

SEEN AND HEARD IN CITY G.A.A. CIRCLES:—

By 'THE RASPER'

Because the Ballybrown club is regarded as a rural club, the effects of their wins in the Limerick and Munster championships may not be as great in the inner city as one would like to see, according to Jack Sheehan, chairman of Bord na nOg, who has been returned unopposed for his third successive term as head of juvenile affairs in the city.

Mr. Sheehan said, however, that he was delighted to see Ballybrown making history so close to their centenary year and he described their achievement as a most unique feat. "Most of their players have come through from juvenile ranks going back as far as 1973 and this proves that their youth policy of that time has paid rich dividends", he said.

On a wider scale, Mr. Sheehan said that he was worried about the standard of hurling in the inner city. "The game seems to have deteriorated because the influence of the Christian Brothers has practically disappeared. Time was when the Brothers produced ready-made teams and the clubs picked it up from there", he said.

According to him, clubs will have to make more inroads into the local schools in order to improve the standards. "Some schools are making no input and it is quite surprising the number who don't take part in any competitions at all".

Whilst he complimented the number of teachers who are doing tremendous work for the game he was somewhat critical of what he called the nine to three syndrome which has crept into some teachers' approach to the promotion of hurling. "The clubs will have to step in and tackle this problem, otherwise we will have a very serious situation on our hands", was his opinion.

Stepping down

Gerry Bennis, who has been at the head of affairs in the Patrickswell club for the last three years, has announced that he will be stepping down as chairman when the club's annual general meeting takes place on January 17 next. Meanwhile it is understood that moves are underway to find a replacement before the meeting with several well-known names being mentioned as possible successors.

Bennis, it will be recalled, took over the reins three years ago after a very impressive four year term as chairman of the City Board, in which role he established himself as one of the best administrators around.

Under his stewardship the "Well" enjoyed its greatest moment on the hurling fields by becoming the first ever Limerick club to win the Munster Club Senior Hurling Championship and whilst he has indicated that he will continue to serve the club his absence at the top is certain to prove difficult to replace. Bennis who is employed by Telecom Eireann has been involved as an officer of the club since 1958 and has served in a number of positions, including vice-chairman, secretary, assistant-secretary and team manager over the years, and is very highly thought of around the county.

"I am taking a year's rest but will be in the background doing my bit for the club", he said this week.

One of his last official duties was to host a special reception for the Ballybrown team which paid a visit to Patrickswell on Friday evening with the Munster club trophy.

O'DONOGHUE GETS GOING

Recently appointed hurling coach for the county, Liam O'Donoghue, plans to visit most of the primary schools in the city area before Christmas as part of his plans to accomplish improvements in the standard of hurling in the inner urban area.

O'Donoghue feels that the G.A.A. base in the inner city is not as strong as it should be and according to him the main problem has to do with

Hurling in city a worry

manpower.

As he faces into his three year term, the Mungret-man is determined to tackle the problems from a number of angles. For instance, he plans to get members of the county senior hurling team involved. "I hope to have some of the players make visits to the schools perhaps once a week in order to generate interest in hurling and I am hopeful that this approach will appeal to the young lads in the schools", he said.

O'Donoghue also plans to make use of videos in order to improve the skills of the game. "Anything I can do to improve the situation will be done, otherwise we stand to lose ground. I will also be hoping that the clubs in the inner city will get involved with me over the next few years", he said.

The former inter-county star will be keeping a close eye on the progress and will be monitoring the situations every four months or so.

As a player who brought intense passion to his play during his career it remains to be seen if he can now generate some of those qualities in his new role.

Surprise

The big news from the recent annual general meeting of the Na Piarraigh club was undoubtedly the failure of long-time administrator Dan Hickey to gain a place on the executive committee. Mr. Hickey had been nominated for the position of chairman but having withdrawn from the contest it was then discovered that he had not been nominated for the general committee. Apparently efforts to have him included were ruled out of order as standing orders could not be suspended.

Mr. Hickey who has been the Limerick Oifigeach na Gaelige for a number of years, has enjoyed a very high profile in the G.A.A. since he came to Limerick in the fifties. He has served as chairman and secretary of the Caherdavin club in the past and has also been very active in the promotion of Scór and the Mackey Stand Lottery.

During his term as chairman of the club some very notable successes were achieved, particularly the winning of the All-Ireland Feile na nGael under fourteen hurling championship in 1984, the result of a carefully executed policy of the development of hurling in the northside area which commenced in the early eighties.

Mr. Hickey has been nominated for two positions at the forthcoming County Convention which is due to take place at the end of January. He has been returned unopposed for the Oifigeach na Gaelige position and has also been nominated by Na Piarraigh for the position of development officer, which has become vacant following the decision of Tommy Healy who had held the post for a number of years but who has decided not to seek re-election.

However, Dan Hickey has a long and impressive record of service to the G.A.A. at club and board level and whilst he will not have a direct input in the affairs of Na Piarraigh over the next twelve months, his vast experience will no doubt be availed of from time to time.

Ladies

Yvonne Murphy of the Monaleen club who has been secretary of the City Bord na nOg for the last three years has decided not to stand for re-election at the body's annual convention which took place on December 18 last. When she was elected into the post three years ago she became the first ever female occupant of the position and in the meantime has performed her duties with admirable



JACK SHEEHAN
(chairman, Bord na nOg)

skill. "I will always be involved in the G.A.A. but as yet I haven't decided what I will do over the next twelve months", she said earlier this week.

Seventeen-year-old Edel Graham who last year achieved her own bit of history when she became P.R.O. of the Claughaun club has also stepped down. Edel, who is a daughter of former Limerick star Mick Graham, has decided to concentrate on her studies for the leaving certificate which is coming up next summer but hopes to be back on the scene when she has completed her examinations.

Meanwhile, Frances Hourigan, who recently won the Na Piarraigh mayoral election, has been elected assistant-treasurer of the Caherdavin based club having come on the committee for the first time early this year and now enjoys the distinction of being the very first female to hold an executive position with the club.

When the Ballybrown general meeting takes place early in the new year it is likely that both Kay Bennis and Delma Kiely, who hold the positions of assistant-secretary and registrar, respectively, will again be returned for another year. Both have apparently done tremendous work for the club and look likely to be given the all-clear for another term.

CITY MEN SEEK TOP POSITION

Six prominent city G.A.A. administrators have been nominated to seek some of the top positions when the County Convention takes place at the end of January. Within the next few weeks the six will be asked by the county secretary to indicate their willingness to stand for election, but in the meantime there is sure to be a good deal of speculation and interest surrounding their chances of success.

REPEAT

One of the most interesting contests should be for the position of treasurer between the sitting man, Declan Moylan of Claughaun, and Paddy Quilligan of St. Patrick's. Twelve months ago Quilligan who has presided over the City Board for the last three years threw his hat in the ring against Moylan who held the post for twenty years and failed by the narrow

margin of ten votes in one of the most intensive contests for some time. This time around it could again be another tight affair between two men who enjoy very high profiles in local circles.

OTHERS

Dan Hickey of Na Piarraigh who has held the position of Oifigeach na Gaelige for a number of years has been nominated for development officer as well, along with other city personalities, John Loftus, Billy Reidy and John O'Grady. Should Loftus and O'Grady decide to stand it will be their first time seeking office at County Board level. Loftus has gained a very high profile in recent years as administrator of the huge Mackey Stand Lottery and has also made a big contribution to the fortunes of the Ballybrown club. John O'Grady is a former All-Ireland referee and a former officer of the City Board.

Bill Reidy contested the secretary's post two years ago but was eliminated after a few counts—the position going to Jimmy Hartigan of Ballybrown who succeeded the long-serving Tom Boland. The next few weeks should provide city clubs with plenty to discuss, as the pros and cons of candidates are weighed up in the run in to the convention.

Walsh is back

Glad to see Joe Walsh back in the limelight in G.A.A. affairs in the city area. Recently he was elected to the committee of the Na Piarraigh club in Caherdavin and is sure to make a big contribution to the fortunes of the northside club, where his experience will not go to waste. Joe comes from good Gaelic stock in Tipperary Town and for years was one of the leading lights in the Old Christians club, particularly in the mid-sixties along with such stalwarts as the late Mick Grace (R.I.P.), Paddy Burke (R.I.P.), Bill Cunniffe (R.I.P.) and Paddy Hennessy (R.I.P.).

His late father came from the Fethard area and his name is adequately commemorated with the Walsh Cup, which last Sunday was presented to the winners of the Tipperary county junior hurling championship, Mullinahone, who defeated Lattin-Cullen. Joe has also given time to the Kickhams club in Dublin

where he worked for many years and is now looking forward to his term as a committee member with Na Piarraigh for the first time.

Disappointed

How close Ger Hegarty came to getting an All-Star award we'll never know but he must feel disappointed that he was yet so near and yet so far from becoming the first ever Old Christians player to be honoured at this level. Long-time official of the club John Power was also disappointed that Ger did not get the nod, but said that so too were all hurling followers through the county. In any case big Ger is young enough and has plenty of time on his side to come back and get amongst the honours over the next few years. For his loyalty to Old Christians alone, he is surely deserving of an award.

South Liberties became the first Limerick club to honour Ballybrown's feat in winning the Munster championship when they accorded the champions a very special reception at the Stroller Inn, Ballyneety, on Sunday week.

Mr. Paddy Shanahan, chairman, made a presentation of an inscribed clock to his counterpart, Bill Davoren, in the course of which he described their achievement as a marvellous boost for the game of hurling in Limerick. Other speakers included John Loftus, Tom Ryan, Ollie O'Connor, Michael Lynch, Terence Kenny and Walter Shanahan. The occasion was a true reflection of the great bond of friendship that exists between Ballybrown and the "Liberties" down through the years.

Earlier at Bruff the Liberties team and substitutes formed a Guard of Honour for the Ballybrown players as they strode on the field for the county senior hurling league final which was blessed with a fine day and produced some fine passages of hurling. On last Friday morning, the Limerick County Council honoured the Ballybrown team and officials with a special reception in the Council chambers.

BACK AGAIN

Kieran McCarthy of Ballybrown looks set for another term as vice-chairman of the City Board, a post he has held without break since 1981, which must constitute some sort of record in local affairs. "I'll give it another shot and continue what I like doing best", he said earlier this week. Meanwhile the popular Ballybrown man expressed satisfaction with the work of

the City Board over the last twelve months and is hopeful of further progress in the new year.

SCÓR-LESS

The City Bord na nOg Scór finals went ahead at the Na Piarraigh G.A.A. Centre recently but without the presence of the Caherdavin club. By all accounts the club had somehow failed to get it right when it came to the dates for the semi-finals, and consequently found themselves out in the cold for the finals. Officials of the board on the other hand are adamant that the required notification was sent out in good time, but it appears that it did not go to the secretary of the club.

Somewhere along the line the notification failed to reach its destination in time for the club to enter teams in the semi-finals and when the confusion had been sorted out it was simply too late to do anything about it. Efforts by the club to get back into the competition were apparently considered by the board which instead of making a decision on the plea, left it to the discretion of the participating club, but this also failed to have the desired result, as at least one club, according to reports, refused to budge and consequently Na Piarraigh found themselves Scór-less with countless youngsters disappointed and facing the wrath of annoyed parents, some of whom, apparently, resigned as members in the wake of the episode.

A hurley that accounted for five goals and two points and the sliothar used in the Limerick senior hurling final are still in the proud possession of Johnny Foley of Claughaun. Both the hurley and the ball have been on display in the Claughaun G.A.A. Centre for a number of years and command a considerable degree of interest by locals and visitors alike.

Johnny who was born and reared in Lixnaw in County Kerry but came to Limerick to take up employment in the late forties and joined St. Patrick's, with whom he won county senior hurling championship in 1949 and 1950. But it was when he teamed up with Claughaun that he made his own bit of history by scoring five goals and two points from the full-forward position in the 1957 county hurling final and followed with another blue riband in 1958 alongside such stalwarts as Declan Moylan, Mick Tynan, Jim Hogan, Sean O'Connor, Jim Moloney and Dermot Kelly. Very much to the fore with the club at that time was Dr. Eamon Casey, Bishop of Galway, whom Johnny describes as a great man for the G.A.A.

Johnny's feat in the 1957 final has often been referred to down through the years, but at that time there was no "man of the match" award, not until 1987 that is, when his colleagues accorded him that honour a full thirty years later. No wonder Johnny is proud of the hurley and ball that brought him fame those many years ago.

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