



JAMES LANGAN, Logue's Shop, Eyre Square (right), presenting a set of sports gear to Noel Dineen, St. Mary's College, Galway, who received his first cap for Ireland when the Irish schoolboys U-15 international soccer team defeated Northern Ireland. He represented Ireland again recently against Wales.

Mervue Face Hectic End To The Season

MERVUE UNITED will be busy over the next couple of weeks — battling for three major senior trophies — and the first of their games is on Sunday when they travel to Tuam in search of the two points that will clinch Connacht Senior League honours.

Tuam Celtic themselves, are out of contention but nonetheless are determined to give Mervue the game of their lives. Often the last few points are the hardest earned, but Mervue are fully aware of the formidable challenge they face in an away game in Ballina to fall back on, they will be all out to win on Sunday.

Last year Mervue were beaten 3-2 in their last league game at the Showgrounds, after leading Sligo Rovers Reserves by 2-1 with just two minutes remaining. Disaster struck just on the 90 minute mark and before Mervue had time to recover from the shock they were hit again in the second minute of injury time, and so Sligo took the honours.

encounter with Rovers in the Senior Cup and the winners of this game will be away to the winners of Collegians (Sligo) v U.G.G.

Last year the honours went to Sligo Rovers when they defeated Hibernians 4-3 in a thrilling game at Terryland Park. If both away teams can pull off victories it would produce a highly attractive All Galway final.

Mervue face a recently improved Ballina Rovers side and although they beat them 6-0 earlier in the season at Mervue, they have a somewhat easier task than U.C.G., who must win in Sligo.

Little is known of the Sligo outfit apart from the fact that they were unbeaten for months before Dynamo Blues knocked them out of an away game in Ballina to fall back on, they will be all out to win on Sunday.

One of the last matches of the season will be the pairing of Tuam Celtic and U.C.G. in the showdown for the Connacht Senior League Incentive Award. This award goes to the team which shows the most improvement on last season's form.

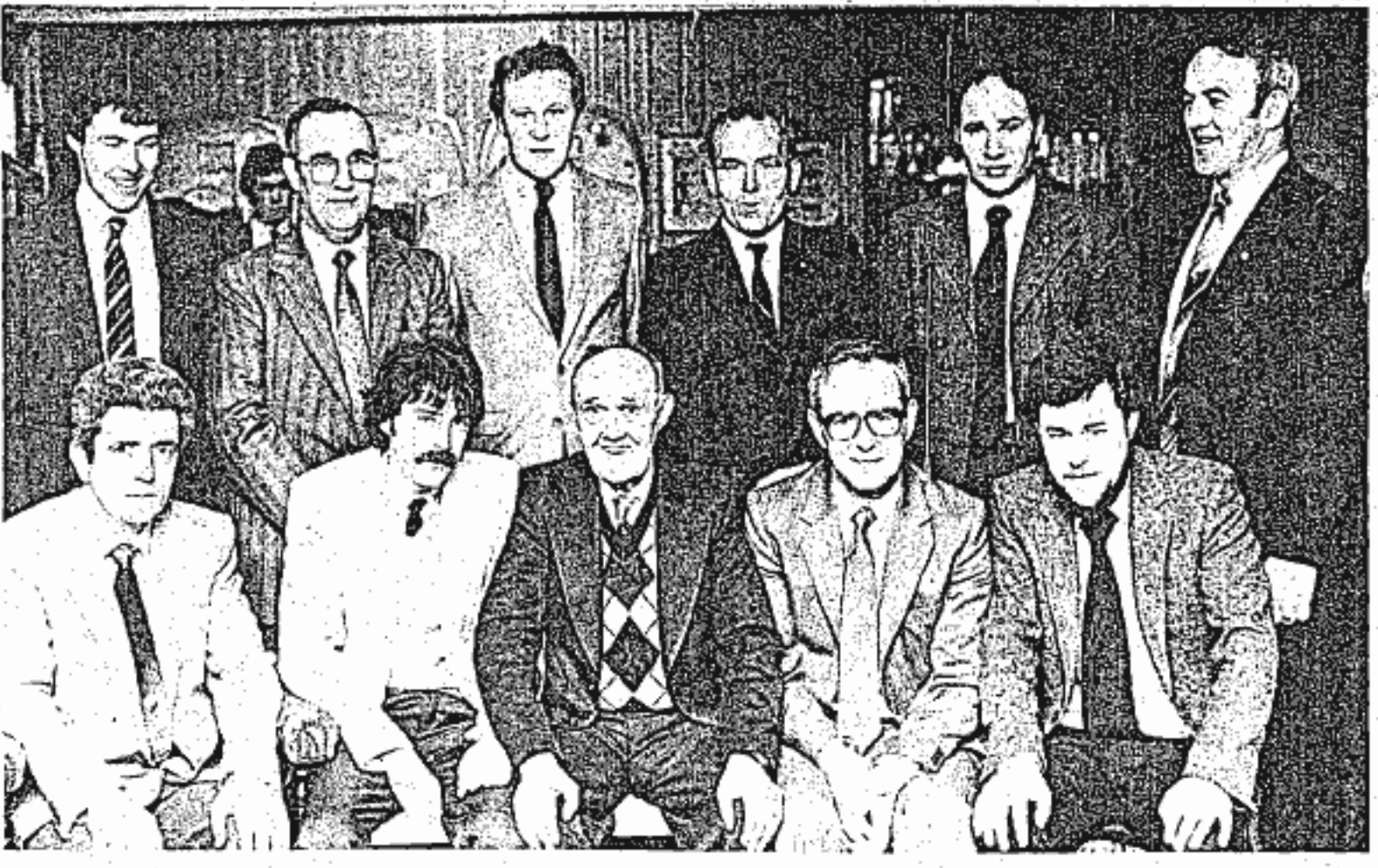
This year both College and Tuam showed a similar amount of improvement, so it was decided that they should do battle on the field for this unique award, which keeps teams fighting at the bottom of the table as well as at the top throughout the season.

Ballinasloe Town had an unhappy first year in the senior ranks but even though they are currently propping up the table, they have great prospects for next season and are already making preparations to sign new talent.

Salthill Devon, too had a far from memorable year and with just one match left in their season, they too will be hoping for greater things to come in the years ahead.

Ballina Rovers are still in with a chance of taking a trophy, while Sligo Rovers will have to settle for the League Cup they won earlier on in the season. Castleroa Celtic, although through to one final will have it all to do to beat either U.C.G. or Mervue in the Challenge Cup.

Collegians, the invited Sligo team undertook recently that if they got a good run in the cup that they would consider entry to the Senior League next season. This would be a great boost and if Westport of Castleroa would also join, it is felt that some of the stronger teams in Galway might follow suit.



THE ORGANISING COMMITTEE of the Mervue Hurling Club at their annual dinner in the Saco Cour Hotel, Salthill: Front (left to right) — Tom Lynch, Ray McDonnell, Harry Golden, John Lenihan, and Seamus O'Grady. Standing (left to right) — Ger Cahill, Frank McGrath, John Lynskey, Christy Egan, Pa Greahill, and Con O'Donovan.

UTD. FACE PROSPECT OF A BARREN TRIP

ONE MUST always look to a club's end of season results as an indication of their prospects for the next year's programme and sadly Galway United supporters will hardly derive much satisfaction from this particular exercise.

Coming towards the end of a most erratic season, United's inconsistent form must be surely baffling their closest followers, but in recent weeks there has been a frustrating similarity about their play.

Three defeats on the trot — admittedly they were desperately unlucky not to have at least shared the spoils with Shelbourne last weekend — represents United's worst run in the current League of Ireland campaign.

And the Westerners can hardly expect any favours on Sunday from Limerick United at the Markets Field where the home side, despite having a poor year by their own high standards, are still a formidable force.

It now looks inevitable that United will be in the bottom four at the end of the League of Ireland programme — an all too familiar placing — which poses the question as to whether the club will realise the importance of pre-season preparation this time.

Maybe if United fail on Sunday the powers that be in the club may realise the urgency of making summer signings as this appears the only course of action left to try to raise the fortunes of Galway United next season.

Thriller In Store At Terryland

ALL ROADS lead to Terryland Park on Sunday next for the replay of the Connacht Junior Cup semi-final between Hibernians and Merville Carraroe of Sligo. When the sides met on Sunday last the game ended 0-0 and ten minutes extra time failed to produce a result.

Next Sunday's game promises to be a thriller as Hibs strive to capture the Blue Riband of Connacht soccer that has eluded them for almost thirty years. Merville will be trying to win the cup for the first time and are going to be very hard to stop as they try to forget the disappointments of the past few years when they were removed from the competition on three occasions on technicalities.

Merville come to Galway with a bad reputation and include in their side four of the Connacht team that captured the Interprovincial series last season. Centre-half and captain David "Crockett" Kenny has been one of Merville's most consistent players in recent years, Frank Kennedy, a rugged but resourceful left full, while Tony Rooney and Tony McLoughlin are match-winners on their day. Other players of note in the side are "keeper" Karney and Devins in attack.

Hibernians, Galway's leading junior side of latter years, have a well-balanced side. Goalkeeper Tom Lally will bring plenty of experience to the side and he can be relied upon in tight situations. Hibs would seem to have the edge at the centre of the field but it is in attack that Hibs may conquer or fail. If John Tierney and Colm Naughton can produce the form that has made them the most-feared partnership in Galway soccer then I take them to qualify for the final against Dynamo Blues on the second Sunday in April.

Referee for the game is Mr. Gibbons of the Mayo Branch I.S.R.S. and the kick-off is 3 p.m.

Madden To The Fore

Galway riders figured prominently in The Emerald Club's Liam Toolan memorial race at Swords over the weekend in which Galway's Brendan Madden initiated the decisive break with 13 others. This group had dwindled to four when the final half mile was reached and in a hectic uphill finish John McQuaid pulled away from Madden to take the honours.

In the sixth place, 45 seconds down, came Tuam's Tommy Mannion, who was showing his best form to date this season and in 15th place was Kevin Walsh, who is now competing in senior ranks despite his tender years. Missing from the Galway squad was P. O'Grady who is in the midst of examinations.

Galway cyclists took part in race in Duleek on St. Patrick's Day and at Dunshaughlin on Saturday but none featured in the prizes although Gerry Watts had a creditable 14th to his credit at the latter venue.

Eire Og Club in Sligo organised the first Connacht race of the new season at Collooney on St. Patrick's Day. With no senior A cyclists present the senior and juniors were left off together on a six-mile course for 42 miles. Here Castleroa's young Mick Ruane showed his heels to the field of 23 riders over the concluding quarter mile to win.

Padraig Mannion of Galway was fourth while his brother, Gerry was in real bad luck with two punctures.

Salthill Gallop Halted

SALTHILL DEVON 1
SPRINGFIELD (Cobb) 2

SALTHILL DEVON'S great run in the F.A.I. under-17 cup ended when they went down by a single goal to a spirited Springfield team in the quarter-final at the Headford Road pitch.

Both teams started well and as the heavy conditions prevented any real open play, the few scoring chances created in the first half meritably flourished with the ball stopping short in the muddy goalmouths.

Salthill Devon, however, went close to scoring midway through the first half when Barret broke through on the right but his first-time effort from thirty yards went narrowly over.

Salthill took complete control in the second half but failed to penetrate the visitors' defence in which the offside trap was used to perfection.

Twenty minutes into the second half Springfield were awarded a direct free outside the Salthill penalty area and Fitzgerald, their current Schoolboy International, struck the ball perfectly and saw his shot fly into the roof of the net.

Salthill Devon were unlucky five minutes later when they awarded a free in a similar situation but Delargy saw his effort come back off the crossbar and into the hands of the grateful 'keeper.

Salthill Devon equalised with ten minutes remaining when Ruane, by far their most effective forward, latched onto an attempted clearance and his shot finished up in the net.

Delargy might have wrapped the game up for the seiders, in the closing stages, but he hesitated too long, when Murphy's chip found him unmarked at the far post but wasted a perfectly good scorable chance.

Such a miss was severely punished just seven minutes from time when Springfield got the winner from their left back, Buckley ran the full length of the pitch evading tackles from all directions, before crossing low and hard to Fitzgerald, who made no mistake from five yards.

Salthill were best served by their excellent defence of Downes in goal, Hickey, Comer, Trill and Parkinson.

Weekend GAA Results

INTERMEDIATE FOOTBALL LEAGUE (West) FINAL

SALTHILL 1-6
FR. GRIFFINS 1-4

INTERMEDIATE FOOTBALL LEAGUE (North) FINAL

CORTOON 2-6
GLYNISK 0-3

COUNTY UNDER 21 HURLING LEAGUE

CASTLEGAR 1-5
ORANMORE/MAREE 0-5

ATHENRY 2-12
GORT 3-4

KILLENADEEMA 5-9
TUAM 0-1

SENIOR HURLING Tournament (Galway Oil Cup) Quarter Finals

CLARENBRIDGE 5-5
KINVARA 1-8

BEAGH 3-7
CRAUGHWELL 2-2

GORT 2-6
ARDRAHAN 0-6

BALLINDERREEN 3-10
KILBEACANTY 0-2

SOCCER RESULTS

CONNACHT JUNIOR CUP (Semi-Finals)

DYNAMO BLUES 4
WESTPORT UNITED 0

MERVILLE, SLIGO 0
GALWAY HIBERNIANS 0 (after extra-time)

PREMIER LEAGUE

ST. BERNARDS UTD. 3
TUAM CELTIC 1

THERMO KING 2
SALTHILL DEVON 2

SECOND DIVISION

COLEMANSTOWN UTD. 2
DOONWOOD HAMMERS 1

RESERVE LEAGUE

MOYNE VILLA 1
UCG 0

THERMO KING 5
MERVUE CELTIC 2



THEY'RE OFF ... at the start of the Milk Run at Eyre Square, on Sunday.

Turloughmore Health Walk

The Walk, which will wind its way over a picturesque route starting at Turloughmore village, will take in areas like Coolane, Grange, Cremore, Carraun, Laskagh and finish at Turloughmore.

Coinciding with the Connacht Tribune Galway City Marathon on Easter Sunday, Turloughmore outdoor enthusiasts will be catered for in less demanding fashion with a 10 mile sponsored Health Walk.



MARIA QUINN presenting her trophy to Dermot Coll, Clubman of the Year at Renmore Soccer Club. Also in the photograph are Colie Moylan, Club Chairman (left), and Richard Quinn, sponsor.

The Connacht Connection!

Outstanding qualities of leadership, courage and nerves of steel have, as we confidently predicted, won for Connacht and Irish Rugby Captain, Ciaran Fitzgerald, the highest honour that the game has graciously can offer — captaincy of the touring Lions.

He thus becomes the seventh Irishman to win this supreme accolade and with him will travel seven other members of the Irish team that he has literally lifted from the realms of the "Wooden Spoon" to the heady heights of Triple Crown and International Championship altitudes in just two seasons.

All Ireland will be "behind" Fitzzy and his 'Lucky Seven' as they take on the self-styled 'World Champions' during their three months tour of New Zealand from May 14 to July 16. None will be more 'chuffed' by the distinction won by Ciaran Fitzgerald than the 'Three Horsemen' from his old school, Garbally Park — P. J. Dwyer, Dr. Mick Molloy and Ray McLoughlin — who played no small part behind the scenes, in the rise and rise of Irish Rugby under Fitzgerald's inspirational powers of leadership and command. — JBD.

Rugby 'A Craze'?

One letter-writer wonders out loud why Rugby has become such a 'craze' throughout Ireland, in recent years. His letter goes:

DEAR JBD,

As a man who has seen all sports played in Ireland down through the years and I have seen such renowned men as Christy Ring, Mick Mackey, Tony Reddan and other hurling stars at their best BUT I never saw one of them to get the publicity that Ciaran Fitzgerald the Irish Rugby captain has got in the Press. For instance, there were several Irish captains of Lions and Triple Crown teams such as Willie John McBride and Kari Mullen but they never were given such 'exposure' as is Ciaran Fitzgerald who was quoted on four pages of one edition of a national daily, this week. Can you suggest any credible reason for this explosion in interest in Rugby and in Rugby players?

BLUE & WHITE (faded).



or Gaelic Football finals screened in full on RTE.

Why that should be the case when they are by far the most widely played games in Ireland, it is difficult to fathom. Perhaps our friend's P.R.O. theory is bang on? — JBD.

Bad Enough?

DEAR JBD,

Wasn't it bad enough for Castlegar to be handed the Co. Under 21 Cup on a plate last year without you now trying to get them the Co. Cup the same way.

E. GALWAY GAEL.

— Fair comment. BUT it is not JBD who suggested that if Kiltormer are thrown out for allegedly playing an unregistered player, that they should automatically forfeit the Co. Cup. Castlegar, as we recall, took their beating in the county final and did NOT 'investigate' the composition of the Kiltormer team as St. Rynagh's did, with such a fine comb, it would appear. — JBD.

Pot Luck?

Further to the above Railway Cup seal we hear from 'Off It For Lent' that it was 'pure pot luck' that enabled Connacht/Galway to retain the Railway Cup Hurling title on St. Patrick's Day.

DEAR JBD,

Before ye start handing out bouquets to the Selectors, Team Manager and bottle-carriers whom we saw on Telly almost as often as 'J.R.' during the Railway Cup final in Cavan, just remember that it was pure pot-luck that brought the Cup back across the Shannon.

Why do I say so? Because the selected forward, young John Murphy was unfortunately for him and fortunately for the team, down with 'flu and so couldn't play. If he was there he could not possibly do himself justice as a feather-weight on the mud-flats of Brehin Park. So by pure pot-luck, the far heavier and stronger player, Brendan Lynskey, got into the side and won the game with a display of the powerful hard-pulling and grunting that were needed in such conditions.

Our selectors should learn a lesson from that and so select players who are suited to fast, dry conditions and alternative players who can act ankle deep in slush, when needed.

'OFF IT FOR LENT', CRAUGHWELL.

Fine Prospects:

In the final of the Connacht Schools' Senior Rugby Cup, between Garbally, Ballinasloe and Sligo Grammar at Galway Sportsground on St. Patrick's Day, some fine prospects were seen in action.

Not since Ray McLoughlin 'propped' for Garbally, had this famous school such a powerful player in the same position as Declan Kavanagh. This immensely strong lad although not yet 18 years, tips the scales at around 14 stones and for a boy of his bulk he can really sprint as he showed when flying in from his opponents "22" to score THE decisive try.

At the same age, Ray McLoughlin was neither as heavy nor as fast and as that shrewd talent-spotter, Ciaran Fitzgerald, has already set eyes on the Garbally player, with a view to drafting him into his club, St. Mary's, Dublin, young Kavanagh with normal development, must be on the way to the very top. His future career will be watched with keen interest by enthusiasts on either side of the Shannon. — JBD.

Amateurish?

DEAR JBD,

The GAA claims to be THE greatest 'amateur' sports association in the world and occasionally that claim appears to be questioned or doubted. Let there be no further doubt after the St. Patrick's Day fiasco of the Railway Cups in the Bog of Brehin, was an outstanding example of amateur organisation.

While it is no doubt, be suggested, that it is a holy and a wholesome thought to spread the gospel of the National game in the hurling wastelands of

Promising:

Amongst the backs, Garbally had in Eric Brady perhaps the most promising winger since International Dickie Roche, and in Michael 'Midge' Lyons, they had a scrum-half, in the mould of Sean Dillon, who with his fellow Garbally man, Paddy Kilcommins, formed a partnership with out-shone Uster and Ireland's celebrated duo, Jack Kyle and Ernie Strathearn, on one glorious occasion. In all, eight of the Garbally lads have already sampled Interprovincial fare. With those already mentioned, centres James Burke and Declan McKoon, flanker Aidan McNamara, 'lock' Desmond Dempsey and prop, Liam Manning, all bore the stamp of future greatness. — JBD.

Referees?

That hardest of hard-working Rugby enthusiasts, Mr. Paddy Beatty, who in his day was Connacht's most honoured Referee, now occupies with distinction the office of President of the Connacht Referees' Association.

At the various functions which his position requires him to attend, Paddy oftentimes hears his counterparts from the other three Provinces trot out with pride complete lists of their Presidents going right back to the year of dot. Such meticulous retention of records has inspired or perhaps prodded Paddy Beatty, to endeavour to put together a complete list of his predecessors in the Presidential Office for Connacht.

He can go back to the mid '30s when Dr. Vincent Barry held office and he has records of Referees (albeit with some gaping gaps) from Dr. Tommy Little, to his successors such as Jim Egan, Tommy Lenihan, Mick Holland, Johnnie Glynn, Connie Finan, Paddy 'Lobby' Lardner, Paddy Griffin and Frank Howard who held the Presidency for a full span of eleven years. In between those names however, are many former Presidents and any information about them would be greatly appreciated by Paddy Beatty. — JBD.

The Clincher!

The demolition job carried out and completed by Ireland on England at Lansdowne Road on Saturday was the 'clincher' and copper-fastened Ciaran Fitzgerald's captaincy of the Lions — despite the naked opposition of the Fleet Street 'Rugger' corps. That morale-boosting victory, so soon after the regretted lapse at Cardiff's National Arms Park, proved without shadow of doubt that the Irish possess the character to put such hiccups behind them and bounce back with new found will to win.

As a direct result, seven other members of the team — Hugo McNeill, full back, winger Trevor Ringland, centres Michael Kiernan and David Irwin, out-half Ollie Campbell, lock Donal Lenihan and flanker John O'Driscoll, laid irresistible claims to tour places.

Short Answer:

A 64 thousand dollar question there, my friend. The short answer is perhaps that so many more are now playing Rugby than ever before in Ireland — a figure of 47,000 was quoted recently. Then with Clubs such as Monivea able to field SIX juvenile teams on the same day and Cup Rugby matches being played in such places as Crepps, Dunmore and Ballaghaderreen, interest is far more widespread throughout the provinces and not just mainly confined to the Cities, as of yore.

One keen observer with whom we debated this question, leans towards the theory that the Rugby Union officers have a very successful P.R.O. set-up, resulting in saturation coverage in Press, T.V. and Radio. Recent screenings of instructions in Rugby as well as full-exposure for the Leinster Schools' Cup final, would appear to support such contention.

We have NOT so far as I am aware, yet had the pleasure of watching All-Ireland Colleges' Hurling

A Rolling Stone Gathers ...

So indeed also did nighty Moss Keane looking fitter than ever and especially so when he led the posse under a high ball to tackle an English centre in the latter's danger zone.

Going strictly on merit, Moss should also have been selected but apparently his senior citizen status, must have been held against him. His omission may, we predict, yet turn out to be Ireland's great advantage. We know from experience that some

Fever!

DEAR JBD,

After Galway's failures in the National Hurling League, interest in the team dropped noticeably. But all is of yet lost and that has been proved by the team which has come back steadily from the brink since their heavy defeat by Kilkenny at Loughrea.

For the marked improvement noted in recent weeks; the return of Ireland's best full back on his day, Conor Hayes, has done the trick and in my opinion, he is THE man to rebuild the defence around for the Championship. He showed what he is capable of against Kilkenny's 'Hurter of the Year' Christy Heffernan, in the Railway Cup and that is something no other full back has been successful at since last year's All-Ireland final.

With care and attention this Galway team WILL be back in Croke Park on the glory trail before the McCarthy Cup is raised aloft in triumph, next September.

'LAURENCETOWN LARRY'.

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Tradition:

As befitting a school with a tremendous tradition for producing top-class Rugby forwards, Garbally had in this year's cup-winning pack, several who showed potential of future stars.

While Declan Kavanagh may have such front row foragers as former Irish Internationals as the