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Limerick Leader

SATURDAY, AUGUST 31, 1963

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News and views of the Week

Wexford bar the way to All-Ireland success

Spotlight on Crooke Park — meet Limerick minors

minors

To be back in Crooke Park on All-Ireland Final day is a wonderful achievement, and to back with a young team full of pep and promise gives hope that the corner has at last been turned and that the future is something really worth while in store for Shannon-side hurling.

We have hoped against hope in the last few years that our lads might succeed in beating the senior barrier, but the fact is that we have not been kind and today has kept us at a respectful distance. Time was the only thing that remained on our side and the consolation thought kept coming up that advancing age was bound to catch up the present top dogs, sooner or later, with Limerick standing the best chance of filling the breach. We had a few gaps, though—and bad ones, and a few earnest students of the game made no bones about openly stating that until these were replaced, the Green and White lads would get nowhere.

It was easy enough to say that, but not so easy to replace them—not as they were, but as they could be. As the commencement of the season many of the lads had high hopes of our seniors getting places, following their magnificent National League showing against Waterford, whilst the latter were in the pink of condition.

Actually, running the rule back over the 1963 championship series, Limerick's nearest miss was in the intermediate hurling championship. We drew with Tipperary in the opening round at Tipperary Town—a game we should have won, and we were again unlucky—in the re-play—so Tipperary went on and were not unduly troubled to win out that competition.

OUT OF THE BLUE

I think the minors came up out of the blue. Very early in the year when particularly the young lads were likely to prove themselves in the higher grades, I remember how hopeful we were concerning some of the standing performers. But the feeling was all the time there that we hardly had sufficient talent to back them up.

The selectors were earnest and dedicated men however. The first match against Galway appeared to bear out the contention of the short supply of top class material, despite a diligent search by way of trial games. Limerick barely scraped through that evening, and saw in them an All-Ireland winning side.

The men in charge spotted the weaknesses too, and they had the courage to tackle the problem and drastically alter the side for the next outing, which was against Waterford. This was a dramatic turn, for the lads from Salsburgh looked assured of victory when Limerick staged a comeback to force a division of the spoils—and another day to decide the issue.

The re-play was fixed for Waterford—and that it would be Limerick's Swan Song was the fairly accepted position. The odds looked all against the Swans, but the selectors encouraged the selectors to make a few bold experiments which, luckily for them, turned up trumps.

Only a very few faithful supporters saw the triumph of Walsh Park. The seeds of success were sown, and the confidence gathered by Salsburgh proved of immense assistance in the subsequent encounter.

ODDS-ON

Tipperary were odds-on favourites in the Munster final, and the fact that they played only one game—against Cork. On the other hand, Limerick had been very active, and they had been able to take a few bold experiments which, luckily for them, turned up trumps.

When Roscommon agreed to come to Limerick, Gaelic grounds for the semi-final, the lads were as good as the All-Ireland final. The onlookers were not disappointed by the lack of worthwhile competition, within a county and in Connacht, and they gave a creditable display and thoroughly enjoyed the experience of playing on the famous turf. The lads who had been home lads had to win by a big margin, but with many of the team fighting tooth and nail to impress the selectors and with their place for Crooke Park, that was inevitable.

The last ditch stand against Roscommon was won as they did in 1949 and 1958—the last occasion they proved supreme in the hurling game. Limerick, who have the distinction of having put All-Ireland hurling back into the limelight, are now in a position to meet Limerick in the final.

FIRST TIME

How good are these Wexford lads? That remains to be seen.

The bulk of those who saw them win the Eastern crown maintain they will not be an easy team to beat—and a particularly difficult one should the going be "soft." The Crooke Park pitch will suit their type of hurling and they will make a terrific bid for the title on their first time as Leinster champions.

Limerick can win, but only if every man of the fifteen, every unit of the side, gets into top gear right from the commencement and has there for the entire hour. Nothing but a best-ever performance can win an All-Ireland title—and that applies in very particular manner to this particular test.

Limerick got to the final by sheer hard work, and in doing, displaced Tipperary—a team with a wonderful record in the competition. Wexford on their part to the decision, were equally impressive, and their triumph over Kilkenny, top dogs for the past three seasons, was equally meritorious.

It is Wexford's first appearance in a minor All-Ireland final, but their record on the senior field over the past decade mark it the most successful spell ever in the history of hurling by the Slaney. The enthusiasm aroused had to have its effect and it is no surprise to see the under-age lads now ready to emulate the deeds of their big brothers. We saw the youth of Wexford on top-ranking College fields not so long ago and they have the utmost respect for their hurling ability, tenacity of purpose and infectious enthusiasm.

Limerick desperately need this win for it could mean a tremendous lot to hurling in the Shannon. The senior county side are blocked from going places really big because of having been beaten in the game to carry all along. They cannot afford this luxury—few teams can—but proper replacements have to be found.

Limerick have improved with every outing and the selectors are particularly bold with some of their experiments, with the result that only a third of the side that won the game were in the game in the colours. Between trial games, and the number of players who actually wore the country jersey, the selectors have created something of a record.

Now, let us have a look at the Limerick lads for this vital encounter.

THE LINE-OUT

Goalkeeper is Andy Dunworth of Banogue, who came on for the drawn game with Waterford and held his place since. Netminder against Galway was P. O'Sullivan, of Killeedy, who played out in the game in the Athletic Grounds. Andy Dunworth, who is also a good outfield player, has five years' goalkeeping experience with all grades of hurling in Banogue, and he helped them win the South Junior hurling championship last year in goal. Gerry was a fine forward on the 1961 minor county team and also played junior for Limerick. Andy played for Emmets in their surprise win over Feenagh in the quarter-final of the senior hurling championship, but the county selectors would not let him play last Sunday. His brother, Jim, however, was right half-back on that occasion.

Jimmy O'Brien, of Brurea, the right corner-back, missed the drawn game with Waterford, but he was the great old Croon figure of the heyday of that great combination, namely, the plays in goal and junior hurling in the South championships and many parish tournaments with Brurea. First in the line-up was a magnificent display of goalkeeping for the Southern division against the eventual winners, the West—in the semi-final of the 1961 Thomond Tournament. A well-built lad of good height, he is also a very promising athlete.

Full-back is John Egan, of the Knockaderry Club, but a native of Ardagh. He was out of bounds for the Roscommon match, but played in both games against Waterford and in the Munster final. Educated at Coolcappa National School, he first came into prominence when he played Under Fourteen Hurling with Ardagh. Later, whilst a pupil of the Clastician College, Roscrea, he played a lot of Leinster Colleges' Hurling and figured in a great win over Kilkenny C.B.S. Another Kilkenny side—the famed St. Kieran's, put an end to rising championship hopes for them.

A SENIOR

Stephen O'Shaughnessy, in a great display for his club against holders, Patrickswell, in the Senior Hurling Cup Final, played himself on to the Limerick side for the second meeting with Waterford, and has held the position since. A pupil of St. Munchin's C.B.S., he starred in a great Old Cup competition which the Thomond schoolboys won. Captain of the city side that played and beat a great Under Fifteen football side from Galway a few seasons ago, he played in both minor hurling and football for Limerick last year, and has helped his club in the senior grade at that.

Paddy Heffernan now comes in as right half-back. A native of Killeenah, he played that brought to Limerick its first All-Ireland senior hurling crown, after Tony O'Brien was easily the most promising player on view. Undoubtedly raw, he still has plenty of hurling in him, and his clearance are of the hay-maker variety giving ample relief. Very definitely an inter-county prospect to watch, as he is not yet out of his teens.

He played in the drawn game against Waterford, and also against Roscommon. Prominent in schools' hurling in the South, he also played with Limerick C.B.S., where he was a pupil. Recently he gave an outstanding display with Blackrock against Knockree in the final of the great annual Ballynaders Pattern Tournament.

Tim McAuliffe (Bruff), who came on to the team for the replay at Waterford, and has figured in all games since, will figure at centre half-back. Tim, who comes of fine hurling stock, played juvenile hurling at thirteen with Bruff, and he won an under-14 cup with them. A product of Bruff De La Salle, he recently helped Bruff win the South Limerick minor hurling title, and figured strong in their county semi-final defeat of Knockaderry.

PLAYED IN ALL FIVE

The first lad to have played in all five games to date is P. O'Brien, of St. Patrick's, who learned his hurling at St. Patrick's National School—that great nursery of the game, and later figured with St. Munchin's College, and O'Mara and Keane Cup colleges hurling. Pa played against Galway in the under-14 football a few years ago and he was a member of the county junior football team. He won the city junior hurling championship this year, captaining the St. Patrick's side, and has done the senior jersey in both codes for his club. He played minor hurling and football for the county last year and was similarly honoured this season. His father, Tommy O'Brien, won senior hurling and football for the county, and was a member of the great Limerick side that won the Munster title that year but unfortunately lost to Waterford in the All-Ireland final—one of the most controversial ever hurled.

Out of bounds for the first match of the series, Tony Roche of Killeenah came on for the Limerick side, but he retained his place. During his school days at Killeenah National School he won a South Junior hurling championship, and later played some fine Dr. Harty Cup hurling with both St. Flannan's and Rockwell Colleges. On the Limerick minor hurling side a year ago, he is now attached to the Killeenah Club and has figured in minor and senior ranks with them. His scoring tally in the four games in which he has played for the present minor side amounts to fourteen points. His clubmate, Bernie Savage, also scored fourteen times but he was out before he had scored 5-9—the best individual tally.

THE "SKIPPER"

Partnering Tony at midfield is the skipper of the side, Eamonn Cregan, of Claughaun, one of many brilliant hurling sons of former minor hurling stars. Eamonn, the family had the unique situation of finding himself caught between two rules and the Munster Council clarified the position in Limerick favour.

Ger Cosgrave (Monaleen), who came on as a sub, in the drawn game against Waterford, has a tally of five goals to his credit, and the reputation of having beaten two minor football sides in the county final. A fine strong lad, full of fire and dash, he is a brother of Monaleen's, and he played in the county final for St. Patrick's National School, continuing the good work when he appeared in the county final. He won the 1959 juvenile hurling county championship with Claughaun—a feat which the Bruff side was opened.

one of his admirers recalled. With Claughaun, too, he won dual county minor laurels last year and the county minor football crown the previous year. He was on the under-13 side in the football game with Galway already mentioned, and has played both senior codes with Claughaun, for whom his brother Mick is now one of the leading and most promising of players. A midfielder, retaining his position since, with a tally of 3-3 proving his scoring ability. The third brother to play for Limerick and win a Munster minor, Vivian won Junior Munster and All-Ireland and senior hurling from Bruff, and he was a magnificent hurler then. A pupil at Limerick C.B.S., Brian won two county juvenile football titles with St. Patrick's and a squad of city juvenile trophies in both codes. This year he helped his club secure the county title. He is another of the lads who figured in the under-15 football win against Galway three years ago.

THIRD BROTHER

Top of the left we have Brian Cobbe (St. Patrick's), who played in the game against Galway lost his place after that display, but was recalled as a sub in the replay at Waterford Gaelic Grounds, retaining his position since, with a tally of 3-3 proving his scoring ability. They vanquished Tipperary, who long held the scene, and they vanquished Tipperary, who long held the scene, and they vanquished Tipperary, who long held the scene.

A POETIC TRIBUTE

From "Eire Og" of Abbeyfeale, who has commemorated most of our great G.A.A. successes in verse, I have received the following tribute to the present side, which can be sung to the air of the "Mountains of Mourne." Let us hear it boys at Crooke Park on Sunday next.

THE RESERVES

That completes the team, but waiting on the sideline is a fine prospect, the son of a former Tipperary All-Ireland star, Denny O'Gorman, who played against Galway and the first day against Waterford as well as the recent match with Roscommon. A stalwart with the reserves, showing consistency, a pupil of St. Munchin's College, he won the county and county junior football titles in 1961 and 1962, and he won the county senior hurling title in 1961.

TOP-SCORER

Centre half-forward is Bernie Savage of Killeenah, who gave a magnificent display with his club against Galway in the county senior hurling final. And later on he helped Killeenah take revenge for that defeat in the county senior hurling cup competition. A cross-country runner, too, he helped Killeenah win the county junior football title in 1961 and 1962, and he won the county senior hurling title in 1961.

Michael Graham (Claughaun), a native of Coonagh, was in Young Ireland colours when he played in the county senior hurling final. He won the county senior hurling title in 1961.

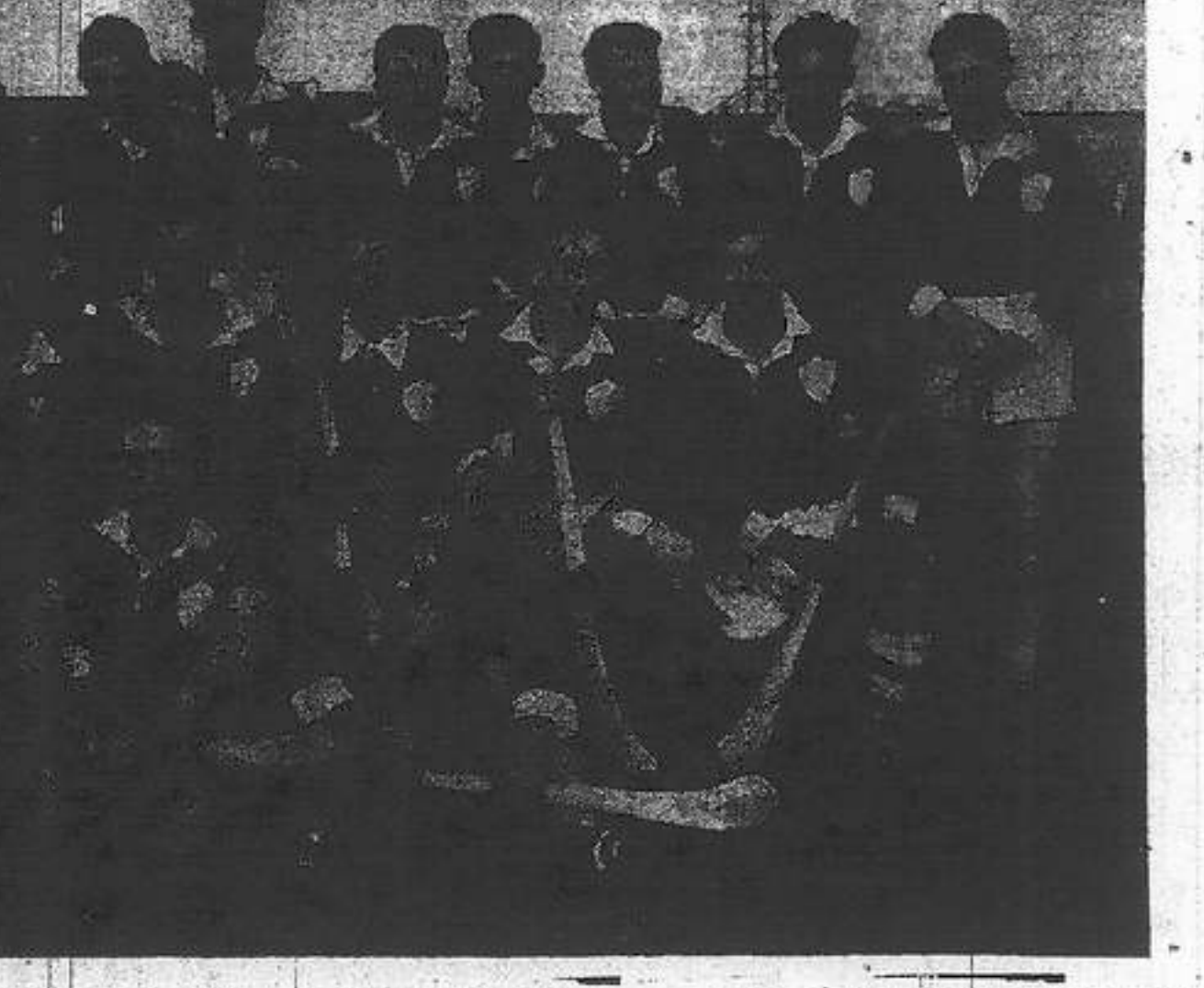
Jim, Gary of Dromedolough missed the first and the last match of the five already played. A pupil of St. Munchin's College, he won the county and county junior football titles in 1961 and 1962, and he won the county senior hurling title in 1961.

John Frost (St. Patrick's) is another lad who hurled himself into the selection for the Roscommon game as a result of first-class displays in winning the city minor hurling title, and in the subsequent game with Claughaun. He won the county and county junior football titles in 1961 and 1962, and he won the county senior hurling title in 1961.

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NOT LEAST

Last but by no means least is Richard Bennis of Patrickswell, who came on as a sub against Galway and held his place for the drawn game at Cork. He was a member of the county junior football team, and he won the county senior hurling title in 1961.



Limerick minor hurling team, after Tony O'Brien was easily the most promising player on view. Undoubtedly raw, he still has plenty of hurling in him, and his clearance are of the hay-maker variety giving ample relief. Very definitely an inter-county prospect to watch, as he is not yet out of his teens.

Mike Conway came out of the game at this stage and was replaced by Ger Doody, and almost immediately Emmets packed home a goal—Conny Daly placing Tommy Bluff in goal scoring position. Rea, Costelloe and Daly were causing Patrickswell plenty of headaches at this stage but Tim Bannons moved into the picture with a lengthy clearance and Patrickswell were awarded a twenty-one yards free right in front of the posts. Gerry Casey felt it should be a goal or nothing and shot low and the effort was beaten off.

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Patrickswell: Michael Tuohy, goal; Paddy O'Reilly, John Dunne, Ger Bennis, John O'Brien, Liam Shinnors, Phil Bennis, Sean Casey, Richard Bennis, John O'Donnell, Jerry Casey, Pat Caray, Jack Fitzgerald, Pat Bennis, David Moran, Sub: Pat Foley.

Frankie Costelloe opened in impressive fashion for the South with a brace of points from frees, which were neutralised after six minutes, as Richard Bennis lifted a grand long point, and Gerry Casey put over another from near the touchline.

Gerry Casey collected the ball for Patrickswell with a lengthy drive over the crossbar, but the Southern lads were back from a great effort by Patrickswell to shoot a goal. Costelloe directed networks, Andy Toomey blocked down, although covered, and Tommy Bluff, who never appeared capable of capitalising on the chances that came their road.

Pat Carey pushed into the picture in the nineteenth minute with a well taken point, that might as readily have been under the bar, and he followed with a second point, putting the club leads on in front, 1-4 to 1-2.

Ger Casey increased the lead to a clear goal in the next exchange but then followed a prolonged spell of Patrickswell pressure, with nothing to show for it. Time again they were all but through but lacked the decisiveness necessary for success. Almost dead on time when the referee blew for the first persistent effort when David Moran connected with a drive from Jack Fitzgerald and Patrickswell led, 2-5 to 1-2.

Patrickswell led, 2-5 to 1-2, change of ends on a day which hardly gave any advantage, for the rain was straight and steady, with no perceptible breeze.

With a lively white ball, Emmets were fast into their stride and Frankie Costelloe from a close in free shot a point. Michael Tuohy blocked the defence but a fairly uncomfortable time, before Larry Murnane crossed the bar with a point. Southern point for it. Patrickswell missed a golden chance but were back in short time to force a "seventy."

In a brief scuffle, Conny Daly secured possession and packed to the net and only a point near the touchline drove a beauty point—2-5 all.

In a southern attack Andy Toomey was fouled going through and from the free followed Frankie Costelloe put his side ahead by the minimum margin. The club lads withstood the exchanges that followed, whilst their own efforts to get away were fouled out, and again, mainly through the enterprise and ability of Eamonn Rea, who

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