



Limerick, the 1956 Munster minor football champions, (back row, l-r); Liam Downey, James Carey, Mossie Lyons, Paddy Cearney, Joe Myles, Mick Murphy, Charlie Quaid, Jack Quinlivan, JJ O'Donovan, David Whelan, (front row, l-r); Paddy McMahon, Martin McNamara, Tim O'Connor, John Fitzgerald, Eamon O'Connor, Moss Downey, Mick Walsh, Liam Moloney, Ger Phelan, Cyril Hobbs.

Limerick minors of 1956 are honoured

By JEROME O'CONNELL

THE Limerick minor football team that won the 1956 Munster minor football championship will be honoured at this Sunday's county senior football final.

Fifty years on, their achievement will be commemorated at the Gaelic Grounds on Sunday when they are introduced to the attendance at half time in the senior final.

Limerick County Board will host a special lunch for the surviving members of the team and mentors along with family members of those who have passed to their eternal reward.

All will be presented

with a commemorative scroll.

JJ O'Donovan was goalkeeper on the team.

"It's a great gesture by the Football Board," O'Donovan told the Limerick Leader from his home in Dublin.

Fifty years ago, O'Donovan was one of six players from the Abbeyfeale club on the starting 15 — the Fealesiders had won the Limerick county minor title the previous year.

"It will be great to meet all the lads again — we are all so scattered around the world," he said.

Back in 1956, Limerick defeated Tipperary, Cork and Kerry to win the Munster minor championship — Limerick haven't won the title since.

Limerick played champions Tipperary in the first round and were 4-6 to 3-6 winners.

The semi final against Cork was played in

Dromcollogher and Limerick progressed to the final on a 1-8 to 1-4 scoreline.

They defeated Kerry in the final 1-7 to 1-5 on July 15 in the Cork Athletic Grounds.

"Against Tipperary we were going into unknown territory, but we got through," recalled the goalkeeper.

O'Donovan has fond memories of the semi final win.

"That was an excellent day and it was great that it was a local match (in Dromcollogher). That win gave us self-belief for the first time."

The decider victory over Kerry gave Limerick it's one and only minor provincial football crown.

"We were a very solid team. We had good balance and had fire in the belly."

He recalled that on the victorious teams return to Limerick there was no official reception.

"It was the same as any other match, I have seen more excitement after club matches," recalled O'Donovan.

In the 1960's JJ left Limerick for Dublin, where he initially worked in Clery's department store.

On his arrival in the Captial, JJ associated himself with Lucan Sarsfields GAA club and remains a loyal member to this day.

In the past fortnight, JJ has hit the national airwaves.

Some years ago he made his radio debut on the now defunct Anna Livia local radio in Dublin.

Now, each Monday and Thursday, JJ is to be heard at 11.30 at night as a sports pundit on Late Night Live on Newstalk, Ireland newest national radio station.

Late Night Live runs Monday to Thursday 10pm to midnight on Newstalk with presenter

Declan Carty.

1956 team: JJ O'Donovan (Abbeyfeale), Mick Walsh (Shanagolden), Paddy Cearney (St Patricks), Martin McNamara (Glin), David Whelan (Knockane), Jack Quinlivan (Claughaun), Eamonn O'Connor, Captain (Abbeyfeale), Joe Myles RIP (Abbeyfeale), Moss Downey RIP (Shanagolden), Liam Downey (Abbeyfeale), Charlie Quaid (St Patricks), Ger Phelan (St Patrick's), John Fitzgerald (Claughaun), Tim O'Connor RIP (Glin), Liam Moloney (Claughaun). Subs: Mick Murphy RIP (Claughaun), Cyril Hobbs (Abbeyfeale), Paddy McMahon RIP (St Patricks), Mossie Lyons (Abbeyfeale), James Carey (Galtee Rovers).

Management: Fr McNamee RIP (St Patricks), Tommy Mann RIP (Abbeyfeale), Bill Tuohy RIP (Abbeyfeale), Eric Ryan (St Patricks), Pdraig Ryan (Galbally).

1907 and 1914 were the firsts for Foynes and Abbeyfeale