

Cork ladies football and camogie squads take a stand

Therese O'Callaghan

The Cork senior camogie squad and Cork senior ladies football squad have issued a joint-statement regarding yet another fixture clash.

Both teams are involved in crucial championship games next Saturday when the Cork senior camogie players travel to Ennis to play Clare (3pm) while the Cork senior ladies footballers are up against Tipperary in Clonakilty (2pm).

It is the second time in a fortnight a fixture clash has arisen. Cork ladies footballers lost to Galway in Pearse Stadium on June 17, whilst the Cork camogie team defeated Down in Páirc Uí Chaoimh on the same afternoon. There are four dual players on both panels — Libby Coppinger, Hannah Looney, Oriáith Cahalane, and Aoife Healy.

The statement in full read: "It is with deep disappointment and regret that we the players of the Cork Senior Camogie & Ladies Gaelic football squads are putting out this statement. Both national organisations have, as part of their guidelines and following their respective congresses, given commitments to support dual players.

"However, in this and other recent situations, this is not being adhered to. We have respectfully exhausted all avenues and feel this is our last resort and appeal to you to help us resolve it. We have provided multiple solutions to the situation but to this point, none have been accepted by either organisation.

"We are requesting that the Ard Chomhairle of the Camogie and Ladies Gaelic Football Associations would organise to meet as soon as possible to rearrange one or both of the upcoming fixtures so that the dual players are available to

play both games.

"The Camogie and Ladies Football games on July 1st are both must-win games, for both squads to continue participation in both competitions. We feel to force dual players and in our case four of our teammates into an impossible and unfair decision is wrong and we are looking for support to resolve this 3rd clash of fixtures, this year.

"With great honour and pride, we represent our counties at the elite level of our sports. This honour, pride, and effort is reflected by players, mentors, managers, backroom staff, their families and county boards. We would much prefer to be concentrating on and preparing for our upcoming must-win games in both codes. All we are requesting is that the welfare of the player, and equality, would be at the heart of each organisation's decision.

"It is our privilege to represent our counties on the playing fields, it is what we want to do, it is what we have spent months preparing to do. We implore both organisations to help us resolve this. Please don't force our teammates to choose."

Elsewhere, Meath interim manager Jenny Rispin said she was delighted the reigning TG4 All-Ireland champions got the defence of their title off to a winning start when they defeated Waterford by 1-13 to 1-8 at Fraher Field.

Dublin bounced back from their opening round loss to put Cavan to the sword by 5-15 to 1-8. A last-minute penalty goal from Aimee Mackin saw Armagh claim their place in the quarter-finals, defeating Connacht champions Mayo by 2-10 to 1-11. Galway booked a home quarter-final date after a 4-10 to 3-4 victory away to Tipperary.



MAKING THEIR POINT: Meath and Waterford players have a sit down protest before the TG4 Ladies Football All-Ireland Championship match at Fraher Field. Picture: Matt Browne/Sportsfile

Experienced Howard points way for Tipp, while Cats beat Dubs

Camogie

Daragh Ó Conchúir

Getting back to the knockout stages of the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior camogie championship after missing out last year was important for Tipperary but it is far from the extent of their ambitions.

Róisín Howard is part of an experienced core in the squad now and the Cahir dynamo was in typical all-action form during her side's hard-fought 3-15 to 0-12 triumph over Wexford at Bellefield that ensured the Premier's qualification to the quarter-final at least.

Howard scored a brilliant goal in the 60th minute but the damage had been done in the first quarter, when goals from Cáit Devane and Teresa Ryan ensured a 2-10 to 0-8 half-time lead.

Ciara O'Connor totted up nine points for a Wexford team that managed to get within five points at one stage but Tipp's superior firepower told in the end.

"We got a great start," said Howard yesterday after the squad's recovery session. "We were expecting a very physical game and that's what it was.

"Wexford would definitely have a big height advantage on us. But I thought we were very solid in the first half and those two goals put us in a very strong position.

"The second half was tight and we were disappointed with not taking five or six more chances. The build-up play was spot on but it was just the execution at the end that let us down a bit."

That players of the calibre of All-Stars Mary Ryan and Aine Slattery as well as Mairead Eviston, Ciardha Maher, Eirena Fryday, Niamh Treacy, Nicole Walsh, and Clodagh McIntyre were not part of Tipp's first 15 illustrates the depth of talent available to Denis Kelly.

"Out of all the years, I think this is our strongest team and the competition is fierce. You don't take anything for

granted but we are in a very good position. We have good impact on the bench and we have people playing very well and we have top quality players ready to come on if we need them too."

"There is no doubt it was disappointing for a little while not to make the league final.

"It was such small margins. When we lost to Kilkenny by a point we needed Cork to beat Galway but Galway won by two points. That's how tight it was.

"But if those things are going to happen, it's better for them to happen at that time of year, when you have time to work on things.

"There were some things we could have done better ourselves in that game and also, we have to remember we were playing a very good team in the All-Ireland champions. But we dusted ourselves down and went back to work."

That led to winning the Munster championship and then carrying that form through the Glen Dimplex All-

Ireland championship, where they will be looking to maintain their 100% record with a rematch against the Cats at UPMC Nowlan Park.

Brian Dowling's charges drew with Wexford in the first round before two goals in five first-half minutes by last year's All-Ireland-winning captain Aoife Prendergast and Katie Nolan, allied with a tally of 1-9 from Denise Gaule, propelled them to a 3-14 to 0-11 success over Dublin.

That leaves the Dubs needing to beat Wexford next weekend to avoid being drawn into the relegation play-offs, while the Model County women will be hoping to win well and that Tipp overcome Kilkenny comfortably too, with a 24-point score difference leaving them up against it to progress.

Kilkenny will top the table if they get the better of their neighbours and so there is plenty to play for, as two of the three group winners will go forward directly to the semi-finals.



Ruairi O'Hagan, Red FM (media partner) presents the Rebel Óg award for May to Cork's Lucy O'Connell and Ellen Crowley, alongside Garry Wallace, Cork manager, and Martin O'Brien, Rebel Óg.



Nicola Cullinane, deputy marketing manager, 'The Echo' (media partner), presents Cork's Amy O'Riordan and Laura Dunlea with the Rebel Óg monthly award for May, alongside Shane Supple, secretary, Rebel Óg, and Michael Boland, hurling coach.

Minor side honoured for major camogie win

■ Rory Noonan

THE Cork minor camogie team are the latest winners of the Rebel Óg monthly awards.

They are being honoured for retaining their All-Ireland title, making it four in six years, a remarkable achievement.

Led by manager Jerry Wallace, they overturned an earlier season loss to Waterford to beat them in the final at UPMC Nowlan Park.

They started their campaign against Dublin and got off to a winning start before they lost out to Waterford in the round-robin stages.

They then had a hard-earned draw against Kilkenny, before wins over Tipperary and Galway secured their spot in the semi-final.

In that, they faced Galway again and another battle ensued with the Rebels coming through by 1-18 to 3-10.

In the final, it was another clash with Waterford, and the Rebels were determined to gain revenge for their loss and retain their title.

An Emily O'Donoghue goal six minutes in was a key score for Cork as they went on to win by 1-13 to 1-10.

Chairman of Rebel Óg, Michael O'Mahony, congratulated the winners and said winning one All-Ireland title is a huge achievement,



The Cork minor camogie team won the Rebel Óg monthly award for May, sponsored by the Clayton Hotel Silversprings, with trophy sponsors Cummins Sports and media partners 'The Echo' and Red FM. Front, from left: Chloe Lane, Lucy O'Connell, Ellen Crowley, and Sinead Hurley (captain). Back, from left, Laura Dunlea, Kate Fennessy, Amy O'Riordan, and Ava Fitzgerald. Pictures: Eddie O'Hare

but to retain it is even bigger.

He added to make it four in six years shows the strength of camogie

in Cork and it can only be good for the game at both county and club level going forward.

Chairman of the judging panel, Michael Evans, also congratulated the winners and said they were a credit



to their clubs, families and to themselves and wished them well as they move forward into adult sides in the coming seasons.

He said he had no doubt the future of Cork camogie was in safe hands with the young players that have come through in recent years and hopefully all will go on to enjoy playing sport for many years to come.

■ To nominate for the awards email: probng.cork@gaa.ie with details.



Kevin Cummins, Cummins Sports (trophy sponsor) presents Cork minor camogie All-Ireland winners Chloe Lane and Kate Fennessy with the Rebel Óg monthly award for May, alongside Martin O'Brien, Rebel Óg, and Cristóir Casey, mentor.



Norina O'Callaghan, sales and marketing, Clayton Hotel Silversprings, sponsors, presents Cork's Sinead Hurley and Ava Fitzgerald with the Rebel Óg monthly award for May, alongside Michael O'Mahony, chairman of Rebel Óg, and Orla Hallihan, liaison officer, Cork camogie.

LGFA tried but failed to facilitate change in Cork dual clash

Eoghan Cormican

The LGFA have said they tried but were unable to facilitate a change of fixture to resolve the latest Cork dual clash, with the Camogie Association remaining silent on the matter.

Both Cork teams have must-win championship games this Saturday; the county's senior camogie team are away to Clare (3pm), while the ladies footballers welcome Tipperary to Clonakilty (2pm).

It is the second time in a fortnight that a clash of championship fixtures has arisen affecting Cork dual players Libby Coppinger, Hannah Looney, Orlaith Cahalane, and Aoife Healy.

On Saturday week last, Coppinger was at full-back for Cork's All-Ireland camogie championship win over Down at Páirc Uí Chaoimh. Immediately after the game, Coppinger travelled almost three hours up the road to Pearse Stadium, Salthill where she was introduced as a second-half sub in Cork's football defeat to Galway.

Both the Cork camogie and ladies football camps have made contact with the respective governing bodies to request one of Saturday's games be moved to either the Friday evening or Sunday to avoid the four dual players having to choose one code over the other. Those requests have not and will not be granted.

A spokesperson for the LGFA told the *Irish Examiner* yesterday that "for any change of fixture, both counties need to be in agreement".

The spokesperson added that "efforts were made to facilitate a Friday evening fixture and a Sunday fixture for Cork v Tipperary, and Tipperary were contacted, but these efforts did not work out".

The Camogie Association were also contacted to establish why the Cork-Clare game could not be switched to Sunday, but no response had been provided at the time of writing. Prior to the fixture being firmed up over the past week, the initial date for the game on the Camogie Association website was listed as July 1/2, meaning the option was there



Cork's Libby Coppinger in camogie action against Down's Olivia Boyle, on a day in which she later lined out for the Cork footballers in Galway. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

to fix the game for Sunday.

Separate to Sunday's statement from the two Cork panels imploring the LGFA and Camogie Association to resolve this latest fixture clash, the *Irish Examiner* has learned Cork football and camogie players wrote separate letters to Camogie president Hilda Breslin and Ladies Football CEO Helen O'Rourke.

The camogie letter, signed by captain Amy O'Connor and team players representative Laura Treacy, made reference to a Waterford camogie fixture being changed earlier this month to ensure a Déise dual player did not have to choose between codes.

"On Saturday June 17, Limerick and Waterford were due to play in Camogie. This fixture was changed to Sunday, June 18 to facilitate one dual player who was playing with the Waterford Ladies Football team on Saturday, June 17 against Donegal. This change

“Cork football and camogie players wrote separate letters to Camogie president Hilda Breslin and Ladies Football CEO Helen O'Rourke

was rightfully made to facilitate one dual player. We have four dual players and have yet to be facilitated.

"One of the aims & ethos of the LGFA is listed as: 'The Association recognises the role of the Dual Player, who is a member of both the LGFA and Camogie Association, and will

endeavour to facilitate them as far as is practicable'. Again, this is not something we feel is the case in the current situation.

"We are asking that one of the games be moved from July 1st to July 2nd.

"As a group, we have trained extremely hard for

eight months for this and it is not fair that we are forced to be without members of our panel because of clashes like this that can be easily resolved."

A number of former All-Ireland Cork winners have vented their frustration on social media at the clash.

"Infuriating that this lack of collaboration is STILL arising," said Bríd Stack. "Looks like not much has changed since we watched our teammates Mary [O'Connor], Ange [Walsh], Briega [Corkery], Rena [Buckley] & Co. having to play two games in a day or worse, being made to choose between the two. That was 15 years ago."

2014 All-Ireland winning Cork camogie captain Anna Geary asked "how was this not sorted when the fixtures were first released?"

"Is it any wonder the players are crying out for basic minimum standards?"

Twomey: This will be like All-Ireland final for Clare

Cork must avoid defeat in Ennis to advance to knockout stages of senior championship

BY MATTHEW HURLEY

MATTHEW TWOMEY'S Cork camogie team is feeling the heat ahead of their crunch All-Ireland senior championship clash against Clare on Saturday (3pm in Ennis, live on the Camogie YouTube channel).

If Cork lose, they are out of the championship. A win or a draw would be enough to progress to the quarter-finals.

Despite the Rebels being part of the so-called big three along with Galway and Kilkenny, Twomey isn't taking anything for granted and knows Clare will provide an obstacle.

"It will be a very tough game. We've played Clare a number of times last year, one of those games went to extra time and we just got over them," Twomey said.

"This is going to be like an All-Ireland final for Clare, to play Cork to knock us out of the championship. We're well

aware this is going to be a huge battle both hurling-wise and psychological-wise so we have to be ready in every department."

A draw would be enough for the Rebels. However, Twomey knows Cork need to win to make sure they progress.

"There will be nothing about a draw in our heads; we have to beat them. If we want to make a mark on this championship we have to go up to a tough place and win. This is where the character of the team comes in now. There are no sideshows with this," the Cork boss said.

The Rebels beat Down in their previous championship game, 3-19 to 1-10, after three matches without a win, including losing the group opener to Galway.

"It was comfortable in the end against Down. Off the back of a few losses, we were a bit nervous in the first half but as soon as we got into our stride

then we played like what we did at the start of the year, which was pleasing," he said.

"I just hope we got a bit of confidence from that game. To get 3-19 was a good score but we still left a bit behind us, a good sign of the character of the team as well. There is still stuff to work on, which we have been doing since the Down game," he added.

Twomey confirmed to *The Southern Star* that Ennis-skeane's Orla Cronin will be available for selection but there is no other major update in regards to returnees.

Clare will provide stiff opposition on Saturday, meaning a big performance is needed from Cork.

"This will be a very good test and Clare have quality players all around the pitch. Anytime we have played them in the last few years they have been very organised. We watched their game against Galway in detail



Cork manager Matthew Twomey.

(Photo: Tom Maher/INPHO)

'If we want to make a mark on this championship we have to go up to a tough place and win'

ALL-IRELAND GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	SD	PTS
Galway	2	2	0	0	2-25	0-25	+6	6
Cork	2	1	0	1	3-31	2-22	+12	3
Clare	2	1	0	1	1-32	3-24	+2	3
Down	2	0	0	2	3-21	4-38	-20	0

and they made it very hard for them. We have to be very patient too. This game is not going to be won after five or ten minutes. We need to stick to our plan," Cork boss Twomey warned.



Cork's Cliona O'Callaghan is tackled by Kerry's Sara Murphy, right, and Patrice Diggin during the Munster Intermediate final at Cusack Park. Picture: John Sheridan/Sportsfile

Cork intermediates need to beat Galway to qualify from their

TOMORROW: Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Intermediate Championship, Cork v Galway, Ballinlough, 5pm

THE stakes couldn't be higher as Cork and Galway meet in the last game of the intermediate championship group series in Ballinlough tomorrow.

With Kilkenny already qualified, second place is up for grabs in a winner-takes-all clash and it's sure to be a tough hour.

Having surprisingly lost their opening game to Kilkenny, 2-13 to 1-8, Cork got their campaign back on track with a round two victory over Dublin, 2-11 to 0-5.

Galway lost to Kilkenny on a 1-19 to 0-11 scoreline before overcoming Dublin, 1-14 to 1-9.

Galway are the reigning champions, having beaten Cork in last year's final, but it must be remembered that this is a new Galway team; having won last year all of those players are not available this time around.

Last season Cathal Murray managed both adult teams, but this year Conor Dolan has taken over as manager.

He has been involved with inter-county camogie teams since 2018 and was part of Murray's management team in 2018 and 2019.

From 2020 to 2022 he was manager and coach of his native Clare senior and junior teams and has managed and coached senior club hurling teams in Clare, Limerick, and Tipperary and with the Ardahan club.

Despite his side not progressing in the league, Dolan was relatively happy given that a lot of his panel are in their first year at this level. He is looking to develop the side with an eye to the future.

Among the players in his squad are Chloe Broderick, Katie Mannion, Ava Lynskey, Katie Donoghue, and Keisha Coleman;

with just over a minute of the second half gone that proved the difference. It turns out that Orlaith Cahalane's foot injury wasn't as bad as it first appeared, management initially hearing that a bone was broken. Cahalane is still not likely to figure for the camogie side as she and Hannah Looney are expected to again join the footballers, with Libby Coppinger and Aoife Healy selected for the small ball.

The decision on who goes where is primarily down to where both Cork managers feel they have cover and with Matthew Twomey very limited with defenders, he'll hold the two mentioned.

Things will look up for Cork if they can get over Clare, another week closer to getting Aisling Thompson and Laura Hayes back into action.

Pamela Mackey, who came on against Down, is going well at training. Two weeks sharper, her impact should be telling. Cork need more from their midfield and forward lines.

Cork's half-back line of Hayes, Laura Treacy, and Saoirse McCarthy were fluent in point-scoring last season. This season, not so much. Treacy has been missing the support play of her flanks, McCarthy playing at midfield now, Hayes likewise.

It was decided that Treacy would return to the right-half back position, but injury has ruled her out since. Take away your defensive and midfield scoring threat, McCarthy aside, and you have a large scoring gap. The forwards need to pick up the mantle.

They are getting the opportunities. Fiona Keating is making great runs but needs to release the ball quicker at times. When a goal presents itself, players need to give the fast pass. Attempts to hit points from tight and difficult angles is taken by some, get within the scoring zone that has been worked on.

If Cork can get more conviction and return up front, they'll reach the quarter final and even beyond.

Cork's Amy O'Connor is tackled by Down's Alannah Savage and Rhea Smyth. Picture: Inpho/Bryan Keane



Cork need to be wary of a fired up Clare



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

TOMORROW: Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Championship Group 1 Round 3, Cork v Clare, Cusack Park, Ennis, 3pm

IT may be a round robin game, but it's the last game of the group and in effect it's a knockout tie.

Galway have topped group 1 and only one other side will join them. Clare have to win; a draw will do Cork to be in the quarter-final draw which will take place after this weekend's games.

What a blow it would be for Cork not to make the quarters. With the bad run of injuries they've had this year, who would bet against the worst-case scenario happening here.

This is a huge game for Clare. Realistically they are not going to win the All-Ireland, but to beat Cork and set up a quarter-final, possibly as a curtain-raiser to the Clare hurlers in Croke Park next weekend, would be a dream come true.

They will come into this game with an incredible desire.

It'll be more difficult for Cork to build themselves up for it because of history and the fact that Clare aren't in the top five as honours contenders, but that's the slippery slope that Cork must be mindful of.

Cork are beatable is how Clare will view this game and that belief carries weight; it'll drive them on even when things may be going against them.



Cork's Aisling Thompson and Chloe Sigerson after the game against Down. Picture: Inpho/Bryan Keane

They'll fight to the bitter end for this one. Clare have taken big scalps in the past. Galway only got past them by a goal last weekend. They're a dogged bunch.

They began the year with a surprising success over Galway, but whereas the Tribeswomen picked up from there to go on and win the league, it went downhill for the Munster side, a repeated storyline for them.

They had to draw with Dublin in the final game to be sure of avoiding relegation and though they subsequently reached the Munster final, they lost to Tipperary by 17 points.

Clare needed a late flurry that yielded a goal and four points to get over the Ulster champions by 1-19 to 2-11 in round one with Eimear Kelly coming off the bench to split the posts twice and Louise McNamara adding to her tally with a pair, before Aine O'Loughlin goalied in injury-time to secure the verdict.

Galway were happy to escape from Cusack Park with a 1-13 to 0-13 triumph. They struggled to break down a well-drilled Clare side.

Lorna McNamara was the primary scorer for Clare, Siobhán McGrath's goal



Cork's Katie Walsh on the break from Kildare's Maria Doyle and Siobhán Hurley during their All-Ireland Intermediate Championship match. Picture: Daire Brennan/Sportsfile

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

players who have plenty of inter-county experience at underage and adult level.

The sides met in the league earlier in the season when Cork recorded a three-point victory, 2-15 to 3-9, and with the stakes higher on this occasion, Galway will be coming to Cork bidding to reverse that result and grab a qualification spot.

Cork manager Trevor Coleman reports a clean bill of health as his side face into the most important game of 2023.

Earlier in the season they won the division 2B league title but lost to Kerry in a Munster final where the performance was not up to scratch, and while they re-deemed themselves with a victory over Dublin, there is a lot more in this side and hopefully we will see them open up and go at Galway from the throw-in.

Cliona O'Leary continues to be an excellent free taker, which is so important.

Fiona Nelligan has impressed in every game when introduced, and at this stage she must be close to a place on the starting 15; she has a huge burst of speed and is an excellent finisher.

A big test awaits, but one that Cork will no doubt relish.

SUNDAY: All-Ireland U16 Championship: Cork v Galway, Duggan Park, Ballinasloe, 2pm

With three group wins to their credit, Cork head to Galway in search of a victory that would almost certainly guarantee them a place in the last four of the U16 championship with just one game to go against Tipperary.

Cork head the table with Galway in second having drawn a game. On form, Cork are on their way to securing a place in the last four.

Éire Óg land premier minor league title as Cloughduv bag plate

Éire Óg 2-15
Inniscarra 0-11

TWO first-half goals helped settle Éire Óg into the Premier Minor League final.

Inniscarra, playing with the aid of the wind, dominated the early stages, but a goal after eight minutes settled the Ovens side. A superb run through the middle by Abbie Casey put the Inniscarra defence under pressure, but a superb save denied her before Kate Murphy reacted quickly to send the ball to the net with a first-time ground stroke.

With Orlaith Cremin and Lisa Murphy strong in the centre of the field Éire Óg were on top and a second goal on 15 minutes came following great work by Fiadh Malone that saw her finish a high delivery to the net. As the sides traded points Laoise Murphy, Abbie Casey, Leigh Coakley, Fiadh Malone, Ciara O'Brien, and Lisa Murphy were on target for Éire Óg with Eva Costello, Rebecca Murphy, Adele Lott, Aoife O'Leary, and Rion Murphy keeping Inniscarra in touch and at the break Éire Óg led 2-10 to 0-7.

Both defences were on top in the second half and scores were hard to come by, but with a cushion of their two first-half goals Éire Óg added to their tally with points from Coakley,

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

O'Brien, Laoise Murphy and Shauna Sheehan. Inniscarra battled hard points from Adele Lott, Costello, Rion Murphy and Orla Kelleher, but Éire Óg had done enough to hold out and take the title.

Scores for Éire Óg: L. Murphy 0-6 (0-2 fs), F. Malone 1-1, K. Murphy 1-0, C. O'Brien, S. Sheehan, L. Coakley 0-2 each, L. Murphy, A. Casey 0-1 each.

Inniscarra: E. Costello 0-3, A. Lott, Rebecca Murphy, Rion Murphy 0-2 each, O. Kelleher, A. O'Leary 0-1 each.

ÉIRE ÓG: R. Halligan; E. Cremin, L. Sheehan, G. Young; L. Ahern, S. Sheehan, A. Larkin; L. Murphy, O. Cremin; L. Murphy, A. Casey, L. Coakley; F. Malone, C. O'Brien, K. Murphy (c).

Subs: C. Murphy for A. Casey (40), M. Basy-Murphy for L. Ahern, C. Dillon for K. Murphy (in), G. Harris for L. Murphy (55), E. Healy for F. Malone (55).

INNISCARRA: E. Honohan; L. Geaney, L. Murphy, L. Murtagh; I. Golden, E. Crowley, G. O'Leary; R. Murphy, A. Whelton, E. Costello, A. Lott; R. Murphy, A. Ryan, A. O'Leary, J. Mollaghan.

Subs: O. Kelleher for J. Mollaghan, S. O'Sullivan for L. Geaney, S. Doyle for L. Murtagh, C. O'Connell for A. Whelton, A. Jones for R. Murphy, A. Barrett for A. Ryan.

Cloughduv 2-13
Aghabullogue 1-10

A first-half Sinead Fehily goal helped Cloughduv lead Agha-



Éire Óg: Premier minor camogie League winners



Cloughduv: Premier minor camogie Plate winners

bullogue 1-6 to 0-7 in the Premier Minor plate league final and they kept the pressure throughout the game with Amy Sheppard contributing six points and Niamh MacNabola with three. Eavan Nolan added their second

goal — with points from Fia Drinan, Chloe O'Driscoll, Sinead Fehily, and Nolan.

CLOUGHDUV: E. O'Sullivan; R. Sexton, A. Lehane, K. O'Neill; L. Burns, F. Drinan, K. Downey; N. MacNabola, A. O'Brien; C. Dineen, E. Nolan, A. Murphy; C. O'Driscoll, A.

Sheppard, S. Fehily.

Subs: C. Murray for A. O'Brien, C. Kelleher for C. Dineen, A. Devine for S. Fehily, O. O'Mahony for A. Murphy, L. Shorten for R. Sexton.

AGHABULLOGUE: E. Downey; R. Lucey, A. O'Shea, S. Bowen; L. Kearney, R.

Bowen, E. O'Sullivan; O. Cahill, E. Buckley; J. Buckley, L. O'Shea, G. Kelleher; A. Foley, M. Leary-Daly.

Subs: A. McCarthy for R. Lucey, E. Barrett for L. Kearney, E. Duff for M. Leary, M. Ross for E. O'Sullivan, E. Buckley for J. Buckley, C. Murphy for Grace Kelleher.

No excuse for fixtures clash



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

WHAT an exhausting fortnight it has been again for Matthew Twomey and Shane Ronayne, with no return.

The fixture clash goes ahead today with the camogie players in Ennis and the footballers in Clonakilty.

The LGFA made attempts to get their game switched to Friday or Sunday. Tipperary refused.

But Tipperary aren't the bad guys here. They could have their own genuine reason for denying the change and even if they didn't, that's their prerogative at such a late stage.

This clash was known months ago. Why the LGFA didn't just change the fixture then instead of the 11th hour and putting it on Tipperary is ridiculous.

The camogie association confirmed last week that they wouldn't be changing, their reason being that second place in group 1 could come down to scoring difference and so they wanted all counties to finish at the same time, so there would be no advantage given to any one side.

Well, unless they expect Down to beat Galway, that is a non-runner of an excuse to not make a date change.

I said last week that I think the day of the dual player is over. I gave some of my reasons why; none of which were because of fixture clashes.

There was no reason for this to



Cork camogie manager Matthew Twomey, left, and Cork football manager Shane Ronayne will both have to do without key players in their respective games today because of a failure to avoid a clash of fixtures.



happen AGAIN but it has. It would wear you out.

But I think we need to be clear at this stage where we are at with both associations.

At this point in time, they are separate, and just because they are both Gaelic games as we know them, that is irrelevant to them.

They don't care about dual players. Just as would be the case if the dual game was soccer or basketball.

If they clash you choose and that's all there is to it. It seems that all the negative press, all the social media

rants run off their backs, so I think managers and players are just going to have to live with it until integration.

This is the third clash this year, it's worse it's getting, so don't think next year will be any different.

All the associations want to do is get their games played and as a curtain raiser or with TV coverage if possible. With every competition now being a round-robin format there are just too many games, and the window is short.

Yes, last weekend was free where neither Cork code had a fixture and

yet they ignored that when scheduling.

They say that the camogie fixtures came out first. I'm not so sure about that. Until a few weeks ago we still had the playing weekends, but still no actual day. We can point the finger all we like. It makes no difference. It's a massive team distraction.

Note the statement from both camps earlier in the week. It's too time consuming, it absorbs too much energy.

Managers and players are going to have to rethink things.

Last weekend's game between Kil-

kenny and Dublin last weekend saw the first GPA driven protest as players expressed their frustration over the failure to implement a player charter for both codes.

The charter would bring clarity around issues such as expenses entitlements, access to medical care and pitches, as well as the provision of playing gear, among other issues.

Cork are looked after far better than many other counties to be fair. Other counties are miles behind and the protest is good.

Extra work is being done to try and provide additional funds to ensure Cork's senior and intermediate camogie squads get what they need.

A number of former players are running a two-day golf classic on July 6 and 7.

Anyone interested in supporting the girls please reach out to any board member, player, or manager.

A draw will do Cork in Ennis today to advance to the quarter-finals. Tipperary and Kilkenny will do battle to determine who finishes first and second in group 2.

Waterford and Antrim meet in group 3 to determine the same scenario.

Six teams will qualify for the knockout stages, two from each group.

Two of the three group winners will advance directly to the semi-finals, with one team joining the other three second placed teams in the quarter-finals.

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

Down, Wexford, Dublin, Limerick, and Offaly have no chance of qualifying for the knockout stages

Murphy bringing all her skills to the table for Clare



Senior All-Ireland Camogie Championship
Clare v Cork

Tomorrow: Cusack Park, Ennis
Referee: Liz Dempsey
TV: Camogie Association's YouTube

Daragh Ó Conchúir



It is more than a decade since Doireann Murphy was crowned a world champion and she has a couple of All-Ireland medals rattling around in her pocket already.

But if Clare beat Cork at Cusack Park today to supplant the Rebels as likely runners-up in Group 1 of the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship and seal a coveted berth among the last six standing, it will rank up there with anything she has been involved in.

Murphy is a top-class goalkeeper who earned the rare (if not unique) distinction for a netminder of being named Munster's senior player of the year last December.

The Clarecastle custodian earned plaudits when saving penalties in consecutive provincial championship games last year as the Bannerwomen reached the decider.

And while she modestly attributes her propensity for overcoming the odds faced with a placed ball one-on-one to "a lot of luck", there is more to it than that.

Murphy herself will concede that her experience as an outfield player is helpful in being able to read where a shot is intended for. But perhaps most useful are the skills

honed in the handball alley. Current Banner hurler Mark Rodgers was an underage star. Further afield, Kilkenny tyro Billy Drennan was an elite operator too. But like Murphy, who won her World Championship in 2012 in the U13 doubles category alongside Ella Donnellan before securing All-Ireland minor (2015) and intermediate (2019) doubles crowns with Clodagh Nash, they could not combine the two at a high-performance level.

"If I was playing intermediate handball I could manage it but it's just not feasible to play the two at senior," says Murphy with an obvious hint of regret.

"We're camogie training four or five nights a week and if you want to be competitive at senior handball, you'd have to be giving the same time into that, with the training and the gym work on top of that. It just wouldn't work but it's something I'd love to get back into. I loved it when I was younger and it definitely has its benefits for camogie, especially the hand-eye coordination and footwork. Reactions would be another major one, especially in goals."

An Irish and PE teacher at Presentation College in Athenry alongside Sarsfields and Galway player Maria Cooney, Murphy, who has also won county championships with the big ball for her club, was first selected on the Clare camogie team as a forward.

But having dabbled at goalkeeping in her mid-teens for the club and taken the jersey one year at UL, she decided to focus more permanently on the role when covid restrictions imposed made maintaining fitness levels more challenging.

The 24-year-old admits that it has been a funny sort of a

season for Clare, but they beat Galway in the Very League, reached another Munster final and followed their opening round victory over Down in the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Championship with a one-goal defeat to League champions Galway in Ennis to confirm their feeling that they are coming to the boil.

"At the start of the year, our goal in the League would have always been to retain our status in Division 1 which we did do but we probably would have liked to be a bit more comfortable up there at the same time.

"Going into the Munster Championship our main goal was to try to get back to the Munster final. Obviously we would have looked to go one step further this year and win it but on the day, Tipp were on another level to us. They were absolutely exceptional.

"We were lucky that between the Munster Championship and All-Ireland, there wasn't a huge break so there was no time to sit around and feel sorry for ourselves.

"The first match we'd go up to Down. It's very hard going up there but we were lucky we came out of there with the win.

"Then we were facing into Galway. We put it up to them, we lost by three points. It probably could have gone either way, we were unlucky but at least we're into the last game with it now all to play for and still in our own hands."

And it's a familiar foe standing in the way of quarter-final qualification for John Carmody's squad.

"We've played Cork a good bit over the last few years. A lot of their game is based around runners so it'll be trying to stop those runs further

Twomey happy with Cork's big win in Clare

CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

AFTER all the commotion during the week because of the fixtures clash between the Cork camogie and ladies football teams, both had comfortable wins in their respective championship ties on Saturday, with Cork beating Clare 3-19 to 0-8 in their group clash in Cusack Park to earn a quarter-final spot in the All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship.

"If only we knew that during the week, I could have slept," manager Matthew Twomey joked afterwards.

"We're very happy to get the result today. It was nifty coming up here with the week we put down again, so all we wanted to do was get the job done and we've done that."

Was he surprised that Clare's challenge was so disappointing? "Absolutely yeah, especially what they did with Galway last week, keeping them to a goal. I think from the first minute, we turned them inside out; we had a shot at goal and from then on I don't think we looked back."

"They did get two bad injuries to prominent forwards which knocked them back a bit, but look, we're very happy. We just wanted to get the result here, whatever way it came, we didn't care."

Fiona Keating's goal before half-time was a vital score.

"It really set us up because I couldn't believe how much possession we had and we were only a goal up, so that put a better light on the game for us to be going in two goals up."

"Then I think we got 10 unanswered points in the second half which was very impressive. We emptied the bench and they all came on and made an impression which is great, especially with the two lads down in Clonakilly (Hannah Looney and Orlaith Cahalane).

"They've to come back into the fray as well and we've a couple of injuries coming back as well, so look, we're in a good position going in next weekend against Kilkenny."

Speaking of the injuries to Ashling Thompson and Laura Hayes, Twomey said: "We think we have the two available next weekend. It's a huge boost. I suppose Ashling hasn't played in a year, she's going to be rusty, but to have her around the place, she's putting in a fierce shift in training, so yeah it's a massive boost and having Orla Cronin on the field again today, that's a big boost as well."

Did he consider giving her a run? "We were advised to give it another few days by the medical people, so we have to do what we're told."

"It would have been ideal to bring her on, but we have her in your back pocket now for the next day."

Manager Kelly preparing for quick Tipperary turnaround

DARAGH Ó CONCHÚIR

THREE into two doesn't go, which means Tipperary are the group winners to miss out on a direct route to the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship semi-finals and the chance to take a breath that would have come with it.

Following a thrilling draw with neighbours Kilkenny at UPMC Nowlan Park (2-8 to 1-11), the Premier were drawn out of the hat for a quarter-final joust with Antrim at Croke Park as part of a double-header with the Limerick/Galway All-Ireland hurling semi-final on Saturday.

In the other quarter-final, also at headquarters and scheduled to take place before the hurling semi-final involving Kilkenny and Clare, the Cats will play Cork, who pulled away in the second half to record a 3-19 to 0-8 triumph over the Banner's camogs. This is a repeat of last year's

All-Ireland final, won by the Noreiders.

Galway, who beat Down by 1-18 to 0-10 to maintain their 100pc record, and Waterford, who did likewise as Beth Carton scored 2-10 in their 5-16 to 0-10 defeat of Antrim, lie in wait for the winners, with the semi-finals being held at UPMC Nowlan Park on July 22.

Of the teams that finished bottom in the three groups, Offaly, who failed to score in the second half at a time when they were trailing by only a goal on the way to a 5-14 to 0-5 reverse to Limerick, drew the literal short straw and have one shot of survival in the top tier, as they await the loser of Down v Wexford, with the Ulster contingent having home advantage in that game.

Wexford had a small chance of progressing to the knockout stages but Dublin got the better of them by 0-16 to 1-10 to ensure they would retain senior status



Denis Kelly has time to refocus

and send the Yellowbellies into the relegation play-offs.

Tipperary manager Denis Kelly admitted that he would have preferred to have had a three-week break to a semi-final and is expecting a strong examination from an Antrim team that suffered their first defeat against a red-hot Déise side at the SETU Arena.

"We can't do anything about it now," the manager told Tipperary Camogie. "We'd probably prefer that extra bit of a break because bodies are going to be very sore. Antrim are going to give it everything as well in Croke Park, so it won't be an easy game."

"So we'd prefer the break but it is what it is now and we have to refocus the minds, get ourselves back into recovery in the morning, drive on next week and have everything ready for Saturday."

While Tipp had already been assured of a place in the last six prior to the game, Kelly admitted that losing another match to one of the long-established top three by a small margin would have been tough to take.

"A humdinger of a game, it was nip and tuck all the way through. There wasn't an inch given or taken there and we're delighted to come out with something out of it as we've been coming down often enough

and going home with one- and two-point deficits, so it was important we got something out of it. We also topped the group, which I suppose helped us in the draw."

Kelly lost goalkeeper Caoimhe Bourke in the first half through injury and with Denise Gaule causing mayhem, introduced Mairéad Eviston to help turn the tide in his side's favour.

"That's the way these things go. They'd an upper hand with Gaule inside. We brought in Mairéad and she did a right good job on her. That's the way it goes."

There was some confusion over an Eimear McGrath free that had been recorded as a point on the scoreboard and by the Tipperary stats team but when they thought they went in at half-time level, they resumed a point down. But once more, Kelly didn't make too much of an issue of it.

"Disappointed... but we didn't focus on it at half-time," he said.

By Daragh Ó Conchúir

KILKENNY and Cork will meet in a mouth-watering quarter-final rematch of last year's Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior camogie final as part of a double-header with the All-Ireland hurling semi-final involving Kilkenny and Clare next Sunday.

The other quarter-final will be between Tipperary and Antrim and will take place ahead of the hurling semi-final between Limerick and Galway on Saturday.

Waiting for them in the semi-finals will be National League champions Galway and last year's semi-finalists and current Division 1B title holders Waterford.

Meanwhile, Wexford, Down and Offaly will battle to avoid relegation to the intermediate ranks.

The Cats fought out a barnstorming 2-8 to 1-11 draw with Tipperary at UPMC Nowlan Park, a result that sent them through as runners-up to their neighbours.

Tipp lost goalkeeper Caoimhe Bourke and joint-skipper Clodagh Quirke to injury in the first half but



CATS ON THE ATTACK: Kilkenny's Katie Nolan takes on Tipperary

Kilkenny responded in style with a great goal by Denise Gaule

They were able to call on former All-Star netminder Aine Slattery, while Mairéad Eviston had a big impact in helping to reduce the impact of Denise Gaule.

The visitors got off to a great start, an uncharacteristic mistake from Kilkenny captain Aoife Prendergast to move four points ahead but with Eimear McGrath accurate from placed balls, Tipp shot five of the next six scores, including a brace of points by Casey Hennessy, to go in level at the break, 2-4 to 1-7.

Kilkenny responded in style with a fantastic goal by Gaule and then another major from Aoife Prendergast to move four points ahead but with Eimear McGrath accurate from placed balls, Tipp shot five of the next six scores, including a brace of points by Casey Hennessy, to go in level at the break, 2-4 to 1-7.

They dominated much of the second half but were very wasteful and although building a three-point lead and holding Kilkenny scoreless for 17 second-half minutes, Asha McHardy, Katie Nolan and Gaule - with a huge effort - suddenly restored parity and they could not be separated.

In the other Group 2 outing, Wexford needed a big win over Dublin and for Kilkenny to lose heavily to have a chance of qualification but,

Cats through to quarter-finals after Tipp draw

in the end, a first victory of the season in national competition for the women in blue consigned the Yellowbellies to the relegation playoffs on a 0-16 to 1-10 scoreline.

Aisling Maher and Aisling O'Neill scored ten points between them for Gerry McQuaid's side and though Ciara O'Connor hit 1-7 for Wexford, it wasn't enough to deny the Metropolitans.

Two first-half goals gave Cork the freedom to open up in the second half and record the 3-19 to 0-8 victory over Clare at Cusack Park that

cemented their quarter-final qualification.

The Rebels have stuttered to date but those majors from Sorcha McCartan and a trademark Fiona Keating effort sent them in at the break leading by 2-6 to 0-6, with O'Connor and Lorna McNamara slotting five points each.

Matthew Twomey was without the services of Hannah Looney and fit-again Orlaith Cahalane, who were on football duty, but would have been delighted to be able to call upon vastly experienced

defender Pamela Mackey after injury.

The Leesiders were able to play with more freedom on the resumption, though McNamara's departure through injury was a big blow for the hosts. O'Connor raised a third green flag on her way to registering a tally of 1-9 with eight different players getting on the scoresheet.

Galway confirmed their spot on top of Group 1 with a third straight triumph, proving too strong for Down on a 1-18 to 0-10 scoreline.

Cathal Murray's side had the damage done in the first half and were ahead 1-10 to 0-4 at the interval. Carrie Dolan put seven points onto Niamh Hanniffy's goal, while Niamh Mallon hit all the Down scores and it was a cruise to the finish line, though the home team battled all the way.

Waterford delivered a real statement of intent when cruising to a 5-16 to 0-10 victory over Antrim in a clash between two already qualified teams at the top of Group 3 at the SETU Arena.

The visitors just could not cope with Waterford's scoring artillery and Seán Power's squad were ruthless in scoring four goals in nine minutes in the first half to put the tie to bed.

Beth Carton began the goal rush and Mairead O'Brien struck twice before Niamh Rockett registered her customary major. Carton lobbed Caitriona Graham for her second goal early in the second half and finished with 2-10 to seal top spot.

In the group's other game, Limerick ensured their senior status for next year by waltzing to a 5-14 to 0-5 success, goals from Sarah O'Brien, Aine Reynolds, Claire Keating, Laura Fennelly and Lizanna Boylan making it a day to forget for Offaly, who were only 1-5 to 0-5 behind at the break but failed to score in the second half.

Camogie Round-up

Tipperary forced to take the long way around after draw

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Galway, who beat Down by 1-18 to 0-10 to maintain their 100 per cent record, and Waterford, who did likewise as Beth Carton scored 2-10 in their 5-16 to 0-10 defeat of Antrim, lie in

wait for the winners, with the semi-finals being held at UPMC Nowlan Park on July 22nd.

Trailing

Of the teams that finished bottom in the three groups, Offaly, who failed to score in the second half at a time when they were trailing by only a goal on the way to a 5-14 to 0-5 reverse to Limerick, drew the short straw and have one shot at survival, as they await the loser of Down v Wexford, with the Ulster side having home advantage in that game.

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chance of progressing to the knockout stages but Dublin got the better of them by 0-16 to 1-10 to ensure they would retain senior status and send the Yellowbellies into the relegation playoffs.

Tipperary manager, Denis Kelly admitted that he would have preferred to have had a three-week break to a semi-final and is expecting a strong examination from an Antrim team that suffered their first defeat against a red-hot Déise side at the Setu Arena.

"We can't do anything about it now," the manager told Tip-

perary Camogie. "We'd probably prefer that extra bit of a break 'cos bodies are going to be very sore. Antrim are going to give it everything as well in Croke Park so it won't be an easy game.

'Drive on'

"So we'd prefer the break but it is what it is now and we have to refocus the minds, get ourselves back into recovery in the morning, drive on next week and have everything ready for Saturday."

In the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Intermediate Champion-

ship, Kilkenny play Wexford and Cork play Meath in the next week's quarter-finals, with Derry and Westmeath qualified for the semi-finals.

Carlow have home advantage in the relegation semi-final against Dublin and the loser will play Laois to determine who makes the drop.

Armagh and Tipperary are confirmed participants in the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Premier Junior semi-finals, awaiting the outcome of next week's quarter-finals involving Roscommon and Limerick, and Clare and Cavan.



Cork's Rose Murphy is tackled by Galway's Joanne Daly during the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland intermediate camogie championship at Ballinlough. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

Cork too strong for Galway and claim second place in group

Cork 0-16
Galway 0-8

CORK secured their place in the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Intermediate Camogie quarter-final after they overcame holders Galway to finish runners-up in their group behind Kilkenny.

They had to battle hard, and it wasn't until the beginning of the fourth quarter that Cork began to pull away.

It was winner-takes-all for both teams, so Galway are out, albeit with a new side under the rules having lifted last year's All-Ireland.

Playing against the strong wind in the opening half, Cork were full value for their three-point interval lead.

Galway got the game's opening score with an Ava Lynskey point, but Cliona O'Leary levelled with a free before Laura Doyle struck from play.

With their defence holding a firm grip on the Galway attack, Cork held their lines.

Aoibhinn Barry made it 0-2 each before three points in a row from Lauren Homan (2) and Lucy Allen nosed them in front.

Rose Murphy and O'Leary added to Cork's tally and Chloe Broderick replied before Stephanie Beausang denied Barry with a good save.

Broderick pounced before the break, but Cork were still 0-7 to 0-4 up.

On the resumption, Homan converted a free, but Cork hit then struck four successive wides with Niamh Horan



Cork's Avril Cashman boots the ball away from Galway's Shelia Forde. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

pointing for Galway.

The Tribe then went 17 minutes without a score as Cork took over.

Upping the tempo, the Rebels split the posts through Allen, Rachel Harty, and O'Leary (2).

The hosts then won a penalty after Harty was impeded on her path to goal. Homan clipped it over, and from there until the finish there was only going to be one outcome.

The Cork attack picked off points; Homan and Rose Murphy with two each, before Broderick and Niamh Spellman (2) brought the curtain down on the last game in Group 1.

Scorers for Cork: L Homan 0-5 (0-2 f, 0-1 pen), C O'Leary 0-4 (0-2 f), R Murphy 0-3, L Allen 0-2, R Harty, L Doyle 0-1 each.

Galway: C Broderick 0-3 (0-2 f, 0-1 45), N Spellman 0-2 f, A Lynskey, N Horan, A Barry 0-1 each.

CORK: S Beausang, A Moloney, N O'Leary, E Flanagan, L Doyle, M Ring, L O'Sullivan, A O'Callaghan, R Harty (c); R Murphy, L Allen, A Cashman, C Dooley, C O'Leary, L Homan.

Subs: F Nelligan for C Dooley (42), I Sheehan for L Allen (52), T McCarthy for A Cashman (52), E O'Donovan for A Moloney (58), C Golden for A O'Callaghan (58).

GALWAY: C Hickey, P Finnerty, L Burke, E Burke, S Forde, R Kelly, J Daly, K Donoghue, R Hughes, K Broderick, A Lynskey (c), A Barry, N Horan, K Mannion, M Dillon.

Subs: A Crowe for J Daly (h-t), S McGinley for K Mannion (39), K Coleman for S Forde (42), N Spellman for R Hughes (46), A Rock for C Broderick (56).

Referee: Mike Ryan (Tipperary).



Cork's Katrina Mackey controlling the sliotar against Clare's Susan Daly during their All-Ireland Senior Camogie clash at Cusack Park. Picture: Brendan Gleeson

Classy Cork beat Banner



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

Clare 0-8
Cork 3-19

CORK are through to the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland quarter-final after an emphatic victory over Clare in Cusack Park on Saturday afternoon.

Cork needed at least a draw to ensure a quarter-final spot next weekend, and the outcome in Ennis was never in doubt from early on, even though it took a while for Cork to register their first score.

Cork will face Kilkenny at Croke Park on Saturday as part of a double-header with Clare-Kilkenny in the All-Ireland SHC semi-final.

There was one change to Cork's team to the which played Down, Pamela Mackey replacing Aoife O'Neill.

A strong wind that blew left to right favoured Clare and a raucous roar greeted Clare as they emerged second from the dressing room.

Both teams had left the field after the national anthem in a continuation of the camogie and ladies football players' protest over concerns about fair treatment.

In what was a scrappy enough opening half, Cork took a 2-6 to 0-6 lead into the half-time dressing room.

They always looked the better side in an often slow-moving encounter, not helped by an early injury to Eimear Kelly with play held up for more than five minutes before Kelly was substituted.

It took 12 minutes for the opening score. Sorcha McCartan had a goal chance in the opening minute. Katrina Mackey put her through, but from a tight angle, her attempted bat to the net was blocked by keeper Doireann Murphy.

Cork's goal came after Amy O'Connor blocked a slow Clare clearance and it offered McCartan her second goal opportunity; this time, she made no mistake.



Cork's Saoirse McCarthy is tackled by Clare's Chloe Morey. Picture: Brendan Gleeson

At the other end Amy Lee made a brilliant save from Aine O'Loughlin for what was Clare's only goal chance in the first half as they lived off scraps, getting just one point from play.

Cork led 1-4 to 0-2 on 24 minutes, with approximately 19 minutes of action played, four points from O'Connor, one from play.

Four points to one for Clare after that, all frees, in what was a low-scoring game from play as we headed towards the six minutes of additional time.

It was a good spell for Cork as the clock ticked towards the short whistle. Saoirse McCarthy fed McCartan who in turn fed Fiona Keating who went on one of her runs down the middle, and as the pitch opened up, Mackey did well by pulling wide, Keating found herself in front of the posts and billowed the ball to the net.

Mackey hit Cork's third point from play as they held a comfortable lead against the wind.

Clare were dealt a huge blow at the start of the second half Lorna McNamara, scorer of five points in the first half, got injured.

Cork took control from there; O'Connor and Mackey pointed before Orlaith Duggan replied.

A good ball into Mackey who passed to

O'Connor, who hit Cork's third goal. Clare fought on. Another brilliant block by Lee on O'Loughlin, and Chloe Sigerson sending good ball inside Cork pushed 3-11 to 0-7 ahead.

The stop-start nature crept back into the game with several stoppages.

The substitutes started for both sides early. Surprisingly, Katrina Mackey was one of them; she hasn't seen too much game time this year.

Clare had their quota of five on before the final quarter. That didn't strengthen their cause with just a two-point return in the second half.

Scorers for Clare: L McNamara 0-5 (0-4f, 0-1 45), O Duggan 0-2, A Keane 0-1.

Cork: A O'Connor 1-9 (0-7 f), S McCartan 1-3, F Keating 1-0, K Mackey, C Finn 0-2, C Sigerson, E Murphy, O Cronin (f), 0-1 each.

CLARE: D Murphy, C Grogan, S Daly, C Kelly, C Morey, C Hehir, A Walsh, C Carmody, L Daly, O Duggan, N O'Dea, Z Spillane, E Kelly, A O'Loughlin, L McNamara.

Subs: M Scanlon for E Kelly (inj), A Keane for L Daly (h-t), A Keating for L McNamara (inj), 33), L Ryan for S Daly (42), A Ryan for C Morey (43).

CORK: A Lee, M Murphy, L Coppinger, M Cahalane, A Healy, L Teacy, I O'Regan, S McCarthy, P Mackey, C Sigerson, F Keating, C Healy, A O'Connor, K Mackey, S McCartan.

Subs: E Murphy for C Healy (42), C Finn for K Mackey (46), H Ryan for M Cahalane (51), O Cronin for S McCartan (56), A Smith for A O'Connor (61).

Referee: Liz Dempsey (Kilkenny).

Kelly gets ready for quick turnaround

Daragh Ó Conchúir

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Tipperary manager Denis Kelly admitted that he would have preferred to have had a three-week break to a semi-



Tipperary's Cait Devane tries to hold off Kilkenny's Grace Walsh in the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship Group 5 match at UPMC Nowlan Park. Picture: Evan Treacy/Inpho

final and is expecting a strong examination from an Antrim team that suffered their first defeat against a red-hot Déise side at the Setu Arena.

"We can't do anything about it now," the manager told Tipperary Camogie. "We'd probably prefer that extra bit of a break 'cos bodies are going to be very sore. Antrim are going to give it everything as well in Croke Park so it won't be an easy game."

"So we'd prefer the break but it is what it is now and we have to refocus the minds, get ourselves back into recovery in the morning, drive on next week and have everything ready for Saturday."

While Tipp had already been assured of a place in the last six prior to the game, Kelly admitted that losing



Cork's Rose Murphy is tackled by Galway's Joanne Daly in the All-Ireland intermediate championship game at Ballinlough. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

another game to one of the long-established top three by a small margin would have

been tough to take.

"A humdinger of a game, 'twas nip-and-tuck all the way

through. There wasn't an inch given or taken there and we're delighted to come out with something out of it as we've been coming down often enough and going home with one- and two-point defeats so 'twas important we got something out of it. We also topped the group which I suppose helped us in the draw."

Kelly lost goalkeeper Caoimhe Bourke in the first half through injury and with Denise Gaule causing mayhem, introduced Mairéad Evison to help turn the tide in his side's favour.

"That's the way these things go. They'd an upper hand with Gaule inside. We brought in Mairéad and she did a right good job on her. That's the way it goes. Next day it could be someone else but we can't

Camogie quarter-final draw

Saturday, July 8: Tipperary v Antrim, Croke Park, 3:30pm
Sunday, July 9: Kilkenny v Cork, Croke Park, 1:30pm
Semi-finalists: Galway and Waterford

wait around, sitting on our hands and we had to make our moves. Today they worked and another day they mightn't but we were happy they worked for us today."

There was some confusion over an Eimear McGrath free that had been recorded as a point on the scoreboard and by the Tipperary stats team but when they thought they went in at half-time level, they resumed a point down. But once more, Kelly didn't make too much of an issue of it. Just like the draw, it is better not to waste energy on anything you cannot impact.

"Disappointed... but we didn't focus on it at half-time. We said we'd control the controllables, control our work rate and really go at Kilkenny in the second half. So I suppose it worked for us, we didn't dwell on it too much but at the same time, if we came out losing the game by a point, we'd be very sore going home."

In the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Intermediate Championship, Kilkenny play Wexford and Cork play Meath in the next week's quarter-finals, with Derry and Westmeath qualified for the semi-finals.

Carlow have home advantage in the relegation semi-final against Dublin and the loser will play Laois to determine who makes the drop.

Armagh and Tipperary are confirmed participants in the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Premier Junior semi-finals, awaiting the outcome of next week's quarter-finals involving Roscommon against Limerick and Clare versus Cavan.

Camogie

Daragh Ó Conchúir

It is almost 41 years to the day since Antrim last reached the knockout stages of the All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship but the current trail-blazers and teams of yore are inextricably linked.

Anna Connolly is a member of the squad that takes on Tipperary in tomorrow's Glen Dimplex All-Ireland quarter-final at Croke Park (3.30pm).

Her mother Mary (née McMullan) played in the quarter-final defeat by Limerick at Adare on July 4, 1982. As a teenager, she had lined out at right wing-back when the

Saffrons standing on shoulders of giants

last of Antrim's six All-Ireland titles had been won three years previously.

There was a time when Antrim were superpowers of the game and current captain Lucia McNaughton and defender Maria Lynn-O'Hara have grown up on the stories of their late grandmother Maria McGarry, who was an 18-year-old player when the Saffrons sealed a famous All-Ireland three-in-a-row in 1947.

McNaughton has had an injury-interrupted campaign though should see some time

on Saturday, having been introduced for her first championship minutes against Waterford last weekend.

Lynn only added the O'Hara to her surname in the middle of June and has postponed her honeymoon indefinitely until the inter-county season is concluded. That's what the jersey and the sports means and Connolly Sr is delighted that the gap to the last time Antrim were among the elite has been bridged.

"I attended the meeting in the late 1980s when it was de-

ecided that the county be regraded to junior," said Connolly in *The Irish News* this week. "There was no intermediate level at the time."

"I spoke against it on the night. I wanted Antrim to stay up because it is easier to go down a grade than it is to come back up. But the vote went against us. However, I never thought it would take this long to get back to where we once played."

Connolly hails the groundwork that has brought Antrim back to this stage, despite

being without at least five players that would be regulars through injury, or in the case of Chloe Drain, after becoming a mother.

"Anna and Róisín McCormick, Maeve Kelly and the rest all came through good work in development squads feeding into underage county teams. They were also successful at schools level and Cross & Passion lost a couple of All-Ireland senior A finals."

"The school structure in the county is very good at the minute... Loughgiel reaching the

All-Ireland club final, clubs from the county able to compete at the top level.

"That is why this current squad has the best chance of staying at the top and building to become a team that can challenge for an All-Ireland. I think they are beginning to establish themselves among the top teams. There is a lack of confidence there at times, but that will develop with experience when you start to win at this level as they are doing at the minute. We have also been unlucky with injuries. (But) contesting an All-Ireland quarter final in Croke Park is a huge step forward. What a lift it would be if they beat Tipperary on Saturday."

When it comes to equality, the GAA has

THE blue plaque on the wall of the wine shop catches your eye as you cross the square in Dungarvan. DAN FRAHER, it reads. 1852-1929. Sportsman & scholar lived here. While you have said and typed the words 'Fraber Field' numerous times, you have never once given a thought to the man behind the name. A quick google reveals that not only did Fraher live on that corner of Grattan Square, but he owned a drapery there called the Gaelic Outfitting Store, which supplied gear to — among others — the West Waterford IRA during the War of Independence. A cursory Google also supplies a

great photo of Dan Fraher wearing striped pants, medals pinned to his chest, a Dungarvan GAA hat on his head.

How often do we mention the names of the men who our playing arenas are named after — and they are nearly always men, with the notable exception of Markievicz Park —

without thinking of the person behind the name? It helps that a lot of the names are strong words in and of themselves: Croke, Semple, O Caoimh, MacHale, Casement, Nowlan, Cusack. Maybe that's the best kind of afterlife — to transcend humanity and become a street, or a train station, or a playing field. To have your name spoken frequently.

Maybe nothing better demonstrates the power and prevalence of the GAA than its real estate. A pitch in every

community, plus an imposing county grounds in each county — the cathedrals to the GAA clubs' chapels. Even without a ball being pucked or kicked, the GAA has visibility, presence, and clout.

I was chatting to a fellow writer recently who mentioned in passing that he was researching the history of St Tiernach's Park in Clones. It was bought, he told me, in 1944 for £700. And look, £700 in the 1940s was a decent sum — about €25,000 in today's money, according to the Bank of England's inflation calculator. But still, relatively speaking, a bargain. It's not unusual to hear of GAA pitches costing 10 times that amount to develop these days.

Because of its many historical acquisitions, the GAA is rich in property in a way that its sister organisations, the

LGFA and the Camogie Association, are not. Though the Camogie Association has been in existence since 1904, and the LGFA since 1974, it's only in the last several decades that these sports have gathered funding, momentum and popular appeal.

Some might argue that the solution to the pitches quandary is for the women to get their own, but in a modern context that's easier said than done.

In comparison to the GAA and its legacy property portfolio, the women's organisations are like broke millennials trying to scrape together a deposit while simultaneously paying high rents.

It's just over two weeks since representatives from every camogie and ladies football panel held a press conference to announce that they

would be playing the remainder of the championship 'under protest'.

The issues they highlighted were the same ones they've been speaking about in the media for years — lack of expenses, and trouble accessing ordinary facilities like the gym, physio, and playing together to present their issues as a united front had a stronger impact than individual testimony.

Even though integration is apparently underway, equitable conditions may not be in place in time to help the current crop of players. As their statement read, they are no longer willing to 'patiently endure the treatment of second-class citizens'.

In the pending integration of the three Gaelic games organisations, the allocation of



Eimear Ryan

some ground to make up

pitches and stadiums will be among the most hotly contested issues. I am lucky in that I plied my camogie trade in two counties, Tipperary and Cork, that had their own county camogie grounds.

When it came to county training or the business end of club championship, the county boards didn't need to go to the GAA for venues — they had their own premises. But this isn't the case in every county. At grassroots level, GAA clubs have generally been excellent at sharing their spaces with women's teams, but if push ever came to shove — i.e. if boys and girls were vying for the same timeslot on the same pitch — it generally broke the lads' way. At club level, this resulted in inconvenience and small slights to women's teams; at intercounty level, under the media's

gaze, it could be a hot mess, as with the LGFA All-Ireland semi-final debacle of 2020.

IT'S a fairly unique set of circumstances that have brought us to this point.

Despite its presence in every community in Ireland, the GAA always has been, and for now remains, a fraternal organisation. It didn't occur to the lads in 1884 that women might want to play Gaelic games; maybe it didn't even occur to them that women would be capable. So they made no provision for women to play. Maybe that can be understood in the context of the time, but what's more surprising is that the GAA made it 140 years before starting the process to formally bring the women's codes under its auspices. When it comes to equality, the GAA has some ground

to make up.

The statement released by the GPA on Tuesday, signed by the 68 male inter-county captains in support of their female colleagues, was as impressive a sign of solidarity as we've seen since the WGPA and GPA merged in December 2020. The signatories fully put it up to the leadership of the GAA, invoking the principles that they hold dear: 'Community is at the heart of our Association ... if our neighbour is struggling or requires help, the local GAA club steps up to provide it ... Are you going to live that value of community, or will you allow this opportunity for positive change to pass by?'

The GAA makes much of its diversity and inclusion. *Where we all belong*, as the tagline goes. It's time for the GAA to fully earn that slogan.



LIMERICK LADIES: Mary Fitzgerald of Fitzgerald's Woodlands House Hotel along with Limerick team captains Ann Kennedy (junior camogie), Roisin Ambrose (senior football), and Marion Quaid (ladies senior camogie) to mark the hotel's sponsorship of the teams.

GPA using female players as 'pawns', says Howard

Stephen Barry

Former Camogie Association president Liz Howard has accused the GPA of using female players as "pawns".

Howard, who was the Sunday Game's first female pundit and the first woman elected as a GAA county board officer, described the protests by inter-county camogie and football panels as "silly".

"I think they're very silly because the GAA is being forced into integration by the Government and Sport Ireland," she told *Tipp FM's Extra Time show*.

"I was involved in the GAA and Camogie (Association) for a long time and I have found with the GAA, you get your foot in the door and then you gently ease in the rest.

"I think they're being used as pawns by the GPA. Over the years, you've had a lot of very controversial people there who, many of them if you go back, caused the Cork strike and personally I think Cork has never fully recovered from that.

"I've talked to a few of them

(current players) and I've said to them, ease back, you'll get an awful lot more by using the honey approach than this kind of approach."

Players are demanding minimum standards of care and welfare to be enshrined in a mandatory charter from 2024.

They have held protests before games and this week received support from their male counterparts in an open letter signed by all 68 captains of men's inter-county teams.

"Now their issues are about expenses. Camogie, while it has made huge progress and has some sponsorship, generates nothing like the revenue of the GAA. And what are they looking for? I'm not quite sure," said Howard. "Is it for the GAA to pay their expenses? You've got to be real and you've got to understand it (integration) is complex."

Howard raised questions over the consultation process being undertaken by the Steering Group on Integration, led by former president of Ireland Mary McAleese.

"I have concerns about it. Miriam O'Callaghan, a terrific woman who was president of the Camogie before me, and I, neither of us have been asked our views on integration. Who are they asking? Who are they talking to?"

"I think Mary McAleese is very pro the GAA and I just wonder is she there because she's more GAA than women's sports? And that's a fairly blunt statement. I just don't know where it's going.

"I'm making a statement based on what I know about her closeness to the GAA. I think she has been a brilliant president but I don't know where it's going.

"I've asked: What progress had been made? Where are we at? Who is with us? Who is against us? And I frankly do not know.

"I thought it was a mistake and I'm sure other presidents weren't asked their opinions. We'd all have views and we'd all have an input and we'd all have the good of all associations (at heart), not just one."

'We're at our best when people doubt us,' insists boss Twomey

Cork take on All-Ireland champions Kilkenny in rematch of 2022 final

BY MATTHEW HURLEY

CORK take on reigning champions Kilkenny in a mouth-watering Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior championship quarter-final showdown this Sunday.

This is a rematch of the 2022 All-Ireland final that the Cats won, 1-13 to 1-12, and this weekend's clash in Croke Park 1.30pm (live on RTE 2) will be the end of the road for one of these big guns.

The game will also act as the curtain-raiser to the All-Ireland SHC semi-final between Kilkenny and Clare.

Cork boss Matthew Twomey is relishing the chance to take on Kilkenny, knowing too it's the hardest possible test his side could face at this stage.

'We're in the position now where we have to play the best teams and Kilkenny are All-Ireland champions,' Twomey said.

'I'd rather we got them now. If we played Antrim and won, we'd probably be hiding cracks. We want to be tested. We want to go toe to toe with the best teams and see how we go.'

The Cork manager believes that last year's All-Ireland final will have no relevance to Sunday's game.

'There's only two or three of the management from last year left now. The game last year might be at the back of someone's head but there's no such thing as revenge because if you have that, you're only putting pressure on yourself. This is our next match now. We won't be looking backwards, just forwards,' Twomey said.

Cork find themselves in an All-Ireland quarter-final after finishing runners-up in Group 1, behind Galway. The Rebels recorded a resounding 3-19 to 0-8 victory over Clare at Cusack Park last Saturday that cemented their quarter-final qualification. Goals from Sorcha McCartan and a trademark Fiona Keating effort sent them in at the break leading by 2-6 to 0-6. Amy O'Connor raised a third green flag on her way to registering a tally of 1-9 and eight different players getting on the Cork scoresheet. It was the ideal warm-up before the trip to Croke Park on Sunday,



Cork's Fiona Keating in action in the 2022 All-Ireland senior camogie final in Croke Park.

'We want to go toe to toe with the best teams and see how we go.'

- Matthew Twomey, Cork manager

which will see Kilkenny well supported as their hurlers are in action afterwards.

'I don't think it matters where we play. We played Kilkenny in the national league in Nowlan Park and beat them comfortably that day. The fans could be crucial, if a game is coming down the final hurdle,' Cork boss Twomey said.

'It is up to the players now, we talk an awful lot about their character and this is the biggest test so far this year. There's nothing overdaunting about it, it's a great opportunity. Neither team will be affected by the ground.'

Cork have won their last two games after a run of four losses in a row in all competitions. Not only that but they scored 3-19 for two games in a row against Down and Clare. The confidence is coming back at the right time.

'We were under pressure going up to Ennis with all the stuff going on with dual players and strikes. We weren't going too well before it. If we can continue along those lines of the last two games, it would be great,' Twomey admitted.

'It's good for our confidence, especially in the forwards. We were creating lots of chances, not just converting. We're more direct than a few weeks ago but there's a lot of room for improvement. The way we won the last two games was great and it's given us confidence. We trust the system, we trust the process. We have to implement that as best as we can for the Kilkenny game.'

A positive for the team is the availability of all four dual players - Libby Coppinger, Hannah Looney, Orlaith Cahalane (back from injury) and Aoife Helay - and there won't be any more fixtures clashes this season.

'It's huge because we shouldn't be in this position. It's very unfair that you're in All-Ireland series inter-county games and you're down four players,' Twomey argued. 'Having the four together going to training and preparing for Sun-

day is great. We now have a full squad to pick from again.'

Brian Dowling's Kilkenny drew their last game against Tipperary, 2-8 to 1-11, but are still unbeaten in this year's championship. Twomey is fully aware of their threats.

'They've gone through the All-Ireland series unbeaten. They're All-Ireland champions and on top of that they're going to have 10,000/15,000 on Sunday whereas (most) Cork fans aren't going to travel to Dublin. Our backs are to the wall, there's no doubt about that but

the players look forward to this kind of game. I think we're at our best when people doubt us,' Twomey said.

'They're ferocious and tenacious. They'd want to make the pitch as small as possible and make it into a battle for us,' he explained. 'They have quality players who can win a game on their own like Denise Gaule and Katie Power. We have to have a plan for all those players too. You're not going to be able to shut them out but performing to the best of our ability will be our goal.'

THOMPSON BOOST

CORK camogie boss Matthew Twomey has confirmed that Aisling Thompson and Laura Hayes will be back in the Cork panel for Sunday's All-Ireland quarter-final clash with Kilkenny. Thompson suffered a cruciate injury in August 2022 while Hayes was also sidelined with a knee injury.

'We will have Aisling Thompson and Laura Hayes back,' Twomey confirmed. 'They were training during the week. It will make a big difference to the team.'

Another boost was the return of Enniskene's Orla Cronin against Clare last weekend; she played the last ten minutes and even scored a point. Twomey said: 'We were delighted with Orla. She's after turning a corner with her injuries.'



Aisling Thompson.



Cork's Katie Walsh gets away from Kildare's Maria Doyle, left, and Slough's Siobhán Hurley during their All-Ireland Intermediate Championship match in Newbridge. Picture: Daire Brennan/Sportsfile

Cork and Meath battle it out for All-Ireland Intermediate semi spot

TODAY: Glen Dimplex Intermediate Championship quarter-final: Cork v Meath, Semple Stadium, 1pm

IT'S winner takes all when Cork face Meath in the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Intermediate Championship in Semple Stadium today.

The sides met in last season's championship when Cork won with four points to spare after a tough battle. Both sides have a lot of new faces since that meeting, but each will be focused on the task that lies ahead as they battle for a place in the last four. Meath enjoyed an excellent league campaign where they participated in Division 2A, reaching the final after good displays against tough opponents, with victories over Westmeath, Cavan, and Derry.

They lost a close group game to Laois before drawing with Kerry. They went on to contest the final where they lost to Kerry by a point.

In championship, they emerged from Group 3 as runners-up, having surprisingly lost to Westmeath 3-15 to 0-11. It was a result that Meath would not have expected given their 2-13 to 1-6 league win over the same opponents.

They dug deep and overcame Kerry and Laois to make it out of the group as runners-up behind Westmeath.

Aoife Minogue continues to be one of their top players, ably supported by Ciara Foley, Grace Coleman, Abbey Donnelly, and Amy Gaffney.

Brendan Skehan and his management know the challenge ahead is a big one, but just as they did in their league campaign, they are determined to give it a go.

This year he has introduced a group of newcomers into his panel to replace retiring players, and before the league final he

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

admitted his charges were in bonus territory. Since last year's semi-final, Sinead Hackett, Aine Keogh, Jane Dolan, Aoife Maguire, Christina Troy, and Aidin Slattery are no longer involved, but with steady progress being made, Skehan will relish a crack at last season's defeated All-Ireland finalists.

Cork lost last year's All-Ireland final to Galway in a game that went down to the wire.

Cork manager Trevor Coleman also has new faces in his side with Joanne Casey, Hayley Ryan, Kaitlin Hickey among the player from the class of 2022 who are not involved this year.

Lauren Callanan re-joined the panel recently following the birth of her son three months ago and her experience around the group will, no doubt, be invaluable.

Cork are Division 2B and Munster champions; the league win was especially pleasing, having drawn with Kilkenny in the first game, Cork showed huge determination to comfortably win the replay.

In championship, having lost out to the same opponents in round one, they put their heads down and worked hard to defeat Dublin and Galway to set up a quarter-final meeting with Meath.

Cork played well against Galway; their defence is solid and cool under pressure with experienced performers Leanne O'Sullivan, Aisling Moloney, and Niamh O'Leary leading from the back.

Up front, Lauren Homan, Cliona O'Leary, and Rose Murphy have been to the fore with captain Rachel Harty driving them on.

In the second quarter-final, Kilkenny meet Wexford at 3pm.



Cork's Ann O'Connor tries to block down Clare's Lousie Ryan during their camogie match in Cusack Park. Picture: Brendan Gleeson

A pity that one of the big three will exit championship



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

IT'S a big day tomorrow for camogie.

I can't remember the last time that two of the big three met at the quarter-final stages of the All-Ireland Championship. It seems too early to have one of these two knocked out.

Cork and Kilkenny (1.30pm) do battle ahead of tomorrow's Kilkenny-Clare hurling semi-final, a big coup for the Kilkenny girls support-wise.

The other quarter-final will be between Tipperary and Antrim and will take place ahead of today's hurling semi-final between Limerick and Galway (3.30pm).

Waterford and Galway head straight to the semi-final after last Saturday evening's draws.

Despite Cork's less than impressive displays with a first-round round championship defeat, and subsequent loss to Waterford in the Munster Championship, they've had two strong wins since.

The opposition was weak, but if you look at Kilkenny, they also had two of what would be considered weaker counties in their group, Wexford, and Dublin, and haven't set the world alight either.

Comparing scores for and against is fruitless when the teams are in different groups, but I'll state it anyway, 6-50 for to 2-30 against for Cork; 6-39 for to 4-33 against for Kilkenny from the same number of games.

The standard at senior level has been far lower than what we should expect. That could change from here on.

Julianne Malone, Miriam Walsh, and Mary O'Connell started last August's All-Ireland final but are no longer in the Kilkenny squad.



Clare's Muireann Scanlon puts Cork's Laura Tracey under pressure. Picture: Brendan Gleeson

Cork have injuries to Ashling Thompson, Laura Hayes, and Ciara O'Sullivan from their starting line-up last year.

Thompson and Hayes could figure at some stage; O'Sullivan is still in rehab as is Katie O'Mahony and Olivia McAllen.

It's a big ask of Thompson to come into Croke Park after a year's absence. Hayes has been out for six or seven weeks and that is also a long time for an environment like Croke Park.

You can't hide there. But the lift they'll give the side if called upon in the final quarter will be telling.

If Cork can get over tomorrow, the next two weeks will see another leap forward in match fitness.

It would be a dream to get them back on the pitch and have Hayes and Saoirse McCarthy drop back to the half-back flanks, have Hannah Looney partner Thompson at midfield, and the icing on the cake would be Orla Cronin inside on the 40.

But tomorrow first.

Orlaith Cahalane has been declared fit and I think we're going to need her at some stage up front.

We still aren't hitting the heights there, in all areas and everyone needs to carry their own water at the very least.

So much will depend on the influence of Kilkenny's Denise Gaule, lining out last weekend at full-forward and finishing with 1-5, 1-2 from play.

I'm not so sure they'll place her there tomorrow. She won't make much hay against Libby Coppinger, and I feel she will start at wing-forward and try to expose Cork, but I think Cork will put Pamela Mackey on her if that is the case.

Looney returns at midfield to partner McCarthy, with Mackey dropping back at the expense of Aoife Healy or Izzy O'Regan, I imagine.

In the other semi-final we expect Tipperary to be comfortable victors, although they did suffer a couple of injuries last weekend. Tipp were well on top in the second half against the Cats but missed chances.

It ended in a draw, and it was important for them not to lose again to one of the big three, a monkey on their back for a number of years.

The Cork intermediate side have a tough game against Meath in Thurles today.

It's a big weekend for our senior sides. Last weekend's games saw a mix of sit-down and stand-together protests that were unanimously backed by all players.

Two games were shown live on TG4 in the All-Ireland football championship and a host of camogie games streamed live, bringing the protest to a wider audience than those at the grounds.

The 'United For Equality' protest calls for a player charter that would deliver minimum standards of player care and facility standards across all four codes for men and women.

It was a major portion of a survey of all players conducted by the GPA and presented to the LGFA, Camogie Association, and the GAA earlier this year.



Cork's Rachel Harty tries to clear the ball under pressure from Kilkenny's Mairead Kennedy during their National League Division 2B final replay. Picture: Brendan Gleeson



All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship Cork v Kilkenny

Tomorrow: Croke Park, 1.30pm
Referee: Brian Kearney
TV: Live on RTÉ 2

Therese O'Callaghan



Four-time All-Ireland winner Ashling Thompson is set to make her first appearance for Cork since last year's All-Ireland senior camogie final one-point defeat to Kilkenny in tomorrow's All-Ireland championship quarter-final against the same opposition in Croke Park.

The star midfielder, who captained the Rebels to victory in 2015, has recovered from an ACL injury she suffered almost 12 months ago. She was among the subs for the Rebels' victory over Clare last weekend.

Confirming she is in contention, Cork manager Matthew Twomey said: "Ashling won't be starting, she will be on the bench again this weekend. She is back training about five weeks, she only got the all clear last week to do contact work. We played an internal match on Tuesday and she played 30 minutes. She did well."

Another of Cork's regulars, Laura Hayes has recovered from injury and is available, but she too is unlikely to start. Orla Cronin's good form has also given the panel a big lift.

"Orla has come on leaps and bounds in the last few weeks, which is a massive boost."

Cork's other ACL victims —



Fit-again Thompson set for bench role against Kilkenny

COMEBACK COMPLETE: Cork's Ashling Thompson has recovered from her ACL injury and will on the bench for Cork's All-Ireland championship quarter-final clash with Kilkenny tomorrow.
Picture: Jim Coughlan/Inpho

Katie O'Mahony, Olivia McAllen, and Ciara O'Sullivan — are ruled out. The dual player issue raised its head once more in recent weeks, with Cork forced to split their four players between camogie

and ladies football. Twomey is glad to put it behind him for now. "Hannah Looney and Orlaith Cahalane were with the footballers last Saturday (against Tipperary). So we are delighted to have them back.

The whole thing clashtook up so much time. One day from the end of work until that night, it took 22 phone calls to sort it out. There is a lot more you could be doing with your time."

As well, the gap in conditions for male and female players continues to be debated. The boss says Cork camogie players are treated well.

"I don't think you call it

equality. I think fairness is the better term. Equality means you have to have 30,000 or 40,000 at your match. We don't. We would be lucky to have 300.

"When I see all these tweets saying the girls have to be looked after, but they still won't come down and watch a match. Even ex-players don't come and support them. It is disappointing.

"We have a physio at every training session. The girls have food after training. I would like to compliment the Cork Camogie Board, our sponsors Kearys, and Linda Mellerick's involvement in running a Golf Classic. That is the reason the funds are there for the players."

Twomey is in his second term as manager, having previously served as a selector. Taking on old foes Kilkenny is nothing new. And as has been the norm, the squad will travel to Dublin by train tomorrow morning.

"Some people say it is a revenge mission for last year's All-Ireland. But that doesn't come into it," he insisted. "We played Kilkenny in Nowlan Park in the league before Kilkenny and Waterford in the SHL, a tough place to go. They had a big crowd, but we just clicked on the day (0-23 to 1-10).

"But look, everything goes out the window when it comes to Cork and Kilkenny. It is going to be a battle again. We have two different styles, so whoever imposes their style will be the difference. And whoever gets their match-ups right.

"We are playing a new system this year, more expansive. We are staying with it. The signs were good against Galway. We have done an awful lot of work. And our injuries are clearing up. I'm happy where we are at."

McGrath's sporting obsession as strong as ever



All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship Antrim v Tipperary

Today: Croke Park, 3.30pm
Referee: Andy Larkin
TV: Live on RTÉ 2

Daragh Ó Conchúir



Gender was never an issue for Aoife McGrath or her sister Eimear growing up in a family where hurleys, sliotars, and footballs were as much a staple of their lives as shoes and socks.

During a conversation regularly punctuated by laughter, the description of the matches played when siblings and relatives got together elicits plenty of hearty chuckling.

"It's all we've known," says McGrath. "The whole family tree has just been immersed in it all my life and the lives before that. It's what we do and what we've done for years. Any family gatherings usually involved a game of hurling out the back which

were pretty intense and vicious at times! There was no inch given or taken.

"We love it. You make friends for life and it's a really special thing to be involved in it. I've been immersed in it since I could walk. Being hauled along to matches and training, to stand on the sideline, hail, rain or snow or sun or whatever.

"We love it. We wouldn't do it if we didn't so we're so lucky to have so many family members to have been involved."

A long-serving former Tipperary skipper and an All-Ireland winner at minor level with the county in 2011, McGrath, 28, and her 21-year-old sister will be important cogs of Denis Kelly's Premier squad taking on Antrim in today's Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship quarter-final, which takes place at Croke Park at 3.30pm as part of a double-header with the heavyweight hurling semi-final between Limerick and Galway.

Their first cousin, Miriam Campion, was previously a member of the panel. Other first cousins, all with All-Ireland medals at senior, U20/U21 and/or minor level include hurling legends John

and Noel McGrath, their brother Brian, as well as Liam McGrath, Michelle Shortt and Campion's two brothers Pauric and John.

Clearly the DNA is powerful and in tandem with her environment, the socialisation that meant that life revolved entirely around the rhythm and beat of Gaelic games, it comes as no surprise that she relishes being involved in elite sport.

"When you're a four or five-year-old boy or girl, you're dreaming of playing in Croke Park or Semple Stadium or Páirc Uí Chaoimh, for your county, wherever that is. You're not dreaming about the hard slog, the training, or the running or the gym sessions or the eating and the sleeping. You're dreaming of playing on those big stages.

"The hard work gets you there but being able to stand back and enjoy it, to enjoy the big test ahead at Croke Park against Antrim, those are the days it's for. It's important to work hard but definitely enjoy it because if you're not enjoying it, it's not really worth it."

The accountant is an audit manager at Deloitte's Limerick office and admits that it's a "pretty stressful career" but one she enjoys. The stress of

camogie offers a balance, though time management and discipline are required to combine the two. McGrath is particularly grateful to her employers for their support at this time of the year especially.

A run of seven consecutive seasons in the knockout stages came to an end last year, on score difference, despite only losing one game and defeating Cork. That was a "kick in the teeth" but they were without a number of important players for the campaign, not least the magnificent former All-Star and this year's joint-captain, Karen Kennedy.

Now, there is a clean bill of health while a number of younger players have added energy to proceedings. That means they have a stronger depth to their squad than ever before and with Kelly stepping up to the vacancy left by Bill Mullaney, who had overseen significant progress, there is an element of freshness too.

Tipp have threatened a big breakthrough in recent years but in games like the 2021 All-Ireland semi-final, the league semi-final earlier that year, and league outings against Galway and Kilkenny in the last two seasons in which

victory would have secured a place in the final, they have fallen narrowly, agonisingly short.

McGrath is giggling once more as the catalogue is reeled off. "No, no, you're right," she says cackling with amusement at the mortified apologies that follow the list of what-might-have-beens.

"It's no secret we've been in tight games where we played really well and small things went against us. A couple of years ago against Galway in an All-Ireland semi-final, that was a game we probably had a real chance of winning and left behind us.

"And most recently in the league against Kilkenny. We had a chance of getting to a league final. All we needed to do was get the result. We were winning the game for most of it, kind of let Kilkenny back into it and I suppose their experience told on the day as well.

"That stung, especially after a good league campaign. To finish like that was disappointing but you have to learn all these things as well. And getting the result against Kilkenny last weekend — we didn't win it, but we didn't lose it and having lost a couple of tight games over the years,

there definitely was a bit of relief and a bit of confidence coming from that, closing out a tight game against the All-Ireland champions in their backyard."

It certainly felt important not to lose last Saturday, as they played so well for so much of proceedings and the prize — the target — from the draw was topping the group. It didn't yield the direct route to a semi-final they coveted, however, leaving them to focus on recovery this week after such a draining encounter.

But while there isn't much recent history between Tipperary and Antrim, with the Saffrons only in their second season of senior camogie after a lengthy absence, McGrath knows all about the Ulster side's scoring power, having played as Drom & Inch fell to Loughgiel Shamrocks in the All-Ireland club semi-final last December.

"I know they have quality players. We were unfortunate to come up against them in the club championship before Christmas, the likes of Róisín McCormick and Caitrín Dobbin. They've won two of their three matches so they're there on merit and will pose a big challenge."

By Daragh Ó Conchúir

TSAYS something about Katrina Mackey's dedication that heading into her 15th season at the highest level, she remains one of the most dangerous forwards in the game.

She showed as much with her glorious equaliser in last year's All-Ireland final against Kilkenny. Unfortunately for the Rebelettes, Denise Gaule had the final say with a dramatic winner, a little bit of pay-back for those extra-time Julia White and Orla Cotter points in 2017 and 2018.

Mackey ended the campaign with her sixth All-Star and along with five All-Irelands, is one of the most decorated players still playing. She missed this year's National League after suffering a bruised lung and ribs in the opening half of the first game against Dublin (she had already raised a green flag) but clipped over four points from play on her comeback in the championship opener against Galway.

Having turned 31 in March and with considerable mileage on the clock, the Douglas dynamo has embraced self-improvement and discovery in every aspect of her life. Naturally, that crosses over into camogie, too.

'I think I've always been like that,' says Mackey. 'Over the years there'd be different managers coming in, different coaches coming in. Liam (Cronin), this year, I think he's brilliant. He's tactically excellent and he's always open to players coming to him and giving their opinion and their feedback. He wants that.'

'You're not going to agree with everything everyone has done but I think you've got to be open to new ideas. Since I first came in in 2009, the game is completely different. It's a million times better. It's gotten faster, everybody is fitter, stronger. The skill level has increased. If you're not willing to take on new knowledge, you're going to be left there.'

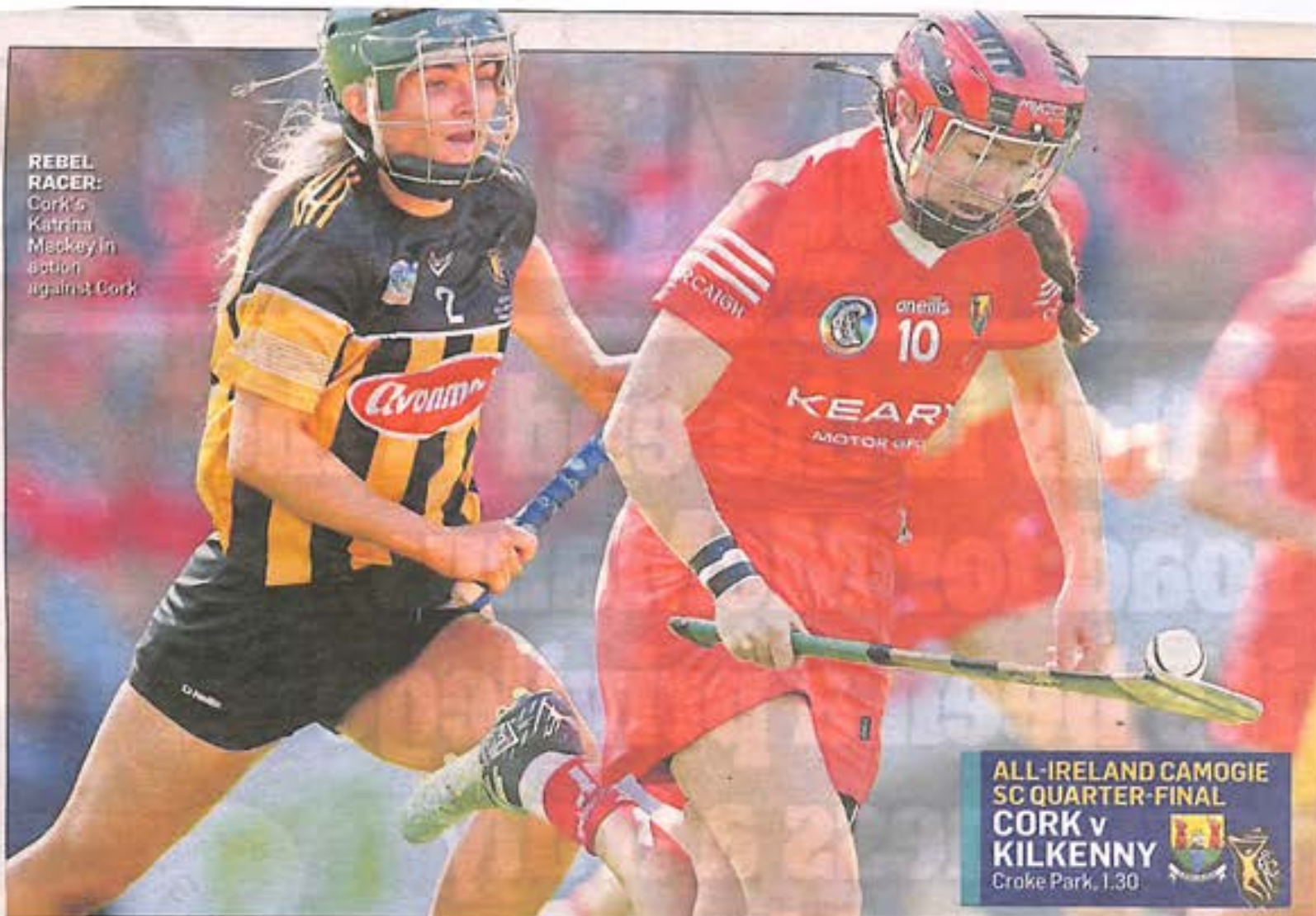
She thinks of how slightly built she was coming out of minor and shudders at the thought of coming into the modern game with such a lack of conditioning.

'I found even the 2012 All-Ireland against Wexford, I couldn't believe how physical they were, and strong. I wasn't strong enough. I had to go away and do a lot of gym work. That definitely stood to me. I'm a completely different player to ten years ago.'

'But then there's a lot down to management too. There wasn't a strength and conditioning coach as such until Paudie (Murray) came in. We have Wesley O'Brien now. He's excellent. You're learning so much from them. That area has improved players massively.'

No one from Mackey's debut season is still around. One by one, Mary O'Connor, Gemma O'Connor, Rena Buckley, Brieger Corkery, Aoife Murray and all the rest took their leave. Even her twin sister

REBEL RACER:
Cork's Katrina Mackey in action against Cork



ALL-IRELAND CAMOGIE SC QUARTER-FINAL
CORK v KILKENNY
Croke Park, 1.30

Facing the Cats brings out best in Cork's Mackey

Pamela, called into the squad with Katrina in 2009, has taken a couple of years off before returning this term, but Mackey never thought about stepping away.

'The years do fly by. I can't believe that was 14 years ago. I honestly think it's almost an addictive part of your life. At the end of the season, you could be tired and might take a holiday - I took a few months before Christmas this year and went travelling - but I enjoy the thing so much.'

'It's part of your life. During the

off-season then, you miss the camaraderie and the friendships. Always at the start of the year, I'm mad to go back.'

Mackey's Twitter feed is littered with high performance mottos and lessons but during her recent trip to Asia, she posted numerous photos - taking Muay Thai lessons, wall climbing or hiking through sand dunes.

'I went to Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and then ended in Bali. The holiday was great, something completely different. Every coun-

try there was something new to do.

'And you were meeting different people as well and learning about their culture. It was a complete break from camogie. You're just a small fish,' she says with a laugh.

'I would say I'm a curious sort of person, so I love learning new things, seeking out new cultures, new knowledge and I have always done that.'

One thing that hasn't changed is the Cork-Kilkenny rivalry. The stakes have always been high but

rarely, if ever, have they jostled in a quarter-final as they do today at Croke Park (1.30), before the All-Ireland SHC semi-final between Clare and Kilkenny.

Remarkably, Mackey has played in an All-Ireland semi-final in all of her previous 14 championships at this level. And 2012 was the last time one of Galway, Cork or Kilkenny didn't reach the last four, the Stripecy women missing out on that occasion.

The relationship between the two counties has been spikey at times but Mackey admires the current champions. What's more, and this is confirmed as her voice transmits an excitement, she is savouring the prospect of another rollercoaster ride on the grandest stage of all.

'It's a really healthy relationship, I think,' she says of the historic rivalry.

'We get the best out of each other. They're a top quality side, with brilliant players down through the years and obviously the current team as well. I think we get the best out of each other and do relish playing each other. It's great.'

'Any opportunity you get to play in Croke Park is brilliant. There should be a good enough crowd there as well. That's going to make it even better but it's any young player's dream to be going out on to Croke Park and any time you get that opportunity is a privilege.'



STAR SHOWING: Cáit Devane of Tipperary (right) in action

Munster champs hit Tipp top form to reach semis

TIPPERARY are back in the semi-finals of the All-Ireland senior championship after this very comfortable victory in Croke Park yesterday against injury-hit Antrim.

The Saffrons went into a first quarter-final for 41 years missing acting captain Caoimhe Conlon after she picked up a shoulder injury last week but boosted by the return of the experienced Lucia McNaughton.

Antrim set up defensively, with Mary McKillen dropping back into the half-back line. It took Tipp a little time to work out how to break them down and, after 15 minutes, the teams were locked on 0-3 each, three frees from Antrim (a Róisín McCormick double and a huge effort from Niamh Cosgrove) and three

Tipperary

3-23

Antrim

0-5

By Séamas McAleenan

AT CROKE PARK

from play for the Munster champions, including a fine effort from Cáit Devane, who would go on to win the player of the match award with a total of 2-6.

Antrim clung on for a while in the second quarter, but three frees from Eimear McGrath and two points from Devane opened a gap of 0-10 to 0-5 by half-time.

On the resumption, the sliotar

broke for Caoimhe Maher from the throw-in and she burst down the centre, the move ending with Devane slotting the goal after just 12 seconds.

Tipperary quickly set about killing off the game, and a series of points followed to bring their total to 1-17 by the three-quarter mark.

Then half-time sub Eimear Heffernan stepped on the gas, following up to hit the net after Caoimhe McCarthy's shot was brilliantly saved by Catrina Graham in the 46th minute.

She subsequently tagged on four points during the last quarter, while another driving run from McCarthy saw the sliotar off-loaded for Devane to volley to the net with a lob

that would have had the crowds gasping at Wimbledon.

Antrim looked dejected as they left the pitch while all is rosy in the Tipp garden ahead of their eighth semi-final in nine seasons. But can they take the next step and reach a first final in 17 years?

TIPPERARY: A. Slattery, J. Bourke, M. Ewing, E. Loughman, K. Bair, K. Kennedy, A. McGrath (M. Ryan 30), T. Ryan (Caoimhe Maher 44), C. Hennessy (C. McCarthy 27), R. Howes, Caoimhe Maher, E. McGrath, G. O'Brien (E. Heffernan 16), C. Devane, C. McIntyre (C. Ryan 50).
SCORERS: C. Devane 2-6 (0-4), E. Heffernan 1-4, E. McGrath 0-5, C. McIntyre 0-2, C. Hennessy, C. McCarthy, R. Howard, Caoimhe Maher, G. O'Brien 0-1 each.
ANTRIM: C. Graham, C. Patterson (E. Keams 56), K. Lavery, M. Lynn, N. Cosgrove, A. Boyle, L. McKenna (M. McGarry 50), L. McNaughton, A. Connolly, S. McKillop (F. Kelly 40), R. McCormick, C. Dobbin, K. McKillop (E. McShane 50), M. McKillen (C. McArthur 40), A. Magill.
SCORERS: R. McCormick 0-4 (0), N. Cosgrove, C. Dobbin 0-11 each.
REFEREE: Andy Larkin (Cork).



Leanne O'Sullivan, Cork, controlling the sliotar against Ciara Foley, Meath, at Semple Stadium. Pictures: Brendan Gleeson

Cork bow out after flat second-half showing against the Royals

Meath	3-11
Cork	1-11

CORK can have few complaints after defeat in the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Intermediate Camogie quarter-final.

Cork went 18 minutes without a score in the second half and overall this was a poor performance, though they were up 1-7 to 1-6 after a close opening half.

They started brightly, with Rose Murphy and Cliona O'Leary on target before Stephanie Beausang denied Maeve Clinch with a superb save at the expense of a 45 which Grace Coleman duly converted. Meath then raised a green flag through Ellen Burke's long-range shot.

O'Leary and Lauren Homan replied with Aoife Minogue (2) and Grace Coleman on target at the other end. Cork captain Rachel Harty rallied her side with a superb goal as she evaded the Meath defence and blasted to the net to level.

Standout performer Minogue and Amy Gaffney restored their advantage but O'Leary, Murphy and Homan gave Cork a one-point interval lead.

O'Leary hit a free on the restart before the 18-minute spell when Meath took over. Minogue was dominant around the middle and scored along with Gaffney and Coleman. Beausang was forced into two great stops before Mi-

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

nogue drilled a 20-metre free to the net.

Homan landed a free but Cork missed some good chances before Minogue and Abbey Donnelly made it a five-point gap. Meath pushed for the finishing as Donnelly plucked the ball from the air and drilled to the net.

Two late points from Homan were mere consolation but the game was beyond saving.

A poor performance after a season that promised much. Huge disappointment on a day when Cork will know they didn't perform to their potential as Meath advance.

Scorers for Meath: A Minogue 1-5 (0-2 f), G Coleman 0-3 (0-1 45, 0-1 f), E Burke, A Donnelly 1-0 each, A Gaffney 0-2, C Foley 0-1.

Cork: L Homan 0-6 (0-4 f), R Harty 1-0, C O'Leary 0-3 (0-2 f), R Murphy 0-2.

MEATH: T Murphy, S Payne, C Coffey, R O'Neill, T King, E Burke (c), L Devine, G Coleman, A Minogue, A Gaffney, M Clinch, O O'Halloran, C Foley, E O'Connell, A Donnelly.

Subs: A Carey for A O'Halloran (44), A Lally for G Coleman (52), S Leonard for C Coffey (58), N Doyle.

CORK: S Beausang, A Moloney, N O'Leary, E Flanagan, L Doyle, M Ring, L O'Sullivan, A O'Callaghan, R Harty (c), R Murphy, L Allen, A Cashman, C Dooley, C O'Leary, L Homan.

Subs: I Sheehan for A O'Callaghan (36), C O'Callaghan for A Cashman (39), L Callanan for L Allen (49), F Nolligan for R Murphy (51), O'Connell (59).

Referee: Karol Collins (Galway).



Cork's Laura Tracey celebrates winning a late free against Kilkenny in the All-Ireland senior camogie semi-final at Croke Park.

Picture: Piaras Ó Midheach/Sportsfile

Cork's bench is crucial in close win over champs

Cork	2-14
Kilkenny	2-13

CAMOGIE

■ Linda Mellerick

CORK will face Galway in the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland semi-final after a one-point victory in a dramatic clash at Croke Park yesterday.

Cork should have had this game in the bag in the third quarter; they left goal chances behind them which kept Kilkenny's hopes alive.

Denise Gaule dragged the All-Ireland champions back into it with 1-1 inside the closing minutes and Kilkenny could have levelled it if they'd been awarded a last-gasp free.

Cork's panel, as expected, made a big impact, a luxury they haven't had in a number of years with Cliona Healy, fit-again Ashling Thompson and Orla Cronin, and Laura Hayes introduced in the second half.

Matthew Twomey's side had to cope with a messy build-up as their early train to Dublin was stopped in Thurles due to a serious incident on the tracks. A bus arrived within 40 minutes to take the team to Croke Park under escort.

The match was delayed by 15 minutes and, as expected, Cork were jittery with their touch and were slow to start. They trailed by 1-4 to 0-2 after 14 minutes.

Kilkenny were delivering long balls, often high, inside. This led to a goal on 14 minutes when the ball was hit over Cork's defenders and Aoife Prendergast judged it best to gather, sidestep, and did well to tap

it past Amy Lee.

Cork dominated the second quarter. They ran at Kilkenny, splitting them with ease and had three goal chances, one taken by Amy O'Connor on 20 minutes when she turned inside Steffi Fitzgerald and executed brilliantly to the far left of Aoife Norris.

Kilkenny showed no sign of being All-Ireland champions as Cork took over. Saoirse McCarthy and Fiona Keating's runs were causing significant problems, but the Cats created many of their own.

They failed to score from play after their goal and confidence was at an all-time low as three wides inside the six minutes of the first half's additional time epitomised their demeanour.

Gaule would normally have gone direct with what was a relatively simple free for her, but she choose to hit it across to the unmarked Julianne Malone, who, in front of the posts, fired wide.

Cork, after being five points down went in two up, 1-8 to 1-6, after a 20-minute display they would have been happy with.

Brian Dowling had a dilemma sub-wise. Cork, meanwhile, had its strongest bench all season.

Two further balls dropped into Lee's hands and Kilkenny hit another wide at the start of the second half. The difference; another run by McCarthy, blocked

by Norris, an expected free that never came, but her quick response to pass to Mackey was finished to the net, 2-9 to 1-7.

Cork were in a great position, but Kilkenny hit the next three points.

Cork should have put the game to bed after another goal chance was blocked by Norris. A brilliant point by Gaule, who was now operating further out the pitch after not getting any change from Coppinger, was matched by Healy to make it 2-10 to 1-11.

Healy struck her second point, O'Connor hit two, and Cork led by five before a brilliant Gaule goal and point.

Cork should have been awarded a penalty in additional time after O'Connor's jersey was blatantly pulled, but a free against Fitzgerald for a double hop saw Cork get over the line.

Scorers for Cork: A O'Connor 1-6 (0-4 f, 0-1 45), K Mackey 1-2, S McCartney, C Healy 0-2 each, H Looney 0-1.

Kilkenny: D Gaule 1-10 (0-7 f, 0-1 45), A Prendergast 1-0, A Doyle 0-2, J Malone 0-1.

CORK: A Lee, P Mackey, L Coppinger, M Murphy, M Cahalane, L Tracey, I O'Regan, H Looney, A Healy, C Sigerson, F Keating, S McCartney, A O'Connor, S McCartney, K Mackey.

Subs: C Healy for Sigerson (36), O Cronin for McCartney (42), A Thompson for Looney (44), L Hayes for O'Regan (58).

KILKENNY: A Norris, G Walsh, C Phelan, S Fitzgerald, L Murphy, N Deely, T Fitzgerald, K Power, K Doyle, J Malone, A Doyle, M Kenneally, K Nolan, D Gaule, A Prendergast.

Subs: M Teehan for Murphy (32 in), S O'Dwyer for K Nolan (46), A McHardy for Prendergast (50), J Clifford for Kenneally (52).

Referee: J Dermody (Westmeath).



Goalscorer Rachel Harty under pressure from Grace Coleman.



All-Ireland Senior Camogie quarter-final

Cork 2-14
Kilkenny 2-13

Eoghan Cormican

Croke Park

Cork get their feet back under camogie's top table

Numerous hurdles were put in front of Cork before and during this taxing All-Ireland quarter-final outing. They even erected a few fences of their own. But for the first time in a very long time, Cork came out on the right side of a tight squeeze.

Prior to yesterday, Cork had tasted defeat on four of their last five trips to Croke Park. Prior to yesterday, Cork had tasted defeat in eight of their last nine knockout meetings against the other two members — Galway and Kilkenny — of camogie's big three.

Yesterday's result wasn't just revenge for last year's All-Ireland final defeat or re-familiarising themselves with that winning feeling at GAA HQ. Yesterday's result was Cork reasserting themselves at camogie's top table.

"Psychologically, very big win," said Cork manager Matthew Twomey. "A win like that, against a crowd like that, as well. Our own players answered a lot of questions. We don't care what people think outside, but it's just for ourselves."

A quarter-final win on its own won't sate the appetite of Twomey's group. Kilkenny removed, the next obstacle on the road is Galway.

Yesterday's semi-final draw and its pairing of Galway and Cork means that for the first time since 2012, someone from outside the big three will be involved in the decider.

That newcomer will be either Tipperary or Waterford. The Premier were last there in 2006. Waterford haven't reached the concluding day since 1945.

Cork's road to yesterday's quarter-final was a winding one. An incident on the Dublin line meant Cork had to disem-



ROADBLOCK: Cork's Amy O'Connor is tackled by Kilkenny's Tiffanie Fitzgerald and Kellyann Doyle in yesterday's All-Ireland Senior Camogie quarter-final in Croke Park.

Picture: Inpho/Bryan Keane

bark their train at Thurles. A bus was hastily organised. A Garda escort helped them to make up lost time, with throw-in put back by 15 minutes.

It was then further delayed as Cork returned to their dressing-room in protest at the ongoing fight for minimum standards of player welfare. Both camps wore 'United for Equality' shirts during the warm-up. But unity deserted the teams thereafter as Kilkenny remained on the field instead of disappearing under the Cusack Stand along with their opponents.

Once proceedings eventually got underway, Cork set

about making life incredibly difficult for themselves.

When a Julianne Malone point on 13 minutes was followed two minutes later by an Aoife Prendergast goal, Kilkenny led 1-4 to 0-2.

Cork were resilient and resourceful in their response. The runs of Saoirse McCarthy and Hannah Looney time and again cut open a Kilkenny rearguard wanting for structure and shape.

Amy O'Connor showed her trademark turn of pace for a Cork goal on 20 minutes.

But for the post and an Aoife Norris save, she'd have had a first-half hat-trick.

Cork's interval lead of 1-8 to 1-6 represented a seven-point swing on where they stood at the end of the first quarter. Into the second period. More goal openings, more Cork wastefulness.

Katrina Mackey had their second green flag on 35 minutes, after yet another McCarthy run. Norris denied Mackey a second four minutes later.

Approaching the hour, sub Cliona Healy was penalised for barging inside the large parallelogram. It was a bizarre call. Shortly after, Amy O'Connor had the shirt pulled off her back as she rounded

Norris. No penalty, said referee John Dermody.

And when Denise Gaule fired in 1-1 on 58 and 59 minutes to bring her tally to 1-10 and Kilkenny within a point, Cork were in grave danger of signing their own exit papers.

The Cats had strong claims for a levelling free attempt in the fourth and final minute of injury-time. Dermody, though, ruled that Katie Power had not been illegally challenged.

Their title defence over, manager Brian Dowling and Power both remonstrated with Dermody at the final whistle.

Camogie semi-finals

July 22, UPMC Nowlan Park:
Cork v Galway
Waterford v Tipperary

"I probably thought it was a free, but I was more disappointed with the injury-time," said Dowling. "There were four minutes of injury-time and four played, even though there was a stoppage in the middle of it for about a minute and a half. That was probably my frustration."

Cork, mind, had their own bag of grievances. The calls against Healy and O'Connor late on jumped out.

"Especially Amy's one, she nearly got whiplash the way they were pulling the jersey," said Twomey. "I wouldn't referee a game, so I don't want to be too critical of the man who is trying his best. But they were two poor decisions."

With Ashling Thompson and Laura Hayes back on the field after lengthy lay-offs, Cork are finding form at just the right time.

Scorers for Cork: A O'Connor (1-6, 0-4 frees, 0-1 '45); K Mackey (1-2); S McCartan, C Healy (0-2 each); C Sigerson (free), H Looney (0-1 each).

Scorers for Kilkenny: D Gaule (1-10, 0-7 frees, 0-1 '45); A Prendergast (1-0); A Doyle (0-2); J Malone (0-1).

CORK: A Lee; P Mackey, L Coppinger, M Murphy; M Cahalane, L Tracey, I O'Regan; H Looney, A Healy; C Sigerson, F Keating, S McCarthy; A O'Connor, S McCartan, K Mackey.

Subs: C Healy for Sigerson (36); O Cronin for McCartan (42); A Thompson for Looney (44); L Hayes for O'Regan (58).

KILKENNY: A Norris; G Walsh, C Phelan, S Fitzgerald; L Murphy, N Deely, T Fitzgerald; K Power, K Doyle, J Malone, A Doyle, M Kenna; K Nolan, D Gaule, A Prendergast.

Subs: M Teehan for Murphy (32 inj); S O'Dwyer for K Nolan (46); A McHardy for Prendergast (50); J Clifford for Kenna (62).

Referee: J Dermody (Westmeath).

Devane dynamite but Tipp no longer reliant



All-Ireland Senior Camogie quarter-final

Tipperary 3-23
Antrim 0-6

Séamas McAleenan

Croke Park

mainly pleased to get a game in Croke Park at this point in the summer.

"Going straight through to the semi-finals, like Galway and Waterford have done, has its attractions," Kelly admitted. "You like to get extra time to prepare for the semi-final. But who doesn't want to get a game in Croke Park?"

"We had to take Antrim very seriously. They worried us for a good while during that first half, playing an extra defender and we found it difficult to play against them."

"But we got a bit of a lead before half-time, came in and settled down. In the second half we went back to basics with a high work rate and it really stood to us for the rest of the game."

Kelly agreed that his team's experience eventually told, "Antrim have come a huge distance in the last few years. It's like building blocks, you have to take it step by step. They took a beating here today, but they got this far and they now will have a taste for playing at this level and it will stand to them."

"I would be happy enough with my own girls, the second half especially. Some of our subs came in.... Eimear Hefernan had a fabulous game, Caoimhe McCarthy, Mary Ryan all our subs came in there and made an excellent contribution and that is what you want. You want it to be difficult picking a team for the semi-final and also knowing that there are players on the

bench who can make things happen too."

Player of the match Cáit Devane scored two goals and six points that included a quite brilliant shot over her left shoulder from underneath the Hogan Stand and then a sublime finish for her second goal.

"Cáit made a big contribution. But look, she can't do that unless she is getting a supply of the ball and she would be the first to say that. Tipp teams used to depend fully on Cáit."

"If she was held in a game, you were beat. This team isn't like that. There are scores coming from other sources as well."

Devane was the last player to reach the changing rooms

and was thrilled her team kept their unbeaten run going.

"Every player wants to be here, playing in Croke Park, the sun shining on your back and it all to play for," Devane enthused.

"Last week we played Kilkenny down in Nowlan Park and came away with a draw. We took an awful lot from that game."

"You measure yourself against the All-Ireland champions and we know that we are not too far off the mark."

"Our goal now has to be to reach the final. We have got to a number of semi-finals in recent years and then didn't make the final."

"We want to be taking the next step. We are prepping for that next step."

Scorers for Tipperary: C Devane (2-6, 4 frees); E Heffernan (1-4); E McGrath (0-5 frees); C McIntyre (0-2); C Hennessy, C McCarthy, R Howard, Caoimhe Maher, G O'Brien (0-1 each)

Scorers for Antrim: R McCormick (0-4, 3 frees); N Cosgrove, C Dobbin (0-1 frees each)

ANTRIM: C Graham, C Patterson, K Lavery, M Lynn, N Cosgrove, A Boyle, L McKenna, L McNaughton, A Connolly, S McKillop, R McCormick, C Dobbin, K McKillop, M McKillen, A Magill.

Subs: F Kelly for S McKillop (40), C McArthur for M McKillen (40), M McGarry for L McKenna (50), E McShane for K McKillop (50); E Kearns for C Patterson (56)

TIPPERARY: A Slattery, J Bourke, M Evison, E Loughman, K Blair, K Kennedy, A McGrath, T Ryan, C Hennessy, R Howard, Caoimhe Maher, E McGrath, G O'Brien, C Devane, C McIntyre.

Subs: C McCarthy for C Hennessy (27), E Heffernan for G O'Brien (HT), M Ryan for A McGrath (39), Ciarda Maher for T Ryan (44), C Ryan for C McIntyre (50)

Referee: Andy Larkin (Cork).

After watching Tipperary rip Antrim apart in the second half of Saturday's Glen Dimple All-Ireland senior camogie quarter-final, manager Denis Kelly said he was

Camogie All-Ireland senior quarter-finals



CAMOGIE

Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Championship quarter-finals: Tipperary 3-23 Antrim 0-6, Cork 2-14 Kilkenny 2-13; Senior relegation semi-final: Down 0-15 Wexford 1-16; All-Ireland Intermediate Championship quarter-finals: Cork 1-11 Meath 3-11, Kilkenny 0-11 Wexford 0-9; Intermediate relegation semi-final: Carlow 1-16 Dublin 1-7; Premier Junior All-Ireland Championship quarter-finals: Limerick 1-7 Roscommon 0-13, Cavan 0-7 Clare 3-14.

Cork survive late Kilkenny rally inspired by Gaule

Cork 2-14
Kilkenny 2-13

Cork manager Matthew Twomey admitted that his overriding emotion was one of relief after his side recovered from a slow start to dominate much of yesterday's quarter-final, only to have to withstand a late Kilkenny/Denise Gaule rally before prevailing by the minimum margin that has so often applied in this magnificent rivalry.

In the opposite corner, Brian Dowling spoke of his immense pride as the champions hauled themselves back up off the canvas a number of times before finally giving way.

"We put ourselves in a great position at the end of the game," said Twomey. "There was a few core opportunities we flipped up and that nearly cost us." Our conversion rate today

wasn't good. We started slow, were making a lot of silly mistakes, basic errors. But we got a bit of momentum and we got the goal and we should have got another two goals again. We were lucky to get away with it today."

An Aoife Prendergast goal in the 14th minute gave the Cats an early five-point advantage but Cork's running game began to click into gear and Amy O'Connor bulged the net six minutes later after good work by Fiona Keating.

Cleared

Cork should have had at least two more goals, as Aoife Norris saved from Katrina Mackey in the second half and Grace Walsh cleared off the line from O'Connor, though the Cork skipper should have had a penalty after being clearly fouled by Norris.

The Rebels led by 1-8 to 1-6 at the break and Mackey, who had scored two lovely first-half

points, raised a green flag less than five minutes after the restart.

Kilkenny replied with four points on the trot, including a phenomenal effort by Gaule to put one between them, but that's when Twomey used his bench effectively. Cliona Healy fired two big points and Orla Cronin, Laura Hayes and Ashling Thompson also came into the fray, the latter for her first appearance of the year after recovering from a cruciate ligament injury.

Cork looked to have it in the bag when going five ahead once more but a sensational goal by Gaule followed by a free from the player of the match, who finished with 1-10, left the game on

■ Cork's Cliona Healy and Orla Cronin contest possession with Kilkenny's Michelle Teehan during yesterday's game at Croke Park. PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIAN KEANE/INPHO

a knife edge. But the Leesiders held on.

"I'm just so proud of them for the way they stayed fighting," said Dowling of his charges.

"I think Denise Gaule epitomises this team, the character she showed there.

"We got lucky breaks last year. We thought the game was going away from us and Sophie [O'Dwyer] got the goal. That's sport. It's cruel when you lose."

CORK: A Lee: P Mackey, L Doppingier, M Murphy, M Cahalane, L Treacy, J O'Regan, S McCarthy, M Looney (0-1), C Sigerson (0-1), F Keating, A Healy, A O'Connor (1-6, 5fs, 145), K Mackey (1-2), S McCartan (0-2). **Subs:** C Healy (0-2) for Sigerson (36 mins), O'Donnell for McCartan (42), A Thompson for Looney (44), L Hayes for O'Regan (58).
KILKENNY: A Norris, C Phelan, G Walsh, S Fitzgerald, T Fitzgerald, N Deely, L Murphy, K Power, K Doyle, M Keneally, A Doyle (0-2), J Malone (0-1), K Nolan, D Gaule (1-10, 8fs), A Prendergast (1-0). **Subs:** M Teehan for Murphy (30+2 mins), S O'Dwyer for Nolan (47), A McHardy for Prendergast (58), J Clifford for Keneally (60+2).
Referee: John O'Grady (Westmeath).



Sandie Fitzgibbon, The Echo Rebel Legends award winner, with the award and a framed front page of The Echo. Picture: Denis Minihane

Cork legend Fitzgibbon honoured with Lifetime Achievement Award

GAA

■ Eamonn Murphy

FORMER Cork camogie star Sandie Fitzgibbon will collect a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Gaelic Players Association at the Hurling and Camogie Legends Lunch at Croke Park on the eve of the All-Ireland Hurling final weekend.

Fitzgibbon is widely regarded as one of the greatest camogie players ever and will be honoured for her outstanding service to the game, but she was also a brilliant basketballer.

A six-time All-Ireland winner, she was selected on camogie's Team of the Century in 2004. Her All-Ireland wins span 15 seasons with her first medal coming in 1982 and her last in 1997.

Fitzgibbon captained Cork to their 1992 win against Wexford, a year in which she was also named Player of the Year. That's an accolade she won again in 1995. She also won seven league medals, two inter-pros, and four All-Ireland club crowns with Glen Rovers.

In 2021, she was voted number one in our Echo Rebel Legends poll matching up some of the greatest Cork sportspeople from a variety of codes. The tournament drew 19,959 votes online with Fitzgibbon pulling in 54.7% of the vote in the final against Rena Buckley.

She got the better of Billy Morgan, Denis Irwin, Rob Heffernan, and Roy Keane before the final, which showed the high esteem she's held in for her sustained brilliance with Cork, the Glen, and on the bas-

ketball front for Blarney and Ireland.

Antrim's Eddie Donnelly will get a Hurling Lifetime Achievement Award at the end of the month.

Donnelly is the holder of eight Antrim county titles with Ballycastle, incredibly winning the first of those as a 16-year-old but having to wait another 11 years to add his second.

He was part of their three-in-a-row team from 1978 to 1980, going to reach the 1980 All-Ireland club final where Galway's Castlegar came out on top.

His inter-county career spanned 20 years and during that time he picked up an All-Ireland intermediate medal, Ulster titles, a Division 2 league winners medal and junior honours.

The GPA Hurling and Camogie Legends Lunch takes place at Croke Park on Friday, July 21.

The GPA will be delighted to welcome members of the hurling All-Ireland winning teams from 2013 (Clare), 2003, 1993, 1983 and 1963 (Kilkenny) and 1973 (Limerick) on the day. Cork's All-Ireland winners from 1993, 1983 and 1973 will there to be recognised in camogie, alongside the 2013 winners (Galway), the 2003 winners (Tipperary), and Dublin's 1963 winners.

All proceeds from the event are going to the Jack and Jill Foundation.



Amy O'Connor celebrates after scoring Cork's first goal during yesterday's All-Ireland Camogie Championship quarter-final Piaras Ó Midheach/Sportsfile

Relief for Twomey after Rebels repel Cats' Gaule-led fightback

CORK 2-14
KILKENNY 2-13

ALL-IRELAND CAMOGIE QUARTER-FINAL

Cork manager Matthew Twomey admitted his overriding emotion was one of relief after his side recovered from a slow start to dominate much of the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Camogie quarter-final, only to have to withstand a late Denise Gaule-led Kilkenny rally before prevailing by the minimum.

In the opposite corner, Brian Dowling spoke of his immense pride as the champions hauled themselves back up off the canvas a number of times before finally giving way.

"We put ourselves in a great position at the end of the game," said Twomey. "There were a few core opportunities we flipped up and that nearly cost us. We were shouting at them to take the points to keep the scoreboard ticking."

"We were five points up and we'd two goal opportunities. Instead of taking points, we went for goals, which would have killed the game. But you need the

scores as you can't put away a team like Kilkenny as we saw when they got the goal. The crowd got behind them, but (with) a small bit of composure from our lads, it stood to us.

"Our conversion rate today wasn't good. We started slow, were making a lot of silly mistakes, basic errors. But we got a bit of momentum and we got the goal and we should have got another two goals again. We were lucky to get away with it today.

"All we wanted was the result. You wouldn't be overly happy with the display, but it was about the result. Kilkenny are a fantastic team. They showed it out there.

"When things were going wrong, they still had the composure to come back and could have snatched the draw.

"There was talk about our character after losing (big games). We never questioned the character of the team, but today, I thought they showed a lot of composure. But if we can get a top performance - the scores we left behind us - if we can get them converted, we'll be hard to beat."

An Aoife Prendergast goal in the 14th minute gave the Cats an early five-point

advantage, but Cork's running game began to click into gear and Amy O'Connor bulged the net six minutes later after good work by Fiona Keating.

Cork should have had at least two more goals, as Aoife Norris saved from Katrina Mackey in the second half and Grace Walsh cleared off the line from O'Connor, though the Cork skipper should have had a penalty after being clearly fouled by Norris.

The Rebels led by 1-8 to 1-6 at the break and Mackey, who had scored two lovely first-half points, raised a green flag less than five minutes after the restart.

Kilkenny replied with four points on the trot, including a phenomenal effort by Gaule to put one between them, but that's when Twomey used his bench effectively.

Cliona Healy fired two big points and Orla Cronin, Laura Hayes and Ashling Thompson also came into the fray, the latter for her first appearance of the year after recovering from a cruciate ligament injury.

Sensational

Cork looked to have it in the bag when going five ahead once more, but a sensational goal by Gaule, followed by a free left from the player of the match, who finished with 1-10, left the game on a knife edge. But the Leesiders held on.

"I'm just so proud of them for the way they stayed fighting," said Dowling of his charges.

"I think Denise Gaule epitomises this team, the character she showed there. I don't know how she got in for that goal. The composure she showed with five Cork players behind her. She's been a huge leader and she's worn that jersey with pride over the years, as have all those girls.

"I believe in these girls. Once we got the goal, it was definitely there for us. We had chances. But the one thing I said to the girls during the week and this morning was stay fighting as long as you can. Whatever happens, that's all you can do and I can't ask for any more.

"Cork are a super team. Matthew Twomey is a great manager and I've great respect for him."

SCORES - Cork: A O'Connor 1-6 (5), 0-1 (5); K Mackey 1-2; S McCartan, C Healy 0-2 each; C Sigerson (7), H Looney 0-1 each. **Kilkenny**: D Gaule 1-10 (8); A Prendergast 1-0; A Doyle 0-2; J Malone 0-1

CORK: A Lee; P Mackey, L Coppinger, M Murphy; M Cahillane, L Treacy, I O'Regan, S McCarthy, H Looney; C Sigerson, F Keating, A Healy; A O'Connor, K Mackey, S McCartan. **Subs**: C Healy for Sigerson (36), O Cronin for McCartan (42), A Thompson for Looney (44), L Hayes for O'Regan (58)

KILKENNY: A Norris; C Phelan, G Walsh, S Fitzgerald; T Fitzgerald, N Devry, L Murphy, K Power, K Doyle; M Kennedy, A Doyle, T Fitzgerald; K Nolan, D Gaule, A Prendergast. **Subs**: M Tethan for Murphy (39-2), S O'Dwyer for Nolan (47), A McHardy for Prendergast (51), J Clifford for Kennedy (60-2)

REF: John Donohy (Westmeath)

Player of the Match Devane gives doughty Antrim their due

Tipperary 3-23
Antrim 0-6

After watching Tipperary rip Antrim apart in the second half of Saturday's quarter-final, manager Denis Kelly was pleased to get a game in Croke Park at this point in the summer.

"Going straight through to the semi-finals, like Galway and

Waterford have done, has its attractions," Kelly admitted. "You like to get extra time to prepare for the semi-final. But who doesn't want to get a game in Croke Park?"

"We had to take Antrim very seriously. They worried us for a good while during that first half, playing an extra defender and we found it difficult to play against them.

"But we got a bit of a lead before half-time, came in and settled down. In the second half we

went back to basics with a high work rate and it really stood to us for the rest of the game."

Kelly agreed that his team had more experience than Antrim coming into Croke Park and that experience told before the end.

'Building blocks'

"Antrim have come a huge distance in the last few years. It's like building blocks, you have to take it step by step. They took a beating here today, but they got

this far and they now will have a taste for playing at this level and it will stand to them."

Cáit Devane scored two goals and six points that included a quite brilliant shot over her left shoulder from underneath the Hogan Stand and then a sublime finish for her second goal. That contribution didn't go unnoticed with the Clonulty-Rossmore forward picking up the Player of the Match accolade.

"We're delighted," Devane enthused.

"We have to give Antrim their dues. They made life difficult for us early in the game, but it took us to half-time to work out their weaknesses.

"Our goal now has to be to

reach the final. We have got to a number of semi-finals in recent years and then didn't make the final. We want to be taking the next step. We are prepping for that next step."

ANTRIM: C Grahwin, C Patterson, K Lavery, M Lynn, N Cosgrove (0-1), A Boyle, L McKenna, L McNaughton, A Connolly, S McKillop, R McCormick (0-4, 0-3 frees), C Dobbin (0-1), K McKillop, M McKillen, A Mayall. **Subs**: F Kelly for S McKillop (40), C McArthur for M McKillen (40), M McDermott for L McKenna (50), E McShane for K McKillop (50), E Keane for C Patterson (58)

TIPPERARY: A Slattery, J Bourke, M Eviston, E Loughran, K Blair, K Kennedy, A McGrath, T Ryan, C Hennessy (0-1), R Howard (0-1), Caoimhe Maher (0-1), E McGrath (0-5, frees), G O'Brien (0-1), C Devane (2-6, 0-4 frees), C McIntyre (0-2). **Subs**: C McCarthy (0-1) for C Hennessy (27), E Heffernan (0-4) for G O'Brien (41), M Ryan for A McGrath (33), Ciarda Maher for T Ryan (44), C Ryan for C McIntyre (53)

Referee: Andy Larkin (Cork)

Eleven months on from losing 2022 All-Ireland final, Cork dethrone Kilkenny in thriller

CORK 2-14
KILKENNY 2-13

GER MCCARTHY REPORTS

THE REBELS are on the march once again following a heart-stopping victory over Kilkenny in an epic Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior camogie quarter-final at Croke Park.

In a repeat of the 2022 All-Ireland decider, Cork gained revenge for a one-point loss to end the Cats' reign and secure a last-four berth against Galway.

For Cork manager Matthew Twomey, one word summed up his side's magnificent result.

'Relief,' he said.

'We put ourselves in a great position at the end of the game. There were a few goal opportunities we squandered and that nearly cost us.'

'We were shouting at them to take their points as we were five up. Instead of taking the points, we went for goals. They would have killed the game but we needed to put a great team like Kilkenny away, as we saw when they got that late goal.'

'The crowd got behind them but a small bit of composure from our players stood to us. We were lucky to get away with it today.'

Cork brought in Hannah Looney for Cliona Healy in a game delayed by 15 minutes due to a tragic rail-line incident that occurred early on Sunday morning. That necessitated the Cork senior panel having to leave their train in Thurles and travel the last leg of their journey to Croke Park via coach.

Kilkenny started brightly with Denise Gaule (free) and Aoife Doyle scoring early.

Sorcha McCartan was Cork's only scorer with two points

Cork's Izzy O'Regan, Aoife O'Neill and Kate Wall celebrate the win.

'We put ourselves in a great position at the end of the game. There were a few goal opportunities we squandered and that nearly cost us'

during a poor first quarter in which Kilkenny stretched their lead. Denise Gaule (free) and Julianne Malone found their range prior to Aoife Prendergast capitalising on hesitant Cork defending to net a close-range goal.

1-4 to 0-2 behind, the Rebels went on to dominate the second quarter. Chloe Sigerson and Amy O'Connor (both frees) efforts preceded O'Connor collecting a long diagonal, turning a defender and finding the bottom corner after 19 minutes. Looney edged Cork ahead for the first time before Gaule answered via another free.

1-5 apiece, Katrina Mackey (two) and Amy O'Connor (45) took Cork's total to 1-8 for the half despite wasting two goal

opportunities. Kilkenny fired six uncharacteristic wides but were only a point behind at the break thanks to two late Gaule.

The All-Ireland champions lost Laura Murphy to injury just before the interval but Denise Gaule landed

a free to ease nerves immediately after the restart. That was Cork's cue to up the tempo with Katrina Mackey finishing a rebound to the net after Saoirse McCarthy's long run and shot was blocked.

Amy O'Connor and Amy Doyle exchanged scores and it

was 2-9 to 1-8 on 39 minutes.

Katrina Mackey's goal-bound shot was saved before two Denise Gaule frees reduced the deficit.

Orla Cronin and Aishling Thompson were sprung from the bench prior to the excellent Gaule's eighth point.

REBELS REVENGE



Orla Cronin and Ashling Thompson celebrate Cork's quarter-final win in Croke Park. (Photo: Bryan Keane/INPHO)

Resilient Rebels have the chance

BY KIERAN MCCARTHY

GALWAY, again.

No matter where this Cork camogie team turns, Galway are there.

Hours after the Rebels dethroned Kilkenny on Sunday, the two best teams left in the All-Ireland senior championship were pitted against one another in the semi-finals: it's Cork v Galway, and Waterford v Tipperary in Nowlan Park on July 22nd.

This is a chance for Cork, car-

rying serious momentum after last weekend, to break their hoodoo against the Tribeswomen.

Three times the counties have already clashed this season, and Galway have won them all.

There was the 1-11 to 1-10 home loss in the league in March that mattered little to Cork who had already qualified for the Division 1A final, but in the league game that did matter, Galway won again, 2-13 to 1-12 – and that defeat hurt,

Two-time All-Star Ashling Thompson made her first appearance of the season

as Cork's wait for national silverware goes on. Then Galway beat Matthew Twomey's side in their championship Group 1 opener in June, 1-12 to 0-12. Rarely more than a puck of a ball between them, and now they'll meet again.

Galway have also beaten Cork in three of the Rebels' last four major finals, too. The 2023 league final. The 2022 league decider. The 2021 All-Ireland final.

In fact, Cork haven't beaten Galway in the championship since the 2017 All-Ireland semi-final.

The Rebels really owe them one, and they'll fancy their chances after knocking Kilkenny out.

There were some notable takeaways from this quar-

Cork's Amy O'Connor celebrates scoring her first-half goal against Kilkenny. (Photos: Laszlo Geczo/INPHO)



Cork's Saoirse McCarthy races away from Kilkenny's Kelly-ann Doyle and Julianne Malone. (Photo: Bryan Keane/INPHO)

THE HIGHLIGHTS

Our Star: Amy O'Connor and Saoirse McCarthy were influential for Cork, but veteran Kilkenny forward **Denise Gaule** rolled back the years and produced one of her best displays as she scored 1-10.
Star moment: Katrina Mackey's goal early in the second half came from a rebound after Saoirse McCarthy's initial effort was saved. That crucial score extended a lead Cork would never relinquish.
Talking point: Referee John Dermody and his officials failed to award Cork a late penalty despite a clear tug on Amy O'Connor's jersey.
What's next? Cork will face Galway in an All-Ireland semi-final in Nowlan Park on Saturday, July 22nd, at 5.30pm.



Clinical Amy O'Connor scores her crucial first-half goal against Kilkenny in Croke Park.

posite end but, once again, no penalty was given.

Kilkenny were denied a late free despite a clear foul and Cork held on for a famous one-point victory and All-Ireland semi-final berth.

'All we wanted was the result,' Matthew Twomey said.

'You wouldn't be overly happy with the display but it was just the result. Kilkenny are a fantastic team. They showed it out there. Even when things were going wrong, they still had the composure to come back and could have snatched a draw. (For us) it was just about the result.'

'There was talk about our character out there after losing finals and semi-finals. Today was a quarter-final, I know, but we never questioned the character of our team. Today, they just showed an awful lot of composure.'

'If we can just get a top performance (out of them), because we left a ton of scores behind us, if we can convert

those, we will be hard to beat.'

Scorers

Cork: A O'Connor 1-6 (4f, 145); K Mackey 1-2; S McCartan, C Healy 0-2 each; H Looney, C Sigerson (1f) 0-1 each.

Kilkenny: D Gaule 1-10 (7f, 145); A Prendergast 1-0; A Doyle 0-2; J Malone 0-1.

Cork: A Lee; P Mackey, L Coppinger, M Murphy; M Cahalane, L Tracey, I O'Regan; H Looney, A Healy; C Sigerson, F Keating, S McCarthy; A O'Connor, S McCartan, K Mackey.
Subs: C Healy for C Sigerson (36), O Cronin for S McCartan (42), A Thompson for H Looney (44), L Hayes for I O'Regan (59).

Kilkenny: A Norris; G Walsh, C Phelan, S Fitzgerald; L Murphy, N Deely, T Fitzgerald; K Power, K Doyle; J Malone, A Doyle, M Kenneally; K Nolan, D Gaule, A Prendergast.

Subs: M Teehan for L Murphy (32, inj), S O'Dwyer for K Nolan (46), A McHardy for A Prendergast (51), J Clifford for M Kenneally (61).

Referee: John Dermody (Westmeath).

The Rebels responded with Cliona Healy and O'Connor making it 2-13 to 1-12. Healy was brought down shortly after but no penalty was awarded. Cork continued to press and another Amy O'Connor free looked to have won it with 4 minutes to go.

Kilkenny possessed one final sting however as the irrepressible Denise Gaule evaded four defenders and found the net before firing over a free to leave the bare minimum between the sides.

Amy O'Connor's shirt was pulled in the square at the op-

to end their Galway hoodoo

ter-final. Cork boss Twomey mentioned afterwards how his side's character has been questioned after losing big games – but look at their response when they slipped 1-4 to 0-2 behind in the first half. By the break they led by two.

There was a trend in those four recent final defeats, too – Cork leading in the second half but fading away to eventually lose.

The 2023 league final, Cork led by three at the break and lost by four. The 2022 All-Ire-

land decider, the Rebels were two points in front after 30 minutes, but lost by one. 2022 league final, led by six early in the second half, but lost by four. In the 2021 All-Ireland final, Cork led Galway 1-11 to 0-11 with ten minutes left, but lost 1-15 to 1-12.

Last Sunday, Cork led at the break, swelled that advantage to five during the second half and while Kilkenny trimmed it to one, the resilient Rebels held out to win. That's a rock to build on there. Again, character.

'All we wanted was the result,' Matthew Twomey said afterwards, 'You wouldn't be overly happy with the display but it was about the result.' He feels there's more to come, and he's right. Cork were a distant second best in the first quarter, and Twomey was also critical of his side's conversion rate.

'If we can get a top performance – the scores we left behind us – if we can get them converted, we'll be hard to beat,' he added, and his confidence will be boosted by the

return of some regular faces. Two-time All-Star Ashling Thompson made her first appearance of the season, having suffered an ACL injury in August 2022. 2020 All-Star Orla Cronin came off the bench for the second game in a row after her recent injury troubles. Laura Hayes, another sidelined through injury, came on too. It strengthens Twomey's hand ahead of the biggest game of the season – and of his two seasons as manager – against a familiar opponent.

Camogie player awarded nearly €40,000

A 15-year-old camogie player who was left with a scar on her leg after being struck by "an untaped" hurl has been awarded almost €40,000 damages against Cumann Na mBunscol Ath Cliath.

Barrister Deirdre Byrne told Judge John O'Connor in the Circuit Civil Court yesterday that there was a metal band on the hurl that should have been taped for safety purposes.

Ms Byrne said Jenna McGovern was 11 years old and playing in a school final at Croke Park for St Kevin's Primary School, Kilmamagh, against Balgaddy School, Lucan, Co Dublin on June 11th, 2019 when she received the injury.

Counsel told the court that Jenna, of Parkhill Rise, Kilmamagh, Dublin 24, had been struck on the back of her left leg by a hurl which had a metal band wrapped around it and which caused a laceration.

The girl attended Crumlin Children's Hospital where the wound was further treated and seven stitches inserted.

Ms Byrne said Jenna had been prescribed pain killing medication and had been off school for about a week. She had the sutures removed after a week. She said the Injuries Board had assessed damages in the sum of €38,000 for general damages and €1,183 for medical fees and general expenses.

STAR SPORT

SATURDAY
JULY 15, 2023

Saolse McCarthy in action for Cork in the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior camogie championship quarter-final against Kilkenny. (Photo: Bryan Keane / INPHO)

REBELS STRIKE BACK

Cork dethrone All-Ireland champs to set up showdown with Galway

Pages 4-5



Dowling believes time is right to step down as Cats camogie boss

Andrew Horgan

Brian Dowling has stepped down from his role as Kilkenny senior camogie manager, the Cats county board has announced.

The O'Loughlin Gaels native informed the players of his decision in the aftermath of their narrow All-Ireland quarter-final loss to Cork on Sunday afternoon.

Dowling had been involved with the side for the last five seasons but he believes this is "the right time to step away" from the position.

After taking sole charge of the team back in 2020 — he initially came in as coach back

in 2019 — the former Kilkenny hurler guided the camogie team to two All-Ireland titles in '20 and '22, winning manager of the year for both campaigns.

"Brian Dowling and his entire backroom team have informed us that they are stepping away from the senior camogie team," began Kilkenny camogie chairperson Theresa Aylward in a statement.

"Kilkenny camogie would like to sincerely thank Brian and his entire backroom team for their commitment, dedication, and work, and most of all their professionalism that he has brought over the past five years.

"He is a two-time All-Ireland winning manager having won the titles with the panel in 2020 during the very trying covid-19 period and again in 2022.

"The time that he has put into the panel has been second to none and he has always put the players welfare to the fore in his tenure.

"He has guided this panel of players to heights that many could (only) dream of and he will be sorely missed.

"We wish Brian the very best in his future endeavours and we thank him wholeheartedly for what he has done for Kilkenny camogie," Aylward added.



Brian Dowling: Guided camogie team to two All-Ireland titles.



Cork's Libby Coppinger celebrates at the final whistle with Laura Tracey after beating Kilkenny on Sunday at Croke Park. Picture: INPHO/Laszlo Gezsz

Female players deserve better

LAST year, Anna Galvin, the Kerry ladies footballer was one of seven players across Gaelic football, ladies football, and camogie who — following a request from *The42* — volunteered for an exercise where those players tracked their expenses on a weekly basis in a diary over the course of a month.

All costs related to their inter-county commitments were accounted for in the diaries, including money spent on fuel/travel, nutrition, and medical/recovery expenses. Galvin recorded the highest monthly total of €1,792.

Tracking the number of hours they spent commuting for their inter-county teams, Galvin's tally was 44. Her total mileage cost alone for the month was €1,577. The male players were reimbursed for travel expenses. The female players were not reimbursed for any expenses.

In conversation before last year's All-Ireland football final, when Galvin captained Kerry against Meath, she was inclined to focus on the enjoyment more than the financial hit, but the cost extended far beyond just hard cash.

The emotional and physical toll she described was colossal, leaving Dublin city centre in mid-afternoon, not arriving back to Dublin until 12.30am, before having to get up early again in the morning. The constant driving is merciless on her back. And her mind.

That type of commitment is unsustainable, but it's unrealistic for ladies football or camogie players to maintain that financial input without getting any sort of support.

Earlier last year, Gearóid Hegarty spoke about the massive baseline chasm between how men and women GAA players are treated, which ranged from fixture clashes to access to facilities to female players being asked to pay to play. "They have to ask themselves," said Hegarty. "Can I afford it?"

GAA

■ Christy O'Connor

In today's society, that question now extends far beyond even the players.

"When I look at the minor and U16s playing for Kerry I really do hope things will have changed for them by the time they get to senior," said Galvin last July.

"My parents were driving me all over the county and country, but the cost of living for young families is very difficult now, especially in a county like Kerry where it's so spread out for training.

It's so hard for parents to be able to maintain that level of commitment from themselves financially and time-wise because it's just so expensive.

"People who have daughters playing might just think: 'Why would I encourage them to stay in this? How is this sustainable for them to stay in this game?'"

When 24 senior ladies footballers and camogie players stood united at a landmark press conference in Dublin a couple of weeks ago, one journalist asked the question if they were aware of players not playing, or who have walked away because of the cost involved. All 24 put their hands up.

The costs, financial, and emotional, is becoming too much to bear, which is why ladies footballers and camogie players have been staging their protests over the last couple of weeks at games right across the country.

At that press conference in late June, the players revealed that they had already contemplated full strike action.

"We don't feel that we are being listened to," said Dublin camogie captain Aisling Maher.

Within two hours of the girls' statement being released, the LGFA released a statement expressing their 'surprise' at the events. That evening, Sinead McNulty, CEO of the Camogie Association said on the SixOne news she was surprised. However, if they had been hearing what the girls had been saying, either through the

GPA or the girls themselves, it's difficult to know how they could have been caught off guard when a chorus of anger and frustration has risen to a crescendo.

How much more evidence do the LGFA and Camogie Association need?

When the GPA launched its 'State of Play' equality report in April — a survey of 1,579 women inter-county players — the standout results were glaring; only 9.5% of women players receive travel expenses from their county board; 79% do not have regular access to a team doctor; 36% do not have full access to a physio; 53% don't have full access to a gym; 71% said they don't have full access to suitable pitches.

The players believe that both the LGFA and Camogie Association have failed to engage with them in a meaningful way since the report was published.

The "viable integration" of the LGFA and Camogie Association is central to the GAA's new Strategic Plan, but the challenges will continue until that actually happens.

Last September, former President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, agreed to be independent chairperson of the integration process, where she is chairing a steering group of officials from the three organisations preparing the roadmap to three in one, to one association.

Yet how long is that process going to take? There is evident frustration at the lack of communication from the steering group since the GPA met them in April. How serious are the three organisations about actually making it happen?

When Tom Parsons, CEO of the GPA proposed meeting all three organisations to work towards a female charter now, rather than waiting years before viable integration happens, the GAA and Camogie Association said that it couldn't happen until full integration was official. The players say the LGFA didn't respond, a claim the LGFA have challenged.

The games have never been more popular, especially ladies football, but the players are now on the brink. And the LGFA and Camogie Associations need to realise how serious the players are.

Down or Offaly face senior trapdoor

Daragh Ó Conchúir

All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship Relegation Final: Down v Offaly, 12pm, Ngdc Abbotstown

Being drawn in the same group as Galway and Cork ensured that survival became the primary goal for Down in this year's championship. They would have liked to have done that by beating Clare but couldn't manage it. They have been reasonably competitive though and did beat subsequent All-Ireland quarter-finalists Antrim in the Ulster final.

Offaly, unlike Down, have only one bite of the cherry, the Mourne women having been unable to defeat Wexford last weekend in the relegation semi-final. Noelle Kennedy's Midlanders have endured a miserable season. Not being able to call on the sublime talents of Kate Kenny was a big blow and they were relegated from Division 1B to the third tier of the Very League. Siobhán Flannery remains a key leadership figure, however.

Down lost Sorcha McCartan to Cork since winning the intermediate title in 2020 but possess one of the best forwards in the game in Niamh Mallon.

There's also a relegation final in the intermediate grade, with Dublin facing Laois at Banagher (2pm). Both failed to get any sort of positive result in their group and while Laois drew the short straw of going direct to the relegation final, Dublin were seven-point losers to Carlow in the semi-final.

In the Nancy Murray Cup junior semi-finals, Tyrone meet Mayo while Louth take on Wicklow.

Camogie Association urges GPA to 're-engage' on player welfare report

Eoghan Cormican

The Camogie Association has called on the Gaelic Players Association (GPA) to engage in "open and constructive dialogue" with them so as to address issues surrounding player welfare.

In a statement released yesterday, the Camogie Association expressed disappointment at the GPA for not engaging with them "in a meaningful way" since June 14.

The GPA presented their State of Play report to Camogie's Ard Chomhairle on June 14. Subsequent to that presentation, the Camogie Association sought more detailed information and identification of priority areas that need to be addressed.

Almost a month on, the Camogie Association has not yet received the requested information and so is calling on the GPA to re-engage with them.

Yesterday's statement is the latest development in the fight of female inter-county players to secure minimum standards of care ahead of the 2024 season.

Camogie and ladies footballers yesterday communicated their decision to withdraw any media event organised by either the Camogie Association or LGFA for the duration of the All-Ireland championships.

Players will instead attend a GPA organised media event next Monday ahead of the All-Ireland semi-finals in both codes.

"The Camogie Association recognises the significance of the concerns raised by inter-county players and emphasises the importance of the Gaelic Players Association (GPA) re-engaging with us on these matters. We are steadfast in our commitment to collaborating with them, firmly believing that open and constructive dialogue is the most effective approach to address these issues," the camogie statement read.

"The information requested will provide valuable insight into any existing issues or inequities.

"We are fully committed to working with the GPA to address these concerns, using the resources available to our Association in the short, medium, and long term, however, it is imperative we understand all the data presented before we can action any elements of the report."

At Wednesday's Oireachtas committee meeting, the GAA director general Tom Ryan explained that the association is willing to help and support the establishment of a female charter.

He added, however, that there had been no contact from the LGFA or Camogie Association to bring about such a charter.



Cork's Saoirse McCarthy takes on Niamh Deely of Kilkenny during the All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship quarter-final match at Croke Park. PHOTO: PIARAS Ó MIDHEACH/SPORTSFILE



BATTLE FOR THE SKIES: Cork's Libby Coppinger and Denise Gaule of Kilkenny compete in the air with 2023 Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship Quarter-Final last Sunday. PHOTO: INPHO/BRYAN KEANE

Camogie

There were mixed results for Cork over the weekend. The Intermediate campaign ended in a defeat to Meath and a season that saw them win their league and the Munster Championship ended in a whimper.

It was a very poor performance in which only a few players measured up on the day and I wonder was there a degree of complacency in their approach to the game, having beaten the same opposition twice last season.

It was a significant win for the seniors beating the champions Kilkenny - the first time in 5 attempts that they have beaten one of the so called big 2, Galway the other, in a major game and in Croke Park at that.

The winning margin was only 1 point, but it should have been a lot more with a number of goal scoring opportunities spurned and denied 2 clear penalties by a shocking refereeing performance in the last few minutes.

Crucially Cork won a tight game, in the recent past such results have gone against them and the manner of this victory will in my view stand to them.

The other important factor to take from the game, is the impact off the bench, with Laura Hayes, Ashling Thompson and Orla Cronin getting game time and all three made telling contributions, which will make picking the team for the semi-final v Galway in Nowlan Park on Saturday week very interesting.

Final point: all credit to the players for the manner in which they handled the pre-match disruption, which showed a calmness and experience within the squad.

Thanks also the Irish Rail and Garda Traffic for ensuring we all made it to HQ on time.

CAMOGIE

Glen Dimplex Senior All-Ireland Championship relegation final: Down 1-12 Offaly 0-6; Intermediate All-Ireland Championship relegation final: Dublin 1-15 Laois 1-7; Nancy Murray Cup semi-finals: Tyrone 0-3 Mayo 3-5, Louth 0-6 Wicklow 5-11.



Kevin Cummins, Cummins sports, award sponsor with The Cork ladies minor footballers and Cork U16 camogie team joint winners of the July Rebel Og award monthly award last year. sponsored by The Clayton Silversprings Hotel, Cummins sports award sponsors, with The Echo and RedFm media partners. Back from left, camogie players Sinead Hurley, Keeley Goulding, Aoibhe Daly and Aoibhinn O'Neill, front footballers, Siobhan Callanan, Orlaith Cahalane, Aimee Corcoran and Evie Twomey. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

Cork put title on the line as they face Wexford in All-Ireland U16A semi

TODAY
All-Ireland U16A Camogie Championship semi-final: Cork v Wexford, The Ragg, 4pm

CAMOGIE

■ **Mary Newman**

IT'S semi-final time for the U16s as Mallow plays host to the All-Ireland U16A semi-finals this afternoon when holders Cork take on Wexford in the first game of a double-header, with Galway meeting Tipperary in the second game.

Cork are bidding for three in a row, and with no championship played in 2020 due to covid, Cork could very well be now going for five in a row having also taken the title in 2019 when they breached a 16-year gap.

Cork have since driven on to make it a very productive few years for Cork at U16 level with the great work going in at club and county level is paying huge dividends. There was a change of format this year.

Just six teams battled it out for the U16A All-Ireland championship title with all six playing in one group with the top four now forward to contest the semi-finals.

Cork topped the group with victories over Limerick, Wexford, Kilkenny, and Galway before losing to Tipperary last weekend to a Tipperary side who took the second semi-final spot defeating Kilkenny, Limerick and Cork they drew with Limerick and lost out to Galway.

Galway come into the semi-finals having taken third spot in the group with three victories, a draw and one loss while Cork's opponents Wexford had just one victory against Limerick in their last game. It was enough to give them the fourth qualifying spot, having drawn with Galway and Tipperary before losing to Cork 4-12 to 1-5 when the sides met in Wexford on May 14.

Cork will be hot favourites to make it to the final, and on the basis of the last meeting of the sides the tag of favourite is well deserved.

Having lost in the Munster championship earlier in the season to Limerick they proceeded to turn their season around with excellent championship displays where they went on to defeat the same Limerick side by 10 points.

With a new management team at the helm this year, things have been going according to plan, only one of last season's successful management team remain, but there is continuity with the role of manager taken on by John Maloney from Newtownshandrum who had been part of Donie Daly's management set-up for the last number of years.

Maloney has brought experience to the role of manager and he is joined by Deirdre Twomey from the St Catherine's, who herself lined out at inter-county level with Cork. Michelle Gould, St Vincent's is goalkeeping coach, John Brosnan, Buttevant is a coach/selector, and Mark Kavanagh, Charleville is a coach/selector.

Kavanagh has also been involved with Cork Rebel Og teams.

Brendan O'Driscoll, Carrigaline, who previously worked with Cork U17 development squads, is also on board as a coach/selector.

MINORS BOOK FINAL SPOT

All-Ireland minor champions Cork had to call on all their experience to hold off the challenge of a determined Waterford side to book their place in the Munster final as they recorded 0-15 to 1-11 victory in Castle Road.

Cork led 0-9 to 0-6 at the interval and had to withstand huge pressure before advancing to the final.

A late pointed free helped Cork secure victory and set up a final meeting with Tipperary who overcame Clare 3-15 to 0-11.



Cork keeper Molly Lynch, Izzy O'Regan, Aoife O'Neill, and Kate Wall celebrate after the quarter-final win over Kilkenny. Picture: Inpho/Laszlo Gecz

Cork deserved win but should have been out of sight



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

CORK deserved their victory over Kilkenny last Sunday.

Down to a scary one-point lead again when anything could have happened, but Cork's defence dealt with the threat in the closing minutes. They should have been out of sight when five points up, with opportunities to make it seven, but Denise Gaule's 1-1 pulled Kilkenny back into the game.

Her goal was incredible. You won't find any defensive criticism here for that goal; sometimes you just have to admire brilliance.

Cork outnumbered Kilkenny in the second half in that area with Laura Treacy sitting free and back in the protective zone.

Gaule moved out and back in as she almost single-handedly got Kilkenny to a semi-final.

If Cork had lost this game, they'd have been distraught, because they should have won it by three goals, at least.

They literally tore Kilkenny's defence apart with their runs, Saoirse McCarthy was outstanding.

Missed opportunities in the 23rd, 27th, and 39th minutes, then the penalty that should have been given to Amy O'Connor.

I re-watched the game. What were the umpires doing?

I could see one clearly with his eyes focused on the ball in Amy's hand. But their job is to do more than look at the ball, it's to keep an eye on everything that goes on in that zone and they failed to do it.

It was just as well that the material was strong such as the stretch, or Amy would have had a bashful moment.



Cork manager Matthew Twomey after the All-Ireland quarter-final match between Cork and Kilkenny. Picture: Piaras Ó Midheach/Sportsfile

I read a report stating that Brian Dowling went in to have words with referee John Dermody after the game over a potential closing free not given to Katie Nolan, but I think when he looks back at the game, he'll realise it more than swung both ways.

This charging rule is so frustrating. I see it time and again in games and it depends on the referee as to which way the free goes.

The rule is that the attacking player with the ball in hand must make an attempt to sidestep the defender.

Now, you get a ball in full flight, the defender is on-top of you in milliseconds, how are you supposed to pirouette in the blink of an eye. It's a silly rule and what was even worse was that Dermody gave yellow cards for it.

That's wrong. There is no intent there to foul.

Huge credit to Saoirse McCarthy for Cork's second goal. As Kilkenny ran away from her and she ran right through from midfield, she was fouled on the endline in-

side the square.

She flipped her body quickly to pass to Mackey who finished to the net. It was just as well as Dermody had waved 'no free.'

Most players would have laid flat, made a meal out of it, and walked away with nothing. McCarthy's lightning reaction won the game.

Kilkenny will rue their three wides before half-time and the first five minutes of the second half where four attacks yielded just one-point after a wide and two further balls dropped into Amy Lee's hands.

Speaking of which, Lee's puckouts were outstanding; her distance and accuracy from the top drawer.

Meanwhile, Cork's first attack of the second half led to Mackey's goal.

I mentioned two years ago that there were a number of retirements coming down the track for Kilkenny and Galway, and that Cork were a couple of years ahead in terms of development of new squad members.

That is coming to pass now. Some Kilkenny players have retired, and I think more will follow this year.

They'll struggle if that happens. Dowling announced that he was stepping away as manager after four years in charge, winning two titles. He will be a huge loss. I feel that Galway too are on the brink of transition.

Cork, meanwhile, have their strongest bench in many a year. The 2021 and 2022 campaigns, and the injuries to key players in 2023 forced management to give their panel extended game time and it's proving fruitful.

Cork now have four or five they can turn to when things are going against them.

Cliona Healy hadn't hit the form of two years ago. She lost her place for the quarter-final. She has played herself back into the mix after two great points, and possibly a penalty on another day, when introduced.

An All-Ireland semi-final awaits next weekend against their nemesis Galway.

I can't wait.

It's now time for Cork to deliver.

Skelton sinks Laois while Down survive in top tier

Camogie

Daragh Ó Conchúir

Laois will be competing in the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland premier junior camogie championship next year after Dublin's second string beat them by 1-15 to 1-7 in the intermediate relegation final in Banagher yesterday.

A late goal from impressive

substitute Joyce Atkinson gave the scoreline a slightly flattering look but there was no doubt that Dublin were deserving winners.

Eimear Hassett shot 1-2 for the O'Moores, the goal coming from a first-half penalty after Amy Flanagan was fouled, but the Dubs were creating more opportunities and led by 0-9 to 1-4 at half-time. Gráinne Skelton supplied four of those

points and Méadhbh Hicks two, but notably, the Metropolitans had five scorers in total in that opening period.

Skelton brought her tally to seven in the second half and Hicks and Atkinson also split the posts.

Hassett slotted a pair of 45s but Laois needed goals and instead it was Atkinson that raised the green flag to remove all doubt.

On Saturday, Down defeated Offaly 1-12 to 0-6 in the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior relegation final to retain their top-tier status, with the Faithful plying their trade at intermediate level next season.

Sara-Louise Graffin shot a goal and four points and Niamh Mallon seven points, five from play, for Paul Donnelly's Mourne outfit at the

National Games Development Centre in Abbotstown.

It was 1-7 to 0-2 at the break and with Offaly unable to make any real inroads as weather conditions worsened considerably — though Clodagh Healy did register four points — it was comfortable to the end for Down.

Meanwhile, the Nancy Murray Cup semi-finals were also held on Saturday and as a re-

sult, it will be Mayo and Wicklow that will play in the decider at the NGDC in Abbotstown on July 29.

Mayo turned around the result of the Division 4 Very League final with a convincing 3-5 to 0-3 over last year's champions at O'Neills Healy Park, while 2022 runners-up Wicklow won against Louth, emerging from the Mattock Rangers grounds by 5-11 to 0-6.

GPA welcomes GAA offer to support female charter move

Eoghan Cormican and Shane Donovan

The GPA has welcomed the GAA's offer to support the establishment of a female charter, should they be asked to do so by the LGFA and Camogie Association.

GAA director general Tom Ryan, speaking at the Joint Oireachtas Committee for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport, and Media, clarified that the GAA are willing to

help and support the move.

A GPA statement read: "Players welcome today's public clarification by the GAA Director General Tom Ryan at the Joint Committee for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport and Media that the GAA are willing to help establish a female charter should they be so asked by the LGFA and Camogie Association.

"It has always been the players' view that the GAA would have to play a role and

it is encouraging that they have now made their willingness to do so known on the public record.

"The ball is clearly now in the LGFA and Camogie Association's court.

"They can detail how they will provide the necessary funding to establish a standardised charter for female inter-county players in line with their male colleagues or, they can hear what their own players have been

calling for, for several months, and ask for the support of the GAA.

"Either way, there should now be no block to a standardised, mandatory charter for female inter-county players being developed.

"Players remain willing to sit down collectively to find the much-needed resolution."

Earlier, it was announced that female inter-county players will not participate in any media event organised by

either the LGFA or Camogie Association for the duration of the All-Ireland championships.

While the Gaelic Players Association will facilitate media access to players, the decision of players to withdraw from media events organised by the two governing bodies, particularly in advance of the All-Ireland finals, will undoubtedly hurt coverage of these deciders.

Each year, it is standard practice for the Camogie Association and LGFA to organise All-Ireland final media events where the captain and manager from each participating county are present in Croke Park and available for interview.

The GPA, who communicated the decision yesterday morning, said the players' decision will have no impact on local arrangements that regional media have in place.

Mulkerins hat-trick seals it for Cork U16s

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

Cork 3-12
Wexford 0-6

CORK comfortably advanced to the All-Ireland U16 A championship final as they overcame Wexford at The Ragg.

Three goals from full-forward Ally Mulkerins ensured the champions made it safely through.

Cork always looked to be in control and confining Wexford to just two scores from play they confidently march on and keep the bid for three in a row on course.

A strong swirling wind favoured Wexford in the opening half but it was Cork who led at the break 2-3 to 0-5, Mulkerins with goals in the opening 10 minutes settling Cork.

The first came straight from the throw-in while the second was an effective ground shot to the net after a superb pass from Laure Walsh.

Lyla Stafford and Emma McCarthy with a brace of points each kept Wexford in touching distance but points from Rachel Murphy and Laura Walsh stretched the Cork lead to four points.

As the sides swapped points before the break Cork turned over with a four-point advantage.

On the restart, they took control they hit 1-7 without reply before Wexford had one back with an Emma McCarthy pointed free with 10 minutes to the full-time whistle.

By now, Cork were emptying their bench as their place in the final was secured.

In the second semi-final, played in Mallow, Galway overcame Tipperary 4-8 to 0-5.

Scorers for Cork: A Mulkerins 3-2, R Murphy 0-4 (0-1 f), M O'Brien 0-2 (0-1 f), L Walsh 0-2, C Kelleher 0-1 45, Clara Murphy 0-1.

Wexford: E McCarthy 0-4 f, L Stafford 0-2.

CORK: E Honohan, S Cunningham, A Cagney, C Ryan, L O'Shea, A Cussen, M Lombard, A Cottrell (c), A McAuliffe, K O'Sullivan, R Murphy, C Catherine Murphy, M O'Brien, A Mulkerins, L Walsh.

Subs: Clara Murphy for Catherine Murphy (1-1), G O'Neill for L O'Shea (46), J Murphy for L Walsh (46), T Goulding for M O'Brien (53), C Kelleher for K O'Sullivan (53), S Pomeroy for A Cussen (55), A Mc Sweeney for R Murphy (55), N Hoosford for A McAuliffe (59).

WEXFORD: M Kavanagh, G Hourihane, A Egan, A Firman, E O'Leary, C Whelan, K Doyle, C Parker, A Hughes, L Goggins, L Stafford (c), K Reddy, O O'Rourke, U Daly O'Toole, E McCarthy.

Subs: E Murphy for A Egan (3), S Kirwin for A Firman (36), L Donohue for L Goggins (40), E O'Brien for O O'Rourke (42), M Chin for U Doyle O'Toole (46), R O'Meara for K Doyle (51).

Referee: Gavin Donegan (Dublin)



ALL FOR ONE, ONE FOR ALL: Cork's Amy O'Connor and Galway's Maria Cooney wearing #UnitedForEquality t-shirts at an event organised by players at the Radisson Blu at Dublin Airport ahead of the upcoming All-Ireland semi-finals. Picture: Piaras Ó Midheach/Sportsfile

BY MATTHEW HURLEY

CORK manager Matthew Twomey feels his team is designed to handle the pressure of a showdown with bogey team Galway this Saturday.

The two counties clash in a 2023 Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior camogie semi-final in Nowlan Park (5.30pm, live on RTE2), with Galway having won all three meetings between the teams this season, including the Division 1A league final.

But Twomey is pleased with the character his side has shown in recent games, including the dethroning of All-Ireland champions Kilkenny in the quarter-final.

'In the last four or five games, we have gone in under fierce pressure. The Down, Clare and Kilkenny games were all do-or-die,' Twomey explained.

'They are all huge pressure games, and we're getting used to them and dealing with them better. That's what you have to be happy about. If the pressure does come on Saturday, which I'm sure it will, we'll find out if we can cope as well as we did previously.'

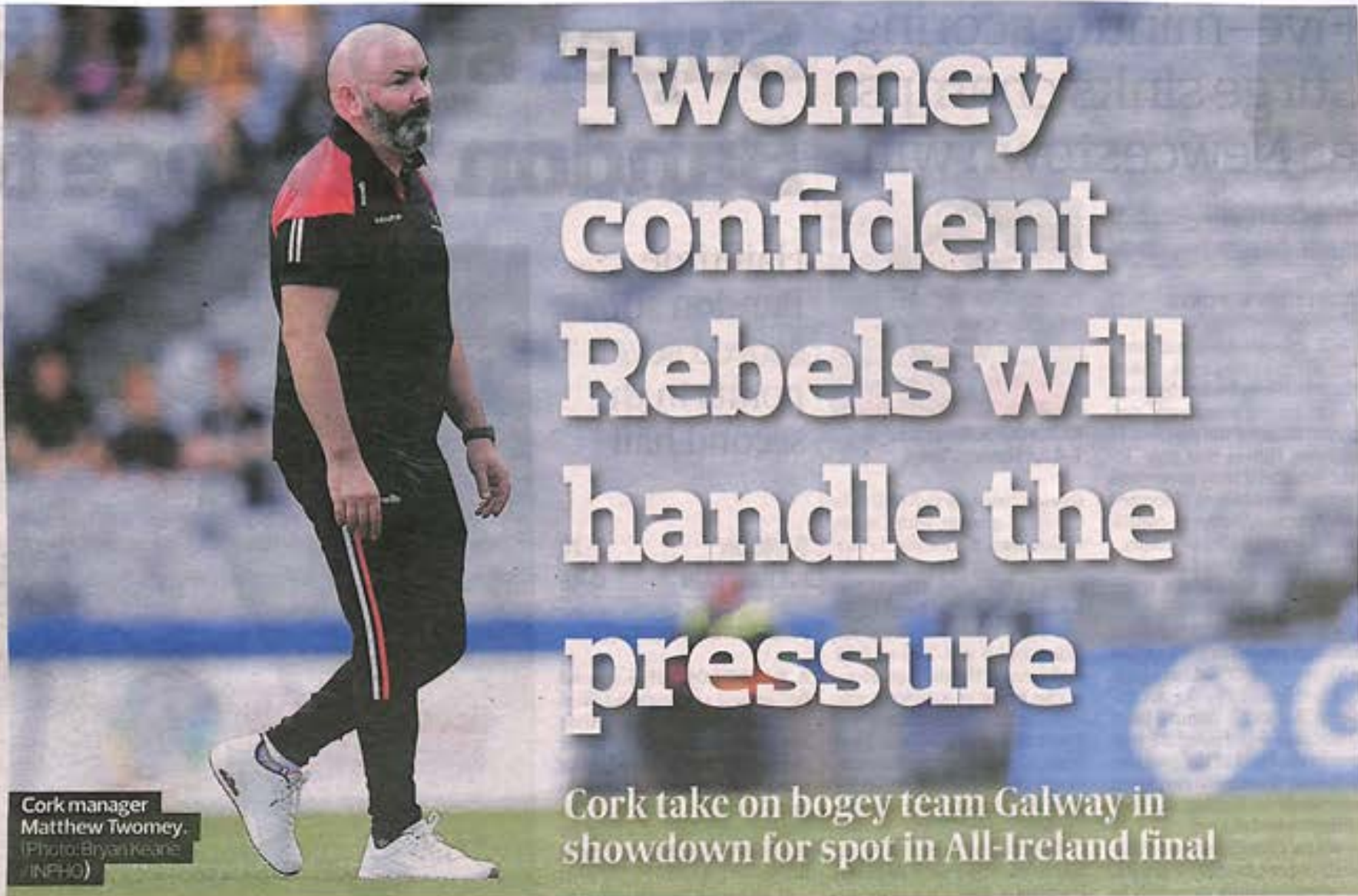
The Rebels are hitting form at the right time but league champions Galway pose the biggest test so far. Cork haven't beaten them since 2017.

'Galway are a seasoned team. They are well used to these kinds of games too and they have had a lot of success,' the Cork boss said.

'They're going to be coming down full of confidence. They'll be happy enough with the draw seeing as they're not overly familiar with Waterford or Tipperary.'

'We have been beaten three times by Galway this year. We're totally up against it but maybe that is the game we can relish. We need a top performance, we're training very hard at the moment and that is the message going out to everybody.'

Beating Kilkenny 2-14 to 2-13 in the quarter-final was a big boost to this Cork team – and Twomey recognises this.



Cork manager Matthew Twomey. (Photo: Bryan Keane / INPHO)

Twomey confident Rebels will handle the pressure

Cork take on bogey team Galway in showdown for spot in All-Ireland final

'You'd be happy with the character of the team. We showed a lot of steel at the end, which people questioned beforehand. We put ourselves in a good position in the game but we probably should have had the game wrapped up before it came to that,' he said.

'We missed a few chances and there were a few ridiculous refereeing decisions as well. We pulled it out at the end, which was a great boost. We're improving all the time. When the players stick to a process, they'll get the fruits from it. The more we go on in the year, it becomes more relevant to us.'

Getting their shooting accu-

racy on point is a top target for this Cork team. It was 56 percent against Kilkenny. A decent return, but still lots to work on.

'Every game this year, I think we won every stat against our opposition except the conversion rate. We were in the 75 percent range in the two games previous (against Down and Clare). I know the opposition weren't at the standard of Kilkenny but that is the number we have to be getting, 60 to 70 percent would be the minimum to us,' Twomey admitted.

Being able to close out the game was an encouraging sign too, especially when Cork hadn't done so in previous big games.

'That comes with experience. We've highlighted a lot of times that we took the lead in games and got caught. That was a massive plus the other day,' Twomey acknowledged.

Aisling Thompson, Orla Cronin and Laura Hayes coming back from injury is a timely boost as well. There was one stage in the season where Twomey was talking about the squad being as tight as 19 players due to injuries or dual clashes. He now has as close to a full deck as he has had all season.

'You saw a lot of players out with long-term injuries and your heart would go out to them. To have them back in full flow is a

CORK SCORERS

Cork's overall championship scorers (including Munster and All-Ireland series): Amy O'Connor 4-26 (16f, 4 45); Katrina Mackey 3-13 (2f); Chloe Sigerson 0-10 (4f); Sorcha McCartan 1-5; Ali Smith 0-5; Fiona Keating 1-2; Emma Murphy 0-4; Saoirse McCarthy, Orla Cronin (1f), Cliona Healy 0-3 each; Clodagh Finn 0-2; Laura Hayes, Aoife Healy, Hannah Looney 0-1 each.

huge lift,' the Cork manager said.

'What it does too is it puts ferocious pressure on the 15 on the field. They'll be looking over at the sideline thinking that they have to put in their best or else they're gone. Even at that, we want the players to empty the tank for up to 40 or 50 minutes.'

'The intensity and tempo has gone up in training because they know they're fighting for their place on the field or even for the first five to come on as subs.'

The other semi-final will be the curtain-raiser at Nowlan Park, as Waterford take on Tipperary (3.30pm).

FIVE REASONS CORK FANS CAN BE OPTIMISTIC

BIG PLAYERS RETURN: The return of Aisling Thompson, Orla Cronin and Laura Hayes from injury is a huge boost at the business end of the season; all three came on in the quarter-final against Kilkenny and made an impact. As well as being three top players, think of the big-game experience they have. It also means manager Matthew Twomey has as close to a full deck as he has had all season. At one stage, there were 14 absentees, leaving just 19 fit players. Thompson, Cronin and Hayes are all Camogie All-Stars, who know how to win big games, so it's a boost at the right time for the Rebels. It increases Cork's options off the bench, too, experienced players to call on in the second half.

STILL WORK TO DO: After the quarter-final win against Kilkenny Matthew Twomey highlighted there was still a lot to work on ahead of the Galway

showdown. Two issues are shooting and the conversion rate. The Rebels had six goal chances against Kilkenny, but only took two. It's a positive that they were creating the chances but Cork will need to be much more clinical against Galway. In addition, Cork had a 57 percent conversion rate in the quarter-final with eight wides. Their conversion rate against Galway in the league final was 44 percent with 10 wides. They had 12 wides against the Tribeswomen in their round-robin championship meeting. While the stat was improved

against Kilkenny, Cork's conversion rate still needs to be better if they are to progress to the All-Ireland final. Puckouts will be key, too. Cork's win percentage from their own against Kilkenny was 63. The stats look relatively good, but still lots to work on.

DUAL CLASHES OVER:

After three well-publicised dual clashes this season, the good news is we won't have anymore this year, at least. That's good news for Cork's four dual players, Libby Coppinger, Aoife Healy, Hannah Looney and

Orla Cronin's return increases Cork's options.

Orlaith Cahalane. It means they can put their full concentration into Sunday's game against Galway, before switching back to football the following week. 2022 All-Star Coppinger and Looney are experienced campaigners, Healy has got on the scoresheet in this championship, while Cahalane adds a different dimension off the bench.

MOMENTUM: In dethroning All-Ireland champions Kilkenny, confidence is going to be high in the Cork camp. After four losses on the bounce from April to the start of June (against Galway three times and Waterford in the Munster championship), Cork needed to reignite their season. They did that with wins over Down (3-19 to 1-10), Clare (3-19 to 0-8) and Kilkenny (2-14 to 2-13). Cork are finding form at the right time, buoyed by beating Kilkenny, and they will need to bring their best form against a very good Galway team.

GALWAY HOODOO: As mentioned in the Star last week, it's Galway, again. The Rebels' recent record against the Tribeswomen has not been good. In their last five encounters, league and championship, Cork have lost every single one. In the All-Ireland final in 2021 and both league finals in 2022 and 2023 especially, Cork had leads but let them slip. This Saturday's match is an opportunity to banish those bad memories. The signs look promising. In the quarter-final, Kilkenny roared back into proceedings, from five down to only one behind, and in the past Cork would have been in danger of letting the game slip from their grasp. The encouraging sign was that they closed the game out. That was an important moment for this Cork team: they held out against one of their main rivals.

BY MATTHEW HURLEY



Kilkenny's back to back dream comes to an end

ALL-IRELAND SENIOR CAMOGIE QUARTER-FINAL

CORK 2-14
KILKENNY 2-13

Robert Cribbin
at Croke Park

Kilkenny's reign as All-Ireland senior camogie champions came to an end when they narrowly went down to Cork in a thrilling quarter-final clash in Croke Park on Sunday afternoon.

Kilkenny's challenge largely depended on Denise Gaule - she put in one of her great performances in the black and amber jersey as she scored 1-10 in total, almost dragging her side back into the game after Cork had taken full control just after half-time.

Even still Cork probably edged things over the course of the hour and it's they who join Waterford, Galway and Tipperary in the last four.

Despite struggling to find form for much of the season to date, Kilkenny raced into Croke Park when knocking over the opening two points.

A Denise Gaule free was quickly followed up by a fine effort from Aoife Doyle who had replaced Michelle Teehan in the starting lineup.

Cork then got off the mark when Sorcha McCartan pointed in the fifth minute but it was Kilkenny who

continued to make all the early running with further scores from Gaule and Julianne Malone.

McCartan doubled her tally to leave just two points between the sides but Brian Dowling's All-Ireland champions were on top in all of the physical exchanges and they had their reward when finding the net in the 14th minute when a long free went over the Cork defence. Last year's All-Ireland winning captain Aoife Prendergast pounced to shoot past Amy Lee between the sticks.

GREAT POSITION

Kilkenny led 1-4 to 0-2 at this stage and looked in a great position but the second quarter certainly belonged to the Rebels.

Kilkenny's scant tally over the following 20 plus minutes were just a pair of Gaule frees as Cork took control of

In a well contested affair, Cork just about had enough for a Kilkenny team that competed right till the end of proceedings

proceedings. A well worked goal from Amy O'Connor as well as points from Chloe Sigerson Hannah Looney and Katrina Mackey enabled Cork to go into the break with a two point advantage (1-8 to 1-6).

Kilkenny goalkeeper Aoife Norris also made a couple of notable saves that kept the defending champions within touching distance and they certainly became more crucial as Kilkenny upped their performance levels in the second half.

MOMENTUM

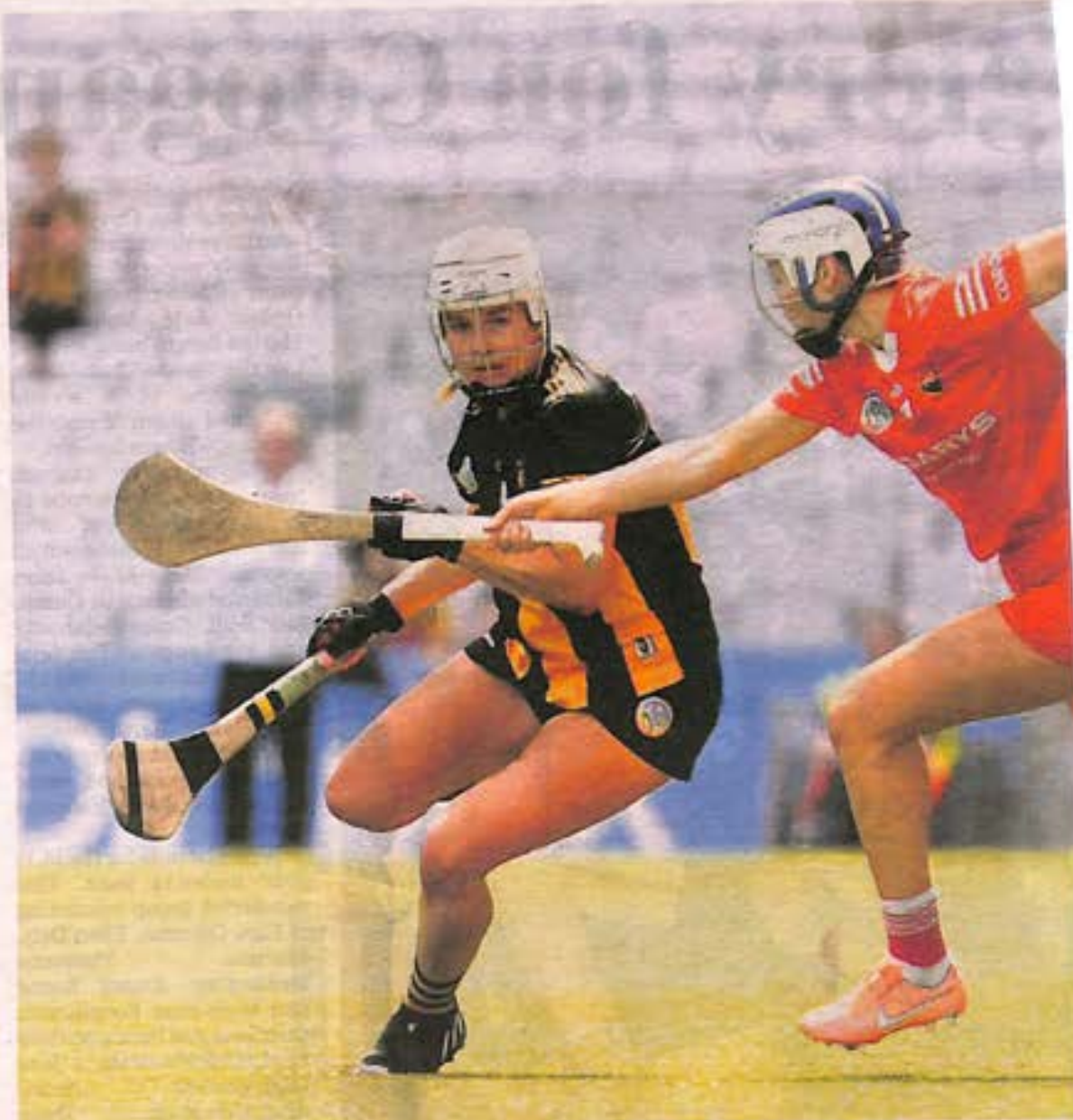
In spite of the improved second half showing, it still took time for Kilkenny to gain momentum after Cork full-forward Katrina Mackey netted after Norris had earlier stopped Saoirse McCarthy.

Cork led by five at that point but, like all Kilkenny teams, Brian Dowling's outfit refused to go away quietly and they kept plugging away.

An excellent Aoife Doyle effort with a shortened grip proved to be that catalyst of the comeback and when Gaule hit over three on the bounce between 40th and 44th minutes, it was all to play for heading into the final 15 minutes of play.

Crucially though Kilkenny couldn't get level and five of the following six points came courtesy of the Leesiders.

Amy O'Connor was a nuisance all afternoon for the



Kilkenny's Michaela Kenneally attempts to fend off the challenge of Cork's Meabh Cahalane during the Glen Dimplex in Croke Park on Sunday PICTURES: BRYAN KEANE/INPHO

Cats defence and she hit three while sub Cliona Healy also made an instant impact in knocking over a pair of scores.

SOLE SCORE

Another Denise Gaule free was Kilkenny's sole score in that spell but their challenge found increased oxygen when Asha McHardy found Katie Power who laid off a delicious pass to Gaule. Despite being surrounded by

red jerseys, the Windgap star found a gap and raced into the square and brilliantly finished to the net.

The big Kilkenny attendance really got behind the team at this stage, and when Gaule hit over her 10th point of the day with a minute to go the Cats looked like they may force extra-time at the very least.

DRAMA

That proved to be the end

of the scoring, but the drama was only beginning as Cork looked to be denied a certain penalty down one end before Katie Power then also looked to be fouled as Kilkenny tried to find an equaliser.

Neither decision was given and after a sideline cut down near the Hill 16 end of the famous stadium, Westmeath official John Dermody called an end to another chaotic encounter

Despair for Dowling, but huge pride

Robert Cribbin
robert.cribbin@kilkennypeople.ie

There were heartbreaking scenes on the Croke Park turf on Sunday afternoon as Kilkenny relinquished their All-Ireland senior camogie crown.

Despite being on the backfoot for much of the last eight clash, the Cats battled to the end and just came up short.

Speaking afterwards a dejected Kilkenny boss Brian Dowling outlined his disappointment on the result.

"We are heartbroken and to come up here and lose by a

point is tough to take. I thought we maybe should have had a free there at the end to go to extra-time but look that's the way it goes and I'm so proud of the girls in the dressing room as they died with their boots on.

"Everytime I've been involved that's what they do and the crowd really got behind us in the last few minutes and we drove it on.

"The game looked like it was dead and buried with five minutes remaining but we somehow found a way and we kept on pushing on but we just couldn't get the equaliser.

"Fair play to Cork though



Kilkenny manager Brian Dowling reacts late in the game

as they deserved the victory in the end."

A first half Aoife

Prendergast goal had given Kilkenny an early five point advantage but it's a lead the

Cats couldn't quite build on.

"We were getting chances today while in the last couple of games we weren't getting those chances and I said it at half-time to the girls that we missed a few handy opportunities in front of goal. It's happened all year - I can't really put my finger on it.

"It's disappointing that we didn't build on that lead but to be fair to Cork they had a lot of shots at goal too.

"We told the girls to keep going at half-time and try to be more clinical in front of the posts as we left scores behind us in the first half and we need to get them when given the opportunity."

The manager is not one for singling out individual displays but it was hard not to acknowledge Denise Gaule's performance.

"I'm so proud of the way the girls kept fighting and Denise Gaule epitomises this team with the character that she showed and I don't know how she got that goal.

"She showed great composure to get a bit of space and fight off a few defenders.

"As well as all the girls, she's worn that Kilkenny jersey with real pride over the last few years."

The O'Loughlin Gaels man also wanted to put on the



All-Ireland Senior Championship quarter-final



Kilkenny's Denise Gaule gets a shot away during Sunday's game



A dejected Tiffanie Fitzgerald after the game

Intermediates finish strong to see off Wexford

ALL-IRELAND QUARTER FINAL

KILKENNY 0-11
WEXFORD 0-9

Aoife Lanigan
sport@kilkennypeople.ie

The Kilkenny intermediate camogie team booked a semi-final meeting with Derry after beating a determined Wexford in Semple Stadium.

This was the third meeting of the sides this year with Kilkenny winning in the League by the minimum and in the Leinster semi-final by 14 points.

This was a hard-fought battle from the start.

Kilkenny opened the scoring in the seventh minute, when Afton Grace converted a 21m free over the bar after Laura Greene had being tackled to the ground. Danielle Quigley tacked on a point for Kilkenny after Sarah Barcoe laid off a neat pass to her.

Wexford centre-forward Nora Higgins scored their first point in the 17th minute before Emer Hunt then equalised and Oonagh Doyle put Wexford ahead with a pointed 21m free.

Afton Grace then equalised for Kilkenny with a pointed free after Mairead Kennedy charged through the Wexford defence and was tripped.

Laura Greene put Kilkenny ahead again in the 28th minute with a lovely point from play from the 45m line.

But heading into first half injury time Oonagh Doyle equalised again for Wexford with a 21m free to leave the interval score level at 0-4 apiece.

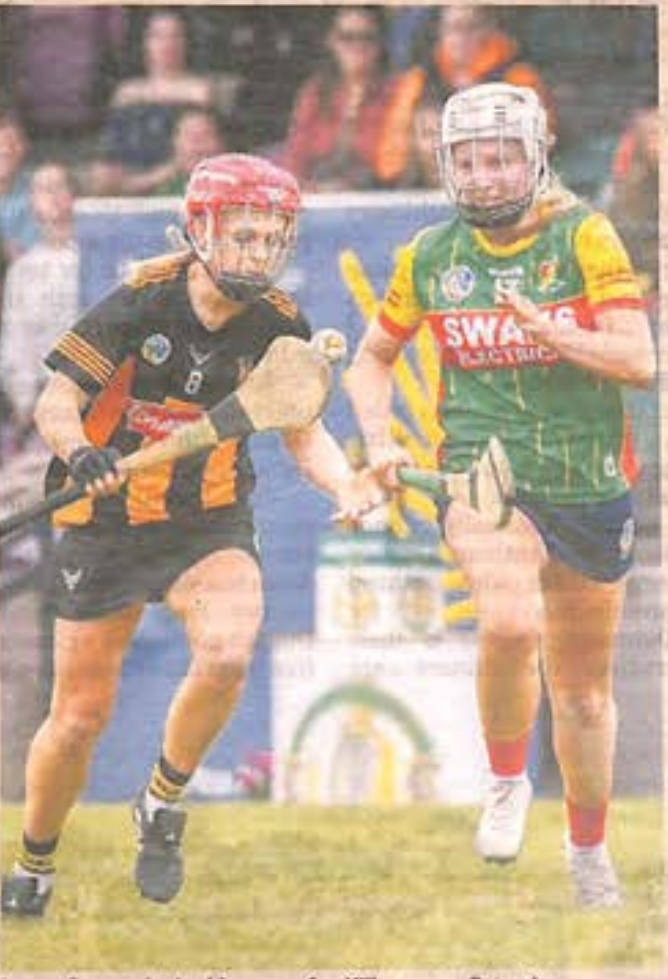
On the resumption of play, Therese Donnelly slotted over a fine point for Kilkenny before Laura Greene added another point for the Cats to put them two ahead but by the 40th minute, Oonagh Doyle had equalised for Wexford with two pointed frees.

From a Kilkenny sideline, the sliotar found its way to Laura Greene via Ellen Gunner and Greene burst through the Wexford defence, slotting over a fine point on the run.

Emer Hunt equalised for Wexford while slotting over a point from play.

Kilkenny substitute Emma Mulhall scored a beautiful point on the run after Laura Greene played the sliotar forward from midfield to Mulhall.

Over the next five



Laura Greene had a big game for Kilkenny on Saturday

minutes, Wexford scored two points through Oonagh Doyle (one free) to put Wexford ahead by a point at the end of normal time.

As the fourth official raised the board signalling that there was going to be three minutes additional time, the Kilkenny players didn't panic.

Ellen Gunner found Laura Greene with a handpass and Greene slotted it over the bar to equalise the game at 0-9 apiece.

In the 62nd minute, Kilkenny were awarded a free after Danielle Quigley was fouled.

Ellen Gunner stepped up and sent it straight between the posts.

TUSSLED
From the puckout, both sets of players tussled for the sliotar in the centre of the pitch.

The referee blew the whistle for the sliotar, he threw it in between players, it broke for Kilkenny's Sarah Barcoe who drove the sliotar towards the Wexford goal.

A Wexford defender attempted to clear it, but Laura Greene blocked her.

Therese Donnelly was quickest to react to the breaking ball and she played it to Laura Greene who passed it out to Danielle Quigley.

Quigley looked up and picked out the unmarked Ellen Gunner who drove it straight between the posts.

From the resulting puckout, the referee blew the full-time whistle, leaving the full time score 0-11 to 0-9 in favour of Kilkenny.

TEAMS AND SCORERS

Kilkenny - Laura Greene (0-4); Afton Grace (0-2, frees); Ellen Gunner (0-2, 0-1 free); Danielle Quigley, Therese Donnelly, Emma Mulhall (0-1 each).

Wexford - Oonagh Doyle (0-6, 0-5 frees); Emer Hunt (0-2); Nora Higgins (0-1).

Kilkenny - Cliona Murphy, Niamh Leahy, Jenni O'Dea, Jane Cass, Niamh Phelan, Roisin Phelan, Hannah Scott (Capt), Laura Greene, Mairead Kennedy, Danielle Quigley, Sarah Barcoe, Emma Manogue, Therese Donnelly, Caroline Kennedy, Afton Grace. Subs: Ellen Gunner for Caroline Kennedy, Emma Mulhall for Afton Grace, Sinead Farrell, Katie Byrne, Keara Ryan, Aine Doyle, Rachel Whelan, Kate McCluskey, Eimear Leahy, Vivienne Holmes, Ava Sheffin, Hannah Larkin, Rachel Brennan, Anna Doherty, Laoise Nolan.

Wexford - Emma Kiely, Kellyanne Dempsey, Ellie O'Connor, Sinead Furlong, Lettie Whelan, Dearbhla Doyle, Grace Roche, Karen Tomkins, Ciara O'Connor, Oonagh Doyle (Capt), Nora Higgins, Aoife McCrea, Sarah Doyle, Caoimhe Byrne, Emer Hunt. Subs: Sadhbh Buttle for Ciara O'Connor, Donna Delahunty for Ellie O'Connor, Grace Donovan for Aoife McCrea, Cathy O'Connor for Sarah Doyle, Kate Butler, Roisin Cooney, Lorna Fortune, Eabha Farrell, Ciara Butler, Shauna Kelly, Clodagh Jackman, Koera Steadmond, Ella O'Connor, Anna Byrne, Aoife Doyle.

in players' effort

record his apology for the way he reacted to a couple of late decisions as his frustration understandably spilled over.

"I believe in those girls every time they take to the pitch and I thought we might get extra-time at the end and we might have liked a bit more stoppage time but as I've said already Cork are a super team and Matthew Twomey is a great manager who I have huge respect for.

"We probably got the lucky breaks in the All-Ireland Final last year but Cork got them today and that's sport.

"The one thing I said to the girls on the way up was for them to just stay fighting for

as long as they can and whatever happens from there I can't ask for much more.

"We might have had a free late on but I was more disappointed with the amount of injury time that was played.

"We were pushing at that stage and I don't like to react like I did at the end and that's not what I do - I want to apologise for that."

Since Sunday's defeat, Dowling has handed in his resignation as Kilkenny manager as he brings the curtain down on a hugely successful tenure where he managed the team to two All-Ireland titles.

"Kilkenny Camogie would like to sincerely thank Brian and his entire backroom team for their commitment, dedication, work and most of all the professionalism that he has brought over the past five years," the Co Board said.

"The time that he has put into the panel has been second to none and he has always put the players welfare to the fore in his tenure.

"He has guided this panel of players to heights that many could dream of and he will be sorely missed. We thank him wholeheartedly for what he has done for Kilkenny Camogie."

Greater focus on physicality driving Déise



Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship semi-final

Tipperary v Waterford

Saturday: UPMC Nowlan Park, 3.30pm

TV: Live on RTE 2

Referee: Liz Dempsey

Paul Keane



Anne Corcoran is hoping that an increased focus on physicality can help Waterford power through to a first All-Ireland senior camogie final since 1945.

The Déise are back at the last four stage and will face Tipperary on Saturday having only contested their first semi-final since 1959 last year.

Corcoran lined out in attack when the neighbouring counties met in May in a Munster semi-final clash which Tipp won.

But the Division 1B league champions bounced back impressively with three straight wins to top their group — securing this weekend's rematch. Waterford are one of the form teams of the year under new manager Sean Power and Corcoran attributes some of their progress to focusing on their



UNITED: Anne Corcoran of Waterford, left, and Karen Kennedy of Tipperary wearing #UnitedForEquality t-shirts at an event organised by players at the Radisson Blu at Dublin Airport ahead of the upcoming All-Ireland semi-finals.
Picture: Piaras Ó Midheach/Sportsfile

strength and conditioning. A tweaking of camogie rules has allowed more contact between players in recent seasons.

"We want to be playing a very similar game to the lads," said Corcoran. "We're able for the physicality, we want to be playing in those strong, hard games. In Waterford, the main focus this year has been on building our physicality. Some may say that we're a small team but we'd like to say

differently now this year."

Having a player like Beth Carton to stick over the scores helps too. The centre-forward won a third All-Star in 2022 and has maintained her brilliant form this term, blasting 3-31 in the group stage alone.

"The work she puts in is second to none," said Corcoran. "She's always at it, every day you see her doing something to better herself."

Waterford overcame An-

trim, Limerick, and Offaly to top Group 3, three teams that they also defeated in Division 1B of the league.

Corcoran dashed any talk of being undercooked for their All-Ireland assault.

"We played Cork and Tipp as well in the Munster Championship so we have played against, if you want to say it, the top teams," she said.

"So we don't think there's any issue there. We feel ready

to go, absolutely."

Corcoran could yet be part of a Waterford group that makes history by landing a first ever camogie crown.

But if things had gone slightly differently she mightn't be playing at all given that her first love is athletics.

A promising track career was cut short by a foot injury though Waterford have clearly benefited.

"Before I got the injury I was doing 400m and 400m hurdles," said Corcoran who also excelled as a heptathlete. "I did compete for Ireland, twice. I was going for the European standard at the time when I injured my foot. It was in the national senior championships."

Corcoran still follows athletics closely and admits she had a "heavy heart" about having to pack it in.

"I can't train five times a week on a track, I've tried to go back but the injuries keep persisting," she explained.

"The grass and the camogie suits me a lot better."

"But look, I'm playing for Waterford, I couldn't ask for any more."

Corcoran lives in Dublin and treks back and forth to Waterford. Motoring expenses are significant and she admits "the financial burden is a lot".

She's fully behind the United for Equality campaign as female inter-county players, supported by the Gaelic Players Association (GPA), push for the creation of a players charter to guarantee minimum standards.

"I haven't put a figure on how much it costs me but it's an awful lot of miles on the car," said Corcoran. "The car needs to be serviced three or four times a year. It is quite tough, that financial burden but the love of the game keeps you going I suppose."

CAMOGIE LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT HONOUREE

SANDIE FITZGIBBON

CORK

6

ALL-IRELAND SENIOR WINS

2

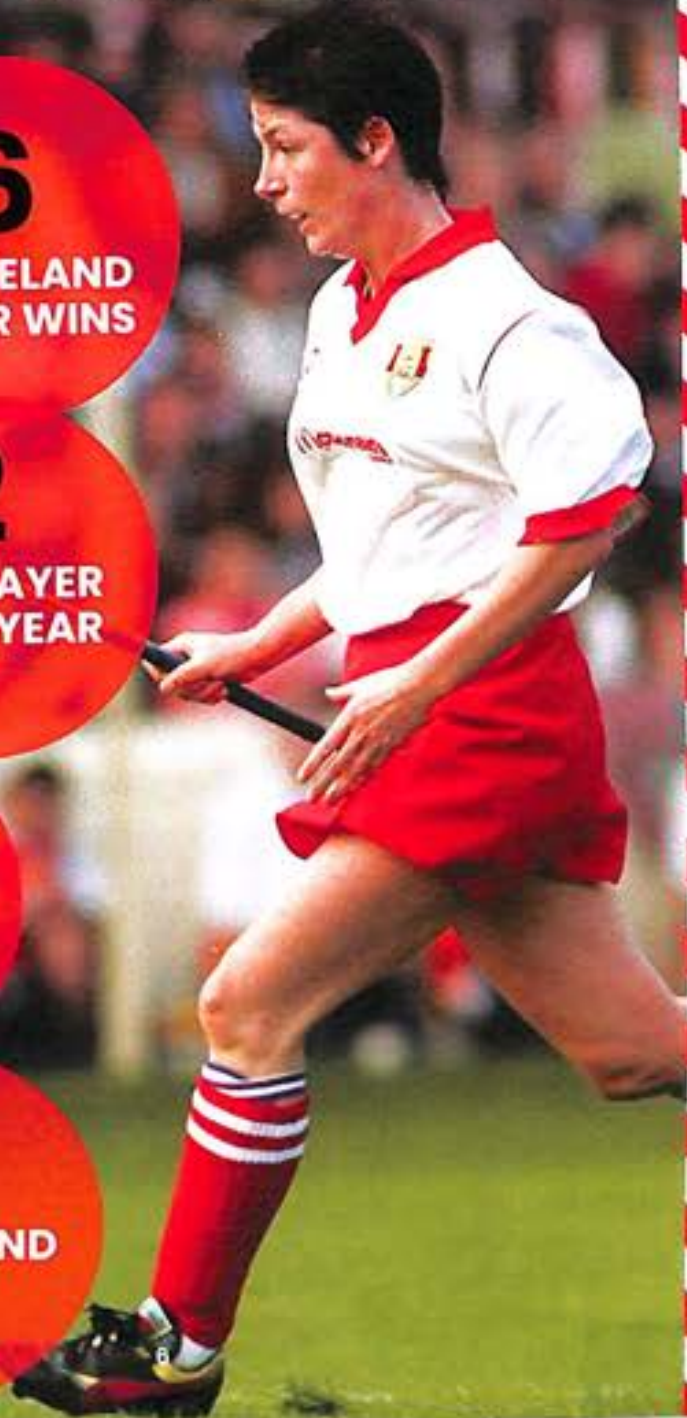
TIME PLAYER OF THE YEAR

7

NATIONAL LEAGUE WINS

4

ALL-IRELAND CLUB WINS





Libby Coppinger of Cork in action against Aoife Donohue of Galway earlier this year.

Picture: Eóin Noonan/Sportsfile

Cork-Galway all to play for



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

TOMORROW

Glen Dimplex All-Ireland camogie semi-final: Cork v Galway, UPMC Nowlan Park, 5.30pm

REGARDLESS of the result of the last three meetings between Cork and Galway, it's a whole new ball game tomorrow in UPMC Nowlan Park as the rivals meet in the All-Ireland senior championship semi-final.

Cork have been stung by Galway four times in the last two seasons. The 2022 league final, their final group game in the 2023 league where they were already qualified, tested players, and gave Galway a way back into a final they looked to have missed out on. Galway's win in Páirc Uí Chaoimh alone would not have been enough had Tipperary beaten Kilkenny, but they lost by a point.

Galway were in and they won the final, by four points. It was a game Cork could have won but they wasted a host of chances in the second half. Cork would happily offer up both league finals to beat Galway tomorrow and reach their third All-Ireland final in a row. Championship is what matters.

Chance after chance was squandered in Athenry seven weeks after Cork's league final defeat as they lost 1-12 to 0-12 in the opening round of this year's championship. No score from play in the second half, 10 second-half wides, and no goal, after a number of chances. Galway got one goal chance and they took it. It decided the game. A conversion rate of 35% was a stat Cork's management were shocked with.

Six weeks later in their All-Ireland quarter-final clash with Kilkenny, despite leaving three goal chances behind them and being denied an obvious penalty they dug out the win, their conversion rate was at 65%.



Cork's Amy O'Connor is challenged by Galway's Shauna Healy and Rachael Hanniffy

Picture: INPHO/Tom Maher

Improving those stats is an area Cork's coaches have worked on considerably in the intervening weeks and it has improved, even though they had a shaky ending to their quarter-final game with Kilkenny having been five points up. They let the Cats back in and in the closing stages, anything can happen. But they survived. Another game, another lesson learned. Galway were the 2021 champs and lost their crown at the semi-final stage to Kilkenny last season, Cork subsequently beaten by the Cats in the final.

Galway's league victory came with new faces, Niamh Kilkenny, Sarah Dervan, Siobhán McGrath, Orlaith McGrath, Sarah Healy and the retired Heather Cooney unavailable. Cathal Murray has doubled up as senior and intermediate boss in recent seasons. In 2022, the intermediates won the title. The blend is working well. Cork were without Ashling Thompson, Katrina Mackey, and Orla Cronin.

Thompson, Laura Hayes, Cronin, and Cliona Healy were all introduced in the quarter-final. What a formidable introduction they were. There is now serious competition for places with injuries behind Cork, a clean bill of health in the camp, fitness levels improving all the time for those returning, and players such as Healy finding form again.

Cork are in a good position going into the game. It'll be three weeks since Gal-

way played their last competitive outing. And that against Down, which wasn't suitable preparation for what lies ahead. Cork's quarter-final route against Kilkenny has put them on the front foot.

Cork's bench is stronger than Galway's and they have to make that count.

I don't imagine Matthew Twomey will jump in and start all four that came on. Those that filled their vacancies have done well and he may keep some key strength in reserve. I don't expect Thompson will start. Sixty minutes in Croke Park is too much of an ask for a player who is only back training a few weeks.

Hayes will start and hold one of the defensive flanks. Cliona Healy may regain a position and equally Orlaith Cahalane is another attractive option.

Galway keeper Laura Freeney replaces the experienced travelling Sarah Healy and should be tested. The two McGraths are back in the Galway squad, Siobhán at full-forward, Orlaith in the subs for their game against Down. Sarah Spellman returns at centre-forward. Sarah Dervan is also back in the starting 15.

Roisín Black has been tremendous at full-back since covering Dervan during the league, so Dervan is now operating in the corner. That's a big change and is it a big ask for a player now aged 35? With Cork playing a two-player inside line of Mackey and Amy O'Connor, it's going to be some battle with Black and Dervan.

Female players suspend protests as deal reached

Eoghan Cormican

Agreement has been reached by the Gaelic Players Association (GPA), Camogie Association, and LGFA to deliver a charter for female inter-county players ahead of the 2024 season, bringing to an end the matchday protests which have been ongoing for the last number of weeks.

Although the three parties have agreed to deliver minimum standards of player welfare by next year, the finer details of the charter — what will the mileage rate be set at, if indeed there will be one — have not yet been drawn up.

Within the framework agreed during separate meetings by the GPA with the Camogie Association and LGFA, respectively, a commitment was given by the two bodies to request funding support from the GAA for the implementation of the charter.

GAA director general Tom Ryan said at last week's Oireachtas meeting that the association stands ready to help the Camogie Association and LGFA, should they reach out.

The Camogie Association and LGFA also agreed that any approach to government for funding will be undertaken jointly with the GPA.

News of this charter commitment means a suspension of the player protest actions that were planned for this weekend's matches.

A GPA statement hailed the agreement to deliver a standardised charter as "a landmark moment in our games and for women's sport in Ireland".

"We thank the Camogie Association and LGFA for their commitment to implementing a standardised player charter for 2024," the statement continued. "We also thank the GAA for their commitment to support the initiative."

Camogie Association president Hilda Breslin welcomed the "breakthrough", saying that the body is "committed to working with players and other stakeholders to continue to improve and expand the player welfare supports currently in place in a very fair and evidenced-based manner."



Hilda Breslin: Camogie chief welcomed the breakthrough.

Gap to ruling elite has never actually been closed

Cork relishing Galway challenge, says Twomey

Ger McCarthy



Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship Semi-final

Tipperary v Waterford

Today: UPMC Nowlan Park, 3.30pm

Referee: Liz Dempsey

TV: Live on RTE 2

Eoghan Cormican



Camogie is a closed shop. Always has been. The ruling elite don't take kindly to outsiders. They don't take them in full stop.

The All-Ireland camogie championship is without mystique or unknowns. When the gun fires on the race for the O'Duffy Cup each summer, the sole question to be answered is which two from the big three of Cork, Galway, and Kilkenny will wind up in the final. Been that way for 10 years now.

Offaly, Wexford, Dublin, Tipperary, and Waterford have all taken turns filling that fourth semi-final spot. All knocked on the shop door. All were turned away.

The gap to the ruling elite, although closing, has never actually been closed.

You'd have to go back 16 years to find the last time the game's natural order was disrupted. Steliah Sinnott's Wexford class of 2007 didn't so much knock on the shop door as they kicked it down. Galway hammered by 10 points in the semi-final, three-in-a-row chasing Cork stunned in the decider.

Not content with ending the county's 32-year famine, Wexford's breakthrough women pulled up a chair and announced that theirs would not be a lone September visit. Three consecutive finals were reached and won between 2010 and 2012. It was only when this group subsequently began to



Tipperary's Caoimhe McCarthy during their All-Ireland senior camogie championship clash against Antrim earlier this month. Picture: Evan Treacy/Inpho

break up that we were left with what we had up to this year - an untouched big three.

The All-Ireland semi-finals are down for decision at UPMC Nowlan Park today. Only two of the big three are involved. The draw, more so than any gap being closed, is responsible for that.

Cork and Kilkenny being paired against one another in the quarter-final opened the door to the possibility of a new finalist emerging from the pack. When Cork were drawn against Galway a few hours after dethroning the champions, that possibility became a reality.

That it is Tipperary and Waterford who stand one hour from being the game's next breakthrough team is only fitting. Nobody has gone closer to unseating the big three in recent years than this pair.

Waterford led Galway by five early in the second half of the 2019 quarter-final before wilting. At Croke Park this weekend last year, Waterford led Cork all the way to the 56th minute of their All-Ireland semi-final.

At the semi-final stage a year earlier, Galway couldn't shake off Tipperary until Orlaith McGrath scored a speculative goal on 59 minutes.

Caoimhe Bourke was the Tipp 'keeper on that occasion, but a cruciate tear in recent weeks means she'll not feature during this latest bid for final involvement. 2020 All-Star 'keeper Aine Slattery will instead wear the number one shirt against Waterford.

"If we could get to that final, it would be huge," says first-season Tipperary manager Denis Kelly.

"There is fierce work going on at county board level and at development squad level. Tipperary camogie is definitely on the rise, but a final appearance for your senior team, then everyone will really start

sitting up and taking notice. It would help to further increase the profile of the game within the county.

"I am living in Borris-Ileagh at the moment, and all the young girls want to be the next Julianne Bourke, Teresa Ryan, and Nicole Walsh. For too long, it was male dominated. If the male team was in an All-Ireland semi-final, the place would be gone mental. It is good that we are catching up."

For too long, it has been Galway, Cork, and Kilkenny marching behind the band on camogie final Sunday.

"It is definitely good that there will be a shake-up. People can get sick of the same teams being there all the time. It's been 17 years since we were in the final and Waterford a lot longer than that (1945 their one and only appearance). It will be great for either county, and we're hoping it is us."

His Déise counterpart Seán Power holds the same big picture view. "It does get a bit dull where the sport is dominated by a two-horse or three-horse race all the time," says Power, who previously led Waterford to All-Ireland minor and U21 hurling glory in 2013 and '16 respectively.

"You need more counties participating at the latter end of the championship and the potential honours to be spread among a larger number of counties. That's where the participation numbers across the counties will grow."

"The numbers playing the game in Waterford have exploded the last couple of years. We've tried to do our bit by rotating where we train and getting to the grounds of smaller clubs in the county."

"Getting to an All-Ireland final would be huge for the game in Waterford and for all those young girls playing the game."

"Hopefully the breakthrough comes for us on Saturday. [If it doesn't], it won't be for the lack of trying."

The pressure is on Cork to deliver in this evening's Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Camogie senior semi-final against Galway at UPMC Nowlan Park.

Pressure is something the Cork Camogie senior manager Matthew Twomey is used to since replacing Paudie Murray.

Yet, it is six years since Cork last lowered Galway's colours (2017 All-Ireland semi-final). So dethroning reigning champions Kilkenny in the previous round represented a timely boost.

"There was relief but a lot of pride in our players too," Twomey said of Cork's quarter-final win over Kilkenny.

"The girls were under pressure but stayed resilient. What we found most rewarding that day was how they stuck to the game plan. We were under fierce pressure in injury-time but held on to beat the All-Ireland champions in Croke Park."

Already no strangers to one another, Cork and Galway have crossed paths three times this year. Each game has been tight but the Connacht side has emerged victorious in the National League (twice) and championship group stages. Unsurprisingly, Galway are favourites to defeat Cork in the second half of Saturday night's All-Ireland Camogie semi-final double-header.

"It will be similar to our quarter-final and come down to who imposes their game plan better," Twomey commented. "We haven't beaten Galway since 2017 and they have beaten us three times this year. That's an unbelievable statistic for Cork Camogie. Our players are relishing this challenge. We have a lot of faith in them but Galway are a savage team. Whatever way you want to play against them, they will match you."

"They have some stars to look out for but we will concentrate on ourselves and try to get the best out of our team. We'll try and dictate the game as much as we can."

O'Rourke feels Murray and Lane have changed camogie

Donal O'Rourke is relishing getting back on the pitch with the Cork hurlers in preparation for next season, after a debut campaign as coach under manager Pat Ryan that did not end with qualification from the Munster bearpit but offered evidence of significant progress and hope for the future.

O'Rourke earned his inter-county chops in camogie and will be a very interested observer of today's Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior semi-finals at UPMC Nowlan Park.

The Cappoquin man was manager of the Waterford team that ended a lengthy absence from the elite level by



Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship Semi-final

Cork v Galway

Today: UPMC Nowlan Park, 5.30pm

Referee: Ray Kelly

TV: Live on RTE 2

Daragh Ó Conchúir



making the quarter-finals in 2018, when this afternoon's opponents Tipperary proved too

strong, and 2019, when they led subsequent champions Galway by five points in the second half before wilting late on.

Galway boss Cathal Murray was impressed and when he was searching for an extra edge for his side after losing the 2020 All-Ireland final, he called the man known throughout his native county as Duck. The result was the O'Duffy Cup heading west once more after a three-point victory over Saturday evening's rivals, Cork.

Niamh Kilkenny is unavailable to Galway this year but O'Rourke knows that Murray, Robbie Lane and co will have

them primed.

"Cathal is an incredible manager. He's really talented at what he does, himself and Robbie Lane, his S&C and right-hand man. What they've done for Galway camogie is phenomenal."

"I would say they changed camogie forever, the two of them. They changed the way camogie teams prepared. To have a full-time S&C coach was unheard of."

"When Cathal took over, they'd two All-Ireland in their history despite being to so many finals and semi-finals. He's doubled that in five years (and won three leagues) and built team after team. I know

Niamh and a few others have stepped away but other girls have stepped away down through the years and he's built a different team."

"He's very fair and that's his main strength I think. If you do well in the league, you'll get your chance. If you're doing well on the training pitch, you'll get your chance. He was light years ahead of anything in camogie in the way he prepared his teams."

"When Cathal rang in January after they had lost the covid final, he was so disappointed."

"I said 'no chance' first, because of the travel, my con-

nection with Waterford, work and the lads at home as well. Cathal twisted my arm. He said, 'If you come up, we'll be unstoppable for the year.'

"Their hurling in the final was so razor sharp. It was our best performance of the year." He would love to see Galway and Waterford make the final on August 6 but there would be no divided loyalties if that transpires.

"I'd have the blue and white hat on if that happened! Galway have plenty of them now... I'd love to see the Waterford girls get over the line and win the All-Ireland."

"One thing's for sure, we're in for two cracking games."



Amy O'Connor, Seandun and Sorcha McCartan, St Finbarr's exchange words after last year's Senior Camogie Championship semi-final.

Picture: Larry Cummins

Local championships are fast approaching as minors get underway

AS the inter-county season draws to its conclusion, thoughts are turning to the club championships, and all over the county clubs are busy preparing for what is sure to be a very busy few months on the playing fields. The draws for adult and underage championships were made recently. At the time of going to press, dates had not been announced for adult or underage championship games, but it is expected that the adults competitions will begin around August 15, U14 on August 18/20, and U16 August 23/24.

The minor championship is already underway with first-round games on this weekend.

SE Systems, who have been huge supporters of Cork camogie, will again sponsor all the adult and minor championships, while this year, for the first time, the underage championships are sponsored by the county team's sponsor Kearys. All championship games at adult and underage level will again be played on a round-robin system. Here, we take a look at the groupings for the senior, intermediate, junior, and minor championships.

Senior championship
At senior level, 17 teams will battle it out for the Punch Cup. There are four groups; five teams in two groups, one group of four, and a group with the three divisional teams.

Last year's semi-finalists Inniscarra, Sarsfield's and St Finbarr's were seeded as were county champions Seandun.

Group 1: St Finbarr's, Glen Rovers, Fr O'Neil's, St Catherine's, and Killeagh.
Group 2: Sarsfields, Courcy Rovers, Aghabullogue, Enniskeane, and Cloughdub.

Group 3: Inniscarra, Ballygarvan, Eire Og, Newcestown.

Group 4: Carbery, Seandun, and Avondu.

Intermediate
In the intermediate championship there are 15 teams in three groups of five.

Group 1: Blackrock, Charleville, Brian Dillon's, Valley Rovers, and Kilbrittain-Timoleague.

Group 2: Na Piarasigh, Ballincollig, Douglas, Watergrasshill, and Milford.

Group 3: Ballyhea, Newtownshandrum, Clonakilty, Carrigaline, and Ballinhassig.

Junior A

Ten teams will battle it out for the junior A title.

These are in two groups of five.

Group 1: Sarsfields, Tracton, Cobh, Slabh Rua, and St Vincent's.

Group 2: Mallow, Castletyons, Ballincarrig, Ballinora, and Bishopstown.

Junior B

Eighteen teams will play in the junior B championship and they are in three groups of six.

CAMOGIE

■ Mary Newman

Group 1: Barryroe, Inniscarra, Millstreet, Aghabullogue, Castlemartyr, and Kildorrey.

Group 2: Blackrock, Glen Rovers, Bride Rovers, Na Piarasigh, Eire Og, and Blarney.

Group 3: Banteer, Erin's Own, Kibree, Youghal, Middleton, and Rockban.

Junior C

Twelve clubs will participate in the SE Systems Junior C championship in two groups of six.

Group 1: Buttevant, Nemo Rangers, Grenagh, Laochra Og, Kinsale, and Kilworth.

Group 2: St Fanahan's, Carrigwohill, Dungourney, Fermoy, Middleton, and St Colm's.

Lily O'Sullivan Cup

Twelve clubs in three groups of four will battle it out for the Lily O'Sullivan Cup. They are second adult teams from senior or intermediate grades clubs.

Group 1: Newcestown, St Finbarr's, Aghabullogue 3, and Killeagh.

Group 2: Douglas, Ballygarvan, Inniscarra 3, and Enniskeane.

Group 3: St Catherine's, Cloughdub, Courcy Rovers, and Clonakilty.

Lily Grant Cup

The Lily Grant cup is for junior clubs with second teams and here Castletyons, Ballinora, Cobh, Slabh Rua and Tracton will battle it out for the trophy. Premier minor

Eleven teams, two groups, one of six and one of five, will battle it out for the minor title.

Group 1: Eire Og, Ballinora, Clonakilty, Blackrock, Aghabullogue, and Enniskeane.

Group 2: Cloughdub, Sarsfields, Middleton, Erin's Own, and Inniscarra.

Minor A

Fifteen clubs, in three groups of five.

Group 1: Glen Rovers, Ballygarvan, Fr O'Neil's, Sarsfield's 2, and Castlemartyr.

Group 2: Newcestown, Laochra Og, Rockban, Cobh, and Ballincollig.

Group 3: Barryroe, Douglas, Kilbrittain/Timoleague, Mallow, and Na Piarasigh.

Minor B

Twenty-two teams, four groups two of six and two of five.

Group 1: Killeagh, St Catherine's, Courcy Rovers, Milford, Ballyhea, and Ballincarrig.

Group 2: Carrigaline, Tracton, Slabh Rua, Valley Rovers, Castletyons, and St Fanahan's.

Group 3: Ballinhassig, Kilworth, Stamey, Newtownshandrum, and Youghal.

Group 4: Carrigwohill, Bishopstown, St Finbarr's, Millstreet, and Aghada.

Minor C

Twelve teams in two groups of six.

Group 1: St Colum's, Nemo Rangers, Dungourney, Bandon, St Vincent's, and Brian Dillon's.

Group 2: Kibree, Watergrasshill, Grenagh, Banteer, Bride Rovers, and Fermoy.



Marie Costine clears the sliotar at Croke Park in 1973.

Here's hoping the 3s have it



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

THE 'threes' have been relatively good to Cork, winning titles in 1973, 1983 and 1993. Here's hoping that continues with Cork taking on Galway this afternoon at Nowlan Park, throw in 5.30pm.

Yesterday, five decades of hurling and camogie champions were honoured in Croke Park by the GPA. Each winning team from the five decades of the 'threes' from 1963 to 2013 were invited. Cork had three such teams in situ, those mentioned above with Dublin, Tipperary, and Galway, 1963, 2003 and 2013 respectively and three hurling counties from Kilkenny (4), Clare and Limerick.

Sandie Fitzgibbon was awarded the camogie 'Lifetime Achievement Award'. 16 September, 1973 was a memorable day in the history of Cork camogie, winning both the senior and junior titles, a feat never before achieved.

Cork's seniors brought off a historic four-in-a-row. Antrim and Cork provided the most exciting final in years. Brilliant striking, lightning pace, an abundance of thrills and a rip-roaring finish ranked this game among the best camogie finals ever played. Antrim had the neutral support.

The duels between Betty Sugrue and Mairéad McAtamney, Pat Moloney and Sue Cashman, Marie Costine and Lily Scullion, Marion Sweeney and Mairead Diamond and Rosie Hennessy and Kathleen Kelly were worth travelling to Croke Park to witness. The game opened at a terrific pace, end to end. From the beginning the crowd got involved and were kept on the edge of their seats. A ball was played wide along the ground to Chris O'Boyle at right forward. She controlled it and cut through the Cork defence to goal.

The ease with which she beat her marker brought the Cork selectors into council. Strangely, the Antrim midfield did not repeat the supply of low ball to their attack. Instead, Sue Cashman in particular and to a lesser extent Mairéad



Lord Mayor John Dennehy greets the Cork team on their homecoming at Kent Station in 1983.

McAtamney lofted high shots into the heart of the Cork defence.

Marie Costine, Hannah Cotter, and Deirdre Sutton caught ball and ball and returned them with interest. A goal by Anne Phelan and points from Sweeney and Marion McCarthy left Cork ahead 1-3 to 0-3 at the interval. A palmed goal by Lily Scullion raised Antrim's hopes. The sides were level with six minutes to go. A crashing goal from Anne Phelan and a point from McCarthy for Cork. A McAtamney goal as she drove two more wide.

With seconds remaining the same player took a sideline. It shaved outside the post and the final whistle blew. Marie Costine was a tower of strength at full-back, hailed as the greatest full-back the game had known. Sutton brought off save after save. Cally Riordan won both junior and senior titles on the same day, the first player to do so. Cork 2-5, Antrim 3-1.

CORK 1973: D Sutton; M Costine (c), H Cotter, S Dunne, M Whelan; M McCarthy, P Moloney, B Sugrue; A Phelan; M Sweeney, N Gully, R Hennessy.

Subs: A Keane, M Coleman, C Riordan.

Trainer/Coach: M Moran.

The triple was achieved in 1983, Minor, junior, and senior champions. In the senior final Cork piled on the pressure but found Dublin keeper Yvonne Redmond in remarkable form. They trailed by a point

at half time. Mary O'Leary gained parity. Cork's strong teamwork and high resolve kept them in the picture.

Five minutes before half time Claire Kelleher weaved past defenders and slammed the ball beyond the reach of Redmond. Dublin chased the game but Marion McCarthy winning her eighth All-Ireland medal repelled all efforts. Cork won, 2-5 to 1-6.

CORK 1983: M McCarthy, M Higgins, E Dineen, C Landers (c), M Kearney, C Cronin, M Sweeney, S Fitzgibbon, M O'Leary, V Fitzpatrick, C Kelleher, M Geaney.

Subs: L Lynch, N O'Driscoll, A Higgins, G McCarthy.

Trainer/Coach: Tom Nott.

Cyril Farrell led Galway's challenge for 1993 honours. Galway, contesting their first senior final, got an early goal boost.

Lynn Dunlea replied with the first of her three goals. Sharon Glynn gave a tremendous midfield display for Galway. Cork led 1-10 to 1-7 as Kathleen Costine made a point-blank save to deny Galway a leveller. Lynn Dunlea reacted to a blocked shot and palmed to the net. Cork's forwards picked off some lovely points to finish 3-15 to 2-8.

CORK 1993: K Costine, B Kenny, P Goggins, T O'Callaghan, L Towler, S Fitzgibbon, D Cronin, L Mellarick (c); I O'Leary, L Dunlea, C O'Mahony, F O'Driscoll.

Subs: R Desmond, I O'Keefe, L O'Neill, M Finn.

Trainer /Coach: Joe McGrath.

O'Rourke: 'I'd the privilege of coaching two of the best who've played the game'

DARAGH Ó CONCHÚIR

Donal O'Rourke is relishing getting back on the pitch with the Cork senior hurlers in preparation for next season, after a debut campaign as coach under Pat Ryan did not see progress from the Munster bear pit but offered evidence of progress and hope for the future.

A career coach even as he came through the Waterford underage ranks as a colleague of John Mullane's and played in goals at senior level during Davy Fitzgerald's first stint with the Déise, O'Rourke will be a very interested observer of today's Glen Dimplex All-Ireland semi-finals at Nowlan Park having cut his teeth in the camogie fields.

The Cappoquin man was manager of the Waterford team that ended a lengthy absence from the elite level by making the quarter-finals in 2018, and also 2019 when they led subsequent champions Galway by five points in the second half before wilting late on.

Galway boss Cathal Murray was impressed and after losing the 2020 All-Ireland final, he called the man known throughout his native county as 'Duck'. The result was the O'Duffy Cup heading west once more after a victory over this evening's rivals, Cork.

He is not surprised by the progress made in Waterford that sees them one game away from a first All-Ireland final appearance since 1945 under former All-Ireland U-21 and minor hurling-winning supremo Seán Power.

Niamh Rockett, Beth Carton and Lorraine Bray were important figures four years ago but the team totems are nationally renowned now, all winning All-Stars in recent years.

"They were very quiet and raw when I took them on first but they got more confident and as they got more confident, their leadership skills started coming."

As a player, O'Rourke reckons Carton is as good as there is.

"Beth is different. What Beth chooses to do today, no other girl would do. But then tomorrow, that makes her do stuff



Waterford's Beth Carton is one of the best camogie players around, insists Cork senior hurling coach Donal O'Rourke

that no other girl can do. She just works so hard on her game. She just maximises and tries to improve her game the whole time. She was an incredible player to be around," he explains.

"I personally think that I'd the privilege of coaching two of the best camogie players who've played the game in the last 10 years or more: Niamh Kilkenny in Galway and Beth Carton in Waterford. I was very privileged to have coached incredible camogie players but they were different class."

Kilkenny is unavailable to Galway this year but O'Rourke knows that Murray, Robbie Lane and the rest of the management will have them primed.

"Cathal is an incredible manager. He's really talented at what he does, himself and Robbie Lane, his S&C and right-hand man. What they've done for Galway camogie is phenomenal. I would say they changed camogie forever, the two of them," he insists.

"When Cathal took over, they'd two All-Irelands in their history despite being to so many finals and semi-finals. He's doubled that in five years (and won three

leagues) and built team after team. I know Niamh and a few others have stepped away but other girls have stepped away down through the years and he's built a different team.

"When Cathal rang in January after they'd lost the Covid final, he was so disappointed, I said 'no chance' first, because of the travel, my connection with Waterford, work and the lads at home as well. Cathal twisted my arm. He said: 'If you come up, we'll be unstoppable for the year.' 'You could be coaching teams all your life, and I've been since I was 14 and 15 at Cappoquin, and I may never have got a chance to get a team to Croke Park again. That was a huge draw.'

O'Rourke would love to see Galway and Waterford make the final on August 6 but there would be no divided loyalties if that transpires.

"I'd have the blue and white hat on if that happened! Galway have plenty of them now... I'd love to see the Waterford girls get over the line and win the All-Ireland.

"One thing's for sure, we're in for two cracking games."

WEEKEND GAA PREVIEWS

TODAY

ALL-IRELAND SENIOR CAMOGIE SEMI-FINALS
Waterford v Tipperary, UPMC Nowlan Park, 3.30 - RTÉ 2

There will be a new face in the final no matter who prevails as the Kilkenny-Galway-Cork monopoly is set to be broken. Tipperary haven't made the final since 2006 while Waterford's sole appearance in the decider stretches back to 1945 so something's got to give. Tipp have been the form side so far this season, though, and Cáit Devane can help edge this their way.

Verdict: Tipperary

with Cathal Murray's Tribe, still hurting from last year's semi loss to Kilkenny, out to right a few wrongs - but the benefit of a tough quarter-final outing against the Cats must have Cork primed for battle. Ace attacker Amy O'Connor could prove the difference on this occasion.

Verdict: Cork

Camogie

ALL-IRELAND SC SEMI-FINALS: Cork 0-15 Galway 2-6; Waterford 1-12 Tipperary 1-11
ALL-IRELAND IC SEMI-FINALS: Meath 1-11 Westmeath 0-10; Derry 0-21 Kilkenny 0-14 AET
ALL-IRELAND JC SEMI-FINALS: Clare 0-22 Armagh 2-15; Tipperary 2-12 Roscommon 0-8

Galway v Cork, UPMC Nowlan Park, 5.30 - RTÉ 2

Galway have defeated Cork in their last seven knockout meetings so motivation should not be an issue for Matthew Twomey's Rebels as they look to set the record straight.

That will be easier said than done



Galway camogie player Aoife Donohue - lending her support to Up the Hill for Jack and Jill.



All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship Semi-final

Cork v Galway

Tomorrow: UPMC Nowlan Park, 5.30pm

Referee: Ray Kelly

TV: Live on RTÉ 2

Eoghan Cormican



Although neither side knew it at the time, the dynamic of the Cork-Galway relationship tilted west on the Saturday evening of the 2019 All-Ireland camogie semi-final. Four years on and Cork have still

Cork out to turn tables on Tribe tormenters

not managed to wrestle back the balance of power.

That 2019 semi-final at the Gaelic Grounds was a physical, unflinching contest. The very contest Galway had not been able to win against Cork for almost a decade.

Galway ended Cork's three-in-a-row bid. It was the first time since 2010 that the Tribeswomen had edged a knockout championship tie between the pair.

And they've not lost one since, Galway's once inferiority complex against the game's most consistent ruling force long dissipated.

Between league and cham-

pionship, Galway and Cork have met seven times over the past four seasons. Within that there was an All-Ireland final (2021) and two league finals (2022 and '23).

But it didn't matter whether it was the opening day of spring or the concluding afternoon of summer, the result was always the same. All seven meetings ended in Galway victory.

Throw in the 2019 result and that's an 8-0 winning streak. It's got to the stage where Galway are beating Cork in key games having motored neither smoothly nor forcefully.

Cases in point are this and last year's league finals. The westerners were six behind early in the second half of the 2022 decider before overturning the deficit. As for the final of three months ago, they were haunted to be only two in arrears at the break.

The leading character in this changed Cork-Galway relationship is Cathal Murray. He took the Galway reins midway through the 2018 campaign. Murray rose standards and grew belief.

"He has brought Galway camogie way further than it ever was," said full-back Sarah Dervan after she captained

the county to 2021 All-Ireland glory at Cork's expense.

"We were always knocking around semi-final stages, struggling to get to the final. He came in and the people that he brought in around him, the likes of Robbie Lane (S&C) who has done a massive amount of work with us, have brought us so far."

Behind Dervan for only the county's fourth All-Ireland was Sarah Healy. The goalkeeper had this to say about Galway coming from three behind on 49 minutes to win by three.

"We believe in our camp that we are a great team. I

knew coming up that we were going to win. So when they got the goal, we went down and got a score, and then got another score.

"I was like, we are okay, we are going to come back, and we are going to win. And we did."

Cork turned a corner with their quarter-final victory over Kilkenny a fortnight ago. It was the first time in two years that they'd beaten another member of camogie's big three in a knockout fixture.

Tomorrow's semi-final against Murray's women presents the opportunity to turn another corner and rewrite the terms of this relationship. 2018 is too long ago for their last victory over the maroon.

CAMOGIE SC SEMI-FINALS

Waterford 1-12

Tipperary 1-11

By **Daragh Ó Conchúir**

WATERFORD recovered from a poor start to emerge as narrow but probably deserved victors of a pulsating All-Ireland senior camogie semi-final, in the process bridging a gap to 1945 since their last appearance in a decider.

Beth Carton earned the player-of-the-match honours but she had significant rivals for that honour from the sensational Vikki Faulkner in defence and also in the supreme artistry of Lorraine Bray.

Carton did weigh in with eight points, half of which came from play, but perhaps the most significant overall contribution was that of Mairéad Power, playing far closer to the opposition posts than she is accustomed to and carrying out her marking duties on Tipperary playmaker and joint-captain Karen Kennedy brilliantly.

What's more, Power's 25th minute goal was critical in kick-starting the Déise resurgence after falling seven points behind.

It was only when Kennedy was pushed forward late on that that the gifted Thurlie Sarsfields player could impose herself in any way.

The first half was a magnificent affair played in the rain. The teams served up a feast however and Waterford probably went in the happiest at the interval, despite trailing by 1-7 to 1-6.

They had scored a goal and three points on the spin after falling seven behind with 20 minutes gone while keeping Tipp to just two pointed frees for more than a half-hour after Cáit Devane's 20th minute goal.

Tipp had the better of the opening exchanges with Caoimhe Maher and Grace O'Brien pointing. Abby Flynn got Waterford off the mark in the fifth minute but Tipp were breaking the lines too easily and should have had more returns than they did.

Eimear McGrath slotted four points from frees and Róisín Howard was having a big impact, leading Denis Kelly's crew to edge clear.

Howard then pounced on a defensive error, drew the last Waterford player and slipped in Devane, who blitzed a powerful shot high to the far corner of the net.

It was 1-7 to 0-3 but a couple of big plays from Lorraine Bray helped reignite Waterford.

The first was a most sublime and composed jab-lift from the turf by

WINNING FEELING: Waterford players celebrate at final whistle



Waterford survive an early Tipp blitz

Déise through to first senior camogie final since 1945

Bray into the Power's hand and the defender ripped the net from close range.

Soon after, Bray came from nowhere to make a block around her own 45 before picking up the loose sliotar and gliding 50 metres across the turf with it on her hurl, before providing the inch-perfect hand-pass to Carton who made no mistake to split the posts.

Carton finished the half with four points, and Annie Fitzgerald was beginning to cause a lot of trouble, winning frees and also finding the

target.

Waterford had two wides at the start of the second half, including a straightforward free from Carton but though Tipp stretched the lead to two twice from frees, they were getting no change from the Déise defence, in which Faulkner maintained her tremendous form this season.

Carton began to spend more time at full-forward and that tactic paid dividends, as she threw over a brace of points.

When goalkeeper Brianna

O'Regan lofted over a free from her own 65, Waterford were three up.

The Premier continued to battle and points from Kennedy and Devane (free) made it unbearably tense, with Mairéad O'Brien throwing her body in front of a goalbound penalty shot in between those scores, not long after being reintroduced after a five-minute treatment period for a blood wound.

It was heroic, as was the bravery that earned her the injury, and in

truth, as important as any goal or point. It was heartbreaking for Tipperary, who fought valiantly, but it was Waterford's day.

WATERFORD: B O'Regan; V Faulkner, L Forrest, K Lynch, O Hickey, C Carroll (A Landers 5B), K Corbett Barry, A Flynn, R Walsh (C Griffin 4D (R Kavan 6D+2)), M O'Brien (A Corcoran 51-5B), B Carton, L Bray, M Power, N Rockett, A Fitzgerald.
SCORERS: B Carton 0-8(4s); M Power 1-0; A Flynn 0-2; A Fitzgerald, B O'Regan 0-1 each.
TIPPERARY: A Slatery, E Loughman, M Eviston, K Kennedy, K Bane (C McCarthy 77), J Boukie, A McGrath, T Ryan, C Hennessy (C Quirk 3B), R Howard, Caoimhe Maher, E McGrath (N Teacy 6D+2), G O'Brien, C Devane, C McInnes.
SCORERS: C Devane 1-2(2fs); E McGrath 0-5(B); R Howard, C Maher, G O'Brien, K Kennedy 0-1 each.
REFEREE: Liz Dempsey (Kilshenny).



BUBBLY: Cork get their fizz back

Resurgent Cork win shootout with the Westerners

CORK ended a run of eight consecutive losses against Galway, including three this year alone, to emerge victorious in a fiercely fought All-Ireland senior camogie semi-final at Nowlan Park.

This was a game that was less elemental than the first semi-final, cagier, with a little more testiness between players who know each other well.

Cork could find their go-to players more easily than Galway, and whereas Matthew Twomey could introduce Laura Hayes, Cliona Healy, Orla Cronin, Ashling Thompson and Orlaith Cahalane off his bench, Cathal Murray has been shorn of the talents of Niamh Kilkenny, Sarah Dervan, Sarah

Cork 0-15
Galway 2-6

By **Daragh Ó Conchúir**

Healy, Catriona Cormican and Heather Cooney to name just five.

The westerners, who got the better of the duel between the counties in the Very League Division 1 final, battled all the way to the line, with Aoife Donohue driving them forward and Róisín Black a resolute presence in defence, but Cork would not be denied.

Libby Coppinger and official player of the match Saoirse

McCarthy had huge second halves and with the subs having a big involvement, the Cork victory was merited.

It was 0-6 to 1-2 at half-time of this arm wrestle, Mackey slotting two points and O'Connor three on her way to a tally of seven.

Slobhán McGrath buried the first of her two goals in the 17th minute however, to keep Galway in touch.

Donohue brought the teams level but half-time sub Hayes and O'Connor pushed Cork clear, while Healy also hit the first of her two points from the bench as Matthew Twomey's crew moved four clear.

Back came Galway with McGrath's second goal, after Lee failed to gather, but the Cork

response was notable. Healy lofted her second and when McCarthy pointed gloriously from a tight angle after taking the return from a quickly-taken sideline, it felt significant.

With O'Connor bringing her tally to seven and Orlaith Cahalane making it a fourth point from subs for Cork, they would not be stopped.

CORK: A Lee, M Murphy, S Hayes (H), L Coppinger, P Mackey, M Cahalane, L Teacy, I O'Regan (A Thompson 6B), A Healy, N Loney, C Sigeron, F Keating, S McGrath, S McCann (O Cronin 4D), K Mackey, A O'Connor.
SCORERS: A O'Connor 0-7(5B, 1 4S); K Mackey, A O'Connor 0-2 each; L Hayes, O Cahalane, C Sigeron 0-1 each; McCarthy 0-1 each.
GALWAY: F Ryan, S Healy, R Black, D Higgins, R Hanniffy, E Helebert, A Keane, A Donohue, S Gardner (D McGrath 5B), S Spelman, C Dolan, N Hanniffy, N McPeake (S Flaherty 3B), S McGrath, A O'Healy.
SCORERS: C Dolan 0-4(2B); S McGrath 2-0; A Donohue 0-2.
REFEREE: Ray Kelly (Kilshenny).



Cork's Saoirse McCarthy hits the ball past Carrie Dolan of Galway. Picture: INPHO/Tom Maher

McCarthy and Manley on what it meant for Cork to beat Galway

CORK have an All-Ireland final to look forward to against Waterford on Sunday, August 6 after seeing off rivals Galway at Nowlan park.

Player of the match Saoirse McCarthy was thrilled to be heading back to Croke Park, where they beat Kilkenny this month in the quarter-final.

"We all came out together today and fought really hard and we're so delighted to come out with the win," said the Courcroy Rovers star after the Rebels' first win over Galway in eight attempts.

"We haven't beaten them since 2017 and we knew that coming into it. It's our fourth time meeting this year and they were triumphant in the first three. So, we knew we had to put up a big fight today and we came out the right side of it."

Cork didn't panic when Galway got their second goal, squeezing out a 0-15 to 2-6 success to set up a meeting with Waterford.

"I think on other days we did panic. We knew they were capable of getting those goals, but the game isn't over 'til it's over and you saw our relief and delight when the final whistle did blow."

They hit four of the next five points after that goal showed the confidence and belief they possess. "Definitely, and you have to look at those who scored them, the girls coming off the bench, so I'm delighted for them."

"When you look at the subs we brought in, those players would be starting on any other team. To have that coming onto the pitch and there's another ten girls there that could

REACTION

■ Linda Mellerick

just as easily have come on so the competition for places is a great thing. To win an All-Ireland you have to beat everyone so to beat Kilkenny and Galway, you need to do that."

Selector Ger Manley was thrilled to get the result over the Tribe.

"Ah look since I've been involved with Cork this year Galway have beaten us three times in close games. We got a very good run in the second half where we went up four or five points and they came back. I suppose a ball broke for the goal and we came back up and I think Orlaith Cahalane got a great point.

"We played very well in the second half. I thought our subs made a huge difference. Some of the girls that came on did extremely well, there's fierce competition for places. Matthew Twomey to give him his credit has strengthened the squad so much this year."

"Laura Hayes, Aisling Thompson, they were very unfortunate when they got injured. I think we deserved it today; we were better than Galway I thought. Our work-rate by the forwards was exceptional."

They hurled with a 'next ball' mentality.

"It's all about winning possession. Anyone will tell you, the next ball is vital. We won Amy's next two puckouts and we worked it well to get the scores. I thought we deserved it. I know it was tight, we gave fans and ourselves heart attacks, but, in all fairness, we deserved the win."



Relief for Hannah Looney as Cork beat Galway for the first time this season. Picture: INPHO/Tom Maher

The Rebels refuse to yield

CAMOGIE

■ Éamonn Murphy

IN A county like Cork, with 28 senior titles placing them at the head of the camogie roll of honour, a semi-final win shouldn't mean as much as it did on Saturday.

Yet when the final whistle sounded the Rebels either dropped to their knees in relief or ran towards the sideline to embrace their teammates and management. Galway vanquished, after Kilkenny were pushed aside in the quarter-final, sends Cork into a clash with the Déise next month.

One more big performance will see the O'Duffy Cup back on Leaside once more. The neutrals will be behind Waterford, into their second-ever senior All-Ireland after a 78-year gap.

However, Cork are a team on a mission, having shipped a series of blows in recent years, gunning to regain the big prize for the first time since 2018. Before the sliotar was pucked at rain-soaked Nowlan Park, Cork had the snarling demeanour of a side that simply weren't going to be beaten.

Underdogs against the league champions who had already defeated them three times this season and eight times in a row, Matthew Twomey's side hurled with purpose from the throw-in. Katrina Mackey was razor sharp, lancing over a pair of terrific first-half points from play, while Laura Treacy excelled in her sweeping number six role and Saoirse McCarthy's pace and skill provided the ideal conduit.

Meabh Cahalane hoovered up breaks and tackled brilliantly and further up Hannah Looney thundered upfield to break the line time and again in the second half.

It was about the collective though. While Galway felt referee Ray Kelly didn't do them any favours, Cork hunted in



Cork supporters look on at UPMC Nowlan Park on Saturday. Picture: Piaras Ó Midheach/Sportsfile

packs. They earned frees by running hard and creating space around Mackey and Amy O'Connor.

Cork conceded a goal in either half at stages when they were in control. Yet on both occasions, they reset and continued to work ferociously in the middle third battleground. That spoke volumes about the steel and self-belief in the group but also the harsh lessons they learned when the Tribe outscored them in the second half of recent encounters.

Cork's bench press, so telling against Kilkenny, was decisive here as well. Orla Cronin and Ashling Thompson were available after gruelling injuries, their experience and confidence telling. Cronin earned a free Amy O'Connor popped over at a key stage and Thompson, warming up throughout the second half, was eventually introduced for the last quarter and made every possession count. Hard as nails in winning the sliotar but cool as a

breeze in her distribution.

Cliona Healy was the most influential of the subs though, scoring 0-2 and getting fouled for another two scores, but Laura Hayes also hurled the world of ball from wing-back. Orlaith Cahalane, fresh out of minor, and pursuing a dual mandate alongside Looney, Aoife Healy and Libby Coppinger, sliced over a lovely score in the closing stages.

Twomey and his selectors will have some big calls to make for the final because a strong start will be crucial in the final to ensure Waterford, who beat the Rebels in the Munster Championship, don't build up a head of steam. Their supporters created a raucous atmosphere in their semi-final comeback against Tipp and they'll outnumber Cork in the final.

The management deserve huge credit for getting Cork on track when it matters most. We can trust them to get it right for the All-Ireland.



Coaches Wesley O'Brien, Liam Cronin and Ger Manley celebrate after the final whistle. Picture: INPHO/Ben Brady

Rebels coming good at right time



All-Ireland senior camogie championship semi-final

Cork 0-15
Galway 2-6

Therese O'Callaghan
Nowlan Park



When the final whistle sounded in UPMC Nowlan Park on Saturday, Cork camogie players and management celebrated this notable success like no other. They had finally overpowered their bogey team Galway — something they had failed to do for quite some time.

There is no O'Duffy Cup for a semi-final victory. However, and significantly, the Rebels put themselves in a position where they now have a chance to claim All-Ireland silverware.

Matthew Twomey's squad didn't have the best of starts to the year. Elsewhere on this page, he references how they were "unfairly written off" in some quarters after they endured a run of injuries.

That they turned the tide around deserves so much credit. Boosted, no doubt, with the return to action of a number of key personnel — one-by-one Cliona Healy, Laura Hayes, Orla Cronin, Ashling Thompson, and Orlaith Cahalane entered the fray against the Tribeswomen to rapturous applause. Four points came from the bench.

Libby Coppinger is another constant standout performer. Losing so many tight games was well-documented, but the defender says they didn't dwell on it.

"You can't focus on it too much because if you're using that to drive it you're no good. We're just looking to go out every day and be the best team we can possibly be.

"We had a few games this year where things just didn't go right, and we've taken the learnings from them. They sometimes say you learn more from a loss. We had a few in a row there, but thankfully we're coming good at the right time.

"The biggest message at half time is we have to work, we have to win the dirty balls because Galway are always really strong to do that. I think our forwards worked them-



TOTAL FOCUS: Ashling Thompson gets her clearance away in Saturday's All-Ireland semi-final win over Galway at Nowlan Park. Picture: Piaras Ó Midheach/Sportsfile

selves into the ground today and the people that came on did the absolute same thing, so it was an absolute team and panel effort."

Such was Cork's overall superiority in front of 7,257 spectators, their three-point winning margin feels unnecessarily slim. The weather failed to play ball, but operating on one of the best stadiums sur-

faces in the country helped where Cork edged the first half, 0-6 to 1-2.

Captain Amy O'Connor and Katrina Mackey were the targets up front.

Siobhán McGrath's goal for Galway made it 1-1 to 0-5 after the first quarter. Her second goal, coming midway through the second half after 'keeper Amy Lee was forced to cough

up possession, kept her side in it.

In reality, the Connacht side were making no inroads and were not helped by their strong defensive set-up which meant they were shorn of bodies in attack. Granted, Ray Kelly didn't do them too many favours either, with a few strange decisions as another struggle unfolded.

Cork's firepower — especially around the middle third where Saoirse McCarthy excelled — will see them back in Croke Park on Sunday week where they will look to put another losing record behind them.

This will be a historic day when Cork and Waterford face off.

The Déise are going after a first title. Cork are seeking a first since 2018.

It will be interesting to see what changes, if any, Twomey will make for this unique showdown.

Scorers for Cork: A O'Connor (0-7, 5 frees, 1 45), K Mackey and C Healy (0-2 each), C Sigeron (free), S McCarthy, L Hayes and Ó Cahalane (0-1 each).

Scorers for Galway: S McGrath (2-0), C Dolan (0-4, 0-3 frees), A Donohue (0-2).

CORK: A Lee; M Murphy, L Coppinger, P Mackey; M Cahalane, L Treacy, I O'Regan; A Healy, H Looney; C Sigeron, F Keating, S McCarthy; S McCartan, K Mackey, A O'Connor (Capt).

Subs: C Healy for C Sigeron (26), L Hayes for M Murphy (half-time), O Cronin for S McCartan (40), A Thompson for I O'Regan (49), Ó Cahalane for F Keating (53).

GALWAY: F Ryan; S Healy (Capt), R Black, D Higgins, R Hanniffy, E Helebert, A Keane; A Donohue, S Gardiner; S Spellman, C Dolan, N Hanniffy; N McPeake, S McGrath, A O'Reilly.

Subs: S Rabbittie for N McPeake (33), O McGrath for S Gardiner (50), J Hughes for S Rabbittie (60).

Referee: Ray Kelly (Kildare).

Twomey: Bench bounce a key difference for Cork now

Reaction

There are plenty of leaders on this Cork senior camogie team. But the calibre of subs Matthew Twomey was able to introduce in Nowlan Park on Saturday provided them with a real shot in the arm in their impressive All-Ireland semi-final win over Galway.

The Mackey twins Katrina and Pamela, Laura Treacy, Hannah Looney, Libby Coppinger, and skipper Amy O'Connor are just a few of those marquee names that were slated in from the start. Then, to be able to bring in Cliona Healy, Laura Hayes, Ashling Thompson, Orla Cronin, and Orlaith Cahalane had a huge effect in such a close game. A definite boost.

"Was there a temptation to start them? No. We had faith in the starting 15," Twomey, who is in his second term in charge,

revealed. "We knew we wouldn't get 60 minutes out of the subs. We are happy with what we are doing. There are players also who have put in a massive shift and haven't got any run. They would probably be on a lot of other teams. We can't take any major glory for having a bench. It is because players were injured and they were coming back. But we are after creating a bench, which we've not had for a long time."

After a disappointing provincial championship, and a league final defeat to Galway, questions were asked of Cork.

"People wrote us off after we got beat in the league final and we got beaten by Waterford in the Munster Championship. I think they wrote us off unfairly. They are after showing great heart, especially the second-half. Even when Galway got the second goal, we stayed composed. The sign of a great team.

"But nothing is won. We are after beating Kilkenny, we are after beating Galway. We have nothing to show for it. We will have to go again.

"There is pressure all the time. It is a big job, I am well aware of it. But the players are unbelievable, they are incredible. They never say die."

The big stage awaits on Sunday week in Croke Park against neighbours Waterford who take their place in the decider for the first time since 1945, and only for the second time ever.

"Waterford beat us already in the Munster Championship and we struggled over them last year in the semi-final. So that will keep us level-headed.

"Fair play to them today in getting over Tipperary. I thought Tipp might have had too much for them."

Therese O'Callaghan

Camogie All-Ireland Senior Championship semi-finals

Waterford end 78-year wait to reach All-Ireland senior

Carton does her talking on pitch with eight-point contribution in slender victory

camogie final with a 1-12 to 1-11 win over Tipperary on Saturday.

She was particularly tickled though that it was Mairead Power scored the goal that turned the tie in the 25th minute, coming five minutes after Cáit Devane's major had put Tipperary seven points clear. Power is a defender by trade but had been deployed further forward to haunt Karen Kennedy wherever she ventured. Until Kennedy was pushed forward late on, it worked a treat.

Had she ever seen Power score a goal before?

"I certainly haven't!" said a

beaming Carton. "I wouldn't say she remembers herself to be honest. We were getting on to her all week about her playing in the forwards but Mairead can play anywhere. Phenomenal athlete and player. She can do anything she wants to be honest."

Power was one of a slew of inspirational performers in white and blue, Vikki Faulkner, Lorraine Bray, Orla Hickey and Mairead O'Brien just four others that come to mind. Carton is the key to the team though and her two points in the second half to bring her tally from play to four, after Tipp had gone two

clear twice early after the restart, were critical.

"I'm still speechless a bit. Hard to put into words what that means to that group in there and also to Waterford I suppose. We don't get many days out as Waterford supporters so hopefully now, two weeks' time, we can give people a good day out.

"The support is what gets you over the line at the end. You could see the last 10 minutes were the longest ever. You need everyone. The crowd out there and all week has been phenomenal.

"People let us do what we

needed to do during the week as well, which was a big thing. Just to have that support there needs everything to that group inside.

Phenomenal

"They hammered us in the Munster [semi-final]. We could easily have put the heads down after that but we knew what the group could do. Girls had jobs there, jobs that impacted their game a lot but they did it, no problem, no questions asked. Vikki Faulkner, Mairead Power were phenomenal there today. Lorraine Bray.

"It's just a group effort and

when you've confidence in the person behind you anything can happen and that's what happened today."

Waterford will meet Cork in the decider after they overcame a never-say-die Galway team 0-15 to 2-6. Some huge performances from the likes of Saoirse McCarthy, Libby Coppinger and Hannah Looney, as well as four points and a number of major contributions off the bench, meant that the Rebels would secure a first triumph over their rivals after eight consecutive losses, three of which came this year alone.

The tension was evident, as

Beth Carton said she was speechless but thankfully, she wasn't really. Anyway, she had done her talking on the pitch with an eight-point contribution as Waterford ended a 78-year wait to reach the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior

Deadly Déise bridge 78-year gap



All-Ireland senior camogie championship semi-final

Waterford 1-12
Tipperary 1-11

Eoghan Cormican
Nowlan Park

Impromptu or otherwise, semi-final celebratory team photographs just aren't the done thing.

Flashbulbs are for the final. Semi-finals, on the other hand, are for surviving. Nothing more.

Saturday, though, wasn't so much a semi-final as it was a once-in-a-career breakthrough opportunity.

Nobody has banged harder on the door of camogie's closed shop in recent years than Tipperary and Waterford.

With the game's big three devouring one another on the other side of the draw, Tipperary and Waterford would never again get a better chance to reach the big time.

And when referee Liz Dempsey pulled the curtain down early in the fifth minute of second-half injury-time, it was Waterford who had won the title of camogie's breakthrough women.

Only the county's second ever All-Ireland final appearance secured. Their first since the defeat to Antrim in 1945. A 78-year gap washed away in the July rain. They should have followed the photo with a lap of honour.

A very healthy crowd of 7,250 attended Saturday's semi-final double-header. Waterford's following was comfortably the largest of the four. The two mains stands erupted in white at the final whistle.

Before Waterford players danced up into the stands to embrace family and friends, they embraced one another. Lorraine Bray jumped into the arms of Beth Carton. No two players had done more to get the Déise across the threshold. Nobody ferried more possession than Bray.



FINAL-BOUND: The Waterford squad celebrates after their Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior camogie championship semi-final win over Tipperary at UPMC Nowlan Park on Saturday. Picture: Ben Brady/Inpho

'We don't get into many All-Ireland finals in Waterford'

Reaction

Waterford manager Seán Power spoke of role models and of leaving a legacy.

These breakthrough Waterford women have no silverware won yet, but by dint of their endeavours on Saturday afternoon and the giant step forward they have taken for camogie in the county, they've already ticked the two boxes Power wants them to tick.

"This group of players; they are an incredible bunch of role models. The children of Waterford look up to them and I couldn't be prouder of them," said Power.

"We've been going around the camps in the county the last couple of weeks and we've been going to the nurseries in the different clubs. The young girls love seeing these players.

Nobody linked the play better.

In the 29th minute, the captain charged down a Karin Blair point attempt on her own 45-metre line, carried the sliotar to the opposing 45-metre line, handpassed to Carton, and she split the posts.

Of the five second-half points Waterford hit between the 40th and 57th minute to go from two behind to three in front, Beth accounted for all

bar one. Two of her four here were frees, one of which she won herself.

There was no holding the championship's topscorer. There was no holding back the emotion at full-time.

"It is so amazing to have done it with the group and management we have. It is an unbelievable feeling." Waterford half-back Keeley Corbett Barry began.

"And it is something we are happy to do because legacy is a big part of what we are about. We want to leave it in a better place. The sport itself is on a boom. It's so important we get this right, nationally and in Waterford. We are doing some good stuff on the Waterford front."

They have the opportunity to do some more good stuff on Sunday week when they face Cork in the county's first All-Ireland final appearance in 78 years.

Cork fell past them at the death in last year's semi-final, while it was Waterford who were victorious at Páirc Uí Chaoimh when they met in the Munster Championship earlier this summer.

"We don't get into many All-Ireland finals in Waterford, in any code, so we are going to enjoy it and look forward to it.

"The next step, in terms of climbing

mountains, is the biggest one. It's the Hillary Pass of Everest. But we've the capability of doing it. Will we do it? I don't know. We're going to try to do it but we've to do a lot of work to get to that stage."

For Tipperary manager Denis Kelly, pride was mixed in among pangs of regret. No score from play between the 19th and 57th minute was always going to leave them up against it.

"They died with their boots on, but it was disappointing to lose by a point," said Kelly.

"We're devastated at the minute because we had our sights set on Croke Park. It's not happening for us so at least we have the Munster cup and have something to show for our year. We've made good progress, but still, on today's performance, there's more we can do."

Eoghan Cormican

"Camogie has risen so much within Waterford that anyone you met last week, they were saying to you, 'best of luck now on Saturday', whereas five or six years ago, that wasn't the case and there wasn't that awareness.

"Camogie is really pushing on within the county. It was absolutely amazing to see the support we had here today.

"The last few minutes, Tipp

were getting closer and closer. But we did so well. Girls gave it their all. They were dying out on that pitch. They are such a credit."

Tipp's late charge, where they whittled a three-point deficit down to the minimum, was the first bit of hurling they had done since the opening quarter.

After a gift of a Cait Devane goal moved them 1-7 to 0-3

clear on 19 minutes, they were then outscored 1-9 to 0-2 in the ensuing 38 minutes. A 10-point swing.

Tipp had hammered Waterford 4-11 to 1-9 in their Munster semi-final meeting in May. At seven ahead on 19 minutes, they had the foundation laid for another comfortable win.

They will rue their second-half disappearing act. They will rue not pushing defender Karen Kennedy further forward earlier than they did. They will rue Kennedy's blocked goal chance on 59 minutes and the subsequent '45 sent wide by Eimear McGrath.

They'll ruminate long and hard over a fifth semi-final defeat in six years.

For Waterford, their response to Tipp's early charge made the result all the sweeter.

Mairead Power's goal on 24 minutes helped bring them back within one at the break. Upon the restart, they swamped the Tipp attack with bodies, while their clinical link play meant they utilised the space further forward to allow Carton and her supporting cast thrive.

"We knew we had done so much work this year to build on last year," Corbett Barry continued. "It was sickening coming away from last year's semi-final against Cork. We were ahead with three minutes to go and we left it behind us. We didn't want that to happen today."

From bossed to buoyant. From outsiders to camogie's breakthrough bunch. Cork and a likely record final crowd away.

Scorers for Waterford: B Carton (0-8, 0-4 frees); M Power (1-0); A Flynn (0-2); B O'Regan (0-1 free); A Fitzgerald (0-1 each).

Scorers for Tipperary: C Devane (1-3, 0-3 frees); E McGrath (0-4, 0-4 frees); K Kennedy, R Howard, C Maher, G O'Brien (0-1 each).

WATERFORD: B O'Regan, V Faulkner, L Forrest, K Lynch, O Hickey, C Carroll, K Corbett Barry, A Flynn, L Bray, M O'Brien, B Carton, R Walsh, M Power, N Rockett, A Fitzgerald.

Subs: C Griffin for Walsh (40); A Corcoran for O'Brien (52-56 temporary); A Landers for Carroll (58); R Kirwan for Griffin (62).

TIPPERARY: A Slattery, E Loughman, M Eviston, K Kennedy, T Ryan, J Bourke, A McGrath, K Blair, C Hennessy, R Howard, C Maher, E McGrath, G O'Brien, C McIntyre, C Devane.

Subs: C McCarthy for Blair (36); C Quirk for Hennessy (39); N Treacy for E McGrath (62).

Referee: L Dempsey (Kilkenny).



Waterford's Orta Hickey puts Tipperary's Teresa Ryan under pressure during yesterday's All-Ireland senior camogie semi-final at UPMC Nowlan Park. Picture by Piaras Ó Mícheoil

Cork through to the decider



CAMOGIE

Linda Mellerick

Cork	0-15
Galway	2-6

IN front of a crowd of 7,250 in UPMC, Cork and Waterford advanced to the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior championship final.

Waterford won a highly entertaining opening game by the minimum against Tipp in an electrifying atmosphere. Cork and Galway's game was more tactical between two sides that know each other inside out, each trying to find that small margin by which to capitalise.

Cork were the better side, a couple of goals keeping Galway, whose tactics were questionable, in the game.

Two goal chances for Galway in the opening half. Their first came off the crossbar, their second finished by Siobhán McGrath. Ailish O'Reilly was troubling the Cork defence, but Maeve Murphy got to grips with her as the half wore on.

A stop-start opening half with a lot of frees, seven in the first nine minutes by a fussy Ray Kelly.

Róisín Black took up Katrina Mackey, Shauna Healy on Amy O'Connor and she was booked on the stroke of halftime for a second off-the-ball drag, attempting to block O'Connor's runs.

Cork started brightly, three points to the good, from three frees, Amy O'Connor (2) and Chloe Sigerson providing. Carrie Dolan got Galway's first score from play.

Seven minutes in O'Reilly split the Cork defence, her shot ricocheted off the crossbar with Cork eventually winning a free out.

When Cork spread the play fast into their inside line, they were dangerous, O'Connor and Katrina Mackey hitting two from open play to give Cork a four-point advantage. But an outfield ball that fell kindly for Aoife Donohue delivered to McGrath caught Cork as she finished neatly on 16 minutes.



Amy O'Connor and Saoirse McCarthy after beating Galway.

Galway were working the ball out of defence, but Cork's quick backtracking had them outnumbered up front, Ailish O'Reilly isolated, and Galway were finding it hard to make much headway. Mackey pointed, again after a fast delivery, Donohue replying to leave it 0-6 to 1-2 in a tight battle.

Cork went with the same semi-final starting 15, holding key players who returned from injury. Cliona Healy replaced Chloe Sigerson on 25 minutes as Cork tried to inject more pace up front.

Cork's running into trouble led to Donohue's levelling point at the start of the second half. Cork needed to get the ball in fast. The unmarked Laura Hayes, Cork's half-time substitute, received a Laura Treacy pass and struck a great point. O'Connor pointed a free, Cork two up.

Galway were playing plus two at the back and while they won possession their distribution was poor, feeding Treacy who swept well and either popped passes to Hayes or spread the play.

Cork looked in the ascendancy, they were the better team, leading 0-11 to 1-4 on 46 but an Amy Lee error gave Galway a lifeline as McGrath stuck it home for the second time.

Excellent points by Healy and Saoirse McCarthy was a brilliant response. With McCarthy having a storming second half

and Treacy and Maeve Cahalane dominating, Cork brought in the cavalry, Orla Cronin, Aisling Thompson and Orlaith Cahalane all making an impact.

Carrie Dolan, kept quiet in general play, hit their third point from a free but 2-3 from play in an All-Ireland semi-final won't see you get there. Galway persisted in not pushing numbers up even when a goal behind with seven minutes remaining.

Cork were in total control at the back. They are through to their third All-Ireland final in a row in what will be an historic final as Waterford head to their second ever, their first in 73 years.

Scorers for Cork: A O'Connor 0-7 (0-5 f, 0-1 45), K Mackey, C Healy 0-2 each, C Sigerson (f), L Hayes, S McCarthy, O Cahalane 0-1 each.

Galway: S McGrath 2-0, C Dolan 0-4 (0-3 f), A Donohue 0-2.

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

Subs: C Healy for Sigerson (25), L Hayes for M Murphy (57), O Cronin for McCartan (40), A Thompson for O'Regan (49), O Cahalane for F Keating (52).

GALWAY: F Ryan; S Healy, R Black, R Hanniffy; A Keane, E Helebert, D Higgins; A Donohue, S Gardiner; C Dolan, S Spellman, N Hanniffy; A O'Reilly, S McGrath, N McPeake, J Hughes for Rabbittie (61).

Subs: S Rabbittie for McPeake (33), O McGrath for S Gardiner (50), J Hughes for Rabbittie (61).

Referee: Ray Kelly (Kildare).

O'Connor points way to decider for Rebels

CORK	0-15
GALWAY	2-6

DARAGH Ó CONCHÚIR
UPMC NOWLAN PARK

Cork ended a run of eight consecutive losses against Galway, including three this year alone, to emerge victorious in a fiercely fought Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior camogie semi-final at UPMC Nowlan Park.

The Rebels held the upper hand for most of proceedings but they found it difficult to shake off their doughty opponents. With Waterford in the opposite corner for a derby final, Cork will look to end another losing record, having fallen short in the last four national deciders stretching back to the 2021 All-Ireland.

Cork could find their go-to players more easily than Galway, and whereas Matthew Twomey could introduce Laura Hayes, Cliona Healy, Orla Cronin, Aisling Thompson and Orlaith Cahalane off his bench, Cathal Murray has been shorn of the talents of Niamh Kilkenny, Sarah Dervan, Sarah Healy, Catriona Cornican and Heather Cooney to name just five this year.

The westerners, who got the better of the duel between the counties in the Very League Division 1 final, battled all the way to the line, with Aoife Donohue driving them forward and Róisín Black a resolute presence in defence, but Cork would not be denied.

Libby Coppinger and official player of the match Saoirse McCarthy had huge second halves and with the subs having a big involvement, the Cork victory was merited.

It was 0-6 to 1-2 at half-time in this arm wrestle, Katrina Mackey slotting two points and Amy O'Connor three on her way to a tally of seven.

Siobhán McGrath buried the first of her two Galway goals in the 17th minute however, thanks to a real bit of magic by Donohue to somehow get a pass off to Rachel Hanniffy, who in turn supplied the Sarsfields finisher who drove low beyond the advancing Amy Lee.

Donohue brought the teams level but half-time sub Hayes and O'Connor pushed Cork clear, while Healy also hit the first of her two points from the bench as Matthew Twomey's crew moved four clear.

Back came Galway with McGrath's second goal, after Lee failed to gather, but with so much experience and talent to call upon, as well as vast reservoirs of grit, the Cork response was notable.

Healy lofted her second and when McCarthy, who had powered into the fray in the second half, pointed gloriously from a tight angle, after taking the return from a quickly-taken sideline and making ground up the left before cutting in, felt significant.

With O'Connor bringing her tally to seven and Orlaith Cahalane making it a fourth point from subs for Cork, they would not be pegged back. **Scorers - Cork:** A O'Connor 0-7 (5f, 1-1 45); K Mackey, C Healy 0-2 each; L Hayes, O Cahalane, C Sigerson (f), S McCarthy 0-1 each. **Galway:** C Dolan 0-4 (3f); S McGrath 2-0; A Donohue 0-2.

O'Brien puts body on line as Déise end wait

WATERFORD	1-12
TIPPERARY	1-11

DARAGH Ó CONCHÚIR
UPMC NOWLAN PARK

Waterford emerged narrow victors of a pulsating Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior camogie semi-final at UPMC Nowlan Park, reaching their first final since 1945.

Beth Carton earned the player-of-the-match honours with eight points, but perhaps the most significant overall contribution was that of Mairéad Power, carrying out her marking duties on Tipperary playmaker and joint-captain Karen Kennedy brilliantly.

What's more, Power's 25th-minute goal was critical in kick-starting the Déise resurgence after falling seven points behind.

It was only when Kennedy was pushed forward late on that the gifted Thurles Sarsfields player could impose herself in any way, which is a testament to how well Power carried out her task.

Waterford probably went in the

happiest at the interval, despite trailing by 1-7 to 1-6, Tip's goal coming courtesy of Cáit Devane in the 20th minute.

Tipp stretched the lead to two points twice from frees at the start of the half, but they were getting no change from the Déise defence, in which Vikki Faulkner was outstanding.

Carton began to spend more time at full-forward and that tactic paid dividends, as the De La Salle sharpshooter threw over a brace of points during a resurgence.

When goalkeeper Brianna O'Regan lofted over a free from her own 65, Waterford were three up.

The Premier continued to battle and points from Kennedy and Devane (free) made it unbearably tense. In between those scores, Waterford's Mairéad O'Brien had to throw her body in front of a goal-bound shot not long after being reintroduced after a five-minute treatment period for a blood wound in a heroic play that ensured it was Waterford's day.

Scorers - Waterford: B Carton 0-8 (4f); M Power 1-0; A Flynn 0-2; A Fitzgerald, B O'Regan (f) 0-1 each. **Tipperary:** C Devane 1-2 (0-2f); E McGrath 0-5 (5f); R Howard, C Maher, G O'Brien, K Kennedy 0-1 each.

Resilient Rebels beat their bogey team, but know there is still a big job still to do

CORK 0-15
GALWAY 2-6

DARAGH Ó CONCHÚIR REPORTS

LIBBY Coppinger hailed Cork's work-rate after the Rebels booked their place in the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior camogie final.

Cork ended a run of eight consecutive losses against Galway, including three this year alone, to emerge victorious in a fiercely-fought semi-final at UPMC Nowlan Park.

In front of a strong overall attendance for the televised double header of 7,257 – Waterford's win over Tipperary was first up – the Rebels held the upper hand for most of proceedings but they found it difficult to shake off their doughty opponents.

'The biggest message at half-time is we have to work, we have to win the dirty balls because Galway are always really strong to do that,' said St Colum's dual star Coppinger, as Cork led by a single point, 0-6 to 1-2.

'I think our forwards worked themselves into the ground today and the people that came on did the absolute same thing so it was an absolute team and panel effort.'

'(Our bench) is incredible,' Coppinger added of the introduction of Laura Hayes, Cliona Healy, Orla Cronin, Ashling Thompson and Orlaith Cahalane.

'We're marking them in training and you can't get around them but there's a real mentality there at the minute, we're nearly finishing as strong as we're starting and that's exactly what you

Laura Treacy tackles Galway's Ailish O'Reilly.

need.'

With Waterford in the opposite corner for a unique derby final pairing, Cork will be looking to end another losing record, having fallen short in the last four national deciders stretching back to the 2021 All-Ireland.

This semi-final was a game that was less elemental than the first semi-final, cagier, with a little more testiness between players who know each other well.

Cork could find their go-to players more easily than Galway, and whereas Cork boss Matthew Twomey could introduce Hayes, Healy, Cronin, Thompson and Cahalane off his bench, Galway manager Cathal Murray has been shorn of the talents of Niamh Kilkenny, Sarah Dervan, Sarah Healy, Catriona Cormican and Heather Cooney to name just five this year.

The westerners, who got the better of the duel between the counties in the Division I league final, battled all the way to the line, with Aoife Donohue driving them forward and Róisín Black a resolute presence in defence, but Cork would not be denied.

Libby Coppinger and official player of the match Saoirse McCarthy had huge second halves and with the subs having a big involvement, the Cork victory was merited.



'There has just been days where we're nearly over the line and they come back so until that final whistle went we weren't going to be comfortable or let us think beyond that,' said Coppinger of her immediate emotions at the final whistle. 'So it was just the next job, the next job.'

'That's what great teams do.

TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK



'The biggest message at half-time is we have to work' – Libby Coppinger

They never go away. They're there behind you the whole time. We're so delighted. It hasn't sunk in yet but semi-finals are there to be won so thankfully we got over the line.

'You can't focus on (the losses) too much because if you're using that to drive it you're no

good. We're just looking to go out every day and be the best team we can possibly be.'

'We had a few games this year where things just didn't go right and we've taken the learnings from them every time. They sometimes say you learn more from a loss. We had a few in a row there but thankfully we're coming good at the right time.'

It was 0-6 to 1-2 at half-time of this arm wrestle, Mackey slotting two points and O'Connor three on her way to a tally of seven.

Siobhán McGrath buried the first of her two goals in the 17th minute however, thanks to a real bit of magic by Donohue to somehow get a pass off to Rachel Hanniffy, who in turn supplied the Sarsfields finisher who drove low beyond the advancing Amy Lee.

Donohue brought the teams level but half-time sub Hayes and O'Connor pushed Cork clear, while Healy also hit the first of her two points from the bench as Matthew Twomey's crew moved four clear.

Twomey wary of Déise challenge

BY DARAGH Ó CONCHÚIR

WE have to go again – that was the defiant message from Cork boss Matthew Twomey after his team booked their place in the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland senior camogie championship decider.

After dethroning champions Kilkenny in the quarter-final, Cork beat their bogey team Galway in the semi-final to set up a showdown with Munster rivals Waterford, who ended a 78-year wait to reach the All-Ire-

land senior final.

Cork's three-point win over Galway means the Rebels have reached a fifth straight national final and a third All-Ireland senior camogie championship decider.

Some huge performances from the likes of Saoirse McCarthy, Libby Coppinger and Hannah Looney, as well as four points and a number of major contributions off the bench, meant that the Rebels secured a first triumph over their rivals after eight con-

'We are after beating Kilkenny, we are after beating Galway. We have nothing to show for it. We will have to go again'

secutive losses, three of which came this year alone.

'People wrote us off after we got beat in the league final and we got beaten by Waterford in

the Munster championship. I think they wrote us off unfairly,' Matthew Twomey said.

'They are after showing great heart out there, especially the second half. Even when Galway got the second goal, we stayed composed. The sign of a great team.'

'We needed it badly. They've been a bogey team of ours. Cathal Murray has done an incredible job with them but they've been a bogey team for us for years and to get a win is a massive relief.'



Cork's Saoirse McCarthy receives a hug from manager Matthew Twomey after the game. (Photo: Tom Maher/INPHO)

Cork's Hannah Looney celebrates the All-Ireland semi-final win against Galway.
(Photos: Tom Maher/INPHO)



Cork star Saoirse McCarthy celebrates the win with her father Leonard McCarthy.



Cork forward Katrina Mackey under pressure from Galway's Emma Helebert.

Signs look good but Rebels must finish the job

BY MATTHEW HURLEY

WILL it be third time lucky for Cork in the All-Ireland senior camogie final? Let's hope so.

Having lost in 2021 and '22, the Rebels are back in their third All-Ireland final in a row, and they have done it the hard way. They have now beaten the two other counties in the so-called 'big three', taking out champions Kilkenny and bogey team Galway, however as manager Matthew Twomey pointed out, nothing is won yet.

In last weekend's semi-final Galway only managed to level proceedings once in the game and never led. Despite the winning margin being 'only' three points, 0-15 to 2-6, Cork were full value for the victory.

The signs were good on Saturday. Look at Cork's shooting accuracy. Cork boss Twomey stressed in last week's *Southern Star* that Cork needed a 60 to 70 percent conversion rate at a minimum to compete at the highest level. They managed 78 percent against Galway, converting 15 shots out of 19, and hitting only one wide. Nine out of 11 shots taken in the second half alone were converted. Twomey pointed out that Cork's highest conversion rate was 75 percent against Down and Clare in the group stage. They have just topped that against a Galway team that regularly competes for All-Ireland titles. The weather wasn't great either, making this stat even more impressive.

The turnover count was high as well. Cork won 41 compared to Galway's 36. Laura Tracey, Libby Coppinger and the ever-reliable Saoirse McCarthy played out of their skins in that aspect. Galway only scored five scores from play in 60 minutes. This was largely down to the pressure put on by the Cork backs as Carrie Dolan and Siobhan McGrath didn't get enough supply of the ball. Galway only managed a 53 percent conversion rate too. The Cork defence deserves massive credit.

Courcey Rovers star McCarthy was exceptional and has really announced herself to the camogie world in recent seasons. Her determination for the cause was epitomised with a clip shared on social media, where she burst out of defence before being fouled. She still managed to pucker the sliotar after that though, while on her knees. She led from the way throughout, hence why she was given player-of-the-match award. The point she got in the 52nd minute also showed great leadership. Even at this stage, you would imagine she is a shoe-in for an All-Star.

The performance levels from the Cork team has improved as the season has gone on. They just have to make sure to get the job done on Sunday week. Beating the other two big sides was a great feat but it will be undone if they succumb to defeat to the Deise. A 29th All-Ireland title, and a first since 2018, is one win away for the Rebels.

JENNIFER'S HEARTBREAK

DESPITE hitting the back of the net, there was heartbreak for Barryroe camogie legend Jennifer Curry in the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland premier junior camogie semi-finals. The West Cork woman (39) is joint captain of Armagh, where she now lives, and they were hoping to go one better than last season when they lost the All-Ireland final. Unfortunately, the Orchard County fell at the semi-final hurdle last weekend, losing 0-22 to 2-15 against Clare. Eight-time Camogie All-Star Jennifer, who also won four senior All-Irelands with Cork, scored an early goal, but there was disappointment by the end as Clare advanced to set up clash with Tipperary.



Jennifer Curry.

Back came Galway with McGrath's second goal, after Lee failed to gather, but with so much experience and talent to call upon, as well as vast reservoirs of grit, the Cork response was notable.

Healy lofted her second and when McCarthy, who had powered into the fray in the second half, pointed gloriously from a tight angle, after taking the return from a quickly-taken sideline and making ground up the left before cutting in, felt significant.

With O'Connor bringing her tally to seven and Orlaith Cahalane making it a fourth point from subs for Cork, they would not be pegged back. Onwards and upwards for the Rebels.

Scorers

Cork: A O'Connor 0-7 (5f, 145); K Mackey, C Healy 0-2 each; L Hayes, O Cahalane, C Sigerson (f), S McCarthy 0-1 each.
Galway: C Dolan 0-4 (3f); S McGrath 2-0; A Donohue 0-2.
Cork: A Lee, M Murphy, L Coppinger, P Mackey, M Cahalane.

L Treacy, I O'Regan, A Healy, H Looney, C Sigerson, F Keating, S McCarthy, S McCartan, K Mackey, A O'Connor.
Subs: C Healy for Sigerson (25), L Hayes for Murphy (ht), O Cronin for McCartan (40), A Thompson for O'Regan (49), O Cahalane for Keating (52).

Galway: F Ryan, S Healy, R Black, D Higgins, R Hanniffy, E Helebert, A Keane, A Donohue, S Gardiner, S Spellman, C Dolan, N Hanniffy, N McPeake, S McGrath, A O'Reilly.
Subs: S Rabbittie for McPeake (33), O McGrath for Gardiner (50), J Hughes for Rabbittie (61).
Referee: R Kelly (Kildare).

as focus now on All-Ireland final

'But nothing is won. We are after beating Kilkenny, we are after beating Galway. We have nothing to show for it. We will have to go again. There is pressure all the time. It is a big job, I am well aware of it. But the players are unbelievable, they are incredible. They never say die.'

'Waterford beat us already in the Munster championship and we struggled over them last year in the semi-final so that will keep us level-headed... we start from scratch again now.'

Waterford's one-point win, 1-12 to 1-11, over Tipperary was enough for the Deise to book their place in the senior final, and they only need to go back to May for their last win against Cork - a 1-18 to 1-15 loss in the Munster championship was also a first competitive defeat to Waterford since their ascension to senior ranks in 2015.

Cork will take plenty of confidence from their last two wins, and also by the strength of their bench - Laura Hayes, Cliona Healy, Orla Cronin,

Ashling Thompson and Orlaith Cahalane were all brought on. Matthew Twomey explained that he was happy to keep his bomb squad in reserve.

'We knew we wouldn't get 60 minutes out of them,' he said. 'We are happy with what we are doing. There are players also who have put in a massive shift and haven't got any run. They would probably be on a lot of other teams. We can't take any major glory for having a bench. It is because players were injured and they were coming

back. But we are after creating a bench, which we never had for a long time.'

Meanwhile, Galway boss Cathal Murray admitted that Cork were the better team in this latest clash.

'Cork are a super team. We've probably had the upper hand on them the last few years. That was always going to change. They've been coming and they had super players off the bench as well in the last ten minutes when they needed them so best of luck to them,' he said.

ALL-IRELAND SENIOR CAMOGIE SEMI-FINAL

WATERFORD: ALL-IRELAND FINALISTS

WATERFORD	1-12
TIPPERARY	1-11

THOMAS KEANE

Waterford produced a brilliant performance at a wet Nowlan Park on Saturday afternoon last to book a place in an All-Ireland final for the first time since 1945.

Top scorer Beth Carton brought home another player-of-the-match award, but in truth any number of Waterford players could well have collected the accolade.

The De La Salle player scored eight points, four of which were from placed balls, but equally impressive were players like Vikki Faulkner who was outstanding throughout in defence, Lorraine Bray in the middle of the field and Mairead O'Brien in attack.

Tipperary tore Waterford apart early with their fast running game but they found scores from play hard to come by, relying heavily on frees.

Waterford however never gave up, even though they trailed by seven points at one stage in the first half. The decision to move Orla Hickey to help out the backs worked the oracle as Waterford clawed their way back into the game.

Munster Champions Tipperary had a great start with Caoimhe Maher opening the scoring after just two minutes and they extended their lead when Grace O'Brien pointed just seconds later.

Abby Flynn scored Waterford's first point on four minutes which was followed by an exchange of scores from Róisín Howard and Beth Carton. Howard's point on five minutes was Tipperary's last point from open play until Karen Kennedy pointed on 57 minutes.

Eimear McGrath put another free over on 11 minutes for Tipperary and just moments later Clodagh McIntyre looked as if she was going to strike for the games' first goal, but Brianna O'Regan, one of the best goalkeepers in the country, did well to keep the effort out.

Another pointed free by Eimear McGrath followed by a Cáit Devane score put Tipperary 0-6 to 0-2 in front at the mid-way point of the first half. Beth Carton pulled a point back for Waterford but her effort was soon wiped out by another Eimear McGrath free.



Waterford

Tipperary scored the games' first goal on 20 minutes. The Waterford backs failed to clear a ball properly, Róisín Howard picked up the loose ball and Cáit Devane, from close range, gave Brianna O'Regan no chance with a bullet of a shot.

Waterford notched up the next crucial score five minutes after Devane's goal.

Beth Carton was judged to have dropped her hurley by referee Liz Dempsey who had an excellent game throughout. Eimear Loughman took the resulting free about 25 metres from the Tipperary goal, dropping it on the Waterford 65 metre line where Niamh Rockett broke the ball.

Beth Carton picked the breaking ball and played it to Niamh Rockett who in turn picked out Mairead O'Brien. She attempted to shoot over the Tipperary crossbar but failed to get the required height, the rebound fell to Rachel Walsh but her effort was blocked. Annie Fitzgerald's rebound was also blocked and while Rachel Walsh may not have picked the ball as cleanly as she would have liked, she did find Mairead Power who fired to the net to move Waterford to within four of Tipperary.

Annie Fitzgerald followed up with a point and when Beth Carton landed a brace of scores, there was only one point between the teams, (1-7 to 1-6).

Waterford made all the early running in the second



Referee Liz Dempsey pictured with Waterford captain Lorraine Bray and Tipperary captain Clodagh Quirke.



Waterford's Orla Hickey tackles Tipperary's Clodagh McIntyre.



Waterford captain Lorraine Bray leads her team out at Nowlan Park.



Waterford's Mairead O'Brien tries to halt the run of Tipperary's Casey Hennessy.

Continued on Page 49

ALL-IRELAND SENIOR CAMOGIE SEMI-FINAL

Continued from Page 48

half but failed to add to their half time tally.

Eimear McGrath pointed from a free for the first score of the second half to extend Tipperary's lead but her score was wiped out with an Abby Flynn effort from play.

Cait Devane put over another close in free before Beth Carton sent over a superb score from a tight angle to keep just one between the sides.

Beth Carton levelled matters on 42 minutes and when she edged Waterford in front for the first time in the game four minutes later, the huge Waterford support inside the ground were in full voice, pucking every ball with the players from the stands.

Brianna O'Regan, who must be in line for a first All-Star this year, came out from her own goal to take a free in the middle of the field with four minutes remaining and she had plenty of height and accuracy and took the applause of the Waterford support as she went back to her goal.

Waterford failed to score after this, but it did not matter. Karen Kennedy pointed with two minutes remaining for her side's first point from play since the fifth minute of the game.

Tipperary piled on the pressure but the water-tight Waterford defence held firm. Mairead O'Brien did brilliantly to deflect a Karen Kennedy effort out for a '45. Cait Devane missed the



Fantastic block by Waterford's Vikki Faulkner on Tipperary's Cait Devane.

resulting puck as the stadium announcer declared there would be four added minutes.

Cait Devane put over a free with 90 seconds remaining to reduce the deficit to a single point. Moments later Lorraine Bray sent a sideline cut wide of the Tipperary posts but Liz Dempsey's full-time whistle sounded shortly afterwards as the Waterford management, bench, supporters and players on the pitch erupted in a frenzy of joy and celebration. The long wait was over, Waterford are back in an All-Ireland senior

final for the first time in 78 years.

WATERFORD: Brianna O'Regan; Vikki Faulkner, Laoise Forrest, Kate Lynch; Orla Hickey, Clodagh Carroll, Keely Corbett Barry; Abby Flynn, Rachel Walsh; Mairead O'Brien, Beth Carton, Lorraine Bray; Mairead Power, Niamh Rockett, Annie Fitzgerald.

SUBS: Clara Griffin for Rachel Walsh (40), Annie Corcoran for Mairead O'Brien (51-56 Blood Sub), Aoife Landers for Clodagh Carroll (58), Róisín Kirwan for Clara Griffin (62)

SCORERS: Beth Carton (0-8, 45); Mairead Power (1-0); Abby Flynn (0-2); Annie Fitzgerald, Brianna O'Regan(1) (0-1) each

TIPPERARY: Aine Slattery, Eimear Loughman, Mairead Evison, Karen Kennedy; Karin Blair, Julieanne Bourke, Aoife McGrath; Teresa Ryan, Casey Hennessy; Róisín Howard, Caoimhe Maher, Eimear McGrath; Grace O'Brien, Cait Devane, Clodagh McIntyre.

SUBS: Caoimhe McCarthy for Karin Blair (36), Clodagh Quirke for Casey Hennessy (39), Niamh Treacy for Eimear McGrath (62)

SCORERS: Cait Devane 1-2(0-2fs); Eimear McGrath 0-5(5fs); Róisín Howard, Caoimhe Maher, Grace O'Brien, Karen Kennedy 0-1 each.

REFEREE: Liz Dempsey (Kilkenny)



Waterford's Mairead Power celebrates scoring her goal in the first half.



Waterford's Niamh Rockett in an aerial battle with Tipperary's Mairead Evison.



Waterford's Vikki Faulkner gets away from Tipperary's Cait Devane.



Fantastic block by Waterford's Vikki Faulkner on Tipperary's Cait Devane.

PHOTOS: NOEL BROWNE



Cork's Aoibhinn O'Neill breaks from Kilkenny's Angela Carroll in the 2021 Tesco All-Ireland U16 A Camogie Championship final at Birr.

Let's hope the U16s can bring home second title of 2023

TODAY

All-Ireland U16A Final:
Cork v Galway, Nowlan Park, Kilkenny, 4.30pm.

IT HAS been an amazing journey for the Cork U16s as they set out on their last lap today to Nowlan Park and an All-Ireland camogie final meeting with Galway.

Who would have imagined when they lost out to Limerick in the Munster final back in April that their journey would take them to all the way to the All-Ireland final?

Cork are bidding for three in a row of titles and with no championship played in 2020 due to Covid, Cork could very well be now going for five in a row.

Having also taken the title in 2019 when they breached a 16 year gap, Cork have since driven on and it has a very productive few years for the county at underage level with the great work going in at club and county levels.

It is paying huge dividends and with several minor titles also achieved, the production line is moving along nicely with players progressing through to the adult teams continuously.

Having lost out in the provincial final the Cork management, under the leadership of manager John Moloney, put the heads down and worked hard to have their charges right for championship.

They did that in style as they topped the group with victories over Limerick, Wexford, Kilkenny and Galway before losing out in their last game to a Tipperary side, who



Cork Fiona Twohig in action against Kilkenny in the 2021 Tesco All-Ireland U16 A Camogie Championship final at Birr.

Pictures: Mary Browne

CAMOGIE

Mary Newman

took the second semi-final spot where they came up against Galway whilst Cork took on Wexford.

A superb display saw Cork overcome the challenge of Wexford on a 3-12 to 0-6 scoreline in a game they controlled from the throw in.

In their semi-final clash with Tipperary, goals helped win the day for Galway as they fashioned out a 4-8 to 0-5 victory.

Cork and Galway have already met in the group series when Cork travelled to Duggan Park and recorded a comfortable 2-18 to 0-11 win but this is an All-Ireland final, the stakes are higher and no doubt manager Johnny Kane will have his charges fired up for the challenge ahead.

Up front, they have had impressive performances from Mary Brigit Cosgrove, Emma Barrett, Katie Lawless and Cara O'Brien.

In their semi-final outing it was Tipperary who started the brightest but after a shaky start, Galway began to find their range with four points without reply to lead by the end of the first quarter and it was a lead they held to the full time whistle with goals from Emma Barrett, Mary Brigit Cosgrove and substitute Katie Flaherty ensuring their place in the final was secured.

Galway manager Johnny Kane in his post semi-final interview with Galway Bay FM acknowledged the challenge from Cork will be huge favourites but with a strong panel and players returned from injury he expects the game to be a closer one than in their previous meeting.

Cork have been impressive in their march to the final.

Ali Mulkerrins was the star of the show against Wexford as she took the Wexford defence apart, notching up and impressive 3-2, whilst Rachel Murphy, Laura Walsh, Maebh O'Brien and Catherine Murphy have all impressed.

Ava McAuliffe and Aoife Cottrell have been a hard working duo and they will ensure a steady supply to the Cork inside line.

The minor All-Ireland title is safely on Leaside, let's hope the U16s can bring the second title of 2023 safely home.



Ashling Thompson of Cork in action against Emma Helebert of Galway during the All-Ireland Camogie semi-final.

Glory is now in their grasp

CAMOGIE



Linda Mellerick

THE Cork senior camogie team have beaten the two teams that have denied them titles in the last two seasons, Galway, and Kilkenny. Surely, they won't leave it behind them now, but Waterford will be a slippery banana and I'm sure they're more than aware of that.

What an incredible crowd in Nowlan Park for both semi-finals last weekend.

I don't ever recall such an atmosphere, the chanting of supporters getting behind their teams.

Waterford supporters led the way, they were the extra player. They held the majority and roared their team to victory.

Nowlan Park was a great venue, that atmosphere would have been completely lost in Croke Park.

Tipp, not to be outdone, challenged Waterford in the stands but there was no denying where the crowd was predominantly from.

When the final whistle blew the roar was deafening. For the first time I witnessed the media in the press box standing and applauding a team's achievement. Waterford's first final in 78 years. I was one of them. I won't be one of them Sunday week, let's not get too carried away.

Waterford will bring a massive crowd to Dublin, of that there is no doubt.

Cork people need to get behind the girls. As a county we haven't had too many championship trips to Croke Park this year so it's not as if it's a step too far to go there again.

There was a strong Cork support in Nowlan Park, vocal too when they needed to be against Galway. The final has a 5pm throw in. It's an awful time and sure to turn some people off. Kids make up a huge part of All Ireland camogie day.

It's a wonderful day out for them and 5pm would most definitely be too late for many parents to consider were it a school



Cork's Saoirse McCarthy celebrates with her father Leonard McCarthy after the game.

night but the saving grace is that it's August and not the traditional September final.

So, I urge all Cork people to please make the decision to travel next weekend.

I hope that Iarrrod Eireann puts on additional evening trains that support the late throw in time.

Cork's fighting spirit was excellent against Galway. They are so hungry for this title after the disappointment of the two years.

Every free won, every score, even early in the game, was celebrated. Referee Ray Kelly was poor I felt, way too fussy again, particularly on a day when the conditions were so bad. He allowed for nothing. I can understand Galway's frustration in the opening half. I thought he gave Cork a couple of soft frees.

It wouldn't have changed the outcome. Cork were far better all over, a couple of goals kept the score somewhat respectable from a Galway point of view.

I felt sorry for Amy Lee for Galway's second goal. Losing control of the sliothar happens all over the field but as a keeper it stands out. But she's strong enough to put those incidents behind her.

Referencing Limerick's All Ireland hurling final win on Sunday. What a team!

What I have taken from them over the past few seasons is their togetherness. They refer constantly to the collective.

There are no egos, no players who feel they have a right to be on the team above any other panel member.

There are many teams who should take note of such an attitude. Over the years I have heard of players sulking over not starting, I have seen them throw tantrums when substituted.

It's something I can't abide. For any player to think their effort is more important or valuable than another player on the panel is a real turn off for me.

That entitlement, that attitude, brings a bad vibe into the collective and you have to cut it out. Limerick's humbleness is what has seen them achieve four in a row.

The great Eamon Ryan used to jokingly say his Cork footballers were so successful because they had 'small heads and small arses'.

A joke, but true.

It's a great week to be a Cork senior camogie player, that sense of purpose in your final training days, dusk approaching as you get into your car after your shower, the flip in your stomach as you ponder the game.

Enjoy it!

Timing is everything in the battle for equality

Female players have achieved their initial aim of opening discussions



Nadine Doherty

The players have been amazing. They are the most important people and to have them here in such numbers is fantastic. It's a dual focus really, you have on-the-field and off-the-field issues. Little things like not having hot showers and meals after training, and not having physio on hand. Those things we probably need to tackle, and they have to become the norm rather than things players have become very frustrated by."

Dr Aoife Lane outlined some of the reasons behind the decision to form the Women's Gaelic Players' Association at its launch in January 2015. It is unlikely that Lane, one of the founding members and inaugural chairperson of the WGPA, would have predicted that the issues associated with these 'little things' would take over eight years to resolve. During that time the WGPA evolved, gathered momentum and provided

its members with increased supports. However, the most consequential decision taken was the merger with the GPA. By joining forces with their male counterparts they immediately wielded more power, amplified the voice of their female players and took a huge step forward in the ongoing fight for equality, equity and parity. Last month, female players announced that they would play the remainder of the 2023 season under protest. They demanded a female squad charter be put in place for the 2024 season and that standards and provisions would be guaranteed to remain the same each year. They were supported by their male counterparts.

The campaign gathered significant momentum and its potential for success was highlighted by the World Cup-bound Irish soccer team following their own protest back in 2017.

The GPA campaign itself was relatively tentative, it was more visual and vocal as opposed to disruptive. There was a boycott of media duties organised by the LGFA and Camogie Association. It was perhaps a targeted response to the media event held by the LGFA before the league finals in April, when players were sent a

document of suggested answers to certain issues at the time, such as their transgender policy and Cavan's refusal to field a team in their final league game following difficulties with their own county board in relation to expenses.

Over the last five weeks the unity between the players has been visible before games as teams joined in sit-down protests and delayed matches by returning to the changing rooms – these acts also further highlighted the obvious disconnect between the players and their governing bodies.

A heightened polarisation of our GAA community has emerged since the beginning of the protest, a tendency common in a society when inequality and a feeling of separation exists. The largest cohort, to which I belong, publicly stands behind the players.

There are a number of other groups, including those who are frustrated at what they view as the GPA's refusal to acknowledge the county boards who have ensured that their players do not have to pay to represent their county. There are others who are satisfied with the improvements in standards for female players over the last 20 years and deem them significant enough and feel that a charter isn't necessary.

There are those who believe that the responsibility to provide funding for a charter lies solely with each individual association so the GAA should not be involved. Others see the integration process as the best route to securing a female charter in the future.

Last Monday, GPA CEO Tom Parsons announced the players' intention to suspend protests indefinitely, a strong indication that positive discussions had taken place with the governing bodies. On Wednesday, the GPA followed up with an official statement detailing an agreed framework with



A moment that will be remembered for the courage, unity and strength shown.

the LGFA and Camogie Association committing to the implementation of a charter in 2024 and an immediate suspension of any further protests.

Timing is everything. The GPA press release came on July 19, exactly one month after the announcement of the planned protests.

The LGFA and Camogie Association must be credited with the speed at which they engaged with the GPA in reaching an agreement that was timed perfectly to allow the latter stages of their championships to take place without a focus on a player protest. In doing so, they have signalled a strong intent to uphold their duty of care to the players, something they have committed to doing in the past.

Both associations will request funding support from the GAA for the implementation of the charter, independent of the GPA, and following Tom Ryan's public pledge to help if requested then they are likely very confident that the GAA will stick to their word.

Also, if necessary a request to the government for further financial assistance will be undertaken jointly with the GPA and considering our female players contribute so much across the societal spectrum the sports minister Thomas Byrne should ensure that a request will not be necessary and offer financial support instead.

All parties have welcomed the news that the Gaelic Games Associations' Steering Group on Integration (SGI) has commissioned a landmark research study to gauge the opinions of members to assist in developing the pathway to integration.

The GPA statement concluded with: "This is a landmark moment in our games and for women's sport in Ireland."

It is also a moment that will be remembered in history for the courage, unity and strength shown by a collective group of women who put the welfare of future generations of female athletes ahead of their own sporting ambitions in 2023.

It is likely that there will be a significant amount of negotiating necessary in the coming months in order to finalise an agreed charter, but the players have achieved their initial aim of opening discussions, their timing was everything.



Joy for the Cork U16 camogie team after beating Galway in the All-Ireland final. Picture: Patrick Browne

Murphy is on fire as Cork retain All-Ireland U16 A camogie title

Cork	0-11
Galway	1-7

CAMOGIE
Eanna O'Reilly

CORK claimed their fourth consecutive All-Ireland U16 A camogie title, following a one-point win over Galway at Nowlan Park on Saturday afternoon. John Moloney's side came through a gripping final to deservedly take home the trophy for the 17th time, with Ballinora's Rachel Murphy producing a Player of the Match performance.

The first quarter of the game was very evenly contested. Cork played against the wind and opened the scoring with a good point from Murphy after a strong run down the right wing. Galway replied two minutes later with a score from Emily Lawless. Laura Walsh put the Rebels back in front with an impressive individual score before Galway became dominant and tallied four consecutive points. Cara O'Brien sent over two frees and a 45, before Katie Lawless pointed to give the westerners a 0-5 to 0-2 lead.

Murphy reduced the margin with a super score from the left wing, before Galway restored their three-point lead with an O'Brien score from play. The final point of the half came from Cork's Catherine Murphy to leave the Rebels two behind, 0-6 to 0-4.

A tight and tense third quarter saw few scoring chances for either side, but Galway got a huge boost in the 40th minute when they were awarded a penalty. Emily Lawless was the player brought down in the Cork square before Katie Lawless blasted a low penalty to the net. Cork looked in trouble; they were chasing a five-point lead midway through the half. However, the response from Moloney's young players was magnificent. They dug in and took over, scoring seven points without reply.

Murphy caught fire, hitting three marvellous points in a row. Walsh then took a neat score over her shoulder, before Clara Murphy's point levelled the match in the 53rd minute.

The momentum was now with Cork, and they continued to put pressure on the Galway defence. The Cork forwards drew two frees which were pointed by Murphy to put them 0-11 to 1-6 ahead entering injury-time. Katie Lawless pointed a late free to reduce the margin to the minimum.

Galway pressure in the dying minutes failed to produce an equaliser, with the Cork backs defending superbly. The Rebels held on to deservedly claim another All-Ireland title in a grade that Cork continue to dominate.

The future of Cork camogie is certainly bright based on the quality of this outstanding group of players. Murphy, Walsh, Avril Cagney, Lily O'Shea, Ava McAuliffe, and Aoife Cottrell were particularly impressive for Cork.

Scorers for Cork: R Murphy 0-7 (0-2 F, 0-1 45), L Walsh 0-2, Clara Murphy, Catherine Murphy 0-1 each.

Galway: K Lawless 1-2 (1-0 pen, 0-1 F), C O'Brien 0-4 (0-2 F, 0-1 45), E Lawless 0-1.

CORK: E Honohan; S Cunningham, A Cagney, C. Ryan, M. Lombard, A. Cussen, L. O'Shea; A. McAuliffe, A. Cottrell; R. Murphy, K. O'Sullivan, Catherine Murphy; M. O'Brien, A. Mulkerins, L. Walsh.

Subs: Clara Murphy for O'Sullivan (14), T. Goulding for Catherine Murphy (39), J. Murphy for O'Brien (50).

GALWAY: L. Horan; C. Fahy, A. Morgan, M. Ni Liosaigh, E. Dillon, R. Kilkenny, R. Gardiner; L. Behan, K. O'Driscoll; M. Rodgers, K. Lawless, C. O'Brien; E. Lawless, M. B. Cosgrove, E. Barrett.

Subs: E. Ryan for Ni Liosaigh (14), K. Flaherty for O'Brien (51), C. Burke for Barrett (55), A. Morrissey for Rodgers (60).

Referee: Liz Dempsey (Kilkenny).



Nikki Hosford, Saoirse Cunningham, Caoilinn Ryan, and Catherine Murphy celebrating their win. Picture: Patrick Browne

Cork minors add Munster title

Cork added the Munster minor camogie title to the All-Ireland crown won earlier this year with a 1-16 to 1-12 win over Tipperary at The Ragg last night.

Clara Morrison had an early goal to get Cork on their way and with Emily O'Donoghue slotting frees, they led 1-10 to 1-6 at half-time. Lucy Purcell had the Tipperary goal.

Amy Sheppard had a fine game for Cork, while Morrison added a pair of second-half points to stretch the lead to eight points at one stage. Tipperary kept battling in a very skillful contest, with Kate Ralph superb, and while they reduced the margin to four, Cork deserved victory.

Rebels edge out Tribe to clinch their four in a row

CAMOGIE

By Aoife English

CORK secured a record-equalling fourth successive All-Ireland U16A Camogie Championship title when they turned around a five-point deficit to edge out Galway by 0-11 to 1-7 at Nowlan Park yesterday.

The success extends the county's advantage over the Westerners at the top of the roll of honour to two, as they registered a 17th success in total, having started their current unbeaten run by ending the Maroons' five-in-a-row bid in 2015.

It was a much closer affair than when the teams crossed swords in the round-robin phase. Galway had actually led at the interval on that occasion before being left stunned by the Rebels' second-half blitz, the 13-point margin at the final whistle telling its own tale.

A 59th-minute goal from Leah Kelly clinched the All-Ireland U16A Shield title for Clare, as they overcame Antrim by the bare minimum also, 1-8 to 0-10, after a pulsating conclusion to the final at UPMC Nowlan Park.

A slick Derry were deserving victors in the All-Ireland U16B decider, defeating Kildare by 3-19 to 2-5 at Inniskeen Grattans GAA. The damage was done in the opening period, at the end of which they led by 2-13 to 2-2.

Meanwhile, the All-Ireland U16B Shield is Carlow's as a result of the second-half heroics of substitute Róisín Joyce at Birr's St Brendan's Park.

Westmeath led at half-time thanks to goals from Annabel Hynes, Ali Brennan and Abbie McCauley in response to Lily Jones' early green flag but Carlow gradually reeled in the 3-5 to 1-4 deficit.

Barrett found the net to reduce the margin to two points in the 41st minute and, after Doyle kicked two points, Kate Burke added a third goal for her side.

Joyce sent a piledriver to the net soon after and finished with 1-4, all but a point of that from play as Carlow prevailed by 4-12 to 3-6.

Support camogie and Cork ladies football teams

It's a busy weekend for the Cork camogie and ladies' football stars, starting tonight.

After a thrilling draw a fortnight ago the Cork ladies' U16 team take on Cavan in the All-Ireland final replay at TUS Gaelic Grounds, Limerick.

This side showed in the drawn game the spirit and desire to win that epitomises all the Cork ladies' teams playing this weekend.

Twice they came from behind in injury time to earn a well-deserved draw and they will be aiming to finish the job tonight, throw-in 7.30pm.

Also in action tonight are the Cork minor camogie team who face Tipperary in the Munster final at The Ragg, throw-in 7pm.

In a slightly unusual situation, they are already the All-Ireland champions and will be looking to round off their inter-county season with a provincial win as well.

Saturday it's over to the camogie U16 side first, before it's back to football that night. They face Galway in their final at Nowlan Park at 4.30pm.

For some of these young camogie stars it will be a busy weekend as they are also involved in the Cork set up on Friday night against Cavan.

So it could be a simply unreal 24 hours for the dual stars as they have the chance to win two All-Ireland medals.

And to round off the day the Cork senior ladies' footballers face Dublin in the TG4 All-Ireland semi-final at FBD Semple Stadium at 7.30pm.

All sides deserve the support of the Cork public as they try and bring back titles to the Rebel county.

Again this season the women of Cork have shown their sporting prowess on the camogie and ladies' football pitches all over the country. They are a shining example to young players, boys or girls, in Cork.

After games, no matter what the result, they are always gracious with their time to sign autographs and pose for pictures.

They are the heroes of these young players and they never let them down.

Now it's the turn of the Cork public not to let them down and travel in numbers to either Tipperary or Limerick tonight, and Kilkenny or Thurles tomorrow.

So come tomorrow night, hopefully, we will see three more trophies on Leeside and the senior footballers joining the senior camogie team in their respective All-Ireland deciders.

So it's time to get behind the women of Cork and let that Rebel roar be heard across the weekend.

Rebel abú!

Twomey: We were always confident we could turn it around

CAMOGIE

■ Rory Noonan

LIKE all inter-county managers, Matthew Twomey is exactly where he wants to be at this time of the year — in the All-Ireland final.

Next Sunday sees them take on Waterford at Croke Park, throw-in 5pm, as they bid to end a barren run for Cork.

They haven't won the title since 2018 and have lost in the final for the last two seasons.

Twomey is delighted to be in the final, but did admit that during the season it wasn't looking that way at times.

"We went through a dodgy patch mid-season but we were always confident that we could turn it around, there was so many players missing and we were also trying a new system.

"Confidence got knocked a bit but the thing we were saying to the players was nothing is won in April, judge us in August and thankfully we are after getting there.

"We are after a few good wins in the championship but every game we have been under severe pressure, every game has been knock-out.

"Beating Kilkenny and Galway is incredible but we hope we haven't done Waterford a favour by knocking them out of the way.

"We know that it's another massive game ahead of us on Sunday.

"We are under no illusion of what we are facing, they beat us by three points in the Munster championship but their performance was better than that win and we have it all to do.

"After that loss to Waterford we spent about 40 minutes in the dressing-room, harsh words were said at first but we wanted to talk it out and see what are we doing.

"We went off like a train at the start of the league and beat Kilkenny well and things were going well but then we got brought back down to earth.

"We were creating chances but they weren't being taken. The Waterford game was a kick in the backside. We went out then in the first round of the championship and stats wise we blew Galway off the park, but at the start of the second half we hit seven wides on the bounce and you can't do that.

"Old habits came back but since then we have had some serious games, training has been going well and they have showed fierce character.

"Facing into Kilkenny in the quarter-final was a big

thing and a huge psychological win for us. We were the better team and even talking to their management afterward they said so.

"At times before when we were ahead in tight games we have lost them, same with Galway with 15 minutes to go in a lot of the games we were ahead and lost in previous years.

"We had to put that right and we emptied the bench in a good manner, sometimes it works and it worked for us that day."

Injuries have played a huge part in Cork's season, with key players out early on but they are returning now.

"That's been a key thing for us, for the Down game earlier in the season we were toying out with 19 players.

"When the minors won the All-Ireland we got five of them in to make up the numbers in training and we still couldn't make 15 a side.

"Some of the sessions we had 16 or so training and 16 were on the sideline watching on injured. But we never panicked and said one of these days we will get it right and click.

"We are still waiting for that to happen in a proper case, we know we have the quality to open up any defence. With them all back it makes training sessions very competitive. Not alone are they fighting for the first 15 but also for the next 5 to come on.

"There are some players that are better off coming on than starting and we are after realising that now. We have options now and when they go out on the pitch we are asking them to empty the tank.

"Whether that's 20, 30 or 40 minutes it doesn't matter, you have your job done then and then next player up.

"The mindset has changed in GAA totally, you have starters and finishers. You try and tire out the defence for the finishers to come on.

"We are going up there confident and want to get a performance, we have 15 minute markers and we want to meet all them.

"Before the Clare game we said it's like the steps of a stairs, one at a time and we are at the final step now and we are well prepared for it," concluded Matthew.

Record crowd set to attend camogie final

Eoghan Cormican

Camogie is braced for a record-breaking All-Ireland final Sunday as a crowd in excess of 30,000 is forecast for the meeting of Cork and Waterford.

The 24,730 that watched the 2019 decider between Galway and Kilkenny stands as the largest ever All-Ireland camogie final attendance, but that figure is set to be smashed this weekend by a first final meeting of neighbours Cork and Waterford.

The Déise, appearing in only their second final and first since 1945, are chasing an

historic first O'Duffy Cup triumph. Cork, meanwhile, are trying to avoid a first three-in-a-row of All-Ireland final losses since 1989. The county last reached the summit in 2018.

Cork's 2007 defeat to Wexford is the sole camogie final to break the 30,000 barrier, the game watched by an audience of 33,154. That figure, though, was significantly inflated by the All-Ireland U21 hurling final undercard between Galway and Dublin.

The Camogie Association has already enjoyed a bumper semi-final crowd this

summer, with 7,250 attending the semi-final double-header at UPMC Nowlan Park last Saturday week.

Waterford brought nearly as much support to Nowlan Park as the other three counties combined, and manager Seán Power (pictured) is confident of another large following this Sunday.

"For the sake of the sport itself, you want to get bums on seats. From a Waterford point

of view, the more Waterford noise we have the better," said the Déise boss. "I understand the support is going to come.

There are buses going from here, there, and everywhere. The more we have at it, the more of a spectacle it will become."

His Cork counterpart, Matthew Twomey, doesn't want Cork to be outnumbered as Waterford's semi-final oppo-

nents Tipperary were.

"The semi-final crowd Waterford had was huge. It affected Tipperary, there are no two ways about it," said Twomey.

"We had a bad start last year in the All-Ireland final. But when Fiona (Keating) got the goal, the Cork crowd turned, and we could feel it. The players commented on that at half-time.

"We hope the Cork crowd comes out and supports us. The players deserve it. They are an unbelievable set of players."

■ More camogie: Page 7



Twomey facing 'massive headache' on selection front



Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship final

Cork v Waterford

Sunday: Croke Park, 5pm

Referee: TBC

TV: RTE2

Eoghan Cormican



CORK manager Matthew Twomey has a "massive headache" on his hands.

Does he stick or twist? Does he hope for another bench bounce or does he promote the players who have been consistently plating up sizable second-half contributions when beckoned from their bucket seat?

Whenever Twomey and his management team sit down this week to pick Cork's All-Ireland final starting team, the calls they will have to make will be the toughest encountered during their two seasons at the helm.

Twomey has no problem revealing that players outside the first 15 in recent games have openly told him they want to start Sunday's decider. But he also knows that if he promotes too many, he's at risk of puncturing the bench bounce that won Cork their All-Ireland quarter and semi-finals against the last two champions, Kilkenny and Galway.

During their quarter-final dethroning of Kilkenny, Clona Healy threw over two second-half points, while there were also important plays from Orla Cronin, the fit-again Ashling Thompson, and Laura Hayes.

In the semi-final against the Tribeswomen, the five subs



DELICATE BALANCING ACT: Matthew Twomey is wary of the risk of puncturing the bench bounce that won Cork their All-Ireland quarter and semi-finals against Kilkenny and Galway. *Picture: Eddie O'Hare*

used — Healy, Hayes, Cronin, Thompson, and Orlaith Cahalane — had a direct hand in each of Cork's nine second half points.

It was a bench impact to rival that of the Jim Gavin Dublin era.

Healy again sniped a pair, while there was a white flag each from Hayes and Cahalane. Of the four second half frees converted by Amy O'Connor, three were won by Healy and Cronin.

That leaves just one point unaccounted for, that a Saoirse McCarthy effort for which Thompson assisted. In her 16 minutes on the field, 2015 All-Ireland-winning captain Thompson had six possessions and four turnovers.

Now you can see the conundrum facing Twomey and how difficult it will be to again hold such a stellar cast — three of whom are All-Star winners — in reserve.

"We do have a massive headache. We have options we never had before," the manager acknowledged.

"There are some players better off starting rather than coming on and there are other players we are after realising are probably better off coming on than starting.

"Players have told me they want to start, and that's fair enough, but I've talked to a lot of them individually, and you have to get the point across that if you are not there from the start, we want you to come

in and make an impact. The mindset has totally changed in the GAA."

Cork's revered supporting cast came about more by injury than design.

A torn cruciate suffered last autumn meant the All-Ireland quarter-final was Thompson's first bit of game-time in red since the 2022 All-Ireland final.

A broken bone in her foot saw Hayes miss the county's three All-Ireland group games, while Cahalane and Cronin have also battled injuries at different points of the season.

"The Friday before the Down group game, there was the potential that we were only tagging 19 players be-

cause of injuries," Twomey continued.

"When the minors won the All-Ireland, we got five of them in to make up the numbers for training and we still couldn't make 15-a-side. There were a couple of trainings where we had 16 watching in injured.

"Every time I picked up the phone, it was to learn of another injury. We had three cruciates (Thompson, Katie O'Mahony, and Olivia McAllen) before we ever came back for 2023 and then another (Ciara O'Sullivan) after the Ashbourne weekend. We just had no luck."

They didn't have much luck with results either as the league upgraded to championship. Following the league final defeat to Galway — Cork's fourth consecutive final defeat at GAA HQ — were losses to Waterford in the Munster quarter-final and Galway in their All-Ireland series opener.

"The pressure was absolutely severe for a good few weeks. A lot of people wrote us off. A lot of people criticised us, unfairly. They didn't know the full facts of what we were going through. They were throwing players under the bus, which I didn't like.

"We spent around 40 minutes in the dressing-room after the Waterford game. We wanted to talk it out, ask what we are doing and what are we trying to go at.

"It was hairy for a while, but thank God we turned it around."

The last step is to end the county's five-year wait for All-Ireland honours.

"Especially after the final pain of the last two years and the two league final defeats too, you are under pressure big time. But we are going up there confident rather than in hope."



The Galway U-16 camogie team which lost out narrowly to Cork in Saturday's All-Ireland Final at Nowlan Park. Back row left to right: Laoise McGrath, Amanda Conway, Alannah Farrell, Caoilin Corban, Caoimhe S Fahy, Róisín Cahill, Katie Lawless, Ruth Kilkenny, Cara O'Brien, Kerri O'Driscoll, Emily Dillon, Leah Behan, Emma Barrett, Amy Morgan, Katie Flaherty, Leah Horan, Sarah Nolan, Aoife Flynn, Katie Murray, Denielle Grealish, Eva Ruano, Tarron Kilkenny. Front row: Aoife Jordan, Emily Noone, Grace Tarpey, Emily Lawless, Eva McGlynn, Maeab Ni Lionsaigh, Caoimhe E Fahy, Mary Brigid Cosgrove, Mia Rodgers, Rebecca Gardiner, Aoife Scarry, Aoife O'Meara, Allison Morrissey, Emma Deeley, Evie Ryan, Róisín Casey, Clodagh Burke.



Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship final

Cork v Waterford

Sunday: Croke Park, 5pm
Referee: TBC
TV: RTÉ2

Eoghan Cormican



The same as Pat Gilroy with the Dublin footballers, you won't always find Paul Flynn mentioned in a match programme involving the Waterford camogie women.

But no more than Gilroy and Dublin, you don't need to see Flynn's name listed to know of the impact he's having.

Having served as selector under Seán Power when Waterford waltzed to All-Ireland U21 hurling glory back in 2016, it was only natural then when Power was putting together his backroom team for a first season with the county's camogie side that he'd pick up the phone to the former Déise forward.

Flynn, as Power tells it, had committed to coaching an underage team in Ballygunner, and so he informed the new Waterford camogie manager that he'd give what he could in 2023.

"Of course, Paul comes and sees them, I get in his ear, and he's here all the time then," Power continues.

Power, as hardly needs pointing out, is a two-time All-Ireland-winning manager. He's a shrewd manager along with that. What he has done for this debut camogie season is pull from his 2013 minor and 2016 U21 backroom teams, with Waterford's minor winning coach from 10 years ago, Wayne Power, heading up a camogie coaching ticket that

Flynn having major impact in Waterford



Waterford's Abby Flynn and Róisín Kirwan celebrate after their side's victory in the All-Ireland Camogie Championship semi-final match against Tipperary in Kilkenny. Picture: Piaras Ó Midheach/Sportsfile

also includes Flynn.

Annie Fitzgerald is corner-forward on the Waterford team. Hailing from Ballygunner, it is no surprise to hear that 2004 All-Star Flynn was one of her hurling heroes growing up.

"As a forward, I'd get a few pointers off him. If he is telling you to do something, you listen and you do it because you have watched him do that," Fitzgerald explains.

"He is also a calming influence. He comes in with the water and he's really kinda

calming. He'd nearly make a joke or something when he comes into you. He's great to have around."

Mind you, it isn't just the forwards who are feeding off and benefitting from Flynn's own playing experience.

Déise goalkeeper Brianna O'Regan is another, though unlikely suspect, to sing the praises of the three-time Munster winner.

Fifty-six minutes into their All-Ireland semi-final against Tipperary, Waterford won a free right on halfway. But in-

stead of forwards Abby Flynn or Beth Carton standing over the placed-ball, Flynn was promptly out onto the field to relay the message that O'Regan travel up and hit it. And convert it she did too, sending Waterford three ahead.

Considering it was Waterford's last point of the semi-final and how Tipperary subsequently shrunk the gap to the minimum, O'Regan's booming effort ultimately proved the winning score.

"When Paul Flynn looks at

you, you kinda have to back yourself and go up and take it," O'Regan says of the free.

"Paul has a very good hurling brain. The stuff he comes out with and the way he thinks about hurling, even just picking his brain about what way would you pick out the ball to a forward. He is top-class on that type of stuff."

"If a forward is running out to a puckout, what way would the forward like for it to be placed; you can ask him about that and what trajectory you should hit it at."

Starting with Donal O'Rourke's two-year spell as manager in 2018 and 2019, Waterford's camogie graph has risen in line with the quality of coaching and management that they have been exposed to over the past six seasons. O'Rourke's first year saw the county return to the quarter-finals for the first time in decades. His second and final season saw them lead eventual champions Galway by five early in the second half of their quarter-final before wilting.

"Donal set the foundations with this team. He got us believing in what we are actually capable of. He put us in the right direction," Annie Fitzgerald says of the now Cork hurling coach.

Derek Lyons was next to progress the project, steering them a step further to the semi-finals in 2022. And now to Power and his backroom team, who've helped them climb a rung higher again and reach a first final in 85 years.

"Seán has won All-Irelands with the minors and the U21, and he has brought that wealth of experience, along with all the people in the backroom team," says O'Regan.

"They are bringing that different mentality that they had from their hurling background, and the physicality level too. Everything is sharp and to the point."

Everything so far is going to plan.

Cronin hoping to mark return with title

Therese O'Callaghan

Liam Cronin is fast becoming a recognisable name in the inter-county coaching scene. From Clare to Cork to Dublin and back to Cork again, the Limerick native is currently working as Matthew Twomey's right-hand man.

A secondary school teacher in Ardscoil Ris since 2002, he has been instrumental in guiding them to Harty Cup success. His work with the Clare and Dublin hurlers is another high point on his CV.

Chatting to colleague Eoghan Cormican last week, Twomey described Cronin as one of the best coaches he has ever seen, adding "his level of detail is unbelievable and the brain he has, I don't think I'll ever coach a team again after being with him".

Cronin spent a year with Cork camogie in 2020. He is back on the N20 once more.

"Matthew asked me last November to come back into the fold," Cronin explains. "When I left, I was convinced there was a team good enough to be contesting All-Ireland finals.

"They were unfortunate in 2021 and 2022, they came incredibly close. Hopefully we will have a better outcome in 2023. I'm really enjoying it. The drive is nothing major when you see how committed the girls are."

Covid-19 impacted his previous involvement.

"It was a very difficult year. We got a great start, we were in a league final before Covid hit. Then we had to down tools like everyone else. I still felt going into that championship we had a lot of work done. Kilkenny beat us in the semi-final in Páirc Uí Chaoimh.

"When we looked back, we had more than enough chances to win. We just didn't put it on the scoreboard. Kilkenny went on to win the All-Ireland. You knew you were close, but at the top there are such small margins."

After leaving Cork, he joined Mattie Kenny's Dublin hurlers.

"I'd been involved with Clare hurlers before 2020. One of the lads I was working with, Gavin Keary, was coaching in Dublin. He asked me to get on

board. Eventually I said yes. It turned into two years, two very good years. A very good setup there as well. From my own perspective, it was a huge learning opportunity."

The switch back to camogie was smooth. But he does detail one notable difference.

"In many respects, it is similar. In other respects, it is completely different. The big difference for me is the ball doesn't travel as far. In hurling, if teams drop off of you, you can score from 70 or 100 yards.

"Whereas in camogie, you have to be more skillful because you have to work the ball into a scoring zone to make sure of the score. That to me is probably the biggest difference. In terms of similarities, the way the girls apply themselves, they give absolutely everything for Cork. There is no difference there."

In a season where the bench has been key, he operates his own style.

"Matthew and I have got on really well. At the start of the year, we would have had a long chat on how he sees the game played. We have a lot of



Cork coaches Wesley O'Brien, Liam Cronin, and Ger Manley.

similar mindsets that way so from that perspective, it was easy for me to come in and implement one or two things. We have a really good mix of new and experienced girls, they know how to play the game.

"Earlier in the year in the games we lost out, we were probably competitive going into the last quarter, but didn't have the impact off the bench. Now there is competition for places and every girl is driving each other on, trying to get a hand on the jersey."

"That is one of the main reasons we are still involved. It is

down to competition. Girls took the opportunity. We genuinely felt the girls who had started previous games merited the jersey."

Waterford await in the final, and he is wary of the threat they will pose.

"They were hugely impressive in the semi-final on how they went from 1-7 to 0-3 down, to turn it around to be a point down at half-time. All the momentum was with them in the second half. They have an exceptional team.

"Beth Carton and Lorraine Bray are probably two of the best players in the country."

"Everyone else absolutely works themselves into the ground to support those two girls in particular. When you look back on that game, it was work-rate and commitment that got them over the line."

"It would be very difficult for us to try and plan for what Waterford are going to do. If you go that road, you could end up down a rabbit hole."

"I'm not going to say we won't have a plan in place, but 90% of our focus will be on our own dressing room."



Amy O'Connor captain of the Cork senior camogie team who play Waterford in the All Ireland final at Croke Park. Picture: Eddie O'Hare

Amy: It's an honour to lead this team out at Croke next Sunday

ST VINCENT'S star player and Cork captain Amy O'Connor said that it's an absolute honour to be leading out the Cork senior camogie team in the All-Ireland final next Sunday.

She has been a key player for the Rebels in their march to the final, getting some crucial scores along the way.

It certainly won't be for lack of effort on her part if they come up short in the decider against Waterford, throw-in 5pm at Croke Park.

"We are exactly where we need to be and are looking forward to it, when you set out at the start of the year it's where all sides want to be.

"At the start of the year you set out your targets, you set out your goals and the All-Ireland was our main one. We weren't gunning for the league, we weren't gunning for the Munster championship.

"We have faith in our management team that they were doing the right things so we never really panicked about it."

Reflecting on their loss to Waterford in the first round of the Munster championship Amy admitted it hurt them.

"Big time it hurt us, and did so for a long time. But it was probably a good thing too as it showed us the areas we need to work on and over the last couple of months and weeks we have been doing that and hopefully, it will pay dividends."

Looking at their All-Ireland championship campaign to date, starting with Galway Amy added: "I think it was 2017 when we last beat them so having to face Galway away in the first round of the championship was never going to be easy. But I'm a firm believer that all cycles must come to an end and before the semi-final against them I was letting people in the dressing room know that.

"Every cycle must come to an end in sport, I spoke about the Cork ladies footballers and their 10 All-Ireland titles in 11 years, saying everything has to come to an end.

"So that was the thought I had in the players heads going out onto the pitch, that the cycle was ending that day.

"We didn't play badly against Galway the first day and that was the way we wanted to play against them,

CAMOGIE

■ Rory Noonan

we just didn't have a good conversion rate and that was disappointing. Overall we were happy with our first half performance and then there were a few jittery moments at the start of the Down game before we won.

"Then the Clare game was a winner takes all and we went up to Cusack Park and put on a really good performance and that helped up build confidence going into the Kilkenny one.

"We probably couldn't have picked a more difficult route to a final, having to face the champions for the last two years in the quarter-final and then Galway in the semi-final.

"We knew there wouldn't be much between us and them in both ties, two as tough games as you could get in the lead-up to an All-Ireland final but it was good preparation for us.

"We have beaten the two of them but we have won nothing yet, which in some ways is kind of mad. Normally when you beat them you would be there or thereabouts but as I said we have won nothing yet.

"We know a lot about them, they know a lot about us but we are really looking forward to it. Someone passed a comment to me that they will be hungrier than us but that's not the case at all.

"If you can't be hungry to win an All-Ireland final there is something wrong. There is probably pressure on both sides, they haven't won it in so long and we haven't won since 2018, which in Cork terms can be considered a long time."

Reflecting on being captain Amy said: "The pride I will feel walking out as captain is unmeasurable really, it's something I never thought would happen coming from a junior club.

"I am very proud of it and so are my club. I remember ringing a club member to tell him and he actually cried on the phone, that's how much it means to Vincent's.

"It will be an honour to lead them out on Sunday and I also know the Cork supporters will travel in numbers to get behind us.

"It's going to be a great occasion and hopefully we come out on the right side of the result," concluded Amy.



Ashling Thompson has played key roles coming off the bench this year and may well do so again against Waterford on Sunday. Picture: Piaras Ó Midheach/Sportsfile

Thompson continues to prove her worth to Cork in different role

IT'S a testament to the drive in Ashling Thompson that 12 months after tearing her ACL in a club game with Milford on August 17, 2022, she took to the pitch in the 44th minute of Cork's All-Ireland quarter final with Kilkenny on August 9.

Introduced again in the semi-final in the 49th minute, Thompson is ready to do whatever is asked of her in Sunday's final.

Back training a while, in full contact almost a couple of months, and looking leaner than she has in many a year after a lonely 12 months of gym work and rehab, Thompson explains what it took to get her to where she is today.

"There were often times when I was training five, six, seven days a week, and even recovery, trying to get to the pool, the ice baths, getting up to Santry, in and out to Cork and Limerick on the biodexs to test my strength; the amount of work that actually goes into it is phenomenal.

"But you know what, when you're in it you don't really notice, but there are times where you'd be crying coming out of the gym, but it's not even crying about the injury, it's crying because of the amount of pressure that I put on myself to push myself as hard as I can while I'm in there. Just the effort doing the exercises themselves, the amount of effort it takes to get that strength back into the leg, it's something I've never experienced before.

"It was extremely tough, and I couldn't imagine having to go through that again. Obviously if I had to, I would, because that's the mentality I have anyway, but I can't imagine, or but admire, people who do that two and three times and come back time and time again because it's probably one of the toughest things you'll ever go through in your sporting career."

It's in Thompson's nature to live on the edge in games, wear her heart on her sleeve, show no fear,

CAMOGIE

■ Linda Mellerick

and throw herself about.

While some might criticise that approach, it's a trait I've long admired in her; that, along with her athleticism and hurling ability, has made her an invaluable member of the Cork team since 2013.

Her first piece of action this year against Kilkenny saw her tear into a three-person tackle.

"I think if you don't have the same mentality as the likes of Kilkenny, who I always admire, where they put their bodies on the line, and if you don't have the same going in against them and Galway; you just have to get stuck in there."

Thompson has had to be patient, eager to get onto the pitch but feels that the way management have filtered in their subs this year has been excellent.

"Whatever the lads think is best. The way they've brought in the subs has been brilliant, improving the team and not unsettling the balance."

A start for Thompson on Sunday might be a stretch too far. An All-Ireland final is a different ball game to any other, a different level of intensity.

"I do think the game against Waterford might be a bit more open, that might work to my benefit.

"The fact that I hadn't played contact hurling in a championship setting all year doesn't compare to being in training contact.

"For the little time I came on in the last two games I was blowing smoke," she laughs.

"But I do find it's harder to come off the bench. I would get more out of myself if I did start, but it's a case of do they want me there at the start or the finish.

"That's not to say I wouldn't finish the game, but that's the risk you take. At the end of the day if they (management) want me out there I'll take the opportunity."



Sarah Burrows from Newcestown camogie club was on the winning All-Ireland Cork U16 camogie team last weekend when they defeated Galway by one point on a final score-line of Cork 0-11, Galway 1-7.

Goal-scoring exploits will be key if Cork are to avoid cagey final

CORK may be strong favourites to win Sunday's All-Ireland camogie final at Croke Park against Waterford, but they will need to improve their goal-scoring exploits if they want to avoid getting embroiled in a tight cagey affair.

They grabbed two in the quarter-final win over Kilkenny, through captain Amy O'Connor and Katrina Mackey, but only raised two green flags in the four league and championship games they played against Galway.

You would expect that they will need a goal or two to come out on top on Sunday.

They did not need one a fortnight ago when getting on top of Galway by 0-15 to 2-6 in the semi-final in Nowlan Park, but Waterford, who are appearing in their first final in 78 years, will be confident of scoring a couple of their own, as they have registered 10 in their four championship games to date.

Cork lost the 2022 and 2021 finals to Kilkenny and Galway, so there will be no shortage of motivation. That experience of playing on the big stage that is the All-Ireland final can weigh a team down when they have lost a few deciders but the hope would be that Matthew Twomey's side can utilise the experience garnered from those losses.

Conversely, this is completely new territory for Waterford, and the occasion might well get to them, although it must be noted that they remain the only undefeated side in this year's championship after four wins in a row against Antrim, Limerick, Offaly and Tipperary.

In saying that, both Kilkenny and Galway were also undefeated before they ran into

CAMOGIE

■ Derek Daly

Cork, Waterford had an easy time in Group C, beating Offaly, Limerick and then Antrim by 20, 14 and 21 points, respectively, to secure an automatic semi-final slot.

They went into that semi-final against Tipperary as underdogs, but were worthy winners by 1-12 to 1-11, despite being seven points down after 20 minutes.

Of course, Cork are here on the back of defeating their bogey side Galway, who had beaten them in the opening game of Group 1 in June.

They had also lost to Galway in the league final in April when losing by 2-13 to 1-12 in Croke Park, after the earlier encounter at Páirc Uí Chaoimh had finished 1-10 to 1-11 to Galway.

After losing three times to the same opposition in less than four months it was a sizeable monkey to get off the back.

Cork had an ace up their sleeve in their wins over Kilkenny and Galway, with that being the strength of their bench. Being able to introduce players of the calibre of Cliona Healy, Orla Cronin, Aisling Thompson, Laura Hayes and Orlaith Cahalane to be closers almost seemed like cheating, and Cork can feel confident of winning out with such strength in reserve.

Having lost the last two All-Ireland finals to Galway and Kilkenny, Cork got their revenge in the last two games.

It would be a shame if they were to not complete the job by bringing the O'Duffy Cup back to Leaside on Sunday night.

Gunners hotshot determined to seize Déise's big moment

ANNIE Fitzgerald's primary school yearbook was rooted out by her younger sister Beth last week. A timely find too.

They're clearly a creative bunch over in Ballygunner, producing end-of-term yearbooks as a little memento for their departing sixth-class students.

Beth had good reason for pulling out and dusting down her older sister's yearbook from 10 years ago. One of the questions put to Annie and the rest of the Ballygunner class of 2013 was to name an ambition of theirs going forward.

And what did 12-year-old Annie Fitzgerald write? Only that she wanted to win a senior All-Ireland with Waterford.

The Déise camogie team weren't even senior at the time. They weren't even long out of junior, having won promotion from the third tier to intermediate just two years earlier in 2011.

But their status didn't matter a jot to young Annie. Her goal was to win a senior All-Ireland in white and the reality of the county's low standing at the time wasn't going to get in the way of her dreams.

Ten years on, Fitzgerald will line out at corner-forward on the Waterford team that goes in search of the county's first senior camogie All-Ireland.

Upset Cork at Croke Park on Sunday and she can put a large tick beside her primary school yearbook goal.

"It would be everything to win. It is the thing you dream of," the 22-year-old begins.

"When we were leaving primary school, there was a little



Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship final

Cork v Waterford

Sunday: Croke Park, 5pm

Referee: TBC

TV: RTE2

Eoghan Cormican



yearbook and we were asked what was our ambition. Mine literally says, to win a senior All-Ireland.

"Growing up, I would have watched Trish Jackman. I remember being in Croke Park and seeing Trish when Waterford won the junior in 2011 (Jackman was midfield and a leading light of that team). Trish is the same club as me, so I was lucky I had a lot of role models locally."

"I had completely forgotten about the yearbook and the answer I gave until my sister found it last week. It is mad how it has almost come full circle. I was 12 writing that, so it is a nice memory to have."

When Waterford climbed from intermediate to senior, Fitzgerald was their water girl for the county's first season back at the top table in 2016.

From carrying out bottles of water to carrying some of the scoring load, Fitzgerald joined the set-up two years later when current Cork hurling



coach Donal O'Rourke took charge.

Erasmus took her away from the panel for a year and she then decided to focus solely on football at inter-county level in 2022.

What motivated her to reprise her dual status this season was sitting in the Hogan Stand last July watching Waterford lead Cork all the way to the 56th minute of their All-Ireland semi-final and the subsequent phone call she had with new manager Seán Power.

"To be honest, it killed me to be sitting in the stand watching that match," she says of Waterford's 0-15 to 0-10 semi-final defeat to this weekend's final opponents.

"We finished on the football side around two weeks before the camogie semi-final and I was sitting in the stand that afternoon in Croke thinking: 'Jesus, I would love to be playing here'."

Wasn't she glad then that Power got in touch shortly after being confirmed as

Derek Lyons' successor. Fitzgerald had never spoken to the new manager before but was immediately struck by his level of detail and planning for the season now almost concluded. He had her sold very early in their conversation.

"It was the organisation that really stood out to me. Seán had a whole backroom team in straightaway, whereas sometimes you are grabbing people with camogie and it is not as set up as this was."

"There has been no stone left unturned. Everything we

STRIKING A POSE: Annie Fitzgerald meets fans of Waterford camogie at their training base in Carriganore.

Picture via Waterford Camogie

ask for is there for us. The professionalism and some of the training we are doing is training we have never done before. Not as much running, more really, really intense ball work.

"Everything is there for us, just even gear for example. The last few weeks, we haven't been begging for anything. It has been brought to us, whereas before maybe we would have been the ones asking people. That is all done for us now, which really helps. You don't have to be thinking about where we are going to get the money from for this or that."

The niece of former Waterford hurler Shane O'Sullivan and first cousin to Pauric and Philip Mahony has added to a forward unit orchestrated by the irresistible Beth Carton (pictured). In their four games on the road to Croke, Fitzgerald has clipped 1-6 from play.

For all the improvements on and off the field under Power, Waterford's final history — Sunday is their first final appearance since 1945 — suggests there are no guarantees Fitzgerald will get another chance anytime soon to realise her 12-year-old yearbook goal.

"You need to grab this opportunity with both hands, especially in Waterford. If you look at the hurlers, they got to a final in 2020 and they seem far away from that at the moment, so you just don't know when you will get back there."



O'Connor lauds

Paul Keane

Cork captain Amy O'Connor has praised the "professional" attitude shown by fit-again Ashling Thompson who is pushing for a first start of the season in Sunday's All-Ireland camogie final.

Thompson walked off the Croke Park pitch disappointed after missing a stoppage-time opportunity to level last year's Glen Dimplex decider against Kilkenny.

Weeks later, the Milford midfielder suffered a cruciate knee ligament injury, but returned to feature as a substitute in this season's quarter and semi-final wins over Kilkenny and Galway, respectively.

Thompson's steady influence around the middle third was clear in the semi-final win over Galway, who'd previously beaten Cork three

times this year, leaving boss Matthew Twomey with a welcome selection headache this week.

O'Connor said she's in the dark about whether Thompson will start against Waterford, but praised her recovery from the career-threatening injury.

"Ashling Thompson has reacted like a professional athlete in dealing with her injury since it happened to her," said O'Connor. "Credit where credit is due, she was absolutely phenomenal, so regal in her recovery, and I'm delighted for her because she's flying in training. She looks great, she looks sharp. She really, really went about it in the right way."

Thompson left the field moments after that late, late wide in last year's final and cut a broken figure, returning later to join her colleagues on the

Sole focus has helped O'Keeffe take final step

In another year, Sinéad O'Keeffe might have been preparing for two All-Ireland finals in a week.

However, the decision to concentrate on camogie has probably eked out improvements that have helped her and Clare get over their semi-final hump to be putting the finishing touches to their preparations for the Glen Dimplex All-Ireland premier junior final against Tipperary at Croke Park on Sunday.

Of course there is a tinge of regret about missing out on the ladies football squad's All-Ireland intermediate decider seven days later at HQ but commuting from Dublin for



Glen Dimplex Premier Junior All-Ireland Championship final

Clare v Tipperary

Sunday: Croke Park, 12.50pm

Referee: TBC

TV: RTE2

Daragh Ó Conchúir



training and games became too tough. Something had to give.

"Travelling up and down to Dublin was a bit difficult trying to manage both so I committed to camogie for this year," explains O'Keeffe, who will lead John Carmody's team out as captain. "It's been going well obviously and I'm delighted for the footballers that they've got to the final as well. You'd love to be there but it was very hard and the decision has paid off in terms of camogie. And I know all the girls in the football so it's great for them. Hopefully we can both do get over the line."

At 28, the Kilmaley defender has been a panellist since 2018 and seeing so many minors coming into the squad over

the past 15 months or so, she does feel like Methuselah at times. The young blood has infused speed and energy however and O'Rourke believes that the national stadium will suit them as they bid to complete a double having annexed the Very League Division 3B title earlier this year.

"The game plan we've worked on all year is using space and keeping our width and depth in our forwards so we're hoping to be able to use Croke Park to that effect. We know it's a massive field so we're getting ready for that."

"At the start of the year we wanted to get back to a semi-final first of all and then get

over it. We knew when we drew Armagh it was be a tough game. To get to the final you have to beat everyone in front of you so we didn't look too much at them, played our own game and focused on getting over the line.

"We haven't played Tipp so far this year but we played them last year in Munster and the All-Ireland. Both those games came down to the wire and we robbed them in one of those games so we know they're a very tough team, very physical and you could see that in their semi-final against Roscommon. They're going to bring that physicality so we have to be ready for that."

"Clare GAA are contributing all their funds from their match programmes for the next couple of weeks to the two Clare teams in All-Ireland finals, to the camogie and to the ladies' football. I think that's a huge thing. In the past it may have been very separate but that's huge support for us and we're delighted they're willing to do that. That's a driving force for us."

"We've talked to the likes of (Clare hurlers) Conor Cleary and Tony Kelly lately and they were saying how they were following our games. That means a lot. Now we need bums on seats and hopefully we'll get that for the final."



Thompson for comeback

field as Kilkenny celebrated their O'Duffy Cup triumph.

"If you were to ask me who I would want to have the ball in that situation, it would be Ashling," said O'Connor of the long-range score attempt. "She was very, very unlucky with the shot. I think she took it hard. But she's long enough in the game now to know that these things happen."

Last month, Thompson's partner, Limerick hurling star Darragh O'Donovan, celebrated All-Ireland success at Croke Park. The expectation is that there'll be more celebrations on Sunday for the couple, though O'Connor balked at the suggestion that Cork's semi-final win could be considered the real final.

Opponents Waterford will be featuring in their first final since 1945, and have never won the title.

"You can't look at it that

way," said O'Connor. "You'd be a fool to look at it that way. Waterford are a very, very good team. The three top teams, who have traditionally met in the final, were on the same side of the draw. But you can't look past Waterford. It's going to be a very, very difficult game for us."

"Being in Munster, we have come across them a huge amount. This is the first year we haven't played them too often, funnily enough. We only played them once."

As it happens, Cork lost that encounter, a Munster quarter-final at Páirc Uí Chaoimh in late April. It was the first time in more than a dozen outings that they'd beaten Cork.

Waterford went on to lose the subsequent provincial semi-final heavily to Tipperary, but bounced back with a perfect record in their All-Ire-

land group and they gained revenge with a Nowlan Park win over Tipp to secure this Sunday's showdown.

Cork deserve credit too for a battling campaign, pulling off some huge wins despite being stripped of dual players for several games.

"We had three dual clashes this year," said four-time All-Ireland winner O'Connor. "It meant, unfortunately, that we were without four players for one game and two for two other games. It's not ideal for preparations."

Some on Leaside wondered if the dual clashes and the failure to re-arrange those fixtures amounted to a punishment of sorts, for the strong stance Cork took regarding the All-Star trip protest earlier this year.

"Ah no, I'd take no notice of that," said O'Connor. "It was what it was."

McCarthy: League loss to Déise was a turning point for us

Therese O'Callaghan

She is only 23 years old since Sunday week, yet the talented Saoirse McCarthy has become a natural leader.

In February, the Courcey Rovers star captained MTU to Purcell Cup victory. She has the distinct honour of winning a staggering trio of minor, intermediate and senior All-Ireland camogie medals in 2018, and would be forgiven for thinking all her birthdays had come together.

Unfortunately, a barren period followed, and she will be seeking her first senior medal on the field of play this weekend.

"It's a long time ago now," she recalls. "We haven't won a senior since 2018. The minor All-Ireland was probably the best day of our lives because we did it with our friends, we beat Galway. We beat Down in the intermediate, and Kilkenny in the senior."

"That senior medal isn't really ours. We played no minutes with the seniors, we were playing with the intermediates and were senior subs."

Her love of the game was fostered from an early age with role models in plentiful supply.

"Growing up, you are watching Sara Hayes, Rachel Moloney, Christine O'Neill, Jacinta Crowley in the club."

"I was only talking to Laura Hayes about this, her sister is doing the pitch walk with the U14s at half-time in the final. Myself and Laura have the picture of ourselves doing the pitch-walk in Croke Park in 2014 when Cork won."

"Matthew (Twomey) was involved with the management team back then. A lot of the girls I'm play-

ing with now were playing that day, and we were watching on from the stands."

A versatile performer too, comfortable in any position — even if we are in an age where jersey numbers aren't as relevant as before.

"Wherever I'm put, I genuinely don't have a preference. Last year I played wing-back. The start of this year I was at midfield. I am now half-forward. The competition for places is massive. If me being moved can create space that suits someone else, that is fine by me."

"Playing wing-forward is really the same position as last year playing wing-back, because I was pushing forward. The same with midfield. You are doing the same job, just in different places."

Manager Twomey has dipped heavily into the subs bench during this championship. She dismisses any fear factor of being taken off.

"I don't think

you think about it that way. You are out there to do your job and do it to the best of your ability. You are not looking over your shoulder, I don't think anyone is. If you are not having a good day, which can happen easily, you are happy to let someone else do the job."

En route to the decider, Cork knocked out two of the big three in Galway and Kilkenny. Keeping a lid on expectations will be important.

"We have to focus game by game. That is our job. We couldn't look past Kilkenny and Galway. We worked very hard all over the field and the subs coming on was a huge boost."

"I do enjoy the build-up. I get caught up in it sometimes, looking at the signs in the village (Ballinspittle). But I also feel like we haven't taken anything for granted."

"There is no small All-Ireland final. There is no bad team that gets to an All-Ireland final. We know what it is like to go into an All-Ireland final as underdogs and you

don't write yourself off ever. Waterford will be no different."

"They have beaten us already this year in Páirc Uí Chaoimh in front of a big (Cork) crowd. That was a turning point for us."

"It was a bit of a reality check for sure, especially after losing the league final a couple of weeks before. We've had enough reality checks."

"Waterford don't have any bad players. They have quality all over the pitch. We are looking for a performance. If the medal comes, it will be Thank God."

Saoirse McCarthy: 'Competition for places is massive. If me being moved can create space, that is fine by me.'



Burke: Meath can follow lead of Waterford and Antrim

Ellen Burke captains the Meath team attempting to overcome Derry in Sunday's Glen Dimplex All-Ireland Intermediate Camogie Championship at Croke Park.

She played at HQ first in 2017 when Meath drew with Cork in the final, before coming out on top in the replay at the Gaelic Grounds, and she was back this year as Kerry denied her Very League Division 2A silverware by the odd point in 27.

"For myself, the 2017 final went over my head and that's one of the things I said to the girls, be present in the moment and try as much as you can to enjoy it."



Glen Dimplex Intermediate All-Ireland Championship final

Derry v Meath

Sunday: Croke Park, 2.45pm

Referee: TBC

TV: RTE2

Daragh Ó Conchúir

"I would have been serious and superstitious with things but I've definitely just learned

to enjoy the big days.

"Having the League final there this year is a massive advantage to our girls, particularly the younger ones. They weren't fazed at all when we were up there in April but it's great for them to have that."

The scale of the senior challenge was too steep and they were relegated in 2019, but have been competitive at intermediate since, reaching the semi-final every season.

They had failed to surmount that particular hurdle, however, until seeing off neighbours Westmeath in a fierce tussle at FBD Semple Stadium 12 days ago.

It put to bed any notions

that they would not cope without the legendary Jane Dolan and Aoife Minogue, who stepped away after years of service.

Both are still attending games, supporting their friends and former teammates, and Dolan still sends the odd encouraging text that Burke appreciates. But there is no shortage of know-how in the team.

"We've been the bridesmaids the last three years with semi-final defeats and there was a lot of noise around players we lost at the beginning of the year and people thinking we might be going through a rebuild."

"But the core group of players is still very experienced and in every line on the pitch there is a leader there that stands up."

"People lead through their actions on the pitch so we never really need to say a whole lot. But we've spoken about being a resilient group and the importance of the top four inches so definitely having the likes of Claire Coffey, Aoife Minogue and players like that is important. They know how to steady things."

Among the many positives to date is the emergence of young talent in the likes of Aoife Carey (Na Fianna), Emma O'Connell (Ratoath),

and the twins Grace and Katie Connolly (Killyon) all in their first seasons.

They are a similar age to Burke when she was called up in 2013. She is impressed by how other counties have shown that it's possible for an intermediate-winning outfit to cement itself at senior level if everything is right.

"There's a lot of learnings from seeing the likes of Waterford and Antrim. Antrim have definitely been impressive to be able to make it stick."

"There's something there in how they're structuring things and the development they're bringing through that has to be admired."



FOUR REASONS CORK CAN WIN

EXPERIENCE: Aisling Thompson, Katrina Mackey, Amy O'Connor, Hannah Looney. Just some of the Cork players who know what it takes to win an All-Ireland. No Waterford player can say that. It will count for a lot on Sunday, especially going into the closing stages.

FOREWARNED: The last time the Rebels played Waterford, they lost 1-18 to 1-15 in the Munster championship at the end of April. Cork boss Matthew Twomey will know the Déise's threat and will come up with a plan to stop it. Worth noting too that Waterford almost beat Cork in the All-Ireland semi final in 2022 in Croke Park.

BENCH: Cork brought on five subs against Galway. Aisling Thompson, Laura Hayes, Cliona Healy, Orla Cronin and Orlaith Cahalane. All are potential match-winners, which is a plus for Cork. These 'finishers' could make the difference here. This squad now has strength in depth that, perhaps, it was lacking before.

DETERMINED: Four major finals in the last three years, lost them all, including the last two All-Ireland deciders. Cork will have that stat in their minds during the week and will be gunning to right those wrongs. This is a huge opportunity to do that against a side that weren't considered in the top three before the season.

BY MATTHEW HURLEY

She's only 22, but Saoirse McCarthy has developed into a leader for Cork

BY MATTHEW HURLEY

SARA Hayes isn't surprised to see Saoirse McCarthy develop into a leader for the Cork camogie team.

The Courcey Rovers legend coached McCarthy in her underage days with their home club, and there were some tell-tale signs that the Ballinspittle native had star quality.

'I had Saoirse when she was U16. She was the same underage as she is now but has developed so much more athleticism, drive and hunger,' explains Hayes, who herself has won five senior All-Ireland with Cork.

'Saoirse still had those things when she was younger and I played her in positions where she was allowed to roam. We only had to work on small things like tightening up her swing when she was U16. She is more athletic now and stronger than she was back then.'

McCarthy's rise has been incredible to watch, as the 22-year-old is already an All-Star having scooped an award in 2022. Her trophy cabinet is filling up quickly, with a player-of-the-match award from the All-Ireland semi-final the latest addition.

It was former Cork camogie boss Paudie Murray who brought McCarthy onto the senior panel, having coached her with the Cork intermediate team too. He liked what he saw. 'What impressed me was

A JOY TO WATCH IN FULL FLIGHT



her athleticism and she was something different: a livewire around the middle of the field,' Murray says.

'She wasn't lacking confidence. Getting her settled in a position was the one thing we worried about when she came in.'

There has been a bit of debate as to what McCarthy's best position is. Her versatili-

ty is noticeable. Current Cork manager Matthew Twomey has utilised her as a midfielder this season. She played at wing back last season and was playing in the forwards as recently as 2020.

'We played her in all sorts of positions. I feel her best position is wing back because that's where she plays her best hurling,' Murray said. 'I think she

needed to be moved around this year because they had a high level of injuries. They were plugging gaps in various different places. Her versatility has helped the management greatly this year.'

'As an attacking wing back, I think she's unstoppable. She's got a good hand, she's got a very good strike and I think she would worry the opposition

'Her versatility has helped the management greatly this year' – Paudie Murray, former Cork camogie manager

tearing down the field.' Sara Hayes, however, has



Cork captain Amy O'Connor is ready for Sunday's showdown. (Photo: Dan Sheridan /INPHO)

Cork held their nerve in tough spell

BY KIERAN MCCARTHY

AMY O'Connor can't ever remember a losing run like it. Between March 26th and June 3rd, Cork lost four games in a row across three competitions. Challenging times for the Rebels.

There were three defeats to Galway, including the Division 1 league final and the opening group game of the All-Ireland championship, as well as a shock Munster loss to Sunday's All-Ireland final opponents, Waterford.

The darkest hour came before the dawn of a Cork team that has since knocked out reigning All-Ireland champions Kilkenny and bogey team Galway en route to Sunday's showdown with the Déise (5pm).

'I don't think we ever had that in my time with Cork camogie,' O'Connor says. 'This is my tenth season and we have never

'We always kept the faith and we always knew what we were trying to achieve' – Amy O'Connor

lost that many games in a row or even in a season.'

But Cork didn't buckle. Instead, they pulled together.

'We always kept the faith and we always knew what we were trying to achieve,' the Cork captain told this week's *Star Sport Podcast*.

'Even in those games we didn't play too poorly at all; in the championship first-round game against Galway we were exceptional for the first 20 minutes so we knew we were on the right track.'

'The important thing was not to panic. As a group we

trust our management team and they trust us as players. We didn't want to peak in the middle of May, we want to be where we are now.'

To emerge from that period and then embark on a run that has seen Cork reel off wins against Down, Clare, Kilkenny and Galway highlights the resilience in this group. O'Connor points out, too, the injuries the Cork camp had at the time, but it all seems to be coming together at the right moment. The injuries have cleared up; just look at the subs Cork brought on in the semi-final against Galway – Cliona Healy, Laura Hayes, Orla Cronin, Ashling Thompson and Orlaith Cahalane. It feels like this jigsaw is coming together.

'It is a building process, it hasn't happened overnight, we have been working towards this for a long time now,' four-time All-Ireland winner



SCAN ME

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O'Connor explains, 'but there are exceptional people in the dressing-room, exceptional characters, brilliant players and all-round good people and it's nice to be part of a group like that. Everyone has that one goal.'

It's been a journey these last



Saolirse McCarthy was player of the match for Cork in the All-Ireland semi-final against Galway.

Courtesy Rovers' Saolirse McCarthy with her 2022 PwC Camogie All-Star Award.

Twomey ignoring the favourites tag

BY MATTHEW HURLEY

GIVEN this is Cork's third All-Ireland senior final in a row and it's Waterford's first since 1945, it's easy to understand why the Rebels – an established power at this level – are the favourites to win the O'Duffy Cup on Sunday (5pm throw-in).

However, Cork boss Matthew Twomey is not entertaining that talk.

'That's only talk outside our dressing room. We have no talk like that,' Twomey says.

'The last two games (against Galway and Kilkenny) we went in as underdogs and took no notice of that either. We're too long in the tooth now for that, we have a lot of experience so we know there is a massive task ahead of us.'

Twomey only has to point to Cork's most recent meeting with Waterford: a 1-18 to 1-15 defeat to the Déise in the Munster senior championship in April. Waterford might be viewed as the underdog, but they're a team on the up. Look at last year's All-Ireland semi-final between this Sunday's opponents, as Cork came from five points down in the second half to win an epic (0-15 to 0-10).

'I think they have been beaten once all year,' Twomey pointed out on this week's *Star Sport Podcast*.



Cork manager Matthew Twomey.

'We were beaten by three points in Munster, but that flattered us'

'We were beaten by three points in Munster, but that flattered us. They were a far better team than us on the day. Physically and everything they blew us out of it. We weren't complacent going into that game either and they blew us out of it.'

'If you want to go physical with them, they love it. If you want to go hurling with them, they love it. It's for us to come up with a system trying to be as competitive as we can and just come up with a game plan and stick to it.'

A big plus for the Rebels is the return of Aisling Thompson, Orla Cronin and Laura Hayes after injury layoffs. The dual stars in Hannah Looney, Libby Coppinger, Aoife Healy and Orlaith Cahalane also have one sport to focus on. Twomey is now in a position where he has lots of options, which has not always been the case this year.

'We were playing Down and there was obviously a fixture clash when the ladies footballers were playing Galway. We had potentially 19 players fit out of a panel of 32 and that's 100 percent legit. That's where we were,' he says.

'With all these players back again, it is great.'

ing played at wingback herself, thinks McCarthy would be better used at midfield.

'She can make it back to the full-back line and then into the half-forward line, she is so athletic. She has the running to go backwards. I always saw her as being a midfielder for the Cork seniors in time. I said it to her,' says Hayes, who was never convinced playing McCarthy at

corner forward was the right move.

'I knew that was the wrong place for her. She gets scores but she needs a bit of space. We can see now when she played at wing back last year she just excelled. She is a joy to watch when she's in full flight, tearing up the wing and she has a massive strike at the end of it. She can score from 50 yards out,

no problem. She can also belt it into the net if closer in. She is very versatile but wing back or midfield is the place for her, there's no doubt about it.'

Regardless of her position, the one thing that McCarthy has in spades is determination.

'Her drive is just admirable and she had the same playing for MTU this year. She was the one that won the Purcell Cup

for them,' Hayes insists. 'She just wants every ball. She is a leader and always positive. People look up to her but they also expect her to do it because she can. She's very easy to coach, takes things on board, listens and there was never any back-chat from her.'

Paudie Murray concurs. 'I always knew that to make it at the highest level you needed to have a high level of desire. To me, she has made it even though there is a lot more in her,' he says.

'You don't get there without that determination. The year she was minor, we brought her straight back into the intermediate team and she had a massive bearing on that even as an 18-year-old. We wouldn't have been able to win the All-Ireland without her,' Murray said.

Look at her all-action displays recently against Kilkenny and Galway.

'When she got going against Kilkenny, we went with her and the same against Galway when we really needed her,' Matthew Twomey says on this week's *Star Sport Podcast*.

'Nothing phases her,' he adds. 'She doesn't get nervous or anything like that. She just has a job to do. She loves pucking the ball. Loves playing camogie. That's what you want.'

McCarthy is also a player who drives this Cork team on, and will be key in Sunday's All-Ireland final against Waterford in Croke Park.

'When the pressure came on against Galway, she stepped up with a great point out on the sideline. For Cork to win an All-Ireland, they would need her to be performing at a high level,' Paudie Murray notes.

'She is up there with the best this season. I think there is an awful lot more in that girl and she can become one of the top players in the country in a number of years.'

and have reaped rewards since

few years, with Cork losing the last two All-Ireland finals, and the last two league deciders also, so to be back within touching distance of the game's biggest prize is a nod to the character of O'Connor and Co. Leading the charge is the Knocknaheeny woman with an infectious love for the game.

'It's a pure and utter love for the game. I know that might sound like a cliché but I just love playing camogie. I love playing with Cork because everyone is on the same page and everyone has the same goals, and that's what I enjoy,' says Cork's top-scoring forward in this championship campaign with 4-33.

Her experience is key. She has lived the build-up to an All-Ireland final seven times before so can take it all in her stride. This week feels familiar, and she'll stick to her routine. O'Connor plans to work up to

Friday evening; she is a senior project manager at Workvivo, an internal communication platform recently acquired by Zoom. On the All-Ireland final day itself she knows it inside-out, too. She's relaxed, confident in the work and experience this Cork team



Amy O'Connor celebrates her goal against Kilkenny in the quarter-final.

WHO SCORED WHAT?

CHAMPIONSHIP SCORERS (including Munster and All-Ireland series): Amy O'Connor 4-33 (21f, 5 45); Katrina Mackey 3-15 (2f); Chloe Sigerson 0-11 (5f); Sorcha McCartan 1-5; All Smith, Cliona Healy 0-5 each; Fiona Keating 1-2; Emma Murphy, Saolirse McCarthy 0-4 each; Orla Cronin 0-3 (1f); Clodagh Finn, Laura Hayes 0-2 each; Aoife Healy, Hannah Looney, Orlaith Cahalane 0-1 each.

RESULTS: Munster – Cork 1-15 Waterford 1-18. All-Ireland – Cork 0-12 Galway 1-12 (group); Cork 3-19 Down 1-10 (group); Cork 3-19 Clare 0-8 (group); Cork 2-14 Kilkenny 2-13 (quarter-final); Cork 0-15 Galway 2-6 (semi-final).

SCORED: 9-94 (2-14 per game).
CONCEDED: 7-67 (1-12 per game).

has threaded together.

'Against Galway and Kilkenny they were two very different games against two very different teams with two very different styles so it's nice to know you have that work in the bank,' she says. The feeling after those games was relief, two important steps that see O'Connor one win away from a fifth All-Ireland senior medal.

STAR SPORT PODCAST

This week on our podcast ...

We chat to Cork captain Amy O'Connor and manager Matthew Twomey ahead of the All-Ireland camogie final

PLUS ...

We round up the main talking points from a hectic weekend of club football championship action

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