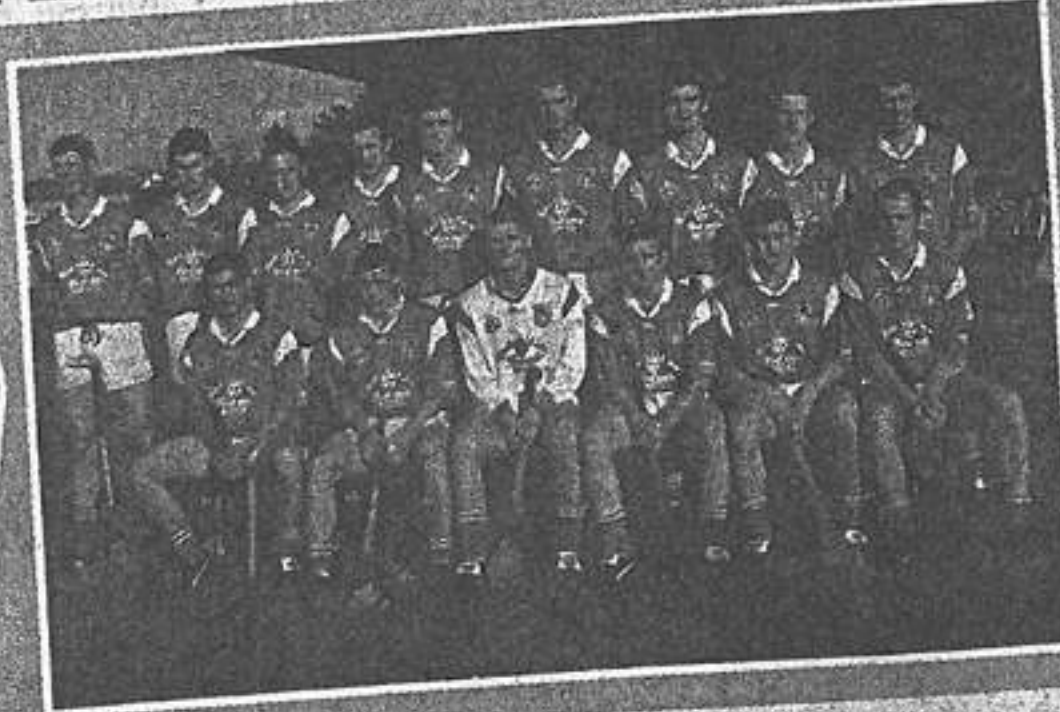


LEADER SPORT

Sports Editor: CORMAC LIDDY Tel: 214514

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Limerick sparkle in Gaelic Grounds sunshine



INSIDE
Limerick duo off to Sydney Olympics



GAA Report on 21's great win... Swimming Limerick in Kilkee... Rugby Munster win in Cork

Business sector asked to row-in

By JOHN O'SHAUGHNESSY

THE time is opportune for the cash-strapped Limerick County Board to 'cash' in on the under 21 hurlers fantastic win over Cork, on Wednesday evening.
So argues Pat Fitzgerald, Development Officer.
He has called on the business community to row in behind them in their proposed plans for the Gaelic Grounds.
"We are close to making a decision on whether to invest £8m in the rede-

velopment of the Ennis Road venue. That is an awful lot of money, money which we don't have. My fear is, that if we do go ahead it will place a huge burden on the board and could affect preparation of all county teams."
Fitzgerald has pleaded with others who could benefit from a new-look Gaelic Grounds to come to their aid.
"I am thinking in terms of the Chamber of Commerce, the Hotel and Vintners Federation, and the business community in general. All have enjoyed huge spin-off from big matches in Limerick and this is their perfect chance for them to

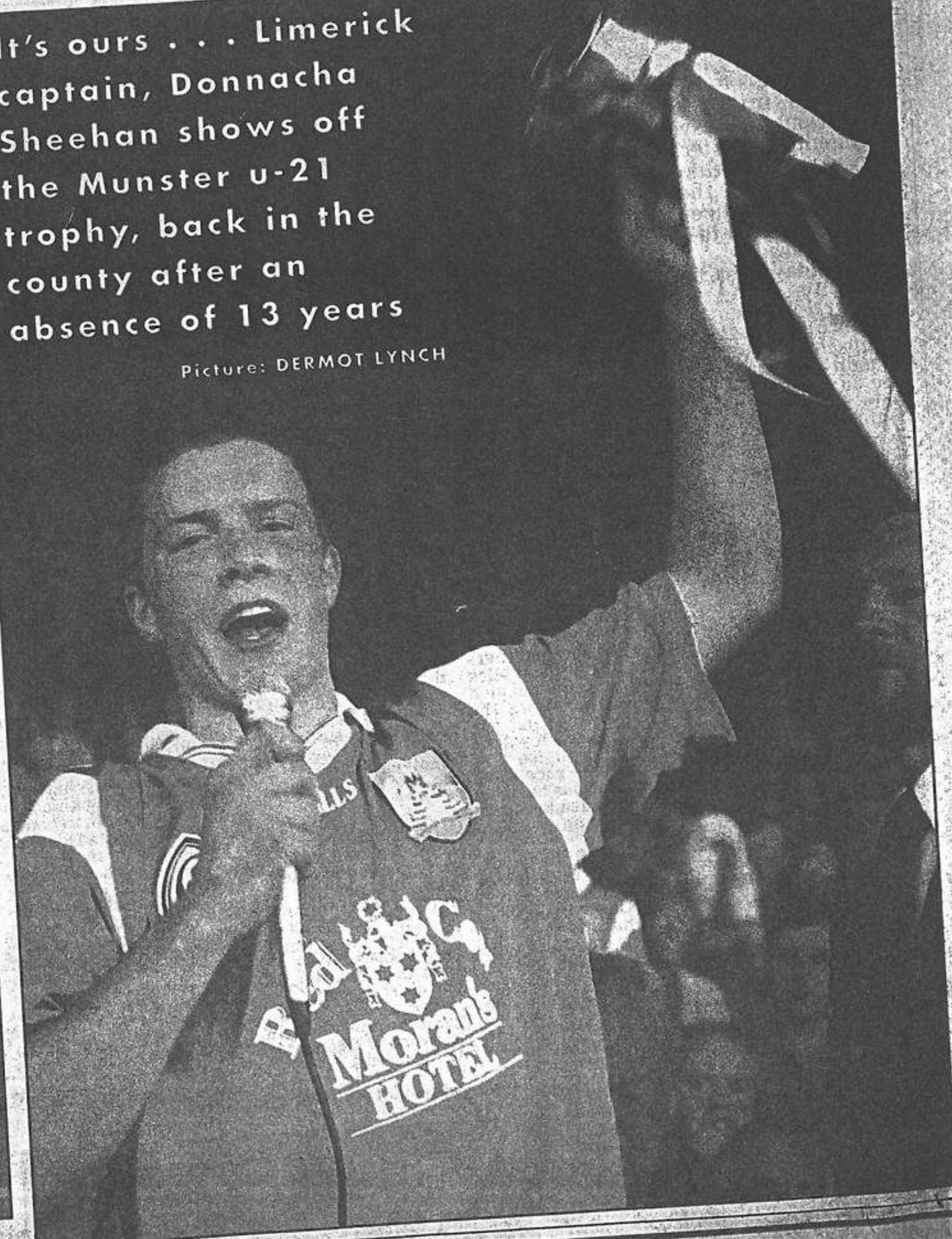
give something back while at the same time, protecting their own interests."
There was, he continued, an amount of good will out there towards their games, particularly after their double success at under-21 level this season.
"There were 13,000 people at Wednesday's match. It was a great occasion, but if we are to enjoy such big events in the future then we have to go ahead and bring the Gaelic Grounds into line with other venues."
Fitzgerald estimates that they will have to raise upwards of £4.5m themselves if they are to

make the project viable.
What worries him is that a decision on whether they go ahead, will have to be made inside the next week.
"The contractor has told us that he will need to start work at the grounds in September. A later start would certainly mean a revised contract and the £8m already tendered could rocket."
It was too much, he said, to ask the County Board to raise £4.5.
"Yes, it could be done over the years but at a cost to the future development of our games. We are in a Catch-22 situation right now. Let us have a meeting of minds with the

business sector and with their financial support, we could proceed with confidence."
At a full County Board meeting earlier this month, many delegates expressed reservations about the redevelopment of the Gaelic Grounds, fearing it would drain monies from other arms of the Association.
After Wednesday's marvellous win, John Naughton, a long serving officer of the Board, said: "We will just have to go ahead now...we have caught up with Cork on playing fields and let us now strive to at least match them in ground facilities."

It's ours... Limerick captain, Donnacha Sheehan shows off the Munster u-21 trophy, back in the county after an absence of 13 years

Picture: DERMOT LYNCH



Sensational win by Limerick u-21 hurlers

By JOHN O'SHAUGHNESSY

THE Limerick under-21 hurlers scored a sensational 4-18 to 1-6 win over Cork in their Munster final replay, at the Gaelic Grounds.

The game was watched by a crowd of 13,000, and such was Cork's embarrassment, that hundreds of their fans were heading towards the exits at the end of the third-quarter.

It was a truly amazing performance by the green-and-whites, who led 2-9 to 0-4 at the interval.

There were some emotional scenes at the finish when captain Donncha Sheehan, was presented with the trophy.

It was the first time since 1987 that Limerick claimed the prize.

It was an historic occasion also in that for the first time, Limerick completed the double at this level. The under-21 competitions were introduced in 1961.

County Board chairman Donal Fitzgibbon, described Wednesday's win as "unbelievable", while secretary James Hartigan, said it was the perfect boost for Limerick hurling.

Manager Davie Keane, an engineer with Limerick Corporation, was applauded on his achievement. There were no mixed feelings for him afterwards-what was not generally known was that he was a medal winner with his native Cork, back in the 1970s.

It was a night in which Limerick produced 15 All-stars. David Keane had a personal contribution of 1-9, with the other goals shared by Donncha Sheehan (2) and Brian Begley.

The foundation was laid in a superb half-back line, of Brian Geary, Willie Walsh and Paul O'Reilly.

On their way to All-Ireland glory in 1987, Limerick also beat Cork in the final, 3-14 to 2-9.

In the interim, they were beaten finalists on five occasions.

On this Saturday, Limerick play Antrim, in the All-Ireland semi-finals, at Parnell park, Dublin, with a 2 o'clock start.

*Should they reach the final, scheduled on September 17, it will mean that the county senior hurling final, also fixed for that date, will have to be deferred.

The county semi final meeting between Garrysillane Doon, fixed for this Sunday, has been

Limerick rugby stars down under



Colm Tucker



Eugene McGovern



Fiach O'Loughlin



Jody Danagher

By AIDAN CORR

FIVE Limerick schools players were involved in Ireland's defeat of Australia in Brisbane on Wednesday. Another, Ard Scoil Rís scrum-half Fiach O'Loughlin, was on the bench.

The test victory marked the conclusion of one of the most successful ever rugby tours 'down under' from this country and highlights the progress made here in under age-rugby over the past decade.

St Munchin's College hooker Colm Tucker and Crescent College duo John O'Connor and Eugene McGovern were

first choices for this test victory with Stephen Keogh of St Munchin's and Jody Danagher of UL/Bohemians and Blackrock College being called in during the second half.

The victory marks only the second win by an Irish schools touring side over the Australians, the last being in 1996 when the team included future internationals Robert Casey, Ciaran Scally and Peter Stringer.

According to flanker John O'Connor, Wednesday's tie was by far the toughest of the eight-match tour with the home side fully committed to lower the Irish colours.

Limerick's young heroes are due back in the city at the week-end

and it would not be inappropriate were they to be afforded some form of civic recognition for their achievements.

The IRFU will hold a

welcome home party for the Irish squad to celebrate this tremendous achievement when they return to Dublin Airport at 7.15pm this Saturday.



Stephen Keogh



John O'Connor



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Championship, Ballybrown v Na Piarsaigh, Rathbane 7 pm.
TSB U21 A hurling championship.

An invitation is going out this week to players who might be available to give consideration to joining Cloughaun. We would be delighted to

grounds this Saturday may or may not be played depending on the outcome of Wednesday's Limerick/Cork Munster

Deasy 0-2, J Noonan, L Morrison 0-1, G McGrath 0-3. Subs: M Murphy, A O'Dwyer, C Quinlan. Our Senior footballers

Danbridge, go down for the 125 mile journey. Congratulations to Matthew and Eugene Fitzgerald.

Early Morning Mist was an impressive winner of the Ideal Printers Titles