

the senior soccer scene.

But after some protracted wranglings Limerick 37 were granted a licence and invited to take their place in the Eircom League First Division on February 9.

Limerick CBS lifted the entire city when they collected the All-Ireland Schools title.

That side featured the promising Shane Clarke who also played a starring role in Dom Considine's all-conquering Wembley Rovers youths team.

On April 22 they claimed the Munster Youths Cup with a 3-1 win over Everton (Cork). That afternoon at Turner's Cross John Tierney shone brightest when he partnered Clarke up front.

Both players would later make auspicious debuts for Limerick 37 and win the Dr. Tony O'Neill (Southern Section) League with Billy Barrett's exciting

On May 20 the Desmond League faced Kilkenny at the semi-final stage, but a slow start cost them two goals and their chance to make history.

Paul McGee's Limerick 37 began the season in enterprising fashion.

By April 20 Limerick were top of the league table alongside Dundalk and regularly attracted 1,500 to Jackman Park.

Although their form was patchy at times Limerick 37 looked at have a realistic shot at promotion.

Three consecutive wins, against Wexford, Athlone and Kildare, seemed to assert their ambitions and suddenly anything seemed possible.

That is until Limerick made the five-hour journey to Ballybofey and lost 3-0.

All was not lost however. On July 8 Limerick 37 marked the mid-way point of the league and won 1-0 away to Monaghan.

MUNSTER SENIOR CUP

ABBEYFEALE United face what amounts to their biggest test in their 23-year history when they play Douglas Hall in the second round of the Munster Senior Cup on Sunday, 30 December.

Given that it's such a big game, it's a pity that it's been fixed for the middle of the holiday period by the Munster Football Association but that's the way it is and both sides will just have to get on with it.

Douglas Hall are the real deal. They play in the Premier Division of the Munster Senior League and are in title contention at the moment.

Based in Cork city, they have quality players throughout the team, none more so than striker Declan O'Connell who has won Amateur international caps for Ireland in each of the last three seasons.

Another key player for them is holding midfielder David Moore who has played with Cobh Ramblers and spent some time with Glasgow Celtic.

Other players in the side have also experienced League of Ireland football with either Cork City or Cobh Ramblers.

Douglas Hall played Cobh Ramblers in the second round of the FAI Senior Cup and won 4-1, with last season's top scor-

er, Brendan O'Connell, netting a brace. Cobh since went on to win Division 1 of the League of Ireland.

In the third round, the Cork outfit were beaten 1-0 by Limerick 37 in a replay in Turner's Cross, the visitors netting the winner in the 88th minute.

In this competition, Douglas Hall won their first round game convincingly, recording a 4-0 victory at home to Munster Senior League Division 2 promotion contenders, Glasheen.

For their part, Abbeyfeale United caused an upset in the first round, winning 3-1 in Riverside Park against Tramore Athletic who play in

Division 1 of the Munster Senior League.

The man of the match that day was David Roche who bagged a sparkling hat-trick. That was the fifth game in a seven-match winning streak for Abbeyfeale but they have faltered since, with one win, one draw and one defeat in their last three games.

With Douglas being strong in all sectors, Abbeyfeale United can't afford any weak links or below-par performances when they travel to Cork on the penultimate day of 2007.

Certainly, they will have to be at their defensive best but, also, they will have to keep

their own share of possession and central mifielders, Joe Kelliher and Denis Fitzgerald, will be key players in the latter regard.

Roche, Kelliher and Fitzgerald are all capable of rising to occasions such as this and that's what the entire team will have to do against one of the best teams in Munster outside of the four League of Ireland teams based in the province.

It's a fierce challenge but also a great opportunity for all involved.

FRANK NELLIGAN

Noel Murphy played his part in Limerick's first European adventure

By AIDAN CORR

SOCCER and rugby have always had a close affinity to each other in this sports-mad region but few will remember that one of the country's best ever international back-row forwards played his part in Limerick AFC's first European adventure following their League of Ireland success in 1960.

Noel Murphy, who played most of his club rugby with Cork Constitution, was capped over 40 times for Ireland, but also had two seasons with Limerick club Garryowen FC.

Transferred to Limerick in 1959 he joined the light blues in Dooradoyle and soon accepted an invitation to train Limerick AFC at the Markets Field.

"They had won the League of Ireland for the first time the previous season and had qualified for the European Cup so it was felt that they needed to be extra fit as the opening round was taking place at the start of the new campaign," Noel told the Limerick Leader.

"I can't remember who invited me to train the team but the name Rene Cusack comes to mind. Ewan Fenton, the former Blackpool star, had agreed to join Limerick and I was brought in to fill the gap and take the team through their training two nights a week. Fenton arrived early in August and Limerick played the Young Boys of Berne in Thomond Park in the first week of September in 1960 and lost 5-0."

Few people would associate Cork rugby legend Noel Murphy with Limerick soccer.

When his business brought him to Shannonside he was immediately snapped up by Garryowen and played with them for almost two seasons. Murphy was very popular and well-liked when he was here but Limerick players who remember him during that era regarded him as a very tough task-master at the training sessions.

"Maybe it was because he was used to training for rugby that he brought such discipline and such a high work-rate to the training camp at the Markets Field," recalled Eric Costelloe who was with Limerick at the time. "We all got on very



Squad members of Limerick AFC training at the Markets Field in 1960. Back row, from left, Eric Costelloe, PJ Meagher, Kevin Fitzpatrick, Mick Doyle. Front row, Denis Linane, Paddy Hackett, Gerry McCarthy, Tony Brosnihan, Dick O'Connor, Des McNamara, Joe Casey and Noel Murphy who was trainer of the side. In the background are Paddy Noonan and Christy Holman. Limerick had won the League of Ireland the previous season and had been drawn against Young Boys of Berne in the first round of the European Cup at Thomond Park.

well with him but we were not used to putting in so much effort so early in the season. Noel was fierce fit at the time and our lads certainly found his training techniques challenging."

The Limerick soccer team of the time was a curious mix of Corkonians, Dubliners and home-produced talent. Donie Wallace and Gerry O'Brien came from Leaside with Harry McCue,

Clem Dillon, Georgie Lynam, Fergus Crawford, Willie Clinton and Paddy Skelly putting in their pre-season training in the capital.

This was an exciting era for Limerick senior

soccer. As league champions they qualified for Europe for the first time and with a trip to Berne in Switzerland beckoning players jockeyed for favour with new boss Fenton. There was a core group of automatic choices such as Gerry McCarthy, recently returned from a few seasons with Charlton Athletic in the English first division; wonder winger Dick O'Connor, the sturdy Dessie McNamara and left full-back Joe Casey who was already a legend of city soccer.

Others were on the fringes such as youngsters Eric Costelloe, Kevin Fitzpatrick and Mick Doyle while Denis Linnane, Paddy Hackett, Tony Brosnihan and PJ Meagher fought hard to uproot the outsiders.

Noel Murphy came to Limerick in the summer of 1960 at a time when he was one of the most exciting young back-rows in the country. It was a major boost for the light blues at the time having lost to Shannon the previous season in the semi-final of the Munster Senior Cup. Murphy made a big impression at Dooradoyle and the following season he helped them to the final where they met his former club, Cork Constitution at a packed Thomond Park.

The Garryowen team that day in 1961 read: Tony Colbert; Dick Dunworth, Billy Harris, Jack Ryan, Bobby Cotter; Davy Keane, Brian O'Farrell; John O'Dwyer; Joe Quinn, Tom Coffey; Tom Nesdale, Liam Downey; Sean Brosnahan, Tim McGrath and Noel Murphy.

Constitution won that final 12-5 with Garryowen's scores coming from a try by Dick Dunworth and a conversion from full-back Tony Colbert. Noel Murphy went on to win 41 caps for Ireland between 1958 and 1969, won numerous Munster caps and was on two Lions tours.

A former Munster President he is still deeply involved in Irish rugby, holds IRFU positions and is a trustee of Munster Rugby.

Despite a lifetime of involvement with the oval ball game, Noel still remembers his short sojourn with Limerick senior soccer: "It is a long time ago but I still remember those days. I recall some of the players such as Joe Casey and Gerry McCarthy and Des McCarthy and they were a great bunch of lads who put great effort into the sessions."

LIMERICK DISTRICT LEAGUE FIXTURES

Sunday, December 30

MFA Youth Cup
Wembley Rvs v Kilmallock, 2.00,
Rathuard, R Broe

Sunday, January 6

FAI Under-17 Cup 4th Round
Kilmallock v Wembley Rvs, 2.00,
Kilmallock, E Quaide

Oscar Traynor Trophy

Limerick v Clare DL, 2.00, Jackman
Park, M Kiely, A/R, F O'Neill, M Bourke

Kilmurry Lodge Hotel 331133

Premier League
Corbally Utd v Ballynanty Rvs, 10.30,
Corbally Club, F O'Neill

Star Rvs v Carew Park, 10.30, Lee Estate,
M Bourke

Wembley Rvs v Granville Rgs, 10.30,
Rathuard, J McNamara

Herbertstown v Charleville,
10.30, Herbertstown, T Hoare
Hill Celtic v Ballynanty Rvs,
10.30, Hogan Park, G Hourigan

Errea Sport Div 1B League

Prospect Priory v St Patricks,
10.30, Cals Park, R Broe
Croom Utd v Pike Rvs,
10.30, Croom, M Weldon
Hollycross v Park FC,
10.30, Hollycross, D Broughton
Coonagh Utd v Knockainey,
10.30, Coonagh, T Mazur
Shelbourne v Fairview Rgs B,
10.30, LPYMA, R Peiper

Errea Sport Div 2A League

Glenview Rgs v Athlunkard Villa, 10.30,
Cats Cradle, S Jordan
Hyde Rgs v Hospital,
10.30, Hospital, A Keogh

Pallasgreen v Newport,
10.30, Bilboa, T Meagher
Southend v Regional Utd,
10.30, Southill, G Keogh
Ballynanty Rvs C v Weston Villa,
2.00, Bateman Park, T Mannion

Errea Sport Div 3A League

Meanus v Caherconlish,
10.30, Meanus, J Clancy
Geraldines v Trinity Rgs,
2.00, Rathuard, R Peiper
Ballylanders v Star Rvs,
2.00, Ballylanders, R Broe
Charleville v Hill Celtic,
2.00, Charleville, T Mazur

Errea Sport Div 3B League

St Patricks v Summerville Rvs,
10.30, Patrickswell, S Kavanagh
Aisling Annacott v Parkville,
10.30, Annacott, J Carev

Dromore Celtic v Kilmallock,
2.00, Bawnmore, P O'Brien

B Brosnahan Under 17 Div 1 Cup

Geraldines v Fairview Rgs,
2.00, Garryowen, J Mullins
Corbally Utd v Janesboro,
2.00, Corbally, M Weldon

Errea Youth Div Two League

Hospital v Moyross,
2.00, Hospital, M Costello
Knockainey v Croom Utd,
2.00, Knockainey, J O'Halloran
Cappamore v Murroe,
2.00, Cappamore, J McNamara

Errea Under 17 Div 2 League

Lisnagry v Hyde Rgs, 2.00, Castleconnell
Summerville Rvs v Regional Utd, 2.00,
Portland, T Meagher

FAI Junior Cup 6th Round

Killester v Ballynanty Rvs, 2.00, Hadden
Park, Dublin
Redcastle v Pike Rvs, 2.00, Donegal

MFA Junior Cup

Wembley Rvs v Star Rvs,
10.30, Rathuard
Janesboro v Aisling Annacott,
10.30, Pearse Stadium

Munster Junior 4th Round Draw

Ballynanty Rvs v
Mayfield Utd or Midleton
Star Rvs or Wembley Rvs v Fermoy
Aisling Annacott or Janesboro v
Blackstone Rvs/Park Utd B/Mayfield
Kilmallock v

Pearse Celtic or Grattan Utd
Knockainey v Glenvale or Kinsale
Bansha Celtic or Wilderness Rvs v
Regional Utd

Douglas Hall/Ringmahon/Village Utd/
Wilton Utd v Ballynanty
Rvs/Mayfield/Midleton
Aisling /Janesboro/Blackstone/Park
B/Mayfield v Villa
FC/Dungarvan/Carrick Utd
Knockainey/Glenvale/Kinsale v St
Michael's/Cahir Park/Lisselton
Rvs/Tralee Dyn/Killarney Ath

Youth Cup Fourth Round Draw

Fairview Rgs v Listowel or Avenue Utd
Knockainey v Nenagh Celtic
Kilmallock Utd or Wembley Rvs
v Greenwood

Fifth Round Draw

Kilmallock/Wembley Rvs/Greenwood
v Kildysart Celtic/Clonmel Town

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