

THE 1944 Munster senior hurling final re-play between Cork and Limerick was again fixed for Thurles, the date July 30th.

The crowd was once more a great one. Thurles was packed to overflowing the previous night, and the morning of the game saw another influx of vehicles that transformed the Cathedral City to something like its appearance in the infant days of the G.A.A., when the great Archbishop Croke walked its streets.

A big number of Limerick enthusiasts left the city on the Saturday and walked the forty odd miles to Thurles. Sixty-five years old Peter Ryan set off from Lisnagry, walking thirty-five miles to see the game. The spirit of the old days was never more evident in our time than in that memorable year of 1944

#### DRAMATIC MATCH

It was a dramatic match, as extracts from some press reports will testify.

"Green Flag," writing in the "Irish Press," said:—

"Well played Cork! Gallant winners of the Munster Hurling final replay. Hard luck, Limerick, sporting losers of a classic that thrilled thousands.

"Inquests" are unavoidable after a game such as that which held the crowd in a spell, and while everybody, including the most ardent Limerick supporters, will congratulate Cork on their magnificent rally when all seemed lost, most people will agree that it was tough on Limerick to be beaten with victory almost in their grasp.

"The 'keep the game fast' last minute advice to the Cork men played a big part in the win, which was as dramatic as any we have seen in a Munster final.

"The champions set the pace early on, and although they had to give way to Limerick in the second and third quarters, they never forgot that little bit of advice.

"It was their lightning burst in the last quarter that swept a tiring Limerick centre-field and defence off their feet, and as grand a solo run as ever Mick Mackey essayed in his greatest moment was accomplished by Christy Ring, whose finishing shot was never touched by friend or foe until it landed in the net. It was a brilliant feat and only a player like Ring could bring it off after a gruelling game.

#### WHERE ALL AGREED

"After the match, I discussed with umpires, backs and forwards, the score, which gave Cork the sothern title for the twenty-third time, and all agreed that while everybody within range pulled on the

ball, nobody touched it.

"It was one of these goals that a man gets in a lifetime and it came at the right minute when a score was worth a king's ransom.

"Luck seemed against Limerick as, in addition to the earlier goal, which Mick Mackey netted just as the whistle had gone for a free, the Limerick skipper knocked the lime off the upright in a bid for the goal that would again have levelled up, leaving the issue to be decided in extra time.

"Mick, when he appeared after the game with his little two-year-

### By SEAMUS O'CEALLAIGH

old son dressed in the Limerick colours, was given a wonderful ovation as a tribute from all on his great display."

#### A CHERISHED MEMORY

In the "Irish Independent," we read:—

"For those who were at Thurles the last minute goal by Christy Ring, which brought victory to Cork and defeat to Limerick, will remain a cherished memory of a wonderfully artistic effort by a great hurler. To those who were not there it will be recited for many a year to come how the Glen Rovers' man ran from his own half almost to the Limerick line with the ball bouncing merrily on his hurley and then smacked it across for the goal that won the day.

"Had the referee played the advantage rule Cork's reign as champions was over, for just before their final rally Mick Mackey had walked through to crash the ball into the net, only to find that the whistle had sounded for a Limerick free, which was driven wide.

"Outstanding forward on the field was Mick Mackey. Con Murphy tried in vain to watch the Ahane wizard, who bobbed up in the most unexpected places to get or make scores for his side."

#### ADVANTAGE RULE

"Galteemore," in the "Tipperary Star," dealing with "the goal Mick Mackey might have got under the Advantage Rule," wrote:—

"When all is said and done, is it not the height of absurdity to frame a rule to protect the player who, though fouled, gets his score and then not give it to him. Advantage rule! Advantage for the man who commits the foul! As things stand after Sunday it will pay a back to foul a forward if he looks good for a score at all. If Limerick don't raise hell about that rule and do something to ensure that it works the right way instead of the wrong way, then the spirit of Garryowen 'ain't what it used to be."

"Carbery" in the "Cork Examiner":—

"It will rank with the classic Munster Finals of the past—in its stern naked grandeur, in its hearty manly spirit where rival surging bloods swing ash with freedom and abandon, where scores were level three times in the hour, where Mick Mackey treated us to all his wizard artistry.

"Mick Mackey played in the 1945 Railway Cup series, which Munster won.

"With a victory over Clare, at Ennis, on June 24th, 3-6 to 3-3, Limerick qualified for the Munster Final, which was played at Thurles on July 15th."

#### A TYPICAL MUNSTER FINAL

The newspaper described the game:—

"It was a typical Munster Final, the hurling was hard with men standing shoulder to shoulder and pulling first time in the air or on the ground with an abandon that was almost reckless.

"Limerick looked all set for a recovery of the title when Mick Mackey, with one of his old dare-devil solo runs spreadeagled the Tipperary defence to score a great goal that had a huge Limerick following on their feet. But Tipperary's defence was superb and with Cornelly the star, they stood up to a red hot Limerick barrage, in which Mick Mackey was the prime mover, to win 4-3 to 2-6."

The "Tipperary Star" said:—

"How fared Mick Mackey? On the whole he was well held and though he careered around in his usual style, the Tipperary Captain, John Maher, and the left back, Phil Purcell, were successful on many occasions in spiking his guns. On other occasions, however, he was still the elusive Mick and he gave us almost all the spectacular hurling of the game."

Ahane paid a visit to Ballycastle, Co. Antrim, later that season, where they had a great game with the Dublin Faughs, who won 3-2 to 2-4. The Limerick scores on that occasion were contributed by—John Mackey (1-2); Mick Mackey (1-1), Timmy Ryan (0-1).

Limerick met Tipperary (All Ireland champions) in the opening round of the 1946 Munster Championship, played at Cork Athletic Grounds.

#### DANCING FEET AND SOLO RUNS

Two lightning goals in the first few minutes put Tipperary followers in confident mood, but slowly and surely the champions lead was pegged back; the dancing feet of Dick Stokes, the solo runs of Mick Mackey and the first time methods of Derry McCarthy, all contributing to the scores, which left champions and challengers on level terms at the half way stage.

A picture goal by Jacky Power in the twentieth minute of the second half set the Limerick men alight, and when, seven minutes later, John Mackey raced through for another major score, Tipperary's All Ireland crown was gone. Limerick, 3-5; Tipperary, 2-2.

The Munster Final at Thurles, in which Cork proved victors over Limerick, 3-8 to 1-3, was Mick Mackey's last big game; although he came in for the closing stages of the 1947 Munster Championship game, in which Limerick beat Tipperary 6-8 to 2-3—a match in which his brother John gave one of his greatest displays.

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