

RUGBY COLM TUCKER OBITUARY

Limerick rugby legend Colm Tucker remembered as 'terrific sportsman'

TRIBUTES have continued to pour in for former St Mary's, Shannon, Munster, Ireland and Lions forward Colm Tucker who was laid to rest last Saturday.

Aged 59, he died last Wednesday in Beaumont Hospital following a lengthy illness.

An outstanding wing forward, Colm Tucker helped Shannon to win six Munster Senior Cups. He represented Munster on 36 occasions between 1974 and '87.

The popular Limerickman was a member of the legendary Munster team that defeated the All Blacks at Thomond Park in 1978 and played a key role again when the province overcame Australia at Musgrave Park two years later.

He made his Ireland international debut against France in January 1979 and won two further caps against Wales and France again in 1980.

The Limerickman represented the British & Irish Lions on the tour to South Africa in 1980 and scored a try in the tourists 17-13 win at Loftus Versfeld in the final Test to give the Lions a 3-1 series win. He was the first Lion from Shannon RFC.

Former Shannon, Munster and Ireland forward Brendan Foley played with Colm Tucker for close on 15 seasons, initially at St Mary's.

"Colm played with Richmond before joining St Mary's where I was playing U-20s at the time," Brendan Foley said.

"He was probably playing in the U-18 side. Colm made rapid progress and moved on to Shannon after a few years.

"He was very strong, especially going forward with the ball. I remember one year, either in 1977 or 1980, we were playing the semi-final of the Munster Senior Cup. Colm had his appendix out about two weeks before the game and we thought he would be lucky to make it to the match as a spectator.

"But he turned up with his gear on the day and played. People will always associate him with playing a major role in Munster's win over the All Blacks in 1978, but he also had a terrific game in 1980 when we managed to beat Australia at Musgrave Park."

Gerry McLoughlin was a long-standing team-mate of Colm Tucker's at Shannon and Munster. Indeed, the pair made their international debuts on the same day against France in the Five Nations Championship in 1979.

Gerry McLoughlin said: "We were very lucky to have a player like Colm at Shannon. We were a working man's club, a fledgling club when Colm was starting out.

"I and several more players certainly wouldn't have got as far as we did in the game without Colm blazing a trail for us.

"I played with Colm at Shannon from 1973 onwards. From the outset, you could see he was a born international. He was so talented, had the perfect physique for rugby. He was a natural, elite athlete.

"Colm was an all-rounder. He played soccer with Tanyard and was a natural goal-scorer. Just as with his rugby, he was a match-winner with soccer too.

"In 1978 when we beat the All-Blacks, they based their game around having powerful ball carriers. Colm was our equivalent, someone the All-Blacks had to keep an eye on. He was terrific that day."

"When it came to rugby, I would rate him as the best wing forward I ever saw to carry the ball, bar none. He should have won more Irish caps than he did. Despite all the success he enjoyed in rugby, he remained a very modest man. It never went to his head.

"He was a terrific sportsman, someone who played the game in the manner it should be played."

"It's very sad to see a man who looked after himself so well die so young. He was extremely fit. He will be a big loss to his family and to everyone who admired him so much."

As a mark of respect to the late Colm Tucker, Shannon All-Ireland League Division 1A tie with Garryowen, scheduled to take place at Dooradoyle on Friday night was postponed.

Sincere sympathy is extended to his wife Geraldine, sons Colm Junior and Richard, and daughter Rachel.



The late Colm Tucker (main pic) during the fourth Lions test against South Africa in against South Africa at the Loftus Versfeld Stadium, Pretoria, in 1980. Left - Colm during his first Ireland cap against France



Robbie Burke of Ard Scoil Ris in action against Midleton College

RUGBY MUNSTER SCHOOLS SENIOR CUP

Late Deegan try helps Ardscoil advance

Ardscoil Ris	13
Midleton College	6

A SMASHING late try from centre Robbie Deegan helped Ardscoil Ris secure a precious victory over Midleton College in their Avonmore Milk Munster Schools Senior Cup preliminary round tie played at Towns Park this Wednesday.

Ardscoil's prize for getting the better of their gritty East Cork opponents is a trip to Leaside to face traditional cup heavyweights, CBC, on

Wednesday, February 1, in a quarter-final, round one, tie.

After a forward dominated opening half, played out on a heavy pitch, Ardscoil Ris enjoyed a useful 6-0 lead. Robbie Burke kicked two penalty goals on 15 and 22 minutes for the Limerick side.

Midleton rallied in the second half and two penalty goals from their Munster Schools centre Ned Hodgson drew them level at 6-6.

Ardscoil showed admirable composure in the final quarter to regain the initiative. Led by the outstanding Ronan McKenna at full

back and the industrious trio of Craig Irwin, Conor Glynn and prop Tony Cusack in the pack, the Limerick side held the upperhand.

Their endeavour was rewarded when Deegan cut through a gap to score in the closing minutes, while Burke duly added the conversion.

ARDSKOIL RIS- Ronan McKenna, Conor Mulqueen, Robbie Deegan, Dylan Kelly, Evan O'Callaghan; Robbie Burke, Joe Murray; Tony Cusack, Darragh O'Shea, Liam McMahon; Patrick Kearns, Craig Irwin, Conor Glynn, David O'Halloran, Ciaran Power (Capt). **Replacements**- Paul O'bando for McMahon, Luke Guinane for Cusack, Frank Bradshaw-Ryan for Irwin. Not used- Jack Stokes, Colin Ryan, Anthony Keane, Cathal Flanagan.