



The Limerick United team that won the League of Ireland Championship at St. Mel's Park, Athlone. Standing, from left: Pat Nolan, John Delamere, Des Kennedy, Ger Duggan, Kevin Fitzpatrick, Brendan Storan, Eoin Hand. In front, from left: Dave Mahedy, coach; Gary Hulmes, Mick Ryan, Tony Morris, Joe O'Mahoney, Tony Meaney, Johnny Walsh.



Young Munster, winners of the 1979-80 C.B.C. teams of the province. Standing, from left: Ger McNamara, Brian O'Connor, Mick McCarthy, Gerry Casey. In front, Francis Brosnan, John Flanagan, Brian Flanagan, Eoin Hand.

# Eoin planning for 1980/'81

By John O'Shaughnessy

Though the excitement of Limerick's first League success in two decades is still very much with us, player-manager Eoin Hand is already planning ahead to 1980-'81. The former Republic of Ireland international confirmed after Sunday's 1-1 draw with Athlone Town that he would definitely be remaining on in his present capacity – and that is welcome news for United fans.

Hand, in re-living the tension and anxiety that was very much part and parcel of their exciting run over the past nine months, said that Limerick had given him his proudest moment in his illustrious career.

He confessed to having had many sleepless nights, particularly in the final few weeks as the blues held on grimly to their one-point advantage over deadly rivals Dundalk. "It was all so nerve wrecking, but looking back I think it was all so worthwhile. The lads deserved their success, and so did our supporters many of whom sacrificed so much to lend us encouragement all the way."

Though he shared in many great triumphs with Portsmouth and the Republic of Ireland, Hand stressed that his most memorable moment was when he was chaired off the pitch at St. Mel's Park. "The emotion shown by our supporters was genuine. I actually saw grown men shed tears of joy – that summed up for me their appreciation of what we had achieved."

At this juncture the boss refuted rumours to the effect that he might be considering returning to England.

"It might be a little premature to start talking in terms of next season, but let me state emphatically that I have a contract with Limerick and it is my intention to fulfil a part of the bargain. We have a European Cup game coming up in September and before that will be involved in the Tyler Cup – our preparations will commence in July, and by then I hope to have recruited a couple of new players to boost our squad."

While delighted with the progress made by his team this season Hand admitted that he would have liked a stronger playing panel. They were fortunate, he added, in that they escaped serious injuries and with only a limited pool, it wasn't possible to give players a rest period.

He spoke in glowing terms of the commitment and dedication he received from his squad. "They are only part-timers but they put as much effort into their game as would a Third or Fourth Division club in England."

Dave Mahedy, too, came in for much praise from the manager. The P.E. instructor had Limerick at peak fitness from the opening game of the season when they travelled to Belfast to play Linfield in the Tyler Cup and the same high pitch was maintained throughout the League.

## MAGNIFICENT

Hand also spoke about the magnificent response from the public.

"They backed us right from the beginning – there was no waiting on the wings until such time as we proved ourselves."

When asked if there were times during the season

## SPORTING VIEW

### A time to celebrate

IT CERTAINLY is a time for Limerick sport to celebrate. And if the hurlers can pull off the National League title in Cork on Sunday week, they will complete one of the greatest periods ever in the history of the city and county.

Although Young Munster mightn't agree, pride of place at present must go to the League of Ireland soccer team who finally reaped the reward by clinching the title at Athlone on Sunday. We have said more than once in this column during the year that the present Limerick side didn't deserve to go without a title simply because of their positive approach to the task on hand.

Never before has a Limerick soccer team trained as hard and played as hard. Every one of them was dedicated to winning the cup and the league, and the first was lost in one of the greatest matches played in this country for a long time, they turned to their attention to the league undaunted and duly picked up the three points which clinched the title.

The players themselves deserve every credit; so, too, do the Directors, led by Mick Webb, coach Dave Mahedy, who turned our probably the fittest side the Championship

ager was magnificent. The black and amber of Young Munster flew proudly after their thrilling Munster Cup final victory over Bohemians and here, too, there could hardly have been more popular winners. There was all-round sympathy for Bohemians, who put up such a mighty battle, but Young Munster had waited 42 years and had suffered bitter disappointment and no small amount of ill-fortune in that time.

For once, the ball hopped their way and as a club with some of the most efficient and courteous officials to be found anywhere, it gives one special pleasure to express congratulations.

And if the Munster Junior Cup is the most insignificant of the three championships, there can be no belittling the performance of Thomond in beating the might of U.C.C. to win the event for the second time. The Junior Cup is surely one of the most difficult of all events to win and for a relatively small club like Thomond, it was some achievement.

So now we keep our fingers crossed for the hurlers, and hope they can complete a mar-

when he felt their challenge might fade. Hand replied that while he lived on edge, his philosophy of taking each game as it came helped to ease the burden.

He did fear after that 1-0 defeat by Bohemians at Dalymount Park that they might be overtaken by Dundalk. "It was after that match that we went to Waterlooville for a rest period and when we returned to hammer Thurles Town 5-0 in our next match, I was firmly convinced that we had what it took to go the full distance."

Limerick United not only won the League – they also broke existing club records in addition to creating a new points total in the championship. The club must have grossed upwards of £55,000 over the season.

Never before in the history of the League has any one club netted such a figure.

Their total of 47 points was two better than the previous best set up by Dundalk last season, and four ahead of Bohemians who won the title the previous year with 43 points. They were also unbeaten at home.

What made their success all the more gratifying was that with the exception of Hand, Delamere, Hulmes and Matthews, the panel was an all local one. And remember it was late in the season when Delamere and Hulmes arrived on the scene.

Never before in the history of the club did Limerick win nine matches away from home in the same season.

Their total of 67 goals must also go into the history books.

That League triumph will be spoken about for many a long day. It serves another purpose in that it gives a new image to the game locally. The spin-off should be seen at junior, minor and schoolboy levels.

Limerick will be wined and dined over the next few weeks – and that's only as it should be. Their dedication throughout the season was never in question. They thrilled their supporters with some exciting performances, led the championship for practically the entire distance and in the manner in which some of their victories was achieved left an indelible mark.

Who will ever forget that magnificent display in Donegal when they came from 2-0 down with 20 minutes remaining to win 3-2 or that equally fascinating game at Killohan Park when they won 4-3 in a thriller? And beating Shamrock Rvs. 2-1 in Dublin was no mean feat either.

According to Joe O'Mahony, the game that gave him most satisfaction was against Sligo Rovers at the Showgrounds last September. "We won that one 3-2 after taking a pounding from Sligo, and it really hit me afterwards that this could be our season."

There were three players who played in all the club's fixtures, Kevin Fitzpatrick, Joe O'Mahony and Johnny Walsh.

Limerick can also feel proud of their F.A.I. Cup performances, beating Drogheda and Dundalk away from home, before eventually losing to Waterford in the semi-final, after a never-to-be-forgotten replay.

### GOAL SCORERS

	TC	LC	L	FAI	Total
Tony Morris	–	–	19	1	20
Eoin Hand	–	–	12	–	12
Johnny Walsh	–	–	9	3	12
Ger Duggan	–	1	6	1	8
Tony Meaney	–	–	5	–	5
John Delamere	–	–	3	1	4
Brendan Storan	–	–	1	–	1
Des Kennedy	–	–	4	1	5
Pat Nolan	–	–	1	–	1
Johnny Mathews	–	–	1	–	1
Pat Mullally	1	–	–	–	1
Gary Hulmes	–	–	4	–	4

Code TC: Tyler Cup; LC: League Cup; L: League; FAI: FAI Cup.

### APPEARANCES

	L	Cup	L	Cup T/Cup	Total
Fitzpatrick	30	4	1	1	36
Nolan	28	4	–	1	33
Storan	24	4	–	1	29
O'Mahony	30	4	1	1	36
Ryan	26	3	1	1	31
Fitzgerald	15	1	–	1	17
Meaney	18	4	–	–	22
Hand	28	4	1	1	34
Walsh	30	4	1	1	36
Duggan	26	4	1	–	31
Kennedy	16	4	1	–	21
Morris	30	3	1	1	35
Mathews	9	–	–	–	9
Delamere	6	3	–	–	9
Hulmes	3	1	–	–	4
P. Mullally	1	–	1	1	3
F. Mullally	8	–	1	–	9
F. McDonnell	2	–	1	1	4

### Parteen Pitch and Putt Club Mansergh Cup final

# Young Mu highlight

By CHARLIE MULQUEEN

**NO VICTORY over the All Blacks to "crow" over maybe, as we had this time last year, but what a season it still was for Munster rugby. After 42 years of trying, Young Munster finally won the coveted Munster Cup and that was enough to keep the tongues wagging for many moons to come!**

In the end, they were made to sweat it out by a Bohemian side that gave as good as it got in a pulsating final and only gave best by 2 points, 9 to 7, after a second half that will live forever in the memories of the 12,000 that thronged Thomond Park on a glorious afternoon.

Twelve months earlier, Munsters had lost a gloomy final against Garryowen by a penalty goal to nil. This year, they were slow to settle, didn't make much shape in the league and only a few impressive friendly results kept the faithful believing that the long period in the wilderness could be broken. Coach Tony Grant and selector Mick O'Callaghan were, however, playing their cards close to their chest. As Cup time approached, the "wasps" were doing noticeably better and like a racehorse groomed for the big event, they were just when it came to meeting league champions and championship favourites U.C.C. at Musgrave Park on March 30th.

It was a game that should never have been played, for the pitch was in atrocious condition, not least because Dolphin and Waterpark had waged battle immediately beforehand. However, to the great credit of all concerned, the young students of U.C.C. and the men from Young Munster produced a marvellous contest in the mud and pools of water and a try by under 23 international prop Brendan O'Connor was enough to see Munsters through.

They were drawn away again in the semi-final – against Dolphin – and came good again, two tries by left winger Derek McCarthy and a penalty by Gerry Casey seeing them home by 11 pts. to nil. At the same time in Limerick, Bohemians were accounting for Highfield at Thomond Park by 14 pts. to 3, and so the stage was set for the fourth successive all-Limerick final at Thomond Park.

The chat in the preceding fortnight was animated to put it mildly. Tickets were snapped up and when kick-off time on April 19 came around, there must have been 12,000 packed inside the ground – and that's more or less as much as Thomond Park can hold! It was a lovely sunny afternoon, and the pitch had more grass on it than ever before at this time of year, but there was a very stiff wind blowing down the centre and it was helping Bohemians in the first half.

Looking back on it all now, it is clear that Boh lost the chance of their first cup in eighteen years in those opening forty minutes. Well on top territorially, their backs failed to capitalise on the liberal supply won by the pack and Munsters, playing it quiet and tight, were happy to turn over at 3 pts. each.

Micky Bromell, a drop goal for Bohs and a Gerry Casey penalty for Young Munster, were the first half scorers, and it looked as good as over when the "wasps" went in front within five minutes of the resumption. Mick Sheehan's try, expertly taken and superbly set up first by a loose head heel by Pat McGrath and strong running by the centres Pat Cross and Francis Brosnihan, was converted by Casey. At 9-3 and the wind behind it, it looked a good thing for Munsters.

Strangely, though, it was Bohs who came at the favourites, shattering them in the forward exchanges and second-row John Madigan playing like a man possessed. All they managed in the end was a try by M. Wixted and when Steve Hennessy's difficult conversion attempt missed the target, Munsters were through at long last. Their fanatical supporters, surely 5 to 6,000 of them, were at last able to give vent to their pent-up feelings. All the

### Adare Manor Golf Club

### Walpole does it again!

Veteran Willie Walpole keeps marching on. After seeing off Jim Little (preliminary) and Tom McNamara in the first round it looked as if his gallop would be halted as he tackled Captain John McCarthy (5) in the third round last Sunday. But Willie didn't hold that view. He got stuck in from the first tee and playing consistent golf he was one up at the 8th; 2 up at the 9th and three up after 10 holes. Making the 11th and 12th it looked as if John had found his form but Walpole took the next two holes in style to finish the match on the 14th. The captain, a gallant loser at all times, paid great credit to his opponent. "Willie is a lesson in consistency and should do

nervous anxiety of the ever had to play was the players on to their high to the stand who already in full cry with "ters", the club's famous

42 years of frustration were forgotten Bohemians who were drawn, begrudged them too long for that, and they have been playing no doubt that this side rather than later.

Coach Tony Grant, skipper Ritchie Daly, 1 sec. Johnny Brennan through 1979-80. But the last eight months; it over the past decade a club launched an unsuccessful that the literally came up through

And on the same weekend their 42 year sp Limerick club, Thomond defeating U.C.C. in the Cup by 15 pts. to 9. They went for a club like Thomond sively from the Thomon with obviously limited Thomond are immer what grade they contend view Park they have grounds in the land.



Brian Flanagan, the Munster j

It was that spirit Thomond's cup fina was literally a who's C.B.C. teams of the province few from Crescent a shouldn't have had a not only the determine also the skill which; too cognisant of the

And so it transpire and that was a beaut Cusack just before h arrears. Two seco Flanagan clinched th

