



AN CHOMHDHÁIL BHLIANTÚIL 2021

2020 TUARASCÁIL AN ARD-STIÚRTHÓRA
AGUS CUNTAIS AIRGID

ÁBHAR

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CONGRESS 2021 AN CLÁR

26ú FEABHRA 2021 (Dé hAoine)

16.00	Cruinniú de chuid an Coiste Bainistíochta
18.00	Cruinniú Ard-Chomhairle

27ú FEABHRA 2021 (Dé Sathairn)

10.00	Opening of Congress
	(i) Adoption of Standing Orders
	(ii) Adoption of Minutes of Congress 2020 and Special Congress 2020
10.15	Report of Ard-Stiúrthóir
10.45	Adoption of Accounts
11.15	Break
11.30	Announcement of the result of the election of Representatives to Congress
11.45	Reappointment of Secretary of DRA
11.50	Consideration of Motions
13.00	Break
14.00	Óráid an Uachtaráin
15.00	Installation of an tUachtarán nua agus Óraid an Uachtaráin nua
16.00	Close of Congress

STANDING ORDERS

In order that the proceedings of Annual Congress be carried out without delay, the following Standing Orders will be observed:

1. The Proposer of a Resolution or of an Amendment thereto may speak for five minutes, but not more than five minutes.
2. A delegate speaking to a Resolution or of an Amendment must not exceed three minutes.
3. The Proposer of a Resolution or an Amendment may speak a second time for three minutes before a vote is taken, but no other Delegate may speak a second time to the same Resolution or Amendment.
4. The Uachtarán may at any time he considers a matter has been sufficiently discussed call on the Proposer for a reply, and when that has been given a vote must be taken.
5. A delegate may, with the consent of the Uachtarán, move “that the question be now put”, after which when the Proposer has spoken, a vote must be taken.
6. A speaker to the Ard-Stiúrthóir’s Report or to any other general discussion shall not exceed three minutes on any one topic.
7. Any motion seeking to amend a rule in the Official Guide must have a majority equal to three-fifths of those present, entitled to vote and voting.
8. Standing Orders shall not be suspended for the purpose of considering any matter on the Agenda except by the consent of a majority equal to two-thirds of those present, entitled to vote and voting.
9. The Uachtarán may change the order of items on the agenda with the support of a simple majority of those present, entitled to vote and voting.

AINMNIÚCHÁIN D’IONADAITHE NA COMHDHÁLA

an tSeacha, Roibeard (Robert Frost) - An Clár

Ó Cearúil, Seán S. (John Joe O’Carroll) - Ciarraí

Ó Cuinn, Éamonn (Ned Quinn) - Cill Chainnigh

Ó hOsáin, Micheál (Michael Hasson) – Aontroim

INTRODUCTION

This time of year, and this report, is customarily an opportunity to reflect on the themes and events of the previous twelve months and highlight some likely topics of emphasis for the year ahead. 2020 certainly bears reflecting upon, but it is from a very different perspective.

Many of the challenges that faced the Association in prior years are still evident, but they pale into insignificance next to the challenges dealt to us by the Covid-19 crisis in 2020. More tellingly, they are even further outweighed by the difficulties faced by the wider society in Ireland and beyond. It is to be hoped that 2021 will be brighter, not just for the GAA and its members and friends, but for everybody who has laboured under the toll of 2020.

The impact of Covid-19 on every aspect of our lives has been profound. Regrettably, it will prove a recurring theme in the pages that follow. However, in the interest of brevity and in an attempt to maintain a note of positivity I won't pore over every aspect of the crisis and how it unfolded in the GAA.

Instead I will try to emphasise those good things that we saw in the GAA this year...and there were many.

- Our pitches may have been silent last spring, but our clubs were a focal point for massive community effort in every part of the country.
- Cúl Camps in both remote and traditional formats signalled a joyful return to activity for our juvenile members, to be followed by a hugely enjoyable club programme throughout the summer.
- We introduced, and observed diligent new safety protocols and we pioneered innovative IT solutions to get everybody back playing – club first and then county.
- We all embraced a new way of watching games, with club matches streamed into our homes from all corners of the country.
- The year concluded with momentous inter-county championships in both codes and all grades.
- We arrived at a new shape and structure to the GAA calendar which perhaps points the way ahead.

So yes it was a grim year in very many ways, but there was plenty to enjoy and take pride in too. The GAA and its members were proven to be adaptable and resilient. With redoubled effort and continued commitment, and with time, the GAA will recover and prosper.

Sadly, though, some things proved more important than our games. In that regard 2020 has taken a heavy toll which can't be forgotten. I preface all of the remarks that follow by expressing my sincere sympathy to those who have suffered loss; our empathy with those who continue to struggle with the repercussions of the crisis, and our sincere gratitude to those people in the frontline services – many GAA people among them – who continue to strive to combat the virus and make 2021 a better year for all of us.



THE SHADOW OF COVID

When it first became apparent that a Covid threat was emerging we did not foresee the extent or duration of what was ahead. The initial shutdown of our activities in late March was in the sincere expectation of a difficult few months and no more, and we expected to be able to weather a brief interruption.

We were very clear about what our priorities should be.

- To uphold our responsibilities with regard to public health and safety
- To play whatever part we could in assisting communities
- To uphold the standing and reputation of the Association
- To adopt a consistent approach across both jurisdictions and leave nobody behind
- To try to provide, within whatever scope we were permitted, the best playing opportunities we could for as many people as possible
- To protect as best we could the livelihoods of our employees

We undertook to do this in such a way as to ensure that, if at all possible, the financial damage suffered could be confined to 2020 and would not have repercussions for future years.

But what followed proved more difficult than we could have imagined. We tried our best to live up to our responsibilities to the Association and to society. And we tried to be mindful of our above priorities with regard to each step we took.

The pressure on the Association was amplified by what was at stake – peoples’ health and the Association’s future wellbeing – and by the degree of scrutiny that was applied to us at every juncture. We did not always get everything right, and we did not fully deliver on every aspect, but I do think we comported ourselves reasonably well and lived up to our responsibilities.

As state restrictions evolved we consistently adopted a slightly more conservative stance – we shut down earlier; restricted ourselves more comprehensively and we didn’t reopen facilities, training or games at the earliest permitted opportunity. I know that this caused quite an amount of frustration within the membership at times but it was borne simply out of caution, not lack of conviction.

Similarly, there were calls from many quarters at

many stages for clarity with regards to our plans for competitions, venues and so on. In many cases these were questions to which we simply didn’t know the answers ourselves. We just tried to be flexible, to keep our options open and to make sure that if we were given a chance to get matches started again at any stage we would be in a position to do so.

I must admit that the clamour of voices calling upon us to take certain actions, do certain things, stop doing other things (sometimes the same thing at the same time!) was very difficult to manage. We tried not to be distracted and to keep grounded by the principles I mentioned above. We also had to admit at times that we didn’t yet know what to do, but that we would get there. For example I recall at an early stage being asked by a journalist if a championship without spectators was being considered. I said that it had no real attraction for us and was unlikely. I believed that at the time, but when all other possibilities were gone I was very glad to eventually be proved wrong. More of the championships later.

Perhaps the most heartening aspect of the GAA response to the crisis was manifest at local level. Whether through national initiatives like Community Call, or local county or club projects, and even individual acts of kindness, we can all be very proud of the work undertaken by clubs to help vulnerable people in their neighbourhoods. (I will return to this topic in more detail later in these pages, because it certainly merits recognition.) You will recall too that dozens of GAA grounds all over the country were repurposed in order to house temporary Covid test centres – from clubhouses to county grounds, to Croke Park itself.

I think that the most impressive aspect of all of this was the fact that this outpouring of goodwill and desire to help was unprompted and spontaneous. Indeed one of our early challenges was to try to build a structure around it to protect volunteers regarding insurance, vetting and so on. And the hardest part was just keeping pace with the sheer volume of volunteers and initiatives.

We didn’t fully deliver on all of our objectives. We scheduled a return to mass participation at juvenile and club level first, and I like to think that went well. When I look back on the year those few weeks stand out as one of the real positives. So, it is a matter of real regret that we didn’t manage to finish the championships in every county. I regret also that this was largely our own fault. Faced with the health risk

and reputational damage from a number of high-profile post-match events we had no alternative but to suspend the games in the remaining counties. That day, and that decision weighed heavily on me. Our job is to promote games, not to stop them, but there was a greater imperative that we couldn't shy away from. I sincerely hope those championships can be concluded. I estimate we missed out on the playing of 11 senior finals which was a regrettable blight on an otherwise excellent programme of games.

I'm thinking too of those competitions that did not proceed at all, or were halted mid-stream through no fault of their own. Second Level Schools, Club All-Irelands and so on. It was a summer of hard choices. Our final theme was to protect the livelihoods of our staff. This too came at a cost. As all of our workplaces

closed our staff had a new and difficult working environment thrust upon them. Colleagues were required to deliver to a higher standard, at a time of heightened pressure and scrutiny, and all while working for reduced pay. That was traumatic for the organisation, but especially for our staff and their families. They all played a huge part in salvaging what positives we could from a bad year.

A guiding light at every step was the Covid Advisory Committee chaired by Shay Bannon. The group was assembled at short notice in June when it became clear that we would need a very specific level of expertise to help us negotiate a safe and sensible path through what lay ahead. Their calm and thorough approach to the most trying of topics was literally invaluable.

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Coronavirus
COVID-19



Coronavirus
COVID-19
Public Health
Advice

Help prevent coronavirus



GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

The GAA simply could not have navigated its way safely through 2020 without the significant support of governments both north and south. That support came in many forms and was consistent across changing administrations.

The advice and guidance we received from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, as it was at the outset, was invaluable as we repeatedly found ourselves in uncharted territory. The timely introduction of the various employment support measures made it possible for us to keep our staff in employment. The funding support for the entire sporting sector was unprecedented, and the GAA at all levels benefitted hugely. Unfortunately, as is evident elsewhere in this report, our financial losses were still unprecedented, but government supports mitigated those losses significantly.

Towards the latter part of 2020 a number of factors coincided to present us with the possibility of resuming the inter-county season and playing the championships. As health restrictions were reinforced to effectively close the club game, we were afforded an exemption to allow inter-county to continue.

Similarly, it became apparent that there was a significant appetite among our supporters and the wider public for a championship over the winter. Unfortunately after the year we had endured, and with no prospect of attendance revenues, the Association was in no position to fund such an undertaking. The government stepped in to underwrite the championship and it is to their credit that we all enjoyed such great games as winter closed in. GAA members and supporters everywhere greatly appreciated this unprecedented support at a time when we all needed it most.

2020 INTER-COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Of course, the other most important deciding factor in the 2020 Championships was the appetite of players. We can't forget that our inter-county players had come through the same miserable year as the rest of us with all that it entailed for their families, their studies, their jobs and their health. So we should be very grateful to them for taking to the field in difficult and surreal circumstances.

County Boards too found new challenges. Travelling

to games, eating afterwards, even the most mundane things were now obstacles that required meticulous planning.

So we changed the timing, we changed the competition structures, we changed the rules, we changed our broadcast arrangements...we changed everything. We introduced an array of new safety protocols and we embarked upon a championship season the like of which we had never seen before.

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FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

As Sligo unfortunately found out, the stakes were high and uncharitable but they had to be in this year like no other. This was a new dispensation not of our making.

The championships may have been staged using different – and indeed familiar old formats – but their allure burned strongly. In football the trapdoor nature of our championship reminded us of the cut and thrust of straight knockout fare. While the appeal is obvious, I don't think anyone could reasonably ask our county players to commit the way they do for one shot at advancement or exit stage left after defeat.

Losing championship heavyweights Tyrone at the first hurdle underlined this and eventually brought an end to one of the most captivating managerial careers as Mickey Harte stepped down after 18 years in the role. He didn't go too far but he moved on to his new challenge in Louth with the acknowledgement of the wider Association.

'Could anyone in Ulster stop Donegal?' was a narrative that gained momentum when the scalp of Armagh was added to Tyrone and a provincial final spot was booked.

The answer as it turned out was yes and it came about in unexpected fashion as relegated Cavan set off on a week-in, week-out odyssey that paired them with Donegal in the provincial final.

Their eventual win capped what could only be described as a seismic day, and indeed weekend, for the GAA.

Earlier, Tipperary had challenged their own football demons by accounting for a Cork team that sensationally dethroned Kerry with an injury-time goal played in a Páirc Uí Chaoimh monsoon, and delivered a first provincial title to the Premier County since 1935. Previously Mayo had built on the away league win over Galway by doing it all again, this time at Pearse Stadium, to catapult their new and emerging team back into the last four on the back of another Connacht title.

The night before the exploits of Tipperary and Cavan, Dublin served up a reminder that their standards and ambitions remained very much intact by beating Meath convincingly.

Earlier that evening, as outlined elsewhere in this



report, we, an organisation, honoured the memory of the 14 people who lost their lives on Bloody Sunday.

After their win, Dublin paid their respects to those lost lives with team captain Stephen Cluxton placing a wreath in front of Hill 16 to complete an extremely poignant night that had started with an emotional commemorative event.

When the semi-final line up for Championship 2020 was completed the following day to mirror that of the last four of 1920 – including pairings – there was an added sense of historical symmetry in a year when so much of what we consider to be normal was challenged. Much of what followed focused on whether Dublin's push for a sixth consecutive title could be stopped.

Tipperary's run ended against Mayo in an incredibly open game, while Cavan came up short against Dublin to leave us with a final re-run of a rivalry we have come to know and look forward to.

Mayo, under the management of James Horan, had started to build a new team with fresh faces such as Oisín Mullin and Ryan O'Donoghue injecting both youth and pace into their challenge.

However, it was two more established Dublin names that anchored the challenge of the defending champions as Dean Rock and Con O'Callaghan swooped for first-half goals.

They would go on to record a five-point win, a first under new manager Dessie Farrell and a sixth consecutive title. There is no ignoring their brilliance and after more retirements it will be interesting to see if rival counties can close the gap in 2021.

HURLING CHAMPIONSHIP

On the hurling front we reverted to the qualifier system which granted teams a second chance in the Liam MacCarthy competition. While the decision to introduce a yellow sliotar for what was going to be a winter championship generated quite an amount of interest, much of the pre-championship analysis focused on how Tipperary's defence of the championship would fare and if Limerick's 2019 setback was a temporary wobble or something more significant. Both queries would be addressed before long.

Despite the lengthy break, Limerick would pick up where they left off beating Clare in the Munster SHC in a game that also served as the Allianz League Division 1 final. The win rounded off an unblemished league campaign. That form would continue in the meeting against Tipperary while Waterford laid down a marker accounting for Cork. Limerick's showing against Waterford in the Munster final, without being spectacular, was workmanlike and enough to keep the Déise challenge at bay and deliver another provincial title.

In Leinster, Laois fell at the first hurdle to Dublin, who themselves exited after a near miraculous comeback against Kilkenny. Galway showed flashes of brilliance in their semi-final success over a flat Wexford challenge - but surrendered a winning position against Kilkenny in the provincial decider when Richie Hogan turned on the style to see the Cats home.

The reconstituted qualifiers produced little in the way of shocks, but Laois gave Clare a serious fright in Kilkenny and Cork dealt with the Dublin challenge. The following round produced a tour de force from one of the game's best when Tony Kelly dominated in Clare's win over Wexford. His 1-15 provided further proof as if it was needed of the prodigious talent that he is.



That was as far as the Clare challenge would go as Waterford ended their interest at the quarter-final stage and Galway edged out Tipperary in yet another memorable encounter.

The semi-final line-up was a stellar one with Limerick holding off the Galway challenge and Waterford roaring back into life to account for Kilkenny after an incredible second half.

Before Liam MacCarthy silverware would be presented, Antrim made the winners' enclosure for the Joe McDonagh Cup at Croke Park by beating Kerry to add Leinster Championship participation next year to the promotion already secured. They followed the exploits of Kildare, Donegal and Louth, who claimed Christy Ring, Nickey Rackard and Lory Meagher Cup honours respectively at Croke Park in the preceding weeks.

For the first time ever, Limerick met Waterford in an All-Ireland senior hurling final with Waterford out to end a run stretching back to 1959 since their last win. 2019 left many questioning Limerick and wondering had 2018 been a one off; a flash in the pan.

The 2020 season, for all its peculiarities, answered that in dramatic fashion.

A storming final show, spearheaded by the excellence of Gearóid Hegarty, saw them take control of their encounter early on and their unrelenting athleticism in every line of field proved too much on the night.

Their eventual 11-point win did not flatter and while Waterford had done much to illuminate the championship – their semi-final performance being one of the season's most memorable moments – there was no disputing the destination of the title. Seeing the victorious players celebrate their victory as they did emphasized what it meant to their group, with or without supporters.

The sincere hope is that some of the traits that made 2020 unique in so many ways, recede as 2021 unfolds, chief among them the absence of our members and supporters.

I must give thanks to the grounds people at the various venues around the country. Remarkably every pitch at every venue was playable at the most unseasonable time of the year.

BROADCASTING AND STREAMING

Yet another defining feature of our year was the extent to which our broadcasting landscape changed.

January to March saw the usual busy broadcast schedule via TG4, eir Sport and RTÉ before Covid-19 halted action. Particular highlights were 500,000 viewers for RTÉ's Dublin v Kerry Allianz League game and the fact that GAAGO carried all games for a seventh consecutive season to the diaspora worldwide. In addition, GAANOW continued to provide us with near-live in-game clips and midweek archive features for free on any connected device, anywhere in the world.

When matches were suspended mid-year (during the GAA match suspension window) the live sport void was filled by historic GAA archive footage across eir Sport, RTÉ and TG4 and I think we all very much enjoyed taking a trip down memory lane.

We broke new ground when, in conjunction with Kellogg's and TG4, the inaugural 2020 GAA Cúl Camps TV series aired for three weeks and 15 episodes each morning and evening to entertain and encourage children to practice their football and hurling skills while in lockdown. The series was a break from the traditional camp format and showed great innovation and purpose despite Covid restrictions being in place.

Club games resumed in July with huge anticipation and interest all over the country. With limited spectators permitted, we needed a way to bring those games to a wide audience. With the support of our broadcast partners, we recast our national arrangements and a centralised local streaming package, negotiated on behalf of interested County Boards by the Commercial Department in Croke Park with Nemeton TV, gave us a huge number of games shown online on county websites or selected social media channels.

We all enjoyed extensive local streaming by County Boards. This trend proved universally popular and extended into the early round provincial minor games before the competition was again suspended – a sign of demand and modern-day content consumption habits.

Credit is due to our counties who adapted, in some cases very quickly and for the first time, to maximise the potential of streaming. In some cases it also



helped to alleviate the serious financial losses that having no crowds meant for our counties.

The challenges in this space going forward include consistency and the standardisation of the presentation of our games but the positive experience of most of our units – at all levels – means streaming is sure to stay on our communications landscape and is likely to evolve and develop as technology and broadband become ever-more accessible.

In tandem, Club Championship TV coverage ran from July to October and was a welcome diversion from the difficult events unfolding around us. In total 45 games were shown by TG4 and RTÉ in 26 different counties.

A new time and format for the senior inter-county championships needed a new broadcast plan as well.

A new schedule involving an unprecedented 80+ matches was drawn up for the 10 weekends from October to December period to ensure all remaining Allianz League and 2020 Senior Championship games were available to us to watch at home on either TV or online. GAAGO was a major factor here with domestic streaming live on the platform for the first time.

Special recognition should go to all stakeholders who were involved in the delivery of such a challenging broadcast schedule in what was a very constrained Covid work environment. Extensive live coverage was a very welcome source of enjoyment for the nation during a difficult period.

The existing broadcast deals with our partners expire in 2022 and the Association faces tough challenges in a new commercial reality in the next 12 months, before new arrangements are put in place. As custodians of Ireland's foremost live sport broadcast rights portfolio our track record this year will stand us in good stead and I'm confident that we can achieve maximum exposure and a fair commercial value for our games.

OUR SISTER ORGANISATIONS

Our links with Camogie and Ladies Football have never been stronger. In a time of extreme adversity for all three organisations every key decision that we made was taken in consultation; every step was taken in common. This approach was borne not out of any structural or contractual arrangement, but out of a simple recognition that our fates are closely intertwined and that we are stronger acting in communion rather than individually.

There were a number of particular landmarks this year that are referenced elsewhere in these pages as fundamental to the GAA but which were joint and combined efforts with our colleagues from the other organisations. Our communications programme to clubs and beyond; the new player pathway; the Covid Advisory Committee to name but a few. These may not have garnered headlines but they are sterling evidence of three organisations working effectively in tandem on the most fundamental of issues.

You will recall that we each committed some years back to a route towards closer cooperation and integration. That agreement expired at the end of 2020. I am sure that but for the events and pressures of the latter part of 2020 we would have concluded a new understanding. In fact we have already started discussing our renewal, and what the next phase of our relationship might bring. I think I speak for all three of us when I say there is a very keen appetite on all our parts to move to closer alignment. The precise shape and form of that alignment will emerge over time, but it cannot be unilateral. Camogie and Ladies Football are independent and distinct bodies. They are well run and eminently capable, and they deserve the right to determine their own destiny. Merely assuming that they would be better served in an all-encompassing GAA does them a disservice.

I believe that the true success here will be measured in terms of outcomes, not in terms of processes or structures. In other words we are striving for the day when there are no apparent differences between us in all of our key policy objectives and how we deliver them. Indeed that we deliver them as one. This can be achieved irrespective of constitutional change. That is not to either pre-empt or discount any eventual constitutional changes, just to de-emphasise that side of things. There is already a flourishing model to build upon – the one club model where a club offering diverse codes flourishes as a single unit - irrespective of the games it offers or the vagaries of its committee structures.





FIXTURES CALENDAR

The structure and composition of the GAA year has been a matter of much contention in recent times. Our Calendar Review Group, chaired by Eddie Sullivan, has undertaken extensive work in this area to derive the optimal structure – affording all players at all levels the best opportunity to play within competition structures and at times of the year that best fit.

It has been a considerable task, and one that bears fruit this year with publication of their recommendations and associated motions for Congress. Regardless of the structures that we settle upon, a key facet will be the governance and oversight provisions proposed which I think will be very progressive if enshrined in our rules.

Our plans for reform extended beyond merely producing options and proposals. We had intended the topic to be the subject of an extensive consultation process with gatherings scheduled at various locations around the country for members, players, officers, counties, clubs – all of us – to debate the merits or otherwise of the concepts and possible solutions. For obvious reasons that did not come to pass. We did facilitate a number of online sessions with the same objective. They were very well run and well attended, just not quite the same. Nevertheless, the fruits of the committee’s work are before us now and offer a clear way forward.

One key element which bears commenting upon is the idea of a clearly demarcated period for inter-county games and for club championships; the colloquial “split season”. It is fair to say that this was an idea greeted with caution in many quarters before this year. The pitfalls cited included relinquishing the prime traditional All-Ireland Finals weekends and taking our chances in a crowded summer... a potential exodus of players once the inter-county season concluded... there were many and I don’t mind admitting that I subscribed to a few of them.

The necessities of 2020 meant however, that we all had to cast any preconceived ideas aside in order to embrace whatever chance we were given to offer games to players. Players at all levels. And this year that meant playing club matches, and club matches alone, from July until September, with sole emphasis on the inter-county scene thereafter. I think it worked very well. Clubs and club players revelled in the spotlight, championships were played in good weather with full compliments of players and county activity did not impinge.

Correspondingly when inter-county teams took centre stage the transition worked well, the games and the players had the attention of the entire country and they served up fantastic fare.

Some elements were not ideal of course. The preparation time in advance of each section of the season was perhaps too short; the season of games itself likewise; it asked a lot of county players to go through both programmes at full intensity. So, I know there are things to be improved upon.

But in the spirit of the times everybody did their best to make it work with the result that I think that we all enjoyed the fresh approach.

Most importantly I think - I hope - that players did.

We will need to set out clearly, and buy into, the transition period between the two phases. If we can do that, address lead-in times, and incorporate a defined and meaningful closed season then I think this structure to a GAA year offers us a clear road ahead.

One more thing... it’s not a club vs county season, it’s both, with scope for a full club programme throughout the year.

If we get this right then 2020 can prove to be a watershed.

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and proposals.*

JOHN HORAN AND LARRY MCCARTHY

This Congress sees the conclusion of John Horan's term as Uachtarán. It has been a momentous three years. John took up office with a number of clear objectives in mind – and without exception they have been delivered upon. Foremost among these was reform of the playing season which I refer to elsewhere.

That project could only have arrived at fruition with the leadership characteristics that are John's trait. He charges responsibility to the best of people; he knows his own mind but allows others scope to arrive at independent views; he makes fair decisions grounded in his own values and everything he does is for the benefit of the Association.

The last 12 months of John's tenure have been very difficult and sad for the GAA in so many respects. And so very different to what I am sure John envisaged. But a measure of a person's leadership is how they respond in adversity and the last 12 months define in a positive sense John Horan's contribution to the GAA when leadership was called for.

On a personal note, I have enjoyed greatly my time working with John. He is a person of fundamental fairness and integrity. I hope John can enjoy a well-earned rest in the months ahead before an inevitable return to the GAA fray in whatever guise.

I welcome, as you all do, the beginning of Larry McCarthy's term as Uachtarán. Larry represents a new departure for the Association in so many ways.

It is a signal of the GAA's outward looking approach that we can look as far afield as New York for our leadership. I know from working with Larry previously that he will bring his own ideas, his own thinking, his own style and his own perspective in the years ahead. And the Association will be all the better for that. I know too, that Larry will be grounded by a strong sense of duty to the GAA and to his role. I wish Larry every success and offer him my personal support. Above all I sincerely hope that our incoming Uachtarán enjoys what I hope will be a very special three years.



MATTERS FINANCIAL

Our success is not defined by financial performance, and nor should it be.

Nevertheless the past year has proved very damaging to the Association from a financial point of view, with the likelihood that the after effects will be felt for some years to come. The extent and nature of that damage is evident elsewhere in this report, but the topic bears reflecting upon here too.

2020 presented us with many difficult decisions, not least financial. We may not have had income, but we still had responsibilities. It was vital that we didn't fold the tent and give up. We still had a role to fulfil, a profile and reputation to maintain. So to the extent possible we played games, we promoted health initiatives, we made facilities available, we put our best foot forward. Ironically these came at a continued cost when we could least afford it.

But the Association will flourish again long after this pandemic is over, and we need to maintain certain momentum in the meantime – albeit on a greatly reduced scale. With time, with the restoration of public health and the resumption of normality I have no doubt that we will recover.

This brings into sharp focus some key areas of financial focus and control with which we can aid that process, and which will stand us in good stead in the meantime.

Cashless admittance to grounds

The advent of limited crowds at our Club Championship games doubtless posed many challenges but also presented a benefit that will far outlive the pandemic. The summer saw a growth in new online mobile ticketing scanning applications with associated remote method of ticket sale, distribution, and scanning on entry becoming accepted practice. The introduction of cashless gates was always an aspiration but was technology dependent and was proving slow to gain acceptance and costly to deliver. Summer 2020 proved that it can and does work. Hopefully, we can build on

this to improve revenue assurance and eliminate collecting, counting, and managing cash – easing the burden on our overworked treasurers.

Funding raised in the name of the GAA

Fundraising patrons and supporters are a welcome and essential feature of the GAA landscape. It is imperative that funds raised by such means are appropriately governed by the Association, are controlled within the GAA and that any such bodies have their finances properly audited. No external body that is not 100% under the direction and control of a County or Club Executive should be permitted to raise funds in the name of the GAA. This means agreeing the terms of reference of the body, or initiative and exercising full control over expenditure. Good practice dictates that related organisations such as Supporters Clubs are audited as part of the annual audit process of a County Board or Club Accounts and the controls and rules as set down by Central Council are fully adhered to.

Financial Health Situation in Counties and Development Projects

Half of our County Committees – 16 in total – reported losses for the year ended 31st October 2020. Combined, our counties have posted losses of over €4m for 2020. With the public health restrictions still in place and looking that they will be for some time ahead, the situation for our counties and clubs looks bleak for 2021. In this context any planned capital or development works should only be undertaken if 100% funding is secured and in place prior to commencement of works and a strong repayment capacity is in place for any borrowings. A prudent approach should be taken to planning any new works to be undertaken. All grant aid from Central Council has been put on hold and will remain on hold for the foreseeable future. The Central Council Development Loan Fund is currently closed to new applicants although the fund remains open to the taking in of new deposits. The current interest rate payable on such deposits remains at 1.9%.

Team Costs

Despite a reduced schedule of activity for the year ended 31st October 2020 for the inter-county game, a total of €18.8m was spent in the year on preparing county teams. Admittedly this represents a reduction from €29.7m in 2019 but it is still a sizeable resource commitment. The reduction was delivered through the truncated inter-county season along with a number of new and novel measures.

We saw the introduction of maximum panel sizes of 32, and a limit to three training sessions per week. We introduced a centralised system of player expenses management to facilitate better analysis and more timely payment. Crucially too, our players all agreed to a reduction in the player mileage rates which it is important to acknowledge.

In short, everybody played a part when called upon. Similar discipline will be required again in 2021, I suspect, as the Pandemic persists. Covid aside, we should build on the lessons of 2020 in order to derive a long-term sustainable structure and scale for the resourcing of the inter-county game. The next step, perhaps, is to streamline the scale of backroom expertise enlisted by counties. Consider too, rebalancing our demands on players' time – away from training and in favour of matches.

Last year we were in the unfortunate position of needing state assistance to underwrite our games. We were extremely grateful for that help – but going forward we need to help ourselves too. That means greater discipline needs to be applied to our costs both centrally and locally, and now more than ever.

Club Grounds Grants

Unfortunately, due to lack of current resources Central Council was unable to make provision for Club Grounds Grants for 2020. We are committed to reinstate this support as soon as we can. We understand however that clubs cannot stand still, and some will still have the means and opportunity to improve their facilities. Clubs who purchase or develop property while our funding is suspended are invited to submit a grant application for retrospective support. It is further planned that all future grant support will be based on a uniform percentage of expenditure to be funded, and this percentage allocation would be the same across all provinces. It is envisaged that funding from provincial councils towards the Club Grant Scheme will be centrally pooled and distributed based on the predefined grant available for a related project.



GOVERNANCE

Good governance is always relevant, but the necessity was never more apparent than it is now. The circumstances of the year just passed made it essential that the GAA be able to respond to circumstances and if necessary change course in a timely and flexible way.

That meant potentially changing competitions, schedules, rules, the fundamental operating parameters of the Association – either to ensure compliance with national health requirements or, to avail of whatever limited scope to resume activities presented itself.

The intermittent travel and gathering restrictions made such responsiveness impossible under our current structures, so we convened a Special Congress in April to introduce special emergency governance measures.

Special interim powers were conferred upon An Coiste Bainistíochta to take any decision or implement any measure which would otherwise be undertaken by Congress.

These powers were short in duration – requiring renewal every eight weeks; were used very sparingly; and were ratified at every step by Central Council. Nevertheless, it was with reluctance that they have since been renewed. The system has operated well but we all look forward to the time when such measures can be stood down.

The financial disciplines, systems and processes that have served us all well over the years are now more valuable than ever. Financial pressure nationally or locally should not manifest in us compromising on these measures. Appropriate executive or management board approval and signoff should always be secured before any agreements or contracts are entered into. Doing the right thing will serve all our units and members well in the long run and good governance is not something that is optional depending on the circumstances presented.

Central Council has enhanced its centralised Internal Audit function this year with the redeployment of Michelle McAleer to this newly expanded role. This new internal auditor function combined with the motion before Congress that will hopefully see the requirement to establish an Audit & Risk Committee at every county and provincial level will provide two added levels of review and accountability for all our members.

It is intended that Michelle will visit all counties over the coming year to carry out an initial review and assessment of governance practices and controls.

As part of this initial review and in line with the GAA Governance Guide, counties will be asked to submit their confirmation of formal adoption of the GAA Governance Code.

Counties will also be asked to submit a completed self-assessment tool which will be used as the baseline for continuous improvement and review over governance-related areas within the county executive.

Counties will be required to present their risk register for review and outline what controls are in place to ensure the register is maintained, updated and acted upon on a regular basis.

Cumann Lúthchleas Gael – Central Council is designated as a Type “C” Organisation in accordance with the Governance Code. We have confirmed to Sport Ireland that the expected date for the GAA to attain full adoption of the Sport Ireland Governance Code will be 31st October 2021. This is an important target, and an important signal that we will strive to reach and maintain the best standards.

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REMEMBERING BLOODY SUNDAY AT CROKE PARK

On the 21st November we paused to remember the centenary of the Bloody Sunday attack on Croke Park and the innocent lives lost at the ground on that day in 1920.

In a simple and solemn ceremony, we lit a torch for each of the 14 Croke Park victims – and in doing so shone a light on a group of people who have not always had the prominence or recognition that their contribution to our history merits.

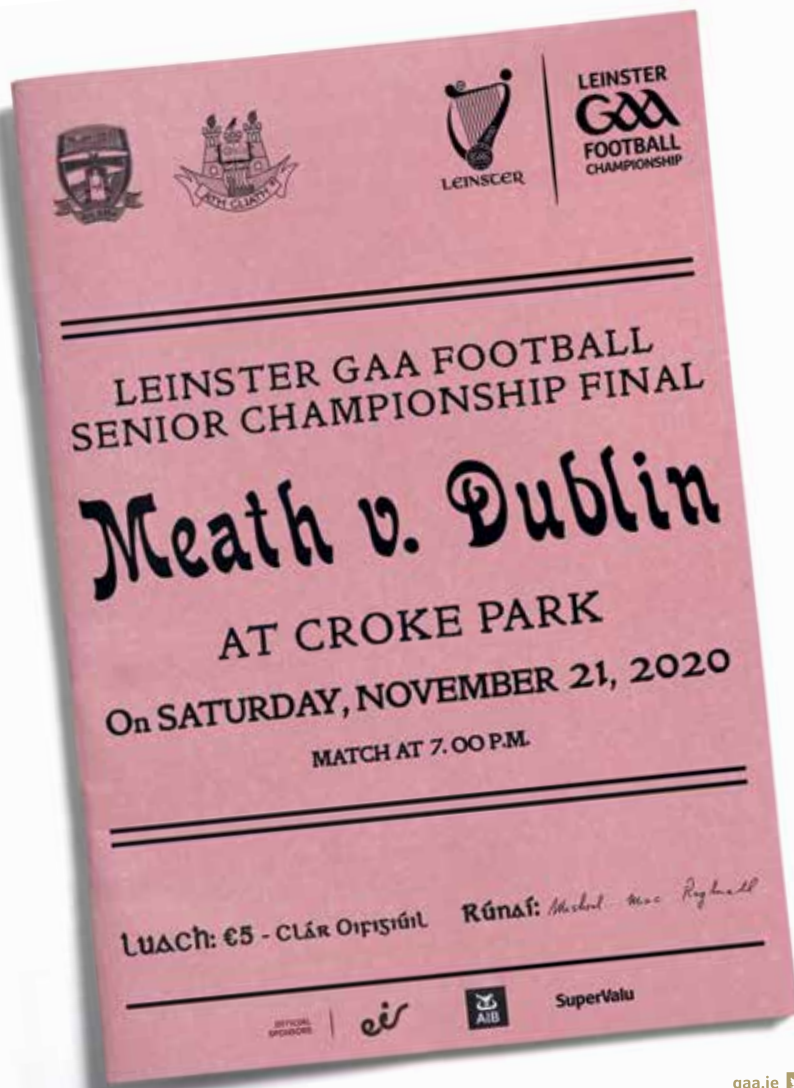
The Croke Park Bloody Sunday story is a human tragedy; the harrowing tale of ordinary people who went to a match and who never came home.

The Association began working on this centenary and on remembering the dead back in 2015 when a Bloody Sunday Graves Project started the job of

addressing the fact that several of those who were killed as a result of the Crown Forces attack were still in unmarked graves. This led to seven headstones being erected between 2015 and 2019.

This work also brought the Association back into contact with surviving relatives of the victims and with the help of the journalist and Bloody Sunday author Michael Foley, the GAA reconnected with these lost lives and made a commitment to their families to telling their story and honouring their memory when the centenary came.

The result was a comprehensive programme of events that, even in the face of the pandemic, succeeded in telling the Croke Park Bloody Sunday story and crucially, remembering the 14 victims and remembering the people behind that number.



From a poignant series of videos, to new sections and content on the Croke Park and GAA websites, to documentaries, a museum lecture series, special stadium tours and a podcast - there was a concerted effort to tell this story and help today's GAA membership reconnect with this seminal moment in our history.

The GAA Museum in Croke Park assembled a hugely impressive exhibition featuring several significant contributions from 100 years ago. The exhibition, like the rest of the museum, has sadly been seriously curtailed by the restrictions and lockdowns. However, I've no doubt that when the time comes it will prove a major attraction given the level of interest that the centenary generated.

The high point of the commemorative work was the centenary calendar anniversary of 21st November which fell on the Saturday night of the Leinster senior football final.

Great credit is due to Robert Smith Events for assisting us in having a pitch perfect ceremony which was honoured by the presence of Uachtarán na hÉireann Michael D Higgins, An Taoiseach Michéal Martin and Catherine Martin, Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

Wreaths were laid on the spot where Tipperary corner back Michael Hogan was fatally shot and killed as he tried desperately to crawl to safety.

It was important that it was a night without hierarchy and there was due recognition for all of those who we lost that awful day and who we are committed to honouring.

The beautifully scripted words of Michael Foley, so eloquently delivered by Brendan Gleeson, summed it up perfectly:

They are our family, our friends, our people.



Cuimhnimís orthu uilig. We remember them all.

- Jerome O'Leary (10)
- William Robinson (11)
- John William Scott (14)
- Tom Hogan (19)
- Joseph Traynor (20)
- Michael Hogan (24)
- James Teehan (26)
- Tom Ryan (27)
- Jane Boyle (29)
- Daniel Carroll (30)
- James Matthews (38)
- Michael Feery (40)
- James Burke (44)
- Patrick O'Dowd (57)



2020

IN MEMORY OF
Michael Hogan
(24)
Grangemockler
Tipperary
Farmer

IN MEMORY OF
John William Scott
(14)
Fitzroy
Avenue
Schoolboy

IN MEMORY OF
James Teehan
(26)
Gurteen
Tipperary
Publican

IN MEMORY OF
Joe Traynor
(20)
Ballymount
Labourer

A R MEMBERS

ÍMIS ORTHU UILIG

PLAYING RULES

We are all passionate about our games. We all have a view on what would make them better and the debates are many up and down the country every year as the season progresses.

In tandem with that passion and conviction though, we have to add a degree of detachment and disinterested analysis. That is the lot of the Standing Committee on Playing Rules.

In June 2019 the committee advanced seven Guiding Principles for the rules of our games and these were approved for adoption by Central Council. These principles provide a robust framework against which the games can be governed and regulated. Arising from the Guiding Principles, several motions are being put forward this year by the committee to address various aspects of the games.

Foremost among these is a measure to address the increasing incidence of cynical play. It is absolutely essential that we do not allow a situation to evolve (or persist) whereby it pays to engage in foul play. Sanctions have to be enshrined so as to bring about a change in approach on the field.

I know that there is a counter argument that says we don't need black cards and such in hurling. I'm not deaf to that point of view, and I know that was the consensus in previous years, but I do think the time has come to give it serious consideration again. Not just as a response to specific matches or fouls... more because that is our ongoing responsibility. In some respects the time to take action is when a trend emerges that needs to be reversed, not later when more drastic remedial action might be needed.

The proposed experimental Playing Rule change - in the forthcoming championships - provides a balanced and proportionate basis for dealing with the underlying problem and will facilitate the development of an evidence-base against which proposed changes - and their impact can be evaluated. This will give us the opportunity to assess both our plans and any unintended consequences that may pose a risk.

I urge you to give these topics and measures your full consideration.

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DIGITAL SLIOTAR

Over the past decade, a considerable volume of effort, energy and time has been devoted to the development of the Digital Sliotar for use in all official games. There are two key dimensions to this project: inserting an electronic chip in the sliotar and changing the sliotar colour from white to yellow.

The colour change is based on evidence-based feedback from other sports - tennis in particular - which indicates that the needs of the visually impaired spectators or those whose sight might be compromised because of a medical condition can best be addressed by using a yellow sliotar. Despite some initial apprehension, the new ball proved to be very successful in the 2020 MacCarthy Cup competition. Consequently, the Central Competitions Committee (CCC) has decided to extend the use of the yellow sliotar to all levels of the Allianz Hurling League and Championship in 2021.

The electronic chip is intended as a means to verify the quality and origin of the sliotar. A mobile phone

app will be used to detect the chip in order to confirm that the sliotar has been produced by an officially approved manufacturer who will be subject to a quality assurance programme.

This will hopefully curb the production of inferior quality sliotars which undermine the integrity of the game - as both a contest and a spectacle - because of the variations in distance that they are travelling.

One further important consideration is that many counterfeit sliotars are sourced outside of Ireland and may be of dubious origin. In particular we should be concerned about the possibility of sliotars being produced using child labour. The chip will verify that the sliotar has been ethically manufactured by an approved supplier.

It is proposed to finalise policy proposals in relation to the use of the digital chip in the coming year.



COMMUNICATIONS

One significant thing I learned in the last year was the value of engaging directly with our clubs, and the scope that we have in order to do it.

As with any situation where profound change occurs quickly, effective communication is of vital importance and the Covid Pandemic certainly fell into that category.

In the interests of health and safety, it was imperative that our units and members had accurate and timely information at every stage of a challenge that has yet to run its course.

To that end, we have never communicated directly with our club units as frequently as we did since last March. The traditional cascade communication model where our communication is routed through our counties just would not have fully served our needs. Communicating directly with clubs – while keeping counties informed by including them in the same correspondence – meant all clubs received updates at the same time.

I am always wary of overloading club officers with communications but in this instance liaising directly with our club officers was justified and it allowed them to share information with their members in what was a fluid and rapidly changing situation.

Similarly, we tried to use our own channels when the need arose to put spokespersons out to explain the rationale behind any new decisions and measures and what they meant for clubs and counties, such as the commencement of the health questionnaire which was a ground breaking initiative for the Association.

This prompts the question how useful direct correspondence with our members might prove to be with the ongoing improvements in our communications infrastructure. Witness developments such as Foireann, our new games management system which will enhance our ability to engage with our membership.

This is sure to be a feature of how we communicate with GAA members into the future as we will look to

get content such as our monthly Club Newsletter, directly into the inboxes of our members.

We were in the final stages of finalising a new Communications Strategy for the Association when the Pandemic struck last March and the decision was taken to pause the roll out of the plan given the challenges Covid posed. With Covid still very much with us we are likely to launch this document across the organisation in the coming months.

The continuing Pandemic will undoubtedly delay some of our ambitions. However, it should not derail and deter us from striving to be as good as we can be in any given area of our operations and that's what this plan proposes in the area of communications.

Digital Campaign on Covid-19

At various stages over the course of 2020 the GAA was asked to assist with different initiatives relating to the Pandemic and one of these was in the area of messaging.

With the country coming in and out of lockdown there was a challenge and a lifespan to some of the messaging - but one strength we could use to good effect, was our ability to connect with the youth, an age group that has felt the effects of isolation with their social engagement badly disrupted at a formative time in their lives.

While we have assisted various government agencies at different stages of the Pandemic, there was a concerted effort on our behalf around the All-Ireland series and the finals in particular, to urge the wider membership and members from the competing counties in particular, to work with us and respect the guidelines as they applied at the time.

I would like to thank the team managers from the competing finalists John Kiely, Liam Cahill, Dessie Farrell and James Horan and their players and also the county PROs for their assistance in spreading this message at the time and also acknowledge our members who respected the wishes of the civic authorities by staying away from public gatherings.



JANUARY 2021
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OFFICER DEVELOPMENT

Much attention has been paid to how the Association dealt with the impact of Covid-19 on fixtures, facilities, and finances in 2020; however, our officer development capabilities were also put to the ultimate test in supporting clubs and counties to function in a safe and effective manner.

Our Covid-19 Return to Play Education Initiative featured a mandatory eLearning module which was completed by an unprecedented 650,000 people in three weeks, multiple club-specific webinars which were viewed over 100,000 times and a daily digital campaign promoting safe return advice. Coupled with this, numerous webinars were delivered in the spring and autumn to assist our units run effective meetings, including AGMs and conventions.

The slogan for our officer education programmes is “The Great Teams Aren’t Just on the Field.” This was evidenced because our ability to deliver the training required in short timeframes depended on effective teamwork and leadership from staff and volunteers at national, provincial and county levels. The efforts of our staff, National Officer Development Committee, IT Committee, County Development Officers, and the team of 50 Leadership Associates deserve special mentions for engaging and assisting so many volunteers to seamlessly adapt their ways of working through structured online training.

While the Pandemic accelerated many technology trends changing the nature of officer development in the GAA, I fully expect the resumption of face-to-face workshops on a local basis as part of a blended approach when it is safe to do so. In the first two months of 2020, we organised a two-day conference for 200 County Officers in Croke Park and 36 events for 1,700 Club Officers. The level of participation in these events provides unrivalled opportunities for idea sharing, problem solving and networking.

In February 2020, I was thrilled to formally welcome both the LGFA and Camogie Association to join the Club Leadership Development Programme (CLDP) to achieve an aligned approach to training for the first time. After almost a year of planning, Club Officers were able to choose from a menu of 20 modules tailored for all Gaelic games organisations. There were 22 counties who organised CLDP events on a joint basis which equated to 374 hours of training delivered in the first few months of 2020. Notwithstanding the obstacle provided by Covid-19, 18 webinars were subsequently delivered online

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under the one umbrella and 50 more scheduled for delivery in the first quarter of 2021. This is a collaboration which I fully support and expect to see flourish further in the years ahead.

I would also like to mention a certified Governance Course which has been designed and delivered to County Officers in recent months. This six-module course is an important way for our units to have increased confidence that they are doing things right in our core areas of activity such as coaching and games, safeguarding, finance, IT, insurance, and HR.

I commend all County Officers who completed the course and encourage those who have not done so yet to do so by the end of the year.

To again emphasise the positive from the past year, I am convinced that our adaptation to online learning during the Pandemic will position us to emerge stronger from it with a better balance between online and face-to-face training to deliver what clubs and counties need at the right time in the year ahead.



GPA

One of the very important constituencies in our membership is the inter-county player. We witnessed again this year, with perhaps greater clarity, the contribution they make to our Association and our country. In what was undoubtedly a difficult environment, I think we appreciated this all the more.

This year was also a significant one in terms of our relationship with the players' representative body, the GPA.

We faced key playing and training decisions at every turn throughout the year and we endeavoured to consult and consider players wherever possible. And county players in particular, when it came to safety during the championship. The GPA played a valuable role in this effort, most notably as part of our Covid Advisory Committee.

We also agreed upon a new operating agreement with the GPA for a further four years and potentially

beyond. The key elements are a committed stream of funding for programmes for players and a renewed commitment to combined commercial ventures with which to fund both organisations. Both of which are underpinned by a redoubled commitment to the volunteer and amateur ethos of our games.

Unfortunately, our 2020 financial commitment to the GPA had to be revisited in light of the resources available to us, and the provisions of the players charter had to be similarly lessened for the 2020 Championship. Both were regrettable but were transacted in a positive and productive manner.

I hope and expect that when the Pandemic is over – if not before – we can both return our attention to the more fundamental and long-term issues impacting upon the players, counties, games and the wider Association.

Paul Flynn recently announced he will shortly be leaving his role as GPA CEO. Paul made a big contribution to the on-going development of the players' body over several years and we wish him well in his new venture.

COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY AND COMPLIANCE

At stages during 2020 it seemed that we had reached a new state of maturity within the Association. As matters got progressively worse, successively more unpalatable measures were required to be implemented by members, club officers, counties...all of us.

But rather than dissent, or indeed ignore them, the prevailing mood was one of everybody bearing what they had to endure with good grace and making things work.

This was crucially important. It meant that the Association didn't need to get distracted unnecessarily with matters of compliance but could focus all of its attention on the fundamentals at hand and how best to navigate the unfolding problems.

Consider a couple of cases in point: Locking our gates and closing walking tracks seemed quite draconian at the time. It wasn't a State requirement, but we felt it was necessary ourselves. Many were unhappy, but it was extremely well observed.

Similarly, the timelines imposed for returning to inter-county training. Not untypically, initial concerns were about "what sanctions will apply for contravention" rather than the actual merits of what was proposed. So, we introduced some sanctions. However, they proved to be unnecessary. Now I am sure there was the odd breach here and there but the overwhelming sense was of measures that were observed not because of any threat, but simply because everybody concerned recognised it was the right thing to do.

That is exactly where we need to get to. Observing standards through threat is neither desirable nor practical. It's not a very impressive premise upon which to base an organisation of our scale and import. Now I'm not naive enough to think we have arrived at that state yet. In fact I know we have not. But I hope that in reflecting upon the year we've all had we might recognise that there are things more important than stealing a march on the authorities or on prospective opponents. Things like our collective reputation, the health of our community and - when Covid is long gone - respect for ourselves and the Association.

The things that worked in the last year were down to good leadership at county and club level. That meant Club Executives making the right decisions about what we would promote / or not permit in our own clubs. It meant clarity of purpose and communications on the part of County Executives... "this is what we are doing, and this is why".

It was not all positive, I know that. But collectively we hung on in the face of all of the pressures because we all tried to make the right decisions for the right reasons. We tried our best to explain what was going on, and took responsibility.

That I would characterise as strong leadership in clubs and counties all over the country. It stood to us last year and it can be a theme again in 2021 and beyond...in hopefully better circumstances.

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HUMAN RESOURCES

I acknowledge throughout in these pages, implicitly and explicitly, the contribution of the thousands of volunteers who make the Association work. Correspondingly I wish too to consider and thank our staff in Croke Park and elsewhere for a remarkable effort this year.

Croke Park closed as a workplace from March and staff had to adjust to working from home with all of the challenges that entailed.

Although distanced we all tried to stay connected with each other and keep our networks – formal and informal – going. That itself takes effort and isn't always easy. Some people flourished in the new environment, but I know too that some people struggled. The HR Department worked hard to assist the transition to home working, providing supports like the confidential Employee Assistance Programme for advice and counselling, the Spectrum Wellbeing Portal with lots of health and wellbeing content as well as plenty of wellbeing webinars and home workouts.

The working year was still difficult though. Demands upon people increased. The stakes were higher and timelines and tempers often shorter. Each step we took was subject to intense external scrutiny. Staff had understandable questions about what lay ahead, and sometimes we had no certainty or reassurance to offer. All of this was endured while suffering regrettable but necessary reductions in pay, not to mention family or personal health concerns.

Despite all of this, every single positive outcome that I report upon in these pages was achieved in no small part thanks to the hard work and innovative thinking of our staff.

Consider in particular the Cúl Camps, and the sheer effort undertaken by coaching staff around the country to make the camps safe and enjoyable. That programme that made such a difference in so many homes this summer and set the tone for the second half of the year.

It seems that we will continue working from home in the months ahead, but I look forward to the day when we are back together in Croke Park again, or elsewhere, for matches of course, but also as a happy workplace.

We completed a thorough review of our HR structures, practices and policies this year. Clearly the events of 2020 were unforeseen when that work was undertaken, and the outcomes will have to be changed somewhat to reflect the realities we now face. The fruits of that work will become apparent in 2021 as we set about reshaping the organisation. There are a lot of experiences from the past year that we can draw upon and learn from as we look to make our structures more responsive and effective for the years ahead.



CHILD SAFEGUARDING

Maintaining Child Safeguarding services in the GAA

The events of the year brought a whole new awareness of the importance of sport and of Gaelic games to the lives of so many young people. Unseen by some, and perhaps unknown to others, many children in the GAA have suffered greatly due to the absence of their favourite games and the social outlet they provide. Coaches and parents alike needed to be especially cognisant this year of the fragile nature of some children on returning to play and to make allowances accordingly.

Such needs have cast into focus the importance of our safeguarding work and the value of the tireless efforts of key personnel particularly at club level who continue to maintain the highest of standards.

Never before were we so grateful to the many volunteers and a small cohort of staff nationwide, who still fulfilled various but vital safeguarding roles at club, county and national levels during this Pandemic. The two key roles which are vital to maintaining and progressing our safeguarding obligations are that of the Children's Officer and the Designated Liaison Persons (DLP).

Training

Those who hold a role of responsibility with children in the GAA must attend either face-to-face (in-person) training or a virtual (live) training workshop online prior to commencing their role at club or county level.

The circumstances of the Pandemic mean that we had to redesign our safeguarding training and our delivery methods to move away from reliance on face-to-face training. We temporarily extended training recognition periods for our online safeguarding programme and we published specific Cúl Camp and Club Camp videos for camp assistants.

We also developed our Child Protection in Sport Awareness Workshop (Safeguarding 1) and our Designated Liaison Person Workshop (Safeguarding 3) for delivery as part of the "Big Blue Button" platform. These virtual workshops are most

impressive in terms of both content and in how they are delivered. Indeed, such has been the success of the virtual training that this model of training will definitely be here to stay and will be a key feature alongside the return of face-to-face training whenever it is permitted to resume.

Of course we continued to engage in face-to-face safeguarding workshops when restrictions permitted, and most importantly we agreed a secure online coaching of children guidance document in collaboration with Tusla.

Zero tolerance of deliberate poor practice

Regrettably we often hear from Club Children's Officers disheartened to observe that some basic child safeguarding measures that are standard practice in other sports are still questioned by some in the GAA.

We should all know by now that it's not permissible for coaches to coach children while alone; or to text teenagers individually; and we still hear reports of abusive language by coaches towards young children at games and training. Even more disheartening is the lack of support at times shown to Children's Officers who intervene in the interest of the child and find little support from others for their endeavours.

All of the above examples are highlighted as unacceptable poor practice in our Code of Behaviour (Underage) and continue to be addressed in our Child Safeguarding training of coaches. There are no excuses and no such actions by coaches can ever be described as well-intentioned because they are not.

More serious allegations or concerns of abuse and of serious poor practice still occasionally emerge, albeit of an historic nature. The repercussions of such cases are felt many years later and we must stand firm in our beliefs and actions so that no such reoccurrences may take place in the GAA again.

We can take solace however in the fact that any external review of our safeguarding procedures will show that GAA safeguarding policies and guidance and training all lead the field and we will continue our efforts to maintain these standards and have them implemented.

Vetting completion

Our vetting services continued without disruption with an increase yet again of vetting applications from club coaches of underage teams. A total of 18,824 GAA members were vetted in 2020 via the AccessNI and the Garda National Vetting Bureau services. Notwithstanding the absence of Féile in 2020, this still represents another year-on-year increase in the vetting of GAA coaches who work with children in our Association.

Our juvenile players are so important to us and we have a responsibility to provide a safe environment for them to enjoy the games. We are committed to delivering a best-in-class service to safeguard children and young people and those standards were certainly upheld in 2020.

GAMES DEVELOPMENT

Player Pathway

Games Development is at the very core of our ambitions every year. Many other things changed in 2020 but that did not.

One of the key achievements this year was development of a new player pathway framework. The purpose here is to develop players holistically (as players and people) by providing them with The Right Support at The Right Time to ensure they are equipped with the knowledge and skills to reach their potential whatever that might be. The goal is to recruit and nurture players, so they Play and Stay with The GAA and in doing so sustaining our unique national games in every community across the country. The GAA Player Development Framework is underpinned by six principles to guide player development within the Association and are aligned to our GAA Values - Community Identity; Amateur Status; Inclusiveness; Respect; Player Welfare and Teamwork. The principles are:

1. 'Club is Core' - Club is central to nurturing a love and passion for our games and sustaining communities and lifelong participation
2. 'Player Centred' - We develop the player and the person
3. 'Quality Coaching Experiences' - Our coaches create an enjoyable coaching environment to meet needs and welfare of the player
4. 'As Many as Possible for as Long as Possible' - Our pathway prioritises long-term development with a games programme that supports recruitment, development and retention of players
5. 'Working Together' - Everyone works as a team to support the player across the club, school and county
6. 'Inclusive' - Gaelic Games are for All, regardless of abilities, background, beliefs or identities

Coaching during the Year

In reviewing these principles and in reflecting the past year it is with some pride we saw them demonstrated in how our coaching officers and volunteers supported the restart of our games right across the country. The efforts by so many to sustain activity

during and post lockdown did not go unnoticed, and for this everyone deserves huge credit.

From the very start of the pandemic Games Development personnel mobilised, adapted and engaged with our players and coaches, increasingly through the introduction of innovative delivery mechanisms. By the end of March face-to-face coach education was suspended and there was a switch to online learning.

By the end of June, through the work of National, Provincial and County Units 267 courses were delivered to 47,131 participants across four provinces and internationally. With little on-field activity the largest ever coaching survey was undertaken by the Association. In total 11,669 coaches engaged in the study and from this their coaching experiences and journey will inform future policy.

The lockdown served as an opportunity to reactivate a number of programmes. Through the #PrimarySchool Challenges, Gaelic games themed lesson plans linked to the Céim ar Aghaidh Resource were repackaged and repurposed to support home-schooling. The GAA Activity Planner really came into its own during this period with activities available to children to practice at home.

When primary schools reopened in September we had resources available to support coaching our coaches and teachers in line with public health guidelines.

It was hugely encouraging to see our presence and profile in schools maintained and restored and it is a testament to our coaches that they were universally welcomed back into schools to support the delivery of PE and as soon as they reopened. This is evidence of the special relationship the GAA enjoys with our primary schools and the quality of our coaches. By the end of the first school term GAA activities were back up to 80% of regular engagement.

Looking Forward

The year provided Games Development with the opportunity to review, reflect on our programmes and initiatives and methods of delivery. One area where we utilised the collective and brought national, provincial and county staff together was through the formation of workgroups to review our programmes and in particular begin the process of

actioning recommendations outlined within the player development report last year. A number of key milestones were achieved that include:

- o development of a new player pathway framework;
- o review of our coach development framework;
- o establishment of a Development CCC;
- o review of our youth games programme at youth level with identification of new minimum standards;
- o review of our Go Games model;
- o establishment of a sport science workgroup;
- o revised academy squad games programme;
- o new format for Féile.

Cúl Camps

Our agility and flexibility in terms of programme provision and delivery was best displayed in our successful staging of the GAA Kellogg's Cúl Camps. This was an extraordinary 'team' effort. A robust operational plan was devised and implemented in line with public health guidelines. However, the fact that these guidelines were rapidly evolving meant that significant contingency plans had to be incorporated into the training and education programme.

The result was 71,000 participants across nearly 700 camps. 3,391 coaches worked on the camps

too. The commitment of Kellogg's to the project was testament to the organisation, planning and implementation of measures and protocols in advance. A further innovative new departure saw camps delivered virtually in partnership with TG4 for the first three weeks.

The camps proved very successful in their own right, but equally as important they proved to be the catalyst for a safe and successful return to widespread club activity. Our members, the general public, and the health authorities saw that the GAA could be trusted to promote and run matches safely and responsibly on a widespread scale.

Such was the professional and safe manner in which the programme was delivered that there was only one recorded Covid-19 case related to a Cúl Camp, and it was later confirmed that this case had originated outside of the camp and not within it.

It is no exaggeration to suggest that the success of the camps gave the whole Association a lift and gave us the confidence to return to play.



HANDBALL CENTRE

I know that visitors to Croke Park were few this year, but when you next have occasion to visit headquarters you will immediately notice an impressive new structure beside the Cusack Stand car park. This is the new National Handball Centre which was completed in 2020.

The building comprises five state-of-the-art handball courts including a magnificent four-wall show court, two further full courts and a one-wall court at ground level, and a 60x30 court on the first floor. There is also office accommodation, a small café, and a generous hall for use by local community groups. The project cost €11.5m in total and took two years to build.



The building and the site it occupies are owned by Páirc an Chrócaigh Teoranta. The facility will be managed and operated by a joint venture company under a long-term lease. This company comprises a partnership between the GAA and the Irish Handball Sports Centre.

As an aside, on page 160 of the financial statements of Páirc an Chrócaigh Teoranta the building is recorded at a value of €5.5m, being 50% of the construction cost. This diminution in value is required in order to reflect the partnership nature of the operating lease and operating company.

Rest assured this does not in any way compromise GAA ownership or control. The building is on the Croke Park campus; its primary purpose is the promotion of handball; our staff will be based in the building; and it can never be repurposed, changed in any way or indeed sold without GAA consent.

The more important point however, is that it signals both a new era for handball, and a new era in terms of relations with our neighbours in the local community. It will be a fantastic asset for both in the years ahead.

Sadly, despite completing this year the building has yet to actually be used for its intended purposes. Instead we were pleased to make the facility available to the health authorities for use as a Covid test centre.

The World Handball Championships were scheduled to take place in Ireland this year, and there were plans to showcase the new facility as a pivotal part of that event. As we know, those championships will not now proceed. Nevertheless, the centre will in time prove to be a catalyst for redoubled promotion of the game as we strive to bring handball to a wider playing population.

Hopefully the day is not too far away when the facility can be properly commissioned. I know it will prove to be a vibrant new focal point for the neighbourhood around Croke Park and will be enjoyed by handball players, spectators, officials and community groups alike for very many years to come.

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WORLD GAA

The introduction of a quarterly newsletter helped to promote the quantum of work happening across all our international units. The publication was of particular value in highlighting the impressive extent of activity happening across our international units, something our co-funders at the Department of Foreign Affairs were really impressed to see. This proved to be a key factor in strengthening our partnership.

Remarkably, and despite worldwide events last year, I am delighted to report that international club development continues apace. The last 12 months saw the foundation of a number of new clubs, including the first-ever GAA club in Bermuda - established with the able assistance of USGAA. Russia as a GAA region is now thriving, to the extent that

Gaelic Football has been included on the Olympic Programme in Ulyanovsk. Furthermore, 2021 will be the "Year of Children's Sports" in Ulyanovsk and the Minister of Sports, Ramil Egorov, has already earmarked August for a first Cúl Camp in Russia and October for a schools blitz. This is a real first for us internationally.

Off the field our international units played a special role in sustaining community spirit amongst the Irish diaspora - many of whom did not make it home this year. Special mention goes to the GAA clubs in Vietnam where Saigon Gaels, Na Fianna, Ho Chi Minh City and Viet Celts in Hanoi supported the community by organising charity events to help people impacted by the Pandemic and natural disasters.

GAA AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN 2020

National Youth Forum

In common with many other perennial highlights of the regular GAA year, our National Youth Committee were not able to proceed with the National Youth Forum in its traditional format this year. However, we adapted as best we could and sought to ensure that the voice of our youth was still heard through delivery of a six-week webinar/podcast series that was produced and hosted by Youth Representatives. The series #GAAYouth – Beyond the Pitch focused on the following topics:

- Leadership & Mental Resilience with Jonny Cooper
- Wellbeing with Aishling Sheridan & Conor McDonald
- Inclusion & Equality with Ann & Angela Downey
- Volunteering with Caoibhe Sloan, Cormac Reape & Podge Collins
- Player Pathway with Fionn Fitzgerald
- COVID-19 & the 2020 Season with Valerie Wheeler, Conor Sweeney & Michael Fennelly

The series was well attended and well received, and

I hope played a key part in maintaining links with an important cohort of membership even when playing and training was denied us.

Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Initiative (DEYLI)

A total of 120 young GAA members, aged 15-18, were due to graduate from the DEYLI in 2020; the accredited programme is delivered in partnership with Foróige and NUIG. While an online graduation took place in February 2021 instead of the usual gathering in NUIG, a special online recognition event was hosted back in May to acknowledge the achievement of the participants and their volunteer tutors.

Normally delivered through a county-based model, the Steering Committee made the decision to recruit participants for phase five of the programme using a club-centred approach. A total of 42 clubs expressed an interest in hosting the initiative for their young members, (Ulster 9, Munster 5, Leinster 21, and Connacht 7) while recruiting tutors to receive online training delivered online by Foróige and NUIG. While the pandemic has delayed its October rollout, some clubs have commenced online delivery of the modules involved.

Future Leaders

While the school year was severely disrupted in the 2019/20 academic year, the Future Leaders Transition Year Programme continued to hold its position as the largest TY Programme in the state and is currently being delivered in over 350 schools. The programme, a joint initiative with the Professional Development Service for Teachers, is designed to encourage maturity, initiative, responsibility and leadership skills in pupils, and with the launch of the new history module in November 2020 now comprises nine modules (Introduction, Wellbeing, Nutrition, Performance Analysis, Refereeing, Coaching, Sports Journalism, and Event Management).

Considering that the programme gives pupils the knowledge and skills to support the effective delivery of Gaelic Games and health and wellbeing initiatives within their school or local club, the initiative has never been more relevant.

The challenges of providing support to schools remotely and through online webinars was readily taken on by our Future Leaders PDST Associates, headed by National Coordinator Eoghan Hanley, and the developments in hosting and delivering the programme through our GAA Learning Platform have served the programme well over the last 12 months.

The programme will continue to evolve ahead of the 2021/22 academic year as we aim to link it to the new GAA Green Club Programme and reinforce the relationship between our clubs and affiliate schools.

GAA Solo

Again, mindful of the needs of our schoolgoing GAA members and the challenges they were facing while denied access to their club and school friends and the games they love, the GAA Solo initiative was launched last Spring as the Covid-19 Pandemic took hold. The initiative used social media to promote positivity, physical activity and wellbeing among young people, while encouraging them to stay at home and follow public health guidelines. Run over four weeks, teachers and students were provided with four weekly challenges to partake in. The videos went viral on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram and helped thousands remain connected while staying apart. Prizes were sponsored for the best entries by O'Neills.



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Restrictions on our movements and gatherings, together with additional safety requirements meant we needed to very quickly adopt a completely different way of running our Association. We all became accustomed to working/volunteering from home and engaging with people through video calls, online meetings or instant messaging. Not perhaps the approach we would have chosen, but, as with many other strands of GAA life in 2020 we made the best of it, and our IT infrastructure, IT staff and IT officers played a vital role in helping us to adapt very quickly and keep the Association functioning.

Collaboration

Our initial focus, once the restrictions on movement were introduced in early March 2020, was to ensure that the Association could continue to operate and conduct its affairs whilst maintaining social distancing. Many of the normal practices that we were all familiar with had to change overnight and the dependence on technology, in particular hardware (devices /PCs / laptops), connectivity (broadband / 4G / 5G) and software applications, was immense.

Fortunately, the Association was in a good position to continue operations largely through the use of the Microsoft Office 365 suite of tools and in particular the MS Teams application, but also due to the flexibility and adaptability of its staff, volunteers, members and patrons. Countless committee meetings, at club, county, provincial and national levels have been conducted online since March. Indeed, the Special Congress which I refer to elsewhere was successfully conducted via MS Teams on April 17th, something that would never have been attempted were it not for the Pandemic.

ReturnToPlay

The ever-changing public health situation, and associated guidance and restrictions, meant that quite a number of controls were required to enable the Association to recommence its core activities

of playing games over the summer months, or ReturnToPlay as it was known. Some of these controls were awareness related e.g., communications to GAA members and prominent signage at GAA facilities. Some were training related e.g., mandatory Covid Awareness training courses and some were procedural – submission of health questionnaires and attendance record-keeping.

As you know, every GAA member was required to submit a Health Questionnaire prior to each engagement in GAA activities. Everybody was required to confirm that they were not displaying symptoms of COVID-19, and submit personal information, such as name and contact details, prior to playing, training, officiating, or even attending a match. The submission of these completed Health Questionnaires was verified by newly nominated individuals, called COVID Supervisors, in each club. The relevant information was retained for three weeks before being deleted in line with the agreed Data Protection policies and procedures.

Over a 19-day period in early June we designed, developed and implemented our ReturnToPlay app to manage the submission, verification and secure retention of this information.

Over 100,000 people registered to use the application in the first three days and there were 422,000 individual users by the end of the year. Over 10,000,000 Health Questionnaires were submitted in total, each of which indicates an individual participating in training or matches during the second half of 2020. On Saturday, September 5th 2020, over 119,000 people partook in GAA activities and there were on average eight people submitting Health Questionnaires every second for a sustained period of three hours (8:00 – 11:00am).

The sheer volume of activity at every age group across our clubs, particularly at underage levels, was incredible. The Health Questionnaire and contact tracing requirements for Cúl Camps were also managed through the ReturnToPlay app.

KEY STATS RETURN TO PLAY**100K users registered in the first three days****422,941 Registered users****10,471,531 Health Questionnaires****796,026 Distinct people (Registered users and their dependents)****24,177 COVID Supervisors assigned****8 Health Questionnaires submitted per second at peak times****Foireann**

From an IT perspective, the number one goal for 2021 is to complete the roll out of Foireann, the new Games Management System which represents a 'digital transformation' within the Association giving the ability to manage our games, and all of the associated administrative tasks, in one consolidated system. The Foireann system has been built using the ReturnToPlay application and is already being used to capture membership subscriptions and registrations for the 2021 season.

The efficiencies introduced, and the insight that will be available through analytics, will be critical to how the Association is managed into the future. There will also be very tangible impacts in the short term with reduced costs for clubs who choose to receive registrations online and secure, compliant communications tools available. Coupled with the Microsoft Office365 suite of products, Foireann will support clubs, volunteers, County Committees and Games Development coaches to do their jobs in an efficient, compliant and streamlined manner. Ensuring that these tools are utilised to their full potential will be a major focus for the year ahead.

eLearning

I refer elsewhere to advances in volunteer training this year. These would not have been possible without IT. The value of remote attendance on training courses or the ability to complete eLearning at a person's own convenience has been demonstrated in 2020. Indeed, the COVID-19 Awareness course was completed by over 400,000 people prior to returning

to play. In addition to the wide range of coaching and games development materials available, Data Protection, safeguarding and concussion courses have been provided along with content for the Club Leadership Development Programme. A big focus in 2020 was the delivery of Governance training and the eLearning module for this topic has proven to be a big success. These technologies, and this approach will continue to be assets in the years ahead.

Supporting LGFA, Camogie and Handball Associations

Significantly, our sister organisations in the Handball, Camogie and Ladies Gaelic Football Associations share our IT architecture and technologies. Considerable IT planning and support was devoted to the development of the new Handball Centre. We were also very glad to provide continued support in 2020, facilitating a common strategy for communications, officer training, and – crucially – ReturnToPlay across all Gaelic Games codes throughout the year. We also supported remote working / remote volunteering in each Association through the provision of Microsoft Office365 licences, assistance with Membership and Registration on Foireann, Data Protection support, eVetting support and general IT services. IT partnership has proven to be a fine model upon which to further explore and build collaboration between our organisations.

THE GAA AND COMMUNITIES

Covid-19 Pandemic response

For all the challenges it presented, 2020 also afforded the GAA the opportunity to showcase its work as a community organisation.

Within days of the initial lockdown back in March, as the population struggled to come to terms with the gravity of the situation, the GAA's network of clubs and volunteers were swinging into action. The most vulnerable in our communities were identified and teams of volunteers were recruited to deliver to them essential goods, medications, and hot meals. By mid-May 2020 across the 32 counties, almost 20,000 GAA volunteers were supporting almost 35,000 persons vulnerable to the disease. Almost all the 1,600 GAA clubs in Ireland were involved in some way. When our games stopped, our people didn't.

Many of the first clubs to respond were those amongst the 300 currently engaged in the GAA Healthy Club Project, which is delivered in partnership with Healthy Ireland, the HSE, the National Office for Suicide Prevention, Irish Life and the Tomar Trust. The PHA also supports specific Healthy Club initiatives across the Six Counties. Notably one of the last large gatherings in 2020 in Croke Park was the orientation day on February 1st for the 150 clubs commencing phase four of the project. The training they received through the Community & Health Department meant they had already established project teams charged with enhancing the club's work beyond just the promotion of Gaelic Games. In many instances this would have included connecting with isolated members of their communities, through the likes of the GAA Social Initiative. Scotstown GAA's 'Make your Céilí' (which arranges visits to older community members living alone) was featured on RTÉ's Ear to the Ground and at the annual GAA Healthy Club conference in 2019.

Mindful during lockdown of the health and wellbeing needs of the GAA community, the Community & Health Department worked with Irish Life to deliver a Healthy Club Steps Challenge during the month of June. Almost 12,000 GAA supporters and members racked up an incredible total of 2.2 billion steps on the MyLife App, competing on behalf of 424 registered clubs for a prize fund of €20,000 kindly donated by Irish Life. A second Healthy Clubs Steps Challenge planned for January 2021 was at the time of writing already on course to double these remarkable figures.

All this came after the hugely popular 'Ireland Lights Up' walking initiative back in January/February 2020, delivered as ever in partnership with the GAA, Operation Transformation, and Get Ireland Walking. Back in the happy times when large crowds could gather in their local GAA club, almost 400 clubs turned on their lights and hosted 121,000 walkers during the dark winter evenings of the eight-week broadcast period of the hit RTÉ show.

Diversity & Inclusion/GAA for All

It has rightly been pointed out that while we are all in the same Pandemic storm, we are not all in the same boat and the most marginalised of society have been amongst those most severely impacted. The annual M Donnelly Wheelchair Hurling and Camogie inter-provincial leagues and All-Ireland championship and the Football for All programmes (run in conjunction with the Irish Sport Schools Sports Council) could not be delivered in 2020. To ensure those with additional needs or members of other minority groups were being catered for, the Community & Health Department, with support from Sport Ireland, scheduled a National Diversity & Inclusion Fitness day to coincide with the European Week of Sport in September. 120 clubs from Ireland, UK, Europe, Canada, USA and Middle East signed up to the initiative. Over 250 GAA clubs have also signed up to the CARA disability sport charter. Meanwhile, the GAA supported the 2020 Virtual Pride Parade this year with video messages of support from members of the Association's gender diversity working group and the flying of the LGBTQ flag in many GAA grounds and clubs including outside Croke Park.

A highlight of the year was the New Gaels documentary broadcast on RTÉ in September which related the fascinating stories of many members and players from diverse backgrounds and our commitment to living up to being an organisation 'Where We All Belong'. It is important that we continue to assert our zero tolerance of racism. We will continue to work with organisations like Sports Against Racism Ireland to advance that message.

Green Clubs

Reflecting the GAA's nomination by Government as a champion of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a new Green Clubs Programme was successfully launched on December 9th.

Phase one will see 45 clubs and two regional venues (selected from over 200 clubs that responded to a questionnaire indicating an interest in sustainability) explore a range of sustainability projects designed to enrich their physical and social environments with a view to producing at the end of 2021 a Green Clubs toolkit for all clubs, based on the experiences of the pilot. A case study involving Clan na Gael GAA club, Dundalk, (one of three mentor clubs alongside Mullingar Shamrocks and Culloville Blues, Armagh) revealed how the club recently completed an energy saving project that will result in annual energy and maintenance savings of €10,000 per annum and a large reduction in CO2 emissions.

The GAA Green Club Programme, supported by the County & City Management Association and the local authority Climate Action Regional Offices, is delivered in partnership with the LGFA and Camogie Association, with additional support from expert agencies across the five thematic focus areas of the programme, namely: Energy, Waste, Biodiversity, Water, Travel & Transport.

Online training and webinars

Throughout 2021, the Community & Health Department like all units in the GAA adapted to the delivery of online training and webinars. A total of 748 GAA members received Healthy Club Officer training in 2020 representing 384 clubs. The department's summer webinar series covered a broad spectrum of health and wellbeing topics, attracted hundreds of attendees and featuring many notable contributors and worthy topics.

The breadth of work carried out and coordinated by the Community & Health Department could not be achieved without the exceptional support provided by our volunteer health and wellbeing and GAA for All committees and structures, our army of Healthy

Club officers, our statutory and NGO partners, and our funders. Much of this work might have once been considered peripheral to the core activities of the GAA. It is now reflective of an Association that can authentically call itself a community organisation as much as a sporting one. Such work has ensured that during one of the most challenging periods our country and our Association has experienced, the GAA's social capital has never been higher.

*IT IS IMPORTANT THAT
WE CONTINUE TO ASSERT
OUR ZERO TOLERANCE
OF RACISM. WE WILL
CONTINUE TO WORK WITH
ORGANISATIONS LIKE
SPORTS AGAINST RACISM
IRELAND TO ADVANCE
THAT MESSAGE.*



GAEILGE

Tá cur chun cinn na Gaeilge fíorthábhachtach don Chumann agus is cúis mhór áthais dom a thuairisciú go raibh bliain an-rathúil againn maidir le ról na Gaeilge sa Chumann arís i mbliana in ainneoin na ndúshlán éagsúil a bhí romhainn de bharr Covid-19.

Bhí an Ghaeilge le feiceáil ar ardáin chumarsáide Chumann Lúthchleas Gael, agus ar mheáin shóisialta an Chumainn ach go háirithe, níos mó ná riamh le bliain anuas agus tá forbairt mhór tar éis teacht ar líon na n-altanna a bhíonn le feiceáil ar rannóg Ghaeilge an tsuíomh idirlín idir thuairiscí ar chluichí, ghné-ailt, ghníomhaíochtaí do pháistí, scéalta móra na Gaeilge sa Chumann agus go leor eile.

Foilsíodh iris nua Ghaeilge an Chumainn, ‘Cuaille’, don chéad uair le linn 2020 agus beidh an iris seo ar fáil uair sa ráithe uaidh seo amach. Craoladh neart podchraoltaí i gcomhar leis an Spota Dubh timpeall ar na comórtais peile agus iomána idirchontae i mbliana agus tá fás mór ag teacht ar an líon lucht éisteachta a bhíonn ag na podchraoltaí seo de réir a chéile.

D’éirigh linn clár oibre Fhondúireacht Sheosaimh Mhic Dhonncha 2020 a chur i gcrích agus tá 200 club páirteach anois sa scéim Ghaeilge seo a eagraítear i gcomhar le Glór na nGael. D’éirigh le trí chlub boinn óir a bhaint amach i mbliana.

Mar chuid de shraith imeachtaí a eagraíodh do Sheachtain na Gaeilge i mbliana, rinneadh ceiliúradh ar ‘Lá Idirnáisiúnta na mBan’ agus ar an nGaeilge ag ócáid a eagraíodh i bPáirc an Chrócaigh i Mí an Mháirta.

Tá áit ag an nGaeilge i ngach réimse de chuid obair an Chumainn agus bhí sé le feiceáil go soiléir i 2020 nuair a seoladh an leagan Gaeilge de ‘Cheannairí an Todhchaí’ i mí Eanáir. Bhí sé le feiceáil, freisin, i bhfeachtais mhargaíochta an Chumainn agus sna feachtais a eagraíodh maidir le scaipeadh Covid-19 a chloí. Bhí an Ghaeilge lárnach i gcomóradh Dhomhnach na Fola agus eisíodh físeáin Ghaeilge i gcuimhne an 14 a maraíodh mar chuid den

chomóradh. Ba i nGaeilge a bhí na Cúl Camps a craoladh ar TG4 i Mí Iúil freisin, dar ndóigh, agus foilsíodh ceachtanna Gaeilge mar chuid de na #GAAPrimary Challenges.

D’éirigh linn an iliomad rudaí eile a bhaint amach don Ghaeilge le linn 2020 agus tá muid ag súil go mór le bliain ghnóthach eile arís i 2021.

Scór

Bhí bliain ghnóthach ag Scór, freisin, le bliain anuas. Despite having to defer three Scór Sinsir provincial finals as well as the All-Ireland finals that were due to take place in April, 1,700 attended the Scór na nÓg finals in January. These finals took place in the INEC in Killarney and were a huge success.

During the first lockdown between March and June ‘Virtual Scór’ took place over a six week period and both young and old had an opportunity to showcase their talents online. We were overwhelmed with the response and are grateful to all those who took part.

Over 400 clubs participated in Scór activity again in 2020 and we look forward to the resumption of Scór competitions as soon as it is safe to do so.

Is gné an-tábhachtach é cur chun cinn an cultúir Ghaelaigh de chuid obair Chumann Lúthchleas Gael agus tá sé iontach go dtugann Scór deis dár gcuid ball fud fad na tíre teacht le chéile chun an ceol, an drámaíocht, an damhsa agus an amhránaíocht Ghaelach a cheiliúradh.

CONGRESS 2021

It was important that we do everything possible to keep the machinery of the Association functioning.

We introduced some emergency protocols, technologies and advice to facilitate and encourage units to manage their affairs remotely. Thus, over the last few months clubs and counties, (and in recent weeks provinces) have all harnessed new technologies to conduct AGMs and conventions in safe, socially distant ways.

The same imperative applies to Congress. This year we gather virtually, with some necessary changes in format and a somewhat truncated agenda. Specifically, our consideration of motions to vary Treoir Oifigiúil is very different.

Some 47 motions have been prepared for consideration and have been validated by the Rules Advisory Committee and Central Council in the

normal manner. However, many of the proposals are complicated and have far reaching consequences. They require careful debate, which is not best achieved in a virtual meeting.

Included among these are the potential alternative football championship structures and the potential playing rule changes proposed by the Standing Committee on Playing Rules. There are one or two other proposals as well. The research and groundwork is complete; consultation has been widespread; the precise motions are drafted and approved for consideration. But it would be a disservice to seek to advance them via this constrained Congress. So they are not before you for consideration today.

Later this year, as soon as it is permissible and safe for us to gather again in person, we will convene a Special Congress for the specific purpose of considering these topics.



IN ÓMÓS

The GAA is always, ultimately, about people.

The great strength of our Association has always been the calibre of people who dedicate themselves as players, volunteers, supporters and administrators to the betterment of the GAA at local and national level.

Every year we take a moment to reflect on the passing of those outstanding servants who have sadly passed on in the previous 12 months and whose contribution to the GAA is a part of their legacy.

Covid-19 not only added to our number of bereaved, but also had a cruel impact on our ability to mark their passing appropriately.

One area where the importance of a GAA club to a community can be often seen is in these times of

grief, loss and tragedy; when our clubs rally in such large numbers to honour and pay their respects to one of our own.

Due to restrictions, funerals and services were seriously and understandably curtailed.

It denied our membership an opportunity to make those public displays of appreciation and affection, but I know that out of sight was not out of mind and that clubs continued to be a great source of strength to people who suffered a loss during the last year.

At a time when we dare to look to the future and hope for the challenges of 2020 to begin to recede, we always are mindful of those family, friends and colleagues who are sadly no longer with us and whose memory we look to honour.

Go dtuga Dia suaimhneas síoraí dá n-anamacha.



CONCLUSION

2020 is a year that will live long in all of our memories for any number of lamentable reasons.

We should remember the losses and the human cost of last year, but I hope too, that we can, in time, reflect also upon some good things that emerged, or that we came to value more in adversity. And I include elements of our GAA year in that.

There were great matches, great endeavour off the field, and a reminder that the GAA means a lot to a very great many people.

Unfortunately, as I write this it now seems certain that 2021 will also be overshadowed by Covid. Indeed, it may, in many respects, prove even more difficult.

Last December for example, after lengthy deliberation, we decided upon a modified fixture schedule for 2021. Two months later events have again overtaken us and we will have to think anew. Similarly, after a lot of positive momentum before Christmas, the prospect of spectators returning to matches suddenly seems very remote again. Consequently, our financial prospects for the year ahead are not good.

So we could be forgiven for conceding that 2021 only means more of the same.

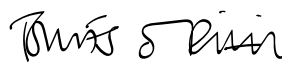
But perhaps it can be better. We are a little better equipped to deal with what is ahead of us. Last year's travails were thrust upon us suddenly. This year we can at least plan for what may be ahead. Last year taught us, as if we didn't know already, that the GAA can adapt, it can show its true worth and it can overcome.

Many of the challenges of prior years... fixture congestion, giving sufficient priority to clubs, the costs of preparing teams, challenges to our core values and so on... they still apply. One good outcome from 2020 can be a realisation that these things are less daunting than we might have thought. We were sorely tested this year and we kept going. And I hope that we are a better organisation for all that.

We are certainly all the stronger for the huge voluntary effort that we saw throughout the GAA this year. Sincere thanks are due to everybody who played a part – on the field and off – in keeping the Association and our games to the forefront of Irish life.

If we can harness the confidence and conviction and cooperation that was in evidence throughout the GAA last year I know there are better times ahead for us.

Fanaigí Sábháilte.



Tom Ryan
Ard-Stiúrthóir
Cumann Lúthchleas Gael





2020 - YEAR OF THE UNBREAKABLE TREATY

Consistency in a world gone mad, Limerick were a fixed point in the hurling heavens, illuminating the stop-start season with their unerring standard and plotting a path towards greatness.

For two years now John Kiely's Treaty men have been hugely effective in the quest to show that their breakthrough Liam MacCarthy success of 2018 was anything but a flash in the pan.

And if the 2019 All-Ireland bid came unstuck after winning the Allianz League and the Munster title – the 2020 campaign was very much a case of no mistakes this time.

It produced a clean sweep of league, provincial and All-Ireland honours for a second MacCarthy cup crown in three years and a real sense of an empire being built on Shannonside.

They say necessity is the mother of invention. Well, it is certainly true to say that John Kiely, Paul Kinnerk and the Limerick backroom excelled at maintaining the Limerick challenge in the face of some personnel challenges that could easily have derailed them. The team that lined out against Waterford, in what will forever be known as the Christmas All-Ireland decider, was most certainly not the first choice 15 that Limerick would have settled on at the start of the season.

But it says a lot about them that the changes and reshuffle at the back in no way deflected from the sense that this is a seriously formidable-looking Limerick team.

The talismanic Shane Dowling called time on his magnificent career, the brilliant forward and free-taking ace sadly cut short by injury but fittingly exited with a Celtic Cross from 2018 to go with his club championship heroics with Na Píarsaigh.

Injuries robbed them of defensive rocks Richie English early in the season and then Mike Casey midway through it and meant that Limerick needed to rebuild

the full-back line with Dan Morrissey and Barry Nash heading into an area where there is never a margin for error.

Reshuffles saw Kyle Hayes move from centre forward to wing back and Cian Lynch bring his industry from midfield to centre forward.

The biggest compliment you can pay them is the fact that they seemed to get stronger as the long season went on.



But they were by no means the only team that made a statement in 2020.

Clare began the Allianz League under new manager Brian Lohan in an unbeaten run that was halted by the March lockdown, and while they never fully reignited when things picked up in October, they showed positive signs and in the phenomenal free-scoring of Tony Kelly gave us one of the season highlights, striking 1-53 in the championship. Stunned by Laois in 2019, Dublin avenged that defeat in the championship and overturned a 16-point deficit to give Kilkenny a massive fright only to run out of road in injury time in a Leinster semi-final - but clearly unearthed a new forward gem in Dónal Burke.

Kilkenny rode out an early storm to eventually beat Galway in the Leinster final with yet another new-look team assembled by Brian Cody, but one still inspired by some veteran heroes in a game that will be forever remembered for the majestic goal-scoring wrist work of Richie Hogan.

That defeat was a setback for Galway who had looked so impressive in ousting Wexford 1-27 to 0-17. But they regrouped and after a titanic struggle with old foes Tipp that resulted in a 3-23 to 2-24 victory in the All-Ireland quarter-final, they just came up short against the Limerick machine in the semi-final by 0-27 to 0-24. Without silverware, but far from a fruitless first season for new manager Shane O'Neill. The defending All-Ireland champions, Tipperary got a lot right but never quite hit the sort of free-flowing authority that had been their 2019 hallmark. Wexford and Laois, teams that recorded significant progress in 2019 with Leinster and Joe McDonagh titles respectively, also struggled to leave a mark.

Liam Cahill took the reins in Waterford and inherited a team who hadn't won a championship match in 10 games before beating Cork in October.

Despite losing the Munster final to Limerick 0-25 to 0-21 they showed more signs of progress as some new faces and some rejuvenated stars supplied them with momentum. The highlight clearly was overturning a nine-point deficit in a second-half whirlwind that left their neighbours and rivals Kilkenny flat footed in the All-Ireland semi-final. As Stephen Bennett starred, Austin Gleeson returned to sparkling form, Stephen O'Keeffe and Tadhg de Búrca inspired and Conor Prunty, Calum Lyons and Dessie Hutchinson were more than just a supporting cast, there was nothing fortuitous about Waterford reaching the All-Ireland final.

Their problem was that come the final, Limerick were now in full stride, but the Déise definitely made a statement in 2020.

It was Limerick's year, however. The opening match in Munster on October 25 doubled up as also being the Allianz League Division 1 final between Limerick and Clare. The Treaty men posted 0-36 that day as they clearly put down a marker for what was to come.

Tipperary, Waterford and Galway all posed problems for them and unsettled them at times. But there was never any panic.

The reshuffled defence ended the year with their goalkeeper and six backs all being nominated for PwC All-Stars.

The twin towers of Gearóid Hegarty and Tom Morrissey in the half-forward line were in a different class, while on the inside line the exceptional form of Séamus Flanagan gave them another lethal weapon alongside Aaron Gillane.

A school principal by profession, John Kiely will have been rightly satisfied to see his men pass every test and ace all their exams because simply put, they had

an answer for every question asked of them. He will know too, that after a season like that every other contender will have their homework done on Limerick for the new season, as the green machine are held up as a new standard.

There's a sense though, that the challenge will continue to bring out the best in this Limerick side. Yet again, the hurling public will be the beneficiaries as a new decade continues and hurling's ability to send our excitement levels soaring shows no sign of abating.

Antrim's excellent and high-scoring form in 2020 meant they were first time winners of the Joe McDonagh Cup, edging an entertaining Croke Park final against a quality Kerry side with full-forward Conor McCann playing a real captain's role.

Kildare began their Christy Ring Cup campaign with a walkover due to a Covid shutdown in the Offaly squad. Offaly regrouped but were stunned by a sensational strong finish against Down in their semi-final. The Mourne Men couldn't kick on in the final however, as Kildare's ability to get goals was the decisive factor in a gripping 3-16 to 0-22 final at Croke Park on November 22.

The Nickey Rackard Cup final was another close-fought affair as a Mayo side inspired by Shane Boland were dramatically overhauled by Donegal who got two goals in the last four minutes from Davin Flynn and Richie Ryan to give them a third title on a 3-18 to 0-21 scoreline.

Louth overcame an earlier one-point defeat to Fermanagh in the group stages to see off the Erne men by 2-19 to 2-8 in the Lory Meagher final with Darren Geoghegan prominent.



THE FOOTBALL YEAR

Most seasons begin with baseline speculation around permutations and connotations.

New faces, fresh tactics, old rivalries, retired personalities, 'the form' and the usual fervour and giddiness as hope springs eternal across a blank canvas.

2020 will be forever different in that it focused on one issue and one issue alone: could the season even proceed?

With so much engulfing society and the rhythm of life so fundamentally challenged, weighing up the pros and cons of staging the championships at times might have seemed trite.

However, with all of the necessary assurances in place, the allure and the positive distraction provided by the championships very quickly became apparent and it was not only welcome but for many, it was needed.

Those of more seniority amongst us often marvel at the resilience and flexibility of the GAA in getting its games played in troubled times.

The revolutionary period, followed by the Emergency, and Foot and Mouth outbreaks all challenged fixture-

scheduling in the past in a way that had never been experienced before the outbreak of Covid-19.

During these testing spells the Association always managed to show deftness and flexibility to get games and finals played – sometimes years late – to ensure the record books carried the name of the jubilant victors and the gallant vanquished.

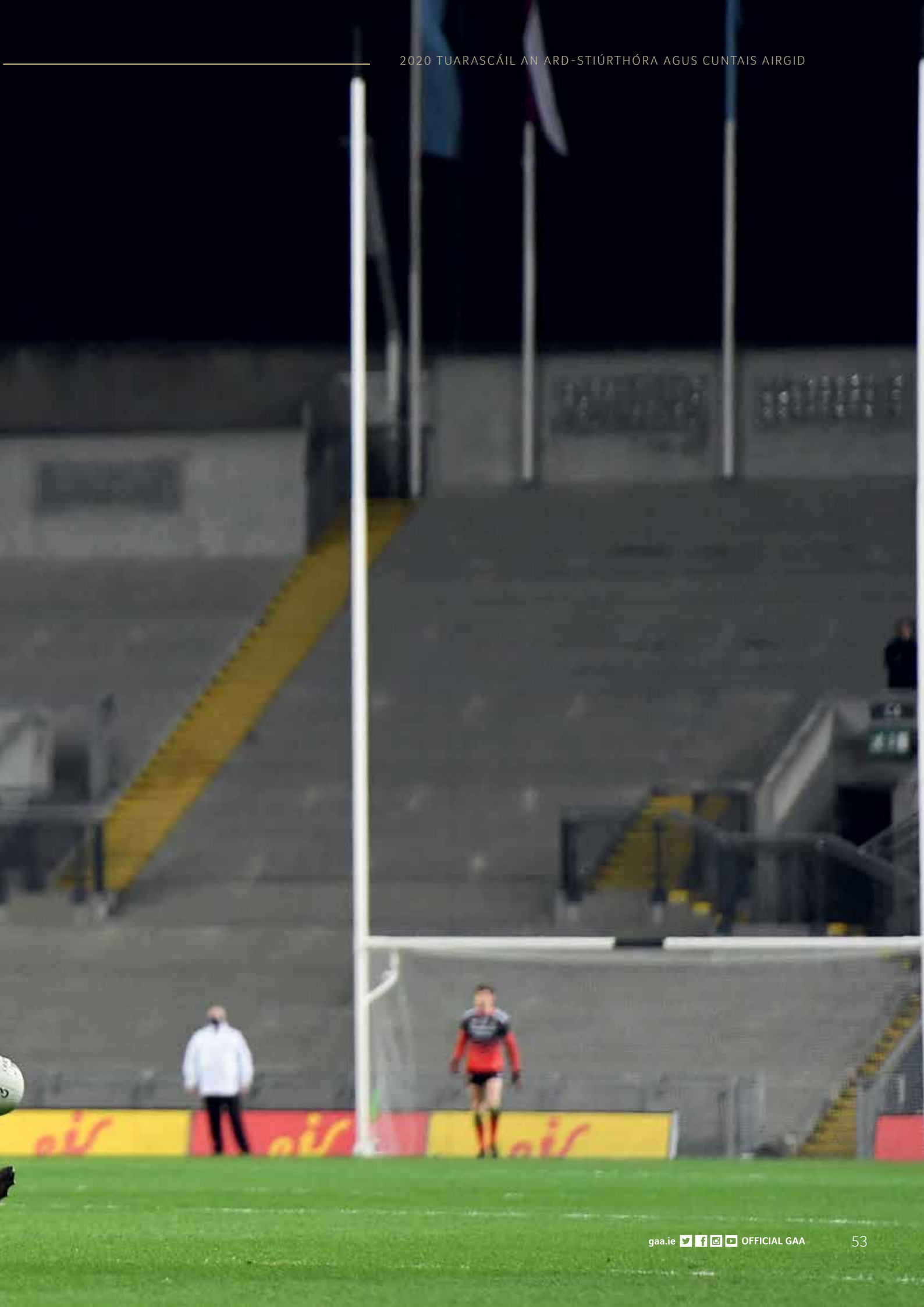
Few, if any of us, ever thought such a scenario would play out in modern times but the year 2020 asked questions of us we could never have countenanced – far outstripping the confines of sport.

After months of inactivity – some of it without collective training never mind games – it soon became apparent that the season when it did begin to materialise, would be different to anything any of us had ever experienced.

For a start there would be no crossover between the club and county scene – itself a radical development with potential to influence a scheduling debate well and truly up and running already.

Of no less significance was the limit or complete absence of supporters from games which, left us grappling with the new normal.





It's said you only truly miss and covet something when it's taken from you and the oxygen that the presence of supporters at games provide was laid bare because of its absence last year.

The shouts of players and managers, the interactions with match officials, the cries of watching substitutes and the bizarre and muted goal celebrations. It was all new to us and it was all very different to what we are accustomed.

The echoes emanating from empty stands reminded everyone that this was not the same but the general consensus was not long materialising that it was still a whole lot better than no games at all.

The club championships were something of a revelation.

Good weather (most of the time!), firm pitches, quick-fire games in many instances and the full focus of the GAA family, not to mention the undivided attention of county players, all made for compelling action.

Added to a real appetite for games following the long break and the availability of games via national broadcasters and county streaming, it all made for a bumper summer of GAA activity.

It would be impossible to list the standout moments as the club scene dominated national GAA coverage but there were some unforgettable moments and achievements.

The Tyrone football championship engaged followers across the island and further afield with Dungannon Clarkes making history in more ways than one by ending their club drought after penalties.

If any county final win underlined the freshness of county players in action for their clubs it was Ballymun's success in Dublin where their large county contingent tackled the club championship fresh and eager.

The only blight to otherwise memorable campaigns was the inability to stage the provincial and All-Ireland series for county winning teams because

of calendar restrictions and of course the county championships that were not completed owing to the return of a second lockdown.

If anything, the club activity whetted the appetite for the county championships that followed.

Despite problems encountered in Sligo a huge logistical undertaking swung into action which saw a straight knock-out football championship with finish on the day in operation.

It was novel because it had to be and it didn't disappoint.

Before a championship ball was kicked Mayo's big league away win over a previously high-flying Galway reminded us all that it would not simply be a case of picking up where we had left off.

Once the Allianz League honours had been secured by Kerry, Roscommon, Cork and Limerick, the provincial championship took centre stage evoking memories of years gone by with no safety net for 2020.

The novel nature of proceedings was underlined by the exit of Tyrone at the first hurdle, a result that would bring the curtain down on Mickey Harte's lengthy Tyrone managerial tenure.

Early contender for result of the year went to the Cork footballers for their last-gasp smash and grab against Kerry in the Munster semi-final when Mark Keane ended Kerry's interest in the 2020 competition.

With Mayo and Dublin seeing off Galway and Meath respectively to secure Connacht and Leinster provincial honours, it was the Ulster and Munster finals that came out tops in the drama stakes.

In a year when the GAA honoured the memory of the 14 people who died on Bloody Sunday 100 years earlier, the poignancy of the event organised at Croke Park on the night of the Leinster football final resonated across the organisation and further afield.

In an incredible twist of fate, the results of the two

provincial finals the following day ensured that the exact same semi-final line-up from 1920 was repeated.

Tipperary travelled to Páirc Uí Chaoimh to take on a buoyant Cork team and set about making some history of their own.

Chasing a first Munster title since 1935 they set about their task in resolute fashion and were full value for a win earned playing in the jersey the county wore on Bloody Sunday.

Cavan bounced back from their league relegation to start a championship odyssey which included wins over Monaghan, Antim and Down to secure an Ulster final date against a fancied Donegal team.

A dogged Cavan challenge made a mockery of the pre-match billing and a late flourish saw the deal sealed and a first title since 1997 delivered.

The two wins, coming as they did on an emotional weekend for the organisation, reverberated around the Association and provided a welcome tonic during the Pandemic – the only pity being the absence of family and friends to savour the moments.

There was no disguising the step up that awaited both victors at the next stage as two of the most consistent teams in the game came into view.

Cavan locked horns with defending All-Ireland champions Dublin and despite a determined start, the six-in-a-row chasers had too much in reserve.

Similarly, Tipperary ran into the Mayo juggernaut the following afternoon and despite a glut of second-half chances spurned, they could have no real complaints as their fairytale season also came to a halt.

Dublin v Mayo final clashes have been a consistent narrative in top level football since Mayo dethroned the Dubs back in 2012.

Could this, the strangest year in living memory, be the year that the Connacht champions would put their final hoodoo to rest once and for all?

The first half suggested it might just be as Dublin were served up a test that they hadn't experienced all year.



*TIPPERARY TRAVELLED
TO PÁIRC UÍ CHAOIMH
TO TAKE ON A BUOYANT
CORK TEAM AND SET
ABOUT MAKING SOME
HISTORY OF THEIR OWN.*

Despite striking for one of the fastest finals goals of all time, when Dean Rock palmed to the net after only 13 seconds, Mayo roared back into the game with Cillian O'Connor and Ryan O'Donoghue particularly lively.

Even a second Dublin goal, expertly taken by Con O'Callaghan, didn't dampen the Mayo challenge. However, half-time seemed to come at the wrong time for them and the fizz left their challenge in the second period as Dublin got a stranglehold on the game and won with five points to spare.

Their game management and overall brilliance was impossible to ignore in that second half and their sixth consecutive title, elevating as it did players such as James McCarthy and Stephen Cluxton onto the highest pantheon of the game, served up a reminder of the achievements of this group – even in the year of a change of management, with Dessie Farrell now at the helm.

In the weeks that followed a flurry of retirements saw players such as Paddy Andrews, Michael Darragh Macauley, Chris Barrett, Keith Higgins and others

leave the stage bringing the curtain down on their respective contributions to top-level football.

Even in strange times the wheel keeps turning.

2020 will be forever known as the year of Covid, of that there can be little dispute.

Equally clear cut however, is the commendation our players, coaches and administrators – at every level – deserve for shining a ray of light across a year when the rhythm of life was severely challenged.

2021 may ask similar questions of us all. Similar answers would at least shorten the year and help on towards something approaching normality.



*even in the STRANGEST
times the wheel
keeps TURNING.*



2020 HURLING FINALS RESULTS



Date	Competition	Stage	Venue
13/12/2020	GAA Hurling All-Ireland Senior Championship	Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh
13/12/2020	Joe McDonagh Cup	Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh
22/11/2020	Christy Ring Cup	Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh
22/11/2020	Nickey Rackard Cup	Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh
28/11/2020	Lory Meagher Cup	Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh
25/10/2020	Allianz Hurling League Roinn 1 / Munster GAA Hurling Senior Championship	Final / Quarter-Final	Semple Stadium, Thurles
18/10/2020	Allianz Hurling League Roinn 2A	Final	Bord Na Móna O'Connor Park
18/10/2020	Allianz Hurling League Roinn 2B	Final	Athletic Grounds
08/03/2020	Allianz Hurling League Roinn 3A	Final	Éire Óg, Carrickmore
18/10/2020	Allianz Hurling League Roinn 3B	Final	Connacht Centre of Excellence
18/01/2020	AIB GAA Hurling All-Ireland Intermediate Club Championship	Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh
18/01/2020	AIB GAA Hurling All-Ireland Junior Club Championship	Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh
19/01/2020	AIB GAA Hurling All-Ireland Senior Club Championship	Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh



Result				Referee		
LIMERICK	0	30	0	19	WATERFORD	Fergal Horgan
ANTRIM	0	22	1	17	KERRY	Liam Gordon
DOWN	0	22	3	16	KILDARE	Chris Mooney
DONEGAL	3	18	0	21	MAYO	Kevin Jordan
FERMANAGH	2	8	2	19	LOUTH	Gearóid McGrath
LIMERICK	0	36	1	23	CLARE	Fergal Horgan
ANTRIM	2	23	2	20	KERRY	Liam Gordon
DOWN	2	16	0	17	DERRY	James Clarke
ARMAGH	0	19	1	18	DONEGAL	Aidan Ferguson
SLIGO	3	17	2	16	LEITRIM	Richie Fitzsimons
FR. O'NEILL'S	5	12	3	19	TULLAROAN	Thomas Walsh
CONAHY SHAMROCKS	0	22	0	15	RUSSELL ROVERS	Seán Stack
SHAMROCKS BALLYHALE	0	18	0	15	BORRIS-ILEIGH	Colm Lyons

2020 HURLING CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS

Date	Competition	Stage	Venue
24/10/2020	Leinster GAA Hurling Senior Championship	Quarter-Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh
31/10/2020	Leinster GAA Hurling Senior Championship	Semi-Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh
31/10/2020	Leinster GAA Hurling Senior Championship	Semi-Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh
14/11/2020	Leinster GAA Hurling Senior Championship	Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh
25/10/2020	Munster GAA Hurling Senior Championship	Quarter-Final	Semple Stadium, Thurles
31/10/2020	Munster GAA Hurling Senior Championship	Semi-Final	Semple Stadium, Thurles
01/11/2020	Munster GAA Hurling Senior Championship	Semi-Final	Páirc Uí Chaoimh
15/11/2020	Munster GAA Hurling Senior Championship	Final	Semple Stadium, Thurles



Result					Referee	
LAOIS	0	23	2	31	DUBLIN	Paud O'Dwyer
DUBLIN	2	22	3	20	KILKENNY	Johnny Murphy
GALWAY	1	27	0	17	WEXFORD	Colm Lyons
KILKENNY	2	20	0	24	GALWAY	Fergal Horgan
LIMERICK	0	36	1	23	CLARE	Fergal Horgan
CORK	1	24	1	28	WATERFORD	Sean Stack
TIPPERARY	2	17	3	23	LIMERICK	Liam Gordon
LIMERICK	0	25	0	21	WATERFORD	Colm Lyons



2020 HURLING CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS

Date	Competition	Stage	Venue
07/11/2020	GAA Hurling All-Ireland Senior Championship	Round 1	UPMC Nowlan Park
14/11/2020	GAA Hurling All-Ireland Senior Championship	Round 2	LIT Gaelic Grounds, Limerick
14/11/2020	GAA Hurling All-Ireland Senior Championship	Round 2	MW Hire O'Moore Park, Portlaoise
21/11/2020	GAA Hurling All-Ireland Senior Championship	Quarter-Final	Páirc Uí Chaoimh
21/11/2020	GAA Hurling All-Ireland Senior Championship	Quarter-Final	LIT Gaelic Grounds, Limerick
28/11/2020	GAA Hurling All-Ireland Senior Championship	Semi-Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh
29/11/2020	GAA Hurling All-Ireland Senior Championship	Semi-Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh
13/12/2020	GAA Hurling All-Ireland Senior Championship	Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh
25/10/2020	Joe McDonagh Cup	Round 1	Corrigan Park, Belfast
25/10/2020	Joe McDonagh Cup	Round 1	Austin Stack Park
31/10/2020	Joe McDonagh Cup	Round 2	Netwatch Cullen Park
31/10/2020	Joe McDonagh Cup	Round 2	TEG Cusack Park, Mullingar
07/11/2020	Joe McDonagh Cup	Round 3A	Netwatch Cullen Park
14/11/2020	Joe McDonagh Cup	Round 3B	Corrigan Park, Belfast
21/11/2020	Joe McDonagh Cup	Round 4	Austin Stack Park
21/11/2020	Joe McDonagh Cup	Round 4	Páirc Tailteann
28/11/2020	Joe McDonagh Cup	Round 5	TEG Cusack Park, Mullingar
28/11/2020	Joe McDonagh Cup	Round 5	Páirc Tailteann
13/12/2020	Joe McDonagh Cup	Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh



Result				Referee	
LAOIS	3	17	0	27 CLARE	Thomas Walsh
CORK	1	17	2	18 TIPPERARY	James Owens
CLARE	1	21	0	17 WEXFORD	Liam Gordon
WATERFORD	3	27	3	18 CLARE	Paud O Dwyer
GALWAY	3	23	2	24 TIPPERARY	Johnny Murphy
KILKENNY	2	23	2	27 WATERFORD	Fergal Horgan
LIMERICK	0	27	0	24 GALWAY	James Owens
LIMERICK	0	30	0	19 WATERFORD	Fergal Horgan

ANTRIM	4	25	1	15 WESTMEATH	Seán Stack
KERRY	1	20	0	13 MEATH	Thomas Walsh
CARLOW	2	25	5	16 ANTRIM	Cathal McAllister
WESTMEATH	0	14	2	19 KERRY	Seán Cleere
CARLOW	1	22	1	21 MEATH	Rory McGann
ANTRIM	3	18	2	14 KERRY	Patrick Murphy
KERRY	2	22	1	23 CARLOW	Cathal McAllister
MEATH	1	19	2	20 WESTMEATH	Rory McGann
WESTMEATH	1	21	2	13 CARLOW	Thomas Walsh
MEATH	3	10	2	30 ANTRIM	David Hughes
ANTRIM	0	22	1	17 KERRY	Liam Gordon



2020 HURLING CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS

Date	Competition	Stage	Venue
24/10/2020	Christy Ring Cup	Round 1	Bord Na Móna O'Connor Park
25/10/2020	Christy Ring Cup	Round 1	Celtic Park
25/10/2020	Christy Ring Cup	Round 1	Dr Hyde Park
31/10/2020	Christy Ring Cup	Round 2A	Ballycran
01/11/2020	Christy Ring Cup	Round 2A	Newbridge
07/11/2020	Christy Ring Cup	Round 2B	Páirc Esler, Newry
08/11/2020	Christy Ring Cup	Round 2B	Athleague
14/11/2020	Christy Ring Cup	Semi-Final	Páirc Esler, Newry
14/11/2020	Christy Ring Cup	Semi-Final	Newbridge
22/11/2020	Christy Ring Cup	Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh
24/10/2020	Nickey Rackard Cup	Round 1	Athletic Grounds
24/10/2020	Nickey Rackard Cup	Round 1	Clontibret
24/10/2020	Nickey Rackard Cup	Round 1	Letterkenny
31/10/2020	Nickey Rackard Cup	Round 2A	Healy Park, Omagh
31/10/2020	Nickey Rackard Cup	Round 2A	Letterkenny
07/11/2020	Nickey Rackard Cup	Round 2B	Glennon Brothers Pearse Park
07/11/2020	Nickey Rackard Cup	Round 2B	Clontibret
14/11/2020	Nickey Rackard Cup	Semi-Final	Elverys MacHale Park, Castlebar
14/11/2020	Nickey Rackard Cup	Semi-Final	Letterkenny
22/11/2020	Nickey Rackard Cup	Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh
24/10/2020	Lory Meagher Cup	Round 1	Darver
01/11/2020	Lory Meagher Cup	Round 2	Brewster Park
08/11/2020	Lory Meagher Cup	Round 3	Kingspan Breffni
28/11/2020	Lory Meagher Cup	Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh



Result

Referee

OFFALY (CONCEDED)	0	0	0	0	KILDARE	Thomas Gleeson
DERRY	0	0	0	0	SLIGO (CONCEDED)	Aidan Ferguson
ROSCOMMON	3	14	2	19	WICKLOW	Kevin Jordan
DOWN	1	13	0	13	DERRY	Chris Mooney
KILDARE	2	14	1	10	WICKLOW	Patrick Murphy
DERRY	1	12	0	32	OFFALY	Colum Cuning
ROSCOMMON	0	20	0	17	SLIGO	Richie Fitzsimons
DOWN	2	20	1	23	OFFALY	Seán Stack
KILDARE	3	24	1	9	ROSCOMMON	Thomas Gleeson
DOWN	0	22	3	16	KILDARE	Chris Mooney
ARMAGH	1	21	0	12	LEITRIM	Colm McDonald
MONAGHAN	2	10	3	32	MAYO	Colin Murray
DONEGAL	2	13	1	14	LONGFORD	Tarlach Conway
TYRONE	0	9	1	23	MAYO	Colum Cuning
DONEGAL	3	13	1	9	ARMAGH	James Clarke
LONGFORD	0	12	1	11	LEITRIM	Thomas Gleeson
MONAGHAN	1	12	2	19	TYRONE	Aidan Ferguson
MAYO	3	23	1	11	LEITRIM	Richie Fitzsimons
DONEGAL	3	25	1	21	TYRONE	Colm McDonald
DONEGAL	3	18	0	21	MAYO	Kevin Jordan
LOUTH	1	15	3	10	FERMANAGH	Richie Fitzsimons
FERMANAGH	0	16	1	13	CAVAN	Tarlach Conway
CAVAN	0	16	1	14	LOUTH	Colm McDonald
FERMANAGH	2	8	2	19	LOUTH	Gearóid McGrath

2020 FOOTBALL FINALS RESULTS



Date	Competition	Stage	
19/12/2020	EirGrid GAA Football All-Ireland U20 Championship	Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh
19/12/2020	GAA Football All-Ireland Senior Championship	Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh
25/01/2020	AIB GAA Football All-Ireland Intermediate Club	Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh
25/01/2020	AIB GAA Football All-Ireland Junior Club Championship	Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh
19/01/2020	AIB GAA Football All-Ireland Senior Club Championship	Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh

*No finals played in the Allianz Football League.
Top team in each division declared as champions -

KERRY - Allianz Football League Roinn 1
ROSCOMMON - Allianz Football League Roinn 2
CORK - Allianz Football League Roinn 3
LIMERICK - Allianz Football League Roinn 4



	DUBLIN	0	13	1	11	GALWAY	Paul Faloon
	DUBLIN	2	14	0	15	MAYO	David Coldrick
	MAGHERACLOONE GFC	0	12	2	16	OUGHTERARD	Seán Lavery
	NA GAEIL	3	20	1	5	RATHGAROGUE-CUSHINSTOWN	Seán Lonergan
	COROFIN	1	12	0	7	KILCOO	Conor Lane

2020 FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS

Date	Competition	Stage	Venue
01/11/2020	Leinster GAA Football Senior Championship	Round 1	Bord Na Móna O'Connor Park
01/11/2020	Leinster GAA Football Senior Championship	Round 1	Chadwicks Wexford Park
07/11/2020	Leinster GAA Football Senior Championship	Quarter-Final	MW Hire O'Moore Park, Portlaoise
08/11/2020	Leinster GAA Football Senior Championship	Quarter-Final	MW Hire O'Moore Park, Portlaoise
08/11/2020	Leinster GAA Football Senior Championship	Quarter-Final	Glennon Brothers Pearse Park
08/11/2020	Leinster GAA Football Senior Championship	Quarter-Final	Aughrim
15/11/2020	Leinster GAA Football Senior Championship	Semi-Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh
15/11/2020	Leinster GAA Football Senior Championship	Semi-Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh
21/11/2020	Leinster GAA Football Senior Championship	Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh
01/11/2020	Connacht GAA Football Senior Championship	Quarter-Final	Páirc Seán Mac Diarmada
07/11/2020	Connacht GAA Football Senior Championship	Semi-Final	Pearse Stadium
08/11/2020	Connacht GAA Football Senior Championship	Semi-Final	Dr. Hyde Park
15/11/2020	Connacht GAA Football Senior Championship	Final	Pearse Stadium
31/10/2020	Munster GAA Football Senior Championship	Quarter-Final	Fraher Field
01/11/2020	Munster GAA Football Senior Championship	Quarter-Final	Semple Stadium, Thurles
07/11/2020	Munster GAA Football Senior Championship	Semi-Final	LIT Gaelic Grounds, Limerick
08/11/2020	Munster GAA Football Senior Championship	Semi-Final	Páirc Uí Chaoimh
22/11/2020	Munster GAA Football Senior Championship	Final	Páirc Uí Chaoimh
31/10/2020	Ulster GAA Football Senior Championship	Preliminary Round	Clones
01/11/2020	Ulster GAA Football Senior Championship	Quarter-Final	Celtic Park
01/11/2020	Ulster GAA Football Senior Championship	Quarter-Final	Ballybofey
07/11/2020	Ulster GAA Football Senior Championship	Quarter-Final	Kingspan Breffni
08/11/2020	Ulster GAA Football Senior Championship	Quarter-Final	Brewster Park
14/11/2020	Ulster GAA Football Senior Championship	Semi-Final	Kingspan Breffni
15/11/2020	Ulster GAA Football Senior Championship	Semi-Final	Athletic Grounds
22/11/2020	Ulster GAA Football Senior Championship	Final	Athletic Grounds
05/12/2020	GAA Football All-Ireland Senior Championship	Semi-Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh
06/12/2020	GAA Football All-Ireland Senior Championship	Semi-Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh
19/12/2020	GAA Football All-Ireland Senior Championship	Final	Páirc an Chrócaigh



Result					Referee	
OFFALY	3	14	0	20	CARLOW	Fergal Kelly
WEXFORD	0	11	2	9	WICKLOW	Maurice Deegan
WESTMEATH	0	11	0	22	DUBLIN	Martin McNally
KILDARE	0	20	0	16	OFFALY	David Coldrick
LONGFORD	1	14	1	16	LAOIS	Seán Hurson
WICKLOW	0	7	7	14	MEATH	Ciarán Branagan
DUBLIN	2	23	0	7	LAOIS	Ciarán Branagan
MEATH	5	9	0	15	KILDARE	Conor Lane
DUBLIN	3	21	0	9	MEATH	Derek O'Mahoney
MAYO	2	15	0	10	LEITRIM	Paul Faloon
GALWAY	W.	0.		Scr.	SLIGO	-
MAYO	1	16	0	13	ROSCOMMON	David Gough
MAYO	0	14	0	13	GALWAY	Seán Hurson
WATERFORD	0	9	2	14	LIMERICK	Brendan Cawley
TIPPERARY	2	11	1	11	CLARE	Conor Lane
LIMERICK	2	11	1	15	TIPPERARY	Maurice Deegan
CORK	1	12	0	13	KERRY	Derek O'Mahoney
CORK	0	14	0	17	TIPPERARY	Maurice Deegan
MONAGHAN	1	17	2	15	CAVAN	Ciarán Branagan
DERRY	0	15	0	17	ARMAGH	Seán Hurson
DONEGAL	1	13	1	11	TYRONE	Joe McQuillan
CAVAN	0	13	0	9	ANTRIM	Paul Faloon
FERMANAGH	0	11	1	15	DOWN	Barry Cassidy
DONEGAL	1	22	0	13	ARMAGH	David Coldrick
CAVAN	1	14	1	13	DOWN	Martin McNally
CAVAN	1	13	0	12	DONEGAL	Barry Cassidy
CAVAN	0	12	1	24	DUBLIN	Ciarán Branagan
MAYO	5	20	3	13	TIPPERARY	David Gough
DUBLIN	2	14	0	15	MAYO	David Coldrick

