

...Tipp. year in, year out. So had had things gone that when Joe McGrath, It was then, perhaps, that the players showed trainer Capt. Mick Cregan and his players got down cetera.

THE GOLDEN DAYS OF LIMERICK HURLING

ck-Kilkenny match; Frank Cummins looks over Bernie Hartigan and Sean Foley.



playing on Sunday. Here he eludes Phil Bennett a previous Limerick-Kilkenny clash.

IN THIS ARTICLE, our G.A.A. writer, "Camán", looks at one of the most glorious eras in Limerick hurling—the golden thirties—and right up to the 1940 final triumph over Kilkenny, again our opponents on Sunday.

Limerick's hurling resurgence in the thirties first manifested itself in the National Hurling League campaign of 1932-33, when the Shannonsiders tried their wa- to the final, which their opponents, Kilkenny, were also making a first appearance.

The venue was Nowlan Park, where a mighty crowd gathered for a great game developed, which Kilkenny eventually won, 1-3 mainly through the favours of "Lory" Meagher, who had one of his greatest displays.

A press report of that game said: "I should say that Lory Meagher is the greatest match-player of the present era. I would like to see him in the hands of Babe Ruth in Baseball. Yesterday he was grand—was an artiste among artists—a hurling king among hurling kings."

Limerick and Tipperary also played for the All-Ireland final that year, and at a game it proved. Some facts from the press of that time tell of its remarkable details:

The years will pass but the memory of this thrilling tussle will never diminish. It will be living memory. It will be a

tradition that will inspire the hurlers of future generations. It will forever be a source of pride to the men who participated in it.

"The memorable and inspiring scene at Croke Park on Sunday the greatest day the G.A.A. has ever had, are beyond adequate description. It seems almost futile to attempt to clothe in words that might manifest the enthusiasm of the strength and enthusiasm of the Gael. The 1934 All-Ireland hurling final presents a panorama of splendour which leaves one almost breathless with amazement. Picture it—forty-five thousand spectators, a vast sea of faces surrounding the pitch. The stands, side lines and enclosures literally choked with cheering thousands, and yet thousands more clamouring vainly for admission. It was a record attendance, the greatest concourse of people that ever gathered together at any ground or at any match in Ireland. Never before has the G.A.A. witnessed such a spectacle of almost awe inspiring magnitude.

"And then, how can one convey an adequate impression of the mighty hurling drama enacted on Croke Park's green sod—that terrific battle between Kilkenny, the champions, and Limerick, the challengers?

Never before has the headquarters of the G.A.A. seen such a great battle of hurling giants—sixty minutes of desperate conflict, dazzling speed, flashing camans, splintering ash, thirty vigorous many combatants leaping through the air, crashing together in ceaseless conflict, striking like demons, fighting wildly for supremacy with a singular tenacity of purpose returning blow for blow in grim silence, neither asking nor giving quarter, every ounce of strength in those wonderful bodies given in an heroic effort to secure the nation's greatest prize.

"This great clash of the men of Thomond and Ossory left abiding memories. It was hurricane hurling of a type that only the finest of Irish athletes could endure. Limerick made the pace, Kilkenny clung to them grimly. An interval score of four points each is itself a graphic picture of that never to be forgotten first half. It was a game of great defenses. The backs on both sides withstood shock after shock. The only goal of the game came four minutes from the end and will forever link the name of Johnny Dunne with the 1933 final. It was a masterpiece of hurling, brilliantly carried out and vividly spectacular. In that serious situation, Limerick refused to crack—with indomitable courage and great resolve they fought back, and went down with flying colours."

There could not have been a more imposing opening to the golden era of Limerick hurling, and the Shannonsiders' fifteen of that unforgettable day must be recorded. Mick Fitzgibbon, Young Ireland, was captain; Paddy Scanlan was retainer; and with Timmy Ryan, John and Mick Mackey, represented Ahane. Fedamore supplied Tommy McCarthy, Paddy and Dave Clohessy; Mick and Pat Ryan came from Murroe; Newcastle West provided Ned Cregan; Micky Cross was there from Claughaun; the long serving Garrett Howard and Jim Roche kept the Croom connection with Christy O'Brien, the Cappamore delegate.

In the four and a half years following that unforgettable match, Limerick hurlers played a grand total of sixty-five games in Ireland, Britain and America—against all the great teams of the period. They won fifty-eight of these games; were held to a draw on four occasions, and only lost three times in all

that spell, completing a record that may never be equalled, let alone surpassed by a hurling combination.

A complete list of their wonderful victory march will be treasured by all admirers of that grand team, and provide for the younger Gaels, an inspiring reminder of the glory the county won during those great years of Limerick hurling grandeur.

1933
National Hurling League
October 15th, beat Tipperary, 2-7 to 1-4; October 29th, beat Offaly 9-2 to 2-4; November 12th, beat Galway, 5-5 to 2-3; December 10th, beat Clare, 6-3 to 2-3.

1934
March 25th, beat Dublin, final, 3-6 to 3-3.
Ennis Tournament
April 9th, beat Galway, 6-4 to 4-9.
Fermoy Tournament
May 6th, beat Cork, 4-3 to 2-5.
Thomond Fels
May 13th, beat Clare, 3-7 to 0-5; June 17th, beat Cork (final), 3-6 to 3-4.

Ward Cup (in London)
May 21st, beat Kilkenny, 5-4 to 4-5.
Hospitals' Trust Medals
June 3rd, beat Dublin, 6-9 to 1-2.

Munster Championship
June 24th, beat Clare, 6-4 to 3-2; July 8th, beat Cork, 3-4 to 2-2; July 22nd, beat Waterford (final) 4-8 to 2-5.

All Ireland Championship
August 5th, beat Galway, 4-4 to 2-4; September 2nd, drew with Dublin, 2-7 to 3-4; September 20th, beat Dublin (final) 5-2 to 2-6.

National League
October 21st, beat Clare, 4-6 to 2-3; November 4th, beat Waterford, 3-8 to 2-6; December 2nd, beat Tipperary, 5-2 to 0-2.

1935
February 10th, beat Galway, 7-4 to 2-2.
March 24th, drew with Cork, 2-7 to 3-4; April 28th, beat Dublin, 5-7 to 4-3; May 12th, beat Kilkenny, 1-6 to 1-4; June 23rd, beat Laois (final) 6-8 to 2-2.

Thomond Fels
May 19th, beat Clare, 6-7 to 4-3; June 18th, beat Tipperary, 4-7 to 1-5.

Ward Cup (in London)
June 10th, beat Dublin, 6-5 to 3-1.

Newport Tournament
July 7th, beat Kilkenny, 9-7 to 6-3.

Munster Championships
July 28th, beat Cork, 3-12 to 2-3; August 11th, beat Tipperary, 5-5 to 1-4.

All Ireland Championship
September 1st, lost to Kilkenny (final) 2-4 to 2-5.

National League
October 6th, beat Laois, 6-3 to 3-1; October 20th, beat Clare, 6-4 to 1-1; November 3rd, beat Waterford, 3-6 to 0-6; December 1st, draw with Tipperary, 3-3 to 3-3.

1936
February 2nd, beat Galway, 5-4 to 1-2; March 1st, beat Cork, 3-6 to 4-2; March 22nd, beat Kilkenny, 6-1 to 1-2; April 5th, beat Dublin (final), 7-2 to 4-4.

U.S.A. Tour
May 17th, beat New York, 3-7 to 2-3; May 24th, beat New York, 6-3 to 0-8; May 30th, beat Massachusetts, 9-4 to 2-2.

Munster Championship
August 2nd, beat Tipperary (final), 8-5 to 4-6.

All-Ireland Championships:
August 16th—Beat Galway, 4-9 to 2-8.
September 6th—Beat Kilkenny (final) 5-6 to 1-5.
National League:
October 18th—Beat Laois, 7-1 to 2-4.
November 1st—Beat Waterford, 4-3 to 2-3.
November 15th—Lost to Tipperary, 2-4 to 4-5.
November 29th—Beat Galway, 8-4 to 0-3.

1937
February 7th—Beat Kilkenny, 6-3 to 4-1.
March 2nd—Drew with Clara, 3-2 to 3-2.
April 4th—Beat Dublin, 4-4 to 0-6.
April 18th—Beat Cork (final), 11-6 to 5-1.

early in the second half altered the whole aspect of play, and the crowd were in a ferment as the teams continued neck and neck. Dublin appeared to be getting the upperhand, when they put over three points in fairly rapid succession, but great middle end endeavour by Timmie Ryan put Dave Clohessy in possession ten minutes from time, and the Fedamore man sunk to the net for the leveler once more. The minutes were flying faster than the flashing camans, and only two precious ones remained when Mick Mackey put Limerick in front once more with a beautifully executed point. Dublin, not to be denied, broke away from the delivery, and Limerick supporters missed a heart beat as one of the Metropolitan forwards broke loose in possession for a pot-shot at the Limerick net. Veteran "keeper, Tom Shinnéy, only called into action at the last moment when Paddy Scanlan fell ill, proved equal to the testing occasion and brought off one of his greatest saves. Immediately, Jacky O'Connell raced out for a falling ball and another point was on the scoreboard for Limerick. And with virtually the last puck of the day, Dave Clohessy ensured All-Ireland success when he crashed home an unstoppable goal—and Limerick had captured the Blue Riband of Irish hurling once more.

Timmy Ryan was the Limerick captain on that great occasion, and Ahane clubmates on the side with him were John and Mick Mackey and Jimmy Close; from Fedamore were another quartette—Tom Shinnéy, Tom McCarthy, Paddy and Dave Clohessy; Garrett Howard, Jim Roche and Jacky O'Connell kept Croom hurling to the fore, and the remaining four heroes of that win were Ned Cregan, Newcastle West; Mick Kennedy Young Ireland; Micky Cross, Claughaun, and Mick Rystn. Murroe.

In normal circumstances many other noteworthy games would justify for attention during Limerick's great spell but the telling must await another occasion.

Mick Mackey possibly reached his peak in the Munster Championship campaign of 1935 and his display in the semi-final against Cork was noted by many old-timers as unbeatable.

Things looked bright indeed for Shannonside hurling then, and few in the great crowd that saw Limerick sweep to double All-Ireland success would think that thirty-three long, dreary years were to pass before the green and white again graced Croke Park in the premier event of hurling final day. But so it turned out—and it only remains to record our players in that last great All-Ireland senior triumph.

Mick Mackey was again the captain—Ahane were in their heyday then and they also provided Paddy Scanlan; Mick Hickey, the most colourful player of that campaign; Timmy Ryan, John Mackey, Paddy McMahon, Jacky Power and substitute, Tony Herbert. Croom sent to their assistance Peter Cregan and Jim Roche, and the remaining players were—Jim McCarthy, Feenagh; Mick Kennedy, Young Ireland; Tommy Chokey, Knockree; Dick Stokes, Pallas, and Ned Chawke, Grandagh.

Thurles, and took a lot of the gloss off their All-Ireland win, by trouncing them 5-2 to 1-1.

That was the end of the era for Limerick, however, except for the unforgettable 1940 revival, which commenced shakily enough with a rather ugly draw against Waterford at Kilmarney. Limerick won the replay at Clonmel, and went on for two star-studded meetings with Cork at Thurles before Southern honours were safely tucked away.

A week later, Limerick had to face Galway at Ennis, but again victory graced their standard and the stage was set for another great meeting with Kilkenny, who the previous year, had mounted a grand comeback to regain All-Ireland reign in an unforgettable finish against Cork.

1940 might be written down as Limerick's day of days from the All-Ireland viewpoint, for as well as beating Kilkenny in satisfying fashion in the senior decider, the county won its first ever All-Ireland minor hurling

Ward Cup (in London): May 17th—Beat Kilkenny, 3-5 to 3-3.
Thomond Fels: May 2nd—Beat Tipperary, 5-6 to 3-2.
June 20th—Beat Clare (final), 6-2 to 1-2.
Munster Championships: May 23rd—Beat Clare, 5-5 to 4-1.
July 4th—Beat Waterford, 3-4 to 3-2.
July 25th—Lost to Tipperary (final), 4-3 to 6-3.
National League: October 24th—Beat Waterford, 5-5 to 4-1.
November 7th—Beat Cork, 3-3 to 3-2.

1938
January 6th—Beat Clare, 3-3 to 1-3.
April 3rd—Beat Kilkenny, 5-4 to 1-3.
April 24th—Beat Tipperary (final), 5-2 to 1-1.

It would be obviously impossible to even think of describing the outstanding games amongst the many I have listed, but a few stand out in bold relief in my memory of those glorious years and a brief reference to them must suffice for all.

Limerick's first big win was in the National Hurling League final of 1934. This was played at Fairs na nGael on 25th March, 1934, and a stirring struggle it proved, in which the Shannonsiders beat Dublin, 3-6 to 3-3. Mick Kennedy Young Ireland, was the Limerick captain. Four other league wins were to follow in successive years, setting a record for the competition that no other county has succeeded in emulating.

Then comes the 1934 Munster semi-final in which Cork were Limerick's opponents. Played under a brilliant sun it was a stirring encounter. Limerick entered in grand style and were into an early lead but Cork fought back brilliantly and nullified the Limerick advantage. For the twenty minutes that followed play reached a blistering pace with the excitement terrific but no score was registered by either side. As time ticked away a draw looked inevitable and Limerick hearts sank as Garrett Howard, veteran of many great encounters, had to retire injured with three minutes play left. But the Shannonsiders resumed as if electrified. Mick Mackey sent a long ball downfield, Jacky O'Connell advanced to meet it and soon he was bulging the net amidst scenes of excitement scarcely ever equalled for one of Limerick's hardest earned wins.

Limerick's opponents in the jubilee year All-Ireland hurling final was Dublin—and a great fighting side they were. The Metropolitan, playing power packed hurling, were four points up in as many minutes, but Limerick fought back in stirring style and with two rapid points and a green flag they nosed narrowly out in front, and although fortunes alternated in the ensuing minutes the Shannonsiders still had the odd point lead in fifteen to their credit at the interval. Dublin again levelled early in the second half but Limerick looked set for victory with some great efforts that had them out in front by five points with time closing in. Dublin were far from beaten, however, and two fast points from the wings got them back within striking distance.

With a bare minute to go it was a goal of nothing as they swung once more onto the Limerick lines, and from a sharp angle Dinky O'Neill broke Limerick hearts with a sizzling goal that decreed another day should decide the issue.

The re-play was an even more exciting affair in a thrill-packed first half scoring was low and the hurling magnificent with defenses shinning. Dublin had two minors before Dave Clohessy sank the net for the only goal of the interval. In the last thirty minutes of this half only one score was conceded—a point to Dublin, which left a score at the turn-over level. Four goals in as many minutes

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