

Clonduff Camogie Report 2019

As a club we have experienced many momentous days in our recent history, from our first Senior Championship in 2007 to our first Ulster Intermediate Club title in 2014. However, undoubtedly, our greatest achievement to date came on 3rd March 2019 when we were crowned All Ireland Intermediate Club champions in Croke Park. It was a fantastic day for the whole community and just reward for the team, management and committee and all those involved with Clonduff Camogie Club. Our achievement was acknowledged far and wide- we were awarded The Irish News Camogie Excellence Award at a function in the Armagh City Hotel and Newry Mourne and Down District Council held an event for us in the Canal Court Hotel. The celebrations continued with the Dinner Dance and Gala Ball in November. On behalf of Clonduff Camogie Club we would like to offer sincere thanks and gratitude to Clonduff GAC for hosting an amazing night to celebrate the success of our All Ireland Winning Camogs. We were very honoured and grateful to be special guests and to receive the prestigious All Ireland medals in a magnificent personalised mounted frame.

For the team to be awarded Hall of Fame recipients 2019 is truly humbling and we thank Fintan Mussen for delivering a powerful speech which really touched the hearts of all our girls and indeed everyone in the hall who witnessed it.

Thanks to all those who helped organise such a brilliant night which will be remembered fondly for years to come.

At the County Awards in Liatroim clubrooms on Sun 24th Nov we were awarded Club of the year

U6 team

This year we had approximately 30 under 6s (P1 and P2) attending training every Tuesday. This enabled us to enter several teams to the monthly blitzes. Thanks to Natasha Corbett who helped out with the u6s. Many thanks also to the parents for their support in taking the girls to the various blitzes.

U8 team

The success of our senior team in Croke Park in March this year played a major part in the increased numbers of girls wanting to play camogie at this age in the club. Week on week more and more new players were turning up at training on Tuesday evenings. It meant that instead of all U8s training together, we had to split them into two groups - p3 and p4 to give each child more specific coaching. We were fortunate to have Aine Byrne (a former star player in the club) return to help with the weekly training. Also helping with this group on a regular basis was senior player Niomhi Murray. We took part in the monthly U8 all county blitzes held in Mayobridge, Castlewellan, Ballygalget, Warrenpoint and Ballela and were able to enter two and sometimes three teams in this group. The end of year annual parish tournament was a wonderful display of progressing skills, enjoyment and also an edge of competitiveness. This year with the increase in numbers the U8s had their own separate tournament instead of being included with the U10 and 12s. Thanks to Aisling Dickson and Lorraine McGinn who helped at the blitzes and all the parents who supported us especially Marie Cowan, Shauna Brown, Pamela Binks, Majella Kelly and Mary Burns.

U10 team

The Under 10's like the rest of the underage teams this year had a massive influx of players on the back of the Senior All Ireland success. Coaches Orla Morgan, Patrice Maginn and Niomhi Murray were greeted with a record thirty young girls who attended training and various blitzes throughout the year. The blitzes were generally 10 a side so we were able to enter three teams at each blitz giving all our girls plenty of game time. All three teams were of mixed ability therefore no team more elite than the other.

The year was finished off with the annual parish league. The teams were made up of U8, U10 and U12 players. Again we had record numbers of players in the field that evening with over 90 medals presented including our budding U6's. This is always a very fun but highly competitive league and it was great to see the support of parents and grandparents along the sidelines. Thanks to the U14 girls who took on the role of managers and referees.

Of course with the record numbers attending this required lots of help. Thanks to our senior panellists Ursula Kearney, Sara-Louise Carr, Orla Gribben, Molly Brown and Erin Rafferty who helped out throughout the year.

The camogie club hopes to run another Academy in the youth club over the Winter months each Saturday. This was also a great success last Winter with guest coaches including Cushendalls Aaron Graffin providing some excellent sessions which the girls thoroughly enjoyed enabling them to maintain and develop their skills and also catch up with their camogie friends.

U12 team

U12s had a successful year. There were 23 uU12s this year. They accepted an invitation to attend a camogie tournament hosted by Carrickmore GAA and reached the final of the cup competition. They also attended the annual Ellen Finnegan tournament and won the shield. Unfortunately, due to clash of fixtures with the seniors playing in the Ulster Final the U12s couldn't attend the final blitz. Sincere thanks to the parents for their support throughout the year. Much appreciated.

U14 Team:

This team had a fantastic year winning the double; they topped the league and were unbeaten throughout and won the championship final against a fancied Ballygalget team in Drumaness before the Senior Final. Many supporters at the game were astonished at the excitement,

intensity and skill on display that day. This was a small panel made up of many U12 players who were invaluable throughout the season. Managers of the u14's were Guinevra, McGilligan, Oliver Morgan and Colin Shields. A big thank you to all the parents who supported the team during the year.

U16 Team:

The U16 team were runners-up in the league and the year promised a lot with such a talented bunch of players but they were hit with serious injuries throughout the year. They met Liatroim in the quarter final of the championship and having drawn with them in the league they knew they were tough opposition. Unfortunately, injuries to key players made this a difficult task and Liatroim ran out deserved winners on the day. The team was managed by Guinevra McGilligan, Oliver Morgan and Colin Shields and much appreciation to the parents who supported the management and team throughout the year.

Minor Team:

The minor team entered the Championship and had the misfortune of meeting Ballygalget in the first round; depleted with players away on holidays they travelled to the Ards but suffered a heavy defeat. Thank you to Lizzy Wilson & Katie McGilligan who travelled with the team.

Junior Team:

For the first time in quite a few years we entered a second adult team; the success of the senior team the previous season lit a fire in the bellies of many past players and with many girls coming out of the underage ranks it was felt that 2 adult teams could be accommodated. Unfortunately, with regrading etc and a mix-up we were unable to officially enter the league but played a number of challenge games. As championship rolled round the team were drawn against Attical and they had a great win in Longstone. The Championship Final would see them up against Aghaderg – a rejuvenated team with plenty of talent. Clonduff were confident going into the game but Aghaderg proved too strong and came away with the title; however, for this bunch of players to reach a county final in their first year was an fantastic achievement.

Senior Team:

The seniors took a well earned 4-week break after the All Ireland Final and regrouped at the start of April, managing to get together for the start of the 2019 league campaign against An Ríocht. The league was used to experiment and finished mid-table. The team were determined to defend their county title and the first round of the championship was against old rivals Liatroim – regardless of the accolades and titles the previous year, a match against the Fontenoys would always be tough and the team were defending 3 titles and 3 majestic cups that day in Mayobridge. It wasn't pretty and Liatroim threw everything at Clonduff, but they managed to come out on top with a 5-point margin. The semi-final win against Ballygalget was sweet followed by an impressive victory against Portaferry in the County Final – many within the county thought Clonduff was there for the taking but they weren't prepared for the resilience and hunger within the team that resulted in three in a row County titles – one cup retained and another two to go.

The girls defended their Ulster title against Eglisk at Pearse Óg grounds in Armagh, Eglisk were still that polished and talented team and once again threatened Clonduff but the strength and experience within the team held firm – two cups retained and one to go!!

The Clonduff girls are now in the middle of their winter program preparing for Gailtír on the 26th Jan 2020 (the team they beat in the All Ireland Final).

Seven Clonduff players were nominated for Gaelic Life All Stars – Karen Haughey, Erin Rafferty, Nicola Elliott, Clare McGilligan, Paula O’Hagan, Danielle Harrison and Sara Louise Graffin with Erin, Paula and Sara Louise getting the nod.

Karen Haughey is currently nominated as Intermediate Player of the Year and Clonduff Senior Management have been nominated for Coach/Management of the Year – all to be decided on Saturday 30th November at the Ulster Camogie Awards Dinner.

County teams

Down minors were crowned All Ireland Minor B Shield champions. We were represented by Beth Fitzpatrick, Caitlin Harper, Isabella O’Hare and Roisin McPolin.

County Seniors built on their success from the previous season by retaining the Ulster Championship after a scintillating game in Clones against Antrim; Down captain Fionnuala Carr picked up the ‘Player of the Match’ award with Clonduff players Sara Louise Graffin, Paula O’Hagan, Clare McGilligan, Cassie Fitzpatrick, Orla Gribben, Danielle Harrison and Katie McGilligan involved. They also met Westmeath in the All Ireland semi-final and despite leading most of the game, they were beaten by the narrowest of margins and Westmeath went on to win the All Ireland title.

At this point Fionnuala Carr has been nominated for County Senior Player of the Year for the 2019 season by Ulster Camogie which will be announced at the annual awards lunch on Saturday 30th November.

Primary Schools

Congratulations to the school camogie team who are the Cuman na Bunscoil camogie champions and Zara Kelly who was selected to play in the mini games during half time of the All Ireland Hurling Semi-final Tipperary v Wexford.

Secondary Schools

The Our Lady's U14 team on winning the Schools final beating Sacred Heart in the final. Special mention to our 7 girls who were part of the panel; Katie and Amy Morgan, Ellen and Bláithín Shields, Ceallagh Byrne, Niamh McConville and Cara Savage. Commiserations to Grace Clancy who was part of the Sacred Heart team. Clonduff Camogie is very proud of you all. Later in the year the two sides met again in the Ulster Junior Medallion Shield Final when Sacred Heart were victorious. The same girls were involved with the addition of Orlaith McCusker (SH) and Meah Murphy (OLS). Senior team player Níomhí Murray was part of the OLS management team

Gael Linn

Sara Louise and Paula were members of the Ulster Gael Linn team that won the title for the third time in a row in Abbotstown.

Sponsorship/Fundraising

The Camogie Club were overwhelmed by the support received during our All Ireland Campaign. To all those who purchased signs, put up banners and gave any form of financial assistance we are very grateful. Thanks also to Darren and our senior footballers for doing their own fundraising for us in a “Last Man Standing” competition.

We received sponsorship of gear from Mourne Leak finders, Mourne Construction NYC, Pilates with Paula and DOH Building Contracts.

To show our appreciation to all our sponsors we held a thank you evening in the clubrooms in July. It was lovely to hear from some of the girls on what winning meant to them. The Managers Alastair and Damian also spoke and gave some insight on the preparations they had to do to ensure the team was fully prepared for the Final. Patsy Russell, who has been commentating on our matches from the first championship win, spoke on how getting into the press box in Croke Park had been a dream of his. Our guest for the evening Neil McManus was very honest and spoke on how he would do anything to win an All-Ireland with his club Cushendall. He then presented the All Ireland medals to Jenna & Lizzie who were heading off to teach in Doha in August. Thanks to Donna and Luigi for the food and to Francis Quinn for hosting the evening.

We held our annual Cake sale April in clubrooms on the same day that we hosted the County U12 blitz. Thanks, as always to the butcher for displaying our hamper and to all those who bought tickets. Our big breakfasts continue to be well supported. In March we kicked off the All Ireland celebrations when The Nooks played in the INF. Our annual Coffee morning will be held on Sat 7th December in Downshire Arms Hotel.

Other news

- The Summer coaching scheme was held on 5th -9th August.
- BBC Northern Ireland featured the Camogie Club in an online feature titled ‘Sister Act: Clonduff Camogie Champions talk family ties’ – thanks must go to Kieran Dunbar who facilitated this.
- We hit the airwaves on Downtown Radio when senior players Paula O’Hagan and Orla Gribben had a chat with Kevin McAllister on their All Ireland success. We showed our stripes for women in sport as we supported the 20x20 campaign.
- We had 3 new arrivals during the year and congratulations to Orla (Zara), Ursula (Grace) and Megan (Beau) on the birth of their beautiful son and daughters.
- The club were represented by Orlaith & Aoife McCusker and Tiarna Savage at a Online Safety Workshop in Croke Park hosted jointly by GPA & WGPA.

Administration

Off the field of play our hard-working committee continue to support our teams in all they do and are the backbone of everything that is good about Clonduff Camogie:

Chairperson/Secretary	Guinevra Mc Gilligan
Treasurer	Cathy Fitzpatrick
Assistant Treasurer	Aisling Dickson
Insurance Officer	Marie Cowan

Additional committee members: Teresa Carr, Eileen Hamill, Maura Quinn

Outside of the club Teresa Carr is County Vice Chairperson, Eileen Hamill is a member of the County THDC and Ursula Kearney is Vice Chair of Ulster Camogie.