

ON THE BALL

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE CAMOGIE ASSOCIATION
Spring/Summer 2016



**DECISIONS
DECISIONS
DECISIONS**

Coaching Corner
with Damien Young



**AIB
CLUB
FINALS**

Milford hat-trick
Cahir in dreamland

**OUR SPORT,
OUR FUTURE**
National
Development Plan

**+
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AWARDS**



**THE
CAMOGIE
ASSOCIATION**

WELCOME – PRESIDENT CATHERINE NEARY

Year to Date

It has been a busy start to 2016 for the Camogie Association, on and off the pitch. President Catherine Neary reflects on the year so far.



Camogie President Catherine Neary is introduced to the Milford players before the AIB All-Ireland Senior Camogie Club Championship Final at Croke Park – page 6

OUR SPORT, OUR FUTURE

What we're really trying to do is meet the needs of our own players, members, clubs and people outside of the camogie community so that we can make sure we meet the requirements of working in a new era and moving on from where we have been previously.

Securing a broadcast deal and two commercial deals are big things for us. The important thing is for people to see our game and to put our players front and centre so that people can see the skills. If you don't see the game then you don't really know about the game.

AIB CLUB FINALS

The great thing about the All-Ireland club finals is that it's a community day. It's also a celebration of the club player and their chance to play in an All-Ireland Final. To play in Croke Park is huge because every kid growing up who is in any way involved in camogie or hurling or Gaelic football, everybody wants to play in Croke Park at some point and not everybody can get to do that. The fact that you can be there as a club player makes a huge difference and we saw that this year with the excitement of Cahir and Milford. You can see the significance of it for them.

VOLUNTEER AWARDS

Without our volunteers, games just wouldn't happen. Volunteers are the bedrock of our Association and they do an incredible amount of work to ensure that the Association is as strong and vibrant as it is.

FIXTURES REVIEW

One of the big issues we have this year is a fixtures review. This will look at fixtures across the whole spectrum and the impact of inter-county games on club games. We want to have meaningful games with good structures. We want to make sure that each player can play at a level that's suited to their skillset.

BEING PRESIDENT

One of the nice things about being President is that you get invited to a lot of medal presentations at clubs. That's where you get to meet the real workers on the ground. I think it shows you the significance of the honour of being President when you see the enthusiasm of people and the welcome that you receive. I've been up as far as Donegal and it's wonderful to feel that welcome. You realise the love that people have for the game of camogie and the importance of camogie in their life.



THE CAMOGIE ASSOCIATION

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FRONT COVER IMAGE: Cahir's Kirsty Arbuckle celebrates after the final whistle at the AIB All-Ireland Intermediate Camogie Club Championship Final

NEWS IN BRIEF

Camogie4 Teens 2016

Camogie4Teens is a new and exciting initiative specifically for teenagers. The Camogie Association were one of five national governing bodies to receive funding for a project from the Coca Cola Thank You Fund.

The aim of this unique programme is to cluster Camogie clubs together in a county in order to provide targeted programmes for their teenagers (15-18 year olds).

There will be five clubs clustered together for each programme. Each club will be able to nominate 6-8 teenagers for the initiative. There will be 20 programmes in total and they will be run over two phases.



Johnstownbridge players pose for selfies at Croke Park on AIB Club Finals Day where they were honoured for their All-Ireland Junior Club victory

County Boards have already applied for the programme and the 20 counties chosen are as follows:

Phase 1: Dublin, Meath, Carlow, Westmeath, Derry, Antrim, Cavan, Galway, Limerick, Cork.

Phase 2: Wicklow, Offaly, Wexford, Kildare, Down, Armagh, Donegal, Roscommon, Clare, Tipperary.

Five clubs will be chosen within each county for the programme. Each club in

the cluster of five that is chosen within a county will host an element of the programme for the teenagers involved. Programmes include: Coaching Course, Referee Course, Admin/PR Course, Lifestyle & Blitz days. Tutors for the courses will be organised by the Camogie Association through the Regional Development Co-Ordinators.

For more information contact:
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AIB ALL-IRELAND CLUB FINALS

Cork club Milford and Tipperary's Cahir were the big winners at this year's AIB All-Ireland Club Finals.

While Junior champions Johnstownbridge were also honoured on the day at Croke Park, Cahir and Milford had the thrill of climbing the steps of the Hogan Stand. For Cahir, it was especially sweet having known final heartbreak last December.

A total of 17 members of the panel were involved when Cahir lost the intermediate ladies football decider by two points but they got to experience the other end of the spectrum with this nine-point victory over Eyrecourt, 0-14 to 1-2.

In the Senior final, Milford collected their third title in four years following a 2-8 to 1-3 victory over Killimor. Second half goals from Maria Watson and Laura Stack, in response to Claire Conroy's 32nd minute major, set the seal on a well-deserved victory for the North Cork outfit.

AIB PROVINCIAL CLUB PLAYER AWARDS

AIB, sponsor to both the GAA and Camogie Club Championships, honoured 11 club players from camogie, football and hurling at the 20th AIB GAA Provincial Club Player Awards.

Killimor's Susan Keane was the first star to be honoured at the ceremony hosted in Croke Park. The Galway sharpshooter took home the Connacht camogie award. The Ulster camogie club gong was awarded to Emma McFadden of Loughgiel Shamrocks. Leinster winner Ciara Storey, daughter of 1996 All-Ireland winning captain Martin, followed in his footsteps as she skippered Oulart-The Ballagh ladies to back-to-back Leinster success. Milford stalwart, Ashling Thompson, scooped the Munster camogie club player of the year award.

BILL & AGNES CARROLL CUP

The silverware on offer to the winner of this year's AIB All-Ireland Senior Club Championship Final had a new name.

Bill Carroll presented the cup anonymously and it was only after he died that the trophy took on his name. Now though, he will be joined by his late wife to be remembered annually on one of the biggest days of the camogie calendar, when the Bill and Agnes Carroll Cup will be on offer.

SPORTSWOMEN AWARDS

Cork dual stars Briege Corkery and Rena Buckley were both recognised with the Irish Times/ Sport Ireland Sportswoman of the Year award for 2015.

Corkery and Buckley played starring roles in the Cork teams that won both the All-Ireland camogie and women's football titles last September. It brought their individual All-Ireland medal tallies to 16 – six each in camogie and 10 each in football – and no GAA player has ever won more than that. They were also the first joint-winners of the award now in its 11th season, beating off the other 11 monthly award winners, including boxer Katie Taylor, golfer Leona Maguire, rugby players Sophie Spence and Niamh Briggs, and jockey Katie Walsh.

ALL-IRELAND INTERVARSITY FINALS

Joy & despair on St Valentine's Day

ASHBOURNE CUP

After another dramatic finale to the Ashbourne Cup, University of Limerick claimed their sixth title thanks to an injury time goal from Sarah Fryday.

It was heartbreak for UCC on St Valentine's Day in Gort as Fryday's late strike gave UL a sensational victory, 3-12 to 4-7. It looked like the Cork contingent might have snatched the honours themselves when turning a six-point deficit around to lead by two after a very late goal from Cork All Star Catriona Mackey. However the conclusion was typical of the ebb and flow of the decider.

Favourites UL went two points clear early on but UCC thundered into life with a goal from the ever-threatening Mackey. UL bounced back with a goal from Fryday and a point from Kerry sharpshooter, Patrice Diggin to extend their lead to four. UCC halved that by the interval and the spoils were still up for grabs, 1-5 to 1-3.

The margin was still two when Fryday struck for her second goal in the 44th minute and another point from player of the match Diggin, who finished with a tally of eight points, put six between them. Back came UCC once more, with another Cork panellist, Hannah Looney with a goal 11 minutes from time. The drama

was heightened when Mackey found the net once more and the sides were level with five minutes remaining.

UL edged a couple of points clear once more thanks to Diggin but UCC got their noses in front for the first time, and apparently with impeccable timing, when Mackey registered her third goal. But that was reckon without the desire and character of the Shannonsiders, and when Diggin dropped a late free into the square, McMahon got the final touch to snatch the honours with the game's final act.

PURCELL CUP

Cork IT won the Purcell Cup, defeating Maynooth University 1-12 to 0-4. Points from Wexford player Linda Bolger and Cork underage star Michelle Murphy helped establish a five-point interval lead, 0-8 to 0-3. Bolger continued to find the target and it was comfortable in the end.

FR MEACHAIR CUP

Trinity College emerged victorious in the Fr Meachair Cup, winners by five points on a scoreline of 1-10 to 0-8 against Athlone IT.

The sides were deadlocked at half time, 0-7 to 1-4, but with the defence holding firm and Dublin forward, Aisling Maher keeping the scoreboard ticking over, it was Trinity's day.



JUMPING FOR JOY: Jacinta Crowley and Claire Tyndall of CIT celebrate winning the Purcell Cup Final

O'NEILLS ALL-IRELAND POST PRIMARY FINALS

Top of their CLASS

SENIOR A

St Brigid's, Loughrea 2-6
Loreto, Kilkenny 0-9

The double dreams of Loreto College, Kilkenny were dashed by a second half rally from St Brigid's of Loughrea, who left MacDonagh Park in Nenagh as the Senior A champions.

Loreto looked well on the way to bagging the honours as they led by double scores at the break, 0-6 to 0-3. Aoife Hannon scored three points for Loreto but St Brigid's had been terribly wasteful, failing to capitalise on possession.

They made no mistake in the second half though and with Patricia Manning giving a tour de force that earned her player of the match honours, they threw everything at their opponents.

Goals from Aisling Connolly and Katie Manning turned the tide in St Brigid's favour, leaving Loreto's hopes in tatters.

St Brigid's Scorers: S Healy 0-5; A Connolly, K Manning 1-0 each; S Spellman 0-1. Loreto Scorers: A O'Carroll

0-3, S O'Dwyer, R Kelly 0-2 each; E Keoghan, C Dowling 0-1 each.

POTM: Patricia Manning

SENIOR B

Scoil na Tríonóide, Doon 4-10
St. Joseph's College, Lucan 0-3

It was one-way traffic for Scoil na Tríonóide against St Joseph's, Lucan in the B final, who laid the platform for their win with a stunning first half display.

The Limerick outfit made full use of a strong outfit and none more so than Gráinne Regan, who helped herself to a hat-trick of goals.

Molly Hammersley added another and there was no way back from a 4-6 to 0-2 interval deficit for their Lucan rivals.

Scoil na Tríonóide Scorers: G Regan 3-0; E McDonald 0-5; M Hammersley 1-1; L Leonard 0-2; G Fox, J Kelly 0-1 each

POTM: Grainne Regan, Scoil na Tríonóide



PARTY TIME: St Brigid's College players celebrate after winning the Camogie Senior Schools A Final

SENIOR C

St Joseph's, Rochfortbridge 1-8
Mercy, Roscommon 1-7

St Joseph's, Rochfortbridge enjoyed a one-point victory over Mercy Convent, Roscommon at Mountmellick. The brilliance of Hannah Core, who was named player of the match, saw St Joseph's edge it by 1-8 to 1-7.

POTM: Hannah Core, St Joseph's

SENIOR D

Our Lady of Lourdes, Wexford 2-7
St Augustine's, Dungarvan 1-3

Our Lady of Lourdes, Wexford were propelled by Oonagh Doyle to a seven-point win over St

Augustine's, Dungarvan. Doyle was responsible for 1-7 of the winners' tally.

Our Lady of Lourdes Scorers: A Kinwan 1-0, O Doyle 1-07. St Augustine's Scorers: M Curran 1-2, K Tobin 0-1

POTM: Oonagh Doyle, Our Lady of Lourdes

JUNIOR B

Colaiste Choilm, Ballincollig 3-6
Our Lady's, Terenure 3-2

The Junior B decider provided plenty of entertainment in the form of six goals and some wonderful play by the young girls but Ballincollig's Coláiste Choilm always looked the likeliest winners.

POTM: Eimear Ni Chadhala, Colaiste Choilm



MY CLUB AND I: SARAH SEXTON, MILFORD

‘Camogie was our first love’

Milford captain, Sarah Sexton, led her club to their third All-Ireland Senior title in March. Injury kept her out of the final but having suffered four county final defeats in six years, every success is sweet. By **Brendan Coffey**

Like so many girls from Milford, Sarah Sexton developed the camogie habit young.

“Camogie was our first love, we didn’t have anything else really,” she says.

“It was instilled in us from a very early age. We started in ’97 with Ann Watson and Sheila Thompson. We did a lot of Community Games and mini-sevens and that kind of stuff and Mosney was the big thing of course. We started from there and it started building and we’ve been going from strength to strength ever since.”

Initially, success was all they knew.

“We won everything growing up from under-12 to under-18. Then we won a Senior B but for ages the only thing that we couldn’t get was a County Senior title. We had lost four county titles in six years. People kept saying, ‘we’ll give

it one more year and try and get back.’ Then we’d get back to a county final and we wouldn’t be able to do a job on the day.”

Despite so many losses, their belief never wavered. “We always knew it was within us, that was the thing. We knew that there was one county title in us and we thought if we could get one we’d be away and that’s what happened.”

Their breakthrough success came in 2012. The All-Ireland followed and they’ve hardly known defeat since.

“Last year we said if we got another county we’d be happy but once you get that, you’re looking for more. It’s pretty amazing.”

Winning back-to-back All-Irelands (2013 and 2014) gives you a taste for the big time. When Milford won Munster again in 2015, it was their



Milford captain Sarah Sexton and Lisa Healy lift the cup at Croke Park

fourth provincial title on the trot.

“Our success will bring on the younger crowd again,” said Sexton, reflecting on their third All-Ireland victory in March. “It needs to be nurtured because we were nurtured. And that’s the only reason we’ve been successful because we were nurtured and taught the good habits years ago.”

Some habits die hard though.

“If I’m not training, if I didn’t have something to do on a Wednesday night, a Friday night or a Sunday morning, you’d be like, ‘oh my God, what am I going to do?’” says Sexton. “And for myself, because I’ve been out injured, the whole idea is to get back. Please God I will and hopefully we’ll win another county.”

Milford may be a small place but their passion runs deep.



“We’d die on the pitch for each other”

A Dream Come True

MY CLUB AND I: AISLING MCCARTHY – CAHIR

When Aisling McCarthy first played camogie, the club in Cahir was only getting off the ground.

“I started playing camogie when I was six or seven,” the 20-year-old Cahir captain recalls. “The club only started 15 years ago and I suppose it’s the girls that are about 25 now, they were on the first team. They wouldn’t have won a match really but they just kept going.”

From humble beginnings to All-Ireland glory in Croke Park, it’s been one hell of a journey for the Tipperary club and McCarthy has been there most of the way.

“It’s a dream come true to even play in Croke Park with your clubmates, never mind winning,” said McCarthy in the aftermath of victory at this year’s Intermediate club final. “We’re just a family really, we’re best friends. The

camaraderie we have, we’d die on the pitch for each other.”

In the All-Ireland Final against Eyrecourt, Cahir just had too much class for their Galway opponents. Winners by nine points, they were an unstoppable force.

“I just think that we really wanted this one,” said McCarthy. Even though success has followed closely behind throughout her career, it was the memory of defeat that inspired the final performance.

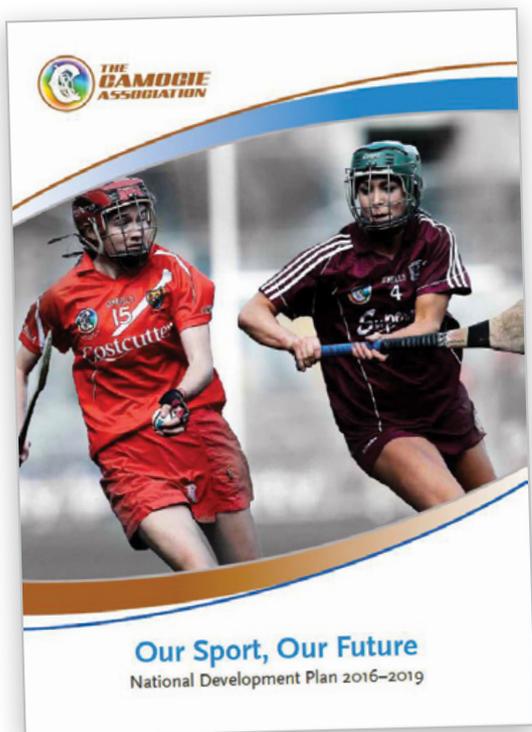
“We lost an All-Ireland, 17 of us, in December and we weren’t going back into a dressing room like we were in December,” said McCarthy, who was on the Cahir ladies football team that lost the intermediate club final at the end of 2015.

Redemption came courtesy of camogie.

“It’s a bit sweeter winning because we lost the football. You know the hurt that there is and just the absolute excitement and to go up the steps of the Hogan Stand and all the people in your community are congratulating you. I think that there’ll be a buzz around the town now for a good while. It’s a fantastic day for the club,” said McCarthy, whose grandparents were in Croke Park to witness her latest success.

A second year physiotherapy student at University of Limerick (UL), McCarthy won an Ashbourne Cup medal last February. Already, she’s looking to the future.

“I think we showed winning an Intermediate All-Ireland that we could have a good chance at senior in Tipperary. We’ll give it a rattle and see where we go.”



NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Camogie Association launches new dynamic four-year plan

The Camogie Association unveiled a new national development plan at the AIB All-Ireland Club Finals in Croke Park on 6 March.

Entitled ‘Our Sport, Our Future’, the plan outlines a four-year vision for the future of the game with growth and development at the heart of the agenda both on and off the pitch. It is a result of a lengthy consultative process between the Camogie Association and its many stakeholders, especially its players.

The feedback received has led to a series of targets designed to secure a more modern and sustainable future for Camogie as part of the wider Gaelic games family.

In particular, the Association intends to place a greater emphasis on commercial partnerships and promotions designed to raise awareness of the game and encourage more girls and young women to take part.

There are four main elements to the plan: On the Pitch; Off the Pitch; In the Public Eye; and Strengthening Relationships. Work has already begun in a number of the areas identified, with all targets scheduled for completion or to be established by 2019.

Presenting the plan, Camogie Association President, Catherine Neary, said the main purpose of the strategy was to ensure that Camogie moves with the current trends as a

sports organisation and remains at the forefront of women’s sport in Ireland.

“With this national development plan, the aim is to build a prosperous and high-profile future for Camogie without letting go of the game’s proud heritage and history,” said Neary. “We want to make sure Camogie remains as a strong voice within the national sporting conversation, and part of an inclusive Gaelic games family into the future.

“The plan today is a product of a huge analysis process undertaken by the Association with its stakeholders. The opportunity to collect both positive and negative feedback by those most invested in the game has ensured that we can work more collaboratively on delivering on and addressing any issues that exist over the next four years,” she said.

The four-year plan intends to place a greater emphasis on its current and future players to help raise Camogie’s profile for future generations.

“Promoting the game is a key part of the plan, and we’re really keen to leverage the profile of individual players by positioning them as role models at a local and national level for girls and young women who might like to take up the game,” Neary added.

“Developing new commercial

partnerships will also play a part in promoting Camogie. In recent years the game has benefited hugely from the involvement of sponsors like AIB and Liberty Insurance, and I think there’s a lot of other brands out there looking at the growth and the potential of Camogie and thinking that is somewhere they’d like to be.

“Change is also firmly on the agenda, and we have committed to a series of organisational and structural changes that are designed, ultimately, to benefit clubs and players,” she said. “The more support we can give our players, the happier they will be and the more new recruits we will attract to Camogie – that’s what we are working towards.”

Under the terms of the four-year plan, the Camogie Association will also seek to integrate more closely with the GAA with the support of facilitators. The integration process will be measured by the number of clubs adopting the ‘One Club’ model.

“We’re proud to be part of the GAA family and we’re very happy to work closely with our fellow members where the overall aim is to benefit the game of Camogie,” said Catherine Neary. “That work has already started and it will help to deliver a bright future for everyone connected with our game.”



Getting more teenagers playing camogie is one of the goals of the National Development Plan

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Inspiring people to play, empowering them to stay

Our Sport, Our Future is the third National Development Plan to be published by the Camogie Association. Including targets around on and off-the-pitch activities, this four-year strategy (2016-2019) is designed to grow awareness and participation levels

On the pitch, it was a famous day for the clubs of Cahir and Milford as they tasted All-Ireland glory at Croke Park, but it was another significant day off the pitch for the Camogie Association as President Catherine Neary launched the latest National Development Plan on Sunday, 6 March.

Sport Ireland CEO John Treacy was also present to witness the launch and spoke about the growth of women's sport.

"The gap between the men and the women is closing in terms of participation. Before the gap was 10 per cent and now it's close to three or four per cent," said Treacy. "We all need to make sure that we are all the time talking about women's sport and making sure that it does get into the minds of the media and the minds of people that follow sport."

One of the key pillars in the national development is the promotion of camogie.

"There's a momentum and an interest and a drive around women's sport that certainly wouldn't have been there 10 or 15 years ago," said Ard Stiúirthóir Joan O'Flynn.

Our Sport, Our Future is the third national development plan for the Camogie Association and came about through a consultation process that involved more than 1,000 people. The majority of participants, 66 per cent, identified themselves as players.

"Player are at the heart of what this game is about, players are at the

heart of what this association is about and players' voices and interests and concerns feature in how we shape the direction of the Association over the next four years," said O'Flynn.

The plan identifies seven values for the Association –innovation, leadership, voluntarism, fun, integrity, excellence and inclusiveness.

"They are the things that will shape our decision-making in the future. And they'll also hopefully be the values that allow us to be a sustainable, relevant and modern organisation going into the future," added O'Flynn.

Among the specific goals of the plan are an increase in participation numbers for teenagers and adults over the age of 21. The Association is also targeting more revenue through commercial partnerships while the pursuit of a broadcast deal is a major ambition.

KEY POINTS

- 4-year strategy, 2016-2019
- Aim to grow awareness and participation levels
- Includes targets around on- and off-pitch matters
- Camogie Association will integrate further with GAA
- Developing commercial partnerships key to its future

VISIT WWW.CAMOGIE.IE

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Volunteers the bedrock of Camogie

In 2012, the Camogie Association established the County Volunteer of the Year Awards to acknowledge the tremendous work carried out by volunteers within the Association.

The County Volunteer Awards recognise people who have played an integral role in the development of camogie. Each year the 29 award winners are honoured at a gala presentation in Croke Park. The 2015 winners received their awards at Croke Park on 20 February, where more than 200 guests attended. On the day, the 12 referees who officiated at National Finals in 2015 were also presented with their medals.

Volunteer Awards 2015

Antrim	Kieran Convery
Armagh	Ann O'Hare
Britain	Bridget Hehir
Carlow	Mick Lillis
Cavan	Catriona Byrd
Clare	Catherine O'Gorman
Cork	Joan Casey
Derry	Emmet McCloskey
Donegal	Fergal Doherty
Down	Bernard McKee
Dublin	Anne Noctur
Galway	Seán Geraghty
Kildare	Aileen Kelly-Rafferty
Kilkenny	Sinéad Quigley
Laois	Danny Gorman
Limerick	Paul Doyle
Louth	Mary Connor
Mayo	Rosaleen Duggan
Meath	Teresa Cince
Monaghan	Catherine Greenan
New York	Ger Lavery
Offaly	Frances Teehan
Roscommon	Geraldine Beattie
Tipperary	Mary Howard
Tyrone	Tony Cassidy
Waterford	Derek Healy
Westmeath	Mary Glynn
Wexford	Jacinta Roche
Wicklow	Trish Kehoe



A Lifelong Passion

CAMOGIE AND ME: MARY CONNOR (LOUTH)

I started playing camogie in 1964 with St Anne's in Co Louth and I've been involved ever since. There was a young priest in the parish, Fr Patrick Kennedy, who started a camogie team. It was a rural parish and there was nothing for girls at the time. I remember we used to cycle around to different fields to play because we had no set pitch.

Once I started playing, I had a love of the game. My three sisters – Geraldine, Connie and Eileen – all played as well. We were immersed in it. My three brothers played football with Naomh Fionnbarra. My whole family was involved in the wider GAA family.

At 18, I became secretary of St Anne's. There were no phones so I used to cycle around the parish, dropping off notices about games and meetings. It would take all evening but it was the done thing at the time. I was one of the fitter players on the team!

The highlight for me was winning an All-Ireland with Louth in 1982. I played alongside my three sisters. To run onto the pitch at Croke Park was magical, it was like nothing else. I played camogie

right up until my late 30s. It would be unusual now but it wasn't at the time. I have three children and they tell me they were brought up on the sideline! They loved it. I was very lucky that my mum and father were big into it so I always had family support.

I've held every position in the club and I've been county chair and chair of Leinster as well. I refereed two All-Irelands in '79 and '81 and I was a selector for the Camogie/Shinty game in 2009. If I had given the time to a business that I gave to camogie I would be worth a fortune but I wouldn't change it for the world. The fun that you have and the friends that you make - you end up being part of a bigger family.

I'm still very involved with my club and I'm chairing the National Child Welfare Committee. It's hard to move away from it. I still love to have the hurl in my hand on a summer's evening.

Mary Connor was one of the 29 County Volunteer of the Year Award winners in 2015



PRO OF THE YEAR:
Róisín Hartley, Waterford PRO

CAMOGIE FINALS REFEREES 2015

Referees who officiated at National Finals in 2015 were presented with their medals at this year's Referees, Volunteer and Media Awards Dinner at Croke Park.

Under 16B: Justin Heffernan (Dublin v Waterford)
Under 16C: Aoife Woods (Antrim v Westmeath)

ALL-IRELAND

CHAMPIONSHIP FINALS

Senior: Ray Kelly (Cork v Galway)
Intermediate: Jenny Byrne (Kildare v Waterford)
Premier Junior: Gráinne Coulter (Laois v Roscommon)
Junior A: Richard McNicholas (Carlow v Kerry)
Minor A : Ray Kelly (Kilkenny v Tipperary)
Minor B: Philip McDonald (Derry v Meath)
Minor B Shield: Julie O'Neill (Antrim v Laois)
Minor C: Pat Kehoe (Armagh v Roscommon)
Minor C Shield: Peter Dowd (Cavan v Monaghan)
Under 16A: Liz Dempsey (Cork v Galway)

NATIONAL LEAGUE FINALS

Division 1: Owen Elliott (Cork v Galway)
Division 2: Éamon Cassidy (Laois v Waterford)
Division 3: John Dermody (Carlow v Dublin)
Division 4: Michael Ward (Kerry v Meath)

ALL-IRELAND CLUB

CHAMPIONSHIP

FINALS 2014

Senior: Cathal Egan (Mullagh v Oulart-The Ballagh)
Intermediate: Peter Dowd (Lismore v Piltown)
Junior: Ger O'Dowd (Four Roads v Kilmessan)

INTER-PROVINCIAL

Junior: Jenny Byrne (Munster v Ulster)

Camogie Association Media Awards

The Camogie Association Media Awards and Mick Dunne Memorial Award recipients for 2015 were recognised at a gala presentation in Croke Park on 20 February.

Róisín Hartley received the PRO of the Year accolade while Waterford's innovative social media campaign #JointheJourney which followed the fortunes of the county's All-Ireland winning season was awarded the Camogie Association Best Use of Social Media Award.

KFM and the Southern Star were named as the Mick Dunne Local Radio and Local Newspaper of the Year respectively. Clare Camogie Board collected the accolade for Match Programme. Desmond Loughrey from Derry won the Photograph of the Year award. This was the 10th year of the Camogie Association Media Awards.

THE WINNERS

BEST USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA
#JointheJourney (Waterford)

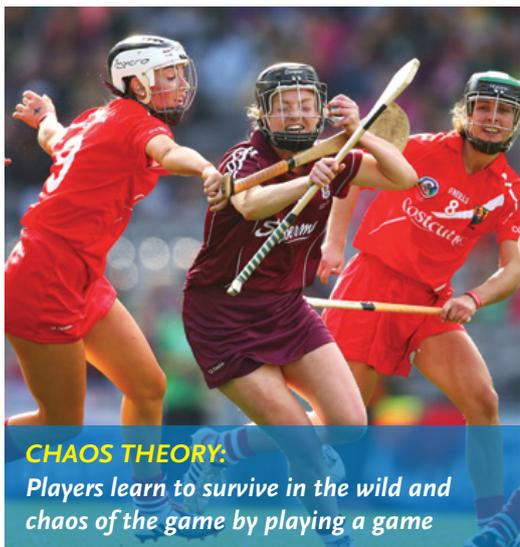
PHOTOGRAPHY
Desmond Loughrey (Derry)

PRO OF THE YEAR
Róisín Hartley (Waterford)

MATCH PROGRAMME
Clare Camogie Board

LOCAL RADIO
KFM

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CHAOS THEORY:
Players learn to survive in the wild and chaos of the game by playing a game

COACHING CORNER

So many decisions, so little time

How many times does a player have possession? How much time does a player have in possession? When Damien Young investigated, the answers caused a surprise. *By Brendan Coffey.*

Midway through Damien Young's presentation at this year's GAA Games Development Conference, there was an audible gasp in the room.

Young's analysis of last year's All-Ireland hurling and camogie finals revealed some remarkable stats. Kilkenny's TJ Reid, player of the year, took just 0.8 seconds to score his goal in the final against Galway. Orla Cotter, player of the match for Cork, had possession 18 times in the camogie final. In a match that lasted 63 minutes, the most influential player on the pitch had possession for 39 seconds.

"You have limited time to make decisions on the ball. Players have to execute under pressure from time and opposition. The rest of the time they're making decisions off the ball, they're reading the play. They have to be really skill efficient. If you have limited time and limited possession, they (players) have to be really, really skilful to execute that skill," said



Cork star
Orla Cotter

Young, addressing the audience.

The title of Young's presentation – So Many Decisions, So Little Time – is a neat description of the challenge facing players when they step onto the pitch. Take TJ Reid's 17 possessions.

"17 times he had to make a decision about what to do, where to hit it, when to hit and who to hit it to," said Young. "You have to be really adaptable for different environments."

For Young, the challenge for coaches is to improve the decision-making of players. How do you prepare a player for the chaos of a game?

"We learn the game by playing a game," said Young. "If we keep telling players what to do can they think for themselves?"

To illustrate his point, Young compared life in the zoo with life in the jungle.

"Zola (a tiger) lives in the zoo – every single day John the zookeeper brings her breakfast, lunch and an evening meal. Even if she's not hungry, she's fed. Every evening her cage is open, she goes in and she has protection from all the elements. Every day is the same, every day is easy.

Life is comfortable. Eva lives in the wild. Every single day, Eva has to go and find her food. If she wants to eat, she'll have to run and chase down her prey. Even with all her strength and skill, she'll only be successful one in 20 times. If she doesn't find food, she doesn't eat. If she doesn't find water, she doesn't drink. She has to learn how to protect herself, she has to learn how to adapt in order to survive. What would happen if we put Zola into the wild, how long would she survive? She hasn't developed the skills necessary to find food, to protect herself."

For players and coaches, it boils down to one thing – the game.

"Tigers learn to survive in the wild by being in the wild," said Young, summarising his presentation. "Players learn to survive in the game by playing a game."

DAMIEN YOUNG

From Drom-Inch in Tipperary, Damien Young has played senior inter-county hurling with his native county and has also worked as a Performance Analyst with the Tipperary Seniors. Young is a lecturer on the Sports Strength and Conditioning Course at Limerick IT and Setanta College.

'THERE IS SO MUCH TO THINK ABOUT' – GEMMA O'CONNOR

In last year's All-Ireland Final, Cork midfielder Gemma O'Connor was one of the most influential players on the pitch. However she only had the ball in her hands 13 times and her total time in possession was just 29 seconds – an average of 2.23 seconds per possession.

"If I was asked to guess, it definitely would be more than two seconds. You would never think that you only have the ball 13 times. It really means that you're not really on the ball that much compared to what you think you are," says O'Connor.

"You do so much work on the pitch – you're running, you're thinking. You think that you're more involved than what you actually are. It certainly teaches you that when you are on the ball it's really important to distribute it well and not to be making crucial mistakes because you don't know when you're going to get on the ball next.

"There is so much to think about when you're playing – are you going to make a run or give the ball off straight away? Are you going to carry it? I suppose a lot of it just comes from instinct."



Cork star Gemma O'Connor is facing into her 15th season

CAMOGIE: THEN AND NOW

'It's become like a game of chess'

Ten years ago Cork beat Tipperary to win the Division 1 league title but even at that stage, Gemma O'Connor was well established in the Cork side. Facing into her 15th season, O'Connor reflects on the changing landscape in camogie. By *Brendan Coffey*.

For Gemma O'Connor, the most noticeable change during the course of her career has been on the training pitch.

Camogie, like all sports, has become as much about science as skill. Progress is not always linear but there is a logic to what happens behind the scenes.

"There is a lot more training now, you have four nights a week and gym programmes on top of that. People are more aware of what they're doing now. It has changed for the better. It's a lot more intense now than it was 10 years ago," says O'Connor, who has been at the coalface for 15 seasons.

"Training and physical fitness has evolved. Sport now is more science based than anything and we're trying

to bring that onto the training pitch. Everything has a reason now. It's definitely for the better."

The increasing demands at training are an obvious difference since she first started playing. It is not the only change. Cork, maybe more than any other team, have transformed the way the game is played.

"The days of just going out and playing and marking your opponent are gone," says O'Connor. "Everything has a strategy and a plan. I enjoy that side of it. It probably suits the older players as well!"

Self-deprecation aside, the tactical side of the game is something that genuinely intrigues.

"It's become like a game of chess in a lot of ways, what move do you make

and how do you counteract it. I enjoy trying to out-smart the other team."

In terms of the league, which is now building towards a conclusion, the mindset has not changed much.

"I still think the league is used to try out new players and different strategies. It's not taken as seriously as the championship for obvious reasons but people would be lying if they said they didn't want to win a league. It's a great way to try out new things."

In other areas, the lack of change frustrates.

"I think camogie is a long way away from where it should be and where I would like it to be. The coverage is still kind of back in the dark age, if you compare it to ladies football we're miles behind because they have great PR and they have TG4. You won't get what you want in terms of PR unless it's going to be televised. As long as games aren't being televised, camogie is going to lag behind. I probably won't see it in my generation but for players in the future it would be nice to see some of those championship games televised."

To that end, the Camogie Association are pursuing a broadcast deal during the lifetime of their latest development plan, which runs from 2016 until 2019.

"If they (camogie) want to compete with other sports in the country, it's going to have to be televised, there's no bones about it. I think the sport deserves the coverage."

For now there are more pressing matters. Another championship looms and Cork have another All-Ireland to defend but beyond that lies uncertainty.

"I'm happy enough being involved again this year, I don't know what the future will hold after this year," she says. "I'd like to think that I'd be involved in coaching in the future. Maybe I'll test the waters at club level first."

If there is an ominous tone in her voice, it would be easy to understand. However it's hard to imagine O'Connor without a hurley in her hand.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



Athenry Hurl with Me 2015

This year's Camán to Croker takes place on Monday, 8 August

HURL SMART WEEK: 6-12 JUNE

Hurl Smart Week aims to increase activity levels at all ages in the community by providing a programme of events in the local Camogie club for the week. Clubs will be able to register to take part in Hurl Smart Week this year and will be put into a draw for a chance to take part in the Camán to Croker day on 8 August.

HURL WITH ME PROGRAMME

NATIONAL DAY: SATURDAY 25 JUNE

This programme is for girls in your club aged 7-10 and their parents/guardians. The programme will be for six weeks and held in 24 clubs around the country. A tutor will coach the basic skills of Camogie to the parents/guardians and girls aged 7-10. A national participation day will be held on 25 June in Dublin for all clubs

PROVINCIAL BLITZ DAYS

Under-12 blitz days for clubs will be run in each province again this year. Last year these events took place in Pearse Stadium, Galway (24 clubs), Newry, Down (35 clubs), O'Connor Park, Tullamore (43 clubs) and Semple Stadium, Tipperary (48 clubs) with 150 clubs from 27 counties taking part over the four locations. 3,750 girls took part in this initiative in total. Provincial days will be run again this year before Camán to Croker Day (8 August) with draw to decide who participates.

CAMÁN TO CROKER: 8 AUGUST

Last year 64 under-12 club teams took part in this one day event in Croke Park sponsored by Torpey Hurleys. The date for this year's event is Monday, 8 August. Teams who apply to attend their provincial dates will be put in a

draw to go to Croke Park. Also any club that runs a Hurl Smart Week this year will also be put in the draw to attend the Camán to Croker event.

U14 NATIONAL BLITZ DATE

Last year more than 1,200 girls participated in the national under-14 Blitz Competition in Dublin. 51 teams from 29 counties took part in the competition across five divisions. The date for this year's event is the Saturday, 10 September.

U15 NATIONAL BLITZ DATES

Last year, two phases of the under-15 Blitz took place with 20 counties and 23 teams taking part in the event in total. The dates for Phase 1 Counties this year is Saturday, 13 August.

For more information on any of the development projects listed above contact:

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GREAT SHOTS

THE AGONY & THE ECSTASY

Sport can be an emotional rollercoaster and when the stakes are high, the emotions come flooding to the surface. It is said that sports do not build character but reveal it. And when the final whistle goes we are left exposed, overwhelmed by the agony of defeat or overjoyed by the ecstasy of victory.

At this year's inter-varsity finals on 14 February in Gort, Co Galway INPHO photographer Donall Farmer captured the moment of victory for Jacinta Crowley (above) as she celebrated CIT's success in the Purcell Cup Final.

For the players of Loughgiel Shamrocks, there were very different emotions at the end of their AIB All-Ireland Senior Camogie Club Championship Semi-Final against Killimor at St. Tiarnach's Park, Clones on 31 January. Once more INPHO photographer Donall Farmer captured the moment with this evocative image (below) of the Loughgiel players.





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