



Lucy Allen, Sarsfields, taking on Ashling Moloney and Elaine O'Reilly, Courcey Rovers. Picture: Jim Coughlan

## Sarsfields through to last four after cracking clash with Courceys

**Sarsfields** 1-18  
**Courcey Rovers** 2-13

**CAMOGIE**  
Linda Mellerick

A HUGELY entertaining, fast-paced SE Systems quarter-final on Saturday saw Sars beat Courcey Rovers.

It was a frantic second half and both sides left it all on the pitch.

The first half was end to end. Saoirse McCarthy was doing damage, 1-3 scored by the 19th minute and it was point for point for the most part.

Sars took the lead courtesy of a Lucy Allen point, replied to by McCarthy's first. By the end of the first quarter, it was four points apiece. Referee Cathal Egan was playing his part in the free flow, letting the players battle it out. Sars went a point ahead from the free-taking accurate stick of Cliona Lynch, but a four-minute spell during which Courceys scored 1-2 gave them a nice lead.

Linda Collins pointed before Rovers won the breaking ball around the middle of the pitch, the delivery was won by the impressive Eimear O'Reilly who had a hand in most of Rovers' good play up front.

She passed to the in-running McCarthy who hit the net after Molly Lynch looked to have done enough to keep it out.

Two Cliona Lynch frees either side of an O'Reilly point left a goal between the sides at half-time.

In the second half Sars won more ball around the middle and, with the wind at their backs, they piled on the pressure. They hit 1-3 inside nine minutes, circling Fiona Keating's point. Two from the magical stick of Orlaith Mullins, one from Ella Woods and



Orlaith Mullins, Sarsfields, battling Grace O'Reilly, Courcey Rovers. Picture: Jim Coughlan

a rocket of a goal from Katlyn Sheehan saw Sars hold a two-point advantage.

Jacinta Crowley pointed a free for Rovers before three on the trot from Lucy Allen (2) and Lynch (1) put Sars in the driving seat. But again came Rovers. They needed to get the ball into Collins.

If she got a yard, she would do damage. She hit 1-1 with Lorraine Collins hitting another and Rovers were back in front by one. The play was feverish, the chasing, hooking, and blocking excellent from both sides.

Sars' defence were fighting with everything they had. Four points for Sars, two for Rovers as the score sat at 1-17 to 2-12 with the clock ticking.

Rovers missed a free, Ann Marie Collins pointed. A Molly Lynch blockbuster of a puckout went straight to Lucy Allen who put it over the bar. Rovers had one last chance, but Sars defence stood tall.

**Scorers for Sarsfields:** C Lynch 0-6 (0-5 L, 0-1 45), L Allen 0-5, K Sheehan 1-2, O Mullins 0-4, E Woods 0-1.

**Courcey Rovers:** Linda Collins 1-4, S McCarthy 1-3, J Crowley 0-2 (1), E O'Reilly, Lorraine Collins, F Keating, AM Collins 0-1 each.

**SARSFIELDS:** M Lynch, E Casey, E Murphy, T Elliot, A McNamara, A Fitzgerald, M Mullins, C Lynch, C Mullins, E Woods, L Allen, O Mullins, M Sheehan, S Desmond, K Sheehan.

**Subs:** K Fennessy for E Woods (46), L Dunlea for A McNamara (53), H Herlihy for S Desmond (55).

**COURCEY ROVERS:** S O'Reilly, G O'Reilly, G Hannon, L Crowley, C Hayes, A Moloney, E O'Reilly, J Crowley, E Maquire, C O'Neill, F Keating, Lorraine Collins, Linda Collins, E O'Reilly, S McCarthy.

**Subs:** O Twomey and O O'Mahony for L Crowley and C O'Neill (48), A M Collins for C Hayes (54).

**Referee:** Cathal Egan (Glen Rovers).



St Finbarr's Aoife O'Neill hand passes while being chased by Killeagh's Ciara Daly in the senior camogie championship at Castle Road.

Picture: Howard Crowdy

# St Finbarr's seal semi-final spot

**CAMOGIE**

Linda Mellerick

**St Finbarr's** 3-13  
**Killeagh** 2-11

ST FINBARR'S made it through to the SE Systems senior camogie semi-final after a second-half battle with Killeagh in Castle-road on Saturday.

The damage was done in the first half when Killeagh conceded three goals and were down eight points at half-time.

But Killeagh chased it and on two occasions in the second half they had the gap down to three, but a few wides at crucial times and a failure to capitalise up front always allowed St Finbarr's to pull away.

Despite scoring just five points in that second period, two from play, the Barrs always looked like they could up things a notch and see the game out.

Key players for both sides, Maeve Cahalane and Aoife Walsh, were ruled out after picking up injuries earlier in the week. While Cahalane was a loss to St Finbarr's, Walsh's absence was a huge blow to Killeagh, who don't have the same strength in depth.

Nicole Olden was Killeagh's tormentor and the experienced Walsh could have made a difference there. All Olden needed were two chances to strike two goals with her nifty play and cool finish. She laid the Barrs' foundation with her first on three minutes coming in on the left and kicking the initial block home.

Killeagh were working harder for their scores and were 1-1 to 0-3 behind when Olden got her second goal. Killeagh, dispossessed by Ciara Golden outfield, were punished when Olden rounded and finished to the net.

St Finbarr's lined out up front as many Cork teams have — Olden and Eimear Hurley on the square, Orlaith Cahalane on the 30, Gemma O'Connor a direct line outside her on the 45.

O'Connor and Keeva McCarthy made it 2-6 to 0-6, before an O'Connor strike from 40 dipped under the crossbar to open up a



Killeagh's Caoimhe Harney fails to block as St Finbarr's Emma Olden clears. Picture: Howard Crowdy

nine-point lead and things weren't looking good for the East Cork side.

In truth, Killeagh were disappointing in that first half. They looked flat-footed, while their opponents had a spring in their step. Laura Treacy hit three good points, but they didn't have the scoring threat up front, which has hindered them over the past few seasons.

They tried to address that with bold switches, but you need more at this level. The half finished 3-8 to 0-9, with Killeagh coming back out with wind advantage. They took the game to St Finbarr's immediately, playing with a far greater intensity. Ciara Daly pointed and it was all Killeagh for that first 10 minutes, but they weren't getting the return on the scoreboard and a couple of stoppages killed any momentum.

Daly won a penalty, which Sigerson netted, and Hannah Looney followed up with a point and, suddenly, there were just three points in it with a quarter-plus left to play.

But Ciara Golden stemmed the tide with the Barrs' first score of the second

half and it was an important one. Then, Cahalane hit two, one from a free, and Killeagh's huge effort was wiped out. They kept coming. A low free from Sigerson was blocked but was gathered by Beausang to hit the net and we had a goal margin again.

The final minutes, including six additional, were frantic, as the Barrs sought an insurance point and Killeagh a leveler, but the Barrs were on top and drew fouls, leaving Cahalane to hit the last two points for a deserved Barrs victory.

**Scorers for St Finbarr's:** N Olden 2-1, O Cahalane 0-5 (0-2 F, 0-1 pen), K McCarthy 0-3, G O'Connor 1-1, H O'Leary, S McCartan, C Golden 0-1 each.

**Killeagh:** S Beausang 1-4 (0-4 F), C Sigerson 1-1 (1-0 pen, 0-1 F), L Treacy 0-3, H Looney 0-2, C Daly 0-1.

**ST FINBARR'S:** C Hurley, S Punch, A Egan, G Cahalane, A O'Neill, E Olden, C Golden, S McCartan, A Shannon, K McCarthy, O Cahalane, H O'Leary, E Hurley, G O'Connor, N Olden.

**KILLEAGH:** K M Cullinane, C Barry, N Ni Chaoimh, E Treacy, M O'Donovan, C Sigerson, S Kent, L Treacy, H Looney, C Harney, K Aherne, L McEvoy, R Sheehan, S Beausang, C Daly.

**Sub:** R Fogarty for C Barry (inj 48).

**Referee:** John Horgan (Gleann na Laoi).



Amy O'Connor, Seandún, has a word with referee Niall O'Neill, after scoring the second goal against Éire Óg during Cork Senior Camogie quarter-final at Cloughdub. Picture: Jim Coughlan

# Four-goal Amy fires Seandún into semis

Seandún 5-16  
Éire Óg 1-8

## CAMOGIE

■ Linda Mellerick

CHAMPIONS Seandún are the fourth team through to the semi-finals of the SE Systems senior camogie championship after a comprehensive win over Éire Óg in Cloughdub on Monday.

It was a blistering start for the divisional side. From the throw-in, Lauren Homan gathered possession and pointed.

A minute later Homan, who was finding plenty of space, sent a delivery into Amy O'Connor whose lovely controlled stickwork saw her finish to the net.

Another O'Connor and Hayley Ryan point and the score sat at 1-3 to no

score after four minutes.

Matters calmed after that as Éire Óg settled. Two Margaret Herlihy frees, and an Ellen Crowley point matched Seandún's next three scores from Siinead Mills, Ryan, and Katelyn Hickey.

Éire Óg were winning some good 50/50 tussles, but they didn't have the scoring power of Seandún.

O'Connor, double marked again, shrugged off her challengers to dart towards goal and finish off her second before a classy move involving Mills, Homan, and O'Connor saw the latter hit her hat-trick leaving it 3-7 to 0-5 at

the break.

Seandún rubber-stamped their superiority within two minutes of the restart as O'Connor hit her fourth goal, Seandún substituting their star forward a few minutes later.

All over the pitch Seandún were on top, but that wasn't to say that Éire Óg didn't have their moments and they were rewarded for their determined effort when Siobhan Hutchinson goaled in additional time.

A goal followed from Erin Curtin as well some lovely scores from Homan, Hickey, and Ryan as Seandún emptied their bench.

They now face St Finbarr's in a mouth-watering semi-final.

Scorers for Seandún: A O'Connor 4-2, L Homan 0-7 (0-2), H Ryan 0-3, E Curtin 1-0, K Hickey 0-2, S

Mills, L McKeogh 0-1 each.

Éire Óg: M Herlihy 0-5 (ft), S Hutchinson 1-0, E Crowley 0-2, C Beechinor 0-1.

SEANDÚN: A Lee (Na Piarraigh); N O'Leary (Brian Dillon's), L McKeogh (Blackrock), E Buckley (Na Piarraigh); S K Brosnan (Brian Dillon's), R De Facite (Blackrock), M Scannell (Bishopstown); N Crean (St. Vincent's) K Hickey (Blackrock); L Homan (St. Vincent's), M Murphy (Blackrock), C Coleman (Na Piarraigh); A O'Connor (St. Vincent's), H Ryan (Blackrock), S Mills (Brian Dillon's).

Subs: M Coffey (Blackrock) for C Coleman (ft), E Curtin (Blackrock) for A O'Connor (38), L O'Neill (Bishopstown) for M Murphy (44 inj), C Ryan (Blackrock) for R de Facite (46), C O'Keefe (St Vincent's) for E Buckley (52).

ÉIRE ÓG: R Murray, F Murphy, A O'Callaghan, R Murphy, O Lynch, R Sheehan, M E Desmond; A McSweeney, M Gleeson; S Sheehan, E Crowley, L Cleary; I Sheehan, M Herlihy, S Hutchinson.

Subs: O Beechinor for R Sheehan (34), C Henchy for O Lynch (37), C Beechinor for S Sheehan (40). Referee: Niall O'Neill (Midleton).



Inniscarra's Aileen Sheehan fires the sliotar past Cloughdub's Aoife Barry-Murphy during the SE Systems Senior Camogie Championship match at MTU. Picture: Howard Crowe

# What's in a name? Words matter in integration process

**F**OR a while there, it was all quiet on the integration front, but now — with the appointment of former President Mary McAleese as chairperson of the process — the mammoth task of unifying the GAA with the Camogie Association and the LGFA is back on the media agenda. (To be fair, it never really went away, but there were matches on; and administrative drama, no matter how intriguing and popcorn-worthy, always takes a back seat to action.)

It's encouraging to see someone of McAleese's calibre appointed, and important, too, that a woman will join Mark Dorman, the Croke Park chief who has been appointed as integration's project manager, to oversee the process. McAleese's legal and political brain — as well as her reputation for bridge-building — will stand her in good stead in what promises to be a thorny and fascinating undertaking.

Even agreeing on the need for integration was an enormous first step, and the urgency of this process remains readily apparent. You only need to look at Cork's club scene right now, in particular the schedules of dual clubs and players. While the men have the luxury of hurling one weekend, football the next — allowing them to both remain injury-free and retain their sanity — their female colleagues sometimes get less than 24 hours between games in different codes.

When it comes to integration, it's hard to know where to start first. There are so many knotty issues to be grappled with — the time-frame; the allocation of fixtures, grounds, and funding; the administrative structure — that one issue has escaped scrutiny: the nomenclature. Once we're all one association, will camogie still be called camogie? Or will it be called what it actually is — hurling played by women?

It's hard to think of another sport where the women's code has an entirely different name to the men's. It makes name recogni-



**CHAIRPERSON:** Former President of Ireland Mary McAleese has been appointed chairperson of the integration process — the mammoth task of unifying the GAA with the Camogie Association and the LGFA. Picture: Ray McManus/Sportsfile

tion difficult. I was hanging out with a friend recently, a worldly person who grew up in multiple different countries and is married to a Waterford man. In explaining why I was on the pints of water, punctuated by the odd

Heineken Zero, I said that I had a match at the weekend.

"What do you play?" she asked. "Camogie," says I. "What's that?" she

reasonably asked. "Do you know hurling?" I said. She said of course, her spouse watches the Waterford matches on GAA Go. "It's the women's version of hurling," I replied. She nodded, but was surprised when no further context or explanation was forthcoming. I couldn't really explain it myself.

The word camogie stems from the stick used in the early 1900s: if men used a camán, women used a camóg, a smaller version of the standard hurley. Though the camóg is now obsolete, the word camogie has survived all these years. Perhaps it made sense, when camogie's rules

were significantly different, to give the sport its own name; there was once a time when camogie was as different from hurling as cricket is from baseball. But now the only material difference is that camogie is played by women.

If there's one thing writers agree on, it's that words matter. When we refer to women's hurling as camogie — when we refuse to call a spade a spade — are we, in effect, othering the women's code? How can the sport be held in the same esteem as hurling when it's given an entirely new label, treated like a different entity altogether?

Additionally, we cut ourselves off from the mythical past when we call it camogie. The word camogie was invented in 1903, but hurling goes all the way back to the Tíin. Why do men get to inherit that rich legendary past, but not women?

And then there's ladies football: another term that has be-

come normalised with usage but which, when you really think about it, is very much of its time. I prefer the TG4 phrase 'peil na mban' — simple, classic, to the point. (Delightfully, there isn't really an Irish word for 'lady', unless you count 'bantiarna', which basically translates as 'woman-lord'.) Renaming ladies football as women's football would also solve the sport's grammar problem; technically, there should be a possessive apostrophe at the end of 'ladies', but because the sport's governing body leaves it out, so will I.

**I**T'S not that a naming convention automatically brings about equality and parity of esteem. You only need to glance at the headlines right now to realise that women's sports — and perhaps women's team sports in particular — are going through a reckoning.

From the Spanish women's

**“Giving the sport the same name as its masculine equivalent establishes at least the intention of parity.”**

soccer team protesting abusive working conditions (while at the same time being scolded by Spain's soccer federation), to the English women's rugby team flying economy class to the World Cup (when the men got a chartered jet), battles for equality grind frustratingly on. But whether it's women's tennis, women's athletics, or women's basketball, giving the sport the same name as its masculine equivalent establishes at least the intention of parity. It acknowledges that we are all on the same team, doing the same job: in the naming, at least, one is not alienated from the other.

There are those who might advocate for the retention of camogie, who would argue that it has a distinct identity from hurling. And it's true that camogie has its own hard-fought history. It has travelled a huge distance in its nearly 120 years of official existence, sometimes with support from the GAA, sometimes without. To rename it women's hurling would be to erase that identity, goes the argument. But as former Camogie Association president Joan O'Flynn memorably pointed out in the 2018 RTE documentary *The Game*, "The verb is to hurl."

It's what we all do. It's what we all love. And if we're going to truly integrate, maybe we should start by acknowledging what we share. Maybe we should start with names.



**Eimear Ryan**

## Kilkenny and Cork dominate All-Stars shortlist

**TJ Galvin**

All-Ireland champions Kilkenny lead the way with 11 nominations in the shortlist of 36 nominees for the 2022 PWC Camogie All-Stars.

All-Ireland finalists Cork have 10 players nominated while semi-finalists Waterford have seven players on the list.

The rest of the nominees are made up of players from Galway (five), Dublin (two) and Limerick (one).

All-Ireland-winning Kilken-

ny goalkeeper Aoife Norris faces competition from Waterford's Brianna O'Regan and Cork's Amy Lee.

They are joined by 14 defenders, Kilkenny once again holding the top spot with five nominees, followed closely by Cork with four.

Galway have three defenders nominated in Shauna Healy, Sarah Dervan, and Roisin Black. Waterford are also recognised with two nominations in Orla Hickey and Iona Heffernan.

At midfield, Cork duo Ashling Thompson and Hannah Looney are featured with Waterford's Lorraine Bray, Kilkenny's Katie Power, and Galway's Aoife Donohue.

Kilkenny lead the nominations in the forward division once again with Julianne Malone, Denise Gaule, Katie Nolan, and Miriam Walsh all acknowledged.

The shortlist of nominations for Manager of the Year are Kilkenny's Brian Dowling, Brian Kearney and

Mark McFadden of Antrim and Galway's Cathal Murray.

**PwC Camogie All-Stars Nominations 2022**

**Goalkeepers:** Amy Lee (Cork), Aoife Norris (Kilkenny), Brianna O'Regan (Waterford); **corner-back:** Libby Coppinger (Cork), Michelle Teehan (Kilkenny), Shauna Healy (Galway), Tiffanie Fitzgerald (Kilkenny); **full-back:** Grace Walsh (Kilkenny), Iona Heffernan (Waterford), Sarah Dervan (Galway); **half-back:** Laura Hayes (Cork), Laura Murphy (Kilkenny), Orla Hickey (Waterford), Saoirse McCarthy (Cork); **centre-back:** Claire Phelan (Kilkenny), Laura Treacy (Cork), Roisin Black (Galway); **midfield:** Aoife Donohue (Galway), Ash-

ling Thompson (Cork), Hannah Looney (Cork), Katie Power (Kilkenny), Lorraine Bray (Waterford); **half-forward:** Abby Flynn (Waterford), Caoimhe Costello (Limerick), Denise Gaule (Kilkenny), Julianne Malone (Kilkenny); **centre-forward:** Aisling Maher (Dublin), Beth Carton (Waterford), Fiona Keating (Cork); **corner-forward:** Aisling O'Neill (Dublin), Katie Nolan (Kilkenny), Katrina Mackey (Cork), Niamh Rockett (Waterford); **full-forward:** Alish O'Reilly (Galway), Amy O'Connor (Cork), Miriam Walsh (Kilkenny).

**Manager of the Year:** Brian Dowling (Kilkenny), Brian Kearney and Mark McFadden (Antrim), Cathal Murray (Galway).

# We must ensure women don't lose out again in integration process

**E**IMEAR RYAN wrote a great column this week on the appointment of Mary McAleese as chairperson of the process that is intended to lead to the integration of the GAA, the LGFA, and the Camogie Association.

The column ranged across the history of the very name — camogie — and what its origins and status might mean.

It also addressed the issue of the naming of Gaelic football as played by women as 'Ladies football'.

Eimear Ryan made the point that changing the name would not in itself of course bring about equality and parity of esteem. And she acknowledged also that there were those who would argue against such a change and would "advocate for the retention of camogie", not least because "it has a distinct identity from hurling".

And all of that is true. Just as it is true that "Ladies Football" was so named at the beginning of the 1970s when the LGFA was founded.

Both names were reflective of the discrimination against women that was evident in the sporting world of their coining. And reflective also of the wider societal discrimination of the time.

In respect of camogie — so named in the early 1900s — the discrimination was all the greater. But even in the 1970s when the LGFA was formed, the scale of abuse of women who wished to play sport was immense.

The very fact of the choice of names which distinguished the games to be played by Irish women and girls from those played already by Irish men and boys was emblematic of the structural inequalities in Irish sport.

There is no need to rehearse again here the scale of these



Dublin ladies footballer and Lidl ambassador, Carla Rowe with students from O'Fiach College in Dundalk at the launch of Lidl's #SeriousSupport Schools Programme. Picture: Ramsey Cardy/Sportsfile

inequalities, except to say that in both the early 1900s and the early 1970s there was no organisation to cater for Irish women to play soccer or rugby, or to box, or to engage in all manner of meaningful sporting competition.

It says much for the nature of Irish society and its sporting world that the establishment of associations for women to play hurling and

Gaelic football could only be undertaken under the disguise of different names.

Apparently, it would be an affront to the manliness of the Irish male that Irish women should actually be considered capable of playing the same game as them.

Such an affront would devalue not just the worth of men, but also

the games that they played.

It is entirely logical to argue that having pursued a particular path which was forced upon women, they should now be loath to change and should cherish the name that denoted the sports which they built for themselves.

But it is also the case that the very fact of the name is the product of a time and a mode of thought that presented women as incapable, unworthy, and — ultimately — justly unequal.

The conversation around the names to be used might be considered mere window-dressing on the substance of the challenge which is involved in integration. This is not true. It gets to the very heart of the fracture between

men and women in terms of the playing of sport.

It is more than symbolic. Instead, it is rooted in a mindset whose legacy lives on.

In practical terms, the access to facilities must be resolved. The bottom line is that the families who paid for the construction of GAA clubs do not ordinarily prize their sons above their daughters.

It may be that when they contributed to the establishment of GAA grounds, it was for the playing of Gaelic football and hurling, and that camogie or ladies football were either not prominent or not played at all.

But that is a consequence of the social mores of the age, not a conscious decision to privilege boys and exclude girls. It is now widely understood that girls can love sport just as much as boys, are as competitive as boys, want to train as much as boys, and so on. There is a moral imperative to acknowledge this and establish parity of access.

But there are other challenges with integration.

The fact that every significant sporting body must by necessity create its own official scaffolding — officers, rules, a constitution, commercial partners, traditions, practices, and much else — means that integration might mean a certain loss of control and maybe even of prestige. It need not necessarily happen, but the fear of it is real.

This is not just a potential tension between officers of the GAA and those of the associations which are now to join it in an integration process; it is also a process in which the LGFA and the Camogie Association must also reach an accommodation with each other.

This will be no straightforward matter. Having been involved with teams that are affiliated to the LGFA and the

Camogie Association, I can attest to the need for change.

The reality of relations between both associations is revealed regularly in a calendar of play in which girls and women who wish to play both games are poorly served. This is bad enough when the girls are young teenagers, but it is entirely wrong as they move through the ranks to minor and beyond.

There is no serious expert in sports science who will agree that it is appropriate to schedule serious championship matches within 24 hours of each other, let alone on the same day.

And yet this is something that happens time and again with ladies football and camogie.

The integration of a proper calendar of play between these two sports would be of enormous benefit; that such a thing need even be asked for is a clear indication of the scale of the challenge.

It is not just in the creation of risk for chronic injury that change must come. It is also a basic fact that between the cost of memberships, insurance, and playing gear, it is more expensive for many girls to play sport than it is for boys. There is no justification for allowing this to continue to happen.

And yet there are grounds for optimism. The people who volunteer in clubs are ordinarily decent and want to do their best for everyone. This decency and desire to do good is what can underpin the integration project to be led by Mary McAleese.

Her appointment is a clear indication that this is a serious process. The expectation is one of success and not failure. It cannot happen soon enough.

Paul Rouse is professor of history at University College Dublin



Paul Rouse

# Kildorrery champs after close contest

Kildorrery	2-8
Millstreet	1-9

## CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

THE last adult camogie championship final of the season saw Kildorrery crowned SE Systems Junior 13-a-side champions as they overcame Millstreet in a close contest on the Bishopstown 4G pitch recently.

Conditions were challenging for both sides. A strong wind and heavy rain made it hard on everyone.

The sides had met previously in the group stages where Millstreet came out winners and this time it went right down to the wire as both sides battled to take the title.

Millstreet played with the wind in the opening half and were first on the

scoreboard with a Kate O'Keeffe point, but Kildorrery settled quickly with a Sally McCarthy goal, McCarthy then followed up with a 45.

Kildorrery kept the pressure on and added to their tally with an Aoife Noonan point to help open up a four-point lead.

Millstreet didn't panic and worked their way back to within a point with three points without reply from O'Keeffe.

Then 20 minutes in Kildorrery grabbed their second goal with Ciara Palmer blocking down a clearance be-

fore finishing to the net to break the Millstreet momentum just as they were beginning to gain a grip on proceedings.

Kildorrery battled to extend their lead and a Judy McCarthy point put them five points clear.

As half-time approached, Millstreet won a 20m free and it took a superb save and clearance from Aoife Hennessy to deny them a goal and it was Kildorrery who led 2-4 to 0-4 at the break.

Millstreet were against the elements but made a great start to the second half as they cut the deficit with a quick Ellen Cronin point and an O'Keeffe goal.

McCarthy steadied Kildorrery but Millstreet hit another purple patch.

Three points in a row from O'Keeffe made it 1-9 to 2-5.

A McCarthy free levelled matters before she put Kildorrery a point clear.

Neither side was giving an inch as they battled for possession and as the game entered injury-time Kildorrery won a free which McCarthy converted.

Scorers for Kildorrery: S McCarthy 1-6 (0-4 F, 0-1 45), C Palmer 1-0, A Noonan, J McCarthy 0-1 each.

Millstreet: K O'Keeffe 1-8, E Cronin 0-1.

KILDORRERY: A Hennessy, L Hanley, S Coughlan, N Mullins, E O'Connor, F O'Flynn, A Keating, J McCarthy, K Barry, S McCarthy, A Noonan, O Quaid, C Palmer.

MILLSTREET: L Corcoran, C Brophy, E Lawlor, E Cronin, B Moynihan, M Morley, U Buckley, K O'Connor, C Murphy, A Barry, D Murphy, K O'Keeffe, F Hurley.

Subs: C Collins for U Buckley, C O'Keeffe for D Murphy, O O'Leary for A Barry.



The Echo Player of the Match in SE Systems Junior C camogie championship final, Jennifer Barry, is presented with her trophy by Collette O'Neill

## Ballyhea look for win to ensure their progression

WE are at the quarter-final and semi-final stages of the SE Systems Junior A and B championships, whilst the Junior C camogie title has already been decided with Bride Rovers overcoming Midleton.

### CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

Bride Rovers	4-3
Midleton	0-5

#### INTERMEDIATE

The last round of the SE Systems Intermediate camogie championship takes place this weekend.

Ballyhea meet Valley Rovers in Blarney at 4.30pm today, while tomorrow Na Piarasigh meet Watergrasshill in Kilworth at noon.

Brian Dillon's and Charlieville meet at 2pm and Blackrock meet Newtownshandrum at 4.30pm. Both games are in Castle Road.

At this stage, Blackrock are top of group one on 12 points and will qualify.

Ballyhea are on nine and a win over Valley Rovers would put them through.

Valley Rovers and Newtownshandrum are hot on Ballyhea's heels, both are on six points, and if both were to win, it will get down to scoring difference for the second place spot.

Aghabullogue are top of group two and Na Piarasigh will secure the second place here as neither can be overtaken by results of remaining games.

#### JUNIOR A

In the SE Systems Junior A camogie championship the semi-finals are down for decision on October 16th and here Tracton will take on Ballinora and it will be Ballinhassig versus Castlelyons.

#### JUNIOR B

In the SE Systems Junior B championship we are down to the quarter finals this weekend.

Youghal have a home venue for their clash with Kibree, whilst Inniscarra 2 are at home for their meeting with Banteer.

The winners of these games will meet Aghada and Bishopstown, who both secured their semi-finals spots as group winners.

#### JUNIOR C

Bride Rovers took the SE Systems junior C camogie title as they overcame Midleton in a game where goals proved vital.

Grace Kearney had Bride Rovers on the scoreboard with the game's opening goal and they followed up with a point from a Jennifer Barry free and two from play from Chloe O'Flynn helping them to lead 1-3 to 0-2 at the break.

Midleton kept in touch in the opening thirty minutes with Abbie Foley converting two frees.

Bride Rovers are a very experienced outfit and they put the young Midleton side under pressure from the start with substitute Katie Quirke prominent in their attack as she struck for three goals.

Midleton battled hard but a string of Bride Rovers defence held firm. Rebecca Cassidy had a Midleton point from play whilst Abbie Foley and Vivienne Gleeson converted frees as they worked hard to get something from the game but a focused Bride Rovers side who dug deep to ensure the title was secured.

Jennifer Barry was named as *The Echo* player of the Match following a superb performance as her sides were crowned champions.

Scorers for Bride Rovers: K Quirke 3-0, G Kearney 1-0, C O'Flynn 0-2, J Barry 0-1 (f).

Midleton: A Foley 0-3 (fs), R Cassidy, V Gleeson (f) 0-1 each.

Bride Rovers: C Barry, M Parle, E Barry, T O'Sullivan, A Hoare, J Barry, C Hazelwood, S O'Sullivan, A Barry, C O'Flynn, A O'Connor, L Murray, G Kearney, G Cahill, S Hayes.

Subs: K Quirke for S Hayes, K Roddis for G Kearney, N Parle for A Barry, E Roche for T O'Sullivan, A Murray for A O'Connor.

Midleton: J Connaughton, M Kelly, L Hogan, R Hennessey, M Beausang, Y Abernethy, A Fitzgerald, L Wallis, V Gleeson, A Foley, E O'Sullivan, J Keegan-O'Connell, S Beausang, R Cassidy, H Power.

Subs: C Cronin for M Kelly, R Power for H Power, S Ni Theangana for E O'Sullivan.



Cloughduv's Aisling Kelleher pulls away from Inniscarra's Aine O'Regan at MTU.

Picture: Howard Crowdy

# Quarters go to the wire



### CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

THREE of the four quarter-finals went close to the wire in recent days.

Cloughduv gave strong favourites Inniscarra a ferocious challenge and it was only in additional time that Scarra pulled clear with three unanswered points from Aileen Sheehan. It was the first time that such space had opened up.

Inniscarra's experience and calmness in those closing stages was crystal clear. Cloughduv needed to grab every opportunity if they were going to get over this hurdle and there were a few frees in the opening half that went wide of the post.

Cloughduv's workrate was phenomenal and to come back from four points down at half-time to draw level spoke volumes of their spirit. What caught them at times was their first touch, that one chance that slipped away giving Inniscarra time to pounce, and the odd panicked wrong option.

Champions know how to see games out and Inniscarra have been there so many times. Sheehan's first point to go ahead was excellent, she had milliseconds to look and strike.

Cloughduv were extremely disappointed. But from a neutral's perspective, they had a great season and to lose in additional time to a team like Inniscarra, well there's no shame in that.

I've been very impressed with Niamh McNabola too. A young player with a strong future.

The first of a doubleheader in Castle Road last Saturday was St Finbarr's v Killeagh. As often happens when you look forward to a classic, it failed to excite.

The second half was a big improvement on the first, but Killeagh had left too much to do. Three first-half goals by Nicole Olden (2) and one from Gemma O'Connor and this game looked over on 25 minutes.

Yes, Killeagh made a strong comeback, but I could never see them catching the



Seandún's Nicole Crean closes in on Avril McSweeney, Éire Óg.

Picture: Jim Coughlan

Barrs. I felt the Barrs had more in the tank if they needed it. There were times in the first half when Killeagh surrendered possession too easily. They were more dogged in the second and you'd wonder if they had that intensity all through would they have made it.

But you can't work hard for scores and then have them wiped out so easily and Olden was finding it too easy to round and score. Gemma O'Connor's goal was a strike from 40 yards which dipped in.

To be fair to Killeagh, they really tried to address their scoring prowess in the last two years, Stephanie Beausang moving from goal to full-forward where she's not shy in hitting the net, to give her credit. Ciara Daly, typically a defender was moved forward as was Laura Treacy, to midfield.

There were definite improvements in that regard. Unfortunately, it wasn't enough when you compare it to the very strong forward line of the Barrs. Aoife Walsh and Maeve Cahalane were missing. Walsh was more of a loss for Killeagh as she could have picked up Olden.

A game that really excited was Sars-Courcey Rovers. Two young sides, full of enthusiasm went at it hammer and tongs. Rovers were favourites, when you con-

sider the losses Sars have suffered. Missing Katie Barry, Olivia McAllen, Maeve McCarthy, and with Hollie Herlihy not capable of starting, it was a big ask.

I glanced at Sars warming up and thought they looked very young. I've been critical of the lack of leadership in Sars in recent seasons. Since Emer Fennell retired, I felt they've lacked passion and intensity to a large degree.

Well, they've found it now. Orlaith Mullins has really stepped up this year, Lucy Allen likewise. It's when things are going against you, you look to see who can pull a game out of the fire.

Cliona Lynch's free-taking was also inspiring. Those moments matter more than just adding to the scoreboard and the confident puck-outs of Molly Lynch, her last one directly to Lucy Allen to point, all provided a great performance.

Courceys will be disappointed. They needed to get the ball into Linda Collins more as she was finding space.

Seandún against Éire Óg was one-way traffic. Tough for Éire Óg who had a bout of flu running through the team but a good season for them, nonetheless.

For Seandún it was a welcome game for a side that hadn't had one in three weeks.



Courcey Rovers' Jacinta Crowley shoots against Douglas during the senior camogie championship at Castle Road. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

## Aghabullogue hoping to go one better than last year's final defeat

THE two SE Systems intermediate championship semi-finals are on today.

Four teams remain in the hunt for the title, at the time of going to print the venues had yet to be confirmed.

Last season's runners-up Aghabullogue, Ballyhea, Blackrock, and Na Piarsaigh remain in contention after a championship in which initially 13 clubs set out on a journey that began in the second week in August.

### INTERMEDIATE

Aghabullogue take on Ballyhea while in an all-city clash Na Piarsaigh meet Blackrock.

Aghabullogue topped group one with impressive victories over Watergrashill, Kilbrittain/Timoleague, Na Piarsaigh, Carrigaline, and Clonakilty. Ballyhea, having put in a huge effort this season, made it through as runners-up in group two where they lost out to Blackrock, but overcame the challenges of Charleville, Brian Dillon's, and Newtownshandrum before their final group game last weekend saw them secure a one-goal victory over Valley Rovers to secure their semi-final spot.

Blackrock have been the stand-out side in group two with five wins to top their group and they now look forward to an all-city meeting with Na Piarsaigh who overcame Milford, Clonakilty, Carrigaline, and Kilbrittain/Timoleague.

In an ironic twist Na Piarsaigh and Blackrock find themselves in opposition and 24 hours later a lot of the same players will line out side by side as Seandún take on St Finbarr's in the senior semi-final.

Aghabullogue, having lost county finals in 2020 and 2021, will be hoping that this is finally their year. They have fine players in Cliona Healy, Emma Flanagan, Ciara McCarthy, and Erinn O'Connell, but they will get a stern test from a focussed Ballyhea side who will look to Rachel Harty, Roisin Killeen, and Kate Kilcommins to lead the way in their quest for a place in the final. Blackrock and Na Piarsaigh brings the two city sides together for what promised to be an excellent contest, Blackrock were hugely disappointed to lose to Fr O'Neill's at the semi-final stage last season and this time around they are determined to make it through. Kaitlin Hickey, Hayley Ryan, Michelle Murphy, and Kate Leneghan are among the players who have impressed in

### CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

their path to today's semi-final. Na Piarsaigh have enjoyed a great campaign and they will no doubt be determined to keep it going. Amy Lee will, as always, guard the Na Piarsaigh goal and they have strong players in Emily Buckley, Alish Allen, and Casey Coleman and they will test Blackrock to the limits.

### JUNIOR A

SE Systems junior A semi-final are down for decision on October 16 when Ballinhassig will take on Castlelyons (1pm) and Tracton meet Ballinora (4pm) venues to be announced.

### JUNIOR B

The SE Systems junior B semi-finals will go ahead on the weekend of October 15/16; on Saturday its Inniscarra versus Aghada in Castlemartyr (4pm), Bishopstown meet Youghal (4pm) with the venue to be announced.

### UNDERAGE

This weekend a lot of clubs will be bidding for semi-final places in the U12s competitions, to be played by the cut-off date of October 10. In the U12 A1 Cup the semi-final pairings are Sarsfields Blue against Blarney Red; Clonakilty are through but are awaiting an outstanding game to find out their opponents will be. In the U12 A1 plate it's Sliabh Rua versus Valley Rovers Green with Ballincollig Green awaiting their opponents as they await a result of an outstanding game.

In the U12 A2 cup Charleville met neighbours Milford and Ballyhea take on St Fanahan's, in the U12 A2 plate it's Carrigaline Yellow versus Newtownshandrum and Kilbrittain/Timoleague meet Barryroe.

U12 B1 Cup has Carrigtwohill meeting Glen Rovers and St Finbarr's meeting Watergrashill Red. In the U12B1 Plate it's Valley Rovers White against Fr O'Neill's and Carrigaline Yellow against Ballygarvan.

U12 B2 Cup Castlelyons take on Bandon and Bride Rovers play Castlemartyr White, in the U12 B2 Plate Blarney White face Courcey Rovers and Banteer take on Fermoy. The U12 C Cup sees Ballinascorthy face Middleton White and Nemo Rangers Black take on White's Cross. In the U12 C Plate it's Kildorrery against Clonakilty Red and Eire Og Yellow versus Blackrock.



Lucy Allen, Sarsfields, tries to block Ashling Moloney, Courcey Rovers.

Picture: Jim Coughlan

# Picky refs ruin the flow



### CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

THE nominations for the 2022 PwC Camogie All-Stars were announced on Wednesday, with All-Ireland champions Kilkenny in pole position.

The nomination of 36 players covers six counties, selected as follows: Kilkenny (11), Cork (10), Waterford (7), Galway (5), Dublin (2), Limerick (1) selected.

All-Ireland winning Kilkenny goalkeeper Aoife Norris faces competition from Waterford's Brianna O'Regan and Cork's Amy Lee.

Of 14 defenders, Kilkenny hold top spot with five nominees, followed by Cork with four: Libby Coppinger, Laura Hayes, Saoirse McCarthy, and Laura Treacy, though I'm disappointed Meabh Cahalane didn't receive a deserved nomination. Galway nominations are Shauna Healy, Sarah Dervan, and Roisin Black, while Waterford are recognised with two in Orla Hickey and Iona Hefferman.

At midfield, Cork's Ashling Thompson and Hannah Looney feature Waterford's Lorraine Bray, Kilkenny's Katie Power, and Galway's Aoife Donohue.

The list of forward nominations includes nominees from six counties: Kilkenny, Waterford, Limerick, Dublin, Cork, and Galway. Kilkenny lead proceedings again with Julianne Malone, Denise Gaule, Katie Nolan, and Miriam Walsh all acknowledged for their campaign.

Waterford and Cork land three slots each, Fiona Keating, Katrina Mackey, and Amy O'Connor representing the Rebels, with Dublin on two nominations, along with Galway and Limerick with one.

The Managers shortlisted are Brian Dowling (Kilkenny), Brian Kearney and Mark McFadden (Antrim), and Cathal Murray (Galway), senior, junior and intermediate champions, respectively.

Presentations of the awards will take place on November 28 in Croke Park. Meanwhile, Dublin senior manager Ad-



Nominations include Cork's Amy Lee (August winner, Northside & District Sports award).

rian O'Sullivan resigned two years into a three-year term; a pity as he had excited Dublin players and supporters for the future by building a team backed by youth.

Speaking on RTE's *Game On* last week O'Sullivan admitted he grew more disheartened with the stop-start nature of the games: "I found myself getting very frustrated with that. I was left at a crossroads. Do I adjust my whole coaching ethos specifically for camogie, or do I stick to my principles and where I want to develop as a coach? That's what it came down to."

Would he have stayed longer if officiating wasn't such a sticking point?

"Yeah, I think so. It definitely played a huge part in it. It's so frustrating. The quality of officiating isn't up to standard either, or what you'd get in hurling. Even club hurling."

"Some referees took the new contact laws and really went with them. There were some savage intense games, physical, and that is what the players want. Then another day, [you] go out the same way, and it becomes a free-taking contest."

"We had players bench pressing 70kgs, doing 10 reps of wide arm chin-ups and every county is the same, that's the way the game has gone."

"The rules haven't quite kept up with the change and development of players physically and a skill point of view."

I can't argue; it has been extremely frustrating over the years to sometimes witness north of 40 frees a game. No question it has improved, but as I said two years ago when the motion was passed, the contact rule was too loose, too open to personal interpretation by referees.

The rule is: 'A player may use minimal contact on an opponent's body from side-on once they are making a reasonable effort to gain possession of the ball.'

If that isn't open to wide interpretation, I don't know what is. We have referees that are excessively picky and others who will let players battle it out and you don't know who you'll have from one day to the next, which is frustrating.

In addition, referees who might have been perceived as picky during the season get the nod to ref an All-Ireland final and completely change tack.

Managers are forced to decide tactics depending on the referee; that's not right.

This isn't a referee-bashing exercise but if we can have great finals, where teams live on the edge, no one is injured and we have cracking games, like the last two finals, then why not every day?

Cork Senior Camogie  
semi-final

Sarsfields 2-11  
Inniscarra 2-9

Therese O'Callaghan

Tadhg Óg Lynch said Sarsfields were "absolutely thrilled" to be in the final of the SE Systems Cork senior camogie championship, after they battled past Inniscarra in Ovens yesterday.

"Inniscarra were going for seven finals in a row, so we knew what we were up against. We have a few out through injuries, so it is quite

# Lynch goals prove crucial for Sarsfields

a young team. We are just absolutely thrilled to be in the final.

"We were happy at half-time, two points down, because we had whatever wind was there for the second half. Against Courcey Rovers (quarter-final), our fitness kicked in, so we knew we had a lot to bring. 2019 was our last title, we only have two. So it would be nice to add a third. We will be giving it absolutely everything."

Behind at the break, 1-6 to 0-7, it was another one of the Lynch clan — Cliona — who turned the game in their favour with both goals, from placed balls, arriving in the fourth quarter.

The first green flag, even if fortuitous, was a well-struck free from marginally inside the '65 but out by the sideline that went all the way to the net in the 49th minute.

The second major — from nearer the 30 metre line — was

fired to the roof of the net five minutes from time.

Lynch emerged chief scorer for the Riverstown side, closing with 2-7.

Inniscarra's top finisher Joanne Casey equalled Lynch on the scoreboard. Casey gave Inniscarra a timely boost in the first half with her 25th-minute goal. It came at a time when the east Cork side edged it, 0-4 to 0-3.

Inniscarra, managed to keep their half-time two-point

margin intact, it was 1-8 to 0-9 at the three-quarter mark.

That is, until Lynch hit 2-2 in quick succession, 2-11 to 1-8.

There was still time for one more twist. Casey's 1-1 at the death resulted in a two-point game. But that's how it remained.

**Scorers for Sarsfields:** C Lynch (2-7, 2-6 frees), L Allen, K Sheehan, O Mullins and H Herlihy (0-1 each).

**Scorers for Inniscarra:** J Casey (2-7, 0-4 frees, 0-1 45), E Looney and A Sheehan (0-1 each).

**SARSFIELDS:** M Lynch; E Casey, E Murphy, R Elliott; A McNamara, M Sheehan, M Mullins; A Fitzgerald, C Lynch; E Woods, L Allen, C Mullins (Capt); O Mullins, S Desmond, K Sheehan.

**Subs:** H Herlihy for E Woods (half-time), S Hurley for M Sheehan (43), K Fenneley for S Desmond (55).

**INNISCARRA:** C Buckley, C Looney, C Ring, J Burke, A O'Regan, R Buckley, A Kavanagh (Capt), S O'Callaghan, E Looney, R Murphy, C Keane, A Sheehan; E Crowley, R Quigley, J Casey.

**Subs:** M Lyons for R Murphy (49), L Desmond for S O'Callaghan (49), A Dineen for J Burke (59).

**Referee:** Niall O'Neill (Midleton).



St Finbarr's Grainne Cahalane manages to get past the challenge of Killeagh's Ciara Daly during the SE Systems Senior camogie Championship match at Castle Road. Picture: Howard Crowley

# Cracking semis on the cards



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

**SUNDAY:** SE Systems senior camogie championship semi-finals, Inniscarra v Sarsfields, 1pm; Seandún v St Finbarr's 4pm, Eire Óg, Ovens

TWO mouth-watering senior championship semi-finals to look forward to in Ovens on Sunday when both games should go to the wire.

St Finbarr's, as a club, hold massive momentum, Seandún are the holders, Sars are back in the semi-final after their seven-point defeat at the same stage last year, despite a plethora of absentees, while Inniscarra are the queens of reaching finals.

First up is Sarsfield's v Inniscarra.

Both sides have key forwards, and the mindset of both managers will be to manage them, similar to what we'll see in the second semi.

Inniscarra had the toughest of the groups in this championship; they were drawn with Glen Rovers, Killeagh, and Courcey Rovers but they topped it with two wins and a draw scoring 4-38 and conceding 4-30.

Sars had an easier group, topping it with four wins from four, scoring 10-57, conceding 5-29.

Does this statistic matter?

I don't think so. Inniscarra got a hell of a fright from Cloughduv in their quarter-final, three added-time points securing their victory, with Cloughduv having missed opportunities.

Sars had an excellent win over a fancied Courcey Rovers side in their knockout game and come into this game with massive impetus.

Sars showed a desire to pull that game back in the second half that I haven't seen



Amy O'Connor, Seandún, gets away from Roisín Murphy, Eire Óg in their quarter-final.

Picture: Jim Coughlan

from them recently. Inniscarra bring an intensity to every game, never easily beaten and are physically very strong.

Sars are young and need to try and avoid condensed battles and rely on space and speed to pull away. Molly Lynch in goal, Cliona Lynch, Lucy Allen, and Ella Woods will take watching while the strong work rate of Joanne Casey, her runs up the flank, her speed and scoring is Inniscarra's jewel in the crown up front alongside the ever dependable on the big day, Aileen Sheehan.

Rena Buckley will be the master of ceremonies at the back with Ciara Ring, Aoife Kavanagh, and Erin Looney.

It'll take a mighty hour's effort from both sides.

The concern for Seandún in the second semi-final is the heavy toll on the legs of the Blackrock and Na Piarasigh players, who face each other in what is expected to be a tough intermediate championship semi-final.

Fifteen players are involved here. St Finbarr's, on the other hand, have a clear run in with the ladies' football county championships reaching their conclusion

last weekend.

It's unfair and a replica of what occurred in 2021 and the same thing will happen for the final if Seandún get through. The intermediate final is scheduled for October 22 with the senior decider the following day.

This could be worked better. It shows a disregard for the divisions.

The players involved will have to try and recover as best they can if they hope to hold on to their title against a Barrs side who have, because of the fixture schedule, a better than 50% chance of winning.

Fixture list aside, this game has the potential to be a thriller. Both sides have star-studded forward lines with St Finbarr's having the slightly stronger defence on paper, taking inter-county activity into account. How both sides line out will be crucial.

The Barrs will try and create lots of space from the opposition's 45 inside to capitalise on the speed of Orlaith Cahalane and Nicole Olden; they have Keeva McCarthy and Sorcha McCartan playing deep around the middle, both physically strong players and capable of scoring from distance.

Add in Hannah O'Leary and a defence of Ciara Golden, Maeve Cahalane, Grainne Cahalane, Aisling Egan, and Aoife O'Neill, and it shows the strength in depth they have.

The fact that Ella Wigginton-Barrett didn't feature in their semi-final speaks volumes.

On the other side, Amy O'Connor, Lauren Homan, Sinead Mills, Hayley Ryan, Katelyn Hickey from midfield up with Amy Lee, Niamh O'Leary, Roisín de Paolite, and Susan Kate Brosnan showing there is experience on the defensive side for Seandún also.

Expect the middle third to be busy as both sides vie for space. Tactics will count for a lot here.

There will be replays in the event of draws.



Aghabullogue responded to a Ballyhea first-half goal with two quick goals in succession, first through Ciara McCarthy and then Emma Flanagan. Picture: Larry Cummins

## First-half goal spree sends Aghabullogue through to decider

**Aghabullogue 3-11**  
**Ballyhea 1-4**

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

AGHABULLOGUE will contest their third SE Systems Intermediate Championship final in a row after they had 13 points to spare over Ballyhea at Banteer.

Three first-half goals were a cushion for an Aghabullogue side who were focused from the throw-in and their goal spree helped them hold an eight-point interval lead.

Through the second half they kept the pressure on Ballyhea and they moved the ball smoothly through the lines. Ballyhea found the going tough with their attack closed down by the strong Aghabullogue defence and with all of their points coming from Kate Kilcommins frees, the favourites were always in control.

The sides were evenly matched in the opening stages; Ballyhea had a good start as Kilcommins pointed a free to open their account after Ciara McCarthy had fired over the opener at the other end.

Cliona Healy replied with an Aghabullogue free but Ballyhea were boosted 18 minutes in when Tara O'Sullivan struck for a goal.

Upping the pace the Mid Cork side's response was superb, goals in the 19th, 20th and 31st minutes helped them take the game by the neck and stamp their superiority until the full time whistle.

Flanagan raised two green flags, with another in between from Ciara McCarthy.

Healy completed their impressive first-half showing with a point to hold a commanding 3-3 to 1-2 advantage at the break, despite Kilcommins clipping a second Ballyhea free.

As the second half got underway, Healy kept the scoreboard moving with a free and she added another from play with her side firmly holding the upper hand.

Now in full flight, Aghabullogue continued to add to their tally thanks to Flanagan, McCarthy and Healy.

Ballyhea battled hard but with their scoring power closed down they could only add two frees.

Scorers for Aghabullogue: C Healy 0-7 (0-5 f), E Flanagan 2-1, C McCarthy 1-3.

Ballyhea: K Kilcommins 0-4 f, T O'Sullivan 1-0.

Aghabullogue: N Moynihan, E O'Connell, M Cotter, B Cotter, M Ring, K Mc McCarthy, A Barrett, E Foley, R Barrett, A Twomey, C Mc McCarthy, J Crowley, C Healy, E Flanagan, K Honohan.

Subs: E Curtin for A Barrett, J Tarrant for J Crowley, A Foley for K Honohan.

BALLYHEA: C Keogh, L Dillon, O'Toole, MC Carroll, R O'Connor, L Dundon, R Killeen, S O'Kelly, K Kilcommins, J Hooper, I Mortell, T O'Sullivan, A O'Sullivan, C Harty, C Dundon, J Foley.

Subs: A Clifford for I Mortell, C Crowley for C Harty, K Daly for S O'Kelly, C Morrissey for T O'Sullivan.

Referee: Cathal Egan (Glen Rovers).



Amy O'Connor, Seandun battles against St Finbarr's in SE Systems Senior Camogie Championship semi-final at Owen. Picture: Larry Cummins

# Amy on song for Seandún



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

**Seandún 1-9**  
**St Finbarr's 0-9**

A BRILLIANTLY saved penalty on 60 minutes by Amy Lee prevented this thrilling SE Systems senior championship semi-final going to a replay in the second of the double header in Eire Og on Sunday afternoon.

It was St Finbarr's second penalty, one point the return and while one might have questioned the Barrs decision to hit their first over the bar, you imagine they took the Amy Lee factor into account for that one.

A tactical battle this was always going to be. As predicted, St Finbarr's played four, often three inside the opposing '45 as they went into defensive mode.

Trying to capitalise on the pace of Orlaith Cahalane and Nicole Olden, and minimise the threat of Amy O'Connor, it was a tactic the Barrs maintained for the full game, even when chasing it, and it cost them.

But huge credit must go to a divisional side, who had to line out without the important Roisín de Faolte at centre back after she was injured in the Blackrock V Na Piarasigh Intermediate championship semi-final on Saturday.

How those nine on field players dug deep in an energy sapping game is testament to the bond that now exists in this divisional side.

This was a low scoring game, tension in what was highlighted as the game of the season and downpours of rain, the primary factors.

St Finbarr's looked very dangerous in those opening minutes and were creating problems with that space up front.

But Seandún weathered the storm and that was important for them as tactics settled. It was two points apiece twelve minutes in.



A late penalty by Keeva McCarthy for St Finbarr's is stopped by goalkeeper Amy Lee, Seandún, in SE Systems Senior Camogie Championship semi-final. Picture: Larry Cummins

Amy O'Connor, again for the most part double marked, sat in wait like a crouching tiger on the edge of the square and needed just one chance.

It came on sixteen minutes. Amy Lee to Nicole Crean to O'Connor and what skill to finish.

That goal kept Seandún's noses in front right to the finish. Keeva McCarthy replied with a free five minutes later.

O'Connor pointed again before three further frees for O'Connor (2) and McCarthy had it at 1-5 to 0-5 at the break.

Three minutes into the second half and the Barrs won their first penalty. Orlaith Cahalane took her point.

Another Cahalane free and the gap was just one on forty minutes. You couldn't take your eye off the action.

It looked for a part as if Seandún were flagging around the middle as the Barrs defensively drove ball forward.

But Seandún's composure defensively was excellent, and they came back to life. Holding just one spare defender they pushed up on the Barrs midfield and defence.

Space was at a minimum in that area, but Seandún were coping when ball got through and all they needed to do was keep the score ticking over. Easier said than done and testament to the rigidity of this game, no second half score came from play.

It was point for point. On three occasions the Barrs had the gap down to a point, but they never got level. An O'Connor and Katlyn Hickey converted free, and the gap was three again on fifty-seven. As the clock ticked down the Barrs needed a goal. They threw everything at it, but Seandún were resilient. Trying not to give away frees was crucial. They conceded another penalty.

An outstanding save by Lee. Out for a forty-five. Another chance for the Barrs. They opted to hit it up the line.

A run-on goal, a massive ruckus before Seandún won a free out. They jumped for joy; this was a big one.

A minute later the final whistle. Scores for Seandún: A O'Connor 1-5 (0-4f), H Ryan, L Homan (f), N Crean (f), K Hickey 0-1 (f) each.

St Finbarr's: O Cahalane 0-5 (0-3f, 0-1p), K McCarthy 0-3 (f), N Olden 0-1.

SEANDÚN: A Lee (Na Piarasigh), C O'Keefe (St Vincents), L McKeogh (Blackrock), E Buckley (Na Piarasigh), M Scannell (Bishopstown), N O'Leary (Brian Dillons), S K Brosnan (do), N Crean (St Vincents) K Hickey (Blackrock), L Homan (St Vincents), M Murphy (Blackrock), C Coleman (Na Piarasigh), H Ryan (Blackrock), A O'Connor (St Vincents), S Mills (Brian Dillons).

Subs: E Curtin for S Mills (40), M Coffey for C Coleman (54).

ST FINBARR'S: C Hurley, S Punch, A Egan, G Cahalane, A Shannon, M Cahalane, A O'Neill, S McCartan, C Golden, K McCarthy, G O'Connor, H O'Leary, E Hurley, N Olden, O Cahalane.

Subs: E Wigginton Barrett for E Hurley (41).

Referee: David Hobbs (Ballyhea).



Kate Kilcommins in action for Ballyhea in the SE Systems Intermediate Camogie Championship semi-final. Picture: Larry Cummins





Anne O'Farrell, Blackrock, holds off Allie O'Sullivan and Ellanah Sheehan of Na Piarsaigh during their SE Systems Camogie Intermediate semi-final match at Cloughduv. Picture: Dan Linehan

## Blackrock see off Na Piarsaigh to reach intermediate decider

**Blackrock 1-13**  
**Na Piarsaigh 0-10**

**CAMOGIE**

■ **Mary Newman**

BLACKROCK booked their place in the SE Systems Intermediate Camogie final with a hard-earned victory over Na Piarsaigh in Cloughduv.

Blackrock led by seven points at the break after an opening half where they took every chance they created.

A goal from Kate Leneghan on 29 minutes helped them stretch an advantage they held from the fifth minute after Erinn Curtin had edged them in front.

Allie O'Sullivan had opened the Na Piarsaigh account a pointed free for the first score of the game before Michelle Murphy replied for Blackrock.

Blackrock worked hard all through the opening half. Murphy, lining at wing-forward, did huge work dropping deep and winning a lot of possession she distributed it well and set up a lot of Blackrock attacks. Inside, Hayley Ryan, Erinn Curtin and Kate Leneghan were on top, while Kaitlin Hickey impressed around the centre.

Blackrock lost hugely influential centre-back Rosin De Faoite eight minutes from the break and her departure upset her side as she was dominant in defence.

Na Piarsaigh were under a lot of pressure as they battled to make headway against a strong Blackrock defence and they had to rely on the accuracy of Allie O'Sullivan with three frees and a long-range Amy Lee free for their first-half scores.

With Ryan and Hickey on target, Blackrock had opened

up a 0-6 to 0-2 advantage and in a sweet move Michelle Murphy set up Leneghan for the opening goal, with a neat sidestep finishing well, but Na Piarsaigh responded with two frees to trail by seven at the break.

Na Piarsaigh upped the pace significantly in this half, their workrate was huge and they were applying all the pressure; the sides swapped points before three in a row from Na Piarsaigh narrowed the gap.

It was nip and tuck all the way to the finish as both defences were on top.

Clodagh Coughlan in the Blackrock goal was the busier of the keepers as she denied Na Piarsaigh with two excellent saves. In midfield, Blackrock were not enjoying as much freedom as they had in the opening half, but they had enough done.

**Scorers for Blackrock:** H Ryan 0-6 (0-3 f), K Hickey 0-4 (0-2 f), K Leneghan 1-0, M Murphy, E Curtin, B O'Shaughnessey 0-1 each.

**Na Piarsaigh:** A O'Sullivan 0-7 (0-6 f), A Lee (f), O Bourke, J O'Connor 0-1 each.

**BLACKROCK:** C Coughlan; T Mc Mahon, C Ryan, K O'Brien, A Lucey, R De Faoite, A Nagle; M Coffey, L McKeogh, M Murphy; E Curtin, H Ryan, K Leneghan.

**Subs:** M Cashman for R De Faoite (inj 22), B O'Shaughnessey for T Mc Mahon (fit), J O'Keefe for M Coffey (50), O Russell for K O'Brien (50), E O'Riordan for E Curtin (64).

**NA PIARSAIGH:** A Lee; E Claire, S O'Donovan, A Coleman; R Rourke, E Buckley, A Allen; E Sheehan, A O'Sullivan; O Bourke, E O'Connor, E O'Sullivan; A Ring, C Coleman, K O'Donovan.

**Subs:** J O'Connor for K O'Donovan (43), S Warren for S O'Donovan (57).

**Referee:** Gerard Aherne (Cloughduv).



Blackrock players Anna Lucey and Roisin de Faoite winning this breaking ball from Emma O'Connor, Na Piarsaigh. Picture: Dan Linehan



Ava Fitzgerald, Sarsfields makes a clearance in the final seconds of the game against Inniscarra. Picture: Larry Cummins

# Sars back in a senior final

**CAMOGIE**

■ **Linda Mellerick**

**Sarsfields 2-11**  
**Inniscarra 2-9**

SARSFIELDS are through to the SE Systems senior camogie championship final for the first time since 2019 and for the first time in seven seasons we won't see Inniscarra in the final after a pulsating finish in Éire Óg on Sunday.

In awful conditions for hurling, this game was a battle, with mistakes made, slipping feet, and many melees, referee Niall O'Neill refereed sensibly, allowing play to flow as often as possible.

With little between the sides throughout, and scores at a minimum, Inniscarra were two points to the good as the game entered the fourth quarter.

But this game turned on its head in a seven-minute spell as Cliona Lynch struck 2-2 from frees to propel Sars into the driving seat.

There's much credit due to Lynch who had a tough start from placed balls, hitting three scorable attempts wide of the post only to compose herself and turn it around.

The wind, blowing into the right hand corner, favoured Inniscarra at the throw-in. Inniscarra had a decision to make before the game as to whether to start Aileen Sheehan, vomiting all Saturday night with a bug. She lined out and lasted the game.

Joanne Casey got Inniscarra off the mark before Lynch (f) and Lucy Allen replied for Sars.

It was nip and tuck, Sars were in front by two on 20 minutes after Tara Elliot made a great block on Casey, the ball struck up the field and Katlyn Sheehan pointing.

Balls were running off hurleys, points you'd normally see going over went wide of the post as the rain and wind grew stronger.

Caolmhe Buckley's puckout to Rebecca Quigley found Casey and she billowed the net to make it 1-3 to 0-4 on 25 minutes.

Aileen Sheehan, Casey (2), and Lynch



Joy for Sarsfields after they defeated Inniscarra. Picture: Larry Cummins

(2) saw the half out to leave the scoreline at 1-6 to 0-7.

The second half was as committed as you'll get from both sides. Both defences batted down, Rena Buckley was influential alongside Ciara Ring and Aoife Kavanagh for Inniscarra with Emma Casey, Ellen Murphy, and Elliot for Sars. Hollie Herlihy, introduced at half-time, made an impact and she hit Sars reply to the Casey free just after the break.

The battle continued and Inniscarra led 1-8 to 0-9 before the pendulum swung. Lynch pointed a free, then winning a free on the opposing 65, her strike dipped under the crossbar.

The lift it gave Sars was tangible, but there was a long way to go yet. Lynch pointed again before Sars won a free roughly 30m from goal. Whether she went for goal or not, that's a secret Lynch may keep to herself.

But she hit it low and even though Inniscarra's goal line got a touch, the ball skidded into the goal and they had a mountain to climb.

But who better to put their foot forward than Casey. Erin Looney had a chance, but it slipped away, the ball spun across the goal, Casey gathered and what an incredible strike through the eye of a needle to billow the net.

She followed it up with a free, and there were two points in it entering full-time, but there had to be at least four minutes additional time.

Bodies on the line, desperation on both sides as they scrambled for possession, hooking, blocking, but no further scores before Niall O'Neill blew the full-time whistle.

An incredible confidence boost for Sars after a tough year of injuries and absence of key players. For the second game in a row they came back in the second half to claim victory with a really strong fighting spirit.

For Inniscarra, well it's Inniscarra, they'll be back in the mix again next year.

**Scorers for Sarsfields:** C Lynch 2-7 (2-6), L Allen, K Sheehan, O Mullins, H Herlihy 0-1 each.

**Inniscarra:** J Casey 2-7 (0-4), 0-1 (45), E Looney, A Sheehan 0-1 each.

**SARSFIELDS:** M Lynch; E Casey, E Murphy, T Elliot; M Mullins, M Sheehan, A McNamara; A Fitzgerald, C Lynch; O Mullins, L Allen, E Woods; S O'Callaghan, E Desmond, K Sheehan.

**Subs:** H Herlihy for E Woods (h/t), S Hurley for M Sheehan (43), K Fennessy for S Desmond (46).

**INNISCARRA:** C Buckley; C Looney; C Ring, J Burke; A O'Regan, R Buckley, A Kavanagh; S O'Callaghan, E Looney, R Murphy, C Keane; A Sheehan, E Crowley, R Quigley, J Casey.

**Subs:** L Desmond for S O'Callaghan and M Lyons for R Murphy (49), A Dineen for J Burke (59).

**Referee:** Niall O'Neill - Midleton

**Cork Senior Camogie semi-final**

**Seandún** 1-9  
**St Finbarr's** 0-9

**Therese O'Callaghan**

"Heart, spirit and honesty" was how manager Trevor Coleman described Seandún's hard-fought SE Systems Cork senior camogie championship victory over St Finbarr's at Ovens yesterday. A place in the final against Sarsfields awaits on October 23.

"We just have to give them credit, what these girls are doing for Seandún, last year and this year. Ten of them played with Blackrock and Na Piarasigh yesterday, we had girls playing football as well."

"Michelle Murphy had a very sore elbow. She went out there and gave it her all. I just can't say enough about them."

"All we can do on the sideline is guide them, not just on the field but in life in general, and these girls are a credit."

The fear coming into this semi-final was that the city divisional side weren't tested. However, there was no doubting the defending champions' ability as they stood up to everything St Finbarr's threw at them. The Toghher club were looking for a place in the decider for the first time since 2008.

When it came down to it, magical moments from inter-county stars Amy Lee and Amy O'Connor were pivotal.

It was O'Connor's 16th minute goal that handed Seandún a 1-5 to 0-5 interval advantage.

# Seandún boss praises side's 'heart, spirit and honesty'



**EVERYTHING AT STAKE:** Seandún's Amy O'Connor battles with St Finbarr's players in yesterday's SE Systems Cork Senior Camogie Championship semi-final at Ovens. Picture: Larry Cummins

And with the game in the melting pot, Lee pulled off a tremendous penalty save from Keeva McCarthy in stoppage

time. It was the second penalty the Toghher side earned in this match, Orlaith Cahalane opting to take a point from

their first penalty just after half-time when her side trailed 1-5 to 0-5.

St Finbarr's created a lot of

opportunities early on but they failed to capitalise. Orlaith Cahalane in particular, was very dangerous. They

were 0-3 to 0-2 in front before O'Connor's green flag arrived.

The Barrs were still in with a shout, 1-7 to 0-9 in the 50th minute, but O'Connor and Katelyn Hickey frees gave Seandún vital breathing space. Substitute Ella Wiggington Barrett was fouled for the late penalty only for Lee to demonstrate why she is the number one 'keeper in Cork.

**Scorers for Seandún:** A O'Connor (1-5, 0-4 frees), N Crean (free), K Hickey (free), H Ryan and L Homan (free) (0-1 each).

**Scorers for St Finbarr's:** O Cahalane (0-5, 0-3 pens, 0-1 pen), K McCarthy (0-3 frees), N Oiden (0-1).

**SEANDÚN:** A Lee (Na Piarasigh); C O'Keefe (St Vincent's), L McKeogh (Blackrock), E Buckley (Na Piarasigh); M Scannell (Bishopstown), N O'Leary (Brian Dillon), S K Brosnan (Brian Dillon, Capt); N Crean (St Vincent's), K Hickey (Blackrock); L Homan (St Vincent's), M Murphy (Blackrock), C Coleman (Na Piarasigh); H Ryan (Blackrock), A O'Connor (St Vincent's), S Mills (Blackrock).

**Subs:** E Curtin (Blackrock) for S Mills (40), M Coffey (Blackrock) for C Coleman (54).

**ST FINBARR'S:** C Hurley, S Punch, A Egan, G Cahalane, A Shannon, M Cahalane (Capt), A O'Neill, S McCartan, C Golden, K McCarthy, G O'Connor, H O'Leary, E Hurley, N Oiden, O Cahalane. **Subs:** E Wiggington Barrett for E Hurley (41).

**Referee:** David Copps (Ballyhea).

## Late goal and point seal junior camogie championship title for Blackrock

**CAMOGIE**

**Mary Newman**

**Blackrock** 1-15  
**Aghabullogue** 3-8

TWO points separated the sides in this exciting SE Systems Lillie O'Sullivan Junior Camogie Championship final at Castle Road recently.

Having trailed Aghabullogue for most of the second half, a Katie O'Sullivan goal after 59 minutes followed by a Bronagh O'Shaughnessy free in the third minute of injury time snatched the title.

Little separated the sides through the opening half but by the 45th minute, Aghabullogue had opened up a six-point advantage.

The last quarter belonged to Blackrock, however, as they hit 1-4 without reply to turn the tide. Aghabullogue led at the break, 1-6 to 0-7.

Blackrock had got the opening score through Julia Byrne before Anna Foley hit two in a row for Aghabullogue. The sides



**Blackrock camogie team, winners of the Lillie O'Sullivan Junior Championship.**

swapped points through Bronagh O'Shaughnessy and Ellie Buckley. Blackrock were 0-6 to 0-4 in front, before a superb move saw Anna Foley link up with Robyn Martin for an excellent goal. Now in control, Aghabullogue's

Orna Cahill and Edel Tarrant pointed but a Kate O'Sullivan score on the stroke of half-time ensured the gap was just two at the break. On the resumption, O'Shaughnessy, who was doing huge work for Blackrock, scored twice

to tie up the game. Aghabullogue's response was instant as two goals in the space of two minutes from Anna Foley put them in the driving seat. Kate O'Sullivan struck a point but the Rockies looked in trouble.

Ellie Buckley and Orla Russell swapped points as Aghabullogue remained six ahead but Blackrock came storming into the game with O'Shaughnessy leading the way with a free. Blackrock upped the ante, firing over another two frees.

Aghabullogue missed two frees but looked to be weathering the storm with time running out. A Blackrock free from a difficult angle was going wide but live-wire O'Sullivan batted the sliotar to the net, level pegging. Play swung from end to end before The Echo Player of the Match O'Shaughnessy nailed the crucial winning free. Huge credit must go to both sides who gave it their all in an excellent final.

**Scorers for Blackrock:** B O'Shaughnessy 0-6 (0-3 f), K O'Sullivan 1-3, O Russell 0-2 f, E Coleman, S McCarthy, O Russell (f), J Byrne 0-1 each.

**Aghabullogue:** A Foley 2-2, R Martin 1-0, E Buckley 0-2 (0-1 f), E Tarrant 0-2 f, S Dineen 0-1.

**BLACKROCK:** S Crowley, M O'Sá, O Russell, E O'Donoghue, E McCarthy, O Grimley, L Guerin, A Hegarty, J O'Keefe, E Coleman, S McCarthy, A Golden, K O'Sullivan, B O'Shaughnessy, J Byrne.

**AGHABULLOGUE:** E Downey, T Desmond, A O'Shea, Meadhbh McCarthy, S Byrne Bowen, A Dineen, O Cahill, Megan McCarthy, A Healy, MB Ennequess, E Buckley, R Martin, E Tarrant, A Foley.

**Subs:** K Cooney for E Tarrant (52), L Corkery for S Byrne (52).

**Referee:** William Wallace (Aghada).



**Ms Gould's students shine in final**

MICHELLE GOULD, who is a member of the St Vincent's camogie club, has had great success as a camogie coach with her school. Loreto Secondary School, Fermoy, recently won the All-Ireland 7's Camogie title, with Ms Gould heading up the team. Posting on Facebook, St Vincent's camogie club said: "Congratulations to Michelle Gould on coaching her school Loreto Fermoy to victory in the All-Ireland Camogie 7's title after a very close final winning by 1 goal against St Marks, Co Down."

# Eventual finalists appear not to have read script for an all favourites final

HAVE the favourites reached the county final after two hard fought semi-finals last weekend?

Even though Seandún are the reigning champions it was generally felt that St Finbarr's were the team to beat this year, while Sars, after suffering the loss of key players, weren't really viewed as likely finalists.

Isn't sport great in that sense. If it were too predictable and upsets didn't happen, we wouldn't have half the excitement.

It's rare I've been at such a tension filled game as St Finbarr's v Seandún. Both sides had been thinking of this game for weeks, ever since the groups were finalised.

I'm still amazed at how St Finbarr's approached the game. Well, maybe not so much as to how they started out, we knew what was going to happen there, but more how they became increasingly defensive as the game went on.

They must have truly believed that their moments would come from their inside line. As it was, the Barrs scored just two points from play. Considering the scoring talent, they have it's hard to imagine. Who would have believed that before the throw-in?

Seandún scored 1-2 from play. The weather conditions unquestionably played a part in the low scoring, but tactics did too, primarily from St Finbarr's who lowered both their own and Seandún's scoring ability.

Why Gemma O'Connor, Keeva McCarthy and Sorcha McCartan weren't pushed up into the opposition's 45 during the second half, the last quarter in particular, is a strange one. Either of those players would have picked up ball in that area and hit a point. For most of the second half just a point separated the sides and had the Barrs drawn level it may have led to a different outcome.

There was no intended sweeper on Seandún's side. It was the Barrs that pulled three of their six forwards out.

In the early moments it looked as if Seandún would be in trouble. A couple of very fast balls inside and you could see the threat the Barrs had. Their return was two points, one from play, and Seandún settled.

The division took the lead on 16 minutes and never lost it. It was the lightning speed of Amy O'Connor to pick and hit the net in seconds. One chance was all she got in the hour, and she took it.

What an incredible season she is having for Seandún. To give her huge credit, she is almost always, frustratingly for her, double-marked. But she never gets cranky and still causes havoc.

She had scored 8-17 going into the semi-final from three games - 8-10 from play. She hit 1-5 last Sunday, 1-1 from play in a compressed area.

Tactically I think Seandún did very well. Rather than mirror their opponents and go into defensive mode, they pushed up on the Barrs mid-



Cork players Amy O'Connor, Seandún, and Sorcha McCartan, St Finbarr's, exchange words after the SE Systems Senior Camogie Championship semi-final at Éire Óg. Picture: Larry Cummins

## CAMOGIE

■ Linda Mellerick

field and defence particularly in the second half which actually forced the Barrs further back.

The way to counteract that from a Barrs perspective was to break free and also push up, taking Seandún back with them. But they didn't and that large area was so congested, frees were conceded by both sides, and delivery inside was slower. That suited Seandún. Ball did get through of course but Seandún's defence will be thrilled with how they coped. When you consider the Barrs got just one point from two penalties, the opportunities were there.

There was a great crowd in the excellent Éire Óg facility, and you could feel the tension coming from them as well as from the pitch.

Inniscarra looked to be heading to another final, but Sars outscored them 2-4 to 1-3 in the second half to win by two. There was never more than two points between them until Cliona Lynch hit her seventh point of the afternoon to give Sars a three-point advantage and then the killer goal from a close in free to make it six before Joanne Casey finished with 1-1. Inniscarra will rue the two goals they'll feel they should have prevented.

As it stands, I think we'll have a lively final tomorrow week, two young attacking teams. Seandún will be favourites, but finals are where the most upsets occur.

Blackrock and Aghabullogue play the intermediate final the day before. Two sides vying for victory at this level for a while now. Strong players on both sides.

Having moved the games from Castle Road last weekend it is expected the pitch will be ready for both finals.

# Coleman hoping Seandún stars come through unscathed

## Camogie

Therese O'Callaghan

Manager Trevor Coleman is keeping his fingers crossed the Seandún players involved in the SE Systems Cork intermediate camogie championship final between Blackrock and Aghabullogue on Saturday will emerge unscathed.

There are also three players from Bishopstown lining out in the re-fixed junior B semi-final against Youghal, after that match fell victim to the bad weather last weekend.

On Sunday, defending champions Seandún take on Sarsfields in the top-tier showdown at Castle Road, 2.30pm.

"We know, as a division, that is what we are facing," acknowledged Coleman, who led the Cork intermediate squad to the All-Ireland final this year.

"We did ask if anything could be done this weekend, but the camogie board were unable to accommodate us. Maybe it doesn't look like it, but to be fair they are trying to help us.

"I have to give great credit to the clubs in the city division, they release their players to us. We must remember they are club players first and foremost, and they are released to us the day after. The matches with their clubs go on the day before us, which has to happen.

"Look, we all played matches two and three days of weekends before. These girls know what they have to do. I think there is a myth out there, girls can't play two days in a row. These girls proved last year, and again this year, it can be done.

"I believe if you want it enough, and if you are fit enough, you can play two, three games in a row, if you have to."

## Fixtures

**Saturday:** SE Systems Intermediate championship final: Aghabullogue v Blackrock, Castle Road, 2.30pm (Referee: Simon Stokes, Tullylease).

**Sunday:** SE Systems senior championship final: Sarsfields v Seandún, Castle Road, 2.30pm, (Referee: Gerard Ahern, Cloughduv).

Entry fee €10 (adult), €8 OAP/student (cash).

\*Venue for both games weather permitting.

■ Meanwhile, Gemma O'Connor will launch her autobiography, *Why not a warrior?*, written with Sinéad Farrell, in the St Finbarr's club on Wednesday October 26, 7.30pm.

O'Connor called time on an incredible 19-year inter-county career in the spring of 2021.

The St Finbarr's player, who featured in this month's county semi-final, is a nine-time All-Ireland senior medal winner and holds a record 11 All-Stars. She was twice named Player of the Year.



Leah Hallihan, Maedhbh de Búrca, and Avril Cashman, members of the Cork minor camogie team, winners of the Cork City & County All Star Youth Awards, sponsored by John Buckley Sports, Maldron Hotel Shandon, with Cllr Dáimian Boylan, Deputy Lord Mayor and Cllr Danny Collins. Picture: Siobhán Russell



Ballyhea's Roisin Killeen in possession during the SE Systems Intermediate Camogie Championship semi-final against Aghabullogue at Banteer. Picture: Larry Cummins

## Intermediate sides have proven themselves to be worthy finalists

SATURDAY

SE Systems Intermediate Camogie Championship final: Aghabullogue v Blackrock 2.30pm, Castle Road.

THE SE Systems Intermediate camogie championship final brings together two sides that since the championship began have been the teams tipped to make it to the final.

Both have got here coming through their respective groups undefeated and now the battle for the Nano Nagle cup reaches its conclusion and both will be going in determined to keep their one hundred per cent record alive.

Blackrock have been the standout sides in group two with wins over Brian Dillon's, Valley Rovers, Ballyhea, Charleville and Newtownshandrum they confidently topped their group to book a semi-final spot against city rivals Na Piarsaigh where they received a very stern test before victory was secured.

Blackrock led by seven points at the break, after an opening half where they were dominant, a goal from Kate Leneghan on 29 minutes helped them stretch an advantage they held from the opening minutes, but they had to withstand huge Na Piarsaigh pressure all though the second half.

The loss of influential centre back, the experienced Roisin De Faoite, after 22 minutes through injury, saw them lose their shape totally. Her departure upset her side as she was dominant in defence.

Word is that she is fit again and recovered to line out in the final and this is a huge boost to Blackrock.

They have had excellent displays to date from Michelle Murphy who lined out at wing forward in their semi-final

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

and did huge work dropping deep and winning a lot of possession.

She has a huge ability to distribute the ball to her inside lines where Hayley Ryan, Erin Curtin and Kate Leneghan are all capable of grabbing scores.

At midfield Kaitlin Hickey is a hard worker and she is another player Aghabullogue will have to keep an eye to.

Blackrock were hugely disappointed to lose out at semi-final stage last season to eventual winners Fr O'Neill's and they feel their time has now come.

Aghabullogue having lost out at in the county finals of 2020 and 2021 will be hoping this is finally their year; they came through the group staged with victories over Watergrasshill, Kilbrittain/Timoleague, Na Piarsaigh and Carrigaline before taking on Ballyhea in the semi-final where they ran out comfortable winners.

Looking at their semi-final victory over Ballyhea, they only had three scorers over an hour where they hit 3-11.

Cliona Healy was on target with seven points five from placed balls.

Emma Flanagan with 2-1 and Ciara Mc McCarthy with 1-3 were the other players to find the range.

In comparison, Blackrock had six players on target in a hard fought 1-13 to 0-10 battle with Na Piarsaigh.

Aghabullogue will also feel like their opponents their time has finally come but they will need to be on top of their game if they hope to topple a strong and focused Blackrock side.



Amy O'Connor, Seandun eyes her free as she scores a point against St Finbarr's in SE Systems Senior Camogie Championship semi-final.

# City slickers are attempting to go back-to-back

CAMOGIE



Linda Mellerick

SE Systems Senior camogie Championship Final Seandun v Sarsfields, Castle Road, Sunday, 2.30pm

SEANDUN battle for back-to-back titles against 2019 champions Sarsfields in the SE Systems senior camogie championship final in Castle Road on Sunday.

Hopefully we won't have the weather conditions of last Sunday and the pace of this game won't be lessened.

These are two typically fast, attacking teams and we can expect much of the same, although you would expect that Sars will come up with a strategy to reduce the supply into Amy O'Connor or block her path to goal.

This isn't just the Amy O'Connor show however. Seandun has a very talented forward line. Lauren Homan out around the forty is having a confident season and if she finds space, she'll pop over points from distance.

Hayley Ryan and Sinead Mills are both lively and good hurlers and if they get possession they'll hit the scoreboard themselves or create scores with good peripheral vision and fast offloads.

Michelle Murphy is a strong worker alongside Kaitlyn Hickey, flanked by Nicole Crean and Casey Coleman. Roisin de Faoite has spent the past two weeks out with a rib injury, should she line out with Blackrock on Saturday in their intermediate championship final, it could hinder any potential start for Sunday.

It was felt coming into the semi-final that Seandun's defence wasn't as strong as last year.

That test was passed against St. Fin-



Orlaith Mullins, Sarsfields, attempts to evade Christine O'Neill and Grace O'Reilly of Courcey Rovers.

barrs, but I'd expect Sars to be a greater challenge, more attacking than the Barrs. Brian Dillon's Susan Kate Brosnan captains the side from left half back.

The flexible Niamh O'Leary could start at full, corner or centre back for Seandun and management will consider their options here particularly around the threat of Orlaith Mullins, Lucy Allen and Kaitlyn Sheehan.

It gives defenders, particularly your full back line huge confidence when you have a solid keeper behind you and with Amy Lee between the posts Seandun has the best in the business. Brave, a great shot stopper with lengthy puckouts, the latter is something Seandun should capitalise on and go into attacking mode at every opportunity.

She has her puckout equal in Mollie Lynch, her senior intercounty understudy, who can also put Sars into the danger area with one strike.

Defensively Sars will have their hands

full but they're tenacious and have improved with strong performances over Courcey Rovers and Inniscarra. Emma Casey, Ellen Murphy, and Tara Elliot are the type of defenders you hate to have snapping at your heels.

I imagine Murphy will take up Amy. Sars half backs against Seandun's half forwards will be a pivotal line.

Hollie Herlihy has come into the last two games as an influential substitute, injury preventing a full hour's action. A further two weeks down the line will Sars decide to hold her again or start their best and give this everything they have from the throw in. You have height, speed, and skill in Herlihy, Mullins and Allen. Sars have strong scoring forwards of that there is little doubt, 13-86 scored on their path to the final with eleven different scorers. You have Ella Woods, who on her day is exciting to watch with 0-11 to her name, six from play. Kaitlyn Sheehan is another who may not always grab the headlines but is more than contributing with 2-10 to her credit.

Add in Clare Mullins, Saoirse Desmond (2-1) and the spread is strong in Sars. Sars have conceded nine goals in their last four outings and it's something they'll be anxious to address facing the championship's top goal scorer in Amy O'Connor with nine goals in her pocket.

Sars are young but also an experienced side in many quarters who have been here before. Seandun have 17-77 scored over their campaign, a game less than Sars, and conceded 2-42.

The standard in their respective groups is telling here so best not to read too much into it. But certainly, defensively Sars will have to protect their goal.

Seandun are favourites, but marginally. Blackrock are out on Saturday, even though it hasn't affected them over the past 12 months.

But if Seandun feel they have one hand on the cup, their grip will slip very quickly.



Katelyn Hickey, Blackrock, looks to win this ball from Na Piarsaigh's Emily O'Sullivan during their SE Systems Camogie Intermediate Championship semi-final match at Cloughduv. Picture: Dan Linehan



Seandun and St Vincent's players Lauren Homan, Nicole Crean, Amy O'Connor and Courtney O'Keeffe celebrate last year's county senior camogie title win over Inniscarra. Picture: Howard Crowdy

## Seandún put their title on the line after 2022 1 landmark triumph

AS we count down to tomorrow's SE Systems Senior County Camogie Championship final, it's nice to take a trip down memory lane and see where all the titles have gone.

Without doubt the most coveted prize in Cork camogie is a senior county championship title and since the competition's inception in 1932 only 24 names have been engraved as holders of Cork camogie's most prestigious title.

Eighteen clubs, four divisions, one university and one school have had the honour of being crowned senior champions. Tomorrow, Seandun bid for the division's second title, while Sarsfields will be hoping to make it three.

Let's take a little wander through our recent past and meet those who have won the title.

In 1932, a group of schoolgirls made history taking the Science Cup for the first time when the pupils from St Aloysius becoming the first winners.

1933 saw Nora Kelleher carry the trophy in triumph as Muskerry became the first division to take a senior title.

They had to wait until 2007 before Catriona Foley followed in her footsteps.

Kitty Cotter led Mayfield to their only crown in 1935 and in 1936 there were new champions as UCC, led by Lil Kirby, defeated Hillside.

Lee Hosbery were led by Mary Valley to the first of their successes in 1937.

In 1938 new champions climbed the victory rostrum as Old Aloysians Past Pupils were crowned champions. They were captained by Renee Fitzgerald. The club would later go on and add 14 more titles to their collection.

1947 heralded success for another divisional side when Imokilly defeated Lee Hosbery. Imokilly added a further five titles taking, a five in a row from 1972 to 1976.

Mary Delea led Blackrock to glory in 1948 when the Rockies proved too strong for the champions Imokilly as they brought the first of two titles to the famous southside club.

1950 was Glen Rovers' year as Siobhan O'Brien led her side to victory over Blackrock.

The Glen went on to add a further 21 titles and they lead the roll of honour with the most titles — 22 in total having completed two record-breaking seven in-a-rows from 1960 to 1968 and from 1990 to 1996.

### CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

It was 1969 before another new name was added to the roll of honour.

It was again past pupils who were creating history when Mary Crowley led the South Presentation Past Pupils to title number one.

They made it three in-a-row winning again in 1970 and 1971.

1977 saw another new name added to the roll of honour with the emergence of Éire Óg as champions led by Marion McCarthy-Reck.

The Ovens girls went on to added titles on three further occasions.

East Cork was to the fore as Breda Landers led Killeagh to their first success in 1980 and they made it three titles in a row and were back to take their fourth title in 1984.

There was a big gap between 1980 and 1997 before new champions emerged when Eithne Duggan led Bishopstown to their first title of their four in a row success from 1997 to 2000.

We had new champions again in 2001 as the girls from Cloughduv were victorious and they retained the title the following year.

In 2003, Fr O'Neill's finally broke the hoodoo that had followed them when Fiona O'Driscoll carried the cup in triumph back to Ballymacoda as O'Neill's defeated Inniscarra.

The following year divisional side Carrigdhoun took their first title.

There was a new name again in 2006 as St Finbar's were victorious for the first time.

Again in 2008 we had new winners with Douglas emerging to take the honours and they added title number two in 2011.

A new chapter began in 2009 as St Catherine's got over the line. Inniscarra took the first of their four titles in 2010, and Milford made it four in a row setting the pace with their first title in 2012.

It was to be 2020 before a new force emerged to be crowned champions as Courcey Rovers won their first title and last year a new division emerged as Seandún took their first title and became the fourth divisional side in the history of the championship to be crowned champions.

Tomorrow it's all to play for again.

We won't have a new name engraved on the Punch Cup but either Sarsfields will make it three wins or Seandun will win their second in two years.



Sarsfields' Emma Casey breaks clear of Fr O'Neill's Clodagh Finn and Kayla O'Riordan during the SE Systems Senior Camogie Championship match at Castle Road. Picture: Howard Crowdy

# Stage set for cracking final

### CAMOGIE



Linda Mellerick

IT'S the champions of 2021 versus the 2019 winners in what promises to be a rip-roaring senior championship final tomorrow.

Seandún and Sars are similar styled teams and, weather permitting, we should see a high-scoring final.

Sars manager Tadgh Óg Lynch has guided Sars to their second final in four years, their third in 33, after over a decade of huge underage work in Sarsfields.

For a campaign that started with absence and injury to key players, it's a position he's delighted to be in.

"We knew some of the girls were going to be away from early on. Then Olivia (McAllen), Maeve (McCarthy) got injured but others came in and stepped up," Lynch said.

"You're only as good as your subs and for us that's very obvious this year. At the start of the year the objective was to get out of the group and see what happened."

"We got a tough draw in the quarter-final, a very tough draw in the semi-final but the girls stepped up and worked hard, got the rub of the green maybe, and got over the line in the semi-final."

"Look, we're obviously thrilled. It is still quite a young team. Going back to 2019 only seven of that team started the semi-final. Hollie (Herlihy) came on and another one or two on the bench."

"So, in only three years there's been a transition of personnel and we're lucky that we have quality coming up, younger girls who have done well at underage and beginning to make their mark on the team as well."

Restraining Amy O'Connor, who has scored 9-11 from play, must be on Sarsfields' minds.

"Look, how do you stifle Amy? It's very difficult. Teams that have played Seandún have put players back, put a sweeper, two sweepers back."

"The problem is you hand the initiative to Seandún because you're allowing them



Seandún's Lauren Homan is tackled by Carbery's Michelle Dullea during their 2022 Cork Senior Camogie Championship at Castle Road. Picture: Jim Coughlan

maybe one or two extra defenders, hindering your attack.

"I think both teams have built their success on attacking play. We have six, seven, maybe eight very good forwards that we can pick from. Our scoring has been good (13-86), and we'd be hoping to bring the game to Seandún."

"I think our forwards have done really well for us and we'll be hoping that they'll turn up again on Sunday and put in another decent shift."

What is noteworthy in Sars is that those scores have come from 11 players.

The spread of your scoring power is always better than relying on one or two and all Seandún defenders will need to be on their toes.

Conceding nine goals, Sars full-back line have improved and did stand up against Inniscarra.

"Yeah, our backs have been good. Ellen Murphy is full-back, an experienced campaigner and has spent time with Cork."

"Mollie is (Lynch) in goal, even though she's only 21 it's her sixth campaign as goalie and she's had the benefit of being with Cork the last number of seasons and got huge experience from that."

"Tara Elliott won a minor All-Ireland with Cork this year. Maeve Mullins, she's

a good few campaigns with Sars behind her, so yeah there's a bit of experience mingled with youth and enthusiasm."

"Certainly, the younger players have brought a no fear approach and don't care who they're marking or who they're playing."

"Maybe sometimes with experience, fear comes, so they've been very good. We're very happy and looking forward to Sunday. Hopefully, it's a good game and may be the best team win."

Seandún manager Trevor Coleman will be waiting anxiously today hoping that 11 of his Blackrock and Bishopstown players come through their respective championship games injury-free.

It'll be a tough ask in heavy underfoot conditions to play two massive games within 24 hours. He is aware of the challenge they face in Sars.

"This is going to be our hardest game to date, and I suppose that's what you'd expect in a final."

"We'll play a similar style and attack the game. They've a talented forward line, a good spread of scorers and a strong bench."

"Look, it'll be a big ask of our players but knowing the bunch of girls they are they'll give it everything they have."

CUMANN CAMÓGAÍOCHTA CHORCAÍ

SE SYSTEMS SPONSORED

Cork Camogie Senior Club  
Championship Final  
Corn Punch Shoe Care

**SEANDÚN vs SARSEFIELDS**

#FeelTheEnergy

Camogie Grounds, Castle Road  
Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2022  
At 4.00pm  
Réiteoir - Gerard Ahern (Cloughduv)  
Luach: €3

# O'Connor key as Seandún look to wrest off challenge of Sars

Cork Senior Camogie Final  
**Sarsfields v Seandun**

Tomorrow: Castle Road, 2:30pm  
Referee: Gerard Ahern

**Therese O'Callaghan**

Tomorrow's SE Systems Cork senior camogie championship final sees Seandún put their title on the line against Sarsfields, the champions of 2019. Last year, the city division claimed the silverware for the first time, following their win over Inniscarra. On that historic day, their attacking game was the difference when a pair of goals from Cork star Amy O'Connor proved key, while O'Connor's inter-county colleague and goalkeeper Amy Lee was in fine form. In the interim, not much has changed. The two of these

players were instrumental in their hard-fought three-point victory over St Finbarr's in the semi-final, and it is no surprise either that O'Connor has emerged as the overall top scorer in the championship. Blackrock are involved in a vital match today when they meet Aghabullogue in the intermediate final. At least a third of the Rockies are in line to start the senior decider, as is Maeve Scannell, who is in action with Bishopstown. Crucially, they experienced similar circumstances in 2021, and managed it well. Sarsfields bridged a 30-year gap when they lifted the trophy for the second time three years ago. The manner of their semi-final success over a more seasoned Inniscarra, will give them great assurance. Despite falling behind before half-time, they remained calm. The game-defining scores came in the fourth quarter when Clona Lynch struck 2-2 without reply, for her team to regain the lead. Even though Inniscarra, who were seeking a seventh consecutive final appearance, threw the kitchen sink at the Riverstown outfit, they survived with two points to spare.



The inclement weather was extremely challenging for both of those penultimate rounds in Owens a fortnight ago. And it could well play havoc again tomorrow in

Cork and Seandún star Amy O'Connor is the top scorer in the Cork club championship so far. She was crucial to the win over St Finbarr's. Picture: Larry Cummins

Castle Road. Nonetheless, you would expect the two squads to pick up where they left off, and being a fixture of such magnitude, they will be in the right mindset regardless of the conditions. It should be a close encounter. The question is, will it be a second title for Seandún or a third for Sarsfields?

## Time out with Susan-Kate Brosnan

SEANDÚN CAPTAIN

Susan-Kate began playing camogie in primary school when her school Gaelscoil and Ghoirt Álainn was successfully involved with Sciath na Scol competitions. Her love of the sport grew, and she joined Brian Dillons Camogie Club. As a member of the club, she gained invaluable experience from training with some incredible players and coaches. She was fortunate enough to achieve county titles with her club at U14, U16, Minor, Junior B, Junior A and Intermediate levels over the years. She also holds a senior county title with Seandún who won the county for the first time last year. She also represented Cork at underage and Intermediate grades and won a Purcell Cup with Mary Immaculate College during her time there. She credits camogie with providing her with confidence, discipline, and wonderful friends. She is currently working as a primary school teacher in Carrigaline Educate Together NS and enjoys coaching the children there and instilling in them a love of GAA.



## Time out with Clare Mullins

SARSFIELDS CAPTAIN

Clare, 22, has been playing camogie with Sars since the age of 5 and has been a pivotal member of our Senior panel since making her debut in 2016. One of Clare's standout memories with Sars is winning the Senior County title in 2019 - "this was a great day/year for our team and the feeling of winning with my friends has stuck with me, driving us forward each year".

"As we approach this year's county final I am thrilled to be captaining such a great bunch of girls. Most of the girls I have been friends with for years making it a huge honour to lead them out. I am also playing alongside two of my sisters, Méabh and Órlaith, which makes it extra special when playing together."

Clare's club accolades include titles at U14, U16, Minor League & County, as well as her coveted Senior County title won in 2019.



SEANDÚN				SARSFIELDS			
	1 Amy Lee	2 Niamh O'Leary	3 Leah McKeogh	4 Courtney O'Keefee		1 Molly Lynch	
	5 Susan-Kate Brosnan <i>Captain</i>	6 Roisin De Faoite	7 Maeve Scannell		2 Emma Casey	3 Ellen Murphy	4 Tara Elliott
	8 Nicole Crean	9 Katelynn Hickey			5 Meabh Mullins	6 Cliona Lynch	7 Amy McNamara
	10 Lauren Homan	11 Michelle Murphy	12 Casey Coleman		8 Ava Fitzgerald	9 Clare Mullins <i>Captain</i>	
	13 Amy O'Connor	14 Hayley Ryan	15 Sinead Mills		10 Ella Woods	11 Lucy Allen	12 Orlaith Mullins
					13 Katlyn Sheehan	14 Hollie Herlihy	15 Saoirse Desmond
<b>SUBS:</b>				<b>SUBS:</b>			
16. Megan McCarthy	20. Erin Curtin	24. Emma Sharpe	28. Niamh Ring	16. Megan Sheehan	20. Katie Walsh	24. Laura Dunlea	28. Maeve McCarthy
17. Emily Buckley	21. Laura O'Neill	25. Emma O'Connor	29. Amy Coleman	17. Aisling McCarthy	21. Rachael Roche	25. Anna Nestor	29. Chloe Aherne
18. Grainne Kearney	22. Shauna Homan	26. Carol Ryan	30. Aine Ring	18. Fiona Holmes	22. Kate Fennessy	26. Ellis Hegarty	
19. Maeve Coffey	23. Emily O'Donoghue	27. Elannah Sheehan		19. Chloe Casey	23. Sinead Hurley	27. Olivia Mcallen	
<b>MANAGEMENT PANEL</b>				<b>MANAGEMENT TEAM</b>			
Trevor Coleman	Jason Long	Padraig Treacy		Anthony Elliott	Jennifer Murphy	First Aid:	Sharon Quirke
Trevor Allen	David Lockyer	Catherine Allen		Bryan O'Leary	John Barry	Sponsors:	Loftus Demolition
Liz O'Mahony	Michael Hickey			Denis Twomey	Tadhg Og Lynch		
Follow Cork Camogie on Facebook.com/CorkCamogie Twitter @CorkCamogie   Instagram CorkCamogie   www.corkcamogie.ie				Follow the Camogie Association on Facebook.com/officialcamogieassociation Twitter @officialcamogie   www.camogie.ie			



The Seandún management celebrate their win over Sarsfields at Castle Road. Picture: Jim Coughlan

## Coleman pays tribute to Seandún girls after cracking final victory

DELIGHT for Seandún as they retained the SE Systems Senior camogie title in a cracking game with Sarsfield's.

City Division mentor Trevor Coleman paid tribute to the fantastic effort of the players, some of whom were involved the day before in intermediate and junior.

"These girls are fantastic, they gave it their all. We are just here to guide them along and they do all the rest, they put in the work. They got their rewards and I'm delighted for them."

"A lot of people knock divisions and say they should not be in this championship, but for these players it's great and we are delighted to have Seandún again be crowned county senior champions."

A great start, including a goal inside 10 minutes helped.

"We knew Sarsfield's would come back at us and they did, they kept working away and got themselves into the game. We showed huge character to close it out, Sars got it down to a point, but our girls stood firm and stopped them getting an equaliser."

"We brought Erin Curtin on towards the finish and she is only 17 and played yesterday with Blackrock, but her contribution when she came on was huge. She was out in front and won a few vital balls and that's what it's all about; battling to the final whistle and that is what Seandún did."

Coleman acknowledged Sarsfield's went down fighting and contributed enormously

### CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

to a great final.

"They came at us in waves, particularly in the second half and it is only what you would expect in a county final and they certainly were there to the full-time whistle."

Seandún captain Susan Kate Brosnan was delighted with her side's victory and also acknowledged Sarsfield's contribution to an excellent game:

"I'm so thrilled, it was a hard tough game and we knew Sarsfield's would finish strong, they are a very young, fit side. We got a great start with an early goal and it settled us."

"The girls have really been unbelievable and the hard work they all put in helped get us over the line."

Brosnan was at the heart of the Seandún defence, which held firm in the last five minutes as Sarsfield's came in search of a leveller.

"They applied huge pressure and we really had to defend and not give away possession or a free, it was vital to get the ball out of the danger zone and we broke up field and I think it was Lauren Homan got the last point."

"I was just delighted to see the flag going up and we going two points ahead. We had to withstand another Sars attack, but thankfully we got over the line and it's just great."



Seandún celebrate their win over Sarsfields.

Picture: Jim Coughlan

# Amy inspires county glory

### CAMOGIE

■ Linda Mellerick

Seandún	2-16
Sarsfields	1-17

IT was a pulsating second half in the SE Systems senior camogie final, with Seandún hanging in to win by two at Castle Road on Sunday.

Trailing by five at half time, Sars took the game to the holders, bringing the sides level. It looked as if the younger, fresh legs of Sars would take this game, but Seandún's desire to not give up their title easily meant the last quarter was frantic.

Sarsfield's Lucy Allen was unfit to play after breaking her thumb in training on Thursday and divisional players Hayley Ryan and Carol Ryan picked up injuries in Saturday's intermediate championship final.

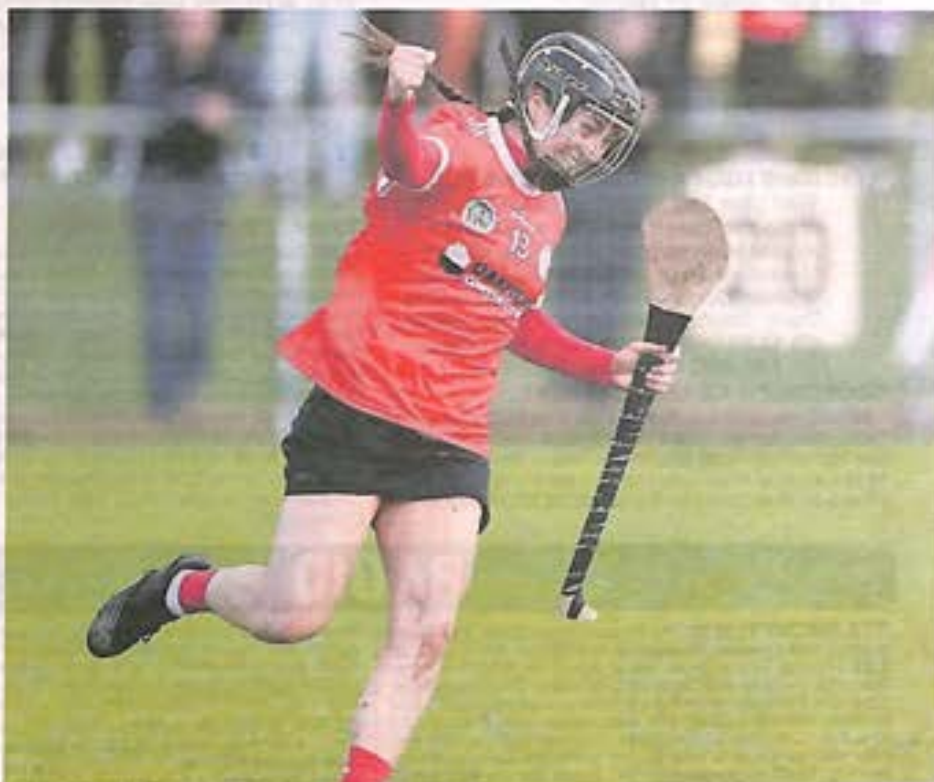
The talk before the game was how Sars would cope with Amy O'Connor. The St Vincent's player was majestic. Inside the opening eight minutes, with Seandún hitting fast ball in, she had 1-4 to Cliona Lynch's pointed free.

Good work by Casey Coleman on eight minutes found O'Connor, who finished to the net. Tara Elliot had her work cut out and even with Cliona Lynch sometimes the floating defender, Seandún were still getting ball into their star forward, who was outstanding.

Rather than panic, Sars let matters settle and began winning ball around the middle and drawing frees. Ella Woods pointed three in a row, one of them from play, and just a goal separated the sides. Seandún again hit a strong patch with four points, from O'Connor (f), Michelle Murphy, and two excellent long-distance frees from Lauren Homan.

But, again, Sars responded with three from Cliona Lynch (frees) and Hollie Herlihy. Another distance free from Homan and O'Connor from play finished the half.

What a second half! Orla Mullins kick-started Sars's comeback. Katelyn Hickey and Ella Woods swapped points, before a move involving Amy Lee and Hickey and Maeve Scannell was delivered into O'Connor, who again blasted it into the net. Was it back to



Amy O'Connor, Seandún, celebrates her early first half goal against Sarsfields.

Picture: Jim Coughlan

square one for Sars?

Mullins, from the puck-out, hit an absolute belter to the back of the net and Sars now had their mojo. Four points in a row for the club side followed, from Lynch (f), Woods, and Mullins (2) and Sars were level and in the ascendancy. Seandún looked to be tiring, but they never wilted. They took back the initiative, won three frees, and converted all three, Homan and O'Connor (2) the providers. There were three in it again.

Sars's substitutes were making an impact, Chloe Casey hitting over before another Lynch free. But Erin Curtin, introduced entering the last quarter, was excellent for Seandún. Carrying the ball to Sars, she pointed to give Seandún a two-point lead.

Back to one with a Lynch 45, Sars were driving for the equaliser. Brilliant defend-

ing by Seandún stopped them. The first-rate Lauren Homan decided matters with the game's final point on 65 minutes.

**Scorers for Seandún:** A O'Connor 2-8 (0-4 f), L Homan 0-5 (0-4 f), M Murphy, K Hickey, E Curtin 0-1 each.

**Sarsfields:** C Lynch 0-7 (0-6 f, 0-1 45), O Mullins 1-3, E Woods 0-5 (0-2 f), H Herlihy, C Casey 0-1 each.

**SEANDÚN:** A Lee (Na Piarasigh), E Buckley (Na Piarasigh), L McKeogh (Blackrock), C O'Keefe (St Vincent's), SK Brosnan (Brian Dillon, s), N O'Leary (do), M Scannell (Bishopstown), N Creen (St Vincent's), K Hickey (Blackrock), L Homan (St Vincent's), M Murphy (Blackrock), C Coleman (Na Piarasigh), A O'Connor (St Vincent's), R DeFacite (Blackrock), S Mills (Brian Dillon).

**Sub:** E Curtin (Blackrock) for L McKeogh (45).

**SARSFIELDS:** M Lynch, E Casey, E Murphy, T Elliot, M Mullins, C Lynch, A McNamara, A Fitzgerald, M Sheehan, E Woods, C Mullins, K Sheehan, H Herlihy, O Mullins, S Desmond.

**Subs:** K Fennessy for S Desmond (37), C Casey for M Sheehan (51), M McCarthy for K Sheehan (53).

**Referee:** Gerard Ahern (Cloughduv).



Linda Mellerick, representing The Echo, presents Seandún's Amy O'Connor, with the Player of the Match trophy. Picture: Jim Coughlan



# Awesome Amy inspires Seandún



Cork Camogie final  
**Seandún.....2-16**  
**Sarsfields.....1-17**

**Therese O'Callaghan**  
 Castle Road



Amy O'Connor scored 2-8 for Seandún as they completed back-to-back SE Systems Cork camogie titles at Castle Road on Sunday. Having made the breakthrough in 2021, the city division rose to the challenge in front of a big crowd.

The talented O'Connor, who was crowned 'player of the match' is grateful for the chance to play at the top level.

"Let's call it a spade a spade. I probably never will, unfortunately, play senior with my club (St Vincent's). I don't mean to sound negative, that is the harsh reality. It is great to have this opportunity to play senior."

"Two years ago, if you asked me, would I have a senior county medal, I would have laughed in your face. Thankfully, I am lucky enough now to have two. That is a testament to the players we have available."

"We could potentially lose a huge bunch of them. If Blackrock go and beat Aghabullogue next Saturday (intermediate replay), they go up senior. Blackrock makes up a huge spine of our team. They



**PARTY TIME:** Seandun celebrate their Cork senior camogie win over Sarsfields at Castle Road. The divisional side overcome a young Sarsfields team in an exciting battle.

Picture: Jim Coughlan

are phenomenal players. It would be bitter-sweet.

"I said in the huddle before the game, we never know when we will have such an exceptional group of players playing together again, so you might as well make the most of it."

In a contest that went all the way to the wire, O'Connor got the titleholders off to the best possible start with her 1-4. Defensively strong as well, Lauren Homan was unerring from frees.

Sarsfields needed to produce something big to get back into the match, and unanswer-

ed points before half-time from Cliona Lynch (2), Ella Woods, and Hollie Herlihy left them with a fighting chance at the turn, 1-10 to 0-8.

Sarsfields brought much more intensity to the second half and despite O'Connor's second green flag, they gained parity courtesy of an unanswered 1-4 — the Sarsfields goal a brilliant effort from Orlaith Mullins (1-14 to 2-11).

It was a roller-coaster from there to the end.

"My heart was in my mouth for the entire second half," O'Connor continued. "In Castle Road, they say the end

we were playing into in the first half is the scoring end, so you want to get as much of a lead as possible. We probably didn't have enough of a lead at half-time."

"We were put under savage pressure. Sars have such pace. They are so young, they have lots of minors. I actually love watching them because they are so exciting. I wasn't excited when I was down the other end and they drew level. They gave us some game."

Sarsfields, vying for their first title since 2019 and their third overall, could never get their noses in front. In a fren-

etic finale and a one-point game, Homan sealed the deal in the 66th minute.

"I love camogie, I love playing, and playing with such freedom. It is a huge challenge too because you are marking some of the best defenders in the country. But I enjoy scoring goals. It is part of my game, it has always been since I was a child," she said.

**Scorers for Seandún:** A O'Connor (2-8, 0-4 frees), L Homan (0-5, 0-4 frees), M Murphy, K Hickey and E Curtin (0-1 each).

**Scorers for Sarsfields:** C Lynch (0-5 frees, 0-1 45) and E Woods (0-3 frees) (0-6 each), O Mullins (1-2), M Herlihy, C Casey and K Fennessy (0-1 each).

**SEANDÚN:** A Lee (Na Piarasigh); E Buckley (Na Piarasigh); L McKeogh (Blackrock); C O'Keefe (St Vincent's); S K Brosnan (Brian Dillons, Capt); N O'Leary (Brian Dillons); M Scannell (Bishopstown); N Crean (St Vincent's); K Hickey (Blackrock); L Homan (St Vincent's); M Murphy (Blackrock); C Coleman (Na Piarasigh); A O'Connor (St Vincent's); R De Faoite (Blackrock); S Mills (Brian Dillons).

**Subs:** E Curtin (Blackrock) for L McKeogh (45 in).

**SARSFIELDS:** M Lynch; E Casey; E Murphy; T Elliott; M Mullins; C Lynch; A McNamara; A Fitzgerald; M Sheehan; E Woods; C Mullins (Capt); K Sheehan; H Herlihy; O Mullins; S Desmond.

**Subs:** K Fennessy for S Desmond (37); C Casey for M Sheehan (51); M McCarthy for K Sheehan (54).

**Referee:** Gerard Ahern (Cloughduv).

**Time out with Katie McCarthy**  
 AGHABULLOGUE CAPTAIN

Age: 22  
 Profession: **Primary School Teacher**

Earliest memory of playing camogie: **Hitting tyres in Aghabullogue Hall**

Favourite Memory of Camogie: **Playing with Coachford College**

Favourite Playing Position: **Centre Back**

Biggest influence: **Lotty**

Favourite thing about playing with Aghabullogue: **Playing with the girls and the craic we have**

Biggest sporting idol: **Katie Taylor**

**Time out with Katie O'Brien**  
 BLACKROCK CAPTAIN

My name is Kate O'Brien, I'm 29 years of age. I have been playing camogie since about 6 or 7 with Blackrock Camogie Club.

I also played camogie with my primary school Gaelscoil Mhachan and St. Angela's College growing up.

My fondest memories with Blackrock are winning the Junior County Championship in 2010 and the Intermediate County in 2016.

CUMANN CAMÓGAÍOCHTA CHORCAÍ

SE SYSTEMS SPONSORED

Cork Camogie Intermediate Club

Championship Final

Nano Nagle Cup

# AGHABULLOGUE VS BLACKROCK



#FeelTheEnergy

Camogie Grounds, Castle Road

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2022

At 2.30pm

Réiteoir - Simon Stokes (Tullylease)

Luach: €3



## AGHABULLOGUE

1 Nicola Moynihan

2 Erinn O'Connell

3 Miriam Cotter

4 Brid Cotter

5 Meadhbh Ring

6 Katie McCarthy  
*Captain*

7 Aoife Barrett

8 Ella Foley

9 Rachel Barrett

10 Aoife Twomey

11 Ciara McCarthy

12 Julie Tarrant

13 Cliona Healy

14 Emma Flanagan

15 Kelly Honohan

### SUBS:

- |                       |                   |                       |                  |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| 16. Edel Downey       | 20. Ella Curtin   | 24. Clara Daly        | 28. Orna Cahill  |
| 17. Joanne Crowley    | 21. Ailbhe O'Shea | 25. Ellie Buckley     | 29. Rachel Bowen |
| 18. Eireann O'Shea    | 22. Amy Dineen    | 26. Louise O'Donoghue | 30. Tess Desmond |
| 19. Caoimhe O'Connell | 23. Anna Foley    | 27. Meadhbh McCarthy  |                  |

### MANAGEMENT PANEL

- |            |                |            |
|------------|----------------|------------|
| Denis Ring | Martin Buckley | Pat Kiely  |
| Joe Foley  | Brian Murphy   | Patsi Daly |

## BLACKROCK

1 Clodagh Coughlan

2 Tia MacMahon

3 Aideen Nagle

4 Kate O'Brien  
*Captain*

5 Orla Russell

6 Roisin DeFaoite

7 Leah McKeogh

8 Anna Lucey

9 Katelyn Hickey

10 Maeve Coffey

11 Michelle Murphy

12 Kate Lenaghan

13 Erinn Curtin

14 Hayley Ryan

15 Grace Mulqueen

### SUBS:

- |                     |                           |                       |                    |
|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 16. Sophie Crowley  | 20. Juliet O'Keefe        | 24. Ella Coleman      | 28. Anne Golden    |
| 17. Maeve Cashman   | 21. Lia Guerin            | 25. Doonagh Grimley   | 29. Carol Ryan     |
| 18. Aisling Hegarty | 22. Sadhbh McCarthy       | 26. Eimear O'Donoghue | 30. Anne O'Tarrell |
| 19. Kate O'Sullivan | 23. Bronagh O'Shaughnessy | 27. Abbie Hurley      |                    |

### MENTORS

- |                   |                |                  |
|-------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Aidan Ryan        | Kieran O'Keefe | Anthony Nagle    |
| Mossie O'Sullivan | Tomas Russell  | Lisa O'Callaghan |
| Kevin Murphy      | Ger Coughlan   |                  |

# Rockies forced into a replay

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

SE Systems Intermediate Championship replay, Aghabullogue v Blackrock; Saturday, October 29; Eire Og, Ovens; 1pm.

BLACKROCK seemed to have their hands on the Nano Nagle Cup on Saturday last. They led by eight points three minutes into the second half, but Aghabullogue battled back.

Led by Ciara McCarthy, who fired home a goal seven minutes into the second half to kickstart their revival, they took control and it ended level as Cliona Healy sent a free in the seventh minute of injury time between the posts to tie the sides up and take it to a replay.

Disappointment for Blackrock and relief for Aghabullogue and now they both have to do it all again.

Conditions were wet and slippery on Saturday last, and it wasn't easy, the rain in the afternoon making it hard for both sides. Aghabullogue had excellent performances from their defence, where Miriam Cotter, Maebh Ring, and Katie McCarthy were on top.

Likewise, Blackrock, who closed down the Aghabullogue attack, with Roisin De Faoite and Lean McKeogh holding the upper hand and with Anna Lucey doing a good job policing Cork senior Cliona Healy. The Blackrock defence was solid.

Scores were hard to come by and the sides had to work to get them. It will be a similar story on Saturday and no doubt each camp will be looking to get that one break that might just swing the game in their favour.

On Sunday last, Hayley Ryan did not line out with Seandun in the senior final, having picked up an injury on Saturday and Blackrock will be hoping to have Ryan, who notched up three points on Saturday last, fit and ready for action.

**SE Systems Junior A Final: Ballinhassig v Ballinora, Mon Oct 31st; Castle Road; 2.45pm.**

Ballinhassig and Ballinora bid for the SE Systems Junior A title on Monday. Ballinora have been here before and for Ballinhassig, having re-graded down to junior A in 2020, it's a chance to get back up to intermediate grade.

Ballinora will be hoping to go one better this year, having lost out in last year's final to Charleville. They had a semi-final victory over Tracton, while Ballinhassig saw off the challenge of Castletyons.

Ballinhassig welcomed back former Cork senior Eimear O'Sullivan this year, who came out of retirement. She is a huge player for them, and they will be hoping she can lead their quest for honours. Cork senior Maebh Murphy will be hoping she can lead the way for her side in a top-class encounter.



Mairead Donovan, chairperson Cork Camogie, presents the cup to Seandun captain Susan-Kate Brosnan. Picture: Jim Coughlan

## Two very attacking teams made for a final of the highest quality

CAMOGIE

■ Linda Mellerick

I MET so many people this week that were blown away by the quality of the senior camogie final last Sunday.

What a final it was! We couldn't have asked for better.

I mentioned last week that two attacking teams would 'go for it' and that's what they did. I'm not shy in admitting to wearing my Seandun hat on the day. With my niece lining out at centre-back and having coached the Brian Dillons contingent in the past, I was emotionally involved there.

But I have to say that my heart went out to Sarsfields at the final whistle. They were awesome, in that second half in particular, and how could you not admire such an effort to come back?

They'll probably have regrets and dissect, as every team does when they lose by such a low margin, but they should also try and reflect on their brilliant passages of play, their scoring, and incredible desire. Seandun should also give themselves a pat on the back for the same attributes.

What a loss Lucy Allen was for Sars.

Their injury had luck continued right throughout the season. To break her thumb the Thursday before the final, she herself must have been heartbroken. Lucy had scored 3-16 leading into the final, 3-14 from play.

There will always be some that grudge divisional sides winning the championship but that is wrong on many levels. These girls deserve to experience playing at the highest level as much as any other player.

They often play in front of family and friends, with little media coverage. On Sunday they played in front of an audience they could have only dreamed about.

Unfamiliar players were able to show what they're capable of. Players such as Bishopstown's Maeve Scannel. Her club lost the Junior B semi-final last Saturday. She was excellent on Sunday.

Captain Susan Kate Brosnan from Brian Dillons, what a memory for her. I could go on.

I would also put my case forward that the huge crowd in Castle Road last weekend introduced first-time attendees that had never gone to a senior camogie championship game before.

Seandun brought a large

spread from many clubs. A number of those that I met; it was their first senior camogie final.

And oh, were they impressed!

We have had great finals, games that went down to the wire and brought incredible drama over the years. But I think for quality as well as tension this one stands tall.

I can't recall a player ever dominating a championship like Amy O'Connor has done this season. She finished the championship with 11-30, 11-15 from play. That was from five games as she missed the opening round due to injury. Her marker last weekend Tara Elliot is young, a Cork minor All-Ireland winner last March who has had a fine season. No one could hold Amy this year.

The last quarter of the game was as frenzied as you'll see.

Orlaith Mullins had done ferocious damage in the first 13 minutes of the second half, hitting 1-3. What a top-class goal it was. Niamh O'Leary was switched over as her marker and calmed matters.

I thought defensively Seandun were excellent. Their composure in finding teammates to get out of trouble before unleashing long deliveries was great.

Blackrock's Erin Curtin was a big introduction in that final quarter, and I thought Sinead Mills' work-rate and spread of the ball was vital. The last big run of the day when Erin, competing with two Sars runners, ran the width of the pitch to win possession was crucial in the closing minutes.

That ball found Mills then Lauren Homan who pointed to go two up. Had Sars won that possession, who knows what would have occurred.

Often predictions that young talented teams have plenty of silverware years ahead of them doesn't materialise, but I think it's fair to say that Sarsfields' next senior title is only around the corner. I also feel they are the next Cork team that will bring All-Ireland club titles back to Leeside.

For a team that have won so much underage the pain of last Sunday will stand to them even though it doesn't feel like it right now.



The Aghabullogue team celebrate their victory over Blackrock in the SE Systems Cork Camogie Intermediate club championship final replay at Ovens. Picture: Picture Dan Linehan



Cliona Healy and Erin O'Connell of Aghabullogue celebrate their extra-time victory over Blackrock. Picture: Dan Linehan

## Healy pounces right at the death

<b>Cork ICC final</b>	
<b>Aghabullogue</b>	<b>2-17</b>
<b>Blackrock</b>	<b>3-13</b>
<b>AET</b>	

**Therese O'Callaghan**  
Ovens

Cork senior Cliona Healy delivered the decisive point in the dying embers of extra-time in this terrific SE Systems Cork intermediate camo-

gie championship final replay at Ovens on Saturday.

The showdown was a thriller from start to finish with player-of-the-match Healy finishing with 1-11.

"It is great to be a senior club, we are a young group of players" the 22-year-old said. "We've been trying for a while. We lost the last two finals.

"We had to fight so hard as well last week. We were eight points down in the second-

half. Blackrock are a fantastic team, you never get anything easy off of them.

"Anna Foley gave me the ball for the last point, I was delighted to see it go over.

"Blackrock hit a great line ball into our goal after that, and we just managed to clear it away. We had to defend very well."

Level eight times in regulation (2-11 each), it was Anne O'Farrell's goal in the first period of extra-time that

edged Blackrock ahead by the minimum, 3-12 to 2-14.

Ciara McCarthy ensured parity before a Healy free nosed her side in front.

Katelyn Hickey's fifth placed ball levelled matters again. And when it appeared the contest would be heading for extra, extra-time, Healy took on a difficult shot for the winner.

It was a crushing defeat for Blackrock — many of whom had won senior county medals

## to secure a thrilling win

with Seandún the previous weekend.

It was four points apiece after a quarter of an hour. Healy and Erin Curtin swapped goals late in the half for wind-assisted Blackrock to lead 1-7 to 1-6 at the interval.

The rain came down, yet more goals arrived amid a busy restart — Aoife Barrett and Hayley Ryan making it 2-7 apiece. It was tit-for-tat all the way to the finish line, both sides working so hard.

Ella Foley forced extra-time when she landed a lengthy free from the middle of the field.

**Scorers for Aghabullogue:** C Healy (1-11, 0-8 frees, 0-1 45), A Barrett (1-1), E Foley (0-2 frees), K McCarthy, C McCarthy and E Flanagan (0-1 each).

**Scorers for Blackrock:** H Ryan (1-4, 0-2 frees), K Hickey (0-5 frees), E Curtin (1-1), A O'Farrell (1-0), M Coffey, K Lenaghan and B O'Shaughnessy (0-1 each).

**AGHABULLOGUE:** N Moynihan; E O'Shea, M Cotter, B Cotter; M Ring, K McCarthy (Capt), E Curtin; E Foley, R Barrett; J Crowley, C McCarthy, A Barrett; C Healy, E Flanagan, K Honohan.

**Subs:** J O'Keefe for M Cashman (half-time), A Hegarty for M Coffey (35), O Grimley for K Lenaghan (43), G Mulqueen for B O'Shaughnessy (60), T McMahon for K O'Brien (1 ET), K O'Sullivan for A Hegarty (12 ET).

**ret:** C Healy, E Flanagan, K Honohan. **Subs:** E Buckley for J Crowley, A Foley for K Honohan (both 60), E O'Connell for E O'Shea (15 ET).

**Blackrock:** C Coughlan; A Lucey, R De Faolite, K O'Brien (Capt), A Nagle, K Hickey, L Keogh; M Cashman, A O'Farrell; M Coffey, B O'Shaughnessy, M Murphy; E Curtin, H Ryan, K Lenaghan.

**Subs:** J O'Keefe for M Cashman (half-time), A Hegarty for M Coffey (35), O Grimley for K Lenaghan (43), G Mulqueen for B O'Shaughnessy (60), T McMahon for K O'Brien (1 ET), K O'Sullivan for A Hegarty (12 ET).

**Referee:** Cathal McAllister (Aghada).

## Healy lands extra-time winner for Aghabullogue

<b>Aghabullogue</b>	<b>2-17</b>
<b>Blackrock</b>	<b>3-13</b>
<b>(after extra time)</b>	

AGHABULLOGUE are SE Systems Intermediate champions after a thriller in which a point from Player of the Match Cliona Healy in the dying seconds of extra-time decided the contest. Aghabullogue made the better start with Healy in clinical form before Hayley Ryan scored for the Rockies. They then hit a purple patch and edged in front before Healy put Aghabullogue two clear with the opening goal. The response was instant; after Nicola Moynihan denied Erin Curtin, the Blackrock forward finished the rebound to the net and as the sides swapped points it was Blackrock who led by a point at the break.



Aghabullogue celebrate their victory over Blackrock in the SE Systems Camogie Intermediate Championship final replay at Ovens. Picture: Dan Linehan

Aoife Barrett clipped over a point after the resumption and when she netted seven later, Aghabullogue looked to have the upper hand, but back came Blackrock with a Ryan goal. In extra-time Anna Farrell swung the game back in Blackrock's fa-

### CAMOGIE

**Mary Newman**

vour, sending a ground shot to the net but Aghabullogue fired over two points, Emma Flanagan and Healy again to the fore. Advantage Blackrock at half-

time in extra-time, 3-12 to 2-14. Weary tired legs were taking their toll, but a Ciara McCarthy point and a Healy free put Aghabullogue ahead again. Kaitlin Hickey hit back once more, pointing a long-range free and attacking from the puck-out,

Blackrock looked to have hit the winner but the ball hit the post. Healy then landed what turned out to be the winner.

**Scorers for Aghabullogue:** C Healy 1-12 (0-10 f), A Barrett 1-1, K McCarthy, C McCarthy, E Flanagan, E Foley 0-1 each.

**Blackrock:** H Ryan 1-5, K Hickey 0-5 f, E Curtin 1-1, A Farrell 1-0, B O'Shaughnessy M Murphy, 0-1 each.

**AGHABULLOGUE:** N Moynihan; E O'Connell, M Cotter, B Cotter; M Ring, K McCarthy, E Curtin; E Foley, R Barrett; J Crowley, C McCarthy, A Barrett; C Healy, E Flanagan, K Honohan.

**Subs:** A Foley for K Honohan (54), E Buckley for J Crowley (6-1).

**BLACKROCK:** C Coughlan; A Lucey, R de Faolite, K O'Brien (c); A Nagle, K Hickey, L Keogh; M Cashman, A O'Farrell; M Coffey, B O'Shaughnessy, M Murphy; E Curtin, H Ryan, K Lenaghan.

**Subs:** J O'Keefe for M Cashman (11-0), A Hegarty for M Coffey (33), O Grimley for K Lenaghan (43), T McMahon for K O'Brien (6).

**Referee:** C McAllister (Aghada).

# A winner and a warrior on the pitch and in life



Gemma O'Connor: 'That inequality does cross my mind at times.'  
Picture by Dan Sheridan

In this extract from her autobiography 'Why not a Warrior' Gemma O'Connor, camogie's most decorated player, tackles the question of sexuality in society and in sport with typical honesty and courage

## 1: TEAMMATE TO SOULMATE

**A**n Irish name pops up on the screen when I open the Snapchat app. AoifeNi wants to add me as a friend. And who is AoifeNi? Well, she's from a place called Knockavilla in Cork.

I first hear of the place when a close neighbour of mine, Barbara O'Connell invites me to play soccer for Knockavilla Celtic. Barbara is a sports journalist and she asks me and a few other girls in the city if we have any interest in having a go?

My first thought ... where is Knockavilla? Well, it's a place in West Cork, which is about half an hour outside of Cork city. This is a big county and West Cork is another planet compared to where I live. Anyway, they play in a West Cork league during the winter.

I'm thinking that it might be a bit of craic ... and something to do during the camogie off-season.

A lot of my friends from Ballypheane end up playing for the team too. Compared to camogie, it's a far more relaxed weekend activity. Matches are played on a Sunday morning and we wash it all down with a few pints after.

AoifeNi is also playing for Knockavilla, and her father is our manager.

I've always had an interest in soccer and I grew up playing with some of the lads in my local area. I played in school too, and with

Wilton United FC. But again, everything was clashing with camogie, and camogie was my priority. For me, with sport, I was very tunnel-visioned and I just wanted to play camogie.

No other sport could splinter my attention. I was never willing to sacrifice any part of my game for anything else. I played in Munster schools and would love to have played at a higher level of some description, but my compass always brought me back to camogie.

So, AoifeNi IS a teammate and someone I know. A friend of a friend, really. I can't say that I know her much more than that.

We first speak at a mutual friend's party in 2012. It's pretty packed but we manage to peel off and start chatting. As with most parties, the crowd eventually makes a move towards town to keep the night going.

On the way in, I start thinking to myself, wondering what AoifeNi's story might be?

Thankfully, I don't have to question things for too long. We connect instantly. We start texting ... meeting up, and begin to figure out if we fit into each other's lives. As time goes on, AoifeNi becomes more than a Snapchat acquaintance to me. She's Aoife Ní Chrua-laí, and we share a lot of common interests.

We both love food and cooking. We love sport too. She doesn't play camogie, but she soon starts attending my games. She's there in Croke Park to witness the defeat to Wexford in the 2012 All-Ireland final. Already, she's signing up to suffer through the cruellest sides of sport with me.

Friday nights are for us in the early days. Aoife works as a teacher, and when school's out at the end of the week, we hang out ... maybe go for a bite to eat and have a glass of wine. We just work well as a pair from the beginning.

We head out to Heir Island, to Aoife's dad's house, for our first proper time away together. It's cold and sunny as we sit outside, off the southwest of Cork, shooting the breeze over cheese, crackers and wine.

You find out quickly enough if a person is annoying or not, and so far ... I like what Aoife's about. We're completely different in every way. She's calm ... I'm hyper. I'm tall ... she's small.

I wear completely different clothes to her, and the same with jewellery. I sleep soundly the night before our wedding, and she can't get a wink. She's non-confrontational, but stubborn too. She tries to prolong arguments, but whenever we row, I don't allow her to let things fester. We have to deal with it now.

The issue must be discussed and then pack it away.

There's just one tricky thing to navigate during that period ... Aoife's not out. Now, I never officially came out. Straight people never have to confirm their heterosexuality and I just never stood up and announced to the world ... 'My name is Gemma O'Connor and I'm gay'.

But, at the same time, my sexuality has been known to my friends and family since I was 17.

Aoife hasn't reached that point just yet with her family, but she assures me that there's nothing to worry about with them accepting her for her. We keep our relationship a secret for a while until she's ready to unveil that part of herself to others.

We have mutual friends but we don't tell them either for a bit. As time goes on, we just allow people to put two and two together, and figure out the easy equation. You don't necessarily have to announce ... 'Oh we're together'. We just allow word to spread.

Sometimes, I do find myself resenting that a bit ... the pressure to verify a same-sex relationship. If I was straight, I wouldn't have to do this.

That inequality does cross my mind at times. I just don't understand the obsession that people have about who other people get to spend their time with, or who they share their life with. That's more than just an Irish issue, it's a human one too. The treatment of people in same-sex relationships is so varied all over the world.

In some cultures, you can only do one thing and that's be with a man or a woman. You have to flee to another country to earn the right to be who you are. Other cultures allow you to be as free-spirited as you want, and we have an open enough country here in Ireland which I'm very grateful for.

## 2: NO BIG DEAL

I've always tried to normalise my relationships.

That's just the way I have always approached it. I don't want it to be a big issue or a big deal because, to me, it isn't. This is just the person I'm with ... and this is them and this is me. I'm not big into waving rainbow flags behind



Aoife and Gemma's wedding day.

I do think people are capable of falling in love with people, whether that's a man or a woman, or same sex. I suppose that's what happened with us.

There's no description to capture who we are, and we just happened to find happiness with each other.

It's important not to box yourself off from your desires. You don't know anything if you don't try it. You might think you're completely straight and that you'd never fall for a woman, but until you meet somebody, you're not really going to know that.

And if, God forbid ... it didn't work out with me and Aoife, who's to say she wouldn't meet another man ... or a woman? I don't know.

The same applies to me. I can still see an attraction in men, and I don't believe that you are just shut off from one gender because you find love elsewhere. You can't control what makes you happy.

That's just life.

### 3: COMING OUT

This is who I am ... I play camogie ... I'm in the army ... and I have a wife. That's all you really need to know about me. My sexuality is just one part of my life. But it hasn't always been easy. It isn't easy for anyone who belongs to the LGBTQ+ community. One of my uncles on my mother's side is gay. He had his ear bitten off in a nightclub, basically for being gay. I know a GAA player who is openly gay, and who was subjected to disgraceful abuse while playing in a league game against a rival team.

This is why men are emotionally repressed and don't talk about things. Or come out. How can they when we don't create a safe environment for them to live authentically?

Don't get me wrong, some innocent mind-games are harmless. That's just trying to get inside the mind of an opponent and edge them out psychologically. But there's a difference between giving someone an elbow or telling a player that their manager is warming up another player to replace them ... and calling someone a 'faggot'.

That's a whole different level of abuse.

The GAA culture is something that I don't like for that reason, and it's the same in soccer. These are games that are perceived as man-



*I'm not big into waving rainbow flags behind me or listening to Pink 24-7 but I just try to make it as normal as possible.*

ly men playing manly hurling and football. You have to fit a certain profile for you to qualify as a man.

Verbal assaults at a football match is the reward they get for not hiding from themselves. Some way to treat someone who has the courage to not be a fraud. Knowing what could be waiting for them if they do take the step to come out ... a gay man will worry that people will think less of them for it.

Maybe they're afraid to come out because they think it might create a weird atmosphere among their

teammates in the shower after training and matches. It should be just widespread acceptance and support, but unfortunately, that's not always the case. There's the whole sordid pub culture that goes with it too, which makes it all the more difficult for people to be brave and find peace in their identity.

In my opinion, it's harder for male players to come out, compared to female players, but it's no picnic for women either. Kelly Holmes, the two-time Olympic champion for Great Britain, recently announced in public that she is gay. Her family have known for a long time but this was her first time to tell the world about who she is. She's known since she was 17, but to speak openly about her sexuality at 52 must be daunting for her.

It's different for me because I'm comfortable with talking about it. Everyone has known the truth about my sexuality since I was young. For me, it's easy to talk about it, but for people at a more advanced stage in their life, it must be pretty scary.

### 4: HORRIBLY WRONG

I'm out in Cork city one night when a friend of mine rings me in distress. She's getting harassed and things are kicking off outside a bar. I'm just about to get into a taxi when she phones to tell me that a guy is calling her names over her sexuality.

When I arrive, I see that her aggressor is about 6' 7" and standing in a doorway while she's crying. He starts pushing me when I question him about it, and then I boot him up the ass to protect my friend. I later find out that this guy actually works in Cork and I see him all the time. He was hassling her because she's gay.

Things can go horribly wrong in seconds, but those incidents are ten-a-penny. Unfortunately, you will always have people who will try to incite violence over nothing more than who you are.

On another night, I'm outside a bar when two lads roar out a comment from across the road. Not happy with what they've said, I decide to chase after them. One of them takes off, thinking I won't catch up, and I surprise them when I do.

I trip one of them up mid-chase, and he falls straight into the middle of the road just as a car is passing. I can't tolerate the offence, but I also can't stop myself from thinking about what would have happened if he was struck by the car.

I believe that it's important to stand up for yourself but, sometimes, it can come at a cost. And instead of just walking away, you do stupid things.

The man who was harassing my friend that night is a big part of that unpleasant GAA pub scene community. It's a minority group but they are out there and they're not afraid to be loud about their ignorance.

Sometimes I bite back when they provoke me. That probably just typifies who I am ... I wear my heart on my sleeve. But as time goes on, I learn to treat their homophobia

with silence. Sometimes that's the only way to guarantee your peace.

### 5: CAN'T RUN FROM YOURSELF

It's just not always an easy road. Some families are way more accepting than others, and some people have completely different experiences. Your family might be really supportive but your friends might not be, or vice versa.

Some people might take a very long time to come out, and the struggle can be further complicated by depression, anxiety, and suicidal tendencies. It's crazy to think that people go through all that because of who they are, but that's why being comfortable with your identity is so important. And why it's equally important to surround yourself with people who accept, and love you for your identity.

You might face some, or a lot of opposition in your life, but you should never deny yourself from yourself. There's so much to enjoy when you give yourself permission to live sincerely.

That really rings true for me after our wedding.

One or two girls contact me on Instagram with some really lovely messages. 'Thank you for being you', they write. 'You've helped me with my sexuality'. That means so much to me.

That's just one or two people that I can do that for, and hopefully, it's just the start. I know I'm living right but messages like that are such a massive incentive to keep going, and influence others to do the same. It's great to know that people are seeing this as normal and that you can be who you want to be, without fear. For anyone who is struggling with their identity or sexuality issues, there are a few things you need to understand. You can't run from yourself.

Your true self won't just disappear if you try to ignore it, or pretend it doesn't exist. You have to confront it and the first person you must admit it to is yourself. Once you've accepted you for you, it's important to try and talk to someone that you can trust. That might be a family member, a teammate, a friend or maybe even a counsellor.

The best thing you can ever do is open up to someone you feel comfortable with, and talk about what's worrying you. That's obviously not a simple order to follow, especially if you live in a household with people who don't have an open or progressive mindset.

Maybe there's a parent who has a way of life that's discouraging to you. But even if there is a chance that you won't be accepted, you should still say it out loud.

At least then, it's out in the open and off your chest.

Carrying it around like a horrible secret is far more damaging to your mental health. It's exhausting to live in fear, worrying that someone might figure you out ... every day. That can provoke people to have suicidal ideations, depression and anxiety. I know it's not easy, but you must do all you can to avoid creating a dangerous environment for yourself. And have some faith as well.

You might get a good response from your friends and family when you open up about something like this. But either way, you're unburdening yourself of something that your family should know.

Take that weight off your shoulders.

How can you live the life you're supposed to lead if you're not true to yourself? You may have to lose some people along the way, but you'll find your tribe too.

That might take some time, but the journey to finding yourself is always easier than trying to live a lie.



Gemma O'Connor's autobiography 'Why Not a Warrior?' is published by Hero Books and is available in all good bookstores, and also on Amazon as an ebook (£9.99), paperback (£20) and hardback (£25).



me or listening to Pink 24-7 but I just try to make it as normal as possible.

It's funny watching people try not to be awkward about it, and doing their absolute best to show you how progressive they are. We meet people in the local parish and they'd be going ... 'That's Gemma now, and her paaaartner!'

It's almost like a code to subliminally let others know that there's a gay couple in the area. RED ALERT! RED ALERT! My friends and I always thought it was funny when people said it. We would be laughing, putting on a funny voice and going, 'Oooh, this is my paaaartner' ... and 'Don't say girlfriend!'

I think the term came from the older generation.

I hear heterosexual people saying partner more and more these days. Older couples who aren't married say partner too. I never stick rigidly to any one way of informing people about my relationship. I say partner, I say girlfriend ... and now, I get to call Aoife my wife, which is very weird to me.

A very formal label. There's no stereotypical gay person, but I suppose years ago, people always saw gay women as either sporty or tomboyish.

Aoife's quite the opposite. People might find it harder to place a label on her, and that's why I don't necessarily like labels ... you just like who you like!

The sexuality spectrum is so diverse and fluid. It's a complete minefield and you could talk about it all day. There are so many identities and preferences, I can't even keep up with what's happening now. Gay, straight, bisexual, pansexual ... it's a long list of orientations and of all the labels that are currently there, you might not even find anything that completely captures who you are.

Humans are evolving all the time. But whether you pin yourself to a label or not,

By Micheal Clifford



**I**N A book of searing honesty, there is a passage in Gemma O'Connor's autobiography that tears more than tugs the heart-strings.

Cork's nine-time All-Ireland-winning camogie star is recalling the moment her mother Ger leaves the family home in Ballyphehane for the last time.

'She sits into the front seat beside me, and Dad gets into the back. As we reverse out from the house, I look over at her for a second. She throws her gaze up towards the house and just shakes her head as she looks up at our home.'

Geraldine O'Connor, terminally ill with cancer, is being driven by her daughter to Marymount Hospice and everyone in the car knows that there will be no return journey to zether.

O'Connor's book, beautifully co-written by journalist Sinéad Farrell, is aptly titled *Why Not A Warrior?*

Facing down fear without cowering before it is the true testament of a warrior, and that quality has defined O'Connor through a staggering camogie career over 18 years, which yielded 11 All-Stars before she finally laid down her inter-county stick for good at the end of the 2020 championship.

That courage has served her even better off the field, in her work as a sergeant in the Irish Army, which has taken her to some of the most dangerous trouble spots in the world; in the challenge of living openly and authentically as a gay person in a society still not free of homophobia and in coping with losing the person who allowed her to be the woman she is.

The sense is that the greatest legacy of her career is not all those medals and gongs — and two player-of-the-year awards can be added to the treasure chest — but that it has given her the opportunity to pen a public tribute to her mother, who died in 2015.

'I am very lucky to have camogie as a platform to express that love and gratitude. She wasn't just a parent, she was everything to me, a fan, a mentor, a friend and I am just grateful that I have been given the opportunity to put that across in the book,' she says.

'And it is not just thinking about the good times, it is looking back on the moments of suffering, when their heart is broken and the realisation is there that this is it.'

'Going back to that moment in time where she looked up at her house knowing that she was never going to go back there again. That really defined the heart-break, the sadness of the whole thing.'

'It is those small things that stick, these are the hard moments that you think about and that you still think about,' she explains.

Since the passing of the marriage equality referendum in 2015, the notion of complete acceptance for the gay community is seductive but, as ever, it is not quite that simple.

**Cork camogie legend tells her story of a life less ordinary with honesty and courage**

# Both on the pitch and off it, O'Connor is a warrior

Gemma never struggled with her sexuality.

'I've known who I am from the moment I could think. From very early on, I can sense there is something different to what I am attracted to. There's no period of self-denial and I never feel like I should repress how I feel,' she writes in the book.

However, she believes there is, what she labels as, a 'toxic' pub culture which also seeps into the base elements of the GAA.

In the book, she recalls an incident on a night out in Cork city where she had to rush to the aid of a distraught friend, who was being verbally abused by a man because of her sexuality.

In her younger days, she was the focus of unwelcome comments as well. In some ways, her public profile added to the entitlement of strangers who recognised neither boundaries nor decency.

That is in the past now — married to

Aoife, Gemma's days of being on the social front-line as a gay person are no longer an issue for her personally but she has concern for those who still face that bile.

'That culture was probably down to where we were as a nation back then and everything was "hush,

**'I've known who I am from the moment I could think, very early on'**

hush' and the gossip scene was huge and you had people coming up and saying stupid things to you, saying things that were not nice.

'That was when I was young, I can't really say that is the way it is now, but that is the way it was when I started on the scene from 2002

**'Absence of physicality points to inequality'**

THE lack of tolerance for physicality in women's Gaelic sports amounts to a form of 'discrimination', nine-time Cork Camogie All-Ireland winner Gemma O'Connor says.

The fallout from the officiating in this year's All-Ireland football final between Meath and Kerry and the prohibition of the shoulder tackle in camogie has dialled up pressure on both associations to allow for a greater level of player contact.

O'Connor insists the governing bodies must now bend to the will of their players.

'It beggars belief really where you are out training like a semi-professional athlete, you

are observing nutrition guidelines, you are in the gym, you want to be bigger, you want to be stronger, you train hard and then you go out and play in a game and you are being pulled up for being too physical.

'We talk about the need for TV coverage but to achieve that you need to make the game as attractive as possible. It is a physical game, so why not let the shoulder tackle be employed, why not let the girls be physical?'

'I just can't understand why women can't show that level of controlled aggression the same as men and, to me, that is discrimination. That is inequality in itself.'

onwards. They are a small group of people but they can ruin the experience.

'Sometimes people might say something to a person and that person might not be able to take it and that is the harsh reality. People then think "I can never come out" because this is what is going to happen, I am going to be made a joke out of, be slagged or what will my parents think,' she explains.

Coming out to her mother was not an issue.

'I didn't know but I am not surprised,' was how she calmly addressed the revelation, but poignantly, Gemma says it is still an issue for her father, Donal.

'For me, my dad is the cross I have to bear with my sexuality,' she writes.

It is not an observation sourced in grievance, but rather in sadness.

'My mam never made a big issue of it, my dad found it very hard to accept and everything took time.'

'I don't know if he fully understands it or will he ever fully understand it. Some people still have that and that is just the reality of it and you can't change people.'

'I think the important message in all of this is communication. If you have a son or daughter, brother, sister or cousin, the important thing is to talk to people even if it is to say "I don't fully understand but I still love you".'

'That is all that anyone can ask for and that is acceptance in itself. Everyone is born differently and nobody chooses it, you love who you love. That is the way it is; it is not a choice and people need to try and understand that.'

'We take for granted we are in a world now where everyone is so open but there are people out there who are still finding it hard to come out and talk about things and it may be down to a family member or their own insecurities, but there are people out there that are struggling with their own sexuality and we need to be aware of that.'

**Why Not a Warrior?** The Gemma O'Connor Story, with Sinéad Farrell, published by Hero Books, is in book shops now, priced at €20.



**LEESIDE LEGEND:** Cork camogie star Gemma O'Connor



# Season's best named on team of the year



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

THE much-anticipated Reardans Camogie Team of the Year has been selected. As always it's a difficult one to pick with many impressive performances from various players throughout the championship. Such is the way the game is played today, positions aren't set in stone. Players take up different positions from that which they are named and play roaming roles throughout.

Players to lose out narrowly were Cloughduv's Lisa Lynch and Niamh McNabola, Sarsfields' Ellen Murphy, Inniscarra's Rena Buckley, Killeagh's Stephanie Beausang, Courcey Rovers' Saoirse McCarthy, Douglas' Katrina Mackey and St Finbarr's Ciara Golden.

**Amy Lee:** Conceding just three goals throughout the championship Amy was a pillar behind her defence, providing them with huge confidence. With excellent puck outs putting Seandún on the attack, and a superb penalty save on the hour in the semi-final against St. Finbarr's she is a worthy recipient.

**Laura Buttimer:** In what was a strong season for the West Cork side, Cloughduv reached the quarter-finals only to lose narrowly to Inniscarra. Throughout their campaign, they faced stern challenges where defensively they weathered the storm and Laura was an instrumental leader in that regard.

**Niamh O'Leary:** The versatile Niamh O'Leary played in a number of defensive positions for Seandún this season. Often the player selected to mark their opponent's most dangerous forward, Niamh was miss consistency. Calm and composed under pressure, she worked the ball very well out of defence.

**Meabh Cahalane:** St Finbarr's trustworthy defender, lining out in the half-back line but always dropping back to deny attackers. Her contribution is constant and undoubtedly the first name on the team sheet. Her dependence can be relied



A late penalty by Keeva McCarthy for St Finbarr's is stopped by goalkeeper Amy Lee, Seandún in the SE Systems Senior Camogie semi-final.

Picture: Larry Cummins

upon and she is the Barrs' lynchpin.

**Cliona Lynch:** An attacking wing-back transitioning into a forward position throughout the campaign, who had an excellent season. Showed real leadership qualities in Sarsfield's semi-final win over Inniscarra with 2-2 scored from placed balls inside seven minutes in the final quarter.

**Laura Hayes:** While St Catherine's failed to reach the quarter-finals Laura was inspirational for her team. In superb form at centre-back, she drove her side forward, distributing excellent ball, in addition to hitting the net and taking her side's frees.

**Laura Treacy:** Named at left half-back but played a highly influential attacking game all season, covering midfield with driving solo runs up the middle. In a tough group with Glen Rovers, Inniscarra and Courcey Rovers, Laura's determined play drove her team with strong finishes to reach the quarter-finals.

**Katelyn Hickey:** A huge engine at midfield. Covered massive ground and won vital ball in both the semi-final and final when games hung in the balance. Offering assistance to her defensive teammates and hitting lovely points, her contribution to Seandún's success was mammoth.

**Michelle Murphy:** Some players do an incredible amount of work. They don't always stand out but the team would be lost without them. Seandún's Michelle Murphy is one of those. A hook here, a block there, falling back, moving forward, Murphy was an instrumental part of her side's victorious campaign.

**Orlaith Mullins:** In the running for Player of the Year. Took many a game by the scruff of the neck and became a real leader. Her ball striking is beautiful, her many scores majestic. And what an unbelievable goal for Sars in the final - would grace any field or occasion.

**Lucy Allen:** It's fair to say that Lucy's absence in the county final for

Sars tilted the title in Seandún's direction. With 3-16 leading into the big day, her distribution, work rate and scoring ability from difficult angles was a huge loss. A great season.

**Lauren Homan:** A brilliant season from Lauren. When finding even an inch of space her point scoring was as good as you'll see anywhere. She put herself about in Seandún's half-forward line, covering the width of the pitch. Her long-distance free taking in the final was remarkable. Such composure in a tight game.

**Orlaith Cahalane:** From a Player of the Match display in the All-Ireland minor final, Orla carried her form into the Barrs' championship. Such confidence and flair at such a young age. Strong work rate too. A great season and a great future ahead.

**Amy O'Connor:** Unquestionably the Player of the Year. What performances, game-in and game-out despite often being double marked. Finished the campaign with 11-30. Speed,

strength and sublime finishes.

**Joanne Casey:** Another brilliant campaign. Rescues her team time and again. Finished with 2-26 from play and placed balls. Consistent accuracy and her commitment to drop back, win ball and drive forward was a key reason Inniscarra reached another semi-final.

## REARDENS CAMOGIE TEAM OF THE YEAR

- Amy Lee (Seandún).
- Laura Buttimer (Cloughduv).
- Niamh O'Leary (Seandún).
- Meabh Cahalane (St Finbarr's).
- Cliona Lynch (Sarsfields).
- Laura Hayes (St Catherine's).
- Laura Treacy (Killeagh).
- Katelyn Hickey (Seandún).
- Michelle Murphy (Seandún).
- Orlaith Mullins (Sarsfields).
- Lucy Allen (Sarsfields).
- Lauren Homan (Seandún).
- Orla Cahalane (St Finbarr's).
- Amy O'Connor (Seandún).
- Joanne Casey (Inniscarra).



Katelyn Hickey, Seandún, gets past Niamh O'Regan, St Catherine's.

Picture: Larry Cummins



Joanne Casey, Inniscarra, blasts in a late goal to give Inniscarra hope in the final minutes of the game against Sarsfields.

Picture: Larry Cummins



Enniskeane woman taking part in unique fundraiser for Kenya

BY KIERAN MCCARTHY

CORK camogie star Orla Cronin is swapping her hurl for a shovel this month as she embarks on her latest challenge – a charity mission to Africa.

The Enniskeane woman is one of 50 GAA players that have signed up for the 'Plant for the Planet Games', as the Gaelic Players Association (GPA), Warriors for Humanity and Self Help Africa have united forces.

Joining All-Star Cronin on the eight-day trip to Kenya – November 19th to 27th – are Cork team-mates Libby Coppinger, Laura Treacy and Ashling Thompson, as well as GAA players from all over the country. Their goal is to raise enough money to plant one million trees in Africa, as well as highlight the impact of climate change.

'This is the brainchild of Alan Kerins, who is the founder of Warriors for Humanity, which is a charity organisation,' Cronin told *The Southern Star*.

'Alan engaged with the GPA, and that's where the idea for this trip to Kenya came about, with Self Help Africa which is an international charity organisation that specialises in small-scale farming, and training families and communities to

# Cork star Cronin raising funds for charity mission

Cork camogie star Orla Cronin.



sustainably farm.

'Planting these trees will really make a difference. It will be a source of income, will grow fruit that offers better food and nutrition, it will help the soil quality and help restore the land too.'

Each player has committed to raising €10,000, with the funds going to Self Help Africa to help with the planting

of trees, which will help combat climate change and also provide sustainable income for local communities.

'To plant a tree there costs 40 cents so with each player committing to raising €10,000, that will equate to planting 25,000 trees. It would be amazing if we reached that,' says Cronin, who has set up an iDonate page for people to donate. (Just visit

idonate.ie and search for Orla Cronin.)

The travelling party has a packed itinerary for the trip, and it will include the first-ever inter-county GAA game in Kenya when the GAA stars take to the field for a challenge match at Nairobi Rugby Club.

'That will be something different, and I'm not sure how it will look, maybe a mix of hurl-

ing and football, and it will be great to showcase our games in Kenya,' Cronin said.

'There is a busy schedule of events. We will be visiting some of the towns and areas where Self Help Africa have their projects running and have engaged with the communities so they can sustain their crops. We will spend an evening with Brother Colm O'Connell who is a very

famous Kenyan athletics coach, and we'll meet two-time Olympic champion David Rudisha as well.

'This is an important trip, to raise awareness of climate change, but also make a difference to peoples' lives in Kenya.'

To support Orla Cronin, visit [www.idonate.ie/fundraiser/OrlaCronin](http://www.idonate.ie/fundraiser/OrlaCronin)

## CHAMPIONS Bal camogie celebrates



The Ballinascearty U12 camogie team claimed their second consecutive county final win recently with a 2-3 to 2-1 victory over White's Cross. Pictured are the winning team singing 'Happy Birthday' to their captain Aisling Kingston. Back from left, Clara Cashman, Kate Donegan, Rachel Buttimer, Sinéad O'Callaghan, Caoimhe Barrett, Elise Walsh, Emily Walsh, Meadhbh Collins and Rachel Prochniak. Front from left, Ruby McCarthy, Claire Higgins, Aisling Kingston (captain), Fiadh Pattwell, Sinéad Walsh and Ayla Bishop.

## Sarsfields made to work for their four-in-a-row

**Camogie:** Sarsfields made it four-in-a-row as they took the Galway camogie senior championship by 2-11 to 2-9 after a close battle with Oranmore Maree yesterday.

Shannon Corcoran found the net for the All-Ireland champions in the ninth minute, however Galway star Niamh Hanniffy responded in kind almost immediately for Oranmore.

Klara Donohue found the net again after 17 minutes for Sarsfields as they took a narrow 2-5 to 1-6 lead into the half-time break, with Oranmore Maree passing up several chances that they would regret.

Sarsfields stretched their lead by three further points across the opening 20 minutes of the second half to set the foundation for victory. Lauren O'Dea hit an injury-time consolation goal for Oranmore, however they couldn't find what would have been an unlikely winning strike as Sarsfields marched on.

**Sarsfields:** L. Glynn, R. Kelly, L. Ward, K. Gallagher, T. Kenny, M. Cooney, J. Daly, C. McGrath, N. McGrath, K. Donohue, S. Spellman, R. Murray, S. Corcoran, S. McGrath, C. Kenny. **Subs:** C. Kelly for Donohue (43), C. Cahalan for Cooney (45), C. McGrath for Kenny (57).

**Oranmore Maree:** T. Holland, M. Keane, C. Hanniffy, N. Black, T. Lawrence, C. Brennan, R. Black, A. Finn, L. O'Dea, N. Hanniffy, E. O'Donovan, S. Mannion, C. Power, A. O'Reilly, R. Hanniffy. **Subs:** A. Conolly for Mannion (44), E. Gill for Power (54).

# Weather plays havoc with games as officials try to complete fixtures

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

THE push is on to get all camogie competitions completed. Last weekend weather was the spoiler as it forced the cancellation of the SE Systems Junior A and A championship finals. It is hoped to get these games played this weekend. The junior A Ballinhassig versus Ballinora is provisionally down for this Saturday at 7pm venue to be confirmed. The Junior B Aghada versus Youghal goes ahead today in Pilmore at 12.30, it is hoped to get the 13-a side final Millstreet versus Kildorrey also decided today venue and time to be confirmed at time of going to press.

## MINOR

Still a lot of Minor championship competitions to be completed all grades are down to quarter or semi-final. In the Premier Cup it's down to the semi-finals where Cloughduv will meet Sarsfields and Aghabullogue meet Inniscarra. In the Premier Plate there is one quarter final and here Glen Rovers are drawn to play Aghada with the winner playing Clonakilty in the semi-finals, the second semi-final will be contested



The Aghabullogue team celebrate their victory over Blackrock in the SE Systems Cork Camogie intermediate club championship final replay at Ovens. Picture Dan Linehan

between Blackrock and Eire Óg. In Minor A two quarter finals to be played. Na Piarasigh will play Midleton and Ballincollig will play the winners of Sarsfields 2 or Tracton and Erins Own or St Finbarr play Fr O'Neill's. Two quarter finals in Minor B: Castlelyons meet Ballygarvan; Ballinhassig meet Laochra Gael; the winners meet each other in one semi-final and St Catherine's and Millford through to the second semi-final. Dungourney take on Nemo the winners of this go through to the

final, Kilworth meet Watergrass-hill, Newtownshandrum play Fermoy winners met in the semi-final. On Saturday last Aghabullogue and Blackrock battled it out once again in an effort to be crowned SE Systems Intermediate championship having finished all square on the first occasion. The splendid setting of the Eire Óg GAA pitch in Ovens was the setting for the replay and what a great game supporters were treated to as the sides battled and battled to find a winner.

Underfoot conditions were heavy as the game got under way but as Cathal McAllister threw in the ball for the second half the rain began to pour down and it was so hard on both sides but neither took the foot off the pedal as they went for it. Blackrock had a slender one-point, half-time lead but that was cancelled out and as the lead changed hand the effort from both sides was something else, all over the pitch. Both sides had heroines as the battle was relen-

less. A late long-range free as the rain poured down from Ella Foley ensured the game was tied up with three minutes of time remaining and despite the sides throwing the kitchen sink at it, neither could find a winner and so we went to extra time. Conditions were hard as tired bodies began to feel the pressure but still neither side could pull away. Blackrock took the lead, Aghabullogue replied and just as we came to the break a Blackrock goal from Anna Farrell

looked as if it would be the score to help get them over the line. However, Aghabullogue were having none of it, and two points in a row saw them trail by one as the sides turned around for another 10 minutes of play. Clara Mc McCarthy had Aghabullogue on level and Cliona Healy struck her 11th point. Back came Blackrock led by Kaitlin Hickey and they were level pegging again with five minutes remaining. Blackrock won the puck out and drove forward but their effort hit the goalpost. Relief for Aghabullogue, agony for Blackrock. It looked as if we might be going to extra, extra time but up stepped Cliona Healy winning possession on the far wing. She evaded tackles to get into a good position and strike a superb effort between the posts and Aghabullogue were in the lead. Dropping back deep, Aghabullogue defended their one-point lead despite Blackrock throwing everything at them. In the dying seconds Aghabullogue stood firm and crucially didn't concede a free as they just about held out. Huge credit to both sides that must be complemented on two superb games under hard weather conditions on both days.



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

# Healy answers call once again

THE Intermediate championship final replay went to extra time last Saturday, and it looked to be heading towards a free-taking contest to decide who would be crowned champions.

But once again Cliona Healy answered the call for Aghabullogue and scored with seconds to spare.

When Blackrock goaled in extra time, I felt they might push on, and indeed they had a number of chances to see the game out.

But for the second week in a row Aghabullogue dug deep, never believed the game was gone from them and took the title.

It was an awful game to lose but I'm glad it wasn't decided with frees.

You'd feel for Blackrock who have been knocking on the door for so long now but equally it was Aghabullogue's third final in a row so who could begrudge them their moment.

With Michelle Murphy, Katelyn Hickey, Carol Ryan, Kate Lenaghan and others I believe, heading off on their travels for twelve months shortly, it'll be hard for Blackrock to come to the well again.

Here's hoping they will. We really had three hugely exciting finals over the eight-day period.

The drawn intermediate final, the senior final and then the intermediate replay. I know some of the senior group games were very one sided, and as mentioned before there's a couple of clubs need to rethink matters but once the group stages were over, we had some really great games in the knockout stages.

Sarsfields take on Clare Champions Scariff Ogonelloe in the Munster semi-final tomorrow in Scariff's home patch.

Scariff-Ogonelloe are back-to-back Clare senior champions after a fluent performance saw them claim the club's third ever McMahon Cup on a score of 0-14 to Truagh-Clonlara's 2-05. Scariff also won the Munster club title in 2021 so will be defending their crown.

While it's difficult to appreciate



Aghabullogue Captain Katie McCarthy holding the Nano Nagle Cup aloft after her side's victory over Blackrock in the SE Systems Cork Camogie intermediate club championship final replay at Ovens. Picture Dan Linehan



Mary Newman presents the player of the match to Cliona Healy of Aghabullogue. Picture: Dan Linehan

how strong Scariff are without having seen them in action you would feel that Sars are more than capable of reaching the Munster final.

Sars are the strongest club in Cork and that counts for something in Munster.

It's difficult to pick yourself up after a county final defeat and head into the Munster campaign but two weeks down the line here's hoping Sars have done just that and will drive forward as they represent Cork.

Katrina Mackey has been short-listed for the PwC GPA player of the year. These awards are voted for by the GPA's camogie playing membership.

The shortlists for the awards across the senior, intermediate and premier junior grades were announced.

Miriam Walsh was outstanding as Kilkenny captured the O'Duffy Cup for the fifteenth time overall and the second time in three years, defeating Cork in the decider.

They were pushed all the way in that final by Cork. Katrina Mackey's performances earn her a place on the shortlist.

And they are joined by Waterford's Lorraine Bray who was instrumental in her side reaching a first All-Ireland semi-final since 1959.

Cork are also in with a shout of winning the intermediate award with Joanne Casey nominated alongside Galway pair Lisa Casserly and Niamh McPeake.

In the premier junior grade, an An-

trim player is guaranteed to pick up the honour. Teammates Dervla Cosgrove, Aine Graham and Emma Lavery are the three players in contention.

Cork has seven soaring star nominees with All Ireland intermediate champions Galway having eleven.

Galway keeper Fiona Ryan faces competition from Stephanie Beausang. Cork has three shortlisted in defence; Ashling Moloney, Niamh O'Leary and Kate Kilcommins. Rachel Harty is nominated at midfield with Joanne Casey and Lauren Homan up front.

Meanwhile the first meeting of the Integration Steering group chaired by Mary McAleese took place.

It was unanimously agreed that the future integrated structure will be based on 'one association' for all Gaelic games and built on the principle of equality.

It was also unanimously agreed that a significant listening process is required to assist the development of the integrated structure and this process should be one where all voices are given an opportunity to contribute.

Representatives of clubs, 'One Clubs', the Camogie Association, GAA and LGFA management, players, county committees, provincial councils, and relevant others, including representatives of outside organisations, which have successfully affected integration processes will be invited to take part.

Starting this December, the SGI plans to hold a series of one-day forums on the "how" of integration to which these representatives will be invited and given the opportunity to share their ideas with members of the Steering Group.

# Brosnan grows from adversity



CAMOGIE

Rory Noonan

JUST a few weeks ago Susan Kate Brosnan had the honour of lifting the cup as she captained Seandun to the camogie senior county title for the second year in a row.

The Brian Dillon's player was one of their star performers on the day and not too many forwards fancy coming up against Susan Kate.

With her club and with Seandun she has been involved in some memorable games over the years and recalls them fondly.

As an underage player with Brian Dillons, a U16 county final win over Rockban is one that she looks back on with great memories.

"I just remember it so vividly as there was a lot of hype coming up to it and it was a lashing rain on the day and we ended up winning by a couple of points," said Susan Kate.

"At that age, you can have a drop off of girls playing sport and it drove us on to win a minor county afterwards and it was a huge incentive to keep playing and a really positive experience.

"Preparing for that final we did bonding sessions for the first time away from the pitch and it was a great experience." As an adult player, she said to captain Seandun to beat Sarsfields in the county final was huge and it was a great honour to bring the cup back to Brian Dillons afterwards.

With Brian Dillons she recalled a junior county final against Enniskeane in 2012.

"It ended in a draw and went to a replay and we won that by two points. We were real rivals for a few years and had many great games against them. It created a huge buzz in the club and we kicked on from there. We also won the league that year, beating Sliabh Rua in the final.

"We won the Junior A then and went up intermediate and enjoyed success there and that win over Enniskeane kickstarted that great time for the club," concluded Susan Kate.

## Twenty questions with Susan-Kate Brosnan

1. What age are you? 29

2. When did you start playing?

I started playing when I was in primary school in Gaelscoil an Ghoirt Alainn with Sciath na Scol teams and then joined Brian Dillons when I was 12.

3. What is your favourite venue to compete in?

I don't have a favourite venue really, but growing up and even now, it is great to play a game in our home pitch of the "Tank Field". There is always a crowd watching and cheering us on.

4. What other sports did you play growing up?

I loved athletics and trained with Leevale for a while. I also played Gaelic Football growing up.

5. Who were the major influences on your sporting career?

There are a few, but I suppose the



Mairéad Donovan, chairperson Cork Camogie, presents the cup to Susan Kate Brosnan, Seandun captain, after their win over Sarsfields in the county final.

Picture: Jim Coughlan

main influence was always my Dad. I used to go up to the Tank Field with Dad every day for hours practising my camogie as a child. He drove all over the country bringing me to matches in my teens and is still my biggest supporter to this day. Niall MacLochlainn was also a significant figure.

Niall does trojan work with underage teams in Brian Dillons and he was the first person to ask me to join the club. John Ring also had a huge influence on me. He trained me from the age of 12 until I was about 20! With him as coach, we won Junior B and Junior A titles with Brian Dillons.

Another major figure is Linda Mellerick, her coaching is second to none, but it is how she demonstrates commitment, dedication and a winning mindset that have really influenced me. She coached us to intermediate success in 2015.

6. Who are your sporting heroes, then and now?

Growing up I was always a huge fan of Sonia O'Sullivan and when she won silver in the Olympics there was a Civil Ceremony in City Hall for her that I was lucky enough to attend. I got to meet her in person and hold the medal, a real "pinch me" moment.

7. Did you have a fork-in-the-road moment where you might have gone a different route?

Not really. I suppose with everything, there were moments after significant losses or years where there weren't huge commitment levels at training where you might ask yourself "is it all worth it?" but those moments are fleeting and persevering through those tough times makes success all the sweeter.

8. What was the most memorable game you attended?

I think the Cork v Galway in the All-Ireland Hurling Final of 2005 is the most memorable for me. At the time you could fly from Cork to Dublin and my aunt and uncle took me up on the plane to see the game! I was 12 at the time and totally beside myself with excitement. I still think Seán Óg's speech that day was incredible!

9. What was your biggest sporting disappointment?

In 2014 we lost the Intermediate County final to Sars and I was captain. That was a tough one to take but stood to us when we came back to win the following year!

10. Who was your toughest opponent?

I find marking Katelyn Hickey from Blackrock very tough. She's incredibly fast and skilful and reads the game exceptionally well.

11. What are the most important traits in your sport?

Skill and fitness level are huge and come from consistent training and commitment but to be honest, when it comes down to the wire in tough games, it's heart and determination that stand out to you the most!

12. What advice would you give young players starting out?

Play as many sports as you can and have fun! Things won't always go your way, but setbacks help build resilience so keep persevering and practising.

13. If you could go to any sporting event what would it be?

I'd love to go to the Olympics. I think the buzz would be amazing!!

14. If you could have taken part in any historical sporting event,

what would it have been?

There are a few, I'm not sure about taking part in, but I think being a spectator at the Ireland v New Zealand Rugby test earlier this year in New Zealand would have been amazing. I also think the 2008 Wimbledon Final between Nadal and Federer would have been epic to attend!

15. What movies and TV shows are you streaming?

Recently I've started watching "The Sopranos" from the beginning and am loving it.

16. What is on your Spotify playlist?

I'm a big fan of podcasts. I love "My Therapist Ghosted Me", "Crime world" and "What's the crime?"

17. What is your favourite book?

I love the "Outlander" series. I also love true crime books and have read lots by Jo Spain. I recently read "The hearts invisible furies" and thought it was excellent.

18. Who do you enjoy following on social media?

I mainly follow friends on social media, but also love following travel pages, I find they're very handy if you're planning a trip away. I think it's very easy to get caught up in the "perfectionism" on social media and important to remember that it's where everyone puts their best foot forward, and not necessarily reflective of reality.

19. What is your cheat meal when you're not training?

I love pizza, I'm very boring with toppings though, I only ever go for margherita.

20. What are your sporting goals from here?

To keep playing and enjoying camogie as long as I can!

# Aghabullogue advance after gritty win

## Munster Intermediate Camogie Championship

Aghabullogue	1-4
Borris-Ileigh	0-5

### Therese O'Callaghan

A gritty performance by Aghabullogue in awful conditions at Coachford yesterday saw them emerge with a two-point win over Borris-Ileigh in the AIB Munster club intermediate camogie championship semi-final.

The contest turned into a real dogfight, the home side forced to withstand a late fightback from the visitors, but they held out for a place in next Saturday's decider against Kerry outfit Clannmaurice in Mallow.

There were some intriguing battles, especially the one involving county stars Julianne Bourke who faced off against Cliona Healy.

It took the teams a good while to acclimatise to the heavy underfoot conditions: Aghabullogue fired nine wides in the opening half.

A Healy free was followed by a vital goal from Julie Tarrant three minutes from time that yielded a 1-1 to nil interval advantage.

The corner-forward was on hand to nudge the sliotar over the line after Emma Flanagan sent in a delivery.

Borris-Ileigh were turning to play with the wind and the battle for supremacy began.

Their captain Aedin Hogan and Aoife Twomey traded points before the Tipperary club added two more points from Hogan and Danielle Ryan, 1-2 to 0-3, at the end of the third quarter.

Emma Flanagan pushed the Aghabullogue lead out to three. Thereafter, the momentum shifted to Borris-Ileigh and with the wind at their backs they swung over points from Hogan and Danielle Ryan to cut the gap to a single point, 1-3 to 0-5 and 10 minutes of regulation remaining.

Healy managed to arrow over a point from a tricky position to keep her side in control in the 54th minute.

The final minutes were thrilling as Borris-Ileigh applied serious pressure.

Aghabullogue, shorn of their injured captain and centre-back Katie McCarthy, defended with huge aggression, and in numbers. Meadhbh Ring, Brid Cotter and Aoife Barrett among those to impress.

Overall, a courageous display from the victors.

**Scorers for Aghabullogue:** J Tarrant (1-0), C Healy (0-2, 0-1 free), E Flanagan and A Twomey (0-1 each).

**Scorers for Borris-Ileigh:** A Hogan (0-3, 0-2 frees), D Ryan (0-2).

**AGHABULLOGUE:** N Moynihan; E O'Shea, M Cotter, B Cotter, E Curtin, A Barrett, M Ring; E Foley, R Barrett, A Twomey, C McCarthy, E Flanagan; C Healy, K Honohan, J Tarrant.

**Subs:** E Buckley for C McCarthy (53), A Foley for J Tarrant (56).

**BORRIS-ILEIGH:** K Healy, E Galvin, J Bourke, N McGrath; E Kelly, Aini Ryan, J Delaney, T Ryan, K Fitzgerald; A Fitzgerald, A Hogan (Capt), Aoife Ryan; E Maher, D Ryan, N Stapleton.

**Subs:** A Bevens for E Maher (43). **Referee:** Mike Flannery (Limerick).



Sinead Hurley of Cork's Sarsfields tries to win a battle for control of the sliotar against Clare's Scarriiff-Ogonelloe in the Munster Club Senior Championship semi-final yesterday. See report below. *Picture: Brendan Gleeson*

# Magnificent Scarriiff-Ogonelloe edge Sars in semi-final thriller

## Munster Camogie Senior Club semi-final

Scarriiff-Ogonelloe 0-16  
Sarsfields 1-11

### Derek Dormer

In one of the best camogie matches seen in quite a while it's reigning Munster champions Scarriiff-Ogonelloe who move into another provincial final after a titanic, fast-paced tussle with Sarsfields of Cork. This game had everything one would want from a match, full of endeavour with hooks, blocks and tackles being the key attributes in Scarriiff-Ogonelloe's success.

A pulsating opening half that saw 14 white flags all of the upmost quality ended with Scarriiff-Ogonelloe taking an interval lead of two points to the dressing room on a scoreline of 0-8 to 0-6.

There were some fantastic scores but two in particular really stood out. In the 13th minute corner-forward Kate Fennessy won a ball out on the far touchline. Surrounded by four defenders she jinked her way through with sensational footwork before cutting in and striking on the run over the black spot.

Not to be outdone, Aoife Power caught a sliotar amongst a forest of ash before

slotting over off the hurley in one fluid movement to roars of approval from the large home crowd.

The second period was as intense a battle as one could imagine with both teams throwing their bodies on the line in pursuit of glory.

Sarsfields came roaring back into the contest when in the 38th minute Maeve McCarthy rattled the net after catching a ball on the edge of the square before blasting home to level the contest.

The response from Scarriiff-Ogonelloe epitomised why they remain unbeaten in provincial action.

Landing the next four

scores in quick succession ensured they would advance to another decider in what was a truly epic contest with a monster Aisling Corbett free from 70 yards the highlight, lifting the roof off the stands as the crowd came to life.

Overall worthy winners, Scarriiff-Ogonelloe will now meet familiar foes Drom and Inch next Sunday in what should be another mouth-watering classic.

**Scorers for Scarriiff-Ogonelloe:** M Scanlon (0-5 45), A Power (0-4), A Corbett (0-3 2f 1 45), A Walsh (0-2), L O'Donnell, A Rodgers (0-1).

**Scorers for Sarsfields:** C Lynch (0-5 3f, 2 45), M McCarthy (1-1), O Mullins, K Fennessy (0-2), K Sheehan (0-1).

**Scarriiff-Ogonelloe:** R Daly, H McGee, S Daly, A McGee, C Doyle, R Minogue, A Barrett, A Walsh, L Daly, J Daly, M Scanlon, L O'Donnell, A Rodgers, A Power, L Grady.

**Subs:** A Corbett for Daly (40mins), C McNamara for Grady (60 mins).

**Sarsfields:** M Lynch, M Mullins, S Hurley, T Elliot, R Roche, E Murphy, A McNamara, A Fitzgerald, C Mullins, E Woods, O Mullins, C Lynch, K Fennessy, M McCarthy, K Sheehan.

**Subs:** L Dunlea for T Elliot (HT), H Herlihy for E Woods (HT).

**Referee:** Mike Ryan, Tipperary.

# A youthful Sars side crash out of Munster at the hands of Scarriiff

Sarsfields 1-11

Scarriiff Ogonelloe 0-16

## CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

FIELDING five U16s during the hour, Sarsfields fell just short in their Munster senior semi-final clash with Scarriiff Ogonelloe on Sunday.

Trailing by two on 63 minutes Mollie Lynch's long free was heading for the parallelogram only for the referee to bizarrely blow for full time as the ball was airborne.

Sars did themselves proud and but for three wides at an important stage of the second half, who knows?

But that's not to take from Scarriiff's experienced display where key players stood up.

Ciarra Doyle in defence was excellent, Mairead Scanlon and Labhaioise O'Donnell winning vital possession and substitute Aisling Corbett hitting three from placed balls.

dynamic forward. Hollie Herlihy introduced at half time gained ground and suddenly Sars were level as McCarthy billowed the net from the tightest of angles. But the Munster champions responded with four points in four minutes. Scanlon and Aisling Corbett who had just entered the field hit two frees before Abby Walsh and Power struck from play. Sars had two from Cliona Lynch (f) and Orlaith Mullins. But Corbett again with a free and a '45 had it at 0-16 to 1-9 on fifty-nine. Two Lynch points before that final free from Molly that never got to play out.

**Scorers for Sarsfields:** C Lynch 0-5 (0-3f, 0-2 45), M McCarthy 1-1, K Fennessy, O Mullins 0-2 each, K Sheehan 0-2.

The clumpy pitch was as you'd expect for November, with a strong wind favouring Sars in the opening half.

Mollie Lynch's puckout landed in the opposing thirty metre area and Kathryn Sheehan got Sars off the mark.

Four points from Scarriiff, displaying good teamwork, followed before Orlaith Mullins pointed with Kate Fennessy matching it.

A converted free from strong centre forward Mairead Scanlon on fifteen minutes before another from Fennessy.

Ava Fitzgerald was doing great work at midfield and picked out Fennessy for another lovely point from the wing.

Scarriiff were targeting corner forward Aoife Power who had pace and she was troublesome.

She picked off her second and third points within a minute on twenty-five minutes as Scarriiff led by two to break at 0-8 to 0-6.

With the strong wind at their backs two fast Scarriiff points stretched their lead but Sars responded.

Maeve McCarty pointed. Rachel Roche, having been switched onto Power in the latter part of the first half was curtailing the



Alva Rodgers, Scarriiff-Ogonelloe, Clare, under pressure from Sinead Hurley, Sarsfields, in the Munster Club Senior Championship Semi Final *Picture: Brendan Gleeson*



Sinead Hurley, Sarsfields, struggles to control the sliotar against Scarriiff-Ogonelloe in the Munster Club Senior Championship semi final. *Picture: Brendan Gleeson*

## Cork star on her injury-plagued 2022 inter-county season

BY KIERAN McCARTHY

ORLA Cronin is hopeful her injury nightmare is over.

The 2020 Camogie All-Star endured a frustrating campaign with Cork this year.

Plagued by injuries, the Enniskeane ace missed the entire league campaign and featured in only three championship games before she stepped away from the county panel ahead of the All-Ireland semi-final.

Out-of-luck Cronin felt she had no other choice.

'It was definitely a hard decision to make. It wasn't how I intended the year to pan out for me. It was very frustrating,' Cronin told this week's *Star Sport Podcast*.

'I came into the year carrying a bit of a niggle and it was tough going into pre-season carrying a knock. I was doing my best to come back from injuries but when I went back into the thick of training I would pick up another soft tissue injury. Initially it was my quad, and then my hamstring.'

'I really had to try to find the balance in getting the load right, getting adequate recovery but also trying to train. It all just started to catch up on me. There were other little things, too; I picked up some rib bruising in another game when I just got back.'

'You have ups and downs as an athlete, and it was one of those years when a lot of unfortunate events happened and caught up with me. Before I

# 'I had to take that step back to get my body right'



Cork camogie star Orla Cronin.

### 'That time away stood to me, to get on top of my injuries' – Orla Cronin

knew it, it was in the thick of the season when you want to be training pain-free and injury-free, but you're playing catch-up after those injuries.

'Those injuries forced me out and I needed a bit more time to get right. Obviously I want to play with Cork, and seeing the girls play in the All-Ireland final was tough, but I am happy

that I took the time to get right because my aim is to be fit for the coming year.'

Cronin's injury woes were eventually traced back to a muscle issue in her hip, similar to tendonitis, but hamstring and quad strains she suffered had masked the root of her problems.

It was a frustrating period when she didn't know what was causing her injury troubles.

It restricted her inter-county involvement to three appearances in Group 1 of the senior camogie championship. She came on as a sub against Wex-

ford, started in the wins against Clare and Dublin, but missed the next game with Waterford, and in July Cronin felt she had no other option than to step back from the panel.

'I did everything I could to get back right but when it wasn't happening, it was going to be impossible to get myself right for the semi-final and then final,' she explained.

'I had to take that step back to get my body right. It was a long year of rehab for me and figuring out what the issues were, and getting to the source of them.'

While Cork went on to reach the All-Ireland final – and Cronin was in the stands in Croke Park to cheer her teammates on against Kilkenny – her attention was on getting back to full fitness with her club, Enniskeane, in the county senior camogie championship.

'We had four games, and by the fourth game I was starting to feel better and my body was feeling better. That time away stood to me, to get on top of my injuries,' she said.

An injury-free Cronin is looking forward to returning to the inter-county set-up for 2023,

and that's good news for Cork who need their influential forward fit and firing. She's a big-game player who was Cork's top performer in the 2021 All-Ireland final, and was involved in a Cork score every nine minutes during that year's championship campaign.

Cork GAA stars Orla Cronin and Libby Coppinger are both travelling to Kenya this month for Plant for the Planet Games. To support them, visit [www.idonate.ie/fundraiser/Orla-Cronin](http://www.idonate.ie/fundraiser/Orla-Cronin) and [www.idonate.ie/fundraiser/LibbyCoppinger](http://www.idonate.ie/fundraiser/LibbyCoppinger)

## Goals key as Ballinhassig win county title

### Hero Healy inspires her club to Cork junior A camogie glory

BALLINHASSIG 2-11  
BALLINORA 0-9

JJ HURLEY REPORTS

BALLINHASSIG'S determination proved too much for a spirited Ballinora performance in the county junior A camogie final at Bishopstown on Saturday night.

Indeed, Ballinora may well reflect on the first 18 minutes of the second half as a lost opportunity as they held their near-neighbours scoreless before the player-of-the-match, Grace Healy, settled her team's composure with a free.

Following the victory, a delighted team manager John Paul Griffin admitted it had been a tough encounter but pointed to the return of several experienced players as making a huge difference in the end. However, one of the younger guns opened the Blues' account on three minutes when the impressive Grace Healy



The Ballinhassig team that won the Cork Junior A camogie final against Ballinora.

(Photos: Claire Dooley)

landed a free.

A minute later, it was followed by another score from the Carrigdhoun outfit as Catriona Collins, who proved a handful for the Ballinora defence in the opening half, scored a point from play.

In what proved difficult conditions for both teams playing with a stiff breeze across the pitch, it didn't affect the accuracy of Ballinora's Kate O'Shea, landing five frees in the opening half, the first on five minutes.

Ballinhassig responded four minutes later when Deirdre Cooney fed the Ballinhassig number 14, and she popped the sliotar over the bar. They could have goaled minutes later, but Anne-Marie Leahy settled for a point. Again it was O'Shea who kept her side in touch, landing two more points as Geraldine Collins added a point to the

Ballinhassig tally, leaving the score 0-5 to 0-4 on 21 minutes. It was all to play for as the game ebbed and flowed, with both full-back lines outstanding.

A point from Eimear O'Sullivan nudged her side two points ahead before a speculative shot from Caitriona Collins deceived the Ballinora goalkeeper. The Muskerry representative's response was instant as the impressive Katie Dooley raised a white flag, and it was followed by another O'Shea free, as Rose Murphy scored a superb point. O'Sullivan gave her team breathing space leading up to half time with another point, as the scoreline read at the break 1-7 to 0-7.

Ballinhassig's failure to kick on in the first 18 minutes of the second half looked like throwing Ballinora a lifeline. Still, the Blues blunted Ballinora's open game, as they failed to take ad-

vantage, scoring only one point from Rose Murphy.

Finally opening up, Ballinhassig landed four unanswered points from Healy (3) and Caitriona Collins in six minutes, but the coup de grace arrived on 56 minutes as the Ballinhassig centre-forward Geraldine Collins found the net.

Ballinora, to their credit, continued to chase the game with Siobhan O'Regan forcing a save from the Ballinhassig goalkeeper, as substitute Karen Lane had an immediate effect landing the concluding point.

#### Scorers

Ballinhassig: Catriona Collins 1-3; Grace Healy 0-4 (3f); Geraldine Collins 1-1; Eimear O'Sullivan 0-2 (1f); Anne-Marie Leahy 0-1  
Ballinora: Kate O'Shea 0-5 (5f); Rose Murphy 0-2; Kate Dooley and Karen Lane 0-1 each.



Ballinhassig captain Emma O'Donovan being presented with the cup after their county final win.

Ballinhassig: Sarah Leahy; Margaret Healy, Emma O'Donovan (captain), Emer Reardan; Niamh Sheehan, Triona Healy, Aoife Casey; Eimear O'Sullivan, Emma Jordan; Deirdre Cooney, Geraldine Collins, Eimear Daly; Anne-Marie Leahy, Caitriona Collins, Grace Healy.

Subs: Amy Keating for A Casey (1f); Evelyn Collins for E Daly (3f); Elaine Healy for AM Leahy (5f).

Ballinora: Ailannah Linehan; Brid Holmes, Nessa Kingston, Eva Murphy; Katieann Creen, Meabh Murphy, Amy O'Riordan; Aoife Nic Abhaird, Judy Murphy; Louise O'Neill, Rose Murphy, Kate O'Shea; Kate Dooley, Siobhan O'Regan, Abbey Murphy.

Subs: Lauren Walsh for A Murphy (4f); Jennifer Murphy for L O'Neill (4f); Karen Lane for A Nic Abhaird (5f).

### THE HIGHLIGHTS

**Our Star:** There were a couple of notable nominations here, but Grace Healy deserves the reward for her work rate and important scores.

**Star moment:** Grace Healy's free on 48 minutes was a crucial one, steadying the nerves of her teammates.

**Talking point:** A huge crowd had great entertainment over the hour, and both sides deserve great credit for providing top-class hurling under challenging conditions.

**What's next?** Champions Ballinhassig advance to the intermediate grade in 2023.



Ballinhassig's Emma O'Donovan receives the cup.

## Ballinhassig take junior A title as goals prove to be the vital difference

**Ballinhassig** 2-11  
**Ballinora** 0-9

**GAA**  
Mary Newman

GOALS proved vital for Ballinhassig as the experienced Catriona Collins grabbed one in the opening half and Geraldine Collins the second with five minutes remaining, ensuring the SE Systems Junior A title was secured. Aided by the wind in the opening half Ballinhassig held a 1-7 to 0-7 interval lead after a close half where the sides were evenly matched.

Catriona Collins was hugely effective at full forward and was always a threat. Having hit two points she grabbed a goal with five minutes to the half time whistle when her long-range effort went all the way to the net. Through the opening half Ballinora stayed in touch with Kate O'Shea, Kate Dooley and Rose Murphy all prominent whilst Grace Healy did huge work for Ballinhassig as they showed a huge work ethic and matched Ballinora in all sectors.

We had to wait 12 minutes into the second half for a score Rose Murphy narrowing the gap with a point but Ballinhassig upper their game significantly and working hard they moved the ball fast and they hit four points without reply as they controlled matters. In defence they held firm and crucially they didn't concede frees.

With six minutes remaining it was 1-11 to 0-8 and Ballinora needed something but they failed to break down a physically strong Ballinhassig and when Geraldine Collins' long range effort ended up in the net the title was heading to Ballinhassig. Karen Lane did get a late point for Ballinora but on the night Ballinhassig were worthy winners. Ballinhassig's Grace Healy was named as The Echo player of the Match after an excellent hour where she worked hard all through as her side battled to secure the title.

**Scorers for Ballinhassig:** G Healy 0-4 (0-2 45, 0-16), C Collins 1-3, E Jordan, A M Leahy, E O'Sullivan (f), E Daly 0-1 each.

**Ballinora:** K O'Shea 0-5 (f's), R Murphy 0-2, K Dooley, K Lane 0-1 each.  
**Ballinhassig:** S Leahy, M Healy, E O'Donovan (c), E Reardon, N Sheehan, T Healy, A Casey, E O'Sullivan, E Jordan, A M Leahy, D Coomey, E Daly, G Collins, C Collins, G Healy.

**Subs:** A Keating for A Casey (1/1), E Collins for E Daly (36), E Healy for A M Leahy (54).

**Ballinora:** A Linehan, E Murphy, N Kingston, B Holmes, K Crean, M Murphy, A O'Riordan, J Murphy, A Nic Abhaird (c), S O'Regan, R Murphy, K O'Shea, K Dooley, A Murphy, L O'Neill.

**Subs:** L Walsh for A Murphy (44), K Lane for A Nic Abhaird (50), J Murphy for L O'

Neill (50).  
**Referee:** Luke Knight (Kilmurray).

**Aghada** 1-9

**Youghal** 1-6

A close SE Systems Junior B final went down to the wire as the lead changed hand through a second half where it took a goal with a minute of normal time remaining to final swing the title in Aghada's favour. Played on the excellent Pilmore Pitch, both sides gave it everything they had in a hugely competitive game. Avril Cashman gave Youghal a great start with a goal inside four minutes of throw-in but two Abigail ring point had Aghada within touching distance. Youghal stretched their lead with two points in a row Aghada replied with one and when Amy O'Connell sent a forty five went all the way to the net they went three point clear and as they sides swapped points it was advantage Youghal 1-4 to 0-4 at the interval.

Aghada dug deep from the restart and three points without reply had them on level, again Youghal rallied with two unanswered points to go two clear. With seven minutes Ali Smith pointed a free and as the sides battled on it looked as if Youghal would hang on.

Aghada won a long range free and it looked as if we had an equaliser but Ali Smith's effort went all the way to the net. Izzy Barry added a point in injury time to stretch the lead to three points. Youghal battled hard but could not get through for an equaliser in the three minutes of added time.

Aoife Healy was named as Player of the Match as she gave an exhibition of defensive play all the way through for Aghada.

**Scorers for Aghada:** A Smith 1-5 (1-2f's 0-1 45), A Ring 0-2, A Healy, I Barry 0-1 each.

**Youghal:** A O'Connell 0-4 (0-3 45, 0-1 f), Avril Cashman 1-0, Alex Cashman, C O'Connell 0-1 each.

**Aghada:** M Stafford O'Farrell, S Walsh, A Bennett, A Mc Grath, A Healy, E Boylan, R Leahy, S Leahy, A Ring, A Smith, C Boylan, M Leahy, C Walsh, M Collins.

**Subs:** I Barry for M Collins (38), M Mc Grath for C Boylan (44), C Walsh for A Bennett (55).

**Youghal:** K Mc McCarthy, R Walsh, L Dempsey, S O'Connell, R Kennedy, J Doyle, L Cashman, Avril Cashman, Alex Cashman, C Crowley, A Daly, A O'Connell, L Broderick O'Keefe, J Swayne.

**Subs:** E Walsh for L Broderick (38), C O'Connell for J Swayne (38), R Landers for L Dempsey (50), E O'Connell for H O'Keefe (53).



Aileen Corkery, Eoin Sheppard, Amy Sheppard, Linda Byrne, Katie Browne, Aoife Barry Murphy, Clodagh Sheppard, Anna Keane, Moira Twomey, Cloughduv, at the Reardens All-Stars. Picture: Jim Coughlan

# Cork will be in the frame again



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

AS another camogie season ends at adult level, it's time to reflect.

Two senior final visits to Croke Park, in league and championship, and defeats to Galway and Kilkenny respectively. A 2-14 to 1-13 loss to Galway after being six in front at the start of the second half. The championship final was a one-point defeat 1-13 to 1-12.

Our intermediate side lost by two points to Galway in the All-Ireland final.

Are Cork in with as strong a chance as anyone of winning both championship titles next year? Of course.

What to change? This year we relied on wing-backs Laura Hayes and Saoirse McCarthy to burst forward and pick off scores. This they did to good effect in many games but not so much in the semi-final and final.

Our wing-forwards were then dropping back into the space that they vacated. While the odd spontaneous attacking burst from the flanks is wonderful to see, it should be opportunistic more so than the game plan.

It is a huge bonus to have the likes of McCarthy, Hayes, and Ashling Thompson picking off long-distance points, but it's up front where we really need to be confident of getting a return. We didn't get too much from there when it mattered.

It's fine to be clocking up scores against the weaker counties in the group stages, but when it comes down to the final four Cork were shown up. In the league final of 1-13, just 1-6 came from our forward division. Cork forwards scored 1-5 from play in the All-Ireland final.

Orla Cronin and Linda Collins are back for 2023 and that gives Matthew Twomey a giant boost. With those players back, we will significantly increase our scoring capacity and working on maximising that I imagine will be the plan.

Thompson has had her cruciate operation and is going through her rehab.



Eithne, Lucy, and Mick Allen, Sarsfields Camogie, at the Reardens All-Stars. Picture: Jim Coughlan

We'll have to see how that goes. Olivia McAllen and Katie O'Mahony are also in cruciate recovery. Liam Cronin is back in as coach to the side. He was involved in 2020 and Matthew and the players liked what they saw.

Cork never really hit form in 2022. They never set the world alight in any game despite winning them. That needs unlocking.

A review of the panel needs to take place. You need to be able to look behind you and without hesitation see five or six players that can come in and do a job for you.

There is also an All-Ireland in the Cork intermediate side. We could have won it last year, a few adjustments and maybe we would have, but we can be stronger next year if the right players are brought in.

There were a few players who put their hand up during the club championship. Unless they're dynamic altogether, I don't agree with them making the leap to the senior panel, only to sit on the bench. The stepping stone is the intermediate side and that's been proven in Galway many times.

I hope some of these players, when asked to wear the Cork jersey, will do so. Not everyone wants to play for Cork. It's a

big commitment and they're happy to just play with their club. But they should, if nothing else give it a go, particularly at intermediate level.

The All-Ireland-winning minor team also had some great players. Don't ruin them by propelling them onto the senior scene. Don't let them fall off the radar either.

Derry, the 2022 favourites, remain at intermediate level next year after Cork beat them. Offaly have joined them after senior relegation and if they regroup, they'll be a big challenge.

On the club scene we had some enthralling games from the quarter-final stages. We had some tight games too in the groups, but things really livened up as you'd expect when it became knockout. Seandún, Sarsfields, Inniscarra, and St Finbarr's were our semi-finalists.

Seandún and the Barrs, apart from the tension over the hour, you couldn't say it was a good spectacle. Inniscarra and Sars was more open, but it was the final that really stood head and shoulders above the rest with a top-quality fast-paced game.

Back-to-back county titles for Seandún, a Munster semi-final for Sars where a very young team were close to getting over the line. Who to pick for 2023? That's the question!

# Drom-Inch avenge 2021 pain

**Munster Club Senior Camogie final**  
**Drom-Inch (Tipperary) 0-14**  
**Scariff Ogonneloe (Clare) 0-8**

**Therese O'Callaghan**  
 Mallow

Defeat in the 2021 Munster club senior camogie championship final by a single point to Scariff Ogonneloe was the driving force behind Drom-Inch's victory at Mallow yesterday. Their manager Pat Ryan said they were hurt by the pain. "We left here gutted last year. Our full focus was to get back and right the wrong. Scariff deserved it last year.

"But we have an absolutely savage group of girls, they weren't going to leave that after them today. I'm so proud of them.

"Katie O'Dwyer came on and scored three points for us, she played minor this year. That is what we have, we have strength in depth."

Super-sub O'Dwyer scored three wonderful points in the final 10 minutes to put daylight between the sides. Eimear McGrath (0-7) and Niamh Treacy (0-3) were others to post those important scores.

Keen rivalry has developed



**SWEET SUCCESS:** The Drom-Inch panel celebrate after their victory over Scariff Ogonneloe.

Picture: Mike Ryan

between these teams, so it was no surprise they were tied on six occasions before the Tipperary champions pushed on in the fourth quarter. Defensively they were heroic too, they kept Scariff scoreless for the final 20 minutes.

Tied 0-5 apiece at the break, the second half developed into a see-saw battle. Aoife Power ensured Scariff Ogonneloe wouldn't go down without a fight.

Deadlocked at eight points each in the 40th minute, Anne Eviston and Eimear McGrath

points swung the momentum Drom's way.

As both squads emptied the tank, teenager O'Dwyer's intervention was key.

Drom-Inch could also call upon Joanne Ryan — the last Tipperary captain to lift the O'Duffy Cup in 2004.

"We live in a great parish at home in Drom-Inch, a great bunch of girls. We always want more. We were hurt from last year, we only lost by a point. So we had to prove something," the club stalwart said.

"I've always kept playing with the club. At the end of the day, your club is number one.

"We have great young players coming along as well, which is brilliant."

And more to look forward to next month when they face Loughgiel Shamrocks (Antrim) or Slaughtneil (Derry) — the Ulster final is due to be played next weekend — in the All-Ireland semi-final.

Scorers for Drom-Inch: E McGrath (0-7, 0-4 frees, 0-1 pen), N Treacy and K O'Dwyer (0-3 each), A Eviston (0-1).

Scorers for Scariff Ogonneloe: M

Scanlon (0-4 frees), A Power (0-3), J Daly (0-1).

**DROM-INCH:** C Bourke, A Greed, C Brennan, M Ryan, E Cahill, M Eviston (Capt), A McGrath, N Long, M Burke, E McGrath, N Treacy, C Shanahan, A Eviston, M Campion, N Ryan.

Subs: J Ryan for N Ryan (47), K O'Dwyer for N Long (49), S McGrath for M Burke (61).

**SCARIFF OGOANELLOE:** R Daly, H McGee, S Daly, A McGee, C Doyle, R Minogue, A Barrett (Capt), A Walsh, L Daly, J Daly, M Scanlon, L O'Donnell, A Rodgers, A Power, L Grady.

Subs: C McNamara for L Grady (48), B Wiley Murphy for H McGee (49), A Corbett for J Daly (55).

Referee: Andrew Larkin (Cork).



The Reardens All-Stars Camogie team of the year with Matthew Twomey, Cork manager, Margaret Kenneally and John Styles, Reardens.

Picture: Jim Coughlan.



Award winners Orlaith, Conor, and Meabh Cahalane at the 2022 Reardens GAA Club All Stars.

## CAMOGIE

**Munster Club Senior Championship final:** Scariff-Ogonneloe (Clare) 0-8 Drom and Inch (Tipperary) 0-14;  
**Munster Club Intermediate final:** Clannaurice (Kerry) 2-9 Aghabullogue (Cork) 1-8; **Leinster Club Senior semi-final:** Oulart-the-Ballagh (Wexford) 5-16 Birr (Offaly) 1-7.



Libby Coppinger



Aghabullogue native Cliona Healy won the scholarship in recognition of her achievements in camogie for club and county.

## Cork camogie star is recognised with Elite Sports Scholarship

CORK camogie star Cliona Healy has been awarded an Elite Sports Scholarship by Mary Immaculate College (MIC).

MIC Elite Sports Scholarships recognise MIC students who have excelled in their chosen sport and are offered in memory of former MIC staff members Noreen Lynch and Leonard Enright.

The Aghabullogue native won the scholarship in recognition of her achievements in camogie for club and county.

Recently she delivered an Echo Player of the Match performance and scored the winner in the Intermediate final, where she hit 1-11 in total to clinch the title and secure senior status for next year's campaign for the Muskerry outfit.

The replay against Blackrock went to extra time and Healy was the club's saviour in the drawn match with late, late free under pressure as they came back from eight points down.

### Medals

On the inter-county scene, she has three Munster senior titles, and also secured medals at intermediate All-Ireland and Munster level in 2018, in addition to a Minor All-Ireland in the same year.

As well as this year's intermediate triumph, Healy's roll of honour at club level includes two Minor B medals as well several Cork Féile nan Gael trophies.

She also captained Coachford College Secondary School to a Munster Senior A League win in 2019, as well as playing an important role in the panel that won the title in 2016.

Healy is a final-year Bach-

### CAMOGIE

by Éamonn Murphy

el of Education (primary teaching) student at MIC and plays with the College's camogie squad.

"I am delighted to receive the Elite Sports Scholarship as I know there have been some very impressive awardees previously and it's an honour to be among their company.

"It was also great to be acknowledged for my role in my sport, camogie.

"This scholarship will relieve the financial burden associated with combining study with competing at an elite sports level.

Looking to the year ahead, Healy says she hopes for academic and sporting success: "From a study perspective I hope to graduate as a primary school teacher from MIC this academic year.

"From a sporting perspective, I hope to win the Intermediate Camogie Cork County title with my club Aghabullogue.

From an inter-county point of view, I hope to win National League, Munster, and All-Ireland medals with Cork next year.

"And finally, from a college point of view, I hope to win an Ashbourne medal with MIC this coming season."

The other Elite Sports Scholarship recipient is MIC third-year Bachelor of Education student Thomas Devaney, Mayo, who has won medals in athletics for his local club Castlebar AC, at third level with UL Wolves in Limerick, and at European level representing Ireland.

## Collins' return is boost for Rebels

BY MATTHEW HURLEY

THE Cork senior camogie team will be boosted by the return of forward Linda Collins for the 2023 season.



The Courcey Rovers player (pictured) took a break from Cork camogie in 2022 and spent time teaching in Dubai, but she's back now and returns to strengthen the Rebels' attack.

"Linda Collins is back for next year," Cork boss Matthew Twomey confirmed to *The Southern Star*.

"She's travelling over Christmas and we're hoping to have her back in February. We'll be delighted to have her back in the fold again. She was a big loss this year and excelled in the club campaign."

Collins (26) captained Cork in the 2021 season and scored the winning point in the All-Ireland semi-final as they beat Kilkenny 0-15 to 1-11 in Croke Park. She was back in action for her club, Courceys, in this year's county senior camogie championship, and scored 2-10 from play in five games.

Cork boss Twomey also confirmed that Enniskeane star Orla Cronin will return to the panel for 2023, after she stepped away from the set-up during the summer because of recurrent injuries.

"We had 36 players on the panel this year. Orla Cronin and Linda Collins are definitely coming back into the fold so that brings it up to 38. We had a competitive group last year but ultimately we had five players sitting up in the stands," he explained.

Twomey added he is working alongside Cork intermediate manager Trevor Coleman to get the best teams possible to represent both sides. More importantly though, the aim is to get more players game time.

"We're hoping to set up a couple of matches to get a lot of the players who did well with their clubs and players who did well with the minors this year and the year before. If they can make the senior squad, brilliant. If they can make the intermediate squad, that's brilliant as well," the Cork senior boss explained.

## Jubilant Murphy hails 'fantastic' Clanmaurice

Munster Intermediate Club final	
Clanmaurice (Kerry)	2-9
Aghabullogue (Cork)	1-8

Therese O'Callaghan  
Mallow

Clanmaurice are "fantastic ambassadors for Kerry, and for Kerry camogie", according to coach Eddie Murphy, who joined their setup this year.

After a hugely successful Junior campaign that yielded the last five provincial titles, Clanmaurice — with a panel of just 20 players — added the AIB Munster Club Intermediate Camogie Championship at Mallow on Saturday.

"This team has kept camogie going in Kerry," said Murphy. "We lost five players to Cillard. The club was facing extinction due to the lack of numbers. We have a tiny pick, but there is great heart. It means the world to win Munster for the first time ever.

"We had no games coming into this, we got a bye to the Munster final. We played five challenge matches. Aghabullogue have played 10 matches up to now. The fear was they would be so battled-hardened.

"Amy's [O'Sullivan] two goals at the start were vital. She is only 19, she goes to Mary I. She is a super talent. The game management in the second half, when it was there to be won, was fantastic. We are only one game away from Croke Park."

Many of this Clanmaurice side play for Kerry, and that experience shone through. O'Sullivan's brace in the opening five minutes provided the platform.

Rocked by that concession, Aghabullogue did not settle until Aoife Barrett's point in the seventh minute.

Thanks to three Cliona Healy scores, they trimmed the deficit, 2-1 to 0-4, on 20 minutes. A free from Patrice Diggin pushed the lead out to six, and that was the margin at the interval, 2-5 to 0-5.

Aghabullogue were also thankful to their goalkeeper Nicola Moynihan who saved a well-struck penalty from Diggin on the brink of half time.

Aghabullogue were a different team in the second half. Against the wind, a goal from Healy energised them. A pair of points from the same player placed them just one adrift.

Clanmaurice, sensing the game moving away from them, regained their composure through Diggin and O'Sullivan. They had to survive a nervy finish when Healy cut the deficit to three points, but a stoppage-time strike from Kate Lynch sealed the win.

Clanmaurice now await the winners of the Ulster final involving Eglis (Tyrone) and Clonduff (Down), which takes place next weekend.

Next month's All-Ireland semi-final will be followed a week later by the final on Saturday, December 17, under lights in Croke Park.

Scorers for Clanmaurice: A O'Sullivan (2-2), P Diggin (0-4, 0-1 free), J Horgan (0-2, 0-1 free), K Lynch (0-1).

Scorers for Aghabullogue: C Healy (1-6, 0-3 45's, 0-3 frees), A Barrett and C McCarthy (0-1 each).

CLANMAURICE: A Fitzgerald; M Costello, S Murphy, R McCarthy; A Behan, N Leen, E Ryan; P Diggin, K Lynch; A M Leen, L Collins, C Spillane; J Horgan (Capt), D O'Leary, A O'Sullivan.

AGHABULLOGUE: N Moynihan; E O'Shea, M Cotter, B Gator; M Ring, K McCarthy (Capt), E Curran; E Foley, R Barrett, A Barrett, C McCarthy, E Flanagan; J Tarrant, K Monohan, C Healy.

Subs: A Foley for J Tarrant, E Buckley for K Monohan (both half-time), A Twomey for C McCarthy (47). Referee: Fintan McNamara (Clare).

### Camogie

The Courcey Rovers camogie and ladies football club held a very special celebration of 40 continuous camogie years in Courceys Parish.

A great crowd showed up from many teams over the years and everyone who came was delighted with the lively atmosphere and displays of videos, photographs and medals by the stars of the club which included All Stars, All-Ireland winners and local stars over the years.

It was a great trip down memory lane and chairman of the Courcey Rovers camogie club, Brian Barry, completed

the very successful event by presenting their main team sponsor, John Lordan of The Speckled Door, a large framed photograph of the 2020 County senior A champions.

All-Ireland medal winners attending were Rachel Moloney and Sara Hayes who are also involved in coaching in Courcey Rovers. Both highly acclaimed ladies had their All-Ireland medals mounted. Many players who had played with them had their array of All-Ireland senior medals on display for the very first time.

In recent times the club has celebrated the heights of the present Cork seniors in Linda Collins, Saoirse McCarthy and Fiona Keating.

### Loughgiel bring an end to Slaughtneil's dominance

Loughgiel scratched a seven-year itch in Páirc Esler yesterday to regain the Ulster senior camogie title from a Slaughtneil side that has taken the last six titles, winning 2-13 to 1-11.

The Antrim champions got off to a great start with goals from Róisín McCormick and Caltrín Dobbin midway through the first half. However, Tina Bradley scored a solo goal in the 26th minute to bring Slaughtneil right back into contention and, at the break, there was just a point between the teams, Loughgiel leading by 2-5 to 1-7.

Both teams missed chances from frees in the early stages of the second half as Cliona Mulholland brought the Derry champions level. However, points from McCormick, Annie Lynn and Anna Connolly in quick succession opened a gap by the 40th minute.

McCormick then widened the advantage to five points with three beautiful scores between the 43rd and 49th minute to effectively secure the title and a meeting with Munster champions Drum and Inch in three weeks.



Cliona fires home a goal playing against Blackrock. Picture: Dan Linehan

### CAMOGIE

Leinster Club Senior final: St Vincent's (Dublin) 1-9 Oulart-the-Ballagh (Wexford) 0-11.



# Norris and Murphy among eight Kilkenny All-Stars

## Camogie

Cian Locke

All-Ireland champions Kilkenny dominated the PwC Camogie All-Stars team after capturing the O'Duffy Cup for a 15th time. Amongst the eight All-Stars recipients for the All-Ireland champions were first-time winners Aoife Norris as goalkeeper and half-back Laura Murphy.

In defence for Kilkenny, Grace Walsh and Claire Phelan picked up their third All-Star wins.

The Cats half-forward duo of Julianne Malone and Denise Gaule also picked up awards, with Denise Gaule having previously taken her place on the All-Star team in 2016, 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021.

Katie Nolan took her place in the 2022 line-up in corner-forward position, with Miriam Walsh joining as full-forward for Kilkenny.

Cork picked up four All-Stars — Libby Coppinger in corner-back, Saoirse McCarthy as half-back, Ashling Thompson in midfield



Kilkenny's Miriam Walsh with her Senior All-Star award and her 2022 PwC GPA Senior Camogie Player of the Year award. Pictures: Ryan Bryne, Inpho



First-time All-Stars Kilkenny's Aoife Norris and Laura Murphy.



Waterford's Beth Carton and Lorraine Bray with their All-Star awards.

and Katriona Mackey at corner-forward.

Waterford's captain Lorraine Bray and Beth Carton were awarded the midfield

and centre-forward positions respectively, with Galway's Shauna Healy completing the 2022 PwC Camogie All-Stars line-up in corner back.

Kilkenny boss Brian Dowling was named as PwC Camogie Manager of the Year for the second time having guided the Cats to All-Ireland victory in

2020 and 2022.

Miriam Walsh also collected Senior Player of the Year award for Kilkenny, with Lisa Casserly of Galway the recipi-

ent of the Intermediate accolade, whilst Antrim's Dervla Cosgrove was chosen for the Premier Junior Player of the Year. All three were selected after voting by inter-county players through the GPA, with the awards sponsored by PwC.

All-Ireland Intermediate champions Galway lead the 2022 PwC Camogie Soaring Stars represented by seven players: Defenders Ciara Hickey, Clara Donohue, Katie Manning and Lisa Casserly on the back line. Jennifer Hughes took her position in midfield, with forwards Katie Gilchrist and Niamh McPeake completing Galway's selection.

Runners up in the Intermediate Championship Cork took home three Soaring Stars, with Ashling Moloney full-back Joanne Casey half-forward and Lauren Homan in corner-forward.

**CAMOGIE ALL-STARS:** A Norris (Kilkenny); L Coppinger (Cork); G Walsh (Kilkenny); S Healy (Galway); L Murphy (Kilkenny); C Phelan (Kilkenny); S McCarthy (Cork); A Thompson (Cork); L Bray (Waterford); D Gaule (Kilkenny); B Carton (Waterford); J Malone (Kilkenny); K Nolan (Kilkenny); Walsh (Kilkenny); K Mackey (Cork).



Saoirse McCarthy (Cork) with her PwC Camogie All-Star Awards. Picture: INPHO/Ryan Bryne

## Four Cork players named on All Star team of the year

THERE was plenty of glamour and glitz at the Camogie All Stars where Cork took four All Star awards from their ten nominations at the PwC awards on Saturday evening.

Libby Coppinger at corner-back, Saoirse McCarthy at half-back, Ashling Thompson in midfield and Katriona Mackey at corner-forward were honoured on the night.

Amongst the All-Stars recipients for the All-Ireland champions Kilkenny were first-time winners Aoife Norris as goalkeeper and half-back Laura Murphy. Grace Walsh and Claire Phelan picked up their third All-Star wins in defence. The Cats half-forward duo of Julianne Malone and Denise Gaule also took awards, with Denise Gaule on the All-Star team in 2016, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021.

Katie Nolan was named at corner forward in the 2022 line-up, with Miriam Walsh joining her Kilkenny teammates.

Lisa Casserly of Galway was the recipient of the Intermediate Player of the

### CAMOGIE

#### ■ Mary Newman

Year accolade, whilst Antrim's Dervla Cosgrove took the junior camogie award.

All-Ireland Intermediate champions Galway dominated the 2022 PwC Camogie Soaring Stars selection with seven players.

Runners-up Cork and All-Ireland Premier Junior champions Antrim had three players each recognised, with one a-piece for Meath and Antrim. Cork's Lauren Homan, Joanne Casey and Aisling Moloney were honoured for their performances with Cork Intermediate team during their journey to the final where they lost out to Galway.

**CAMOGIE ALL-STARS:** A Norris (Kilkenny); L Coppinger (Cork); G Walsh (Kilkenny); S Healy (Galway); L Murphy (Kilkenny); C Phelan (Kilkenny); S McCarthy (Cork); A Thompson (Cork); L Bray (Waterford); D Gaule (Kilkenny); B Carton (Waterford); J Malone (Kilkenny); K Nolan (Kilkenny); Walsh (Kilkenny); K Mackey (Cork).



Maggie Coppinger on behalf of Libby Coppinger (Cork) is presented with her PwC Camogie All-Star Award by Uachtarán Hilda Breslin and PwC's Markets Partner David McGee. Picture: INPHO/Tom Maher

# Dynamic Walsh caps perfect year

Daragh Ó Conchúir

Not even a certain Danish brewer could have dreamt up Miriam Walsh's year, after the Kilkenny full-forward was named PwC GPA Camogie Player of the Year at Croke Park last night.

There is no need for the conditional adverb. Probably doesn't come into it. Walsh's POTY award and third PwC All-Star, arriving a week after her wedding to Freshford hurler Noel McGree, in the season in which she produced her best-ever form to help propel a much-changed Kilkenny to a second Glen Dimplex All-Ireland in three seasons, cannot be topped.

"It was a great weekend," Walsh says of the nuptials. The O'Duffy Cup and most of her Kilkenny compadres were at the wedding. There was a slight pull over the build-up though. "Freshford got relegated before our wedding. Noel was so down about it. I was like, 'Oh my God, you may cheer up, we've a big day coming up!' But he was so upset.

"He's a very good hurler. He got called in [to the] county, Brian Cody rang him years ago, but he never went in. A rumour went around he picked the darts over the hurling and he gets a slugging over that. He was only after losing his mom and dad so the commitment just wouldn't have suited at that time."

Miriam Walsh has been a nightmare for full-backs for more than a decade. Always happy to leave others garner the headlines, she could not avoid the limelight in 2022. Goals and assists have been a regular part of her repertoire, so too winning frees and penalties, gaining possession when often second favourite too.

The quarter-final win was a case in point, quick enough to win ball on the flanks, so difficult to stop once building a head of steam. When the sliotar is in her paw around the area, something is going to happen. She raised one green flag and was the injured party for the penalty from which Denise Gaule slammed the other.

What was noticeable though, was the improved conversion rate shooting for points, particularly on the run. In the All-Ireland final, the 27-year-old from Tullaroan hit three, two of those in the first half were of massive importance.

Walsh also was fouled for two more, including the injury-time winner by Gaule. Her fingerprints were all over the season and the ultimate success.

"This year was so sweet, winning the O'Duffy Cup. There was just more of an appreciation this year about it. The management team were great. A team beat us in a challenge match one night and I remember driving out of the pitch feeling, 'Oh my God, we won't see an All-Ireland,' but they really stuck with us.

"I remember one night, it changed everything. Tommy Shefflin brought us into the dressing room, and Brian Dowling, and they just gave an exhibition of speeches.

"The group of girls this year were



Miriam Walsh with her award

so special. You go training and before, you might pucker with the same girls but this year, you'd go with anyone. We're a really close group. And there are so many leaders, from Aoife Prendergast to Grace Walsh to Leann Fennelly, they're all brilliant.

Fennelly, a 32-year-old who captained Kilkenny when they lost the 2014 All-Ireland final, earned her first medal at this level in August. It was actually her eighth All-Ireland memento in total but it arrived 14 years after the seventh. The Mullinavat veteran, a daughter of Kilkenny hurling legend Liam, returned to the fold in 2021 after six years in Australia and despite being confined to a squad role with the seniors, was an inspirational figure, says Walsh.

"I'd say Leann Fennelly was the biggest leader on our panel and that was special, for someone that wasn't on the starting 15. Her presence was huge. She's a good talker but it's really just giving 110 per cent at training."

Walsh also name-checks Ann Downey's role in laying the groundwork, with the players and also getting her eventual successor, Dowling involved as a coach in her final season.

Indeed it was Downey who first called Walsh in to join her first cousin Grace on the county panel. She had been puckering around with Grace and Grace's brothers, future county hurlers Tommy, Pádraig and Shane, from as long as she could remember. She has recounted how the matches they would play among themselves would often end in tears.

The power she attributes to those days and playing Féile with the boys had fooled Downey though, and as a 15-year-old, she was too young by regulation to participate. There was no stopping Walsh the following season, however, and she has been an ever-present since. None of it was by accident.

"I worked hard this year, arriving at training early, working on my shooting and stuff. It goes to show, if you work hard, it'll pay off. Every player is kind of the same. You don't know when it's going to be the last time to wear the jersey so you just want to give your all."

The good news is she will be back next year, along with the management and all the rest of the players.

"I am really looking forward to next year. When you're getting married, you're probably wondering, but I'm definitely going to give it one last year. After winning the All-Ireland, you just kinda want more."

# 'Libby is one of the hardest working players I ever met'

BY GER MCCARTHY

LIBBY Coppinger's army of fans is growing – and it includes one of Cork's greatest-ever players.

Gemma O'Connor is GAA royalty. The nine-time All-Ireland winner and 11-time All-Star is among Coppinger's supporters, having watched the St Colum's dual star develop into one of the top players in the county.

She is one of ten Cork players shortlisted for 2022 PwC Camogie All-Star awards, with the winners being announced at the awards ceremony this Saturday, 26th, in Croke Park.

O'Connor shared a dressing-room with Coppinger in the county's camogie set-up, and the West Cork woman left a very positive impression.

"From the moment I met Libby, I was really impressed by her," O'Connor told this week's *Star Sport Podcast*.

"I think any young person should meet Libby and see how extremely honest a player she is. She is very hard working. One of the hardest working players I ever came across.

"Libby's a little ball of muscle and that's the way I describe her! She is tough as nails and a super back (defender). You get nothing easy off her. You need to have those characteristics as a back. You need to be honest because if you are not honest when playing then you are going to get absolutely creased."

Coppinger's dedication to lining out for both the Cork football and camogie senior panels is something 11-time All-Star



Dual star Libby Coppinger.

O'Connor has witnessed firsthand.

"Libby leaves no stone unturned, has a super attitude and approach to training and games," O'Connor explained.

"She is just like the other dual players, such as Hannah Looney. I used to say to them that I didn't know how they kept doing it (playing football and camogie), that they must be exhausted.

"We used to train at 8am on Saturday and Sunday mornings with Cork. The times Libby wouldn't be staying in Cork, she'd be below on the farm in Kealkill, she'd be in her car getting a few minutes sleep before the training sessions started.

There wouldn't be a whinge or complaint out of Libby, just straight out onto the pitch. She is a big player for Cork."

Cork GAA great O'Connor recently released her autobiography, *Why not a Warrior?*, and much like her performances for Cork, it's earning rave reviews.

*Why not a Warrior?* is published by Hero Books and available in all good bookstores or via Amazon.

**CAMOGIE:** All-Ireland Junior Club semi-final: Knockananna (Wicklow) v St. Dominic's (Roscommon), Coralstown-Kinnegad, 12pm; All-Ireland Intermediate Club semi-final: Clonduff (Down) v Clanmaurice (Kerry), Coralstown-Kinnegad, 2pm.



Siobhan McGrath: She and her sister still look on song and their Sarsfields team can retain their All-Ireland camogie club senior title in the final against Loughgiel Shamrocks tonight.

# Barrs celebrate golden

## CAMOGIE

■ Plunkett Carter

**ST Finbarr's Camogie Club recently celebrated their 50th anniversary at club's complex recently.**

More than 200 people attended and a great evening was had by all as players, current and past, coaches and club officials reflected on an era which saw St Finbarr's camogie club grow from humble ranks to one of game's top senior clubs.

Camogie had been played in the Barrs at the different periods in the club's history, going back to the early 20th century before being disbanded, while in 1957 another short-lived Barrs team entered the fray.

The Barrs won the junior championship in 1964 but disbanded shortly afterwards.

The present club was reformed in 1972 under the guidance of Frances Barry-Murphy and her late father John Barry-Murphy, Mary McCarthy, Kitty O'Grady, and others. Mary McCarthy and Kitty O'Grady were also of great influence.

### Highs

In its formative years, the Barrs experienced highs and lows on the pitch; the contested several finals before landing their first county success, a junior win over Blackrock in 1981, followed by county intermediate success in 1982. They also won the Cork Féile that year.

Underage success followed over the next few years, and they annexed another junior title in 1984.

Now operating at senior level, they contested two finals in 1990 and 1992 and, while defeated by Glen Rovers in both games, progress continued.

In 1991 the junior team completed the B Championship and League double and success continued at underage with the winning of the U14 and U16 Championships in 1995.

It was evident that the hard work of the underage mentors was beginning to reap its rewards as young players were showing great promise and hopes were high that the ambition of winning a first senior title was not too far away.

In 1994 the Camogie Board introduced a Senior B Championship in which the Barrs were graded.

They contested three Senior B finals in 1995, 97, and 98 without success but eventually made the breakthrough in



At the St Finbarr's Camogie Club 50th anniversary celebrations were, from left, Alix Mendez, Jesse Mendez, Barbara O'Connell, Barbara O'Connell senior, Susan O'Connell, Lynda O'Connell, and Alan Murphy.



Attending the St Finbarr's Camogie Club 50th anniversary celebrations were Mary McCarthy, Roisin Walsh, and Jessica McCarthy. Picture: Eddie O'Hare



Pictured at the St Finbarr's Camogie Club 50th anniversary celebrations were sisters, Gráinne, Meabh and Orlaith Cahalane.



At the St Finbarr's Camogie Club 50th anniversary celebrations were Michelle Minihane and Niamh McCarthy. Picture: Eddie O'Hare



Pictured at the St Finbarr's Camogie Club 50th anniversary celebrations were Maureen Kelleher and Vera Hayes. Picture: Eddie O'Hare



Pictured at the St Finbarr's anniversary celebrations were Sheila McCarthy, Eileen Murphy, and Kathleen Troy. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

# jubilee of camogie



The organising committee at the St. Finbarrs camogie club 50th anniversary celebration dinner which was held at the club recently.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

2001 when crowned Senior B Champions defeating Milford in the final.

A year later they were back in the county senior final but were narrowly defeated by Cloughduv. The heartbreak of agonising defeats continued, but this bunch of girls were not going to be denied the club's lifelong ambition to win a senior county title which came to fruition on Sunday October 8, 2006 when they beat Imokilly.

Barrs players have contributed hugely to Cork's success at inter county level down through the years.

Marie O'Sullivan, Claire Cronin (holder of four senior All-Ireland medals), Colette O'Mahony, Colette Cronin, Brid Kelleher, Jenny Duffy, Lynda O'Connell (now in her 30th season), Orla O'Sullivan, Ellen Clifford, Meabh Cahalane and Gemma O'Connor have all won senior medals with Cork.

In recent years Keeva McCarthy, Eimear Hurley, Aoife O'Neill, Clara Hurley, Clara Golden, Ella Wigginton-Bar-

rett, Nicole Olden and Orlaith Cahalane have all been part of successful intermediate, minor and U16 winning teams.

Many girls have made huge sacrifices for the club but nobody has done more to promote the game than Marian McCarthy. She continues to make huge contributions to the Barrs and to camogie in general.

In February 2020 the inspirational Marian received the prestigious President's CLG Award for outstanding contribution to the GAA.

As a player she tasted a junior championship success with the Barrs in 1981 and then victory at intermediate level the following year to send the club up to senior level for the first time in its history.

When her playing career ended, Marian turned her attention to administration, mentoring and coaching. She was elected chairperson of the Cork Board in 2002 and held the post for 14 years.



Dymphna Murphy, Sheila Barrett, Mary Fitzpatrick, Joan Doolan and Marie Santry.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare



Paula, Harriett and Colette Carey at the anniversary celebration dinner at the club.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare



Dolores O'Sullivan and Deirdre Clarke at the 50th anniversary celebration dinner at the club.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare



Bill O'Connell, club president and his wife Aileen at the camogie club's 50th anniversary celebration dinner.

Picture: Eddie O'Hare

# STAR Sports

SATURDAY  
DECEMBER 3, 2022

# STAR QUALITY

Libby and Saoirse the pride of West Cork after Camogie All-Star success



Cork camogie star Libby Coppinger has won her first All-Star award.

INSET: Coursey Rovers' Saoirse McCarthy with her PWC Camogie All-Star Award. (Photo: Ryan Byrne/INPHO)



2022 PwC Camogie All-Star Winners			
Goalkeeper	Aoife Norris	Kilkenny	First All-Star.
Corner Backs:	Libby Coppinger	Cork	First All-Star.
	Shauna Healy	Galway	4 <sup>th</sup> All Star. Won in 2019, 2020, 2021.



Mid Field	Ashling Thompson	Cork	3 <sup>rd</sup> All-Star 2015 & 2017.
	Lorraine Bray	Waterford	2 <sup>nd</sup> All-Star. Won in 2019. Soaring Star in 2015.
Half Forward	Denise Gaule	Kilkenny	6 <sup>th</sup> All Star. Won in 2016, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021.
	Julianne Malone	Kilkenny	2 <sup>nd</sup> All Star. Last won in 2016.
Centre Forward	Beth Carton	Waterford	3 <sup>rd</sup> All-Star. Won in 2018 & 2019. Soaring Star in 2015.
Corner Forward	Katie Nolan	Kilkenny	2 <sup>nd</sup> All Star. Won her first in 2021.
	Katriona Mackey	Cork	6 <sup>th</sup> All-Star. Won in 2012, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018.
Full Forward	Miriam Walsh	Kilkenny	3 <sup>rd</sup> All Star. Won in 2016 & 2020.



Lauren Homan with her award, with Uachtarán Hilda Breslin and David McGee of PWC.

### Soaring star award

Local camogie player Lauren Homan was awarded a Soaring star award last week for her exploits on the pitch for Cork's intermediate camogie team this year. Posting on Facebook, her club St Vincent's said: "We couldn't be more proud. Massive congratulations Lauren on your Soaring star award. So very very well deserved." Clubmate Amy O'Connor missed out on an All Star award at senior grade. St Vincent's said: "Unfortunately it wasn't Amy's night but to say we're proud is an understatement. To be nominated is an achievement in itself. Amy you are and always will be our star."

2022 PwC Camogie Soaring-Star Winners			
Goalie:	Aine Graham	Antrim	1 <sup>st</sup> year playing for Antrim at Senior level. First Soaring Star
Corner Backs:	Ciara Hickey	Galway	First Soaring Star
	Ashling Moloney	Cork	First Soaring Star
Full Back:	Ciara Donohue	Galway	First Soaring Star
Half Backs:	Katie Manning	Galway	First Soaring Star
	Gráinne McNicholl	Derry	First Soaring Star
Centre Back:	Lisa Casserly	Galway	First Soaring Star
Mid Field:	Jennifer Hughes	Galway	First Soaring Star
	Emma Laverty	Antrim	First Soaring Star
Half Forwards:	Joanne Casey	Cork	First Soaring Star
	Aoife Minogue	Meath	Won Soaring Star in 2017.
Centre Forward:	Katie Gilchrist	Galway	First Soaring Star
Corner Forwards:	Dervla Cosgrove	Antrim	First year competing in Premier Junior Championship. First Soaring Star
	Lauren Homan	Cork	First Soaring Star
Full Forward:	Niamh McPeake	Galway	First Soaring Star

2022 PwC Manager of the Year			
Manager of the Year	Brian Dowling	Kilkenny	2 <sup>nd</sup> Award having won Manager of the Year in 2020

# From Kenya to Kealkill, All-Star Libby puts St Colum's on the map

Cork defender Coppinger is her club's first-ever All-Star award winner

BY KIERAN MCCARTHY

LIBBY Coppinger will never forget where she was when she won her first Camogie All-Star Award.

The St Colum's clubwoman was on a two-day safari in the Masai Mara National Reserve, on the final leg of the eight-day Plant the Planet Games trip to Kenya.

When the 2022 PwC Camogie All-Stars Awards ceremony was on last Saturday night, Libby was a long way from home, but was on the phone to her mom, Maureen, who was in Croke Park, with Libby's sister Maggie and aunt Breda. The Coppingers were there in force.

Maggie had been given the nod to accept the award on Libby's behalf, if the Cork star was selected – and, deservedly, she was, named as a corner back on the All-Star selection after her superb season in the Rebels' full-back line.

'I got a FaceTime off mom, but she was actually very confusing!' Libby told this week's *Star Sport Podcast*.

'She was so happy, but I was like "is it a yes? or is it a no?", and then she showed Maggie up on stage so it was great.'

Winning an All-Star award while on a safari in Kenya is an experience, Libby says, she will never replicate again, but what

an incredible memory to have.

She was back home in Kealkill on Monday night, landing in the front door of home around 8pm, after a quick stop-off at her grandmother Maureen's house.

Waiting for Libby on the kitchen table was her All-Star award.

'It's really surreal, to be honest,' she says.

'I don't know if you can say you dreamed of it as a child because the dream is to play for Cork and to win All-Irelands, but this is an added bonus.'

'I am lucky enough to be amongst a limited number of players from West Cork who have won All-Stars, and I don't take that lightly. I'm honoured to have one, and I have to credit it to anyone who has helped me along the way – my parents, my coaches, my team-mates as well, and anyone who has done anything to help me excel.'

The Coppinger clan is GAA mad. They are her biggest supporters, as this St Colum's woman lines out for Cork in both football and camogie. She's a rare dual star, and shines bright for both. Her GAA journey started with St Colum's – and Libby is now the first player, male or female, from the club to win an All-Star.



All-Star Libby Coppinger.

'I owe them everything. I started out with them and thankfully I'm still playing with them,' Libby says.

'We started the club in 2009 and I played a year with the boys before that, but St Colum's is where my camogie career started – and huge credit to everyone who set up the club. If I didn't have that I wouldn't have had the opportunity to play camogie. The nearest club would have been Enniskeane, but when I had only played one year before that I didn't know how much I loved it. I am hugely grateful for them pushing and getting a team in St Colum's.'

And now Colum's have their first All-Star, and a brilliant role model for young girls and boys in the club.



Breda Coppinger celebrates after her niece Libby wins an All-Star award.

Libby was one of four Cork players to win 2022 PwC Camogie All-Stars, as Courcey Rovers' Saoirse McCarthy at half-back, Ashling Thompson in midfield and attacker Katriona Mackey were also selected.



RIGHT: Maggie Coppinger, on behalf of her sister Libby, is presented with her PwC Camogie All-Star Award by Uachtarán Hilda Breslin and PwC's Markets Partner David McGee. (Photos: Ryan Byrne/INPHO)

## All-Star Saoirse joins exclusive club

BY MATTHEW HURLEY

SAOIRSE McCarthy has joined an exclusive club: Courcey Rovers players with Camogie All-Star awards.

Before Saoirse picked up her first All-Star award, after being named on the 2022 PwC Camogie All-Stars team on Saturday night, Rachel Moloney was the only Courceys player to have a Camogie All-Star in her collection. In fact, Moloney has three. But current Cork wing back Saoirse is catching up.

'I'm absolutely delighted,' McCarthy told *The Southern Star*.

'It's great for my family, and to get something at the end of the year after all the training and hard work. I think it's a good indication of how well we (Cork) were going and how close we were to winning. Obviously it would have been a lot nicer if we had won the All-Ire-

**'Courceys are so supportive. Half the parish was up there!'**  
– Saoirse McCarthy

land final. Still, it's great to be recognised, but hopefully we'll knuckle down and do the big one next year.'

It's a proud moment for her club, too, and another Courceys star, Fiona Keating, was also shortlisted for a Camogie All-Star, so the club was well represented at the awards ceremony in Croke Park on Saturday. Making it a memorable night for Courceys, Ashling Moloney picked up her first Soaring Star award and was named as one of the 2022 PwC Camogie Soaring-Star winners after an impressive season with

the Cork intermediate camogie team. Two more Cork players, Joanne Casey and Lauren Homan, also picked up Soaring Star awards.

'Courceys are so supportive. Half the parish was up there! There was a great sense of community. For a small club in Ballinspittle/Ballinadee to have

two representatives, it's mental when you actually think of it,' McCarthy said.

'It was great having Fiona nominated at centre forward. Delighted for her and she's only going up, and hopefully next year she'll get the award.'

Saoirse takes her place at wing back on the 2022 All-Stars team, and this is where she is making her name, but when she started at county level the Cork star was renowned as an attacker.

'I adapted to it last year (2021) and I really enjoyed it. This was my first proper year playing there and I got nominated for an All-Star. You can't be picky when it comes to a competitive team like Cork,' she explained.



Courceys' Ashling Moloney and Saoirse McCarthy celebrate with their awards.

**STAR SPORT**

## PODCAST

This week on our podcast ...

St Colum's Libby Coppinger on her Camogie All-Star win, the role her club played and more

**PLUS ...**

Ballinascorthy junior hurling manager Joe Ryan chats coaching, family and Bal

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2 Manage consent			
<b>Soaring Star of the Year</b>			
<b>Premier Junior:</b>	Dervla Cosgrove	Antrim	First Soaring Star
<b>Intermediate:</b>	Lisa Casserly	Galway	First Soaring Star
<b>Senior:</b>	Miriam Walsh	Kilkenny	3 <sup>rd</sup> All Star. Won in 2016 & 2020.

## Coachford pip Sacred Heart to Cork title

**Cork Colleges Camogie Senior A final**

**Coachford College 0-10**  
**Sacred Heart 1-5**  
**SS Clonakilty 1-5**

### Therese O'Callaghan

Level on five occasions, late points from Amy Sheppard and Adele Lotty decided this Cork Colleges senior A camogie final (Merriman Cup) at Hayes Park, Castle Road on Wednesday night.

It was the mid Cork school's first victory since claiming back-to-back titles in 2017.

Despite the conditions, this was a superb advertisement for the competition, which showcased so many great individual displays. And mention too for referee Diarmuid Kirwan who let the game go.

The winners made a positive start with top-scorer Aoife Barrett and Ellie Buckley edging them ahead. A goal from Katie O'Driscoll, after she flicked to the net following a brilliant delivery from Siofra Patwell, had Sacred Heart up and running.

Patwell added a brace of frees to give her side an interval lead of 1-2 to 0-3.

The Coachford defence and keeper Edel Downey soaked a lot of pressure after the restart, and were level in the 40th minute with Barrett supplying both flags from play.

At the other end, custodian Amy Giles played her part as O'Driscoll nudged her side back in front, 0-5 to 1-3.

Midway through the half, and they were tied once more with Barrett on target.

Shauna Sheehan pushed Coachford in front but Meabh O'Brien replied.

It appeared there was no separating these two sides and extra-time might be required.

Sheppard sent over a free following a foul on Barrett on 53 minutes but Sacred Heart were equal to the challenge when Amy McCarthy popped up for the equaliser two minutes from time.

Sheppard availed of her opportunity at the death to give Coachford a bit of breathing space. Lotty then landed the insurance score in stoppages.

**Scorers for Coachford College:** A Barrett (0-4), A Sheppard (0-2, 0-1 free), S Sheehan, E Buckley, K Honohan and A Lotty (0-1 each).

**Scorers for Sacred Heart SS:** K O'Driscoll (1-1), S Patwell (0-2 frees), A McCarthy and M O'Brien (0-1 each).

**COACHFORD COLLEGE:** E Downey (Aghabullogue); A Dineen (do), E Buckley (Eire Ogi), R Bowen (Aghabullogue); A O'Leary (Inniscaera), S Sheehan (Eire Ogi), A Buckley (Newcestown); A Sheppard (Cloughduv), R Barrett (Aghabullogue); E Buckley (do), K Honohan (do, Capt), A Lotty (Inniscaera); A Foley (Aghabullogue), A Barrett (do), C Daly (do).

**Subs:** A Lehane (Cloughduv) for C Daly (49), G O'Leary (Inniscaera) for K Honohan (50 in).

**SACRED HEART SS:** A Giles (Clonakilty); E Sexton (Kilbrittain), A O'Brien (Clonakilty), A Meade (do); N Kennedy (do), K O'Donovan (Kilmeen), C White (Clonakilty); M Murphy (Kilmeen), A McCarthy (Clonakilty); M Condon (Ballinascarthy, Capt), C Murphy (Kilmeen), A O'Flynn Meade (Clonakilty); M O'Brien (Enniskeanes), S Patwell (Ballinascarthy), K O'Driscoll (Clonakilty).

**Referee:** Diarmuid Kirwan (Eire Ogi)



**QUEENS OF THE CASTLE:** Coachford College celebrate their win over Sacred Heart Clonakilty in the Cork Colleges Senior A Camogie final at Hayes Park, Castle Road last night.

Picture: Jim Coughlan



## 11. Billionaire granny changes the game

The most life-changing activation in Irish sport came in 2022 when Carmel Naughton of Glen Dimplex invested a chunk of her personal fortune into the Camogie Association. The value of the five-year investment is unknown but The Pitch forecasted that it works out at approximately €5m over its seven-year lifetime. The organisation has funds like never before and is currently undergoing a major rebrand.



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## Seandún celebrate county camogie victory

AT the Seandún senior county camogie team victory dinner at Páirc Uí Chaoimh were:

- 1. Cork players Amy Lee and Amy O'Connor.
- 2. Susan Kate Brosnan, captain, and Lauren Homan, last year's captain.
- 3. Maeve Scannell and Laura O'Neill, Bishopstown.
- 4. Niamh O'Leary, Susan Kate Brosnan, captain; Emma Sharpe and Sinead Mills, Brian Dillons.
- 5. Lauren Homan and Nicole Crean.
- 6. Carol Ryan and Leah McKeogh, Blackrock.
- 7. Amy Lee, Amy Coleman, Emily Buckley, Casey Buckley, Emma O'Connor, Elannah Sheehan and Aine Ring, all Na Piarsaigh.
- 8. David Lockyer, selector; Trevor Coleman, manager; Karen O'Leary, SE Systems; Trevor Allen, selector; Liz O'Mahony, chairperson/selector; John O'Leary, SE Systems; and Jason Long, selector
- 9. Cllr Dan Boyle, deputising for the Lord Mayor, and Mairead Donovan, chairperson, County Camogie Board.
- 10. Toni Curtin with her sister Erinn and mother Lisa.

Pictures: Eddie O'Hare



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# HEARTBREAK FOR CORK AS KILKENNY AND GALWAY TAKE THE HONOURS



LIBBY COPPINGER OF CORK IN ACTION AGAINST DENISE GAULE OF KILKENNY DURING THE GLEN DIMPLEX ALL-IRELAND SENIOR CAMOGIE CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

FOR THE FIFTEENTH TIME IN THE ANNALS OF GAELIC GAMES, KILKENNY MADE THOSE WRITING OFF THE BLACK AND AMBER LOOK DISTINCTLY FOOLISH AS THE COUNTY REGISTERED ITS 15TH GLEN DIMPLEX ALL-IRELAND SENIOR TITLE BY VIRTUE OF A HEART-STOPPING 1-13 TO 1-12 TRIUMPH OVER A GUTSY CORK AT CROKE PARK ON AUGUST 7.

As she has done so often in a glittering career, Denise Gaule delivered the definitive blow, converting a 45m free in the second minute of injury time to ensure Aoife Prendergast had the privilege of lifting the O'Duffy Cup. Super sub Sophie O'Dwyer's 58th-minute goal was probably the key contribution though as the

Rebels had made a dash for home and gone two points clear when the James Stephens attacker pounced.

It was tough on Cork, who fell short for the second season in succession and had so many stellar performers. One of them, Katrina Mackey accelerated away from the defensive cover to equalise in response to O'Dwyer's gut punch but Gaule was to deliver the rapier thrust.

Dismissing Kilkenny is foolish in any pursuit and the camogs have illustrated the folly now with their last two successes. Just as in 2020, the perception was that Brian Dowling and his brains trust would be overseeing a transition after the loss of key figures through injury, retirement and travel. This time, it was the likes of Davina Tobin, Collette Dormer, Meaghan Farrell, Kellyann Doyle and Aoife Doyle moved on, after Anne Dalton and Anna Farrell had retired in the wake of the Covid December decider. But that was to understate the depth of Noneside talent as the Fitzgerald sisters, Tiffanie and Steffi, and Laura Murphy established themselves, while the returning Niamh Deely and



Julianne Malone provided a significant boost. Then you had the Walsh cousins, Miriam and Grace providing constant leadership, along with Gaule and Claire Phelan, while the dynamic Katie Nolan starred in almost every outing through the year, even adding free-taking duties to her repertoire. The Cats had beaten All-Ireland champions Galway in the semi-final by 1-13 to 0-12, thanks to the heroics of goalkeeper Aoife Norris and a stunning goal by Murphy. Cork got the better of Waterford, who made history by reaching the last four for the first time and actually led for most of proceedings. With Matthew Twomey's outfit (coached by Davy Fitzgerald) only hitting the front for the first time against Derek Lyons' troops with four minutes remaining, the eventual 0-15 to 0-10 scoreline bore a scant reflection of preceding events. How the Déise do under new management will be one of the most interesting storylines of the next season.

Earlier in the year, Galway had come from six points down early in the second half to record a 2-14 to 1-13 victory over Cork in the Littlewoods Ireland Camogie League Division 1 final at HQ. Goals from substitutes Catherine Finnerty and Carrie Dolan saw Cathal Murray's crew power home. The Leesiders will look back on the year with mixed feelings, having gone so close to securing major silverware but ultimately

failing to do so. They will hope that midfield dynamo Ashling Thompson recovers from serious injury, while Hannah Looney's return from a stint working abroad was a considerable addition. Mackey, Laura Treacy, Saoirse McCarthy, Fiona Keating, Libby Coppinger and Amy O'Connor were other standout performers through the year and with plenty of youth in their ranks, they will make a bold bid for honours once more in 2023.

They will also have some graduates from the intermediate side that reached their All-Ireland final, albeit that it was another reverse for the Reds at the last hurdle. On this occasion, a very young Galway outfit chiselled out a 0-13 to 0-11 triumph at Croke Park.

Cork will rue shooting 11 wides though the westerners will point to some outstanding defensive work by the likes of skipper Lisa Casserly and Ciara Donohue. Cathal Murray's charges showed tremendous character as they were reduced to 14 in the 52nd minute when Kate Manning was shown a second yellow card in six minutes, this one for a high tackle. Yet with their rearguard effort supplemented by ferocious workrate throughout the field, they rarely looked like conceding the goal that would scupper them. There was one notable exception as

Joanne Casey shot powerfully from a free just outside the 20m line. The sliotar ricocheted off the ankle of young defender, Katie Anna Porter who cleared and Katie Gilchrist shot her seventh point from the resultant attack.

In such a tight affair, Gilchrist's contribution was a mammoth one and though Casey hit six for Cork, and Lauren Homan half that, Galway did just about enough, as Laura Loughane also scored three points for the Tribeswomen. The Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Premier Junior Championship was won by Antrim, fielding a second team for the first time in the Saffrons' history. Four goals from Dervla Cosgrove including three in 84 first-half seconds, and three saves from Áine Graham were among the more notable events as the team managed by Brian Kearney and Mark McFadden got the better of an Armagh unit mentored by Antrim legend Jim McKernan, who had led his native county to intermediate glory 12 months previously alongside Paul McKillen.

The goal salvo left Armagh with as mountain to climb, particularly as 2021 minor captain, Fionnuala Kelly also shook the rigging in that opening period, finishing with 1-2 to go with Cosgrove's 4-2.

The Orchard women battled hard, with Ciara Donnelly and former Cork legend Jenny Curry prominent, and they actually had nine different scorers but their porous defence in the first half was costly and it was Antrim's day.