

GAA LIMERICK SENIOR FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

MOMENT IN TIME NEWCASTLE WEST WIN LIMERICK SFC, 1992

When Newcastle West last ruled

Jerome O'Connell looks back on Newcastle West's last Limerick SFC final win in 1992

NEWCASTLE West dominated the underage football ranks in Limerick throughout the 1980's.

On five occasions they were crowned U-21 champions, while they collected the minor crown twice. The dream for the west Limerick town was to nurture the underage talent into their first senior winning side.

With just a 1972 championship final appearance to brighten up their roll of honour, all craved success at the highest level.

Men like Denny O'Grady, Dan Murphy, Moss Brouder, Jack Kelly, Murty O'Connor and Steve Nash laid the foundations with the underage teams.

Finally the break through came in 1987 and they followed up with another in 1992.

However that was as good as it got for The Magpies and this Sunday will be the 20th anniversary of their last title.

"You would never think that we would be waiting 20 years later for another win," said Billy Lee this week.

Lee was centre back in 1992 and Man of the Match in their 2-4 to 1-6 final win over Hospital-Herbertstown. That game was played on October 24 in the Gaelic Grounds.

"We had about six new fellas from the '87 team," recalled Lee.

He actually missed their maiden SFC final victory with an ankle injury ruling him out of the final.

"Getting to the final in '87 was the big thing for us. I remember that year we played Ballybrown and we were poked to win. I think we were something like seven points down with five minutes to play. When you win games like that you start to think it could be your year," recalled Lee.

"We beat Galbally in the quarter-final and Adare in the semi-final," he outlined.

The final was against Cloughaun - the defending champions and along with St Kierans the dominant club sides in Limerick throughout the '80's.

Newcastle West topped the champions and with that confidence went on a journey of discovery in the Munster club championship.

"We beat Kilrush and Loughmore Castleiney in Munster and reached the Munster final against Nemo Rangers. After three months out with ankle ligaments I was back for the final but we were no match for Nemo," said Lee.

With a first county final win and their Munster club voyage, Newcastle West should have been set to challenge annually for Limerick honours.

Not so. "Maybe fellas got a bit carried away - we were trying to keep feet on the ground," said Lee.

He explained: "It was 1990 before we won another game in Limerick. We lost to St Kierans in '88 and Askeaton in '89".

The championship was a straight



Back Row Left to Right - Donie Enright (Selector), Vinny White (Manager), Pa "Scorch" Meehan, Kevin Lyons, Connie Kelly, Brendan Kelly, Derry McMahon, Tommy Kelly, John Danagher, John Power, Sean Kelly, Liam "Wally" Cremin, Maurice Hurley, Eamon Walsh, Mickey Lane, Billy Lee, Jamsie Kelly RIP (Selector -- Hidden), Peter Curtin (Chairman) John Kenny, Kieran Brouder (Kneeling); Front Row Left to Right - Dan O'Connor, Pat Lane, Dan Cahill, Tony Doyle, Noel Hennessy, Liam "Wally" Keane, Joe Lee (Capt), Donal Cremin, Denis King (His son Seamus King in Arms), Willie Hurley, Ray Keane, Pat "Chuck" O'Connor (Trainer/Selector), Andrew Curtin - Young lad beside Pat O'Connor; Kneeling - David O'Connor, Gearoid O'Connor and Kieran O'Connor

knockout back then.

"We always need games to get up an running. The further we went in the championship the stronger we got. The numbers went up in training. We always had a core of players and then some fellas were a bit more luke warm."

In '92, things went their way. Managed by Vinny White with Jamesie Kelly, Donie Enright and Chuck O'Connor, they were captained by Joe Lee from full back.

After missing the '87 final due to injury, Billy Lee played centre back in 1992.

Another newcomer to the starting

team was wing back Willy Hurley.

"It was a real battle to be honest," said Hurley of the '92 final win over Hospital-Herbertstown.

Mush of the excitement was packed into the final quarter, at which stage the south Limerick club trailed 2-3 to 0-5.

A John Breen goal gave Hospital hope but a point from Sean Kelly gave Newcastle West some breathing space.

Kelly was earlier a goal scorer with John Power getting the second Newcastle West goal.

"It was the Kelly goal that made the difference - it was a punched effort,"

recalled Hurley.

"A Holy Mary effort into the square that Sean got a fist to," recalled Lee.

He added: "The goal knocked them off their stride".

There were seven minutes of injury time it was it only a last gasp save from replacement goalkeeper Connie Kelly that denied Hospital a dramatic late winning goal.

"County final day was a big thing - bigger than now I think. It was a day not to be missed," said Hurley, who earlier this season helped guide Newcastle West to the county U-16 title.

"Everywhere you went in the

town people would be chatting about football. Now the town is more diverse," he said.

None the less, the buzz remains. Hurley works alongside Dromcollogher-Broadford's Ben Noonan.

"There's a bit of banter alright," laughed Hurley.

"Underage is now my passion and it's great to see players develop. We always have very naturally skilled footballers in Newcastle West. For the young players it would be great for them to see the seniors winning," outlined Hurley.



Watching on: A selection of the crowd during the 1992 Limerick SFC final between Newcastle West and Hospital-Herbertstown