

## RUGBY OBITUARY

# Bohs legend Mick English passes away

Rugby fans were saddened by the news this week that former Irish out-half Mick English had passed away

Colm Kinsella & Luke Holmes

TRIBUTES have poured in this week for Limerick rugby legend Mick English, the former Bohemians RFC, Munster, Ireland and Lions out-half who has passed away at the age of 77.

Local rugby fans were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of the classy fly-half who was affectionately known as 'Mick the Kick.'

The late Mick English won 16 caps for Ireland between 1958 and 1963 and also toured with the Lions in 1959.

Educated at Rockwell College and a member of Bohemian RFC, he won Munster Senior Cups with the Limerick club in 1958, 1959 and 1962.

He later moved to Dublin and like many a Munsterman joined Lansdowne FC where he won a Leinster Senior Cup in 1965. He later became Club President in 1989/90.

Mick English's Munster career saw him play against three touring sides, Australia in 1958, South Africa in 1960, and New Zealand in 1963.

He was also selected in the British & Irish Lions in 1959 but injury saw his tour cut short.

Brendan O'Dowd, who played with Mick English in the Bohemians 1959 treble cup winning side, described him as "a great man and a fantastic player."

Brendan O'Dowd said: "Mick was great, the centre of our team."

"We had the best half-backs in the British Isles (Tom Cleary and Mick English).

"In those days you had to be three or four times better than anyone from Leinster to get an Irish cap."

"I remember Mick would get a cap and he'd play well."

"The next week he'd be dropped from the Irish team and they'd bring in some Leinster player who wasn't half as good as Mick was."

"Then they would reluctantly play him again."

"They didn't care how good you were. If you were from Limerick, they didn't want to pick you."

"I remember in the 1958 Munster Senior Cup final we were playing Highfield in Thomond Park."

"Mick got the ball one yard from our goal line at the Ballynanty end and he kicked the ball into touch 5 yards from Highfield try-line. He was absolutely incredible."

Mick English made his debut for Ireland against Wales at Lansdowne Road on March 15, 1958, taking over at out-half from Jack Kyle.

He was capped against France at the Stade Colombes a few weeks later.

The following season saw Mick capped against England, Scotland and France when he also notched up his first international points with a drop goal to help Ireland win by 9-5.

His nine international points consisted of three drop goals and interestingly Ireland did not lose in the three games in which he scored - the aforementioned game against France, a 3-3 draw against Wales in 1962 and 14-6 win over the Welsh in Cardiff in 1963.

He made his last appearance for Ireland in December 1963 against New Zealand.

Noted for his sense of humour, Mick is famous in rugby circles for his description of what happened in a game against England when he went to tackle his opposite number Phil Horrocks-Taylor: "Horrocks went one way, Taylor went the other and I was



Above left: Mick English pictured in action for Ireland. Above right: Bohemian RFC 1956-57 - Mick English pictured front-row second from the right



Left: The Limerick Insurances team, including the late Mick English, who played Cork Insurances for the Carphin Cup, an inter-city insurance soccer competition, at The Mardyke, Cork in 1962. Back-row: Peter Irwin, Ger

Neville, Denis Russell, Joe Mulqueen, RIP. Front-row: Billy Leahy, Paddy Fielding, Mick English, AN Other. Absent from the photograph were the late Gordon Wood and the late Tim Duggan. Both Mick English and Gordon

Wood played for the Lions during their highly successful rugby careers. The photograph is reproduced courtesy of Paddy Fielding, Fr Russell Road, a former team mate of the late Mick English on the Limerick Insurances



Right - November 3, 2008: Mick English pictured accepting his Hall of Fame award from Peter O'Reilly, President of the Rugby Writers of Ireland, during the Guinness Rugby Writers of Ireland Awards

SPORTSFILE

left holding the bloody hyphen!"

Mick will be sadly missed by his family and friends and by the wider rugby community.

UL Bohemian President, Ted Mulcahy said Mick English's passing was not only a major loss to the club but also to Irish rugby.

"I'd like to extend my sympathy to the English family," Ted Mulcahy said.

"They've have been an integral part of Limerick rugby down the years. Mick's death is a loss to the club and to Irish rugby."

The late Mick English is survived by his wife Pauline, daughter Michele, sons Conor and John, brother John, sister Phil, relatives and friends.

Removal took place on this Thursday evening from Carnegie's Funeral Home, The Crescent, Monkstown, Dublin to St John the Baptist Church, Blackrock at 5pm.

Following funeral Mass on Friday (April 30) at 11am, Mick English will be buried in Shanganagh Cemetery.

## UL BOHEMIAN SHARKS



The UL Bohs Sharks, who performed superbly in the under-12A tournament final in the London Irish Mini Rugby Festival at Sunbury last weekend, reaching the Plate final, with proud coaches Donal Enright, Dave Culligan and Tim Coughlan