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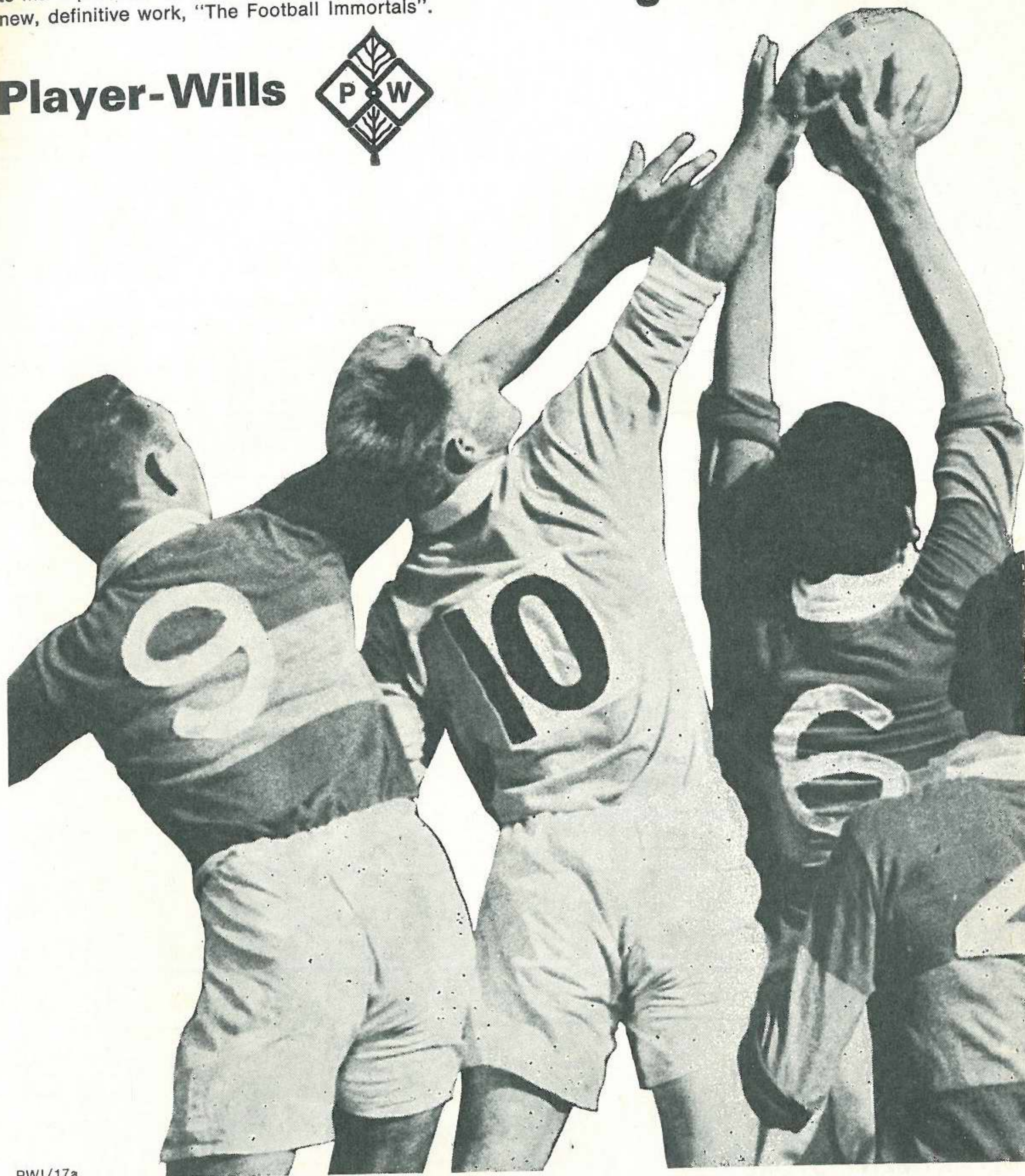
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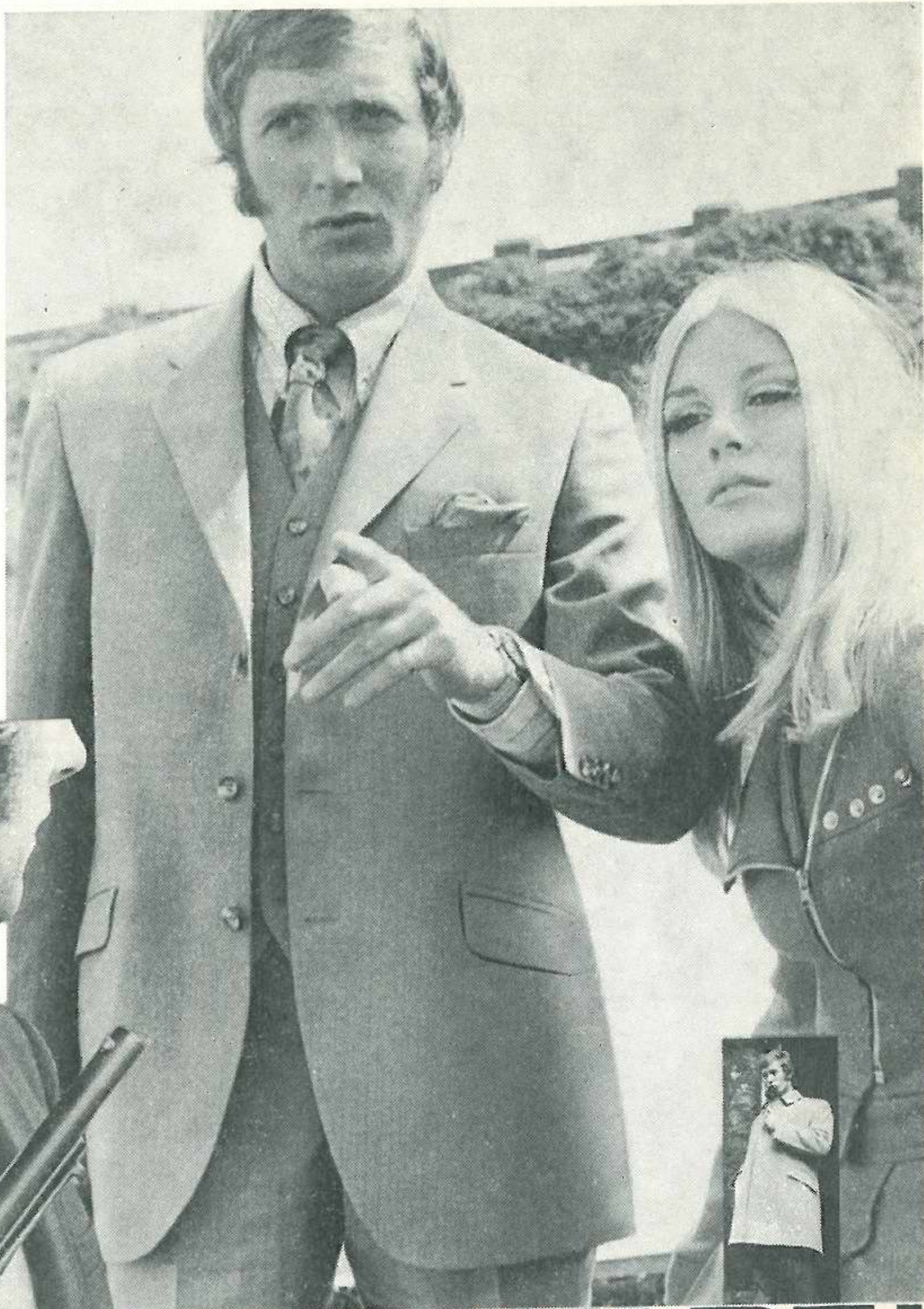
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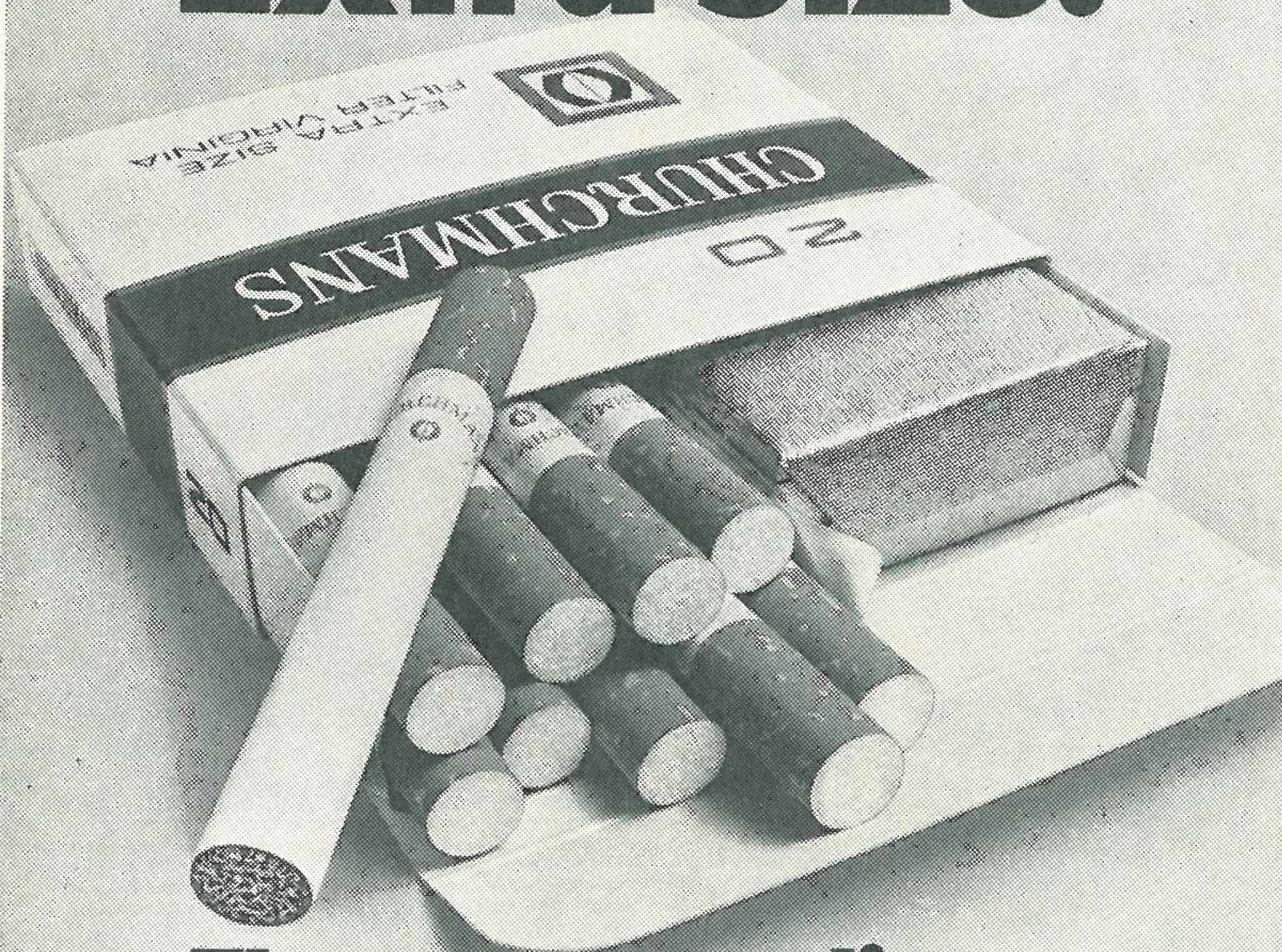
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Gaelic Sport

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COVER PHOTO

Our cover picture this month features an action shot from this year's All-Ireland Football Final. The Down man is, of course, the irrepressible Joe Lennon and his Kerry opponent is young Brendan Lynch, a star of the future.

Picture by Lensmen.

DOUBLE-THINK

THE few words which follow are not to be taken as an intrusion by this magazine into politics, cross-border cross-talk, or Civil Rights problems in the Six Counties.

In common with many people in this part of the country, we found much to commend in the Letterkenny Partition speech of Mr. Neil Blaney, Minister for Agriculture, even if diplomacy dictated a milder choice of words in the circumstances of the time.

What tickled us about the affair was the effrontery of the Minister to express those sentiments of true-blue, 32-county Republicanism while the same Mr. Blaney is President of an avowedly partitionist body, the 26-county soccer organisation otherwise known as the Football Association of Ireland.

At least it can be said of rugby, hockey and cricket that they operate under 32-county administration and play internationally under the name of IRELAND.

But maybe Mr. Blaney forgot his partitionist sporting connections, because, after all, he was a late choice for the post, moving in at the last moment to oust his fellow-Minister, Mr. Brian Lenihan, who had been a hot tip to succeed the late Donogh O'Malley.

People who help to maintain partition through their sporting affiliations should hardly be the first to spout about the wider aspects of the island's mutilation.

Perhaps the Taoiseach, a G.A.A. man, will allude to this aspect of the matter in anything he has to say to his Minister for Agriculture about the Letterkenny speech.

**RAYMOND
SMITH
names his**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
STARS OF '68
 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

I HAVE never had less hesitation in choosing my Hurler and Footballer of the Year.

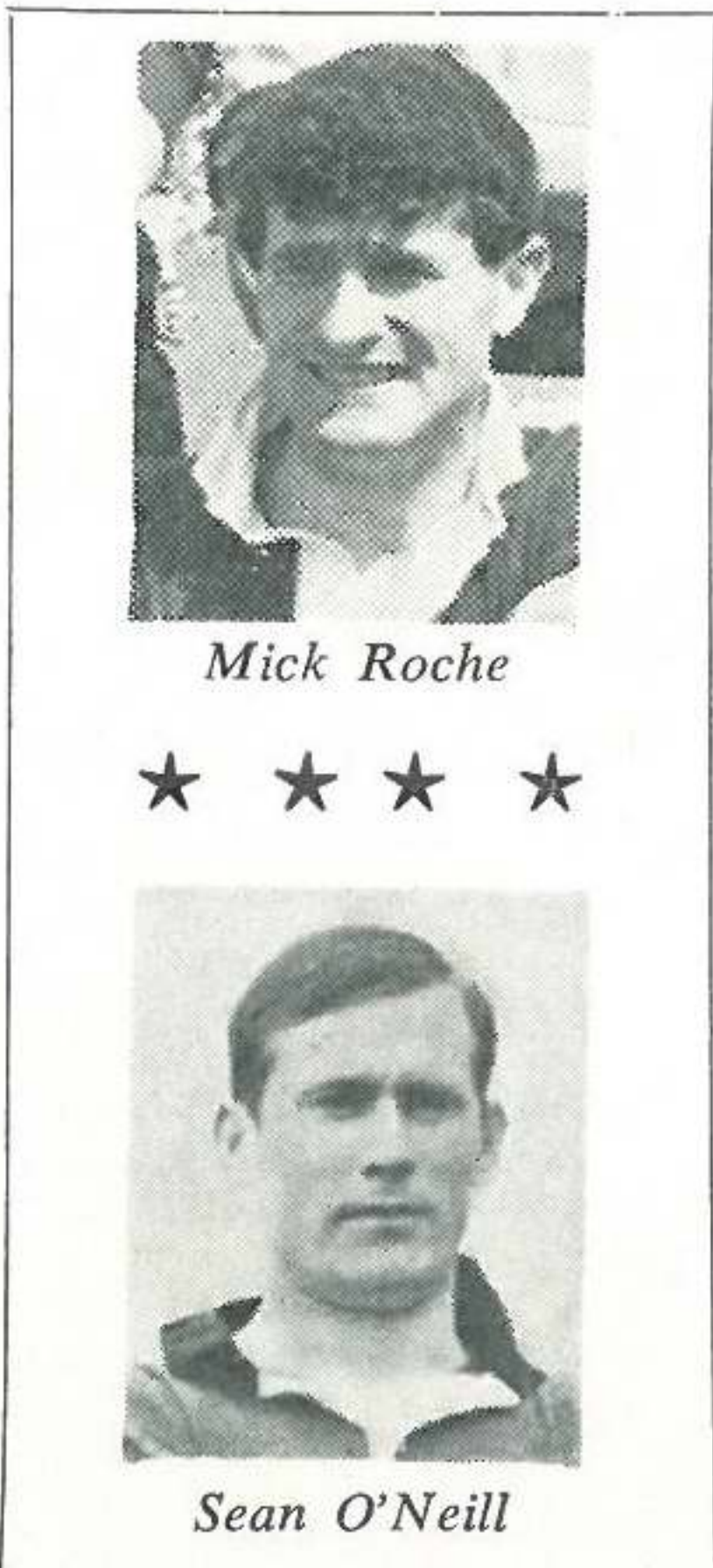
The two men who stood head and shoulders above all others were, to my mind, Seán O'Neill (Down) and Mick Roche (Tipperary).

If Mick Roche happened to be on the losing side in the All-Ireland Final, it does not influence me one iota. The 1968 All-Ireland Final was Roche's hour, just as surely as the 1954 Final was Bobby Rackard's. Both were classic defensive displays, both remain etched in the mind and set these two players apart as two of the finest hurlers—hurler is the operative word—we have seen in defence.

There has been a certain tendency to name the captain of the winning All-Ireland team in hurling or football as the Player of the Year in his respective code. If not, the top men have usually been chosen from the winning All-Ireland team. Sometimes, of course, the captain has happened to be a star right through the season—as was the case with Des Foley in 1963 and Nick O'Donnell in 1960.

But I have always believed that it is wrong and, indeed, unfair to pick the top man from the winning All-Ireland team when in fact the star of the season may happen to be on the losing All-Ireland team or, in fact, on some side that has not got to Croke Park at all.

When Jim McKeever of Derry was chosen as Footballer of the



Mick Roche



Sean O'Neill

Year in 1958, no one could cavil with the decision because his display in the second half of the All-Ireland Final was of heroic proportions and just could not be overlooked.

Mick Roche, to my mind, was the finest hurler afield in this year's All-Ireland Hurling Final. But, of course, I would not pick him as my star of the 1968 season on the strength of one match alone. The Final display merely set the seal on a season that saw the Carrick player achieve a new dimension in attacking defensive play.

I had seen him at Gaelic Park, New York in June giving a bril-

liant display the second day against New York. I had watched the growing confidence and maturity of his play right through the Munster championships, culminating in a real captain's showing against Cork in the Final at Limerick. I marvelled that the South Riding of Tipperary, by tradition the football stronghold of the county, could produce two hurlers of the calibre of Mick Roche and 'Babs' Keating in the same era.

Theo English had set a new pattern in 1958—Liam Connolly had followed too. But there were those who were still not convinced. They believed in the old maxim that the Tipperary selectors should not go beyond Cashel in the South and Borrisoleigh in the North! They held to it jealously for a long time, for had not Thurles nurtured the Blues and Tom Semple and the glory of the Blues had to be preserved!

But Roche and Keating have finally killed all that. If 'Babs' had hit an hour as glorious in the Final as he had done in the Munster Final or against Clare, I would have given the accolade to him. The deftness of his stick-work at times was simply amazing. There was that wonderful point he scored against Cork, beating one defender with a body swerve, tapping the ball over the heads of two other defenders as they came at him and then slipping eel-like between them, taking the ball before it reached the ground and superbly flashing it over the bar.

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OUR GAMES

OUR GAMES, the G.A.A.'s official annual, has made its appearance in the shops in good time for Christmas and, at the very reasonable price of six shillings, it provides a ready solution for all who are looking for an acceptable and inexpensive gift for their young relatives and friends.

Once again it is a rich production, full of fine stories and articles and profusely illustrated with pictures, drawings and cartoons. Indeed, the 1969 edition is, perhaps, the most eye-catching yet produced in the series, for the use of colour is unstinted throughout its 128 pages.

In addition, the full-colour front cover is highly attractive, showing the four senior All-Ireland finalists marching around Croke Park.

Foremost among the varied collection of articles and stories are special features on Wexford and Down and finely-drawn pen-profiles of Tony Doran and Sean O'Neill.

Harry Beitzel discusses the future of Gaelic football as an international game; Micheál O'Hehir recounts Meath's tour of Australia and Jack Mahon recalls the day that Rás Tailteann visited Spiddal. Handball and Camogie are adequately covered and there is a comprehensive results section, covering all the inter-county hurling and football games of 1968.



DAN McAREAVY

IN REPLY TO FR. MANSFIELD

Dear Father Mansfield,—In the last issue you addressed your open letter to the G.A.A. and in proffering a reply I am not in any way purporting to be an official spokesman for the Association; that must be left to more able pens.

As one of the least of the brethren, however, I would like to thank you for giving us so much food for thought and in the most appetising manner, too.

You have said many things that badly need saying over and over again. Your prescription is hardly likely to be swallowed in toto but I believe that even a diluted version would remedy many of our current ills.

But to some of the points in your letter. Your comment on Dublin fielding only "one second-rate" inter-county hurling team from a population of three quarters of a million seems a valid one while the "squandering" of the Limerick minors gives none of us any comfort when we consider the loss between the numbers at school-leaving or minor age and those who eventually wear the senior jersey in any county one wishes to name.

The spread of soccer to State schools and to territories traditionally regarded as "strongholds" quite clearly calls to the Association to match the challenge with a new spirit — and style—of salesmanship.

With respect, however, I would suggest that the involvement of the younger people in club management is a more difficult problem. The drift to "spectating" is reflected in the lack of enthusiasm for holding office among those with the youth, time and—as often as not—the ability on their side.

Maybe we are selling "administration" in the wrong way, but outside Hugh O'Hare's efforts at juvenile level in Dundalk, I cannot recall any successful "under-age" government in our affairs.

Your ideas on allowing boys to play soccer or rugby during a G.A.A. close season is certain to gain a great deal of support. It is, in a way, a revolutionary step and as such can count on a large sympathy vote.

Somehow, I don't regard such a move as the answer to the prob-

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POUNDS FOR PINK!

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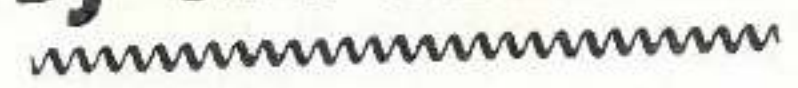
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pay out £5
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By **JIM BENNETT**



JOE LENNON

Man and Superman

IN these times when the standards in football have so levelled off that just about any county might spurt into the limelight, it is much harder for an individual player to dominate the scene. So much more reason to wonder, then, at what manner of man this Joe Lennon is who has had his name in the mouth of every follower for the best part of a decade.

Certainly, the dominance has not been physical, for he is no giant, just a tidy wee chap with a rapidly balding head, a sharp and intelligent face and a bubbling manner. Nor has his dominance been purely from the point of view of his football skill or natural footballing ability: he has played some of the most impressive football of any man, to be sure, since the turn of the decade, and his control of the trends of play has been even greater than his amount of possession of the ball, but that does not explain the whole of the man's thrall.

I think that his main grip on the sporting public has been intellectual, for his dominance of footballers — both his own

county's and others — has been extraordinary since he came to the top.

He has talked and rationalised the game of football with a will and with a tireless appetite. He has written of it and coached it and put down his point of view of how to play it in a book which has become a standard guide to the performance of the skills of the game.

To him must go the credit, as well as some of the falls, of getting the coaching idea across in the halls of power. But, it has been his own personal vehicle—the Down footballers — which have made him the most admired, respected, feared, frowned upon, loved, hated, player in the game.

Whatever you think of Joe Lennon you cannot ignore him.

The style and the maturity of concept which Down displayed in this year's championship win was, of course, the crowning point for Lennon, though, sadly enough, he did not partake personally to any great extent in the final through the muscle strain which hampered him from an early stage and caused him to come off at half-time.

Nonetheless, the whole outlook, the confident panache and the skilled coordination of the unorthodox which Down displayed all the year was a tribute to the kind of gospel which Lennon has been preaching for nearly a decade. It is also true that there are other teams throughout the country which have gained the habit of talking and thinking football in the Lennon manner, with the result that there is something inside their minds when the ball comes.

You can have too much inside the head when the ball arrives of course, and nothing is more pathetic than the poor footballer who knows how to do it all and what should be done in every given set of circumstances, but cannot quite carry out his designs in the heat of the playing moment.

Lennon has always been at pains to emphasise the distinction between training and coaching. He has been also at pains to point out that it is not part of coaching to impose a particular style of play on the pupil, but rather the correction of faults in basic skills, the improvement and introduction to other skills and the basic idea of thinking about the game. Beyond that he would

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AFTER THE SECOND GALAHS

ONCE again they came, they saw, they conquered. Or, if they did not conquer so comprehensively as before, insofar as two of their games were drawn, they certainly overcame the All-Ireland champions, and on the face of it that would seem to be justification in itself.

But, in proving themselves, the Australians, in some curious and unblameworthy manner, also disproved themselves. There was, for example, the fact that they were received with no more than average enthusiasm, and that when it came to arranging fixtures and co-ordinating their tour they were received with a cool enough courtesy. The impasse at the end of their tour, when the game with Down had serious doubts cast upon it at some stages, and the fixture with New York assumed a stop-go quality all its own for several days, cast up shades of all the bedevilling problems which have beset international games since they first came into prominence in the G.A.A.

One could not but remember the problems which have been constantly bothering the Central Council in their dealings with New York, and vice versa. One wonders whether this is not the first of many hitches and difficulties in the story of the Australian dealings with the G.A.A.

It must also be said that this year's team lacked the dash and total commitment to the spectacular which made their predecessors such a wonderful breath of fresh air. Nor would it be overstating the case to say that they were not anything like such good performers, on the whole, as were the first Galahs. Their record

apart, it may be fairly said that no team was ever in danger of being outplayed by them as were all opponents they met in 1967.

Saddest, perhaps, was the fact that when they faced Down, the All-Ireland champions, and the importance of the game was obvious to them as a passport to the future survival of the series, they set about winning in as ruthless a fashion as would be countenanced by any of our most victory-conscious home teams.

That this should happen the carefree Australians of giant-like personality which we saw here last October twelve-months, was

basic question asked, it turned out that many of the enthusiasts were not going along to see them play after all.

One was put in mind of the first exciting visit or two of the New York footballers here in the St. Brendan Cup competition when their reception was tumultuous. But, the reaction has consistently cooled, and one finds, now, that they seldom awaken the same sentiments as in those early days.

The difficulty with setting up any international competition, or even international exchange at the moment in football or hurl-

By JAY DRENNAN

sad to see. If there should be an inbuilt element of competition in any future clashes between the national selections, and this would appear essential if the games are not to become a pointless routine, one must conclude that the style and panache of carefree days would be sacrificed to the god of victory.

The weather, this year, certainly did not help very much, and the crowd, particularly at Croke Park for the game against Down, was disappointing. It seems a curious characteristic of the Irish that they get terribly excited about the first visit of sporting rivals and afterwards lose their appetite for them rather quickly. There was a great fluttering in the dovecotes after the first lesson of the men from the other side of the world; and there was a lot of talk in advance of this year's visit. But, when the talk was done and the

ing, must necessarily be financial. The G.A.A. is placed in an invidious position by the fact that it has not the financial independence which would enable it to sponsor and take-over such a venture.

Naturally, it sees the tours of county or national teams, or teams from abroad coming here under patronage of individuals or groups, as a potential maverick which could, at any time break loose and damage not only itself but the whole Association. Not that one senses that there is any such tendency or desire on the part of either Australia or New York—their love of the game is obvious, and their fraternal ties with Ireland and the G.A.A. strong.

But, it must seem to the G.A.A. that what they cannot run themselves with complete independence to say yea or nay, might turn out to be a development

which they could not later control. To that extent the position remains unsatisfactory. The Association's funds are simply too limited for the hundred and one domestic purposes for which it needs funds, not to mention anything extra-mural.

The fact that the Association should be short of money always is something which has little remedy in the present context of things, and present resources would seem to limit future income gravely in the face of diminishing worth of money. What might be done, and ought to be done is a matter for another article another day, but, suffice it to say that the underwriting of a tour which turned out a flop could knock too serious a hole in the minimum requirements of the Association's yearly budget, to bear thinking about for most Central Council members. If other methods are to be found, one hopes they make their appearance quickly.

In the playing sense, the recent Australian visitors again showed tremendous natural ability and a degree of fitness which borders on the highest professional standards. In that, they will always have an advantage in playing Irish teams; they will have an advantage also in physique, since there is hardly a man-jack of them much under six feet, and broad in proportion. The games' rigours are little to them compared with some of the light and small men who always have succeeded in making a mark in Gaelic football.

In the playing rules, everybody rushes to make concessions with an ecumenical spirit which has no regard for the welfare of the game. I have still seen nothing to convince me that the pick straight from the ground would in any way expedite matters, or cause fewer frees. It might for a few weeks; but, as new tactics were taught out, it would simply

mean that opponents would have to get up closer to the one picking the ball, and the logical challenge—indeed, the only one—would be to get the boot in to loosen the ball from the grip of the picker up.

Result: many a sore hand, and many a frayed temper. At present the picker has the protection of the positioning of his own body, at least, to ward off the challenging boot from the rear. Who could differentiate the deliberate kick at the player's hands, and the decent challenge for the ball.

The Australian challenge and tackle is mooted: well, why not

play Rugby? What on earth can a hip-tackle add to the game of football except to help slow it to the funeral pace at which Rugby is played, and drive away those who view it until attendances achieve parity with the paltry few who view Rugby club-games.

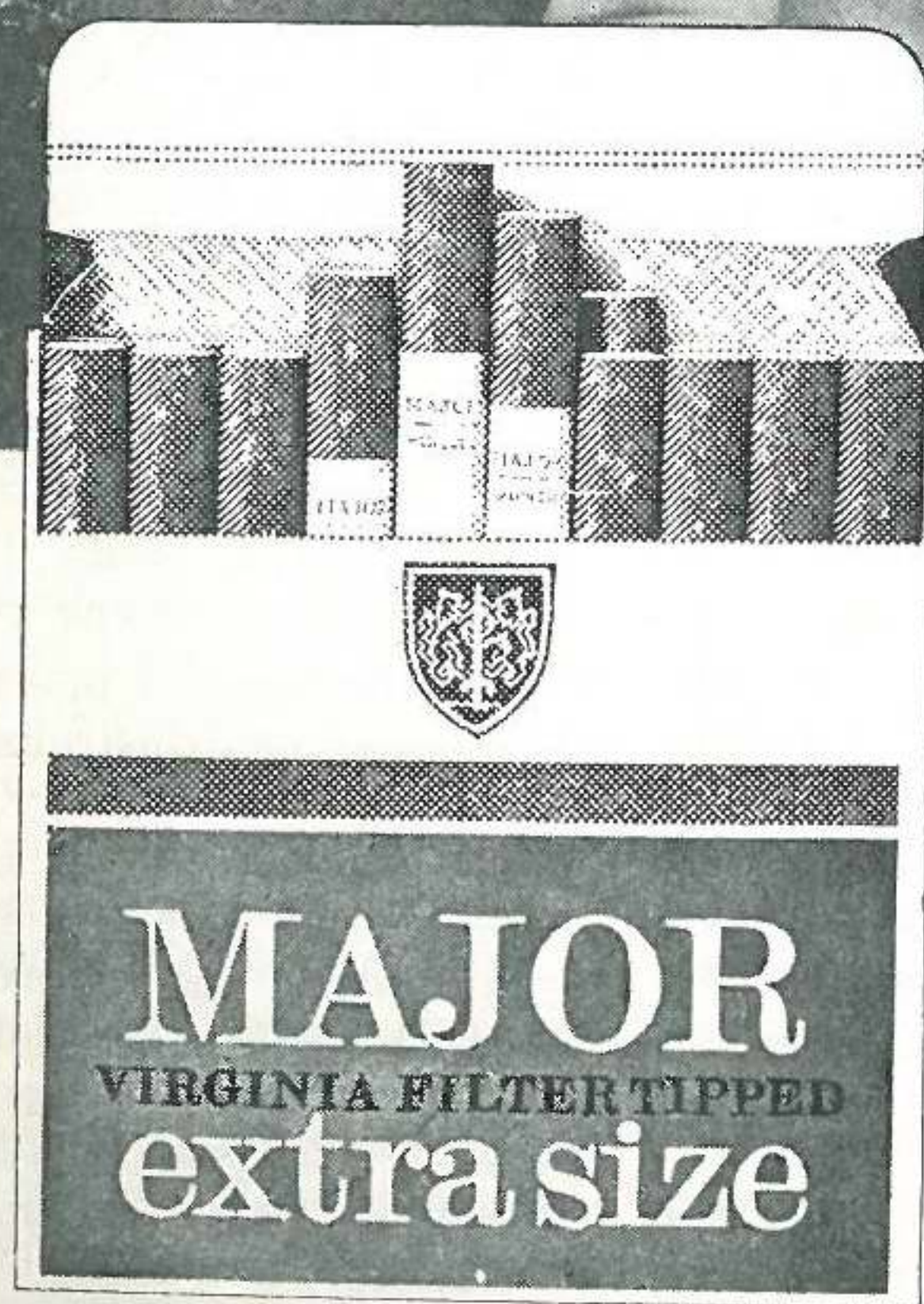
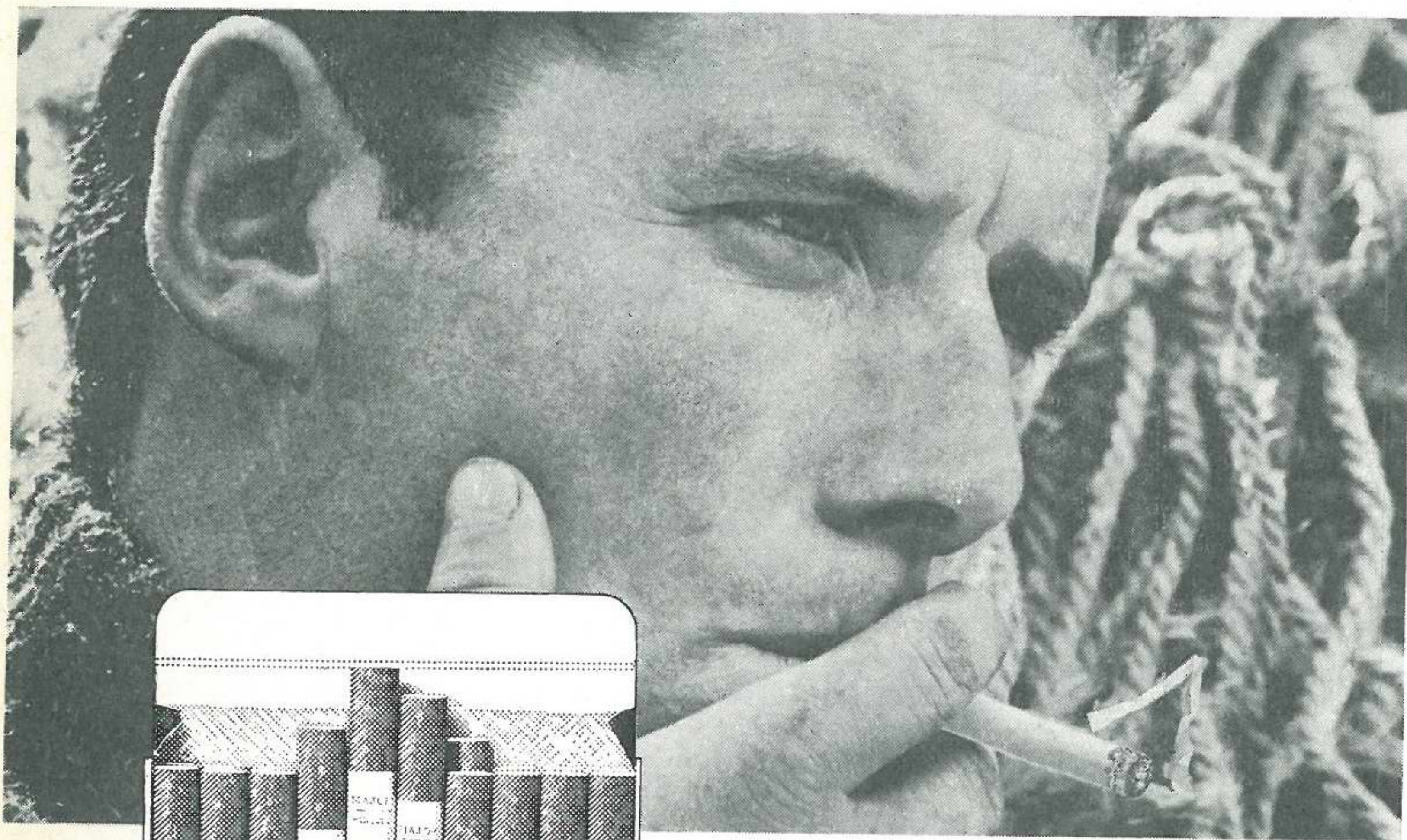
Call it, then, "a player's game" to excuse the disastrous condition to which rule-mad people will have reduced it. It is not the rules, I say now, as I said last year, which can improve Gaelic football further, but better fitness standards and deeper thinking from trainers, coaches and players on better tactical advances.

CHRISTMAS GIFT



Raymond Smith autographs a copy of his best-selling history of Gaelic football, "The Football Immortals" for Enda Colleran, who captained Galway to success in the 1965 and '66 All-Ireland title wins. The book is available from the publishers, Bruce Spicer Ltd., Dublin, at 8/6 post free (or two dollars air mail to America). It makes an ideal Christmas gift for Irish exiles.

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TRIBUTE TO THE LATE JIM BARRY

By EAMONN YOUNG



THE May sunlight streamed down on the Cork street when I met him that evening two years ago.

"You must be the fittest-looking trainer since Percy Cerutti", I said.

The white mane of hair shone silver in the sun; the face was tanned and virile; the check suit impeccably cut and the dicky bow had an air of gay assurance. The expensive brown sandals shone and through the leather peeped the neatest pair of yellow socks, bright as a canary's wing. With a grin of mock bravado Jim Barry took the pipe out of his mouth, clenched his big fists, expanded a chest which had a five-inch expansion, and drawing in the stomach 'till he had a waist like a girl, tapped his breast-bone and rapped out.

"Take a bit o' shelter under that".

God knows if I were smaller (a little smaller) I could have.

That was the year they won Cork's and Jim's last All-Ireland. He told me that his first was early in the century, probably that of 1912 when Kilkenny beat Cork by 2-1 to 1-3. Maybe, though he loved the Black and Amber, that was why he often spoke of their point wins over us. He would recount with truant glee how he sold his school-books to raise the price of the rail-ticket.

Life wasn't quite as easy for the young people of those days but exercise kept young Jim Barry out of trouble. His gymnastic ability made a diver of him and he was the first winner

of the Lee swim. He worked at his boxing in an era when Corkmen flowed into the Opera House or the Coliseum to see Mikus Creedon, whose son Dave won three All-Irelands in the early fifties, Mick and John Mahony from Blackpool and above all their brother, the gentle iron man, Pakey Mahony, who boxed thirteen rounds against Bombadier Billy Wells before he collapsed with a broken jaw, fractured ten rounds earlier.

Later on, after the Rising, Jim Barry then very slight and fast on his feet, was to put on the gloves with big Pakey to box for the Arms Fund. Pakey was billed as the Champion of Ireland and Jim was the Champion of the I.R.A.

"And I'm the only boxer in the world", he'd say with a chuckle, "who will die a champion". How true.

Like all hardy youngsters with national feelings, Jim was bound to be in trouble with the British and in those days when fist-fighting with British soldiers was common enough in Patrick Street he earned the name of Tough, which described his physical hardihood, but not his soft heart.

Eventually he was arrested and he told me how he and his friends slept in the open under wire cages on the square at Victoria (now Collins) barracks. Soon they were put into huts which wore the notice "Murderers and traitors live here. Reward for anyone recognised".

The soldiers passed by daily

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TRIBUTE TO THE LATE JIM BARRY

● FROM PAGE 13

and the boys behind the wire always wondered when a Tommy short of a pound might decide he knew a man who tripped him up coming out of a pub downtown.

A few years before that saw the era of the travelling opera companies when the Carl Rosa and the Moody Manners came to the Opera House and the people who loved their singing stars often unyoked the horses and drew the carriages to the Victoria hotel where the singers came out on the balcony to sing the arias.

Jim Barry's tenor was trained in the old, exacting school when one didn't learn a song to-day and sing it in public to-morrow. He sang "The Persian Love Lyrics", the only one now remembered being "Pale Hands" at the interval in the Pavilion cinema. He had roles in the Opera House and sang professionally in London. But his performances didn't end there.

I remember the night coming back from a match when he sang "Nessun Dorma", and one of the players, Jimmy Lynam, fell in love with it. Jim sang it three times more for Jimmy, but he'd say, rapping the glass of the windscreen with a hard finger: "How could you take a top C properly with that thing in front of you?"

We who couldn't take a middle C properly had no answer to that one.

About twelve months ago in a homecoming car he turned to Big Donal O'Sullivan and myself, asking did we ever hear this one and then sang word perfect and true in pitch "Fíll, Fíll a Rúin Ó", a Donegal melody about two hun-

dred years old. Flintoff Moore, Mabel Dennis, Olive Westwood (Brendan Bowyer's grandmother)—he often spoke of these fine singers. Their songs are sung.

For most of his life he ran his own tailoring business and I remember with affection, which had nothing to do with that pleasant time of life, the honeymoon tweed he cut for me. Upstairs in the big room with all the mirrors there was always a show on, the central figure being Jim while the audience relaxed in the armchair or overflowed on to the big table, while Jim argued, recalled or demonstrated in virtuoso.

You might find there Paddy Donovan or Jack Lynch or Jim Hurley, Mickey Leahy or John Quirke trying to get a word in edgeways. We used duck our heads and listen for the glass breaking. Christy Ring scored more goals in Jim Barry's place than ever he did on the field, but Jim was the demonstrator.

He loved sportsmen and his psychology was deep. One day coming from work, John Quirke, a four-in-a-row hurler, called in to ask Jim about the training the night before. John hadn't been there and felt just a little guilty. No word of blame from Jim but, with stars in his eyes, he told how Batt Thornhill slapped high ones from the skies, how Micka Brennan crashed through, how Din Joe Buckley whipped on flying balls and Billy Murphy drove the sliotar away out into the Atlantic Pond.

"Before he was finished", said Quirky, "I was running home for my togs".

Once I got a note from Seán

Óg Murphy, the County Secretary, to turn up for a League hurling game against Kilkenny at Nowlan Park. I showed it to Jim Young, who said:

"For the love o' God boy, go on away home. It's football Seán Óg was thinking of".

The ego wouldn't let me comply, so I went up to Jim Barry.

"It is a mistake, Jim?" I asked plaintively.

"Not at all, boy", he said. "Tis the likes of you we want". I grew another foot.

We dropped into the Horse and Jockey on the way back from a Croke Park game. Around the open hearth with Mrs. O'Keeffe we sat, Doney Donovan, Mick Cahill, Con MacGrath, Weesh Murphy and Neally Duggan. Tired but happy I went down a few inches in the pint and called for Jim Barry to sing.

"Il mio tesoro", I asked which, after all, wasn't the song for just then. Relaxed and comfortable the boys began to talk about the game and I, too, was guilty of what in the older person's eyes was the worst of bad manners. In the middle of the long breath Jim stopped.

"Ye asked me to sing", he rapped out, "and now ye won't listen to me". He turned and stalked down to "the room".

"Go after him", they said, and I did. He was walking up and down in a rage. I told him not to mind that crowd of bostoons and to come up and sing another. But he turned on me (for being disloyal to the lads, no doubt) and barked out that it was I who asked him to sing and I wasn't listening either. And he'd walk home. It was only sixty miles. It took a bit of persuading but anyway he didn't.

He loved Kerry men—but then he loved everyone. He seconded that champion footballer, Gega Connors, in a Munster middle-weight bout, told Gega to knock

your man out and Gega complied. He took on Danny Ryan of Tralee in a singing contest in Barry's Hotel. They sang in several languages but the Kerry-men said Dan won because he sang a song in German. Jim was always a bit sceptical of Dan's fluency in the language.

And the night coming home from the Munster Convention in Tramore when Denis Conroy had him almost convinced that the Cork chairman, Jack Barrett, at Cheltenham that day, had led in Arkle.

"You fellows are like my own sons", he said when he went security for me in the bank to buy my first wireless. And I suppose we were, for Jim had no sons of his own. His life was upright, manly and clean. Until recent years his drink was a glass of port. Now older men feel they have lost a brother: some middle-aged men feel the loss of a second father.

On the day of the funeral, when Jack Lynch, Canon Dan Connolly, Seán MacCarthy, Comdt. General Tom Barry, Willie John Daly, Pat Barry, Con Sullivan, Mick Burke, Seamus Power, Tom Loftus and the rest stood bareheaded in the down-pour, Danny Ryan said with a grin:

"Well, we stood for him in the rain. Jim had the last laugh".

As we watched the earth go down over the shell that once held the spirit of Jim Barry there was a quiet sadness among the manly fellows, who, like, the man they honoured.

**"Ever with a frolic welcome
took the sunshine and the
rain,**

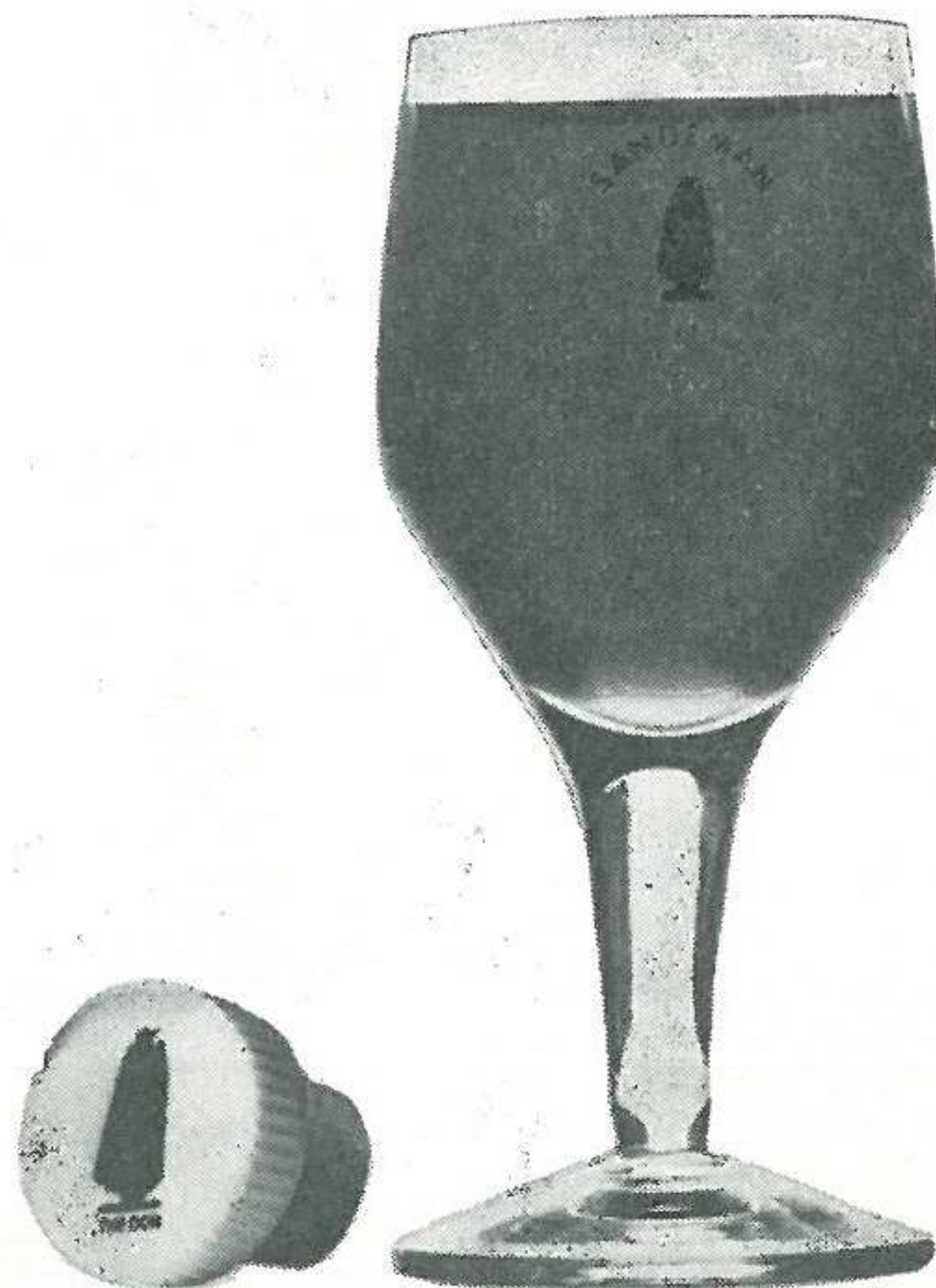
**And opposed free hearts, free
foreheads".**

But the sadness didn't last long. The spirit of Barry, free, bright, and unafraid was winging on. It was the one funeral he shouldn't have missed.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF '68

MEMORIES, how they jostle one on top of another, as the year draws to a close! Memories of stirring and pulsating games, of brilliant individual and team performances, of well-worked scores, first-class saves by goalkeepers, and of outstanding achievements.

But, what are the memories tinged with gold, the ones that will stand the test of time in the years to come? Below are my top eight.

GAME OF THE YEAR:

I remember power-packed hurling displays, all at Thurles, between Tipperary and Kilkenny in a League draw in March; Kilkenny and Clare in part one of their three-part League semi-final story, also in March, and Clare against Waterford in a Munster senior championship tie in May.

In football, I recall with delight the wonderful fare Down and Meath provided in their League divisional final at Croke Park in April, the high-quality play from Kildare and Sligo in their two games in the League semi-final, and the sunshine football that marked Longford's debut in an All-Ireland senior semi-final in that unsuccessful tilt with Kerry.

Yet, I pass them all over in favour of the Down-Kildare National League final, as my game of 1968. Here was a match full of drama and movement, a

stirring tie, played at a scorching pace for most of the hour by both teams, and with the emphasis by both sides on smooth, co-ordinated football. To add to the splendour of the tie was the garnish of some cleverly-worked scores, and first-rate individual performances.

OUTSTANDING TEAM DISPLAY:

Wexford's dramatic second-half come-back that swept them to victory over Tipperary for a fifth All-Ireland senior hurling title will put them in the lead in many enthusiasts' lists for this particular accolade. However, I still must stick to the Football League final.

Down turned on a really super-show in that game. From first to final whistle they displayed artistry, industry, pace and power, and blended efficiently into a sweet-moving unit, with strength, ability and class in

By
**OWEN
McCANN**

every department. It also adds gilt to the quality of that performance that they had to rise to the heights they did to thwart the challenge of gallant Kildare.

TOP INDIVIDUAL DISPLAY:

Seán O'Neill added further colour to the League final with a grand exhibition, which he highlighted by scoring 1-4; Michael Keating and Mick Roche illuminated the hurling League final with their dazzling repertoire of skills, and who can forget the majesty of Roche's hurling in the All-Ireland final?

Each display is certainly well worthy of the honour of the No. 1 individual performance of 1968, but how can one really pass over Tom O'Hare's exhibition in the All-Ireland semi-final with Galway?

That was a real tour-de-force of defensive football. Brilliant positioning, superb covering, immaculate fielding, unhurried and intelligent-placed clearances . . . we had all the high points of efficient rearguard action brilliantly—and for Down tellingly—paraded by O'Hare in that truly regal hour.

Indeed, I would go so far as to rate the Down man's performance that day as one of the

● TO PAGE 18



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● FROM PAGE 17

greatest defensive exhibitions we have seen in this decade.

GOAL OF THE YEAR :

What a truly rich vein one has to tap here. We could almost confine ourselves exclusively to Seán O'Neill's spectacular goal-scoring record alone, and make a strong case for the selection of any of the green flags he raised!

But what of that tremendous goal from about 25 yards that Charlie McCarthy crashed home to give Cork a dramatic win almost on time over Wexford in the Oireachtas Cup semi-final at Cork in October? Or Tony Doran's brilliant palmed goal to almost unbelievably put Wexford three points in front after 52 minutes of the All-Ireland senior hurling final? Nor will I easily forget the cool, professional-like way in which Doran whipped home Wexford's first goal in the Leinster final.

I could go on . . . but for speed of thought and action. I still feel there was nothing to equal Seán O'Neill's 28th-minute goal in the League Divisional final with Meath in April. He took a pass from John Murphy and, in one free-flowing movement that was completed in a twinkling, he dropped the ball to his toe, and shot home a gem of a left-footed goal. One of the really great scores in fact, of this or any other year.

POINT OF THE YEAR :

Here again it must be O'Neill. The match I have chosen as the year's outstanding tie was entering the closing stages when the Down full-forward raced out speedily and shrewdly to punch over a long-range Paddy Doherty free and put the Ulster team 2-12 up against Kildare's 1-7.

TOP SCORING DISPLAY :

Jimmy Doyle's total of 0-11 in Tipperary's National League

The great O'Hare in action

- *The Down left full back, Tom O'Hare, pictured during the All-Ireland semi-final against Galway on August 18.*



quarter-final win over Wexford at Croke Park in April was by no means the highest individual scoring achievement of 1968, in either code.

But quality-wise, I think that Doyle's exhibition has the edge. It was a good all-round display, executed in a major game in the highest possible class, a showing of purposeful forward play and accurate shooting both from frees and play.

SAVE OF THE YEAR :

Clare and Waterford folk will sing the praises of Pascal O'Brien and Mick Foley, particularly for their 22-carat showings in the

Munster championship meeting of the sides at Thurles. Rightly so, too, as each coloured their displays with some brilliant saves.

In football, Johnny Culloty brilliantly paraded his talents in the All-Ireland final. Remember that great save from Paddy Doherty just before half-time, which ended with a 50 for Down that Tom O'Hare pointed?

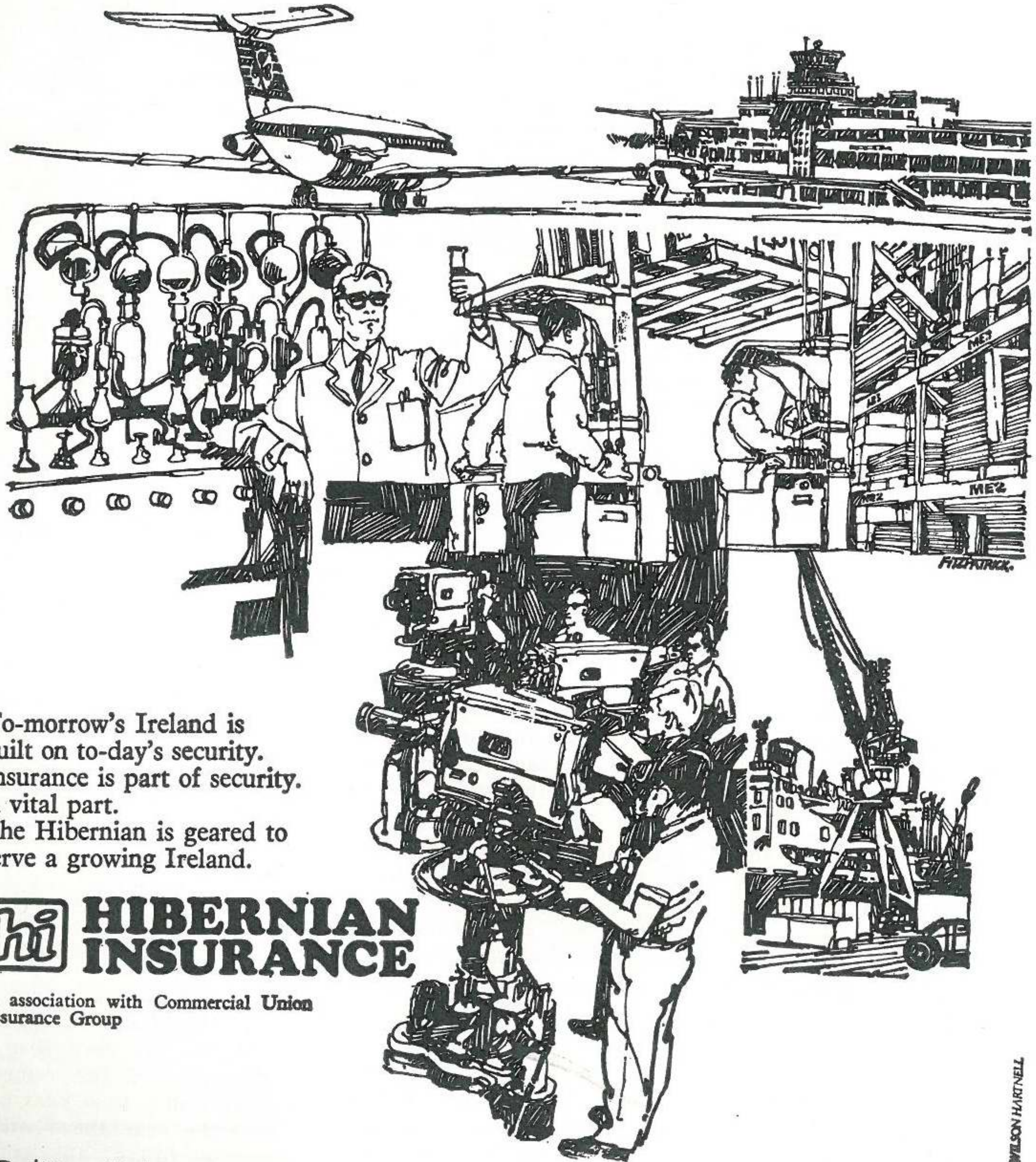
Culloty, in fact, gets my award, but for a save in the All-Ireland semi-final with Longford. It came in the 40th minute, when he stopped a great shot from Jackie Devine.

For my final award of 1968, I

move to the clubs and make St. Joseph's, of Donegal, my No. 1 choice. The Ballyshannon-Bundoran selection took the Ulster Senior Club championship and went on to take the All-Ireland championship after two great games with Dunmore McHales, of Galway. Later, they regained the Donegal county championship.

So, here's a "Thanks for the memory" to footballers, hurlers and all who make the games possible and who gave us so much to enthuse over and remember in 1968. And a New Year wish, too, that the year ahead will bubble merrily full of all that is best, exciting and exhilarating in our great games.

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WILSON HARTNELL

DONIE NEALON

Talking to
SEAN MURPHY

“HURLING has declined somewhat in both rural and urban areas in recent times but as a game it will never die.”

The speaker was Donie Nealon, the school teacher from Burgess in North Tipperary and hero of the Premier county hurling team for many years. The occasion was the presentation of the Tommy McCarthy trophy to his fellow county man, Mick Roche for his display in this year's All-Ireland final. It took place at the Kilfinane (Co. Limerick) hurling symposium. Later in the proceedings I had the pleasure of talking with the informative Nealon and it went as follows:

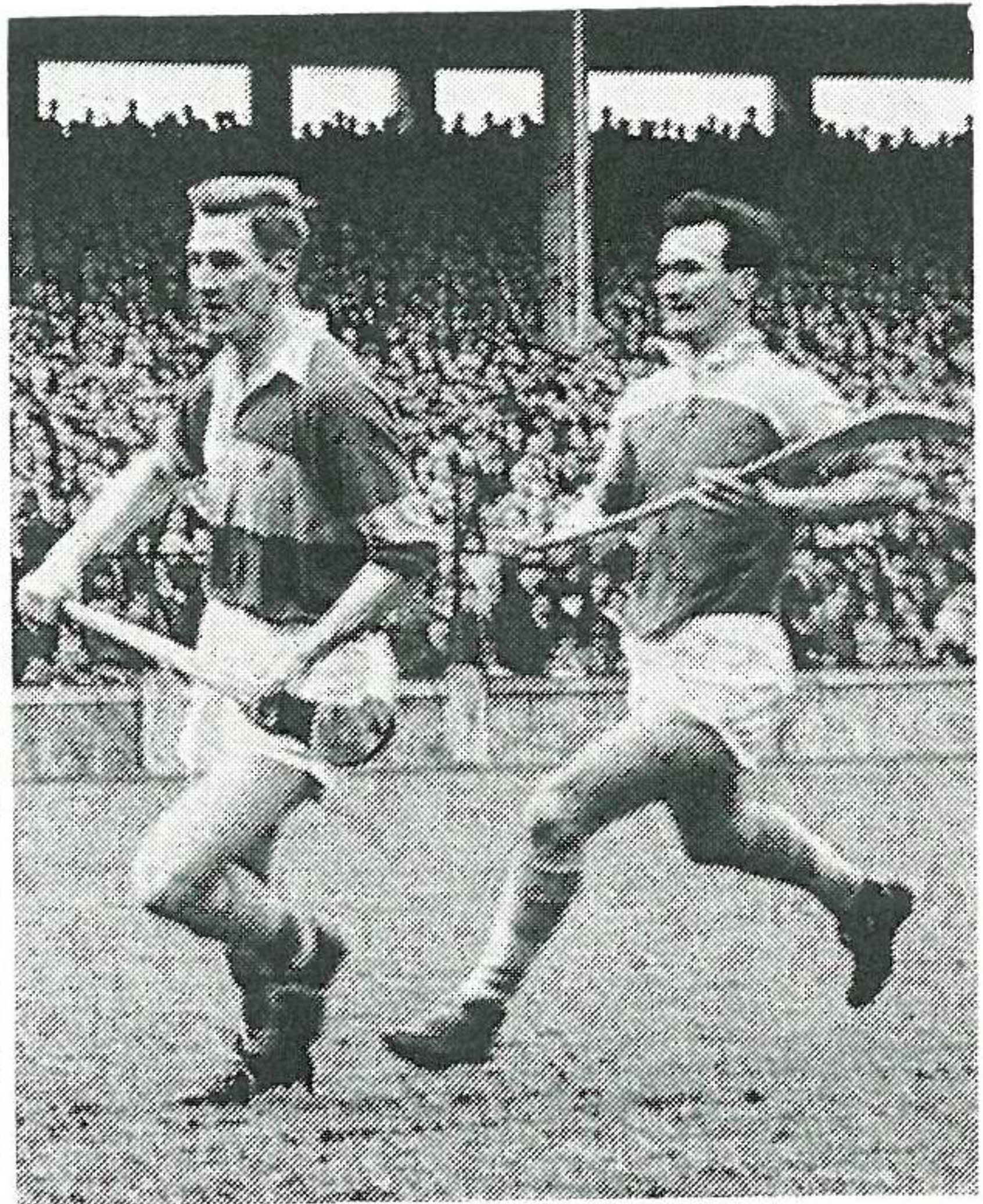
Murphy — To what do you attribute the decline in hurling, referred to in your speech?

Nealon — There are many reasons and the first that springs to mind is that youngsters to-day have too many attractions and if we are to survive we must lure them towards our national game. The skills of hurling should be imparted when our boys are very young and I feel better use should be made of TV to promote hurling. The motor car, big dance halls, T.V., lounge bars and a better standard of living all round have all been detrimental to the progress of hurling.

Murphy — Do you believe courses such as that at Gormaston are fulfilling their purpose?

Nealon—Most certainly, yes. I

● *Donie Nealon of Tipperary playing in the 1965 All-Ireland hurling final against Wexford, strongly pursued by his equally sporting opponent Tom Neville.*



feel youngsters can be taught the necessary skills and, while on this point, I would like to refute the saying—hurlers are born, not made. To prove my statement I cite the case of Des Ferguson of Dublin, the best backman in the past twenty years. Des was born in Down in a district where hurling was unknown, but when he moved to a hurling environment he turned out to be a master exponent of defensive play.

Murphy—Have you any ideas to improve hurling?

Nealon—First of all, I would like to see the standard of refereeing improved by the launching of a national referees' course. I would like to see four referees from each county attending and

when they returned home that they in turn would organise courses at local level. Then we should have a uniform interpretation of the rules. I would like, also to see teams reduced to thirteen-a-side. Drop the full-forward and full-back. This would lead to more open play and more protection for the goalkeeper. I feel, also that hurling should be pushed at national level with Bord Fáilte boosting it as a leading attraction for tourists, just as Spain does with its traditional bull-fighting.

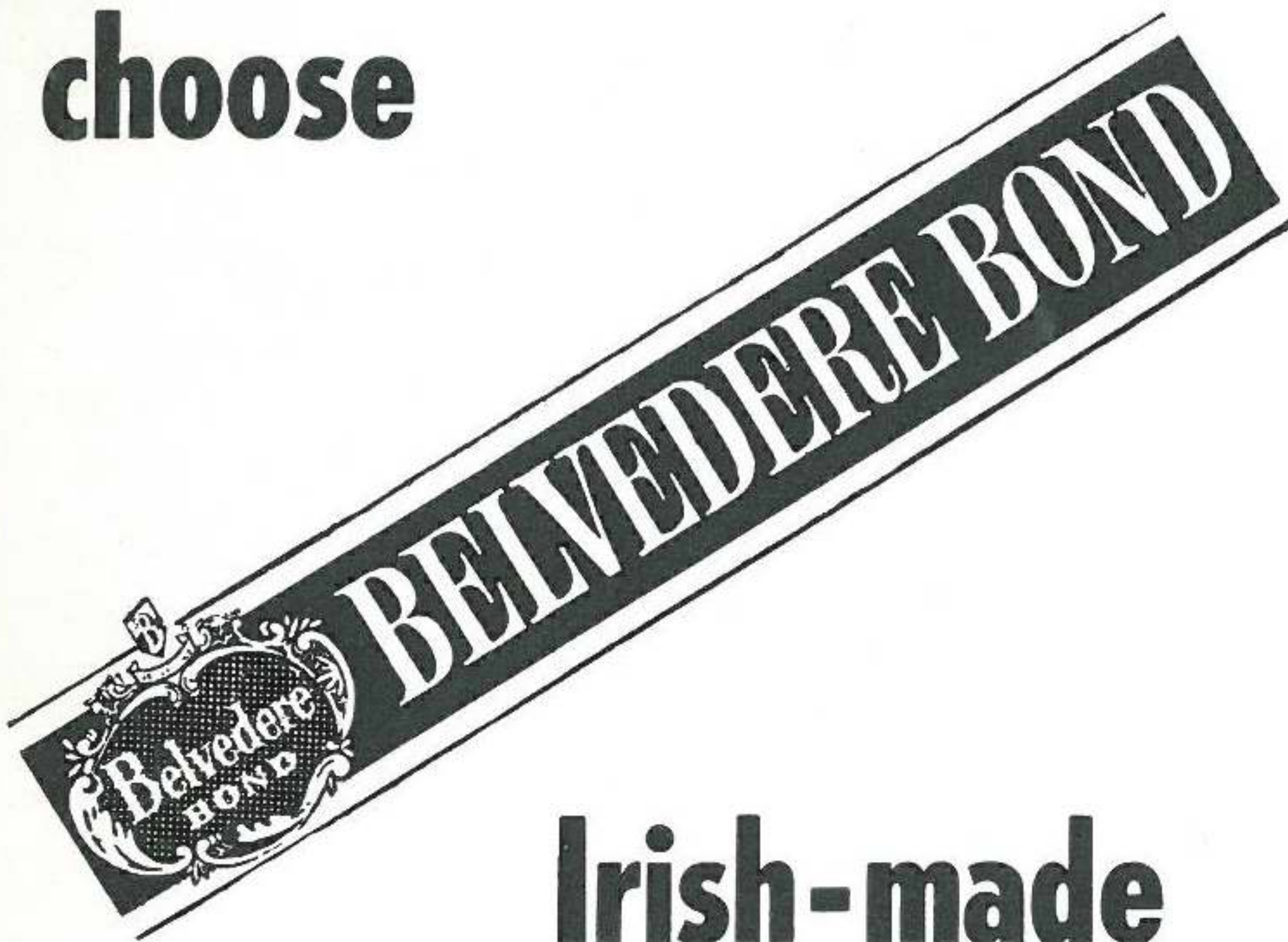
Murphy—Any other aspect of the G.A.A. you would like to comment on?

Nealon—I feel there is too

● TO PAGE 22

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ADMAR

● FROM PAGE 21

much glamour surrounding the county teams. After all, the club is the grass-roots of the Association. The inter-club hurling championship should be continued to All-Ireland level and the junior and intermediate grade should go.

Murphy—What memories have you from your long and successful career?

Nealon — I have certainly enjoyed every moment of it, but the tension of All-Ireland day is very harassing, indeed. There is nothing I enjoy more than a few pucks with the local boys. After all, I think the real unsung heroes of hurling are to be found in the village green and not in Croke Park.

Murphy—What game gave you your greatest thrill?

Nealon—The 1962 All-Ireland final, with the 1954 Harty Cup final a close second.

Murphy—Who was the greatest player you encountered?

Nealon—I have no hesitation in naming John McGovern of Kilkenny. He was the complete hurler.

Murphy—Have you any idea of retiring?

Nealon—Not really. I would like a rest during the present league campaign and if the selectors feel I am worthy of selection in 1969, I will be again ready, willing and able, D.V.

Murphy—Do you think Tipperary will again be a strong hurling force?

Nealon—I have no doubt whatsoever on this matter. We came back before and we will do it again. There is a wealth of youthful talent in the county and all we need is the right blend:

Murphy—What are your ambitions now?

Nealon—To keep on playing hurling for many years and maybe win another All-Ireland medal with Tipperary.

MAHER STILL THE CHAMP...

the court on the particular night was virtually unplayable.

Unfortunately, the floor started to weep at the beginning of the match and, as it progressed, movement for the players became hazardous. They found a partial solution in discarding their shoes, which negated, at least, the chances of a dangerous fall. The four of them were heroes.

The McEllistrims started at a blistering pace and were well into the first game before Buggy and Lyng found their feet.

At the beginning of the second the position was reversed. Buggy, having regained the composure that he displayed in his other matches during the season, began to defend his corner determinedly.

In turn, Wexford levelled the game. Picture the position, with Kerry leading by 17-7 in the third. A great rally by the Slaney-siders, the deficit is erased and they go in front.

The Kerry men regain the initiative and, with the game at his mercy, Tom goes in to toss. To the utter consternation of his supporters, he throws out two short balls which by handball rules, causes his dismissal.

Now, a Wexford victory seems assured. Lyng and Buggy go in to toss and have only one ace to make for victory.

The last ace is always the hardest to get in a handball match and today the Wexford players will substantiate that view.

With victory on Wexford's doorstep the McEllistrim's stepped in to snatch it.

● TO PAGE 48



THE HANDBALL SCENE

By
ALLEYMAN

● JOE MAHER

THE time is opportune to review the championship season which has just passed. It was in many ways an interesting campaign, highlighted by the return of Joe Maher from Toronto. As expected, he won both the softball and handball singles championships.

An indication of the high standard that prevails in this country is substantiated by the fact that Maher had to make an all-out effort to achieve the double.

In the older code of handball he was given a severe testing by Willie Doran from Kildare, while in the softball final Murty McEllistrim gave the Louthman a hard passage.

In the latter game he found himself in arrears to the extent of 13-8 and 18-13 in the vital second set, having already lost the first. The fact that he had the ability to come back and win is an indication of his real ability and flair for the big occasion. However, justice was done when McEllistrim won a doubles title.

He partnered his brother, Tom, to success in the softball in a desperately exciting final with Wexford's Richie Lyng and Séamus Buggy.

I have vivid memories of this final, which compared with the best for excitement and durability of the participants, taking into consideration the fact that

It was not a good year

MAYBE I am growing grumpy, as well as growing old, but I was far from satisfied with this Gaelic year that is already rapidly fading into history.

There were the brilliant performances of Down in winning both the football league and the football championship; there was Wexford's amazing second-half resurgence in the All-Ireland hurling final, and there was Longford's feat in breaking through at last to win the Leinster senior football title. But, after those highlights, I find it a little bit difficult to discover much else to treasure from this year of 1968.

Pleasant or not, facts are there to be faced, and the first fact and by no means a pleasant one, was this. Not alone was the whole Railway Cup series uninspiring, but the public seemed to decide, at long last, that there is no longer much point in turning up for the Croke Park finals.

The St. Patrick's Day attendance would have been considered disappointing 25 years ago, but there is no use in blaming the public. After all, only diehards like myself are still foolish enough to head up to Croke Park, St. Patrick's Day after St. Patrick's Day, to watch Railway Cup finals that rarely, if ever, rise above the mediocre now-days.

sadly shattered their schedule but, at least, they kept the National League title on this side of the water.

The championships were interesting but not particularly brilliant at provincial level. Kilkenney, smarting under the suspension of Ollie Walsh, nevertheless only failed by a point to Wexford in the Leinster final.

Tipperary, without John Flanagan—suspended with Ollie—had no problems in Munster, not even in a traditional final against Cork at Limerick.

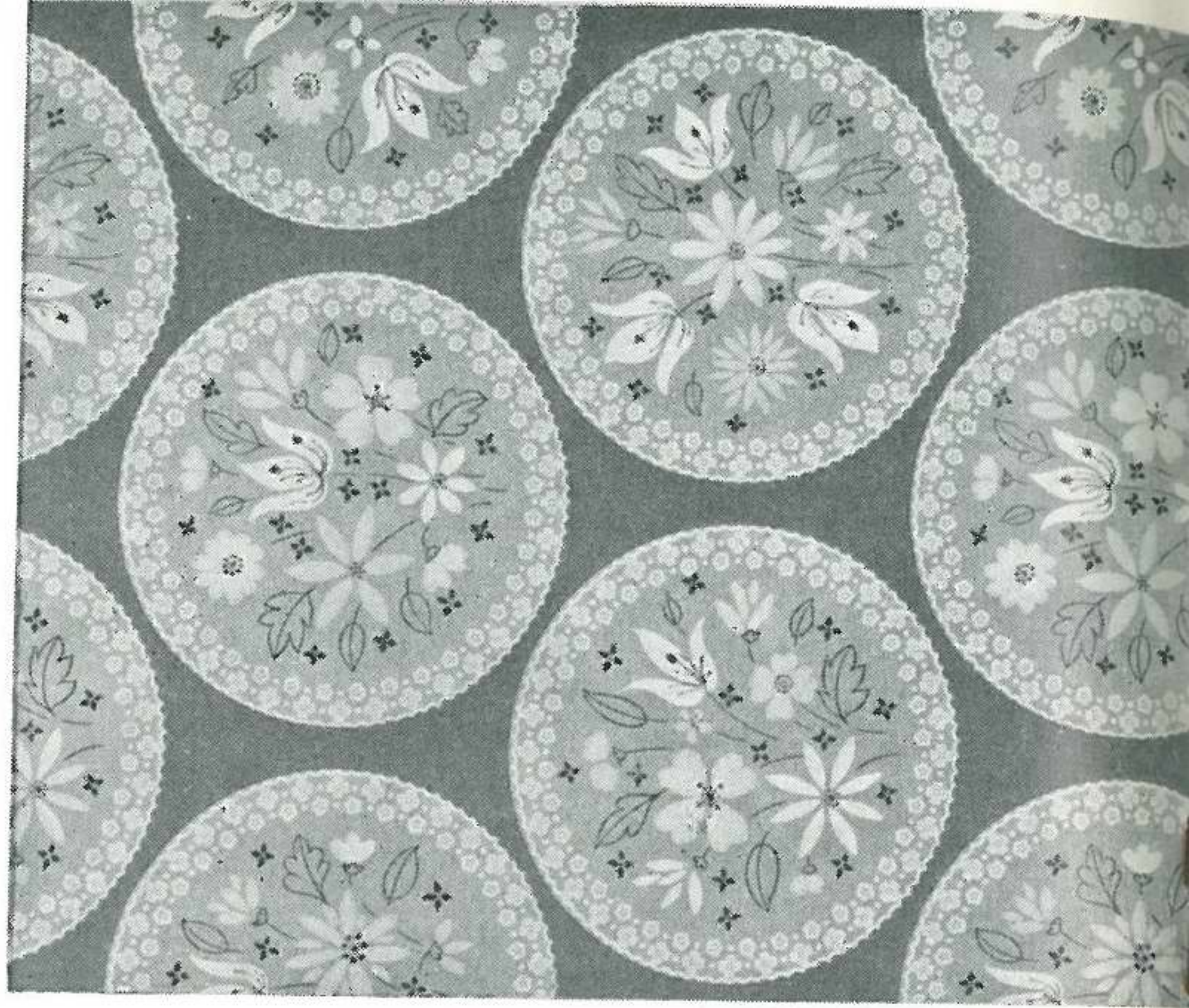
In football, Down, despite a tough schedule, swept through Ulster. Longford came storming out of Leinster at last. Galway, after an early fright from Roscommon, reasserted their superiority in the West while Kerry, despite a manifestly suspect defence, came marching out of Munster after a three-year lapse.

So the stage was set for the football semi-finals, and both provided entertaining games, with Kerry and Down qualifying for a final that failed to come up to expectations. Down won, deservedly but not nearly so decisively as they might have done. Kerry battled hard but just had not got what it takes on the day. Then Down really proved them-

all levels. Even Ron Barassi's Australians were nothing like the drawing-cards in 1968 that they proved themselves in 1967.

We have to set out in 1969 to bring the crowds back in their

former numbers. And I sincerely hope we will succeed. If not, there are more difficult days ahead than the G.A.A. has known since the depressed days of nearly forty years ago.



You don't have to be a genius to realise that you can sit snugly at home instead and watch these games in comfort on television, and they will probably look better on the small screen, too!

As I say, don't blame the public. I hate to add this, but I fear the responsibility rests upon a certain number of players who just don't seem inclined to put the same amount of heart, or anywhere near it, into playing for their province that they put into their efforts for club or county.

The result is that the man-on-the-terraces, who can rarely be coddled for long, has written off these interprovincial games, and it is not going to be easy to win the crowds back again.

In fact, the whole question of crowds was one of the big problems of 1968, but we will come back to that later.

The closing stages of the National Football League produced a number of excellent and entertaining games, and if Down won, very deservedly, the men from Kildare, Sligo and resurgent Galway all gained themselves a host of new friends.

The three semi-final games between Clare and Kilkenny should have heightened interest in the National Hurling League final, but once again the crowd was disappointing. Maybe that was just as well for Tipperary and Kilkenny produced some "fireworks" towards the end of the first-half, which have not yet finished exploding.

Tipperary won, deservedly, and then crossed the Atlantic where rain, and the tragic assassination of Senator Bobbie Kennedy,

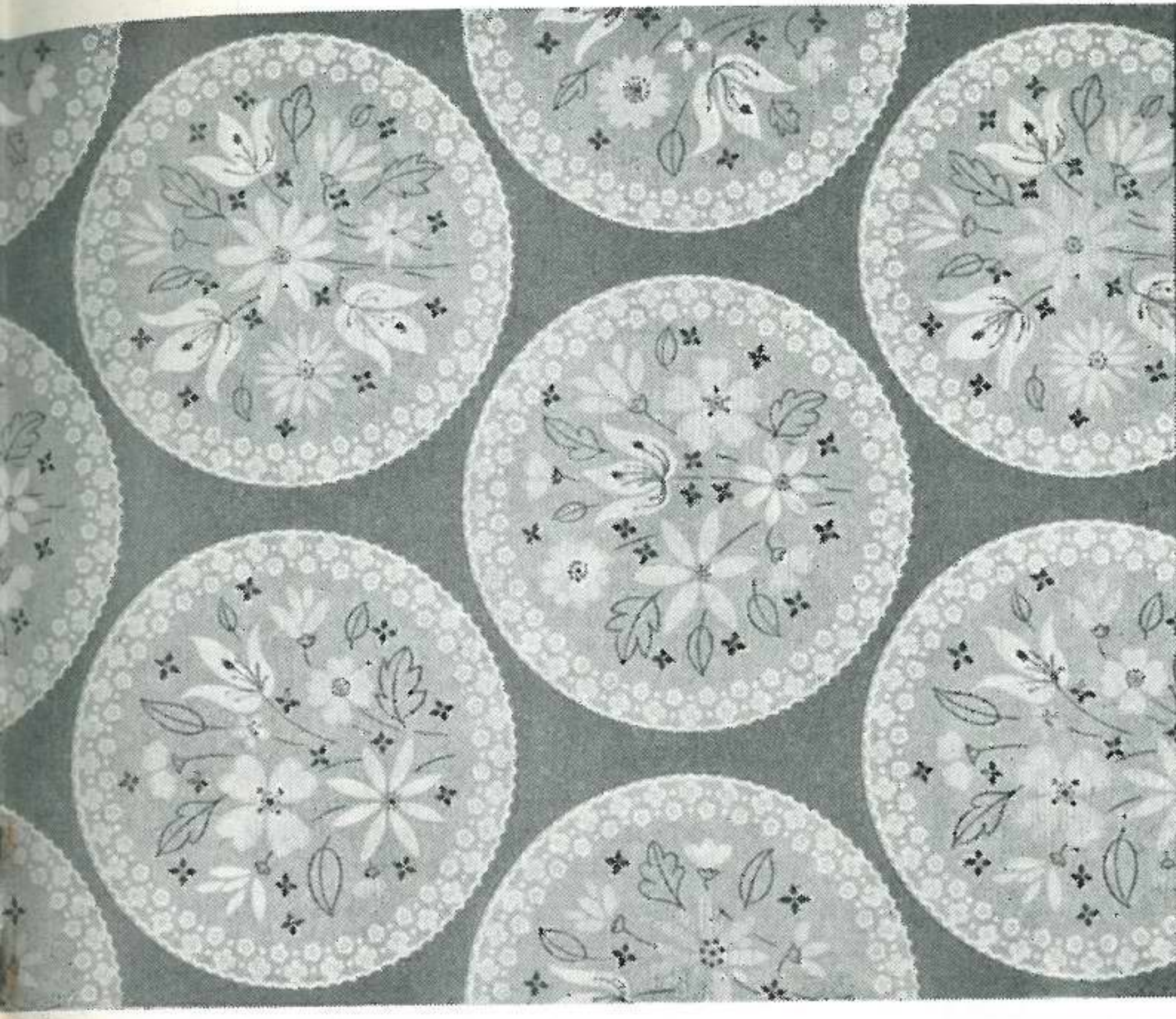
seives by crossing the Atlantic and defeating New York decisively in the second-leg of the World Cup.

Meanwhile, on the hurling fields we saw a really extraordinary All-Ireland final. During the first-half, Tipperary, hurling completely at their ease, made Wexford look like second-raters. But the Munster champions had nothing at all to offer when they came out for the second-half and Wexford swept on to amazing victory.

The Wexfordians then beat New York in a World Cup final that nobody seemed to care tuppence about.

The All-Ireland final, however, had an uneasy sequel for the whole hurling game. There was a difference of opinion between the Tipperary County Board and leading Gaelic commentators, in which the National Union of Journalists soon became involved. The result was that the G.A.A. in Tipperary ceased to exist as far as the six Dublin national newspapers were concerned. It was an unfortunate situation that was allowed to drag on far too long, and that did nobody any good whatsoever.

It certainly did not help hurling, nor did it help the attendance in the various big games in which Tipperary were concerned towards the end of the season, with the unfortunate Oireachtas Committee, who had no hand, act or part in the dispute, the worst sufferers. With attendances continuing to fall, the question of attracting back the crowds becomes one of the greatest problems facing the Association at



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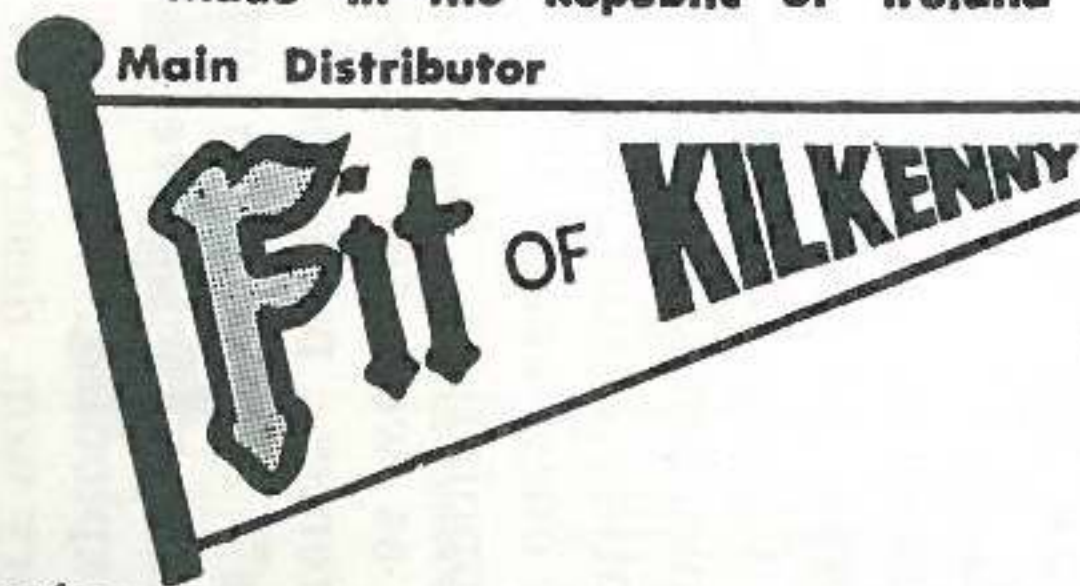


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Dear Sir, — I am an all-round sportsman. In this letter I wish to express my views on Gaelic games in Ireland at the moment.

First of all a few things would need to be set straight. This business about the Ban. I think the rule should go. Another thing is that Gaelic games are slowly dying away in Ireland.

I go to a college where hurling and football are played a lot, but any time a game of football is being played out in the yard, it's soccer.

Many of the young people today like Gaelic games, but they also like soccer and rugby. If they become members of the G.A.A. they cannot play these games or go to see them, or have anything to do with English games because of the Ban. So they leave the G.A.A. and become soccer or rugby players, or followers.

Another point is this. If people were payed for playing hurling and football a lot more people would be playing Gaelic games than at the moment. Also, if the Ban went, more people would join the G.A.A. and the people still in the G.A.A. would not be stuck to hurling and football all the time.

In the college that I go to as a boarder, hurling and football are played a lot but a few weeks ago only about 50% watched the All-Ireland football finals, both senior and minor, on television. A few nights after that, a soccer match between Manchester United and some other team was shown on television. Over 90% watched that match.

Why not run more competitions for primary and secondary schools? Like under 12, 13, 14 Leagues between the provinces.

May our Gaelic games last forever.

Yours respectfully,

GABRIEL DILLON.

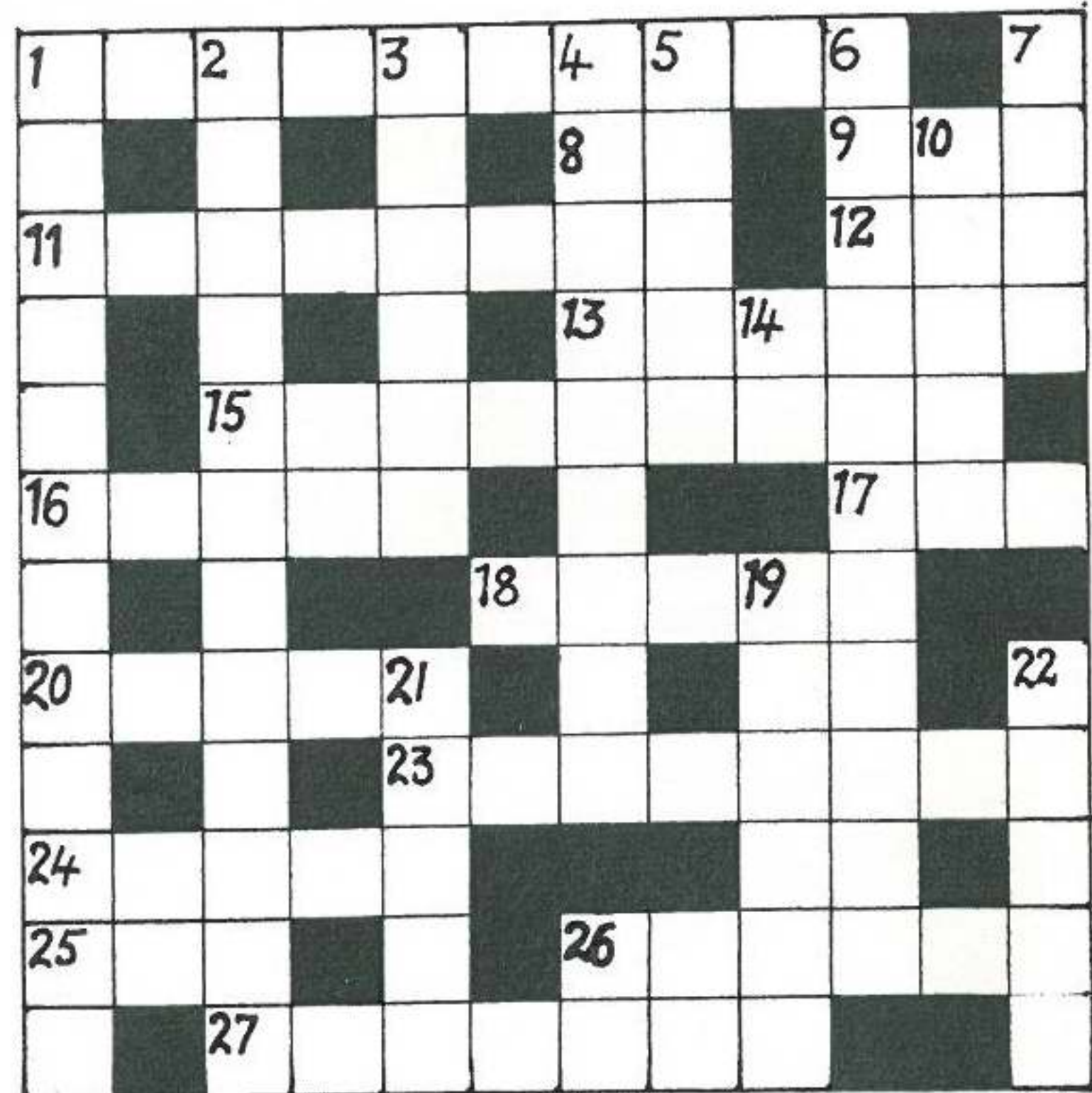
Good Counsel College,
New Ross,
Co. Wexford.

ACROSS :

1. Constructive centre-forward and also hurler with his native Meath (5, 5).
8. An Irish hound (2).
9. Northern Ireland equivalent to our own Leaving Certificate (1, 1, 1).
11. Familiar name of the An Treorai Oifigiul (8).
12. Three parts of a noun (3).
13. A little knot or a small lump (6).
15. Figured in Donegal attack until a few years ago; thoroughly suitably surnamed for one from that county (1, 8).
16. Ill-tempered, like a rodent, this player seems to have been (5).
17. Possible remedy for teams who change their colours (3).
18. Grade or quality of play is the hallmark (5).
20. Physique which is no substitute for brain (5).
23. Either goal or point is welcome in a tight finish (3, 5).
24. Ice hockey surface sometimes compared to a slippery sod (1, 4).
25. A solo for two ? (3).
26. Tipperary-born Trustee of the Central Council, the outstanding referee of the early part of the century : a busy bird, in fact (1, 5).
27. Tipperary-born Dublin hurling stalwart of the thirties; at centre-forward mainly (3, 4).

DOWN :

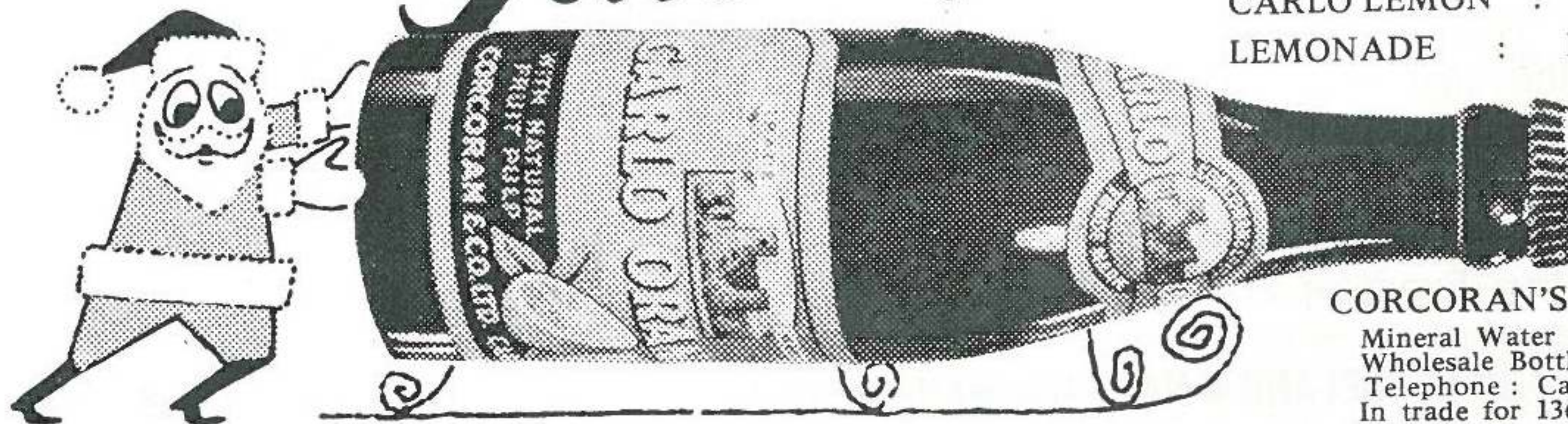
1. Donegal and Ulster full-back (7, 5).
2. Pictorial aid to the explanation of a skill or report of a game (12).
3. Who has won nine All-Ireland senior hurling medals ? (6).
4. Waterford centre or corner back in football whose surname is the same as heavyweight Kildare forward who was a back until recently (1, 8).



5. Gold rush country in North America (5).
6. At centre-field for the All-Ireland hurling champions of 1945 (1, 10).
7. McCarthy—the one who has been in and out of the Cork football team (4).
10. Barney was a stout Cavan defender some twenty years ago (5).
14. Roscommon and Connacht centre-forward. Initials (1, 1).
19. Safe and sure, like a sound defence to the rescue (6).
21. Dekan unsuitably undressed for football (5).
22. Form of headdress affected by some players: more in keeping with French or Basque (5).
26. Degree, or the initials of Clare forward in hurling (1, 1).

SOLUTION : PAGE 48

Carlo Galore!

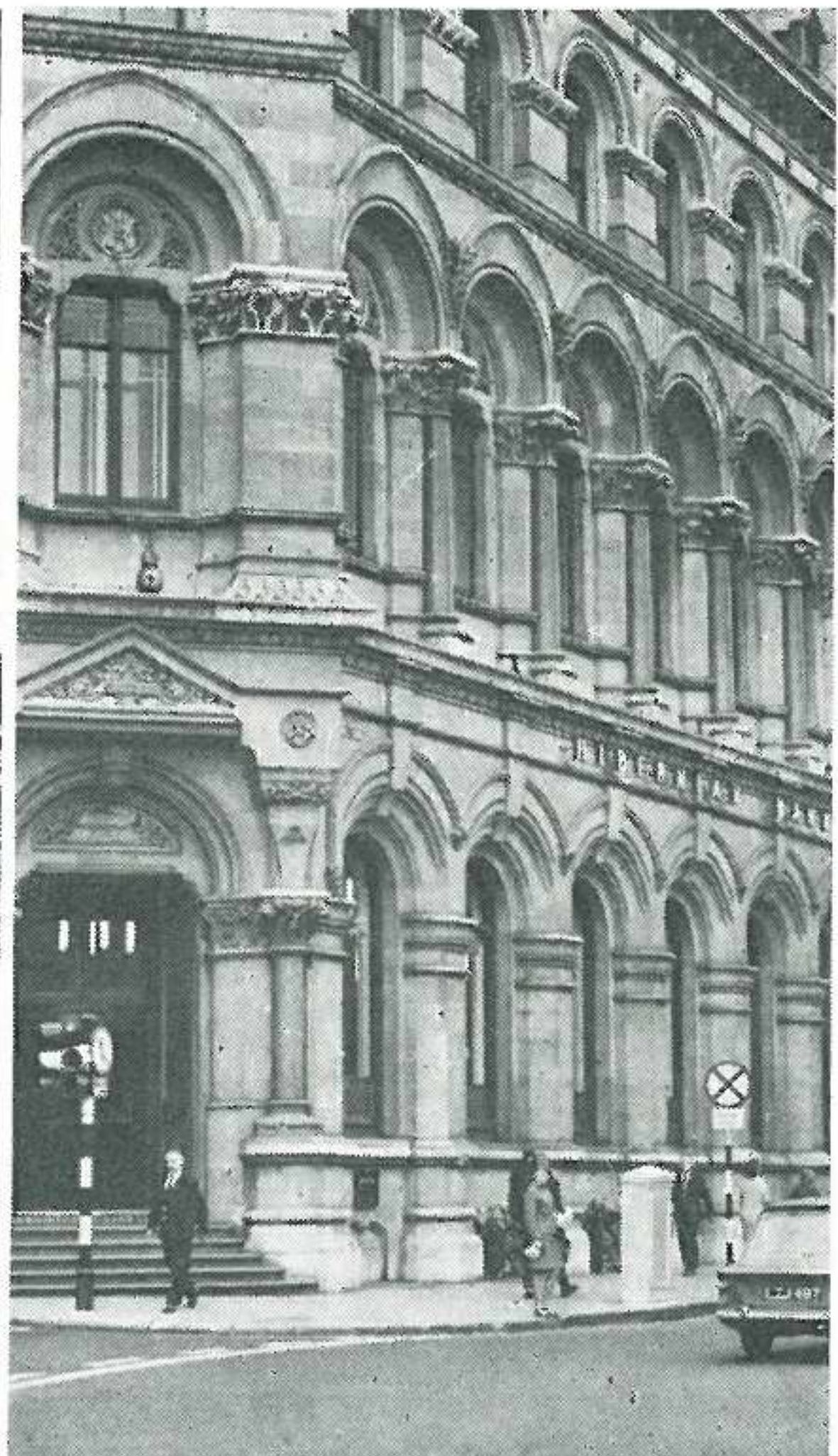


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DEIRE BLIANA EILE

TÁ bliain eile imthighthe thart beagnach. Seadh, deire bliana eile. Táimid ag gluaiseacht ar aghaidh, is gan fhios dúinn féin go ró-mhinic bféidir. Tá sé ar aigine againn dá bhrígh sin fhéachaint siar ar an mbliain atá caithte chun d'fháil amach conus mar a d'éirigh linn i rith na bliana. An raibh gach aon nídh sáisiúl? Ar dhéineamar morán dul chun chinn, nó an amhlaidh gur chúlamar siar i n-áiteanna. Tógaimís i dtosach na craobh-chluichí. An raibh aon fhuireann nua páirteach ionnta nó an amhlaidh go raibh na seana laochra céadhna páirteach ionnta arís? As na ceithre fóirne, abhí páirteach ins na leath-cheannais comórtaisí, ní raibh ach conndae nua amháin i bPáirc a' Chrócaigh—Longphort. Bhí bliain iontach aca san. Bhaineadar amach craobh Laighean don chéad uair riamh. Conndae ana bheag é Co. Longphort, agus tá ana cheideamhaint ag dul dóibh, craobh Laighean a bhaint amach, mar tá sé níos deachra craobh Laighean a bhaint amach ná craobh aon chúige eile, thuair de nó theas. Na fóirne eile abhí ann, níorbh

aon stróinséirí iad i bPáirc a' Chrócaigh. Bhí cuid aca ann arís is arís.

NA FÓIRNE CÉADNA

Maidir leis an ggraobh-chluiche iománíochta, le blianta beaga anuas, is iad na fóirne céadhna a bhíonn páirteach beagnach, bliain i ndiaidh bliana. Bíonn a fhios agat abfad Éireann roimh-re, i dtosach na bliana, nó chó luath is a bhíonn craobh amháin thart, cad iad na fóirne a bheidh páirteach ann an bliain seo chughainn. I láthair na h-uaire d'fhéadfá cúig fóirne a phriocadh amach is a rádh go mbeidh dhá cheann éigin acu san san craobh-chluiche eile.

Tógaimís Cúige Laighean, cuir i gcás. D'fhéadfá a bheith deimhneach de, go mbeidh Cill Choinnigh nó Loch Garman ar cheann des na fóirne a bheidh ann. Is é an scéal céadhna é i gCúige Mumhan. D'fhéadfá a rádh cheanna féin, go mbeid dhá cheann éigin díobh so páirteach ann Tiobrad Árann, An Clár nó Corcaigh. Maidir le Cúige Uladh agus Cúige Connacht, d'fhéadfá iad a leogaint amach as an gcóir-

eamh ar fad, ar fad. Ní bheadh aon iona orm-sa dá má rud é go mbeadh an dá fhuireann chéadhna páirteach sa chraobh-chluiche an bhliain seo chughainn is abhí ann i mbliana Tiobrad Árann is Loch Garman arís. Níl ach míniú amháin air sin, go bhfuil an iomáint lag, lag, lag sa tír, agus is mór an truagh san.

AN BUADH TUILLTE

Ag féachaint siar anois ar thoradh an dá chraobh-chluiche, ceapaim go raibh an buadh tuillte ag an dtaobh is fearr. Thug Loch Garman ana theasbántas sa tarna leath, agus aon fhuireann a déanann é sin i gcoinnibh Thiobrad Árann tóg uaim-se é gur laochra calma iad, is cuma cé h-iad. Bhí an scéal céadhna ann sa chraobh-chluiche peile. Bhí an Dún abfad Éireann níos fearr ná Ciarraidhe. Bhíodar, sa tslighe seo—bhíodar níos tapúla, bhíodar níos cliste, agus bhí níos mó den chóimirt aca, agus is iad na trí tréithe san a bhuid an cluiche dhóibh. Ach tá rud amháin le rádh maidir leis an dá chraobh-chluichí, agus rud is ea é atá níos tábhataidhe ná buadhchaint an chluiche nó cailliúnt an chluiche, do bhí an dá chluiche glan, bhíodar mánla. Ní raibh aon suarachas gurbh fhiu trácht air, ag baint leis na fóirne, nó le lucht leanúna aon chinn aca agus is mór an moladh é sin.

Bhí sé are aigine agam tagairt a dhéanamh don ghaisce a dhéin Doire is Tír-Eoghain i rith na bliana leis, ach caithead é do chur siar go ceann lae eile.



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BLEAK FUTURE FOR GALWAY?

By SEAN RICE

THE signs are there: The actors are growing old; some have withered and fallen from grace, and the replacements are as out of place as a horse-and-cart going through O'Connell Street. Now no rhythm graces the Galway stages. And the audiences are becoming unsettled.

Still they persist, those old lovable actors: the Keenans, the Leydons, the Dunnes, the Colerans—all remnants of a team whose skills are ingrained into every pitch in the country, but whose best days are over now.

But what about the future? Is it as bleak as it looked on a Sunday last month when they crashed to Mayo in the National Football League at Tuam — a Mayo team which included eight changes from that defeated by Galway in the Connacht final in July?

Galway had a few newcomers that day, too. Players like Michael Meade, John Connolly and Ray Gilmore. But they failed to impress so that loopholes appeared in almost every line of the team.

Why, then, don't Galway mentors try for more talent? They would, I believe, if it was available. The trouble is they have no pool from which to draw new talent. For while Galway seniors were winning All-Ireland titles too few people paid any atten-

tion to the minors. No careful eyes watched or encouraged and now all Galway may pay the penalty.

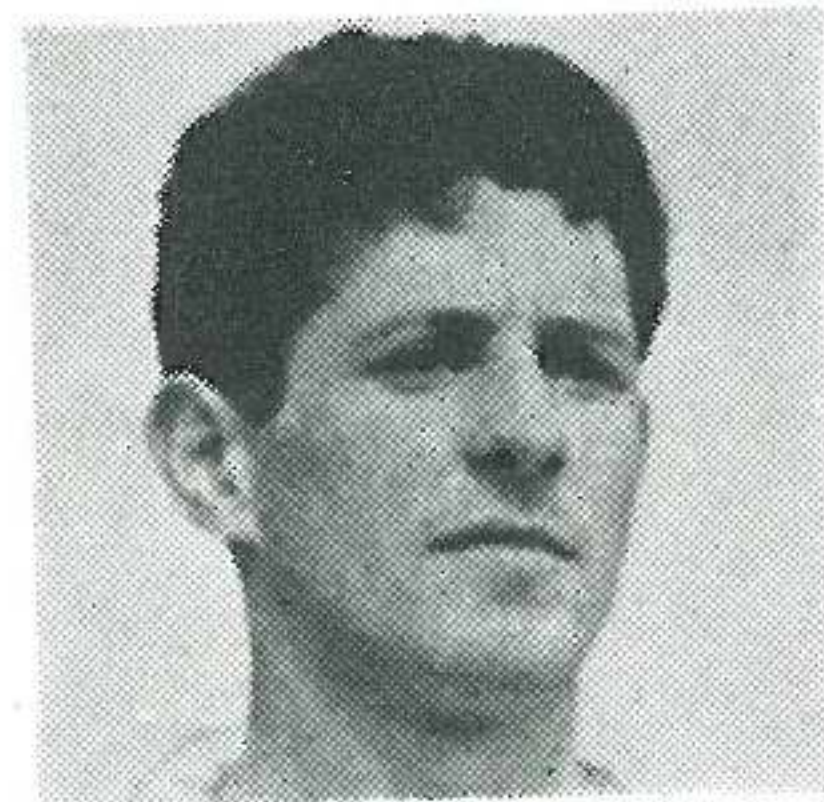
Senior star Jimmy Duggan once told me: "Galway never showed any great interest in minor football since 1960 when they won the All-Ireland title. Many members of that team formed the nucleus of the great era that was to follow."

"I think one of the main reasons for the lack of interest was that the juniors and seniors were doing so well that they hadn't time for the minors. But they must take more care, otherwise football will gradually die."

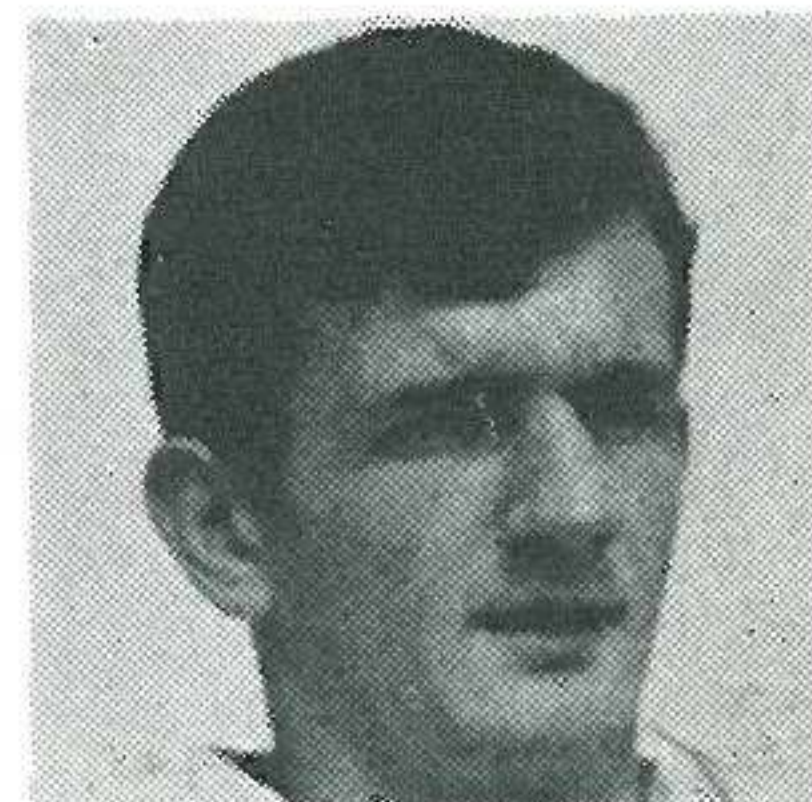
The players Galway have brought on since they first started to slip have not welded into the team like Coilín McDonagh and Jimmy Duggan have done.

The ideal partner has not been found for Jimmy Duggan at midfield, Cyril Dunne is not the success hoped for at full forward. Ray Gilmore, although he is an improvement, is still not the answer to centre-half back and I don't think Frank Canavan will be long at centre-half forward.

A team without a backbone will not last long. And that's where Galway's trouble is at the moment—right down the centre. This is not to say that they are to be written off immediately far from it. They are still



Coilín McDonagh



Liam Sammon

capable of finding the 'kick' to beat some of the best teams in the country. But I don't think they can hold out for long.

A certain panic is creeping into their play. Balls that once would have found a colleague with deadly accuracy are now being swept over the side line in desperation. And their forward line has not the thrust to hammer home scores.

Again Mayo, quite a few good opportunities presented themselves in the opening minutes of the game. Liam Sammon and Seamus Leydon had ideal chances of scoring goals, but they didn't avail of them and this is what told on the scoreboard in the end.

The older players will have some good individual performances in the months to come, but they have not found the link men to turn their work into scores. Unless these are found soon, the future of the Galway team would seem to be clouded.

WHERE ARE THE YOUNG IDEAS?

Asks SEAMUS O CEALLAIGH

DECEMBER is generally a quiet month in G.A.A. circles when it should be one of the most active of the calendar. We mostly associate it with efforts by the laggard ones to get their games programmes completed — a mission that usually involves only a limited number of clubs. The bulk of the others appear at any rate as if they were in hibernation.

Clubs who are alive to their responsibilities should be like busy bees this very vital month. County Conventions must, according to rule, be held in January, if not earlier, and clubs, in order to prepare for this important legislative session, should have their annual general meetings as soon as possible, so that all their members get the opportunity of putting forward their views on how the Association should be run, the competitions to be provided, and the part the club should play in the general G.A.A. scheme of things.

Time and time again we hear the view expressed that the G.A.A. is out of date in its rules and thinking; that its methods are outmoded; that it does not reflect the modern age or properly cater for the many

thousands of young men entering its ranks.

If this state of affairs exists the blame lies squarely with the clubs. They are not active or interested enough to tackle things they see wrong with the Association. In fact, some of them are so poorly organised that they rarely call their members together and a properly constituted, business-like meeting is an unheard of thing.

It is quite common to hear players criticise the Association, to mention facilities that are lacking and grievances they harbour. It is time we got down to brass tacks and told these people it is up to them to make the changes they desire.

The ordinary player is far and away the most powerful member of the Association because he constitutes the vast majority. He usually pulls his weight on the playing field, but in other aspects of the Association's work he lags very much behind.

Youth has the reputation of being full of ideas, of doing dedicated work, but mighty few of these ideas reach the County Conventions, let alone All-Ireland Congress.

The G.A.A. is a truly democratic organisation in which the humblest member, even those

of very recent origin, have the same voice in its affairs as the most powerful of its officials. They have exactly the same machinery to process a suggestion or proposal — and it is not the fault of the Association if this is not availed of.

December is such an important month in that it provides for the ordinary member the opportunity of exercising his right to alter the rules, or do anything else he sees fit. There is no hindrance except the possible failure of his club to provide the forum.

That is a situation the members should be able to remedy. Machinery exists for calling a club meeting and it should be availed of, if the responsible officials fail in their duty in this regard.

The go ahead member should insist on his rights and then use them to the best of his ability to mould the Association in the way he wishes it to go. There is a right and a wrong way of doing everything and the individual who is always complaining about the ills of the G.A.A., without doing anything to cure them, is certainly on the wrong track.

The lack of social life in the G.A.A. is something that is

*"Clubs are not active
or interested enough
to tackle things
they see wrong
with the Association."*

very much talked about at the moment. That is a matter that can be vigorously tackled at club level and it is at this level that a solution must be found.

There are many other matters such as the purchase or improvement of a club pitch; the erection of dressing and club rooms; the organisation of a games programme, additional to championship or league engagements; the raising of finance, etc., which clubs can vigorously tackle and determine on their own account.

They can also interest themselves in the wider aspects of G.A.A. involvement — consider the amenities they need in their own county and press for their arrangement of official competitions and see if they can be improved to ensure for every club a plentitude of games in all grades and in both codes. On the national scale a number of matters will undoubtedly be found to claim attention and a sincere member should do all in his power to remedy anything he sees amiss.

Action speaks a lot louder than words and those not satisfied with the present trend of events in the G.A.A. should give up the criticising and instead endeavour to apply the curative process which they consider to be needed. That is the honourable course, and one for which no apology is needed, as it is in accordance with the democratic principles of the G.A.A. charter.

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NOW that another playing season has ended and the annual club dinner is upon us our thoughts turn from the playing fields to the pavilion. Although the emphasis up to this has been on the development of pitches, in the future, greater stress will undoubtedly be laid on the social side of the game. Rugby clubs have for some time now, with the cash receipts from the bar and the weekly social, subsidised the many overseas tours undertaken by these clubs. There is great scope in the G.A.A. for this sort of development and indeed if it is handled the correct way it will attract more of our youngsters who otherwise might be attracted to other imported field games.

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Crowd attendances, both at club, county and provincial level have in recent years shown an alarming decline and this is not something that applies only to G.A.A. games but is applicable to rugby and soccer also. Television is the great culprit here but we must face the fact that the "box" is here to stay and it would appear the only way to halt the falling off in attendances and in player potential is to make the social side of our Association more inviting so that the younger generation will feel attracted to active participation, not because they are their fathers' sons but simply because our Association has more to offer, socially and competitively, than the local golf or rugby club.

THE LEAGUE MUST BE CHANGED

NOW that the County Convention days have come around once more, this is the opportune time to take a long, searching look at the National Football League. The groupings will come up for revision at the end of the present two-year cycle in the spring.

In the interests of harnessing the tremendous drawing-power of football to the fullest extent possible, of putting the game in an even stronger position to compete with the ever-growing opposition from other sports, and of seeing the National League successfully into the 'Seventies as a worthwhile and appealing feature of the calendar, a more imaginative set-up **MUST** be introduced next year.

These days we are being "bombed" as never before with firsthand information of personalities and events in cross-Channel soccer, of autumn and

winter "ups and down" in the top positions in League tables, of Rugby internationals and club tours. The indications, too, are that the flow of words, pictures and details concerning these competitions will increase in the years ahead.

On the Gaelic front we are currently countering this with a far from inspiring National League . . . a competition that is not, in fact, really a League test at all! The chief aim of any League should be to maintain the interest of ALL the starters for as long as possible, but under the current League groupings, half of the starters are out of the title hunt after only a mere three games! Then, the League goes merrily on its way on a knock-out basis.

One gets the impression from all of this that the opening games are played merely for the sake of playing games, and before the

really serious stuff gets under way. Nor does it help to improve the status of the opening games when, apparently, officials do not consider it worth while to publish a programme. At a number of first round games that I have attended, programmes, which add greatly to fans' enjoyment of a game, were not published.

The knock-out aspect of the current League also means that the eliminated teams have no competitive games at all in the first five months of the year. Many of those still in the League going into a New Year play only one or two competitive games before the championship.

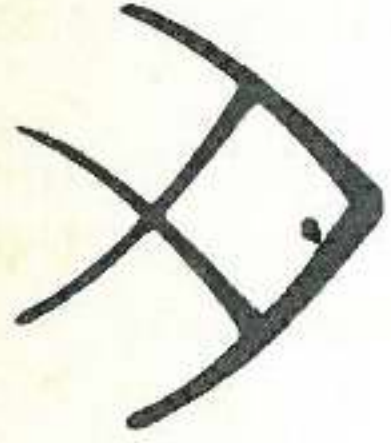
It seems to me, then, that if the National League is to go into the 'Seventies exploiting football to the degree that it should, we must have a competition that is truly league in character. In short, we must have teams of equal strength competing against each other, and with a sufficient number in each group or section to ensure that defeat in the first two, or even three, games would not necessarily end a county's chance of winning the title.

I think the best way to achieve this would be to have a League of two distinct sections: Division I composed of the top counties, and Division II for the weaker counties, with a system of promotion and relegation.

In grading the teams, past reputations, provincial and All-Ireland title wins in days gone by should all be put aside in favour of current form. Even the winning of a place in a provincial final should not, in itself, be an entry into the top division.

Rather should the showings of the beaten provincial finalists be analysed, and measured against the displays of the provincial

● TO PAGE 37



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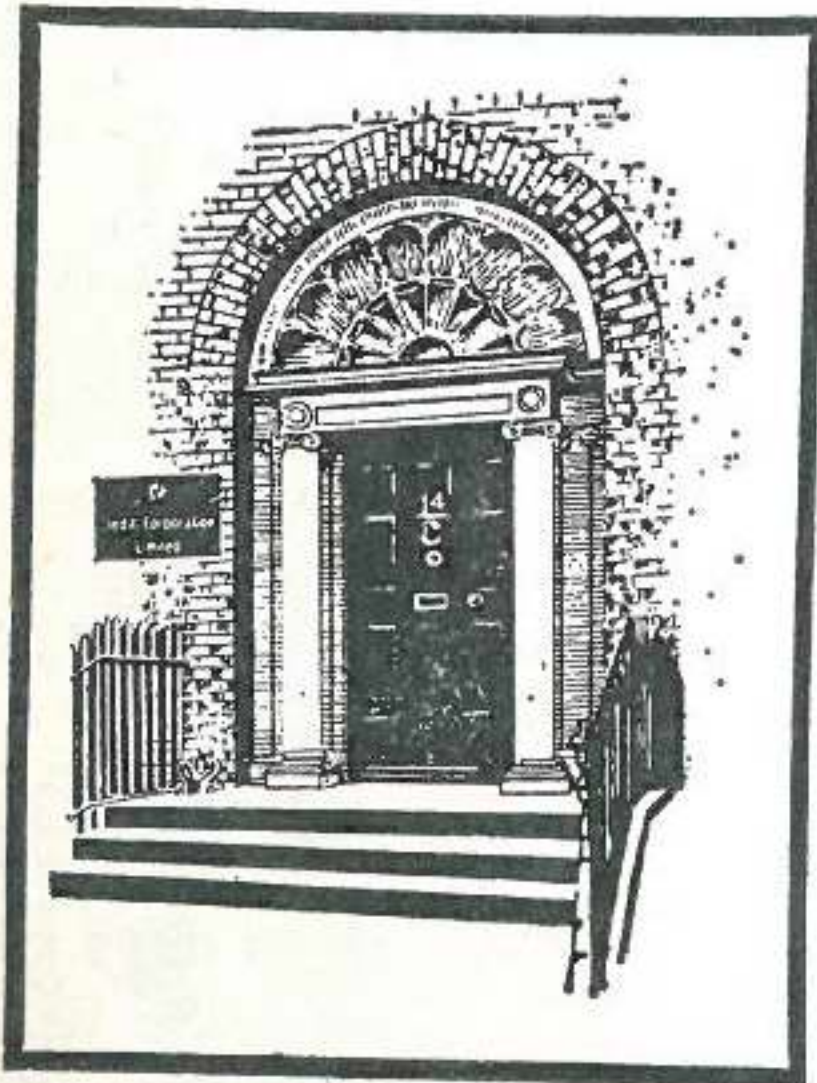
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● FROM PAGE 35

champions in the All-Ireland championship. Cold, hard results, rather than sentiment, should be the chief guide lines.

I'm not going to run off the teams I think should be graded into the two divisions. That would serve no useful purpose now in the context of a League not due to start until October, and for which form up to at least next year's All-Ireland semi-finals would have to be seriously considered.

However, it does not take much imagination or effort to see that, on 1968 form, we could have a senior League of 14 or 16 teams, and a secondary one composed of the remaining counties. Each section could be run off in two groups in order to minimise travelling, with the winners and runners-up in each group qualifying for the League semi-final proper.

This would be an attractive and worth-while League. Each team in the senior, or principal League, would have a minimum of six or seven games. Then, with promotion and relegation operating, the interest of all teams would be maintained right to the end.

This would make for a much better League, both from the football viewpoint, because of the grading of the teams, and financially. Games in the early rounds of the senior section, particularly, would have an appeal and pulling power that is lacking in many of the opening ties in the current set-up. So, attendances would be big at nearly all fixtures from first to final round, instead of, as is the case nowadays, at the more important matches.

More important still, this would focus nation-wide interest in the National League in the autumn and spring to a much greater extent than is the case now. This would be all to the

good of the game's development. It would ensure that football was competing at the right time, and in the most effective way of all, with other sports for the national headlines and talking-points.

Let's not forget, either, that competitive match-play is the best form of training, and the more games teams have in attractive, graded competitions, the better will be their prospects of making the big break-through.

Some will throw "cold water" on this plan on the grounds that games in the weaker section would not be real crowd-pullers. Some of those games would not set the turnstiles clicking merrily, but, then, the present set-up features some meetings of Cinderella teams.

However, as the League moved towards a climax interest would undoubtedly build up tremendously, for there is nothing like a winning team for bringing out county loyalty, and pulling in enthusiasts. Accordingly, I'm convinced that over all, the weaker counties would make a much more effective contribution financially to the League pool in a group of their own, rather than under the present set-up.

Furthermore, nothing succeeds like success, and for any of the success-starved cinderella counties a win in Division II of the League for promotion to the premier section would bring about an upsurge of interest that would help greatly in setting the county concerned securely on the way up the ladder of football strength. Equally, the team relegated to Division II would have a big incentive to go all out to regain lost glory.

It would all add up, I think, to a League that would be full all along the way of interest-holding fare, and exciting talking-points, and a money-spinning competition. Over-all, too, the real winner in the end would be the game of football itself.

John Quigley Star at 19



Call him a hurling dynamo, but some would say 'transformer' might be a better term to describe 19 years old John Quigley, man of the match for thousands of Wexford supporters. His galvanic display following his arrival in the second half effectively helped to turn the Tipperary tables in this year's memorable Senior Hurling Final at Croke Park.

Fourteen All-Ireland medals are shared between the members of the Rathnure G.A.A. family. His brother, Dan, this year's team captain, manages the family farm. John himself, while not following exactly in his father's or brother's footsteps, nevertheless retains his links with farming. Having successfully sat for his Leaving Certificate at St. Peter's College, Wexford, he came to Dublin where he now works in the head office of the Agricultural Credit Corporation in Harcourt Street.

Mention of A.C.C. brings to mind the Corporation's Chairman, Mr. Brendan C. Considine, who won renown for himself for his G.A.A. exploits in his younger days. Of his fellow A.C.C. staff members, during the recent exciting days John said "they were with me all the way and gave me every help and encouragement."

MARGARET O'LEARY

Talking to SEAN O'DONNELL

MMARGARET O'LEARY, Wexford's pride and joy, is as dedicated a camogie player as one could find and the people of Garryaniel, Monamolín, must be very proud of her, indeed.

It would be futile to go into Margaret's achievements, as they have been told several times over in the pages of GAELIC SPORT. More important, I feel, is to air her views on the game that she really lives for and I had the pleasure of having the following interview with her despite her discomfort of a fractured right thumb, which was a rather unfortunate end to a great year.

But knowing Margaret's tremendous will power and her great enthusiasm for camogie it would not surprise me in the least to find her back in the playing fields by the time these notes appear in print.

O'D.—To what do you attribute Wexford's All-Ireland success?

M.O'L.—I attribute it mainly to the collective training, which the players had for the first time. I was unfortunate in this regard as I was unable to attend and to be quite honest about it, I felt this affected my game in the final. I suppose it also helped matters when Dublin were defeated by Kilkenny, as they in years gone by had proved our big stumbling block in the championship.

My answer to this question would not be complete without a word of thanks to the following, without whose help our success could not have become a reality—Paddy Shannon, County selector; Pat Shiel, Dominic Kiernan, trainer; and Eileen O'Brien, County Secretary.

O'D.—What effect, if any, do

you think the success of the team will have on the game within the county generally?

M.O'L.—Oh, most certainly it should do the game of camogie a world of good. It will, I feel sure, provide inspiration for any young girl who is thinking of taking up the game.

O'D.—You say that you did not participate in the collective training for the final. Then how did you train?

M.O'L.—I trained mostly on my own in the Phoenix Park and this training consisted mainly of lapping round the pitch. As I have stated, it is not the best way to prepare for an All-Ireland final. It is very difficult to work up real enthusiasm when training on your own.

O'D.—Has it been a disadvantage to you that you've been playing club camogie in Dublin?

M.O'L.—Most certainly not. In fact the change to Eoghan Ruadh has helped to give me the necessary confidence to succeed at the game. The experience gained is invaluable and, of course, the game is more competitive in Dublin than it is at home. There are, also, more demands on players with Dublin clubs, therefore creating opportunities for more games. More important still, the standard set is pretty high so you have got to keep up with it.

O'D.—How did you come to join the Eoghan Ruadh club?

M.O'L.—It all came about as a result of a suggestion by Denis Molumbey, a teacher in Wexford, who highly recommended Eoghan Ruadh and I must say they have lived up to my expectations. They are a great club to be with and

I am very proud to be associated with them.

O'D.—What attracted you to camogie in the first instance?

M.O'L.—From an early age my dad was my tutor and having had great admiration for him and the way he could handle a hurling stick, I decided that I was going to be every bit as good.

O'D.—Have you any advice to give to young players taking up the game?

M.O'L.—Yes. I would like them to practise as much as they can to perfect their game. They should not be put off by the little knocks and bruises they get from time to time. This is all part of the game and should be taken in good spirits. As for giving encouragement to young players, I do all that I can when I go home at week-ends to render encouragement to the younger members in the family and, indeed, when some other girls gather from the neighbourhood we have some great fun and I always look forward to it.

O'D.—Has ever anything unusual happened to you before a game?

M.O'L.—Not really, but I gather there was a little bit of a mix-up between the RTE commentator and the Wexford players, or rather two of them, on All-Ireland final day. It seems that Brigid Doyle, number six on the programme and Brigid O'Connor, number eight decided to switch tunics before the game, never realising the confusion they were to cause. However, someone on the Wexford sideline who had a transistor radio realised what was happening and the girls switched back to their own tunics at half-time.

O'D.—I understand that a number of players are very dissatisfied with the present uniform worn by camogie players. Are you?

M.O'L.—Yes, indeed. I am one of the many dissatisfied ones. This is a very important matter and should be looked into as soon as possible. The uniform we now have to play in is not at all suitable or comfortable and I say this after playing the best part of fourteen years in the present tunic.

I feel that a culotte worn with a blouse and black tights would be an ideal uniform for camogie players. To explain, a culotte is a rather wide, flared skirt-trousers combination with a seam up the centre, leaving plenty of freedom to manoeuvre. I would definitely recommend it unless some genius comes up with a better idea.

As a matter of fact, Wexford hope to play in the county colours, purple and gold next year. Let's hope the uniform is a culotte.

O'D. — Generally speaking, Margaret, are the girls of Wexford anxious to play camogie?

M.O'L.—Yes, indeed, they are all very keen and this was reflected by the success of our two county teams, senior and junior, in the 1968 championships. Don't forget that our junior side won the Leinster title and I think it is a credit to them that Down, who beat them by four points in the All-Ireland semi-final, went on to win the title.

However, to get back to answering the question—the girls are very keen but they are given little encouragement. Perhaps this is where some of the county's famous hurlers could help and I can assure them that by doing so, their efforts would be a great inspiration to our young players.

O'D.—How many camogie clubs participate in the game in Wexford?

M. O'L.—There are four senior and four junior at present, so, as you can imagine, the number of games and the competitive element does not compare with that of Dublin. Still, we won the All-Ireland.

O'D.—Is there a particular hurler whom you admire?

M.O'L. — Well, I have great admiration for Seamus Keevans, who has done some great work for camogie and Billy Rackard was always my favourite centre-half back. Perhaps I have tried to model my game on his. Last, but certainly not least, I admire the elusive Tony Doran, the best centre forward in present day hurling and, no kidding, he could


work wonders if they would let him play camogie!

O'D.—Do you feel the county team will show many changes for next year's championship?

M.O'L.—A good question. Well, it is always possible to have a few new faces on the team, although I don't know if any of this year's side intend to retire just yet. It will be hard to keep some of our junior players off the senior team as they gave some great displays this year. However, we will just have to wait and see.

O'D.—What hobbies do you have, apart from camogie?

M.O'L.—I really love a good game of badminton, and play whenever I get a chance.



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RED-LETTER YEAR FOR CAMOGIE

By
Agnes
Hourigan

FOR those of us who have for years been waiting for the big upsurge in camogie, 1968 will surely go down in the annals as the year in which all our hopes were realised. The three all-Ireland titles were won by sides that were inscribing their names on the roll of champions for the first time. Wexford in the senior grade, Down in the very first All-Ireland junior competition, and Kilkenny in the inter-club test.

After the long years of Dublin and Antrim dominance this was surely the big break-through with a vengeance, and makes the 1969 championship already the most intriguing ever.

Moreover, the victory of Kilkenny over Dublin in the semi-final of the Leinster championship made the position in the Eastern province very open indeed, especially as Wexford then routed Kilkenny and went to take their first All-Ireland title in flying style.

Furthermore, the wind of change was not confined to the playing fields. The commission set up by Congress to draw up a blue-print for the future of the game went quickly into action, has been hard at work ever since and its report to Congress next spring will be keenly anticipated.

Stars of '68

AS a fitting farewell to 1968 here are my ten top stars for the year past.

1, MARGARET O'LEARY (Wexford); 2, PEGGY DORGAN (Cork); 3, BRIGID O'CONNOR (Wexford); 4, MEL CUMMINS (Cork); 5, SUE CASHMAN (Antrim); 6, CARMEL O'SHEA (Kilkenny); 7, MARY SINNOTT (Wexford); 8, EILEEN NAUGHTON (Galway); 9, ALICE HUSSEY (Dublin); 10, BARBARA SANDS (Down).

In addition to authorising the junior All-Ireland series, which was such a conspicuous success, Congress took a very big step forward in setting up an All-Ireland Colleges' championship. The results are already apparent with a Colleges championship set up officially in Munster for the first time, and several new schools in action in Ulster and Leinster, while Galway, from its strong county competition, should be well able to provide worthy representatives from the West.

I believe that this All-Ireland Colleges competition will provide

a tremendous fillip for the game. The next logical step in that quarter would seem to be the setting up of a Central Colleges' Council to devote its energies to advancing the game in a properly co-ordinated fashion in the schools of all four provinces.

For the moment, the respective Colleges Councils are in the rather anomalous position of being responsible to Central Council, but are not officially represented there.

There were, of course, many other encouraging features of the past year—coaching courses and get-togethers at Kilkenny and Roscommon as well as Belfast, reawakened enthusiasm in counties that had been looked upon as derelict, a great all-round advance in Munster, far greater recognition for camogie by G.A.A. circles in many counties which had not hitherto bothered much about the girls' game.

Again camogie got a show-place in putting on the inter-provincial final before the Oireachtas hurling semi-final, and the girls came through with flying colours.

The attendance at the All-Ireland final showed a very welcome upsurge for the first time in a decade, but I would suggest

● TO PAGE 47

STARS OF '68

● FROM PAGE 6

I have not seen a finer point in all my time looking at hurling.

Of course, Keating was a marked man in the Final. He knew himself beforehand what would be expected of him—the heights he had attained in Munster could not be attained every day. You cannot always scale Everest. And then too he had pulled a muscle in training and the way Keating hurls—depending on stick-work and the sudden killing pounce when the ball breaks—he had to be one hundred per cent fit to repeat his earlier outstanding performances.

But that must not detract from the performance of Willie Murphy, whose hurling in the Wexford half line I have always admired.

Before I turn to Seán O'Neill and the football scene, let me list

some of the other outstanding hurling performances of 1968. Tony Doran, the big Wexford full-forward, was undoubtedly Wexford's Man of the Match in the Final. He shattered the Tipperary full-back line when he went in full-forward. He may not be a clever hurler as such but he makes up for that with his strength and power through the centre—he takes the direct route to goal and it would take a Nick O'Donnell to hold him in check.

Phil Wilson played a notable part in the All-Ireland title win for he assuredly brought Wexford through the Leinster Final making a vital goal, with a wonderful solo run. I rate him one of the best midfielders I have seen in this decade. Wexford have some fine up-and-coming stars on whom judgment must be reserved for the present but let us not forget men like Pat Nolan, Tom Neville and Vinnie Staples and, of course, that great captain and

sportsman Dan Quigley (member of an outstanding hurling family) for their contributions this past notable season for the Model County.

I give you also Tom Ryan of Clare, Jimmy Cullinane and Vincent Loftus, fine hurlers all and Gerry Sullivan of Cork, who maintained his reputation on a dismal Munster Final Day for the Leesiders, I give you Seamus Cleere, Ted Carroll and Pat Hendron and I give you Liam Devaney who has decided to call it a day for Tipperary. Devaney will go down in the hurling history books as one of the all-time greats.

Seán O'Neill now stands unquestioned as one of the finest full-forwards ever to grace the football scene. Tom Langan belonged to another era—he was great in his own right. But in this era we have not seen better than O'Neill. He was the match-winner against Galway in the semi-final and he killed Kerry's hopes in the Final.

He moves like a panther and kills coldly like one—when a half chance arises. He is as dangerous off the ball as in possession. Because you never know when he will strike and from what point he will strike.

Paddy Doherty had a brilliant Final, linking up beautifully with O'Neill. Here was an axis that recalled for me the deadly striking power of the Heffernan-Freaney and the Purcell-Stockwell partnerships.

John Murphy, John Purdy and Mickie Cole . . . these were new stars that emerged in the Down colours. We will hear more of them. Tom O'Hare was already established before this season began and in my book he runs Seán O'Neill very close indeed for the title of Footballer of the Year. He was undoubtedly Defender of the Year.

In my Top Ten in Football, I have no hesitation in picking

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Jackie Devine of Longford. I rate him one of the most polished right wing forwards I have seen—a pure footballer.

Into my Top Ten also go Joe Corcoran (Mayo), Jimmy Duggan (Galway), Mick Morris (Kerry), Colm McAlarney (Down), Jim Milligan (Down), Cyril Dunne (Galway).

I am not making a county-by-county choice or listing out a complete Top Ten but I am giving you the names of men whose displays in particular games are imprinted in my mind. Cyril Dunne, for example, showing himself in a new light as a full-forward in the Grounds Tournament semi-final and Colm McAlarney emerging as a real force at midfield. Duggan always a footballer of natural talent—Corcoran invariably a genius in attack.

I look for footballers of real talent, men with class in their footballing make-up and the crop of youngsters this season, especially in the Down colours, have surprised me with their confidence and natural skill. Other counties are being challenged now by Down, who are setting the standards in the modern game and those standards are very high indeed.

Good, workmanlike teams without star individuals do not draw the crowds. The 1968 season will be remembered for the manner in which it was lit by the individual performances of men like Mick Roche, 'Babs' Keating, Tony Doran, Phil Wilson, Seán O'Neill, Tom O'Hare . . . and while we have performances like they gave us, we can smile at the old-timers talking nostalgically over their pints about 'the mighty men' of their day.

There are mighty men in every era—and I would take Keating and O'Neill to make it hot even for Tom Semple or Joe Barrett, respectively.

LETTER TO FR. MANSFIELD

● FROM PAGE 7

lem of youth involvement. On reflection, I have no regrets about my pro-ban stand in Armagh, particularly since I became chairman of the County Committee five years ago.

More games are not what we want. A drastic streamlining of the present programme would, it would seem to me, be more beneficial. With proper organisation—and I would be the first to agree we have fallen down in this respect—hurling and football offers as much as the most avid player wants.

Congress 1968 failed by a hair's breath to give the two-third's majority necessary to delete Rule 29 and it could well be—taking a realistic view of the position—that the "dancing" law may fade from the Official Guide. But I can't help worrying about what additional support the native dancing would receive by such a move.

There could be, as you suggest, a great deal more continuity in our games and the very conservative attitude adopted by Congress towards rule changes never ceases to cause frustration. Part of the trouble would appear to lie in the fact that, under the present system, there is no room

for an official trial period between Congresses.

Given such a period for official experiments I am convinced many interesting results would emerge with imaginative thinking given a free rein.

On the question of organisers I am completely with you. I have consistently argued that the Association's greatest need is a full-time secretary—at a salary to attract the right man—in each county. You go further and suggest two full-time workers in each county with 10 in Dublin. On this point I am prepared to compromise and agree with you.

With the best will in the world the Headquarters' team cannot hope to reach the grass roots and if the club is to be maintained as the basic unit of the Association, professional workers are badly needed in this field.

You say that these professionals could be paid with the money "not now wanted to build more big stadia." I would prefer it to come from other sources as the ground problem remains acute at club level.

I would like to continue but the deadline has me beaten.

But thank you very much for your advice and please write again.

Le meas mor,
Dan McAreavy.

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TERENCE ROYNANE TURNS BACK THE PAGES OF HISTORY
AND TRACES THE . . .

ORIGINS OF HURLING

THE origins of hurling are far to seek, but there can be no dispute about the fact that Ireland's national game is one of the oldest field games on earth.

Here, in its greatest and last stronghold, the caman game reaches back into the farthest records of our history, aye, and far beyond into the remotest memories of tradition.

It is said that there was a hurling game played as a preliminary to the battle of Moytura which was back when the Tuatha de Danainn came to Ireland. And certainly hurling was in full flower at the start of the Christian era for it was at that time that Cuchullain was hurling his ball of bronze before him on his way to join the Red Branch Knights at Emain Macha.

Hurling was the common relaxation of the warriors of Fionn MacCool and it was for his prowess at hurling on the green of Tara that Diarmuid of the Love Spot won the hearts of many a high-born maiden.

It was hurling that led, in part, to the departure of St. Colmcille from Ireland, though the saint himself had no part therein, and the game was still flourishing, though in an unorganised way, when the Normans came.

It was not long till the Norman-Irish were as fond of the game as were the natives themselves and twice, in the Statutes of Kilkenny and in those of Galway, the alien rulers tried to wean the settlers away from the hurling game, by outlawing it.

After the Flight of the Earls, and the subsequent collapse of what remained of the old Gaelic way of life, the Irish still clung to the hurling—almost all that was left of the way of life their fathers had loved.

Even during the worst years of the penal laws the hurling game lived on, sponsored often by sporting members of the new Planter classes who frequently matched their tenants against one another in cross-country games for large wagers.

Wexford was a great stronghold of the game through the years, and when the pikes were out in '98, it was the hurling men of Wexford who led the van.

Through the years before the Famine, the old style of cross-country hurling was in its flower, the whole man-power of a parish meeting the whole man-power of another parish in the 'hurling home' which often lasted from after Mass until dark on Sunday or Holiday.

The Famine scattered the

hurling as it scattered the Irish; yet it was soon to be revived and the first sign of revival came from Gort in the county of Galway in the early 1850's.

Soon afterwards there came to this area a young school-teacher named Michael Cusack from nearby Burren in the County Clare, and there amid the hurlers of Gort he intensified his boyhood love of the game.

Throughout East Galway this revived hurling steadily spread and by the 'seventies the fame of Pat Larkin from Kiltormer, who led the hurlers of Killimor, was known even in distant Dublin. There Cusack, with a parcel of gossoons from his Civil Service Academy, had been keeping the old game going in the Phoenix Park, and from those Phoenix Park games sprang first the Dublin Hurling Club, and then the famous Metropolitan Hurling Club which was later to be one of the foundation clubs of the G.A.A.

In early 1884, the Metropolitan hurlers went down to play Killimor on the Fair Green of Ballinasloe. And though, due to different rules, the game was never really played, the interest roused was so great that the beginning of the G.A.A. may be readily traced back to that day in Ballinasloe.



TOP TEN

THE following rankings in hurling and football are compiled from games played in Ireland from Sunday, October 20 to Sunday, November 17, inclusive.

The total points awarded during the year will be calculated in our next issue, when the Stars of 1968 will be announced.

HURLING

- 1—J. Cullinan (Clare)
- 2—J. Berry (Wexford)
- 3—J. Quigley (Wexford)
- 4—B. Hartigan (Limerick)
- 5—G. Lohan (Clare)
- 6—E. Cregan (Limerick)
- 7—A. Gallagher (Offaly)
- 8—A. Dunworth ... (Limerick)
- 9—N. Casey (Clare)
- 10—E. Colfer (Wexford)

FOOTBALL

- 1—M. Kerrigan (Meath)
- 2—H. Newman (Cavan)
- 3—S. Cleary (Galway)
- 4—P. J. Loftus (Mayo)
- 5—S. Woods (Monaghan)
- 6—J. O'Neill (Tyrone)
- 7—E. Coleman (Derry)
- 8—A. Richardson (Sligo)
- 9—S. O'Connell (Derry)
- 10—P. Cullen (Dublin)

▶ Sean O'Connell, Derry

JOE LENNON

● FROM PAGE 9

not, ideally, wish coaching to go.

There has been a group who have found it very difficult to accept this possibility. They would, perhaps, compare coaching with elocution. You have surely heard the child who has been taught to elocute—I use the word advisedly, for not only is pronunciation and diction chiselled to fine proportions, but, unfortunately, a grossly exaggerated accent has been overlaid upon the natural music of the voice the child was used to. That is the abuse of elocution, just as the 'jeremiahs' would fear an abuse of coaching. Traditional styles are guarded religiously, not

always by those who practise them.

As a player, Lennon has operated almost everywhere, but never so effectively as the centre-field role he played in guiding Down to their first All-Ireland or the half-back role he has played in setting the third All-Ireland win for the men from the Mournes. In between he was all over the defence and attack, not without effect ever, but without the special influence which he exerted in building up play and sealing off openings which were the hallmark of his earlier days at centre or his later ones at half-back.



Joe Lennon

CAMOGIE...

● FROM PAGE 41

to all the people directly concerned to start planning now to make the final a truly memorable camogie day next year.

Now that the Colleges All-Ireland has become a reality I would suggest that all those who look after camogie in the senior schools should start planning to start the new school year by bringing their school teams to Dublin as a treat to see the All-Ireland final.

This would give the school-girls an enjoyable outing in company, would enable them to see the stars of the county play the game at its best and would engender fresh enthusiasm among

these young players for their own school competitions that will then be directly ahead of them.

If the preliminary planning were gone into now, it should be possible to organise cheap fares to Dublin for school teams on that day.

Moreover, I am sure the Camogie Association would be only too glad to admit such teams at a nominal charge of say a shilling a head, or whatever figure seems suitable.

With a little advance organisation right from the start of the year a ten thousand attendance at the 1969 camogie final is a figure that could not only be aimed at but easily attained.

THE Directors and staff of "GAELIC SPORT" take this opportunity to wish all our readers both at home and overseas, a most holy, healthy and a happy Christmas.

BECKERS TEA

the best drink

● FROM PAGE 23

The remaining senior title — the hardball doubles — went to Tipperary.

Here, Paddy Hickey from Clogheen and Connie Cleere from Nenagh formed a most constructive partnership to beat the Dubliners, Jim Doyle and Mick Sullivan.

Indeed, on their form, one would be quite entitled to suggest that Tipperary may be at the top in this grade for many seasons.

At junior level there were many notable performances. Andy Byrne compensated for the defeat of the senior side by bringing a hardball singles title to Dublin, while the corresponding softball crown went to Dan Kirby of Clare.

The latter created a unique record, for his brothers, Pat and Mick, had also been successful in previous years.

In doubles the Roscommon partnership of Ray Doherty and Pat Clarke were deserving winners of the softball crown and few can suggest that victory for Kerry's Niall Kearns and Tim Fitzgerald was not well merited.

They had been beaten in last year's final.

John Quigley, the young Wexford player from Taghmon, was undoubtedly the star at minor level with two victories to his credit, one a doubles in which he was partnered by John Sydney.

The remaining titles were won by Billy McCarthy and Seán Halley (Tipperary) and Pat Bennis of Limerick.

Gauging by the high standard of play in this grade, there should be no scarcity of top quality players in future years.

CHAMPIONS

S.S.S.—J. Maher (Louth).

S.S.D.—T. and M. McEllistrim (Kerry).

S.H.S.—J. Maher (Louth).

S.H.D.—P. Hickey and C. Cleere (Tipperary).

J.S.S.—D. Kirby (Clare).

J.S.D.—R. Doherty and P. Clarke (Roscommon).

J.H.S.—A. Byrne (Dublin).

J.H.D.—T. Fitzgerald and N. Kearns (Kerry).

M.S.S.—P. Bennis (Limerick).

M.S.D.—J. Quigley and J. Sydney (Wexford).

M.H.S.—J. Quigley (Wexford).

M.H.D.—W. McCarthy and S. Hally (Tipperary).

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