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Shock at death of soccer star Tony

By AIDAN CORR

LIMERICK sport was numbed this morning with the news of the sudden death of former Limerick United soccer star, Tony Meaney.

Aged 52, he collapsed at his home last night and was later pronounced dead at Limerick Regional Hospital.

Tony was one of the city's best known footballers and came to prominence both at schoolboy and minor level with Ballynanty Rovers.

His outstanding talent as a winger or inside forward was quickly spotted by local senior soccer scouts and Tony was signed by Limerick AFC manager Paddy Coad in 1967 after Ewan Fenton had left the club for a stint with Linfield in the Irish League.

He was a substitute that season as Limerick were

knocked out of the FAI Cup by Dundalk in Oriel Park.

Tony Meaney went on to share in Limerick senior soccer's best run of successes. He won a regular place in the team and was part of the Limerick AFC side that enjoyed their best ever run of achievements.

In 1970 he played an important role as Limerick won the Dublin City Cup and the following season, he had one of his best ever campaigns as 'the Blues' brought the FAI Cup to the city for the first time in their history after a thrilling final replay victory over Drogheda on April 22, 1971. Tony then helped Limerick to success in the League Cup in 1975/76 and under the management of the late Frankie Johnson, helped Limerick reach their second FAI Cup final in 1977, going down 2-0 to Dundalk.

The arrival of Eoin Hand as Limerick manager heralded more success for the talented footballer. In one of Limerick senior soccer's most exciting campaigns ever, Tony helped Limerick

to their second league success, scoring the crucial penalty in the final game against Athlone Town in St Mel's Park that gave United the point necessary to take the title.

He played with Limerick against Real Madrid in the two European Cup games in 1980 as well as against Torino, Southampton and Dutch side, AZ67 Alkmaar and won his last major national trophy when helping Limerick to their second FAI Cup success with a 1-0 victory over Bohemians at Dalymount Park in 1982.

Tony Meaney was a natural footballer of exceptional ability. Even in his teenage years he was able to deal with the big occasion and soccer fans throughout the country will be saddened by his sudden death.

Well known in the bar business in the city, he once ran the former Lanny Frasers Bar in Thomondgate.

He is survived by his wife, Trudy, sons and daughter, relatives and friends.



Tony Meaney celebrates after scoring the penalty spot to give Limerick the league title in Athlone in April 1980

Limerick earn a point

Limerick FC.....2
Bray Wanderers.....2

THERE was no scarcity of drama and excitement at the Pike Rovers Sports Ground yesterday as battling Limerick FC clawed their way back from two goals in arrears to snatch a deserved share of the honours against high-flying Bray Wanderers.

The pity was that so few were present, with no more than 200 fans having

passed through the gate.

Still in with a chance of a place in the Top Four, Limerick travel to Cobh Ramblers on next Friday, and have been forced by the authorities to play their back fixture against Kilkenny City at the Pike Grounds on Tuesday week, with a 2 o'clock start. Former chairman Michael O'Sullivan described that decision as a ridiculous piece of planning by the authorities.

Bray, who needed to win yesterday if they were to go back to the top of the table,

had the elements behind them in the first half and created the first chance when Paul Forsyth had a header saved by John Healy. The adventurous Robbie McGuinness blazed wide from a favourable position.

Stephen O'Flynn had the ball in the net at the other end in 30 minutes but was whistled back for offside.

Bray went ahead before the interval when the ball hit off Kieran O'Brien on its way to the net.

The talented Eamonn Zayed consolidated their position immediately on the change of ends.

Limerick, with two successive draws behind them, upped the tempo and substitute Derek McCarthy raised hopes when he connected with a Sweeney cross. Both teams had their chances afterwards in the rain, and just when it looked as if Bray had achieved enough to record a third win over the Shannonsiders in the current campaign, they were denied by an unusual goal from Brendan Hughes. Bray keeper Chris O'Connor, in attempting to clear, only managed to flist the ball onto the back of the midfielder and it went over the line.

Limerick FC: Healy, O'Mahony, Molan, Finucane, Purcell, Sweeney, Hughes, Sugrue, Heffernan, O'Donoghue, O'Flynn, Subs: McCarthy, O'Donoghue, Keating, O'Mahony.

Bray Wanderers: O'Connor, Gleeson, Farrell, Long, Clarke, Fox, McGuinness, O'Donoghue, Zayed, O'Brien, Forsyth.

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