

FULL TIME

GAA - ALL IRELAND U-21 HURLING FINAL

MATCH STATS

LIMERICK	0-26
WEXFORD	1-7

SCORERS

LIMERICK - Roman Lynch 0-6 (5 frees), Barry Nash 0-5, Tom Morrissey 0-4, Cian Lynch, Pat Ryan, Peter Casey (Open) 0-3 each, Diarmaid Byrnes (free) 0-2. **WEXFORD** - Conor McDonald 1-4 (3 frees, 1 lineball), Andrew Kenny, Pdraig Foley (free), Cathal Dunbar 0-1 each.

LIMERICK

- David McCarthy
- Sean Finn
- Richie English
- Michael Casey
- Diarmaid Byrnes
- Barry O'Connell
- Gearoid Hegarty
- Darragh O'Donovan
- Pat Ryan
- Barry Nash
- Cian Lynch
- David Dempsey
- Roman Lynch
- Colin Ryan
- Tom Morrissey

Subs: Peter Casey for Colin Ryan (48mins), Andrew La Touche Cosgrave for Pat Ryan (51mins), Jack Kelleher for Roman Lynch (54mins), Mark O'Callaghan for Sean Finn (57mins), Jody Hanlon for Darragh O'Donovan (58mins).

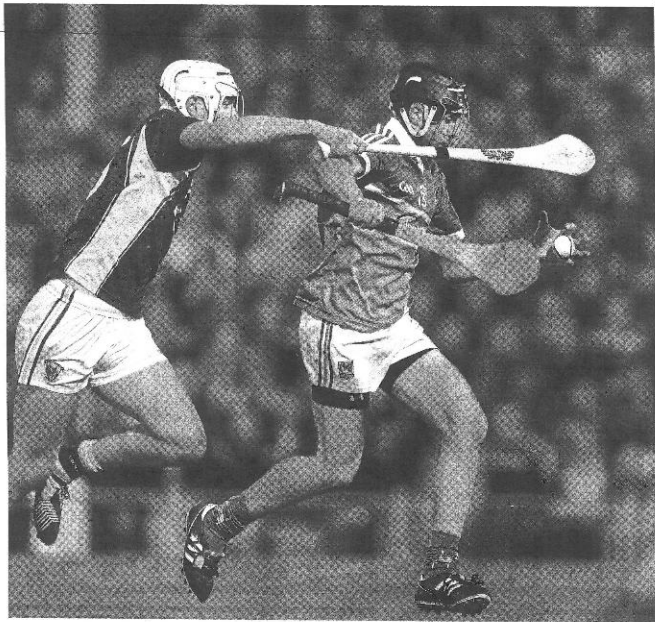
WEXFORD

- Oliver O'Leary
- Simon Donohue
- Liam Ryan
- Eoin Conroy
- Jim White
- Pdraig Foley
- Jack O'Connor
- Conor Devitt
- Tony French
- Andrew Kenney
- Kevin Foley
- James Cash
- Cathal Dunbar
- Conor McDonald
- Peter Sutton

Subs: Shane Murphy for Tony French (54mins), Sean Kenney for Conor Devitt (40mins), Sam Kelly for Kevin Foley (45mins), Jake Firman for James Cash (46mins).

Limerick sweep aside Wexford challenge to claim championship with scintillating all-action display of hurling and a 16-point winning margin

Sensational U-21 win for Limerick



On the Run: Colin Ryan, Limerick, in action against Liam Ryan, Wexford during Saturday's Bord Gais U-21 All Ireland Hurling final in Thurles. Pictures: Sportfile

JEROME O'CONNELL
AT RURAL STADIUM

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All Ireland U-21 hurling champions for a fifth time and Limerick did so in sensational style.

From start to finish, Limerick dominated this Thurles final with a most compelling style of fast, yet composed and clever, hurling, all bound together by a massive work ethic.

Limerick were simply sensational at times and blew away their opponents to win by 16 points.

John Kiely's Limerick hit 19 scores from play over the hour and remarkably held Wexford to just three scores from open play.

This was a Wexford team that were beaten in the final 12-months ago and were the championship favourites from the outset.

After three seasons without an U-21 win Limerick were 18/1 outsiders from the outset but justified their 2/5 final odds with a dominant display.

Nine successive points in the final 10-minutes sealed the victory and such was the margin of victory thousands of Limerick supporters streamed onto the sidelines as the final minutes ticked down before invading the Scemple Stadium pitch at the final whistle, which signalled a 0-26 to 10-7 victory in front of 18,244.

Captain Diarmuid Byrnes lifted the Cross of Cashel trophy to add to previous wins in 1987, 2000, 2001 and 2002.

The victory maintains Limerick's proud record of never losing an All Ireland U-21 hurling final.

From the early minutes, Limerick, with 11 starting players underage next season, looked very much on form playing just as they did in the Tipperary, Clare and Galway enroute to the final.

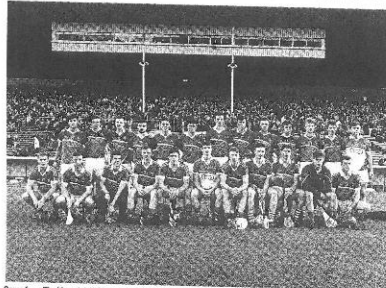
Limerick were 0-11 to 0-4 up at half-time after dominating the first half.

It was a first half that Wexford went 12-minutes without a score as Limerick led 8 to 0-2 after 20-minutes.

The early minutes were nervous but points from Pat Ryan and Barry Nash settled Limerick as the game was level 0-2 each seven minutes.

Tom Morrissey came to life with successive points. Tom Morrissey had two with Barry Nash in between to set the ball rolling.

Then on the 11th minute Limerick thought they had a goal when Ronan Lynch found the net but referee Johnny Ryan called it back for a free.



From left: The Limerick U-21 squad (above) before Saturday's All Ireland final against Wexford in Thurles; below: Limerick goalkeeper David McCarthy clears his lines. Pictures: Sportsfile

While the absence of advantage angered many, the Tipperary official was consistent when doing likewise to Wexford's Kevin Foley in the 28th minute.

Two Ronan Lynch frees stretched the lead and then Barry Nash had his second point from play to leave it 0-8 to 0-2 after 30-minutes.

Not for the first time this season Limerick then slightly faded and Wexford had two frees from Conor McDonald to cut the lead to 0-8 to 0-4.

But testament to Limerick they finished the hour brilliantly with three free points from play in a two minute spell.

Pat Ryan, Cian Lynch and Nash accounted for the vital points for a seven point half time lead.

While Limerick had nine scores from play in the half, Wexford had just one. When The Model County did find a way through Limerick defence excellently with Wexford's Andrew Kenney denied goal chances by Richie English's body block in the first minute and Darragh O'Donovan's hook in the 23rd minute.

Within 10-minutes of the restart Wexford had replaced most midfielders but the Limerick dominance continued and they led 0-14 to 0-5 with Pat Ryan and Ronan Lynch on target.

Although's Limerick's wider tally reached 12 with 15-minutes to play the Treaty men were 0-15 to 0-7 clear.

Ten minutes from time Conor McDonald had Wexford's goal.

But the response from Limerick side everything about this thrilling team.

Nine successive points followed to seal the scintillating display and a most welcome All Ireland title.

BIG MATCH IN BRIEF

Star Man - Barry Nash

The South Liberties man was chosen as the TGA-Bord Gais Man of the Match. He was one of seven Limerick scorers and led the way with five points from play. But the heroes were throughout the team from Richie English in defence to Tom Morrissey and Nash in attack.

Key moment

THERE was a mini Wexford revival late in the first half to cut the lead to 0-8 to 0-4 but three injury time points from Limerick brought the half time lead to seven points. A gap that was never reduced.

What now?

ALL but four of the starting team will be underage in 2016 to defend this All Ireland U-21 title. But ultimately many will be part of the new senior panel and with high hopes.



Manager's view

"It goes without saying we picked up these players at the start of this year and we put our stamp on them but there were so many managers and coaches like Brian Ryan, Leo O'Conner and Joe Quaid and all these people who have been involved at underage for the last four years have worked hard as have their club coaches and mentors."



Calling the shots: Limerick U-21 manager John Kiely during the game

Kiely praise for Limerick 'tidal wave'

REACTION

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LIMERICK'S All Ireland winning manager, John Kiely has described the display of his U-21 heroes as a "tidal wave".

The Shanonistories beat Tipperary, Clare, Galway and Wexford to lift national honours and the manager is loud in praise of this 40-man panel.

"We just needed to get over the monkey off the back of the defeat of the last three years and give the boys confidence and give us the launch pad to get the boys training and working hard. Momentum built and built and it seemed like we were a tidal wave in the finish today and that momentum was almost visible on the pitch - there was no stopping them," said the manager.

"Hats off to the boys, it's hard to bring stuff from a training ground and the meeting room on All Ireland final day but they did and very successfully so. Everything we had spoken about for weeks on end, just came off and I am so delighted for the lads," said the Limerick man.

"It's hard to believe it," he said of the emphatic victory. "Even as the game was going on I was just waiting for the moment that was going to

put us under pressure. They got a goal but listen the manner in which the boys went about getting the next point - their determination to run forward was just incredible. At every opportunity our boys dropped the shoulder and rain and there was nothing going to stop them - there was always someone else on their shoulder waiting for the pass," explained Kiely.

"I don't see that coming - I was quite wary of Wexford. Losing a final (2014 Clare) and they had a lot of players there from last year and their performance against Kilkenny (1st senior final), I thought they were going to bring something to this game that I had not seen with the other teams in terms of the aerial ability and the directness of their play. You need to be very resolute and good in the air and let's face it Limerick teams wouldn't be known for their prowess in the air in recent years and we have looked at that for the last couple of weeks that we were going to stand up and catch the ball and it's did it and we were going to get on the ground - that was the launch pad for our attacks and our work rate was tremendous throughout the field."

"Hats off to them - they are a fantastic bunch of lads, 1-40. It's a pleasure to work with them and they had a lot of good people around us in the backroom team - fella's doing jobs carrying water bottles and picking up stools."

ALL THE LATEST NEWS?

Check out our website today for the latest reaction to the All Ireland U-21 victory

www.limerickleader.ie

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The backroom boys: Members of the Limerick management team, from left to right, selector Jimmy Quilty, coach John Flavin, manager John Kiely, and strength and conditioning coach Ross Flavin celebrate after the All Ireland U-21 final in Thurles on Saturday evening. Picture: Sportfile

'Absolutely incredible' feeling for captain Byrnes

U-21 CAPTAIN INTERVIEW

JAMES O'CONNELL
GAA Correspondent
17 hours

LIMERICK'S All Ireland winning U-21 captain has led the tributes to the Limerick supporters who cheered his side to glory.

"I don't know how to describe it really - you can see what it means to the players because this is absolutely incredible. It was an incredible feeling when that final whistle went. I could see the crowd on the sideline and they just swarmed us when the final whistle went," he recalled.

After lifting the Cross of Cashel trophy, the Patrick-

swell 21 year old had to "take a moment" to gather his thoughts.

"I took a moment after a spoke and I handed the cup over to the lads and I took a moment for myself. To see all those Limerick fans, maybe 15,000 on the field - I had seen the scene in Limerick in 2013 (Munster SHC final) but it is incredible to look down and to do it for them was great," said the influential wing back.

"We don't get too many glory days like this. Silverware might be scarce but when we do get it you can see what it means to people - we have a lot of loyal supporters who travel around the country for us and we need that as

well," he said of the big Limerick support in the crowd of 18,544.

"They have suffered enough but these glory days are what we keep going for and thankfully we did the business."

Such was the Limerick lead the support made their way onto the sidelines with five minutes to go, edging on to the field as the stopwatch ticked down.

"Only noticed them when I was running back along after scoring a point - I couldn't even see the management because they were sucked in by the crowd," he said.

"In the dying moments of the match and you know the game is yours you know

you are up by 13-points and you have a moment when you can see the crowd and you know you are bringing it home and it's a great feeling," he revealed.

Byrnes said that the Limerick response to both mini revivals from Wexford was testament to the champion's spirit.

"We deleted that goal straight away - we went down the field and boom, boom, boom, three points on the trot and I think we really put the foot on the throat then because that had given them a bit of a boost and it brought the game back to seven points. To delete that goal - straight away - showed the great team spirit."

No rest for Limerick U-21 hurling stars as clubs go centre stage

CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS

JAMES O'CONNELL
Final year editor/limerickleader.ie
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JUST 72 hours after winning All Ireland honours the first of the Limerick U-21 hurlers will return to club duty.

The next seven days will see 35 crucial club football and hurling ties take place.

This Tuesday and Wednesday nights are the final rounds of group games in the Limerick IFC and SFC.

Then next Saturday and Sunday attention turns to club hurling fixtures.

On Saturday is the first of the Limerick SHC quarter-finals with Adare playing Ahane in Kilmallock at 5.30. Limerick U-21 team-mates Jody Hananon (Adare) and Tom and Paddy Morrissey will be on opposite sides.

The second quarter final takes place on Sunday at 1.00 in the Gaelic grounds with champions Kilmallock playing Doon.

Doon will be backed by five U-21 stars - Pat Ryan, Richie English, Darragh O'Donovan, Dean Coleman and Eoghan McNamara.

Kilmallock's Robbie Hanley was part of the U-21 set-up but injury forced him to miss Saturday's final and could miss the club game.

After two postponements the final round of group games in the club football championships finally takes place over the next 48-hours.

All 12 clubs can still reach the knockout stages of the Limerick SFC, albeit more

realistically eight clubs are battling for the six places.

After 24 games not one single club has a game guaranteed their place in the next round. As the final round of fixtures have worked out there will be a game in either group to determine the eventual group winner and the side that progressed directly to the semi-finals.

In Group One, champions Ballylanders play Drom-Broadford, while in Group Two, Newcastle West play Ballinsteen. While the winner of each of these games will advance to the semi-finals on October 3, while the loser will have to await the outcome of the remaining two games in the group to confirm if they progress to the quarter-finals.

While mathematically, Rathkeale, Pallasgreen, Adare and St Kierans can reach the knockout stages, their inferior scoring difference comes against them and therefore this quartet are battling to avoid the relegation play-off in their final games. One of the quartet face each other, with each facing opposition attempting to book a spot in the quarter-finals.

The bottom side in each group will play-off to determine who drops to the intermediate ranks in 2016. Where two teams finish level on points the result of the game between the pair will determine their league standings, while scoring difference will be used for three or more teams finishing on the same points.



The main man: Limerick's Barry Nash is presented with the Bord Gáis Energy award of the match award by Oisín Kierna, aged 12, from Kilmacsk Crokes GAA club, who won a competition to present the award through the Bord Gáis Energy Rewards club.