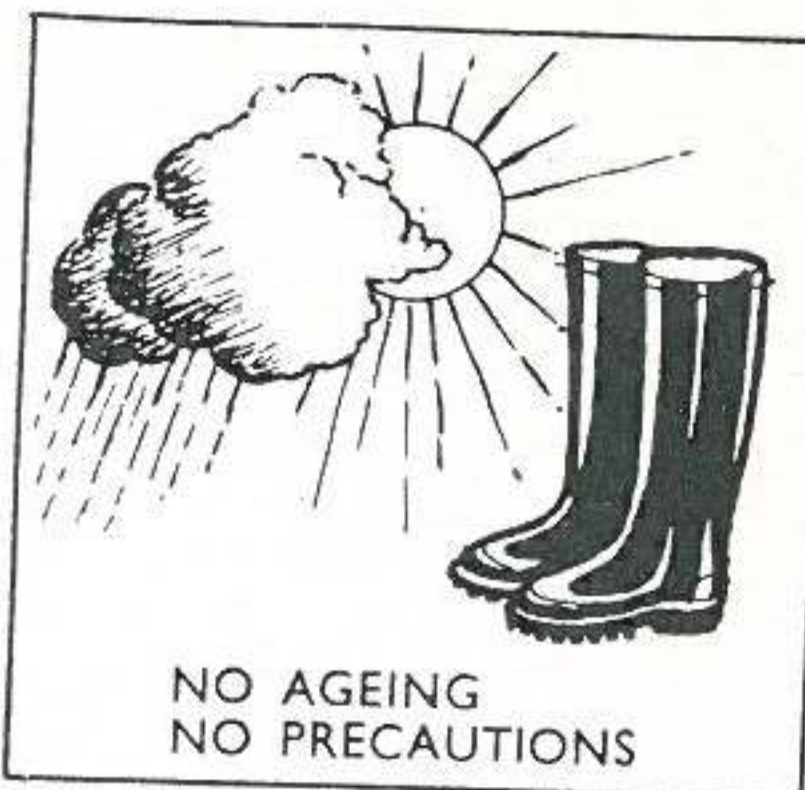
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COVER PHOTO

Action in that most-talked-about football match of modern times—the clash between the All-Ireland champions, Meath, and the Australians at Croke Park on October 29th.

'Pull up them socks'

IN country parts long ago — and maybe to this very day — a player performing below par was told by his followers on the sideline that his activities needed some more pep. The exhortation was expressed forcibly, if sometimes humorously. "Pull up them socks Mossy, boy," the sideline voices said.

The words, after essential grammatical correction, might well be adopted as a national slogan by the G.A.A. to-day. Not as a means to improve individual performances, but as a reminder to many footballers and hurlers that their manner of dress on the field of play required adjustment.

Nothing looks more slovenly than stockings, which are made to be worn knee high, sagging down around a player's ankles. It is a common sight in all our games, from the lowliest club event right up to All-Ireland finals. (Pictures are printed on page 35 to illustrate the point).

This deplorably uncouth habit frequently mars even the splendour of the ceremonial parade on Final day.

What is the reason? Primarily it is carelessness, a blithe disregard for neat appearance which reflects on the player himself, on his team and ultimately on the image of the game, though we are told that some players feel that, to perform well, they need the freedom of naked shanks. This, of course, is an illusion. If carried to its ludicrous conclusion we shall some day encounter the player who divests himself of shorts and jersey be-

cause he finds those garments restrictive of movement.

This is not a trivial topic. These comments may be contested by the argument that it is what a player is and does that matters, not the mode of his apparel. We would answer that by saying that the commercial product sells more readily if presented to the customer in attractive wrapping. The appearance of a player's dress is the quality of his packaging. There is an obligation on every player, on every team, to present the best possible image of the games, especially to the eye of the outsider.

The Australian footballers have been cited so often to illustrate so many things that one is reluctant to invoke their names again in this context. Their neat appearance on the field was one of their biggest attractions. In this, at least, we could profitably imitate their example.

But do we have to look so far afield? It is a noteworthy fact that almost invariably the great hurler or footballer is also a neat dresser. Christy Ring never let his stockings sag to his ankles; neither did the Rackards nor Mick O'Connell. Eddie Keher is an example to-day.

The G.A.A. cannot pass a rule compelling players to wear garters. And it is too much to hope that the current naked-shanked brigade can now break a long-standing habit. But it would be a wonderful change if those in a position to do so made sure that the rising generation of players were taught to "pull up them socks" — and keep them up.



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CRESTED TEN

by JAMESON

THE EDITOR'S FORUM

IT is not the practice in the publishing business for one newspaper or journal to mention the name of a rival in any complimentary way in the course of normal reportage. The narrow view is that it's a free advertisement—tantamount to the cutting of a stick to beat oneself.

It has never been the policy of *Gaelic Sport* to pretend to its readers that the other fellow doesn't exist. Consequently, we take this opportunity to congratulate our contemporary, *Gaelic Weekly*, on its recently announced plans for expansion. In this we include Mr. Brendan Mac Lua (a former Editor of *Gaelic Sport*) who has been appointed Editor of *Gaelic Weekly*.

It would not be in keeping with our policy of good fellowship if we didn't wish him and them success.

A part of *Gaelic Weekly's* expansion project is to acquire new writers. Their progress in this respect is already evident. We note that one of their most recent acquisitions bears the venerable and respected name of Fear Ciuin, chief Gaelic games correspondent on the *Sunday Press* for many years.

His writing will bring its own distinctive dignity to the pages of that paper. It would be a pity, then, if this were spoiled by Fear Ciuin's reactionary tendencies.

We recall, still with traces of irritation, the stand he took (with obvious sincerity) when the question of a distinctively coloured jersey for football goalkeepers was mooted some years ago. This change became essential as soon as the goalkeeper was permitted to lift the ball directly from the ground within the square, because it was seen that the player who possessed the new privilege should be clearly distinguishable from his fellow defenders.

HOW THOSE QUIET MEN CAN SHOUT!

Fear Ciuin strenuously opposed the proposal, virtually arguing that the change would erode one of the national principles of the G.A.A. ! After some delay, however, Congress passed a rule compelling goalkeepers to wear distinctive jerseys. That was commonsense.

In the *Gaelic Weekly* of November 11 and a week subsequently, Fear Ciuin fired the first salvoes of reaction into the re-vitalised atmosphere of thought and dialogue which has surrounded Gaelic football since the visit of the Australian team. Sadly we feel that many more guns will rally to the side of the venerable old commentator in the weeks and months ahead.

He speaks of "mass hysteria" and "mob-like outcry." He refers, we presume, to the comments of his fellow writers in the national and provincial press. We would agree with his remarks if he had confined them to one or two columnists who have been blathering about the "shattered image" of the G.A.A. and the "disgrace" of Meath.

This kind of nonsense makes

what the occasional popular press sports writer thinks is "good copy." And sub-editors love the chance to put up fat, black headlines.

No serious, responsible journalist suggested that the G.A.A. was "shattered" or Meath "disgraced". Ninety-nine per cent of our sports writers are both serious and responsible and their treatment of the affair reflected those standards.

They wrote no more than the man in the street was saying—had been saying before ever the Australians came: that Gaelic football had deteriorated in quality; that, structurally, it probably had flaws; that it was now time to take a critically detached look at the game and forthwith to embark, if necessary, on a campaign of improvement or rejuvenation, whether by rule change or some other means.

This was not mass hysteria. It was healthy self-criticism. A whirl of wind in a musty room. The sports writers were in good company. Leading officials of the G.A.A., including the President, Mr.

● CONTINUED OVERLEAF



Ron Barassi, the Australian captain, pictured with one of the pretty, gaily-clad Australian girls who travelled from London to see the tourists play Meath on October 29th at Croke Park.

● FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Seamus Ó Riain, the General Secretary, Mr. Seán Ó Siocháin, the ex-president, Mr. Alf Ó Muirí, Fr. Tully and Peter McDermott of Meath and Mr. Tom Loftus of Dublin, all reacted favourably to what they saw in the Meath-Australia match. In varying ways, all of them agreed that changes of some nature were necessary. There are no ostriches at the top.

We fear that Fear Ciuin's reactionary articles will bring them forth from other places. We can only hope that the volume of reaction (now, it seems, inevitable) will not stifle the new thinking which, in a few years, could re-vitalise the Gaelic code and make it truly what we always wished it to be—the finest and most spectacular football game in the world.

The Australians proved one thing conclusively—that physical fitness is paramount. They also showed us that the old style of catch and kick, when performed smoothly, intelligently and swiftly, is the very essence of the game.

We referred in this column last month to the "smart set" who sniggered at the traditionalists. These people, lovers of the New Trend, which involves the solo-running, dallying, twisting and turning of so-called good teamwork, these also learned an eye-opening lesson on October 29, and again when the tourists played Mayo.

One must now ask: was it Kerry of thirty and forty years ago, the masters of catch and kick, who really played Gaelic football at its best? The question answers itself.

As performed by the Australians, the direct lift of the ball from the ground made the game faster, smoother and markedly free of the fouls which the toe-pick invites.

It has been argued (Jay Drennan, one of our leading correspondents, does so elsewhere in this issue) that the toe-pick is a special skill of the game which we should be loath to remove.

But is this method of lifting the ball a special skill anymore? Who performs it properly, even at the top level nowadays? But even if it were still an attractive feature of play, would it be worth keeping if it continued to lead to numerous fouls and, as now has been proven, maintained a cumbersome brake on the swift, free movement of play?

We are not advocating change for the sake of change. Nor do we suggest that this, or any other modification of the playing rules, should be made without careful thought and experiment.

We do strongly propose, however, that a trial period be instituted before the playing rules again come up for revision in 1970. In that way, everyone would be satisfied that changes were either necessary or unnecessary.

We further propose that the Central Council should appoint a Playing Rules Committee whose function it would be to watch the experiments, examine them carefully and then report their findings to Congress.

We think that this committee should be comprised chiefly of prominent ex-players—preferably of recent vintage. We could suggest names like Jim McKeever of Derry, Kevin Heffernan of Dublin, Peter McDermott of Meath, Jack Mahon of Galway, the Minister for Health, Sean Flanagan of Mayo, Eamonn Young of Cork and Jim Brosnan of Kerry. There are many more.

The winds of change are blowing. Let not well-meaning but stuffy conservatism stop them now.

TOP TEN

THE top spot on the football list this month goes to P. J. Loftus of Mayo for his outstanding displays against the Australians and against Cork in the Grounds tournament semi-final. That fine left-full back, Peter Pritchard of Cavan, fills a close second place.

The number one place in hurling is filled by Ted Carroll of Kilkenny, who had one of the best games of his career in the Oireachtas final against Clare.

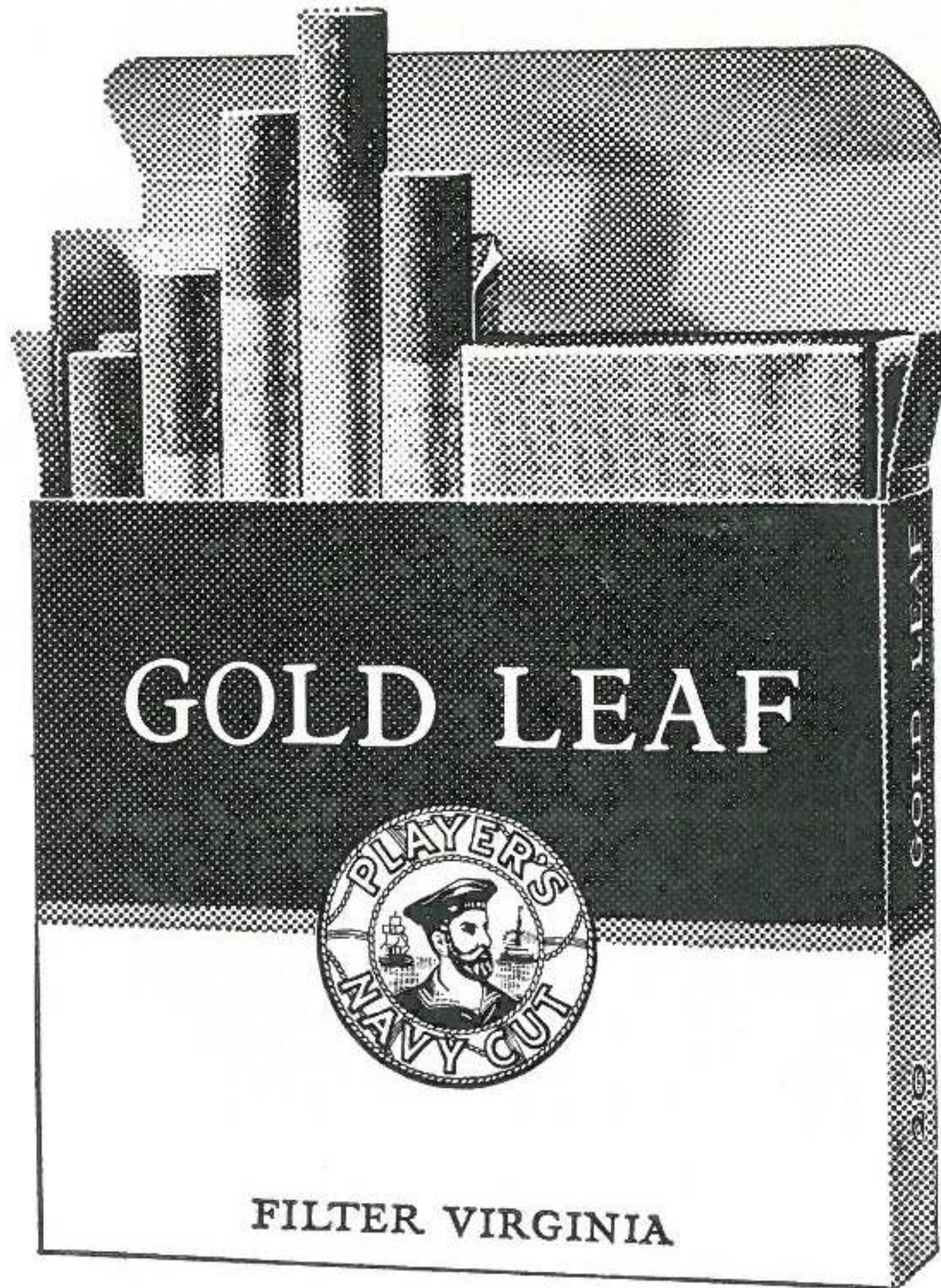
The ratings are compiled on senior matches from October 15 to November 12.

FOOTBALL

- P. J. Loftus (Mayo)
- Peter Pritchard (Cavan)
- Fergus McAuley (Cavan)
- John Donlon (Longford)
- Ray Carolan (Cavan)
- Paddy Cole (Westmeath)
- Mick White (Meath)
- Jack Quinn (Meath)
- Jim Fleming (Mayo)
- Pat Reynolds (Meath)

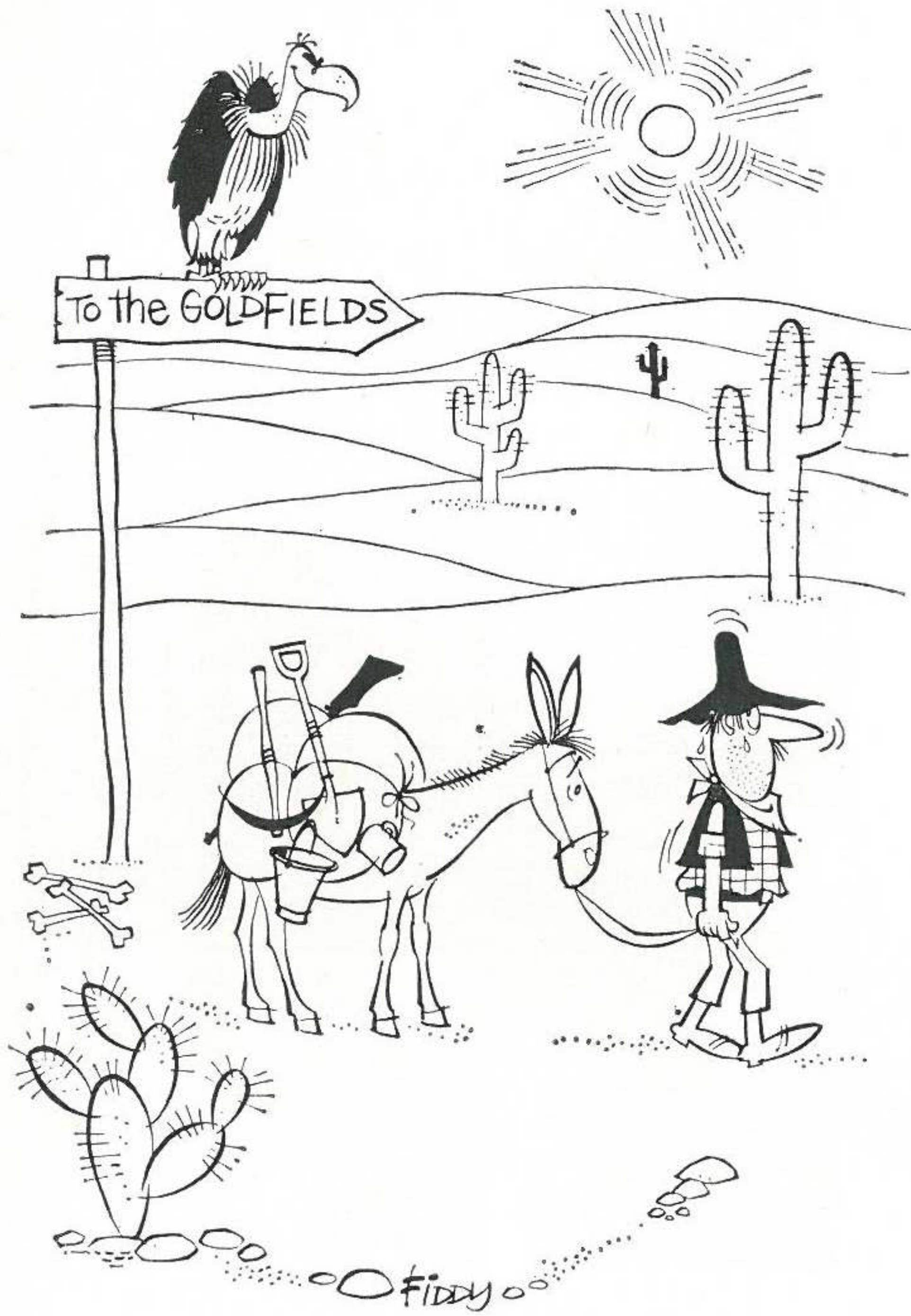
HURLING

- Ted Carroll (Kilkenny)
- Phil Wilson (Wexford)
- Barney Moylan (Offaly)
- "Pa" Dillon (Kilkenny)
- Tom Cheasty (Waterford)
- Liam Danagher (Clare)
- Peter Cosgrove (Galway)
- Mick Roche (Tipperary)
- Gerald McCarthy (Cork)
- Jimmy Cullinane (Clare)



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CASH PRIZES FOR READERS

OUR new competition, in which we are offering cash prizes for readers' letters, has brought a big response. After careful consideration of the entries, most of which were of commendable standard and some very good, the adjudicators have awarded the first prize of **ONE GUINEA** to Aodhán O Cearbhaill, Annamoe, 23, Maunseus Road, Galway.

The following are his comments on the question posed last month: Should hurlers wear protective headgear?

THE QUESTION of protective headgear has been raised again in hurling circles, prompted, no doubt, by the injury Tom Walsh suffered last September. The most heartening aspect of the arguments on both sides is that the problem is being discussed in a sane and sensible manner.

We have been spared the hysterical and extreme criticism that sometimes follows serious injuries in sport. This, I believe, is because we realise that grave mishaps in hurling are rare, and while we are not minimising the danger, we are examining the issue in its correct perspective.

Head injuries in hurling are so uncommon that most hurlers pass through their playing days without falling foul of a swinging hurley. Viewed in this light, compulsory protective headgear would be a burden rather than a help to most players. Besides, it would not be possible to recognise a player by his flaming red

"YOU Said It," our new competition which gives readers an opportunity to comment on subjects of topical interest in the G.A.A. and at the same time collect cash prizes, has got off to a most successful start.

The topic for this month is: "Would the abolition of the toe-pick, permitting players to lift the ball directly off the ground, improve Gaelic football?"

Readers are asked to give their views in not less than 200 words and not more

than 300. There is no age limit.

A first prize of **ONE GUINEA** will be awarded for the article which, in the opinion of the adjudicating panel, is most worthy of publication. A prize (or prizes) of half a guinea may be awarded for other contributions of merit.

Please write on **ONE** side of the paper **ONLY**. Entries should be addressed to "You Said It," Gaelic Sport, 328 North Circular Road, Dublin 7. Closing date is first post on Saturday, December 9th.

hair, high forehead or bald spot, if headgear were compulsory.

Also, it is doubtful if any kind of realistic headgear would have minimised the seriousness of the freak accident that befell Tom Walsh, as his was an eye injury. I believe that if the choice were left to the players most would opt to play as they have always played — without protective headgear.

But there are undoubtedly hurlers who would welcome such headwear. Not only should these players be entitled to cranial protection but the G.A.A. should recognise a certain type

of headgear as standard, and make it clear that this approved article is as much a part of a player's outfit as his boots — if he cares to wear it.

Otherwise those who wished to protect their heads might be deterred from doing so by public reaction. One can imagine a full-forward appearing in Croke Park in headgear and being greeted with shouts of "Go back to Lansdowne Road!" or "Where's your motorbike?"

And a player should be free to wear recognised headgear for one match and discard it for the next, if he wishes.

● TO PAGE 52



SEAN MURRAY
(Longford)

LOOKING back on the year now drawing to a close it is really difficult to select the outstanding features on the playing field, for we had some brilliant scores, many fine individual performances, first-rate games, and noteworthy team achievements.

Take the goal of the year, for instance. Sean O'Connell capped a brilliant three-goal getting performance in a Lagan Cup play-off with Donegal at Ballinascreen with a gem of a second major after a superb twenty-yards solo run. Tony Doran took Wexford's third goal in their League final win over Kilkenny really efficiently; Seamus O'Dowd climaxed a superbly controlled and pulse-raising 40-yard solo run in the second half of the Connacht semi-final with Galway by raising the green flag, and scores by Jackie Devine from twenty yards after a great run in the first half of Longford's Leinster replay win over Kildare, and by Eamonn O'Donoghue four minutes from the end of the drawn under-21 football final, also jostle for the accolade.

But, I still pass these scores, great ones though they were, for the goal that really brought football's Railway Cup back to Connacht on St. Patrick's Day after

By OWEN McCANN

a nine year absence. This was a real vintage move that Enda Collieran set up about a minute and a half from the interval with a well-directed clearance to Joe Langan. The Mayo man passed on to Seamus Leydon, who in turn, sent to Mickey Kearins, and the Sligo man supplied in brilliant fashion the final flourish by cracking home a goal of superb elegance.

Top individual scoring exhibition? Again there is a strong field. Willie McGee's four goals in Mayo's under-21 football final replay win over Kerry cannot be easily overlooked. Pat Cronin shot ten grand points against Limerick in the championship, and what about Eddie Keher's splendid 2-10 against Offaly in a League tie at Kilkenny in February, and that noteworthy tally of 2-5 with which he almost won the Leinster final with his own hurley?

Noteworthy achievements, certainly, and there were others, too. However, for my money pride of place is taken by the sharpshooting of Sean O'Connell in Derry's Lagan Cup semi-final replay with Armagh at Dungannon in March. This was a classic showing of what efficient forward play is all about — cool, methodical, clever and, most important of all, with an out-

High spots of the season

standing end-product to good out-field work in a return at 4-3 of one of the biggest individual totals of the year in football.

From scores and score-getting to the last line of defence is a logical step. Cork fans, I have no doubt, will immediately proudly and loudly parade a brilliant full length save by Billy Morgan from D. J. Crowley just before half-time in the Munster final with Kerry as the save of the year in either code — and rightly so, for that was a wonderful one.

Nonetheless, I just cannot pass over Ollie Walsh's All-Ireland final exhibition — and exhibition is the operative word here. In the first half, particularly, he brought off at least half-a-dozen saves, any one of which was a "save-of-the-year" topper in its own right, but the one that stirred me most came after about ten minutes.

The great Kilkenny goalkeeper blocked out a "70", and then almost immediately foiled superbly a quick and accurate return from Donie Nealon that more often than not would have been rewarded with a goal.

That All-Ireland final display of Ollie Walsh was, of course, one of the top individual performances in what was something of a vintage year in this respect. I also



BILLY MORGAN
(Cork)

remember the brilliance of Sean Murray, polished off by a personal total of 1-5 for Longford against the Combined Universities early in the year at Longford; that O'Connell tour-de-force against Armagh; the power-packed hurling of Harry Dalton at midfield that contributed nobly to Dublin's League win over Cork at Croke Park in February; great performances by Jimmy Cullinane, especially in the League semi-final with Kilkenny, and the championship against Limerick; the majesty of Jack Quinn in the Leinster final, and Australian, Barry Davis, hitting the high spots in the win over Meath.

Each has strong claims for ranking as the outstanding individual performance of 1967, but if it were possible for me to re-live just one of those champagne showings, I would have no hesitation in making my choice — the coolness, vigilance, dynamic saving and lengthy striking that added up to that formula for sheer brilliance and class with which Ollie Walsh coloured Kilkenny's long-awaited All-Ireland final win over Tipperary.

Still on the scoring theme: Was there a better point in 1967 than Jimmy Keaveney's in the 56th minute of the League semi-final with Meath at Croke Park? That was a great score after a spectacular solo run, and virtually there and then wrote finish to a great Meath come-back bid after a ten-point interval deficit.

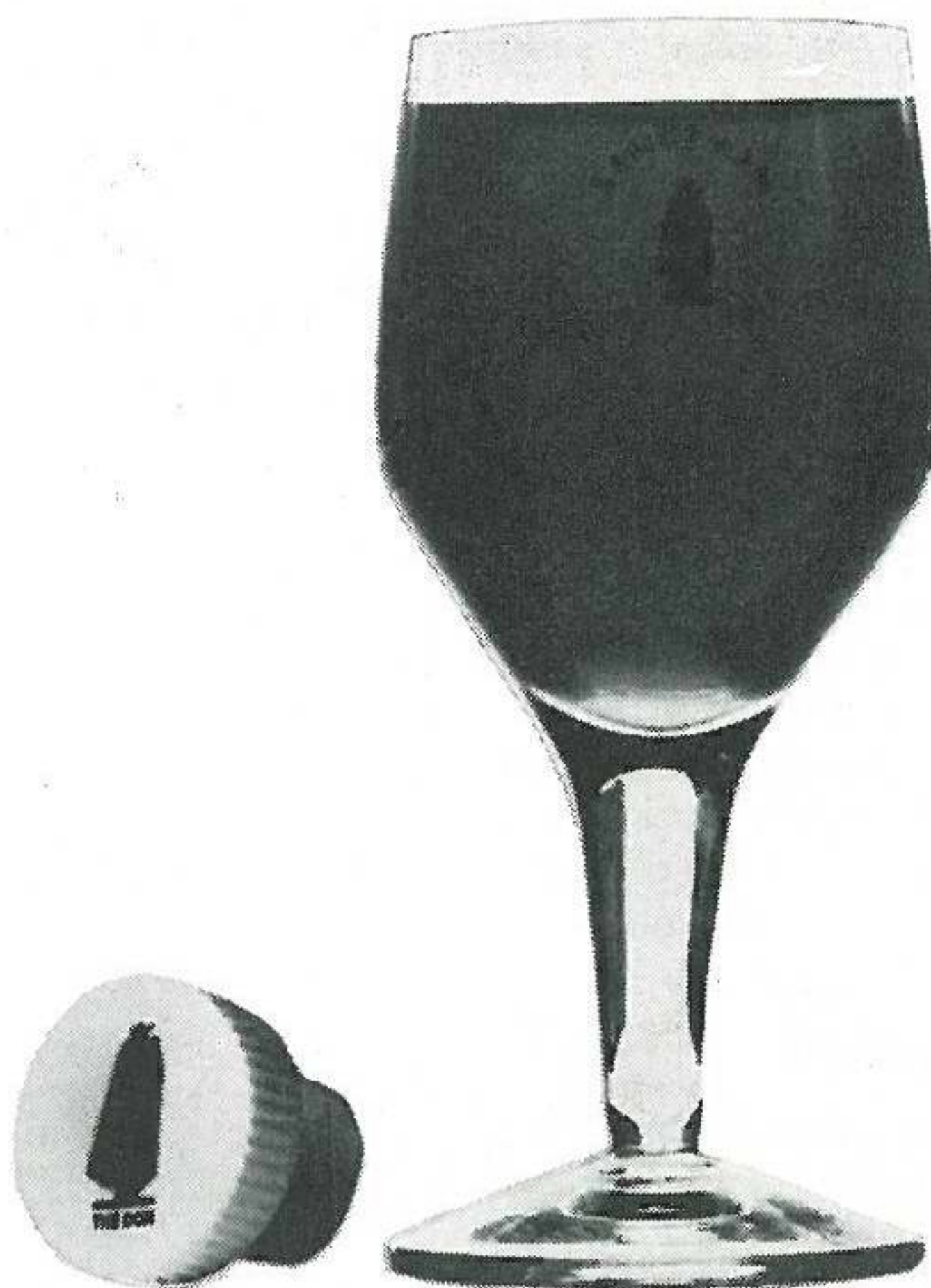
Game of the year? Not such a lengthy list here. Still, Limerick and Cork provided hurling of real

● TO PAGE 13

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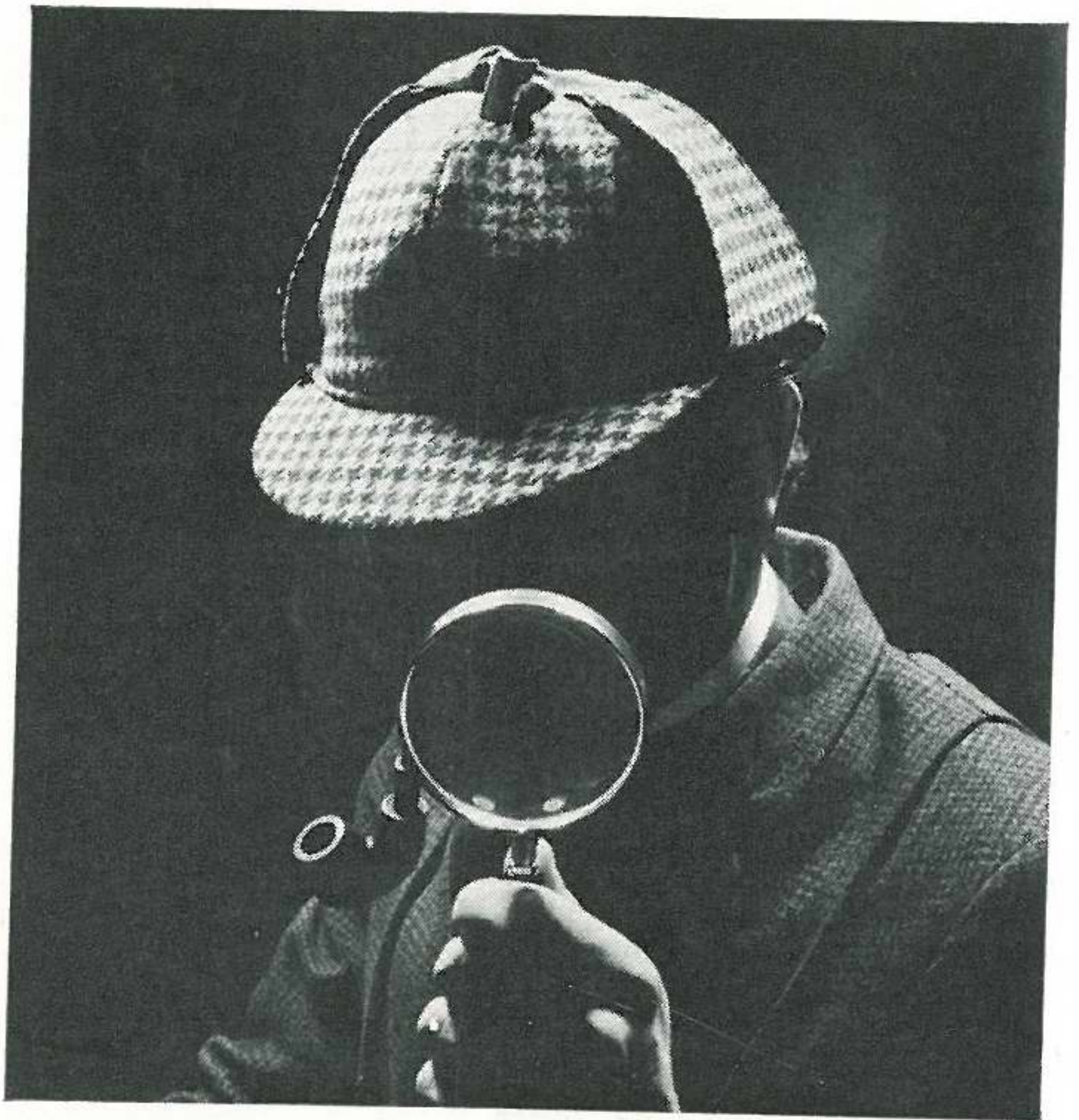


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for Pink!**



Ollie Walsh (Kilkenny), one of the stars of the year.

● **FROM PAGE 11**

class, as well as thrills in plenty, in their National League game at Cork in February; the National Hurling League final in May was another memorable encounter, and there was much to enthuse over in the Leinster hurling decider.

However, I did not see anything in the premier grade that stirred me as much as the drawn Mayo-Kerry under-21 football final. This was an outstanding match, with clever and attractive football, some first-rate individual performances, and well-worked scores. And, to cap it all, we had a finish that

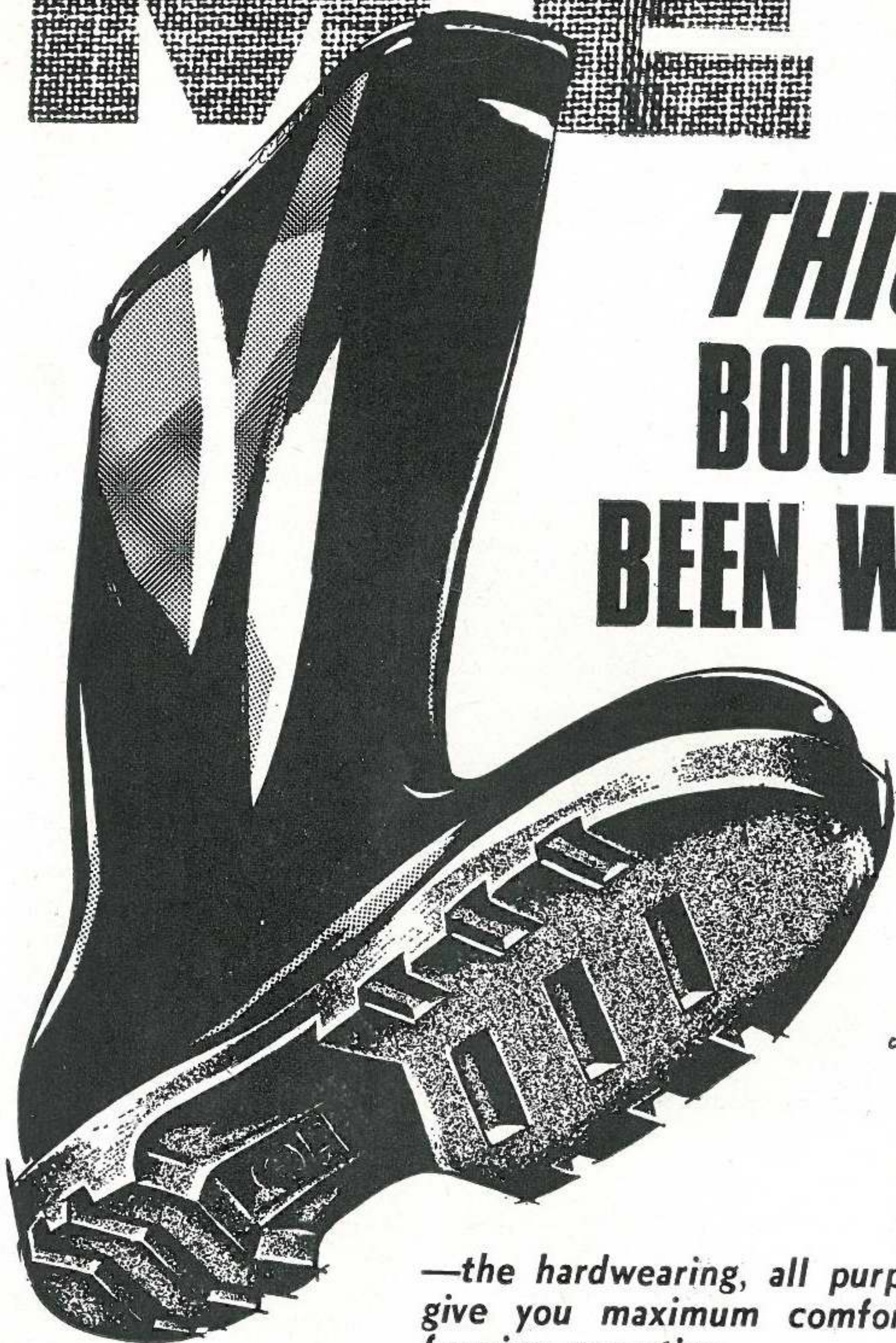
could not have been better had it been stage-managed, as Kerry came from six points down at the interval to snatch the lead with a goal four minutes from time, and Mayo equalised with a free a minute from the final whistle.

Much praise has been lavished on the Australians for their high-power football against Meath and Mayo, and deservedly so. But, in looking for my outstanding team performance, I am guided by play in the white-heat of serious competition, rather than in challenges, no matter how novel or unusual. Accordingly, I must pick

the Cork minor football side for their All-Ireland final showing. Here was a team that fired on all cylinders, played fast, co-ordinated football, made the most effective use of each player's particular assets, and took their chances.

For my final choice for the outstanding team achievement of 1967 I make no apologies to anyone for passing over footballers and hurlers alike, without hesitation, in favour of the Antrim camogie side in their All-Ireland final replay win over Dublin. That was Dublin's first defeat in the championship since 1956.

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Cork

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WALK ON THEM

Says FRANK McQUAID

IF you think about it you'll realise we use our feet for two main purposes: first to stand on and keep us in an upright position, second to walk about on, run and jump on. Playing a game of football, it is your foot which is used as a lever when you kick. If we did nothing at all but stand immovably in the same position, the flatter our feet were the better for the purpose. We could dispense with those toes which so often develop inconvenient corns, and do away altogether with the curves which so often let us down by tending to turn into "fallen arches." But you'd find it hard to climb a tree, or even a flight of steps, with flat, solid feet like this. The feet Nature has equipped us with are the best compromise that can be managed at the moment, and it's up to us to see that we give them a bit of care so that they don't turn into painful appendages that are more a source of annoyance than of usefulness.

Remember, when choosing footwear, never sacrifice comfort for fashion, always choose the most comfortable article for the job on hand. For example, many chiropo-

dists feel that a heavy, rigid sole on a shoe is bad for the foot — especially a youthful foot not yet fully developed. So if you must be out working in all weathers, in damp conditions and bad roads, choose to wear Wellington boots rather than heavy leather ones. Wellingtons solve the problem of keeping feet dry in bad weather, and their soles aren't inflexible. For total comfort wear a pair of long woollen stockings inside. But remember to slip off the Wellingtons when you come indoors — they are designed for outdoor conditions and will definitely be no substitute for a pair of house slippers inside.

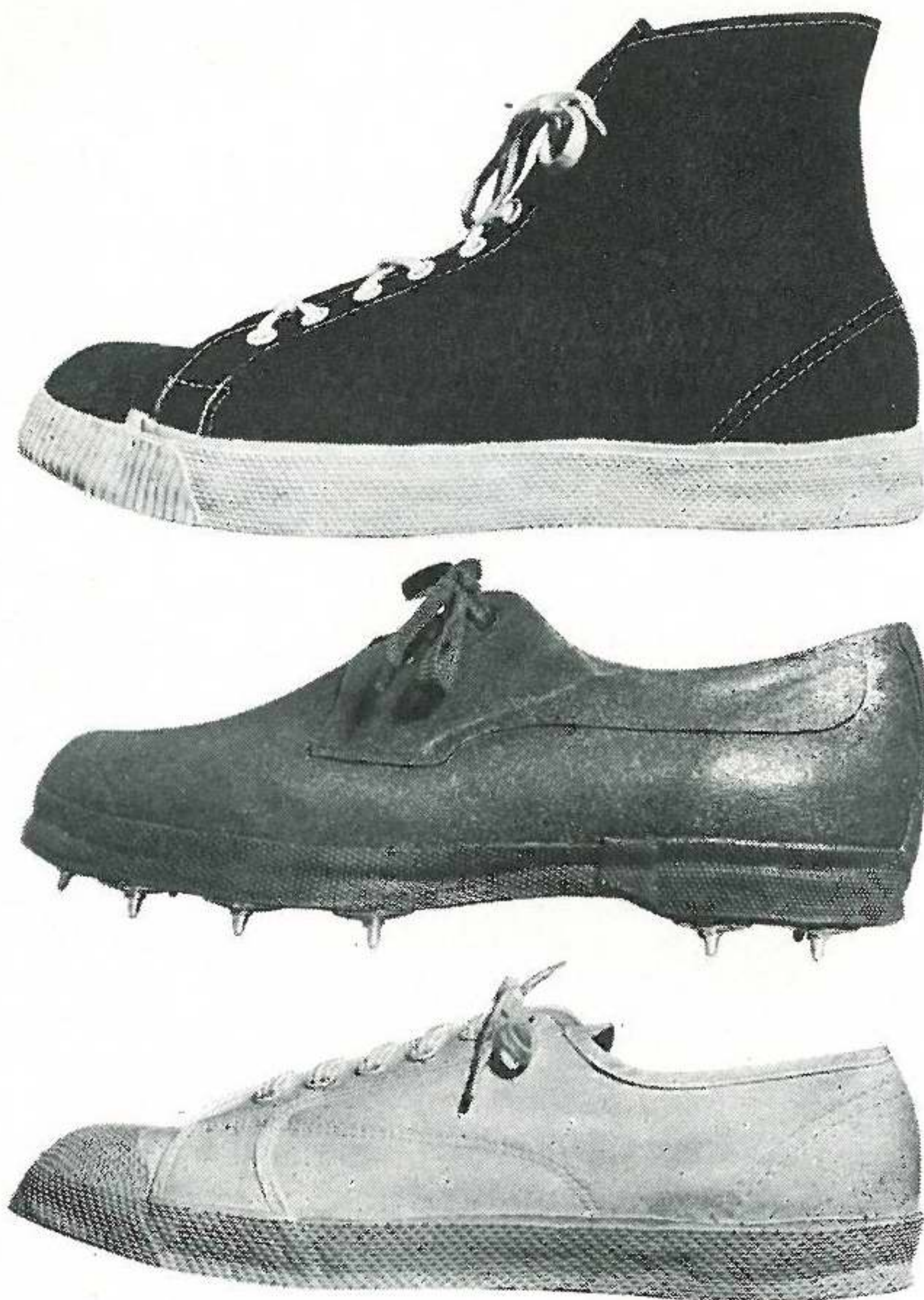
The odd blister, corn or callous which is just a minor nuisance to the rest of the population can be a big worry to the keen sportsman. But minor troubles like these can be dealt with at home and a bit of regular care and attention to the feet will ensure that they don't get much chance to develop.

"Give your feet a good soak, son" is the advice Granny often gave. Granny was wrong about this. At the time it can soothe your nerves as well as your feet

to sit soaking them in a bath of hot water, but all you're doing is making your poor "dogs" more tender than ever, and less likely to be able to stand up to tough conditions. Wash the feet regularly by all means — but in lukewarm water, and don't soak them. Dry very thoroughly, especially between the toes and round the nails. If you have "soft" feet, inclined to be sweaty, a rub down with a spoonful of methylated spirit will toughen them up. A small corn can be dealt with by using an ordinary cornplaster — but regard it as a danger signal and change to another pair of shoes once you've cured it. Callouses and welts are best treated by rubbing with a drop of olive oil after you've washed the feet. This will gradually soften the hard skin and it will rub away eventually, after a few weeks. Don't be tempted to take a razor to either a corn or a callous and if you suspect you have some serious trouble, like an impending bunion or hammer toe, the man to see is the doctor or the chiropodist. Nobody else can help you.

● TO PAGE 16

Sports Foot Notes from Dunlop



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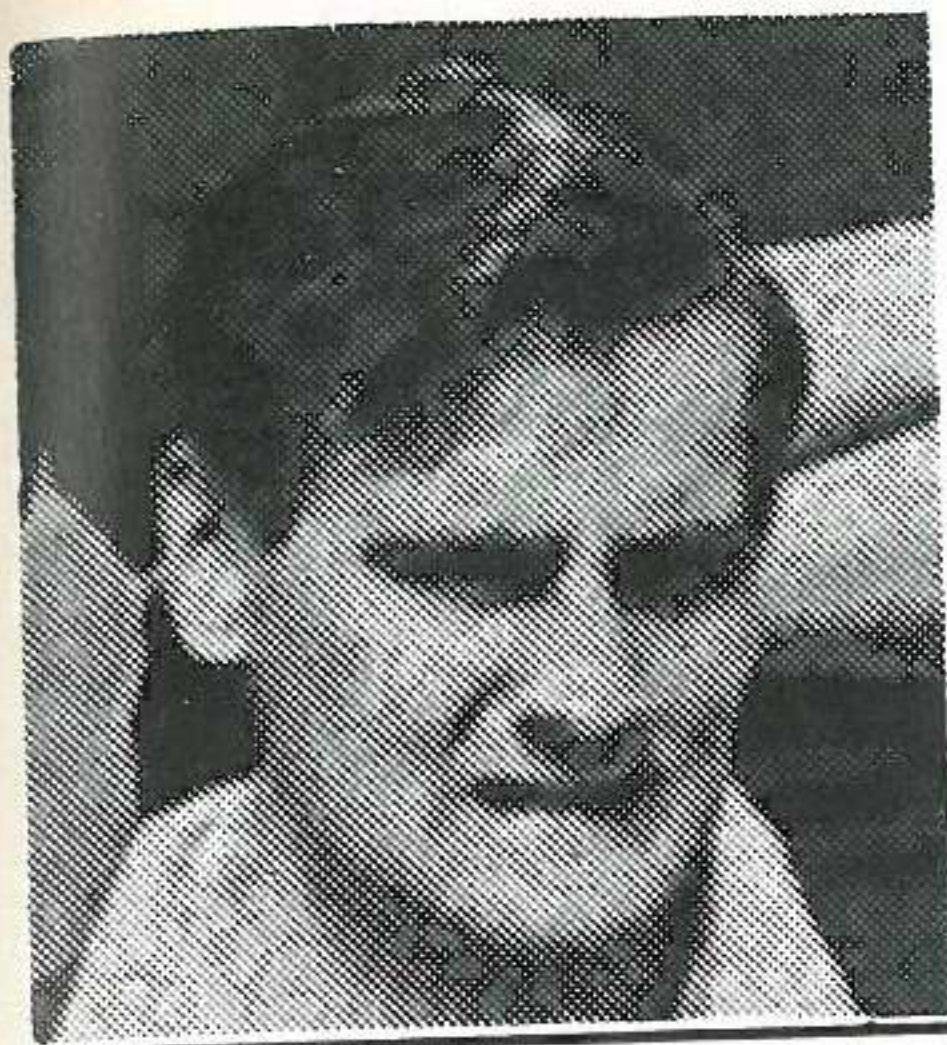
The Irish Dunlop Co. Ltd.
Dublin and Cork

● FROM PAGE 15

These are just a few suggestions on how to keep your feet in top class condition and after all they are a sportsman's most important asset which too often are taken for granted.

Now a word or two about sports shoes and boots which probably get the worst treatment of any footwear, both while on active service and on "home leave." You will carefully maintain a car or bicycle in apple pie order, but after a game, a pair of boots is usually flung into a corner, mud encrusted, and left there for days or even weeks. Naturally they won't stand much of this treatment without protest. On coming in from play, remove the mud and earth as gently as you can — a damp cloth is the best for the job. If the boots happen to be wet, putting them near the fire is the sure way to ruin them. Hang them up by the laces instead, in a current of cool, dry air — an out-house or passageway would be fine. Then when next you take them down for wear they'll be flexible and comfortable as before, and not battered and bent out of recognition. Incidentally, an old army tip for keeping the feet comfortable on route marches is to soap the soles of your socks (just rubbing them over with a dry cake of soap) before you put them on. It's a tip that could work equally well for sportsmen, especially those who concentrate on long brisk walks as a means towards keeping fit.

One last word and then I'll be off. During the coming winter months when indoor training facilities are not always available, get into the habit of walking to and from your place of employment even during your lunch hour. Most doctors agree that walking is the most complete exercise and unlike most things in this life, the more you do of it the better off you'll be — physically, that is.



BOSCO McDERMOTT

Talks to SEAN RICE

THEY have gone now. No more will the sight of the giant-striding Mattie McDonagh stir the Croke Park thousands. No more will John Donnellan or Bosco McDermott grace the battlefield that was the scene of so many of their victories. No more.

But they will be remembered. Time has taken its inevitable toll, but the memories are indestructible. Now these players can relax and watch the white heat of battle among other contestants. They have done their job, have won every honour the game can bestow.

They have gone. But in their wake they have left an immortal image of courage and determination that is unlikely to be equalled again.

It is only right then that we should take a last brief look at one of these players—Bosco McDermott—whose play was an example to the growing footballers of to-day.

The following is an interview I had with him:

Question — When and where did you start playing football?

Answer — In Paddy Griffith's field in Galway as a youngster of ten or eleven years.

Q. — When did you first play for Galway?

A. — In a senior football challenge game against Roscommon, at Roscommon, in 1959.

Q. — Did you play minor football?

A. — No. Neither minor nor junior.

Q. — What game is clearest in your mind?

A. — A National League game against Offaly in Tullamore in 1963. It ended in a draw and I was playing at midfield.

Q. — Did this game give you the greatest thrill of your football life?

A. — No. My greatest thrill was winning the third All-Ireland final.

Q. — Did you always play in defence?

A. — No. I played in the forward line for two seasons and I played at midfield on one occasion.

Q. — What forward did you most fear?

A. — I feared all of them, but especially any Down or Dublin forward, and particularly Paddy Doherty, Sean O'Neill, John Timmons and Brian McDonald.

Q. — What was the formula of Galway's success?

A. — We had players who were willing to make the necessary sacrifices to obtain a perfection of skill and fitness which would normally only be obtained by professionals.

Q. — Which player contributed most to Galway's success?

A. — There are, I think, fifteen answers to that question. Each player's effort inspired the whole team. And he looked upon his part as merely a part.

Q. — Have you decided to quit for good?

A. — It was decided for me. I was just left off.

Q. — Do you miss the game since you quit?

A. — Yes, very much. As a matter of fact I would advise all players of long standing to prepare for retirement, because it demands big adjustment which I have never read or heard about. I have felt it. I wonder have others?

Q. — Will you continue to assist your club?

A. — I will.

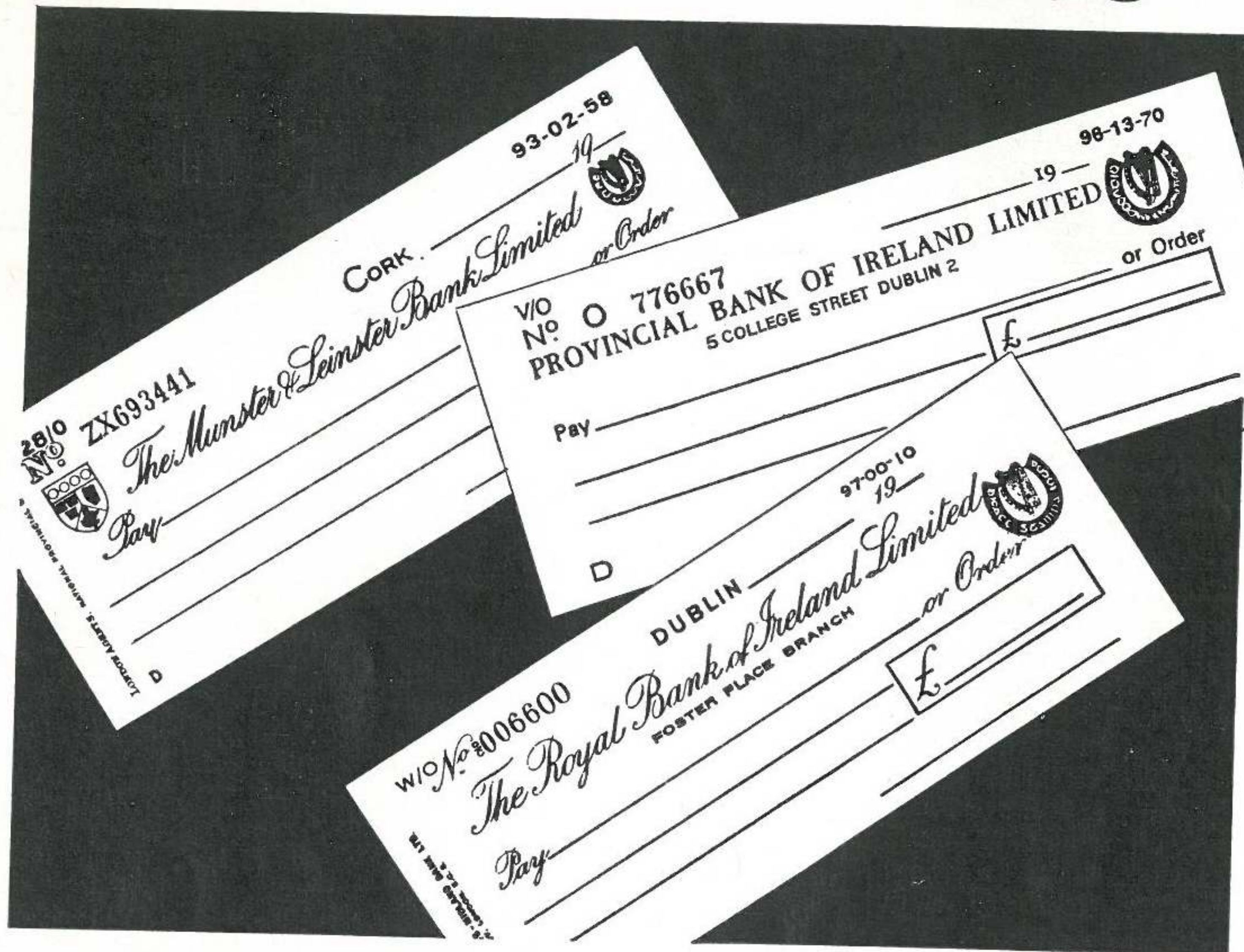
Q. — What does the future hold for Galway?

A. — It should have a bright future. If we believe in inspiration, then the young lads of Galway should have no excuse.

Q. — Is the standard of football in the country improving?

A. — Yes, it is, in the sense that more young men are accomplished at the game. Still, the demands are so big on the players that very high standards will not easily be achieved in the present G.A.A. structure.

All-Ireland forwards



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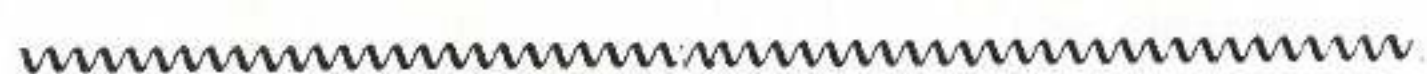
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CLUB BARS?



EAMONN YOUNG'S VIEW



I AM strongly addicted to drink. That's why it's easy to write this article.

I like to see a man at the end of a hard day going down in a pint and sitting by a cosy fire with his friends.

I like to see families at home having a drink together and helping thus to understand each other's problems without waiting for a family funeral to get them to talk to one another.

I like to see big house-parties where friends of the family bring their wives and girl-friends, and there's a drink of one's choice for each. And I like to see a man bring his wife, young, middle-aged or old, out for a night to get her away from the house and the kids.

Anyone would think I'm a wonderful chap. I'm not, but that's how I feel. Small wonder, then, that I should see a lot of merit in the provision of a bar for a G.A.A. club.

There are many very decent, sincere and sensible G.A.A. men who disagree with me completely, and the best of luck to them. They say we should have no G.A.A. bars. We should continue as we are, concentrating on playing the games well, giving spectators a good view and all the rest. It's better if the players go home after the game, but if they do want a drink, there are plenty of G.A.A. pubs for them to patronise.

Why should the association put

up bars for them in a country already over-supplied with licenses? Why should the G.A.A. encourage drinking and lead young lads to ruin?

This attitude, which has a perfect right to be expressed, is born I fear of the old days in Ireland when drink was the curse of a people who far too often had little other relaxation from the harsh reality of a life in which a man often lost his job or his farm because the local sham-aristocrat didn't like him.

Too often, then, we had real drunkenness, fighting, and the atmosphere which turned the women and so many of their sons against drink ever since. This is not to say that there isn't plenty of drinking done to-day with quite a number of consequent abuses also; but all drink isn't bad and we are now, let's hope, mature enough to be able to put it in its right place.

The fear remains among some of our G.A.A. men that we'll traduce the youth if we have bars in the clubs. We will place our young players in a drinking atmosphere and be the cause of their downfall.

The view is hardly reasonable. To-day the young men are daily in touch with alcohol consumption and the fact that so many of them have money in their pockets at an early age puts the bottle of beer within their grasp in every sense

of the word. The responsibility for their drinking will certainly not be laid at the door of the G.A.A.

While debating this I cannot help remembering that, as a young lad, I togged out for the local team . . . in a pub. When I finished about thirty years later I togged out for the same local team . . . in a pub. I took my first cupful of stout at a threshing down in West Cork at the age of fourteen, though what effect this has on the argument I'm not very sure.

Now, let's remember that Alf Murray and Seamus Ryan, the president in office, supported the application of Casement Park and Jim Brosnan on behalf of Austin Stack Park, for the sale of drink at those places. Both are tee-totallers and Alf Murray made the point that if the conduct in either of those places was not satisfactory the licence would probably not be renewed anyway.

The G.A.A. will survive without the sale of drink, but if that survival is more energetic and wholesome for the addition of facilities outside of the playing-field so much the better.

The rugby clubs are well organised socially and naturally they attract. The Dublin rugby club which I visited one Sunday morning early was a credit. The field was first-class but the dressing rooms with hot showers, the dance-hall cum meeting room, the

● CONTINUED OVERLEAF

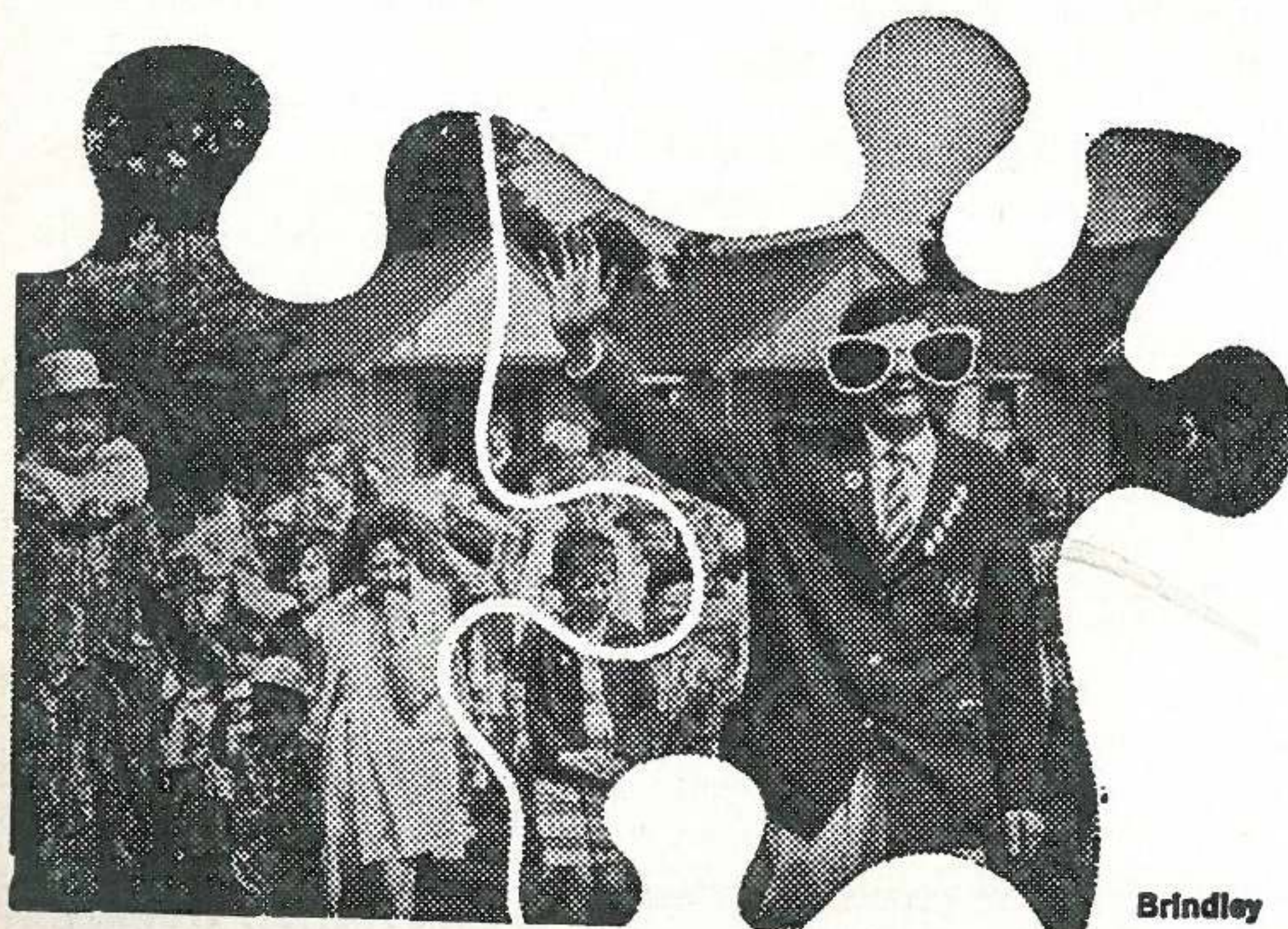


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Brindley

● FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

bar and the squash courts made me very envious. The atmosphere was virile, healthy and altogether desirable. The bar, incidentally, wasn't open as we were there pretty early and I believe it was open only at suitable times.

For the very obvious reasons of increased social intercourse among our G.A.A. public we do need a place to talk. The more spacious it is and the nearer to the pitch — which, after all, is the reason we get together — the surer our chances of having player and supporter of both sexes meet.

The club will obviously become a place where the administrative meetings will be held. I see nothing wrong with having the meetings in the pub of the local G.A.A. supporter, where still so many of our teams tog off. But if the clubhouse has all the amenities, including the bar, the correct place to hold the meetings is at the clubhouse which will more and more become a focal point. And, after all, that's what we want, isn't it?

At the moment, they say the charge is being made, as it was thirty years ago, that the administrators are divorced from the players. Then let the meetings be held at the pitch where the boys will be training and where the oldsters will have a chance of admiring the self-discipline of the lad who trains on a dark, rainy night and appreciating the complete necessity for showers if they are not already installed.

The bar in the club house will give a little extra employment and it won't go into competition with the local G.A.A. publican, because it won't be open regularly.

There's one very good argument for the bar in the club, and that's the real club atmosphere which it must stimulate. Those of us who belong to clubs where drink is sold know the real matey atmosphere

which is generated when people who have a definite common bond are drinking together. As we all know, the reason for the drink then is often more businesslike than anything else and as everyone knows everyone else, the initial inhibition which afflicts so many is absent.

In army messes all over the world soldiers experience this and there exists in these places a spirit of relaxed comradeship which is admirable in any organisation. Incidentally, we might pause to reflect also on the very desirable standard of behaviour in such places and find in it an assurance of reasonable conduct should we have the courage to take the step and allow more G.A.A. bars.

Our games are very good and deserve to stand on their own. Yet, they could go to the wall if the other games were better organised, had more social facilities and in consequence attracted more young people who have the right to enjoy themselves after the game.

We must not only catch the young — that we are doing just now — but we must hold them. We who were young in the thirties and forties are hewn of a different age (hewn out of a different rock, a young friend tells me) so we must not in our middle age be so blind as not to see what the young people of to-day, who are just as good as and perhaps better than, we were, want from this great Association of ours.

I'll tell you what they want. They want serviceable cars and good hotels and good food and clean, tidy dressing-rooms with hot showers. And they want to meet their girls after the game, just as we did only they want some place handy where they can take them to meet the other players. And they like to have a drink sold there. And they're dead right.

And what do I want? Well

(among other things) the old-timer wants to put his elbow up on the club bar and listen to himself talking . . . listen to the old-timer of the other side talking . . . and argue about what's wrong with the G.A.A. and how it can be improved. And he wants to see what makes the young man tick, and he likes to see opponents sort out the

differences that will always arise on the field and which nearly always evaporate afterwards, given a fair chance.

And if the old-timer has to bring the wife to an odd match, he will be just as happy to bring her into his club bar and show her that the boys aren't really that bad. It could be a help . . . or could it?



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Mr. BEITZEL

THE best way to describe Harry Beitzel is to call him the Michael O'Hehir of Australian football. Anyone who heard his witty comments over the public address at Croke Park will know what I mean. The only difference is that O'Hehir does not wear a Digger's hat — at least not to my knowledge. But more about that hat, and the controversy it started, later.

Manager Beitzel, in his native Melbourne, is a public relations officer, marketing consultant, newspaper proprietor, football umpire, broadcaster and sports writer, and the sponsor of the world tour by the Australian Rules players.

It was my pleasure to interview Mr. Beitzel after their Croke Park victory over the All-Ireland champions, Meath, but I think it will be of interest to record that before we got to the dressingroom a lady, and I presume her two young sons, stopped us to ask, "who are you" (meaning Mr. Beitzel). She

HARRY BEITZEL

talking to SEAN O'DONNELL

went on: "I watch you every week on television in Melbourne, your face is so familiar."

"I am Harry Beitzel. Who are you and where do you come from?" was his reply, and after signing some autographs for the two boys he proceeded with me to the dressingroom where we had the following interview while I fitted on Harry's Digger hat.

O'Donnell—The hats your boys are wearing have caused a great deal of controversy and I believe the opposition in the Australian Parliament went so far as to ask for a ban on your wearing them on your world tour. Why?

Beitzel — Well, they felt it would degrade part of the national heritage. However, no man is a prophet in his own land and I think no one is more entitled to wear those hats than these boys of mine. Anyway, the hat has captured the imagination of the public and I will recall this trip as the tour of the hat and the round ball.

O'D.—Why is it called a Digger's hat?

B. — It got its name from the Aussie soldiers who wore it throughout the world wars. They also wore it while digging the trenches, hence the name Digger's hat. It is something of a national emblem in our country and we are very proud to be able to wear it.

O'D.—You must be very pleased that you have defeated the All-Ireland champions, Meath?

B. — Oh yes, we are. But you

have no idea what this actually means to me personally. My boys have been playing this game only for six weeks and after today's performance I think they are a wonderful bunch of athletes.

O'D.—What, in your opinion, is the similarity with Gaelic football?

B. — The first similarity is the popularity of both games in their respective countries, compared with soccer and rugby. Others are that both produce plenty of high fielding, long and accurate shooting and, most important of all, lots of scores.

O'D.—How do you view Gaelic football as a game?

B. — I think it is quite a lively game, but I honestly believe your players get far too much protection from the referee. From what I have seen of it, the game is slowed up too much by blowing for petty fouls instead of allowing the advantage rule to apply. The players hold on to the ball too long.

O'D.—Are there any rules you would like to adopt from Gaelic football, or are there any which we could adopt from your game?

B. — It is not for me to dictate to your organisation what changes they should make, but I do agree that we can learn an awful lot from your game, as I am sure you can from ours. Therefore, it is entirely up to each organisation to make any changes they think fit.

O'D.—Has your game any connection with rugby?

B. — I don't know why people

keep asking me this, but I would like it to go on record that our game has no connection with rugby whatever.

O'D. — *How seriously is the game taken in Australia, from a spectator's viewpoint?*

B. — Oh, very seriously, indeed. In fact, it is like a religion over there. The people take it very seriously. So serious that the goal umpire has to get special protection from mounted police, and God help him if he happens to disallow a score. He will be lucky to get away with his life.

O'D. — *All your players are professional?*

B. — No, semi-professional. They do get paid for playing but it is not their living. All of them have jobs and only play on a part-time basis.

O'D. — *What system is used to play off your championship games?*

B. — All our games are played in the winter. We have twelve teams competing in Melbourne and the championship is run on a points system with the top points team qualifying as champions.

O'D. — *Would you like to see Australian Rules football played with a round ball, or Gaelic football with an oval ball?*

B. — No. I don't think there is any need to change the respective balls; leave them be. They are part of the history and tradition of the games. It is the approach and the methods adopted that could be improved.

O'D. — *How do your players train?*

B. — They do quite an amount of gym. training, body building, weight lifting and they run a lot. The main emphasis is on speed and body building.

O'D. — *What are your plans for the future of both games?*

B. — My plans are to be able to return again next year to Ireland. After all, we must give them a chance to beat us. But seriously, I would like these games to become an annual feature, with an Irish side coming over to our country.

O'D. — *You speak of these games becoming annual events, but would they be feasible from a financial point of view?*

B. — We could make them feasible. I brought my party over, and I am not a rich man.



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DAN McAREAVY

A TERRIBLE DREAM

THERE was not a Gaelic pitch to be seen in the land. Nowhere was the sky-line broken by a single set of goal-posts. The clash of the ash was heard no more. Three thousand odd clubs had disappeared over-night. There was no longer any need for playing fields or meetings. All the throbbing veins of activity which we had known for over three-quarters of a century had been severed. The Gaelic Athletic Association had ceased to exist and the Irish people were left count, not so much the cost, but the loss.

Lest it be thought that I have been favoured with some top-secret leakage from the Space Age, let me hasten to add that my "dream" of an Ireland without the G.A.A. was prompted by a discussion I had a few evenings ago when the many "failures" of the Association were enthusiastically advanced by a group of young people from a school where a disappointing switch from traditional allegiance has taken place.

Finding it totally unsatisfactory to attempt answering the question, "Why play Gaelic football or hurling in preference to other codes?" without reference to the historical context, but in which these young people did not seem even mildly

interested, I decided that all-out attack must be the best defence.

"Imagine for a moment the complete abolition of the G.A.A. and let us attempt to draw a fair picture of the aftermath," I argued, "Because if your claims are valid such a move would eliminate all your 'problems' with the disappearance of what you have called this backward-looking, conservative, monolithic structure."

There was an obvious awakening of interest as I proceeded — with faltering step, for I had no homework done on the question — to sketch in very rough outline the picture which I felt would emerge if, in fact, the G.A.A. ceased to exist.

Nor did I refer to Dr. Croke's letter lest my audience would again charge me with "looking back as usual, like all G.A.A. people," for apparently in many young eyes to-day it is a crime to "rake up the past." Any reference to history seemingly marks you out as "square" and certainly not "with it."

But as I saw it, the litany of change would be long and overwhelming — clubs would disappear, playing fields would be hives of activity no longer, gaping holes would appear in the columns of

the press where match accounts and committee reports were formerly featured, the endless debates in the houses at night would become a memory. Sunday afternoon would be morgue-like in its unhealthy silence.

But if these were some of the startling and immediate changes which would follow the "death" of the Association, the over-all effect would obviously go much deeper.

The Irish people would find themselves bereft of the last bastion of Nationalism left to them — a bastion which has enabled them to survive the festering wound of the unnatural division of their country, a bastion which has never ceased to inspire hope that justice will be done one day. But now buffeted helplessly on the sea of foreign influence, who could blame them if the unquenchable spirit was at last smothered?

And what of the other facets of our life and heritage which the G.A.A. has stoutly defended over the years?

The games, although a worthy outward sign of the Association's life, have never been more than a means to an end. But the ideal, enshrined in the original charter, of an Ireland for the Irish people, could not be expected to survive

By DAN

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McAREAVY

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in the new dispensation. We would soon become a bastard part of Western Europe without any distinguishing badge. And does even the most broad-minded" or "ecumenical" amongst us want that?

The language and ceili dancing, too, would have lost their bravest champion, for disappointments in their revivals surely cannot be placed at the Association's doorstep. And is it possible to put a value on those club get-togethers at night when the common bond is continually being strengthened in a truly national setting.

But perhaps the greatest loss of all would be the disappearance of the G.A.A. way of life — that indefinable quality which we take for granted because it has been nurtured so carefully from Congress to Congress by every Central Council so far elected, right down to those meetings of the most junior club in the land.

Our discussions went on into the small hours. Candidly, I don't believe I got any converts. Probably the fault was mine. But I am convinced that some day a more able pen will draw, in stark relief, the harrowing picture of an Ireland cut off from the influence of the greatest national organisation in the country.



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PETER OWENS

Historic milestones

THE two games of the Victorian Australians on tour, against Meath and Mayo, were historic milestones in the constantly developing pattern of Gaelic games. It is, I think, fair to say that, even at such a short distance in time, before the historical perspectives have been sufficiently defined.

How the effect of the draught of fresh air which the Australians have sent whistling through the more sombre quarters of our games will affect these dull corners still must be seen. However, one major and simple thing has been established: a new challenge has been set up which must have the effect of sharpening competitive instincts grown flabby through lack of better standards with which to measure our own.

In brief, the Australians play a game which is radically similar to our's, in origins and in concept. Its development — isolated like our own, for some of the same reasons — has taken some different turns from ours. The four goalposts, the six-point goal, some of the more rugged tackling are redolent of the earlier days of the G.A.A.

On the other hand, the larger pitch, oval-shaped, are more the legacy of the fact that the game made its Australian habitat on

the cricket ovals of that country. As a game of football, most of the energy has been directed towards increasing the standards of play rather than refining the rules. It is a pretty natural game, containing still several characteristics which have been legislated out of our game.

That this is no reflection on the G.A.A. was clarified by the comparative merits of the two games as seen side by side in Croke Park on the first day. There was no doubt that the Gaelic football code was the better game; even the Australians themselves played a more exciting, mobile, skilful game at Gaelic than at Rules. The splendid qualities of these brawny, extremely well-trained, super-fit men from Down Under were far better exhibited in our code than in their own. That they have taken such a liking to it would suggest that they know that, too.

Mayo showed that we have reaped some benefit from the years of playing our own game, and learned something of the way in which different tactical devices may be employed, different styles introduced to gain an advantage even against such all-powerful opposition.

In one regard Mayo failed — lack of preparation. Had they been



THE AUSTRALIANS UP A NEW CHALLENGE

By JAY DRENNAN

as well-trained as their opponents, they might have won. But, when all is said and done, that is poor enough consolation to us. It reduces complacency to realistic appreciation of the fact that Gaelic games have failed, no doubt due to lack of outside standards by which to compare ourselves, to maintain as high a degree of progress as we might have.

Nothing is so good as the spirit of emulation to increase standards; for that reason alone, it is probable that we can look forward to an improvement all round in the football standards in the next few years. It will be clear to team trainers and coaches, and all those concerned with organisation of teams,



NET
GE

that the leeway is there to be made up, and the Australians will have done that much service.

They will have done us another service, too, in that they will have sown the seeds of several different possibilities of bringing this progress about. They have opened up new avenues of thought for those who think tactics; they have suggested one or two ways by which we might improve the flow of our own game by borrowing from them; they have shown us a move or two which we can work on to make the rather stagnant patterns of our team preparation once again something new and exciting.

There is, after all a limit to

which you can go in working on the same tried and true manoeuvres and tactical gambits; the law of diminishing returns begins to operate quite quickly after a few initial large successes. To overcome this, the stimulus of competition and comparison which now comes to the Association from a new source will be welcomed.

To more practical details: we might well consider straightaway the problem of the pick-up the main point which has caught the public imagination. It would seem that there is an amount of truth in the statement that eliminating the toe-applied pick-up would cause a fluidity which is sometimes lacking.

To my mind, this would hold greater benefits at a lower level of competition than in the higher reaches, where it is to be presumed that the participants have reached the height of technical skill and should not be unduly delayed in their collection of the ball even in the old style.

Before we rush into any amendment here it is also worthy of consideration that this is one of the skills of the game, that it has been essential to the game over the years. No doubt, most of us will have as our earliest memory of coaching in football some schoolmaster teaching us young-

● TO PAGE 42

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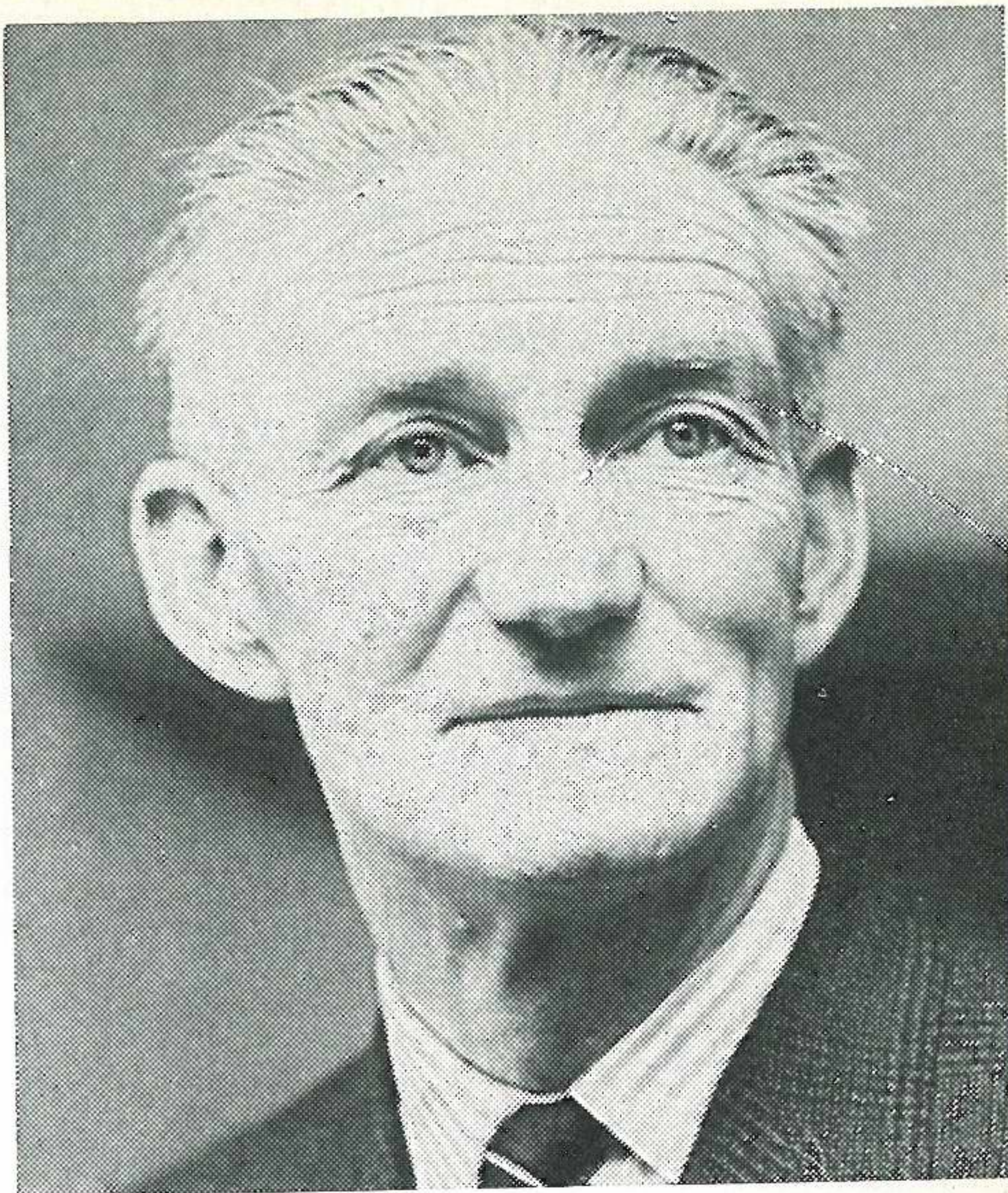
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PRESIDENTS OF THE G.A.A. (21)

ALF MURRAY



RARELY does it happen that a man who was an outstanding player also wins fame as an outstanding legislator, but that is the case with Alf Murray, who was one of the greatest footballers ever to grace the Gaelic fields, and then, coming up through the various councils of the Association, made an equally brilliant mark as President.

I first saw him play for Armagh in the year or so immediately before World War II and first saw him play in Croke Park in a replay of an Ulster final against Cavan around that time. It was the first and only time that I saw an Ulster final played in Croke Park and it was no fault of Alf Murray from Lurgan that Armagh lost.

I had a great interest in his football from there on, and later that year, or maybe the next, saw the young school-teacher play brilliantly in northern games. But the vast majority of southern followers did not see him until he came down with the great Ulster Railway Cup sides of the early 'forties.

The keyman in the spectacular Ulster forward-line was Alf Murray on the forty-yard mark and it was his brilliant scheming and defence-splitting runs that brought the inter-provincial title to the north for the first time and made Ulster

By **TERENCE ROYNANE**

supreme on the inter-provincial fields for several seasons.

Even before his playing days had ended, he was taking a prominent part in the council chambers of the G.A.A. He has been President of Ulster Council for more than one period and can be safely said to have served the Association at every possible level of administration.

He was always one of the most prominent speakers at Congress, where he always spoke to effect, and when in 1964 he was elected to the Presidency, succeeding another teacher, Hugh Byrne from Wicklow, every Gael knew that Alf Murray would bring his keen mind and trenchant tongue to the task of keeping the Association to the forefront in the National scene.

An uncompromising patriot, Alf Murray during his Presidency made

sure that the Association stayed true to the ideals propounded long ago by the founders.

An outstanding student of the Gaelic language, Alf Murray was a great propagator of its use at all levels of G.A.A. business and he also was one of those who set in motion the nation-wide scheme for the revival of hurling, which is now beginning to bear fruit.

But his work on a broader scale for the G.A.A. should not be allowed to obscure the fact that he has with his fellow Gaels in the Clann Eireann Club in Lurgan set up there a Gaelic centre that is a model to every other G.A.A. club in the country. Catering for men and women, boys and girls alike, and providing every kind of social activity it is surely the prototype of the G.A.A. club of the future. The Clann Eireann club is the first step towards the new image of the Association which Alf Murray has long planned and worked for.

CROSSWORD

No. 29

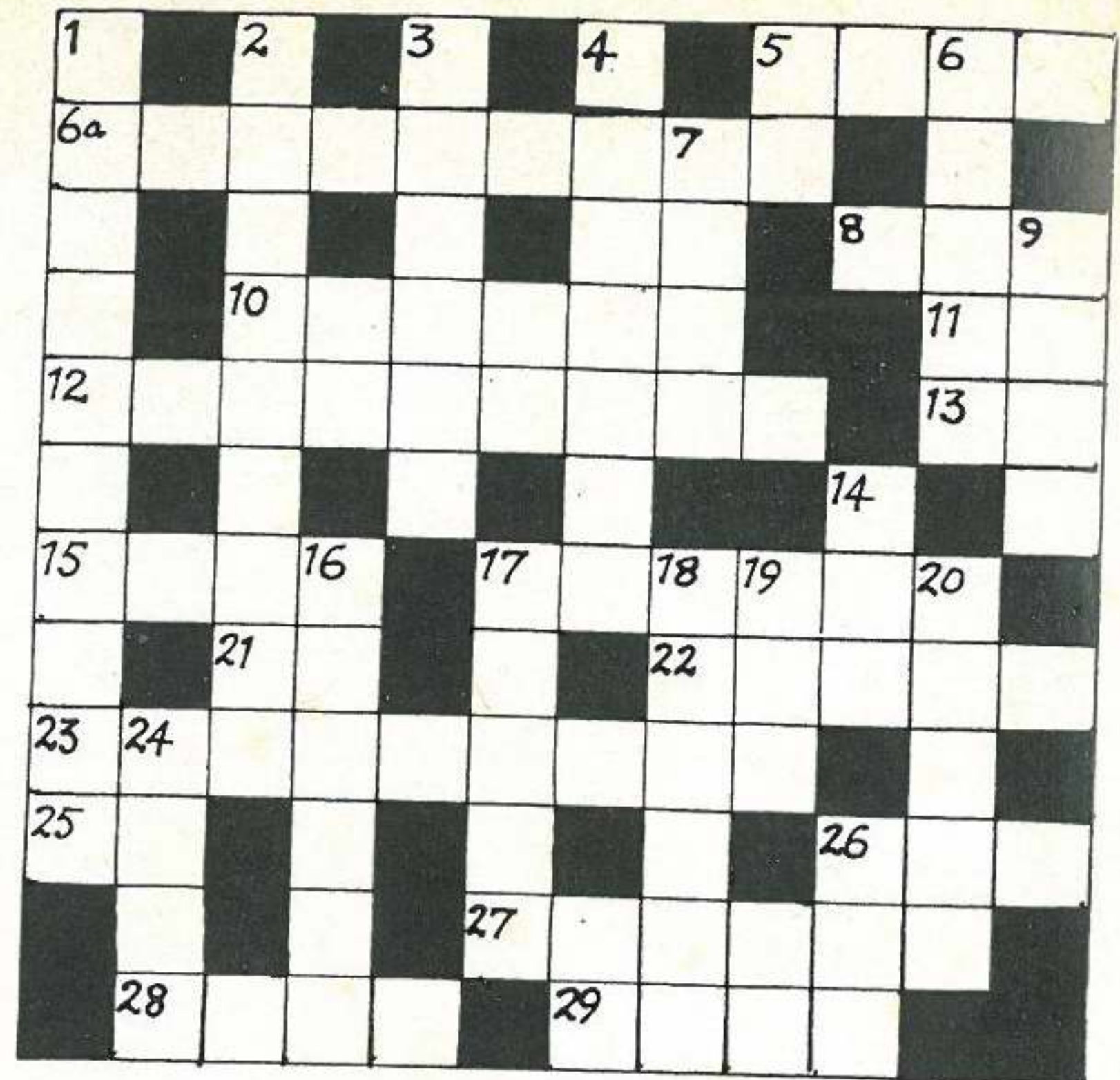
By PERMUTER

ACROSS :

- 5—Loosened cape makes a necessary attribute of the speedy, modern player. (4)
 6a—Full-back for Down. (3, 6).
 8—Animal who sometimes interrupts games. (3)
 10—Liquid sounding Cork midfielder in their All-Ireland triumph in 1966. (6)
 11—Bloodless victory. (1, 1)
 12—(and 6 Down) The noise which gives atmosphere to big games. (4, 2, 3, 5)
 13—Father, childishy. (2)
 15—Such starts are a major fault in G.A.A. organisation. (4)
 17—Goalkeeper for New York from Offaly. (1, 5)
 21—Truncated oxx. (2)
 22—Almost senile markings on a playing field. (5)
 23—Non-participant in the game. (3, 6).
 25—Westmeath full or corner-forward with initials like a learned theologian. Initials. (1, 1)
 26—Make an effort. (3)
 27—Mayo wing-half or Roscommon forward. (6).
 28—Ties could make a suitable position for club premises. (4)
 29—"Mutt" of Tipperary. (4)

DOWN :

- 1—The big competition. (3-7)
 2.—An All-Ireland winning corner-forward with Kilkenny some 20 years ago. (3, 6)



- 3—Nuts to this tall Kilkenny midfielder. (6)
 4—Ran past suggesting ancient Grecian rigour of training. (7)
 6—See 12 across.
 7—A silence falls on 12 across. (4)
 14—Heated supporter to cool a lady. (3)
 16—He knows all the skills and tactics — a coach must be one. (6)
 17—Like an expert tweed-maker, a forward will swerve his way through. (5)
 18—Frank was a much-travelled footballer before ending up with Kerry in the '60s. (6)
 19—Three-quarters of Italian coin gives a figure from ancient Irish myth. (3)
 20—Close is the most of this player's name. (5)
 24—Betting men's way of expressing a team's chances. (4)
 26—The number on the right half-forward's jersey. (3)

SOLUTION PAGE 52

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Time for a change of togs

By TIM HORGAN

WHETHER Gaelic football will become an international game or not is a question time alone will answer. But there can be no doubt that the recent visit of the Australians to Dublin must occasion a great deal of re-thinking and re-appraisal on the part of our administrators, and many minor re-adjustments to the code are bound to emerge.

It is not my purpose to discuss possible changes in the rule-book this month, but I am prompted by recent events to introduce a topic which has been overlooked far too long.

Why don't hurling and football teams wear coloured togs?

There was a time, not so long ago, when the idea of a distinctive jersey for the goalkeeper seemed alien to the G.A.A.'s way of think-

ing. It smacked too much of soccer, they suggested. But since its introduction and the corresponding "soccer" rule of allowing the goalkeeper to pick the ball off the ground, who can deny its beneficial effect on the game?

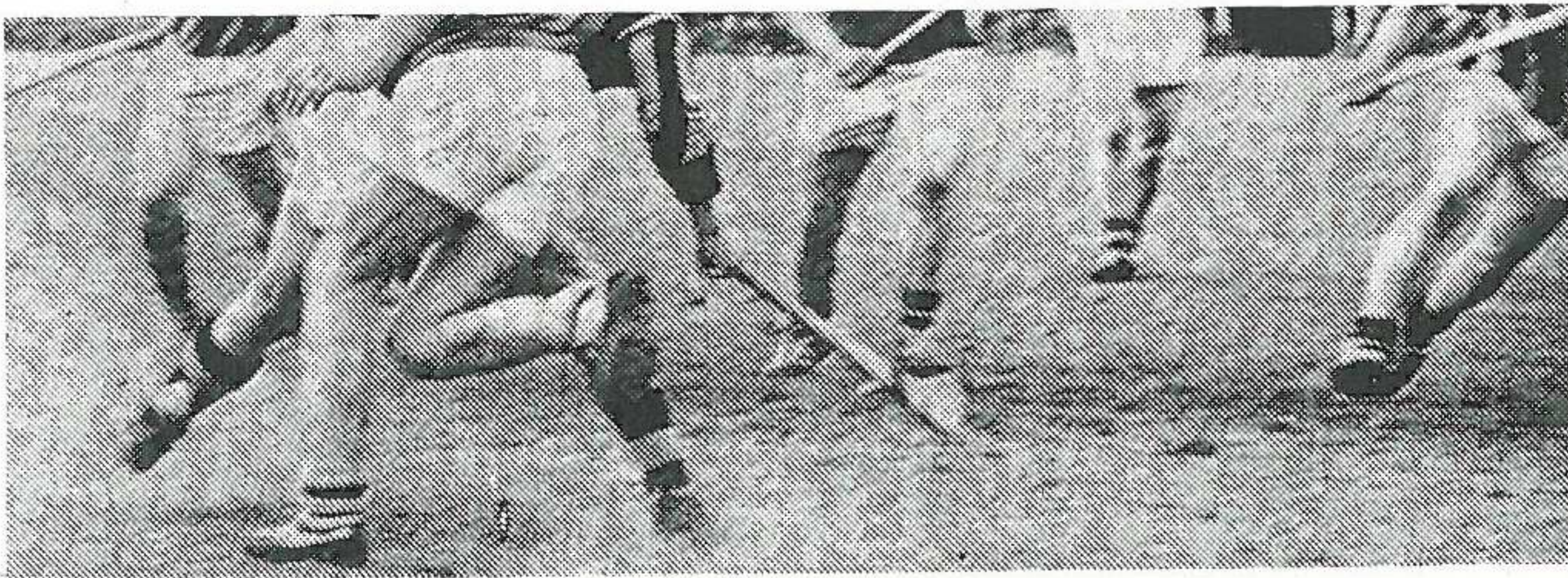
Early last year and again this year the Donegal footballers arrived in Croke Park wearing attractive green togs, in keeping with their county colours. The overall effect of their attire was most pleasing on the eye, but unfortunately the idea didn't catch on.

It seems remarkable that many counties whose colours do not include white should continually wear white trunks in major sporting events. This applies, in particular, to teams whose jerseys include black, but who persist in

donning white togs. In recent years black trunks have become quite familiar in Croke Park and full marks to the Down footballers for adopting the colour on a permanent basis. But isn't it about time the Kilkenny hurlers followed suit?

Whenever Kilkenny appear in an All-Ireland final the official programme lists their colours as "Black and Amber." Yet, for decades the Noreside hurlers have been playing with black, amber and white markings and will continue to do so until they change the colour of their togs. Black knicks may have been difficult to procure in the past, but there isn't any good reason why the present team shouldn't wear them.

Kilkenny are not the only
● CONTINUED OVERLEAF



SLOPPY

Slovenly players like those on the left, damage the image of the Association. Visitors are appalled to see players appear like this in All-Ireland finals.

35
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● FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

"offenders," of course. Many other hurling and football counties are guilty of adding white to their authorised designations. Some notable examples include Tipperary (blue and gold), Kerry (green and gold), Clare (saffron and blue), Meath (green and gold), Wexford (purple and saffron) and Mayo (green and red). Admittedly, in the case of counties like these, appropriate coloured togs may be hard to come by, but Donegal have set a very good lead.

In the case of some counties, white trunks are quite acceptable. Teams like Cavan (blue and white), Cork (red and white), Limerick (green and white), Offaly (yellow, white and green) and Dublin (white and blue) do not require a change of colour. But even here there is room for improvement, and this brings me on to a second point about the colour problem.

It's hard to understand why so many players wear club stockings in big matches with their county. Nothing looks more shoddy and cheap than a team of hurlers or footballers sporting a variety of colours on their legs during an important game. But, unfortunately, such an occurrence is all too frequent in the provincial championships and even in Croke Park itself.

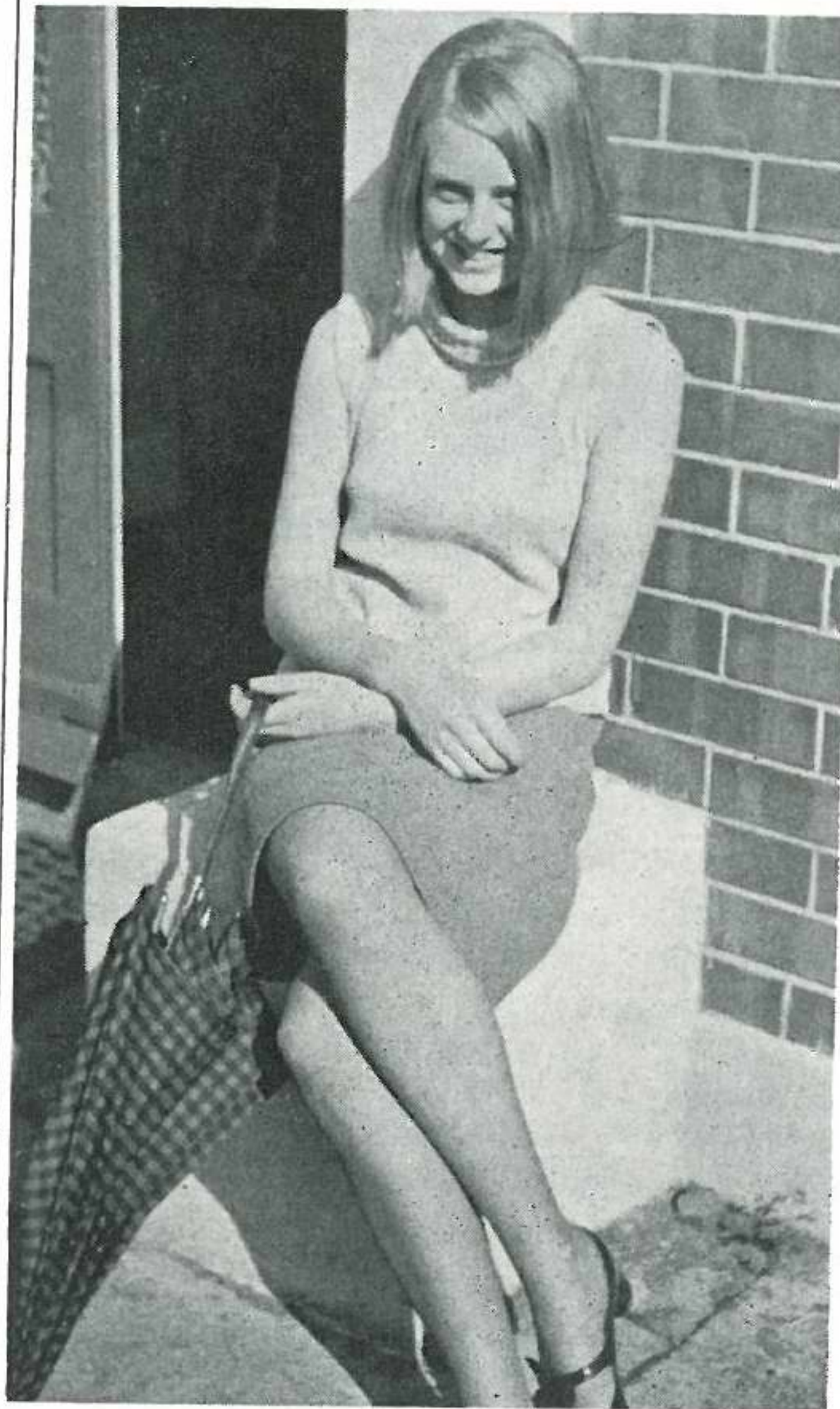
It's high time steps were taken to stop this trend, and the obvious solution would be for the respective County Boards to supply their senior teams with sets of socks at the start of every championship campaign. This would ensure a certain amount of homogeneity in the appearance of the team and thus add an extra touch of glamour.

As well as wearing the same coloured socks, I would also like to see teams lining out with the same design. One player may have a different arrangement of the same colours and stand out from his colleagues. This takes from the over-all appearance of a team

and is not to be recommended.

Since the Australians did so well in Croke Park there has been much talk of Gaelic football as an international game. Perhaps such a dream may come true in the future;

meanwhile it's up to the respective counties in Ireland to make the game even more attractive to outsiders. And to my mind coloured togs and appropriate socks are the first step in that direction.



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GAMES THRIVING IN THE BANKS

By P. G. O'DONOGHUE



EDDIE KEHER
(Provincial)

AS the year draws to a close and many a glorious hour becomes a memory, the time has come to recall deeds of valour which were many.

Everyone has little difficulty in conjuring up a picture of Croke Park on All-Ireland Final Day. Crowded stands ablaze with colour, the dignatories of Church and State, and an expectant throng awaiting the outcome of the encounter. I wonder how many among the vast concourse of people on those occasions spare a thought for the men who are the very life blood of the G.A.A. — the players and mentors of clubs throughout the country, who, unheralded and unsung, strive to achieve the Gaelic ideals.

There are, indeed, hundreds of such clubs spread throughout the land, names that gladden the heart

of Gaeldom. Down through the years also, numerous competitions such as the Sigerson and Fitzgibbon Cups have come into being, together with many inter-firm championships, where the rivalry is razor keen and which have proven so often in the past to be the "graveyard of reputations."

The spotlight is now focussed on Gaelic activity in the bastions of financial stability — the Irish Banks. It is not surprising, on closer perusal, that our national games should flourish in the afore-

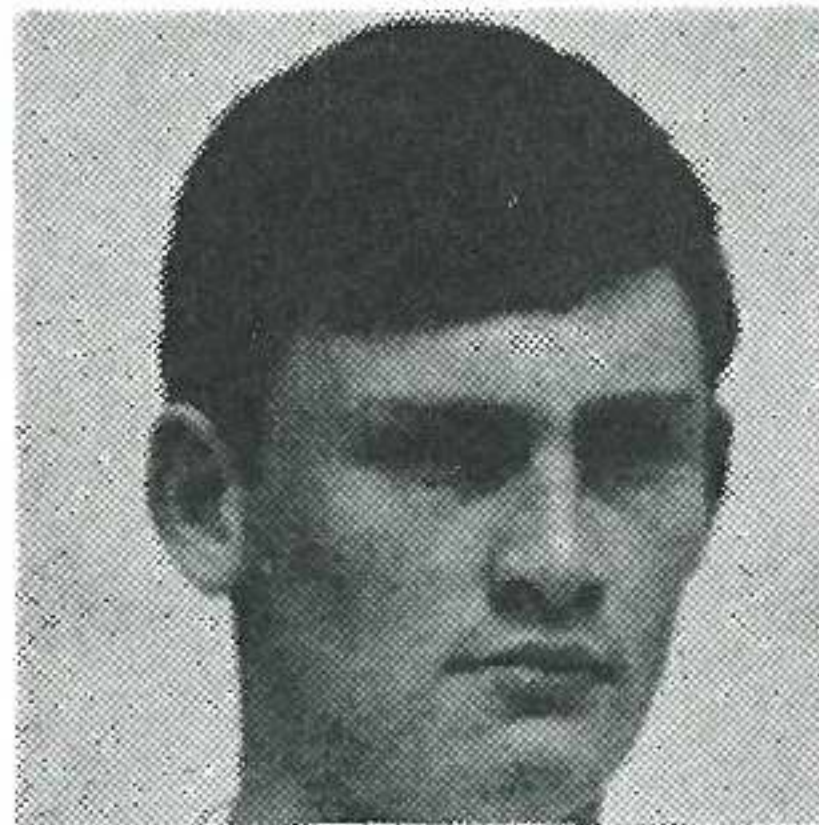
mentioned institutions. After all, having been synonymous with the nation's progress in economic fields it is only fitting that they should play an active part in promoting Gaelic activity.

And so it was that in 1950 the inter-banks competitions were inaugurated and since then have blossomed forth, now being among the best of their type in the country.

In this year's hurling final there was a first class surprise created by the victory of the Provincial over the much vaunted National. This was the Provincial's first trophy — a just award for years of honest endeavour. Architect-in-chief of their great victory was the redoubtable Eddie Keher, whose activity on many a field has delighted hurling aficionados.

On this occasion, he contributed no less than three goals and six points of his side's total, ably abetted by Jim Phelan, Michael Carew and company. Best for the National who played manfully

● CONTINUED OVERLEAF



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● FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

throughout, were Pat Murphy of Limerick, Tony Doyle and the former Tipperary goalkeeper Terry Moloney.

This year's football champions are the Munster and Leinster, who accounted for the holders, National, in a thrill-packed encounter at O'Toole Park. This ended the latter's great run of victories in recent years. A fighting fit Munster team never let their much-lauded rivals settle down and in the end ran out convincing winners by 3-12 to 1-9.

Scorers for Munster & Leinster were: G. Eustace (0-6), B. McBride (0-4), J. Ahern (0-1), D. Feeney (1-0), J. Martin (1-1), J. O'Neill (1-0). National replied per P. Ahern (1-6), J. Costelloe (0-1), T. Doyle (0-1), T. Monahan (0-1).

There has been a tremendous influx of talent into the banks in recent years, the latest acquisition being Jimmy Duggan of Galway, who has joined National. It is

BIG PLANS

John "Kerry" O'Donnell (left) pictured with the former world heavyweight champion, Jack Dempsey, at Dempsey's restaurant on Broadway, New York. Mr. O'Donnell is now making plans for a round-world tour by the New York hurling team next autumn. Arrangements have been tentatively made for games in Sydney (Australia) and Wellington (New Zealand). On arrival in Ireland the tourists will play the All-Ireland champions for the World Championship Cup.



hoped that in the near future representative sides will be put in the field to take part in annual fixtures against, perhaps, the Sigeron-Fitzgibbon Cup winners or similar opposition. Fixtures of this

importance would undoubtedly be a great shot in the arm for Bank sport, and would keep it abreast with the many dramatic changes at present taking place in the financial corridors of power.



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ULSTER'S OMENS

By SEAMUS McCLUSKEY

THERE is an old belief among G.A.A. followers in the North that when Ulster wins the Railway Cup Football final, hopes of an All-Ireland title in that year are very remote. As far as senior titles are concerned, this has always been the case with only two exceptions — 1947 (Cavan) and 1960 (Down). So, as we northern followers wound our way dejectedly from Croke Park on St. Patrick's Day last, after witnessing Ulster's dismissal from the Railway Cup by Connacht, at least we had the consolation of realising that prospects of an All-Ireland title coming northwards in 1967 were so much brighter. But what a disappointment was in store for us.

Never in the history of the Gaelic Athletic Association has Ulster experienced such a dismal year. Not alone did we fail to capture a single title (this is a regular occurrence) but we also failed to reach a single final in any grade, as every northern team made its exit at the semi-final stage.

It may be argued that Down's teenage hurlers were highly successful but let us not forget that both these competitions — the under 16 and special minor hurling championship — were not "full" All-Irelands and were confined to a limited number of counties. Notably absent from both series were the leading hurling counties of the south. Otherwise the north drew a complete blank.

With such a dismal record now behind us, Ulster mentors would be well advised to look to the future and to set the wheels in motion that will prevent a recurrence of the events which caused such disappointment to northern followers in 1967. It is obvious

that a new approach to the problem is required and county conventions during the coming month must not confine themselves to internal matters.

For too many years this has been

a northern failing — counties concentrating on their club affairs and doing little to raise standards generally over the province.

A lot can be done for football

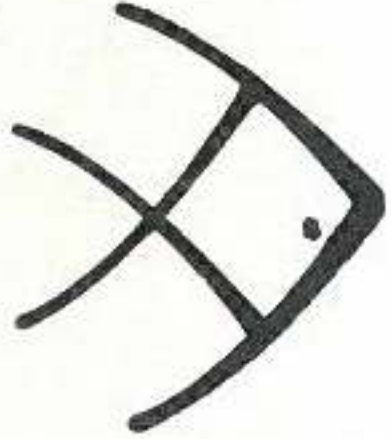
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MINORS MAKE MAJOR IMPACT

MINORS of quite recent vintage had a major contribution to make to this year's All-Ireland championship. That is my first impression on taking a glance at the entire list of winners: Indeed, we had even the unusual instance of a current minor player gaining a junior championship in addition to two titles in his own grade.

That was Greg Lawler, the stylish ciotóg from Ballymore Eustace, who took the junior hardball doubles, in addition to the minor singles and doubles.

His feats were unique in many ways. For one thing, it was the first time that a player ever won out in the two grades of the hardball code in the same year — it has happened on a couple of occasions in softball.

Lawler also had the distinction of partnering brothers in both of his doubles victories. In the minor, he was partnered by young Cecil Winders, who is still eligible to compete in the minor grade for the next four years, while in doubles, he lined out with Robin, a brother of Cecil.

For Lawler, victory in the minor singles was particularly welcome, for it was his first solo success despite the fact that he has been in the grade for the past four years.

During that time there were occasions when it appeared that he must win out in singles, but, invariably, until this season, his best efforts were thwarted.

I remember last year choosing him as an odds-on favourite to beat Roscommon's Mark O'Gara in the final at Ballyporeen. But

the young Connacht champion triumphed gloriously.

Indeed, I am wondering at this stage if O'Gara has the Indian sign on all Kildare players. This year he was not chosen to play singles at all for Roscommon. His place went to Joe O'Brien, who plays with the Gate Club in Dublin. O'Brien won his way to the final for a tilt with Tom Geoghegan of Kildare.

As final day neared the handball world was surprised to learn that O'Gara would man the gap in the final. And it is now history, of course, how the young Ballintubber man, who is at present in training at the Garda Depot in Templemore, upset the odds and Tom Geoghegan.

Those of us who witnessed his effort in Ballymote will not easily forget his bid for victory in the second game.

He had lost the first and stood 20-18 in the second. On four occasions he went in to toss game ball and, as he was tossed out on each occasion, we assumed his effort was futile.

But he took the game on the fifth effort. He now had a psychological advantage over his opponent and it was quite obvious that the junior title was on its way to Ballintubber.

Plaudits are also in order for the enthusiasm and unflinching spirit of Sligo's Marcus Henry and John Gaffney. Frankly, they were not given much of a chance at the start of the campaign. The experts said, among them myself, that Henry was not fit enough and that Gaffney did not possess the hand-

ball finesse necessary to win an All-Ireland title.

It is superfluous to say that they proved us wrong. The Sligomen came to Croke Park and brought home the title in a thoroughly deserved fashion from Kerry's Tom Fitzgerald and Niall Kearns.

Limerick's Pat McGarry took the junior softball singles. This was a natural follow-up to the form he had displayed in taking the minor last year and the under 21 section of the Tailteann Games this year.

Reverting to the minor grade, it is certainly unusual to see Dublin players listed. Prior to this season, the metropolis had never won a minor singles trophy and only one minor doubles, and that was many years back. But now, Pat Murphy and Paul Domigan have rectified the situation.

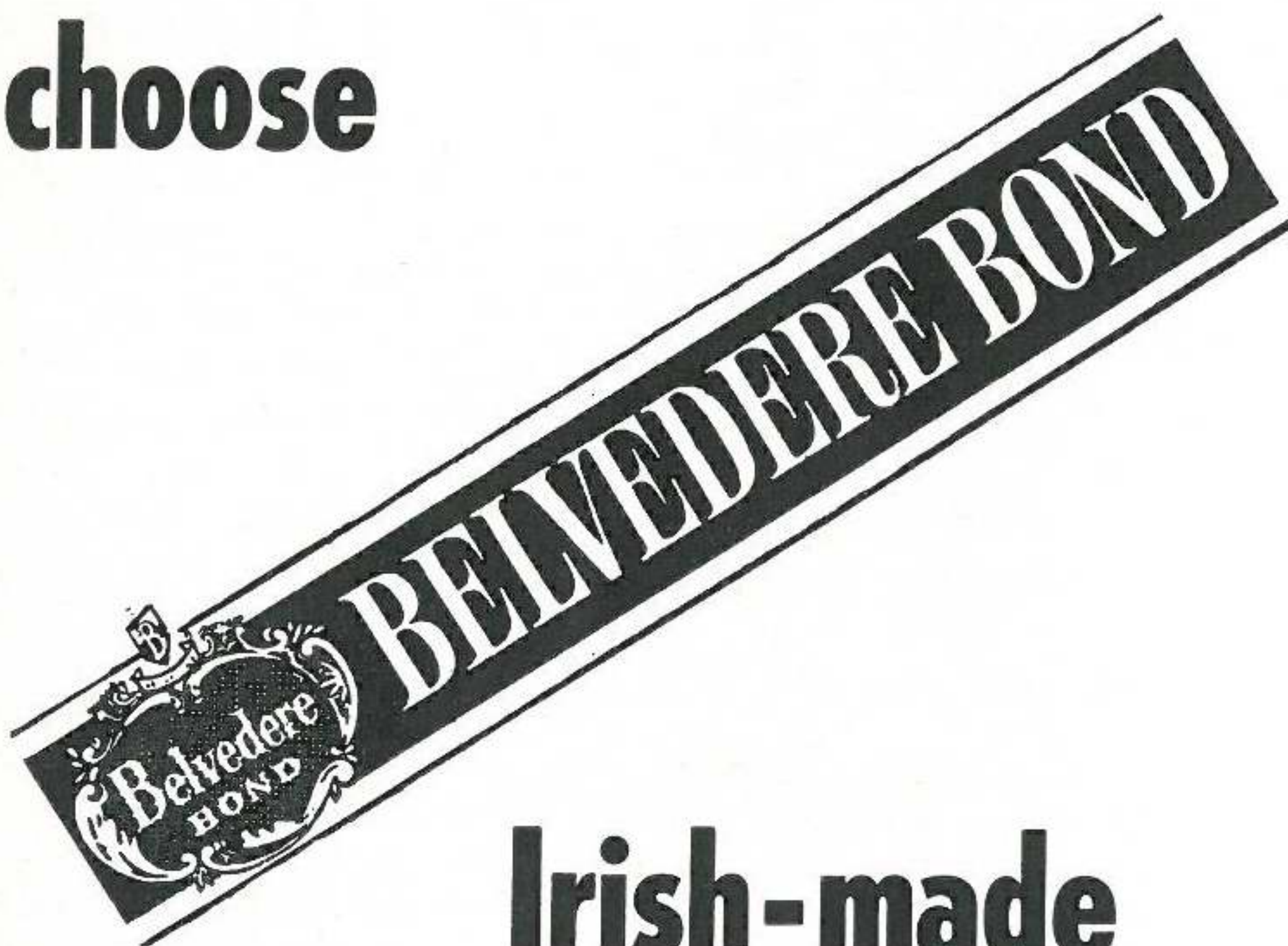
Between them they took the two softball titles. As age is on their players' side, the Dublin Minor Board mentors must certainly be viewing the future with confidence.

At senior level there was the added incentive this year that the winners would be putting themselves in line for a tilt at a play-off for representation at the World Games at Toronto in November.

Peadar McGee got two bites at the cherry by virtue of his success in the hardball singles and doubles where he was partnered by Paddy Ballingbrook. However, he failed with both, for Seamus McCabe (Monaghan), the softball singles winner, and Meath's Liam Molloy and Dessie McGovern, the corresponding doubles winners, made the trip. All three fully deserved it.

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ADMAR

● FROM PAGE 27

sters how to gather the ball correctly from the ground.

There is, I think, always a very justifiable body of opinion in any game that it is a weakening of the game to eliminate from it any skill which is a big part of the game whether that skill makes the game more easy or more difficult to play. If, indeed, it makes it more difficult, all the more reason for weighing it seriously before jettisoning it. One does not consider banning "ducking" in boxing because it makes the opponent too difficult to hit.

The argument for abolition runs rather on associated matters than on the worth of the abolition itself. It is said, for instance that it is the cause of numerous frees through poor execution; hardly a fault of the pick-up, surely. It is said that it occasions many fouls by charging into a picking opponent, and slows the game so that the man gaining possession does not clear away but is covered and so subjected to charging, pulling or pushing or some other unlawful activity. Again, one must be logical; why blame the pick-up rule when the troubles being complained of are infringements of other rules altogether, which will still remain in the book. The only danger is that they may become even more blatant as the possessor gains an even clearer advantage over his challenger.

Confident in the knowledge that the G.A.A. will think twice before acting once, I know that the whole question of changing the pick-up rule will be well scrutinised. I hope that many trial games will be played and studied to remark on the consequences, and to see whether the elimination of a special skill of the game will be concrete (not putative) evidence of an improvement in general rhythm and movement of the play.

McGee out until Spring

MAYO forward Willie McGee who scored four goals against Kerry in the All-Ireland under-21 final, will be out of football until spring. Ironically, it was McGee's own wish not to play senior football for Mayo until next year. But he allowed his name to go forward for selection after Galway defeated Mayo in the first round of the National League.

He subsequently played against Cork in the Grounds tournament semi-final and was again selected to play against Clare in the National League, but ten minutes from the end of that game he dislocated his shoulder and has thus been forced out of football.

The Sligo county footballer, Brendan McAuley, won a Sligo senior championship medal with Ballisodare/Collooney when they defeated Easkey Sea Blues by one point. McAuley was the star of the team.

Roscommon's ace forward, Tony Whyte has returned to defence, and is now the utility man on the team. He lines out at left-half back but in moments of crisis has been drafted into the attack. Centre half forward Dermot Earley, who is often described as the Mattie McDonagh of Roscommon, is a Mayo man. He was born in Claremorris where his father was a school teacher for a number of years.

Another Mayo man who is at present playing with Roscommon is Christy Dolan, a Garda, based in Croghan. He is a native of Garrymore and played junior football for Mayo.

Ballaghaderreen Garda Barracks is one place where football is certain to be the topic. For three

members of the Mayo senior football team are stationed there. They are the right-full back, Johnny Carey, the full-back, Jim Fleming and the centre-half back, John Morley.

There are no visual signs of the old artistry fading from Mattie McDonagh. For the former Galway star was the outstanding player on the Ballygar team which defeated Corofin by eight points in the Ryan Cup league final. His play eclipsed the current Galway stars,

Tommy Sands and Sean Cleary, who were also on the team.

Mayo County Board have put a stop to all late starts to games within the county — by imposing fines for every five minutes the teams are late. Two of the county's leading clubs, Claremorris and Castlebar Mitchels, were fined £1 each for being five minutes late in starting their week-evening championship game. This is an example all clubs in the country should follow.

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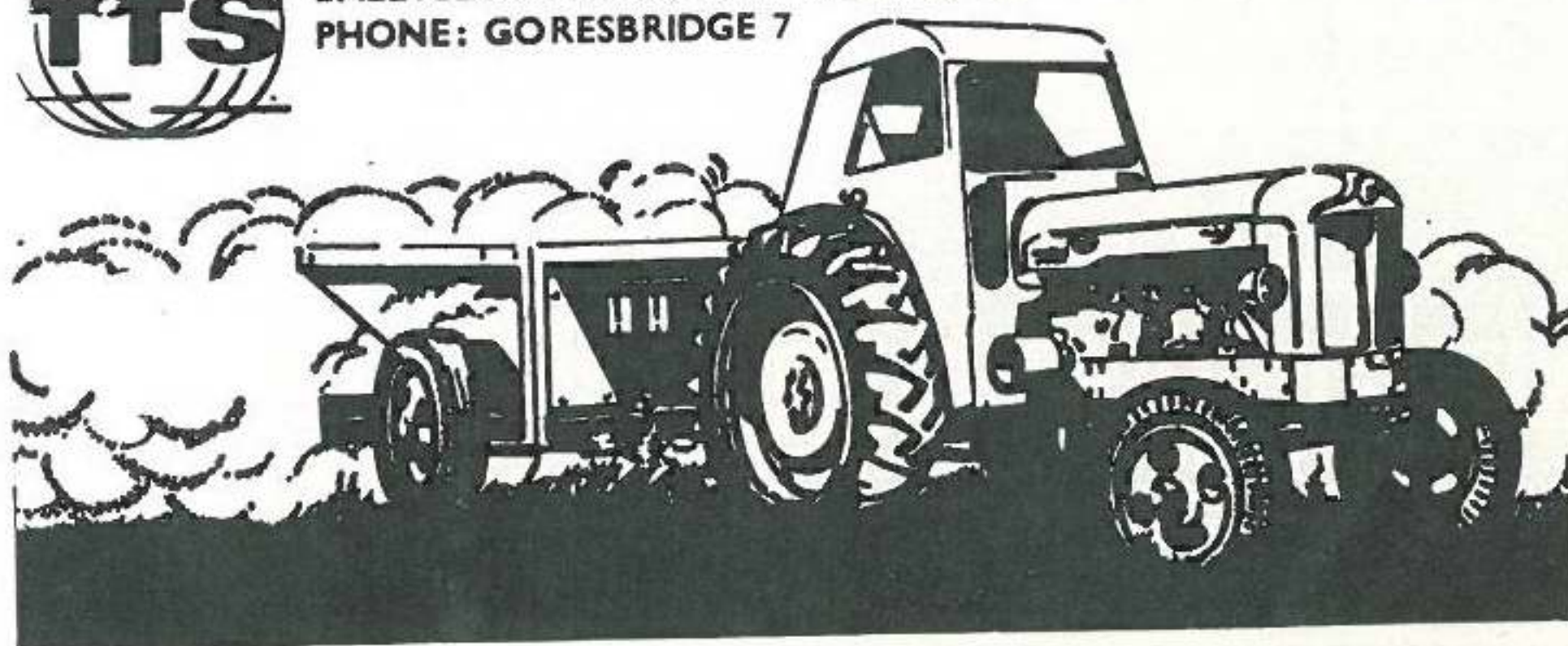
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FOCUS ON
CAMOGIE

CAMOGIE'S greatest year. That, I feel sure, is how the historian of the future will sum up 1967 from a camogie viewpoint for this was the year when, for the first time, the game of the girl Gaels finally broke through to the recognition it deserved.

For this major achievement the top credit must go to the players of Dublin and Antrim who first captured the public imagination by turning out to give such a magnificent display under almost impossible weather conditions in their drawn game at Croke Park and then gave a wonderful exhibition in the replay, when their standard of stickwork, and their sporting approach, captivated thousands on Oireachtas Day at Croke Park who had never seen a camogie game of this standard before.

The experiment of playing the game in conjunction with a big hurling match was a most successful one and should surely be considered; but I think if, as has been suggested, a camogie match should in future be a feature of Oireachtas final day, that camogie match should not be the All-Ireland final.

The All-Ireland camogie final should be an event of national importance in its own right and should have its own day in Croke Park, as has been the case for so many years past.

The match that I would put on

in conjunction with the Oireachtas is the final of the interprovincial tournament for the Gael-Linn Cup. After all, the players who appear in these games are the pick of their respective provinces and the standard is invariably of the highest. Besides, in making the interprovincial final the show-

By

AGNES HOURIGAN

piece, the girls from some of the counties that rarely appear in the limelight would be given a chance to play in Croke Park.

But now for a brief survey of the camogie year. Schools and Colleges competitions took up the early part of the season and the Ashbourne Inter-varsity trophy, the first major event, was retained by University College, Cork. We had some exciting games, too, at schools' level.

The opening of additional pitches in the Phoenix Park marked a great step forward in Dublin and the Dublin Board, very courageously, are at the moment busy collecting funds to build a new pavilion to meet the needs of the teams using the four pitches that are now being utilised.

The inter-county series started in Munster where Cork scored an

early surprise by defeating champions, Tipperary, and then went on to regain the southern title. In the North, Antrim once again came through with plenty to spare, and there was a surprise also in the west where Mayo at last broke Galway's long supremacy.

There was only one surprise in Leinster, where Kildare retained the junior title with an entirely new side while Wexford retained the intermediate crown and Dublin again defeated the improving Wexford girls in the senior final.

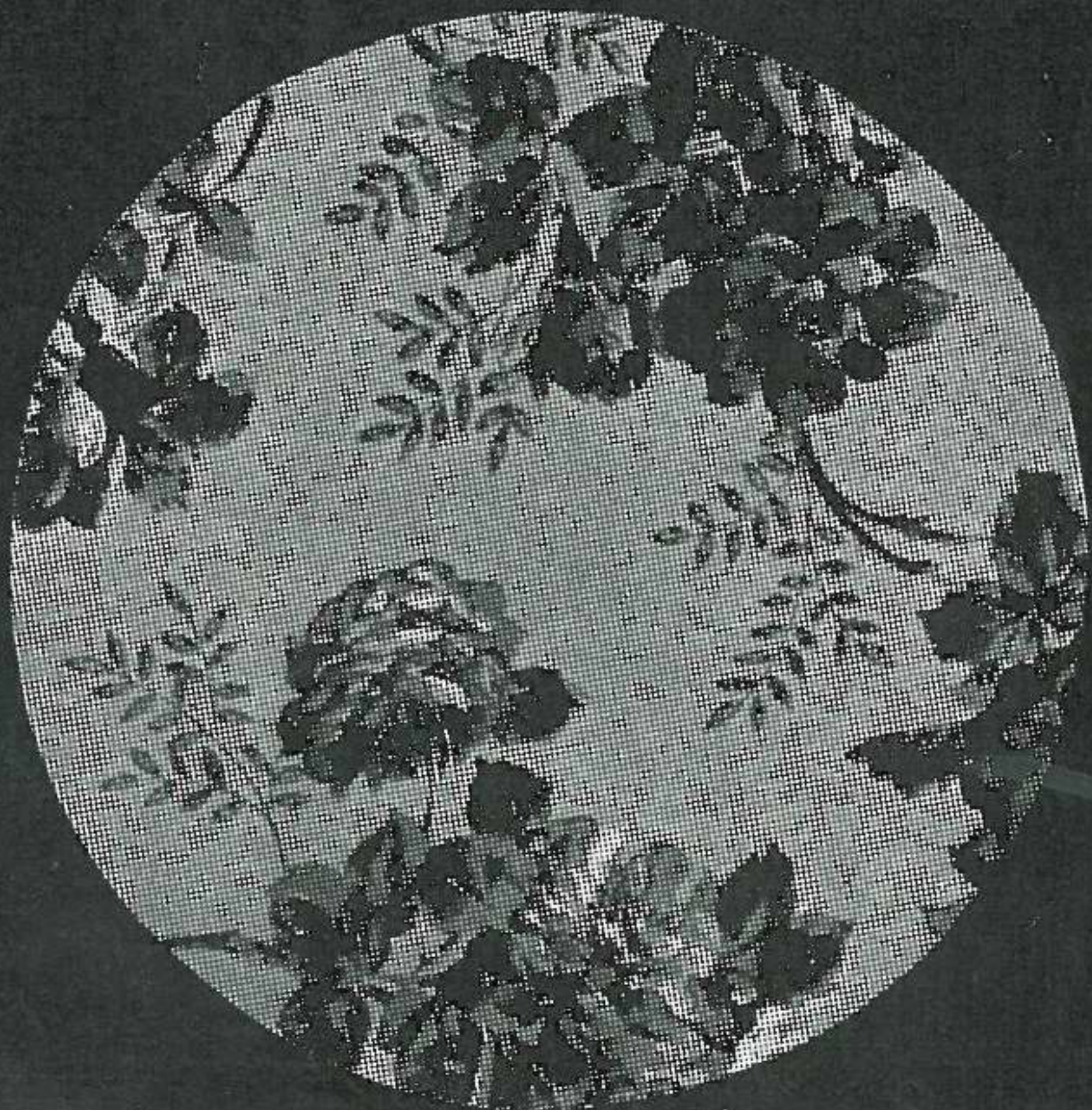
In the All-Ireland semi-finals, Dublin had a clear-cut win over what still looked a very promising Mayo side, while Antrim showed us their real power when they travelled down to Cork and there were clearly too good for the home side.

The brilliant All-Ireland final, and the equally brilliant replay in which Antrim finally ended Dublin's long supremacy and brought the O'Duffy Cup back to the north after eleven years' absence will long be remembered, and the Antrim stars, aided by two worthy representatives from Down, went on to take the interprovincial title and the Gael-Linn Cup for the first time, but only after a tremendous battle with Leinster who, narrowly defeated, had ample reason to lament the continued absence of Anne Carroll.

● CONTINUED OVERLEAF

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FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

The All-Ireland club series also produced some brilliant play before Eoghan Ruadh of Dublin and Oranmore of Galway reached the final which also ended in a draw.

Now for my stars of the year. First, of course, must come three Antrim players, Sue Cashman, the captain, who led them at last to All-Ireland victory undaunted by previous failures; Maeve Gilroy, who crowned years of endeavour by captaining Ulster to victory in the Gael-Linn Cup, and Mairead McAtamney, the outstanding player for the champions over the two All-Ireland finals.

Next I would place Margaret O'Leary of Wexford, who for club (Eoghan Ruadh of Dublin), county and province, was outstanding in every game she played.

For Dublin no one strove harder than Una O'Connor to win that fourteenth All-Ireland medal that eluded her this time, while next in line I would rank goalkeeper Ethna Leech. In the south, the long-serving Anna Crotty played very well both for Cork and for Munster, while in the west, Kathleen O'Flaherty of Galway and Oranmore and Josie Ruane of Mayo were outstanding in the games I saw.

Finally, a word of praise to people who are seldom praised. First, to Ethna Neville of Limerick for her excellent refereeing of the two All-Ireland finals. Second, to those selfless officials, north, south, east and west, whose tremendous work still ensures that the Camogie Association, whose only resources are enthusiasm and hard work, continues to advance.

PRENDERGAST OUT

Mayo's former full back, Ray Prendergast, will be out of foot until spring. He has not played with Mayo since the All-Ireland semi-final against Meath owing to a recurring ankle injury.

LOOKING BACK

IT is remarkable, that after a very busy and successful year on G.A.A. fields, the two events that really set the public imagination alight had nothing to do with accepted G.A.A. procedure at all. The first was the camogie final, the second was the visit of the Australian Rules football team.

The first proved that camogie, as played by these stars from Antrim and Dublin, has developed into the brilliant and spectacular game that hurling should be, but too often is not. The second showed that we are badly in need of fresh thinking and a fresh approach to our whole method of playing our own game of Gaelic football.

I only go part of the way with those who were all for sweeping rule revisions after watching the Australians play but I fully agree that we have a vast amount to learn from Down Under in the matter of physical training, mental alertness and moving the ball directly towards the opponents' goal, which must be the first principle of any ball-game.

I am glad that Meath are going to go to Australia. They have earned that unusual trip, and I am sure they will learn a great deal there. And when, please God, these Australians come back next October, I hope they will bring a fully representative side and that we in Ireland will send out a full side of the best footballers Ireland can produce to play against them.

The breath of international competition can do us little harm; it might, in fact, do us a great deal of good, and perhaps it will lead to the establishment of full international games between Ireland and America, since the present system of New York playing for our League titles, and also in World Cup games in the same year, is a rather clumsy one at the moment.

But while we are looking farther afield we should not forget the development at home, and I was especially pleased with the results of the special competitions in hurling for the weaker counties. We had four of these and Wicklow

must get my top award of the year for reaching all four.

They won the junior hurling competition, the most testing competition of all for these counties. They also won the special minor championship, and if they failed in the finals of the special under-21 and under-16 championships, the margins against them were narrow in each case.

The rise of the Wicklowmen is very creditable, indeed, and the hurling revival has certainly made tremendous progress on the Wicklow hills and among the Wicklow valleys. There are many talented hurlers among those four Wicklow teams and the future of the game in the Garden County certainly looks to be exceptionally bright.

But the really heartening thing about it is that the Wicklowmen got nothing soft on their way to any of those titles.

They were hard-pressed by Kerry in the home junior final and only got the better of London after a drawn game and replay. They had very little to spare over Down in the minor final and they had to give their best to Roscommon in the under-21 decider and to Down in the under-16 final. That shows that it was not in Wicklow alone that the hurling revival was making progress.

Indeed, the most heartening game of all that I saw from the long-term viewpoint of the hurling revival was that under-16 final. There were plenty of talented young hurlers on both sides so it is obvious that, in the years ahead, what we now look upon as the great hurling counties will have to look to their laurels.

On the senior fields, of course, this was Kilkenny's year. Except

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MATT LYNCH

*Key figure
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By SEAMUS McCLUSKEY

ONE of the least publicised personalities behind the recent return to fame of Cavan's Breffni Blues is a tall quiet-spoken army man, by name Matt Lynch, who has been masseur and assistant-trainer to Cavan teams since the winter of 1961.

If you enter the Military Barracks in Cavan, any day before 4.30 or should you pay a call to Gormanston Military Camp on your way to Dublin during the summer F.C.A. training period, you will find in one of the offices of the 8th Battalion, a Quartermaster busily engaged in working out the pay and credits due the part-time soldiers of mid-Cavan. This is Company Quartermaster Sergeant Matt Lynch (to give him his full title)—the man who looks after the feeding, stores, rations, clothing and equipment of "D" Company of the 8th Infantry Battalion F.C.A.

Following the rise to fame of such Northern teams as Tyrone, Derry and Down in the late 'fifties and early 'sixties, Cavan teams had fallen on lean times and Ulster senior football titles were beginning to become something of a rarity in Cavan—the county that had for so long dominated the Ulster scene. The men who were

then in power in Cavan County Board realised that something would have to be done and done quickly if Cavan was to regain its rightful place in the Northern football world. A winter training scheme was initiated and a very comprehensive indoor P.T. schedule was organised for the members of Cavan's county teams. Permission was obtained from the Army authorities to use the gymnasium in the local Military Barracks for this winter schedule. Next problem was to find someone who really knew something about physical training, but this problem was short-lived, for the man they were looking for was right there on the spot — C.Q.M.S. Matt Lynch.

Quickly, Matt, who hails from Crosskeys between Ballyjamesduff and Cavan and who has connections with the Drumalee club in Cavan town, set about putting his charges through their paces in the FCA gymnasium during those bleak winter evenings of 1961 and early 1962. His strict training schedule and his superb knowledge of physical culture soon had the Cavan players in a peak of fitness that they never before had experienced at this early stage of the year. His quiet winning manner,

too, was something which brought out the very best in the Cavan lads and when Railway Cup time came round, Cavan's representatives on the Ulster team played more than their part in bringing the beautiful Railway trophy to the North on St. Patrick's Day.

This was only part of Cavan's goal, however, as that coveted Ulster title which had eluded them for a much longer period than usual, was something which was badly wanted back in Breffni. For the previous six years the playing potential had been there but something was missing and the Anglo-Celt Cup had stayed on its longest ever holiday outside Cavan's boundaries. Matt Lynch's winter schedule supplied what had been missing and the 1962 Ulster senior football championship saw a rejuvenated Cavan team sweep everything aside and take the Northern title from All-Ireland champions Down on a scorching hot July day at Casement Park, Belfast. Revenge was sweet for Cavan that day, just as it was on July 23 this year at Clones, for Down it was who had supplanted Cavan as Ulster champions on both occasions.

Although Cavan relinquished their Ulster title in 1963, with the

● CONTINUED OVERLEAF

● FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

aid of Matt Lynch they were back again in 1964 for yet another Northern victory. In 1965 and 1966 there were further blanks, but victory at Clones last July again proved very sweet for the Blues. I sat next to Matt Lynch on the Cavan substitutes' benches and when Jimmy Hatton blew full-time, I don't think I've even seen a happier man. In his official capacity as Masseur to the county team he had again served Cavan loyally and effectively. When I met him again next morning in Gormanston Camp he was being lavishly congratulated by all ranks, but I wonder how many Cavan folk really appreciate Matt's part in this deserved victory.

Strangely enough, Matt's most pleasant memories of Cavan teams has nothing whatsoever to do with Ulster championship games. Instead he finds much more delight in recalling his trips with Cavan teams to London for the Wembley Tournament finals. He has been to Wembley in 1963, 1966 and 1967 but his happiest memory of all is his side's victory over All-Ireland champions Galway on the famous London sod earlier this

year. Galway were then in rampant mood, holding both championship and League titles, but this Wembley game was the beginning of their downfall and they never seemed to recover from the defeat inflicted on them by the Ulstermen. Later they lost their League title to New York and failed even to come out of Connacht in the championship race. At the time of the Wembley final, however, they were regarded as practically invincible, but Matt and his men were the first to prove otherwise.

Matt Lynch first joined the Defence Forces in 1939—a few months before the Emergency—and his early interests included cross country, athletics, football and basketball. Attached to Western Command, he represented the 4th Brigade in the All-Army cross country championship for ten successive years (1940 to 1950). His team won this title on four of those years. He also ran cross-country for Westmeath when stationed in Mullingar and Athlone. Later he figured prominently for the famous Co. Cavan club, Tomregan Harriers.

Later still he turned his attention to football and played for his

native Crosskeys. Basketball also took part of his time and in athletics he gained many notable successes in 440, 880 yards and 3 miles events at sports meetings throughout the West and North. It was at this time, too that he took up physical culture, completing his P.T. course at Athlone Barracks, where one of his instructors was Billy Keogh, later trainer to the Roscommon county teams. Matt's favourite sport was still cross-country, however, and he trained and massaged several cross-country teams.

Later he became a Quartermaster in Co. Leitrim and in 1959 returned to his native Cavan. The Drumalee club had the benefit of his services in 1960 and the following year, Cavan County Board engaged him for the winter training programme already mentioned. In that great Cavan revival he was assistant trainer to Mick Higgins for the Cavan senior side.

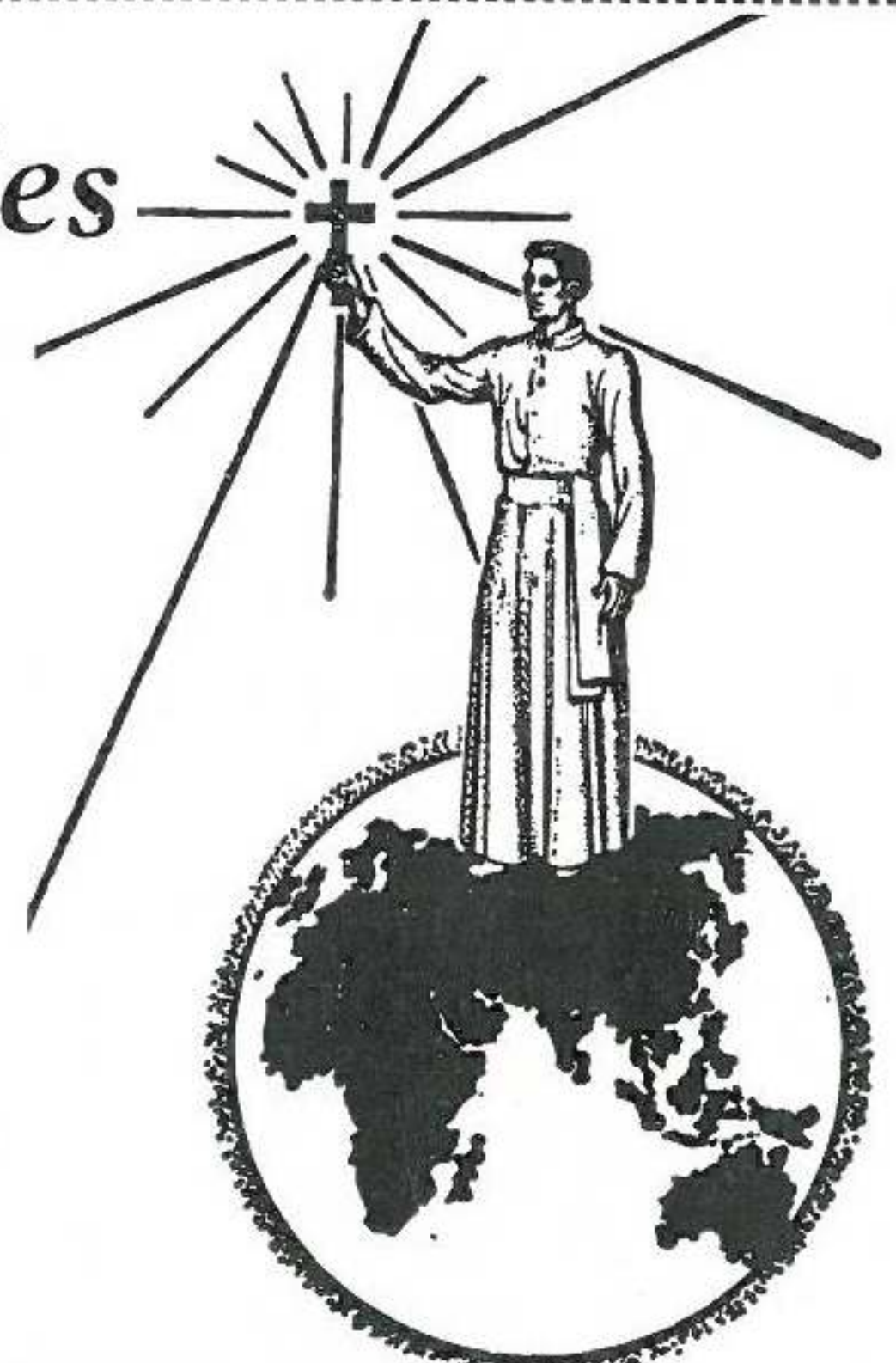
Married with five children—three girls and two boys—he lives right beside the Cavan gymnasium and Cavan mentors are mighty grateful that such a capable masseur and P.T. expert is right on their doorstep.

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MOONDHARRIG'S DIARY

● FROM PAGE 47

for a brief period through the months of late May, June and early July the Noremen completely dominated the hurling scene. They swept all before them in the early part of the year, marching into the League final and supplying the back-bone of the Leinster team that readily won the Railway Cup for Leinster.

Then, inexplicably, they went down to Wexford in the League final, lost at Wembley to Cork and then failed to Waterford in the opening game of the Grounds tournament.

And just as unexpectedly they found their touch again, regained their Leinster title and accomplished their greatest feat for nearly half a century when they defeated Tipperary in the All-Ireland final and thus deprived John Doyle of that ninth medal.

They suffered heavily in that victory, however, for they lost young Tom Walsh for good, one of the great hurling tragedies of our time, and moreover had to face across the Atlantic to fight for the new World Cup without the services of Eddie Keher and Jim Lynch.

Yet, they seemed to find new greatness in adversity, got the

better of the exiles after two titanic struggles and then came back to set the seal on a great year by defeating Clare in a hard-fought Oireachtas final.

To round off a great year for Leinster, who took every senior trophy in this country. Wexford beat Waterford in the final of the Grounds tournament, but this was a somewhat disappointing game.

Munster had consolation and hope for the future in the victory of Tipperary in the under-21 championship and the narrow triumph of Cork in the minor grade. And of course one of the big surprises of the hurling year was the victory of the London hurlers in the intermediate grade.

On the football fields it was a varied year. Connacht, Galway-powered, regained the Railway Cup after a long interval, and the great Western side continued their long winning run by taking the home League title. But they crashed to New York in the two-leg final on the far side of the Atlantic, came back to fail to Cavan and then were overwhelmed by Mayo in the first Connacht championship outing before their own fans in Pearse Park.

Mayo then swept on to take the Connacht title, only to go

down to Meath in the August semi-final. Cavan, who had come out of Ulster, fell to Cork, who had just pipped Kerry, so that gave us an All-Ireland final between Cork and Meath — a unique pairing. The Meathmen dominated the second half to win well, and then came out on the following Sunday to defeat New York in the final of the new World Cup.

Next came the Grounds tournament games in which Cork had to give best to revived Mayo, while only at the second attempt and after two sparkling games did Cavan defeat Meath.

In the meantime, those bouncing Australians had come to Croke Park, beaten Meath and Mayo in turn, and gave a shot in the arm to Gaelic football, the results of which are already evident and which will be more evident still as 1968 comes along.

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ANOTHER SAYS 'NO'

A prize of half a guinea goes to Patrick Kehoe of Bahana, St. Mullins, Kilkenny for the following contribution:

TO THE QUESTION "should hurlers wear protective headgear," my answer would be definitely no. My reason for being against headgear in hurling would be based on a few factors.

Firstly, a player would find it very awkward to hurl with headgear, in as much as several hurlers today cannot play while wearing a cap.

Secondly, the wearing of headgear would be the cause of players becoming careless. They just would not mind where or how they would pull when they knew the head was protected, and players would sustain severe injuries elsewhere on their bodies. Old-timers will tell you that there is not nearly as much over-head pulling in hurling these days as twenty or thirty years ago, and it is generally accepted that it is in overhead pulls that head

injuries are sustained. So why was there not a call for headgear before now? And even if a player gets a nip on the head he is able to take his place on a team within a fortnight or so again.

The wearing of headgear would also take away from the nationality of the game, as headgear is only worn, as far as I know, in American football. It would also reduce the game as a spectacle. Many visitors to Ireland who may never have seen hurling played before are amazed at the swiftness with which a ball is struck without any injury being caused to the player.

There are not many injuries in our hurling games except when a game happens to get out of control. In this case I would suggest that more time be devoted to coaching referees in the controlling of our games. Otherwise we'll just waste time discussing the useless question of headgear for our hurlers.

● FROM PAGE 39

in Ulster and Down and Antrim have taken a step in the right direction in agreeing to make their section of the current League a double round competition. Monaghan and Armagh tried for the same but Dublin dug their heels in and wouldn't have it.

Competition at senior level is essential, with less emphasis on the secondary grades (excluding minor). This is only one of the answers, however, so let's hope the nine forthcoming county conventions come up with some useful suggestions for the provincial convention in March next. I expect our hardworking provincial secretary, Gerry Arthurs, will also have some new ideas in his annual

report — they certainly are very much needed at the moment.

Miracles are not expected in hurling in the north and, despite the fact that semi-final exits were the order during 1967, a year of considerable success is reported. However, full marks to the Emyvale club in Co. Monaghan (one of the least hurling-minded areas in the country) who have tabled the following motion for Monaghan's convention on December 10 — "That in Railway Cup hurling competitions, a preliminary round — Ulster v. Connacht — be played each year. Winners to meet on 'home' venue, Leinster and Munster in alternate years in the semi-final."

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6/6

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● FROM PAGE 30

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