

Pike Rovers made soccer history

EVER since they entered local soccer ranks in 1938, Pike Rvs. have established themselves as one of Ireland's leading football clubs. In addition to winning most of the trophies on offer to them, they can also boast of having supplied some great names to the football world—players such as Tim Cunneen, Tony McKeown, Mick Lipper, John Gavin, Joe Casey and Des. McNamara, who have collected Inter-League and full international honours for their country.

Pike Rovers, who made history by being the first club to bring a national soccer trophy to their native city, were founded in 1938. At the first meeting held in the Blackboy Pike area, those selected to included in the affairs were: Messrs. Tom Slattery, Paddy and Sean Frawley, Mick Russell, S. McKeown, Joe Dillon and Tom Liston. It was decided to participate in minor and juvenile grades. For a few years, success eluded them, and in 1941, due to the world situation, many of their members answered the call to arms and consequently the club had to withdraw from the soccer arena.

However, in 1944 the club was again revived by Messrs. Joe McKeown, Mick Waters and Jimmy Madden, and again took part in minor and juvenile competitions, this time to bring to the Pike its first soccer trophy, winning the minor league. Those who helped win this trophy were: J. Madden, Joe Casey, F. Liston, T. O'Sullivan, J. Stockill, R. Rahilly, A. McKeown, Mick and Ed. Waters, G. Hanrahan, Mick Lipper, F. Cleary and P. Lavin. Season 1945/46 saw Pike re-enter junior ranks and won the Cromer Cup for the first time. The Pike team then was: J. Madden, M. Sergeant, J. Casey, J. Stockill, J. McKeown, T. Naughton, McKeown, T. Cunneen, D. Hanrahan (present Chairman Bord na gCon), F. Cleary, K. O'Mara, M. and E. Waters, W. Dillon, G. Frawley and T. Griffin.

SUCCESSES

This was the forerunner of a great run of successes for the Pike club and their record to date is: F.A.I. Minor Cup (1), Munster Senior League (1), Buckley Cup (1), Munster Junior Cup (1), Lawson Cup (1), Saxone Cup (4), Cromer Cup (4), North Munster Cup (2), Limerick Junior League (2), Limerick Minor League (5), Under 17 Cup (1), Under 16 Cup (1), 16 League (4), 15 Cup (2), 14 Cup (2), 13 Cup (1), Mick Waters Testimonial Cup (1), Limerick Minor Cup (5). In addition they were runners-up in the F.A.I. Intermediate Cup (1), F.A.I. Junior Cup (1), F.A.I. Minor Cup (1), and Munster Senior League (1). Season 1949/50 saw Pike make history by winning the Irish Minor Cup. It was their first time in this competition and it was also the first time a National trophy came to Limerick. They had a hard road to the final and registered a good win over Johnville (Dublin) in the final at the Markets Field (gate receipts £150). This was the first time the final of a National competition was played outside Dublin.

The Pike line-out was: Eamonn O'Connor, M. King, M. Kirby, M. Collopy, J. Stockill, A. O'Byrne, P. Storan, D. O'Donovan, M. Penny, J. O'Callaghan and P. Cronin.

Limerick had to wait another 16 years before Fairview won our next National trophy, beating Douglas, Cork, in the F.A.I. Junior Cup final.

Men behind the scenes when Pike won the Minor Cup were: Messrs. M. J. Keyes, T.D., Minister for Local Government; P. Frawley, Joe McKeown, John O'Shaughnessy, Tom O'Donnell, Mick Russell, John Dillon, Tom Lynch, D. Renwick and Mick Ryan. In season 1950/51, Pike fielded five teams for the first time in their history, junior, minor, juvenile league and two schoolboys. Looking after the schoolboys were Tony McKeown, Mick Lipper, R. Hynes and Mick King.

F.A.I. CUP

Pike also made history in season 1952/53, when they became the first Limerick club, outside of the L.O.I. eleven, to compete in the F.A.I. Senior Cup. They were drawn against Waterford in the opening round and were most unlucky to go under by 2-1. Pike qualified for the Intermediate Cup final the same season and went under to A.O.H., Cork. The Pike side then was: E. O'Connor, M. King, J. Casey, E. Waters, G. Flynn, T. Madigan, S. O'Dea, J. Meaney, J. O'Callaghan, D. Rochford, W. Downes and L. Byrne. Pike won the Munster Senior League the same season to bring the trophy to Limerick for the very first time.

Pike reached the F.A.I. Senior Cup for the second time in season 1959/60 when they went under by 4-3 to Cork Eds. at the Mardyke, and made history two seasons later when they reached the second round of the competition. They beat Longford Town in the opening round and were most unlucky to go out in the second round to Shelbourne (Dublin).

On the Pike side then were Eamonn O'Connor, M. Bennis, Brian Hanrahan, John Hunt, Paul Croke, Pat O'Dwyer, Eddie O'Donovan, Pat Casey, Gay Tobin, Pat Hackett, and Richie O'Brien, while Shels, boasted of such star players as Hannigan, Heavey, Bonham, Strahan and Roberts. Brian Hanrahan, who played left full-back for Pike against Shels, saw service with Sligo Rvs. and Shels, and is still one of the outstanding players on the present Pike side, as are Paul Croke, Ed. O'Donovan and Richie O'Brien. The gate receipts for the game against Shelbourne were £387.

MUNSTER JUNIOR CUP

Pike Rvs. collected the Munster Junior Cup for the first and only time in season 1953/54. Their victims were Brideville (Cork). The Pike side was: Clem Bennett, Jack O'Brien, Brian O'Brien, Paddy Quinlivan, John Murphy, Paddy Casey, Liam Foley, Eddie McCormack, Ger Waters, Dom Lipper, John O'Brien.

Pike Rvs. reached the F.A.I. Minor Cup in season 1955/56 and were beaten by Drumcondra in the final at the Markets Field. Pike fielded the following side: A. O'Brien, E. Flanagan, M. Kemmy, P. Casey, R. McMahon, D. McNamara, C. O'Brien, H. Byrnes, G. Waters, E. Tuite, E. O'Donovan.

PROMINENT

Pike Rvs. can boast of having had a Cabinet Minister as President. He was Dall Deputy M. J. Keyes, who was Minister for Local Government. Mick took a great interest in the sport, as did his two sons, Ger and Tom, who both played in attack. The Keyes family are not the only ones associated with the great story of Pike Rvs. There was Pat Frawley, huffer of half-a-century ago with Young Ireland, who was father of Pike stalwarts Paddy, Ger and Dan Frawley. Another family who helped this very ambitious club were the Waters quartet. Mr. Jack Waters, the father, was a prominent member of the Limerick Branch of the N.A.C.A.I. Tony Waters, his son, played minor for the club; Mick and Ed. Waters, two other sons, were juniors.

Then there was the McKeown family. Joe acted as Secretary without a break from 1944 to 1950 and played full-back with the club in 1940. Joe's brother, Seamus, was a founder member in 1938 and also played outside

left, while another brother, Tony, also gave great service to the club and later assisted Scottish First Division side, Aberdeen. The late Joe McAleer signed Tony for Limerick, with whom he got inter-League honours, and was transferred for £2,000. Others who have given great service to the Pike club are Dick Penny, Tom Joyce, Jim Burrowes, Pat Woodland and Dan Howard.

Pike are noted for producing top-class footballers and amongst those to represent their country were: Tim Cunneen, Arthur O'Connor, Gerdie Flynn, Jim Downes, John Gavin, Anthony McKeown, Joe Casey, John Fricke, Mick Lipper, Noel Carey, Mick Kemmy, Ger Waters, Eddie O'Donovan, Des McNamara, Pat Casey, Mick Doyle and Tony Ahern. Ben Barrett and Brian O'Brien gained interprovincial honours. The majority of the above players figured prominently with Irish and English clubs after leaving Pike, notably John Gavin (Norwich) and Tottenham Hotspur), McKeown (Aberdeen) and Tim Cunneen (Aberdeen).

CAPTAINS

Past captains of the club are—Ger Frawley, Joe McKeown, Vincent Rochford, Frank Hardaker, Ger Frawley, Ed. Waters, Joe Casey, Pat O'Brien, Mick Kemmy, John O'Brien, Brian O'Brien, Pat O'Dwyer, Mick Lipper, Brian Hanrahan, Pat Casey, Paul Croke, Ed. O'Donovan, Oily O'Brien and the present captain, Pat Lawlor.

Among the novelties sponsored by Pike were fancy dress soccer matches (held on Christmas mornings) and hurling challenges between rugby and soccer players and hockey and rowing clubs. There are many who would like to see those novelty games revived again. The Pike Club presented a

special trophy to their star forward, Eddie O'Donovan, in 1953. O'Donovan played in under-14, 15 and 16 grades in the one season and had the satisfaction of scoring in each game.

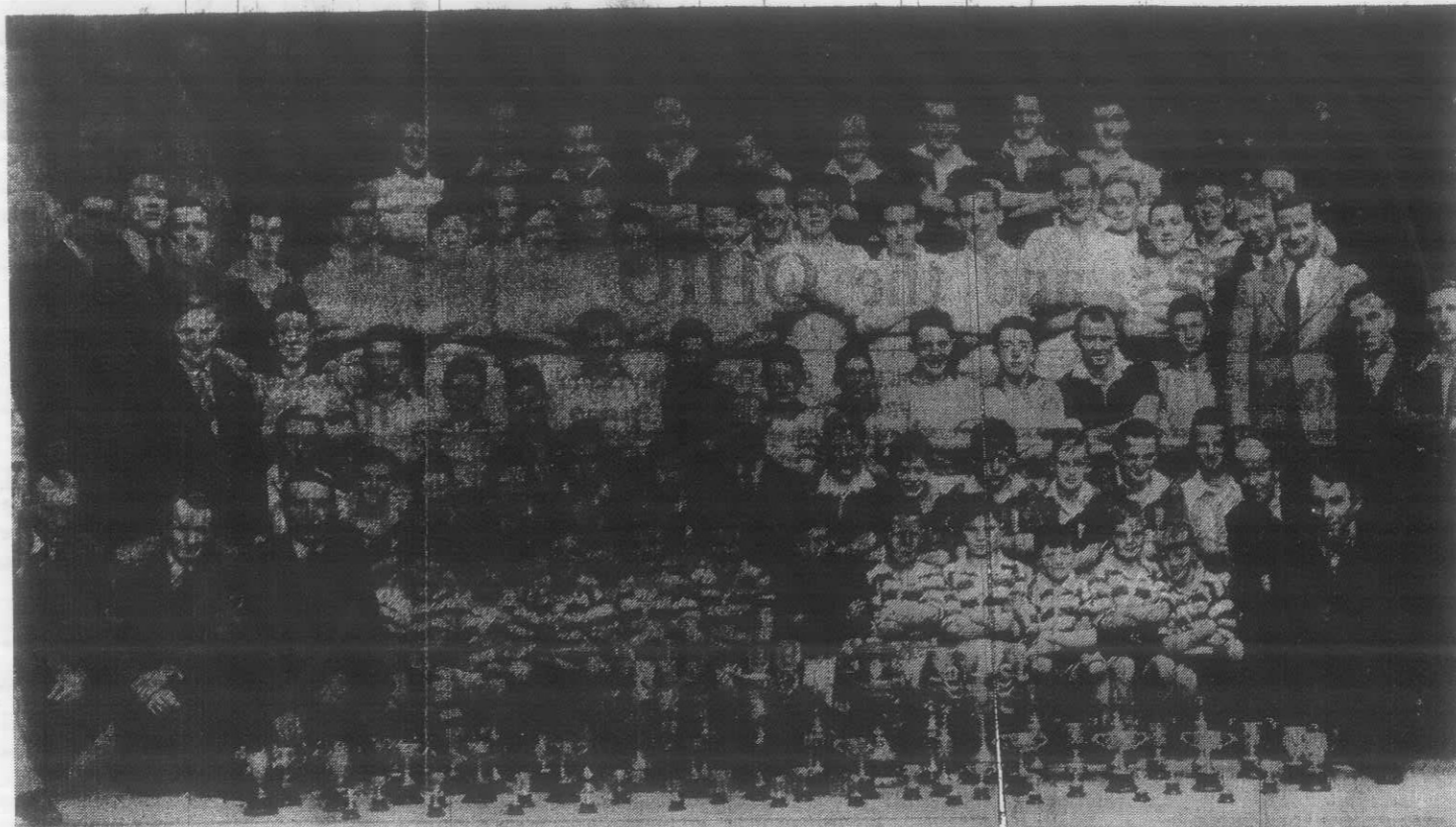
OFFICERS

The present officers of the Pike Club are: President: Mr. Jack Waters; hon. chairman, Jim Burrowes; hon. vice-chairman, Pat Kenneally; hon. treasurer, Dan Howard; assistant hon. treasurer, Sean Sheehan; hon. secretary, Ed. O'Donovan; assistant hon. secretary, Noel Enright. Committee: Noel Enright, Committee: Noel King, Brian Hanrahan, Paul Croke, Willie O'Brien, Dan Greaney, Jim Stockill and Mick McNamara.

Schoolboy Committee: Dan Howard, Justin Herbert and John Sheehan. Hon. vice-presidents: Rev. Fr. O'Grady, Rev. F. Gallagher, Rev. Fr. Walsh, C. O'Dwyer, D. Sheehan, Joe McKeown (snr.) and Tom O'Donnell.

Pike Rovers have not won a schoolboy trophy since they won the Under-13 Cup in 1961-'62, but they hope to rectify the matter this year. They are doing exceptionally well in the League at the moment and they seem assured of several successes under the capable hands of Mr. Dan Howard, who has done tremendous work for schoolboy football in the city.

Pike took a step in the right direction recently when they opened their new ground at the Fairgreen. They feel they could have done much better down through the years if they had their own grounds and now that their wish has been fulfilled, we can expect even greater things from this proud club in the years ahead.



Pike Rovers A.F.C., 1953. Front row (l. to r.)—P. Tierney, P. O'Brien, P. Dillon, C. Carey, F. Flynn, J. Ryan, T. Flynn, J. O'Brien, T. Judge, P. Ryan, E. Costelloe, W. O'Brien, T. Costelloe, M. Fleming, P. Hanrahan, M. McCarthy, J. Cunneen, M. Doyle, M. Ryan, B. Tynan, Mr. J. Waters, J. Ryan, R. Ryan, P. Casey, L. Hoare, M. Fleming, J. Ryan. Third row—J. McKeown, P. O'Connor, L. McNamara, P. McGuire, S. O'Brien, N. Clancy, G. Waters, T. Burrowes, P. Croke, R. McMahon, S. Flanagan, N. Waters, T. Byrnes, M. Dillon, M. Cusack, A. McKeown. Fourth row—J. Holman, M. Griffin, J. Dillon, J. Joyce, S. McMahon, M. Kemmy, P. Lynch, D. Moloney, J. O'Connor, G. Deane, B. O'Brien, P. O'Brien, R. Clarke, P. Quinlivan, D. O'Donovan, S. Nestor, T. Joyce, T. O'Donnell, W. Neville, M. Russell, J. O'Shaughnessy. Back row—E. Sciascia, T. Cassidy, G. Frawley, B. Hanrahan, J. Casey, J. Stockill, J. McNamara, A. Waters, A. Shanny. John O'Brien (8th from left, front row) scored the only goal in last night's Saxone Cup final against Janesboro' Utd. at Pearse Stadium.



Pike Rvs., who won the 13 Cup in 1962. Front row—William Ryan, Michael Fitzgibbon, Philip Browne, Tadgh Horan, Peter McNamara. Back—Denis O'Sullivan, Ger O'Connor, Denis Sheehan, Michael Enright, Pat O'Dwyer, Joseph Fitzgerald.

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