

Academy carries Munster's hopes

By AIDAN CORR

MUNSTER'S academy players carry the hopes of the province for the future and already they are making an impact.

Three of the current academy played a role in Munster's win over Llanelli Scarlets last Saturday in Cork with a few former members also named in Declan Kidney's 22. Now academy members can while away their spare hours on their own individual laptops, compliments of a Limerick accountancy firm and business advisors.

BDO Simpson Xavier have agreed to supply Munster's rising stars with computers for their own educational and game analysis use. The three year sponsorship arrangement will see BDO Simpson Xavier become the first Sponsorship Partner of the Munster Rugby Academy.

At the announcement of the sponsorship Hamish Adams, manager of the Munster Rugby Academy said that this represents a very unique sponsorship which will directly benefit the academy players on and off the field.

"One of the main focuses of the Academy is on the educational development of players. All of the current eleven academy players are undertaking courses ranging from Business, Engineering, Sports Science to Building. We are delighted to secure such a sponsorship as it represents the first of its kind among all the provincial teams. It also acknowledges the way rugby is developing with a large element of player development taking place off the pitch. Ensuring all players have access to their own laptops for game and skills analysis is a great resource to have for their educational and rugby development," added Mr Adams.

Managing Partner of BDO Simpson Xavier Brian McGann said that one of the critical aspects underlying any team success in business or sports is a commitment to developing their people.

"We place great importance in career and skill development in our own business and know the importance of having access to the most modern training and educational resources available," said Brian.

"We are delighted to make this contribution to the development of the future stars of Munster Rugby."

He explained that the sponsorship will also result in BDO Simpson Xavier working with the Academy on a career development programme. Players will also be provided with access to ongoing career advice with dedicated consultants across a range of business disciplines.

BDO Simpson Xavier is also the Official Business Advisor to Munster Rugby.

The Academy operates a three year cycle with a maximum of seven places per year available. During their three years in the Academy all players complete a Level 7 Higher Education Training Awards Council Diploma in Professional Rugby through HETAC. Since the Munster Rugby Academy started three years ago players such as Tomas O'Leary, Jeremy Manning, Ciaran O'Boyle, Donnacha Ryan and Keith Earls have progressed to the senior squad.

This season Darragh Hurley, Mark Melbourne, Tom Gleeson, Gerry Hurley, Tim Ryan, and Denis Hurley have been promoted into the senior squad.

The Academy is overseen by an Academy board that includes Munster Rugby CEO Garrett Fitzgerald, Declan Kidney, Philip Danagher and Chaired by Donal Lenihan.

RUGBY FIXTURES

September 27
Senior Schools Friendly
Glenstal v Rockwell College at Glenstal 2.30
Junior Schools Friendly
Glenstal v Rockwell College at Glenstal 2.30

September 28
Magners League
Dragons v Munster at Rodney Park 6.10

September 29

The legacy of a Limerick legend

Johnny Gavin, one of Limerick's soccer greats, passed away last week. Aidan Corr traces his magnificent career.

ONE of the city's greatest ever footballers, Johnny Gavin, formerly of Janesboro, died on Friday last in a Cambridgeshire hospital. He was 79.

Johnny made his debut for Limerick AFC in season 1947-48 at outside right and his skills were quickly spotted by cross-channel scouts. He signed for Norwich City in 1949 and scored 132 goals in 338 outings for the Canaries.

Johnny started his playing career with local junior side Janesboro United and worked with CIE as a painter. His transfer from Limerick AFC to Norwich was one of the biggest talking points in soccer with a fee of £1,500 causing a stir in local sporting circles. Tottenham signed the Limerickman in 1954 and Johnny scored 15 goals for Spurs in 32 games. He then returned to Norwich and added a further 53 goals to his scoring record from 117 appearances for the Canaries.

The Gavin family originally lived in a detached house which was hidden from view by a high wall across the road from St Joseph's Hospital in Musgrave Street. That was home in its day to two Irish internationals, footballer Johnny Gavin and boxer Johnny Logan. The Gavins, who ran a grocery shop in William Street, then moved into the new housing estate in Janesboro having previously lived in the red-bricked terrace of houses across the road from the popular side entrance to the Markets Field.

Johnny was a promising footballer at juvenile level and cut his teeth with Janesboro United AFC. His talents were soon recognised by Limerick AFC and he was signed at the beginning of season 1947/48 on a contract that guaranteed him £1 a week. Johnny made an immediate impact as an outside right. According to Willie Hayes, who was the Limerick goalkeeper when Gavin played with the Blues, Johnny was a footballer with outstanding talent.

Speaking to the Limerick Leader from his home in Torquay, Bill said that himself and Johnny shared accommodation together during away games: "Johnny was a good friend of mine and whenever Norwich City came to play Torquay he would come and visit me. We also shared bedrooms when playing for Ireland and he was always good humoured and a thorough gentleman. Johnny played for the Boro and I played with Star Rovers, but I don't remember ever playing against him. We were both in the squad for the Republic of Ireland's World Cup qualifier against Finland at Dalymount Park in 1949. Johnny scored the home side's first goal direct from a corner that day and it was Ireland's first ever win in the World Cup.

"Johnny had great pace. I remember him taking part in an athletics meeting in the LPY-MA on the Ennis Road around 1947 and he won his race in a canter. He also scored a cracking



The 1947 Limerick AFC team - Johnny Gavin is pictured seated second from the right.

goal for Limerick against Drumcondra at the Markets Field. It was said that his performance that day clinched his contract with Norwich City. He cut in from the right wing and his shot flew into the top corner of the net. It was a brilliant individual goal and showed that he was a class apart from the rest of us."

Johnny won seven Irish caps and scored on his debut against Finland and in his final game in the Irish jersey. His last appearance was against Denmark on October 3, 1956 when he netted from the penalty spot to give Ireland a 2-1 victory.

Johnny's youngest child, Sharon Budworth, paid tribute to her father's bravery, both on and off the field.

"We're all very, very proud of him. He's always been such a strong and lovely man, even to the end," said Mrs Budworth, 39, from Huntingdon.

"He had been ill for some time. He was 79 and I think did remarkably well to fight it for a long time. In the end everything just got the better of him and he couldn't fight anymore but he did die peacefully. He had this inner strength to learn to live with everything that life threw at him and just took it on the chin and got on with it. He was just so strong."

Mrs Budworth said her father would be fondly remembered by his five children, 13 grandchildren, and seven grandchildren, many of whom are too young to remember his playing days at Carrow Road.

for several players' reunions and was inducted into the club's Hall of Fame.

Talking to the local Norwich newspaper, goalkeeper Ken Nethercott, a team-mate of Gavin throughout his time at the club, remembered him as fast, fearless and a great finisher.

"He was a very, very quick player, very brave, and brilliant in the air, considering he was not that tall. A lot of his goals were scored with his head," said Nethercott.

"He could jump as high as the crossbar and he wasn't afraid to get hurt. On a number of times he would come in with blood on his shirt, on other occasions he would off with a broken nose. And 132 goals? Not bad for a winger.

"There were four or five of us always together: me, Johnny, John Duffy and Tom Docherty. Johnny was a lovely chap and this is a great shame," said Nethercott.

Johnny was earning one pound a week with Limerick AFC when he left for the English division one league. His £1,500 transfer fee was regarded as a bargain by Norwich and his goal-scoring feats with the club certainly provided a profitable return.

Gavin scored 79 goals in 221 games in his first stint with 'the Canaries' before joining Tottenham in 1954, where he scored 15 times in 32 matches. He returned to Carrow Road a year later in a part exchange deal that took centre-half Maurice Norman to Spurs, adding a further 53 goals in 117 appearances on his return before moving to Watford and Crystal Palace.

A regular visitor to Carrow Road and to Nor-

told him not to miss the opportunity that he decided to sign for Norwich," his wife Bridie, who is a cousin of another Limerick soccer legend the late Bud Ahern told the Limerick Leader this week.

Formerly Bridie Benson from the Distillery area of Thomondgate, it has been a traumatic few months for the mother of five children.

"He had been poorly for some time and I could see that he was going down quickly. He smoked all his life, he had a new hip put in when he was 48 and lost his leg in 2000. They could not knock him out to do the operation because of his medical condition and he only had an epidural for the operation. He was so brave all his life. Even when he was a player he feared nobody and he carried that courage with him in the latter days of his illness. The English FA were very good to him and bought him a buggy to get around in."

Bridie and Johnny were going out together when he was playing with Limerick AFC.

When he went to Norwich he would write weekly letters asking her to join him in England.

Eventually Bridie went over and the couple returned to Limerick in 1949 and were married in St Munchin's Church.

"I settled in quickly in England and made a lot of friends there. We had a happy life. Johnny was earning £18 a week when he joined Norwich and when he moved to Tottenham Hotspur he was getting £20 a week.

"He was a man's man, liked his cigarettes

Dragons v Munster at Rodney Park 6.10

September 29
ODM Munster Senior Cup
Bruff v UL Bohemian at Bruff 2.30
Clonakilty v Shannon at Clonakilty 2.30
Dolphin v Young Munster at Musgrave Park 2.30
Midleton v Garryowen at Midleton 2.30
Old Crescent v Nenagh at Rosbrien 2.30
Sunday's Well v Waterpark at Cork 2.30
Gleeson League
Garryowen v Richmond at Dooradoyle 3.00
Old Crescent v Shannon at Rosbrien 2.30
St. Mary's v St. Senan's at Corbally 3.00
Young Munster v Thomond at Derryknockane 3.00
Thomond v Bruff at Fitzgerald Park 12.30
Cashel v Thurles at Cashel 12.00
Kilfeacle v Bruff at Kilfeacle 6.00
Kilrush v Ennis at Kilrush 1.00
Newcastle West v Scariff at Newcastle West 1.00
Under-20 League
Old Crescent v Garryowen at Rosbrien 3.00
Young Munster v Nenagh at Clifford Park 3.00
UL Bohemian v Thomond at Annacotty 3.00
Bruff v Shannon at Bruff 3.00
Under-20 Friendly
Clanwilliam v Sunday's Well at Tipperary 3.00
MJC Challenge Cup Quarter-Final
Kanturk v Kilfeacle at Kanturk 2.00
Cashel v Clonmel at Cashel 2.00
Crosshaven v Thurles at Crosshaven 2.00
Junior 1 Friendly
Young Munster v Newport at Clifford Park 2.00
Garryowen v Monivea at Dooradoyle 2.00
Richmond v Nenagh at Richmond Park 12.30
Clanwilliam v St. Senan's at Tipperary 12.30
Senior Schools Friendly
Ard Scoil Ris v St. Munchin's at Ard Scoil Ris 12.00

September 30
Under-18 League
Old Crescent v Garryowen at Rosbrien 11.00
Newcastle West v Bruff at Newcastle West 11.00
Shannon v Richmond at Coonagh 11.00
St. Mary's v Young Munster at Corbally 11.30
UL Bohemian v Thomond at Annacotty 11.30

October 3
Senior Schools Friendly
Rockwell College v Templeogue at Rockwell 2.30
Junior Schools Friendly
Rockwell College v Templeogue at Rockwell 2.30
Bowen Shield
Ard Scoil Ris v C.B.C at Ard Scoil Ris 2.30
Under-14 League
Ard Scoil Ris v CBS at Ard Scoil Ris 2.30
Bowen Shield
St. Munchin's v P.B.C. at Corbally 2.30
Under-14 League
St. Munchin's v P.B.C at Corbally 2.30

What would Eddie's reaction have been if his job wasn't guaranteed

THREE of the best-known names in Irish life were under siege last week and rugby was the common denominator. The stunning beauty of Paris provided the latest battleground as all three fought with their backs to the wall. For Taoiseach Bertie, in the French capital for the dual purpose of political wheeling dealing and the match in Stade de France last Friday night, and for Ronan O'Gara, the explanations were not easily contested and mostly acceptable. For Eddie O'Sullivan they were more difficult to accept and sometimes to understand.

Quotes from the coach as he approached next Sunday's final pool game against Argentina like "it might be a high risk strategy but at this stage that's maybe where we need to go" was followed with "we lost to France in the Six Nations and bounced back from that. That's the challenge of the business."

Comparing the Six Nations to this World Cup is like making a comparison between the Eircom League and the English Premiership. One wonders what the reaction of the Irish boss would have been had he not had the security of guaranteed employment up to 2012 in his back pocket before he departed the shores of the Emerald Isle at the start of this month.

In fairness to Eddie O'Sullivan he has seldom been so available to the media as he has been during this World Cup. What a pity that his team is not playing as well as he has been performing before the cameras. He is renowned for his attention to detail in his preparations for every single game. Somehow, it appears that Ireland have got it terribly wrong on this occasion. Their biggest mistake was banking on France beating Argentina on opening day. Once that result went in favour of the Pumas the entire Irish strategy went out the window and a degree of panic seeped through the Irish camp.

Now you had a problem that was not envisaged. First of all, the French were now playing for their survival and the visit of the country's president to their training camp during the build-up to last Friday night's game emphasised the extra burden of national pride that was being heaped on the host country's players. Secondly, Argentina were now favourites to top the pool and suddenly Ireland were rooted out of their comfort zone and relegated to third in the pecking order in Pool D before they had kicked a ball.

So far that is the way that the pool has panned out. Ireland, confident in the build-up of not alone reaching the quarter finals but of seriously challenging

for the title, flounder in third place with a game to play and need one of the biggest sporting upsets since the USA beat England in the soccer World Cup in 1954 to survive.

It is, in reality, an impossible task considering that they have scored just seven tries in three games, one a penalty try and another a contentious decision by the referee who opted not to go to the TMO before making up his mind on a possible knock-on.

Not all the rumours that have been floating around are totally untrue. It has been known since the turn of this year that Denis Leamy has not been at his usual explosive self. The exact nature of the problem remains a mystery but it continues to be reflected in his performances. Who could blame Geordan Murphy for being peeved after

spending less minutes on the field than he has fingers on one hand over the opening three games. Leicester Tigers must have been amused.

Should Ireland lose to the Argies on Sunday next in Parc des Princes, it would be advisable to put plenty of newspaper under the fan.

Eddie O'Sullivan has made just two changes for what could be Ireland's last game of World Cup 07. One is enforced with the only player to shine in the green shirt in all three games, Girvan Dempsey, out with a shoulder injury and Geordan Murphy in at full-back. That injury did not save O'Sullivan from having to justify fielding an Irish side without an Ulster player and Andrew Trimble, who displayed naivety against the French, is replaced by a recalled Denis Hickie.

ly remembered by his five children, 13 grandchildren, and seven grandchildren, many of whom are too young to remember his playing days at Carrow Road.

"I'm the youngest so I didn't ever live in Norwich and didn't see him play, which is a great shame, but I do have memories from photos and papers," she said.

"All of us have photos and paper clippings which were kept throughout his life from when he was at Norwich. It's lovely to show them as they would never have seen him play."

She said her parents were both "very, very happy" at Norwich where her father will be remembered and sadly missed by thousands.

"He was a very modest man, he didn't blow his own trumpet at all," said Mrs Budworth. "I think he was proud of what he did there, but just let everyone else be proud of him."

After his professional career Johnny Gavin had spells with Cambridge City and Newmarket Town and worked as a publican, a painter and decorator. He returned to Carrow Road from his Cambridgeshire home in later years

32 matches. He returned to Carrow Road a year later in a part exchange deal that took centre-half Maurice Norman to Spurs, adding a further 53 goals in 117 appearances on his return before moving to Watford and Crystal Palace.

A regular visitor to Carrow Road and to Norwich from his Cambridgeshire home he seldom missed player reunions.

Norwich AFC chairman Roger Munby said this week: "Everybody at Norwich City is saddened to hear of the passing of our all-time record goalscorer."

"His place in Canary legend is secure forever and our thoughts are of course with his wife, Bridie, children Catherine, Mary, Patrick, Susan and Sharon, grandchildren and great-grandchildren."

WHEN Norwich manager Dougie Lockhead came to Limerick to sign Johnny Gavin in 1949 the player was reluctant to leave his native city.

"The Limerick soccer team's secretary Mick Tubridy was trying to persuade him to go and it was only when Johnny's father Patrick, who was working in Birmingham, came over and

Lawlor's well-placed kick fell into the path of the chasing Edwin Torrie but the full-back knocked the ball forward as he touched down.

It proved to be a costly miss for the favourites.

Bruff began to look dangerous on their first incursion into Bohs territory as the second half got underway and a mighty surge by the pack resulted in full-back Brendan Deady scampering through for a fine try which Brian Cahill expertly converted from far out on the right.

The pace of the game increased after that with the large Bruff following getting behind their side. Some good rugby by UL Bohemian brought them their second try on 52 minutes.

The pack squeezed Bruff a few metres from their own line and Martin McPhail went over in the corner unchallenged. Lawlor missed the difficult conversion into the strong wind.

Many would have expected Bohs to drive on from this 15-7 lead and lift

the trophy for the second season in succession but the refusal of a spirited Bruff to concede victory turned the game in their favour.

Each time that they got deep with in scoring range they came away with a score.

On 55 minutes Brian Cahill landed a penalty to reduced the deficit to 15-10 and with Bohs continuing to ruin good attacking play through poor handling, Bruff continued to make the most of their possession.

On 67 minutes Bohs were penalized for holding on in a ruck and from 30 metres out, Brian Cahill's penalty kick left just two points in it at 15-13.

Despite some superb running rugby from the Annacotty side and a number of fine breaks by Mark Butler in the centre, Bruff held on tigerishly and with just eight minutes remaining they got the score that gave them their first Charity Cup success.

Again it was the pack that set up the platform for the score and when

of Dragons v Munster.

"I settled in quickly in England and made a lot of friends there. We had a happy life. Johnny was earning £18 a week when he joined Norwich and when he moved to Tottenham Hotspur he was getting £20 a week.

"He was a man's man, liked his cigarettes and his few drinks and enjoyed male company. He played until he was 36 and then we took over a pub called The Rock Hotel in Cambridge. Norwich City supporters stopped there on their way back from away matches and it always ended up in a sing-song.

"In my day there were no WAGS. The wives were left at home to look after the children. We had our last child when I was 40 and it was not easy running the pub and bringing up five kids but we enjoyed a good life together and have a lot to be thankful for."

Bridie has two sisters still living in Limerick, one in Janesboro and one in Rathuard in Ballyclough.

Johnny Gavin will be cremated in Cambridge on October 3. His removal will take place to the St Philip Howard Church in Cambridge on the previous day, October 2.

Bohs were again penalised in a ruck, Brian Cahill became the hero of the day by landing his fourth successful kick. Bruff had to defend their line courageously in the dying minutes as time ran out on Ian Costelloe's side and the final whistle signalled lengthy celebrations in Kilballyowen.

UL Bohemian: Ed Torrie; Martin McPhail, Mark Butler, Dave Moloney (Coleman Finn 50), Ian Hanley; Fergal Lawlor, Chris de Looze; Richie Feeney, Ian Henry, Mike Storey; Anthony Hartigan, John O'Neill; Cathal Parkes, John Ed O'Connor, John O'Neill.

Bruff: Brendan Deady; Finbarr Hogan, Eoin Cahill, Gary Leonard, Paul O'Brien; Brian Cahill, Tony Cahill; Bob Hickey (David Horan 31), Cathal O'Regan, Liam Hurley; Alfie Laffan, Dermot Murnane (Alan Bourke 45); James Taylor, John Stephen Shine, Martin O'Rourke.

Referee: Mike Kennedy, MAR.



Aidan Corr Rugby Round-Up

Ireland await a report on Jerry Flannery's injury before deciding on the hooker position.

If Ireland don't get to the quarter-finals, which now looks likely, they will not have automatic qualification for the next World Cup. They will return to a route that could see them travel through uncharted waters that can be costly and strewn with the unpredictable.

The IRFU will not thank them for that after sparing zero euros on this preparation. This World Cup highlighted a significant strengthening of the minnows. The 'big boys' like the Tri-Nations sides, the Pumas, France and even England remain in the leading pack and there is now not a huge difference between four of the Six Nations and the southern islands of Fiji, Samoa and Tonga.

This week I learned that some of the players' mothers have taken seriously to the rosary beads.

That is encouraging in view of what we have seen from this team over the past three weeks.

Beating Argentina in a ground where we have never won a test, scoring four tries (more than half the total that we have scored in three games so far) and out-pointing the Pumas by more than seven requires a Miracle Match. Mun-

ster are familiar with those glory days in Thomond Park but somehow, achievements like that now only appear to be part of folklore.

DESPITE all the focus centered on this World Cup, with an estimated 400 journalists encamped in France, life goes on within the domestic game for those of us confined to this island.

Attendances here, however, have shown a significant drop from previous seasons with the proceeds from the Limerick Charity Cup likely to record its lowest takings for decades.

Munster depend on decent gates at their Magners League home fixtures to keep their annual income in the black at the end of the season.

Their CEO Garret Fitzgerald constantly emphasises this but he will not have been too pleased with the size of the attendance at last Saturday's opening league game at Musgrave Park.

Only 3,400 came through the Cork turnstiles for the visit of Llanelli. Apart from an attendance of 1,141 at the Showgrounds for the Connacht and Dragons game, Munster's 'gate' was the lowest of the week-end trailing the 8,141 at Ravenhill, a crowd of 9,630 at the RDS and 5,425 at the Arms Park.

And they say Munster has the best club support in Six Nations land.

I wonder?