

**GAELIC FOOTBALL MUNSTER SENIOR FOOTBALL FINAL**

# 'A splendid victory'

Limerick's one and only Munster senior football championship title was won way back in 1896. **Jerome O'Connell** delved into the archives of the Limerick Leader to recall that historic win



Commercials - the 1896 Munster senior football champions

**T**HE Commercials club represented Limerick in the province for most of the championships of the 19th century.

All-Ireland champions in 1887, Commercials won eight Limerick SFC titles in this era and were among the contenders on an annual basis in Munster.

In the 1895 championship, Limerick (Commercials) were defeated in the Munster final by Arravale Rovers of Tipperary, 0-5 to 0-3 in Kilmallock.

That loss spurred the Limerick City club to new heights of training for the championship of 1896.

On alternate Sundays, captain Con Fitzgerald would lead his side as they walked the six miles to Cratloe. They would play a local selection and then walk the return jour-

ney back to the city.

Cratloe would undertake the journey to Corkanree to play Commercials on the other Sunday.

Limerick gained revenge on Arravale Rovers in the semi-final of 1896 when securing a 2-4 to 0-6 win in Mallow, in a game played on October 3, 1897.

Mallow was also the venue for the Munster final, which took place on November 21, 1897. The opposition was Erin's Hope of Dungarvan in Waterford, who had reached the final after getting a walkover from Killimer of west Clare.

'Splendid Victory for Limerick' read the headline on the Limerick Leader, dated Monday evening November 22, 1897.

It is reported that a special excursion train departed Limerick for Mallow, but that the crowd was disappointing.

'The day kept gloriously fine, the Blackwater meandered through green fields and bubbled under bridges, misty filmy clouds overhung the hills near at hand, "sedate and clerical rooks, in sedate and clerical company" winged their flight overhead as the shades fell, whilst far beneath what Wordsworth, in his Excursion, impudently called, "the inglorious leather" met with many a thud.'

Limerick won the 'spin of the coin' and then the game started shortly after three o'clock.

Waterford were first off the marking with the final's opening point, but Commercials were soon level when Ailbe Quinlan pointed after Pat Griffin had won a kickout.

The Limerick champions were soon dominant and led 0-3 to 0-1 at half time.

Goalkeeper Birrane and defender Guiry were key to maintaining Limerick's lead as the second half progressed.

'A player from each side was disqualified for catching, and were sent off the field.'

Ten minutes from full time of 60 minutes, the Limerick side scored

their fourth point, but this score was contested by the Waterford side.

It appears that the ball was sent between the posts, but that it came back into play off a spectator.

'The flag was not raised by the flag umpire and Mr L Roche, who was standing by raised his handkerchief, and immediately the referee whistled and on inquiry awarded the point to the Commercials. Waterford then refused to play, and Limerick generously offered to forego the score and finish the match.

This, the referee, would not allow, and the Waterford men having retired, he awarded the match to Limerick, in which decision he was upheld subsequently at a meeting of the Central Council.' Final Score: Limerick 0-4, Waterford 0-1.

Limerick then progressed to win their second All-Ireland senior football title when defeating Metropolitan Young Irelanders on February 6, 1898 at Jones' Road, Dublin. The winning scoreline was 1-5 to 0-7.

**1896 MUNSTER CHAMPIONS**

Limerick: Con Fitzgerald (capt); D Birrane, W Guiry, J O'Riordan, Pat Griffin, John Riordan, P Roche, Larry Sheahan, Tom Campion, John Murphy, Ailbe Quinlan, William Murphy, JD O'Donnell, James Nash, W McNamara, J. Buttimer, M Ryan.

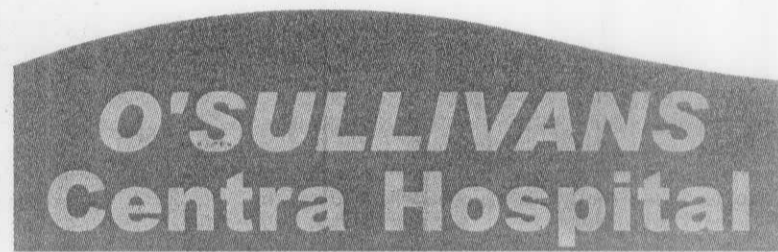
**ENABLE IRELAND**

LIMERICK Golf Club will host a JP McManus Qualifier Golf Classic on behalf of Enable Ireland on Friday, September 18 (time sheet 10am to 12.30pm and 2pm to 3.30pm). The winning team will compete at the grand qualifier at Adare Manor Hotel & Golf Resort in May 2010. Format - team of three stableford, best score to count at each hole. Entry Fee - €500 per team which includes meal, prizes & entertainment while each participant will receive free admission to the Pr o-Am for both days in 2010.

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**Best of Luck  
to the Limerick  
football team in  
the Munster Final**



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**Best of Luck to all the lads in the  
Limerick Team, from all the Staff and  
Management.**

**LIMERICK IN MUNSTER SFC FINALS**

Limerick in Munster Football Finals While Kerry lead the provincial roll of honours with 72 titles Cork have won the Munster senior football final on 35 occasions (last title: 2008), Tipperary have won it nine times, Clare twice with Waterford and Limerick winning the title just the once (1896).

As well as this Sunday's decider Limerick have appeared in 12 provincial finals

2004	Kerry 1-11 Limerick 1-11
Replay	Kerry 3-10 Limerick 2-9
2003	Kerry 1-11 Limerick 0-9
1991	Kerry 0-23 Limerick 3-12
1965	Kerry 2-16 Limerick 2-7
1934	Kerry 1-14 Limerick 1-2
1922	Tipperary 1-7 Limerick 0-1
1905	Kerry 2-10 Limerick 1-6
1901	Cork 1-9 Limerick 1-6
1897	Cork 0-5 Limerick 0-3
1896	Limerick 0-4 Waterford 0-1
1895	Tipperary 0-5 Limerick 0-3
1888	Tipperary w/o Limerick scr