

GAA LIMERICK INTERMEDIATE HURLING CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

Seven years of heartache ends for Ballybrown



Jerome O'Connell

In Fitzgerald Park, Kilmallock

Ballybrown	1-15
Dromin-Athlaca	0-13

AFTER an absence of seven years, Ballybrown will be back in the senior ranks of Limerick club hurling in 2013.

One of just four clubs in Limerick to win a Munster senior club championship, Ballybrown were relegated from the senior ranks in 2005.

They needed a few years to re-establish themselves and then reached two of the last three intermediate finals.

Defeat to South Liberties (2009) and Effin (2011) was their lot in the previous finals, but last Saturday they made it third time lucky.

Ballybrown changed management ahead of this season and Christy Keyes assumed the manager role and brought in Clem Smith as coach and Dave Mahedy as trainer.

Indeed last Saturday, former Ahane and Limerick hurler Smith found himself in opposition to a Dromin-Athlaca club that he is now associated to.

Earlier this year, Smith lined out in goals when Dromin-Athlaca beat Ballybrown in the county Junior B league final.

And, Smith's Ballybrown were certainly deserving winners in this Nick Grene Sportsgrounds Ltd county intermediate hurling championship final in Fitzgerald Park in Kilmallock.

From the throw-in they produced one of the hardest working performances ever seen by a Ballybrown side.

It was this huge work ethic that saw them set the pace and never really allow Dromin-Athlaca find their feet.

When they sides met in the round robin series, it was the men from south Limerick that emerged two points winners but on this occasion the Clarina based club dominated from the off.

They were 0-6 to no score ahead after nine when playing with the aid of the wind in the opening half.

Alan O'Connor, Shane Kenny, Kyle Loftus and Mikey Kiely all fired over in their early blitz of scores.

With their half back line of Ian Burke, and Kenny brothers Richie and Des on top the supply of ball was always towards their attacking goal, while Stephen Foster and James Hall were hard working around the middle sector.

Even in the early exchanges it was clear that Ballybrown were not prepared to be bridesmaids again.

Indeed but for eight first half wides, Ballybrown could have been further ahead at the break.

As it was they led 0-10 to 0-4 at the interval.

It took Dromin-Athlaca 10-minutes to score and only found two points from play from Paul Neenan and Eoin O'Leary in the half.

At the other end Alan O'Connor notched six points in the half with all bar his first, coming from frees.

On the change of ends, Dromin-Athlaca restructured their team and began with a renewed vigour. Among the changes, Brian Kelleher was now at centre back, from full back, while corner back Donal Walsh was switched to corner forward.

But it was the impact of David Reidy that was crucial - he had two points inside 90-seconds to cut the lead to a manageable four points as they found some form.

But then came the crucial moment. Stephen Foster won possession in midfield and soloed forward.

Thirty-five metres out and with no option for a pass, he attempted to score a point but his weak effort fell short.

Mark Moynihan appeared to have the effort covered but somehow managed to allow it slip through his hands and into the net.

To add to the Dromin-Athlaca woes, the resulting puckout was sent straight back over the bar by Bryan

Griffin.

All of a sudden the score was 1-11 to 0-6.

A Neenan free came in reply but clearly Dromin-Athlaca were rocked and Griffin and O'Connor (free) stretched the lead with further points.

Now 1-13 to 0-7 clear Ballybrown retreated somewhat into a defensive shell.

Ballybrown were only to score another two points in the remaining 20-odd minutes but it was sufficient.

Especially with Dromin-Athlaca failing to find a goal.

Dromin-Athlaca went for broke and three substitutions followed as they sought some spark to ignite a fight back.

Five successive points between the 47th and 54th minutes did reduce the lead to 1-13 to 0-12 but the necessary goal never arrived.

They closest they came was in the 49th minute but David Lyons was fast off his line to divert the danger when a long ball from Eoin Benson could have fallen into the path of Donal Walsh.

Ballybrown had now gone over 15-minutes without a score and needed some reprieve from the Dromin-Athlaca onslaught.

Pat Hartigan was summoned from



Let the party begin: Ballybrown celebrate winning the Limerick IHC final in Kilmallock on Saturday last after Limerick GAA vice-chairman Oliver Mann presented the cup to their captain Des Kenny. Pictures: Dermot Lynch

the bench and repaid the vote with two superb points.

With his very first touch he eased tension.

David Reidy hit back to maintain Athlaca interest but then in the final minute Hartigan lofted over his second score to set the Ballybrown celebrations in motion and confirm their return to the senior grade.

SCORERS - Ballybrown: Alan O'Connor 0-7 (six frees), Bryan Griffin 0-3, Stephen Foster 1-0, Pat Hartigan 0-2, Shane Kenny, Mikey Kiely.

Kyle Loftus 0-1 each. **Dromin-Athlaca**: Paul Neenan (three frees) and David Reidy 0-4 each, Eoin O'Leary, James Kelleher, Brian Kelleher (free), David Mullins, Killan Liston 0-1 each.

BALLYBROWN - David Lyons; Roddy Burke, James Kennedy, Stephen O'Reilly, Ian Burke, Richie Kenny, Des Kenny (capt), Stephen Foster, James Hall; Alan O'Connor, Bryan Griffin, Kyle Loftus, Mikey Kiely, Shane Kenny, David Hall. **Subs**: Evan Loftus for David Hall (51mins), Pat Hartigan for Shane Kenny (56mins), Brian Quinn for James Hall (60mins).

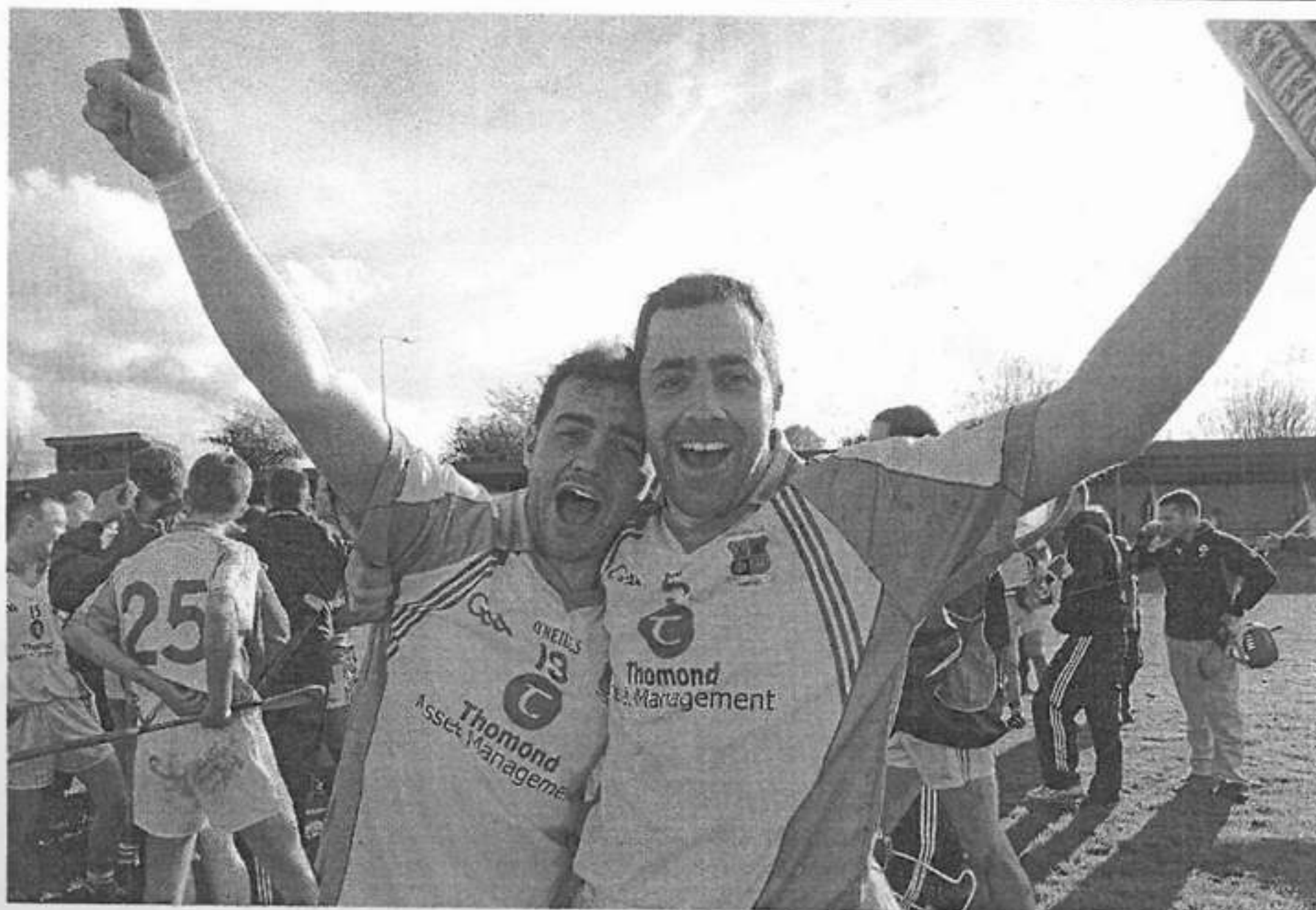
DROMIN ATHLACA - Mark Moynihan; Donal Walsh, Brian Kelleher, Gearoid O'Leary, Peter Rya, Eoin Benson, Tom Breen; Michael Reidy, Eoin O'Connell; Paul Neenan, David Reidy, Gerard Kelleher; Tiernan Ryan (capt), Eoin O'Leary, James Kelleher. **Subs**: David Mullins for Tom Breen (34mins), Michael Kelleher for Eoin O'Connell (49mins), Killan Liston for Gerard Kelleher (43mins). **REFEREE** - Shane Hourigan (St Marys Sean Finns).



Ready to go: The Dromin-Athlaca team (above) before the Limerick IHC final against Ballybrown (below)



GAA LIMERICK INTERMEDIATE HURLING CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL



Happiness is: Ballybrown's Evan Loftus and Ian Burke celebrate after the final whistle; below left - captain Des Kenny with his wife Valerie and baby daughter Saoirse; below right - Dromin-Athlacca manager Ged Moynihan

IN BRIEF

MAIN MAN - IAN BURKE

IT was the Ballybrown half back line that was key to their dominance.

Time after time the trio of Ian Burke and Kenny brothers, Richie and Des repelled Dromin-Athlacca's forward and launched attacks.

Leading the trio was Ian Burke.

He was relentless from start to finish and set the tone with some great fetches and appeared to emerge out of every tight situation in possession.

TURNING POINT

The lead was down to four points within 90 seconds of the restart of the second half and Dromin-Athlacca were gathering pace for the first time.

Then Mark Moynihan found himself in a most unfortunate position when he allowed a weak shot from distance from Stephen Foster to

slip through his hands and into the net for the game's only goal.

The score halted the Dromin-Athlacca comeback and gave Ballybrown a cushion for victory.

Both sides had scored a goal in each game of the championship and with only the one goal in this final it was always going to be the decisive score.

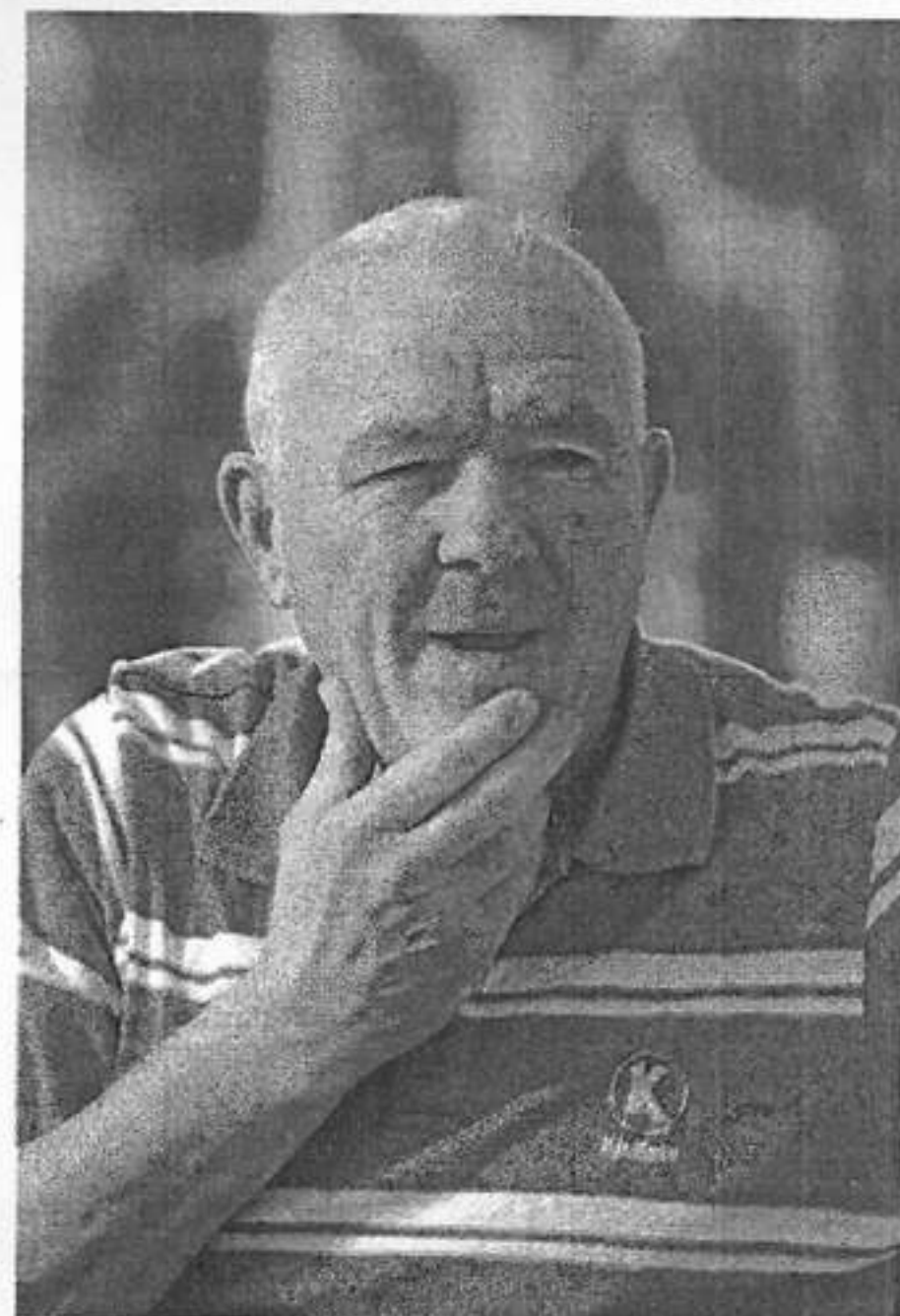
TALKING POINT

Ballybrown are promoted to the senior ranks for 2013 by virtue of their intermediate championship win.

It returns the Clarina based club to the top ranks for the first time since they lost the 2005 relegation final to Knockainey.

But what will be the structure of the Limerick SHC for next season.

It appears that a number of clubs have submitted a host of difference changes to the senior and intermediate championship for next season's competition.



GAA MUNSTER CLUB IHC

Ballybrown bid to relive old glories in the Munster club championship

Ballinhassig v Ballybrown

Date: Monday October 29

Venue: Pairc Ui Rinn, Cork

Throw-in: 2.00

Referee: Fergal Horgan (Tipperary)

erome O'Connell

AFTER waiting seven years to climb back out of the intermediate ranks there was little time for prolonged celebrations for Ballybrown with Munster club action this Bank Holiday Monday.

The newly crowned Limerick champions must travel to Cork to play their premier intermediate opponents Ballinhassig.

And, it will be a tough task for

Ballybrown against a side that were only relegated from the senior grade last year and have made an immediate return to the top level.

Indeed Ballinhassig won the 2005 Munster intermediate club title, before losing the All-Ireland final to Kilkenny's Dicksboro.

They will have Cork panellist Martin Coleman in goals and also look towards; Brendan Lombard Fintan O'Leary and Danny O'Callaghan.

Ballybrown manager Christy Keyes was a member of the last two panels from the club to play in the Munster club - albeit at senior level.

"Whatever happens from here is a bonus," he said.

"We went through to the All-Ireland final in 1990 and you never

know what could happen again," said Keyes.

"We are delighted to be going to represent Limerick again," said Keyes, who was a member of the panel beaten by Ballyhale Shamrocks on St Patrick's Day 1990.

"At least the monkey is off our back," he said of the county intermediate win.

"This has been a long time coming and I am delighted for this group of players. They have been there for the last couple of years and I have seen them first hand and the way that they have trained and applied themselves is unreal."

"They were unlucky last year and we came in this year and just put a bit of belief in them."

Keyes said that it was self belief that made the difference in 2012.

"They were knocked from pillar to post and called every sort of thing," recalled Keyes of recent years when Ballybrown came so close to glory.

"We tried to put belief into them so that when the games got tough and when they were in a tough game that they could win them. All they had to do was knuckle down and believe in themselves and play for one another."

The addition of Clem Smith and Dave Mahedy to the back room team helped inspire the players.

"They trained away like no other team in the country and are brilliant guys," said Keyes.

Six points in the opening nine minutes set Ballybrown on their way

to victory.

"We got a great start and that is vital in matches like this - we were here for the semi-final when Dromin-Athlacca got a great start and it swings in roundabouts and today it was us that got the start. Our backs were brilliant and our forwards took their chances in the first half and in the second half we kept the scoreboard ticking over."

But Dromin-Athlacca did hit back and ask questions of Ballybrown.

"They got five points in a row but our lads didn't panic - we knew they would come back and get more scores."

If Ballybrown win they will play Ballyduff (Kerry) in the semi-final on November 4 at a Limerick venue.

GAA LIMERICK JUNIOR HURLING CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

Molyneaux on the mark as St Kieran's claim junior title

St Kieran's	1-12
Monagea	0-14

John Redington
in Tournafulla

BETTER known as a football club, St Kieran's gave a reminder of their small ball tradition when victory in Saturday's county junior A final brought intermediate hurling back to the twin parishes for the first time in almost 30 years.

Revived by Donie Nolan's 48th minute goal, they clinched success with a long late strike from midfielder Anthony Molyneaux to edge home after a titanic struggle that saw the sides level on eight separate occasions and raised the passions of the big noisy crowd that turned up under the crisp autumn sunshine of Tournafulla.

While they may have been outsiders at the start of the county's most keenly contested championship, Kieran's went in as favourites to this all-West decider on the back of their earlier runaway success in the divisional decider. But Saturday turned out to be an entirely different proposition. Although a long senior football campaign gave them an advantage in conditioning, their opponents had the edge when it came to first touch and made better use of the chances that came their way.

Indeed, up to Nolan's game-changer goal, Monagea looked the more likely to succeed. While they struggled to win the early ball around the middle, their tightness at the back forced Kieran's into wasteful attempts at scores. And any time one was conceded, the inspirational Seán Herlihy and the metronomic free-taking of John Hough were there to respond.

However, the two-man strike force wasn't able to shoulder the entire burden on its own. The rest of the Monagea lineup was confined to just three scores over the entire hour as they were crowded out for size or for pace in too many positions. For all their finishing difficulties as they racked up a dozen wides and dropped almost as many shots again into Mark Kelly's hand, Kierans had far more frequent sight of the posts and it eventually paid off.

That strength in depth also extended to the bench. When they needed to pick it up again in the middle after Herlihy had moved out to stiffen Monagea's presence coming up to half-time, an injury led to the introduction of Darragh Treacy and the county footballer had an immediate effect. And when scores were needed during a hectic final quarter, Ian Mackessy came on to show his more experienced team-mates how to finish off the move.

With their half-back line cleaning up, Kierans dominated the early stages

IN BRIEF

MAIN MAN - SEÁN HERLIHY (MONAGEA)

More often than not, tight games turn on that one individual performance rising above the intense one-on-ones which cancel each other out. But it turned out not to be case in this instance. Despite five superb scores from play and creating another three from frees, Seán Herlihy's barnstorming display wasn't enough on its own to deliver victory to Monagea.

TOP SCORE

Fortune favours the brave as Anthony Molyneaux found out when, with a yard or two of space and just over a minute to go, he aimed for the posts and split them with a 60 metre drive that decided the game.

TURNING POINT

Twelve minutes from time, three Monagea points without reply looked as if they'd finally broken Kierans' resistance before Donie Nolan ran onto the crossfield pass, stretched the opposing full-back line and drove into the corner of the net for the game's only goal.

as Johnny McCarthy and Nolan's free put them in front. The lead could have been greater had they not missed from play and from frees missed as their opponents spilled the fouls at both ends. Hough showed them how as he opened for Monagea with a long



Champions at last: St Kieran's (main pic) celebrate their Limerick JHC final win over (Monagea) below in Tournafulla on Saturday last
Pictures: Dermot Lynch

free and, while Nolan replied, Herlihy started coming out deeper to bring the Strand forward line into the game.

Jason Brouder and Hough had them level and Herlihy gave them the lead before Kieran's regained the upper hand in the middle when Treacy came on for the injured Timmy Carroll. Danny Collum equalised and Herlihy struck from play and from a free before Nolan's free shaved Monagea's advantage back to 0-6 to 0-5 at the break.

Treacy levelled matters within seconds of the restart as did James Muckell in reply to Herlihy and Nolan after exchanging frees with Hough before the Coolcappa club took the lead for the first time since the opening period. But Nolan's free provoked a Monagea response as Herlihy drove over a pair from distance and then engineered the foul for Hough to put them two ahead.

The gap might have grown had Nolan not hit back straight from the puckout, running wide off the pass to blast beyond Mark Kelly's reach.

And while Michael King levelled immediately, Kierans' tails were up when Mackessy struck twice in succession to leave Monagea searching for a response. They found it in Joe Murphy and Hough's equalising free but couldn't repeat it as Molyneaux drove long, high and straight with a minute to go to signal the celebrations over Ardagh, Coolcappa, Kilcolman and Carrigkerry.

SCORERS - St Kieran's: Donie Nolan 1-5 (0-5 frees), Ian Mackessy 0-2, Johnny McCarthy, Danny Collum, Darragh Treacy, James Muckell, Anthony Molyneaux 0-1 each;

Monagea: Seán Herlihy 0-6 (one free), John Hough 0-5 (all frees), Jason Brouder, Michael King, Joe Murphy 0-1 each.

ST KIERAN'S - John Greaney, Mike Windle, Brendan McCarthy, Mike Flynn, Paddy Windle, Seán Windle, Anthony Molyneaux, Jack Ben Harnett, Timmy Carroll, Johnny McCarthy, Ray Cahill, Donie Nolan, James Muckell, Danny Collum. Subs: Darragh Treacy for Timmy Carroll (injured - 28 mins), Ian Mackessy for Ray Cahill (46 mins), Jonathan Ruttle for Danny Collum (59 mins), Chris Madigan for James Muckell (60 mins).

MONAGEA - Mark Kelly, Peter Cregan, Conor Murphy, Seán Carmody, Tom O'Callaghan, Peter Murphy, Kevin O'Shea, Kevin Brosnan, Michael King, Cian Mulcahy, Joe Murphy, John Hough, John Dore, Seán Herlihy, Jason Brouder.

SUBS: Paddy O'Sullivan for Jason Brouder (38 mins), Kevin Mulcahy for Cian Mulcahy (49 mins), Mark O'Sullivan for Kevin Brosnan (53 mins).

REFEREE - Trevor Mann (Ballybrown)



GAA LIMERICK JUNIOR HURLING CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL



GAA in Brief

Tipp turn tables on Limerick U-17s

FOR the second times in three years, Limerick were beaten in the final of the Munster U-17 Football Development Tournament this Tuesday night.

Tipperary emerged 1-9 to 0-6 winners in the Gaelic Grounds to collect the Daryl Darcy Memorial Cup for a third successive year.

The defeat comes just one week after Limerick had beaten Tipperary 2-10 to 2-6 in the final group game in Mick Neville Park.

That saw Limerick progress to the final with three wins from three.

But in the final, playing with the wind, Tipperary led at half time, 1-8 to 0-2.

LIMERICK - Tom Dwyer; James Bridgeman, John Murphy, Shane Lynch; John O'Neill, Steven Cahill, Killian Ryan; Cian Sheehan, Cathal Broderick; Jamie O'Connor; Cormac O'Shea, James Naughton; Jack Breen, Mark Long, Kieran Daly. Subs: Andy Brouder, Gavin Reidy, Eoin Hurley, James Guineá, Ryan Meagher, Steven Brosnan, Sam Mullins, David Cussen.

Crucial game in Corn Ui Mhuiri

WEST Limerick Colleges face into a make-or-break Corn Ui Mhuiri game next Wednesday November 7.

The amalgamated side play Clonmel High School in Ballybricken's GAA Grounds in Caherelly at 1.30.

West Limerick were narrowly beaten 1-13 to 1-9 by Chorca Dhuibhne in round one after a terrific display.

In their round one game, Clonmel were winners over North Clare Schools.

With two teams to progress from the group next Wednesday's game will determine if West Limerick Colleges are to remain in position to advance in the Munster senior A colleges football championship.

West Limerick Colleges is an amalgamation of Colaiste na Trocaire of Rathkeale, Colaiste Ide agus Iosef Abbeyfeale and SMI Newcastle West.

The Limerick side are managed by teachers; Garrett Noonan (Rathkeale), David Keannelly (Abbeyfeale), Diarmuid O'Connell (Abbeyfeale) and Diarmuid Crowley (Newcastle West).

The Limerick side is be backed by club players from Limerick premier minor football champions, Fr Caseys, and semi-finalists St Marys Sean Finns and Newcastle West.

A number of the West Limerick players have been involved with the Limerick U-17 side in recent weeks and those games should stand to them.

Ballyagran to host both junior finals

LIMERICK GAA are hoping to play a double-header of Junior B Championship finals in Ballyagran on Sunday November 11.

The County JBHC final between Bruff and Mungret has been fixed for 1.30. Bruff are bidding to go one better than last season when they lost the final to Croom.

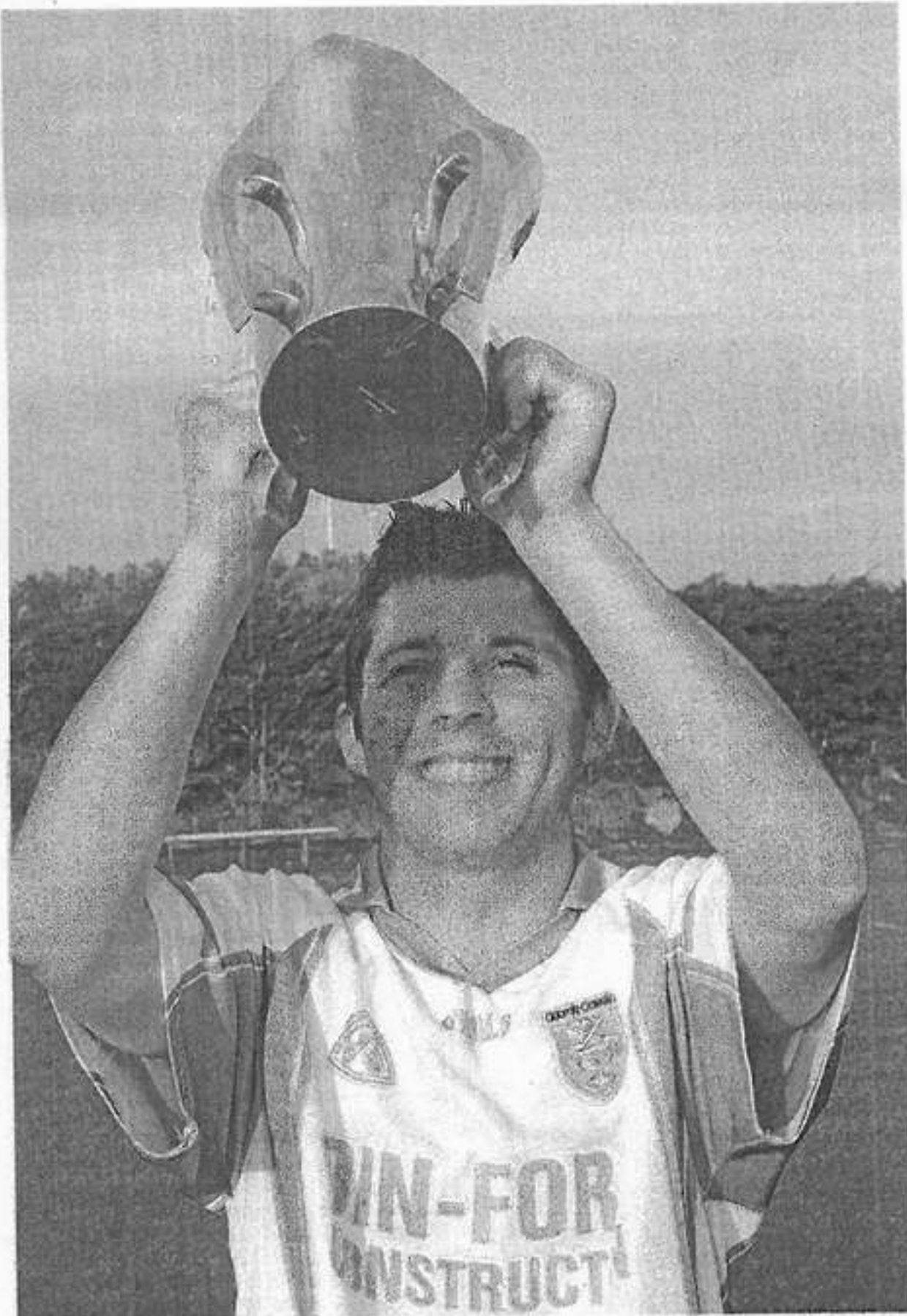
It is proposed that the JBFC final then take place at 3.00. Newcastle West are looking to add the championship title to their league crown. They await this Sunday's semi-final winners between Patrickswell and Feenagh-Kilmeedy.

Ladies Football to coach teachers

Munster Ladies Gaelic Football are hosting coaching course adapted for teachers in Limerick on November 17.

The Fundamentals coaching course will take place between 10.00am- 4.00pm and cost €20 per person incl. light lunch.

To book a place or for more info please contact Mary Beades on 086-0471501 or email: maryde@munsterladiesgaelic.ie



Clockwise from above: St Kieran's captain Paudie McCarthy with the cup after the Limerick JHC 'A' final in Tournafulla last Saturday; Monagea's Conor Murphy attempts to clear his lines; St Kieran's James Muckell gets his shot in

Pictures: Dermot Lynch

