

Wembley Rovers' winning way



The proudest under-14 team have won all their matches so far, and are leading the league. Back row — Patrick Ryan, James Carey, Deaiga O'Callaghan, Gerard O'Loughlin, Kieran Sciascia. Front row—Ronald Walsh, Michael Ryan, Thomas McElligott, Phillip Naughton (capt.), Ralph Keating and Francis Enright.



The schoolboys' team (under-14) of 1959-60, front row (l. to r.)—Arthur O'Sullivan, Gerard Cronin, Brendan Ross, Denis O'Sullivan, Thomas Ryan. Back row—John Connolly, Noel Taylor, Tony Krane, Willie O'Brien, Ivan Morris, Michael Keane.

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A MAGNIFICENT tradition in Limerick football has been built up by one of the oldest of the city clubs, Wembley Rovers. In schoolboy football, they have won almost every major trophy, and some of the most important titles have, indeed, come to the club on more than one occasion. To-day, Wembley continue to play good football in all grades, and they have entered a new team in the "B" division to make a grand total of five teams in training.

Away back in 1934, Wembley Rovers was founded as a junior club by E. "Polo" Ryan, Ned Whelan, the late S. Quinn, J. Doyle, Peter Quinn, S. Kinivan and Paddy Moloney. Four years later a schoolboy—then called "juvenile"—under-16 team entered the competitive arena and took honours in 1939 by defeating Pike Rovers 3-1 in the final at the Markets Field.

On the defeated Pike team were such stalwarts as Tim "Togsey" Cunneen, Jim Keogh, Josie McKeown (the popular Chairman of the Inter-Firm committee) and Jim Madden (who has done such good work in recent years as Treasurer of the L.D.M.C.). The Wembley team fielded such well-known personalities as Willie Flaherty (who played with Limerick A.F.C. and is now trainer), John "China" Carroll, who after a few games with Limerick A.F.C. was transferred to West Ham), Jimmy Maher, who later played in goal with Limerick A.F.C., and Jimmy Kelly, one of the best ever full-backs in the game.

Then came the break from schoolboy to junior soccer and during the War years Wembley had a phenomenal run, winning just about all the junior trophies that were on offer.

In the 1953-54 season the club was re-entered for schoolboy football by Jim Calvert, Mick Sullivan, Richard Calvert, E. "Polo" Ryan, P. Fitzgerald and E. Benn. A lean period followed, but it was a brief one, and the come-back was made in the 1958/59 season with the Whelan Shield (under 15).

WINNING CYCLE

It marked the beginning of a fantastic winning cycle, and the achievement reads: 1958/59, Liam Whelan Shield (under 15); 1959/60, Limerick Schoolboy Shield (under 13) and Rathfarnham Cup (under 13); 1960/61, Limerick Schoolboy Shield (under 14); 1961/62, Liam Whelan Shield (under 15); 1963/64, Rathfarnham Cup (under 13) and Limerick Schoolboy Shield (under 14); 1964/65, Pike Shield (under 12, 7-a-side), Rathfarnham Cup (under 13), Limerick Schoolboy Shield (under 14) and Patrick Kirwan (under 16).

First club winner of the "Player of the Year" awards was Arthur O'Sullivan, son of Mike O'Sullivan, one of the outstanding centre-halfs of local football for many years. Arthur was awarded the title in 1962, and subsequent winners were: 1963, Brian Bennis (under 13); 1964, Graham Cashell (under 14); 1965, Gerard O'Loughlin (under 14) and Patrick Kirwan (under 16).

Other honours won by Wembley Rovers' players include: Schoolboy International, Ivan Morris; Youth International, Dermot O'Donovan, full international, Sean Cusack (professional) and Buddy O'Grady (amateur); League of Ireland, Willie Flaherty, J. "China" Carroll, John Maher, G. "Ginger" Cronin and Dermot O'Donovan. Inter-county schoolboy honours have been won by Arthur O'Sullivan, Noel Taylor, Ivan Morris, Brendan Ross, Paschal Crowe and Patrick Kirwan. The following have played with Limerick B and C: Brendan Murray, Ger Cronin, Frank Sheridan, Niall Bennis, Arthur O'Sullivan, Liam McMahon, Maurice Hartery and Declan O'Reilly.

RECORD

In the 1959/60 season the club created a record for Limerick schoolboy soccer by winning the under-13 League and Cup and having only one goal scored against them in the series. Wembley's under-15 side to play at Glenstal Abbey. And, as regards travelling out of Limerick, they are one of the most active of clubs, having played in such venues as Dublin, Cork, Galway, Foynes and Askeaton.

Acting on this year's committee are Eddie Barry, Tom O'Brien, Joe O'Donovan, Mick O'Sullivan, Ned Whelan and Tom Hayden. The season's captains and vice-captains are, respectively: Under-13, Ger O'Donnell and Ronnie Walsh; under-14, Phil Naughton and Kieran Sciascia; under-15, Glenn Shackleton and Dave Brockert; under-16, Kevin McMahon and Mick O'Donovan.

TRAINING

A unique system of training, initiated some seasons ago by Tony Hayden (who with Ed Whelan is in charge of coaching), has had excellent results with the schoolboy players in the club. Tony attributes this success to the fact that the boys play as a team rather than as individuals. And the secret lies in instilling a full sense of club responsibility and spirit in the players. They are encouraged to engage in all facets of club work. At their weekly meetings they select teams, discuss matches, take care of gear that has to be washed, and notify players of fixtures. Each team has its representation on the committee.

TONY HAYDEN

Tony Hayden, a Limerick man, played schoolboy hurling with the Model, trained for athletics with St. Munchin's College, and is one of the city's prominent basketball players. In 1964 he made his debut in table-tennis with St. Augustine's and captained the team that were runners-up in the Limerick Junior B Championship. He takes a lively interest in youth movements, was a scoutmaster for a few years with St. Mary's, and is a member of An Oige. Three of his nine years with the Legion of Mary were spent in helping with the running of Stella Maris Boys' Club, and then the Augustinian Boys' Club was opened about three years ago he took on the office of Youth Leader. He is employed with Messrs. William Todd and Co. Ltd. Tony would like to see the following clubs coming back to schoolboy football—Reds Utd., Fairview Rangers, Caledonians, Westland Rovers, Well United, Richmond Rovers and Revvington Rovers. He would welcome a greater spirit of co-operation between clubs, and, in common with almost everyone who is interested in the promotion of the sport in Limerick, he would like to see better facilities provided for schoolboy football.

ATHLETICS

The club is remarkable for the number of athletes who are prominent among its members. They include Anthony McNamara, All-Ireland champion cross-country runner (under-16); Richard Eades, Munster champion sprinter; Neil Cusack, under-14 cross-country champion, and John Prenderville, javelin and long-jump Munster champion. Past champions include Brian Bennis, sprinter; Michael O'Donovan, sprinter, and Michael Reeves, Munster decathlon champion.



The under-15 team of 1958-59, winners of the Liam Whelan Shield. Back row—N. Sheedy, R. Clancy, S. Madden, E. O'Brien, J. Hanlon, P. O'Brien. Front row—S. O'Brien, P. Whelan, J. McNamara (capt.), J. Mulcahy and C. Robinson.



The under-13 team of 1959-60 were record breakers, winning the League and Cup Competitions and only conceding one goal in both. Back row—J. Quinlivan, M. Wixted, F. O'Connor, A. Keane, P. Keane, E. Mackessy. Front row—P. Crowe, R. Long, A. O'Sullivan (capt.), P. McNamara and R. Daly.

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Inter-Firm Soccer Fixtures

"A" League—
L. v. C. Clover Meats, Monday, 11/6/66, Cal's, 7.00; referee, P. Ryan.
"B" League—
O'Mara v. Port Workers, Tuesday, 11/6/66, Cal's, 7.00; referee, S. J. Meagher.
"C" League—
Mullins v. A.F.D., Tuesday, 11/6/66, 8.15; P. J. Meagher & Meek, Elect. XI v. Crescent Clothes, Saturday, 11/6/66, Bks. 4.15; P. O'Connor, 12th Batt. v. E.L. A., Tuesday, 14/6/66, Bks., 7.30; M. Meagher.
"D" League I—
S. Foundry v. Reg. Hospital, Saturday, 11/6/66, Shel's, 5.00; M. Kelly.
Krups v. I.A.W.S., Monday, 13/6/66, Shel's, 7.00; A. Shaw.
Shannon Spinners v. Morgan McKahon's, Tuesday, 14/6/66, Shel's, 7.30; M. Meagher.
"D" League II—
Limerick Shoes v. Callins Int., Saturday, 11/6/66, Shel's, 8.15; P. J. Meagher.
P.O. Henry St. v. Shannon Dyers, Sat., 11/6/66, Shel's, 7.00.
Printers v. Banks, Saturday, 11/6/66, Cal's, 6.30; C. Barry.