

Lessons learned for Twomey as Cork edge closer to decider

Camogie

Daragh Ó Conchúir

Matthew Twomey wasn't over the moon with Cork's overall performance as they ground out a two-point victory over Tipperary in the top-of-the-table Very Camogie League Division 1A tie at The Ragg on Saturday, but the triumph moves his side closer to a place in the final with a 100% record with two rounds remaining.

Last year's runners-up were on the back foot early on as the hosts flew out of the traps and established an early two-point lead thanks to three points from play from the outstanding Grace O'Brien.

A brilliant goal from last year's minor star Orlaith Cahalane, the latest of her siblings to don a red jersey at senior level, heralded a key period of dominance that sent them in at half-time leading by 1-8 to 0-7.

O'Brien provided the finish to the Cork net after a fantastic move to bring Tipp level but Cork just finished the stronger, points from Emma Murphy and Fiona Keating securing the 1-14 to 1-12 verdict.

"If we were told this morning that we'd be coming out with two points we'd have taken it," said Twomey.

"When you come up here you're gonna get tested and when you get tested you see a few cracks and we saw a few cracks now that we're gonna have to go away and work on Tuesday night. We're happy enough to get the win but there's a 'but' there.

"Tipperary are a very good side. You can see they're going to be a threat to everybody as the year goes on but our main play is speed and we were just hitting the ball from distance and made Clodagh Quirke look like an All-Star. She was standing on her own and we



COLLISION COURSE: Tipperary's Róisín Howard comes up against Fiona Keating of Cork during a tense moment in the Division 1A match at The Ragg. Cork won again to keep up their 100% record. Picture: Ben Brady/Inphc

were hitting it to her and that was very disappointing.

"We wanted to speed up everything. That's the way we should be playing but we just didn't bring it today. It's puzzling why. But we don't expect everything to be perfect at this time of year. We have to realise it's only the start of March but a few things disappointing in it."

Tipp boss Denis Kelly wasn't disconsolate at the final whistle, even though his team had suffered their first reverse under his stewardship. "A humdinger, 'twas brilliant, that's the games you

want," said Kelly. "We knew we'd be tested and Cork are flying. We gave it everything we had, we were out on our feet there at the finish but we're learning lots there. It was just a puck of the ball either way. Maybe a couple of decisions didn't go our way today, they might the next day but that's the way camogie goes.

"You can do all the training you like but that's close to championship (intensity) and you're still only in early March so we're happy with that. We need more points on the board if we're gonna get to

a league final. We've a bit of a break now so we'll go back, regroup and get ready for Clare the following weekend."

Next up for Cork is a trip to UPMC Nowlan Park to take on Kilkenny, who chiselled out a 0-17 to 0-11 victory over Dublin at Parnell Park on Saturday.

That was a first success of this campaign for Brian Dowling's crew, who had struggled to get away from the Dubs due in no small part to Aisling Maher's tremendous shooting.

Gerry McQuaid's charges are still without a point but have improved with every out-

ing. Late points from Asha McHardy and Denise Gaule eased the visitors clear.

The Cork-Kilkenny encounter will have an 11.30am throw-in as it is part of a double-header with a hurling league tie.

"Brian Dowling is after offering us to come in for breakfast at his house in the morning of the game," joked Twomey. "He's a good guy.

"It's exactly what you want now. We're going up to Nowlan Park, they'll have a crowd for their hurling match afterwards. They're going to give it to us. They might be wounded

CAMOGIE

Very Camogie League Division 1A: Galway 1-14 Clare 0-13, Dublin 0-11 Kilkenny 0-17, Tipperary 1-12 Cork 1-14; Div 1B: Waterford 3-24 Limerick 2-6, Wexford 2-17 Down 0-9, Offaly 2-8 Antrim 2-8; Div 2A: Meath 2-13 Westmeath 1-6, Kerry 1-11 Cavan 1-2; Div 2B: Galway 1-9 Wexford 1-13, Tipperary 1-8 Kilkenny 3-10; Div 3A: Tyrone 1-9 Kildare 7-11, Armagh 5-12 Mayo 2-5, Wicklow 0-4 Roscommon 5-16, Louth 0-4 Carlow 2-17; Div 3B: Offaly 0-3 Antrim 4-15, Clare 0-17 Limerick 1-3.

(after losing a few games) but we're a small bit wounded after last year as well!

Carrie Dolan followed up her ten-point tour de force last weekend with seven points as champions Galway beat neighbours Clare by 1-14 to 0-13 at Kilbeacanty. Shannon Corcoran's goal was significant too as Cathal Murray's crew led by 1-9 to 0-4 at half-time.

Lorna McNamara's accuracy from frees reduced the deficit as Clare produced a strong second-half showing but they had left themselves too much to do.

MEET THE STARS

TWENTY-FOUR West Cork Sports Stars of the Year have been crowned since 1998, and here is a walk down memory lane.

- 1998 – Gretta Cormican (Road Bowling)
- 1999 – Philip Clifford (Gaelic Football)
- 2000 – Patricia Donegan (Equestrian)
- 2001 – Michael Collins (GAA Referee)
- 2002 – Jennifer O'Leary (Camogie)
- 2003 – Eugene Coakley and Timmy Harnedy (Rowing)
- 2004 – Johnny McCarthy (Paralympian)
- 2005 – Eugene Coakley and Timmy Harnedy (Rowing)
- 2006 – Nollaig Cleary (Ladies' Football)
- 2007 – Alan O'Shea (Athletics)
- 2008 – David Murphy (Road Bowling)
- 2009 – Keith Cronin (Motorsport)
- 2010 – Graham Carty (Gaelic Football)
- 2011 – Stephen Redmond (Distance Swimming)
- 2012 – Ruthann Sheahan (Ultra Marathon)
- 2013 – Laura Guest (Rugby)
- 2014 – Jennifer O'Leary (Camogie)
- 2015 – Lily de la Cour (Kickboxing)
- 2016 – Gary and Paul O'Donovan (Rowing)
- 2017 – Mark O'Donovan and Shane O'Driscoll (Rowing)
- 2018 – Phil Healy (Athletics)
- 2019 – Connr Hourihane (Soccer)
- 2020 – Phil Healy (Athletics)
- 2021 – Paul O'Donovan and Fintan McCarthy (Rowing)



Camogie great Jennifer O'Leary is a two-time winner of the award (2002 and 2014).

O'Connor: 'Massive disconnect' between chiefs and players

Paul Keane

Camogie great Gemma O'Connor says a 'massive disconnect' still exists between the game's administrators and the actual players, pointing to the current All-Stars debacle as a prime example.

Nine-time All-Ireland winner O'Connor said she is at a loss to explain how authorities thought it was a good idea to pencil in an All-Stars tour for this May, just days out from the start of the Championship.

Cork's Ashling Thompson has stated that 'there is absolutely no way' the county's delegation of All-Stars will be going on the trip "while all of our teammates are breaking their backs in training".

Thompson's former Cork team-mate O'Connor described it as a "bad call from the Camogie Association's point of view" and said she isn't sure "what they are going to do to rectify it".

Speaking at the launch of the Electric Ireland All-Ireland minor camogie championships, O'Connor said the broader issue is that the Camogie Association is out of sync with its players.

"We met with the Camogie Association about four years ago," said O'Connor, who called time on a glittering Cork career in 2021. "That was one of the main points that we brought up, that there is a massive disconnect between the people in the Camogie Association at the top level and actual boots on the ground, the people that play it, the people at grassroots level, the people that are actually involved."

"There's way too much of a disconnect. They're sitting



Cork Camogie legend and 10-time All-Star, Gemma O'Connor, at the launch of this year's Electric Ireland Camogie All-Ireland Minor Championships. This year, for the first time, Electric Ireland will be extending their #ThisIsMajor campaign to the Electric Ireland Camogie All-Ireland Minor Championships. Follow @electricireland on social for updates throughout the Championships. Picture: Ryan Byrne

there making decisions based on how it looks good on paper, but not actually how it works physically on the ground. There has to be more taken into consideration with regards to players, and that's the bottom line."

On the All-Stars saga, O'Connor agreed that it amounted to the Camogie Association shooting itself in the foot. "You would not see a senior hurler or a senior foot-

baller being put into this position with their respective counties," continued the 11-time All-Star. "I don't know how they have managed to come up with this idea and think it is good."

"It is really bad for the game, it is really bad from the management point of view, in terms of how the Camogie Association is organising the whole Camogie championship. It looks really poor, to be

honest, and I know Cork have made a decision to say that they are going to step away from it in protest. You could not expect any group of players to go away for a week and not be with their teams so close to the Championship."

Former President of Ireland Mary McAleese is currently heading up a steering group on the planned integration of the GAA, LGFA, and Camogie Association. Outlining her vi-

'I'm all about inclusivity, but how will it be implemented?'

Paul Keane

Gemma O'Connor says she's all about 'inclusivity' in the Camogie Association but is unsure how the issue of transgender athletes wishing to play the game should be legislated for.

The LGFA has confirmed a new policy allowing for transgender women and girls to play ladies football, subject to various criteria being fulfilled.

O'Connor says that she is "definitely in favour of inclusivity" for the transgender community but isn't fully sure how the Camogie Association should go about catering for this cohort of players.

"I maybe don't know enough about it," conceded O'Connor. "I'm all for equality and all for making people feel inclusive but I suppose you have to realise too the implications of it, in terms of physiologically and stuff like that," said 11-time Ca-

mogie All-Star O'Connor.

"Is it safe for people? Yes and no. Maybe a process needs to be in place of who exactly is going to be playing this. Again, I don't think it's as black and white as what people make it out to be."

"I'm definitely in favour of inclusivity in the transgender community but how that is going to be implemented, I don't know. As I said, I wouldn't have enough (information) on it. But I'm definitely forward thinking in that regard, yeah."

Under the LGFA's new policy, players under 16 will be required to provide confirmation from a GP that 'the applicant has transitioned/is transitioning from male to female and intends to live their life as a female'.

Over 16s will require the same medical confirmation or a Gender Recognition Certificate, along with records of their testosterone levels.

sion last month, McAleese said that the committee is "up and running" and that they have already "started a comprehensive and thorough listening process".

Full integration won't guarantee that issues like the All-Stars headache wouldn't occur again but it should reduce the likelihood of such embarrassing episodes happening. "I think there seems to be a bit of lip service paid towards it," said O'Connor of integration. "It's been said and

it's been mentioned but there seems to be no real action or progression on it. Camogie badly needs it, the players badly need it and it's something that I'm in favour of."

"I think the Camogie Association itself can't survive by itself and I think players feel the effects of that. You need the biggest, strongest governing body behind it and that's the GAA, that's a fact."

"Women in sport need an extra bit of help, that's just a fact of life so why not take it?"



Cork manager Matthew Twomey after the game with Amy O'Connor and Orlaith Cahalane. Picture: INPHO/Ben Brady

Cork building nicely but still plenty of work to do

IT'S so far so good for the Cork senior camogie team as they made it three wins out of the three in the Very League last weekend.

Having had good wins over Dublin and Clare they headed to the Ragg in Tipperary knowing this was going to be a tough challenge and the toughest of the three games so far.

That it turned out to be with little or nothing between the sides all through.

But a goal from the impressive Orlaith Cahalane put Cork in a good position as they led by 1-8 to 0-7 at half time.

But back came Tipp as expected and a Grace O'Brien green flag helped to bring the home side back on level terms.

CAMOGIE

■ Rory Noonan

the most positive part was that we came out with the win and that's the most important thing really.

"Like all sides, we are building towards the championship and we were trying out a few things today, like the other games."

"We are fine-tuning parts of our play, some didn't come off today and that helps us to identify areas we need to look at and work on ahead of our final league games and then the championship."

But late points for the Rebels saw them over the line to win by 1-14 to 1-12 and continue their winning run.

Whilst they are not guaranteed a spot in the league final they can afford to lose one of their remaining two games against Kilkenny and Galway and would still reach it.

Whilst the win was the most important thing, it was obvious from the players' reaction afterward they were far from happy with some aspects of their play and captain Amy O'Connor was no exception.

It's early in the season but these players have set high standards for themselves and would know that at times they didn't reach them against Tipperary.

Afterward, Amy eluded to that and said that they would look back at the game and had a lot to learn from it.

"It was never going to be easy coming up here and we knew that and I suppose we identified areas of our game that we can improve on."

"It was a real test for us and

"We have been building nicely in the league though, we started off with Dublin and then Clare and now Tipp and then have two more tough ties against Galway and Kilkenny in the coming weeks."

"We will have to wait and see if what we have done so far will get up to the league final but we won't be thinking about that. We need to be looking at the two remaining games and ensure we improve our play and put in good performances in both of them."

"As I said today was a real test for us and we are finishing with probably the two best teams in the country over the last few years and they will be two more massive challenges."

"I thought defensively we played well today and it was probably a day for defences with it being a tight pitch and Laura (Tracey) led the line and it was brilliant that she got the Player of the Game."

So with two games to go Cork are building nicely but they would be the first to say there is still plenty of work to do ahead of the championship.



Cork's Laura Tracey is presented with her Very Player-of-the-Match award. Picture: INPHO/Ben Brady



Cork's Libby Coppinger celebrates the league win with Laura Treacy. (Photos: Ben Brady/INPHO)

TWOMEY: JOB DONE, BUT WORK TO DO

Treacy revels in free role

THE influence of Cork centre-back Laura Treacy was one of the main reasons the Rebels maintained their perfect league record with a two-point win against Tipp. The Killeagh star was relieved to come out on top of a titanic tussle. 'I've never come down to The Ragg and had an easy game,' declared player-of-the-match Treacy. 'They gave absolutely everything out there and likewise with our girls, and it ended up being an absolute battle so we're thrilled to come out with the win. 'They dropped a player back which allowed me to go free and everybody else then around me marking. I enjoy that role. You can really play off the cuff a little bit and take a few chances in that role as well. I found myself in good positions and on a lot of ball I guess, and just did my best to transition the ball as well as I could to get up to the other side of the field.'

TIPPERARY 1-12
CORK 1-14

BY DARAGH Ó CONCHUÍR

TABLE-TOPPERS Cork continue to lead the way at the summit of Very Camogie League Division 1A, but Rebels boss Matthew Twomey wasn't over the moon with their overall performance.

Cork ground out a two-point victory over Tipperary in the top-of-the-table tie at The Ragg on Saturday, and the triumph moves Twomey's side closer to a place in the final with a 100 percent record with two rounds remaining.

Last year's runners-up were on the back foot early on as the hosts flew out of the traps and established an early two-point lead thanks to three points from play by the outstanding Grace O'Brien. Tipp led 0-4 to 0-2, with Eimear McGrath adding another. Amy O'Connor and Chloe Sigerson (free) hit back for the Rebels.

The contest shifted in the Rebels' favour when Orlaith Cahalane produced a mesmerising solo run to get beyond the Tipp defence before rifling low into the bottom left corner of the net. Cork pushed on from there, with O'Connor and Fiona Keating both working the scoreboard as Cork moved 1-8 to 0-7 ahead at the break.

O'Brien continued to lead the line brilliantly up front for Tipperary and

she fired in a quickfire 1-1 at the beginning of the final period to leave the sides deadlocked, Róisín Howard finding a deft pass to pick out O'Brien.

These two sides, both unbeaten before today, were level at 1-8, 1-9 and 1-10 apiece before Cork struck two in a row with Emma Murphy grabbing the pick of the pair. Despite their best efforts, Tipp were unable to regain parity with Keating grabbing the final score of the game in the 67th minute to seal a crucial 1-14 to 1-12 win for Cork.

'If we were told this morning that we'd be coming out with two points we'd have taken it,' Twomey said.

'When you come up here you're going to get tested and when you get tested you see a few cracks and we saw a few cracks, now that

we're going to have to go away and work on. We're happy enough to get the win but there's a 'but' there.'

Twomey added: 'We wanted to speed up everything. That's the way we should be playing but we just didn't bring it today. It's puzzling why. But we don't expect everything to be perfect at this time of year. We have to realise it's only the start of March but a few things are disappointing in it.'

The Cork boss was delighted by the contribution off his bench and feels that there is strong competition for starting berths.

'Emma Murphy came on and got a great point and Aoife Healy is after a very strong campaign with UCC in Ashbourne. She's unlucky, she's tied up (as a dual player) and she had a football match with UCC as well during the week and we didn't want to start her but when she came, she did make the defence more solid again,' he explained.

'We've the two Mackeys (Katrina and Pamela), Orla Cronin, if Ashling Thompson comes back (from her cruciate ligament injury), we'll see. There's going to be competitiveness there for places and that's what you need.

'Orlaith Cahalane was one of our best players today, I'd say 1-4 came through her and she's just out of minor. This is what we're looking for.'

Scorers

Tipperary: G O'Brien 1-3; E McGrath 0-5 (4f); R Howard, C Maher, C Devane, G Moloney 0-1
Cork: A O'Connor 0-5 (2f, 145);



'We're happy enough to get the win but there's a 'but' there' – Matthew Twomey, Cork manager

Cork's Sorcha McCartan competes for possession with Clardha Maher of Tipperary.

O Cahalane 1-0; S McCartan 0-2 (1f); F Keating, C Healy 0-2 each; C Sigerson (f), S McCarthy, E Murphy 0-1 each.
Tipperary: C Bourke; J Bourke, C Quirke, E Loughman; K Blair, K Kennedy, C Maher; T Ryan, C Hennessy; R Howard, M Eviston, C Maher; G O'Brien, E McGrath, C Ryan. **Subs:** C Devane for C Ryan (1st), E Heffernan for C Hennessy (1st), M Bourke for C Maher (57, inj), A Fahie for E McGrath (61), G Moloney for G O'Brien (64).
Cork: A Lee; M Murphy, L Coppinger, M Cahalane; I O'Regan, L Treacy, L Hayes; H Looney, S McCartan; C Sigerson, F Keating, C Healy; A O'Connor, O Cahalane, S McCartan.
Subs: A Healy for H Looney (40), E Murphy for C Sigerson (48).
Referee: J Dermody (Westmeath).

★ THE HIGHLIGHTS

OUR STAR: Cork centre-back **Laura Treacy** excelled in a free role, and she had a huge impact, handling a lot of ball and helping to progress it up the pitch.
STAR MOMENT: Has to be Orlaith Cahalane's solo goal in the 11th minute as she produced the finish to match, rifling low into the bottom left corner of the net.
TALKING POINT: This was just the tough test Cork needed after big wins against Dublin and Clare.
WHAT'S NEXT? Table-toppers Cork take on Kilkenny away on March 19th in Nowlan Park, another tough test.

DIVISION 1A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	SD	Pts
Cork	3	3	0	0	68	33	+35	9
Tipperary	3	2	0	1	55	38	+17	6
Galway	3	2	0	1	52	50	+2	6
Kilkenny	3	1	0	2	44	44	0	3
Clare	3	1	0	2	39	53	-14	3
Dublin	3	0	0	3	25	62	-37	0



Cork's Laura Treacy is presented with her Very Player of the Match award.

Rebel minors kick off title defence with big test in Dublin

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

SUNDAY: Electric Ireland All-Ireland Minor A Championship: Cork v Dublin, TUD, Grangegorman, 2pm
THE opening round of the Minor All-Ireland Camogie Championship has Cork on the road to Dublin for a meeting with the home side as they begin the quest to retain their title.

In what is a changed format again this year six counties Cork, Kilkenny, Galway, Dublin, Waterford and Tipperary will play each other in one group with the top four teams advance to the semi-finals.

Cork have been to the forefront in recent years at Minor level, they took the title for the first time in 2018 and made it back to back titles in 2019. There was no championship in 2020 due to Covid and as results Cork were denied a shot at making it three in a row, losing the final to Kilkenny in 2021 they bounced back last year to regain the crown superb fashion defeating Galway. It's all to play for now again, Jerry Wallace remains at the helm and he is joined by Mike Boland, Cristóir Casey, Mossie O'Sullivan,



Cork players celebrate after their Tesco All-Ireland Camogie Minor A Championship Final win in Thurles last March. Picture: INPHO/Tommy Grealy

Orla Hallihan, Ryanna Power, Lucy Wallace, Paul Griffin and John Daly and they have been busy in recent weeks preparing their charges.

Ten of last year's winning panel are still available amongst them Jill Connaughton, Maedhbh de

Burca, Eimear Duignan, Millie Condon, and Ciara Morrison and they will call on the experience gained last season as Cork bid to retain the title.

Cork overcame Dublin in round two of last season's campaign and it a new Dublin squad with

just two players from last year remaining, Zara Thorne and Emily Fogarty the sole survivors.

There is a new manager at the helm with Ashling Kennedy taking over the role from the John O'Connell who brought Dublin to within a point of Cork in the 2021

semi-final.

Aisling is hugely experienced and has played for Dublin at underage, minor and senior level and she and her management team have put in huge effort with the side as was seen in their Leinster championship campaign.

There are representatives from fifteen different clubs in the panel which is a testament to the extensive trial process undertaken to unearth the best talent at minor level in the county.

Dublin recently contested the Leinster final against Kilkenny where they lost out but only after a fierce battle that went down to the wire with Kilkenny only closing it out in the final ten minutes. Cork can expect a tough test from a focused Dublin side but Jerry Wallace will no doubt have his charges ready for the fight ahead.

CORK MINOR PANEL: Jill Connaughton (Midleton), Maedhbh de Burca (Carrigrohilly), Caoimhe O'Donoghue (Bishopstown), Rachel Roche (Sarsfields), Sinead Hurley (Sarsfields, Captain), Ava Fitzgerald (Sarsfields), Eimear Duignan (Mallow), Amy McCarthy (Clonakilty), Millie Condon (Ballinascorney), Niamh MacNabola (Cloughduv), Bronagh O'Shaughnessy (Blackrock), Kate Fennessy (Sarsfields), Eileen Crowley (Iniscarra), Ciara Morrison (Castletyons), Amy Sheppard (Cloughduv), Holly Healy (Eire Oge), Edel Sheehan (Eire Oge), Grainne Finn (Fr O'Neill's), Lucy O'Connell (Blarney), Emily O'Donoghue (Bishopstown), Sarah Murphy (Glen Rovers), Chloe Lane (Castlemartyr), Ciara Rice (Sarsfields), Amy O'Sullivan (Amy Ni Shuilleabhain Mallow), Laura Durlea (Sarsfields), Amy O'Riordan (Ballinora), Fiona Twohig (Valley Rovers), Erin Curtin (Blackrock), Aoibhe Daly (Youghal), Orlaith Cremin (Eire Oge).



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

CORK sit on top of Division 1A of the Very Camogie League after their third-round victory over Tipperary last Saturday.

A tough, physical encounter was just what the doctor ordered. The tight pitch in The Ragg suits Tipp. Their work rate and strength which was impressive is easier to enforce in such surroundings.

I wonder would the game have had a similar outcome of 1-14 to 1-12 if the game had been in Semple Stadium. Maybe Cork's speed would have been better utilised and maybe Tipp would have been better able to express themselves too. Who knows.

This sweeper system that every team operates when up against Cork's experienced defence always baffles me. There wasn't a puff of wind in The Ragg so why not go 15 on 15 and see how the first quarter played out before operating that system from the throw-in. If a team is pulling back a forward, then they must ensure they bypass the defender they have left behind.

To leave Player of the Match Laura Treacy free, who can read a game so well, doesn't make sense to me, particularly in such a tight pitch at this time of the year where the ground is heavy. Laura comfortably covered right to left to pick up breaking ball. Tipp put four goals past Galway a fortnight ago. I wonder did they operate a sweeper that day.

There is a two-week break after three games in a row and next up for Cork is a trip to UPMC Nowlan Park to take on Kilkenny, their first meeting since last year's All-Ireland final.

Kilkenny chiselled out a 0-17 to 0-11 victory over Dublin at Parnell Park on Saturday. That was a first success of this campaign for Brian Dowling's crew, who had struggled to get away from the Dubs.

Kilkenny's start to the season has been poor. A shock opening defeat to Clare followed by a four-point defeat to Galway in Nowlan Park before taking the points against Dublin.

Galway haven't started so brightly

A physical game was just what Cork girls needed



Tipperary's Caoimhe Maher tackles Laura Tracey of Cork.

Picture: Ben Brady/Inpho



Cork's Meabh Murphy celebrates her team scoring a point against Tipp.

Picture: Ben Brady

either, losing to Tipp in round one by three goals before bouncing back with that win over Kilkenny and then Clare last weekend.

They have an even bigger concern at the minute with 2022 Player of the Year Miriam Walsh waiting the results of a scan on a suspected cruciate injury.

The cruciate curse has reached epidemic proportions in camogie and in women's team sports generally. Tipp's Sarah Devane and Erena Fryday (twice) both went through it. Our own Ashling Thompson, Katie O'Mahony and Olivia McAllen are currently out with it. Galway have Ciara

Donohue, Orlaith McGrath and Rebecca Hennelly side-lined. For McGrath, it's a second time, for Hennelly a third.

Kilkenny won last year's All-Ireland without the Doyle sisters. Kellyann was another to go down a third time with the cruciate, Aoife being felled not long after. And on and on it goes. Studies are being carried out and there is information linking the issue with physiology; different pelvic width, the smaller size of women's ACLs, core strength and possibly even menstrual cycles. We are still learning.

Clare were brought crashing back

to earth by Cork after claiming Kilkenny's scalp. Their 1-14 to 0-13 defeat by Galway shows they are being consistently competitive, the Cork game aside. Similar to last year, Clare gave some strong league performances, but will it all come crashing down come championship?

The Munster camogie championship will be run off on a round-robin basis for the first time. There will be six double headers during the GAA/Camogie/LGFA Munster campaigns. Five in camogie, one in football.

On April 30, Cork and Waterford will feature in the Munster camogie and hurling championships in Páirc

Ui Chaoimh. May 6 will see the winners of Cork and Waterford play Tipperary ahead of the Munster hurling championship game in also in the Páirc. The Munster camogie final will be a curtain raiser to the hurling championship game between Waterford and Clare in Semple Stadium on May 13.

Sunday, May 21 at Cusack Park will host the Munster Intermediate Camogie final between Clare of Kerry and Cork ahead of the Clare Cork hurling game.

The Munster championship is due to commence during the league campaign.

Cork minor camogie team begin defence of All-Ireland title with big win

Dublin were no match for the focused Rebels on Sunday afternoon



Kate Fennessy hit 0-5 against Dublin in the Cork minors' championship

Cork 3-21 Dublin 0-8

HOLDERS Cork opened the defence of their Electric Ireland Minor A Championship in strong fashion as they confidently overcame the challenge posed by Dublin.

Cork were well prepared and with a lot of experience in the side from last season, they set about laying the foundations for victory from the throw-in.

Such was their dominance they led 3-13 to 0-4 at the interval.

Through the second half, Cork continued to hold the upper hand in all sectors.

Their defence dealt with anything Dublin threw at them but they were seldom troubled as their midfield and attack were hugely dominant.

Cork hit for an early goal Ciara Morrison finishing to the net to extend the Cork lead after Bronagh O'Shaughnessy had given them an early lead with the game's opening two points.

Amy Sheppard struck for the Rebels' second goal after eight minutes and as Dublin struggled to match the intensity of Cork they fell further behind as the visitors picked off points with ease.

Niamh McNabola, Amy McCarthy and Ellen Crowley all got on the score sheet as the lead was extended, Dublin got on the scoreboard 15 minutes in Zara Thorne pointing from play.

Cork kept the pressure on and an Ellen Crowley goal after 16 minutes put them 18 points clear.

Kerri Austin had three Dublin points as they battled to make some headway but before the break, Kate Fennessy and Ciara Morrison had Cork points to lead them seventeen points ahead at the interval.

Cork continued to dominate all through the second half and were content to keep the scoreboard ticking over as they picked off points.

Dublin battled hard but were unable to match a polished Cork side who emptied their bench as the second half progressed to its ultimate conclusion.

Scorers for Cork: E O'Donoghue 0-6 (0-3 f, 0-1 45), K Fennessy 0-5, C Morrison 1-2, B O'Shaughnessy 0-4 (0-2 f), A Sheppard, E Crowley 1-1 each, A McCarthy, N McNabola 0-1 each.

CORK: J Connaughton; M De Burca, C O'Donoghue, R Roche; S Hurley, A Fitzgerald. E Duignan; A McCarthy, M Condon; N McNabola, B O'Shaughnessy, K Fennessy; E Crowley, C Morrison, A Sheppard.

Subs: L O'Connell for A Sheppard (inj 30), E O'Donoghue for B O'Shaughnessy (h-t), G Finn for E Crowley (36), E Sheehan for C O' Donoghue (36), S Murphy for N McNabola (50), A O'Riordan for M Condon (50), A O'Sullivan for A Fitzgerald (52), L Dunlea for E Duignan (52).

DUBLIN: M Farrell; M Hughes, S Cherry, A Byrne; C Tierney, S Power, N Cotter; Z Thorne, E Keogh; A Thornton, H Reynolds, M Clohessy; A Stokes, E Fogarty, A Carey.



Enjoying the 2022 Celtic Ross West Cork Sports Star Awards gala banquet on Saturday night were, back from left, Paul O'Donovan, Aoife Casey, Fintan McCarthy, Darragh McElhinney, Rachel Whelton, Fintan Fenner, Alan O'Shea (representing Conor Hayes), Mike Keohane, Averyl Condell and Owen Murphy (representing John Murphy). Front from left, Caroline Collins (representing Mark Collins), Millie Condon (2022 Paudie Palmer Youth Award winner), Hannah Sexton, Kieran McCarthy (sports editor, The Southern Star), Helen Wycherley (Celtic Ross Hotel), Brian Cody (special guest), Neil Grant (Celtic Ross Hotel), JP McNamara (C103), Gearoid Wycherley (Celtic Ross Hotel), Siobhan Courtney, Saoirse McCarthy and Libby Coppinger. (Photos: George Maguire)

Awards honour best in the west and remember the great Paudie

Success of local sportspeople lauded at landmark 25th West Cork Sports Star Awards

BY MARTIN WALSH

THE 25th annual Celtic Ross Hotel West Cork Sports Star Awards gala banquet was always going to be different.

Not because of the obvious and its celebration of sporting excellence and inspiration but of the contribution of one of the awards key figures, the late Paudie Palmer. Since 1998 he has charted the sporting prowess of so many of our gifted young athletes from West Cork with an infectious enthusiasm and a great admiration of their talents. On the night, every speaker referenced Paudie's good humour, devilment, and his love of the awards. Everywhere he went he was a magnet of popularity, his untimely passing has robbed a community of a truly great character and friend to everyone.

The awards have gone from strength to strength and despite world, European and national success, they are most cherished by their recipients as recognition from within their own community and its people.

Ultra-successful rowers Skibbereen's Paul O'Donovan and Fintan McCarthy, World and European champions last year, became the first winners to claim back-to-back titles when special guest and Kilkenny hurling legend Brian Cody declared

the duo as the 2022 winners.

Just after 11.30pm on Saturday night Cody took to the stage to deliver an impromptu speech that could have applied to any walk of life and not specifically about sport.

After acknowledging the scenic beauty of West Cork, Cody spoke about the longevity of the awards and commended Jerry Wycherley of the Celtic Ross Hotel and everyone involved.

'This is a fantastic occasion and shows how vast West Cork is, and see the diversity of the sports that are being honoured tonight,' he said.

Cody urged the sports stars to 'Remember the people that gave you the opportunity from the very start to play, enjoy and love your sport. These are the volunteers and should never be forgotten, they deserve great credit.'

In a wide-ranging address the Kilkenny legend revealed that while strength and conditioning matters, he fears people's love of their sport is going to be lost.

'To lose the skill of all the various sports because of science sports, I worry about that,' he admitted.

Cody had words of wisdom for team sports.

'The key to success in team sports is to have a terrific spirit within your team, a great bond,



Skibbereen Rugby Club women's captain Averyl Condell, 2022 West Cork Sports Star Team of the Year, with Neil Grant (Celtic Ross Hotel), Brian Cody (special guest), Helen Wycherley (Celtic Ross Hotel) and Kieran McCarthy (The Southern Star).

togetherness, desire with everyone moving forward together; when you have that you have just about everything. A savage spirit that cannot be broken,' he stressed.

Speaking on the importance of humility and never getting carried away with one's achievements, Cody referenced Paul O'Donovan as a prime example.

'He brushes it (success) off and gets on with it,' he said.

Cody also urged sportspeople, 'Be the best you can be, but never consider that you are the best you can be. Stay hungry for success and always look for that bit more. The only constant in everything is change. Banish ego. Ego kills spirit.'

Before revealing the 2022 award winners he commented

about defeat.

'If you start making excuses, you won't get the success you want.'

Earlier in the evening both Gearoid and Helen Wycherley of the Celtic Ross Hotel spoke about the tremendous success of the awards and the vision of all involved. Former editor of The Southern Star Con Downing chronicled the history of the awards since their inception in 1998 before he was presented with an award to honour his contribution. Official photographer George Maguire, who retired from the role after this year's celebrations, was also honoured.

Popular Celtic Ross Hotel manager Neil Grant also addressed the gathering during the banquet as did C103 pre-

sender/producer JP McNamara.

At the outset, sports editor of The Southern Star Kieran McCarthy introduced all the monthly winners, some of whom were represented by a family member.

The re-named West Cork Sports Star Paudie Palmer Youth award was presented to Millie Condon, the Ballinascarty teenager who won three All-Ireland titles last year.

At various intervals during the evening, Kieran McCarthy announced the Skibbereen Rugby Club as the 2022 West Cork Sports Star Team of the Year. 'Three trophies for a team that is putting women's rugby on the map and in Skibbereen and West Cork. They are also building deep foundations for years to come, a great success

story, on and off the field,' he said. In her acceptance speech, team captain Averyl Condell encouraged (somewhat tongue in cheek) the Castlehaven GAA ladies team, who received a special achievement award, to join the club!

The presentation of the Hall of Fame Award saw the first ever overall winner of Celtic Ross Hotel West Cork Sports Star Award, Gretta Cormican, become the latest inductee. Akin to her description of that maiden honour, she said 'Another Oscar.'

Colette Palmer and her extended family were the very special guests at the banquet. It was a special night that honoured so many exceptional people and remembered one very special man.

Millie proud to win Paudie Palmer Youth Award

BY GER MCCARTHY

BECOMING the first-ever West Cork Sports Star Paudie Palmer Youth Award winner made the accolade even more special for Millie Condon at the Celtic Ross Hotel on Saturday night.

2022 was an amazing year for the rising Cork LGFA and camogie dual star.

Condon claimed an All-Ireland schools' senior C football title with Sacred Heart Clonakilty. The Ballinascorthy camogie player and Clonakilty footballer won Munster and All-Ireland minor medals as part of the Cork LGFA and camogie panels.

Finishing the year as Munster LGFA Young Player of the Year put the seal on a remarkable 12 months before the West Cork Sports Star Paudie Palmer Youth Award was added to Condon's growing collection.

'It is a really big deal for me to be in the same room as Libby



2022 West Cork Sports Star Paudie Palmer Youth Award winner Millie Condon with special guest Brian Cody. (Photo: George Maguire)

Coppinger and Saoirse McCarthy (at tonight's awards),' the rising Cork dual star told *The Southern Star*.

'Paul O'Donovan is here as well so I'm rubbing shoulders with some serious sports stars. Women in sport are getting

better all the time thanks to the work of *The Southern Star* and also the late Paudie Palmer.' The late C103 broadcaster

and commentator would certainly have approved of the first winner of his retitled Youth Sports Star Award.

These are busy times for Condon. The 17-year-old arrived for Saturday evening's West Cork Sports Star Awards ceremony at the Celtic Ross Hotel having helped Cork defeat Waterford 3-14 to 1-4 in the Munster LGFA minor championship earlier that afternoon.

Having received her award from guest of honour Brian Cody and chatted with the legendary former Kilkenny senior hurling manager, Condon had to leave the awards ceremony early. That's because she had to be up early on Sunday morning to travel to Dublin with the Cork minor camogie panel. There, the Rebels overcame Dublin 3-21 to 0-8 and got the defence of their Electric Ireland All-Ireland Minor A Camogie championship title off to the best possible start.

'The fact that this award is named after Paudie Palmer means a lot,' Condon added.

'Paudie played a really big part in promoting women in sport. He was publicising a lot about our school matches last year. So, yeah, it is definitely special to receive an award that is named after Paudie Palmer.'

Condon is entering her final year as a minor in both camogie and LGFA. Lining out for the Ballinascorthy juniors and Clonakilty seniors, later this year, will see the young award winner attempt to make her mark at adult level on a regular basis.

'How do I keep it all going? You just try to take things in your stride and take each day as it comes. Right now, it is ok. I have seen other dual players dealing with the same kind of things at senior level. So, I guess that shows that it can be done. You just have to prove to yourself that you can,' she added.



2022 Celtic Ross Hotel West Cork Sports Star monthly award winner Libby Coppinger with her parents Maureen and Tim, grandmother Breda, family and special guest Brian Cody. (Photo: Gemma Maffey)



Monthly award winner Saoirse McCarthy with her parents Cella and Leonard, boyfriend Cormac Dowd and Aoife Walsh.



2022 Paudie Palmer Youth Award winner Millie Condon with her parents Jack Condon and Clare Collins, and grandmother Marguerite Condon.

Millie is Paudie Palmer Youth Award winner

THE 11-time All-Ireland senior hurling winning manager Brian Cody was guest of honour at this year's West Cork Sports Awards at the Celtic Ross Hotel in Rosscarbery.

The annual C103FM, Celtic Ross Hotel, and *Southern Star* awards ceremony celebrated its 25th year with a star-studded line-up headlined by Kilkenny legend Cody.

Cody guided Kilkenny to 11 All-Ireland senior titles, 18 Leinster Championships and 10 National League titles during a glittering 24-year managerial career.

Along with his wife, former Wexford camogie star Elsie Walsh, Cody was a popular and engaging special guest; he spoke at length about his career, love of sport, and west Cork in a wide-ranging speech.

"It is mindboggling to be here because you realise how vast an area west Cork is," he said.

"Seeing the diversity of sports being honoured is just terrific. There are Olympic gold medalists and world champions here tonight. I've never had an opportunity (like this) to sit among them at one awards ceremony.

"Seeing all the people that represent where they come from here in west Cork and Ireland is brilliant. Getting to meet the people who have won junior titles here as well, they are every bit as important. That's the great thing about sport and these awards, whatever sport you play."

Cody also made a point of mentioning how important it is to acknowledge those who help future sport stars in the early parts of their careers.

"Being involved in sport a long time myself, I always believed it is important to remember the

GAA

Ger McCarthy

people who give you your opportunities.

"When you are at a young age, these are the volunteers, all over the country, parents, teachers, neighbours, club members, who give you that opportunity. These people deserve credit for what they do and shouldn't be forgotten.

"I often hear people saying they give up their time to do things (on behalf of others) in sport. They don't give up their time. They do it because they love doing it. They share their time with all these young sportspeople.

"I am sure all the award winners here tonight remember those individuals and what they have done for your sporting careers."

Cody went on to talk about the importance of remaining humble, no matter how successful you become in your chosen discipline.

"Keeping your feet on the ground is massively important when talking about any successful sportsperson or team.

"Humility (is important), never getting carried away with yourself and thinking 'nobody can touch me'. To me, saying that you want to be the best you can be is a terrific thing.

"I would always challenge the sports people I was involved with to put no limits on what they could achieve. Always look for that bit of improvement. How can I get better? How can I develop more?"

"Every little percentage you can improve on, your tactics, your skill, looking at the opposition, whatever it is, all those things are so important.



Cork dual minor dual star Millie Condon, who won the Paudie Palmer Youth Sports Star of the Year award at the West Cork Sports Awards.

The reality is, the only constant in sport, in business, and in life is change."

A poignant evening also marked the first West Cork Sports Star ceremony since the passing of one of the awards founders and biggest advocates, the late Paudie Palmer. Some of the C103 broadcaster and *Echo* columnist's family were in attendance on an evening when Paudie was fondly remembered.

The newly named Paudie Palmer Youth Sports Star of the Year award went to Cork football and camogie star Millie Condon.

Skibbereen Women's Rugby club claimed the Team of the Year, Castlehaven LGFA seniors won the Special Achievement award and road bowling's Gretta Cormican entered the West Cork Sports Star Hall of Fame.

Skibbereen and Irish rowers, Paul O'Donovan and Fintan McCarthy claimed a second consecutive overall West Cork Sports Stars of the Year award.

Very Ireland Camogie

Having won their 3 games to date, Cork are within touching distance of a place in the Division 1 league final when they play Kilkenny at the unusual time at 11.30am on Sunday morning in Nowlan Park. A win or a draw will be good enough.

Cork got a real test against Tipperary last time out and that will stand to them having easily accounted for Dublin and Clare.

It was a good all round team performance with Meabh Murphy, Laura Tracey, Meabh Cahalane, Laura Hayes playing well in defence while in attack, Amy O'Connor and Orlaith Cahalane impressed while Emma Murphy made an important contribution when introduced.

Kilkenny got their first win in the last round but are concerned about the fitness of Miriam Walsh and her absence seriously weakens the side, but they will at home be hard to beat.

Cork though, are in a good position and should prevail.

In Division 2, Cork will have home advantage in Castle Road on Saturday at 2pm for the visit of Galway and on the basis of the opening round results, Cork look set to make it 2 from 2.

The minors got the defence of their All-Ireland title off to a winning start in Dublin last week and should be too strong for Waterford when the side meet in SETU Grounds on Sunday at 3pm.



CAMOGIE QUEENS: Kearys Motor Group launched their second season as title sponsors of Cork camogie, one of the largest sponsorships in women's sport. The launch with a private coaching and motivational session for the Senior and Intermediate squads with mentalist and brain hacker Keith Barry. Kearys' sponsorship supports the Cork Senior, Intermediate, Minor and U16 camogie teams for the next 2 years, as well as getting involved with both U16 and U14 club championships. Trevor Coleman (Cork Intermediate Manager), Rachel Harty (Cork Intermediate Captain), Keith Barry, Paul O'Halloran (COO, Kearys Motor Group), Amy O'Connor (Cork Senior Captain), Matthew Twomey (Cork Senior Camogie Manager). PHOTO: MICHAEL MAC SWEENEY/PROVISION



Very Camogie League Division 1A
Kilkenny v Cork

Tomorrow: UPMC Nowlan Park, 11.30am
Referee: John Dermody

Daragh Ó Conchúir



There was definitely a raised eyebrow or two among camogie cognoscenti when the results of the opening round of the Very Camogie Leagues came through.

While Tipperary beating Division 1A champions Galway was a triumph, the defeat

Cats must find another level for Cork

of All-Ireland champions Kilkenny by Clare the same weekend was the real shock. Brian Dowling's crew then fell short once more against Galway to leave them pointless, more or less out of contention for overall honours already.

They accounted for fellow basement-dwellers Dubs a fortnight ago but there had been no element of panic, within the squad anyway.

Triple All-Star Claire Phelan does accept that the mindset is different when you commence a season as champions.

"You're coming into it from a different side, it's very different. We've won a few now and we haven't managed to do it the second year running as

it is a big challenge. The target is on our back now again but we have to find another level. Last year isn't going to do anything for us now. We're happy with what we achieved last year but it's come and gone.

"Last year you might be using that hurt from the year before or whatever it was to motivate you, whereas this year you're coming off a high and to ground yourself is the biggest challenge and realise you have to do more than you did last year.

"Hunger would be a huge thing, but I know from training with all the girls that it's definitely there and there's no doubt we'll be driving on as much as we possibly can for

the coming year."

That is why there was no overreaction to those early reverses, with much of what they did in those outings positive. They hit the front at the three-quarter mark against both Clare and Galway but faded down the stretch.

"It's early days, but no matter what time of the year it is, anyone that's playing wants to win so obviously we were disappointed with the first two games but it was great to get a win up in Dublin the last day.

"It was a tough game, but you want to be trying to get wins at this stage of the year and working towards later in the year."

"We're having 10-minute patches where we're doing great things and we switch off. That's the big thing we need to work on and we've earmarked it."

Next up, as part of a mouth-watering double-header with the hurling league outing between Kilkenny and Waterford at UPMC Nowlan Park, is an 11.30am start against table-toppers Cork, rivals Phelan has had good and bad days against for the guts of a decade.

Matthew Twomey's Rebels have been shooting the lights out in recording three straight victories over Dublin, Clare, and Tipperary so the primary school teacher knows that as

ever, she will have her hands full to keep order on Amy O'Connor, Sorcha McCartan, and co.

"Just looking at their results, they've had a super start to the year. And no matter what time of year it is, when you're playing Cork, it's always tough. They never bring anything else.

"We got a lot done with the break, particularly a lot of hurling. Before that, it was mostly fitness, a lot of running, but we got a good bit of hurling, which is what we were looking forward though it was tough too.

"So it'll be a good opportunity for us to gauge where we are at this point and hopefully we'll put up a good performance. That's what we're looking for but no doubt it'll be a tough old battle."



Kate Fennessy hit 0-5 against Dublin in the Cork minor championship opener. Pictures: Jim Coughlan

Cork begin minor title defence by beating Dublin with ease

Cork 3-21
Dublin 0-8

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

HOLDERS Cork opened the defence of their Electric Ireland Minor A Championship in strong fashion, confidently overcoming Dublin.

Cork were prepared and had a lot of experience in the side from last season, and they set about laying the foundations for victory from the throw-in.

Such was their dominance that they led 3-13 to 0-4 at the interval.

Through the second half, Cork continued to hold the upper hand in all sectors.

Their defence dealt with everything Dublin threw at it, but they were seldom troubled, as their midfield and attack were hugely dominant.

Cork hit for an early goal, Ciara Morrison finishing to the net to extend the Cork lead, after Bronagh O'Shaughnessy had given them an early lead with the game's opening two points.

Amy Sheppard struck for the Rebels' second goal, after eight minutes, and as Dublin struggled to match the intensity of Cork, they fell further behind. The visitors picked off points with ease.

Niamh McNabola, Amy McCarthy, and Ellen Crowley all got on the score sheet as the lead was extended, Dublin got on the scoreboard 15 minutes in, Zara Thorne pointing from play.

Cork kept the pressure on and an Ellen Crowley goal after 16 minutes put them 18 points clear.

Kerri Austin got three points for Dublin as they battled to make some headway, but before the break,

Kate Fennessy and Ciara Morrison got points for Cork to put them 17 ahead at the interval.

Cork continued to dominate all through the second half and were content to keep the scoreboard ticking over as they picked off points.

Dublin battled hard, but were unable to match a polished Cork side, who emptied their bench as the second half progressed to its ultimate conclusion.

Scorers for Cork: E O'Donoghue 0-6 (0-3 f, 0-1 45), K Fennessy 0-5, C Morrison 1-2, B O'Shaughnessy 0-4 (0-2 f), A Sheppard, E Crowley 1-1 each, A McCarthy, N McNabola 0-1 each.

Scorers for Dublin: K Austin 0-3 (0-2 f), A Thorne 0-2, H Reynolds, T Brady, S Behan 0-1 each.

CORK: J Connaughton; M De Burca, C O'Donoghue, R Roche; S Hurlley, A Fitzgerald, E Duignan; A McCarthy, M Condon; N McNabola, B O'Shaughnessy, K Fennessy, E Crowley, C Morrison, A Sheppard.

Subs: L O'Connell for A Sheppard (inj 30), E O'Donoghue for B O'Shaughnessy (h-t), G Finn for E Crowley (36), S Sheehan for C O'Donoghue (36), S Murphy for N McNabola (50), A O'Riordan for M Condon (50), A O'Sullivan for A Fitzgerald (52), L Dunlea for E Duignan (52).

DUBLIN: M Farrell; M Hughes, S Cherry, A Byrne; C Tierney, S Power, N Coster; Z Thorne, E Keogh; A Thornton, H Reynolds, M Clohessy; A Stokes, E Fogarty, A Carey.

Subs: N Brennan for E Keogh (19), C Tierney for E Browne (23), C French for K Austin (35), A Ni Rian for A Stokes (48), A Simpson for E Fogarty (48), T Brady for A Stokes (50), S Behan for H Reynolds (52).



Amy Sheppard, Cork, tackles Rachel Murphy, Galway.



Kearys Motor Group have launched their second season as title sponsors of Cork Camogie: Amy O'Connor (Cork senior camogie captain), Matthew Twomey (Cork senior camogie manager), Trevor Coleman (Cork intermediate camogie manager), Keith Barry (brain hacker and mentalist), Rachel Harty (Cork intermediate camogie captain), Paul O'Halloran (COO, Kearys Motor Group), and Tracy Sheehan (Cork Camogie County Board).

Cats will offer a serious test



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

Division 1A:
Very National League Round 4,
Cork v Kilkenny, UPMC Nowlan Park, Kilkenny, Sunday, 11.30am
IT'S an unusually early throw-in this Sunday in the Very league round four tie between Cork and Kilkenny in Nowlan Park.

Typically the games are on Saturday but this is a curtain raiser to Kilkenny v Waterford in the hurling league at 1.45pm. I imagine Cork will be on the road at 8am for the 11.30am start.

Cork taking the points against Tipperary a fortnight ago was important as it's put them in the driving seat to reach the final. A victory on Sunday would seal it.

They lead the table on nine points with Tipperary and Galway behind on six each, Tipperary in second place on scoring difference by +18.

Cork are +18 ahead of Tipp too. If Cork can beat Kilkenny in their home turf it's hard to imagine either Tipp or Galway catching Cork even if they both win their final two games.

The three could finish on 12 points, that's still a possibility, but scoring difference would put Cork through.

While Galway could rack up a large score against Dublin it won't be enough as they sit on -36 behind Cork.

So can Cork effectively seal the deal this weekend?

It'll be a tough one. Outside of the four crucial sidelined members of the panel, and I've been omitting Ciara O'Sullivan in recent weeks in that category, Katrina and Pam Mackey remain sidelined.

Katrina is still struggling with her ribs and lung area from their opening round. Pam continues to nurse a hamstring tear.

Orla Cronin won't make it back for tomorrow while at the time of writing both Laura Treacy and Aoife Healy would be undergoing fitness tests late in the week.

With just 20 outfield fit players at his



Cork camogie player Laura Treacy.

disposal Matthew Twomey may delve into the intermediate squad for back-up, who themselves are out against Galway at home today.

It's not been an ideal start to training for Cork with so many players tied up in third level competition to early February and so many injuries, but they have achieved maximum league points, the next two games arguably their toughest though, Tipp aside.

Twomey is relishing the challenge. "They might be wounded (after losing a couple of games) but we're a small bit wounded after last year as well!"

"It looks like a very appetising game. Very much looking forward to it."

"They're the games you want, inside in Nowlan Park, the stadium and the pitch it is. That's what you want."

Mention of the tie brought a wide smile from Treacy last week, who has enjoyed and endured some tremendous battles with the Cats.

"Here we go again! We always love playing down there to be honest. It's a great pitch, great stadium so we're really looking forward to that one," said a hoping to be fit Treacy.

Kilkenny had a slow league start. Maybe their All-Ireland celebratory January holiday didn't help.

It was a much needed three points for Brian Dowling's panel last weekend

against Dublin following the defeats to Clare and Galway on previous weekends, but with some six minutes remaining, there was only one score between the sides.

Dublin are possibly the weakest side in the 1A league so that win wasn't anything to boast about.

The return of Kellyann Doyle will please Dowling but with Miriam Walsh still side-lined it's bittersweet. At this point Kilkenny will not contest the league final they last won in 2021.

Championship preparation is what it's all about for them now and maybe a bit of pride facing rivals Cork in their own patch so I'm expecting a good game here.

I was impressed with Meabh Murphy last weekend against Tipp. She has certainly grown as a defender since last season. It's great to see.

The more game time debutant Aoife Healy can get the better too. Defensively Cork were very good. We need more from midfield and up front.

In some areas we aren't getting the return from established players that we should be getting. Players are fading out of games in some cases.

Is it match fitness at this early stage? Possibly. Cork's style is a running support game so that brings more players into the action.

As a player, you need to find that actual



Cork's Fiona Keating takes on Kilkenny's Kellyann Doyle.

Twomey delighted with win but disappointed to concede goal to Cats

It was an impressive performance by Cork in their Very National League Division 1A round four clash against Kilkenny in Nowlan Park yesterday.

Hitting 23 points, from 10 scorers and a strong work-rate, Cork manager Matthew Twomey was happy.

"It was a great performance. We're happy and we still have a lot to do."

"Our work rate was very good. We saw a few things in the Tipperary game that we wanted to work on, a bit of tweaking, and we knew that if we could get those things right we'd be on the right track. Work rate comes with that. And the scoring from our forward line was excellent."

Cork's tactic of pulling in and then wide seemed to work well. Cork got a couple of scores as a direct result of that play, particularly one straight from an Amy Lee puck-out.

"We learnt from last year and to date that we have speed and today was the first time I'd say in three years that the game was 15 on 15. There was no sweeper. We don't go out to play a sweeper, other teams do so against us. That created a bit of space up in the forward line but we also had a plan if a sweeper was played. It's a positive performance that's for sure but it's still only March." Cork emptied their bench by using the league allowed eight subs.

"It was good to give those players a run. We called up two from the intermediate panel during the week and they got on the field today. We didn't think we'd manage that today but we did."

Defensively Cork once again showed good teamwork



Katie Power with Cork's Meabh Cahalane and Saoirse McCarthy.

CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

and tenacity.

"Laura Hayes and Treacy and Maeve Cahalane marshal our defence well. There's great communication between them. Again it was the first time that our defence didn't play with a sweeper so Laura Treacy's job is to go back to the D and her player was pulling out so we have to track back and take the centre-forward out of the game and so we dealt with everything I feel."

"We're disappointed with the goal we gave away and they could have got another one and if I was to pick something disappointing from our side it was that we could have created more goal chances. But that's something we're working on."

In a strong team display Hayes stood out.

"When we moved Laura to midfield it took the shackles off and she's certainly an option there when more players come back from injury. Both Saoirse McCarthy and Laura are both well able to score from midfield which helps."

Cork are now through to the league final.

"Yeah, we've been put under a bit of pressure now by Tipperary and Kilkenny in The Ragg and Nowlan Park but we reacted very well and we're very pleased with that."

On another note, the Camogie Association issued a statement during the week that the All-Star Tour scheduled for May and running right up to championship is now cancelled as another window would not be found in a busy calendar schedule.



Cork's Emma Murphy and Kilkenny's Michelle Teehan in Sunday's league game at Nowlan Park.

Pictures: INPHO/Ken Sutton

Rebels lay down marker



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

Kilkenny	1-10
Cork	0-23

AN important win for Matthew Twomey's Cork on Sunday morning, securing their place in the Very Camogie League final, with their work-rate around the field and sharpshooting, as 10 players shared 23 points, the key factors.

With 10 of the starting line-up and 11 of the finishing team that pipped Cork in the All-Ireland final last August, the Cats were tuned in for this league clash at UPMC Nowlan Park. The hosts were however without key figures Player of the Year Miriam Walsh and All-Ireland hero Denise Gaulle.

Cork were in a similar situation, including 12 starters from the final last September, with Katrina Mackey, Ciara O'Sullivan, and Ashling Thompson marked absent.

It was a perfect day for hurling, a slight wind favouring Kilkenny in the opening half. Kellyann Doyle started and finished a move to give the home side their first score of the game in the opening minute. It was refreshing to see no sweeper on display, a tactic used by many teams that Cork face. Both sides operated a two-player full forward line.

Cork's remaining four forwards bunched the 40 and sprinted to the wings for fast deliveries. It worked well on occasion, Fiona Keating's point on 11 minutes a product of such a move from Amy Lee's puck-out. Kilkenny operated a two, one, three forward division from full-forward out.

Kelly Ann Doyle was prominent in those opening minutes from midfield, but Cork got to grips with her early on with Laura Hayes running up the flanks from both wings causing Kilkenny big problems.

Cork's work-rate was once again im-



Cork's Saoirse McCarthy in action against Kilkenny's Niamh Deely and Sophie O'Dwyer.

pressive, defensively they swarmed, blocking well and forcing Kilkenny into errors. Up front, particularly on Kilkenny's short puck-outs, Cork applied good pressure and overturned a few.

Sophie O'Dwyer, a late change to the match programme, was strong up front as Kilkenny led 0-3 to 0-1 after five minutes. Hayes made Cork's second point after a strong run up the right before hitting the spot herself to level the game eight minutes in.

O'Dwyer hit two either side of Fiona Keating's second before four on the bounce from Cork, three Amy O'Connor frees and a Cliona Healy point gave Cork a little headway.

Two again from Katie Power and O'Dwyer before Cork finished the last six minutes strongly, hitting four, Orlaith Cahalane (2), O'Connor and Hannah Looney providing.

Two points inside a minute by Cork after the restart were more than cancelled out after a humdinger of a goal from Julianne Malone after she came in from the right wing. How she got through to get her strike in is something Cork's management will want to address. Power added a good point and suddenly just three points in it after Cork had led by seven.

A fine save by Aoife Norris from Cahalane's shot was pointed by Looney. And from there Cork took over. Six points in a row, nine in total in the final twenty-two minutes. Amy Lee pulled off a magnificent point-blank save with time almost up.

Cork will be happy with scoring 23 points from 10 different scorers with the league final spot now guaranteed.

Scorers for Kilkenny: S O'Dwyer 0-5 (0-3 f), J Malone 1-0, K Power 0-2, S Fitzgerald (f), K A Doyle, A Prendergast (f) 0-1 each.

Cork: A O'Connor 0-5 (0-3 f), F Keating 0-4, C Healy 0-3, S McCarthy, O Cahalane, S McCartan, H Looney 0-2 each, L Hayes, E Murphy and A Smith 0-1 each.

KILKENNY: A Norris, M Teehan, G Walsh, M Bambrick; S Fitzgerald, C Phelan, L Murphy, K Doyle, J Malone, N Deely, M Kenneally, A McHardy, K Power, J Clifford.

Subs: T Fitzgerald for M Bambrick (25), J Clifford for M Kenneally (40), E Manogue for K A Doyle (43), A O'Connor for M Teehan (51), A Curtis for A McHardy (52), A Prendergast for N Phelan and C Phelan for L Murphy (43).

CORK: A Lee, M Murphy, L Coppinget, M Cahalane, P Mackey, L Treacy, L Hayes, S McCarthy, F Keating, T O'Regan, C Sigerson, C Healy, A O'Connor, O Cahalane, S McCartan.

Subs: E Murphy for O Cahalane (44), A O'Neill for C Sigerson (47), C Finn for A O'Connor (53), K Wall for H Looney (55), A Egan for C Healy and A Smith for S McCartan (56), H Ryan and A Barrett for S McCarthy and M Murphy (59).

Referee: John Dermody (Westmeath).

CAMOGIE

Very Camogie Leagues Div 1A: Galway 1-14 Dublin 0-9, Tipperary 1-20 Clare 0-7; Div 1B: Down 2-13 Limerick 1-6; Div 2A: Cavan 1-7 Meath 0-11, Westmeath 1-13 Laois 1-5; Div 2B: Cork 2-15 Galway 3-9, Wexford 3-5 Kilkenny 0-15; Div 3A: Tyrone 1-4 Armagh 0-15, Mayo 1-6 Kildare 2-9; Div 3B: Antrim 1-9 Clare 2-10, Dublin 4-12 Limerick 0-4.

By Daragh Ó Conchúir

GALWAY and Tipperary joined Cork on top of the Division 1A table of the Very Camogie League as a result of comfortable wins secured over Dublin and Clare, respectively, yesterday. The Rebels play Kilkenny tomorrow and the pressure has been placed on them by their nearest rivals, with only the top two reaching the final next month. Galway's defence of their title got

Introduction of legend Ryan only sweetened an already memorable day

off to a very poor start at the hurleys of Tipp, but they have improved and would have been expected to get the better of Dublin, who are propping up the table.

They did, by 1-14 to 0-9 at Duggan Park but it was a workmanlike effort, albeit Dublin deserve credit for making it hard on the hosts and continuing their own improvement under Gerry McQuaid since being blown away by Cork on the opening weekend.

Carrie Dolan has excelled from the start of the season for the Maroons and she provided a goal and ten points to her team's tally on this occasion.

The same applies to Aisling Maher in the Sky Blues jersey and the former All-Star shot all bar one point of the Dubs' tally. It

IMPRESSIVE TALLY: Carrie Dolan of Galway and (below) Tipperary's Cáit Devane



Galway and Tipp draw level with Rebels as race hots up

was 1-10 to 0-5 at half-time, Galway hitting the opening five points of the game in the first nine minutes before Gaby Couch hit the only Dublin point not registered by Maher.

Dolan's goal arrived at the end of the first quarter and she had 1-6 in the first half alone, including a couple of nice points from play.

Dublin actually drew the second half, with both sets of defences on top apart from the two sharpshooters, who slotted four points

apiece. Tipperary have been tremendous to date, their only loss being a narrow two-point one to Cork and they put Clare to the sword at The Ragg. Leading by 0-14 to 0-0 at the interval, they were able to cruise to the finish line for a 1-20 to 0-7 triumph.

Niamh Treacy (0-4), Caoimhe Maher (1-2) and Eimear McGrath (0-4) were huge contributors in attack and, with the remarkable Cáit Devane hitting nine points, it was a game for Denis Kelly's forwards to enjoy themselves.

Kelly was also able to introduce legendary former All-Star defender

Mary Ryan for her first outing of the year after illness to sweeten an already memorable day for the Premier.

The same can't be said for Clare, who defeated All-Ireland champions Kilkenny in the first round but were falling to a third successive defeat since. This was by far the worst, as they failed to record a single score in the first half.

The second was better, particularly as they were down to 14 players after Ciara Grogan received her marching orders for a second yellow card just before the break.

It was all about pride after that and

they did show that, as Orlaith Duggan, Lorna McNamara and Chloe Morey split the posts, but Maher breached their defences for her major in the 42nd minute and it was plain sailing for the home team.

In Division 1B, Down inflicted a fourth consecutive defeat on Limerick on a 2-11 to 0-6 scoreline at the Liatroim Fontenoys grounds, putting the visitors in danger of being relegated to the third tier less than a year after being in an All-Ireland quarter-final.

In Division 2A, Meath edged out Cavan by 0-11 to 1-7 and Westmeath accounted for Laois by 1-13 to 1-5.

'Small steps' but Cork building depth

Camogie roundup

Daragh Ó Conchúir

The party line from both Matthew Twomey and Fiona Keating was that there was much still to work on, and of course there is at this time of the year.

Still, Cork illustrated their rude health once more when recording a 0-23 to 1-10 Very Camogie League Division 1A victory at UPMC Nowlan Park yesterday that, barring disasters, secured a place in the final for a second year in a row.

What the winning manager and player of the match did concede was that there are many players putting up their hands for starting berths in the summer, such as last year's minor star Orlaith Cahalane, Emma Murphy and All Smith.

With the likes of Keating, Laura Hayes and Saoirse McCarthy now maturing into

leaders on the pitch, they had 10 different players contribute to their tally and that is with a number of big names still to return.

The Rebels are certainly humming and it would take a 19-point defeat to Galway next weekend along with a Tipperary win in Kilkenny to deny them.

Four points into the wind before half-time gave them a 0-12 to 0-7 lead at the change of ends and though Julianne Malone rifled a stupendous solo goal for Kilkenny, Cork held their composure and eased clear.

"We're delighted with the performance," said Twomey. "We had a good first half and while we were conscious about the start of the second half, to concede a goal, we're delighted with the character. It's March, we won't get carried away but we're taking small steps at the time."

"The two teams know each other very well. They were

Cork's Sorcha McCartan goes up against Kilkenny's Tiffanie Fitzgerald at Nowlan Park. Picture: Ken Sutton/Inpho



going to get their purple patch. They've quality all over the field though I know they're a few players down, same as ourselves. But it was about how we reacted to their patch.

"When you think of who is to come back — Katrina Mackey, Orla Cronin, Pamela Mackey, Ashling Thompson and a few more on top of that, you have to be happy. We can't be depending on Amy O'Connor getting all the scores like she was at the start. We were conscious of that so the spread of scores was great."

"I know we got 23 points but we still let a lot of scores after us, especially goals but it's the sharing of it that's brilliant."

Keating is revelling in a new role at midfield, having excelled at centre-forward last season. She contributed four points from midfield against the Cats, who beat them in last

year's All-Ireland final.

"Every year it's something different but it's great," said Keating of the new position. "They give you a bit of freedom to do what you want but at the same time you've a role to play in the team and when you listen to experts like Matthew and (coach) Liam (Cronin), they put so much work in behind the scenes, they have everything nailed down to a tee and what they tell you to do is what you do and it all links into the play and results like this one today."

"We've been working a lot in training on things that we could improve on and we put a lot of that practice into play today. Everyone's fighting for places as well. We've the two Mackeys and Orla Cronin and a few more to come back after injury so it's everyone's chance during the League to put their hands up and fight

for a spot in the team.

"You have the likes of Orlaith Cahalane in with us now (with) a really dominant place in the team. That's not a place she had last year but I think she has a big place in the team this year. She's just one of the young players coming through in Cork and it's great to have such a standard of young players coming through."

"There were a lot of positives to take from the match today but there's a lot to work on as well. We'll go back to the drawing board on Tuesday."

Twomey asserted that Galway, who denied them in last year's League final, could not expect any favours, even though it would take a calamitous turn of events for his side not to make the decider for a second year in a row.

"Every game we want to test out something new," Twomey

declared. "We learned a lot from today. We need more games. It's all about games this time of the year."

"We certainly won't be putting the white flag up for next week. We'll be going out strong again and having a cut off it, especially down at Páirc Uí Chaoimh. How many opportunities do you get to play in the Páirc? And there's going to be Cork supporters there for the football so we'll want to put on a performance and go hell for leather."

On Saturday, Cáit Devane shot nine points as Tipperary maintained their eye-catching run under new boss Denis Kelly with a 1-20 to 0-7 triumph over a very flat Clare, while Galway had to work much harder against Dublin before chiselling out a 1-14 to 0-9 verdict thanks in no small part to 10 points from Carrie Dolan.

Camogie's All-Star trip to Canada cancelled

Eoghan Cormican

The Camogie Association has cancelled their 2023 All-Star tour to Canada, which had been scheduled to take place just one week out from the start of the All-Ireland championship.

Having exhausted all their options to reschedule the heavily criticised May trip, the Camogie Association has informed counties that there will be no All-Star tour this year.

The decision was arrived at following consultation between the Camogie Association, GPA, and player representatives from Cork, Galway, Kilkenny, and Waterford.

Last month's initial announcement from the Camogie Association that the 2023 All-Star trip to Calgary would take place from May 19-26, eight days out from the first round of the All-Ireland championship on the weekend of June 3/4, was met with stinging criticism from players.

The seven Cork players who won All-Stars across the past two seasons told the *Irish Examiner* they were boycotting the trip, with midfielder Ashling Thompson describing the timing of the tour as "just crazy".

"How could you expect seven players to turn their back on their teammates at probably the most important time of the year leading up to championship."

"We wouldn't have All-Stars only for our teammates," Thompson told this newspaper.

"We are looking to be the one association. That's the goal. We are constantly looking for equality. How can you look for equality when it doesn't come from the top down."

"How can you possibly look for equality when women don't support women?"

"The GAA wouldn't make decisions like this and put players in such an awkward situation."

Cork's decision to boycott the trip, along with pressure from the GPA, forced the Camogie Association to review their selected dates.

Discussions between these parties, which have been ongoing in recent weeks, have concluded with the decision that the 2023 tour will not go ahead on the planned May dates or on any alternative dates this year.

When contacted by the *Irish Examiner* last month, the Camogie Association had said that "split season pressure" had influenced their decision to schedule the trip to Canada so close to the start of the championship.

"The split season has placed pressure on all availability, combined with a league, provincial championship and club window."



Cork's Lauren Homan is tackled by Galway's Joanne Daly during the Intermediate Division 2B Camogie League at Castle Road. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

Cork have to work hard for victory

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

Cork 2-15
Galway 3-9

CORK had to work hard before victory was secured over Galway in the Very Division 2 B National League at Castle Road.

Galway, with two games already played, came to Leaside in search of their first victory and they showed huge determination all through as they asked a lot of questions of a Rebel outfit that overcame Tipperary in their first-round game.

Galway, having won the intermediate All-Ireland title last season, fielded a new-look side and although losing out, they will no doubt take a lot of positives from a game that they were in until the final minutes. A Cork goal on 59 minutes finally helped put daylight between the sides in a hard-fought victory.

Galway led by two points at the interval having played with a strong wind; two goals in the space of 50 seconds edged them into the lead after they trailed Cork 0-3 to 0-1. Mairead Dillon and Lucy Allen having opened the scoring for their respective sides.

Cliona Dooley and Chloe Broderick exchanged points as the sides remained level. Cork, with Niamh O'Leary as an extra defender, held their lines under a lot of pressure.

At the other end of the pitch Cork created two goal chances. Cliona Dooley's effort went over the bar for a point to edge Cork one ahead before Lucy Allen's shot flew the wrong side of the post.

Dillon edged Galway in front with a goal and from the puck-out they turned over Cork for Broderick to finish to the net to put Galway six points clear. Cork didn't panic, Rachel Harty and Lauren Homan with points kept the scoreboard ticking over and with the defence settling they shut down the danger. Still, Broderick converted a free to put them five



Cork's Lucy Allen blocks down this clearance by Galway's Joanne Daly. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

points clear with five minutes to the break.

Up front, Fiona Nelligan's pace was causing the Galway defence a lot of bother and she struck for Cork's first goal five minutes before the break. The hosts finished the half strong, Cliona O'Leary converted a free, but Sorcha McGinley replied, 2-5 to 1-6 to the visitors at the whistle.

Inside five minutes of the restart, Cork were level thanks to Allen and Nelligan's points. The defence helped them get on top in the third quarter. Leanne O'Sullivan, Niamh O'Leary, and Aoife O'Callaghan worked hard and ensured the ball was moved fast up the field. In midfield, Harty was on top and three points without reply put Cork 1-11 to 2-5 in front as the game entered the last quarter.

Galway, showing huge hunger, cut the gap to a point with two in a row. Cork responded with a Homan free and one from play to again go three up, but back came Galway with Mairead Dillon's goal effort just going over the line: level pegging and all to play for.

Cliona O'Callaghan nudged Cork back

in front with 58 minutes on the stop-watch. Galway attacked from the restart, but after winning possession, Leanne O'Sullivan sent a pin-point delivery to Homan, who off-loaded to Allen who emphatically finished from close range.

Now four points in front, all Cork had to do was not concede a goal. Galway won a free, Chloe Broderick pointed to the sound of the full-time whistle after a tough test.

Scorers for Cork: L. Allen, F. Nelligan 1-2 each, L. Homan 0-4 (0-2 f), C. Dooley, C. O'Leary, C. O'Callaghan 0-2 each, R. Harty 0-1.

Galway: M. Dillon 2-2, C. Broderick 0-4 (0-3 f), C. Lynskey 1-0, C. Reilly 0-2, S. McGinley 0-1.

CORK: C. Buckley, E. O'Donovan, A. Walsh, N. O'Leary, L. O'Sullivan, A. O'Callaghan, L. Doyle, A. Cashman, R. Harty (c), R. Murphy, L. Allen, C. O'Leary, F. Nelligan, L. Homan, C. Dooley.

Subs: M. Ring for L. Doyle (h-t), C. O'Callaghan for C. Dooley (38), T. McCarthy for A. Walsh (43), E. Flanagan for C. O'Leary (53), L. Hallihane for A. O'Callaghan (55).

GALWAY: C. Higgins, R. Kelly, R. McPhillibin, L. Burke, C. Lawless, K. Mannion, J. Daly, K. Coleman, M. Gannon; C. Broderick, A. Lynskey, S. McGinley, C. Dolan, C. Lynskey, M. Dillon.

Subs: K. Somers for M. Gannon (h/t), R. Hughes for C. Lawless (h/t), C. Reilly for S. McGinley (45).

Referee: Mike Ryan (Tipperary).

Twomey wants his in-form Cork to put on

Relentless Rebels on course to qualify for league final, barring a disaster against Galway

CORK 0-23
KILKENNY 1-10

BY DARAGH Ó CONCHÚIR

THE party line from both Matthew Twomey and Fiona Keating was that there was much still to work on, and of course there is at this time of the year.

Still, Cork illustrated their rude health once more when recording a ten-point Very Camogie League Division 1A victory at UPMC Nowlan Park on Sat-

urday that, barring disasters, secured a place in the final for a second year in a row.

The Rebels made it four from four against the team that defeated them in last year's All-Ireland final and while this weekend's opposition Galway, who denied them in the league decider 12 months ago, and Tipperary can join them on 12 points at the top of the table, they would need to suffer a 19-point reverse to miss out.

After the latest win, winning manager Twomey and player

of the match Keating agreed there are many players putting up their hands for starting berths in the summer, such as last year's minor star Orlaith Cahalane, Emma Murphy and Ali Smith.

With the likes of Keating, Laura Hayes and Saoirse McCarthy now maturing into leaders on the pitch, they had ten different players contribute to their tally and that is with a number of big names still to return.

'We're delighted with the performance,' said Twomey. 'We had a good first half and while we were conscious about the start of the second half, to concede a goal, we're delighted with the character. It's March, we won't get carried away but

Cork manager Matthew Twomey.
(Photo: Ken Sutton/INPHO)



'When you think of who is to come back – Katrina Mackey, Orla Cronin, Pamela Mackey, Ashling Thompson' – Matthew Twomey

we're taking small steps at the time.

'When you think of who is to come back – Katrina Mackey, Orla Cronin, Pamela Mackey, Ashling Thompson and a few more on top of that, you have to be happy. We can't depend on Amy O'Connor getting all the scores

like she was at the start. We were conscious of that so the spread of scores was great.

'I know we got 23 points but we still left a lot of scores after us, especially goals but it's the sharing of it that's brilliant.'

A four-point scoring burst into the elements before half time was probably the most significant period in the game, enabling Cork to go in at the break leading 0-12 to 0-7.

The sides were deadlocked four times before the Leesiders took the lead for the first time courtesy of Amy O'Connor, 16 minutes in. It was still a one-point game with eight minutes remaining, but scores from teenager Orlaith Cahalane, O'Connor, Hannah Looney and Cahalane again provided sepa-

big performance at Páirc Uí Chaoimh

ration for the first time.

After conceding the first two points of the second half, Kilkenny were given a considerable boost by a sensational 35th minute goal from Julianne Malone. A Katie Power point reduced the margin to three but Cork gradually edged away after the resumption, Matthew Twomey's subs adding to the energy on the pitch and Cliona Healy, Emma Murphy, Sorcha McCartan and Saoirse McCarthy among the scorers. A standout Rebel in Kilkenny was Courcey Rovers' Fiona Keating who scored 0-4. She revelled in a new role at midfield, having excelled at centre-forward last season. She contributed four points from midfield against the Cats, who beat them in last

'You have the likes of Orlaith Cahalane in with us now' – Fiona Keating

year's All-Ireland final.

'Every year it's something different but it's great,' said Keating of the new position. 'They give you a bit of freedom to do what you want but at the same time you've a role to play in the team and when you

listen to experts like Matthew and (coach) Liam (Cronin), they put so much work in behind the scenes, they have everything nailed down to a tee and what they tell you to do is what you do and it all links into the play and results like this one today.

'We've been working a lot in training on things

Cork star Fiona Keating scored 0-4 against Kilkenny.



that we could improve on and we put a lot of that practice into play today. Everyone's fighting for places as well. We've the two Mackeys and Orla Cronin and a few more to come back after injury so it's everyone's chance during the league to put their hands up and fight for a spot in the team. 'You have the likes of Orlaith Cahalane in with us now (with) a really dominant place in the team. That's not a place she had last year but I think she has a big place in the team this year. She's just one of the young players coming through in Cork and it's great to have such a standard of young players coming through.'

'There were a lot of positives to take from the match today but there's a lot to work on as

well. We'll go back to the drawing board this week.'

Twomey asserted that Galway, who denied them in last year's league final, could not expect any favours, even though it would take a calamitous turn of events for his side not to make the decider for a second year in a row. 'Every game we want to test out something new,' Twomey declared. 'We learned a lot from today. We need more

games. It's all about games this time of the year. We certainly won't be putting the white flag up for Sunday. We'll be going out strong again and having a cut off it, especially down at Páirc Uí Chaoimh. How many opportunities do you get to play in the Páirc? And there's going to be Cork supporters there for the football so we want to put on a performance and go hell for leather.'

DIVISION 1A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	SD	PTS
Cork	4	4	0	0	6-73	3-37	+45	12
Tipperary	4	3	0	1	8-54	3-36	+33	9
Galway	4	3	0	1	4-54	5-44	+7	9
Kilkenny	4	1	0	3	2-51	3-58	-10	3
Clare	4	1	0	3	3-37	4-64	-30	3
Dublin	4	0	0	4	1-31	6-61	-4	5

Galway to host Cork in mouthwatering start to All-Ireland senior championship

Camogie

Daragh Ó Conchúir

Kilkenny will get the defence of their All-Ireland senior title under way in a group involving Dublin, Tipperary and Wexford.

The draws for the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Camogie Championships were broadcast across The Camogie Association's social channels last night.

Brian Dowling's outfit edged out Cork in the All-Ireland final last August courtesy of a late goal by substitute Sophie Dwyer and dramatic winning point from Denise Gaule.

It was a second consecutive defeat in the decider for the Rebels and as if they needed any further motivation, they have been drawn in Group 2 along with Galway, who got

the better of them in the 2021 decider. They are joined by Clare and Down.

Cork and Galway will get the All-Ireland Championships off to a blockbuster start as they do battle in the opening round at a Galway venue on the weekend June 3/4.

Group 3 comprises two of last year's quarter-finalists, Waterford and Limerick, as well as an up-and-coming Antrim and a rebuilding Offaly. All four teams have been competing in Division 1B of the Very Ireland National Leagues and indeed, Limerick and Offaly cross swords on Saturday in a crucial tie where the loser will drop to third tier, Division 2A.

It isn't the only weekend outing that has had a bit of extra spice added as a result of the draw, as Cork and Galway go head to head with the Tribeswomen needing a posi-

itive result to be in with a chance of making the final and defending their League crown, while Tipperary and Kilkenny also clash in a mouth-watering local derby that if the Premiers win, will see them play in a first national final decider since losing the 2009 League final to Wexford.

The Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Intermediate Championship will get under way on the weekend of May 27-28. Holders Galway have been given the stiff task of emerging from a five-team group involving the second strings of Cork, Dublin, and Kilkenny, as well as Kildare. Group 2 involves last year's Premier Junior winners Antrim, Derry, Carlow and Wexford's second team, while Meath, Laois, Kerry and Westmeath make up Group 3.

There are also three groups

All-Ireland groups

Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Championship

Group 1: Cork, Galway, Clare, Down

Group 2: Kilkenny, Dublin, Tipperary, Wexford

Group 3: Waterford, Limerick, Antrim, Offaly

Intermediate Championship

Group 1: Cork, Dublin, Kilkenny, Kildare, Galway

Group 2: Derry, Wexford, Carlow, Antrim

Group 3: Meath, Laois, Kerry, Westmeath

Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Premier Junior Championship

Group 1: Cavan, Wicklow, Tipperary

Group 2: Armagh, Mayo, Limerick, Offaly

Group 3: Clare, Louth, Tyrone, Roscommon

in the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Premier Junior Championship, which also starts on May 27-28. Group 1 is a three-team affair comprising Cavan, Wicklow and Tipperary.

The other two groups are

made up of four teams, with Armagh, Mayo, Limerick and Offaly in Group 2 and Clare, Louth, Tyrone and Roscommon in Group 3.

As in previous years, six teams will qualify for the

knockout stages of the Glen Dimplex Senior All-Ireland Championships, two from each group. Two of the three group winners will advance directly to the semi-finals, with one team joining the other three second placed teams in the quarter-finals.

The identity of those straight to semi-final will be determined by a draw involving the three group winners.

The quarter-final pairings will be decided by an open draw but there will be no repeat pairings, i.e. the group winners participating in the quarter-final cannot play the runner-up from their group.

Hilda Breslin, Camogie Association president, said: 'The Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Championship draws always throw up exciting pairings and interesting discussions, and this year is no different.'



Laura Treacy of Cork in action against Dervla Higgins of Galway at Croke Park.

Picture: Ben McShane/Sportsfile

Treacy has an eye on medal



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

SUNDAY

**Very National League Division 1A
Cork v Galway, Páirc Uí Chaoimh, 12pm.**
IT'S hard to believe that Cork's Laura Treacy has yet to win a national league medal with her county.

Remarkably, 2013 was the last time Cork took that silverware. Since then, Kilkenny have five titles, Galway three, with the 2020 campaign cancelled due to the pandemic.

Just how important is it for Cork to win that league title this year?

"I've never won a league. The last time they won I was in my leaving cert, and I wasn't playing in the league or something like that. So, I don't have a league medal.

"I think winning is important and it's been a long time since Cork have lifted a cup so obviously I would think it would build momentum in the right direction. We want to win games and by winning games that means we're performing and we're going after performance a lot.

"Hitting the targets that Liam Cronin (the coach) is giving us, we're looking at that and once we perform we should get a win if we're hitting those targets. So, I haven't even thought about a league final as such. After each game, the next game is along the way and then the next one so it's been great first of all to have so many games.

"The new structure of the campaign is very much a positive one. You're getting to play all the teams and there's plenty of games, so girls are getting game time. I think winning in itself is important.

"Another win against Kilkenny gave us another boost, gave us other things to work on, that we can learn from and bring them to the next game against Galway this weekend. And perform again against Galway at the weekend is all that I'm thinking at the moment but in looking to



Laura Murphy of Kilkenny encounters Laura Treacy of Cork.

Picture: Piaras Ó Midheach/Sportsfile

the future I guess winning a league would be... it would be nice.

"It's a long time since we've actually gone away and won a national league, obviously, it's been years and years, and it's been a long time since we've walked up the Hogan stand steps. So, winning is important you know just for good momentum and stuff. So, looking forward to it but we obviously have to keep focusing on each game and then after that winning will take care of itself."

Galway will throw everything at Cork on Sunday in their final group game in Páirc Uí Chaoimh. They still have a chance of qualifying if they win and Kilkenny defeat Tipperary. Realistically if both Galway and Tipperary win, Tipp will go through on scoring difference as they are currently +26 ahead of Galway. So, a win is imperative for the women from the West and then they'll hope Kilkenny do them a favour.

Galway didn't set the pitch alight in their 1-14 to 0-9 win over Dublin last Saturday. When you consider that Cork beat the same opponents 3-17 to 0-5 in their opening round and have improved

steadily since it's hard to see a Galway victory. There is competition for places in the Cork squad once their injuries recover.

Bring back in Katrina and Pam Mackey and Orla Cronin in the short term and there are three players that lined out against Kilkenny looking over their shoulder. The likes of Orlaith Cahalane is getting strong game time, Fiona Keating is back to her best, Cliona Healy likewise.

Cork won't be taking their foot off of the pedal. Matthew Twomey asserted that Galway, who denied them in last year's League final, could not expect any favours, even though it would take a drastic turn of events for his side not to make the decider for a second year in a row.

"Every game we want to test out something new," Twomey declared. "We need more games. It's all about games this time of the year.

"We certainly won't be putting the white flag up. We'll be going out strong again and having a cut off it, especially down at Páirc Uí Chaoimh. How many opportunities do you get to play in the Páirc."



Cork full-forward Hayley Ryan in action against Tipperary's Clara Ryan.

Cork senior ladies need to keep momentum, no slip-ups for minors

SATURDAY: Very Division 2B National League: Cork v Kilkenny, Piltown, 1pm

THE clash of table-toppers in the Very Division 2B National League in Piltown on Saturday in a game that is the curtain-raiser to the Kilkenny v Tipperary Division 1 tie.

Kilkenny, with three games played, have a 100% record with victories over Galway, Tipperary, and Wexford.

Having got their campaign off to a great start with a 3-16 to 0-7 win over Galway, they defeated Tipperary 3-10 to 1-8 before receiving a stern test last weekend from Wexford. The underdogs were unlucky not to have got something from the game, losing out by just a single point, 0-15 to 3-5.

This is Kilkenny's last game in the group series and a win will see them top of the table with their place in the final secured. Cork, with a game to come against Wexford will be hoping to maintain their good run and go into their last game on full points.

This weekend, Wexford meet Tipperary and on form, they should have too much strength for Tipp. That means it's Cork, Kilkenny, and Wexford chasing the final spots.

Kilkenny have lots of experience. Danielle Quigley, Danielle Morrissey, Claire Doherty Afton Grace, Mairead Kennedy, and Eimear Leahy have been to the fore in their three outings to date. With their senior side out of the running for a place in the Division 1 final, their second squad will be hoping they can go one better.

Cork had to battle hard on Saturday last to overcome a gritty and determined Galway side, but they dug deep and showed huge character and

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

determination to carve out a victory. Leanne O'Sullivan was hugely influential in defence while captain Rachel Harty worked tirelessly at midfield.

Fiona Nelligan started at corner-forward and she certainly put her hands up for a place in the starting line-up this time out. She showed huge pace as she took on the Galway defenders and helped herself to 1-2. She certainly has a lot to offer to Trevor Coleman and his selector.

SUNDAY: Electric Ireland Minor A: Cork v Tipperary, Castle Road, 2pm.

Cork face into round three and a meeting with Tipperary coming off the back of their seven-point defeat at the hand of Waterford last weekend.

Waterford came into that clash having lost out to Galway in their opening round game and they battled to the finish to get a result.

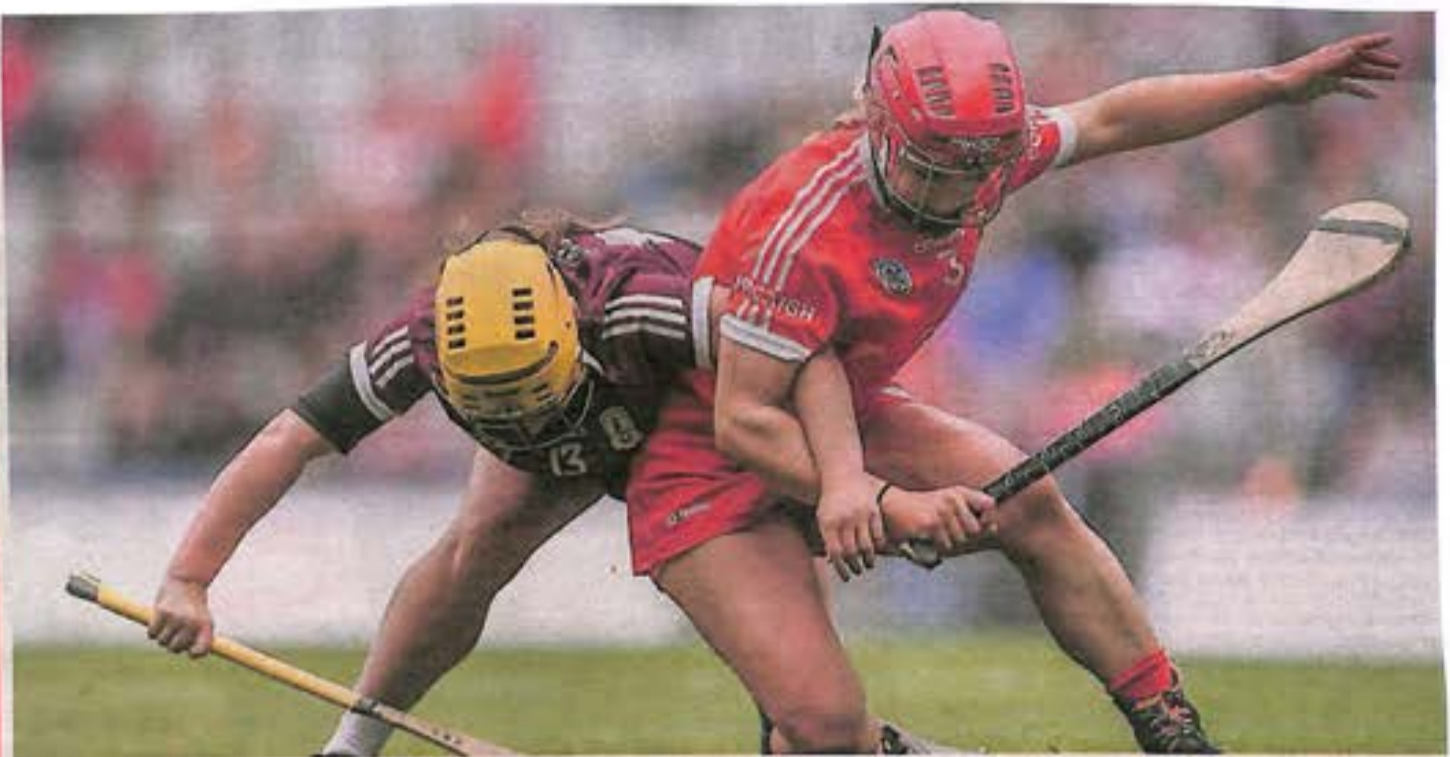
Cork must now put that defeat on the back burner and take on Tipperary side that lost their opening round game to Kilkenny by a point and overcame Dublin in round two.

With the top four advancing to the semi-finals any slip-up is going to be costly and with games to come against Kilkenny and Galway for Cork, they need a victory over Tipperary.

Currently, as we go into round three, Galway head the group with two wins from two games. Cork, Kilkenny, Tipperary, and Waterford are all level having each lost a game. Dublin having lost two games have a lot of catching up to do.



Cork taking on Tipperary at Cork Camogie Grounds, Castle Road, Cork in Division 2B Very Camogie League. Pictures: Larry Cummins



Siobhán McGrath of Galway in action against Cork All-Star defender Libby Coppinger.

Picture: Ben McShane/Sportsfile

Tour planned for a bad time



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

THE Camogie Association issued a statement last week in relation to the cancellation of the 2023 All-Stars tour to Canada.

Cork were the only county to publicly explain that their players would not be travelling such was the inappropriate timing of the event, two weeks out from the All-Ireland championship and right in the middle of the provincial championship.

It is believed however that other counties also expressed their intention to withdraw. A section of the statement read: "It is with regret that we have had to cancel the proposed PwC All-Stars tour to Calgary, Canada, in May 2023, having exhausted all options to reschedule. We have consulted and listened to our players and despite doing everything within our power to make the tour work there is very limited space across the calendar year to ensure the tour does not impact any group and respects all competitions."

"The tour is not feasible in 2023 and it is with great disappointment that we have arrived at this position."

That is so disappointing for the players involved. Had the right date been originally chosen this wouldn't have happened. There were too many parties involved at the late point of trying to reschedule and so it didn't work out. I always feel that for players who aren't lucky enough to feature in or win All-Ireland titles, the All-Stars is something that bit more meaningful to them and for all concerned the All-Stars tour is a wonderful reward for a hard year's work well done.

But it's a holiday, albeit a high-profile one, and the players were right to put their teammates and counties first by withdrawing. Hopefully lessons have been learned.

Galway and Tipperary joined Cork on top of the Division 1A table of the Very Camogie League for all of 24 hours last Saturday before Cork comprehensively de-



Amy O'Connor shoots at the goal under pressure from Kilkenny's Grace Walsh.

feated Kilkenny the following day by 10 points.

The pressure was placed on Cork to beat Kilkenny and push three points clear with all three sides having a final game this weekend. And they duly delivered in what was a very good display. It's March, we all know that, so reading too much into the campaign would be foolish. But at the same time Cork at the moment are well ahead of all the others. Kilkenny have had a poor campaign. They were missing Miriam Walsh and Denise Gaule last Sunday. Walsh, it seems, even though no one seems to be able to get confirmation, has injured her cruciate and will be out for the remainder of the season. What a blow that is to the former Player of the Year and her team.

Cork too however have lost their fair share but seem to have greater strength in depth to cope. I mentioned maybe three years ago that Cork had the youngest panel of the top three and that Galway and Kilkenny would start hitting retirements around now. We still aren't sure who has departed our opponents' panels as the league is always a trial campaign and who knows who will reappear next month. With such a short season; the All-Ireland final being just over four months away,

Kilkenny and Galway seem to have a lot to do.

Galway's defence of their league title got off to a poor start against Tipp but they have improved in the meantime and would have been expected to get the better of Dublin, who are propping up the table. They did, by 1-14 to 0-9 at Duggan Park, which is a poor return if truth be told. While Dublin made it hard on the hosts Galway should have won that game more convincingly.

Carrie Dolan, Cork's tormentor in last year's league final, has excelled from the start of the season and she provided a goal and ten points to her team's tally. 1-10 from 1-14 from one player?

Not an encouraging sign! The same applies to Aisling Maher in the Dublin jersey as the former All-Star shot all bar one point of the Dubs' tally. Tipperary have been going well, their only loss being a narrow two-point one to Cork and they put Clare to the sword at The Ragg. Leading by 0-14 to 0-0 at the interval, they were able to cruise to the finish line for a 1-20 to 0-7 triumph.

The same can't be said for Clare, who defeated All-Ireland champions Kilkenny in the first round but were falling to a third successive defeat since.

Tipp need Rebel favour after being stung by Gaule

TIPPERARY are relying on pace-setters Cork to do them a big favour if their dream of participating in a first national final since 2009 is to be realised.

Denis Kelly's side were left shellshocked as two injury-time points from Denise Gaule snatched a 0-14 to 0-13 triumph for Kilkenny in a hard-fought Very Camogie League Division 1A tie at UPMC Nowlan Park yesterday.

Victory for Tipp would have sealed their place in the decider but they can now be overhauled by Galway, if the defending champions can secure a draw at Páirc Uí Chaoimh today.

The Premier County's Eimear McGrath looked to have grasped a famous win with her fourth point in

CAMOGIE

By Daragh Ó Conchúir

the third minute of injury time, but that was to reckon without the nerveless Gaule, who brought her tally to five and enabled Kilkenny to finish a largely forgettable campaign in the best possible manner.

In Division 1B, Waterford made it five wins from five when maintaining their rich vein of scoring form to account for Down by 3-16 to 0-10 in Carriganore.

The Munster side had already booked a place in the decider courtesy of their 100 per cent record, which allowed new

manager Seán Power to make some changes but they were too strong nonetheless, indicating a real competition for places ahead of next month's final.

Two goals from Niamh Rockett gave the home team the upper hand in the first half and Anne Corcoran added their third in the closing stages.

With the game between Antrim and Wexford having been postponed, they will have to wait to find out who will be in opposition.

What is known is that Offaly have been relegated to the third tier as a result of their 2-14 to 1-14 defeat to Limerick at Mick Neville Park.

The Treaty women registered the last six points of the game, having looked to have been in trouble

trailing by three entering the final quarter. They had goalkeeper Laura O'Neill to thank for not being further behind in what had been a close affair for the majority of proceedings before the see-saw conclusion.

Offaly got the perfect start with a goal from Siobhán Flannery after three minutes but Claire Keating settled the hosts with a brace of points. Mairéad Teehan restored Offaly's advantage with six points in the first half alone but a Caoimhe Lyons goal made it 1-8 apiece at the interval.

Teehan was unerring in the second half once more but Limerick dug deep with their backs to the wall, Rachael O'Brien, Lyons, Orlaith Kelleher and Keating

splitting the posts to record a momentous victory.

In Division 2A, Patrice Diggin scored ten points as Kerry cruised to a 2-15 to 1-5 triumph over Laois to qualify for the final on April 16 against either Meath and Derry, who cross swords tomorrow.

The Division 3A semi-finals were also played and second-half goals from Breege Nolan and Emma Cody propelled Carlow to a 2-12 to 0-4 success over neighbours Kildare. They will face Armagh, who defeated Roscommon, 1-14 to 1-6.

Mayo will play Tyrone in the Division 4 final, after the westerners defeated Wicklow 2-12 to 4-3 and the Red Hands beat Louth 1-24 to 2-5.

Camogie final pairings and relegation on the line

There are some tasty pairings in the Very Camogie Leagues this weekend that have added significance, with places in the finals and relegation to be determined in Divisions 1A and 1B by Sunday evening.

The Division 3A semi-finals take place today.

Very Camogie League Division 1A

Kilkenny v Tipperary, Piltown GAA, today 3pm

Referee: Justin Heffernan (Wexford)

A local derby that would be keenly contested anyway was given added bite when the pair were drawn in the same championship group on Thursday.

Tipperary are unlikely to be thinking about that though, as they are on the brink of a first national final since losing the 2009 League decider to Wexford.

The indomitable Mary Ryan is the sole survivor from that squad and she made her first appearance of the season off the bench in the stroll against Clare last weekend. Denis Kelly's crew have their fate in their own hands, regardless of what happens between Cork and Galway.

They face the All-Ireland champions, who have been off-colour, with just a win over Dublin to talk of and confirmation that player of the year, Miriam Walsh has suffered a serious knee injury another blow.

While the Nonesiders' focus at this stage is on later in the year they are, mathematically, still in danger of being relegated. They would need to ship a very heavy defeat and Dublin to be easy winners over Clare for that to transpire.

Clare v Dublin, Cusack Park, tomorrow 12pm

Referee: John Dermody (Westmeath)

When Clare claimed the scalp of All-Ireland champions Kilkenny in round 1, they wouldn't have been considering a relegation battle. That's the stark reality though after failing to build on that tremendous opening and they were never at the races last weekend against Tipperary. Dublin have lost all four outings but there have been improvements each weekend.

They need, not just to win, but to do so by eight points to be spared

the drop. Should that happen, Clare would require Kilkenny to be beaten by at least 28 points, which seems very unlikely. So they must at least draw this to remain in Division 1A.

Cork v Galway, tomorrow Páirc Uí Chaoimh, 12pm

Referee: Liz Dempsey (Kilkenny)
Live stream on <https://www.youtube.com/@OfficialCamogie/streams>

Another pre-cursor to an impending championship clash. Cork have been purring along nicely, with only Tipperary giving them a real challenge.

The pair could cross swords again in the final, but Galway are defending champions and have bounced back well from losing to the Premier in the opening round.

They need Kilkenny to take something off Tipp as their score difference is far inferior and even if they emerged from Páirc Uí Chaoimh

with the win, would have to do so by 19 points to overtake the Rebels, should Tipp also record victory.

Very Camogie League Division 1B

Waterford v Down, SETU Arena Carriganore, today 12pm

Referee: Cathal McAlister (Cork)

There is nothing at stake but pride as Down cannot force their way into the top two and Waterford have already secured a place in the Division 1B final in the most convincing fashion, scoring 7-80 in four impressive triumphs.

Limerick v Offaly, Mick Neville Park Rathkeale, today 2.30pm

Referee: Barry Nea (Westmeath)

In contrast, there is a lot riding on this tie, as the loser is relegated to Division 2A, not a place a team operating in the senior championship wants to be plying its trade in. Having gotten a brilliant draw against Antrim, a similar result will

do Offaly while Limerick, who were All-Ireland quarter-finalists last year but are 0 for 4, must win.

Antrim v Wexford, Roger Casements GAA, today 2pm

Referee: Ray Kelly (Kildare)

That aforementioned draw must really irritate Antrim but it removes any equivocation about what's required here.

They have to beat Wexford to overhaul them for the runner-up spot.

A share of spoils will be enough to see the Yellowbellies advance.

Very Camogie League Division 3A semi-finals

Armagh v Roscommon, Inniskeen Grattans, today 3pm

Referee: Paul O'Neill (Antrim)

Carlow v Kildare, NGDC Abbotstown, today 12pm

Referee: Ciarán Grooma (Offaly)
Words: Daragh Ó Conchúir

Opportunist O'Reilly shatters Tipp to set up repeat Cork clash

Camogie

Daragh Ó Conchúir

Allish O'Reilly played down her opportunistic goal that kept Galway's hopes of a second consecutive Very Camogie League Division 1A title alive at Páirc Uí Chaoimh yesterday, preferring to focus on the character and workrate of the team, and nine points supplied by the remorseless Carrie Dolan.

Yet it was workrate that had O'Reilly hunting down Cork goalie Molly Lynch in the 48th minute. Had Lynch gathered the sliotar first time, it would have been for nought but she didn't.

Even then, O'Reilly had to win the ball back. She blocked Lynch's attempted pass and was quickest to react then, shooting first time off the sod in the net to bring Galway back level, having fallen behind to a brilliant Emma Murphy goal.

Dolan added three points and Galway inflicted a first defeat of the campaign on Cork by 1-11 to 1-10.

In doing so, they broke the hearts of a Tipperary team that beat them in the opening round. The Premier were denied a win that would have



DRIVING ON: Galway's Aoife Donohue attempts to burst past Cork's Meabh Cahalane and Laura Tracey in the Very Camogie League Division 1A clash at Páirc Uí Chaoimh. Picture: Inpho/Ken Sutton

given them a first national final appearance in 14 years by two injury-time points from Denise Gaule that gave Kilkenny a 0-14 to 0-13 win in Piltown on Saturday.

Instead Galway and Cork will meet again in the final in

Croke Park on the weekend of April 8/9 after both finished on 12 points.

"We were severely disappointed by that Tipperary game," said O'Reilly, "but we've learned so much from it, it was a blessing in disguise

really. We've a fairly new team, with a fair few girls coming through.

"Cork have been flying it and to go toe-to-toe with them and come out with the win was huge for a team morale point of view. We still have a lot of

work to do and we're not going to get carried away. We're going to meet all those strong teams again but it's a step in the right direction."

The way the former All-Star tells it, the goal was the least she could have contributed but she is no stranger to big moments, having been a match-winner in the 2019 All-Ireland final with her penchant for billowing the net.

"Her miscontrol gave me an extra second to get there. Thankfully I blocked her and finished it. It made up for the few wides I had and a few other mistakes but you'll take it when you get it.

"We talk about workrate, it's not a choice at this stage, and we had to up it in comparison to our other games."

Galway and Cork will also get the championship off to a mouth-watering start on June 3 but O'Reilly bats away any notion that this will have any impact on the approach in a fortnight's time.

"We'll look at it as one game. We'll have an eight-week gap to championship then and a lot can change in that time. When you get to a league final, you don't go there to lose so we'll be going all out."

The cherry on top, on a day to remember for Galway

camogie was the return of two-time All-Ireland-winning captain and seven-time All-Star defender, Sarah Dervan to the match-day group.

"It's great to have her experience back there again, her presence is huge. She's good to go now. I don't know if she'll be playing in a couple of weeks, that'll be up to management but she's working hard and to have her back in is a great boost. We're getting there slowly but surely."

At the other end of the table, Dublin were relegated despite gaining the first point of the campaign in a 1-10 to 1-10 draw with Clare, which was enough to keep the Banner in the top tier.

In Division 2B, Meath edged out Derry by 1-9 to 0-10 to secure a place in the final against Kerry, who beat Laois by 2-15 to 1-5 on Saturday to top the table thanks in no small part to 10 points from Patrice Diggin.

Aoife Minogue and Grace Coleman shot three points each for the Royals while Caroline Quinn hit the crucial goal. Derry, who would have advanced with a draw due to a superior score difference, were ironically overly reliant on Aine McAllister, who provided seven points as they fell just short.

Rebels beaten but a decider awaits



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

Cork 1-10
Galway 1-11

CORK had already qualified for the national league final before they took to the pitch in Páirc Uí Chaoimh on Sunday.

Galway had to get a result and they managed it with a one-point victory, two Carrie Dolan frees giving them a two-point lead in additional time before Chloe Sigerson's free closed matters.

Cork went with a few changes, Molly Lynch, Aoife O'Neill, Emma Murphy and Clodagh Finn all getting starts. A few positional changes too. Laura Hayes started at midfield. Hannah Looney dropped back to right half back with Sorcha McCartan coming out to the right of the 40 in the starting team.

For the second week in a row, the game was 15 on 15, with both sides operating a support and running game from defence. It has its risks, both teams coughing up a couple of points in the opening half. Galway started with wind advantage and led 0-6 to 0-2 after 18 minutes, but failed to score for the remainder of the half.

The wind changed direction at the quarter stage and Cork made full use. Three points in six minutes arrive from Saoirse McCarthy as Cork put on the pressure. An Amy O'Connor free levelled it. Carrie Dolan had struck five, four from frees and Ailish O'Reilly with a point for Galway.

There was strong work-rate by both sides. Both defences were doing well as forward divisions headed for the jugular when half a chance was on but Shauna Healy, Roisin Black and Dervla Higgins held firm in Galway's full-back line while Libby Coppinger was highly dependable.

Fiona Keating and Siobhan Gardiner swapped points within minutes of the restart.

A Maeve Cahalane run up the middle and pass to Emma Murphy who came in tight on the end line to squeeze the ball past Fiona Ryan gave Cork their goal on forty-six. Galway responded, Ailish O'Reilly blocking



Galway's Roisin Black and Cork's Clodagh Finn in camogie action at Páirc Uí Chaoimh.

Picture: INPHO/Ken Sutton

Molly Lynch who was retrieving a back pass and pulling to the net.

Converting a free, Dolan had another chance from close range but she choose to shoot low. Cork blocked it. Cliona Healy levelled the game for the sixth time. A soft free, in a crowded melee, gave Galway a one-point lead and another clinched it before Sigerson's final say.

Cork will now play Galway again in three weeks in the league final. A positive for Cork was the return of Orla Cronin who came on after the break.

Scorers for Cork: E Murphy 1-0, S McCarthy 0-3, A O'Connor, S McCartan 0-2 (0-1 f) each, F Keating, C Healy, C Sigerson (f) 0-1 each.

Galway: C Dolan 0-9 (0-8 f), A O'Reilly 1-1, S Corcoran 0-1.

CORK: M Lynch, A O'Neill, L Coppinger, M Cahalane, H Looney, L Tracey, I O'Regan, S McCarthy, L Hayes, S McCartan, F Keating, E Murphy, A O'Connor, C Finn, C Healy. **Subs:** O Cronin for C Finn (43), H Ryan for E Murphy (45), C Sigerson for L Hayes (51), M Murphy for A O'Neill (54).

GALWAY: F Ryan, F Ryan, S Healy, R Black, D Higgins, K A Porter, E Helebert, R Hanniffy, A Donoghue, C Hickey, S Rabbitte, C Dolan, N Hanniffy, S Corcoran, A O'Reilly, A Keane. **Subs:** S Gardiner for C Hickey (41), N McPeake for S Corcoran (49), J Hughes for S Rabbitte (53).

Referee: Liz Dempsey (Kilkenny).



Galway's Ailish O'Reilly celebrates scoring a goal against Cork at Páirc Uí Chaoimh.

Picture: INPHO/Ken Sutton

Nelligan and Keane goals help keep the Cats at bay

Kilkenny 0-7
Cork 2-9

CORK finished strongly to beat Kilkenny away and to go joint-top of the Very Division 2B League group.

With one game to play, against Wexford, they ensured they are in a good position for a place in the final. Kilkenny will have to sit back and wait until next weekend to see if they've done enough to get through.

In a close contest at Piltown, little divided the sides all through but goals proved crucial. Cork got two in the opening half through Fiona Nelligan and Claudia Keane, which was crucial to their victory.

Rachel Harty got the opening score after three minutes before Kilkenny took control with four points without reply, all from Danielle Morrissey, two from frees and two from play

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

Cork burst to life and they were back on level after Nelligan hit the net.

After 17 minutes, Cliona O'Leary edged Cork into the lead with a free and they kicked on as Keane's goal, followed by an Ellen Gunner point for the Cats, made it 2-2 to 0-5 at the break.

Kilkenny narrowed the gap on the restart through Morrissey before O'Leary clipped over a point from play. Morrissey and Lucy Allen traded points and the gap was three as we entered the final quarter.

Digging deep for the closing quarter, Cork began to wear down the Kilkenny challenge.

With their defence now on top, holding the Kilkenny attack well, Cork set about closing the game out.

Two O'Leary frees put five points between the sides. Now in the driving seat, Cork finished with points from Ciara Golden, Aoibhinn Kidney and Rose Murphy.

Scorers for Kilkenny: D Morrissey 0-6 (0-2 f), E Gunner 0-1.

Cork: C O'Leary 0-4 (0-3 f), C Keane, F Nelligan 1-0 each, R Harty, L Allen, R Murphy, A Kidney, C Golden 0-1 each.

KILKENNY: C Murphy, J O'Dea, H Scott, J Cass, K O'Byrne, R Phelan, N Leahy, M Kennedy, K McCuskey, L Greene, L Gunner, A Cantwell, A Grace, D Morrissey, E Mulhall.

Subs: C Doherty for A Grace, D Quigley for E Mulhall, E Hughes for A Cantwell, R Brennan for L Leahy, V Homes for E Gunner, A Shefflin for A O'Dea.

CORK: S Beausang, A Moloney, C Ring, E Flanagan, T McCarthy, M Ring, L O'Sullivan, R Harty, A Cashman, C Keane, L Allen, C O'Leary, L Homan, C O'Callaghan, F Nelligan.

Subs: A O'Callaghan for T McCarthy, R Murphy for F Nelligan, O Mullins for C Keane, C Dooly for C O'Leary, N O'Leary for A O'Callaghan, C Golden for L Homan, A Kidney for C O'Callaghan.

Referee: Karol Collins (Galway).

Cork were already guaranteed their spot in Division 1 final before this group game

CORK 1-10
GALWAY 1-11

GER MCCARTHY REPORTS

CORK suffered their first National Camogie League Division 1A defeat of the season last Sunday, against a Galway side they will meet in this year's decider.

The Tribeswomen arrived on Leaside knowing victory or a draw would cement a 2023 league final appearance as Kilkenny did the Connacht side a huge favour by edging Tipperary 0-14 to 0-13 the day before.

Cork were already assured a place in this year's league decider courtesy of four consecutive victories over Dublin, Clare, Tipp and Kilkenny.

Unfortunately for the Rebels, Galway edged a close encounter by a point thanks to a debatable late free. It was a game in which the home side produced their untidiest performance of the year.

'There are [still] a lot of positives to be taken,' Cork camogie selector Ger Manley told *The Southern Star*.

'Our aim at the start of the league campaign was to get to the final. It is disappointing to lose but that is a very good Galway team. We know that from last year.'

'They came at us full strength today. We have a few injuries but I thought the girls that came on did well. It was the first time some of them started in a national league game.'

'We conceded an unfortunate goal but that makes teams stronger. I thought we fought back well after (conceding) that goal but some decisions, one or two frees that went their way, especially in front of the goal. (The last free) was very harsh. I thought and turned out to be the winning point.'

A pair of Carrie Dolan frees sandwiched an Amy O'Connor effort as the visitors got off to a positive start. The first quarter ended with Galway 0-5 to 0-2 ahead after Ailish O'Reilly and Carrie Dolan (two frees) exchanged superbly taken scores with Sorcha McCartan.

A wasteful Cork struggled to get going as a sharper Galway extended their advantage courtesy of a long range Carrie Dolan effort.

That was Saoirse McCarthy's cue to storm into the game. The Courcy Rovers midfielder reeled off three consecutive points to inject life into a list-

POSITIVES IN DEFEAT AS FOCUS ON FINAL



Cork's Clodagh Finn in action against Galway's Roisin Black during the Very Camogie League Division 1A tie at Páirc Uí Chaoimh. (Photos: Ken Sutton/INPHO)



Cork's Laura Tracey and Libby Coppinger contest this ball with Galway's Aoife Donohue.

less Cork. At the opposite end, Libby Coppinger excelled in her full-back role and helped snuff out a stream of Galway attacks. Having been four points down, the Rebels changed ends tied at 0-6 apiece when Amy O'Connor converted a free to conclude an entertaining first period.

Fiona Keating handed Cork their first lead of the afternoon a minute after the restart. Shannon Corcoran replied with a hard-earned score before Sorcha McCartan landed

a monster free to restore the Rebels' lead.

Carrie Dolan's fifth free levelled matters once again but Cork responded superbly. A flowing move ended with Emma Murphy finding the net from a tight angle to make it 1-8 to 0-8.

Enniskeane's Orla Cronin made a welcome first appearance of the season off the bench before a major turning point. Molly Lynch was put under pressure by a long pass back

★ THE HIGHLIGHTS

Our Star: Saoirse McCarthy was one of the few Cork players to stand out; she contributed three points. Libby Coppinger had another fine outing at full-back.

Star moment: Emma Murphy's goal was finished superbly from a tight angle on a day Cork's long-range shooting was, at times, of the highest order.

Talking point: Liz Dempsey's decision to award Galway a free right in front of Cork's goal for, apparently, someone treading on the ball was perplexing to put it mildly.

What's next? Cork and Galway will meet again in this year's Division 1 final in Croke Park on April 16th.

and Ailish O'Reilly pounced to block Cork's goalkeeper and finish to the net.

Level for a fifth time, it was anyone's game heading into the final ten minutes. Galway's Carrie Dolan converted a free but made an odd decision to go for a goal, and failed, from an easier placed sliotar immediately after. Cork punished that indiscretion when Cliona Healy scored to make it 1-9 apiece.

Deep into injury time, Dolan made amends from a questionable close-in free. That made it 1-11 to 1-9 following Dolan's seventh free of the afternoon. Cliona Healy scorched a late free over the bar but it wasn't enough to prevent Cork's first defeat of 2023.

'Overall, we are happy and have a league final to look forward to in three weeks' time,' Manley said.

'Galway will be there and it is good to play the best teams as it prepares you for the championship.'

'The next three weeks' training is hugely important, especially for our dual players. Orlaith Cahalane didn't play today because she is after playing a lot of matches. Libby Coppinger, we had to leave her on for the full match today. She's an unbelievable player.'

'The players are hard on themselves in the dressing room right now. They are elite players and want to win all the time. The important thing for them is that there is a next day. That's the best thing about sport, you always have another day. The next day out, the league final, gives us something to aim for.'

Scorers

Cork: E Murphy 1-0; S McCarthy 0-3; A O'Connor, S McCartan (1F) 0-2 each; F Keating, C Healy, C Sigerson (1F) 0-1.

Galway: C Dolan 0-9 (8F); A O'Reilly 1-1; S Corcoran 0-1.

Cork: M Lynch; A O'Neill, L Coppinger, M Cahalane; H Looney, L Tracey, I O'Regan; S McCarthy, L Hayes; S McCartan, F Keating, E Murphy, A O'Connor, C Finn, C Healy.

Subs: O Cronin for C Finn (43), H Ryan for E Murphy (46), C Sigerson for L Hayes (51), M Murphy for A O'Neill (55).

Galway: F Ryan; S Healy, R Black, D Higgins; KA Porter, E Heibert, R Hanniffy; A Donoghue, C Hickey; S Rabbitte, C Dolan, N Hanniffy; S Corcoran, A O'Reilly, A Keane.

Subs: S Gardiner for C Hickey (half-time), N McPeake for S Corcoran (49), J Hughes for S Rabbitte (63).

Referee: Liz Dempsey (Kilkenny).

AIB Camogie Club Player Awards



AIB UNVEILS #THETOUGHEST PLAYERS OF TWO EPIC CAMOGIE SEASONS AS THE AIB CAMOGIE CLUB PLAYER AWARDS FOR 2021/2022 AND 2022/2023 ARE ANNOUNCED

The 2021/22 and 2022/23 AIB Camogie Club Championship Teams of the Year, Provincial Players of the Year and overall Players of the Year will be honoured this Saturday evening at a special ceremony at Croke Park.

AIB and the Camogie Association today unveiled the 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 AIB Camogie Club Player awards recipients, who will be honoured at a special ceremony at Croke Park this Saturday (March 25th).

Sarsfields stalwarts Siobhán McGrath and Niamh McGrath were named as the 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 AIB Camogie All-Ireland Club Championship Player of the Year respectively. The sisters helped their club to 2021/2022 All-Ireland success against Oulart The Ballagh, with Siobhán delivering a stand out performance, scoring 1-07 on the day. The Galway side went on to deliver back-to-back titles just a few short months later, as they claimed the 2022/2023 All-Ireland crown thanks to a super display against Loughgiel Shamrocks in the decider, with Niamh dominating the game from midfield.

Elsewhere, the AIB Camogie Club Provincial Players of the Year for both seasons were also unveiled, with players from across each of the four provinces recognised for their achievements. For the 2021/22 awards, Shelley Kehoe of Oulart The Ballagh (Wexford) was AIB Camogie Club Championship Leinster Player of the Year. Caoimhe Burke from Drom and Inch (Tipperary) Munster Club Player of the Year, while Orlaith McGrath was also rewarded for outstanding performances last season in the 2021/2022 AIB Camogie Club Championship, earning her Connacht Player of the Year.

The 2022/2023 AIB Camogie Club Championship Leinster Player of the Year honour meanwhile was awarded to Aisling Maher of St Vincents (Dublin), with Mairéad Eviston (Drom and Inch, Tipperary) picking up the Munster accolade, following fine seasons on the pitch for both players. Niamh McGrath (Sarsfields, Galway) was also named the AIB Camogie Club Championship Connacht Player of the Year, while Roisin McCormick was recognised for the Ulster accolade following her influential displays for Loughgiel Shamrocks (Antrim) this year.

The 2021/22 and 2022/23 AIB Camogie All-Ireland Club Championship Teams of the Year were also unveiled today. The 2021/22 outfit includes six players from All-Ireland champions Sarsfields, as the Galway club won their second ever All-Ireland club title in March 2022 when they defeated Wexford's Oulart The Ballagh in a thrilling final that produced seven goals. Laura Glynn features in goals with Laura Ward and Maria Cooney named in the back line, while Orlaith McGrath, Cora Kenny and Siobhán McGrath were all given the nod in the forward line. Oulart the Ballagh has five players on the team, following a season that saw them fall just short of back-to-back All-Ireland club success following their 2021 triumph. Aileen Brennan takes up the corner back position, with Aoife Dunne and Mary Leacy in the half back line, Anais Curran in midfield and Shelley Kehoe at centre forward.

Three-time All-Ireland winners Slaughtneil have two players on the team in Tina Bradley and Louise Duggan, on the back of another impressive season for the team which saw them claim a sixth consecutive Ulster crown. Following a ground-breaking season, which saw them reclaim their Munster title from Tipperary's Drom & Inch, Scariff Ogonoloe of Clare also have two players named on the team in Mairéad Scanlon and Jennifer Daly, in a year which saw them eventually fall short in their bid to become the first Clare club to contest the Senior All-Ireland final, following defeat at the hands Oulart The Ballagh.

The 2022/2023 AIB Camogie Team of the Year was also revealed today and a second All-Ireland title for Sarsfields in as many years was recognised with seven players named in the 2022/2023 AIB Camogie All-Ireland Club Championship Team of the Year. Laura Glynn got the nod again between the posts, with Reitseal Kelly, Laura Ward, Tara Kenny, Maria Cooney, Niamh McGrath and Siobhán McGrath all also featuring. All-Ireland finalists Loughgiel Shamrocks also feature heavily on the team, with Amy Boyle, Caitrin Dobbin, Róisín McCormick and Annie Lynn all given the nod.

Drom and Inch of Tipperary have two players selected for the Team of the Year in Mairéad Eviston and Eimear McGrath after an impressive season that saw the Munster champions narrowly lose out in the semi-final to Loughgiel Shamrocks. Dublin club St Vincent's round out the team, as they also have two players honoured in Aine Woods and Aisling Maher, after a hugely successful season that saw them come agonisingly close to dethroning Sarsfields, losing by a single point to their Galway counterparts at the semi-final stage following an exhilarating provincial campaign.

Speaking at the announcement, AIB Chief Executive Colin Hunt said: "On behalf of everyone at AIB, we extend our warmest congratulations to those honoured today for their performances in the last two AIB Camogie All-Ireland Club Championships. AIB is proud to celebrate the achievements of these players, and we are delighted to take this opportunity to recognise their talent and skill. AIB has sponsored the Camogie Club Championships for ten years now, and we look forward to celebrating these players and seasons at Croke Park this Saturday evening."

Uachtarán an Cumann Camógaíochta, Hilda Breslin added: "We are delighted to recognise the fantastic achievements of our club camogie players after two brilliant seasons of dedication and commitment to the sport we love. It is brilliant to be able to celebrate the 2021/22 Camogie Club performances alongside this year's worthy winners, and we would like to congratulate everyone who is being honoured today for their commitment and achievements on the field over the past two seasons. Having the support of AIB for the past 10 years has been instrumental in the promotion and development of the Camogie All-Ireland Club Championships, and we are looking forward to honouring the players at Croke Park this weekend."

2021/22 AIB Camogie Club Championship Team of the Year

1. Laura Glynn (Sarsfields, Galway)
2. Aileen Brennan (Oulart The Ballagh, Wexford)
3. Louise Duggan (Slaughtneil, Derry)
4. Laura Ward (Sarsfields, Galway)
5. Maria Cooney (Sarsfields, Galway)
6. Aoife Dunne (Oulart The Ballagh, Wexford)
7. Mary Leacy (Oulart The Ballagh, Wexford)
8. Anais Curran (Oulart The Ballagh, Wexford)
9. Mairead Scanlon (Scariff Ogonnelloe, Clare)
10. Tina Bradley (Slaughtneil, Derry)
11. Shelley Kehoe (Oulart The Ballagh, Wexford)
12. Orlaith McGrath (Sarsfields, Galway)
13. Cora Kenny (Sarsfields, Galway)
14. Jennifer Daly (Scariff Ogonnelloe Clare)
15. Siobhán McGrath (Sarsfields, Galway)

2021/22 AIB Camogie Club Championship Provincial Players of the Year

1. Caoimhe Bourke (Drom & Inch, Tipperary) Munster
2. Shelley Kehoe (Oulart-The-Ballagh, Wexford) Leinster
3. Orlaith McGrath (Sarsfields, Galway) Connacht
4. Lucia McNaughton (Loughgiel Shamrocks, Antrim) Ulster

2021/22 AIB Camogie Club Championship Player of the Year

1. Siobhán McGrath (Sarsfields, Galway)

2022/23 AIB Camogie Club Championship Team of the Year

1. Laura Glynn (Sarsfields, Galway)
2. Reitseal Kelly (Sarsfields, Galway)
3. Laura Ward (Sarsfields, Galway)
4. Aine Woods (St. Vincents, Dublin)
5. Tara Kenny (Sarsfields, Galway)
6. Maria Cooney (Sarsfields, Galway)
7. Mairéad Eviston (Drom & Inch, Tipperary)
8. Niamh McGrath (Sarsfields, Galway)
9. Amy Boyle (Loughgiel Shamrocks, Antrim)
10. Caitrin Dobbin (Loughgiel Shamrocks, Antrim)
11. Aisling Maher (St. Vincents, Dublin)
12. Eimear McGrath (Drom & Inch, Tipperary)
13. Róisín McCormick (Loughgiel Shamrocks, Antrim)
14. Siobhán McGrath (Sarsfields, Galway)
15. Annie Lynn (Loughgiel Shamrocks, Antrim)

2022/23 AIB Camogie Club Championship Provincial Players of the Year

1. Mairéad Eviston (Drom & Inch, Tipperary) Munster
2. Aisling Maher (St. Vincents, Dublin) Leinster
3. Niamh McGrath (Sarsfields, Galway) Connacht
4. Róisín McCormick (Loughgiel Shamrocks, Antrim) Ulster

2022/23 AIB Camogie Club Championship Player of the Year

1. Niamh McGrath (Sarsfields, Galway)



Galway's Róisín Black closed down by Cork's Clodagh Finn. Pictures:INPHO/Ken Sutton

Rebels look to get campaign back on track with trip to Kilkenny

SUNDAY

Electric Ireland Minor A All-Ireland Championship: Cork v Kilkenny, Freshford. WITH their third round game against Tipperary in the Electric Ireland Minor A championship postponed due to a bereavement in the Tipperary camp last weekend the Cork minors head to Kilkenny to take on a home side who are playing in their fourth game of the round robin series.

Kilkenny got their campaign off to a great start with a hard fought one point win over Tipperary they were in another battle before losing out by a point to Galway in a low scoring 2-3 to 0-8 contest.

They got their campaign back on track last weekend in another close game but this time they came out on the right sides of their battle with Waterford in a 2-9 to 1-9 contests.

Currently in second place with their last game to play against Dublin they will be battling hard to hold that second place.

Galway are the sides making all the running with three wins from three games played they sit on top of the table having overcome Waterford, Kilkenny and Dublin with four teams to come out of the group for the semi-finals they are looking strong.

At this stage it's looking like it's between Cork, Tipperary and Waterford for the two remaining places and with games to come against Tipperary and Galway cork will be looking for a big performance this weekend to jump into joint second.

Tipperary take on Galway at home and on form Galway would be expected to be too strong for the home sides.

Cork had a great opening round win over Dublin before crashing down to earth losing out to Waterford in round two, this was a game Cork were ex-

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

pected to win but they must now put that defeat to one side and head to Freshford in search of victory.

INTERMEDIATE CHAMPIONSHIP DRAWS

With the league drawing to its concluding stages the focus was on the championship draws last week and unlike the league where they only met counties second teams Cork will participate in the intermediate championship where they will meet first teams from other counties.

This is always a challenge but one that cork always relish and last season it was the second team from both Cork and Galway who made it to the all-Ireland final and Cork will not need reminding that this was a game they should have won.

It's all to play for now again and Cork are drawn in group one with Kildare, Dublin, Kilkenny and Galway, already Cork have met Kilkenny and Galway in the league and have come away with victories but championship is always different but never the less it is a very good draw for Cork and with Dublin also fielding their second team it should be a very balanced group, Galway having won last year's championship are now fielding a new team.

In group two it's Derry, Wexford, Carlow and Antrim, group three is Meath, Laois, Kerry and Westmeath.

Cork will get their campaign off to a start away to Kildare on 27th/28th May, they travel on 3rd/4th June to meet Kilkenny and they at home to Dublin on 10th/11th June, and finally at home to Galway 1st/2nd July.



Cork's Saoirse McCarthy in action against Galway's Aine Keane.



Cork's Laura Tracey tackles Galway's Sabina Rabbitt during the sides' Very Camogie League clash at Páirc Uí Chaoimh. Picture: INPHO/Ken Sutton

Cork-Galway all to play for

CAMOGIE



Linda Mellerick

IT says a lot about Galway that they came to Cork and fought out a one-point victory in their final group game last Sunday which saw them leap over Tipperary for a place in the final on June 16, again against Cork.

Tipperary had their league destiny in the palm of their hands and failed to see it home.

Their one-point defeat to Kilkenny was a big blow to a team that more so than Cork, Galway or Kilkenny needed a league final appearance. I couldn't see Tipp beating Cork in the league final.

But Tipperary needed to get there, and it goes to show again that when it boils down to it the top three just aren't going to be knocked off their perch by Tipperary or anyone else anytime soon.

What the Cork and Galway game did show up last week is how difficult it was to get past an excellent Galway full back line. Points galore are going to be what wins it in two weeks' time.

We got one goal in each of the two finals in 2022 and lost both games. Galway got two past us in the league final, Kilkenny got one in the All Ireland. Most forward lines won't get much change out of Cork's defence either.

There were a couple of changes in there last weekend, but Cork's defence is hard to break down and Libby Coppinger was outstanding at number 3.

Saoirse McCarthy's three points in six minutes were top drawer. She has a lovely style and adds to it, great pace, and accuracy. Cork won't be bothered by the defeat; they'll welcome it and it gives them greater hunger for the showdown.

Good news for Cork was the return to play of Orla Cronin midway through the second half, her first appearance this season. Katrina and Pam Mackey are still nursing medium term injuries.

A welcome return for Galway is Sarah Dervan, their highly dependable and ex-



Cork's Meabh Murphy and Galway's Niamh Hanniffy.

INPHO/Ken Sutton

perienced full back, two-time All-Ireland-winning captain and seven-time All-Star defender.

The jury is still out as to whether Niamh Kilkenny will line out for championship, it's felt she will. Heather Cooney won't be available while Orlaith McGrath, Rebecca Hennelly and Ciara Donohue are all still recovering from cruciate injuries.

Club All-Ireland victors with Sarsfields, Maria Cooney, Sarah Spellman and Siobhan McGrath are rehabbing other injuries.

Galway goal scorer Ailish O'Reilly agreed that it was a big plus to get Dervan back. "It's great to have her experience back there again, her presence is huge. She's good to go now. I don't know if she'll be playing in a couple of weeks, that'll be up to management but she's working hard and to have her back in is a great boost."

"We're getting there slowly but surely." Denis Kelly's Tipperary side were hugely despondent as two injury-time points from Denise Gaule, snatched a 0-14 to 0-13 triumph for Kilkenny in Nowlan Park.

Gaule converted a free to win the All-Ireland final last August and she wasn't found wanting once more when presented with two opportunities in the closing min-

utes. She had missed Cork's victory over Kilkenny a fortnight ago due to a family occasion.

There was never much between the sides in a dogfight, with the teams level on nine occasions.

Tipp got the better start with points from Eimear McGrath and Eimear Heffernan.

Julianne Malone and Sophie O'Dwyer, who scored eight points between them, brought Kilkenny back level and it was nip and tuck before O'Dwyer delivered from a free to make it 0-5 to 0-4 for the home team.

Defences were definitely on top. Heffernan's second of her three points started a run of four in seven minutes that moved Tipp 0-9 to 0-7 clear. Gaule and Malone replied, and there was a further exchange of scores before Cait Devane and Heffernan provided.

Again, Brian Dowling's Kilkenny dug deep via a pair of Gaule scores. Tipp looked to have grasped a win with McGrath's fourth point in the third minute of injury time, but that was to reckon without the nerveless Gaule, who brought her tally to five and enabled Kilkenny to finish a largely forgettable campaign for them in the best possible manner.



LATEST

Connacht Chairperson, Brian Molloy, has been elected as Uachtarán Tofa at Camogie Congress 2023 in the Talbot Hotel, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary on 31st March 2023.

The announcement came on the first day of Camogie Association Congress, which saw over 150 representatives from every country, provincial councils and delegates from the association's international units, along with Camogie Association Uachtarán, Hilda Breslin.

Brian Molloy, having grown up on the Longford/Roscommon border and having then lived for over 20 years in Dublin (where he met his wife Vivienne), Brian and family moved to the West in 2006 and settled in the South Galway parish of Ballinderreen. With 2 young daughters in family, Brian naturally became heavily involved in the local Camogie Club – starting off as vice-Chairperson and then subsequently taking up the role of Chairperson of the club. He also held the PRO and County Board delegate positions, was Galway County Board PRO and then Connacht Provincial Council PRO before taking up his current role on Ard Chomhairle as Chair of Connacht Council. He married those administrative roles with a large number of successful coaching and management roles over

Off the field Brian is very aware of the (very proper) heightened focus on good governance and strategic management at the highest level of all sporting organisations. He has built up extensive business management experience gained over 30+ years in highly regulated industries across public and private sectors. This has positioned Brian ideally to be able to take on the role of Uachtaran at this time of significant change in our Association. He is also highly qualified in this area with a Masters in Business Administration from the University of Galway and he most recently successfully completed the Level 9 Certificate in Governance (Sport Ireland) through the Institute of Public Administration.

Brian is passionately committed to the continued development of our game and our Association. He believes that there is an excellent opportunity to significantly grow our club membership, within the existing traditional “Camogie counties” and through development of our game in less traditional parts of the country. Participation for all and the rapid growth of our game at all levels will be the focus of his tenure.

Brian is very committed to the integration process and believes that the momentum that exists at the moment will result in the unification of Camogie, Ladies Football and the GAA into a singular organisation with full participation on an equal basis for women and men, boys and girls.

On the announcement, Brian Molloy said, “I am honoured to be elected as Uachtarán Tofa and I am grateful for the trust the membership has placed in me to lead the association. I’m very aware of the excellent work that has been achieved by my predecessors and look forward to continuing the ongoing expansion and development of camogie at all levels. Camogie is one of the leading women’s sports and plays an important societal role in every community. I look forward to contributing to the expansion of the game both here and overseas. The future is bright.”

Hannah Looney - More than just a player

By Alanna Cunnane



Cork's dual dynamo, Hannah Looney, sure knows how to switch things on when she takes to a gaelic football or camogie pitch, but more recently she has also been enjoying some downtime outside of the lines of Gaelic Games.

Living in Kilkenny, working in Tipperary and venturing back and forth between Dublin and Cork to check in with her girlfriend Miah and her family back home, the Aghada and Killeagh club woman is no stranger to travelling. Taking that to a major extent last year, she exchanged the rebel county for the Big Apple and moved to New York city when an opportunity arose to work with MSD as a chemical engineer in October of 2021, where she planned to stay for a year.

Amidst the "whirlwind" of the transatlantic relocation, she tapped into the generic "starting point" for many Irish people when they land abroad and got in touch with her Gaelic Games contacts, and six-time camogie All-Star and fellow Leesider Orla Cotter.

"Once I landed, I met up with her and her friends and they were all Irish and into the GAA one way or the other, so just to have that kind of community and connection was brilliant" she says.

"I've no regrets about going and it was just such a great opportunity, I had to go for it... What I've learned from that experience is that I really want to go travelling and want to live abroad and definitely back in New York that at some point, but we'll see."

Another lesson she picked up along the way was one that had a slightly more existential twang, concerning a question she later found to be a more common one than she originally had thought- "Who am I outside of being a camogie player or a GAA player?"

"It seems very silly on the grander scheme of things, but I suppose it's not when you're in it" she explains.

"When you're younger it's just the be all and end all of everything, and it's funny because you kind of think it's only yourself that feels that way but this year chatting to other teammates, it's interesting that we all kind of feel the same."

"This was a great opportunity to get out there and learn that I'm so much more than obviously a GAA player. There's no doubt that it has been probably the biggest thing in my life for as long as I know and helped me get to where I am in other aspects of life, but to still express myself outside of GAA was very important to learn."

The trip itself had an earlier than expected conclusion with the ever present yearn of returning to play in the championship conformed itself as an "itch" Looney simply had to scratch, but not before consulting a few "powerful connections" that were forged on and off the pitch.

Reaching out to yet another Cork legend, Briege Corkery, as a sounding board before she thought about making the leap home in May 2022, Looney once again came to be reminded of the "brilliant network of people" playing sport has afforded to her.

"If I ever needed advice on something like that, be it in life or be it in sports, the likes of Briege, Rena Buckley, Gemma O'Connor, who you mightn't have spoken to for years, they'll always have your back" she says.



"They'd nearly be the first people you'd call because there's just that special bond that you have when you're playing with a group of people with the same passion and drive for something that, you know, it's very hard to replicate in any in anything else in life."

"My best friends are in both football and camogie and the GAA somehow, so they're the people that get you and the people that you turn to if you're ever in trouble or need."

She took back into fitness and nutrition preparation Stateside before venturing back from The City That Never Sleeps to have another crack at All Ireland glory, and it was anything but a snore. While in football, Cork LGFA were knocked out by Mayo in the quarter finals, the camogie set up got agonisingly close to achieving the comeback of dreams for Looney when they narrowly lost out to Kilkenny on a score-line of 1-13 to 1-12 in the All Ireland final. Looney herself scored a point on that occasion while marshalling the midfield, and despite the anguish of the ordeal is not opposed to coming back for more.

"It feels like forever since we've walked up the steps of the Hogan Stand so it's something I really want, and I'm ready to go for" she says.

"I suppose there's loads of pressures around and trying to plan and schedule everything that you need but once you're there, definitely, it's worth it just to have the crack and be with a group of like-minded people."

Although she marks out that "travelling will be on [her] agenda at some point in the future", for now the Cork woman is limiting her movement to the confines of Ireland, if albeit sometimes behind so called enemy lines.

"I've joined TJ Reid's gym up here in Kilkenny so I meet a few of the Kilkenny girls passing in and out and there's a bit of banter there, but no it's good and Kilkenny is actually lovely!"

"But yeah, I've a lot to balance between the football, camogie, work and personal life then but we'll get there!"

Gearing up for the 2023 season already, she says she is ready to "give it all a bash" again this year and temper the borders between the engineer, girlfriend, family member and friend behind the phenomenal gaelic football and camogie player that is Hannah Looney.



Amy O'Connor - A proud Cork player, an even prouder Knocknaheeny woman

By Alanna Cunnane



Had she taken a different path Amy O'Connor would be off to the women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand this summer, or maybe in another life wouldn't have played sport at all, but in this one she's a Cork stalwart who's looking to captain her side to All Ireland victory once again this year. Falling into camogie completely by chance, aged nine when a spare hurl, helmet and sliotar became available, the four-time O'Duffy Cup winner was a sporting niche within her family right from the start.

"It was total chance! My cousin had joined the club and his mother had bought him all the gear, but he had no more interest after two weeks and so it was all up for grabs. My mam was like, 'ah, we'll try her sure' and the rest is history" O'Connor describes.

"It was just genuine enjoyment that kept me coming back then."

At underage level she toyed with the idea of playing gaelic football and soccer, even donning a Republic of Ireland jersey on many an occasion.

She helped the team to the under 19 European semi-final in 2014 amongst names now in the bright lights of the international stage such as Katie McCabe, Chloe Mustaki and Clare Shine, but ultimately always found herself yearning for her true passion - Camogie.

"When I was away playing soccer from Belgium to Norway to Macedonia and all these mad places, all I could think about was that there'd be camogie training that night back at home" she says.



"I just so happened to be lucky that we had a good guidance councillor in the school at the time and she told me about it, but I definitely think there needs to be more done to make sure people are aware that these programmes are there to apply for.

"Some people might try to hide that they were from a disadvantaged school or area, but I was very proud to be a beneficiary of them and they really helped me throughout college."

Born and reared in a council-built estate in Knocknaheeny in north Cork city, she explains how she never felt held back by stereotypes people might have associated to her.

"Those stereotypes don't represent me. Like yes I come from this area, but that's stereotypes that you often hear and that's not me at all." Both of my parents work hard, my brother went to college and has a good job and all of that, so I was never bothered by being called whatever in games because I knew myself that that didn't represent me" she says.

"I love the area. It doesn't have the best reputation in the world but I love it and it's where I'm from. I know it like the back of my hand, the goings on that happen here, and



"Myself and Sarah Rowe, who plays for Mayo and who was on that same team, were of the same mindset with that. We'd be on another side of the world talking about how Kilkenny might be playing Cork that weekend or whatever it might be.

"I just truly loved playing camogie and that's why I picked it over anything else."

While O'Connor explains that she perhaps didn't see the rise in women's soccer "exploding" to the level that it has so quickly, she believes that camogie's transcendent moment to spur it further into the public consciousness may be on the horizon in the coming years.

"There are so many factors that can go into the growth of a sport. Girls are going to see a lot of Denise O'Sullivan and the Irish team this summer, we just have to make sure they also see the likes of Hannah Looney or whoever it may be" she says.

"Every bit of exposure is important and hopefully there'll be a trickle down for women's sport as a whole" she continues.

O'Connor now works with software company Workvivo as a senior project manager and so is well familiar with the importance of laying out plans to achieve a goal. Growing up she broke a mould in her area having studied pharmacy at UCC before later completing a masters at the Royal College of Surgeons, and although now she admittedly "doesn't use any of it", she believes it has helped shape her into the person she is today.

"My secondary school was a DEIS school and so not as many people as in other schools go onto University, although it is improving" O'Connor outlines.

"I got the Quercus scholarship to UCC for sports, and then I was also a member of the Access Programme which was set up so that people from disadvantaged areas or schools have the opportunity to go to college.

I'm very proud to be from here."

A homebird at heart, the one time all-star doesn't plan on leaving Knocknaheeny anytime soon and still graces the pitch for her local junior club St Vincent's, alongside the divisional side of Seandún, and is unfazed by the varying standards between the levels.

"It's totally different playing with St Vincent's, but I think the key thing people need to realise is that when you're playing with Cork everyone has the same ultimate goal, whereas when you're playing with your club at junior level not everyone's goals are the same" O'Connor says.

"Some people are coming up to the field to get a break from their five children for an hour, others want to win and others are coming to have a release after a stressful day at work... if you take a step back you see it's okay to have those different goals and that makes it a bit easier."

With the rebel county however their ambition is a clear one- to taste victory once again in the All Ireland final and undo the heartbreak of the last two years where they've narrowly fallen short to Galway and Kilkenny respectively.

"We took it tough last year especially" the Cork skipper reflects.

"Ultimately you put your whole life, heart and soul into something and then at the end of the year you literally have nothing to show for it. When you win you get that feeling that you achieved what you set out to and now you deserve a break, but you never get that when you're on the other side of it. You feel like you haven't done enough" she says.

"At the end of the day no matter what happens it's going to come down to the pucker of a ball. In one way then you do kind of have to say look, would I be at anything else? And the answer would have to be no because we just enjoy it too much.

"That said though we've come very close, we just need to raise the bar another bit now and who knows where we'll end up by the end of the year."

With a nice blend of youth coming through alongside their mainstays of Looney, Ashling Thompson, Katrina Mackey and co, there's no doubt that with O'Connor at the helm Cork are already well on their way to take a surge at 2023.



Sabina Rabbittie of Galway in action against Laura Tracey of Cork during the Very Camogie League Division 1A match at Páirc Uí Chaoimh in Cork. Picture: Eóin Noonan/Sportsfile

Must-win game for Cork as Tipp come in after confident victory

SUNDAY
Electric Ireland All-Ireland
Minor Championship:
Cork v Tipperary;
Castle Road, 11.30am.

FOLLOWING on from their draw with Kilkenny last weekend the Cork minors continue their Electric Ireland Championship campaign when they play host to Tipperary on Easter Sunday.

This is a game that was to be the second in the round robin series of game but was postponed due to bereavement in Tipperary.

It is a must-win game for Cork if they hope to secure a place in the last four, currently they are on four points after three games played having won, lost and drawn a game.

Galway are top of the group having won three out of four games, they lost out last weekend to a Tipperary side who are on six points having won two games and losing one to Kilkenny in a close contest where just one point separated the sides.

Waterford are on three points having lost two games, and won one when they defeated Cork and with one game to play against Tipperary they are still in the hunt for one of the semi-final spots. In the last round of game on April 15/16 Cork will take on Galway in Cork and Kilkenny play Dublin, were cork to defeat Tipperary this weekend they would be well positioned going into their last game against Galway.

Tipperary will provide tough opposition they had an impressive 0-12 to 2-4 win over table toppers Galway last week.



Cork's Emma Murphy in action against Kilkenny's Tiffanie Fitzgerald. Picture: INPHO/Ken Sutton

Picture: INPHO/Ken Sutton

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

kend, Celine Guinan, Emer Dwan, Danielle Ryan Kate Ferncombe and Lucy Purcell all impressing.

Cork were a little unlucky not to take the three point on offer on Sunday last in Kilkenny, they looked to be in trouble at half-time but a superb second half display saw them lead by a point as the clock ticked towards full time, however a late pointed free from Kilkenny tied the sides up but if Cork can bring the same urgency into their game this weekend that they showed in the second half they are more than capable of securing a much needed win.

SATURDAY
Very Division 2B National League;

Cork v Wexford;
Oularth - the Ballagh; 2pm.

The Cork Division 2 sides head to Wexford with their place in the Very Division 2B final already secured following victories over Tipperary, Galway and Kilkenny.

It's the last game in the group series for both sides and a win for Cork would put them top of the group over Kilkenny who have all their games played but despite losing out to Cork last week it is Kilkenny who advance to the final as Galway, Tipperary or Wexford cannot catch them.

For Wexford the game will be all about getting a result to avoid being in a relegation battle, currently both Tipperary and Wexford are on three points, Tipperary play Galway this weekend and a win will see them safe but were Wexford and Tipperary to lose it will be a three way tie at the bottom but that won't worry Cork and they will use the game as part of their preparation for their meeting with Kilkenny which is expected to be on Sat April 15th.

Cork U16s

The Cork U16 A and B sides are out in Munster championship duties over the Easter weekend, today Saturday 8th the B side meet Clare in the provincial semi-final at 2pm in Castle Road.

On Easter Monday, the U16A team play Limerick in the Munster Championship Final at 2pm in Mallow.

Battle to fill top vacancies

CAMOGIE



Linda Mellerick

FOR the first time in the history of the Camogie Association there will be a male president in 2024.

While we wish Connacht chairperson, Brian Molloy, elected as Uachtarán Tofa at Camogie Congress 2023, every success in the position, I find it disappointing that it isn't a woman that will lead the organisation for those three years.

I understand that it was difficult to get women to run for the office. It's a prestigious position, but the work, travel and events one has to attend as president is enormous. The announcement came on the first day of the Camogie Congress which had 150 representatives from every county, provincial councils and delegates from international units, along with Camogie's Uachtarán, Hilda Breslin.

Certainly, the association is in a struggling position. They are battling to fill vacancies and according to CEO Sínead McNulty, this is having an impact on the delivery of the association's national development plan.

Sinead said in her annual report ahead of Congress that a competitive employment market is posing a significant challenge for the association in the recruitment and retention of staff. In total during 2022 there was turnover in eight of the 20 staff positions within the association.

That's 40%. I know the market is competitive, but you need to be competitive yourself in order to attract. A couple of the vacancies I saw advertised were below what I would expect someone to be paid for such roles in Dublin. It's expensive to live in Dublin and the salary must reflect that.

The Steering Group on Integration (SGI) of the Camogie Association, the Gaelic Athletic Association, and the Ladies Gaelic Football Association, has announced its intention to seek submissions from every county board across all three associations as part of its on-



Cork's Sorcha McCartan in action against Kilkenny's Tiffanie Fitzgerald. Picture: Ken Sutton/Inpho

going engagement and listening process.

The SGI will also conduct a series of formal meetings with a number of county boards from across the three associations. Starting in early May, this next major phase of the listening process will build on the encouraging progress which has been reported by the SGI, and which is chaired by Iar-Uachtarán na hÉireann, Mary McAleese.

The SGI has reported positive levels of engagement and feedback from meetings held to date with existing One Clubs, Provincial Councils, Ard Chomhairle, and also representatives of players from all three associations.

President McAleese also spoke via video link to the annual congress of the GAA and the LGFA in recent weeks and was encouraged by the reception received and also spoke at the Camogie congress. Workshops were also held at the congresses, and they provided very useful insights on the 'how' of integration.

The discussions which have taken place have helped identify challenges on the path to integration. However, they have also made clear the overwhelming benefits of the move toward integration. The issue of equality has been prominent in the discussions to date and so too, has the

potential commercial benefit for Gaelic games being represented as an integrated body that can maximise benefits and opportunities for all of its members.

The SGI is made up of the three Uachtaráns, Hilda Breslin CA, Larry McCarthy GAA, and Micheál Naughton LGFA, the three Ard Stiúrthóirí (Sínead McNulty CA, Tom Ryan GAA, and Helen O'Rourke LGFA, Mary McAleese as chair and project managed by Mark Dorman.

Members of all three organisations will continue to be kept informed of progress.

Brian Molloy is very committed to the integration process and believes that the momentum that exists at the moment will result in the unification into a singular organisation with full participation on an equal basis.

Brian Molloy, having grown up on the Longford/Roscommon border, moved to the West in 2006 and settled in the south Galway parish of Ballinderreen. With two young daughters, Brian became heavily involved in the local Camogie club where he has held all roles in coaching and administration. Off the field, Brian is very aware of the heightened focus on good governance and strategic management at the highest level of sporting organisations.

Dowling strikes late to deny Cork minors victory

Kilkenny	1-11
Cork	1-11

A TOUGH Electric Ireland All-Ireland Minor Championship clash saw a last-minute free by Rachel Dowling help Kilkenny secure a draw.

There were some excellent passages of play all through. The hooking and blocking of the Kilkenny defenders was superb, but credit too Cork, who never panicked and kept working away and finished strong to ensure they didn't come away empty-handed.

A close opening half saw Kilkenny, aided by the stiff breeze, take an early lead with three unanswered points, one from Lauren Ronan and two Dowling frees.

Amy Sheppard got Cork off the mark with a point but Clara Kehir-Murtagh stretched the home side's lead.

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

Cats keeper Ali Kennedy was solid, but a move involving Amy Sheppard, Emily O'Donoghue, and Erinn Curtain saw Curtain finishing O'Donoghue's hand-pass to the net: 1-1 to 0-4.

Cork hit the front with a Niamh McNabola point, but the hosts responded with two Dowling frees.

Just before the break, Lauren Ronan finished smartly though O'Donoghue converted a Cork 45 just after as Kilkenny who led 1-6 to 1-3 at the break.

On the restart, the sides traded points, but Kilkenny were four in front as the game entered the closing quarter through Muireann Gannon.

Cork sprung into life and grabbed five points without reply to go one in front, through Sheppard, Kate Fennessy, O'Donoghue, and sub Gráinne Finn.

Rachel Dowling had Kilkenny back level with a point from play, Finn again edged Cork in front before that last-gasp Dowling free.

It's still all to play for as the hunt for one of the four semi-final spots continues, with Tipperary defeating Galway which ensures it will come down to the wire.

Scorers for Kilkenny: R Dowling 0-7 (0-6 f), L Ronan 1-1, M Gannon 0-2, C Kehir-Murtagh 0-1.

Cork: E Curtain 1-0, A Sheppard, K Fennessy, A Fitzgerald, G Finn, E O'Donoghue (0-1 f, 0-1 45) 0-2 each, N McNabola 0-1.

KILKENNY: A Kennedy, C Murphy, A Carroll, S Keer, T McGrath, L Phelan, A Doherty, A Brett, C Kehir-Murtagh, L Rohan, C Dunne, L Hickey, R Kelly, R Dowling, M Gannon.

Sub: O Kirwin for L Hickey (46).

CORK: C Lane, M De Burca, S Hurley, C O'Donoghue, E Sheehan, L Dunlea, E Duignan, M Condon, O Cremin, A Sheppard, A Fitzgerald, N McNabola, K Fennessy, E O'Donoghue, E Curtain.

Subs: G Finn for N McNabola (46), L O'Connell for A Sheppard (57), E Crowley for K Fennessy (57).

Referee: Justin Heffernan (Wexford).

ALL ABOUT EVE!

Sinnott's point secures title for Carlow following tense tussle

By Aoife English

CARLOW were crowned Very League Camogie Division 3A champions yesterday after a narrow 0-8 to 0-7 victory over Armagh at Darver.

Hero of the hour was Eve Sinnott when she took a pass from Eleanor Tracey and found the posts from distance for the winning score. It was a point to grace any occasion and, after leading by three going into the final quarter, Carlow breathed a massive sigh of relief.

While the flags blew strongly across the pitch, the conditions still favoured the team playing towards the dressing room end of the ground. Armagh probably didn't make the most of the wind when they had it in the first half.

In a feisty opening the two goalkeepers, Catherine Kavanagh for Carlow and Armagh's Ciarraí Devlin were tested but they showed superb composure when dealing with dropping balls while they both had to deal with loose ball in the small square.

Points from Leanne Donnelly and Eimear Smyth nudged Armagh clear. Carlow almost found the net but Rebecca Kelly's first time pull went just wide of the left-hand upright. Those kind of chances were few and far between with defences very much on top. It was no surprise at the end of the game that it was a defender who took the Player of the Match award and while Carlow's Rachel Breen got the nod, there were a number of players who had to be considered too.

Eimear Byrne opened the Carlow account when she collected a short free from Anna Breen and rifled the ball over the bar. Ciara Quirke used all her experience when crafting the equalising point and the eventual winners went in front when Eleanor Treacy converted a 45. The half-forward enjoyed a purple patch when she added two more points from play with Jennifer Curry replying for Armagh when she raised a white flag.

The scoreboard had Carlow in front by three points at the break but referee, Paul O'Neill from Antrim, confirmed that it was actually 0-5 to 0-3.

Carlow started the second half



BARROW MARGINS: Carlow players celebrate clinching the Division 3A final after their close battle with Armagh

threatening to sweep their rivals off their feet. But while they were winning frees the wind made it difficult and they shot a number of wides. Devlin saved well from Tracey and Carlow were unlucky when Caoimhe Jordan looked set to score but play was stopped for an injury to an Armagh player.

Sinnott's first point put her side three clear and it looked as if it was Carlow's to lose. For Armagh, Corinna Doyle scored a point within seconds of being introduced into the game. Just before she was signalled to be substituted, Rachel Merry tacked on a free. While

Armagh mentors discussed matters, the substitution was further delayed and Merry made their minds up when flashing over two points in quick succession. One of those was the lead point.

Carlow dug deep and forced a 45. From the resultant placed ball, Tracey made no mistake to level the game with two minutes of normal time left. The silverware could have gone either way. Then up stepped Sinnott and the cup was heading south.

There still time for heartbreak for Armagh with Doyle pulling her shot just wide. They had more

chances but found Carlow in no mood to concede. While Tracey pushed another shot right and wide, the full-time whistle came on the puck-out. It was a game of inches and the former All-Ireland junior champions prevailed.

Meanwhile, Tyrone claimed the Division 4 title after the exhibition of point scoring saw off a gallant Mayo effort 0-18 to 2-9 yesterday.

Key scoring from Lara Devlin and sub Roisín McErlean paved the way a Red Hand success.

This clash, played in Joe Fox Memorial Park in Tang, Co Westmeath was a game of high quality



INTENSE: Tyrone's Lara Devlin with Clara Delaney of Mayo

between two evenly matched sides, with captain Siobhán Donnelly collecting the silverware on behalf of her ecstatic team-mates. Lara Devlin was awarded Player of the Match following her haul of seven points.



WINNING FEELING: Waterford celebrate their victory over Wexford in the Camogie League Division 1B Final at FBD Semple Stadium, Thurles. See pages 8-9. Picture: Inpho/Ben Brady

Morrison goals help Cork minors Tipp and seal semi spot

Cork 2-10
Tipperary 1-4

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

CORK secured their place in the Electric Ireland Minor All-Ireland camogie semi-final by beating a Tipperary side still much in the hunt for a place in the last four. The game was played in Castle Road on Sunday morning.

In a tough opening half, Cork played against the strong wind, going to the dressing room trailing by just two points.

Tipperary made a good start, with two points from the stick of the impressive Celine Guinan, but Cork responded with two Emily O'Donoghue frees.

Guinan edged the visitors in front with a point, before a Danielle Ryan goal on 18 minutes helped Tipp open up a four-point lead.

Cork finished the half strongly, Kate Fennessy and Emily O'Donoghue scoring to make it 1-3 to 0-4 at the interval.

Cork were level inside four minutes of the restart and they put the Tipperary defence under huge pressure, but a Danielle Ryan point from a free edged Tipperary back in front.

Cork's work rate was huge, with Millie Condon impressing as they began to wear down Tipperary around the middle.

As the game entered the final quarter, Cork took a firm grip, Emily O'Donoghue scoring a 45 to level matters. From here on it was all Cork: Three points without reply from Ciara Morrison, Millie Condon, and an O'Donoghue free had Cork three in front with five minutes remaining.

Now pushing for home, Cork were not going to be denied, two Ciara Morrison goals finishing the game as a contest and ensuring Cork, with a game to go against Galway next weekend, are through irrespective of the result.

Scorers for Cork: C Morrison 2-1, E O'Donoghue 0-6 (0-4f's, 0-2 45s), M Condon 0-2, K Fennessy 0-1.

Tipperary: D Ryan 1-1 (0-1f), C Guinan 0-3 (0-2 45s).

Cork: C Lane; M De Burca, S Hurley, C O'Donoghue; O Cremin, L Dunlea, E Duignan; M Condon, A Fitzgerald; A Sheppard, C Morrison, N MC Nabola; K Fennessy, E O'Donoghue, G Finn.

Subs: E Curtain for N MC Nabola (47), A McCarthy for A Sheppard (55), A O'Sullivan for L Dunlea (56), C Rice for C O'Donoghue (61), A Daly for O Cremin (61), H Healy for M De Burca (64).

Tipperary: M Gilmartin; A Bourke, A Fitzgerald, P Quirke; S Heffernan, S Corcoran, N Franks; K Ferncombe, K Ralph; D Ryan, C Guinan, H Brennan; E Dwan, D Ryan, L Purcell.

Subs: A O'Kelly for H Brennan (h/t), K Meehan for M Gilmartin (40), E Franklin for D Ryan (43), E Browne for E Dwan (55), A Mellerick for N Franks (56), R O'Mara for A Fitzgerald (nj 65).

Ref: Ray Kelly (Kildare).

Cork 1-18
Wexford 0-8

Already qualified for the 2B league final, Cork travelled to Wexford for a meeting with the home side. They topped the group over second-placed Kilkenny, who they will meet in the final.

An Aoibhinn Kidney first-half goal gave Cork a 1-5 to 0-5 interval lead and, adding to their tally, they ran out comfortable winners. The home side needed to win to avoid a relegation play-off.



Gara Morrison, Cork, Aoife Bourke, Tipperary. Picture: Jim Coughlan



Ava Fitzgerald, Cork, Celine Guinan, Shauna Heffernan and Kate Ralph, Tipperary. Picture: Jim Coughlan

CAMOGIE

Very Camogie Leagues Div 1B

final: Waterford 1-22 Wexford 1-6; **Div 2B semi-finals:** Galway 3-6 Tipperary 1-13, Wexford 0-8 Cork 1-15; **Div 3A final:** Armagh 0-7 Carlow 0-8; **Div 3B semi-finals:** Antrim 1-11 Dublin 1-6, Offaly 1-5 Clare 5-21; **Div 4 final:** Mayo 2-9 Tyrone 0-18.

WATERFORD ON THE MARCH....



Waterford captain Lorraine Bray and her teammates celebrate after their Very National Camogie League Division 1B Final win over Wexford in Semple Stadium, Thurles on Sunday. See pages 2-4 for full coverage. Photos: Noel Browne



Waterford captain, Lorraine Bray, making a speech after her side's League Final win over Wexford.



Hilda Breslin, President of the Camogie Association presenting the Player of the Match award to Waterford's Beth Carton.

CAMOGIE
 Very Camogie Leagues Division 1 final: Galway 2-13 Cork 1-12; Division 2A final: Kerry 0-14 Meath 0-13; Division 2B final: Cork 1-7 Kilkenny 1-7; Division 3B final: Antrim 1-5 Clare 0-9.

Courceys star Saoirse McCarthy can add to her impressive medal haul this weekend

BY KIERAN MCCARTHY

SARA Hayes is Courcey Rovers royalty. A local legend. She played in NINE All-Ireland senior camogie finals, winning FIVE. She was also a coach to current Cork senior Saoirse McCarthy – and Hayes certainly left an impression.

'Everything Sara said, I took it as gospel,' Saoirse says.

'She was our coach when we won the U16 B county title, and they are the memories that you make when you grow up.'

'Having role models like Sara in the club ... she was a Cork senior, she played in all those big games, she told me what I needed to do and what to expect if I was going to be successful.'

The torch Hayes held has been passed onto the next generation. These days it's Saoirse and Fiona Keating who fly the Courceys flag at the highest level, and both will be key players for Cork in Sunday's Very Camogie League Division 1A final against Galway at Croke Park.

There will be a familiar exodus from Ballinspittle and Ballinadee on Sunday morning, cars pointing towards the capital, as Courceys support two of their own in Cork's quest to win a first Division 1 league crown since 2013.

That support from home means a lot. When the Cork defender won her first Camogie All-Star Award in late 2022 Saoirse (just the second Courceys player to win an All-Star, joining Rachel Moloney in an exclusive club) quipped half the

SAOIRSE FLYING COURCEYS FLAG ON BIG STAGE



Saoirse McCarthy in action in the 2022 All-Ireland final.

parish was at the awards ceremony to support the Courceys contingent. Fiona Keating was shortlisted for an All-Star. Ashling Moloney won her first Soaring Star Award after an

impressive campaign with the Cork intermediates.

Great times for a club whose stock has risen in recent years, helped by the huge and historic breakthrough at senior county

level in 2020.

'Winning the county in 2020 was a dream come true for the club; it was the end result of a lot of hard work through the years,' Saoirse says.

'That was the first county (senior) title and it was really special. Everything after that, all the awards and success we're bringing to the club, that's all down to the hard work that

went in when we were younger. The club is going very well, especially underage.'

Saoirse hopes to bring another medal into the parish on Sunday evening if everything

Twomey: Great Cronin is back, but we won't

BY GER MCCARTHY

DELIGHTED to have Orla Cronin back in action for Cork, manager Matthew Twomey insists they won't risk too much too soon from the Enniskeane star.

Cronin came off the bench in Cork's recent Very Camogie League Division 1A clash against Galway to make her first appearance of the season.

She endured an injury-riddled 2022 campaign, missing the entire league and playing in only three championship games before deciding to step back from the panel. So while Twomey is thrilled to have the 2022 All-Star back, he won't



Cork star Orla Cronin.

rush her comeback either.

'Orla Cronin, on her day, is probably one of the best players in the country,' Twomey stated.

'When you watch her playing, she just glides around the pitch. Orla was a massive loss to us

'While Orla is available for selection, she is not fully there, fitness-wise, just yet' – Matthew Twomey, Cork manager

last year. She is still working her way back. While Orla is available for selection, she is not fully there, fitness-wise, just yet.

'The difference in her over the last couple of weeks has been unbelievable. Just having Orla around the panel, out training with us, is fantastic. We want to make the most of that.'

'At the same time we need to mind Orla and make sure we don't rush her back too fast. Right now, it is absolutely brilliant having Orla back.'

Whether Cronin features or not in Sunday's Division 1A final against Galway at Croke Park remains to be seen, but her return strengthens a Cork side that is also missing Ashling Thompson and Katrina Mackey. Sunday is also a chance for Cork to pick up some silverware and cap an encouraging league that saw the Rebels win four games before losing their final group match (1-11 to 1-10) to this weekend's opponents, Galway. In Cork's defence they were already through to the

league final before the game with the Tribeswomen. Cork won't need reminding that Galway also won the 2022 league final between the two counties as well.

'The players were disappointed to lose that league game last month and in the manner they lost it,' Twomey said.

'They have trained extremely well since. Galway are a quality side and very experienced. After Tipperary lost on the Saturday, they needed to come to Páirc Uí Chaoimh and win. To be fair to them, they got it.'

'We are looking to atone for that loss but it is a league final (too). When you are there, you want to put in a performance

as much for yourself. We keep saying it will take a good team to beat us if we put in a good performance. Anything less and we will be in trouble.'

That solitary league defeat to Galway aside, Twomey is pleased with the level of consistency delivered by his panel so far this season. Difficult challenges have been overcome including a gutsy win in a physical contest away to Tipperary and terrific scoring (23 points) at Kilkenny. Make no mistake, Cork are in decent shape and there is much to be positive about irrespective of Sunday's outcome.

'We have changed an awful lot of things from last year.'



Courcsey Rovers' duo Ashling Moloney and Saoirse McCarthy enjoying the 2022 PwC Camogie All-Stars Awards at Croke Park.

goes to plan in the league final. As successful as she has been – her medal haul is pretty impressive, already – the Cork wing back doesn't have a league medal in her collection, yet. That could change on Sunday, but Saoirse is quick to

point out the O'Duffy Cup is the trophy that Cork really want.

'You always want to win when you go to Croke Park and you always want to win finals,' she tells this week's *Star Sport Podcast*.

'We don't hang our hat on the league either. If we don't come away with the trophy on Sunday we're not going to be devastated. The All-Ireland isn't won in April. We will do our best, try to put in a performance and we'll stick to our principles.'

Cork have been the form team in the league. They hammered Dublin (3-17 to 0-5) and Clare (2-19 to 0-10) before two away wins against Tipperary (1-14 to 1-12) and All-Ireland champions Kilkenny (0-23 to 1-10). The Rebels did lose their final group game to Galway (1-11 to 1-10) – Saoirse scored 0-3 – but had already guaranteed their place in the final before that game.

MTU Cork's Saoirse McCarthy lifts the Purcell Cup after their win in February.

'Everything Sara (Hayes) said, I took it as gospel' – Saoirse McCarthy

Sunday's showdown is an opportunity for Cork to end their recent losing streak in finals at Croke Park. They have lost the last two All-Ireland finals, to Galway (2021) and Kilkenny (2022), as well as the league decider to Galway last season. Cork lost those three finals by a combined eight points, so that shows they're not far away from regaining top spot. Saoirse has described last season's All-Ireland final loss (1-13 to 1-12) as heartbreaking, and they know they're not far from the summit.

'I did feel last year that there weren't many stones left unturned so you are left asking what more you can actually do,' Saoirse says.

'We have a psychologist with us this year and she is doing great work, and maybe that was an aspect of our game that we were lacking. Hopefully those extra few percent will make a difference and get us over the line because we are very close.'

'There is a little bit of luck in it too but you have to make your own luck as well. We'll continue to work hard and hopefully things will come right for us.'

MTU Cork student Saoirse has already lifted a trophy this year, captaining her college to Purcell Cup colleges' glory in February, and the 22 year old is no stranger to big games. In 2018 she won All-Ireland camogie titles at minor, intermediate and senior levels. She has played in All-Ireland and league finals, and won a county senior final too.

'I don't really get nervous. I would have before. I get excited more than anything. I'm excited now to just go out and play the game,' she says, but Saoirse does have a few superstitions.

'We have to wave at all the maggies! Myself and Fiona have this thing if we ever knocked down a maggie in the car we have to turn and go home, there is no point going on! Myself and Molly Lynch have this thing we do in the dressing-room – she has a foam roller and she has to foam roll my shoulders because one time we didn't do it, we lost!'

Superstitions aside, Saoirse is confident Cork will produce a performance worthy of the occasion on Sunday. The league has been a success for Cork, regardless of Sunday's game. Cork boss Matthew Twomey has added the strength to his panel that he wanted – 2022 minors like Orlaith Cahalane and Aoife Healy have come in and made an impact. The return of Orla Cronin in the recent game against Galway is a boost too.

'We have got what we wanted out of the league – we are in the final so it has been successful that way. We are only looking for performances,' she says, knowing too that when Cork and Galway meet in the opening game of the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Championships at the start of June, there will be more on the line. Still, this Sunday is the chance for Cork to lay down a marker and fire a statement of intent, and Courcsey's contingent will be key.

Cork manager Matthew Twomey.

rush her too fast

Twomey said.

'We have had to adapt but got a couple of big wins at the start (of the league). We are most happy with our players' character. It is very easy when playing a new system to get side-tracked if things go against you or teams outwit you. My management and I are very happy with the way the players are sticking to the game plan and our new system. That side of things is what you want to get out of the league. We feel that we have a very strong panel this year even though we are currently down a good few players due to injury.'

'The players that have come in have made a name for them-

selves. It is going to be very hard to dislodge those players from the starting team. That is exactly what any manager wants, people on the panel fighting for a starting place. Cork has that this year.'

So there is plenty at stake when two teams who know one another well clash at Croke Park on Sunday. Twomey wants to see a positive response from a strengthened panel desperate to end a run of consecutive All-Ireland final losses later this summer.

'Everyone knows that you now need more than 20 players to win an All-Ireland,' he said.

'We drafted in a couple of new players from our interme-

diated panel because we were down on numbers. Those players have increased competition.'

'We are hoping that we get things right. There is still a lot of work to be done which is great. Cork is getting an opportunity to go to Croke Park and test players out. Sunday is a great opportunity for those players to shine and do what they have been doing week in and week out on the training pitch.'



Limerick win first Munster U16A title

Munster U16A camogie championship

Limerick	2-8
Cork	1-3

Therese O'Callaghan

Limerick made history at Mallow yesterday claiming their first Munster U16A camogie championship title. Diarmuid Ryan's charges led from pillar to post, Caitlin Ryan showing the way with 1-6.

Grace Hegarty opened their account in the seventh minute from play. Ryan fired over a free, and by the 10th minute the girls in green were 0-3 to nil ahead, Aoibhinn O'Connor with their third point.

A huge Ryan free from the 65 metre line then hopped in the square and into the net, 1-3 to 0-1 after quarter of an hour.

Ally Mulkerrens was Cork's biggest threat, and her fine solo goal in the 21st minute, added to a Laura Walsh point got them up and running.

Ryan slotted another free for Limerick but deep in stoppage, Mulkerrens goalied to leave it 1-4 to 1-2 at half-time.

An early goal from Laura Flynn gave Limerick the ideal restart. Three excellent Ryan frees left it 2-7 to 1-2.

In the 55th minute Ava McAuliffe added to the Cork tally but at this stage Limerick had the result secured.

■ In the U16A Shield, Clare defeated Waterford 0-10 to 0-5.

Scorers for Limerick: C Ryan (1-6 frees), L Flynn (1-0), G Hegarty and A O'Connor (0-1 each).

Scorers for Cork: A Mulkerrens (1-3), L Walsh and A McAuliffe (free) (0-1 each).

LIMERICK: E Doherty (Treaty Gaels); Ó Barrett (Knockaderry), M McKenna (Grangah Ballygarry), J Casey (Mungret St Paul's); C Curtin (Templeglantine), E O'Donovan (Blackrock Effin), E Mullins (Adare, Capt); H Horgan (Newcastle West), C Ryan (Na Piersaigh); G Hegarty (Monaleen), M Geary (St Fannah's), S Carey (Patrickswell); A O'Connor (Bruff), L Flynn (Muroe Boher), R O'Grady (Patrickswell).

Subs used: A O'Sullivan Hunt (Kilceddy), E Whinn (Knockaderry), R Molloy (Knockaderry), K Ryan (Cappamore), L Murray (Na Piersaigh), C McCormack (Monaleen), A Mulqueen (Grangah Ballygarry), M Smith (Newcastle West).

CORK: A Kearney (Blackrock); C Ryan (Newtownshandrum), A Cagney (Mallow), S Pomeroy (Sarsfields); S Burrows (Newcastle), A Cussen (Ballinassig), K O'Sullivan (Middleton); C Murphy (Kinsale), A Cottrell (Ballinassig, Capt); L Walsh (Mallow), A McAuliffe (Castlemartyr), R Murphy (Ballinora); M O'Brien (Enniskeane), T Goulding (Ballinaclogh), A Mulkerrens (St Catherine's).

Subs used: J Murphy (Blackrock), C Murphy (Kinsale), S Cunningham (Erin's Own), L O'Shea (Aghabullogue).



Amy O'Connor was a member of the remarkable under-19 Irish soccer squad that beat Spain, Sweden and England to top their group at the 2014 European Championships. Photograph: Dan Sheridan/Inpho

'You're almost grieving because you dedicate so much of your life to it'



Mary Hannigan

Cork captain Amy O'Connor has no regrets about choosing her first love camogie over soccer

Tracy O'Connor and Nuala O'Sullivan must be worn out from congratulating each other on their daughters' sporting feats when they meet up while out shopping in Knocknaheeny. After all, Tracy's girl Amy is the captain of the Cork camogie team, has four senior All-Ireland medals to her name, as well as an All Star, and a heap of club honours. Not to mention all the times she played underage football for the Republic of Ireland. And Nuala's young one Denise only went and earned her 100th cap for Ireland in Texas last week. "Yeah, her mother meets my mam every day in the supermarket," Amy O'Connor laughs, "so they regularly chat about it all. We were delighted for Denise - Jesus, she's brilliant. It's some achievement when you think about it, 100 caps - and she's still young (29), she has a long time left." O'Connor has probably been asked whether she has any regrets about giving

up football for camogie as many times as O'Sullivan has played for her country.

The answer had always been the same: none. Camogie was her first love, so no regrets at all. Although... "Do I think about the what ifs? Probably not too much," she says. "But every now and then when I watch them on telly, yeah, you'd love a game of ball! But no, [I'm] very happy with my decision."

Under-19 squad

O'Connor was a member of the remarkable under-19 Irish squad that beat Spain, Sweden and England to top their group at the 2014 European Championships, before being ousted at the semi-final stage by the eventual winners the Netherlands - inspired by a hat-trick-scoring youngster by the name of Vivianne Miedema.

"She was a cut above the rest," recalls O'Connor of the Arsenal forward, one of the game's greats. "A level above everybody else on that pitch. There was nobody near her. Yeah, that was a tough day in Norway," O'Connor laughs.

"When you look back, we would have played England quite a bit, and you think of Leah Williamson (the current England captain) and what she went on to do.

"I actually think Irish football has really benefited from the success of this English team because it's so close, it's so relatable, we see them on telly, I think it's really benefiting the game in Ireland."

Ten of the 18-strong Irish squad that



competed in that 2014 tournament went on to become senior internationals, including captain Katie McCabe. Once O'Connor's call-ups started clashing with camogie, she opted for county rather than country.

O'Sullivan was a couple of years ahead of her in the ranks, but they had played on the same team at under-14 level.

She has nothing but good memories of the Irish midfielder.

"You know, as brilliant as Denise is on the pitch, she's equally brilliant off it," O'Connor says. "I've never heard anybody say a bad word about her. She deserves everything she gets because of the amount of work that she puts in."

"Knocknaheeny is just so proud of Denise O'Sullivan."

O'Connor is hoping to add to the Cork City suburb's sporting roll of honour on Sunday when she captains her county in the Very Division 1A league final against Galway at Croke Park (live on RTE2, throw-in 1.50pm).

Galway beat Cork in last year's final, then beat them by a point last month in the final round of matches in the group stage of the league, and will be Cork's opponents in their Championship opener in June.

Is O'Connor sick of the sight of them? "We do always seem to end up playing Galway," she laughs, "but the games are always so competitive we tend to learn a lot about ourselves, so obviously that's a very good thing. But yeah, we know each other very well at this stage."

66

Do I think about the what ifs? Probably not too much. But every now and then when I watch them [the Irish women's soccer team] on telly, yeah, you'd love a game of ball! But no, [I'm] very happy with my decision

Cork were no strangers to pain in 2022, along with that defeat in the league decider, they lost to Kilkenny by a point in the All-Ireland final. There was a lot of healing to be done.

"Unless you're in the circle, people don't really understand. You're kind of almost grieving because you dedicate so much of your life to it," O'Connor explains.

"But I always try to think then that there's more important things in life, and that tends to help you get over it a bit. But yeah, on the day or the week, it doesn't help with the disappointment too much."

Losing finals

It is 10 years since Cork won the league title, losing three finals since then, the last success coming a year before O'Connor made her senior debut. By her reckoning, only two of the current panel, the Mackey twins, Katrina and Pamela, have a league winner's medal to their name, so she thinks it's about time the county added a 17th title to their collection.

She concedes, though, that it won't be easy for camogie to increase its profile in the months ahead, with so many competing codes and major events in the schedule. But O'Connor hopes it can ride the wave of the heightened profile of women's sport, not least the one currently being surfed by her former comrades.

"There's going to be a lot of focus on the Irish women's soccer team over the next couple of months, but hopefully women's sport as a whole, including camogie, will be able to tap in to and benefit from that," O'Connor says.

Her more immediate ambition is having Nuala congratulating Tracy in their local Knocknaheeny supermarket on Monday morning after Tracy's daughter captains Cork to their first league title in a decade. Worn out, the mams will be.

Cork bid to end Croker hoodoo

CROKE PARK has become something of a house of pain for Cork camogie.

2022 All-Ireland final, beaten by a point.
2022 League final, a six-point interval lead finishes as a four-point loss.

2021 All-Ireland final, beaten by three.

Even for the newer members of Matthew Twomey's panel who have graduated from the intermediate ranks, their sole experience of GAA HQ is the disappointment endured when coming out on the wrong side of last year's All-Ireland intermediate decider.

Cork's run of defeats at the big house is a far cry from the not so progressive days of the recent past when the sole outgoing camogie players were afforded at Croke Park each year was on All-Ireland final Sunday.

Those were days Cork rarely came away disappointed from.

Of the five consecutive finals contested between 2014-18, all but one ended with the O'Duffy Cup at the front of the Cork bus.

But the balance of power has since shifted. Galway and Kilkenny haven't just closed the gap on the Leesiders, they've stolen a march out front. The pair have shared



Very Camogie Division 1A Final

Cork v Galway

Sunday: Croke Park, 1.50pm

Referee: Justin Heffernan

TV: Live on RTE 2

Eoghan Cormican



the last four championships and eight leagues.

Cathal Murray's Galway chase back-to-back glory in the latter competition tomorrow afternoon. The Tribeswomen, no more than the Jones Road venue, have come to represent an assignment Cork have been unable to figure out in recent times.

The last four knockout fixtures between the counties — 2019 All-Ireland semi-final, 2021 League semi-final and All-Ireland final, and 2022 League final — all had maroon corner verdicts.

And so tomorrow's league climax at Croker is of significant importance to Cork for a number of reasons.

There's the chance to nab a first bit of national silverware

in five years, the chance to reassert themselves against the new order, and, arguably most pertinent of the lot, a chance to ensure the county's relationship with Croke Park on finals afternoon doesn't develop into some psychological stumbling block.

"I think it is important for this group of players to get over the line in Croke Park in a final," begins corner-back Meabh Cahalane. "We have played Galway a number of times over the years and they have just got the better of us in Croke Park the last couple of times we've met."

Barring an upset of epic proportions, Cahalane and her Cork teammates will return to HQ later in the summer for the All-Ireland semi-final double-header.

They'd like to make that journey with happy memories of Sunday's trip. The flipside of that is to head back up there burdened by four consecutive final defeats.

"As a collective, it is important that we are going up with a belief that we can win, and then if we do win, that definitely gives you confidence if you hopefully return there later in the year for an All-Ireland semi-final. It would definitely give you that bit of comfort knowing that that is in the bank."

"We had a positive league



Kerry co-captains Sara Murphy and Clodagh Walsh with Galway's Dervla Higgins, Cork's Amy O'Connor, and Meath's Ellen Burke in Croke Park ahead of the Very Camogie League Division 1A and 2A finals. Picture: Inpho

campaign and it would top it all off if we were to be successful on Sunday. It would give us a lot of confidence going forward and going back up there in the future."

A positive league they have indeed had. Considering four players were lost to cruciate ligament injuries, including Ashling Thompson and Clara O'Sullivan, Cork powered on unperturbed.

Among the younger personnel confidently stepping up in their stead has been Meabh's younger sister Orlaith.

Called into the senior panel on the run in to last July's All-Ireland semi-final, the teenager has impressed at corner-forward this spring.

"It is great to see her transition from a minor to senior player," said the big sister.

"It is a big step, but within a couple of months you can see that she's maturing into the role."

"We chat a good bit about it at home and it's great to see her going well."

"Mam and dad are flat out coming to the matches, so it is nice to have two of us there from the house."

Orlaith's call-up to the Cork footballers earlier this year means she is the latest Cahalane to hold dual status at senior inter-county level.

Travelling in the opposite direction is Meabh. The 27-year-old stepped away from the football set-up during the off-season to focus solely on matters camogie.

"It was a very difficult decision to make and obviously not one you'd like to make. I

would have preferred to continue doing the two, if I could, but I just found at important times last year, when I needed to feel at my best and feel 100%, I just felt that bit tired and that bit off it," she explains.

"The benefit for myself this year is that you get that bit more time for recovery. I wouldn't want to be jinxing it at the moment, but you have your camogie game, be it on a Saturday or Sunday, and that is your sole focus, whereas before with the dual, you might have had a camogie match Saturday and football match Sunday. And that is definitely hard on the body."

The body fresher, can Cahalane and Cork now lift that other weight from their shoulders?

Paul Keane

Cork captain Amy O'Connor has insisted that familiarity hasn't bred any sort of contempt when it comes to their regular meetings with Galway.

The counties will meet at Croke Park on Sunday in a repeat of last year's Very Camogie National League top flight decider.

Galway came out on top a year ago, as they did when the sides met in the 2021 All-Ireland final, while more recently the westerners beat Cork by a point in the final round of group games to secure this weekend's final place.

They will meet again in early June in the first round of the Championship when they clash in a Group 1 opener.

From O'Connor's point of view, it is a healthy rivalry that has helped to develop both counties.

"I think it's really important to meet teams like Galway often," said four-time All-Ireland winner O'Connor. "They're a quality side, they're really tactically aware and they pose questions of you that other opposition maybe might not, and I think you learn from that. By playing against a quality team like that, you pick up so much. They're really physically fit and just a big team in terms of their strength. So it'll only benefit us playing quality games like that."

That one-point loss to Galway late last month was Cork's only reversal of the campaign.

"I think we're in a good place," said O'Connor. "We've added quite a bit of our panel this year. We have young, fresh talent coming in and then we obviously have our experienced people in as well. We're working hard on the

O'Connor: Playing top teams like Galway helps us rise to challenge



HIGH FLYER: Cork's Amy O'Connor at the preview of Sunday's Very National Camogie League final.

Picture: Dan Sheridan/Inpho

pitch and working on different things in training. Some things will work and others won't but, as I said, we tend to

learn a lot about ourselves after playing Galway so this weekend will be a challenge for us."

Cork haven't won a league title since 2013 and O'Connor admitted that ending that near decade long barren streak is a

big motivation.

"I think there's only maybe two players on our panel that actually have a league medal

Ultimately the goal at the end of the year is an All-Ireland but we'd love to win the league

so it's definitely something we're going after," said O'Connor.

"Ultimately the goal at the end of the year is an All-Ireland but we'd love to win the league. Very have put in a huge effort over the last number of years, so it's a big competition. The games are quality. Cork against Galway on Sunday, hopefully that will be the same. Hopefully we can get people in to watch these types of quality games and then push on for the Championship."

Orla Cronin's return tempered some of the disappointment of losing to Galway late last month in that group encounter.

"Orla is back, she has been training over the last couple of weeks," said O'Connor. "She had picked up a couple of injuries but she's on the mend now. She's flying it in training which is brilliant. Everyone knows what a quality player Orla is so it will only benefit us having her back."

No holding back from Galway in Div 1 final – Murray

■ Tribeswomen set sights on retaining league title

EANNA O'REILLY

AHEAD of the Galway senior camogie team's 14th Division One league final appearance, team manager Cathal Murray was eagerly anticipating another day out in Croke Park. It's certainly become a regular occurrence since Murray took over the senior and intermediate teams before the start of the championship in 2018. The intervening years have seen Galway contest seven Croke Park finals.

A haul of five trophies (two All-Ireland senior, one All-Ireland intermediate, two national league titles), have been secured under Murray's stewardship in a highly successful spell, giving Galway supporters some very memorable occasions in recent years.

Interestingly, in six competitive matches against Sunday's opponents the Galway senior team have never lost to Cork during his time in charge. Ahead of the national league decider, Galway boss wasn't inter-

ested in reflecting on any victories from previous years, as he focused solely on Sunday's challenge.

"We might have a good record against Cork [in recent years] but that doesn't count for anything going into Sunday as far as we're concerned. Cork are always very, very hard to beat and we're under no illusions about how hard it's going to be on Sunday."



WHENEVER YOU GET TO A NATIONAL FINAL, YOU WANT TO GO ON AND WIN IT

"Every game we've played against Cork, even when we've won, it's been very tight. There's only ever been a point or two in it. Looking at them this year, they're going very well. So, it's going to be a huge challenge for us."



The Galway camogie backroom team, from left: Adrian O'Sullivan, Mickey Grealish, Cora Staunton, Robbie Lane, John Connor, John Manton, team manager Cathal Murray, and Molly Dunne.

Since their disappointing defeat to Tipperary in the opening round of the league, Galway have really caught fire to record four consecutive wins and give themselves a shot at winning an historic second division one title in-a-row. Murray was naturally pleased with the team's response to their first round defeat.

"Going into that game [against Tipperary], we probably weren't as far on as we thought we were, training wise. It was a poor performance, and the girls knew that themselves. The thing that disappointed us the most was our work rate. We felt it just wasn't up to standard against Tipp, and the following week we really wanted to see a big increase in work rate."

"We had a lot of new players

that day, and it was probably a lesson for them in how you have to perform and the level you have to get to in every game playing senior camogie. We looked for a huge improvement from everyone going down to Nowlan Park the following week. Two losses in-a-row would have really put us under pressure at the time and we obviously wanted to avoid that."

"In fairness, we played really well against Kilkenny. The improvement in work rate brought out a very good performance. We were really tested in that game, and the girls really had to dig in after they [Kilkenny] got their goal in the second half. That win gave us a lot of confidence, and we've looked to improve in every game since."

Despite the changes in personnel this year, the ambition of the Galway players and management has not changed, according to the team boss. Having a presence in finals and competing for silverware at the highest level remains the standard to which the Tribeswomen aspire.

With Galway due to face Cork once again in the first round of the championship, the sides will be very familiar with each other in 2023. The Tribeswomen will host the Leesiders on June 3, getting the championship underway with a heavy weight clash.

Regardless of their upcoming championship clash however, Murray was clear that his side would be fully focused on winning the league final, and there would be no element of keep-

ing their powder dry for June.

"Whenever you get to a national final, you want to go on and win it. It's a great day whenever you can represent your county in Croke Park, and we don't take that for granted. It's going to be a big occasion and it's up to us to perform on the day. We go into every game targeting a win, regardless of who we have or what our starting fifteen is."

"There's a title to be won on Sunday, and that's all we're focussed on. We have plenty of girls in this year's panel who haven't won a league medal yet. So, past finals don't count for anything on Sunday. We believe we have a group here now that's good enough to win and hopefully they'll perform well on the day," concluded the Galway manager.

Defender Black is relishing another crack at Cork

EANNA O'REILLY

ORANMORE-Maree defender Róisín Black has been one of Galway's most outstanding players throughout the National League, continuing the form which earned her an All Star nomination last year.

Black's outstanding versatility has seen her line out at full back, wing back and centre back effectively over the last 12 months, and she has looked equally comfortable in each position. This year, Cathal Murray has chosen to deploy her in the crucial number three jersey.

The 24-year-old primary school teacher doesn't mind where she is deployed however, and is happy do whatever job is asked of her in the Galway side. This week she was looking forward to the challenge of taking on Cork in the league final.

"I'm enjoying playing full back this year, but I'm happy to play wherever I'm needed. We're really looking forward to the game. It's great to be back in the league final and it's always great to be playing in Croke Park," she said.

Having been a member of the senior panel since 2016, Black is now one of the most experienced players in the Gal-



Galway's Maria Cooney, team captain Shauna Healy, and Jennifer Hughes.

way side. Throughout this year's league, she has been a key pillar of a strong defence and will undoubtedly play a vital role on Sunday.

Despite having a good record against Cork in recent years, the Tribeswomen are taking nothing for granted facing the Rebels on Sunday, according to the Galway defender.

"We always have great battles with Cork. They are a very fit and physical team and very tough to beat. The last game in Páirc Uí Chaoimh [on March 26] was very tough; we really needed a win that day. Just looking forward to [facing Cork] now in Croke Park."

Black is also enjoying having three clubmates alongside her in the Galway side this year. The presence of Niamh and Rachael Hanniffy, and Ailish O'Reilly, along with Black, in this year's Galway team reflects the strength of the club, who have narrowly come up short in county senior finals in the last two years.

"Yeah, it's something that's great for the club and for ourselves as well. We are always pushing one another and trying to become better players. It's very enjoyable, and it's nice to have some great company on the way to training as well," she added.



Galway bid to become league queens of camogie and ladies football

Cork have chance to end trophy wait

Orla Cronin availability is boost to Rebels, says Cork boss

BY KIERAN MCCARTHY

CORK have a chance to end their five-year wait for a national senior camogie title this Sunday.

The Rebels take on Galway in the Very Camogie League Division 1A final in Croke Park (1.50pm) as they target

a first piece of national silverware since Cork won the 2018 All-Ireland championship.

Cork's wait for a Division 1 league title stretches back even further, to 2013. Since then they have lost four league finals, including last year's to this weekend's opponents, Galway. Cork have also lost the last two All-Ireland finals, so Sunday presents a chance for this group to get their hands on a trophy.

Cork All-Star Saoirse McCarthy feels the league has already been a success for the Rebels, as they build towards the championship where they will play Galway, again, in the opening round in early June.

'We have got what we wanted out of the league - we are in the final so it has been successful that way. We are only looking for performances,' McCarthy told this week's *Star Sport* Podcast.

Cork boss Matthew Twomey has had to negotiate the league without some of his more experienced players, like Ashling Thompson who suffered a cruciate knee ligament injury in August 2022, but Cork have

been boosted by the availability of 2020 All-Star Orla Cronin who came off the bench in the final league group game against Galway last month.

'Orla Cronin, on her day, is probably one of the best players in the country,' said Twomey, delighted to have the Enniskeane star back on board after an injury-riddled 2022 that saw her play in just three champion-

ship games and miss the league. 'When you watch her playing, she just glides around the pitch. Orla was a massive loss to us last year. She is still working her way back. While Orla is available for selection, she is not fully there, fitness-wise, just yet.

'The difference in her over the last couple of weeks has been unbelievable. Just having Orla around the panel, out training with us, is fantastic. We want to make the most of that.

'At the same time we need to mind Orla and make sure we don't rush her back too fast. Right now, it is absolutely brilliant having Orla back.'

Cork beat Dublin, Clare, Tipperary and Kilkenny in the group stage of the league, and while they lost the final game to Galway, the Rebels had already qualified for the Division 1A league final by then.



Saoirse McCarthy in action in the 2022 All-Ireland final.

INTERMEDIATE CAMOGIE LEAGUE

Dillon's hat-trick fails to save Galway

GALWAY	3-6
TIPPERARY	1-13

SARAH GAUGHAN

THE Galway Intermediate team concluded their National league campaign on Saturday in Ballinaderreen where they were narrowly defeated by Tipperary. The contest ebbed and flowed throughout and there was little separating the sides, but Galway will be disappointed that they failed to win any of their league matches.

Tipperary were quick out of the blocks with two Jean Kelly points. Subsequently, Mairead Dillon hit the back of the net twice between the 9th and 13th

minutes to give Galway a four-point lead. Tipperary fought back, scoring four points on the trot through Aoife McLoughney (2), Ellen Cunneen and Sarah Madden to leave the teams level after 24 minutes.

Dillon replied with a point a minute later to restore Galway's lead, but Kelly found the back of the Galway net to give Tipperary the advantage heading into half time. Niamh Spellman then got her name on the scoresheet with a well taken point to leave the home team trailing by 1-6 to 2-2.

There was no scoring from play in the third quarter. Chloe Broderick landed a brace of frees to regain the lead for Galway before McLoughney did likewise from the placed ball for



Galway's Ava Lynskey comes under pressure from Lisa Cahill of Tipperary during Saturday's intermediate league camogie tie in Ballinaderreen. PHOTO: DON SOULES

Tipperary. Broderick and Madden then exchanged scores from frees to leave one between the sides heading into the final quarter. Joint captain Karen Kennedy and McLoughney swapped scores from play before Mairead Dillon secured her hat-trick in the 52nd minute when she rattled the back of the Tipperary net again. It looked like Galway may pull away for their first victory of the campaign.

Tipperary, however, finished the game stronger with a free through McLoughney and points from play by McLoughney and Kelly as the Munster visitors shaded the verdict.

Galway will now have to switch their attentions towards the championship. While they

came close again on Saturday, they will need to look at getting more point scorers on board to help them close out their games.

Their sights will now turn to the weekend of June 3/4 when they will face Kildare at home in the opening game of the intermediate championship.

Galway: C Higgins; R Kelly, P Finnelly, L Burke, K Coleman, K Mannion, J Daly; C Broderick (0-3, frees), R Hughes, K Kennedy (0-1), A Lynskey, N Spellman (0-1); C Reilly, A Donnellan, M Dillon (3-1), Subs: S Coleman for Mannion, C Dolan for Spellman, S McGinley for Reilly, N Horan for Hughes.
Tipperary: A Butler, E Butler, N Murray, C Ryan, C Walsh, L Cahill, A Callahan, C Shanahan, C Horgan, C Stakelum, J Kelly (1-3), E Cunneen (0-1), A Dwyer, S Madden (0-2), A McLoughney (0-7, 0-3 frees).

Higgins has heart set on league glory with Galway

CORA STAUNTON and Galway camogie – two things you wouldn't tend to associate. After all, this is a Mayo footballing icon and legend of the ladies game we're talking about, not to mention a celebrated figure in the brief history of the AFLW, before calling time to return to Irish shores.

But, typical of her sporting adaptability, she has dipped her toes this season in the area of sports performance. As performance coach with the Galway senior camogie team, the opening-round result in Division 1A of the Very Camogie League would have rankled. A trip to The Ragg didn't end well with a 4-9 to 1-9 humbling of the All-Ireland champions.

There were mitigating factors, mind you. Various players were unavailable through injury and absence and this was one occasion when Galway certainly learned from the experience.

From that Saturday in mid-February until now, Galway didn't lose a game – or drop another point.

The campaign has been about squeezing out wins in tight corners. Against Kilkenny, they had four points to spare. Same against Tipperary.

Then, in the final group game against Cork – a dress rehearsal for today's Division 1A final at Croke Park – they had just the bare minimum. A 1-11 to 1-10 victory down in Cork is a sign of how finely matched these two teams are.

This week, Galway's

By Philip Lanigan



Dervla Higgins spoke of how that opening-round defeat proved to be a blessing in disguise.

'Maybe it was a wake-up call. In fairness to Tipp, they brought the game to us. We've been looking back on that game, seeing where we could improve, what we need to fix,' she said.

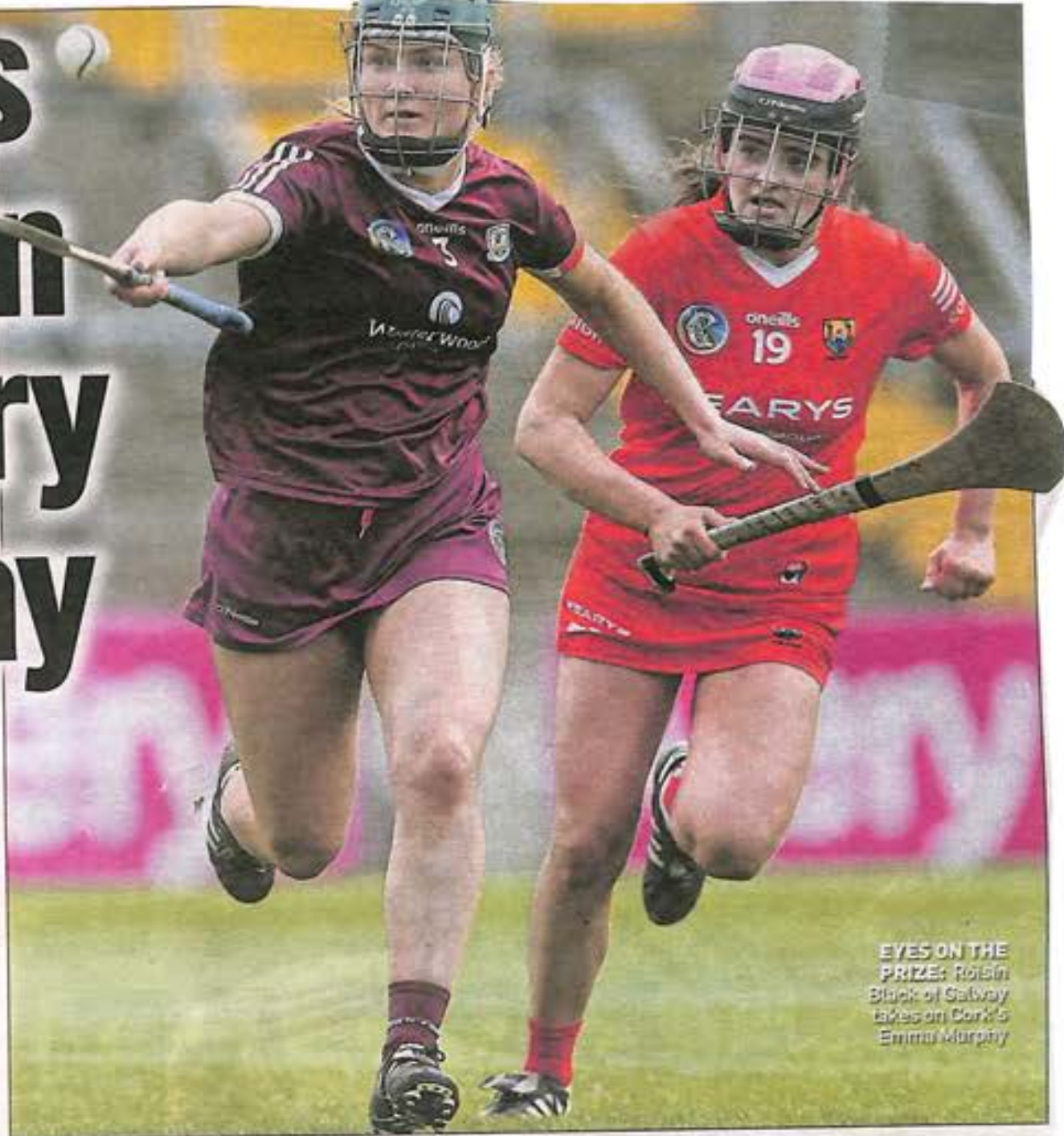
On a weekend when the LGFA is staging its league finals, the link with Staunton and the AFLW is interesting. Camogie is lucky in a way that it escapes the lure of the Aussie Rules game and the talent drain Down Under that has taken some of ladies football's top stars.

Higgins, though, dabbled in a European version of the game to go with her camogie career with Athenry and Galway. She has a senior football title with Kilmihil in Clare and she also won a European AFL title with West Clare Waves.

'It is true. I played a bit of AFL with West Clare Waves for a year or two. A few of us played football together and we were approached to go and play a bit of AFL. That's something we pursued for a season or two and luckily enough we were very successful with it with the West Clare Waves team. We got to travel a good bit around Europe with it.'

'I suppose it was a new

FINAL FOCUS: Galway star Dervla Higgins has Cork in her sights



EYES ON THE PRIZE: Robin Black of Galway takes on Cork's Emma Murphy

VERY CAMOGIE LEAGUE

By Daragh Ó Conchúir

DIVISION 1A FINAL Cork v Galway, Croke Park, 1.50pm (RTÉ2)

Cathal Murray's Galway side are a mix of youth and experience, making strides.

Aine Keane has continued her learning curve at this level and Sabina Rabbite is among the other underage products being assimilated, while Shauna Healy and Carrie Dolan have taken on added responsibilities, and Ailish O'Reilly seems to have retained all her hunger for goals.

The Tribeswomen inflicted a first defeat of the season on Cork in the final group game, but up to that point the Rebels had been flying.

Skipper Amy O'Connor was scoring heavily but she had a lot of help from the likes of Sorcha McCartan, Cliona Healy and Fiona Keating. Saoirse McCarthy and Laura Hayes flourished in their new midfield roles, while Laura Treacy and Libby Coppinger

form the spine of a resolute defence. Cork haven't won the League since 2013, and this is a fourth straight national final for the Leesiders and they are zero for three. That is a record they will aim to correct today.

DIVISION 2A FINAL Kerry v Meath, Croke Park, 1.50pm (RTÉ2)

This division has been extremely competitive. Meath got the better of Derry, Westmeath, Cavan and Laois but, because of their one-goal defeat to Kerry in Trim at the end of February, had to settle for the runners-up spot.

That game was in the second round and came after the Kingdom had drawn their opening tie in Westmeath. Had they lost in Royal country, who knows what impact it would have had on their mindset?

There is very little to separate these teams and the only surprise will be if it doesn't go right down to the wire.

O'Leary holds nerve to secure replay for Cork

CORK and Kilkenny must face off again after their Very National Camogie League Division 2B decider ended 1-7 apiece at the Clonmel Commercial GAA grounds.

Cliona O'Leary kept her cool to slot an injury-time equaliser from a 70-metre free for the Leesiders to earn a replay.

Kilkenny got off to a promising start as Danielle Quigley pulled on a loose ball and netted in the opening minute before Laura Greene added a neat point.

The Rebelettes were right back

ROUND-UP

By Daragh Ó Conchúir

in it thanks to a terrific goal from Cliona Dooley in the 28th minute after gathering possession from skipper Rachel Harty's sideline cut.

But Kilkenny had the final say of the first half with a Claire Doheny point edging them 1-5 to 1-3 ahead at the break.

The second period was closely contested and former senior player

Danielle Morrissey split the posts for the fourth time to restore the Cats' advantage but they could not extend it and O'Leary's nerve held firm to secure the replay.

A gutsy second-half performance saw Clare chisel out a 0-9 to 1-5 victory over old rivals Antrim to win the Very Camogie League Division 3B final at Conneff Park in Clane.

Clare trailed by two points at the interval but a five-point scoring burst proved significant in a dogged affair dominated by defences.

A splendid Orlagh Laverty goal in the 47th minute brought Antrim back level but half-time sub Aisling Cooney slotted the third of her three points after coming off the bench from a free immediately after and that was to prove the winner.

This was a rematch of the barnstorming All-Ireland premier junior semi-final last season, that finished with the Saffrons edging the verdict but only after two periods of extra time.

The Ulster side had led 0-5 to 0-3 at the interval.



FINAL FOCUS: Cork's Rachel Harty



Full-forward Hayley Ryan in action for Cork. Picture: Larry Cummins

Cork and Kilkenny clash for second time in three weeks in league decider

TODAY: Very Division 2B National League final: Cork v Kilkenny, Clonmel Commercials, Cahir, 3.30pm

IN what has been a new-look league for the second teams from Cork and Kilkenny, the rivals meet again for the second time in three weeks to decide the destination of the Very 2B title.

In a change of format this year only second teams that were considered to be from the stronger counties are in this 2B division so it was a very small competition with just five counties Tipperary, Cork, Galway, Kilkenny and Wexford in one group where the top two going to the final.

Cork, having won all their games, topped the group with Kilkenny in second place.

Three weeks ago Cork finished strong as they overcame Kilkenny in a close contest little divided the sides all through but goals proved crucial.

Cork fired home two in the opening half to give themselves the edge that was in the end with as they ran out 2-9 to 0-7 winners. On the day, the Cork defence held the upper hand on a Kilkenny attack that had an overreliance on their top scorer Danielle Morrissey.

She contributed all of their scores bar one as she notched up four points from play and two from frees. Clearly, the Rebels will need to keep a close eye on her today.

While the Cork management will be pleased to have reached the final the decision by the Camogie Association to make changes to the league groups was a strange one. Last season Cork were in Division 2 with a lot of teams who were fielding their first and only adult team

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

and all through Cork got good hard testing games against strong opposition.

This helped in no small way with championship preparations. As the championship gets underway they will come up against these first-choice teams so surely it would have benefitted Cork, Kilkenny, Galway Tipperary and Wexford to have been grouped in a division with them battling for the league title at this higher level and getting good testing games.

TODAY: Electric Ireland Minor All-Ireland Championship: Cork v Galway, Castle Road, 2pm.

THIS is the last game in the group series of the Electric Ireland championship and barring a draw between Tipperary and Waterford on Sunday and a 13-point win for Galway over Cork, these counties are safely through.

Kilkenny are on seven points with Dublin to play on Sunday and they will be expected to win here and go to 12 points/Galway are on nine points and a win will put them on 12. Cork are on seven so a win will see them finish on 10 and Tipp and Waterford are on six each.

A win for Tipp or Waterford will put them on nine and through and the result of the Cork-Galway game would then be irrelevant as the loser of Tipp/Waterford would be on six, one behind Cork, if they lose to Galway. With a +24 scoring advantage Cork look to be safe, but as the saying goes, it ain't over till it's over.



Galway's Dervla Higgins and Cork captain Amy O'Connor ahead of Sunday's Very Camogie League final showdown. Picture: INPHO/Dan Sheridan

Tribe defence coming good



Linda Mellerick

IMELDA HOBBS was the first woman to captain Galway to an All-Ireland in 1996.

These days she co-commentates Galway's league and championship games for Galway Bay FM. She is as familiar with Cork and Galway as I am and we agree on many aspects of how both teams are faring in this year's league and what the championship is likely to bring.

Here, she reflects on Galway's league campaign ahead of their final with Cork.

"Galway didn't have a great start in their opening game against Tipperary. They still had players to come back into the panel and the Sarsfields girls hadn't come back from their club All-Ireland win.

"There was a huge turnaround in their second game against Kilkenny, I'd say one of the finest performances of the league, showing great hunger.

"Carrie Dolan is the key player for Galway at the moment, both from scores and frees and also showing great vision in her runs and support. We've been very good in defence all through the league. Shauna Healy (full-back) is the captain this year. As they've gone through the league Galway's full-back line are getting better.

"Emma (Helebert) at centre-back had a particularly great game against Clare and Rachel Hanniffy has been playing the role of coming forward from defence. A concern is that they aren't settling up front."

Galway have played the league without star forwards Siobhan and Orlaith McGrath, Orlaith due back after a cruciate injury last year. Both are expected to be back for the championship campaign.

In their absence Galway are relying on Carrie Dolan and Ailish O'Reilly, who is lining out at full-forward but possibly more of a threat when playing in the corner. Aoife Donoghue can also be a tormentor and is playing well for Galway, always bringing a huge workrate to the pitch.

Niamh Kilkenny, while no official retire-



Galway's Carrie Dolan and Cork's Cliona Healy in action last month. Picture: INPHO/Ken Sutton

ment has been announced, does look as if she has called time on her intercounty career. Imelda feels that could be the case.

"She's a huge loss as Galway miss her thundering forward with the ball."

Sarah Dervan, Galway's 2022 captain, and a hugely influential player is back on the panel. Where she'll figure is hard to know with Roisin Black having putting her stamp on the number three position.

But what an impact sub Dervan would be if Cathal Murray holds her. Cork will be favourites based on league performances to date.

"I wouldn't read too much into the game two weeks ago. The performance that day was always going to come from Galway and in fairness they delivered. Both teams will want to win it.

"They'll be looking for a performance with championship at the back of their minds. Both sides are building. I think Cork need the victory more than Galway. There's a lot of Galway's All-Ireland-winning intermediate team coming through. Cathal is good at that.

"Sometimes you can get caught with a panel of players and keep using your reliable. But Cathal, and this year more than any other year, has really used his panel. Every game had a different team all

through the league. He's used players such as Katie Anna Porter at wing-back, Jennifer Hughes, Niamh Niland, Ciara Hickey, Laura Kelly and given them loads of game-time. These are all girls that have come up from Intermediate. I'd say he's used his five subs allowed in every game."

Matthew Twomey has also been giving much of his panel good game time. They've used 28 players. Pam Mackey returns from injury tomorrow, as does Orla Cronin.

This does improve the bench and Cork have been short on impact subs in the past so it's very welcomed. Both Galway and Cork play a similar style. 15 on 15 and attack from the back, running and support play, key components. She's impressed with Cork's defence.

"Laura Tracey has really taken over the No 6 role, covers both sides well and attacks and I think has a great understanding with Laura Hayes as well. Libby is playing brilliantly at full-back and doesn't just clear the ball; she makes great deliveries. I think Cork no more than Galway were struggling to get scores the last day. There was a swirling wind but both sides had chances that they didn't take.

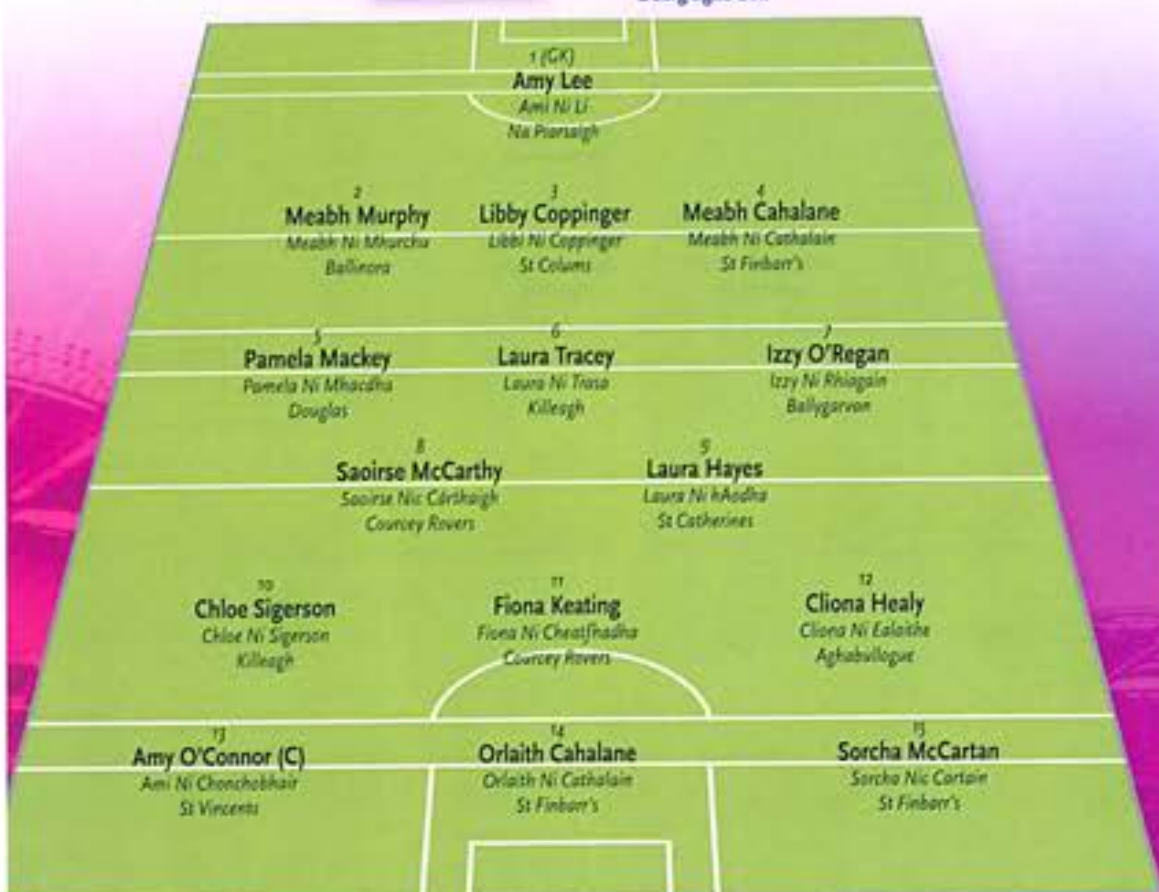
"Like in hurling, goals aren't as plentiful as they were back in our day but are still hugely important."



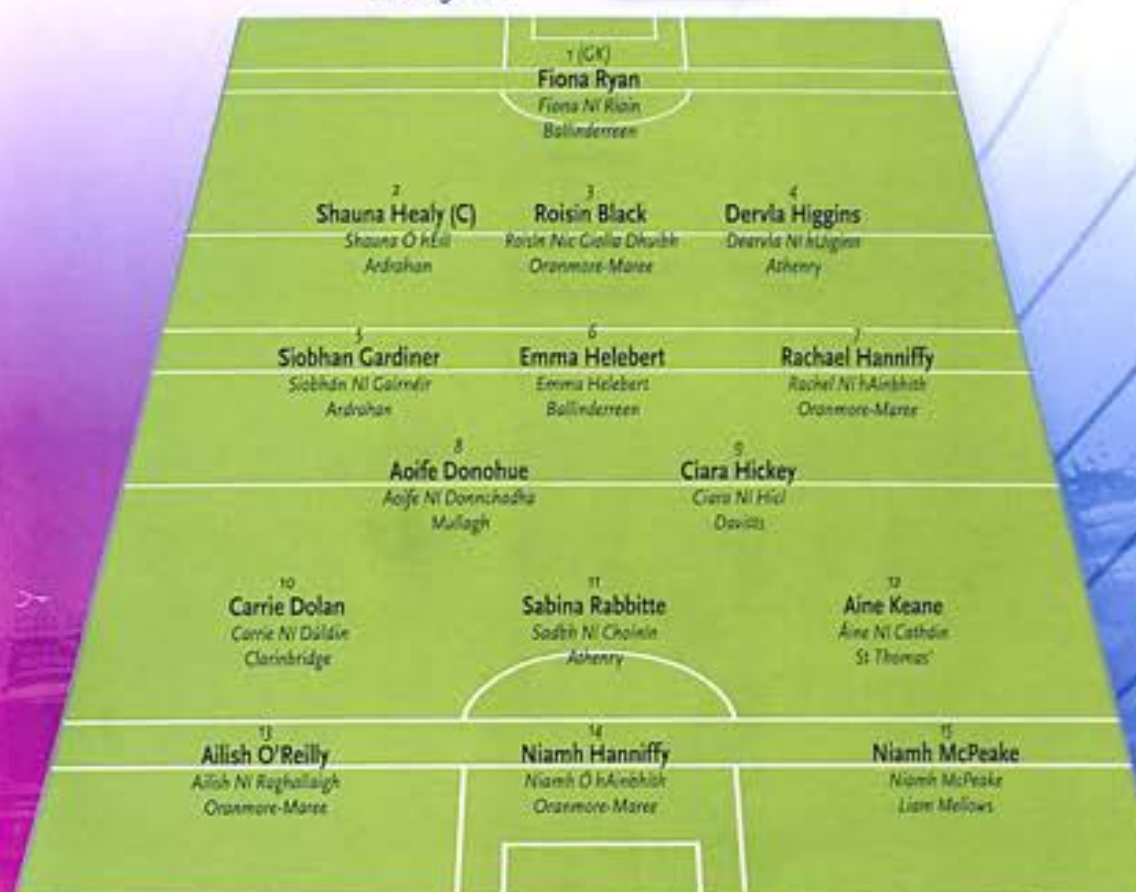
Cork's Clara Morrisson evades Tipp's Shauna Heffernan. Pic: Jim Coughlan



Dearg agus Ban



Marúin agus Ban



IONADAÍ

- 16 Molly Lynch - Mollí Ní Loingsigh Sarsfield
- 17 Emma Murphy - Emma Ní Mhurchú Glan Rovers
- 18 Orla Cronin - Orlaith Ní Choinín Enniskeane
- 19 Clodagh Finn - Clodagh Ní Fhinn Fr. O'Neill
- 20 Kate Wall - Cait de Bhré St Finbarr's
- 21 Aoife O'Neill - Aoife Ní Neill St Finbarr's
- 22 Ail Smith - Ail MacGabháin Aghada
- 23 Aisling Egan - Aisling Mac Aulhegan St Finbarr's
- 24 Hayley Ryan - Hayley Ní Ríain Blackrock
- 25 Hannah Looney - Hannah Ní Lúinigh Killeagh
- 26 Aoife Barrett - Aoife Ní Bharraid Aghabullogue

TEAM OFFICIALS

- Manager Matthew Twomey
- Coach Liam Cronin
- Goalkeeper Coach Teddy O'Donovan
- Coach Ger Manley
- Athletic Wesley O'Brien
- Development Coach

IONADAÍ

- 16 Laura Freeney - Labhráin De Bhaldraithe Asherry
- 17 Katie Anna Porter - Cailt-Aine Ní Phárláir Davitts
- 18 Jennifer Hughes - Seannafair Ní Aodha Cannamore
- 19 Shannon Corcoran - Shannon Ní Charáin Sarsfield
- 20 Laura Kelly - Labhráin Ní Ceallaigh Salihill Knocknacree
- 21 Niamh Níland - Niamh Ní Nialláin Clarinbridge
- 22 Lisa Casserly - Lisa Nic Casarlaigh Ballinderreen
- 23 Alannah Kelly - Ailáine Ní Ceallaigh Portlanna
- 24 Caoimhe Starr - Caoimhe Starr Kilmor
- 25 Katie Manning - Cailt Ní Mainín Mullagh

TEAM OFFICIALS

- Manager Cathal Murray
- S & C Robbie Lane
- Coach Molly Dunne
- Coach Gavin Keary
- Coach John Connors



Cork

Back Row L to R

Ashling Thompson, Ciara O'Sullivan, Izzy O'Regan, Meabh Cahalane, Sorcha McCartan, Kate Wall, Katrina Mackey, Chloe Sigerson Cliona Healy, Emma Murphy, Hannah O'Leary, Meadhb Ring, Mollie Lynch, Amy O'Connor, Aisling Egan, Hannah Looney, Olivia McAllen, Laura Tracey

Front Row L to R

Emma Flanagan, Katie O'Mahony, Amy Lee, Aoife O'Neill, Saoirse McCarthy, Aoife Harley, Laura Hayes, Ail Smith, Fiona Keating, Meabh Murphy, Libby Coppinger, Orlaith Cahalane



Galway

Back row Left to Right:

Roisin Black, Emma Helebert, Katie Manning, Katie Anna Porter, Aine Keane, Caoimhe Starr, Niamh Hanniffy, Sabina Rabbittie, Niamh Níland, Orlain Rabbittie, Fiona Ryan & Alannah Kelly

Front row Left to Right:

Rachael Hanniffy, Shannon Corcoran, Laura Kelly, Lisa Casserly, Tegan Canning, Shauna Healy (C), Ailish O'Reilly, Jennifer Hughes, Dervla Higgins, Aoife Donohue, Ciara Hickey, Niamh McPeake, Carrie Dolan & Laura Freeney



Camogie League Division 1A final

Cork 1-12
Galway 2-13

Eoghan Cormican
Croke Park



Murray's newcomers grind down Rebels

Cork must stew on yet more final regrets

It was only when Galway manager Cathal Murray started listing out all the absent first-teamers who have yet to return and who won't be returning that the county's successful defence of the league took on a whole new level of impressiveness.

With no provincial championship to keep them ticking over for the next while, the westerners now have a seven-week lay-off until their All-Ireland championship group opener against Cork on June 3. By that juncture of the season, Murray will have back fit and available for selection the McGrath sisters, Orlaith and Siobhan, and cruciate victim Rebecca Hennelly.

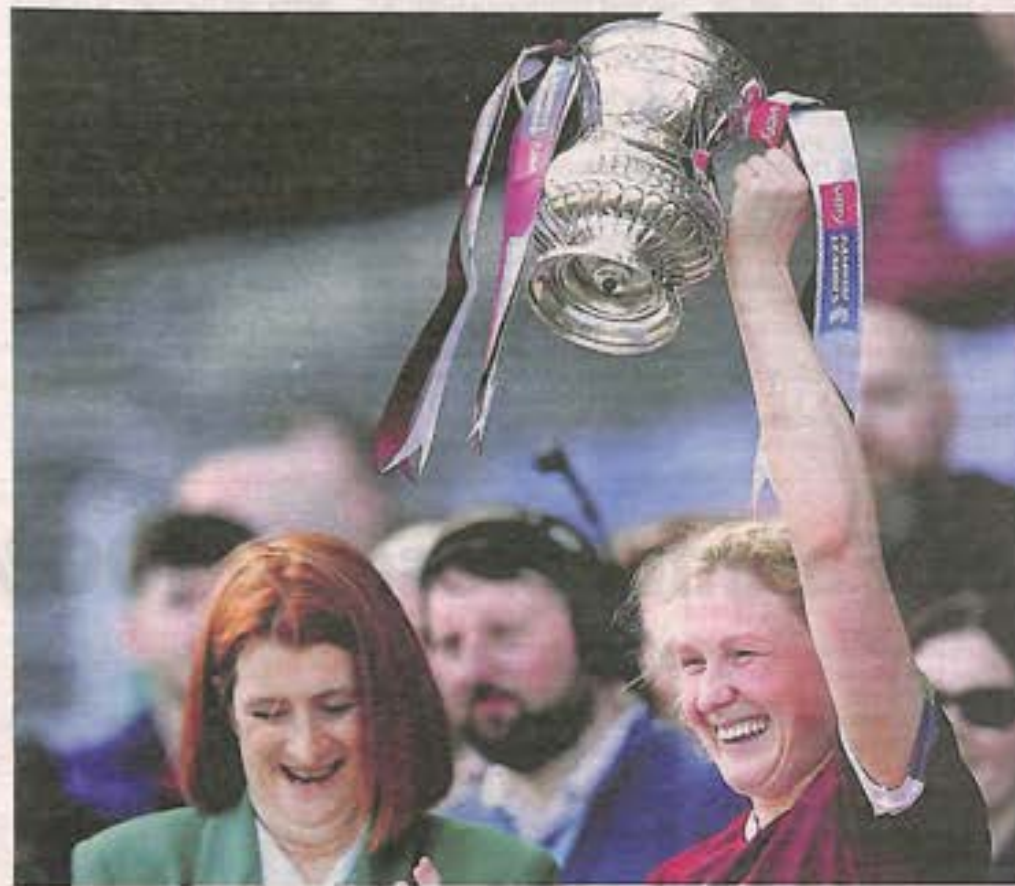
It is also hoped that Sarah Spellman, half-forward for the 2019 and '21 All-Ireland victories, will rejoin the fold ahead of championship.

Maria Cooney and two-time All-Ireland-winning captain Sarah Dervan, while listed at number 28 and 29 yesterday, only returned to the set-up in recent weeks and will be much further down the road under the headings of fitness and sharpness come the June Bank Holiday weekend.

Now to those departed. 2019 player of the year Niamh Kilkeny, Caitriona Cormican, and Heather Cooney have played their last game in maroon after several years of fine service. Two-time All-Star goalkeeper Sarah Healy and Catherine Finnerty, meanwhile, are away travelling.

Add them all up and what you had yesterday was a new-look Galway team retaining the Division 1 League title without eight starters from the 2021 All-Ireland final win.

That's some turnover of personnel. And then to continue adding silverware while bedding in the newcomers, a



VICTORY SALUTE: Galway's Shauna Healy lifts the Division 1A cup after victory over Cork in yesterday's final in Croke Park.
Picture: Inpho/Ryan Byrne

hat tip to the Galway management.

Murray has doubled up as senior and intermediate boss in recent seasons. In 2022, the intermediates went the distance.

Three of that team—goalkeeper Fiona Ryan, midfielder Clara Hickey, and corner-forward Niamh McPeake—started yesterday. Three more—Shannon Corcoran, Katie Anna Porter, and Jennifer Hughes—came off the bench.

Murray said afterwards that he hates the word transition. Whatever label he wants to put on this integration of new faces into the senior set-

up, it's been seamless.

"It is a new group. A lot of fresh faces onto the panel and a lot of new faces onto the team. For them, it is really good to win a game like that. Today was about grinding it out," Murray observed.

"It takes them a while to get up to senior level. We lost to Tipp [earlier in the league] and confidence was knocked a bit. What they have done since gives them a huge amount of confidence that they can compete at this level."

There are others who didn't come the intermediate route who shone during a second half where Cork were held to

four points and only one of those from play.

"Aine Keane was a sub for last year's All-Ireland semi-final, as was Dervla Higgins and Siobhan Gardiner. All these players have stepped up."

Higgins, along with full-back colleagues Shuana Healy and Roisin Black, were pebbles in the Cork shoe during a frustrating second half for the Leesiders. They had begun that second period 1-8 to 1-6 ahead. Their first half was bookended by an Orlaith Cahalane goal and four unanswered points from Amy O'Connor (two frees), Sorcha

McCartan (free), and Laura Hayes. But their succession of missed opportunities—including a Cahalane goal shot off the post and a saved O'Connor rebound early in the second half—left their opponents alive in the tie.

And when Galway weaved together a second goal to hit the front entering the final quarter, they gave a masterclass in dogged resilience to protect that advantage.

The goal was the outstanding score of this flat and atmosphere lacking final. Rachel Hanniffy moved possession to Ailish O'Reilly, she went to pick out sub Shannon Corcoran, but Sabina Rabbite grabbed the pass on her run through and produced a delightful finish. 2-9 to 1-10 they now led.

Aoife Donoghue was fouled for a converted Carrie Dolan free. Donoghue pointed herself shortly after. The pair contributed 1-11 of their 2-13 total. Galway were nowhere near fantastic, but they got the job done. For a side without so many of their once staple figures, what more could you want?

"Last year we won the league but didn't get to the All-Ireland final. I hope we learn from that," Murray signed off.

Scorers for Galway: C Dolan (1-8, 0-7 frees); S Rabbite (1-1); A Donoghue (0-3); A Keane (0-1).

Scorers for Cork: A O'Connor (0-5, 0-5 frees); O Cahalane (1-1); S McCartan (0-2, 0-2 frees); S McCarthy; L Hayes; C Sigerson; F Keating (0-1 each).

GALWAY: F Ryan; S Healy; R Black; D Higgins; S Gardiner; E Helebert; R Hanniffy; N Hanniffy; C Hickey; S Rabbite; C Dolan; A Keane; N McPeake; A Donoghue; A O'Reilly.

Subs: S Corcoran for McPeake (40); KA Porter for O'Reilly (63); J Hughes for Rabbite (64).

CORK: A Lee; M Murphy; L Coppinger; M Cahalane; P Mackey; L Tracey; I O'Regan; S McCarthy; L Hayes; C Sigerson; F Keating; C Healy; O Cahalane; S McCartan; A O'Connor.

Subs: E Murphy for Sigerson (44); O Cronin for Healy (45); A Healy for O'Regan (48); C Finn for O Cahalane (50).

Referee: J Heffernan (Wexford).

Reaction

Eoghan Cormican

Same old story for this Cork camogie team at Croke Park.

A shopping bag overflowing with misses, a lead not protected, and another final lost.

For the umpteenth time in recent years, Cork departed GAA HQ empty-handed and heads heavy with regret.

Matthew Twomey's charges finished with 10 wides and four green flag opportunities not taken. Galway, by contrast, had only one second-half wide, and that didn't arrive until the third minute of injury-time.

Cork have now come off second best in back-to-back league and All-Ireland finals since the summer of 2021.

They've also lost their last five knockout meetings with Galway.

The county's wait for a first piece of national silverware since 2018 stretches on.

"At half-time, we were very happy. But we just went astray. Can't put the finger on it now. We have to analyse it. It's a bit raw now to be coming up with any new messages," said a visibly disappointed Twomey afterwards.

Their collection of misses, he added, were a "killer".

"Our shooting was off today. We had a few goal chances that we should have taken but didn't. Galway had two opportunities and they scored the two of them. That's the difference.

"Was it Orlaith Cahalane who hit it off the bottom of the post early in the second half? If that went in, it was a different story.

"We thought we had a foul went against us and then they went up and got a goal.

"They're the breaks, but we seem to always be on the receiving end of them. It's tough. That's our fourth final in a row [to lose]. It's not easy."

Camogie League Division 2A final

Kerry 0-14
Meath 0-13

Daragh Ó Conchúir
Croke Park

Patrice Diggin has been a central cog in the rise of Kerry camogie in the past decade and the attacker, who scored three points and also helped to reduce the huge influence of Meath star Aoife Minogue when switched to midfield in the second half, summed up the importance of a historic Kerry triumph in the Very Camogie League Division 2A final at Croke Park yesterday.

"Any day you walk out on Croke Park is a special moment but the excitement of winning today is you're pushing up to Division 1B and I think that drives Kerry camo-

Kerry camogie now driven 'to another level'

gie to another level," said Diggin. "In 2019, when we won the All-Ireland you were getting to intermediate and now this year, you know you're going up with the top guns so it's a massive, special day for Kerry.

"You can say it's just another field, it's just another game, but it's always breathtaking coming out onto that field, the size of it, and it can take a few minutes to get into it. You see it the surface, the ball is pinging from end to end. It takes a little time to get used to but it's special."

The Kingdom just edged a pulsating encounter full of outstanding scores, and Diggin's late on from right out on the touchline to put Kerry two ahead with time running out was right up there.

Jackie Horgan was the scoring star for Kerry, contributing eight points after taking over the placed ball duties from her long-time ally and also driving over four scores from play.

Defeat had to be tough to take for Meath and particularly Minogue, who dominated the game in the first half, sending over points from all distances and angles. She also had a couple of shots at goal well saved by Aoife Fitzgerald and little wonder Kerry manager, Pat Ryan described her as a fantastic athlete and Meath as a very good team.

His tone though, was similar to Diggin's. Pure joy.

"I'm just so happy," said Ryan. "Happy is the word," he added, for emphasis. "After

people being through covid and everything, what a day. What a day for the young people, for young girls. What a day for Kerry (ladies) football yesterday (after winning the Division 1 league) and it was great."

Kerry had done well to be only going in a point in arrears at half-time, 0-7 to 0-6. And though Amy Gaffney shot three second-half points for Meath, the eventual winners were much improved in the latter period.

"We just kept it simple," explained Ryan regarding the messaging in the dressing room. "A few home truths, simple talk, we gave one or two instructions and the girls responded. That's all. We spoke for a minute and that was it."

Meath boss Brendan Skehan hailed his charges.

"We were lacking a little bit of experience but I suppose if we'd taken a few of the chances and stuck the points away. There was a little bit of indiscipline that gave away frees as well but all in all, you can't fault the girls. The effort was superb. They're extremely disappointed."

The teams were level seven times and it wasn't until the 56th minute that Kerry hit the front for the last time via a Horgan free.

Then came Diggin's outrageous point and they managed to keep their noses in front through seven minutes of additional time to claim the honours.

"We'd a load of minors with us today who can't play but

trained with us all year," Ryan concluded. "It was like Christmas for them this morning, they were first up for the breakfast! That's the future really."

"Today, you can't buy this, you can't buy this feeling."

Scorers for Kerry: J Horgan 0-8 (4h); P Diggin 0-3 (2h); A O'Sullivan, A Behan, N Carey 0-1 each.

Scorers for Meath: A Minogue 0-6 (1-4, 2h); A Gaffney 0-3; A Donnelly, A Lally, L Devine, O O'Halloran 0-1 each.

KERRY: A Fitzgerald, M Costello, S Murphy, R McCarthy, A Behan, N Leen, K Lynch, J Horgan, E O'Donoghue, P Diggin, L Collins, C Spillane, C Walsh, A M Leen, A O'Sullivan.

Subs: N Carey for Leen (43).

MEATH: T Murphy, S Payne, C Coffey, R O'Neill, T King, M Clinch, E Burke, C O'Riordan, A Minogue, A Lally, G Coleman, A Gaffney, O O'Halloran, E O'Connell, L Devine.

Subs: A Donnelly for O'Connell (51); S Leonard for O'Riordan (60).

Referee: Brian Kearney (Kildare).

Rabbitte goal crucial

Display in second half very worrying and needs fixing

LET'S face the fact that Cork's loss to Galway in Sunday's Very Division 1A league final was a big blow.

Cork have now lost their fourth national final in two years, and they haven't beaten Galway in a major final since 2017.

How Cork fell away in the second half is of a major concern and something that's psychologically going to take a lot of recovering from.

Once again Galway's defence was outstanding, but from a Cork perspective we can't stand back and admire that; we need to work on how to address it.

Leading by two points at half-time after finishing the opening half strongly Cork managed just one point from play in that second half.

Galway have a strong final record under manager Cathal Murray and considering they dug out what was a must win group game in Páirc Uí Chaoimh three weeks ago to reach the final this is a massive boost for them ahead of championship, with a number of key players also to return to play.

Cork took a two-point lead into the half-time dressing room, hitting the last four points of the thirty minutes.

They started well. Despite three early Cork wides, with her first touch Orlaith Cahalane rounded Dervla Higgins and headed for the posts. While Galway, swarmed by three Cahalane, got a pull on the dropping ball, it snuck past Fiona Ryan between the posts.

Carrie Dolan got Galway off the mark two minutes later before Cahalane again got the better of Higgins to point and with Saoirse McCarthy also hitting the mark, Cork led 1-2 to 0-2. Dolan again providing after 12 minutes.

Cork were coping well in defence and were on top in the middle of the park, but Galway hit a solid patch with the wind and struck 1-3 inside the next seven minutes to Fiona Keating's one for Cork.

Their goal came on 18 minutes when Niamh McPeake's strike was blocked by Amy Lee only for Dolan to pull the rebound first time to the net.

But it was early days and Cork didn't falter, coming back at Galway.

It has to be said that they were helped somewhat by a couple of poor Galway decisions where they over caught or over carried the ball and gifted a couple of frees to Cork.

Still, Cork looked to be doing fine and a lovely puck-out by Lee found Laura Hayes who struck the ball over the bar, epitomising Cork's flair at that time.



Cork's Izzy O'Regan with Sabina Rabbitte and Carrie Dolan of Galway

Picture: INPHO/Ryan Byrne



Match analysis

Linda Mellerick

What went wrong in the second half? A Cork goal chance that went amiss at the re-start for one.

A great move involving Saoirse McCarthy, Fiona Keating and Orlaith Cahalane came off the post and Amy O'Connor's ground stroke while slightly back peddling was smothered.

Three Galway points by the 40th minute to Cork's only point from play in that second half had the sides level at 1-9 apiece.

Referee Justin Heffernan was picky but consistent on overcarrying.

Laura Treacy was again reading her wings very well and Cork were getting many chances up front. O'Connor hit over a free, but two scoreable chances for Cork to put them three up went wide and a minute later Galway got their second goal.

A pass from the left was brilliantly taken by the running Sabrina Rabbitte and she deftly lobbed Lee to give Galway a 2-9 to 1-10 lead.

Cork weren't making any headway up front against a resolute Galway full-back line despite making a number of substitutions to try and break them down.

Sorcha McCartan converted a free. Carrie Dolan, who has become such a leader for Galway, pointed her seventh of the day also from a free with the hardworking Aoife O'Donoghue adding another and the game was slipping from Cork.

O'Donoghue's run to win a ball she looked to have no chance of getting was a huge signal to her team in that final quarter.

O'Connor and Dolan again from placed balls and then, crucially, another two poor wides from Cork signalled that the title was only going one way.

Aine Keane added the insurance point and Cork again come home empty-handed.

Plenty of thinking to do before the championship starts and Cork need to find a way to beat Galway sooner rather than later.



Orlaith Cahalane of Cork in action against Ciara Hickey of Galway during the Very Camogie League Final Division 1A match at Croke Park in Dublin.

Picture: Eoin Noonan/Sportsfile



Orlaith Cahalane of Cork has a shot on goal despite the efforts of Roisin Black of Galway.



Cork's Meabh Murphy battles with Aoife Donoghue of Galway.

Picture: Ryan Byrne/Inpho

Story of the game

Score of the game: Plenty to choose from, with Sabina Rabbitte's goal top quality, but for the difficulty of the angle and distance Chloe Sigerson's second-half point was the pick of them.

Player of the game: Laura Treacy and Libby Coppinger were both outstanding for the Cork and didn't put a foot wrong all through, but

the accolade went to Galway's full-back Roisin Black, who matched Coppinger on her performance in the number three jersey. **Turning point:** In a game that was tight all through the telling moment came when Galway raised their second green flag. A brilliant ball from Ailish O'Reilly was caught on the

run by Rabbitte to find the back of the net, after 45 minutes. It put Galway two points up and from here Cork never got back on level terms.

Referee watch: Whilst no manager or team will be happy with every decision a referee makes, Cork can't have too many complaints at Justin Heffernan's display.

as Cork defeated



Cork's Emma Murphy and Dervla Higgins of Galway. Picture: Inpho

Cork player ratings

Amy Lee: To be fair, there was little she could have done about either goal. Her puck-outs couldn't be faulted all through. Bar the two goals she didn't really have a save to make all through. 7

Meabh Murphy: A young player who played a part in keeping the Galway full-forward line quiet all through. Gave it her all over the hour. 6

Libby Coppinger: Simply outstanding as she has been all through the league. A model of consistency and was the same again yesterday. 8

Meabh Cahalane: Had a quite game by her own standards and wasn't seen bursting forward as she normally can but defensively played her part in keeping a quality full-forward line quiet. 7

Pamela Mackey: Another who played well in what was a good overall defensive display by Cork, despite the loss. 7

Laura Treacy: Was the best player on the pitch for Cork and must now be considered one of the top centre-backs in the game. Read the game well as she always does and would have been in line for Player of the Game had Cork won. 8

Izzy O'Regan: Was taken off in the second-half but overall had a good game. 6

Saoirse McCarthy: Made a number of runs forward but on one or two occasions her finishing let her down. 6

Laura Hayes: Was prominent in the first-half but not as much after the break. Got a great score and will be one of the players Cork will look to come the championship. 6

Chloe Sigerson: Another good display from the Killeagh player, who helps out in defence as much as an attacking role, before being taken off after 43 minutes. 6

Fiona Keating: Started well but again was not as prominent in the second-half. 6

Cliona Healy: Worked hard all through before she was withdrawn after 46 minutes. 6

Amy O'Connor: Her frees from points were crucial at times to keep Cork in the game, but wasn't as prominent as she would have liked from general play. 6

Orlaith Cahalane: Started well and another young player who will learn a lot from this encounter. Got a great goal and was unlucky not to get a second. 6

Sorcha McCartan: Worked hard all through and with a little luck could have won it for Cork. 7

Subs: Emma Murphy, Orla Cronin, Aoife Healy and Clodagh Finn didn't really impact the game when they came on.

Rory Noonan.

CAMOGIE



Rory Noonan

Galway	2-13
Cork	1-12

MORE heartbreak for Cork at the hands of Galway as they lost to the Tribeswomen in the Very Division 1A National Camogie League final at Croke Park yesterday afternoon.

In a game that was tight all through, Sabina Rabbittie's second-half goal proved to be the crucial score.

It put her side two points up and from there they never trailed again.

Cork haven't beaten Galway in a final (league or All-Ireland) since 2017 and sadly for the Rebels that run continued this time out.

It certainly was for lack of effort on Cork's part, with the likes of Laura Tracey, Libby Coppinger, and Pamela Mackey to the fore for Cork.

After three early wides and a couple of other missed opportunities, Cork took the lead four minutes in when Orlaith Cahalane raised the first green flag of the afternoon.

She took on the Galway defence and scrambled the sliothar over the line for the first score.

Two minutes later and Galway were off the mark when Carrie Dolan pointed, but Cork were enjoying the better of the early exchanges.

Cahalane got Cork's first point, with Dolan on target again from a free, to make it 1-1 to 0-2 with 10 minutes gone.

Saoirse McCarthy replied for the Rebels from the restart before Dolan got her third from a free to put two between the sides.

A poor ball from a free by Cork let Sabina Rabbittie in to raise a white flag, with Fiona Keating replying to make it 1-3 to 0-4.

With 19 minutes gone Galway took the lead when Dolan raised a green flag. Niamh McPeake's effort was well saved by Amy Lee but there was nothing she could do when Dolan pounced on the breaking ball.

Aoife Donohue added a point as Galway were now on top and using the wind to their advantage.

Amy O'Connor and Donohue exchanged scores, before Laura Hayes pointed to put only a point between them, 1-5 to 1-6.

A superb point from long distance free by Sorcha McCartan put Cork back level and another free, this time from O'Connor, saw the Rebels retake the lead.

O'Connor played Keating in but her shot on goal was well saved by Fiona Ryan. But the referee was playing advantage for a late tackle on O'Connor, who picked herself up to score from the free to see the Rebels lead 1-8 to 1-6 at half-time. Dolan reduced the deficit



Orla Cronin of Cork is tackled by Rachael Hanniffy of Galway during the Very Camogie League Final Division 1A match at a sunny Croke Park in Dublin. Picture: Eoin Noonan/Sportsfile

with an early free before Cork should have had a second goal.

Cahalane's effort came back off the post and Ryan saved O'Connor's effort from the rebound.

Chloe Sigerson scored from distance, before Dolan was on target from another free to make it 1-8 to 1-9 with 37 minutes played.

Three minutes later and the sides were level, with Dolan again raising a white flag from another free.

O'Connor put the Rebels back in front from a free in a game before Hawkeye denied Cliona Healy a point to increase Cork's lead.

With 46 minutes gone Galway were back in front when Ailish O'Reilly found Rabbittie and she gave Lee no chance of saving to score Galway's second goal, 2-9 to 1-10.

McCartan replied from a free from the restart with Dolan replying from another placed ball at the other end to keep Galway two points in front.

Donohue increase their lead to three and with eight minutes go to it wasn't looking good for the Rebels.

O'Connor reduced the deficit from a free, to make it 1-12 to 2-11 with seven minutes left.

Another Dolan free put three between the sides again as Cork now needed a goal with time running out.

Dolan put a goal between the sides again, before O'Connor played McCartan in but she was surrounded by the Galway defence to deny Cork a goal.

With 61 minutes gone Aine Keane got the insurance score as Galway ran out deserving winners to keep their winning run against Cork going.

Scorers for Galway: C Dolan 1-6 (7), A Donohue 0-3, S Rabbittie 1-1, A Keane 0-1.

Cork: O Cahalane 1-1, A O'Connor 0-5 (5), S McCartan 0-2 (1), F Keating, S McCarthy, L Hayes, C Sigerson.

CORK: A Lee (Na Piarasigh); M Murphy (Ballinora), L Coppinger (St Colums), M Cahalane (St Finbar's); P Mackey (Douglas), L Treacy (Killeagh), I O'Regan (Ballygarvan); S McCarthy (Coursey Rovers), L Hayes (St Catherine's); C Sigerson (Killeagh); F Keating (Coursey Rovers); C Healy (Aghabullogue); A O'Connor (St Vincent's); O Cahalane (St Finbar's); S McCartan (St Finbar's).

Subs: E Murphy (Glen Rovers) for C Sigerson (43); O Cronin (Enniskeane) for C Healy (46); A Healy (Aghada) for I O'Regan; C Finn (Fr O'Neill's) for O Cahalane (50).

GALWAY: F Ryan; S Healy, R Black, D Higgins; S Gardiner, E Helebert, R Hanniffy; A Donohue, C Hickey; C Dolan, S Rabbittie, A Keane; A O'Reilly, N Hanniffy, N McPeake.

Subs: S Concoran for N McPeake (40); K A Porter for A O'Reilly; J Hughes for S Rabbittie (both 60).

Referee: Justin Heffernan, Wexford.

Three reasons why Cork lost to Galway in camogie

Wides: Cork had 10 wides overall, five in each half. While that doesn't seem like much some of there were easy scoring chances that you would expect to have gone over the bar.

Others were shot from distance and dropped short and when they look back they will rue some of those missed chances, especially in a game that was close all through.

After games, the stat of five wides per half is not one that would upset too many managers, but on

this occasion Matthew Twomey and his selectors will know it cost them dearly.

Goals: As the old saying goes 'goals win games' and that was certainly the case yesterday.

Cork had a number of opportunities to raise green flags, with the width of the post and a brilliant save from the rebound by their keeper Fiona Ryan denying the Rebels on one such occasion.

At the other end Galway had two chances to raise green flags and they made sure they did. Both came

at crucial times, the first when it looked like Cork were going to get a grip on the game and the second putting them in front. That lead was never lost again, despite the best efforts of the Cork side.

Luck: They say you need a bit of luck to win finals and on a few occasions Cork didn't have it yesterday.

Orlaith Cahalane's effort coming back off the post being one such example when it looked like she was going to get her second goal.



Galway hint at bigger things to come after downing Cork

CONOR McKEON

GALWAY 2-13
CORK 1-12

VERY CAMOGIE DIVISION 1A FINAL

CATHAL MURRAY did his best to dissuade anyone getting too excited but as displays of potential go, Galway's league final win over Cork in Croke Park was undeniably impressive.

Not necessarily the nature of the win itself, although there was plenty to admire in that too.

A young Galway defence kept Cork to just 0-4 and only one from play in the second half of a game in which they visibly grew in stature as it played out.

Their forward line, minus Orlaith and Siobhán McGrath, took all but one of their chances in that period also. But without six of the team that started last year's All-Ireland semi-final loss to Kilkenny, they were full value for money and a bit more besides for a second league title in a row.

"Delighted, but that wasn't at championship level today," Murray stressed. "We still have a lot of work to do to get to championship pace. Our efficiency in the first half was poor, but in the second half we did take our chances. That was pleasing. It was more about grinding it out than it being a classic game. We are very happy with that aspect of it."

Two down at half-time when only slightly better calibration among the Cork forwards might have put them out of sight, Galway were impressively

controlled in the second. Carrie Dolan was superb from placed balls - her first-half goal was a vital piece of intuition at a time when Cork were establishing an air of superiority.

Aoife Donohue threatened all through while a brilliant goal from Sabina Rabbittie midway through the second half gave then separation from Cork.

"Today was more about grinding it out," Murray insisted. "I don't think we were ever at the pitch of it in the first half and we were happy to go in two down at half-time because Cork had done the majority of the hurling."

"We struggled in a lot of places just to keep tabs on them. They showed huge character in the second half, we improved on an awful lot of stuff, and delivery into the forwards improved an awful lot, as well."

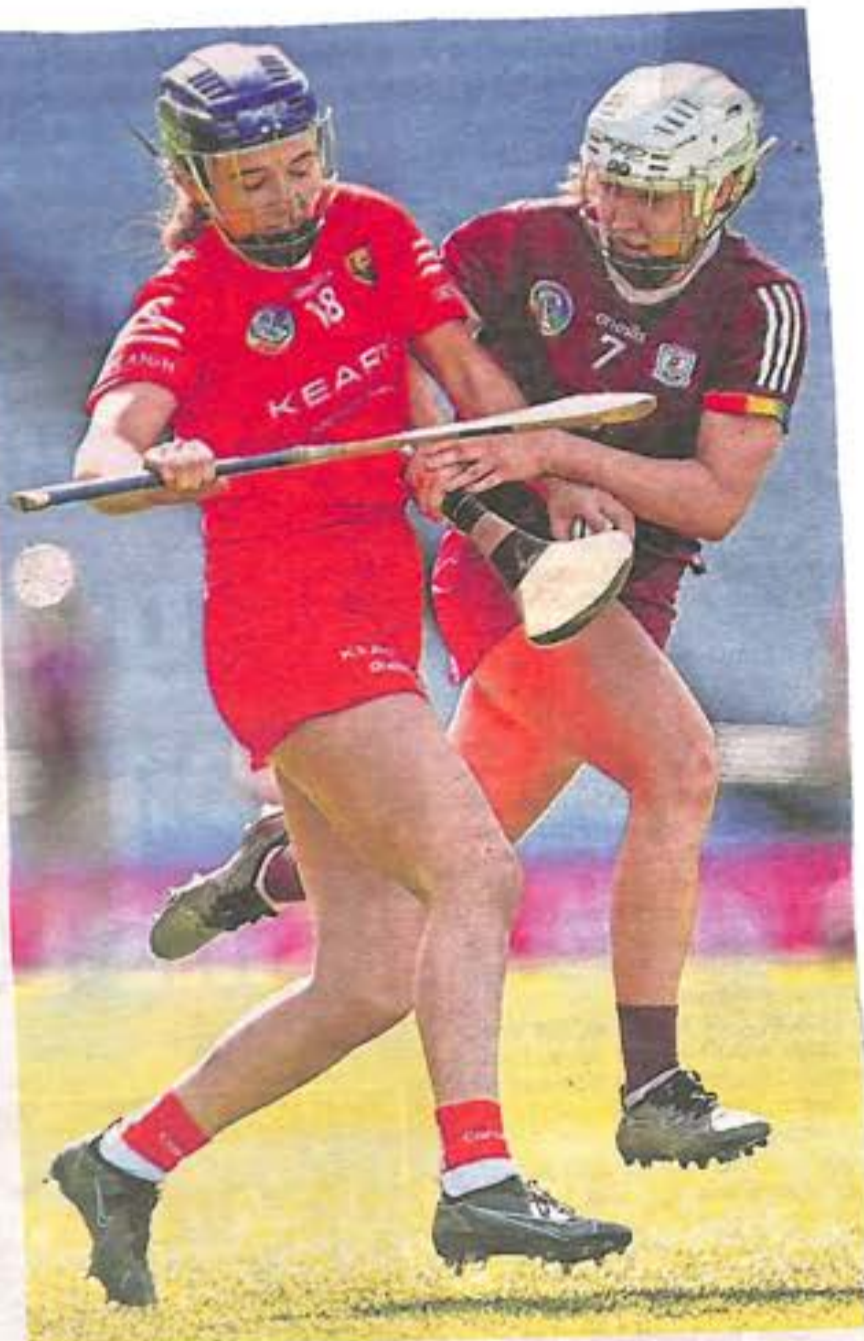
Successful

Transition isn't a word Murray was keen on using yesterday, despite the new sheen of his team. Maybe that's because it's generally only called transition when you're not being successful.

"I hate the word transition to be honest with you," Murray confirmed, highlighting the efficiency of the supply chain from the Galway intermediate side, which he also manages. "A lot of last year's intermediate group, we knew they were going to make senior hurlers. It was just a case of when they got up."

Cork, meanwhile, badly need to find that winning feeling again. And soon.

This was their fourth loss in major finals in a row - two All-Irelands, two leagues - since 2018. Clearly, they are good enough to be among that trio of counties (along with Kilkenny) who have shared all of the spoils between them for almost a decade.



Orla Cronin of Cork is stopped in her tracks by Galway's Rachael Hanniffy during yesterday's league final at Croke Park. EOHN NOONAN/SPORTSFILE

They may even be the best of the three on paper, but can't quite find a way to fall over the line in the final push. Yesterday represented their sixth defeat on the spin to Galway, too. It's becoming a habit.

Afterwards, their manager, Matthew Twomey, made no attempt to hide either his frustration or disappointment.

Asked whether it would be harder for his players to bounce straight back up now given the number of consecutive final defeat, he admitted: "It has to be. They're after working so hard. We put in a great league campaign. We were very happy coming into the game today."

"At half-time, we were very happy. But we just went astray. Can't put the finger on it now. We have to analyse it. It's a bit raw now to be coming up with any great

messages. Our shooting was off today. They're the breaks but we seem to be always on the receiving end of them. It's tough. That's our fourth final now in a row. It's not easy. We know we're there or thereabouts but we're not just getting the results on the big days."

SCORERS - Galway: C Dolan 1-8 (7); S Rabbittie 1-1; A Donohue 0-3; A Keane 0-1. Cork: A O'Connor 0-5 (5); O Cahalane 1-1; S McCartan 0-2 (2); S McCarthy; L Hayes; C Sigerson; F Keating 0-1 each.

GALWAY - F Ryan 7; S Healy 8; R Black 7; D Higgins 7; S Gardiner 8; E Helebert 7; R Hanniffy 8; C Hickey 7; N Hanniffy 7; S Rabbittie 8; C Dolan 9; A Keane 7; N McPeake 6; A Donohue 6; A O'Reilly 6. **Subs:** S Corcoran 6 for McPeake (4); KA Porter 6 for O'Reilly (5); J Hughes 6 for Rabbittie (5);

CORK - A Lee 6; M Murphy 7; L Coppinger 6; M Cahalane 7; P Mackey 7; L Treacy 8; I O'Regan 6; C McCarthy 8; L Hayes 8; C Sigerson 6; F Keating 6; C Healy 7; O Cahalane 7; S McCartan 6; A O'Connor 8. **Subs:** E Murphy 6 for Sigerson (4); O Cronin 6 for C Healy (4); A Healy 6 for O'Regan (4); C Finn 6 for Cahalane (5).

REF - J Heffernan (Wexford)

Very Camogie League Division One final

Rabbittie goal key for Galway as Cork squander chances

Galway 2-13
Cork 1-12

DARAGH Ó CONCHÚIR
at Croke Park

A fantastic goal from Sabina Rabbittie midway through the second half, allied with a personal contribution of 1-8 from Carrie Dolan and a dour defensive display, all added up to Galway retaining their Division 1A title at the expense of an equally driven but less-economical Cork.

It is a seventh title in total for Galway but a third in five seasons for Cathal Murray's side, with two All-Irelands also in the bank in his tenure.

That this victory came with so many new faces and the likes of Niamh Kilkenny, Sarah Derivan, Siobhán McGrath, Orlaith McGrath, Sarah Healy and the retired Heather Cooney unavailable, to name just six, marks them out as the team to beat in

the All-Ireland Championship.

Cork will be one of those with something to say about the destination of the O'Duffy Cup and have had injury problems themselves, the likes of Katrina Mackey and Ashling Thompson among the significant absentees, but they have to be stung by what is a fourth consecutive loss in a national final.

Cork will rue wasting a host of chances in the second half, whereas their opponents only hit their first wide of the latter period in injury time.

The edge

Cork had the edge in the first half, registering four points in a row to turn a two-point deficit into a two-point interval lead, 1-8 to 1-6.

They had started perfectly too with an Orlaith Cahalane goal in the third minute. The latest scion of the famed Gaelic games family had already made one dangerous run before finishing another with a solid strike off the sod, after being hooked excellently initially.



Cork's Meabh Cahalane and Cliona Healy tussle for possession with Carrie Dolan and Siobhan Gardiner of Galway. PHOTOGRAPH: RYAN BYRNE/INPHO

Last year's minor star and sister of defender Méabh followed up with a point, after the inspirational Dolan had got Galway off the mark with a fine score.

The game settled thereafter, Dolan hitting two of the next three points as Murray's side established a foothold.

They were boosted significantly further by an 11th-minute goal from Dolan. The Clarinbridge sharpshooter reacted quickest to the rebound after Amy Lee saved from Niamh McPeake. Her ground shot barely trickled over the line.

Aoife Donohue hit two de-

lightful points either side of Amy O'Connor's first score, from a free, and it was 1-6 to 1-4; but Laura Hayes powered up the left flank to drive over an outstanding point on the run from the next play, matching an earlier effort from midfield colleague Saoirse McCarthy.

Three more points from frees, by McCartan and O'Connor (two), edged the Rebels ahead at the change of ends.

The second half was tight, both defensive units deserve much credit for that, with Libby Coppinger, Méabh Murphy and Laura Treacy prominent for Cork and Shauna Healy, Dervla Higgins and Róisín Black offering stern resistance for Galway.

Cahalane's piledriver hit the post and O'Connor's shot was stopped well by Fiona Ryan.

Galway found the net via a sensational finish by Sabina Rabbittie who placed the sliotar over the advancing Amy Lee in remarkably composed fashion, after being put through by Ailish O'Reilly in the 46th minute.

That moved them two points

in front and with Cork's attack reliant for the most part on O'Connor converting placed balls, they were able to keep their noses in front.

Dolan was unerring from frees herself, but Donohue chipped in with her third. A goal separated the sides when O'Connor broke with a searing run in the 59th minute. Her pass to Sorcha McCartan allowed Galway defenders swooped to block and clear and Aine Keane drove over a beautiful soaring score to set the seal on a special day for Galway.

GALWAY: F Ryan, S Healy, R Black, D Higgins, S Gardiner, E Helebert, R Hanniffy, N Hanniffy, C Hickey, S Rabbittie (1-1), C Dolan (7-8, seven frees), A Keane (0-1), N McPeake, A Donohue (0-3), A O'Reilly. **Subs:** S Corcoran for McPeake (4); KA Porter for O'Reilly (5); J Hughes for Rabbittie (5);

CORK: A Lee, M Murphy, L Coppinger, M Cahalane, P Mackey, L Treacy, J O'Regan, S McCarthy (0-1), L Hayes (0-1), C Sigerson (0-1), F Keating (0-1), C Healy, A O'Connor (0-5, five frees), S McCartan (0-2, two frees), O Cahalane (1-1). **Subs:** E Murphy for Sigerson (4); O Cronin for Healy (4); A Healy for O'Regan (4); L Hayes for Cahalane (5); Referee: Justin Heffernan (Wexford).

MONDAY Sport



Galway players celebrate after their Very Camogie League Division 1A final win over Cork at Croke Park yesterday and, inset, Galway performance coach Cora Staunton encourages the Tribeswomen from the sidelines. Galway won the game 2-13 to 1-12
SEE SPORT PAGE 7 RYAN BYRNE/INPHO

Cork woe at Croker

CAMOGIE

■ Linda Mellerick

CORK camogie manager Matthew Twomey could not hide his disappointment after losing their Very Division 1A final in Croke Park yesterday, their second league final defeat in a row.

"We're very disappointed," he said. "We thought we were in a good position at half time but our success rate in the second half was 33% which is not good enough. Galway had 100% and we can't blame inexperience or anything like that, it was just poor."

"It was disappointing, but look, we have to go away and regroup now again."

Cork got the perfect start, also finishing the first half well, but fell away in the second half.

"We were very happy and were causing them all sorts of trouble," said Twomey. "We were taking the right options, even though we could have had another two goals, but to come out like that in the second half, it was disappointing for them."

Cork finished with 10 wides, and that can eat at players' confidence. "I don't like criticising players but that's one thing we spoke about, getting into the scoring zone, not taking shots from way out — Hail Mary ones," Twomey said. "We can't say that's inexperience any more because this is our fourth time here. It's

just very disappointing. Our turnovers in the second quarter were very strong and I think if we had got that goal straight after half time, we'd have buried them. We didn't, and they went up the field and got their goal."

Cork were still in it at that stage but hit just one point from play and had another goal chance late in the game. "They had two shots at goal and got two. We had about five chances and got one," said Twomey. "It's crucial to take these opportunities when you get them."

This is Cork's fourth final loss. How is that going to play on players' minds heading into championship? "It's going to hurt but they've two choices now, sit back and feel sorry for themselves or stand up and fight and if they're not willing to do that we're wasting our time, but we'll be insisting they do," said Twomey.

Cork play newly-crowned division 2 champions Waterford in two weeks and that won't be easy. "Not at all; they'll be full of confidence. It's up to us to respond again."

"And I have no doubt we will," said Twomey.



Cork manager Matthew Twomey said their performance was 'very disappointing'. Picture: Ryan Byrne/Inpho



Keeley Corbett-Barry, Iona Heffernan, Niamh Rockett, Clara Griffin and Orla Hickey celebrate after their great win against Wexford. Photo: Noel Browne