

# Breaking down the stats



Christy O'Connor

GAA

## All-Ireland win could kick off a Cork era of title dominance

After Galway's win against Tipperary in the All-Ireland camogie semi-final two weeks ago, Cathal Murray wasn't just playing down Galway's chances by being smart ahead of the final against Cork.

"I don't think any one team has come within 10 points of Cork in the championship so far," said the Galway manager.

"They've been absolutely super. They've gone to completely different levels since last year. It's a huge challenge.

"It's going to take a hell of a performance to beat Cork."

It will. Murray saw that first hand earlier in the season, when Cork beat his side by 12 points. In their six games in this competition, Cork have won by an aggregate margin of 110 points.

Cork look unstoppable now, especially when they swatted Galway aside so easily six weeks ago. Or is too much being read in to that game, too?

Galway were heavily impacted by injury.

With the game on in Páirc Uí Chaoimh, and with the losers going to an All-Ireland quarter-final eight days later, Murray and his management were also doing the maths.

What was the benefit of Galway emptying themselves, especially with so many players returning from injury, and risk being flat and off the pace the following week ahead of a likely quarter-final?

Galway got the job done against Waterford: Just. It was a similar pattern in the semi-final against Tipperary, when Galway also scored 1-12, the same total they put up against Waterford.

Galway really fell over the line against Tipp. They went 46 minutes in total, during three different barren periods, without scoring.

Tipp just couldn't put them away, before Galway finally won the match with a run of three late points.

This isn't unusual territory for Galway, either, as this is their fourth final in six years.

Murray and Galway know what it takes to beat Cork in a final, too, having taken them down in the 2021 final.

Cork only scored 1-12 that afternoon. Prior to last year, the average winning score in a final was only 1-13, which was buttressed from the 3-14 that Galway hit in the 2019 final against Kilkenny.

Yet this Cork team have shown what they're capable of racking up,



Cork senior camogie player Laura Hayes: Cork have swatted aside everybody since last year's All-Ireland final.

Picture: David Creedon

which was evident in last year's final, when the 5-13 they posted was the highest score in an All-Ireland final in 58 years.

Camogie was a totally different game back then, when there were more goals than points. In that 1965 final, Dublin beat Tipperary by 10-1 to 5-3.

This Cork team, though, have a level of firepower not seen in the game for years. Four of their six wins in this championship were by margins of 18 points or more. They are ruthless.

If Cork get the scoreboard moving, Galway will struggle to match that level of firepower.

If Galway sit deeper again and play more defensive, Cork still have a huge scoring threat from distance, including their defence, which has good running and shooting power.

Cork haven't had to sweat in a championship game for a while now, but they know that if this match does go to the wire, that Cork can draw on that experience to get them over the line.

That experience and worldliness were hard-earned. Cork lost to Galway and Kilkenny in the 2021 and 2022 deciders by margins of just three and one points.

In four seasons Cork went without a title before last year, they had

been beaten by just one score, with the teams that beat them (Galway in the 2019 semi-final and Kilkenny in the 2020 semi-final) both going on to win the All-Ireland.

That's a serious level of consistency, but that is never good enough for a county that demands — and has repeatedly demanded — the highest standards possible in the camogie world.

When Cork lost to Galway in Athenry in their group game in 2023, that loss was never going to derail Cork.

But it merely confirmed a trend that Cork had to break: It was another one-score defeat in a big game.

Cork had got into a habit of failing to close out tight games, but they altered that trend in last year's All-Ireland quarter-final against Kilkenny, when winning by one point, before edging past Galway in the semi-final by two points.

And Cork have been a completely different animal in championship ever since.

After resembling a ruthless, relentless threshing machine in last year's final, Cork have mown down everything and anything that has come in their way in the championship ever since.

Now that Cork are on the cusp of

another title, they also know, deep down, that a victory here could open up a gateway into another era of dominance for Cork camogie.

Cork have lost some key players this year, but they look stronger than ever. Given their age profile and the make-up of this team, Cork are only going to get stronger, while other teams, like Galway and Kilkenny, are heading for transition, and the rest of the chasing pack still have huge ground to make up.

After winning four of the last six All-Ireland minor titles, the talent is there for Cork to drive on and become even stronger again. And so is the ambition.

In May, Mardyke Arena UCC and Cork Camogie announced the official launch of their pivotal Development Pathway Program.

Athletic performance manager Damien O'Donoghue and his team of S&C coaches designed a comprehensive programme to support the athletic development and personal growth of Cork Camogie's U14, U15, U16, and U17 squads, featuring stage-specific physical development plans that also cover wellness, nutrition, sleep, recovery and mental skills.

If Cork win again on Sunday, who knows where their potential dominance could end?

## Cork name teams for camogie All-Ireland finals

CAMOGIE

■ Rory Noonan and Mary Newman

Cork senior camogie manager Ger Manley has named an unchanged team from the semi-final for their Glen Dimplex Senior All-Ireland Championship final against Galway on Sunday at Croke Park, throw-in 5.15pm.

That means that vice-captain Meabh Cahalane, who came through a fitness test last week, must be content with a place on the bench with Izzy O'Regan starting at full-back.

O'Regan normally plays in the half-back line and her place there will be taken by dual star Hannah Looney.

Cork had a comprehensive win over Dublin in that semi-final, winning by 4-17 to 0-9 but will be expecting a lot closer game against Galway.

It's a strong Cork side and the defensive six will be tough for the Tribeswomen to get past.

Ashling Thompson and Aoife Healy have been rock solid in midfield all through the championship and will hope to continue that form on Sunday.

In attack some quality performances see Cliona Healy retain her spot in the half-forward line where she will be joined by Saoirse McCarthy and Fiona Keating.

Inside them Amy O'Connor, Katrina Mackey and Orlaith Cahalane will be hoping they can do the damage against a talented Galway defence.

All are capable of finding the back of the net and goals could prove crucial in what is



Cork's Izzy O'Regan takes on Grace O'Shea of Dublin during the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship semi-final. Izzy will start at full-back in the All-Ireland final on Sunday against Galway.

Picture: INPHO/Bryan Keane

expected to be a tight affair.

This sees the Cork bench as strong as the team with Meabh Cahalane, Sorcha McCartan and Clodagh Finn all likely to feature at some point.

This is Cork's fourth final in a row and they will be looking to retain their title, after their win over Waterford last season, and make it two in four years.

Meanwhile Cork intermediate manager Donie Daly has named his side for the Glen Dimplex All Ireland final against Kilkenny with Niamh O'Leary returning to the full back position having missed out in the semi-final clash with Offaly due to injury.

The side is otherwise unchanged with Ciara Hurley in goal, Aoife Barrett and Emma Flanagan holding down the corner back positions with Laura Doyle, Olivia McAllen and Maedhbh Ring across the half back line.

Tara McCarthy and Laura Buttimer hold down the midfield positions with captain Lauren Homan, Avril Cashman, Edel Sheehan, Niamh O'Regan, Cliona O'Callaghan and Cliona Dooley in attack.

In all outing to date Daly has utilised his bench to the full and no doubt we can expect the same on Sunday with Maedhbh De Burca, Lucy Allen, Katie Walsh, and Eimear Duignan all having featured strongly.

**CORK senior team:** Amy Lee; Meabh Murphy, Izzy O'Regan, Pamela Mackey; Hannah Looney, Laura Treacy, Laura Hayes; Ashling Thompson, Aoife Healy; Saoirse McCarthy, Fiona Keating, Cliona Healy; Amy O'Connor, Katrina Mackey, Orlaith Cahalane.



The teams are ready for the highly anticipated Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Camogie Championship finals tomorrow. Picture: Ben Brady/Inpho

## Cork women looking for their 30th senior title in All-Ireland final

Cork camogie are bidding to reach the magic number of 30 senior All-Ireland titles tomorrow, when they take on a Galway side bidding for their fifth senior title.

Cork's first title came in 1934, when a side captained by Kate Dunlea overcame Louth 4-3 to 1-4, and Cork then went onto make it three-in-a-row as they captured the title in 1935 and 1936.

Galway had to wait 48 years after Cork's first title to take their first crown in 1996, when a side captained by Imelda Hobbins defeated Cork 4-8 to 1-15 to lift the O'Duffy Cup for the first time.

This will only be the 10th meeting of the sides in an All-Ireland senior final, with Cork victorious on seven occasions: 1939, 1940, 1993, 1997, 1998, 2008, and 2015.

The last time the sides met was in 2021, on a day when Galway got the better of a Cork side that were raging favourites to take the title.

However, it was Galway who prevailed on a 1-15 to 1-12 scoreline and, on the day, they were captained by Sarah Deravan.

Finals take on a life of their own.

Very few gave Galway a chance in 2021, but they came with huge determination and no doubt they will be the same again tomorrow.

They had superb victory over a fancied Tipperary side in the semi-final, and they will have been pleased to have gotten a stiff test in that encounter.

Cork, on the other hand, had little or no test from Dublin, and whilst semi-finals are all about making it to the final, no doubt Ger Manley would



Laura Hayes will line out for Cork in the All-Ireland Camogie final tomorrow. Picture: Dan Linehan

### CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

have preferred a stronger challenge. The Cork intermediate team will be bidding to get the day off to winning start when they take on Kilkenny in the second game of a three-game schedule.

Introduced under new competition structures in 2006 to replace the All-Ireland Senior B Championship, Cork have won the intermediate title twice — whilst the previously named Senior B title was also won on two occasions.

In 2000, Cork overcame Limerick to take the title and, in 2002, Cork were back again with a new team as they defeated Antrim. Further honours came in 2006 and 2018.

Kilkenny have won the title on two occasions: 2008 and 2016.

In 2008, they overcame Cork to take their first title in what was the only time the counties have met in an intermediate/Senior B final.

Unlike the senior semi-final, the intermediate semis were both close games, with Kilkenny and Cork having to really dig deep to book their place in the final.

The open game of a triple header is the junior final, where Tipperary take on Laois.

Well known referee Liz Dempsey, who officiated at the Galway vs Tipperary semi-final clash, takes charge of the senior game.

This will be Dempsey's fourth senior final, having also previous been in charge of the Premier Junior final in 2014, the Intermediate final in 2017, and the 2023 replay match between Derry and Meath.

Her last senior final was in 2021.

The intermediate final will be refereed by Brian Kearney from Kildare, who will be in charge of his first All-Ireland Championship final.

He previously refereed the Division 2A National League finals in 2023, the Minor C All-Ireland Championship final in 2022, and the AIB All-Ireland Junior Camogie Club Championship final in 2022.

The training and hard work is all done, the bags are packed, and it all in the hands of the players now.

Wishing both Cork managements and players the very best of luck.

Let's hope it's a Rebel double on Sunday.



Cork's Lauren Homan celebrates after the win over Offaly with Eimear Duignan. Picture: ©INPHO/Laszlo Geczo

# Cork's Lauren Homan ready for Kilkenny challenge

Tomorrow is huge for Cork camogie — not only because the seniors chase their second consecutive All-Ireland title, but the intermediates, led by captain Lauren Homan, have the opportunity to make it a double after defeating Offaly in their semi-final.



### CAMOGIE

Jack McKay

ticked that off.

"So the next goal is obviously to win and get off the steps of the Hogan Stand, especially like we've such a young group that came in with lots of minors and we've experienced girls," she says. "We're a really tight group and we had to take the younger girls under our wings as well a bit."

"We've learned so much from them and they've learned so much from us, so we're just so excited and regardless of the result, we will still be well able to hold our heads up high and go again."

"Obviously seniors come first in the county, they're seniors for a reason."

"So we're just going to be driving and backing them as much as we can, but again, we've to focus on ourselves. It's brilliant having two teams up there and the support, hopefully will double a bit, but we just want to focus on ourselves

right now. We're the first game out there, so hopefully we can set a standard, win and hopefully that will drive the girls on to go out and do the double."

### PRIVILEGE

As captain, Homan's job in the team comes with additional responsibility, and if her tally of 1-7 against Offaly is anything to go by, she continues to relish it.

"It's a privilege. I'm delighted to be captain, but at the end of the day, it's only a title. My job is just to kind of keep the girls going and pushing them on, and hopefully get to lift the cup at the end of it. But I am so privileged that Donie [Daly] chose me and trusted me."

Winning a potential double and being part of what would be such an incredible achievement as captain and one of the more experienced players on the team — would be special in its own right, but does Lauren feel like it's an opportunity to inspire future generations?

"I haven't thought about it until now!" she laughs. "But you just want to leave your position and Cork camogie in a better place than what you came into."

"Camogie is changing every year, like even the rules, we're more like on the men's side now regarding the rules, it's more physical and hopefully like in the next few years again by the time we all retire that it'll be in a way better position than it was for us and for those younger girls."

That's the goal at the end of the day, just leave it in a better position than when you found it.

The game itself is evolving and so too is the support — something that has been a real boost for Cork this season.

"Even here tonight like the crowds of young girls and young boys even, coming out. It's not often you see the boys coming out, but I think with camogie, the standard has just gone to another level."

"The support is going to another level, even the semi-final the other day against Offaly there was a really good crowd in Thurles, and the crowd actually drove us on towards the end when the legs were going and we were getting tired. The crowds are growing and it does make a huge difference when you're playing on the pitch."



Kilkenny's Cria Langton and Cork's Lauren Homan ahead of the intermediate final. Picture: ©INPHO/Ben Brady

## Camogie All-Ireland final

# Ex-Down double act on Croke Park collision course

Paul Keane

MacCartan and Mallon won an All-Ireland together three years ago

When Down finally won the All-Ireland intermediate camogie championship in 2020, they were grateful for the craft and toil of forward duo Niamh Mallon and Sorcha McCartan.

Mallon, a generational talent in the Mourne County's attack, struck 2-3 in their final win over neighbours Antrim while McCartan added a point and wore out her GPS unit with hard running.

Would Down have landed that first title since 1998 without the duo? Almost certainly not.

But they also couldn't hold on to their most gifted performers and while a Division 2 league title followed in 2021 – the pair scored 2-7 between them in that final – McCartan's relocation to Cork resulted in her transferring to play for the Rebelettes in 2022.

The daughter of 1994 All-Ireland football winner Greg McCartan, played for Cork in the 2022 and 2023 senior camogie finals and will be expected to feature again in this Sunday's showpiece.

This puts her on an unlikely

Croke Park collision course with one of her own, former Down colleague Mallon, who has lit it up out west since making her mid-season intercounty switch to Galway.

Mallon's transfer to the Sarsfields club went through last spring and she made her intercounty debut as a substitute in April's National League final against Tipperary.

In her very first play as a Galway player, she scored a point, added two more and was fouled for two frees. Tipperary still won by a point but were mightily relieved to do so.

Using that individual cameo as a springboard to greater gains, the former All-Star nominee struck 10 points on her championship debut against Dublin and has reached the All-Ireland decider with 3-20 in all from the six wins that Galway have enjoyed, 3-14 of which has come from play.

Two of her goals came against Clare during Galway's group stage demolition of the Banner, a day when she collected 2-4 in total and was named Player of the Match.

No wonder Galway captain Róisín Black, referencing the impact of Mallon at this week's launch of the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland camogie finals, along with the continued excellence of players like Carrie Dolan and Aoife Donohue, bigged up their attacking threat.

"I've been marking them in training, I'm well aware of their



■ Cork's Sorcha McCartan (left) and Niamh Mallon of Galway (below) have been in fine scoring form for their respective adopted counties this season. PHOTOGRAPHS: INPHO



potential and their talent," said full-back Black. "We're very lucky that we have a great spread of forwards."

Yet gifted attackers are no guarantee of All-Ireland success, as Mallon is only too aware. The nutritionist was part of Galway's senior football backroom team this year and must have winced watching gifted duo Shane Walsh and Dami-

en Comer shoot blanks on All-Ireland final day against Armagh.

Two Sundays on, and a week since the Galway ladies footballers lost to Kerry in their final, the camogie team will have the opportunity to make it third time lucky.

As Mallon told Galway Bay FM after striking 1-2 in the All-Ireland semi-final win over Tipp, this wasn't a situation she envisaged being in.

"This wasn't on my radar at all," she said. "It wasn't on my radar six months ago never mind 12 months ago but things fell into place and it's been a mad kind of whirlwind couple of months. But here we are. It's just another game now that we have to go and win."

Galway are up against it though. For all the firepower they possess, Cork perhaps have even more. Amy O'Connor, who struck 3-7 in last

year's final, will fancy wreaking more havoc while the four goals Cork put past Dublin in their semi-final win brought to 17 the number of majors they have registered in six games.

McCartan brings her own unique threat to the Cork attack, netting in last year's final defeat of Waterford as well as in that more recent Dublin game, when she came on as a sub.

She initially commuted back and forth to play for Down after a work placement brought her to Cork before transferring permanently.

"She's very athletic, very dedicated," said her Dad, 1994 Down All-Ireland winner Greg. "You won't find a more dedicated player I'd say. She could be training nearly twice a day at times, two or three hours a day between skills, running and everything else that goes into it. She's just got something in her that embraces it."

## Cork and Kilkenny well road tested

Intermediate final

Cork v Kilkenny

3pm, Croke Park

Live on RTÉ2

Referee: Brian Kearney (Kildare)

These two teams both emerged as winners of their respective groups but had to escape massive examinations in their semi-finals.

Kilkenny needed a Danielle Morrissey equaliser from a free that she had won herself in injury time to bring their game to extra time, where they finally escaped Kerry's shackles.

Cork, who already have the Very League Division 2B title in the locker this season, were flattered by a two-goal margin against Offaly, Cliona Dooley goaling in injury time.

Where Morrissey is the primary scoring threat for the Cats, the Leesiders primarily rely upon Lauren Homan.

Cork are in pursuit of a fifth title and their first since 2018, while bidding to go one step better than in 2022, when they lost to Galway. Kilkenny have won the intermediate championship twice before, most recently in 2016. Their last appearance in the final was in 2021, when Antrim had the upper hand.

■ Kilkenny's Cria Langton, right, and Lauren Homan of Cork ahead of the intermediate final



## Rebuilt Galway face massive challenge to topple ever-improving champions

Only Wexford have gotten to within a single-digit margin of Cork in championship

Senior final

Cork v Galway

5.15pm, Croke Park

Live on RTÉ2

Referee: Liz Dempsey (Kilkenny)

Cork ended an eight-game losing run going back four years by defeating Galway in last year's semi-final and went on to win the All-Ireland. The Rebels have looked even better this year, with only Wexford getting to within a single-digit margin on their route to this year's decider.

Galway were among those victims, losing by 12 points at SuperValu Páirc Uí Chaoimh. Cathal Murray's crew were already qualified to the knockout



■ Galway's Róisín Black, left and Molly Lynch of Cork ahead of the senior final. PHOTOGRAPHS: BEN BRADY/INPHO

stages and were without Aoife Donohue but it was pretty one-sided.

They have rebuilt well with battling performances in overcoming Waterford and Tipperary respectively to get to

the final, showing all their experience and character by scoring the last three points to prevail over the Premiers to clear the penultimate hurdle.

Cork are without multiple All-Star full-back Libby

Coppinger (hamstring) but Méabh Cahalane is available once more, while Pamela Mackey is likely to be called upon to shadow the competition's leading scorer from play, Niamh Mallon.

It is Cork's running power from deep that is causing consternation in opposition defences, opening gaps and creating opportunities for any number of forwards.

So while the likes of Carrie Dolan is vital to Galway in terms of scoring, her work rate and that of the likes of Niamh Hanniffy will be crucial to neutralise the influence of Laura Hayes and Saoirse McCarthy, with Róisín Black and Dervia Higgins will need to be on their mettle with Amy O'Connor, Katrina Mackey and Orlaith Cahalane serious scoring threats.

■ The Nancy Murray Cup final between Mayo and Wicklow throws in at Banagher at 2pm and will be broadcast live on the Camogie Association YouTube channel

# Confident Cork look like they'll have too much for improving Galway side



**URSULA JACOB**

**L**ike Kellie Harrington, Cork have been delivering knockout performances. They have been the form team all year.

They are unbeaten. They have scored 19 goals. They have only conceded four. They were everybody's tip to get back to the All-Ireland final. They produced a superb performance in the final last year against Waterford, and I think they are even stronger now.

Ashling Thompson missed so much of last season with a cruciate injury. Laura Hayes was also struggling with injury. They are still without Libby Coppinger. She was so pivotal to their defence. But Izzy O'Regan is flying at full-back. She has added even more stability.

Thompson and Aoife Healy complement each other at midfield. There's a nice balance there. Ashling likes to hold back. Adding an extra foil across the half-back line. Aoife is so athletic. A dual player who covers a huge amount of ground and who can push forward.

Cork possess an outstanding half-back line. Laura Treacy sits in the pocket. Hannah Looney and Laura Hayes have big engines. They can run up and down the lines all day.

They create a wave that is very hard to contain. They are very forceful going forward and they are well able to lay the ball off, as well as carrying their own scoring threat.

Galway will be thrilled with all the talk and praise about Cork. They have had a topsy-turvy championship. They drew with Wexford. They lost heavily to Cork. Twelve points in it. But they redeemed themselves massively in the quarter-final and semi-final.

They have had a much tougher route to the final, yet those close games against Waterford and Tipperary will stand to them. They'll especially take a lot from their victory against Tipp, who would have been the favourites going into that game having beaten Galway in the league final.

## Impressed

It was looking like Tipperary would win that semi-final in Nowlan Park. But Galway dug in. They kept going. And what really impressed me was the way Galway finished the game, scoring the last three points. Their leaders stood up when they were most needed – the likes of Niamh Kilkenny and Aoife Donohue.

In the group game, Cork completely dominated. They got their tactics spot on. Galway struggled to score from play, and that will concern them.

Galway have brilliant forwards – Carrie Dolan, Ailish O'Reilly and Niamh Mallon. Mallon is top-class, a superb addition. If Galway can get the ball in quicker to the attack, they can make hay. They can certainly benefit from long and direct ball.

Galway will go in quietly confident. Cathal Murray is a very experienced manager, and he could have a tactic or two up his sleeve.

It's been a great first year for Cork manager Ger Manley and his management. He has put his own stamp on things. Some positional switches. A few new players. Cork have such momentum. There's a real slickness in their play.

And they have proven finishers in Saoirse McCarthy, Orlaith Cahalane and Amy O'Connor, who, of course, scored a hat-trick of goals in last year's final.

Cork advanced straight into this year's semi-final. They excelled against Dublin in that last-four tie.

People say they haven't been tested this year. Cork won't be worried about that. It's the old



**Amy O'Connor offers a serious goal threat for Ger Manley's Cork side**

## Tomorrow's previews

### GLEN DIMPLEX ALL-IRELAND SENIOR CAMOGIE FINAL

#### Cork v Galway, 5.15pm, Croke Park, RTÉ2

Cork ended an eight-game losing run against Galway going back four years by defeating the Tribeswomen in last year's semi-final before going on to win the All-Ireland. The Rebels have looked even better this year, with only Wexford getting to within a single-digit margin on their route to this year's decider.

Galway were among those victims, losing by 12 points at SuperValu Páirc Uí Chaoimh. Cathal Murray's crew were already qualified to the knockout stages and were without Aoife Donohue. They have rebuilt well with battling performances in overcoming Waterford and Tipperary to get to the final.

Cork are without All-Star full-back Libby Coppinger (hamstring) but Izzy O'Regan has been in excellent form. Pamela Mackey is likely to be called upon to shadow the competition's leading scorer from play Niamh Mallon.

Galway will need to be on their mettle to stifle the scoring threats of Amy O'Connor, Katrina Mackey and Orlaith Cahalane.

**Cork:** A Lee; M Murphy, I O'Regan, P Mackey; H Looney, L Treacy, L Hayes; A Thompson, A Healy; S McCarthy, F Keating, C Healy; A O'Connor, K Mackey, O Cahalane.  
**Galway:** S Healy; R Hanniffy, R Black, D Higgins; A Starr, A Keane, C Hickey; N Hanniffy, N Kilkenny; A Donohue, N McPeake, O Rabbitte; C Dolan, N Mallon, A O'Reilly.  
**Ref:** Liz Dempsey (Kilkenny)

### GLEN DIMPLEX ALL-IRELAND INTERMEDIATE CAMOGIE FINAL

#### Cork v Kilkenny, 3.0, Croke Park, RTÉ2

**Cork:** C Hurley; A Barrett, N O'Leary, E Flanagan; L Doyle, O McAllen, M Ring; T McCarthy, L Buttiner; A Cashman, L Homan, E Sheehan; N O'Regan, C O'Callaghan, C Dooley.  
**Kilkenny:** C Murphy; N Leahy, R Whelan, J Cass; M Kennedy, S Treacy, H Scott; D Morrissey, L Ronan; C Doherty, R Dowling, A Cantwell; R Kelly, C Kennedy, C Comerford.  
**Ref:** Brian Kearney (Kildare)

### GLEN DIMPLEX ALL-IRELAND PREMIER JUNIOR CAMOGIE FINAL

#### Laois v Tipperary, 1.05pm, Croke Park, RTÉ2

**Laois:** A Lowry; L Finlay, L Daly, F Scully; A Finlay, C Tynan, S Creagh; L C Fennell, J Bergin; A Walsh, G Delaney, S Delaney; A O'Dea, A Collier, E Hassett.  
**Tipperary:** L Leenane; L Ryan, C Ryan, M Connolly; O O'Brien, S Pembroke, L Fahie; A Quinlisk, A Fahie; C Brennan, J-A Quirke, G Moloney; E Flanagan, S Meagher, J Grace.  
**Ref:** Karol Collins (Galway)

story – you can only play what's in front of you. Cork are the favourites but Galway have been improving, bit by bit. And I'm hoping for a cracking spectacle.

I feel there mightn't be much between them. But Cork have been playing with a huge amount of confidence. They have been dominating in all their championship matches.

They have such strength in depth. Quality all over the field. And vast experience. They also have that impact off the bench.

That could be a significant factor. I think Cork will win.

# Galway can't afford another no-show

**Paul Keane**

Galway captain Róisín Black has accepted that they 'didn't show up' when they last played Cork.

Holdes Cork will head into Sunday's Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior final as strong favourites for a variety of reasons.

They wiped out Waterford in last year's decider and have so far been flawless in their defence of the O'Duffy Cup.

They've won all six of their Championship games, regained the Munster title, and, significantly with Sunday in mind, hammered Galway 2-16 to 1-7 in late June.

That was a final-round group game at Páirc Uí Chaoimh and Cork's 12-point win secured top spot in the table, easing them through to the Championship's last four.

As if to underline their quality, Ger Manley's side demolished Dublin by 4-17 to 0-9 in their semi-final while Galway have battled beyond Waterford and Tipperary since losing to Galway.

Galway defender Black said they simply can't afford a repeat of the performance they gave against Cork almost six weeks ago.

"We had a lot of games on the road, one after the other," said Black, reflecting on the buildup to their last meeting. "Cork wanted it more that day. We didn't show up. Our work rate wasn't in it. They ran at us, got all the scores they needed. They were just the better team that day."

"We had to sit down and have a look at ourselves after that. A performance like that is not going to win us any games. We had a six-day turnaround to play Waterford in the quarter-final so we really had to dust ourselves down and go again."



**Róisín Black: It will be a tough battle. We're saying to just treat it like any other game.** Picture: Ben Brady/Inpho

"We didn't have any time to feel sorry for ourselves. And we had great victories over Waterford and Tipperary so hopefully that defeat will stand to us, that we'll learn a lot from those games."

Galway did beat Cork in the league, on their way to the final. "They've kicked on another notch since the league," claimed Black. "They had a great victory over Dublin so it will be a tough battle. We're saying to just treat it like any other game."

"We have a lot of girls with experience of All-Irelands, and from 2021, we've had league finals and experience of playing in Croke Park so hopefully the occasion won't get to the girls."

The hope around Galway is that after a couple of difficult weekends for their county's teams at Croke Park, it can be third time lucky this Sunday. Pádraic Joyce's footballers and Daniel Moynihan's ladies footballers both came up short in their respective All-Ireland deciders.

Not that everyone in the Black household was entirely upset. Black's father is an

Armagh man and both of them went to the men's decider last Sunday week. "I'd the Galway jersey on," she said. "He was in the Nally and I was in the Lower Hogan; we actually saw each other. At least one of us went home happy."

Róisín's aunt, Mary Black, captained Armagh to an All-Ireland intermediate camogie title in 1994 so a precedent exists within the family for small ball success.

But Galway will still be significant underdogs against a Cork side on the crest of a wave right now.

"They're deserving of having that pressure on them because of their performances in the Championship," said primary school teacher Black of Cork.

"They've beaten everyone by a considerable amount this year."

Black, from the Oranmore Maree club, was part of the Galway panel when they beat Cork in the 2021 decider.

"We beat Cork that day in a thrilling game," she recalled. "It's a feeling you want to get back soon."

# Fine margins likely to separate finalists

## Junior final

### Laois v Tipperary

1.05pm, Croke Park  
Live on RTÉ2  
Referee: Karol Collins (Galway)

Laois are Division 3A runners-up (they lost by a point to Armagh in the final having beaten the Orchard girls in the round-robin) and qualified for the All-Ireland semi-final as easy winners of their group. They overcame Cavan in the semi-final to seal a first appearance in an All-Ireland final since their 2015 success, their sole

triumph at this grade after losing the decider in the previous two campaigns.

Tipperary, who are chasing a third title, having won most recently in 2001 but lost last year's final, reached the Division 2B final. They only lost that by three points to intermediate finalists Cork and indeed, won the Munster intermediate crown subsequently.

Managed by former senior boss Bill Mullaney, they had to battle hard to overcome Armagh, who had just beaten Laois in their League final, so it looks like there won't be much between them.



**■ Laois' Liadan C Fennell, left, and Sinead Meagher of Tipperary ahead of the junior final**

## All guides point to victory for champions

DERMOT CROWE

**C**ork bear the mantle of being strong favourites to retain their All-Ireland title, with a run of form that has left all rivals, including today's opponents, trailing in their wake.

In recent years Galway enjoyed an excellent record in this fixture, defeating Cork in the 2021 final when they were last successful, but in the last 12 months the worm has turned.

Victory over Galway in last year's All-Ireland semi-final led on to a runaway win in the final over Waterford. That form has been franked by a powerful run through this year's championship, where Wexford was the closest team of all the counties swept away by Cork's tornado charge. And Wexford merely managed to keep the defeat to nine points.

Galway fell to a 12-point loss in Cork, while Dublin were hit with hammerings in the group stages and the recent semi-final, conceding four goals both days. Cork put another four goals past Down earlier in the campaign.

The obvious concern, if you're searching for one, is the absence of any degree of character testing and this may leave them vulnerable should Galway produce a season's best and make a serious game of it.

The Galway formline hasn't been of a kind to confidently expect that they will produce it, although under Cathal Murray they have earned a reputation for being hard to beat and carry a good record of turning up in All-Ireland finals. Their only defeat in a final came in 2020, to Kilkenny during the first Covid year.

Murray has had to rebuild the team in the intervening years and that process is ongoing, with a number of retirements and withdrawals. They reached the league final this year, beaten by Tipperary, and included a win over Cork in the opening round of the league in March. The team has managed to reach an All-Ireland final without really looking like All-Ireland champions in the making — but the players have developed a winning mentality, like when riding their luck at times in the semi-final win over Tipperary, before finishing strongly to edge the contest.

They will need a much better performance to defeat Cork, who are looking to win a 30th All-Ireland camogie title under the management of Ger Manley. The acquisition of Down's Niamh Mallon has added some goalscoring potential up front for the challengers, but it will need to be a perfect Galway storm to bring about the upset that they are planning.

Verdict: Cork.



Galway's Aoife Donohue and Cork's Laura Hayes will renew rivalry again in today's All-Ireland senior final at Croke Park.  
Picture by Piaras Ó Midheach

# Cork have firepower to prevail

Galway are expected to show more, but their efforts may just fall short

**Aoife Sheehan**



**A**fter a challenging fortnight for Galway, which saw the county's football teams fall short in consecutive finals, all eyes turn to their camogie side who are back in an All-Ireland senior final after a two-year hiatus.

Cork are holders and hot favourites, but the teams are well-acquainted with each other, setting the stage for an intriguing clash to mark the 120th anniversary of the Camogie Association.

Cork, seeking their 30th title, are making their fourth consecutive final

appearance. They secured a decisive victory over Waterford last year but fell short against Kilkenny in 2022 and Galway in 2021.

Only six players from that winning Galway team started the semi-final against Tipperary, highlighting the transition the side has undergone. Before Cathal Murray's management career began after the 2018 league, Galway had won two All-Irelands.

Under his leadership, they have doubled that number and are seeking to add another title today. Since Wexford last claimed the O'Duffy Cup in 2012, the championship has only been won by Cork, Kilkenny, and Galway.

Cork overpowered Galway in last year's semi-final with their intensity, tackle count, and sheer hunger, breaking an eight-game losing streak against the Tribeswomen.

Galway reversed their fortunes in the league, but in the group phase Cork dominated with a 12-point victory at Páirc Uí Chaoimh just six weeks ago. Galway had already secured group qualification and may not have been at full tilt, but that loss had to sting. The team's inconsistent form earlier in the championship, drawing with Wexford and a three-point win over Dublin, could be attributed to navigating injuries and frequent changes, in both positions and personnel. This inconsistency is a concern for their title aspirations today.

That result on Leaside showcased Cork's powerful attack and unyielding defence. They have more than raised the bar since their rout of Waterford in last year's final and it seemed inevitable they would make a swift return to the final.

They picked up the Munster trophy earlier in the summer and had a flawless championship campaign, hardly breaking sweat en route to the final. They had seismic winning margins of 20-plus points, with Wexford the only team in the championship to come within single digits (nine points) on the first day out. They also secured a 20-point victory over Dublin in the semi-final.

On the other side, Galway had a hard-fought and tense semi-final, scraping through with a one-point win, sealing their victory with a late burst of three crucial points.

As a result, one might expect Galway to be more battle-hardened for today's game. However, reports from the Cork camp suggest that their in-house A versus B games have reached a higher intensity than some of their championship matches this summer.

Galway have found scores difficult to come by in both the quarter-final and semi-final, tallying 1-12 on both days. Most concerning for Galway, following Niamh Mallon's goal after

half-time, they went over 20 minutes without scoring the last day out. That won't do today.

Cork have the ability to vary their approach in-game, by shooting from distance, running at the opposition defence and delivering precise passes to the inside line of Katrina Mackey, Orlaith Cahalane and last year's hat-trick hero Amy O'Connor. This dynamic style of play, clearly influenced by hurling coach Liam Cronin, has been a hallmark of their performance this year.

The half-back line of Hannah Looney, Laura Treacy, and Laura Hayes, alongside midfielders Aoife Healy and Ashling Thompson, forms a formidable defensive shield that is tough for teams to break down. Galway must ensure that none of these players are given too much freedom.

While Treacy usually occupies the number six position, providing extra cover and safeguarding the area in front of the full-back line, she must not be left free and allowed to dictate play today. Looney and Hayes excel at shooting from distance and creating goal-scoring opportunities with overlaps, finding players like Saoirse McCarthy and Cliona Healy in the half-forward line.

Niamh Mallon, in her debut season with Galway after transferring from Down, has quickly emerged as a key player. However, she is a doubt for today's game due to a hand injury sustained in the semi-final. If passed fit, Galway need to get her on the ball as much as possible. Mallon has proven to be an outstanding acquisition for Galway, consistently rising to the occasion since her introduction in the league final against Tipperary and it is fitting that she will get the chance to play on the biggest stage today.

Interestingly, Mallon followed in the footsteps of her former teammate

**GALWAY**

**CORK**

SARAH HEALY	AMY LEE				
RACHAEL HANNIFFY	ROISIN BLACK	DERVLA HIGGINS	MEABH MURPHY	IZZY O'REGAN	PAMELA MACKEY
ANNMARIE STARR	AINE KEANE	CIARA HICKEY	HANNAH LOONEY	LAURA TREACY	LAURA HAYES
NIAMH HANNIFFY	NIAMH KILKENNY		ASHLING THOMPSON	AOIFE HEALY	
AOIFE DONOHUE	NIAMH McPEAKE	OLWEN RABBITTE	SAOIRSE McCARTHY	FIONA KEATING	CLIONA HEALY
CARRIE DOLAN	NIAMH MALLON	AILISH O'REILLY	AMY O'CONNOR	KATRINA MACKEY	ORLAITH CAHALANE

**SUBS:** Fiona Ryan, Alannah Kelly, Katie Manning, Réitseal Kelly, Ally Hesnan, Jennifer Hughes, Sabina Rabbittie, Orlaith McGrath, Niamh Niland, Mairead Dillion, Niamh Mc Inerney, Joanne Daly, Ava Lynskey, Aoibheann Barry, Caoimhe Kelly.

**SUBS:** Molly Lynch, Meabh Cahalane, Gráinne Cahalane, Niamh O'Callaghan, Sorcha McCartan, Hayley Ryan, Emma Murphy, Clare Mullins, Orlaith Mullins, Clodagh Finn, Millie Condon, Ciara O'Sullivan, Rachel Harty, Aoife O'Neill, Ciara O'Leary.

**GALWAY v CORK, RTÉ 2, 5.15**

Sorcha McCartan, who transferred to Cork two years ago.

The loss of Siobhan McGrath is huge for Galway, and if she and Mallon were to play inside together their impact could be significant. However, McGrath is taking a break from the inter-county game, stepping away after the league final loss.

While Cork have coped without the injured Libby Coppinger and Meabh Cahalane in the full-back line, today they face a stern test against Galway's attacking trio of Ailish O'Reilly, Carrie Dolan, and the red-hot Mallon. Galway's strategy includes deploying two forwards up front, and switching in Aoife Donohue to partner Mallon when required. Donohue's goal, following her switch to full-forward in the quarter-final against Waterford, was a turning point.

In the semi-final, Galway relied on their experienced stars, Niamh Kilkenny, Donohue, Carrie Dolan, Dervla Higgins, and Orlaith McGrath, who made a crucial late impact to secure their victory. Seven-time All Star Kilkenny, now in her 18th season, is showing sharp form after missing last year due to the birth of her first child. Galway will need to build on their strong final-quarter performance, which was the best we've seen from them this year.

Cork manager Ger Manley, who succeeded Matthew Twomey this year, faces the daunting task of following up on last season's impressive 19-point All-Ireland victory. Manley, who was previously a selector under Twomey, mirrors his predecessor's composed de-

meanour on the sideline. A crucial aspect for Cork is that Liam Cronin remained as the hurling coach, ensuring continuity in their play.

They have fostered a high-performance environment and have serious depth in their panel. The bench proved crucial for them last season, and with finishers like Sorcha McCartan, Clodagh Finn and Ciara O'Sullivan available to bring on, they have excellent options to make a significant impact.

Cork, home to the most camogie clubs in the country, is reaping the rewards of its robust underage development set-up.

They are also in the intermediate final this afternoon against Kilkenny. However, changes are on the horizon: starting in 2025, senior counties will no longer field second teams in the intermediate or premier junior grades. Instead, a new competition will be introduced for these second teams.

Today's referee, Liz Dempsey from Kilkenny, is known for allowing the game to flow, consistent with the approach taken by referees throughout the championship this season. For Galway to secure a victory, they need to start strong and get their matchups right. Under Murray, they have previously upset Cork.

Despite their earlier meeting this season, where Cork's dominance was evident, Galway are expected to show more today. However, Cork are likely to exploit the full width of Croke Park and challenge Galway's defence.

Given Cork's dominant form this championship, they appear well-positioned to retain their title.

# Healy the beating heart at centre of Rebel challenge

## Daragh Ó Conchúir



**A**oife Healy was a bit taken aback by the reaction to one act in last year's Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior camogie semi-final against today's final opponents Galway, but that, in itself, tells a story.

The Cloyne and UCC star quickly cemented a spot at midfield in her first full season, having been player of the match as Cork won the All-Ireland minor title in 2022. A skilful operator in both codes, she has never shirked infantry duties, so in her mind, she was only doing what needed to be done.

Still, the manner in which she chased Galway's pacy icon, Aoife Donohue, down the covered stand side of UPMC Nowlan Park despite not having a hurley, lives long in the memory.

Pestering and harrying, without conceding a free, eventually winning a sideline with a courageous-cum-foolhardy use of the hands and arms to effect a sort of block/hook. You wonder what a player is thinking in those circumstances. Or if they are thinking at all?

"I have no recollection of what was going on," Healy admits a year later. "At that stage, I think we were just so driven and so motivated that every small win ... we were just driving it on, and we were celebrating every small win at that stage. I just feel like the crowd, we were right by the sideline and right by the crowd, and just it was pure driving me on at that stage."

That reaction was elemental. Visceral. Pumped fists and sinew-straining roars, on the grass and behind the wire. The acts of the players feeding energy to the stands, the cacophony emanating from there multiplying that energy and rebounding it back to, on this occasion, the women in red.

There had been so much at stake. Cork had lost the previous two All-Ireland finals as well as two league deciders. What's more, they hadn't beaten Galway since the 2019 semi-final. They had lost three times to Cathal Murray's side already in the previous three months.

It was time to draw a line in the sand and if that had been done in theory and in word in the dressing room, and the intent to carry that through became evident in training, Healy's heroics seemed like the manifestation of that promise to one another. Not this time. Not this day. No more.

Of course it wasn't the only such moment — far from it —



Aoife Healy: 'We were just so driven.'

Picture by Bryan Keane

but it was the standout and Cork went on to prevail by three points and win a first All-Ireland since 2018, when Healy was an under 14.

Little did she think then that she would become the midfield partner of one of the stars of that success, Ashling Thompson. The Milford colossus is her elder by 14 years, though you know she could mix with any age group. It is Thompson's example in terms of preparation, work rate and endurance that stands out for Healy though, now that she is a teammate.

"Sure we all wanted to have pictures of Ashling when we were young girls, and sure now, we're on the same team, and that's amazing for us as well. That drives us on as well as driving the older players like Ashling on I think."

"She is absolutely amazing. I can't speak highly enough of her at all. And after doing her cruciate at such a late stage in her career [at the end of 2022], and to come back from it so strong last year for the end of the championship. She's at her peak right now, it's absolutely insane, and she's such an inspiration to be playing alongside."

With a hamstring injury sidelining Laura Treacy, Healy was entrusted with the centre-back role through much of the league and the early rounds of the championship.

Again, she fulfilled the role willingly and well. Treacy has become a pivotal figure in that position, in terms of cutting off potential danger, but also starting so many Cork attacks. Healy looked comfortable stepping in but she was happy to see her Kilkenny comrade return, and not just because it would strengthen the side.

"I like pushing forward. There's less pressure than at the back, so I do prefer playing midfield at the moment. It is

quite important to have such experienced players playing in your key roles and your spine. They know what they're talking about, and they give us the advice so that we can kind of push on. I have that at midfield with Ashling and Laura being back at centre-back is important that way too."

Ironically, it wasn't a case of love at first sight for Healy when first she clasped eyes on camogie.

"I probably started around four or five, like most people. I don't think I totally enjoyed it at the start, but sure my parents were always down at the pitch, so I kind of was just always there anyway. So then once I started getting older, and there was more girls teams, that's when I started getting into it. I enjoyed playing, and I enjoyed winning and pushing myself."

The environmental science student knows what to expect from Galway. Cork were easy winners at SuperValu Páirc Uí Chaoimh in the group phase but that will mean absolutely nothing today.

"You can't go out there in any way complacent whatsoever. It's the final at the end of the day, and they're always going to come out fighting. It's never going to be a game that you're going to win in the first few minutes. It's going to be right till the end. It always is against Galway and we will be expecting nothing else."



*She is absolutely amazing. I can't speak highly enough of her at all.*

Cork's Hannah Looney



# Cork



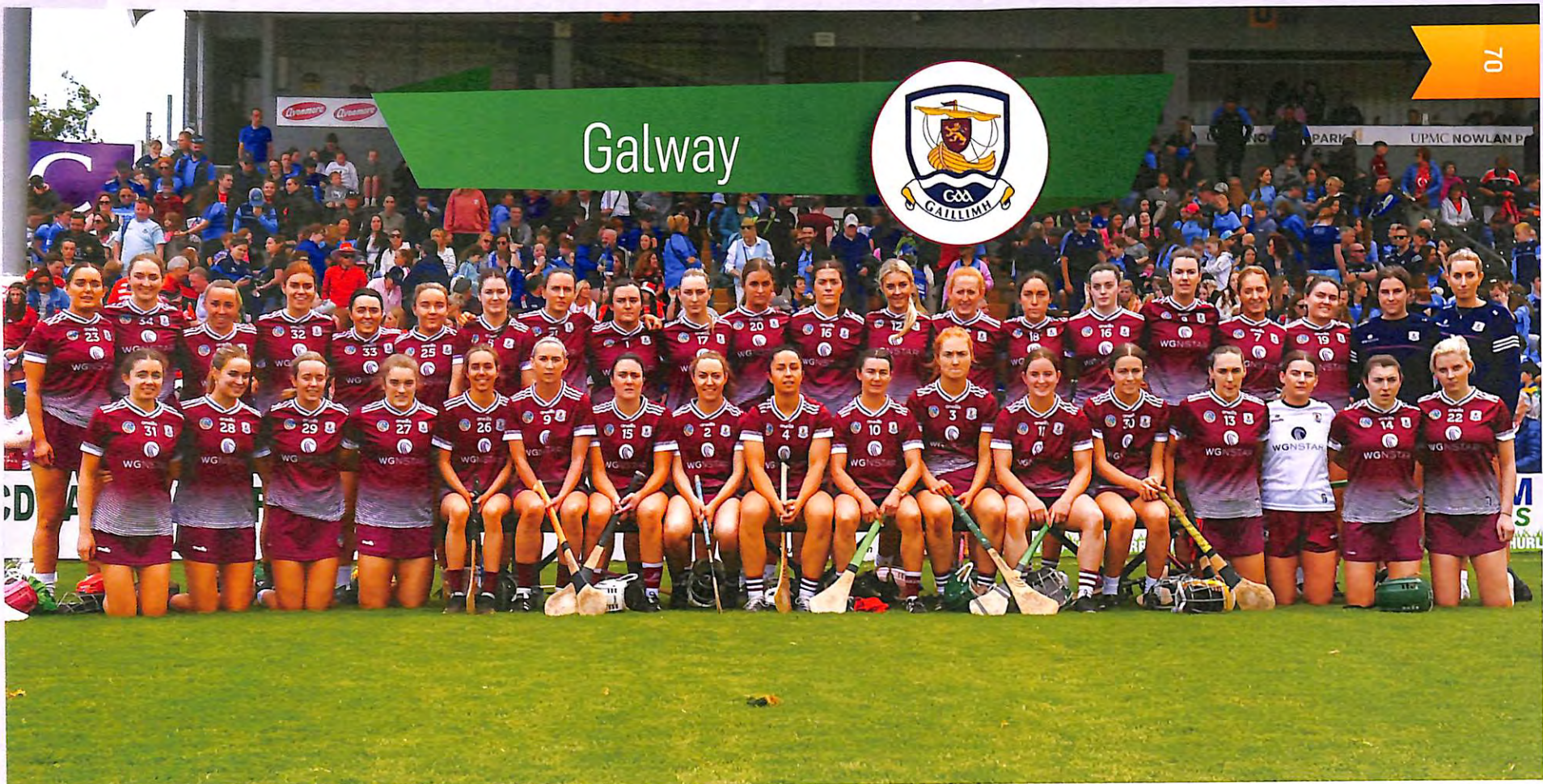
Back row L-R:  
 Grainne Cahalane, Orlaith Mullins, Clodagh Finn, Emma Murphy, Ciara O'Sullivan, Fiona Keating, Hannah Looney, Ashling Thompson, Katrina Mackey, Amy Lee, Laura Treacy, Molly Lynch, Ciara O'Leary, Sorcha McCartan.

Front row L-R:  
 Rachel Harty, Meabh Murphy, Izzy O'Regan, Meabh Cahalane, Saoirse McCarthy, Laura Hayes, Aoife Healy, Niamh O'Callaghan, Hayley Ryan, Amy O'Connor, Cliona Healy, Orlaith Cahalane, Millie Condon.



### IONADAÍ

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| 16 <b>Molly Lynch (C)</b> , Maire Ní Loinsigh, Sarsfields        | 22 <b>Emma Murphy</b> , Emma Ní Mhurchu, Glen Rovers        | 27 <b>Ciara O'Sullivan</b> , Ciara Ní Shuilleabhain, Newcestown |
| 17 <b>Meabh Cahalane (VC)</b> , Meabh Ní Cathalain, St. Finbarrs | 23 <b>Clare Mullins</b> , Clar Ní Mhaolain, Sarsfields      | 28 <b>Rachel Harty</b> , Rachel Ní Hartí, Ballyhea              |
| 18 <b>Grainne Cahalane</b> , Grainne O Cahalain, St. Finbarrs    | 24 <b>Orlaith Mullins</b> , Orlaith Ní Mhaolain, Sarsfields | 29 <b>Aoife O'Neill</b> , Aoife Ní Neil, St. Finbarrs           |
| 19 <b>Niamh O'Callaghan</b> , Niamh Ní Cheallachain, Sarsfields  | 25 <b>Clodagh Finn</b> , Clodagh Ní Fhinn, Fr. O'Neills     | 30 <b>Ciara O'Leary</b> , Ciara Ní Laoire, Cloughduv            |
| 20 <b>Sorcha McCartan</b> , Sorcha MacCartan, St. Finbarrs       | 26 <b>Millie Condon</b> , Millie Ní Conduin, Ballinascarth  |   |
| 21 <b>Hayley Ryan</b> , Hayley Ní Riain, Blackrock               |   |   |



# Galway



**Back Row: (L-r)**  
 Orlaith McGrath, Katie Anna Porter, Niamh Niland, Ciara Dolan, Shannon Corcoran, Mairead Dillion, AnnMarie Starr, Jennifer Hughes, Sarah Healy, Alannah Kelly, Ally Hesnan, Fiona Ryan, Aine Keane, Katie Manning, Laura Freeny, Naimh Hanniffy, Ciara Hickey, Réitseal Kelly and Siobhán Gardiner.

**Front Row (L-R):**  
 Ava Crowe, Ava Lynskey, Aoibheann Barry, Joanne Daly, Niamh McInerney, Niamh Kilkenny, Ailish O'Reilly, Rachael Hanniffy, Dervla Higgins, Aoife Donohue, Róisín Black, Niamh McPeake, Caoimhe Kelly, Carrie Dolan, Ciara Donohue, Niamh Mallon and Sabina Rabbitte



## IONADAÍ

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| 16 <b>Fiona Ryan</b> , Fiona Ni Riain, Ballinderreen          | 22 <b>Sabina Rabbitte</b> , Sadbh Ni Choinín, Athenry            | 27 <b>Joanne Daly</b> , Joanne Ni Dálaigh, Sarsfields      |
| 17 <b>Alannah Kelly</b> , Ailáine Ni Ceallaigh, Portumna      | 23 <b>Orlaith McGrath</b> , Orlaith Nic Craith, Sarsfields       | 28 <b>Ava Lynskey</b> , Eábha Loingsigh, Ardrahan          |
| 18 <b>Katie Manning</b> , Cáit Ni Mainnín, Mullagh            | 24 <b>Niamh Niland</b> , Niamh Ni Nialláin, Clarinbridge         | 29 <b>Aoibheann Barry</b> , Aoibheann Ni Barra, Kinvara    |
| 19 <b>Réitseal Kelly</b> , Réitseal Ni Cheallaigh, Sarsfields | 25 <b>Mairead Dillion</b> , Mairead Dillion, Kilconieron         | 30 <b>Caoimhe Kelly</b> , Caoimhe Ni Cheallaigh, Sarsfield |
| 20 <b>Ally Hesnan</b> , Ally Hesnan, Shamrocks                | 26 <b>Niamh McInerney</b> , Niamh Mac an Air chinnigh, Shamrocks |  |
| 21 <b>Jennifer Hughes</b> , Seannafair Ni Aodha, Carnmore     |  |  |



# When heat came on Cork showed their steely side

**Eoghan Cormican**

Croke Park



**S**EVENTY-EIGHT days after the All-Ireland camogie championship threw in, Cork finally were challenged. They were finally pulled into a contest and pinned into a corner. Such was their form across the 77 days leading into yesterday, the fear was they wouldn't be challenged. The concern was there would be no contest.

Now nobody was predicting the 19-point winning margin of 12 months ago. By the same token, nobody was predicting Cork having to defend for all their might and worth in the sixth and final minute of second-half stoppages. How could they?

Here was a team who had strolled up the M7. And not a drop of sweat expunged along the way. The only competitive championship they'd been involved in was the in-house games at Castle Road. And when you heard of season-ending injuries coming from them, you were left in no doubt as to the intensity of the internal championship that

maintained Cork focus when every other weekend was a dawdle.

Winning margins through the All-Ireland series of nine, 23, 18, 29, 12, and 20 points. Add in their two earlier victories in Munster and Ger Manley's women were unbeaten in eight games.

You had to go back 134 days to March 30 for the last occasion they'd walked off the field beaten and bested. That was above in Duggan Park, Ballinasloe. That was just another example of Galway holding not an ounce of fear of the red shirt.

The latest example came yesterday at 5.15pm. Watching Galway take the lead six times in an opening half that was level on eight occasions it was impossible to know who had walloped who by 2-16 to 1-7 just six weeks ago.

## Roll of honour

Cork	30
Dublin	26
Kilkenny	15
Wexford	7
Antrim	6
Tipperary	5
Galway	4



Galway came with a gear bag full of unknowns and unexpected switches. Cork gave the look of a crowd unsettled and confused by them all.

Niamh Mallon was taken out of her full-forward berth and put on the toes of player-of-the-year frontrunner Laura Hayes. Mallon won two converted frees inside six minutes, Hayes quickly realising that there'd be no sallying up the field today. Her teammates quickly realising there'd be no double-digit stroll today.

Aoife Donohoe began on the far wing but had zero interest in paying rent. She roamed as she saw fit. She came onto possession here, there, and everywhere. Cork didn't follow her and paid for it.

A first for the summer was Cork trailing at half-time. Unfamiliar territory. Seventy-eight days after the All-Ireland camogie championship threw in, we'd finally see the true worth of this Cork team.

"We went in at half time, I can't say we were happy. We set standards, and the standards weren't good in the first half. I didn't think we were working hard enough in certain areas," said Cork manager Ger Manley.

Before this final, there had been repeated mention from the Cork camp of raising the bar. Of how they had raised themselves, their preparation,



their application, and their fitness throughout 2024.

In the 10 minutes after half-time, they raised the bar to a height Galway could not reach. Never mind the unanswered 1-4. The raised bar was most evident at the opposite end. Niamh Kilkenny was hooked, a sight even rarer than Cork being challenged. Niamh Mallon swung wide under pressure. Ann Marie Starr fouled possession under pressure.

And when Galway rediscovered their first-half rhythm to rhyme off six on the spin and achieve stalemate on 51 minutes, Cork took the bar and rose it another two centimetres.

In this high-jump camogie

final, they cleared every height asked of them and that they asked of themselves.

It was most fitting that the two Cork women who rose the O'Duffy Cup wore No.16 and No.17. The second last height cleared was by their bench. Sorcha McCartan struck to end a 13-minute scoring famine. Fellow sub Clodagh Finn followed in her footsteps, not before a delicious side-step of Dervla Higgins. The second of McCartan's was assisted by Finn.

The very last height cleared was by their defensive colleagues. Laura Treacy and company were impenetrable during the six minutes of injury-time. Galway ran at them and were repeatedly repelled.

"We needed that game to show what we're made of," Manley continued, "and it really showed there in the last seven or eight minutes when the going got tough. You saw the senior players — Meabh Cahalane, Laura Treacy, Ashling Thompson, Pamela Mackey, Saoirse McCarthy — they all stood up."

Their resistance and staying ability was unlike the 2021 and 2022 final defeats. They refused to be caught or overtaken. Referencing those two losses, Manley was half joking, half serious when he told the gathered media that they should be going for five-in-a-row in 2025.

As it is, they will attempt to go in 2025 where no Cork team

# Cahalane: Spirit and freshness are key elements **Bench**

## Cork reaction

**John Fogarty**

Cork vice-captain Méabh Cahalane's All-Ireland final lasted just over 15 minutes, but as her manager Ger Manley mentioned afterwards, it was a triumph that she played at all, such was the hamstring tear she suffered in June.

"She got back in six weeks with the injury she had," said Manley.

"That's the spirit that we've shown all year, really, they just worked so hard. We've put so much into this, we started at the start of the year very

late, purposely to plan for this: this was our aim, to get back, and we got back."

With Galway in the ascendancy, Cahalane came on for Hannah Looney and helped stem the tide.

The St Finbarr's woman always felt the injection of young talent after last year's All-Ireland success would stand to them this season, even if their third-place finish in Division 1A felt to the playing group like a let-down.

"Every year there's a bit of a freshness added to the panel and this year the panel was rejigged and we started out the league campaign, and the

league is about experimenting with players, but in hindsight we probably would have been disappointed with our overall league campaign.

"We still went out to win it, but there is huge competitiveness in training and even when you're struggling with niggles and fatigue you're looking over your shoulder and the last number of weeks even when I was injured, I didn't feel like I was going to get straight back into the team.

"I felt I had a role to play and possibly coming on in the semi-final or final like I did today and I just feel like that's

the mentality of the whole group.

"Whatever I can bring to the table, whether it's starting, coming on, everybody plays a different role."

Having put behind them two final defeats with victory over Waterford last year, the question for Cork this season was had their appetite for success been satiated. Cahalane never doubted it.

"Going into the final, I was thinking about the hunger and I don't think that went away from last year.

"We were so hungry for success this year, so hungry going out in every single train-

ing session trying to get something out of it and I think that's the standard that Liam Cronin sets as hurling coach.

"He was under no illusions today that Galway were going to put up a huge test and we knew that would give us a huge physicality test and even a mental test, because Galway are a team that you're never going to put away, especially in a final. They seem to rise to the occasion.

"I felt the mentality of the girls showed today to ride that wave when Galway were coming at us was something else, and they could be so proud of themselves."

## Moments that mattered

### Galway's positive start

Carrie Dolan's third converted free handed Galway their first lead of the afternoon after quarter of an hour. An innocuous score to make it 0-5 to 0-4, but it cemented the fact Cathal Murray's side had matched their opponents during a critical opening phase.

Cork had obliterated plenty of opponents during the opening quarter on their march to this year's All-Ireland final. Galway's positive start en-



Laura Hayes, centre, celebrates with the O'Duffy Cup alongside her team-mates after Cork's victory over Galway in yesterday's All-Ireland Senior Camogie final at Croke Park. Picture: Piaras Ó Mídeach/Sportsfile

has gone since 1972. The chase is already on for three-in-a-row and generational status.

"What we want is to be a generational team and to win back-to-back is only the start of it," said Hannah Looney.

Galway's challenging of Cork right to the last bell went a distance to saving a championship that was desperately lopsided and littered with hammerings. One game shouldn't skim over the many and sizable crevices within a bloated senior competition right now, but that is likely what will happen.

This is, after all, an association that has never moved

with any great haste in rectifying inadequacies. Just look at referee Liz Dempsey's perplexing interpretation of a rulebook stuck in a bygone era. The charging rule - Liz made no friends west of the Shannon with her interpretation of this particular gem - was described by Cathal Murray as "madness" and one that "needs to be taken out".

Galway's contribution to the outstanding camogie final required will be no solace. A third All-Ireland final defeat in a fortnight for the maroon. No county has worn that badge since Cork in 1956.

Across the two codes, male

and female, Galway's All-Ireland final record reads 19 wins and 56 losses. As vexing a stat as their three-in-a-row of misses around the hour mark and the earlier failure of the Hill 16 umpires to catch Katrina Mackey's thrown goal.

"I believe it was a throw ball," remarked Murray. "I questioned it on the line. I was told it was going to be a penalty. And the reason they just let it play is because it was going to be a penalty anyway. But you still have to score a penalty, so I wouldn't agree with them there at all."

Regrets and recriminations. It'll be a long winter out west.

## impact when needed most

sure that wouldn't happen again and set the tone for a tight, physical encounter.

### Mackey's mark

Cork's roaring restart delivered an unanswered 1-4 and turned a one-point deficit into a six-point lead by the 40th minute. Three poor Galway wides didn't help, as Orlaith Cahlane and Ashling Thompson white flags preceded a major turning point.

Amy O'Connor gathered possession, raced towards goal, and found Katrina Mackey on the edge of the square, and the full-forward

managed to bundle the ball over the goal-line.

That was Mackey's last intervention before retiring injured. Yet, as she has done all year, the Douglas player made her mark with another selfless and influential display.

### Bench press

Galway were on fire after sending over six points in a row to level the score with less than nine minutes to go.

Cork manager Ger Manley has utilised his substitutes bench superbly all year and rang the changes out of necessity

Sorcha McCartan, Ciara O'Sullivan, Méabh Cahlane, and Clodagh Finn were sprung from the bench, with McCartan and Finn raising white flags to finally end a quarter-of-an-hour Cork scoring famine.

More importantly, Cork's fresh legs, as they have done all year, made a difference when it was needed most.

Another McCartan effort, fed by Finn, confirmed the Rebels' victory and underlined the importance of Manley's ability to build a title-winning panel.

— Ger McCarthy

# Manley: Half-time home truths key as Cork turned it around

## Therese O'Callaghan



CORK senior camogie manager Ger Manley said they needed to have a team talk at half-time to inspire their second-half comeback, the third quarter yielded an unanswered 1-4.

Galway took a one-point lead to the dressing-room, 0-10 to 0-9.

"We went in at half time, I can't say we were happy. We set standards and the standards weren't good, I didn't think we were working hard enough in certain areas and that changed in the second half. I thought we were very good in that third quarter, we got a good lead. That's what it's about. When you're on top, get the scores, and I think we got the scores and we stayed steadfast in the end.

"But give Galway their credit, they're a super team. They lost a couple of players from last year, us on the flip side, we got players back — Laura Hayes, Ashling Thompson, Cliona Healy and Orlaith Cahlane. If you flip that over, it's a good turnover for us. It's a competitive squad, there's some fierce talent in Cork, the intermediate team as well, and there's more out there.

"I think we raised the bar this year, fitness-wise, hurling-wise. There were times today we looked very good, there were other times where we wouldn't have been happy. Some of the performances we gave were top class. Look for

us, I'm relieved. I'm just delighted with the spirit shown by the team, the work they put in.

"You can see Ashling Thompson, I don't know how many years she's been playing, the Mackeys are at it 16 years. Katrina pulled her hamstring before she got the goal, she went on but we had to take her off, then (Sorcha) McCartan came on and her ankle is like a balloon, she played on. They just got on with it.

"Libby Coppinger was missing from full-back, Meabh (Cahalane) was missing from the half-back line, Gráinne (Cahalane, injured) was one of our subs in the backs and we were tight for backs. Aoife Healy has played in the backs all year, we pushed her up midfield and she made a huge difference, and she's been a marker for us.

"I'm delighted, it was a great game to win. If we had lost I would have been sick."

Katrina Mackey's goal was a hand-passed goal, but it stood.

"I'd say she threw it in, did she? I don't care how she threw it. From what I saw, she went to strike it and she was fouled, and when she threw the ball up to hit it, it went in. She was in the process of striking it, I thought she was fouled. Amy O'Connor was definitely fouled when she put the ball across. When I saw it, I kind of went 'woah', but they pucked the ball out, so it was done and dusted."

Cork had been on top in all of their championship games, never really tested.

"We knew it wouldn't be easy today. It's grand to say we're playing matches, but we needed a match like that. We needed that game to show

what we're made of and I think it really showed there in the last seven or eight minutes when the going got tough. You saw the senior players, they all stood up and we got a couple of great scores from the subs again."

There was special mention for the player sitting to the manager's left in the media room, and her sister Gráinne.

"Méabh Cahlane had an injury there, if it was someone on the men's team he'd be out for three months, she got back in six weeks. That's the spirit that we've shown all year really, they just worked so hard. We've put so much into this. We started at the start of the year very late, purposely to plan for this: This was our aim, to get back, and we got back.

"Gráinne ruptured her achilles the night we had the press night. If we had 15 Cahalanes, you'd be delighted. They have a great attitude. Méabh's attitude is spot on, she's been a brilliant leader for us all year.

"She was just unfortunate, the injury came at a bad time, a simple thing in training. Came on today, she was so good, and that's the way we have been all year. Everyone came on and did their best. I know people have said we weren't tested, but we beat what's in front of us.

"We've a happy camp. It's very hard not to give them all a game. We spoke about it two weeks ago, the trust thing. It's all about the team, not the individual. I don't care who plays, I don't care who scores and that was reiterated at half-time. You saw Amy O'Connor, the pass she gave for the goal, what a pass and Mackey put it away. It's the team and she personifies that."



Cork manager Ger Manley celebrates after the final whistle. 'I think we raised the bar this year, fitness-wise, hurling-wise. There were times today we looked very good,' he said. Picture: Ben Brady/Inph

# Fiona hits late winner as



Cork's Cliona O'Callaghan breaks past Kilkenny's Shauna Treacy.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

## Substitutes prove vital for Rebels to claim win



Match analysis

Jack McKay

It wasn't easy, and it wasn't pretty, but Cork did it. They got over the line after a gruelling battle with Kilkenny to win their fifth Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Intermediate Camogie Championship.

With the change of structure it means it's the last one this group can win, but they fought until the bitter end, and substitute Fiona Nelligan was the hero as they got themselves over the line.

### SUBSTITUTIONS

Cork's second half substitutions were instrumental in changing the outcome of the game.

The introduction of Lucy Allen gave them an additional output going forward, while Kate Walsh and Erinn Curtin added an injection of pace that put the Kilkenny defence under a lot of pressure in the closing stages.

Without a doubt though, the hero on the day was Fiona Nelligan — with the Charleville forward getting the crucial score deep in added time that undoubtedly turned the game in Cork's favour.

### SLOW START

Cork started slow in the first half, and were struggling to find a way forward for the entire 30 minutes. They missed a total of eight first half attempts — hitting six wides, one short and let one goal chance go as Cliona O'Callaghan made a superb run that was well saved by Kilkenny's Cliona Murphy.

The Rebels simply weren't creating enough and when they did find an opportunity to shoot, far too often their opportunities were wasted.

While their opponents only hit three wides in the first half, the free-taking of Lauren Homan and a couple of excellent scores from Niamh O'Regan ensured Cork had a one point lead at the break, and would be crucial to come in the second half when they found themselves behind after Danielle Morrissey goalied from the halfway line.

Against the wind in the first half the Rebels struggled to carry the ball forward, and several opportunities went to waste as a result of wayward passing. It was more of the same in the latter period, as Cork continued to struggle to string passes together. However, Kilkenny couldn't punish them for it — and that was for one key reason.

### FULL-BACK LINE

As they were in the semi-final win over Aghabullogue, Aoife Barrett and Emma Flanagan were ex-



Cork's Laura Doyle solos from Kilkenny's Hannah Scott during the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Intermediate Camogie final at Croke Park.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

ceptional. Were it not for the outstanding shifts the two corner-backs put in against Kilkenny, complimented by the performances of Niamh O'Leary at full-back and Ciara Hurley in goal, it would have been a drastically different outcome for Cork. While Barrett was crowned player of the match in the semi-final, it was Emma Flanagan's turn in the other corner this time, as she forced three turnovers and prevented the Cats from getting any clear goalscoring chances.

Not only were the backs superb in halting the Kilkenny forwards, particularly when they were under pressure in the first half, but composed and disciplined defending ensured they conceded very few frees throughout the game — as highlighted by the fact Kilkenny only had one scorable free in the entire first half, which was converted by Danielle Morrissey.

### DANIELLE MORRISSEY

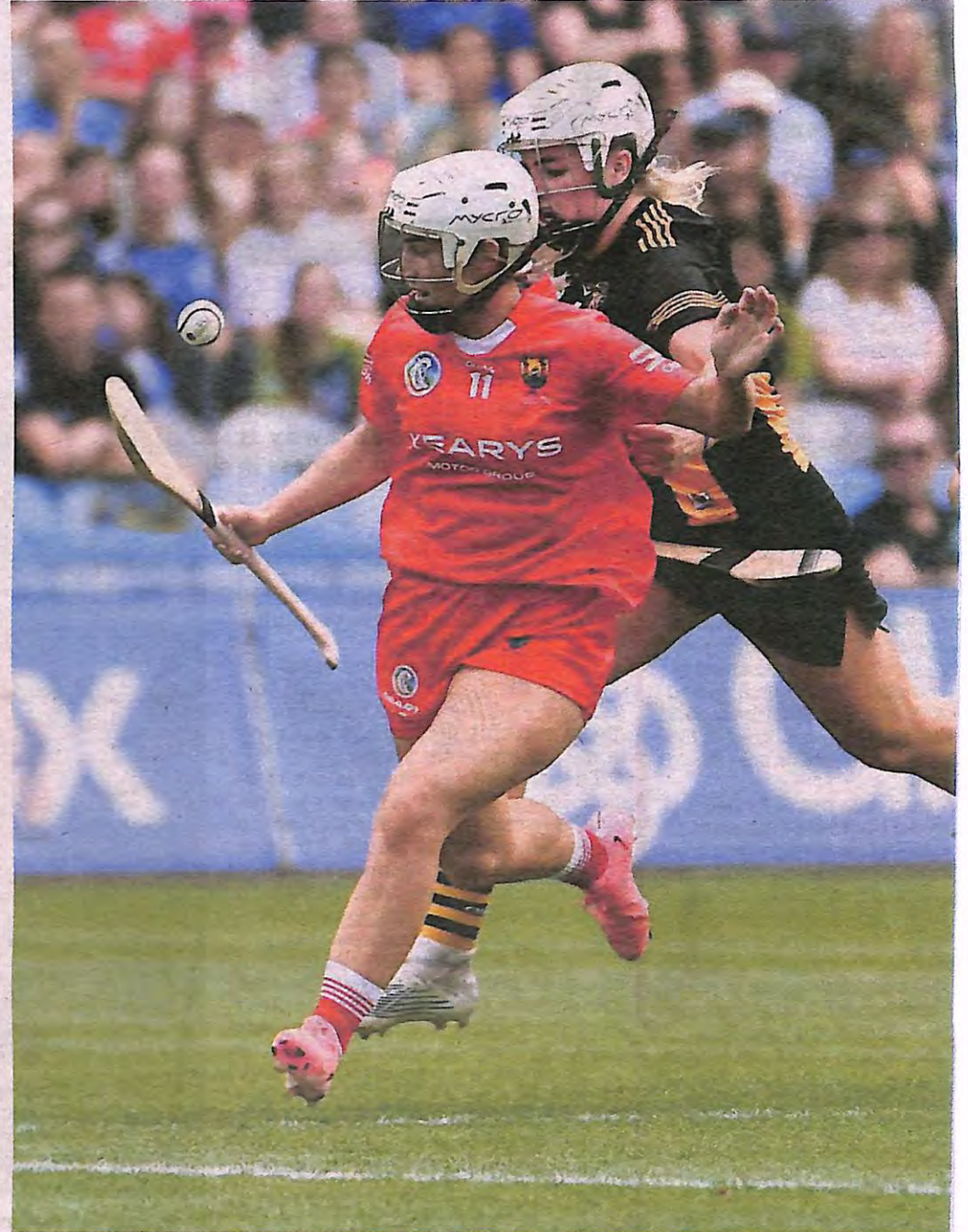
As agonising as it is to come out on the wrong side of the result in a final, Kilkenny's Danielle Morrissey can hold her head high.

She was excellent in every area of the game. Her frees were impressive and she was the architect behind everything that Kilkenny did right.

She got them the all-important goal that put them in front in the second half, but ultimately it wasn't to be.

Her sidelines were outstanding, and the midfielder almost scored a second goal from one, as she cut one long from behind the 20 metre line, though the Cork defence dealt with the incoming ball.

Undoubtedly the best player on the pitch, Morrissey put in a 10/10 performance and without her tally of 1-4 including 1-1 from play, Kilkenny wouldn't have been so close to lifting the title.



Cork's Lauren Homan breaks from Kilkenny's Hannah Scott during the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Intermediate camogie final at Croke Park.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare



Cork players and management celebrate after defeating Kilkenny in the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland intermediate camogie final at Croke Park.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare



Cork's Cliona Dooley is tackled by Kilkenny's Rachel Whelan at Croke Park.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

## Story of the game

**Player of the match:** Emma Flanagan was superb at corner-back for Cork, forcing three turnovers and stopping Kilkenny time and time again as they went looking for goals. The Aghabullogue back couldn't have done any more on the day.

**Score of the match:** While Danielle Morrissey's long-distance goal was certainly a contender — Fiona Nelligan's

game winning score was the crucial.

As Niamh Leahy tried to clear it for Kilkenny, the ball could only go as far as Nelligan, who caught the sliotar and struck it over the bar from the edge of the D.

**Entertainment value:** While neither side were at their best — it was a tight and tense encounter that really ramped up in the final 10 minutes.

It easily could have gone either way. The teams were level a total of seven times, but an additional time score from substitute Fiona Nelligan made the difference. **8**

**Turning point** Cork looked to have let it slip late on, but a crucial Lauren Homan free from a tight angle in the 57th minute closed the gap to one and allowed them to power on and take the win.

# Cork pip the Cats



Cork's Glen players Tara McCarthy and Katie Walsh with bands remembering clubmate Sarah Kate O'Meara. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

## Glen duo dedicate All-Ireland to O'Meara

REACTION

■ Mary Newman

Cork forward Tara McCarthy was hugely emotional at the full-time whistle as she reflected on a great day for the Rebels.

A one-point win over Kilkenny at Croke Park will live long in the memory.

"We were really determined to do it and come away out of Croke Park as All-Ireland champions," McCarthy said.

"Since January we have worked as a panel and the management told us we would take it one match at a time. We got the results we needed to get here."

Winning the league gave the team great belief.

"The management gave us all a chance to play and it's a tribute to all the girls who played their hearts out that we have won the league and championship, these are fantastic girls and each and every one of them put in massive efforts as we worked towards."

Having played against the strong wind in the opening half, Cork led by a point at half-time and McCarthy said it was a calm dressing room at the break.

"We just got in at half-time and the management told us to keep doing what we were doing and to keep working hard and we really had to do just that in the second half as Kilkenny really came at us."

When Kilkenny went two points in front Cork didn't panic.

"Against Offaly in the semi-final we were under a bit of pressure, but our defence was brilliant and again they were superb, every time Kilkenny came at us they broke them up and drove them back and this was the launching pad for our victory, it is so great for us all today and I'm delighted for all the girls and the management."

Her Glen Rovers club-mate Katie Walsh also came on and played a part.

"It's been a tough hard few weeks for Katie and myself and our club Glen Rovers, we lost our young team-mate and friend Sarah-Kate O'Meara who passed away unexpectedly and we miss her so much."

"I want to dedicate this win to her and I really hope we did her proud."

McCarthy and Walsh were wearing wristbands with Sarah Kate's name and jersey number: SK 8.

Cork's Fiona Nelligan, scorer of the winning point, celebrates after defeating Kilkenny in the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland intermediate camogie final at Croke Park. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

Cork	1-11
Kilkenny	1-10

## CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

**Heart, guts, and determination were the order of the day as Cork captured the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Intermediate Camogie title after a titanic battle with Kilkenny.**

In a game that went right down to the wire a point from substitute Fiona Nelligan three minutes into injury-time saw Donie Daly's sides capture the county's fifth title.

And oh how sweet it was.

Playing with the aid of the strong wind in the opening half, Kilkenny went to the dressing rooms trailing by a point 0-7 to 0-6, both sides having been evenly matched through the opening half in which Cliona Dooley gave Cork an early lead with the opening point.

It took Kilkenny six minutes and three wides in a row before they were on the score-sheet after six minutes. Three points in a row, all from play, by Claire Doheny (2) and Caroline Kennedy saw them edge into the lead.

With their defence strong, Cork held their lines and two Lauren Homan pointed frees along with two excellent Niamh O'Regan scores swung the pendulum back in Cork's favour.

However, they were grateful to goalkeeper Ciara Hurley who dealt superbly with two long-range efforts.

Despite battling against the breeze, Cork enjoyed huge possession. Sloppy passing and erratic shooting ensured they couldn't extend their lead.

Kilkenny's Carlisle Comerford and Hannah Scott levelled matters. And with Homan and Danielle Morrissey exchanging pointed frees, it was stalemate again.

With half-time approaching Cork had a sniff of a goal chance, but Cliona Murphy dealt well with a Cliona O'Callaghan effort before Homan edged Cork in front with a free at the end of a half that Donie Daly would have been the happier of the managers.

Morrissey had the sides level on the resumption but from the puck-out

Cork hit the front, Olivia McAllen off-loading a superb ball to O'Callaghan who made no mistake finishing to the net.

Kilkenny responded with a Morrissey free and, wasting possession again, Cork were struggling as Kilkenny were getting to grips with their half-back line, the Cork forwards struggled to make inroads.

Morrissey pointed a free on 42 minutes to again put one between the sides and four minutes later she turned over possession in the middle of the field and her long-range effort ended in the net to push Kilkenny two points in front.

Cork had it back to a one-point game with a Homan free, but Claire Doheny responded to keep Kilkenny two ahead.

Cork needed more from their attack. Winning a free, Homan split the posts and when Kilkenny attacked, Cork broke it up. Tara McCarthy drove the ball up field and Cork won the breaking ball for O'Callaghan to level with two minutes remaining.

Cork pressed and applied huge pressure, but two efforts dropped short.

With three minutes of injury-time

played Nelligan drove the ball between the post: advantage Cork.

It was just a matter of defending tenaciously which they did. From a puck-out Cork won possession and drove it up field to the sound of the full-time whistle. Sheer joy and a well-deserved victory for a superb Rebels side.

**Scorers for Cork:** L Homan 0-6 (0-5 f), C O'Callaghan 1-1, N O'Regan 0-2, C Dooley, F Nelligan 0-1 each.

**Kilkenny:** D Morrissey 1-4 (0-3 f), C Doheny 0-3, H Scott, C Comerford, C Kennedy 0-1 each.

**CORK:** C Hurley (St Finbarr's); A Barrett (Aghabullogue), N O'Leary (Brian Dillon's), E Flanagan (Aghabullogue); I Doyle (Charleville), O McAllen (Sarsfields), M Ring (Aghabullogue); T McCarthy (Glen Rovers), L Buttimer (Cloughduv); A Cashman (Youghal), L Homan (Brian Dillon's, c), E Sheehan (Eire Og); N O'Regan (St Catherine's), C O'Callaghan (Blackrock), C Dooley (Ballinora).

**Subs:** L Allen (Sarsfields) for L Buttimer (39), E Duignan (Mallow) for E Sheehan (45), F Nelligan for N O'Regan (50), E Curtain for C Dooley (56), K Walsh for A Cashman (58).

**KILKENNY:** C Murphy; N Leahy, R Whelan, J Cass; M Kennedy, S Treacy, H Scott; D Morrissey, L Ronan; C Doheny, C Kennedy, A Cantwell; R Kelly, C Kennedy, C Comerford.

**Subs:** K McCluskey for A Cantwell (43), N Crowley for R Kelly (50), C Langton for C Kennedy (54).

**Referee:** Brian Kearney (Kildare).

## Three reasons why Cork are intermediate champions

### DEFENSIVE EXCELLENCE

It may not have been the perfect performance but you couldn't have asked for any more from Cork's backs.

It was the corner-backs of Aoife Barrett and player of the match Emma Flanagan that stood out above the rest, as they worked tirelessly to keep Kilkenny out in both halves.

The Rebels may not have scored as much as they hoped for, but this game was won by their backs — as was the semi-final against Offaly.

### WORK RATE

While they struggled to find a pass or hit the target at times, the work rate of Cork's Intermediate team never faltered.

They pressed on over and over, with wing-backs Meadhbh Ring and Laura Doyle outstanding in their efforts. Cork's work rate stretched beyond their six backs though, with midfielder Tara McCarthy putting in a strong shift overall while captain Lauren Holman was 100% accurate from frees, scoring each of the five that she took.

### LATE RALLY

It took a late surge from the Rebels to get them over the line, but when Homan struck over a free from a tight angle to bring the gap down to one, late on, you could get a sense that things were going to change.

Cliona O'Callaghan restored parity in the 59th minute, and with the Kilkenny side under pressure, substitute Fiona Nelligan proved to be the hero as she stepped up to get the game-winning score in the 63rd minute.

# Cork out on their own once more



**Gordon Manning**  
at Croke Park

Rebels' bench powers them past Galway and to a record 30th title

**Cork** 1-16  
**Galway** 0-16

Cork's bench-press made all the difference as the Rebels responded to a second-half Galway rally to claim a record 30th All-Ireland senior camogie title.

Galway, who led 0-10 to 0-9 at the interval, fell six points adrift following a blistering Cork start to the second half but they clawed back to draw level with nine minutes of normal time remaining.

It set up a grandstand finish to what was a pulsating contest in front of 27,811 spectators at Croke Park, but Galway failed to trouble the scoreboard for the remainder of the game while Cork hit three match-winning scores – all coming from subs, Sorcha McCartan with 0-2 and the lively Clodagh Finn with the other.

"We got a couple of great scores from the subs again," said Cork manager Ger Manley.

"Sorcha did very well when she came on, and Clodagh Finn got a great score. We probably made the panel a little bit more competitive [this year] and

that's what we're looking for."

Those scores ensured Cork would retain the O'Duffy Cup and also pushed them further out in front at the top of the roll of honour with 30 titles. Dublin are second on the list with 26.

The defeat sees Galway garner an unwanted piece of history – becoming only the second county to lose three senior All-Ireland finals in the same year. Cork had suffered that fate in 1956 but Galway join them in that select circle now after losing the men's and women's football finals and the camogie decider this year, all in the space of just 14 days.

"To be honest with you, you can only look after your own corner. Look, whether they won or lost it was never going to impact in what we were doing," said Galway camogie manager Cathal Murray.

"It has been a good year for Galway, getting to three All-Ireland finals is nice to see, but obviously it's all about winning them and unfortunately that wasn't the case."

Cork, having hammered Galway by 12 points when the sides met in the group stages at the end of June, entered this final as strong favourites but Murray's side threatened to rip up the script with a performance full of character, belief and skill to lead by the minimum at the break.

## Switches

Galway made some positional switches at the throw-in as midfielder Niamh Hanniffy started in the full-forward line, with number five Annmarie Starr moving to the middle of the field.

Full-forward Niamh Mallon dropped further out the field to the half-forward line while Aoife Donohue effectively had a roaming role, which left Cork centre-back Laura Treacy as a sweeper in the heart of their defence.

Katrina Mackey and Saoirse McCarthy popped over the game's opening scores but Gal-



■ **Top:** Cork's Ashling Thompson is tackled during yesterday's All-Ireland final; **Above:** Cork celebrate with O'Duffy Cup after the game. PHOTOGRAPHS: INPHO

way refused to buy the pre-game offering that the O'Duffy Cup was already pre-destined for a trip back to Leaside.

A brace of Carrie Dolan frees

had them level by the seventh minute and that set the tone for how the rest of the opening half would play out, the sides exchanging point for point. They were level eight times in the

first half. Galway's accuracy in front of the posts was faultless in that first half with not a single wide registered. All six of Cork's forwards had

scored by the 27th minute but Dolan's accuracy from frees and a great Donohue score from out under the Hogan Stand in first-half injury-time sent Galway in with the slenderest of leads at the turnaround.

But having shown exemplary accuracy in the first half, during the opening five minutes after the restart Galway hit three wides.

## Aggrieved

Cork started the second half like a steam train and hit 1-4 to lead by six by the 41st minute.

Galway can feel aggrieved at Cork's goal, with the legitimacy of Mackey's 36th-minute score questionable as she did not appear to touch the sliotar with her hurl before it crossed the line.

Mackey did appear to be fouled by Sarah Healy as she barrelled through, but either way the goal was awarded. Cork quickly added two further points to lead 1-13 to 1-10 and that should have been that. But Galway refused to go away.

They responded by scoring the next six points to bring the

game level for the 10th time. They appeared to have all the momentum but Cork started to unload their bench. In contrast, two of Galway's three subs were made in injury-time. Cork's strength in depth was pivotal.

Galway started the second half with three wides and they finished with another three – their shooting letting them down at crucial stages.

"We just probably didn't take our chances coming down the stretch," said Murray. "That's going to haunt us for a while. We missed chances. Just didn't finish it off."

McCartan and Finn did though. McCartan, daughter of Down football great Greg, showed great strength and poise to shake off both Róisín

Black and Dervla Higgins before clipping over the score that nudged Cork back in front in the 54th minute.

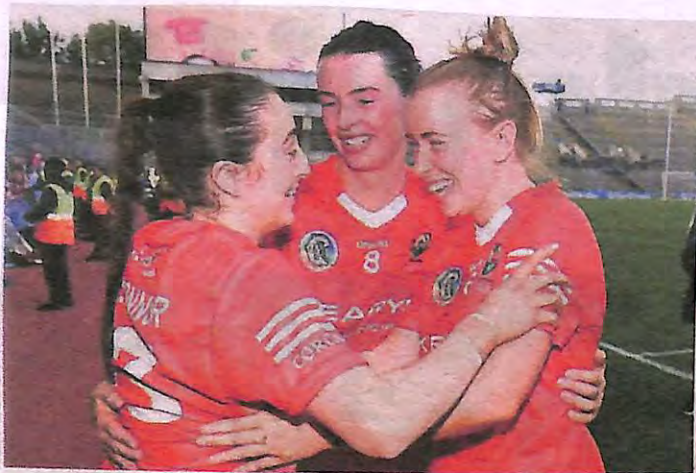
Finn, only on the pitch three minutes, showed Higgins a lovely sidestep moments later and extended Cork's lead to two. The tide had turned decisively.

In the fifth of six injury-time minutes, Finn picked out a lovely pass to McCartan for the score that sealed the victory. The Cork backs defended heroically in the closing stages as Galway pushed for a goal.

It never came. "That's the spirit that we've shown all year really," added Manley. "This was our aim, to get back, and we got back."

They might be there for a while now.

**CORK:** Amy Lee; Meabh Murphy, Izzy O'Regan, Pamela Mackey, Hannah Looney, Laura Treacy, Laura Hayes; Ashling Thompson (0-1), Aoife Healy; Cliona Healy (0-1), Fiona Keating (0-1), Saoirse McCarthy (0-3, one free); Amy O'Connor (0-3, three frees), Katrina Mackey (1-2), Orlaith Cahalane (0-2). Subs: Sorcha McCartan (0-2) for Mackey (39 mins); Clara O'Sullivan for Healy (48 mins); Meabh Cahalane for Looney (51 mins); Clodagh Finn (0-1) for Keating (53 mins); Emma Murphy for O'Cahalane (59 mins).  
**GALWAY:** Sarah Healy; Rachael Hanniffy, Róisín Black, Dervla Higgins, Olwen Rabbittie, Áine Keane, Ciara Hickey (0-1); Annmarie Starr, Niamh Kilkenney, Niamh Mallon (0-1), Niamh McPeake, Ailish O'Reilly (0-2); Carrie Dolan (0-8, seven frees), Niamh Hanniffy, Aoife Donohue (0-4). Subs: Orlaith McGrath for O'Reilly (49 mins); Niamh Niland for N. Hanniffy (62 mins); Ally Hesnan for Rabbittie (65 mins).  
Referee: Liz Dempsey (Kilkenny).



Amy O'Connor, Ashling Thompson and Laura Treacy show their joy.  
Picture: Eddie O'Hare

## Pundits had plenty to say about gutsy Cork win at Croke Park

There was natural elation when the final whistle sounded at Croke Park as Marie Crowe conducted the orchestra among the panel that included Cork's Anna Geary and Ursula Jacob from Wexford, with Anne-Marie Hayes representing Galway. After a brief interview with a delighted Hannah Looney, it was the first opportunity for the panel to give their thoughts on the game.

Ironically, former Cork star Geary who was quickest from the blocks to praise her county.

"When it was put up to Cork today, they really stood up to be counted," said Geary.

"But to be fair to Galway, this game could have went either way, but the Rebels held their nerve, such is the class in this team."

She was quick to point out that Galway had their opportunities in this epic encounter.

"When Galway look back on the game, they will know that a few chances went a begging; but look, that's in every sport, and in the end you got admire the spirit in this Cork side," added Geary.

The former Wexford ace Ursula Jacob believes that Cork were tested by a side who waited for the final to put in their best performance of the season.

"Galway played their part in this final, as some of their players were outstanding, and probably the main difference was the strength in depth that Cork had off the bench," Jacob said.

Back to Geary, and it was time for the former Cork All-Ireland winner to speak about

### TV VIEW

■ John Coughlan

the talent that is presently in her beloved county.

"I think when you look through this Cork team, few if any underperformed, as they all knew their job and they basically never lost their shape even when the pressure came on them," she said.

"Cork have some brilliant movement among their forwards, but look, we could talk for hours about this game, but for me to sum it up, the sport was the real winner as it was a magnificent final."

Cork manager Ger Manley said: "We got the game we knew Galway would give us, as they have some incredible players, and in reality we have been the best two teams in the country for the last few years." When it was pointed out to Manley that his team gave up a six-point lead, his reply was philosophical.

"Look, when you are playing a quality team, that can happen, but you could see in the last seven minutes we took over as we got a couple of great scores that settled us down."

The fitness levels now associated with camogie is now at a serious level, according to Manley.

"The physical training that goes into camogie is so high as it could be five nights a week, with the other two most likely in the gym for many of them."

Having everybody on board and singing from the same hymn sheet is critical for the Cork chief.

"We have great camaraderie, and that's crucial."



Cork's Laura Hayes tackles Galway's Niamh Mallon at Croke Park yesterday.

Pictures: Eddie O'Hare

# How the Rebels rated in final

**AMY LEE:** Consistent with her puckouts and made good use of the ball, which helped keep Cork on track particularly when they were struggling in the first half. 7

**MEABH MURPHY:** Made some good tackles and used her strength well. Relatively quiet until added time, when she made an excellent hook to prevent a Galway goal shot. 7

**IZZY O'REGAN:** Was excellent in defence, made a superb bat that led to a scoring opportunity and impressed throughout. 8

She worked hard and forced several turnovers, and continued to lead at the back in the second period. 8

**PAMELA MACKEY:** Some moments of positive defending but, like Meabh Murphy in the other corner, focused on marking and did a good job on Galway's Niamh Mallon in the second half. 7

**HANNAH LOONEY:** Good movement down the wing ensured Cork almost always had a passing option on the right-hand side. Faded a little in the second half. 6

**LAURA TREACY:** Worked hard, and her strength was a huge asset, particularly in the first period when Cork found themselves under a lot of pressure from the Tribeswomen.

She surged out with the ball numerous times at the latter stages as Galway searched for a way back into the game. 9

**LAURA HAYES:** Put in a crucial tackle

### CAMOGIE



Jack McKay

on Carrie Dolan after three quarters of an hour to stop a potential goal.

Hayes got on a lot of ball in the second half, and her passing was impressive, particularly from frees in Cork's half of the field. 8

**ASHLING THOMPSON:** Her work-rate shone through as it so often does, with Thompson winning a valuable free, picking up a great point from play, and making an excellent pass to Amy O'Connor before she assisted Katrina Mackey for goal. 8

**AOIFE HEALY:** Worked tirelessly in the middle of the park and made a great hook in the first half. 6

**SAOIRSE MCCARTHY:** Has continued to deliver over the last couple of years, and today was no different. A superb run preceded McCarthy's second score, and anytime she got the ball her pace caused all sorts of problems. Finished with 0-3. 8

**FIONA KEATING:** Worked hard, but not a lot of ball came her way. Despite that, Keating still got one score, and her passing all around was top-tier. 7

**CLIONA HEALY:** Relatively quiet

throughout, but worked hard off the ball, and pulled off a great score on the run while under a lot of pressure. 7

**AMY O'CONNOR:** Star of last year's final impressed again this time round, converted three frees, two she was fouled for, and most importantly played a huge role in the goal that separated the sides at the end. Her assist to Mackey was top-class. 7

**KATRINA MACKEY:** Produced two good scores in the first half and found the free space to get herself in position to hit the back of the net after Amy O'Connor's excellent assist, but had to leave the field five minutes later due to injury. 8

**ORLAITH CAHALANE:** Worked incredibly hard and did well in the build-up. Her movement was great, and Cahalane got two scores to go with it. 8

### SUBS

**SORCHA MCCARTAN:** Scored an excellent point from a tight angle and added another crucial one late on. 8

**CIARA O'SULLIVAN:** Brought good energy from the bench. 6

**MEABH CAHALANE:** Late replacement, and her experience told. 7

**CLODAGH FINN:** Immediate impact from the bench, scoring an excellent point as Cork needed that extra gear at the end. 7

**EMMA MURPHY:** Lively in the closing stages, running possession from deep. 6



Ailish Cahalane with her daughters Meabh, Orlaith and Grainne.  
Picture: Eddie O'Hare



Cork players Fiona Keating and Saoirse McCarthy celebrate after the final whistle.



Cork's goalkeeper Amy Lee clears from Galway's Niamh Hanniffy during the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior camogie final at Croke Park.

# Delight for Cork with



Cork's Izzy O'Regan and Laura Treacy tackle Galway's Niamh Kilkenny.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

## The Rebels stand strong to retain title

### Match analysis



Ger McCarthy

We have not seen the last of this Cork panel following their second consecutive Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior camogie final triumph.

Much of the talk coming into the 2024 decider centred on what Galway would do to counteract a settled and in-form Cork lineup.

Cathal Murray is no stranger to facing the famous Rebel jersey in recent years. It was Murray who oversaw Galway's 2021 All-Ireland final success at the expense of Paudie Murray's Cork.

Yet not even a brave, determined Galway effort could prevent their opponents from reclaiming the O'Duffy Cup.

From start to finish, Galway matched Cork every step of the way. It is not stretching the point to say that the Rebels received their toughest test of the year in Croke Park on Sunday.

Yet, when questions were asked, Cork came up with the answers.

Not even a late six-point Galway surge to level the score with less than nine minutes remaining could deter Ger Manley's side.

Once again, the Cork manager went to his bench and came up trumps.

Sorcha McCartan, Ciara O'Sullivan, Méabh Cahalane, and Clodagh Finn were sprung, with McCartan and Finn raising white flags to end a quarter-of-an-hour Cork scoring famine.

More importantly, Cork's fresh legs, as they have done all year, made a difference when it was needed most. Another McCartan effort, fed by Finn, confirmed the Rebels' victory and underlined the importance of Manley's ability to build a title-winning panel.

The foundation for Cork's undefeated run to this year's final and eventual success was their half-back line. Hannah Looney, Laura Treacy, and Laura Hayes have been as impressive shutting down opposing forward lines as they have been the launchpad for their team's attacks.

So it proved once again in Croke Park.

Add in the combined athleticism and tactical nous of midfielders Ashling Thompson and Aoife Healy, plus another Saoirse McCarthy All Star display, and Galway could have no excuses at the final whistle.

Considering Méabh Cahalane only came on late and Cork were missing Gráinne Cahalane and Libby Coppinger, the manner in which the Rebels' last line of defence stood up, not just on Sunday but all year, was hugely impressive.

Meabh Murphy, Izzy O'Regan, and Pamela Mackey didn't put a foot wrong. Amy Lee enjoyed her best year in goal for the Rebels.

What makes this Cork team stand out more than



Cork's Hannah Looney and Galway's Aoife Donoghue tussle for the sliotar.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

anything though is the fact they have bounced back from two All-Ireland defeats in a row and now won two on the bounce.

That takes huge commitment, on and off the field, to achieve that goal. This Cork panel is blessed with seriously talented players, but also a never-say-die attitude that was tested to the full last Sunday.

A fantastic final was won by the team that wanted it that bit more, were able to withstand fallow scoring periods and had the firepower off the bench when it mattered most.

Now, the only question facing Ger Manley and his Cork charges is can they 'three-peat'?

Wexford was the last county to win three consecutive All-Ireland senior camogie titles in 2010, 2011, and 2012. Prior to that, Tipperary triumphed in 1999, 2000, and 2001.

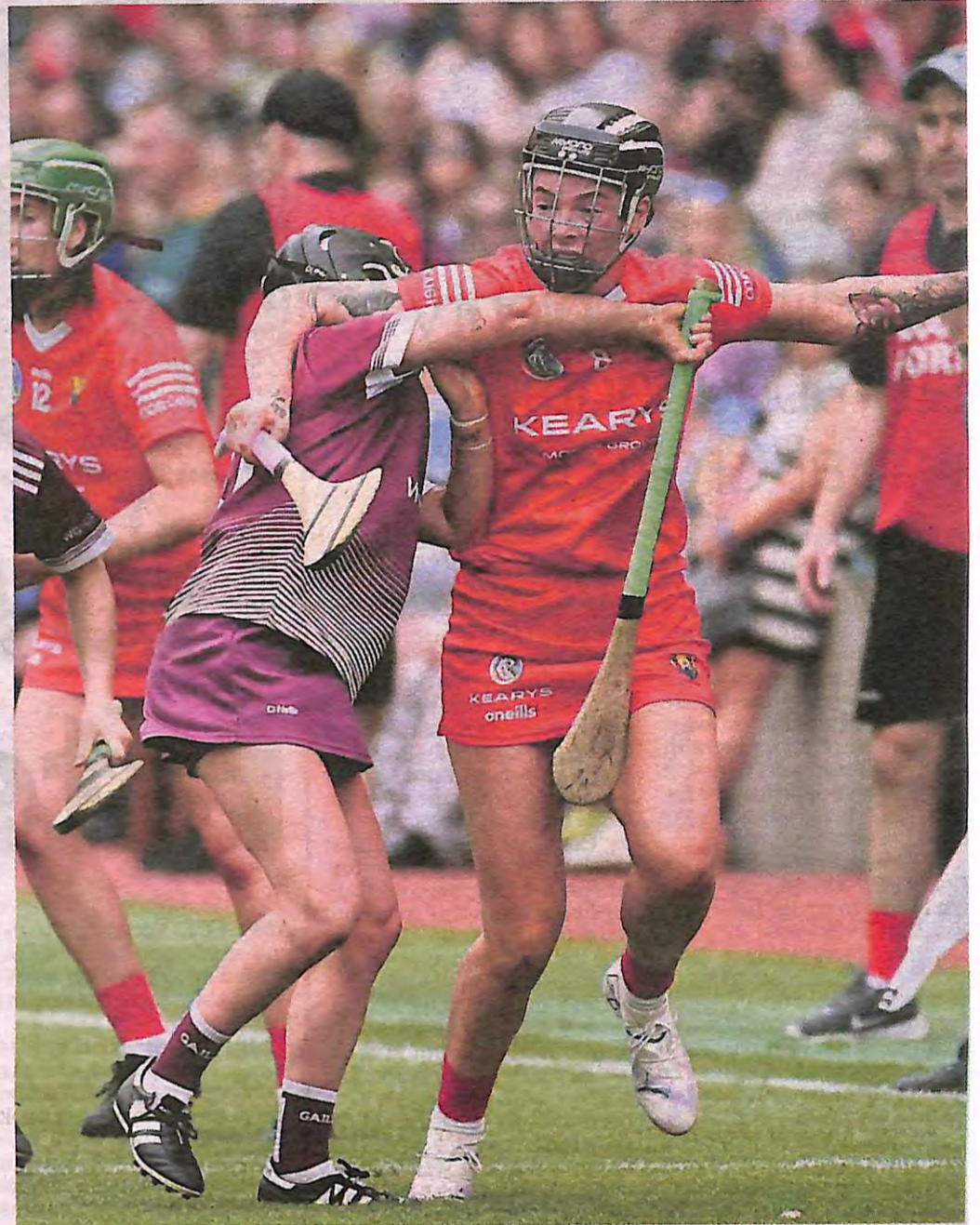
Before Sunday's victory, the Rebels had previously won (recent) back-to-back O'Duffy Cups in 2005/06, 2008/09, 2014/15 and 2017/18.

In the build-up to this year's final, Hannah Looney was quoted at saying Cork were not happy with having just one All-Ireland under their belts. Driving on and becoming a generational team, while far from easy, is expected when you represent Cork, Looney said. Strong words from such a respected dual inter-county player who has been there, done that.

Hannah Looney is right. There is no reason the current crop of Cork players cannot aim to write their names into the history books alongside the likes of Wexford, Tipperary, or even the famous Cork four-in-a-row champions from 1970 and 1973.

They will celebrate tonight, and probably for some time to come. The Cork players and management have certainly earned it.

Once the dust settles and the club championships are completed however, Cork's attentions should start drifting towards cementing their status as a generational team.



Cork's Ashling Thompson is tackled by Galway's Aoife Donoghue during the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland camogie final at Croke Park.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare



Cork's Meabh Murphy and Galway's Ailish O'Reilly tussle for the ball.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare



Cork manager Ger Manley and Sorcha McCartan show their joy.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

## Story of the Game

**Turning Point:** In a game that was tight all through, it was only when Clodagh Finn put two points between the sides as it headed into the last minute of injury time that Cork could start to relax and know they had one hand on the O'Duffy Cup. It was that close all through, and it could easily have ended level.

**Score of the Match:** For the huge significance it had in Cork's win, then it has to be Katrina Mackey's goal early in the second half. Brilliantly set up by Amy O'Connor it gave Cork lead they needed at that stage.

**Player of the Match:** There were plenty of candidates on both sides, and it's a difficult one to call. Ashling

Thompson stood up when needed, but Laura Treacy was simply outstanding late on when Cork needed her, and for that deserves the award.

**Next Up:** The celebrations will continue for some time, but for the fans the chance to meet the two teams will be at Castle Road on Monday night.

# triumphant win



Cork players celebrate their Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship victory over Galway at Croke Park.

Picture: INPHO/Bryan Keane

Cork	1-16
Galway	0-16

It was a battle from start to finish, and joy for Cork as they were crowned Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Camogie champions at Croke Park.

Having never been really tested until the final, Cork had to draw on all their experience to get over the line against a Galway side that made life difficult for them throughout.

A goal from Katrina Mackey at the start of the second half proved to be crucial as the Rebels retained their All-Ireland title. And late on, when it was needed, the Cork defence stood strong — and boy did they need to, as Galway threw everything at them.

But that they did, and the cup is now heading for Leaside for the second year in a row.

Cork took the lead after just 20 seconds when Katrina Mackey scored after a long ball in from Laura Hayes. They doubled their lead in the second minute when Saoirse McCarthy pointed from a free, before Carrie Dolan replied for Galway.

Another Dolan free had the sides level after six minutes as both teams settled into the game. Cork had the aid of the strong wind in the first half and



CAMOGIE

Rory Noonan

were trying to make that tell as they played the ball long into the full-forward line.

But early on, credit to the Galway defence, they were making it difficult for Cork to create any decent scoring chances. Amy O'Connor, from a free, put Cork back in front before Ailish O'Reilly had the sides level again after 10 minutes.

A brilliant point from a tight angle out near the sideline by Mackey put the Rebels back in front, but again Galway hit back through Aoife Donohue. The Tribeswomen took the lead for the first time 15 minutes in when Dolan pointed another free.

Orlaith Cahalane had the sides level for the fourth time when she pointed, but before that Cork felt hard done by when it looked like O'Connor had been fouled. Niamh Mallon put Galway back in front before Cliona Healy split the posts to level it once again.

O'Reilly restored Galway's lead, before McCarthy had the sides level for

the sixth time, 0-7 each. Dolan, from a free, and Fiona Keating exchanged scores with nothing between the sides with three minutes to half time.

Another Dolan free put Galway back in front, before O'Connor pointed from a placed ball at the other end to make it 0-9 apiece. Just before half time the Tribeswomen took the lead when Donohue pointed from play, to make it 0-10 to 0-9 at the break.

Cork were back on level terms a minute into the second half when Cahalane pointed and from the restart, they took the lead when Ashling Thompson scored.

With 35 minutes gone, Cork got the boost they needed when O'Connor took on the Galway defence, and soared past a few defenders to set up Mackey for a green flag.

McCarthy added a point as the Rebels let Galway know they weren't giving up their title easily, as he made it 1-12 to 0-10.

O'Connor pointed from a free and in the space of 10 minutes, since the restart they went from a point down to six in front.

Dolan replied for Galway and she got another from a free, to reduce the deficit to four, 1-13 to 0-12.

Ciara Hickey hit another for Galway before Dolan pointed another controversial free. The referee had played advantage, which they didn't use, and

then had give Cork a free out.

But the linesman called her and she went back to the original free, to make it 1-13 to 0-14. Two in a row from Donohue had the sides level with nine minutes to go.

Sorcha McCartan put Cork back in front before Clodagh Finn extended their lead to two points, 1-15 to 0-16.

McCartan got the last score of the game to see the Rebels run out winners after a battle supreme and a game worthy of the final.

It made it a great day for the Rebel county as the intermediate team were also crowned champions, and they should see huge crowds at the homecoming tonight.

**Scorers for Cork:** K Mackey 1-2, A O'Connor (f), S McCarthy 0-3 each, O Cahalane, S McCartan 0-2 each; F Keating, C Healy, A Thompson, C Finn 0-1 each.

**Galway:** C Dolan 0-8 f, A Donohue 0-4, A O'Reilly 0-2, N Mallon, C Hickey 0-1 each.

**CORK:** A Lee; M Murphy, I O'Regan, P Mackey; H Looney, L Treacy, L Hayes; A Thompson, A Healy; S McCarthy, F Keating, C Healy; A O'Connor, K Mackey, O Cahalane.

**Subs:** S McCartan for K Mackey (39 inj), C O'Sullivan for C Healy (47), M Cahalane for H Looney (50), C Finn for F Keating (53), E Murphy for O Cahalane (60).

**GALWAY:** S Healy; R Hanniffy, R Black, D Higgins; A Starr, A Keane, C Hickey; N Hanniffy, N Kilkeny; A Donohue, N McPeake, O Rabbittie; C Dolan, N Mallon, A O'Reilly.

**Subs:** O McGrath for A O'Reilly (48), N Niland for N Hanniffy (60), A Hesnan for O Rabbittie (60).

**Referee:** Liz Dempsey, Kilkenny.



Sisters Pamela and Katrina Mackey celebrate the win.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

'There is no better feeling than this'

REACTIONS

Ger McCarthy

A cocktail of relief, jubilation, and sheer delight were the emotions expressed by Cork's players and mentors following the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Camogie final win over Galway in Croke Park.

Katrina Mackey netted the all-important goal in her county's 1-16 to 0-16 victory.

"I think that this is about the best Cork team I've played with," the veteran forward said.

"There is so much talent. We work so well together as a team. No matter who starts or who comes on, we all play as one team. Yeah, this is the best team I've played on.

"As for Galway, that win over them in Páirc Uí Chaoimh was not a true reflection of them. They were obviously really disappointed with that. We knew that coming in today. They were always going to bring a massive challenge. They did, but our players stood up and we got the win."

Izzy O'Regan was another Cork player beaming from ear to ear. "There is actually no better feeling than this!" O'Regan commented.

"So much joy, it is unreal. Galway really put it up to us today, but we found the answers. Do you know what, it is the small margins that made a huge difference in the end. We are just delighted to have gotten over the line. It will be all celebrations now!"

Cork selector and former All-Ireland-winning player and manager Fiona O'Driscoll was proud of the entire Cork panel's efforts, not just on Sunday, but throughout 2024.

"The players have just been phenomenal," O'Driscoll said.

"They have trained so hard for this all year. I know other teams do too. Today's game was in the melting pot, but we took it by the scruff of the neck.

"We said all year how important our bench was. They were today again with the players who came on and made an impact.

"Amy [O'Connor] spoke in the dressing room beforehand about today being all about 'we' rather than 'me'. It was Amy who provided the pass for Katrina's [Mackey] goal. She certainly made the right decision when that crucial scoring opportunity came up. The goal was the difference in the end."

O'Driscoll's overriding emotion was one of relief that her county had added another O'Duffy Cup triumph to the history books.

"It is a bloody relief right now and that's the God's honest truth!"

## Three reasons why the Rebels retained the O'Duffy Cup

### Experience

You could leave it at that and say no more, but the experience in this side was crucial, particularly late on when they needed it.

Galway tested the Rebels from start to finish and never let them get away, and at one point they hit six in a row to draw level and looked like they were going to go on and win it. Many other teams would have faltered at that point, but not Cork.

### The goal

There was only one goal, but it was a crucial score in Cork's win. By the time the final whistle came it was the difference, even if it didn't look like Katrina Mackey got a touch before it crossed the line.

They needed it at that stage to get ahead and from there they were never behind again.

Mackey had 1-2 from play before going off injured just after raising the green flag.

### Defence

The Cork defence have been superb all year and were so again in the final. That defensive works starts from the corner-forwards back.

But when the game was in the melting pot late on, you couldn't have asked for better players than the likes of Laura Tracey, Meabh Murphy, Pamela Mackey, and Laura Hayes to see you home, and they needed to call on every bit of their defensive skills to see off Galway.



## SENIOR FINAL



CORK

1-16



GALWAY

0-16

PHILIP LANIGAN  
reports from  
Croke Park

# Rebels are pushed all the way by gutsy Galway

**G**ALWAY clearly didn't read the script for this one. It was meant to be a straightforward Cork coronation. A rubber-stamping of the status of the defending champions, elevating them from a good team to potentially great.

The tone was set when defender Hannah Looney declared in the build-up that this team wanted back-to-back titles to double down on their talent and potential.

And after crushing so many teams along the way to the final, beating Dublin by 20 points in the semi-final and emphatically seeing off Galway in the All-Ireland group stage, there was a sense that this could unravel into a

## In the first half, deadly Galway had 10 points from 10 shots

one-sided affair. Instead, Galway produced a performance of fire and ice to push Cork to their very limit and make them live up to that tag of being a great team.

They had to dig so deep into their reserves of talent and willpower – and the bench – to survive a storming fightback to hit the last three points of the game.

Substitute Sorcha McCartan came up with two of those vital scores, replacing Katrina Mackey who grabbed a crucial second-half goal but took a heavy knock that forced Cork's top scorer off at a crucial stage. There was a real touch of controversy about that score, with Cork's full-forward throwing the ball up to strike – but failing to connect as she was tackled with the sliotar spilling over the line.

Galway argued that it was a 'throw ball' and a technical foul, so should have been disallowed. Galway manager Cathal Murray revealed later that he had been told it was going to be a penalty

On the slide:  
Carrie Dolan  
(left) and  
Pamela  
Mackey clash

anyway after Amy Lee took a knock in supplying the pass.

Nevertheless, the score stood. And Galway didn't let it rattle them. But just when they reeled off six points in a row to level the game coming down the home straight, Cork showed that they could win a tight game just as they can romp home.

McCartan proved a powerful focal point, hitting a super score under pressure to edge Cork ahead and, after another substitute Clodagh Finn added her own score, McCartan again showed a lovely touch to earn the space and time to push her team three ahead.

With the clock now entering the last of six added minutes of time, Galway came with one last push for a goal. That whole period of added time was fast-paced and

frantic as the game came to a thrilling conclusion. But despite the likes of Carrie Dolan and Aoife Donohue producing a string of top-quality scores throughout, Galway just couldn't create that last goal opportunity and were left to rue three late wides.

And so Cork extended their lead at the top of the roll of honour, this being their 30th title.

For Galway, this was a third All-Ireland final defeat in successive weeks across the different codes – to Armagh in men's football, to Kerry in ladies football, and now to Cork.

Cathal Murray's side though can be proud of their effort, upsetting the odds to take the slenderest of half-time leads – and then producing that comeback when Cork reeled off 1-4 after the

restart to power six ahead. It was a fitting flagship final to go with the 120th anniversary year for the camogie association.

From the start, Galway were brave in how they attacked the game, rather than going with a sweeper to sit and protect the full-back line and stop any Cork goal rush. Instead, they took the game to Cork and got their match-ups spot on, Olwen Rabbitte wearing 12 but switching to wing-back to tag Saoirse McCartan and do a hugely disciplined job in limiting her impact.

Cork's inside line did look so threatening, but maybe were guilty of trying to kill the game off too early, foregoing points on a number of occasions to try and work the goal chance when it wasn't fully on. Amy O'Connor

was nearly in for goal in the 18th minute – she looked to be fouled just outside the penalty area – but nothing was given by referee Liz Dempsey, and Galway cleared.

How close things were was evident in how they were level eight times in that first half. For a long time it went point for point. Galway's conversion rate was superb. In the first half they had 10 points from 10 shots. No wides. This was a lesson in efficiency, that seemed to rattle Cork.

That five of those scores came from frees showed how the hot favourites were lacking discipline in the tackle, maybe a bit overzealous with Laura Treacy picking up a yellow for a heavy hit on free-taker Dolan, whose ballstriking was top class.

But it was also down to Galway's

## 'Experienced players stood up when needed to get us

### From Back Page

were, I'd say she went to strike it and she was fouled, and when she threw the ball up to hit it, it went in. She was in the process of striking, I thought she was (fouled) ... Amy O'Connor was definitely fouled when she gave the ball across.

'It was a goal! It's gone against us a few times – but you're right, when I saw it, I kind of went "woah". But they pucked the ball out quick – done and dusted. Look, glad it was us.'

He never fell for the predictions that suggested Cork would win with a bit to spare.

'We knew it wouldn't be easy. We needed that game to show what we're made of and I think it really showed there in the last seven or eight minutes when the going got tough.

'You saw the senior players – Meabh (Cahalane), Laura Treacy, (Ashling) Thompson, Pamela Mackey, Saoirse McCarthy – they all stood up and we got a couple of great scores from the subs again.

'We went up five or six, they came back but you could always see us getting those scores because we had the few subs to make a difference,' Manley continued.

'We've been on the wrong side of these results over the years. This is our fourth final in a row and we lost two we should have won. But these are a team of their generation.

'They're so good. Méabh Cahalane came on after a hamstring tendon injury that's supposed to keep you out three months. We put a lot in, so did Galway but we were a small bit better I think.

'Mackey tore her hamstring and was a loss as she was going well. And when Galway came at us, we held our nerve. The losses builds that character. And we have a brilliant coach in Liam Cronin. He's the

best I've ever worked with. We felt we've left a few after us so to win two is a great. You have to battle. There's nothing easy up here. We're there and we're going to push on again if we can.'

In 2021, Galway produced a big finish to stun Cork in the final.

This time, it was the other way around. 'Obviously, we are bitterly disappointed,' added Murray referencing the All-Ireland group stage beating by Cork and their outsider status.

'Since the game in Páirc Uí Chaoimh we've been completely written off. There's been a lot of obituaries written



# Cork retain their crown on a day of controversy



**Gordon Manning**  
at Croke Park

Heady debate over legitimacy of second-half goal by Katrina Mackey

Cork stretched their lead as camogie's most decorated county after retaining the O'Duffy Cup on a day when another Galway team found a way to lose an All-Ireland senior final in 2024.

Cork's subs scored the last three points of a scintillating All-Ireland senior camogie decider to earn the Rebels a record 30th title, but it was the legitimacy of their second-half goal that dominated some of the debate in the aftermath.

Katrina Mackey's hurl did not appear to touch the sliotar after it left her hand and bounced over the Galway goal-line. Mackey took a neat pass from Amy O'Connor, but immediately shipped a heavy tackle from Galway goalkeeper Sarah Healy and a subsequent challenge from Aine Keane. As the Cork full forward released the ball to try pat it to the net, Mackey didn't seem to make contact with the sliotar.

The rule states: "A goal is scored when the sliotar is played by either team over the goal-line, between the goal-posts and under the crossbar, except when carried in the hand by an attacking player over the goal-line, or thrown over the goal-line by any player."

The 36th minute goal gave Cork a 1-11 to 0-10 lead.

## 'Definitely fouled'

"They say she threw it in, did she? I don't care how she threw it in," said Cork manager Ger Manley when asked afterwards. "I didn't see it but from where we were I'd say she went to strike it and she was fouled, and when she threw the ball up to hit it, it went in. She was in the process of striking, I thought she was (fouled)."

"Amy O'Connor was definitely fouled when she gave the ball across. Jesus, 'twas a goal! It's gone against us a few times - but you're right, when I saw it, I kind of went: 'Woah'. But they pucked the ball out quick - done and dusted. Look, glad it was us."

Galway manager Cathal Murray stressed he did not want to use the nature of the

goal as an excuse, but he did add that officials along the sideline informed him at the time that a penalty was to be awarded rather than permitting the goal.

"I believe it's a throw ball. I questioned it on the line, I was told it was going to be a penalty," he said. "And the reason they just let it play is because it was going to be a penalty anyway. But you still have to score a penalty, so I wouldn't agree with them there at all."

Galway did still respond to that setback and with nine minutes of normal time remaining the sides were level, but Cork fired over the last three points of the contest to bring the O'Duffy Cup back to Leeside.

## Hungry for success

Cork lost back-to-back finals in 2021 and 2022, but they have now followed up with consecutive triumphs.

"Going into the final, I was thinking about the hunger and I don't think that went away from last year," said Cork vice-captain Meabh Cahalane. "We were so hungry for success this year, so hungry going out in every single training ses-



**Cork's Amy Lee and Amy O'Connor celebrate yesterday at Croke Park.**

PHOTOGRAPH: BRYAN KEANE/INPHO

sion trying to get something out of it. I felt the mentality of the girls showed today to ride that wave when Galway were coming at us was something else."

It was a day of days for Cork at Croke Park, as the intermediates beat Kilkenny in their final. Tipperary beat Laois in the junior decider. But the senior final delivered the most gripping showdown of the afternoon.

"Galway have been an exceptional team for the last five or six years, they have some super players, so we knew it wouldn't be easy," added Manley. "We needed a match like that to show what we're made of, and I think it really showed there in the last seven or eight minutes when the going got tough."

For a 30th time, Cork are camogie's standard bearers. The toughest.

pace and ability to break the line in that middle third, putting Cork on the back foot. Galway turned then 0-10 to 0-9 ahead only to be hit by 1-4 without reply.

Ashling Thompson put in a warrior-type second-half display and played an inviting ball down to left corner-forward, where Amy O'Connor picked it up. Those dancing feet helped her jink inside Rachael Hanniffy and fly in on goal.

Very unselfishly, she played the ball across to Katrina Mackey, just as she shipped a hefty challenge from Róisín Black, and her team-mate bundled the ball home under pressure.

A classy point from Dolan kick-started the Galway revival, and she added two more frees to go with a point from outstanding wing-back Ciara Hickey and two beauties from Donohue. The stage was set then

for the grandstand finish - and it was Cork who showed why they deserve any superlatives thrown their way as they put titles back-to-back.

**CORK:** A Lee; M Murphy, I O'Regan, P Mackey; H Looney (M Cahalane 51), L Treacy, L Hayes; A Thompson, A Healy; C Healy (C O'Sullivan 48), F Keating (C Finn 53), S McCarthy; A O'Connor, K Mackey (S McCartan 39), O Cahalane (E Murphy 63). **Scorers:** K Mackey 1-2, A O'Connor (3fs), S McCarthy 0-3 (1f) each, O Cahalane, S McCartan 0-2 each, C Healy, F Keating, A Thompson, C Finn 0-1 each. **Yellow card:** L Treacy 28, A Thompson 42. **Wides:** 1 (3).

**GALWAY:** S Healy; D Higgins, R Healy, R Black; O Rabbittie (A Hesnan 65), A Keane, C Hickey; A Starr; N Kilkenny; N Mallon, N McPeake, A Donohue; C Dolan, N Hanniffy (N Niland 62), A O'Reilly (O McGrath 49). **Scorers:** C Dolan 0-8 (7fs), A Donohue 0-4, A O'Reilly 0-2, N Mallon, C Hickey 0-1 each. **Yellow card:** D Higgins 31, O Rabbittie 45. **Wides:** 0 (6).

**Referee:** Liz Dempsey (Kilkenny). **Attendance:** 27,811.

## over the line'

about us. For the last six weeks we've done ourselves really proud.

'It's a tough dressing room. But we put ourselves in a great position, just probably didn't take our chances down the stretch. That's going to haunt us for a while.'

'But Cork are a super team, we always knew that. We knew we had to give an unbelievable performance - we probably did that for a lot of the game. Just didn't finish it off.'

'We gave it everything. We had big players all over the field. Really proud of our players.'



**Shake on it: Ger Manley and Cathal Murray**

# Cork



Back row, left to right:  
Erinn Curtin, Katie Walsh, Amy O Sullivan, Eimear Duignan, Meadhbh de Burca, Emma Flanagan, Caoimhe O Donoghue, Aisling Egan, Niamh O Regan, Lucy Allen, Grainne Hannon, Emily O Donoghue, Meadhbh Ring, Edel Sheehan, Aoife Barrett, Orla Keating, Ciara Morrison

Front row, left to right:  
Hannah O Leary, Laura Doyle, Niamh O Leary, Fiona Nelligan, Ciara Hurley, Laura Buttimer, Cliona O Callaghan, Lauren Homan (C), Tara McCarthy, Caoimhe Buckley, Olivia McAllen, Cliona. Dooley, Avril Cashman



## IONADAÍ

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| 16 <b>Caoimhe Buckley</b> , Caoimhe Ní Bhuacalla, Inniscarra      | 21 <b>Hannah O'Leary</b> , Hannah Ní Laoire, St. Finbarrs      | 26 <b>Maedhbh de Burca</b> , Maedhbh de Burca, Carrigtwohill |
| 17 <b>Caoimhe O'Donoghue</b> , Caoimhe Ní Dhonnóichú, Bishopstown | 22 <b>Orla Keating</b> , Orla Ní Chéitinn, Ballincollig        | 27 <b>Ciara Morrison</b> , Ciara Ní Muireasáin, Castletyons  |
| 18 <b>Lucy Allen</b> , Lúisá Ní Ailín, Sarsfields                 | 23 <b>Erinn Curtin</b> , Erinn Ní Chuirín, Blackrock           | 28 <b>Fiona Nelligan</b> , Fiona Ní Niallagáin, Charleville  |
| 19 <b>Katie Walsh</b> , Cáit Breathnach, Glen Rovers              | 24 <b>Emily O'Donoghue</b> , Eimile Ní Dhonnóichú, Bishopstown | 29 <b>Aisling Egan</b> , Aisling Ní Aogáin, St. Finbarrs     |
| 20 <b>Eimear Duignan</b> , Eimear Ní Daibhginn, Mallow            | 25 <b>Amy O'Sullivan</b> , Amy Ní Suilleabháin, Mallow         | 30 <b>Graine Hannon</b> , Grainne Ní Ahanín, Courcy Rovers   |

# Kilkenny



Back row, left to right:  
 Carlise Comerford, Rachel Dowling, Laura Phelan, Angela Carroll, Rose Kelly, Niamh Leahy, Cliona Murphy, Mairead Kennedy, Shauna Treacy, Kate McCluskey, Mairead Corcoran, Eimear Leahy, Ciara Foskin, Tara Murphy, Ciara Dunne, Ellen Purcell, Lauren East, Julie Lennon.

Front row, left to right:  
 Afton Grace, Ali Kennedy, Lauren Ronan, Jane Cass, Claire Doheny, Danielle Morrissey, Hannah Scott, Caroline Kennedy, Cría Langton, (Capt), Aoife Cantwell, Niamh Crowley, Sofia Kerr, Emma Mulhall, Rachel Whelan, Ellen Gunner.



## IONADAÍ

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 16 <b>Tara Murphy</b> , Tara Ní Mhurchú, James Stephens         | 21 <b>Ellen Gunner</b> , Eilean Ní Ghunnar, Conahy Shamrocks      | 27 <b>Afton Grace</b> , Afton De Gras, Kilmacow         |
| 17 <b>Niamh Crowley</b> , Niamh Ní Chruaílaoidh, Mooncoin       | 22 <b>Eimear Leahy</b> , Eimear Ní Laocha, Emeralds               | 28 <b>Laura Phelan</b> , Laura Ní Fhaolain, John Lockes |
| 18 <b>Emma Mulhall</b> , Emma Ní Maolchathail, Conahy Shamrocks | 23 <b>Cría Langton (C)</b> , Cría Langtún, Rower Inistioge        | 29 <b>Ali Kennedy</b> , Ali Ní Cinnéide, Windgap        |
| 19 <b>Ellen Purcell</b> , Eilean Puirseil, Barrow Rangers       | 24 <b>Ciara Foskin</b> , Ciara Foskin, Rower Inistioge            | 30 <b>Lauren East</b> , Labhráin East, St. Brigid's     |
| 20 <b>Kate McCluskey</b> , Cait Ní Bhlóscáidh, St. Brigid's     | 25 <b>Mairead Corcoran</b> , Mairead Ní Corcrain, Mooncoin        |   |
|   | 26 <b>Sofia Kerr</b> , Síobail Ní Giolla Cheara, Conahy Shamrocks |   |



# Rebel rousers – Cork double up



Laura Hayes (centre) celebrates with the O'Duffy Cup alongside her team-mates after their victory over Galway in the Glen Dimplex camogie All-Ireland final at Croke Park. Piaras O'Midheach/Sportsfile



Cork's manager Donie Daly celebrates after defeating Kilkenny. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

## Nelligan the hero as Cork intermediates claim All-Ireland crown

A thrilling conclusion to the All-Ireland intermediate camogie final saw Cork defeat Kilkenny yesterday.

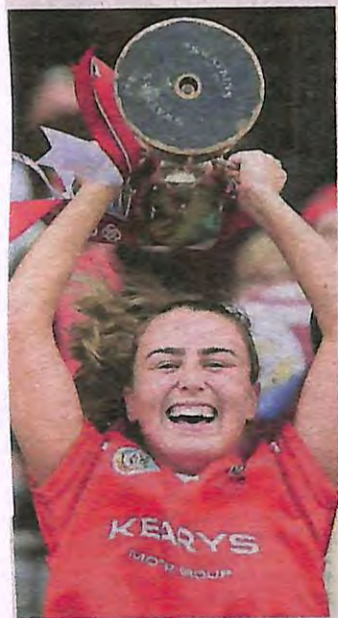
Sub Fiona Nelligan was the hero, much to the delight of manager Donie Daly.

"My heart isn't great after that, but I'm still standing," he said. "It was a phenomenal victory. We knew it wasn't going to be easy, a Cork versus Kilkenny final is always going to be close."

"We were happy at half time to be a point ahead after playing against the wind, and we knew we were in with a right chance. I thought we would make a better fist of it in the second half, but I suppose the wind never won any game and credit Kilkenny, they really put us to the test."

The second half seemed to be slipping away from them, especially when the Cats raised a green flag.

"We did lose our way a bit and allowed them into it, they got a fortuitous goal and it kept them in it," said Daly. "All year we have been turn-



Cork captain Lauren Homan raises the Jack McGrath Cup in triumph. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

### CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

ing in great second-half displays, but I suppose it's an All-Ireland final, it's Croke Park and no one is going to give it away easy."

His bench played a huge part.

"All year we have been bringing on players, and each time they have done us proud. Fresh legs were important and all through it where we have dug out games and results, Eimear Duignan, Katie Walsh, Lucy Allen, and Fiona Nelligan, who got the winning point, came on and played a huge part. Their energy was infectious for the rest of the team, and brought us along to the final whistle."

The group showed great character to seal a double.

"A few times this year we have gone behind but we don't panic, we work and work. This is what we have kept telling them — just keep doing the simple things. The experience showed as well, and once we got level, I felt we wouldn't lose it."

Nelligan ended up with the match-winner in added time.

"It was like slow motion watching it, but all credit to Fiona, she steadied herself and put it straight between the posts. Fiona has been out for a few weeks injured so it was great for her to get the winning score."

Daly also heaped praise on his defence.

"All year our defenders have been excellent, and today it was Emma Flanagan who was Player of the Match. She has been a huge player for us all year. Credit to all our backs, they had to withstand huge Kilkenny pressure. They broke up attack after attack and got in the flicks and blocks and got the ball out around to the middle of the pitch."

"All through the campaign we have built our team from the back line out, and they were immense."

"We are just so delighted for all the girls, if any team deserve to win an All-Ireland, it is this great group of girls."



Cork captain Molly Lynch and vice-captain Meabh Cahalane raise the O'Duffy Cup after defeating Galway in the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland camogie final at Croke Park. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

# 'We will enjoy this win now'

### CAMOGIE

■ Rory Noonan

It was hearts-in-the-mouth stuff all through as Cork retained their Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship title at Croke Park.

Cork were the firm favourites in the eyes of many, but manager Ger Manley said in advance that he knew it was going to be a battle, and that certainly ensued from start to finish.

Cork were never able to get away from Galway and in the end, they were delighted to get across the line with a 1-16 to 0-16 win to retain their title and make it two in a row.

Manley felt Cork got the breaks they hadn't always received in recent years.

"I have been on the wrong side of a few results as well over the years, and I thought we deserved it," he said.

"This was our fourth final, and Kilkenny caught us I thought and Galway caught us with a late goal so you remember those days on ones like this."

"We were level coming down the line, but the girls stuck at it, the senior players stood up and showed their experience in the end."

"You look at Meabh coming on with the injury she had. Others would have been out for months with it, but she got back in six weeks and that showed the commitment of her and all involved with the team this year."

"If we had 15 Meabh Cahalanes, you would be delighted."

"We have worked so hard all year, we have put so much into this. This was our aim, to get back here and hopefully win it and thankfully we did."

"I know people were saying we hadn't been tested coming into the final, but today we were. Galway have been an ex-



Cork manager Ger Manley after his side beat Galway. Picture: Eddie O'Hare



WE DID IT: Ashling Thompson and Laura Treacy at Croke Park. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

ceptional team now for several years, super players, and we knew it wouldn't be easy."

"We needed that game to show properly what we are made of, and we showed that in the last seven minutes or so."

On the goal, that some felt was thrown to the net by Katrina Mackey

"I didn't care how the ball went in as long as it went in," said Manley. "I thought Amy O'Connor was fouled as she played it across to Mackey and then I thought she was fouled when she went to play it, so that might have been the reason. But as long as it went in I didn't care."

When it was tight towards the end, Manley was delighted with the way his side stood up to ensure victory.

"You saw the senior players — Meabh, Laura Treacy, Laura Hayes, and Ashling Thompson, and others — they all stood up when needed."

"The subs made a big impact as well again, we got a couple of great scores from them and they were vital."

"We have been saying that all year and I suppose we made the panel stronger again this year."

"We will enjoy this now and we are delighted, and it was a great game to win."

# Rebelette impact off the bench gets them over the line in thriller



**URSULA JACOB**

**G**alway gave it everything. They left it all out there. As John McIntyre once said, they died with their boots on. They made such a marvelous contribution to this All-Ireland final. It was one of the best in years. It was a real showcase for the sport. The weather was kind, and 28,000 came through the turnstiles. Nobody dared to leave before the end. There was such drama in the three finals.

In the senior final, Galway played like a team that didn't read the match previews. They chased everything. They didn't give Cork an inch. Croke Park is a huge pitch. And there's nothing this Cork team likes more than space.

Cathal Murray's team talk ensured Galway would leave Cork running into cul de sacs.

## Tallest

It was clear from the first whistle this would be Cork's tallest task of the campaign. They have been winning matches by big scores, results decided long before the final whistle.

That was not the case here. Galway have been improving all year. And they saved their best till last. Early on, Cork displayed their renowned teamwork, a player or two, always on the shoulder.

They were finding their teammates with neat hand-passes. Right half-back Hannah Looney was bursting forward anytime she could. But, quickly, Galway settled. They pressed their opponents, making their lives difficult. There was no such thing as a Cork player finding themselves with time and space.

In the first half, Amy O'Connor earned half a yard in front of the Davin goal. But immediately, she was surrounded by three or four Galway players. And it was happening right throughout the field. Galway were playing with such intensity.

It was a compelling clash. A game that will get people talking and help to raise



**Fiona Keating (11) celebrates with team-mates after their side's victory yesterday** Piaras Ó Midheach/Sportsfile

the profile of the sport. There was huge physicality, but referee Liz Dempsey let the play flow anytime she could.

Galway stuck to their task. And they had the advantage of going in a point up at the break. Nobody would have said they didn't deserve that lead. They had obviously done their homework.

One of their most impressive tactics was to spread the play as wide as possible - to avoid the influence of Cork centre-back Laura Treacy. Treacy was playing in the pocket. She reads the game so well. And so often she puts her team on the attack.

Early in the second period, Cork took control, injecting more pace into their play. More urgency. They established a healthy-looking lead. They had a tremendous third quarter, scoring 1-4 to no reply.

Yet Galway responded, showing character and the attitude that shaped their performance. Galway drew level again, showing great belief.

Cork began to use their bench. And, in the end, that proved the crucial factor.

Sorcha McCartan came on and had a major influence. She was winning the 'dirty ball' and scored one of the most important points of the afternoon. The odds were against her. She was under pressure, but still, she managed to send the sliotar over the bar.

It was a vital score for Cork. And it was another substitute, Clodagh Finn, who put them two points up. Cork's last three points came from the bench.

They had to really graft for those scores. And still, Galway kept coming. Cork had to defend with all they had.

And yet despite the pressure, the Cork defenders still managed to use the ball well.

They weren't hitting it anywhere. They were trying to find a red shirt.

And such courage was rewarded late on, when a fine move concluded with McCartan striking another valuable point.

The impact of the bench underlined how it's not a 15-player game anymore. It's such an asset to have fresh legs.

Legs that you know will put in the hard yards. And, in Cork's case, hit priceless points.

Cork have been the form team all year. They have now done the back-to-back. Manager Ger Manley has done a superb job.

I think overall they deserved it. There were two excellent teams out there, but Cork got the vital scores at key moments.

## THE 60 SECOND REPORT

### THE TURNING POINT

There was a lot of time between the goal and full-time, so it can't really be deemed the turning point. Galway hit two wides after going two behind and before Sorcha McCartan's second point. That's where the game was lost.

### SHAPE AND STRUCTURE

Galway gave a floating role to Aoife Donohue, and she was able to buzz her way around the middle third, while Niamh Hanniffy was positioned at full-forward to give Galway a primary ball-winner. Cork chose to stick with the six at the back and Laura Treacy filled the sweeper role with aplomb.

### THE KEY STATS

Ger Manley pointed out that Galway had zero goal opportunities, which was accurate even if there was the odd scent of one. Nine points from play wasn't the greatest return for Galway.

### POST-MATCH CHATTER

The goal, of course. There were shades of Joe Sheridan Leinster final 2010 about it, although there had been fouls on both Amy O'Connor and Katrina Mackey in the build-up. It should have been a penalty, but the score was allowed to stand despite Mackey's hurley not touching the ball after she threw it up to touch it to the net.

### INJURY UPDATE

Mackey pulled a hamstring and was unable to play after the goal, while McCartan and Ashling Thompson played through the pain barrier in the late stages, the former scoring the second of her points after receiving treatment.

### WOMAN IN BLACK

Liz Dempsey had an excellent first half and really contributed to the game. However, some calls, including the legitimacy of the goal, a charging offence against Galway, as well as the lack of a free for Annmarie Starr at the end were questionable.

### NEXT UP

Manley said afterwards that Cork tapered their run to be ready for a defence of their All-Ireland, and the same policy may apply again in next year's Division 1 campaign.

— John Fogarty

## Murray rues one that got away

### Galway reaction

#### Ger McCarthy

Despite a gutsy display, this Glen Dimplex All-Ireland camogie senior final loss is one that is going to haunt Galway, according to Cathal Murray.

Deep in the bowels of Croke Park, Murray didn't shirk a question nor fail to deliver an honest answer shortly after the final whistle.

The Galway manager oversaw his county's last camogie senior title win back in 2021. That was against Cork but today, despite a valiant effort, the Rebels just proved too strong down the stretch.

"We felt over the last five weeks that things were going well," the Galway senior manager admitted.

"Today, we knew there wasn't going to be much in it. The previous game down in Páirc Uí Chaoimh was a non-event. I think the girls recovered well [from that], to be honest. It was themselves that got into a huddle straight away and just talked about coming back.

"Obviously, we had a great win against Tipperary in the semi-finals. We came in here today, honest to God, knew Cork were going really well, a



**Cathal Murray: Gave an honest appraisal after the match.**

massive challenge.

"In fairness, we threw everything at them in the first half. We were really happy going in at half time. They came at us just after that. They made a few good switches, in fairness, you'd have to hand that to them.

"We came back at them and got it level. We were in a great position, but probably didn't take our chances."

Katrina Mackey's goal was the source of much debate in the immediate aftermath of Sunday's senior decider. The manner in which the Cork forward untidily forced the ball over the line, and whether it was legal, will be debated for some time.

"Obviously, the goal was huge impact on the game,"

Murray commented.

"I didn't see it [at the time], but I'm hearing things. It was going to be a penalty anyway, so Liz [Dempsey, referee] said. I suppose that is why they allowed the goal.

"Listen, Cork are a super team who got a huge impact off their bench. Unfortunately, we had chances that we didn't take. Was it six or seven wides down the stretch? You know, those are the chances you need to take if you are going to win an All-Ireland. This is one that is going to haunt us for a while."

The manner in which Galway fought back from conceding 1-3 at the beginning of the second period to level the score spoke volumes about this panel's character and sheer doggedness.

"One thing we always say about those girls is that they die with their boots on. There are good leaders there, and we showed massive leadership in the second half, all game.

"They had us in trouble in different areas, but six unanswered points to get us back into the game. We felt we were in a good position, but just didn't take our chances.

"That was the difference as Cork took their chances down the far end."



## How they lined out

### 1. A Lee

2. M Murphy  
8. N Hanniffy

4. P Mackey  
13. C Dolan

### 6. L Treacy

5. H Looney  
15. A O'Reilly

3. I O'Regan  
11. N McPeake

7. L Hayes  
14. N Mallon

10. A Donohue

8. A Thompson  
5. A Starr

9. A Healy  
9. N Kilkenny

12. C Healy  
7. C Hickey

11. F Keating  
6. A Keane

10. S McCarthy  
12. O Rabbitte

13. A O'Connor  
2. R Hanniffy

15. O Cahalane  
4. D Higgins

14. K Mackey  
3. R Black

1. S Healy



# Leesiders still hungry as ever but defeat will 'haunt' Galway



**FRANK ROCHE**

Fine lines on the scoreboard, wafer-thin calls by officialdom – but a chasm in the post-match reactions of ecstatic champions and bereft bridesmaids.

This was the story of yesterday's All-Ireland senior camogie final, summed up by the comments of winning boss Ger Manley and vanquished manager Cathal Murray.

"Look, it's gutting. That dressing room is a really hard place to be. Croke Park is for winners, end of story," lamented Galway's Murray.

Thus, the place belonged to Cork, claiming a record 30th All-Ireland crown. Mind you, they know how Galway feel: the two-in-a-row champions were hardened by back-to-back defeats in the previous two seasons.

"Oh Jaysus. I've been on the wrong side of a few results the last couple of years with the camogie team, I think they deserve it," beamed Manley.

"Kilkenny caught us (in '22), Galway caught us with a late goal (in '21). We were going down the line there, a couple of points up, but the girls stuck at it."

Manley was coach when Cork overwhelmed Waterford last year, before stepping up as manager when Matthew Twomey departed.

This wonderfully feisty finale to the inter-county year was the polar opposite of a cakewalk, as the 1-16 to 0-16 scoreline underlines.

There was also a distinct whiff of controversy over Katrina Mackey's 36th-minute goal – did she actually get a legitimate strike on the sliotar before it dropped over the goalline?

"They say she threw it in, did she? I don't care how she threw it in!" Manley admitted.

"I didn't see it but from where we were, I'd say she went to strike it and she was fouled, and when she threw the ball up to hit it, it went in. She was in the process of striking, I thought she was [fouled] ... Amy O'Connor was definitely fouled when she gave

the ball across. Jesus, 'twas a goal! It's gone against us a few times.

"But you're right, when I saw it, I kind of went, 'Woah'. But they pucked the ball out quick – done and dusted. Look, glad it was us."

Murray, for his part, hadn't looked at any TV replays – but said he was told by "one of the officials" that a penalty was going to be awarded before the goal was allowed to stand.

"I believe it was a throw ball. I questioned it on the line; I was told it was going to be a penalty ... but you still have to score a penalty, so I wouldn't agree with them there at all," he said.

However, the Galway manager wasn't "going to make excuses" and he was "super proud" of his team's performance. Leading by one at half-time, they looked in terminal trouble after leaking the next 1-4. Their response was thrilling – a necklace of six unanswered points to draw level. Ultimately, though, Cork's bench won it, Sorcha McCartan's brace sandwiching a Clodagh Finn point.

## Chances

"We put ourselves in a great position, just probably didn't take our chances down the stretch. That's going to haunt us for a while," Murray admitted.

Méabh Cahalane, the Cork vice-captain who returned from injury as a 51st-minute sub, went up the steps and lifted the O'Duffy Cup with skipper (and sub 'keeper) Molly Lynch.

Afterwards, Cahalane reflected: "I felt I had a role to play and possibly coming on in the semi-final or final like I did today, and I just feel like that's the mentality of the whole group. Whatever I can bring to the table, whether it's starting, coming on, everybody plays a different role. There is a bit of a freshness about the squad again this year.

"Going into the final, I was thinking about the hunger and I don't think that went away from last year. We were so hungry for success this year, so hungry going out in every single training session trying to get something out of it, and I think that's the standard that Liam Cronin sets as hurling coach.

"I felt the mentality the girls showed to ride that wave, when Galway were coming at us, was something else and they could be so proud of themselves."



# Lady Luck shines on Rebels to edge Tribes

## Cork just about deserve victory as disputed goal helps them to 30th title



**COLM KEYS**

**CORK** 1-16  
**GALWAY** 0-16

ALL-IRELAND SENIOR CAMOGIE FINAL

An All-Ireland senior camogie final that didn't go to script saw Cork hang on for dear life as Galway threw everything at it in an absorbing last quarter in Croke Park yesterday.

Six points up early in the second half after trailing by a point at the break,

Cork looked in complete control and set to become the first county to reach the 30-title mark with some ease.

And based on how they had laid waste to all-comers throughout this championship, a second successive O'Duffy Cup looked inevitable.

But Galway grit was everywhere and before a crowd of 27,181, down on last year's record stand-alone crowd of 30,191, they got themselves back into the game, forcing Cork to defend to the highest standard to keep them at bay.

When Aoife Donohue got them level, 1-13 to 0-16, on 51 minutes with her fourth point, capping a very strong individual performance, it felt like Galway could press on.

But they didn't score again for the remaining 15 minutes played and were left to regret some poor shot selections that

brought their second-half wide count to six, having not registered any in the opening half.

It leaves Galway GAA in an unenviable place this week as they come to terms with a third All-Ireland final defeat in three weeks in Croke Park, following on from their losses to Armagh and Kerry in the men's and ladies football finals respectively.

Only Cork in 1956, when their football, hurling and camogie teams lost to Galway, Wexford and Antrim respectively, have lost three deciders before in the same season.

Many counties would, of course, love to be as competitive and extending their seasons as far but this was a 57th defeat for a Galway team in an All-Ireland final across all senior codes from 79 appearances now. There have been three draws.

To the camogie team's credit, however, this was undoubtedly the best performance of the three.

The decisive moment came in the 36th minute when Cork got the game's only goal and there was more than a whiff of controversy about it.

## Exposed

Amy O'Connor, scorer of a quick-fire hat-trick of goals in last year's final but more subdued here as the Galway defence clamped down on the room she revelled in 12 months ago, got clear of Rachael Hanniffy and popped a pass inside to Katrina Mackey. It was the only time the Tribe defence was ever really exposed.

Mackey broke a tackle and a goal beckoned but she appeared to lose control with the impact, first from Galway goalkeeper Sarah Healy and then Áine Keane. The ball spilled from her grasp but spun over the line without a clear strike from the full-forward.

Referee Liz Dempsey may have awarded a penalty to Mackey for the first tackle but to allow the goal to stand, it was quite the break for Cork and punitive on Galway.



Cork joint-captains Molly Lynch (left) and Meabh Cahalane lift the O'Duffy Cup Piaras Ó Mídeach/Sportsfile





Back Row Left to Right:  
 Ciara Ryan, Laura Leenane, Lorna Ryan, Hazel Brennan, Maria Connolly, Anna Fahie, Saoirse McGrath, Dani Ryan, Laura Shinnors, Grace Moloney, Eimear Fogarty, Gemma Fox, Eva O'Dwyer, Emma Kelly, Emma O'Sullivan, Jenny Grace, Emma O'Halloran, Orla O'Brien, Aoife O'Brien,

Front Row Left to Right:  
 Caroline Shanahan, Amy Callanan, Ciara Brennan, Emma Flanagan, Shona McBride, Tara Hoare, Eimear Carey, Miriam Murphy, Amy Quintisk, Jill Anne Quirke, Lily Fahie, Sophie Pembroke, Sinead Meagher, Molly Gilmartin.



**IONADAÍ**

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| 16 <b>Aoife O'Brien</b> , Aoife Ni Bhriain, Cashel King Cormacs   | 22 <b>Laura Shinnors</b> , Lara Siomúir, Kilruane MacDonaghs         | 27 <b>Shona McBride</b> , Shona Ni Ghiolla Bhríde, Templemore    |
| 17 <b>Gemma Fox</b> , Gemma Fox, Éire Óg Annacarty                | 23 <b>Saoirse McGrath</b> , Saoirse Mac Craith, Newport Ballinahinch | 28 <b>Eimear Fogarty</b> , Eimear Ni Fhogartaigh, Shannon Rovers |
| 18 <b>Miriam Murphy</b> , Miriam Ni Mhurchú, Silvermines          | 24 <b>Dani Ryan</b> , Danielle Ni Riain, Borris-Ileigh               | 29 <b>Emma Kelly</b> , Emma Ni Cheallaigh, Borris-Ileigh         |
| 19 <b>Emma O'Halloran</b> , Emma Ni hAlluráin, Carrick Swans      | 25 <b>Caroline Shanahan</b> , Cearúilín Ni Seancháin, Drom and Inch  | 30 <b>Hazel Brennan</b> , Hazel Ni Bhraonáin, Moyle Rovers       |
| 20 <b>Eva O'Dwyer</b> , Aoife Ni Duibhir, Éire Óg Annacarty       | 26 <b>Tara Hoare</b> , Tara Ni Hora, Drom and Inch                   |  |
| 21 <b>Eimear Carey</b> , Eimear Ni Chiartha, Newport Ballinahinch |  |  |

# Laois



**Back Row Left to Right:**

Lucy Conroy, Aimee Collier, Rachael Deegan, Aoife Hyland, Katie Gaughan, Kirsten Keenan, Grainne Delaney, Líadan C Fennell, Jade Bergin, Roisin Phelan, Sarah Creagh, Laura Finlay, Aoife Finlay, Grainne Hyland, Avia Coss, Clodagh Tynan, Aedin Lowry.

**Front Row Left to Right:**

Gemma Hoare, Aisling O'Dea, Tara Lowry, Eimear Hassett, Susie Delaney, Andrea Scully, Leah Daly, Fiona Scully, Laura Marie Maher, Alice Walsh, Katie Dunican, Ellen Conroy, Karla Whelan.



**IONADAÍ**

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p>16 <b>Laura Marie Maher</b>, Laura Marie Ni Meachair, O'Moores</p> <p>17 <b>Karla Whelan</b>, Karla Ni Fhaoilain, Naomh Éamann</p> <p>18 <b>Rachael Deegan</b>, Rachael Ni Duiginn, The Harps</p> <p>19 <b>Aoife Hyland</b>, Aoife Ni hAolain, O Moores</p> <p>20 <b>Aiva Coss</b>, Aiva Mac Coise, St. Brigids</p> <p>21 <b>Gemma Hoare</b>, Gemma Hoare, St. Brigids</p> | <p>22 <b>Andrea Scully</b>, Andrea Ni Scolai, Camross</p> <p>23 <b>Ellen Conroy</b>, Ellen Ni Conrai, O Moores</p> <p>24 <b>Lucy Conroy</b>, Laoiseach Ni Conraoi, O Moores</p> <p>25 <b>Grainne Hyland</b>, Grainne Ni hAolain, St. Brigids</p> <p>26 <b>Kirsten Keenan</b>, Kirsten Keenan, Camross</p> <p>27 <b>Tara Lowry</b>, Tara Ni Labhraí, Camross</p> <p>28 <b>Katie Dunican</b>, Cait Ni Dhunachain, St. Lazarians</p> | <p>29 <b>Roisin Phelan</b>, Roisin Ni Fhaoilain, The Harps</p> <p>30 <b>Katie Gaughan</b>, Caitlin Ni Ghachain, Naomh Eamonn</p> |
|---|---|--|



## ALL-IRELAND SNIPPETS

### Cork boss Manley hails 'a team of their generation'

DELIGHTED Cork manager Ger Manley hailed his All-Ireland winning heroes as 'a team of their generation' after their latest success.

The Rebels beat Galway in Sunday's final to make it back-to-back O'Duffy Cups, and after losing the 2021 and '22 deciders, Cork have now made it two in a row, with Manley hailing the team's stalwarts, as well as coach Liam Cronin for his influence.

'We've been on the wrong side of these results over the years. This is our fourth final in a row and we lost two we should have won. But these are a team of their generation,' Manley said.

'They're so good. You've Laura Treacy, (Ashling) Thompson, the Mackeys (Katrina and Pamela), Amy O'Connor, Laura Hayes. Méabh Cahalane came on after a hamstring tendon injury that's supposed to keep you out three months. We put a lot in, so did Galway but we were a small bit better I think.

'Mackey tore her hamstring and was a loss as she was going well. And when Galway came at us, we held our nerve. The losses build that character. And we have a brilliant coach in Liam Cronin. He's the best I've ever worked with.'

'We felt we've left a few after us so to win two is a great. You have to battle. There's nothing easy up here.'



Cork manager Ger Manley.

## CAHALANES CELEBRATE



The Cahalane sisters, Orlaith, Méabh and Grainne, lift the O'Duffy Cup after Cork's All-Ireland senior final win over Galway at Croke Park. Their parents, legendary Cork footballer Niall and Ailish, hail from Castlehaven, adding another West Cork link to the Rebels' triumph. In fact, there were more family connections in Croke Park last weekend as Sabina Higgins, wife of President of Ireland Michael D Higgins, is a relation of Orlaith, Méabh and Grainne, whose late grandfather, the legendary Ned Cleary, was a first cousin to Sabina; their mothers were sisters.

(Photo: Ben Brady/INPHO)

## Hannah wants to row with Paul and Fintan on the Ilan!

AFTER Cork's All-Ireland final success in 2023, dual star Hannah Looney celebrated with the O'Duffy Cup by being rowed down the River Lee – and now she wants to row down the River Ilan in Skibbereen with Olympic champions Paul O'Donovan and Fintan McCarthy!

When Looney was asked about her celebration plans following the All-Ireland final, she quipped, 'Maybe bungee jump off the Shandon Bells!' before adding, 'Do you've any connections with Paul (O'Donovan) and Fintan (McCarthy)? We must get onto them and see if they'll row me down the Lee. I'll go down to Skibb for a row, even, but we'll be celebrating for the week, the winter. You work hard for this. Special, special moments.'

Cork boss praises subs' impact as Rebels show the stuff of champs in title defence

CORK	1-16
GALWAY	0-16

### GER MCCARTHY REPORTS

THE Rebels' reign is underway. That's now back-to-back All-Ireland senior camogie titles. With Cork also winning the All-Ireland intermediate crown, the first leg of the double, at Croke Park on Sunday, this was the Rebels' day.

Having cruised, for long stretches, all the way to this year's All-Ireland final, Cork were finally tested on the biggest day by Galway, but the champions found the answers.

When the Connacht side's third-quarter surge resulted in six unanswered points to tie an end-to-end encounter, manager Ger Manley looked to his bench. Sorcha McCartan, Ciara O'Sullivan, Méabh Cahalane, Clodagh Finn and Emma Murphy were all introduced with McCartan and Finn making telling contributions.

McCartan (0-2) and Finn (0-1, one assist) proved the difference at the end of a breathless, gut-busting finale.

Yet, when questions were asked of this Cork senior team, they came up with the answers and delivered a second consecutive O'Duffy Cup success.

'We knew it wouldn't be easy today. It's grand to say we're playing matches, but we needed a match like that,' Manley said.

'We needed that game to show what we're made of and I think it really showed there in the last seven or eight min-



# RESILIENT REBELS RULE



Cork sub Clodagh Finn celebrates a late score. INSET: Ashling Thompson with the player of the match award.

(Photo: Tom Maher/INPHO)



utes. That's when the going got tough. You saw how the senior players all stood up, and we got a couple of great scores from the subs again.'

Galway trailed 0-3 to 0-2 after ten minutes following a physical opening to proceedings. Two Carrie Dolan frees kept Cathal Murray's side in

touch after Katrina Mackey, Saoirse McCarthy and Amy O'Connor, (free) found their range.

The teams would finish level

## Keating: There was a target on

BY GER MCCARTHY

THE confetti had finished falling from the sky but the Cork management team and players were still floating on air following their magnificent All-Ireland senior final success.

Having run herself into the ground, Courcey Rovers' Fiona Keating did her best to summarise Cork's superb and hard-fought All-Ireland final victory.

'What a game but we had the answers in the end,' an exhausted Keating commented.

'We knew coming up here today that we would be up against it. Just to finish it the way we did, the effort from our backline in the last ten minutes was exceptional.

'We couldn't have asked for anything more.

'I think, you know, we always felt we had a target on our backs after winning last year's final so coming up here to Croke Park and winning it again was really special.

'There were two bus loads of Courcey Rovers supporters up

here today. I have yet to find them so I must go off and see where they are!'

As Keating raced off towards the Hogan Stand in search of her club-mates, another famous Cork camogie stalwart was barely able to take it all in.

A six-time All-Ireland winner with Cork, Fiona O'Driscoll went on to coach the Rebels to 2005 and 2006 All-Ireland triumphs. Brought in as part of Ger Manley's backroom team for 2024, O'Driscoll's involve-

ment proved a shrewd appointment.

'It is a bloody relief right now and that's God's honest truth!' the Cork selector commented.

'It was so tight today, right to the end. Look, we have been there before and maybe it was that bit of experience and energy off the bench that made the difference in the end.

'The players have just been phenomenal. They have trained so hard for this all year. We said all year how important our bench was. They were



Cork celebrate with the O'Duffy Cup after their brilliant All-Ireland final win. (Photos: Bryan Keane/INPHO)



Cork's Emma Murphy and Ciara O'Sullivan (Newcestown) lift the O'Duffy Cup. (Photos: Ben Brady/INPHO)

## West Cork's strong links to the Rebels' All-Ireland success

BY GER MCCARTHY

WEST Cork was well represented in the Rebels' All-Ireland senior final success and the future looks bright for the region's top camogie stars.

The country has spent the past month marvelling at the sights and sounds of the Paris Olympics. We cheered on Kellie Harrington, Mona McSharry, Daniel Wiffen, Rhys McClenaghan, Daire Lynch and Philip Doyle as they won Olympic medals. Closer to home, Skibberen Rowing Club's Fintan McCarthy and Paul O'Donovan won rowing gold, again. Add to that, Ballineen native Phil Healy's heroics as part of the Irish women's 4x400m relay team that agonisingly missed out on a medal by a couple of hundredths of a second.

We love our athletes in West Cork. Always have, always will. We also love our GAA, camogie and ladies football players. That's why we in West Cork should be just as proud of Saoirse McCarthy, Fiona Keating and Ciara O'Sullivan's collective triumph with the Cork seniors at Croke Park last Sunday.

McCarthy (Courcey Rovers), Keating (Courcey Rovers) and O'Sullivan (Newcestown) along with Castlehaven and Cork legend Niall Cahalane and his wife Ailish's three daughters - Méabh, Gráinne and Orlaith (St Finbarr's) - plus BallinacCarthy's Millie Condon (pictured below) and St Colum's Libby Coppinger meant there was plenty of West Cork interest in this year's Cork set-up.

Amidst the falling confetti and booming music following the Rebels' three-point victory over Galway, the West Cork contingent had every reason to be ecstatic.

For Saoirse McCarthy, this was the crowning moment of an All-Star season. The dynamic Courcey Rovers wing-forward has been an absolute powerhouse throughout Cork's All-Ireland winning campaign.

McCarthy's surging runs and fearless ability to get physical with her opponents whenever asked made this the 23-year-

old's best-ever season in a Cork senior jersey.

The same is true of her Courcey Rovers team mate Fiona Keating. Her ceaseless running and ability to track back were vital traits in helping her county reach a fourth consecutive All-Ireland decider. Although only 23, she is regarded as one of her inter-county panel's more experienced campaigners.

You would have to have a heart of stone not to have felt a bit emotional at the sight of Newcestown's Ciara O'Sullivan making her All-Ireland final appearance off the bench after 48 minutes.

Having torn her ACL and missed the entire 2023 All-Ireland winning campaign, it was fitting that Cork boss Ger Manley sent O'Sullivan on for the closing stages. Getting to experience the emotions of the final whistle alongside her teammates on the Croke Park turf was the least she deserved.

The same is true of Méabh Cahalane who was also introduced off the bench having suffered an injury-ravaged season. St Finbarr's stalwart got to celebrate alongside sisters Orlaith and Gráinne, the latter missing out due to injury. Libby Coppinger's absence was felt throughout the campaign. The dual star's influence was missed but Coppinger is the type of individual who will bounce back stronger than ever in 2025.

So, the Olympics has ended as has this year's All-Ireland camogie championship. A memorable summer for both.

## THE HIGHLIGHTS

**Our Star:** Six-time All-Ireland winner **Ashling Thompson** was immense and deservedly took home the Player of the Match award. Saoirse McCarthy and Laura Treacy weren't far behind.

**Star moment:** Katrina Mackey's 36th-minute goal was crucial to Cork's three-point victory. Did she touch Amy O'Connor's hand pass? It doesn't matter now.

**Talking point:** Amidst the Camogie Association's biggest day and 120-year celebration, an attendance of 27,811 was disappointing considering three finals took place.

**What's next?** Cork will defend the O'Duffy Cup in 2025 and go in search of a third senior title in a row.

eight times before a cracking opening half concluded. Ailish O'Reilly, Aoife Donoghue, Carrie Dolan and Niamh Mallon efforts saw Galway move 0-6 to 0-5 ahead. Cork responded through Saoirse McCarthy, Fiona Keating and Amy O'Connor but it was Galway who led 0-10 to 0-9 at the short whistle.

Izzy O'Regan and Laura Treacy had to be careful following yellow cards as they burst out of the traps in the third

quarter. An unanswered 1-4 from Katrina Mackey (goal), Orlaith Cahalane, Ashling Thompson, Saoirse McCarthy and Amy O'Connor moved Cork 1-13 to 0-10 in front.

Mackey's 36th minute goal had a whiff of controversy about it as the forward may not have made contact with Amy O'Connor's pass. Fouled having forced the ball over the line, a penalty would have occurred had referee Liz

Dempsey not allowed the goal to stand.

'From what I saw, she (Katrina Mackey) went to strike it and she was fouled,' Manley said.

'When she threw the ball up to hit it, it went in. She was in the process of striking it, I thought she was fouled (myself). Amy O'Connor was definitely fouled when she put the ball across. When I saw it, I kind of went wow, but they pucked the ball out, so it was done and dusted.'



Niamh O'Callaghan, Fiona Keating and Ciara O'Sullivan celebrate Cork's win. (Photo: Bryan Keane/INPHO)

## our backs so this is special

today again with the players who came on and made an impact.'

Méabh Cahalane, daughter of Cork and Castlehaven legend Niall Cahalane, missed most of the season through injury. Thankfully for Cahalane, she managed to make a second-half appearance off the bench.

'I felt I had a role to play and possibly come on in the semi-final or final, like I did today,' Cahalane said.

'I just feel like that's the

mentality of our whole group. Whatever I can bring to the table, whether it's starting, coming on, everybody plays a different role.

'Going into the final, I was thinking about the hunger. I don't think it went away from last year. We were so hungry for success this year, so hungry going out in every single training session trying to get something out of it.'

'I think that's the standard that Liam Cronin sets as hurling coach.'



Courcey Rovers' duo Saoirse McCarthy and Fiona Keating lift the O'Duffy Cup. (Photo: Ben Brady/INPHO)



# Kilkenny agony as Rebels snatch All-Ireland title late on

**GLEN DIMPLEX  
INTERMEDIATE CAMOGIE  
ALL-IRELAND FINAL**

**CORK 1-11  
KILKENNY 1-10**

**Kevin Egan**  
at Croke Park

A heartbreaking finale saw Kilkenny concede the last three points in succession and with it miss out on All-Ireland glory at Croke Park on Sunday afternoon, as Cork showed far more composure and steel in the closing minutes of a tense, error-ridden contest in the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland intermediate final.

Rebel county substitute Fiona Nelligan was the match winner when she seized on Niamh Leahy's diagonal pass out of the left corner of the defence and split the uprights, but over the course of the hour there were plenty of moments that will haunt Seamus Kelly and his panel, with both sides struggling to deal with the swirling breeze and, in the latter stages, the pressure of the occasion.

There was never a stage in

the game where either side looked like they were out of sight, but the McGrath Cup seemed to be Kilkenny's to lose when, with just under ten minutes remaining, Claire Doheny pounced on a breaking ball, capitalising on tigerish work from full forward Caroline Kennedy and fired over what looked like a crucial point to nudge Kilkenny 1-10 to 1-8 in front.

However the closing stages of the contest were dominated by the Rebels, at both ends of the field.

Lauren Homan, top scorer in the championship as a whole, had played well but hadn't dominated the game as much as some of her other contests this year.

That didn't affect her composure as she stood over a free on the 20m line, right out on the Hogan stand sideline, and split the uprights to start their rally.

Three Cork defenders converging to block down Niamh Crowley, then Tara McCarthy hooking Doheny to prevent a score from the subsequent break summed up Cork's ravenous desire to

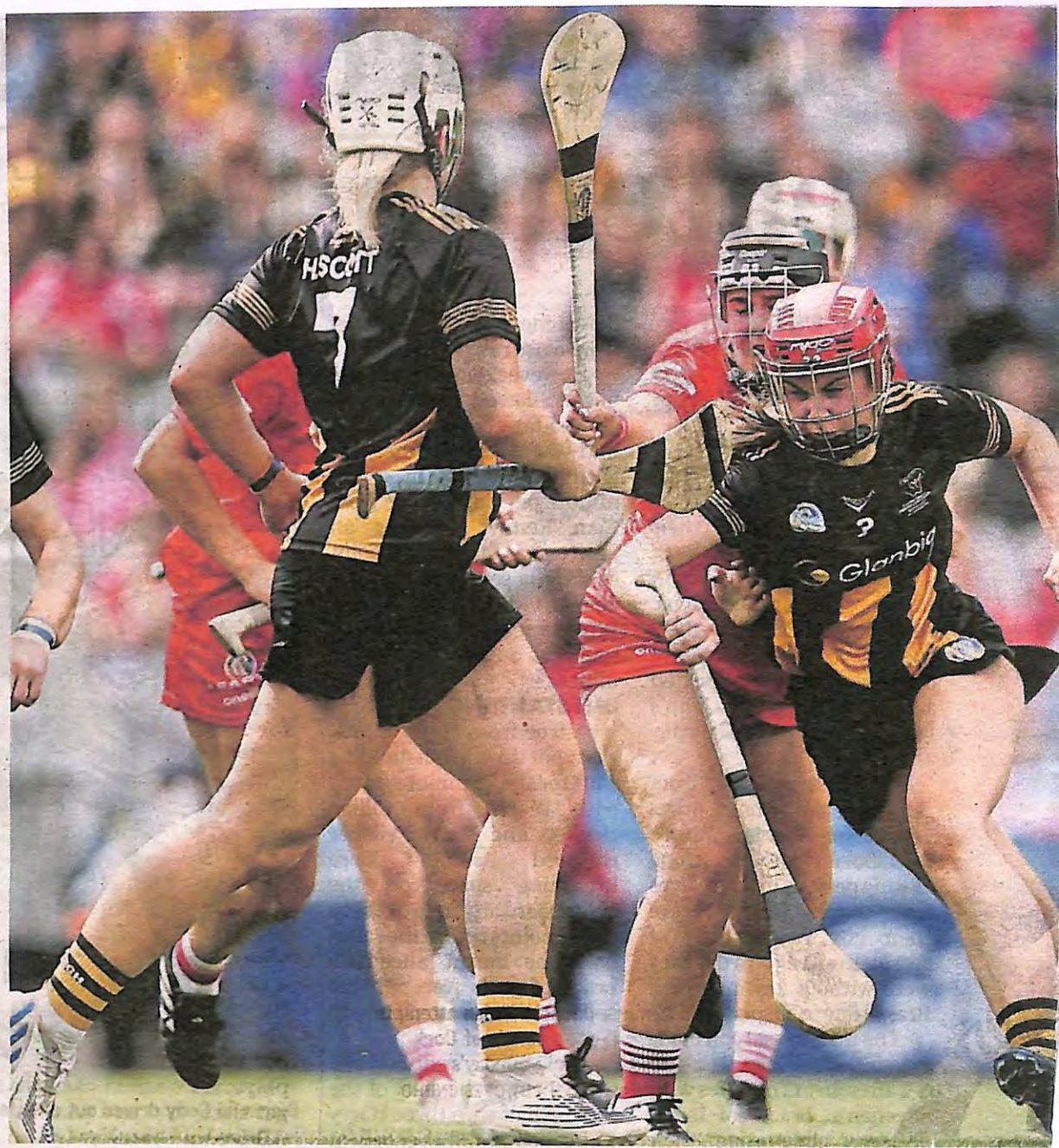
force the issue their way, and that effort was rewarded when Cliona O'Callaghan strode through to fire over the equaliser.

With the wind at their backs and four minutes of stoppage time to play, by now it was Kilkenny who would have gladly listened to Brian Kearney's final whistle and reset themselves for a replay next weekend in Thurles.

A high pressure catch from Cliona Murphy on a hanging shot from O'Callaghan, as well as a brave block from Mairéad Kennedy, seemed like the plays that would secure that second chance, but instead that poorly-placed clearance saw the sliotar drop into Nelligan's hand, and in just her tenth minute on the field, the Cork sub duly split the posts for the biggest score of the game.

The drama of the closing stages was matched in the opening quarter, with Cork edging the first 17 minutes of play by 0-5 to 0-4.

Kilkenny had the larger share of possession in the early minutes but took on



some low percentage shots, missing the target three times before Doheny pointed to cancel out Cliona Dooley's opener.

Rachel Dowling and Doheny added the next two as Kilkenny continued to control both puckout battles, but they needed to put a lot more scores in the bank, as once the chances started to flow at the other end, Lauren Homan settled into her work, and a brace of sharp scores from Niamh O'Regan were enough to give Cork the narrowest of half-time leads, 0-7 to 0-6.

Hannah Scott was on target with two long strikes from distance, though the first of the two rattled off the crossbar before falling for Carlise Comerford to score, but at the other end Cork had the game's first real goal chance, with Cliona O'Callaghan's shot struck too close to Cliona Murphy, allowing the Kilmacow custodian to stand tall and make the block.

If that was the goal that might have been, then the story of the third quarter was one of the two preventable goals that were scored.

Cliona O'Callaghan put her name on the first, placing a low shot into the right hand corner at the Davin End with just two minutes played, but

her strike lacked the power that should have been needed to evade Murphy.

Ciara Hurley will have been every bit as disappointed with her failure to deal with Danielle Morrissey's high shot that dipped onto her hurl just under the crossbar, but skidded up and into the roof of the net, allowing Kilkenny to move 1-9 to 1-7 ahead, having already responded to O'Callaghan's goal with two frees from Morrissey.

By now, both sides were operating with an extra player in the full-back line, as the tension of the occasion took over and scoring chances dried up.

Between wides, scores, saves and shots dropped

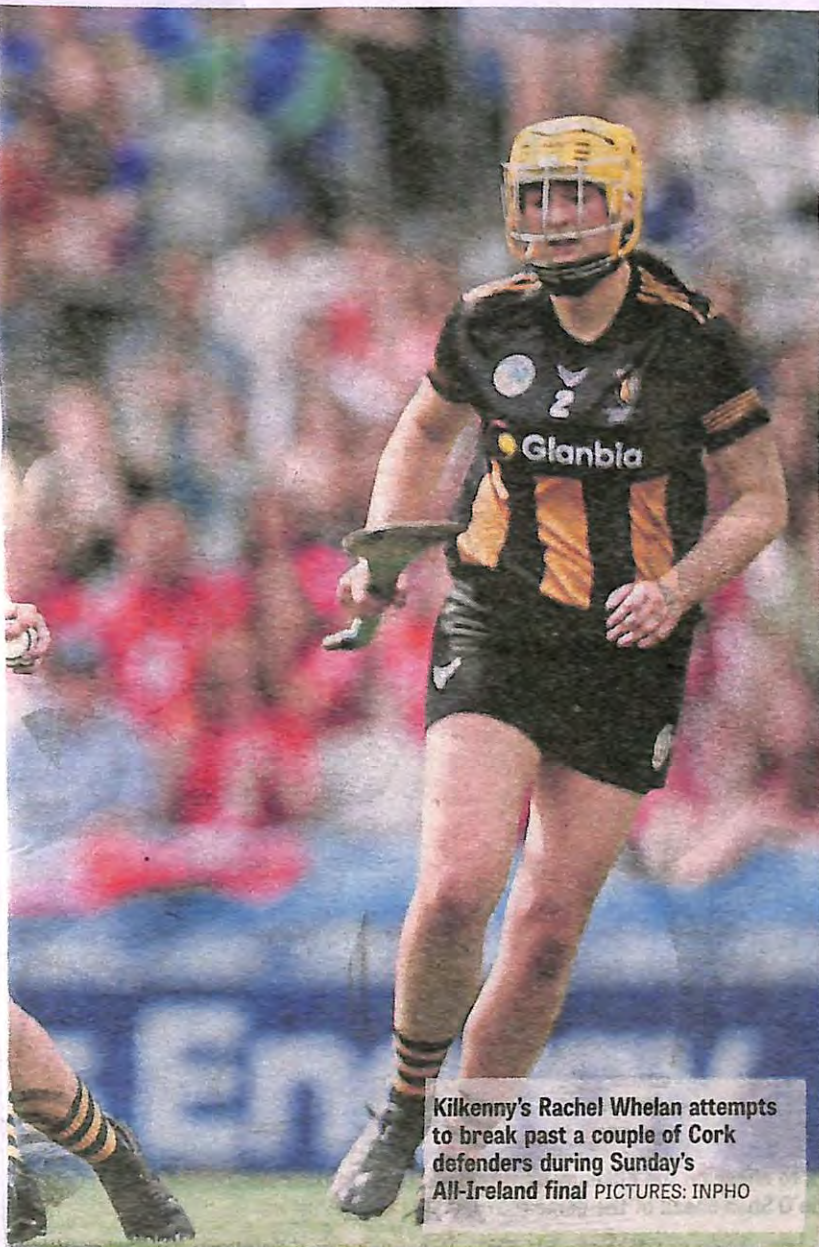


The Kilkenny intermediate squad that faced Cork in Sunday's All-Ireland final in Croke Park



Mairéad Kennedy fends off Cork's Cliona O'Callaghan

# I couldn't have asked for any more from them: Kelly



Kilkenny's Rachel Whelan attempts to break past a couple of Cork defenders during Sunday's All-Ireland final PICTURES: INPHO

short, there were just 19 shots on goal in total in the second half, and that should have suited Kilkenny just fine.

Instead, an ice-cool freetaker, a frenzied defensive unit and a game-changing sub were about to write a different, bitterly-disappointing conclusion to the story of a drama-filled final.

#### TEAMS AND SCORERS

**Cork** - Lauren Homan 0-6 (0-5f), Cliona O'Callaghan 1-1, Niamh O'Regan 0-2, Cliona Dooley 0-1, Fiona Nelligan 0-1.

**Kilkenny** - Danielle Morrissey 1-4 (0-3f), Claire Doherty 0-3, Rachel Dowling 0-1, Carlise Comerford 0-1, Hannah Scott 0-1.

**Kilkenny** - Cliona Murphy; Niamh Leahy, Rachel Whelan, Jane Cass;

Mairéad Kennedy, Shauna Treacy, Hannah Scott; Danielle Morrissey, Lauren Ronan; Carlise Comerford, Rachel Dowling, Aoife Cantwell; Rose Kelly, Caroline Kennedy, Claire Doherty. Subs: Kate McCluskey for Cantwell, 43 mins; Niamh Crowley for Kelly, 50 mins; Cria Langton for Dowling, 55 mins.

**Cork** - Ciara Hurley; Aoife Barrett, Niamh O'Leary, Emma Flanagan; Laura Doyle, Olivia McAllen, Meadhbh Ring; Laura Buttimer, Avril Cashman; Edel Sheehan, Lauren Homan, Tara McCarthy; Cliona O'Callaghan, Cliona Dooley, Niamh O'Regan. Subs: Lucy Allen for Buttimer, 39 mins; Eimear Duignan for Sheehan, 45 mins; Fiona Nelligan for O'Regan, 52 mins; Erin Curtin for Dooley, 56 mins; Katie Walsh for Cashman, 60 mins.

**Referee** - Brian Kearney (Kildare).

Seamus Kelly challenged the players in his dressing room to think bigger, as he reflected on his team's heartbreaking one-point defeat to Cork in the All-Ireland Intermediate camogie final on Sunday afternoon in Croke Park.

The Mount Leinster Rangers club man was wholehearted in his praise of his players and argued that some of them should be ready to step up to senior action for 2025.

"Sport is about challenging yourself, that's why we do it" he said after his side's 1-11 to 1-10 loss.

"I never thought when I went into an interview ten years ago that I would be here, bringing a team to an All-Ireland final. It's something I've always wanted to do, but not for me, for the players. I wanted them to get their cup and win an All-Ireland final in Croke Park.

"Now there's some players in there and it's time for them to move up a grade. Danielle (Morrissey), I think it's time for her to look further, and a few others should start looking up as well."

Nothing has yet been officially confirmed, but it's widely believed that this could be the last year of second teams competing in an integrated All-Ireland structure, with speculation rife that the practice could be discontinued, or that a separate championship could be created - either



Kilkenny Intermediate manager Seamus Kelly watches on before the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Camogie Final with Cork PICTURE: BRYAN KEANE/INPHO

of which would be a mistake, in Kelly's opinion.

"I've had a few thoughts on it and I think it's the wrong thing to do, I think having second teams in it makes it a competitive competition," he replied.

With Tipperary edging out Laois in the Premier Junior Final while Kilkenny and Cork knocked out Kerry and Offaly at the semi-final stages of the intermediate, he argued that these counties need to be able to win games like that with their first team before they can progress, while also emphasising the value of the structure to teams like Kilkenny and Cork, who completed a senior

and intermediate double on Sunday.

"I think if you're able to compete with the second teams and beat them, then you should be able to go up to senior and compete with first teams. I think they need to have a look at it again, maybe put all the second teams in one group, like they do in Kilkenny, where the winner or the top two in the group goes into knockout stages.

"Maybe don't totally get rid of them, if you look at some of the senior results this year there were a lot of heavy beatings, that's not going to do a lot for those teams if they're going to be yo-yoing up and down. I think the game is in a good place in terms of the skill levels being up, but maybe people should sit down and look at it one more time before making that decision," he said.

"It's only when you hit 23 that you start to come into yourself a bit in my opinion. Shauna Treacy for instance went into centre back this year, and through the years Shauna would have been on the fringes of a lot of intermediate teams. It took a while to find her feet, and this year she held number six brilliantly.

"That's just an example of what the intermediate

competition can do. It can give girls a chance to find their feet, improve, look around and learn in a safe environment, away from the pressure of senior championship. When the time comes then, they'll be well able for it."

Kelly concluded by thanking his players for their efforts, as he offered his hope that every Kilkenny team will mimic their approach to wearing the black and amber jersey.

"That group of players inside, they left everything out there. I couldn't have asked for any more from them, the way they wore the jersey even when they were on the back foot, they just pulled themselves together and kept driving on. The girls that came in, did what they were asked to do and did it well, but it's just one of those days, and we were on the wrong side of it.

"People see them as an intermediate team, we don't get all the same plaudits as the senior team get. But if any senior team can look at these players in that dressing room, they'll see what it means to them. If all our Kilkenny teams play with that spirit, Kilkenny will get back on top and start winning All-Irelands again," he declared.



A dejected Kate McCluskey reacts after the game



Kilkenny's Lauren Ronan goes on the attack

## ALL-IRELAND SENIOR CAMOGIE FINAL

# Cork retain All-Ireland title as disputed goal proves the difference between Galway and double champions

ALL-IRELAND SENIOR CAMOGIE FINAL

Cork 1-16  
Galway 0-16

BY COLM KEYS

AN All-Ireland senior camogie final that didn't go to script saw Cork hang on for dear life as Galway threw everything at it in an absorbing last quarter in Croke Park yesterday.

Six points up early in the second half after trailing by a point at the break, Cork looked in complete control and set to become the first county to reach the 30-title mark with some ease.

And based on how they had laid waste to all-comers throughout this championship, a second successive O'Duffy Cup looked inevitable.

But Galway grit was everywhere and before a crowd of 27,181, down on last year's record stand-alone crowd of 30,191, they got themselves back into the game, forcing Cork to defend to the highest standard to keep them at bay.

When Aoife Donohue got them level, 1-13 to 0-16, on 51 minutes with her fourth point, capping a very strong individual performance, it felt like Galway could press on. But they didn't score again for the remaining 15 minutes played and were left to regret some poor shot selections that brought their second-half wide count to six, having not registered any in the opening half.

It leaves Galway GAA in an unenviable place this week as they come to terms with a third All-Ireland final defeat in three weeks in Croke Park, following on from their losses to Armagh and Kerry in the men's and ladies football finals respectively.

Only Cork in 1956, when their football, hurling and camogie teams lost to Galway, Wexford and Antrim respectively, have lost three deciders before in the same season.

Many counties would, of course, love to be as competitive and extending their seasons as far but this was a 57th defeat for a Galway team in an All-Ireland final across all senior codes from 79 appearances now. There have been three draws.

To the camogie team's credit, however, this was undoubtedly the best performance of the three.

The decisive moment came in the 36th minute when Cork got the game's only goal and there was more than a whiff of controversy about it.

Amy O'Connor, scorer of a quick-fire hat-trick of goals in last year's final but more subdued here as the Galway defence clamped down on the room she revelled in 12 months ago, got clear of Rachael Hanniffy and popped a pass inside to Katrina Mackey. It was the only time the Tribe defence was ever really exposed.

Mackey broke a tackle and a goal beckoned but she appeared to lose control with the impact, first from Galway goalkeeper Sarah Healy and then

Aine Keane. The ball spilled from her grasp but spun over the line without a clear strike from the full-forward.

Referee Liz Dempsey may have awarded a penalty to Mackey for the first tackle but to allow the goal to stand, it was quite the break for Cork and punitive on Galway.

Mackey subsequently came off clutching one of her hips from a likely collision with an upright after the goal.

Her replacement was Sorcha McCartan, daughter of former Down All-Ireland-winning footballer Greg, and that put her in opposition to her former Down colleague Niamh Mallon who is living and working in Galway and linked up with their camogie team this year.

The goal pushed Cork four points clear, building on Orlaith Cahalane and Ashling Thompson points to re-establish a lead. And when Saoirse McCarthy and O'Connor, from a free, made it 1-4 without reply Cork looked like they had the wind in their sails.

But Carrie Dolan, Galway's top scorer with 0-8, seven frees from seven attempts, landed the next point and added the following one too before Ciara Hickey, who dominated her flank throughout, left just a goal between them.

Cork looked a little stunned by the response. They had won every game comfortably up to this but a battle ensued and Galway were prepared for it.

Dolan landed another free after referee Dempsey played an advantage from quite a distance back before Donohue knocked over two fantastic points for parity.

Cork had strength in depth, however, and used it well. McCartan and Clodagh Finn, another replacement, put the Rebels two points ahead again by the 55th minute.

The tension rose and the fluency that both sides had enjoyed at times deserted them.

Camogie has benefited from rule changes that allow for greater tolerance in the contact area and it has produced a much better product in recent years. But that may have come at a cost to Galway in the closing stages

when Annmarie Starr was surely fouled as the six minutes of added time ticked down.

While a converted free at that stage would have left just a point in it, Galway never looked like scoring a goal against a Cork defence that had such resilience in Laura Treacy throughout. Cork's centre-back made two important clearances at the end and Méabh Murphy made a vital hook in that passage of play too.

Cork arguably had an edge in athleticism and physicality too and that was evident in the greater ease with which they were able to build scores.

Saoirse McCarthy's 26th-minute point, to level at 0-7 each, reflected that as she rounded Olwen Rabbitte, delegated to track her from the start, and got away into clear space.

As ever Ashling Thompson led from the front from midfield with her power and competitive streak helping her to prevail in so many tight spaces.

But the Cork duo, Thompson and Aoife Healy, didn't have it all their own way against Starr and Niamh Kilkenny.

It was 'tit for tat' throughout the half. Cork had the best chance of a goal but it was a half-chance on 18 minutes as Cliona Healy and Mackey combined to put O'Connor in but she was quickly bottled up by an alert Galway defence.

The sides were level eight times before Donohue, with another brilliant score, made it 0-10 to 0-9 at the break.

Cork deserve their win for how they defended when the pressure came on but they were able to ride their luck too in being first to reach the 30-title barrier.

**CORK:** A Lee; M Murphy, I O'Regan, P Mackey; H Looney, L Treacy, L Hayes; A Thompson 0-1, A Healy; C Healy 0-1, F Keating 0-1, S McCarthy 0-3 (1f); A O'Connor 0-3 (3f), K Mackey 1-2, O Cahalane 0-2. Subs: S McCartan 0-2 for Mackey (inj 39), C O'Sullivan for C Healy (48), M Cahalane for Looney (51), C Finn 0-1 for Keating (53), E Murphy for O Cahalane (63).

**GALWAY:** S Healy; R Hanniffy, R Black, D Higgins; O Rabbitte, A Keane, C Hickey 0-1; A Starr, N Kilkenny; N Mallon 0-1, N McPeake, A Donohue 0-4; A O'Reilly 0-2, N Hanniffy, C Dolan 0-8 (7f). Subs: O McGrath for O'Reilly (48), N Niland for N Hanniffy (62), A Hesnan for Rabbitte (65).

**REFEREE:** L Dempsey (Kilkenny)

Cork players celebrate after their side's victory in the All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship final against Galway at Croke Park. Photo by Sportsfile



## Cork boss Manley: 'We

BY FRANK ROCHE

SUNDAY'S All-Ireland senior camogie final belonged to Cork, claiming a record 30th All-Ireland crown. Mind you, they know how Galway feel: the two-in-a-row champions were hardened by back-to-back defeats in the previous two seasons.

"Oh Jaysus. I've been on the wrong side of a few results the last couple of years with the camogie team, I think they deserve it," beamed Cork manager Ger Manley.

"Kilkenny caught us [in 2022], Galway caught us with a late goal [in 2021]. We were going down the line there, a couple of points up, but the girls stuck at it."

Manley was coach when Cork overwhelmed Waterford last year, before stepping up as manager when Matthew Twomey departed.

This wonderfully feisty finale to the inter-county year was the polar opposite of a cakewalk, as the 1-16 to 0-16 scoreline underlines.

There was also a distinct whiff of controversy over Katrina Mackey's 36th-minute goal – did she actually get a legitimate strike on the sliotar before it dropped over the goalline?

"They say she threw it in, did she? I don't care how she threw it in!" Manley admitted.

"I didn't see it but from where we were, I'd

say she went to strike it and she was fouled, and when she threw the ball up to hit it, it went in. She was in the process of striking, I thought she was [fouled] ... Amy O'Connor was definitely fouled when she gave the ball across. Jesus, 'twas a goal! It's gone against us a few times.

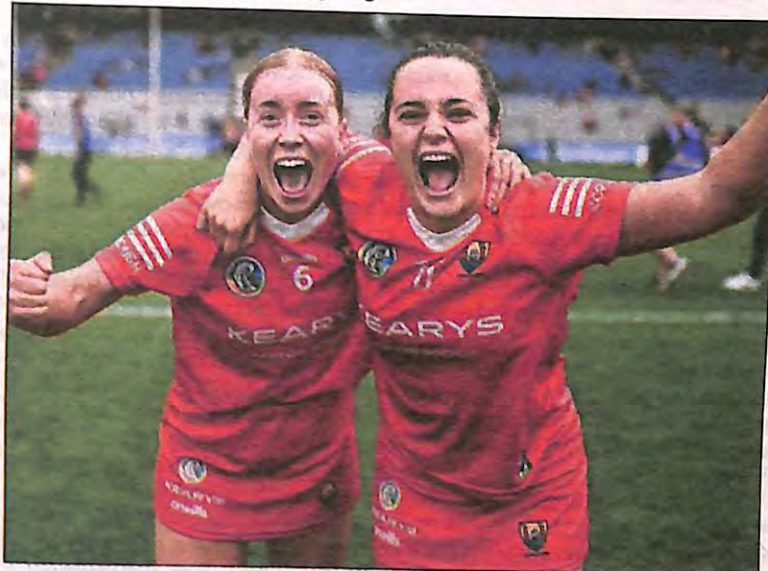
"But you're right, when I saw it, I kind of went, 'Woah'. But they pucked the ball out quick – done and dusted. Look, glad it was us."

Galway manager Cathal Murray hadn't looked at any TV replays but said he was told by "one of the officials" that a penalty was going to be awarded before the goal was allowed to stand.

"I believe it was a throw ball. I questioned it on the line; I was told it was going to be a penalty ... but you still have to score a penalty, so I wouldn't agree with them there at all," he said.

However, the Galway manager wasn't "going to make excuses" and he was "super proud" of his team's performance. Leading by one at half-time, they looked in terminal trouble after leaking the next 1-4. Their response was thrilling – a necklace of six unanswered points to draw level. Ultimately, though, Cork's bench won it, Sorcha McCartan's brace sandwiching a Clodagh Finn point.

"We put ourselves in a great position, just



Laura Treacy, left, and Fiona Keating of Cork celebrate after the All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship final win over Galway at Croke Park



## should be going for five-in-a-row'

probably didn't take our chances down the stretch. That's going to haunt us for a while," Murray admitted.

Cork manager Manley didn't shy away when asked if the back-to-back champions will drive on in search of three-in-a-row – a landmark not achieved by the Leesiders since the county claimed a famous four-timer between 1970 and '73.

Moreover, alluding to narrow final defeats in 2021 and '22, he suggested: "We should be going for five-in-a-row, we should be like Limerick. We should have won the last four if you go through it."

Manley was coach last year before stepping into the hotseat when Matthew Twomey departed. "They've raised the bar this year. The gym work, everything," he declared.

"We did one night a week during the league, one night in the gym. It is the work they do on their own is key.

"We gave them a break after the league for 10 days, the girls had a holiday. We trained hard when they came back and then we took a break again for a week after the All-Ireland series. I think that is the key, that you are not killing the players. I see it there with men's teams. They are killing them."

He added: "Look, we took it handy the last week. We had two hard trainings after the semi-finals. It paid off. You could see it. Killing girls and killing fellas five nights a

week is madness.

"We trained right. We did no running last week, we felt they had enough done. You could see it there today. Laura Treacy is phenomenal, you saw her at the end there. Pamela Mackey, Méabh (Murphy). It really is that defensive core that you need to win these big games.

"We need the scores up front, no doubt, but it is the workrate behind, and the work the girls put in since I've been here – I am in here three years now."

Manley paid tribute to vice-captain Méabh Cahalane who returned from a hamstring injury to feature for the last 15 minutes (injury-time included) ... and then raised the O'Duffy Cup along with Molly Lynch.

"You saw Méabh came on there, she had an injury and if it was on a men's team, he'd be out for three months. She got back in six weeks with the injury she had, and that's the spirit that we've shown all year," the manager beamed.

"They just worked so hard, we put so much into this. We started the year very late to purposely plan for this. This was our aim, to get back – and we got back."

Another member of the famous Cahalane dynasty – Gráinne – missed out on the final after rupturing her Achilles at training.

"I said this early in the year, if you had 15 Cahalanes you'd be delighted," Manley

remarked.

"Méabh's attitude is spot-on, she's been a brilliant leader for us all year. She was just unfortunate at the end that it came at a bad time, it was a simple thing in training. She came on today and she was so good. That's the way we've been all year, everybody's came on and did their best.

Meanwhile, Méabh Cahalane, the Cork vice-captain who returned from injury as a 51st-minute sub, went up the steps and lifted the O'Duffy Cup with skipper (and sub goalkeeper) Molly Lynch.

Afterwards, Cahalane reflected: "I felt I had a role to play and possibly coming on in the semi-final or final like I did today, and I just feel like that's the mentality of the whole group. Whatever I can bring to the table, whether it's starting, coming on, everybody plays a different role. There is a bit of a freshness about the squad again this year.

"Going into the final, I was thinking about the hunger and I don't think that went away from last year. We were so hungry for success this year, so hungry going out in every single training session trying to get something out of it, and I think that's the standard that Liam Cronin sets as hurling coach.

"I felt the mentality the girls showed to ride that wave, when Galway were coming at us, was something else and they could be so proud of themselves."

## CORK RATINGS

**Amy Lee 8**  
Played with such composure. Her distribution was spot-on. Her shot passes began many attacks.

**Méabh Murphy 8**  
Diligent defender. An excellent marker. Made a vital hook on Orlaith McGrath late on.

**Izzy O'Regan 8**  
Brings such versatility. Kept it simple. Has slotted in comfortably to the big shoes of the injured Libby Coppinger.

**Pamela Mackey 8**  
Kept a close eye on Niamh Mallon. Displayed all her experience and guile. No loose change on offer.

**Hannah Looney 8**  
A Rolls Royce engine. The pace and agility of an Olympic athlete. Broke forward at every opportunity.

**Laura Treacy 9**  
Read the game brilliantly. Superb positional sense. Imposing presence at the gateway to Cork's rearguard.

**Laura Hayes 9**  
Was always looking to add to the attacking threat. Moving forward right from the off while also curbing Niamh Mallon.

**Ashling Thompson 9**  
The spiritual leader of the team. Her first touch was exquisite. Played with quiet authority.

**Aoife Healy 8**  
Played on the front foot. Put in an honest shift. Never far from the breaking ball.

**Saoirse McCarthy 9**  
Battery in the boots. Blistering pace down the left wing. Took some elegant scores.

**Fiona Keating 8**  
A performance that was coated in wisdom. Her awareness opened doors for her team-mates. Nice point to level it at 0-8 each.

**Cliona Healy 8**  
Her strong-running game created space. Scored one of the points of the match.

**Amy O'Connor 8**  
So nimble and sharp. Can turn on a euro. Fantastic awareness to create the goal for Katrina Mackey.

**Katrina Mackey 8**  
Her day ended early with injury, but she had done her job. A superb job. Scoring the golden goal. And proving the ideal target-woman.

**Orlaith Cahalane 9**  
Won her own ball. Posed problems for the Galway defence. Always a danger.

**BENCH 9**  
A telling factor. Especially the introduction of Sorcha McCartan, who played such a crucial role in the victory.

**MANAGER 9**  
Ger Manley – Calm, wise presence. Used the bench to perfection. Has stepped seamlessly into Matthew Twomey's boots.

## GALWAY RATINGS

**Sarah Healy 8**  
Saved a point. Impressive puck-outs. Long and short.

**Rachael Hanniffy 8**  
Diligent, focused defender. Had a big job in containing Amy O'Connor.

**Róisín Black 8**  
Captain in more ways than one. Stuck close to Katrina Mackey.

**Dervla Higgins 9**  
Excellent offering. Had to curb Orlaith Cahalane. Not many better markers in the country.

**Anmarie Starr 8**  
In the thick of the action right till the last bell. An inspirational leader.

**Aine Keane 8**  
Delivered a pin-point free to Carrie Dolan for a point. Played with adventure.

**Ciara Hickey 9**  
Made a splendid block just before half-time. Struck a gem of a point. Enjoyed a fine game.

**Niamh Hanniffy 8**  
Showed her aerial ability. Made a valuable contribution in the engine room.

**Niamh Kilkenny 8**  
A class act. Her control was top-class. Hit some precise passes.

**Aoife Donohue 9**  
One of Galway's best players. Never far from the action. Produced a tidy collection of points, including one of the best of the hour.

**Niamh McPeake 8**  
High energy. Did so much work. Ran hard at the opposition.

**Olwen Rabbitte 8**  
The essential team-player. Had hands full marking Saoirse McCarthy. Daughter of Joe Rabbitte.

**Carrie Dolan 9**  
Such a pure striker of the sliotar. Impressed from the placed ball. And out the field.

**Niamh Mallon 9**  
Always showed for the ball. And so good in possession. Highly skilled. Top-quality performance.

**Ailish O'Reilly 9**  
Often came deep to help out the defence. Made and took scores. Her energy never dipped.

**BENCH 7**  
Orlaith McGrath looked dangerous. Niamh Niland and Ally Hesnan didn't come on until after the 60 minutes.

**MANAGER 8**  
Cathal Murray – Couldn't have asked anymore from his players. Game-plan worked a treat.



# HARD DONE BY

Galway's Carrie Dolan comes under pressure from Cork defender Pamela Mackey during Sunday's All-Ireland Senior Camogie Final at Croke Park. PHOTOS: INPHO/JAMES LAWLOR & BRYAN KEANE.



■ Gallant Galway done no favours by referee in a cracking decider

CORK	1-16
GALWAY	0-16

JOHN McINTYRE  
AT CROKE PARK

THEY couldn't have done any more; they left everything on the field, hooked and harried themselves to a standstill, were carried out on their shields, and they did the county proud in camogie's biggest game of the year at Croke Park on Sunday.

And, frustratingly, it still wasn't enough for a defiant Galway to regain the O'Duffy Cup in a thrilling All-Ireland final as the breaks went Cork's way in securing a 30th championship triumph.

More telling, however, was the officiating of Liz Dempsey, who failed to award Galway a couple of blatant frees late on when the match hung in the balance - never mind the Cork goal which shouldn't have stood.

The Kilkenny referee and, more critically, her umpires missed the fact that Katrina Mackey failed to make contact

with her hurley in ushering the ball over the line in the 36th minute after being set up by Amy O'Connor. It had shades of Joe Sheridan's controversial late goal against Louth in the 2010 Leinster Football Final.

Admittedly, in real time, it was difficult for the match officials to see what exactly happened - the rest of us have the benefit of multiple replays - but the goal was illegal, and it being such a high stakes encounter only compounded the post-match aggravation.

Significantly, Galway didn't protest at the time, but it was a different story when AnnMarie Starr, who rolled back the years, was bodychecked after making a great interception or when substitute Ally Hesnan was the victim of a foul pull from behind close to the Cork posts in the dying moments.

Dodgy tackling on the terrific Aoife Donohue and Carrie Dolan in the same incident - Galway could have had a penalty - were also ignored in the second-half, and it took the intervention of a linesmen for the Tribeswomen to even get a free further out the field. There was also the disputable



Galway's Niamh McPeake eyes up her options against Cork's Saoirse McCarthy during the All-Ireland Senior Camogie Final.

free awarded against Niamh Kilkenny for charging.

Putting all those incidents together, Galway were cer-

tainly done no favours by Dempsey, although it must be

acknowledged that Dolan landed all her seven frees, while Cork only had four scoreable frees awarded over the near 70-minutes of high-standard action.

All summer the Rebels had lain waste to any team barring their path - including Galway in a group match - and they were hot favourites to retain their All-Ireland crown in style on Sunday, only for Cathal Murray's team to produce an admirable display of sheer heart, aggression, courage and no little quality.

Galway ran themselves into the ground and worked their socks off in pursuit of victory. They had the champions rattled on several occasions and did magnificently to recover from the concession of 1-4 at the start of the second-half.

Having trailed by 0-10 to 0-9 at the interval after the teams had been level eight times, that scoring blitz suddenly put Cork six points clear and there was brief concern that the floodgates might open.

But what a response from the Tribeswomen. They reeled off six unanswered points, from Dolan (both from play

and frees), Donohue (two) and a brilliant effort from impressive wing back Ciara Hickey, to bring the teams back level again by the 51st minute.

The match was again in the balance, but fatally Galway wouldn't score again, with their hopes being undermined by those questionable refereeing decisions. Ultimately, Cork got more of a bounce from their bench with Sorcha McCarthy (2) and Clodagh Finn landing the final three points of an absorbing encounter.

It was a cruel outcome for the gallant players in maroon jerseys. They had gone toe to toe with Cork from the off in a nip and tuck first-half. The title holders tended to over-elaborate and appeared a little surprised by Galway's positional changes before the off, notably Olwen Rabbitte starting at wing back, Niamh Hanniffy moving to the edge of the square, and Niamh Mallon switching to the wing.

With Donohue, centre back Aine Keane, Niamh Kilkenny, Dervla Higgins and Hickey quickly getting to the pitch of the battle, you could see Galway were up for the challenge. Dolan missed nothing

quently was sensational. Galway lifted themselves to new levels of industry and were rewarded with that string of six points. They were producing their best camogie of the campaign and, having fought back to level terms, they now had Cork on the ropes.

Poor shooting, however, and some harsh officiating down the home stretch conspired against them as Cork's subs helped to bail the title holders out of trouble, with Galway having to be content with a glorious failure.

Donohue, whose extraordinary commitment must have inspired the team, was Galway's top player, but what a mighty display from young defender Hickey, while Aine Keane was imperious in the number six jersey. Niamh Kilkenny's boundless energy around midfield was something special for a player who has given so much to the Galway cause.

AnnMarie Starr was another Galway hero and was also heavily involved in a couple of Galway's first-half points. Dervla Higgins was typically swashbuckling even if troubled at times by a lively Cork attack which didn't do the expected damage.

Though under pressure at times, Rachel Hanniffy and Roisín Black didn't let the team down either in front of excellent 'keeper Sarah Healy, with the superbly accurate Carrie Dolan - apart from one effort from play - and O'Reilly (first-half) also making strong contributions. Mallon was a terrier when fighting for possession but had chances to score more on a day Niamh Hanniffy, Rabbitte and Niamh McPeake also typified Galway's work ethic.

The All-Ireland final may have ended up in a third unwanted 'big-day' defeat in 15 days for Galway, but the fact this team won many new admirers at Croke Park on Sunday is some consolation for a mighty group of warriors who simply refused to give up.

For a Cork team taken to the brink, their top performers were Thompson, Pamela Mackey, Hannah Looney (first-half), Laura Tracey, Laura Hayes, Saoirse McCarthy, Cahalane and substitute McCarran.

**Cork:** A. Lee; M. Murphy, P. Mackey; L. Treacy; H. Looney, I. O'Regan, L. Hayes; A. Thompson (0-1) A. Healy; C. Healy (0-1) F. Keating (0-1), S. McCarthy (0-3, 0-1 free) A. O'Connor (0-3, frees) O. Cahalane (0-2), K. Mackey (1-2). Subs: S. McCartan (0-2) for K. Mackey (inj, 39); C. O'Sullivan for C. Healy (48); M. Cahalane for Looney (51); C. Finn for Keating (53); E. Murphy for O. Cahalane (63).

**Galway:** S. Healy; R. Black, D. Higgins, R. Hanniffy, O. Rabbitte, A. Keane, C. Hickey (0-1); A. Starr, N. Kilkenny; N. Mallon (0-1), N. McPeake, A. Donohue (0-4); C. Dolan (0-8, 0-7 frees), N. Hanniffy, A. O'Reilly (0-2) Subs: O. McGrath for A. O'Reilly (49); N. Niland for N. Hanniffy (62); A. Hesnan for O. Rabbitte (65).

**Referee:** L. Dempsey (Kilkenny)



Galway midfielder Niamh Kilkenny breaking past the challenge of Cork's Meabh Murphy at Croke Park on Sunday.

## MANAGER MURRAY IS 'SUPER PROUD' OF HIS TEAM AS UNDERDOGS GALWAY GIVE CHAMPIONS HUGE FRIGHT

JOHN McINTYRE

GALWAY have arguably been the most consistent camogie team around over the past six years given last Sunday at Croke Park was their fourth All-Ireland Final appearance during that period.

Cathal Murray has presided over the county's most successful era, making their 4/1 pre-match odds against Cork something of an insult to a squad which up to last year's semi-final had established an Indian sign over the Rebels.

Despite being the victims of an illegal goal and some controversial calls by referee Liz Dempsey, Murray was magnanimous in defeat and focussed on the outstanding efforts of his players, who had come so close to turning around their 12-point loss to Cork in the group phase (when both sides were already qualified).

"It's hard to put into words," said Murray. "Obviously, bitterly disappointed. Super proud of the girls. Since the game in Páirc Uí Chaoimh we've been completely written off. There's been a lot of obituaries written about us. For the last six weeks, we've done ourselves really proud.



Galway's Aoife Donohue picking off one of her four points against Cork.

"It's a tough dressing room. But we put ourselves in a great position, just probably didn't take our chances down the stretch. That's going to haunt us for a while.

"But Cork are a super team, we always knew that. We knew we had to give an unbelievable performance - we probably did that for a lot of the game. Just didn't finish it off.

"The best two teams for me get to the final and the best team wins it. And Cork are the best team this year. They deserve it. "Croke Park is for win-

ners. It's a lovely place to be when you win but it's a tough place to be when you lose. I'm super proud of the girls, as I always am. Some unbelievable performance but, unfortunately, we just didn't get over the line."

Murray admitted Katrina Mackey's controversial goal had a huge impact on the outcome. "I didn't see it [at the time] but I'm hearing things."

Cork boss Ger Manley had anticipated a tough battle from Galway and wasn't ruffled by their pre-match positional switches. "I think we were expecting them to do

something. They're such an incredible team and Cathal Murray has so much experience with that crew as well.

"So I wasn't surprised to see Niamh Mallon out on the wing and Carrie Dolan inside, but they worked extremely hard. They turned us over a lot in the middle of the field and they got scores from that, especially in the first half.

"We really had to dig deep, and we had harsh words at half-time. We had to just go out and give it our all and, thankfully, we're out the right side of it," added Manley.

“ POOR SHOOTING AND SOME HARSH OFFICIATING DOWN THE HOME STRETCH CONSPIRED AGAINST THEM

from frees, while Ailish O'Reilly and Donohue landed four rousing points between them. Mallon was also on target, only for her shooting radar to go on the blink in the second-half.

Cork's full-forward line did look threatening, with Mackey (2) and Orraith Cahalane on target, while Cliona Hickey, Saoirse McCarthy (frees), and Fiona Keating also split the posts in a fairly even opening-half in front of a 27,811 crowd.

Galway were doing well from Sarah Healy's accurate puck-outs and you could sense the growing tension in Cork's ranks, especially against a team which repeatedly had their number under Murray stewardship until the 2023 semi-final.

But they flew out of the blocks at the start of the second-half. Mackey's controversial goal being supplemented by points from Healy, Cahalane, influential midfielder Aisling Thompspon and McCarthy. It was starting to look ominous for the Tribeswomen. But what happened subse-

# INSIDE TRACK JOHN MCINTYRE



sports@tribune.

## When it comes to losing All-Ireland finals Galway really take the biscuit

**G**ETTING to All-Ireland finals has never been a big problem for Galway's four senior teams, but winning them is an altogether different proposition as the events at Croke Park over recent weeks have underlined.

In the space of 15 days, Galway have come up short in three senior All-Ireland finals as the county's Gaelic footballers, the ladies' footballers and now the camogie team were defeated in their respective ultimate championship battles.

These losses only compound Galway's wretched record in All-Ireland finals. Of 79 appearances between the four codes, there have been 57 defeats, only 19 championship triumphs and three draws.

Camogie teams have fared worst of all. In 21 final appearances, they have been beaten in 17 finals; while their Galway hurling counterparts haven't fared much better down through the decades - only five victories from 25 attempts.

In Gaelic football finals, Galway haven't done too badly in comparison, bringing home Sam Maguire on nine occasions from 25 appearances, but the county's ladies' footballers have come up trumps just once from the five times they have reached the All-Ireland decider.

These are grim statistics and the events of the last three weeks have only reinforced the view that Galway struggle to cope with the pressures of All-Ireland Final day. Sure, there were many occasions when teams wearing maroon jerseys weren't good enough, but how many times has the self-destruct button being pressed?

Only once before - Cork in 1956 - has a county lost three senior All-Ireland finals in the same year, which puts Galway's misfortunes at Croke Park over three consecutive Sundays into perspective. Granted, the ladies' footballers were well off the pace against Kerry, but it wouldn't have taken much for the camogie team or Padraic Joyce's footballers to have got over the line.

The unfortunate thing is that Galway teams have long since developed a reputation for falling at the final hurdle, and to think some supporters glory in the continued hardship experienced by Mayo footballers. Is it a big-day psychological weakness, as we can't keep writing off some of these failures as just down to bad luck?

Given this continued run of poor results, it leads to a cloud hanging over various Galway senior teams heading into All-Ireland Finals. Will 2025 be any different? Will even any one of the hurlers, the Gaelic footballers, the camogie team or the ladies' footballers make it to the decider next year?

Looking at the evidence of the past three weeks, Cathal Murray's camogie team looks best equipped to have another sustained championship run in 2025. They were in hard luck last Sunday and came desperately close to toppling a Cork outfit which many observers thought was unbeatable.

Some late wides, questionable officiating, and a Cork 'goal' which should have been disallowed did for Galway in the end, but their sheer commitment won many new admirers. Niamh Kilkenny, Aoife Donohoe - a player who uses the hurley with some abandon when tackling - Ailish O'Reilly and Ann-Marie Starr have given the county sterling service



Galway's Ciara Hickey is challenged by Aoife Healy of Cork during Sunday's All-Ireland Senior Camogie Final at Croke Park.

PHOTO: INPHO/TOM MAHER.

over the years and all four were in the vanguard on Sunday.

Murray had done a great job with Galway since taking over in 2018. He is unlikely to walk away from a group of players who, in his own words, did the maroon jersey "proud" on Sunday. The Sarsfields clubman has already two All-Irelands and three league titles in the bag, making him one of the county's most successful team managers ever across a wide spectrum of sports.



**SOME OF THE SCORELINES CONFIRMED THE MISERY OF WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A DEFENDER THESE DAYS**



Cork's Katrina Mackey scores a goal against Galway at Croke Park.

Picture: INPHO/Bryar

## Premier Intermediate Final

# Nelligan points the way past Kilkenny

Substitute's late score completes Cork's comeback to claim their fifth title

**Cork** 1-11  
**Kilkenny** 1-10

Fiona Nelligan lived out the spirit of "don't count your minutes, make your minutes count" for Cork's intermediate camogs yesterday afternoon in Croke Park, as the Charleville player popped up with the decisive score to give the Rebels the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland intermediate title for the fifth time in their history and first since 2018.

With just under 10 minutes remaining, Claire Doheny pounced on a breaking ball, capitalising on tigerish work from full forward Caroline Kennedy and fired over what looked like a crucial point to nudge Kilkenny 1-10 to 1-8 in front.

However, the closing stages of the contest were dominated by Donie Daly's Cork side, at both ends of the field.

Lauren Homan, top scorer in the championship as a whole, had played well but had not dominated the game as much as some of her other contests this year.

That did not affect her composure as she stood over a free on the 20m line, right out on the Hogan stand sideline, and split the uprights to start their rally.

Three Cork defenders converging to block down Niamh Crowley and then Tara McCarthy hooking Doheny to prevent a score from the subsequent break summed up Cork's ravenous desire to force the issue their way, and that effort was rewarded when Cliona O'Callaghan strode through to fire over the equaliser.

With the wind at their backs and four minutes of stoppage



time to play, by now it was Kilkenny who would have gladly listened to Brian Kearney's final whistle and reset themselves for a replay next weekend in Thurles.

### Second chance

A high pressure catch from Cliona Murphy on a hanging shot from O'Callaghan, as well as a brave block from Mairéad Kennedy, seemed like the plays that would secure that second chance, but instead a poorly-placed clearance saw the sliotar drop into Nelligan's hand, and in her tenth minute on the field, she duly split the posts for the biggest score of the game.

The drama of the closing stages was matched in the opening quarter, with Cork edging the first 17 minutes of play by 0-5 to 0-4.

Kilkenny had the larger share of possession in the early minutes but took on some low percentage shots, missing the target three times before Doheny pointed to cancel out Cliona Dooley's opener.

Rachel Dowling and Doheny added the next two as Kilkenny

continued to control both puck-out battles, but once the chances started to slow at the other end, Homan settled into her work, and a brace of sharp scores from Niamh O'Regan were enough to give Cork the narrowest of half-time leads, 0-7 to 0-6.

The story of the third quarter was one of two preventable goals, one from O'Callaghan that was well-placed into the right hand corner at the Davin End, but lacking the power that should have been needed to evade Cliona Murphy.

Ciara Hurley will have been every bit as disappointed with her failure to deal with Danielle Morrissey's high shot that dipped on to her hurley just under the crossbar, but skidded up and into the roof of the net, allowing Kilkenny to move 1-9 to 1-7 ahead, having already responded to O'Callaghan's goal

■ Kilkenny's Rachel Whalen in action during yesterday's All-Ireland Intermediate camogie championship final against Cork.

PHOTOGRAPH: BEN BRADY/INPHO

with two frees from Morrissey.

By now, both sides were operating with an extra player in the full-back line, as the tension of the occasion took over and scoring chances dried up.

Between wides, scores, saves and shots dropped short, there were just 19 shots on goal in total in the second half, and that should have suited Kilkenny just fine.

Instead, an ice-cool freetaker, a frenzied defensive unit and a game-changing sub were about to write a different conclusion to the story of a drama-filled final.

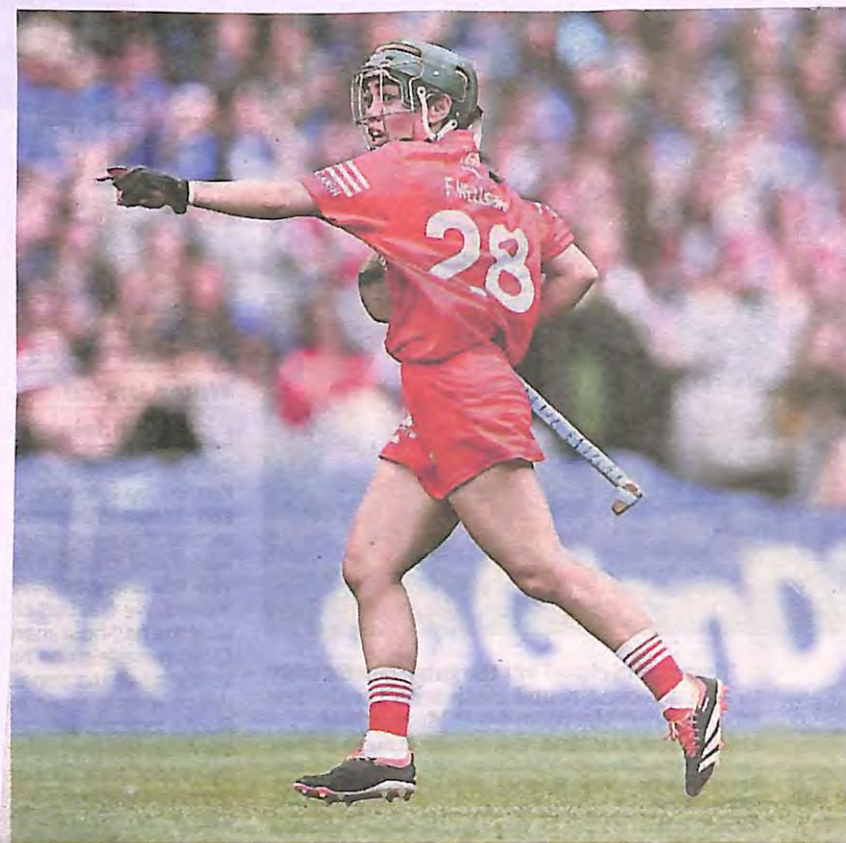
**CORK:** C Hurley, A Barrett, N O'Leary, E Flanagan, L Doyle, O McAllen, M Ring, L Buttimer, A Cashman, E Sheehan, L Homan (0-6, five frees), T McCarthy, C O'Callaghan (1-1), C Dooley (0-1), N O'Regan (0-2). **Subs:** L Allen for Buttimer (39), E Duignan for Sheehan (45), F Nelligan (0-1) for O'Regan (52), E Curtin for Dooley (56), K Walsh for Cashman (60).

**KILKENNY:** C Murphy, N Leahy, R Whelan, J Cass, M Kennedy, S Treacy, H Scott (0-1), D Morrissey (1-4, three frees), L Ronan, C Comerford (0-1), R Dowling (0-1), A Cantwell, R Kelly, C Kennedy, C Doheny (0-3). **Subs:** K McCluskey for Cantwell (43), N Crowley for Kelly (50), C Langton for Dowling (55).

**Referee:** Brian Kearney (Kildare).



Cork's Laura Hayes clears from Galway's Niamh Hanniffy during the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior camogie final at Croke Park. Picture: Eddie O'Hare



Cork's Fiona Nelligan celebrates the winning point during the All-Ireland Intermediate Camogie Championship final at Croke Park. Picture: Piaras Ó Midheach/Sportsfile

# O'Sullivan backs Cork camogie to dominate

Newcestown star is confident Rebels can add to back-to-back All-Ireland camogie triumphs

BY SEÁN HOLLAND

WITH the O'Duffy Cup staying in Cork, is this the start of a period of dominance for the Rebels? Newcestown's Ciara O'Sullivan hopes so.

O'Sullivan, who returned to the senior squad this year after missing the 2023 season due to a serious knee injury, came off the bench in the All-Ireland final win (1-16 to 0-16) against Galway last weekend.

This latest triumph secured back-to-back titles for the Rebels and the feeling amongst those in camogie circles is that this team is only getting started. Add in the Cork intermediate's All-Ireland win, and it highlights the depth of talent in the county. Little wonder the talk of three-in-a-row has already started.

'Our squad has definitely been building for two or



three years, and there are new players in and out each year,' O'Sullivan explained.

'The players that are coming through are brilliant. The likes of Aoife Healy and Maeve Murphy, they've just slotted in and they've taken over. It's insane. I think there's definitely a high chance that we'll go on and win more in the future, but it won't come without a battle anyway.'

'The weekend was ferocious and we wouldn't be expecting anything less from any of the teams again next year to try and get over the line.'

On a personal level, O'Sullivan is focused on reclaiming a

starting spot next season.

'Yeah, I think that's the goal everyone has to have. You need to have ambition to get on that starting 15. After coming back from my injury, I think I would be happy to be pushing for a starting position next year. But every year is different and you never know how it's going to go, so we just have to wait and see,' the Newcestown star added.

With O'Duffy Cup successes in 2023 and '24, it has set the stage for what could be a golden era in camogie on Leaside. With the

blend of youth and experience, and the determination to remain at the pinnacle, Cork's future in camogie seems as bright as ever.

LEFT: Ciara O'Sullivan with the O'Duffy Cup in 2023.

# Grateful Thompson reflects on fulfilling, emotional journey

**Paul Keane**



**A** SCENE from the frantic closing moments of the 2022 All-Ireland camogie final involving Cork and victors Kilkenny.

Trailing by a point and desperate for an equaliser, Cork get the ball to Ashling Thompson but the Milford colossus strikes agonisingly wide of the posts at the Davin End.

Moments later, the full-time whistle blows and the 32-year-old starts walking towards the tunnel and doesn't stop. She eventually returns to the pitch to watch Kilkenny lift the cup and the desolation is compounded weeks later by ACL damage in a game for divisional side Avondhu.

Fast forward to last Sunday, two years on, and Thompson is Player of the Match in Cork's final win over Galway, helping to secure back-to-back titles. This time at the final whistle she explodes in emotion, firing her helmet away and crumpling to the turf in sheer joy and relief.

"Look, those moments happen," said Thompson when reminded about the difference between Sunday and two years ago. "I always remember Amy O'Connor saying in an interview after the 2022 final that she still wouldn't have wanted anyone else on the ball with that shot at the end, and that's the attitude that we have, it goes through the team. That's the sort of respect that we have for each other."

"And do you know what, it actually completely rolled off me (the miss). Things like

that, you have to take it on the chin and move on. There's no point dwelling on it. Sport is cruel but at the end of the day, I have six All-Irelands in the bag now, so moments like that are worth it."

In a funny way, Thompson is even grateful for the ACL setback. It limited her to an impact sub role in the closing games of last year's All-Ireland win but the work she put in during that extended period on the sidelines has stood to her.

"There's never a moment in your career where you can take nine months out to focus fully on yourself," she said. "You're in the gym five and six days a week. You would never get that opportunity in your career unless you have a massive setback like I had. That's why I look at it in such a positive way, and not a

negative, because I don't think I'd be in this position physically only for the ACL injury so I'm very grateful for it."

Just consider her 2024 stats after regaining full fitness. Between the National League and Championship, Thompson started 13 of Cork's 14 games this season — she came on against Clare in Round 4 of the league — and lined out in all nine of their Munster and All-Ireland games.

On Sunday, aside from scoring a point at a vital stage in the third quarter at Croke Park, she also struck the pass down the left wing for Amy O'Connor in the build-up to the match-winning goal.

Not bad for a 34-year-old who has just overcome an ACL layoff.

"This year, it's just a whole new accomplishment," said the 2015 All-Ireland winning

captain. "I've never felt so accomplished in my career than I have this year."

"I've never appreciated it as much as I have this year. It's just been a very emotional journey. Look, it's definitely the sweetest. I've worked my ass off to get to where I am right now. I feel that even at 34 years of age, I'm probably the fittest, mentally and physically, that I've been. So I can't be anything but grateful."

To think that some wondered if she'd be back after the knee setback and general disappointment of 2022.

"It was my first major injury," said Thompson.

"Everyone asked me: 'How do you keep going?' But it's setbacks like that that actually give you a whole new drive. It gives you a new hunger. I think this year again, thanks to the physios, the strength and conditioning coaches, the management, my team-mates, they all just helped to put me in a position physically where I'm probably at my best at the moment. And then to go out and do it on the day in Croke Park, it's everything you dream of."

Sunday's three-point final win, yielding a 30th All-Ireland for Cork, was their narrowest winning margin throughout the provincial or All-Ireland series. Some said they weren't truly tested until Sunday but Thompson doesn't fully agree.

"I wouldn't say we had it easy in the Championship, I think we set a massive tempo for any opposition that we came across. People probably said that we hadn't been tested but I think we just brought our game to another level. In fairness to Galway, they matched it. They threw the kitchen sink at us and to get over the line the way we did, I'd rather win an All-Ireland like that any day than win it by 15 points."



Children and their parents at the homecoming event for the Cork Senior and Intermediate All-Ireland Camogie champions.



REBEL YELL: All-Ireland Cork Camogie senior captain Molly Lynch and intermedia

## Molloy: We are camogie

**John Fogarty**

Camogie Association chairman Brian Molloy has insisted the sport will retain its sovereignty after integration with the GAA and Ladies Gaelic Football Association.

At the launch earlier this year for the integration pathway towards a 2027 date, it was explained that the GAA will become the overarching body with one president and one director general for the three codes.

It is envisaged there will be one rulebook, while county boards will be combined to represent the triumvirate.

However, in an emboldened

speech before handing over the O'Duffy Cup to Cork after their All-Ireland senior final victory on Sunday, Molloy spoke of how camogie was not considered in the establishment of the GAA in 1884 and it will continue to have its own identity.

"One hundred and 20 years ago, before the foundation of the State, our association was founded by a group of strong-willed, independent women," said Molloy.

"Our first uachtarán, Máire Ní Chinnéide, and her peers loved our game, they loved our culture, and they saw the need to protect the integrity of camogie by setting rules



Cork's Ashling Thompson is tackled by Galway's Aoife Donoghue.

Picture: Eddie O'Hara



ite captain Lauren Homan on stage with their squads at Church Road, Cork for their homecoming last night.

Pictures: Dan Linehan

# Treacy: A dose of harsh honesty brought sweetest sixth title

Daragh Ó Conchúir

Laura Treacy thought last year's victory was the sweetest but now the Killeagh stalwart reckons medal number six might just be the most valuable of them all.

That's taking into account how Sunday's Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior camogie final against Galway unfolded and how, for a while, there was a worry she would not be involved at all.

There would have been few arguments about Ashling Thompson's selection as official Player of the Match but Treacy was monumental and was surely in the reckoning. It's what we have come to expect from a player that has just concluded her 13th season.

She began life at this level as a teenage corner-back following her introduction by Paudie Murray in 2012 and progressed to full-back after Anna Geary's retirement.

Stepping into the shoes of Gemma O'Connor, she has really blossomed in recent years as a ball-playing, creative centre-back with the game knowledge to cut off potential danger with sublime positioning and movement, but also the necessary ruggedness to force turnovers in the collision zone.

The 29-year-old has been there and seen it all but it doesn't get better than this.

"I said in an interview with RTE last year after winning the All-Ireland that I thought that was going to be the sweetest All-Ireland ever but I think they get sweeter as they go on," says a smiling Treacy.

"I guess you put so much work into one specific thing. Our lives are camogie from when we go back early January until now. Sleep, food, work revolves around it. Family. Friends. So to get a reward at the end of the day, it makes it all so special."

It has not been a straightforward year for her, even if Cork were moving serenely through the Championship before Galway provided them with the stiffest of examinations at HQ.

"I can look back and say it's all worth it now but obviously



Laura Treacy: Bounced back from injury to excel in the final.

you can come off on the opposite side of things as easy and Galway put up a huge performance against us and we really struggled for parts of that game I think.

"But we dug deep there at the end. We kept tipping away, we didn't panic and we're so grateful to come out the right side."

Treacy's desire to be on the pitch transformed a hamstring strain into a 10cm tear that was dangerously close to a tendon issue.

Crucially, she explains, the tear went upwards towards her glutes rather than downwards in the direction of her knee.

"It was a really tough time, I'm not going to lie. I've never had a long-term injury and it really opened my eyes to the girls who have been through that, like Ashling Thompson, Ciara Sull (O'Sullivan) coming on — really proud of her."

"Gráinne Cahalane got a bad injury just a few weeks ago and Libby Coppinger has been out all year. I was lucky."

"I did a 2B, 2C almost tear in my hamstring. It wasn't as bad to begin with and I went back running and it went again. I wasn't maybe as patient as I probably should have been. I was doing what I was told but putting the physio under pressure to get me back. That's my own fault and I've learned a lot from those times."

"There was always an aim to be back. When I was going to be back I don't know."

"It's very difficult when you're not seeing fast improvements — I wouldn't say

I'm the most patient person. "When you come around and get to perform in Croke Park again, it makes it all worth it. But when you're stuck in the thick of (rehab), God you have some isolating, low days. You really have to pull yourself out of that and keep going."

While not necessarily knowing what was to come — Galway started with Niamh Mallon on the wing in direct opposition to one of the summer's most dominant figures, Laura Hayes, and sited Niamh Hanniffy and Carrie Dolan — Cork knew enough about the manager of the Tribeswomen that they expected a different picture to be presented than what they had seen to date.

In the end, it came down to honesty — in words first and then in effort on the pitch.

"I think we were expecting them to do something. They're such an incredible team and Cathal Murray has so much experience with that crew as well. So I wasn't surprised to see Niamh Mallon out on the wing and Carrie Dolan inside but they worked extremely hard. They turned us over a lot in the middle of the field and they got scores from that and got success from that, especially in the first half."

"We really had to dig deep and we had harsh words at half-time and we had to just go out and give it our all and thankfully we're out the right side of it."

"We're a very honest group with each other. When our backs are against the wall, nobody takes things personally but there is always going to be harsh words when things aren't going right or people maybe aren't performing to their best. We knew we had more in us at half-time and we came out and performed well for about 10 minutes and we got a lot of return from that hard work."

"But then Galway, as Galway do, they always come back into the game. Carrie Dolan with super frees. We were never going to get that far ahead of them to be comfortable but thankfully we're here with the O'Duffy Cup again."

## and we will remain camogie

and structures for our game. "Twenty years earlier, the GAA hadn't provided for camogie, so in 1904 camogie provided for camogie. Since then, our game has developed. Our players are top-level athletes who will never get boxed in."

"We have more members, more clubs, and more games than ever. We have a positive relationship with the GAA and are on the path to integration with them. We will integrate our organisation, we will integrate our operations, but we will retain our game, we will retain our ethos. We are camogie and we will remain camogie."

Integration was discussed at the GAA's management committee meeting in Croke Park last Friday week where the Camogie Association was represented by director general Sinead McNulty, and at a crucial period in the process Molloy's remarks about the GAA have raised eyebrows.

There remain serious misgivings about the costs attached to developing new playing pitches and facilities to ensure that the female sports have parity of esteem with their male counterparts.

As the *Irish Examiner* reported in April, leading GAA figures estimate a com-

prehensive integration of the three Gaelic sports organisations could cost as much as €1bn.

In an interview with this newspaper on Saturday, former Wexford star Ursula Jacob supported the idea of hurling becoming the name for the women's version of the small ball sport.

"When I was playing, I was hurling! And I considered myself a hurler and wanted to be considered a hurler."

"So I think there's a strong case now for it just being 'hurling' across the board. Especially with the playing rules becoming more and more alike."

## Charleville woman helps Cork





Cork's Sorcha McCartan on the break against Galway at Croke Park. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

## Cronin played a key role in Rebels win says former boss Twomey

CAMOGIE

■ Ger McCarthy

An unforgettable day at Croke Park ended with Cork winning the All-Ireland camogie senior final for the 30th time.

It was a weekend when Sophie Becker, Rhasidat Adeleke, Sharlene Mawdsley, and West Cork's Phil Healy wrote their names into the country's Olympic history books.

No medals but plenty of plaudits and a nation falling in love with athletics all over again thanks, in part, to Team Ireland's 4x4 women's relay on-track efforts and off-track interviews.

It is a harsh reality, but Cork's senior and intermediate camogie panel will not garner the volume of headlines they should because of Becker, Adeleke, Mawdsley, Healy, and Ireland's other Olympic competitors exploits in Paris.

That should in no way diminish the Rebels' latest achievements.

Ger Manley's entire backroom team rarely get the credit they deserve. Of that group, coach Liam Cronin's influence was repeatedly mentioned during All-Ireland weekends.

Last year's All-Ireland winning Cork manager Matthew Twomey knows all about Cronin's pedigree as does Manley.

"As a coach, Liam Cronin is the best I've worked with. No doubt about it," Twomey said.

"I was fairly down after losing the 2022 All-Ireland final when I met Liam and as soon as I did, my confidence was immediately restored. We were clones of one another. Liam's analysis of the game and his attention to detail is second to none. Unbelievable.

"In training matches, Liam has simplified things for the players. That's a very rare trait.

"You can see it again with the players this year under Ger Manley. They are playing with total confidence thanks to Ger and Liam's influences. There is an ease about them because they know what to do. That's because they have done it over and over again on the training pitch."

Cork's most positive traits were on display in Croke Park last Sunday.

A swarming, incessant de-

fence. A tireless middle-third anchored by Player of the Match Ashling Thompson and Aoife Healy. A razor-sharp forward line led by the irresistible Katrina Mackey (whose goal proved critical) and complemented by Amy O'Connor and newcomer Orlaith Cahalane's shooting.

The fact that Cork reached an All-Ireland final without the services of injured duo Coppinger and Méabh Cahalane, just back from injury and on the bench, speaks volumes of how well Manley's defence has managed in that collective trio's absence.

Contesting a fourth consecutive All-Ireland senior final and winning back-to-back O'Duffy Cups means Cork are now the top senior camogie team in the country.

Manley deserves every plaudit coming his way. It is one thing to take over an inter-county set-up. Quite another to accept those responsibilities when your players have just won the All-Ireland title.

Creditably, Manley wisely delegated responsibilities to an experienced backroom team and, crucially, increased the quality and depth of his panel.

The Rebels bench was the strongest in the senior grade this year. So much so, that the late scoring surges from the introduction of Cork's game changers delivered 1-4 in the semi-final win over Dublin.

Even more impressively, Sorcha McCartan and Clodagh Finn combined for the three points that proved decisive in seeing off Galway at Croke Park last Sunday.

When you consider the quality of players that didn't come on including the likes of Millie Condon, Orlaith Mullins, Hayley Ryan plus injured duo Gráinne Cahalane and Libby Coppinger, Cork's senior panel is the strongest it has ever been.

Bottom line, Cork were already All-Ireland champions when Manley took over. Now, Cork are double-champions and will start 2025 as favourites for the O'Duffy Cup again.



Cork players Amy O'Connor and Ashling Thompson celebrate after defeating Galway at Croke Park. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

# Cork's strength off the bench proves crucial in final win

CAMOGIE

Derek Daly

**A crucial scoring burst after half-time and a couple of excellent late scores from subs Sorcha McCartan and Clodagh Finn ensured that Cork just about got over the line against a Galway to retain the O'Duffy Cup in a rip-roaring final at Croke Park on Sunday.**

Cork were going for the first back-to-back since they defeated Kilkenny in 2018 and were made to earn it.

Galway had the Indian sign over Cork for years, enjoying eight successive victories over the Rebels, until the semi-final last year, which Cork won by 0-15 to 2-6.

Cork comfortably saw off Galway in the group stages of the championship with a 2-16 to 1-7 victory at SuperValu Páirc Uí Chaoimh in June, with goals from Amy O'Connor and Katrina Mackey proving crucial.

The form guide had pointed to a comfortable Cork win, but sport rarely follows a tidy script.

Cork had averaged 3-18 in every game this year, winning their games by a huge 19-point average.

Galway, on the other hand, had been stuttering along, getting on the right side in a lot of close contests. Beating Dublin and Waterford by three, drawing with Wexford, and scraping past Tipperary by the minimum in the semi-final.

These games had built real resilience in this Galway side, and they gleefully dragged the reigning champions into the uncomfortable territory of a dogfight.

Amy O'Connor scored a brilliant 3-7 in



Cork's Cliona Healy in action against Galway. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

last year's final, and to have any hope Galway were somehow going to have to put the shackles on her. They did this to great effect, with them limiting the St. Vincent's sharpshooter to just two pointed frees in the opening half.

Katrina Mackey opened the scoring after just 22 seconds with a slick point, but there was to be no blistering Cork start, as it took another 12 minutes for Cork to get their next point from play, with Mackey again being the one to split the posts, from an extremely tight angle.

At times Cork were flinging the ball brilliantly around the middle third, but they struggled to open up the teak tough Galway defence, and they struggled to get their dangerous full forward line of Amy O'Connor, Katrina Mackey, and Orlaith Cahalane on the ball.

Galway would have been delighted to be leading at the 20-minute mark, and it took two fabulous individual points from Cliona Healy and Saoirse McCarthy to keep Cork in touch.

The Cork discipline left something to be

desired in the opening half, as they conceded five points to frees from the unerring Carrie Dolan. Down the other end Cork only profited from three placed balls.

Cork weren't exactly in a hole at half-time, as they trailed by one at the break, but an urgent start to the second half was certainly needed, and they got it with two quick points from play from Cahalane and Ashling Thompson.

Galway had not registered a single wide in the first half, but crucially their first three pointed efforts in the second half were all waved wide.

Cork punished this wayward shooting by striking the game's only goal from Mackey, in the 35th minute, after O'Connor for once had escaped the shackles of her marker to set her up.

In their third-quarter push Cork scored 1-4 without reply to take control of the tie, with Galway taking 11 minutes to trouble the scoreboard operator in the second half.

To their credit, they did clip over the next four, with three of those coming from the stick of Dolan, to get them back within range, as Cork stopped feeding their full forward line.

The loss of Mackey to injury was certainly starting to be felt.

When the excellent Aoife Donoghue flung over a fantastic solo score for the Connacht side in the 49th minute they were back to one and a minute later she got her fourth to level proceedings.

Cork had completely folded as an attacking entity, and it took an outrageous point from St Finbarr's Sorcha McCartan to end Cork's 13 minute run without a score, and seconds later Clodagh Finn got in on the fun to give Cork a priceless two point lead as time started to run out.

Cork centre-back Laura Treacy was a colossus in the last few minutes as she repelled multiple Galway attacks, with one of her interceptions leading to another fabulous McCartan score, which proved to be an insurance score, as Galway could find no way back.

# Grace delivers for Tipperary late on as they peg back Laois

Tipperary 0-12  
Laois 1-8

A pointed free in the fifth minute of injury time by Jenny Grace secured the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland premier junior camogie title for Tipperary, completing a comeback as the Premier awoke from the dead to lay the ghost of last year's final defeat.

It was very tough on Laois, who did not fall behind until the 52nd minute and recovered to lead again thanks to a sensational point by Susie Delaney with the hour just about to elapse.

They will know, however, that they should have made more hay from their dominance of the opening 25 minutes, when it was almost one-way traffic, a dominance that was not reflected by a seven-point advantage and certainly not by the four that separated the sides at half-time.

Tipp finished the first half well and were a different side after the restart, obdurate, physical and battling in the war zone of the middle third that they had been blown out of in that initial period.

They got a big return from their bench, Eva O'Dwyer hitting two points and offering a presence up top. Meanwhile, Lily Fahie, who only came on in the 58th minute, set up her sister and fellow sub Anna, with a very cool stick-pass for a 62nd minute equaliser before being fouled for the winner.

## Calm conversion

That winner was a ninth point for Grace, who served a lengthy stint with the seniors and had Bill Mullaney as boss at that grade before this season's reunion. Her experience told with the calm conversion not just of that score, but the important ones that dragged her side back

into the game.

Laois flew out of the traps wand were the more threatening team by some distance for most of that first half. They attempted to pull the Tipperary defence to the flanks and use their speed in the resultant spaces, judiciously placing diagonals in front of the runners, who offered themselves in ones and twos.

They had two points inside five minutes from Gráinne Delaney and Eimear Hassett, before Tipp got off the mark from a seventh minute free by Grace. It was 22 minutes before Tipp scored again and yet somehow, they only trailed by four at the interval, 1-5 to 0-4.



■ Laois' Susie Delaney and Sophie Pembroke of Tipperary in action yesterday

While the victors' strong finish helped, Laois shot some bad wides and threatened to score more than the one goal they did manage in the tenth minute, with a thunderous drive to the roof of the net by Susie Delaney.

It was the Portlaoise player that had been fouled for a penalty as the O'Moore's carved the Tipp defence open again. Collier's poor effort was easily saved by Laura Leenane, who blocked the follow-up bravely. The sliotar broke eventually to Susie Delaney however, who nearly blew the net off the rigging.

Further points from Collier (two) and Aisling O'Dea increased the margin to seven but with Sinéad Meagher beginning to make her physical presence felt around the middle and O'Dwyer doing likewise inside, Tipp managed to win three frees, all of which were converted to put a different slant on proceedings at the change of ends.

The second half was keenly contested but the Laois defence continued to concede frees under pressure and with Sarah Pembroke making up for the penalty concession with a thunderous display at centre back, Tipp were motoring.

They were within one point by the 42nd minute and though Collier pointed a free to put the team managed by her father Pat and Robert Jones two clear, three in a row by Grace – the third from a 60m free – gave Tipp the lead for the first time.

Back came Laois with an equaliser from Collier and then Susie Delaney dispossessed Gráinne Fox before landing a spectacular point from tight to the Cusack Stand touchline and just inside the 45m line to put Laois in front with the four minutes of allotted injury time approaching.

It was fine margins at this juncture and after the Fahie siblings combined for the Tipp leveller, Lily Fahie went tumbling right under the nose of excellent referee Karol Collins as the clock ticked into the 65th minute, leaving Grace to do the needful.

**TIPPERARY:** L. Leenane, L. Ryan, C. Ryan, M. Connolly, O. O'Brien, S. Pembroke, G. Fox, A. Quintisk, C. Brennan, J. A. Quirke, S. Meagher, G. Moloney, E. Flanagan, L. Shinniers, J. Grace (0-9, eight frees), Subs: E. O'Dwyer (0-2) for Quirke (26); A. Fahie for Moloney (52), L. Fahie (0-1) for Flanagan (58).  
**LAOIS:** A. Lowry, L. Finlay, L. Daly, F. Scully, A. Finlay, C. Tynan, S. Creagh, L. C. Fennell, J. Bergin, A. O'Dea (0-1), G. Delaney (0-1), A. Walsh, E. Hassett (0-1), A. Collier (0-4, one free), S. Delaney (1-1), Subs: L. M. Maher for O'Dea (ht); R. Deegan for Fennell (44); A. Hyland for Daly (49); A. Coss for Walsh (80+3).  
Referee: Karol Collins (Galway).

# Relations cool between GAA and Camogie Association after Molloy speech

John Fogarty

Relations between the GAA and the Camogie Association (CA) have cooled significantly following CA president Brian Molloy's All-Ireland senior final speech in Croke Park on Sunday.

Speaking to the *Irish Examiner*, a high-ranking GAA official criticised Molloy's remarks as "provocative" coming as they did from the Hogan Stand rostrum in the GAA's headquarters and "inappropriate" as the CA celebrated its 120-year anniversary.

Before handing over the O'Duffy Cup to Cork co-captains Méabh Cahalane and Molly Lynch, Molloy spoke of the organisation's inception. "Twenty years earlier, the GAA hadn't provided for camogie, so in 1904 camogie provided for camogie. Since then, our game has developed. Our players are top-level athletes who will never get boxed in."

"We have more members, more clubs, and more games than ever. We have a positive relationship with the GAA, and are on the path to integration with them. We will integrate our organisation, we will integrate our operations, but we will retain our game, we will retain our ethos. We are camogie and we will remain camogie."

At what is a crucial period in the integration process, Molloy's remarks were also described by the GAA figure as "unhelpful", especially as the GAA have given considerable financial support and expertise to the CA in recent years.

It is understood Central Council provided an €800,000 subvention to the CA to assist in getting their players' charter up and running. Without it, the agreement with the Gaelic Players Association (GPA) would not have been possible.

Last year, female inter-county camogie players and footballers played under protest at the lack of a players' charter being implemented in either code.

Players had taken to sitting down before games, not participating in media events organised by the CA or Ladies Gaelic Football Association (LGFA), and there had been the threat of further action.

Their efforts were endorsed by the Derry and Kerry men's senior footballers who held a "Unity For Equality" sign in their squad photographs prior to their All-Ireland semi-final 13 months ago.

The GAA later condemned the GPA for bringing the protest to the men's game and allowing the player welfare for female players "to be conflated with the responsibilities

of the GAA". However, the GAA this year made a commitment of €1m to be divided between the CA and LGFA to assist in covering player expenses and entitlements.

A note in the GAA's financial accounts earlier this year read: "CLG (Cumann Lúthchleas Gael) have committed a significant level of financial support in 2024 to both our sister associations in the delivery of their new player charters."

"Significant Government support will be required to deliver full integration to the ambitious and high standards we pride ourselves on."

The GAA's commercial department are also in the third and final year of overseeing the sale of the CA's broadcasting rights as well as their sponsorship.

Camogie sources have acknowledged the GAA's involvement has helped the association realise its marketing potential.

However, the current issue between the hierarchy of the GAA and Camogie Association is not an isolated matter. In May, the CA and LGFA's names were absent from a joint GAA-GPA statement in May calling for "an immediate and sustained ceasefire" in Gaza. It was also announced that the GAA and the official inter-county players' body would make a donation to the Irish Red Cross's relief work in Gaza.

Following lobbying by the GPA and a meeting between members of the "Gael Against Genocide" and Croke Park, a proposal to release a statement was put before Central Council, where it was supported.

It is believed the two female organisations had been involved in the initial stages of wording the statement and were supportive of its sentiment, but a consensus could not be reached on the final draft.



Camogie Association president Brian Molloy gave speech.



Pictured at the homecoming for the Kilkenny intermediate camogie team, which was held at the Ormonde Hotel, were players Jane Cass, Ciara Dunne, Angela Carroll and Julie Lennon





Cork players celebrate beating Kilkenny in the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland intermediate camogie final at Croke Park. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

## Venues a major pain as camogie championship action gets underway

With the excitement that came with the All-Ireland camogie double being achieved, it's back to business with a bang this weekend as the first of a busy schedule of championship games gets underway and it is the divisional game that gets the S E Systems Senior championship ball rolling as Imokilly and Carbery meet in Castle Rd, tomorrow at 6pm.

With a huge volume of games from Senior down to the Junior Lillie Grant cup competitions to be played, the county board are faced with a huge headache of securing venues for games and they are still actively looking for venues for important championship fixtures.

The call is going out to any GAA club who may be in a position to help the board out with a venue to make contact as soon as possible to ensure games are played and the various championships are kept moving along.

Imokilly will be boosted by the return to their ranks of Fr O'Neill's players who have this year made the step down to premier intermediate and Imokilly with players of the calibre of Cork seniors Clodagh Finn and Aoife Healy, who played such huge role in the O' Duffy Cup returning to Cork, Cork intermediate players Maedhbh De Burca, Avril Cashman and Ciara Morrison in their lineup, they will pose a big threat to Carbery, who will look to Cork senior players Ciara O'Sullivan and Millie Condon to lead the way.

Clubs will take to the pitches starting on Thursday, August 22, with five games in the S E Systems Senior championship.

County champions Sarsfields will get the defence of their title underway when they meet Newcastle, Courcey Rovers will take on Killeagh, in an all mid Cork clash.

Cloughduv meet divisional neighbours Aghabullogue, Inniscarra meet Blackrock, who are promoted this season following their intermediate championship success last season, and Eire Og will meet Glen Rovers, at time of going to print no venues were secured for these games.

In the S E Systems Premier Intermediate Championship on Wednesday, August 21, Ballinhassig and Enniskeane meet in Cloughduv and Fr O'Neill's take on Na Piarasigh in Whites Cross. Both games throw in at 7.15pm.

On Friday, August 23, Ballincollig meet near neighbours Ballinora, Brian Dillon's are in action

### CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

against Clonakilty, with venues to be announced for both of these games.

Also on Friday, August 23, Ballygarvan meet Watergrasshill in Na Piarasigh at 7.15pm.

Douglas take on Ballyhea in Castle Road at 7pm.

In the S E Systems Intermediate Championship games get underway on Wednesday, August 21, when Carrigaline playing Charleville, Kilbrittain-Timoleague taking on Sliabh Rua and Valley Rovers meet Newtownshandrum.

Like other matches, venues are yet to be announced for these games.

The S E Systems Premier Junior championship throws in on Monday, August 26, where Aghada open their campaign against Mallow, Ballinascorthy will meet Milford, Castlelyons take on Middleton and Tracton meet Cobh.

In Junior A, on Wednesday, August 21, Bride Rovers meet Bishopstow, Blarney take on Banteer.

Buttevant open their campaign against Rockban, Youghal play Erins Own and Barryroe meet St Vincent's.

In the S E Systems Junior B championship, on Wednesday, August 21, Millstreet play St Fanaan's and on Thursday, August 22, Kinsale meet Grenagh and Castlemartyr play Killworth.

The Junior C S E Systems Championship begins on Wednesday, August 21, when Laochra Og meet Fermoy and Carrightwohill take on Nemo Rangers and on Friday, August 23, St Colm's play Dungourney.

On Tuesday, August 27, the Lillie O'Sullivan championship gets underway.

Ballinora will meet Sarsfields, Newcastle play Aghabullogue, Ballincollig meet Killeagh, St. Catherine's will play Kilbrittain/Timoleague, Douglas play Glen Rovers and Clonakilty meet Enniskeane.

In the Barry O'Sullivan memorial championship games get underway on Monday, August 26, Blackrock play Aghabullogue, Sarsfields play Cloughduv and Inniscarra meet St Finbarr's.

In the Lillie Grant Cup on Sunday, August 25, Ballygarvan play St Finbarr's and Courcey Rovers meet Watergrasshill.

## Former captain Foley on growing camogie more

### CAMOGIE

■ Éamonn Murphy

There's a very strong connection between UCC and Cork camogie.

When Cork landed a double at Croke Park last Sunday, 15 of the senior panel are current or past UCC students, along with 12 of the intermediate squad.

Dr Cathriona Foley, a lecturer in the Department of Surgery, was a four-time All-Ireland winner for the Rebels, captaining the side in 2008, as well as collecting three ladies football All-Irelands and three camogie All-Stars. The Rockban club woman said the link between the college and Cork camogie can be traced through the history of the sport.

"Tadhg Ó Donnchadha (Tórna), a Professor of Irish and Dean of the Faculty of Celtic Studies in UCC and his sister Cáit Ní Dhonnchadha, from Carraig na bhFear, along with Máire Ní Chinnéide from Dublin are credited with creating the sport of camogie in 1903. Tadhg Ó Donnchadha was involved in drawing up the first set of rules for camogie and he is credited with inventing the name of the sport, which came from the shorter stick that women played with a camóg and resulted in the name camógaíocht."

When the camogie association was established in 1904 it was decided to anglicise the Irish name camógaíocht to camogie. Camogie was introduced to UCC in 1913 by Margaret McKenna and Hannah O'Donovan and, along with UCD, was one of only two intervarsity camogie teams in Ireland at the time.

"Cáit Ní Dhonnchadha, sister of Tadhg, sought the assistance of Agnes O'Farrelly, a Professor of Irish in UCD, to establish an intervarsity competition in 1914. The competition was named the Ashbourne Cup after Lord Ashbourne who donated the cup to the competition at the request of Agnes O'Farrelly."

Having shone for the Rebels in the noughties, Foley is delighted to see the profile of camogie and ladies football rise in recent years, though accepts they are still playing catch-up to hurling and football in terms of coverage. Cork have lifted Liam McCarthy twice and Sam Maguire once since 2002 but the women's teams have managed a staggered 11 All-Ireland victories in each code in that period.

"It's an incredible achievement and should be given



Dr Cathriona Foley, Caoimhe Buckley (Inniscarra), and Aisling Egan (St Finbarr's) at the Mardyke in UCC.

Picture: UCCTV/Ruben Tapia

more recognition. In those 22 years, there have been improvements in terms of access to watching live games online or on mainstream TV but there is always room for improvement and increasing this capacity. There are more male GAA games on live TV and there needs to be more equity here. Young females need and benefit just as much from seeing what represents them on TV, in the media, in their community 'If you can see it, you can be it'.

"In UCC the demand from female students to play last year surpassed what the university could facilitate. At a local level, camogie and ladies football needs to be supported by the provision of more teams, to do this they need additional funding, access to more facilities and more volunteers to get involved with more teams." Crowds have grown, 27,811 on Jones Road last weekend, after 30,340 attended the ladies football.

"The first All-Ireland I attended was in 1998 when Irene O'Keeffe scored two cracking goals in the first half for Cork which sealed the deal for the Rebels. There were about 10,400 or so in attendance, by the time I had the chance to play in Croke Park in 2003 there were around 16,000 in attendance.

"What does seem to make a big difference to attendances at inter-county camogie and ladies football games are the bus-loads of underage teams that make the trip. This is only made possible by all the wonderful volunteers in those counties, clubs and schools. 'Wouldn't it be fantastic if more GAA clubs started bringing bus-loads of underage male teams to support the camogie and ladies Football inter-county teams?'"



Dr O'Brien has played a key role in Ger Manley's Cork back-room team. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

## O'Brien: 'They are no longer a player, I treat them as an athlete'

Carrigaline's Dr Wesley O'Brien had a key role in Cork's camogie success this summer as the strength and conditioning coach.

Dr O'Brien, who heads up University College Cork's (UCC) Physical Education, Sports Studies and Arts degree, is keen to bring those skills from the classroom to the playing field.

"They are no longer a player, the first thing I treat them as an athlete," Dr O'Brien said. "You are trying to raise standards in terms of their physical preparation, in terms of elements of their physiological preparations, but I very much live and breathe physical readiness and physical development."

"I am not just a person who puts people into a gym, or does running tests or field tests with them. I always relate it to the game of hurling or camogie and there is no point separating your strength and development from the camogie, you have to integrate that piece."

That ethos has been integral to the Rebels' back-to-back O'Duffy Cup wins, while O'Brien was involved with the All-Ireland winning Cork minor hurlers in 2021 and UCC in the Fitzgibbon Cup in 2015 and 2019.

"A fit player doesn't make an exceptional athlete, so what you are doing in the gym has to transfer to what you're doing on the pitch," he said. "We have access to the players only for an hour and a half and there are 24 hours in a day and that's where the athlete's mindset comes in."

"We understand the game is not a professional sport. I

### GAA

■ JJ Hurley

understand that, but players are striding to become the best they can and want that professional standard. That's where, as coaches, we need to be one in what is happening on and off the field."

Of course, he acknowledges the outstanding crop of current camogie players: "I was blown away in 2023 in how humble everyone in the squad was and that has continued this year, but they have this internal spirit that drove me to be a better coach."

"And when Galway, who by the way are a very fine team, put it up to the girls in the All-Ireland, that fighting spirit was incredible and it was a super finish by Cork."

He said that variety and fun ensured the players were hungry at training: "We know from modern science that players strive off fun, they strive off energy, they strive off variation, whenever a player comes to the gym, track or field, I always have something different."

The back-room team, overseen this year by Ger Manley and previously by Mathew Twomey, are all singing off the same hymn sheet.

Nowhere for O'Brien has the respect for the game's professionalism become more clearly demonstrated as when Cork GAA chairman Pat Horgan said at the banquet following the All-Ireland victory, that Cork Camogie are always welcome at SuperValu Páirc Uí Chaoimh and that the ladies are part of Cork GAA.



Wesley O'Brien on the line for University College Cork in the Ashbourne Cup. Picture: Tommy Grealy/Inpho