

FAI

GRASSROOTS



ISSUE ONE

THE NEW HOME OF IRISH FOOTBALL

JUNE 2021

IT'S GOOD TO BE BACK!

FOOTBALL RETURNS
ALL ACROSS IRELAND



A WELCOME MESSAGE

WELCOME to the pilot edition of our new FAI Grassroots eMag, launched to celebrate the return of football at all levels of the game as our sport continues the journey back to normality.

It goes without saying that the Return to Training, the Return to Play and the Return to Watch has been eagerly anticipated and warmly welcomed by everyone involved with Irish football.

It is a testament to you all that we are back on the pitch in June 2021. For some 16 months now you have abided by Government guidelines, you have lived by the FAI protocols and you have proven beyond doubt that our sport is safe in a COVID-19 environment. For that dedication and commitment, I thank you all on behalf of the Football Association of Ireland.

We are not back to normal yet but we are getting there. Together with our stakeholders and our partners in the Government agencies, we will continue to fight the good fight against coronavirus, together and united.

Every time we play a game, every time we hold a training session, every time we host an FAI Summer Soccer School, we are winning the battle against COVID-19. Given time, we will win the war as well.

In the meantime, I ask you again to protect each other in this pandemic, to watch out for each other. So many of

our footballing community have been affected by this virus, so many have been isolated and left with a feeling of loneliness and vulnerability. We have a sport that brings communities together across the country, we have a game that brings the world together. Let's embrace that and let's look after each other.

My thanks to all the volunteers at our clubs in every corner of Ireland and my thanks also to our hard working FAI staff for their role in getting football back. Thanks also to Eamon Scott and his team for putting this eMag together as we return to the pitch at the start of our Centenary year.

There are many reasons for celebration ahead of us in our one hundredth year but just getting all our players, young and old and from every background, back on the pitch is cause for celebration like no other.

We will share those stories on these pages with you in the coming months.

Fáilte ar ais agus fanacht slán.

Gerry McAnaney

President FAI



FAI CUP DRAW

The FAI Cup qualifying round draw has been confirmed.

The qualifying round for the 2021 FAI Cup will contain six fixtures with six teams receiving a bye to the first round.

All matches are set to be played on the week ending Sunday, July 11 with a winner to be decided on the day. Dates and kick-off times will be confirmed at a later date.

FAI CUP 2021 QUALIFYING ROUND DRAW

Maynooth University Town v Bonagee United
Kilnamanagh v Home Farm
 Fairview Rangers v Athenry FC
Ringmahon Rangers v Crumlin United
 Oliver Bond Celtic v Killester Donnycarney
St. Mochtas v Cockhill Celtic

BYES

Malahide United, Banger GGFC, St. Kevin's Boys, College Corinthians, Liffey Wanderers, Usher Celtic.



FAIRVIEW RANGERS: the FAI Junior Cup holders will face Galway's Athenry FC

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FOCUS: DEFIBRILLATORS

ERIKSEN EPISODE PUTS SPOTLIGHT ON NEED FOR DEFIBRILLATORS ACCESS

BY EAMON SCOTT

(L-R): FAI President Gerry McAnaney, Gillian Tobin, Margaret Fox, Honorary President of College Corinthians and CEO of Irish Mainport Holdings, Dave Ronayne, and Denis Barry at the unveiling of new defibrillators at the gates of College Corinthians - for use by the local community - sponsored by Irish Mainport Holdings.



DENMARK'S Christian Eriksen was given emergency CPR on the pitch after collapsing just before half-time in Saturday's Euro 2020 game between Denmark and Finland; team doctor Morten Boesen said 29-year-old was "gone", but swift intervention of Simon Kjaer and medical staff saved his life.

The incident, which received global exposure, highlighted the importance of rapid access to defibrillators and medical expertise.

Eriksen has now sent out a message for the first time since the incident via a tweet from the Danish FA's account, which read: "Hello everyone. Big thanks for your sweet and amazing greetings and messages from all around the world. It means a lot to me and my family.

"I'm fine - under the circumstances. I still have to go through some examinations at the hospital, but I feel okay."

Here in Ireland, many FAI affiliated clubs have installed defibrillators on their premises and clubs like College Corinthians in Cork have recently installed additional units on site including one at the club gates for use by the local community.

"We've had one on site for some time and Irish Mainport Holdings generously sponsored the additional ones.

"We sent 500 flyers to the local community alerting them as to where to access one in case of an emergency,"

said John O'Regan College Corinthians' club chairman.

"We did have an incident three years ago where one of our players collapsed in the dressing room and intervention from a doctor on the opposition came to his rescue, so we do have close hand experience of what can happen."

"When you see a top class player like Christian Eriksen collapse on live TV it brings home to you that it can happen to anyone anywhere and I really would encourage any club without a defibrillator to consider installing one."

College Corinthians conducted a couple of courses on the usage of the items at their Castletreasure base in Douglas and O'Regan also indicated that platforms like Youtube are excellent for quick refreshers on their usage.

"We were lucky that we had excellent sponsorship to meet the costs but they are now essential equipment and well worth having the comfort of knowing they were readily available."

"The Irish Heart Foundation advised us to leave the access door open and that is the policy we have now adopted."

Added O'Regan: "We were honoured to have FAI President Gerry McAnaney in attendance for the official opening of the community defibrillator at the club gates and everyone at the club would also send their best wishes to Christian Eriksen for a return to full health in the coming weeks."



FEATURE: FOOTBALL'S RETURN

FIELDS OF FUN THE PERFECT FOOTBALL TONIC

BY NIAL SCULLY

THE church bells are beginning to chime again. It's not so much that football's coming home.....more a case that football's coming back.

Bands all over the country have been busy rehearsing. And soon enough, it will be the sound of the referee's whistle.....what a beautiful noise.

For many, the PlayStations have helped to fill the long and lonely hours. But there's no substitute for the rain in your

face, or the mud on your boots.

It's good to see the grass being cut, pitches being marked, and teams back out training.

The other day, the tots were playing a practice match on the mini all-weather. In their bibs that came down over their knees. Taking their first steps in the game.





The coaches were giving them their time. And their wisdom. And doing it in such a gentle way.

The ball would arrive at feet. The child would take a second, or two, to adjust and get it under control.

Once they had done that, came the soft words: "Look up." And look up they did.

At this age, it's all about getting the basics right. And having fun trying to do it.

Graeme Souness was talking about Geoff Twentyman, who was the Liverpool Chief Scout.

Souness said that their first thing Twentyman looked for in a player was how cleanly he struck the ball.

Connecting with the leather on the laces. Just like the goal that saw Leicester win the Cup. A goal from the Bobby Charlton Scrapbook.

One of the benefits of the Lockdown was the amount of old matches that were on the tele.

West Ham featured quite a bit. At a packed Upton Park. The crowd so close to the pitch that they could smell the player's aftershave.

Upton Park, a theatre of football. Like the Gaiety or the Olympia, you were always guaranteed a show.

Trevor Brooking striding across the stage. With a pass that could take the curry off the chips.

Trevor was long perfecting his craft without him even knowing it. He'd walk to school kicking a tennis ball. And in kick-about with his Dad down in the local park, his Dad had only one rule – two feet.

Bobby Moore had the pass made before he even received the ball. The "Look Up" advice of his childhood stuck like a penny stamp.

In his early years, some people said he wouldn't make the grade. They never told him he'd captain England to the World Cup.

Encouragement is a song that never grows old. And, like on those Upton Park Saturdays, or those Tolka Park Sundays, humour is so often the currency of the terraces.

Football without the crowds just wasn't the same. It's like expecting U2 to be at their best in an empty Croke Park.

James McDermott is a Lecturer in the UCD School of Law. He is a season-ticket holder for Fulham. At home at Craven Cottage, on the banks of The Thames. He captured the mood perfectly when he wrote.

"The visiting supporters would often chant: "You only sing when you're rowing!"

Thankfully, the young boys and girls, and junior footballers, are now back tipping their toe in the water.

It's great to be back!

BIG MATCH: BEGGSBORO V DUBLIN DYNAMO

TREBLE TOPS AS DYNAMO DELIVER

LFL CLUBS' TEN-GOAL FRIENDLY TO SHAKE OFF COBWEBS ON 15 ACRES

BEGGSBORO AFC
1
DUBLIN DYNAMO
9

THREE Hat-tricks from three different players and a nine goal reply after going a goal down was the highlight of a return to action on the fabled 15 Acres in the Phoenix Park when Beggsboro AFC and Dublin Dynamo took to the field in a Leinster Football League Bank Holiday friendly.

Remarkably both teams showed decent levels of fitness after the long layoff with Dynamo a few weeks ahead of their opponents who only began to tire in the final stages of the entertaining encounter

The men from Cabra showed no rustiness whatsoever as they hit the front in impressive style after just six minutes of play. Such was the quality of the finish that a walker-by burst into applause as he headed in the direction of the Magazine Fort on a perfect morning for a game of ball - or indeed a walk. The object of his appreciation was Beggsboro's Dean Cunny's bullet like header which flew past Roman Pryyma in the Dynamo nets after a pinpoint right wing cross from Terry Downes.

The fabled grassroots venue has seen



Hat-trick Heroes



many a game over the years but this was the first official match to be played since the enforced lockdown and for referee Alex Saric and the players involved, it was their first outing in 15 months.

No wonder then that many regular strollers also stopped to take in the 'live' action and included among them was Pete Mahon who famously cut his teeth with cup specialists St Francis before taking the helm at St Pat's twice, Bohs and UCD among others.

Pete would have been impressed with the slick interplay that Dynamo brought to their game and truth be told - once they found their rhythm they tacked on

“WE’RE JUST HAPPY TO BE BACK PLAYING AND 10 GOALS CERTAINLY ENTERTAINED THOSE WATCHING.”

goals with regular execution as Boro struggled to live with their pace and invention.



Victor Vinutsen had the blue shirted Dynamo level in the 12th minute from a swerving 20 metre freekick and from then on he shared the goals bounty with Vitaly Chernyshev and Andrei Bitautas and they each finished with a hat-trick to their names.

Four-one up at the interval with more of a physical presence as the experience to match it, they tacked on five second half goals to finish up convincing winners where skipper Artem Kilchsh was a commanding presence and showed an excellent touch and fine distribution throughout.

While the scoreline was a tad harsh on Boro, manager Chris Roche was

pragmatic. “We had some good passages of play but we needed to get a competitive game into our legs. We ran out of steam close to the finish but we’ll be better for the outing and with a full squad to pick from, there will be better days ahead.”

Watching LFL President Tony O’Dowd was a more than interested sideline spectator.

“We’re just happy to get back playing and 10 goals certainly entertained those watching,” said a smiling Tony. “Dynamo are a good side and it showed in the end but I expect Beggsboro to improve significantly once they have a full squad to pick from.”



Beggsboro FC

Added O'Dowd: "Have to say that Alex Saric had an excellent game in the middle. He was right up with play and got all his decisions right. He's a fine prospect and I believe he has the ability to move up the refereeing ladder. We wouldn't want to lose him but I can see him making real progress as a referee."

Concluded Tony: "It's been a long lay-off for everyone so today is a great day for the league and hopefully it's the start of a new era for us. We've added greatly to our numbers and as a league we look forward with genuine positivity for the season ahead, and, on behalf of the LFL, I'd like to wish all clubs the best of luck on the return to action."

BEGGSBORO FC: Chris McEvoy; Jack Whelan, Ryan Somers, Darren Prendergast, Chris Shannon, Josh Bradshaw, Terry Downes, Nathan Marshall, Dean Cunny, Jordan Murry, Andrew Hiatshwayo, **Subs:** Ben Prendergast, Graham Murphy, Glenn Smither., Dan Dura, Chris Roche.

DUBLIN DYNAMO: Roman Pryyma; Artem Kilchsh, Cedas Safkritkus, Sergey Chernyshev, Marius Daknus, Siarcu Lipinski, Igor Chernyshev, Carmos Mesas, Vitaly Chernyshev, Ion Guadaves, Andrei Bitautas. **Subs:** Bogdan Sulegornen, Romas Danulis, Denis Petukov, Victor Vlnutsen,

Referee: Alex Saric.



Dublin Dynamo



MATCH REPORT: GIRLS FOOTBALL

MERRIMAN LEADS CHARGE AS PEAMOUNT LAY DOWN A MARKER IN WILLIE PROUT CUP

PEAMOUNT UNITED
HOME FARM FC

9
1

Four-goal hero
Nicola Merriman



A FOUR-GOAL haul from flame haired Nicola Merriman helped fire Peamount United to a facile win in their Willie Prout Cup group encounter against Home Farm at Glebe North's homely Market Green on Saturday afternoon.

The Greenogue Under 15 girls side hit the front after just 18 seconds and were never troubled unduly by the Whitehall side who battled bravely despite the evident gulf in class.

The tournament is named after Glebe North's former chairman who died three years ago but whose stellar reputation is forever entwined in the club's rich history.

Organised by Roberto Bonello, the competition attracts premier girls teams and in previous years they have attracted academy sides from around the country, this year the call is to local clubs with Dundalk FC the furthest distance from the Balbriggan venue for all the matches.

Barry Kinsella's Peamount United were three goals up by the eight minute and even though Home Farm boss Mick Corrigan tried to tweak his line-up and formation, Peamount were simply at a different level. Apart from Merriman, sisters Freya and Erin Healy showed an excellent range of passing and superb vision as they pulled the strings in



Home Farm FC keeper Ellie Meade makes a save

midfield and Home Farm were at times simply left chasing shadows.

In mitigation, the blue and white hoops have lost five of last year's squad to Shelbourne but the same could also be said of Peamount who have promoted five up their ranks to the club's under 17s.

Grace Connors got the scoring going from the tip off as Home Farm stood off challenging and the left wing approach opened up for Connors to clip the ball to the corner of Ellie Meade's net without a single Home Farm player touching the ball.

Eve Maloney netted a second after four minutes and Merriman got the first of her four by the eight minute as wave after wave of Peamount attack produced scoreline rewards.

There was plenty of advice and instruction coming in from the HF management and while Corrigan candidly admitted post match they were well beaten by a better side, he believes that his side will be better for outing and will improve as recent signings bed in.

For Peamount Boss Barry Kinsella - brother of ex-Republic of Ireland senior international Mark - it was a good

exercise with several pre match game targets satisfactorily achieved.

In fairness to Peamount, they went about their business in a thoroughly professional manner and maintained high standards from start to finish.

The current 2006 born side have been together three years and their understanding and movement saw most of the play compressed in their opponents half.

Home Farm struggled to retain possession or make any sustained pressure on their opponents defence. Merriman made it four in the 15th minute and had her hat-trick in the bag by minute 25.

In a rare incursion into Peamount territory in the 38th minute Home Farm's Grace Kelly saw her powerful header loop over the outstretched effort of Peas keeper Niamh Richardson for the Farm's solitary strike.



Peamount United

Referee Paddy Dunne's interval whistle saw the Peas 5-1 in front and coasting to a deserved success.

Farm's Kelly did have an opportunity to double her own tally from the penalty spot just after the restart but still hobbling from the foul that led to the spot kick, her effort was easily saved.

Sinead Flood tagged on goal six on 54minutes, Anna Kelly netted the seventh in the 70th, Merriman goalied again two minutes later with Peamount's eight and Grace Conors

bookended the haul four minutes from time with a ninth.

Meade, in the Home Farm goal, did take off a couple of excellent saves and credit her for at least keeping the goal tally in a single digit.

The competition continues this week with DLR Waves, Cherry Orchard, Bohemians and Dundalk FC involved but it's going to take a good side to see off this impressive and well coached Peamount United side.



Home Farm FC

FEATURE: THIRD LEVEL FOOTBALL

YELVERTON HOPEFUL OF SEEING SOME ACTION FOR THE STUDENTS

BY JOHN HUDSON



LITTLE did Greg Yelverton imagine when he was re-appointed Head Coach of the Irish men's Colleges and Universities international team for a third two-year term in February of last year that 16 months later, he would still be waiting to prepare a squad for his first game.

The Covid-19 crisis that hit the country the following month and forced the suspension of all football activity for weeks completely wiped-out any plans Yelverton had put in place for a number of fixtures during April and May of 2020.

Another blow came with the further lockdowns in October and after Christmas that finally forced the

cancellation of the entire Colleges and Universities league and cup season proved an added frustration for Yelverton.

However, the recent resumption of football has also brought some good news for the student's boss with the confirmation of two welcome fixtures pencilled in for later in the summer.

"We have been invited to play two games against the Republic of Ireland under 21 and 19 selections toward the end of August and early September next.

"This is great news and should give myself and the other two head coaches Jim Crawford (under 21's) and Tom Mohan (under 19's) the ideal opportunity to have a close look at lads who may be capable of playing at the levels required.

"I'm really grateful to both Jim and Tom for giving me this chance to get our squads together for what should be two competitive fixtures."

Yelverton will have to start the whole process of naming his two squads from scratch as the cancellation of the entire 2020-21 Colleges and Universities season without a ball having been kicked meant he had no opportunity to assess potential players.

"With no football having been played in any of the Third Level competitions since March of last year I had no chance to carry out our usual thorough player ID. But myself and my assistant coach Tommy Griffin have been busy checking

“WITH NO FOOTBALL HAVING BEEN PLAYED IN ANY OF THE THIRD LEVEL COMPETITIONS SINCE MARCH OF LAST YEAR I HAD NO CHANCE TO CARRY OUT OUR USUAL THOROUGH PLAYER ID.”

on what players may be available to us ahead of these two important fixtures.

"The plan is to name a squad for each game and only include players who will be continuing their studies in various colleges and universities in the new academic year.

"As most of the possible candidates will be players who at that time will be involved with teams in the SSE Airtricity League or at the top level of the either Leinster or Munster Senior Leagues, they will be in season so fitness levels will hardly be an issue."

Yelverton is a Cork native and a former



Third Level international recipients were presented with their caps at a special function in advance of the 3-1 FAI Senior international friendly victory against New Zealand in November 2019.

League of Ireland player holding a UEFA Pro Licence who works as the Football Facilitator at University College Cork and was reappointed last year to continue in charge of the all island third level student international side for a further two year term following an open competition and an interview process.

In 2015 Yelverton became the first head coach to this newly formed combined Colleges and Universities international side after the Colleges FAI and the Irish Universities Football Union had agreed to field one side in international and representative fixtures having prior to this operated on a separate basis.

This was a major step for the development of third level football as it led to the FAI awarding international caps and also introducing a Colleges and Universities International player of the year annual award.

Yelverton also took charge of the Ireland side at World University Games in Taipei

(2017) and Naples (2019) with limited success in both tournaments.

However, FISU - the International University Sport Federation - have announced that football would not be a sport featuring in the next games due to be held in China later this year.

The past years in charge of the side has given Yelverton several highs and lows and one game in particular stands out for him.

"I think our first victory over the really strong and talented France side at Longford in June 2018 was a real highlight.

"After suffering home and away defeats to them in our two previous meetings to register a 2-1 win with goals from Georgie Poynton and Darragh Gibbons was a huge boost for us ahead of travelling to Taipei for the World University Games."

FEATURE: REFEREES

PASSING OF REFEREEING ROYALTY - DEATH OF JOHN CARPENTER

IRISH SOCCER Referees Society President Willie Long and former League of Ireland referee Charlie O'Leary have led the tributes to colleague John Carpenter who has passed away at the age of 85.

Carpenter, who lived in Donnycarney and Clontarf, is hailed as Ireland's greatest referee and had the honour of taking charge of the first leg of the 1982 UEFA Cup final between IFK Gothenburg and Hamburg in the Ullevi Stadium in front of 42,500 spectators.

Cork native Long, himself a former international referee commented: "The Irish soccer community was saddened to hear of the death of the much loved and respected former FIFA referee John

Carpenter. John was the first Irish Official to referee UEFA Cup Final and left a legacy when he retired."

Thanks to his personality, patience, perseverance and understanding as well as his generous giving of his devoted time, he will always be remembered as a true pioneer in Irish Football and one of the greats of Irish Refereeing. A legend of a referee when he walked into a room people took notice."

Added President Long: "John



elevated the standing of the game in so many ways. It's a true story that when UEFA and FIFA were appointing him that the telex to the Football Association of Ireland often just read John Carpenter +3. That's how highly he was thought of."

Charlie O'Leary's first introduction to Carpenter, who after a broken leg with St Pat's switched to refereeing, was actually a visit to Olhausen's Butchers where Carpenter was employed.

"A lad dressed in white came from behind the counter and he introduced himself to me and told me he was with the Athletic Union League but was anxious to move up the ranks." recalled Charlie of his first encounter with John Carpenter.

"At that time we had no referees society and only two inspectors. In 1950 when I first started there were no inspectors at all but after that Mr Dwyer and Mr Finn came on the scene to cover the whole of Ireland."

Charlie advised a little understanding and patience to Carpenter as he was only refereeing two months at the time.

"He was clearly ambitious and lo and behold a couple of months later he turned up as a linesman for me in a Drums versus Dundalk match in Tolka Park. I was due to have Pip Meighan and Billy O'Neill as linesmen - both FIFA referees - but they were off on European duty in Finland. Both of the replacement lads did well and a couple of weeks later John was promoted to the League of Ireland panel on a permanent basis."



John Carpenter

"He had refereed an early morning kick-off in Drogheda and then came down to Tolka for a 3.30pm kick-off along with Billy Nolan for that Dundalk game and that was in 1966 I believe."

Carpenter would go on to officiate at many high profile matches but he had a reputation of coming across as being somewhat arrogant and that impacted on his relationship with authorities at home although he was highly thought of at UEFA and FIFA level.

Charlie O'Leary, later to go on to be Jack Charlton's kitman during a Golden Era for Irish football, however, was fulsome in his praise for John's ability as a match official.

"We were aware that John didn't always get on with officialdom but you cannot take away from his ability as a referee. He was excellent, really top class. He

helped put Irish refereeing on the map in Europe at a time when we had little or no representation and we've got to be grateful for blazing a trail for others to follow," said O'Leary.

Carpenter is the only official to ever make the shortlist for Irish Sports Personality of the Year — which was in 1969, when he lost out to Mick Leech. The Larkhill man was in the middle for many big games and could include Pele, Carlos Alberto and George Best among some of the game's stellar greats he officiated over.

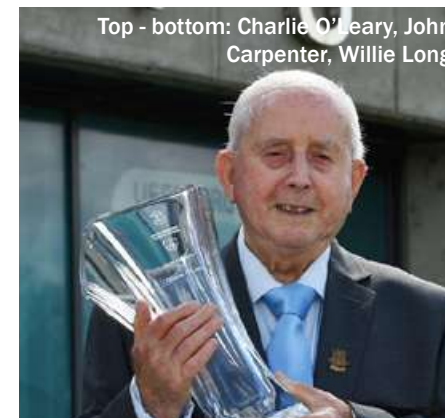
He called games as he saw it, no matter the pressure he came under.

In 1973, he awarded a penalty to Bayern Munich in the cauldron at CSKA Sofia in the European Cup quarter-final second leg. Recalled John Carpenter in later years: "We were in the car park afterwards and Franz Beckenbauer got off the bus and gave us some tankards and said you're very brave men to award a penalty here. I had to — Uli Hoeness was whipped down by the keeper."

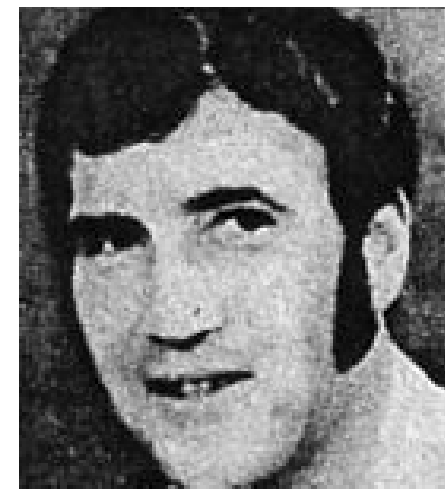
Charlie remains grateful to John or JC as he called him for the ensuring friendship going back to the early 1960s. "He was a loyal comrade and at times he was harshly treated but above all he was a brilliant referee," said Charlie.

John passed suddenly but peacefully at home on May 30th 2021. Very sadly missed by his children, grandchildren, sister, nieces, nephews, extended family, friends and neighbours.

May he Rest in Peace



Top - bottom: Charlie O'Leary, John Carpenter, Willie Long



FOCUS: LSL SENIOR DIVISION

STELLAR ST MOCHTA'S TO LEAD ASSAULT ON MALAHIDE'S CROWN

BY EAMON SCOTT

LEINSTER SENIOR LEAGUE Champions Malahide United returned to action at Gannon Park with a high tempo friendly encounter with fellow senior division visitors Liffey Wanderers.

Ger Coughlan's sides last outing on the same pitch was nine months ago when Malahide United claimed a first ever league pennant after a swashbuckling charge to a deserved title success.

Simply said, they were the best team in the league bar none. Repeating that challenge is now what lies in store as the league re-emerges from lockdown and Coughlan is the first to appreciate the enormity of the challenge ahead -

especially having lost the services of talisman skipper Darren Craven to SSE Airtricity league side Bray Wanderers.

Action in the league is set to commence on the weekend of Sunday July 4 and the energies of all clubs are now focussed on the long awaited return to action.

The grapevine talks of St Mochta's undertaking some serious recruitment in recent times and in many observers eyes Brian McCarthy's side will start as strong favourites to bring the title back to Porterstown Road although a 3-2 midweek defeat at the hands of Kilbarrack United will have raised an



Malahide United



eyebrow or two.

Rumour of Cherry Orchard's demise would appear to be exaggerated and although they might be facilitated with a delayed start, the good news is that the Cherries will take their place as planned and we wish everyone at Elmdale the best of luck. With the great pedigree the club has, the hope is that the recent roadbump will soon be disappearing in their rear view mirror.

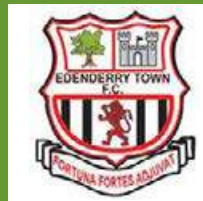
Clubs that emerge from 'Lockdown' unscathed will stand a stronger chance of being at the business end of the league and it's a season where the likes of celebrated managers such as Martin Loughran, Peter Lennon and John Young now take up a spectating role. Now names like Heavey, Coughlan, McCarthy, James Lee at Crumlin, Ross

Zambra at Wayside are bringing new ideas and new energy to the strongest grassroots league in the country and it adds to the levels of expectancy and excitement.

Likewise, Bluebell United are celebrating 75 years and have appointed a strong management team in Shane "Mario" Dolan with a coaching team of Shaun Maher and Brian O'Shea. All bring a wealth of experience and the LSL powerhouse will be a darkhorse as they look to bounce back into the title mix.

Likewise Maynooth have appointed Shane Harte, Kieran Kilduff and Gavin Kinsella and will look to improve on their fourth place finish last season which is not beyond the realms of possibility. Crumlin United have lost a couple of players but with the passion and

LSL SENIOR DIVISION 2021



enthusiasm of the experienced James Lee in at the helm, expect the Pearse Park side to be a difficult nut to crack as they set-out on the post Martin Loughran era.

Wayside without Pete Lennon is like fish without chips but the Kiltiernan side showed excellent end of season form to suggest that this season they intend to look upwards rather than over their shoulder.

Ross Zambra and Kenny Simpson

are in as manager and assistant and are familiar with the Senior Division territory and stability and a solid showing appears to be well within their capabilities.

Killester Donnycarney will be rueing their Intermediate Cup final defeat to St Mochta's but the Haddon Park side under Gary Howlett are always capable of big results and perhaps consistency will be their biggest challenge this season.

The Senior Division is the LSL's jewel in the crown and divisional administrator Roger Mahon always runs a first class show as the season builds to a climax hopefully in May 2022.

The new boys on the block include Sacred Heart, Home Farm and Kilnamanagh and after excellent season's to gain a seat at the top table, that trio will look to bed in and show they are more than capable of competing at the highest level. They all played some sublime football in a notoriously competitive league to earn that elevated ticket and expect them to play their part in the weeks and months ahead.

With a first title under his belt, Malahide's Ger Coughlan appreciates that his side are now in the collective cross hairs of all their rivals but he is confident that the north coast Fingal side have what it takes to be right in the mix once again.

"Tonight was about getting out and playing a bit because we haven't done anything as a team in nine months. There were no real instructions, rather go out and have a bit of fun and enjoy yourselves."

"But playing someone like Liffey who we are going to meet in the league helps bed the players in, so it was perfect and we are all looking forward to the season ahead. We appreciate clubs will be gunning for us but that simply goes with the territory of being league champions," he reflected.

“TONIGHT WAS ABOUT GETTING OUT AND PLAYING A BIT BECAUSE WE HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING AS A TEAM IN NINE MONTHS. THERE WERE NO REAL INSTRUCTIONS, RATHER GO OUT AND HAVE A BIT OF FUN AND ENJOY YOURSELVES.”

On the challenge of retaining the league title Coughlan pulled no punches. "If we did what we did last season and stand still we're looking at mid table. We had a few players out through injury last season and we've only added one or two to the mix, but we are now looking to change our style a little and also add a few extra bits too as well as using the ball better."

"We were good this evening particularly in the first half and we had to be on



Liffey Wanderers

our game because if we weren't, Liffey could give you a hammering. It was a rough way to come back into preseason but it was also a perfect friendly in that respect," said Coughlan following the concession of a late equaliser to the men from Pearse Street which looked a tad offside to many in the ground.

Malahide's Cillian Thompson had given the home side a merited advantage on the half hour after excellent work by Karl Moody down the right flank. His deep cross found Ciaran McGahan and his angled volley was parried by Lee Doyle in the Liffey goal only for Thompson to ghost in and nod across the line from close in. The league champions had the ball in the net for a second time but had the goal somehow chalked off before the halftime whistle.

"I think if we had linesmen it would have been given, but look, it was a good

exercise and look you wouldn't want to get cocky either," said Coughlan post match.

Halftime substitute Levi Boardman cracked a ball off the base of the Wanderers post five minute after the restart but the ball was cleared. To their credit Liffey worked hard and their industry was rewarded with a late, late equaliser.

One area Coughlan wants to address is their unwanted reputation as slow starters to league campaigns. "We're notoriously slow to get going and even coming back after lockdown last season we lost to Edenderry Town and drew our next, so that's something we're looking to put right."

"I was out looking at St Mochtas the other day and they are fairly star studded with all the celebrities they are

Ger Coughlan


bringing in so we will really have to be at it, but it's a talented league when you look at the teams in it and we are looking forward to playing our part in it," concluded a very trim looking Coughlan who recently cycled 1000 kilometres for the charity As I Am.

For Liffey Wanderers boss Declan Heavey it's a bit of a homecoming as he hails from Pearse House and he's honoured to take over from the legendary John Young following his stint with Maynooth Town.

"For us coming to the home of the league champions was a difficult game to open up with, but we were able to have a look after 20-odd players tonight - some whom I've brought in and some who are the heartbeat of Liffey."

"I'm really excited about the season ahead," admitted Heavey. "We've had three weeks training and we have

another four friendlies coming up before the kick-off so we were probably running on a little bit of adrenalin tonight but by the time kick-off comes around we'll be far more organised."

"We had good patience because they had a lot of the ball they are well organised and are a very good team and I really haven't had a chance to put my stamp on things. I didn't go into tactics because we're trying to keep it simple and look at a few fellows.

"We've trained and got our fitness and sharpness up, our recruitment has been good and there's a good basis here already, so there's a lot of potential in the side to go well this season.," added Heavey.

"We've no real superstar in the team but we have competition for places and a good group of honest players who work hard and we just need to work on

Declan Heavey


our set pieces and our patterns of play."

"I'm really excited. A lot of my family live down in the area and we always get a great crowd and if I can get the team playing well with good energy levels I think we can look forward to a good season."

"It's an honour to manage a club close to my heart but I don't think there's a bad team in the league this year. Looking at the make it, I'm pretty sure it's going to be a great league to play in this season," concluded Heavey.

Nine of the clubs will be involved in today's FAI Preliminary draw and for divisional secretary Roger Mahon it is posing a bit of a hold up.

"Clubs want to know their fixtures but with the Preliminary and First round FAI Senior Cup draws imminent, I'm waiting for the draw and will schedule

accordingly straight away," explained Mahon.

"I can't wait for the action to start," said Roger. "It's been a long time coming around and like all the clubs, I'm really looking forward to the return to competitive action."

Regardless, the Leinster Senior League, founded in 1896 and chaired by Dave Moran, always put on a first class show and despite the enforced Covid lockdown, expect the thrills and spills of the 2021/2022 season to be as competitive as anything that has gone before.

Best of luck to everyone involved in your respective leagues and cup campaigns as we start afresh after the most unprecedented hiatus anyone could have envisaged.

It's good to be back!

FEATURE: UCFL

UCFL BOUNCE BACK STRONGER THAN EVER!

COMMUNICATE, Co-operate, Enjoy.

That's the slogan the United Churches Football League has adopted from their preseason Champions League format competition which kicked off last Wednesday.

Remarkably, the league has emerged bigger, stronger and more committed than they were pre-Covid and the strong entry is a clear indication of the appetite for a return to action within the UCFL.

With free entry and token vouchers for the winning teams the take up was eagerly embraced by the vast majority of clubs within the league.

Once valid public liability insurance was in place, the tournament is open to all constituent members and each team must have a designated Covid compliance officer who has to attend each match.

To advance the return to play philosophy,

the roll-on/roll-off system substitute is utilised to maximise the potential game time of every player. For this to happen, every team player must be listed on the match card and all listed players will be deemed to have played in the match.

"This is about getting players back on the field of play and we're delighted with the response we'd had to date," said UCFL Fixtures Secretary Noel Fitzroy.

Added Noel: "This pre-season friendly tournament is designed to allow participating teams the opportunity to gradually return to regular match fixtures before the 2021-22 season commences in August."

In the event of a draw at the end of normal time, penalty kicks determine the "winner". Each tied team in a drawn game will get one point in its group and the winner of the penalty shoot-out will gain an extra point. Goal difference is not applied in the UCFL.

The competition runs from Wednesday June 9th to Wednesday July 28th. The four "finals" will be held on Saturday 7th

August, hopefully, in VEC Terenure, between the two section winners in each group.

With close to 60 teams entered, the league is very pleased with how clubs have eagerly embraced the rules and spirit of the game as they return to contact sport.

"The clubs deserve a lot of credit after what they have gone through," said Fitzroy. "They have been very diligent and have applied all the necessary protocols with regard to return to play. With a big increase in our numerical strength, I think we can look forward to a really competitive showing from the clubs in the preseason tournament but also the league campaign itself."

The league have thanked some of



their refereeing fraternity who have announced their retirement from the game after many years of dedicated service.

Included amongst them is legendary referee observer Bobby Lynch (93) along with referees Graham Caswell, Bill Gannon and Paddy Dunne. Appropriate recognition of their excellent service will happen in due course when conditions permit.

Graham Caswell is taking a place on the UCFL Executive Committee from September. The league also recently welcomed Ian Webb from Glasnaion F.C. to the UCFL Executive Committee.

FEATURE: AMPUTEE FOOTBALL

DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES SIGNAL A RETURN TO ACTION FOR AMPUTEES

BY EAMON SCOTT



THE REPUBLIC of Ireland Amputees have returned to training with the aspirations of competing in the European Championships in September.

The FAI squad are currently ranked sixth in Europe and Cahir Park in Tipperary was the venue in recent weeks for some welcome on field training sessions under the direction of International manager Christy McElligott.

A good showing in the European Championships could earn the Republic a slot in the 2022 World Cup which is pencilled in for Turkey.

McElligott, a former League of Ireland championship winner with St Patrick's Athletic, lost a leg in a serious motoring accident, is the driving force behind the Irish Amputee Football Association as well as being the international team manager.

Currently, an FAI Football For All Development Officer, Christy is playing with Shamrock Rovers in a league that is also made up of Cork City, current champions Bohemian FC and Scottish club Partick Thistle.

His intention is to continue playing club football but he is stepping away from the demands of international football.

"I want to concentrate on managing the international side and it'll help me focus better if I don't have to worry about the playing side. We have a couple of new players breaking through to the senior side while we've also introduced some of our academy players to the senior training camps to familiarise them with

the set-up," explained Christy. Added Christy: "The camps in Cahir were excellent and it was great just to get back onto the field while the lads were delighted to meet up again and renew those friendship bonds which is so important for everybody. We have dates booked in for Portlaoise and it too is an excellent facility which can cater for our needs.

"We had operated with some Zoom calls and players tried to look after their own individual fitness regimes but it was always going to be difficult during lock down and I know myself because I've put on a couple of pounds and that's now part of my own challenge to shed the extra weight."

The situation with regards to travel is posing logistical problems for Scotland's Patrick Thistle but Christy is hopeful that it will be resolved positively for everyone.

"The addition of Partrick Thistle has been so beneficial for the league. There's no one else currently in Scotland for them to compete against on a regular basis and even if it's been a bit of a learning curve for them, it's also been so positive for all the domestic clubs and we are genuinely delighted to have them as members of our league." stated Christy.

The upcoming return to action later this month will not feature the Scottish side but that is simply because travel restrictions are proving a little challenging currently, so the scheduled series of games down in Portlaoise will be for Bohemians, Cork and Shamrock

“IT WAS GREAT JUST TO GET BACK ONTO THE FIELD WHILE THE LADS WERE DELIGHTED TO MEET UP AGAIN AND RENEW THOSE FRIENDSHIP BONDS WHICH IS SO IMPORTANT FOR EVERYBODY”





Rovers only.
“We’d love to have Partick come over but we’re giving them some more time to put travel arrangements in place so the plan is to have a round-robin series of games with the Irish based clubs.”

“We all understand the difficulties for people travelling but we look forward to their return at the earliest opportunity.

We’ve developed strong friendships and they are very much part and parcel of our future plans here in Ireland for amputee football,” insisted McElligott.

The proposal is that the clubs will earn points for their performances and a league table will be compiled on the back of the mini-series which will determine which club will represent the

FAI in the UEFA Amputee Champions League.

The league programme will be played at Portlaoise with dates pencilled in for June 27, August 8, October 23rd and November 20th.

A national training camp weekend will be held in August on the weekend of the

22 while the travelling squad will fine-tune their preparations a week later with another workout at the impressive UL Sports complex in Limerick. Departure for Krakow will be on September 9 or 10 for what will be a 10 day trip.

Heretofore the amputee domestic league was sponsored by Megazyme and Christy is grateful and hopeful that there will be a renewed involvement while Hampton Flooring have also come on board as an associate sponsor.

“I cannot talk highly enough about Megazyme and the support they have given us and on behalf of all the clubs of the league a big thank you for all your support to date. I’m also delighted to announce Hampton Flooring for partnering with us. We are dependent on sponsorship to help us run our activities and without their contribution we would struggle to fulfill our programme.”

Added McElligott: “The Amputee League is a very competitive environment but it is also a great sporting arena with high class games on show and we would welcome any other potential sponsors coming on board to assist with the promotion and development of the Amputee game.”

Can you help the Irish Amputee Football Association through a sponsorship programme?
If you can, please contact: Christy McElligott - 083 8162334; Email: chris.mcelligott@fai.ie
FFA Development Officer

FOCUS: AMATEUR FOOTBALL LEAGUE

AFL REPORTS 15% GROWTH AND SETS THEIR SIGHTS ON ADDING WOMEN'S DIVISION

ALONGSIDE the women's game, the Over 35s grade has proved one of association football's genuine grassroots growth areas.

Now, with the emergence from the enforced hibernation, the Amateur Football League reports an instant bounce to their numbers with a percentage increase just short of 15% in their numerical strength. The league has added a new Saturday division and

they also have plans to start a Women's Over 35s division.

League chairman Noel Daly along with his executive committee have been busy preparing for the upcoming 2021 season across 11 divisions and the action is scheduled to get underway on the weekend of June 26/27.

"It's a shortened season and we are looking to run off league divisions



only and return next season with a full complement of league and cup programmes in the pipeline for 2022," said Daly.

"We have an increase of 15% in numerical strength which is very pleasing for us as a league. Players just want to get back out there on the field of play and I think giving every team a league programme with an end of season in October will kick start us back up and running just nicely.

"I don't know if it's because people are fed up and just want to get out but we're more than happy to provide competitive action for them here in the Amateur Football League and we are thrilled that we have 14 new clubs joining our ranks," added Daly.

With a simple league formula to look ahead to, it also means that the fabled Amateur Cup will be kept on hold for a little while longer.

Chairman Daly believes the appeal of the Over 35s grade has as much to do with friendships as it has with

competitive action and simply meeting up again with team mates is just as important as society re-emerges from Covid-19 restrictions.

"It's been unprecedented for everyone and while a lot of people took to walking or cycling, our experience is that clubs are more than keen to return to playing and that positivity is reflected in our growing numbers," said a contented Daly.

Likewise, the prospects of an AFL Women's division is also central to the league's development plans.

Explains Daly: "It's a topic we have

Noel Daly with the AFL Cup



Peter Connolly



discussed while we have also had soundings about setting a division up and it's all extremely positive, so we are now actively looking at adding that platform to meet that growing demand. It's a new departure for us and we are excited about the potential in the coming years."

"The AFL offers a fantastic outlet for players after they have finished their junior football days and it's a good avenue and you've got to remember lots of these guys are best friends. It's the exact same for women who also want to get out and play the game too."

One of the additions to the AFL ranks include for the 2021 season in founder members Home Farm FC who have entered a team in the league after an absence of many years while adding a bit of an exotic flavour is a team made

up of nationals from Mauritius who have been training in Fairview Park.

Tony McGarry (Bluebell United) and Stephen Belleli (Cottage Celtic) have joined the AFL Executive ranks and Noel paid tribute to his committee members and recognised the great voluntary work undertaken.

"The whole committee is deserving of our gratitude," said Daly. "In Peter Connolly we have a thoroughly efficient honorary secretary as are AFL Executive members and like all of our clubs they too are excited about the imminent return to football."

Concluded Daly: "On behalf of the whole league administration I'd like to welcome all our returning and new clubs and to wish each and every player the best of sporting luck for the season."

FOCUS: WEXFORD FOOTBALL LEAGUE



DARLEX PRESENT NEW KIT TO NORTH END UNITED

DARLEX MD Gregg Browne presented North End United, Wexford League Division 1 Champions manager Stuart Lawlor with a new kit for the coming season.

The club will field 12 teams both Men and Women with schoolboys/ girls from their Hollygrove base on Belvedere Road in Wexford Town.

John Godkin and Gary Dempsey will be in control of the club's flagship Premier team. The current holders of the Leinster Junior Cup and Wexford Football League Premier League

champions have been back training with a hunger to retain their crown. A summer tournament in the style of the Champions League facilitated by the Wexford Football League kicks off early June.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

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FOCUS: WICKLOW LEAGUE

WICKLOW LOOK TO ESTABLISH WOMEN'S LEAGUE

BY PAUL DOWLING

WITH a reported nine clubs expressing an interest, the Wicklow and District Football League are hopeful of establishing a Women's League for 2021 season.

Earlier in 2021, Michael Conlon (Chairman of the Wicklow League) informed clubs that following the restructuring of the FAI, that Women's

football in the county came under their remit.

Since then, clubs throughout Wicklow have been canvassed to garner interest in their communities.

"We need to get to the position that ALL clubs support and have a women's team if player numbers permit and are



Blessington native and Ireland WNT star Louise Quinn



Alannah McEvoy

available” said Conlon.

In correspondence with clubs earlier this month, Conlon revealed more good news.

“A meeting will be held with the relevant clubs to discuss the formation of a Women’s League for the forthcoming season. We have had a positive response to this with nine clubs indicating an interest.”

He went on to explain: “Some clubs have still not responded to this, and I would urge them to do so. We are still open to more female participants.”

The League chairman also made a call for club members and officials to help the league by joining an organising/

steering committee that will run the new League.

“Additionally, if any club has somebody who would be interested in helping the league make this a reality, please put them in touch with myself or any committee member. Their assistance (especially if involved in the women’s game) would be gratefully appreciated.”

The Garden County has always been a hotbed for women’s football, with a strong support for the game in a large catchment area.

Presently – Aine O’Gorman (Enniskerry – Peamount United) and Claire Walsh (Kilbride – Peamount United) as well as Louise Quinn (Blessington – Fiorentina) are members of the Senior Republic of



Michael Conlon

Ireland squad.

U19 cap Alannah McEvoy (Bray – Peamount United) – grand-daughter of the Legendary Andy McEvoy – is close to a Senior call-up.

There is further Wicklow presence in the Women’s National League (WNL) with Beckie Cassin (Rathdrum – Cork City); Edel Kennedy (Carnew – Wexford Youths Women) and Nicole Keogh (Bray – DLR Waves).

They have all followed on trailblazers like world boxing champion Katie Taylor who played internationally for the Girls in Green while the likes of Rachel Jenkins, Susan Hackett, Maria Hogan and Chelsea Snell excelled.

One of the catalysts for the success of today was the Wicklow Ladies Soccer Academy – founded by Hughie Nolan, Tony Poutch, Dave McGuirk, Pat Kearney, and Irene Hackett - which laid the foundation for many players including 2014 Puskás Award 2014 goal of the year nominee Stephanie Roche.

For this upcoming campaign, Greystones United AFC will field Under 19 and Under 17 teams in the Women’s National League.

Greystones United AFC, Enniskerry FC and Wicklow Rovers have teams in the Metropolitan Girls League

Enniskerry Youth Club line out in the Eastern Women’s Football League while Arklow Town, Aughrim Rangers and Coolboy Rangers are currently plying their trade at underage in Wexford.

Wicklow Rovers, Rathnew AFC and Newtown Juniors have had Ladies senior teams of late, with Newtown memorably winning the Leinster Under 14 title.



CLUB ... LEAGUE ... ASSOCIATION ... PROVINCE ... NATIONAL

YOUR GRASSROOTS NOTICEBOARD ROUND-UP

WELCOME SPONSORSHIP FOR DUNDALK SCHOOLBOYS

AS part of Dundalk Credit Union's ongoing commitment to grass roots youth sports and community development, they are delighted to announce a three-year sponsorship agreement with the Dundalk Schoolboys League.

This agreement will see the Dundalk Schoolboys League, an established and integral part of sports development within our wider community, renamed The Dundalk Credit Union Schoolboys League. The League draws talent from across Co Louth and manages league and cup competitions for teams from fifteen affiliated clubs in age groups from Under 12 to Under 18 years and by organising representative teams from these age groups and entering them in suitable national and international competitions.

This new agreement will see the teams within The Dundalk Credit Union Schoolboys League fitted out with new playing kits across all age groups and in addition, offers The Dundalk Credit Union Schoolboys League an opportunity and avenue to further strengthen and grow their strategic plans for The League into the future.

Billy Doyle, CEO Dundalk Credit Union said "The Dundalk Schoolboys League was established in 1927 in response to a local community need, similar to that of Dundalk Credit Union and its founders in 1968. As organisations, we listened to, and answered the needs of our communities, and Dundalk Credit Union is very proud to work together with The League to showcase the importance of team, motivation and focus in success."

Michael Dillon, Chairman, Dundalk Schoolboys League added "Dundalk Schoolboys League are delighted to be partnering with Dundalk Credit Union with this sponsorship agreement. The support provided by the Credit Union through this sponsorship will underpin the activities of the League going forward. This agreement will provide capital for facility improvement and maintenance and for the purchase of equipment and kit.

With this sponsorship agreement Dundalk Credit Union has shown its commitment to grassroots football in the area and, once again, the value it provides as a community based Financial Institution that supports many and varied community groups and activities."

FOCUS: SLIGO LEITRIM LEAGUE

ARTIFICIAL PITCH INSTALLATION AT RAY MACSHARRY PARK NEARS COMPLETION



THE Sligo Leitrim DSL is closing in on the completion of the development of a new artificial pitch and ground works at Ray MacSharry Park in Cranmore, Co Sligo. Work has progressed well and all works are due to be completed in Mid / late July for the progressive Connacht league's home base.

SIS Pitches, the world renowned company that has worked on some of the world's biggest stadiums and owned by Sligo's George Mullan, is overseeing the project which is expected to take approximately eight weeks to complete. It is expected to cost €400,000 in total, with the FAI providing €100,000. A further €197,591.00 was received through a grant under the Sports Capital Programme.

Said Noel Kennedy: "The state of the art pitch will be a brilliant facility addition to our league and I'm grateful to all who have contributed financially including new FAI CEO Jonathan Hill for his good offices in helping us secure the necessary funding from the national association."

The league is also hoping to hold a Memorabilia Auction in July 2021 and are currently accepting items for auction that will allow us to generate much needed revenue. All items received will be acknowledged in writing and through all Social Media outlets.

IF you have any items - jerseys or other football memorabilia that you would like to contribute to the upcoming auction, please contact Noel Kennedy on 087 2586003.

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We want to promote the grassroots game and you can help us put the spotlight on some of the great work carried out nationwide on behalf of the game.



When: Monday-Friday 10:00 - 13:00
Who: Boys & Girls Ages 6-14 Years

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