

# No. 176-MICK MACKEY of Aha ne (Continued)

LEINSTER had won the Railway Cup Finals of 1932 and 1933, and qualified for the 1934 decider by beating Connacht, at Roscrea, 7-6 to 4-6.

When the Munster team for the Final was announced it was something of a sensation to find Limerick players filling seven places on the side. All however, justified their selection. It actually proved a very formidable combination, displaying all the dash and determination characteristic of Munster hurling at its best.

With five Limerickmen in defence, it was pleasant to read afterwards the many tributes paid to the magnificent back play in the second half—the equal of any witnessed in Croke Park.

One press report said: "The first impression one gathered was the good form shown by the seven representatives from Limerick. Four of them were brilliant throughout; the remaining three were good when not excellent."

## GREAT PLAYERS.

"Paddy Scanlan captivated the crowd with a cool, calculated and finished display. He pucked out long and strong and never made a mistake during the hour. A special word of praise must go to Paddy Clohesey, who was the most brilliant man on the field. A tireless worker, he was as accurate at overhead balls as he was at ground play. Timmy Ryan more than held his own at midfield, where he was opposed by the one and only Lory Meagher. Mickey Cross, playing in his sixth Cup Final, enhanced a fine reputation with one of his best displays. Tom McCarthy renewed acquaintance with the hero of the 1933 All-Ireland Final—lovely Johnny Dunne, as Noreiders admirers christened him after that game; and the Kilfinane man held him scoreless, no mean feat. Ned Cregan, who had Matty Power to contend with, did not get much time for fancy hurling, but managed the wily Noreider as well as I saw any other defence man do. Mick Mackey was playing on Eddie Byrne, who was in fine fettle, but the rising Castleconnell star managed to give him the slip on two occasions to take passes from Larry Blake that finished up in the back of the Leinster net."

Munster won, 6-3 to 3-2, and for all by Mickey Cross it was the first Railway Cup medal. Mick Mackey figured in eight further inter-provincial finals, and was on the losing side on only one occasion—in 1936, when the team he captained lost to Leinster by a point.

In 1934, the G.A.A. celebrated the Golden Jubilee of the foundation of the Association, which event took place at a meeting in Thurles on November 1st, 1884.

The capture of the All-Ireland hurling crown in Jubilee Year was the ambition of almost everyone in Sarsfield's County, and with that object in view every game was used as a means of finding the best players in the County, and fitting them for the hard campaign ahead.

## HURLING AT ITS GREATEST.

Ahane opened that season with a great game against St. Finbarr's (Cork), played at Limerick Gaelic Grounds in the 1916 Memorial Tournament final. From the moment that President de Valera set the ball rolling it was hurling at its greatest, to prove one of the sternest and most electrifying games for many a day, completed

## By SEAMUS O'CEALLAIGH

in a welter of excitement as Cork forced the scores that left the issue undecided: Ahane, 7-1; St. Finbarr's, 8-1. The worth of that match re-opened the question of club games on inter-county lines, and many were the advocates of the idea—a return to the first system established under G.A.A. rules.

Limerick made their first visit to London on Whit Monday, and played Kilkenny in the annual game for the Monaghan Cup. The venue was Woolwich Stadium, to which the Gaels returned recently, after many years absence.

It proved an hour of unending thrills—the exiles being teated to some wonderful duels. The Mackey brothers hurled with a speed, skill and consistency that opened up innumerable scoring chances—Mick bringing the crowd to their feet with a stylish goal over his head, his back to the net.

## BOB McCONKEY.

Another Limerick man to attract considerable notice on that occasion was veteran Bob McConkey, whose exchanges with Peter O'Reilly were models of cuteness and tenacity—a typical McConkey goal being the one he banged in on the rebound of a fine save by O'Connell, with a shot that no goalminder could intercept.

Limerick won narrowly, 5-4 to 4-5, the Cup being presented to the Shannonside captain, Timmy Ryan, by the donor, Mr. Owen Ward.

A fortnight later the Limerick lads were at Croke Park, to play Dublin in the Arus na nGaedheal Tournament final, for which Hospitals Trust Ltd. presented a set of medals.

## A SUPERB SIDE.

A Press report of that game said: "It is many years since Croke Park witnessed such a predominance of one first-class side over another. To say Limerick were a superb side would scarcely be doing justice to the merits of the southern men. They were the fastest, the most dashing, the most accurate and the most brilliant side we have seen for quite a time. Just that style which all idealists conjure up to themselves when they envisage a hurling side at its best; no hesitation, no waiting on the ball, no overbalancing at the stroke; instead, a fast outward dash, a sharp sure pull on the stride, and a fast follow-through or a quick recovery as the case may be. Surely this was hurling at its best."

## A HECTIC AFFAIR.

The Thomond Fels Final was a hectic affair. Cork, who led by five points at the interval, surprised all by their high class display against a much fancied Limerick selection. In a pulse stirring finish the home lads just held their unbeaten record, to win, 3-6 to 3-4.

A week later the Shannonsiders opened their Munster Championship campaign, Clare providing the opposition.

The Dalcassians started off at a terrific pace, and playing as a well balanced combination outclassed the holders for twenty minutes. Scanlan was the Limerick hero at a crucial time. He captured balls from short range although blinded by struggling men but a few yards away. The Press commented: "Short clearances are the test of a goalkeeper, and it

is doubtful if as good a man as Scanlan has been seen for many a year."

## LIMERICK AND CORK AT THURLES.

The meeting of Limerick and Cork at Thurles on July 8th provided a game fit to rank with the best played for the Munster crown. Limerick's opening bursts were so powerful and so speedy that the early clashes gave the impression of an easy victory.

In a whirlwind introduction to top class hurling, newcomer Jacky O'Connell—now our very efficient County Secretary—crashed two unsavable shots to the Cork net. Opening into the second quarter the Leesiders showed their mettle and Limerick were lucky to be a goal clear at the interval.

Ten minutes from the restart "Micka" Brennan sent through the leveller—signal for a terrific Cork offensive that had Limerick with their backs to the wall. Mick Mackey fell back to aid the defence, bobbing up here, there and everywhere as the Rebel County assault mounted. In a nerve wracking moment for Shannonside supporters Willie Clancy of Mallow crossed a ball from the wing to give Brennan possession right on the edge of the square. The latter hit a bullet-like drive that looked unstoppable. But Scanlan thought otherwise. He rapped the leather down sharply and cleared with a mighty swing to save Limerick from what seemed certain defeat.

## MICK MACKEY'S FAMOUS SOLO RUN.

With time all but gone, Mick Mackey pounced on the leather, followed that famous solo run—such a feature of his game in after years. Along the wing he travelled with the ball glued to his hurley as he stormed through. For one fleeting moment, every eye in that great crowd was on the bobbing figure in green and white as he brushed all opposition aside, and with coolness and precision slammed through the winning goal.

The second Southern title came easily after that, Limerick triumphing over Waterford in the decider at Cork, 4-8 to 2-5.

With a 4-4 to 2-4 win over Galway, in a tough tussle at Roscrea, Limerick qualified for the Blue Ribband battle for the second successive season.

Limerick, their hearts set on capturing the special medals struck to commemorate the Jubilee Year All-Ireland Hurling Final, met an unexpected reverse when Dublin held them to level scoring at the first meeting.

The issue between the pair was knit with the closeness that makes hurling often as fearsome as it is fascinating. Fortune swayed three, four times in the hour and left superiority undecided at the end.

The Press had this to say: "By the sums of their respective merits, on their spells of supremacy and bursts of spirit, in the debit and credit account of their luck and misfortunes, they have earned the privilege of another essay."

## "GRIM ENDEAVOUR."

"As a contest of vigour and determination, added to skill and speed, it must rank as a splendid game. It was lit up by frequent flashes of brilliancy, but on the whole glowed only with the white heat of grim endeavour. The rivalry of the teams, fuelled by their own and the hopes of their admirers was too intense for artistry to have full play. A stroke unspoiled was a mark against the would-be spoiler. The game began at a great pace, which was well maintained to the end, and towards the end some may have felt it; only a few showed it."

The early lead of Dublin seemed too hasty to be reassuring and yet it took Limerick the greater half of the first moiety to equalise. For at least a quarter hour the Dublin backs were under continuous pressure and resisted with marvelous tenacity. But their efforts would have been in vain but for the inspired goal-keeping of Forde. Dublin may shudder to think what the adverse balance might have been were it not for the alertness and nerve of their cul baire. Almost on the interval, Limerick took the minimum lead, 1-5 to 2-1.

Dublin equalled shortly after the resumption—Limerick forged five points ahead and then had a goal disallowed. It was the critical phase of the game but the Dublin defence never wavered. Sharp duels and mass attacks, loose sorties and quick reverses followed each other with pulsating speed. Then, in the closing minutes Dublin electrified the crowd with an amazing rally. They had two points, and on the call of time, Denny O'Neill, the Dublin full forward, with a superb personal feat, had the goal that mattered.

## LIMERICK THE MORE FORCEFUL SIDE.

"Limerick were the more forceful side. They were more vigorous, more often in possession, more overstriding, but less trustful, less incisive, less dangerous. "Paddy Clohesey's play at present is incomparable. He has never been stopped in his overriding superiority. At times his place striking lacks accuracy, but for all round hurling and vigorous manhood he has no equal just at present."

"The Mackey brothers played more of the ball than any two men on the field. They are artistic and alert, full of speed, strength and science. Mick gave us a glimpse of his strength when he overturned Mick Daniels after both had set themselves for a fair and square 'jostle'. It was the real 'goods'."

"Cross lifted and drove down with perfect direction and with the minimum of effort and without any apparent difficulty. A great sticker and a great man is Cross."

Most Rev. Dr. Harty, Archbishop of Cashel and patron of the G.A.A., started the game. An impressive feature was the unfurling of the National Flag on Hill '16, as a bugler sounded the General Salute, prior to the rendering of the National Anthem.

The next article will deal with the re-play and with the famous "wet day" final of 1935.

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