

1987 - Limerick end U-21 title wait



Champions: The Limerick Under 21 side who won both Munster and All Ireland titles in 1987, the later was a first for the county

By **JEROME O'CONNELL**
 e-mail: joconnell@limerickleader.ie
 Twitter: @JeromeSport

LIMERICK and Cork have met in 11 Munster U-21 hurling finals.

Cork won the first five meetings before Limerick's first ever provincial U-21 title in 1987.

That was a final played in Bruff on Wednesday May 27.

Similar to 2017, the U-21 team of 30 years ago was vastly experienced - Limerick had played in the Munster MHC finals of 1982-84 and the Munster U-21 final of 1986.

Of those five finals - Limerick had collected silverware with the '84 minors and '86 U-21s.

Corner forward in the '87 Munster U-21 final was Garryspillane's Brian Stapleton.

"I can still remember the

burning anger we had after losing the '86 All Ireland U-21 semi final to Galway. Galway went on to win the All Ireland and it was one we felt we could have and should have won," recalled Stapleton this week.

Phil Bennis was Limerick U-21 manager in '87, as he was in '86 and previous to that worked with this group of players at minor level. The backroom team included Pat O'Sullivan (Claughaun), Tom Bulfin (Bruff), Paddy Shanahan (South Liberties) and Gerry Molyneux (Rathkeale).

Limerick's journey to the '87 Munster final started with a quarter final win over Waterford. That set up a semi final meeting with Tipperary - who Limerick only beat by two points in the minor final of three years previous.

Like the final, that semi final was in Bruff.

"I remember Phil Bennis came up with the logic for Bruff. He felt back in '84 that if we were to win the minor that we would be doing it in Thurles and that Bruff was more similar in size and condition than the Gaelic Grounds. We continued to use Bruff then at U-21 level" recalled Stapleton.

"Ahead of the final we also knew that the Cork boys hated coming to Bruff," he laughed.

"In '84 we had beaten Cork in Cork and I can remember then that for that U-21 game we felt that if we could beat them in Cork, that we could beat them anywhere. We really felt that the Tipperary semi final would be the hardest - they would have been bigger physically," outlined the Garryspillane man, who scored the equalising point in the 1984 drawn All Ireland MHC final.

"Once we had Tipp beaten we had no real fear of Cork. They had senior stars but so had we," he recalled of the likes of John Fitzgibbon, Mark Foley, Seanie McCarthy and Kieran McGuckian.

"There really was a lot of experience in our team of '87 - we were a seasoned team even at that stage. Most of the lads would have been playing county senior championship with their clubs and we had lads off the Sexton Street Harty Cup teams."

The final was won 3-14 to 2-9 with blistering starts to both halves laying the foundation for victory.

Gary Kirby scored 10 points from frees.

"Gary never left us down. He was crucial at centre forward because centre backs didn't know how to mark a big awkward left hander. Firstly we knew that there would be breaking ball off

him and also his distribution was top class," recalled Stapleton, who is almost 25 years gone from Limerick and now the Managing Director of Periploi Aviation, based in Dublin.

"I was in the full forward line and we would have had others like Pat Barrett, Leo O'Connor, Joe O'Connor, Pat Davoren - plenty speed, strength and scoring."

Limerick were 2-7 to 1-6 ahead at half time and an early scoring return of 1-3 had

the home side 3-10 to 1-7 clear within minutes of the restart.

Limerick's first ever Munster U-21 title progressed them to an All Ireland semi final against Down in Croke Park.

On June 21 Limerick's wait for an All Ireland U-21 title ended in Cusack Park in Ennis when Galway were defeated 2-15 to 3-6 to gain revenge for the semi final loss of the previous year.

Cluiche Ceannais na Mumhan 1987

Iomaint Fe 21



**LUIMNEACH
V
CORCAIGH**



Reiteoir: W. Barrett (Tiobraid Arann)

Q3
security systems

Proudly supporting Josh Adams,
and the Limerick U21 Hurling team,
in the 2017 Munster Final



MSAI Certified

Limerick 061 35 35 33

Dublin 01 539 44 33

www.q3.ie

REC!



Archive: Mr. Michael Kirby, (right) principal of Glenbrohane NS, presents an Appreciation Award to past pupil Brian Stapleton amid cheers from the pupils - Below - 1987 Munster Final Programme

CORCAIGH

DATHANNA: DEARG IS BAN



The Cork Team which defeated Clare in the Semi-Final. Photo Courtesy: Kieran Clancy, "Cork Examiner"

- (1) Tom Kingston (Tracton)
 - (2) Christy Connery (Na Piarasigh)
 - (3) Seamus O'Leary (St. Flabars)
 - (4) Kieran McGuckian (Glen Rovers)
 - (5) Trevor Cooney (Captain) (Fermoy)
 - (6) Pat Kerneally (Newcestown)
 - (7) Kieran Looney (Sarsfields)
 - (8) A.N. Other
 - (9) Declan Kenneally (Sarsfields)
 - (10) Michael Mullins (Na Piarasigh)
 - (11) Sean M. Carthy (Ballyhassig)
 - (12) John Fitzgibbon (Glen Rovers)
 - (13) Mark Foley (Timoleague)
 - (14) Michael O'Mahony (Midleton)
 - (15) Ger Manley (Inniscarra)
 - (16) Pat Barry (Blackrock), (17) John Power (Sarsfields), (18) Noel O'Leary (Blackrock), (19) John Murphy (Douglas), (20) Mick Crotty (Midleton), (21) Eoin Cavanagh (Blackrock), (22) Dan O'Connell (Kilbrannan)
- Roghnoiri Gerry Galvin (Fermoy) Manager, Paddy Barry (St. Vincents), Mick Malone (Sarsfields) Coach/Trainer, Brendan Barry (Tracton), Bertie O'G Murphy (Sarsfields)

Kenneally Jewellers Ltd.
 WICKHAM STREET,
 LIMERICK
 Phone 45704

LUIMNEACH

DATHANNA: GLAS IS BA



The Limerick Team which defeated Tipperary in the Semi-Final. Photo Courtesy: "Limerick Leader"

- (1) Val Murnane (Coheline)
 - (2) Anthony Madden (Bruff)
 - (3) Pat Casey (Patrickswell)
 - (4) Don Flynn (Kilceedy)
 - (5) Declan Nash (South Liberties)
 - (6) Anthony O'Riordan (Bruff)
 - (7) Ger Hegarty (Old Christians)
 - (8) John O'Neill (Kilfinane)
 - (9) Mike Reel (Bruff)
 - (10) Anthony Carmody (Patrickswell)
 - (11) Garry Kirby (Patrickswell)
 - (12) Gus Ryan (Captain) (Cloughaun)
 - (13) Pat Barrett (Bruff)
 - (14) Joe O'Connor (Ballybrown)
 - (15) Brian Stapleton (Garryspillane)
 - (16) Dan McKenna (Cappamore), (17) Nicky O'Farrell (Na Piarasigh), (18) Declan Marzon (Adare), (19) Sean Enright (Fedamore), (20) Brendan Helfernan (Adare), (21) Tony Dunne (Adare), (22) Arnd Cummeen (Cloughaun), (23) Joe O'Grady (Ahane), (24) Eoin Stapleton (Garryspillane), (25) Ray Doherty (Rathkeale), (26) Seamus Twomey (Adare)
- Roghnoiri Phil Bennett (Patrickswell) Manager, Pat Sullivan (Cloughaun), Tom Bultin (Bruff), Paddy Shanahan (South Liberties), Gerry Molyneaux (Rathkeale)

The **MICK MACKKEY** *Stand*

Work has now started Cost £1.3 million
 Join Our Monthly Members Lottery
 £1,200 in Prizes Each Month
PLUS
 A Toyota Starlet every 2nd month
 Tel: (061) 41111



Emmett O'BRIEN

Your Independent Local Councillor
 Mobile: 087 7998199
 Landline: 061 393073
 f Cllr Emmett J. O'Brien
 @EmmettOBrienIND

Best of Luck to Kyle Hayes and the Limerick U21 Hurling Team, in the Munster Final from Kildmo/Pallaskerry GAA Club