

C.L.G. Laoise



Comhdháil Bhliantúil

The Heritage Hotel
Port Laoise

Monday, 8th December, 2014
7 p.m.

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C.L.G. Laoise



Standing Orders

In order that the proceedings of the convention be carried out without delay the following Standing Orders will be observed: -

- 1. The Proposer of a Resolution, or Amendment thereto, may speak for 5 minutes but no longer.*
- 2. A Delegate speaking to a Resolution or Amendment shall not exceed 3 minutes.*
- 3. The Proposer of a Resolution, or Amendment, may speak a second time for 5 minutes, before a vote is taken, but no other Delegate may speak a second time to any Resolution or Amendment.*
- 4. The Chairman shall, at any time he considers a matter has been sufficiently discussed, call on the Proposer to reply, after which a vote will be taken.*
- 5. A Delegate may, with the consent of the Chairman, move "that the question be now put" after which, when the Proposer has spoken, a vote must be taken.*

An Clár

1. Adoption of Standing Orders.
2. Minutes of 2013 Convention.
3. Secretary's Report.
4. Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement.
5. Appointment of Tellers.
6. Election of Officers.
7. Motions.
8. Aon Ghnó Eile.
9. Votes of Sympathy.

The Annual Convention of Laois GAA was held in The Heritage Hotel on Monday 9th December 2013

Cathaoirleach Gearóid O'Caomhanaigh presided at County Convention in The Heritage Hotel on 09/12/13. The following Executive Members were also in attendance Peadar O Néil, Mairtín O'Broin, Micheál O'Cearbhúill, Ciarán O Consléibhe, Antóin O Dubhsláinne, Briain O hAlúinn, Tomas Mac Seoin, Pascal Mac Aodh Bhuí, Pdraig O Suilleabháin, Seosamh O'Conbhuí, Aindriú O Bruadau agus Niall Mac Laitimh (Runaí).

The following Clubs were represented as follows:

R. O'Cinnéide, E. Ní Dhuinn & B. Ní Chearbhuíll, Mainistir Laoise; M. O'Riain, L. O'Colmáin & R. O'Muilleoir, Anach; S. O'Conbhuí & S. Mac Dónaill, Ard Lios Cilchrúis; S. O'Broin & B. Mac Dónaill, Ard Lios Cilín; A. Mac Giolla Phadraig, L. O'Seachnasaigh & M. O'Donnchaidh, Baile na Coille; A. O'hIfearnáin & N. O'Cianáin, Baile Fionn; S. Hovendon, U. Hovendon & E. O'Caollaí, Baile Laigheanáin; M. Mac Aodh Bhuí, M. Ní Fhaoláin & P. O'Dúlaoich, Baile Píocas; N. O'Dubhsláinne, A. Mac Gabhann & E. Maolcathail, Mainistir Baile Atha Róine; S. Dáibhis, M. O'Braonáin & A. O'Braonáin, Teach an Bhearra; T. Ní Fhaoláin, C. O'Dónaill & S. O'Caollaí, Buiríos Mór Osraí; B. Ní Dhubhsláinne, D. O'Beirgin & D. O'Beirgin, Buiríos Mór Osraí Coill Choitín; P. de Búrca, T O'Deoráin & U. Ní Dhonnchaidh, Camros; M. Ní Dhubhsláinne & S. O'Maoileanaigh, Baile an Chaisleáin Sliabh Bladhma; P. O'Cathail, S. O'Beirgin & S. O'Conraoi, Cluain

Fhada; P. O'Cearbhúill, S. O'Gormáin & M. O'Fallúin, Cluain na Slí Naomh Manmáin; D. O'hAnluain, S. O'Meachair & T. de Cléir, Cloch Baile Cholla; P. Sionóid, P. O'Duinn & L. De Stacphúil, Coillte; B. O'Nualláin, PS O'Ceallaigh & R. O'Donachair, Coill na Cúirte; M. Mac Phaidín, M. O'Sé & S. De Búrca, Crochta Ard; P. O'Bróithe, D. Ní Bhuaidh & M. O'Riain, Ioma; P. O'Cearbhúill & P. O'Deá, Eiréil; M. Boltún, Graig Chuillinn; T. O'Fiach & O. Conraoi, Cill Chabháin; E. Mac Cois, D. Mac Cois & L. Mac Giolla Phadráig, Coill Choitín; M. O'Braonáin, M. Attride & P. O'Braonáin, Cill Eisín; M. O'Roigne & P. O'hEilí, Coill; T. O'Sé, S. O'Conghaile & M. O'Garmaile, Móinteach Mílic; R. O'Sléibhín & L. O'Fionnalaigh, Na Diomasaigh; S. O'Miurín, T. O'Conaill, S. Mac Lochlainn & P. O'Braonáin, Páirc Raithín Uisce; S. O'Fiaich, C. Mac Cartaigh & A. Mhic Chartaigh, Cúil an tSudaire; U. O'Dullaing, S. O'hAinfaidh & O. O'Broin, Portlaoise; A. Stenson & S. O'Reachtair, Rath Domhnaigh; T. de Barra & M. Mac Giolla Phadraig, Rath Domhnaigh Eiréil; S. O'Dúlaoich & P. Breatnach, Ross Fhionnghlaise; T. O'Cearbhúill, P. O'Buaigh & N. Mac Giolla Phóil, Seanchua; S.P. Caimpion, R. O'Nualláin & S. O'hIfearnáin, Sliabh Bladhma Baile an Chaisleáin; R. O'Muilleoir & D. O'Duibhir, Spinc; S. Leathlobhair Mac Ghiolla Phadraig, N. Ní Rhuiséil & S. O'Cearbhúill, Maighean Rátha; M. O'Conaráin, A. Mhic Gabhann & M. O'Móra, Naomh Seosamh; B. O'Dubhsláinne, E. O'Dubhsláinne & M.

O’Ceallaigh, Sráidbhaile; D. O’Duiginn, T. Breatnach & C. Mac Aodh Bhuí, Na Clairsigh; D. O’Céin, L. O’hAoláin & M. O’Dubhsláinne, An Fraoch; S. O’Soirín, D. O’Maonaigh & P. O’Dubhsláinne, An Charraig; L. O’Rannacháin & S. O’Daltúin, Tigh Mochua; S. Ní Dhubhuí, L. De Barra agus S. Mac Peaircín, Tromaire.

Antóin O’Meachair - Referee Administrator, Fiona Ní Dhubhsláinne – Cumann na mBunscoil, Seamus Laibheartaigh – Childrens Officer.

Leithscéil – Sean O Rannacháin Tigh Mochua

Standing Orders were adopted on the proposition of Liam de Stacaphúil, seconded by Sean Mac Peaircín.

Minutes of 2012 Convention was adopted on the proposition of SS. O’Conbhuí, seconded by Sean O’Broin.

Secretary’s Report was adopted on the proposition of Mairtín O Riain, seconded by Moncha Ní Dhubhsláinne.

Treasurer’s Report showing a deficit of €7,981 in County Committee A/c and a deficit of €44,896 in O’Moore Park A/c was adopted on the proposition of Nollaig O’Dubhsláinne, seconded by Roibeard O’Muilleoir.

- Micheal O’Boltúin complimented An Cisteoir on his comprehensive detailed report of our finances. This view was echoed by the entire convention.
- An Cisteoir thanked Executive Committee, all the Clubs for their commitment and support to the County Board Draw, various Fundraising Committees, Ulster Bank and their staff, Gate and Office staff, Central and Leinster Council staff, voluntary Stewards who worked in O’Moore Park during the year and all our sponsors. He stressed that savings must be made in our finances and particularly in Team Administration, as expenditure in excess of €600,000 on County Teams is not sustainable for a County of Laois’s stature. He appealed for Clubs support, in Club Laois and €130 Draw, fundraising initiatives. He also outlined details of GAA National Draw.

Tellers – the following were appointed and approved by Convention – Seamus O Caomhanaigh, Fiona Ni Dhubhsláinne, Aindriú O’Maolmhuaidh, PS O’Ceallaigh agus Tomás O’Móra.

Election of Officers

The following officers were elected:

Cathaoirleach (*Chairman*): Gearóid O Caomhanaigh was elected unopposed.

Leas Chathaoirleach (*Vice Chairman*): Peadar O'Neil was elected unopposed.

Cisteoir (*Treasurer*): Mairtín O'Broin was elected unopposed.

Leas Cisteoir (*Asst. Treasurer*): Pascal Mac Aodh Bhuí was elected unopposed.

Ard Comhairle (*Central Council*) Delegate: Antóin O Dubhsláinne was elected unopposed.

Comhairle Laighean (*Leinster Council*) Delegates (2): Micheál O Cearbhúill agus Ciarán Cónléibhe were elected unopposed.

Oifigeach Forbartha (*Development*): Tomas Mac Seoin was elected unopposed.

Oifigeach Oiliuna (*Coaching*): Padraig O'Suilleabháin was elected unopposed.

Oifigeach Cultir agus Gaeilge (*Cultural and Irish*): Seosamh O'Conbhuí was elected unopposed.

Oifigeach Caidrimh Poibli (*P.R.O.*): Briain O'hAlluinn was elected unopposed.

Congress Delegates (5): Gearóid O Caomhanigh, Niall Mac Laitimh (both automatically elected); Mairtín O'Broin, Ciaran Conléibhe agus Tomas Mac Seoin were elected after vote.

Leinster Convention Delegates (5): Gearóid O'Caomhanaigh, Briain O'hAlúinn, Padraig O'Suilleabháin, Pascal Mac Aodh Bhuí agus Tomas Mac Seoin.

All elected candidates returned thanks.

NA RÚIN

1. That Laois GAA Byelaw No. 5 Transfers / Attachment to First Club be amended (*in bold italic*) to read as follows:

- (a) A Club or Independent Teams Catchment Area shall be defined as within the Parish and within the County boundary. (List of 24 Parishes *based on the boundary of the Roman Catholic Parish* - Clonaslee, Rosenallis, Mountmellick, Emo, Portarlinton, Stradbally, Portlaoise, Ballyfin, Camross, Castletown, Mountrath, Raheen, Abbeyleix, Ballinakill, Ballyadams, Barrowhouse / Athy, Arles, Doonane, Graiguecullen / Killeshin, Durrow, Aghaboe, Rathdowney, Borris in Ossory, Kyle / Roscrea).

And for the inclusion of paragraph (g) as recommended by the National Byelaws Committee:

- (g) *The C.C.C. shall process and make initial decisions on all applications for Transfer and Permission to Play within the county (Riail 6.5, T.O. 2013). The Guidelines and Criteria which will assist the CCC in its deliberations are as follows:*

- (i) *Urban to Rural Transfer/ Applications for Permission to Play*

A player from a designated Urban Club may, at any time, seek Permission to Play for, or transfer to, any Rural Club without the necessity of meeting any of the criteria and / or exceptions usually associated with such Transfers/ Permission to Play.

- (ii) *Rural to Rural Transfer/ Applications for Permission to Play*

(a) *Parentage Rule – A player may apply for Permission to Play or Transfer to a Club in the catchment area in which his Parent was a Player in Adult Competition or, in exceptional circumstances, a Member, who over a reasonable period of time, made a proven contribution to that Club.*

(b) *Primary School – A player may apply for Permission to Play or Transfer to a Club / Independent Team where he is presently attending or has attended Primary School. The Primary School rule will only be taken into consideration where the player has been attending this school or has attended for at least one full school year.*

(c) *Proximity to Club Base - A player may apply for Permission to Play or transfer to the Club / Independent Team based on proximity to Club Ground.*

- (iii) *Rural to Urban Transfer / Applications for Permission to Play*

(a) *Parentage Rule – A player may apply for Permission to Play or Transfer to a Club +in the catchment area in which his Parent was a player in adult competition, or in exceptional circumstances, a Member who, over a reasonable period of time, has made a proven contribution to that Club.*

(b) A family moving residence into Portlaoise Parish from a different Parish in the County with players from that family who are in their 16th year or younger, but have already played with a rural club may apply for a Transfer to an urban club. (CLG Laoise)

Motion passed on a show of hands on the proposition of Peadar O'Neil and seconded by Micheal O'Cearbhúill.

2. That Laois GAA Byelaw No. 5 Transfers / Attachment to First Club be amended (*in bold italic*) to read as follows:

A Club or Independent Teams Catchment Area shall be defined as within the **Roman Catholic** parish **boundary** and within the County boundary. (List of 24 Parishes - Clonaslee, Rosenallis, Mountmellick, Emo, Portarlinton, Stradbally, Portlaoise, Ballyfin, Camross, Castletown, Mountrath, Raheen, Abbeyleix, Ballinakill, Ballyadams, Barrowhouse / Athy, Arles, Doonane, Graiguecullen / Killeshin, Durrow, Aghaboe, Rathdowney, Borris in Ossory, Kyle / Roscrea). **Exception: The Club Catchment Area for Ballypickas GAA shall be the Club's traditional area of Spink and Ballyroan and their surrounding rural areas.**

(b). There shall be two distinct Club "designations" - Urban and Rural. This will allow the CCC to distinguish between Transfers and Attachment to First Clubs to and from - (i) Urban to Rural Clubs, (ii) Rural to Rural Clubs and (iii) Rural to Urban Clubs.

(c). Any player wishing to attach themselves to a Club whose permanent residence is outside the catchment area of that Club must apply to CCC prior to registration.

(d). Portlaoise GAA Club will be designated an "Urban" Club and all other Clubs in Laois will be designated "Rural".

(e). Normally, Transfers within the county shall be granted only in the event of a player moving to a new place of Permanent Residence which is within the Catchment Area of the club to which he wishes to transfer. In such cases the onus of proof of new permanent residence shall be on the applicant for transfer.

(f). Requests for Transfer shall not be considered unless submitted to the County Secretary before January 31st in any year. Exception: In the case of an Urban to Rural Transfer / Attachment to First Club, an application may be granted provided the player has not participated in Club Competition (including Go Games) in the year in which the Transfer / Attachment to First Clubs is sought.

(g) The C.C.C. shall process and make initial decisions on all applications for Transfer and Permission to Play within the county (Riall 6.5, T.O. 2013). The Guidelines and Criteria which will assist the CCC in its deliberations are as follows:

(i) Urban to Rural Transfer/ Applications for Permission to Play

A player from a designated Urban Club may, at any time, seek Permission to Play for, or transfer to, any Rural Club without the necessity of meeting any of the criteria and / or exceptions usually associated with such Transfers/ Permission to Play.

(ii) Rural to Rural Transfer/ Applications for Permission to Play

- a. Parentage Rule – A player may apply for Permission to Play or Transfer to a Club in the catchment area in which his Parent was a Player in Adult Competition or, in exceptional circumstances, a Member, who over a reasonable period of time, made a proven contribution to that Club.*
- b. Primary School – A player may apply for Permission to Play or Transfer to a Club / Independent Team where he is presently attending or has attended Primary School. The Primary School rule will only be taken into consideration where the player has been attending this school or has attended for at least one full school year.*
- c. Proximity to Club Base - A player may apply for Permission to Play or transfer to the Club / Independent Team based on proximity to Club Ground.*

(iii) Rural to Urban Transfer / Applications for Permission to Play

- a. Parentage Rule – A player may apply for Permission to Play or Transfer to a Club in the catchment area in which his Parent was a player in adult competition, or in exceptional circumstances, a Member who, over a reasonable period of time, has made a proven contribution to that Club.*
- b. A family moving residence into Portlaoise Parish from a different Parish in the County with players from that family who are in their 16th year or younger, but have already played with a rural club may apply for a Transfer to an urban club. (Bailepiocas)*

Motion lost on show of hands, after being proposed by M. Ní Fhaoláin and seconded by PS O’Ceallaigh.

3. When a club requests a Hearing before the Hearings Committee following the notification of a proposed penalty arising from the contents of a referees report, the referee must attend the Hearing to clarify/explain the contents of his report. **(Borris-in-Ossory Kilcotton)**

Motion ruled out of order as it is non compliant with Riail 7.3 (aa) (vii), T.O. 2013.

4. In accordance with Rule 3.11 (b) (2), TO, 2013, that Laois GAA Byelaws be amended to state that the Treasurer is not subject to the maximum period of office of five years. **(Baile an Chaisleáin Sliabh Bladhma)**

Motion passed on show of hands on the proposition of M. Ní Dhubhsláinne and seconded by Breandáin Mc Dónaill.

5. In accordance with Rule 6.23 (b) (ii), TO, 2013, Laois GAA Competition Rules & Regulations be amended so as to remove the opportunity for teams awarding championship walkovers with an “ulterior purpose”.
If teams award a walkover/fail to fulfill a championship fixture, all lower graded adult teams, in that code, should be automatically removed from their championships. **(Baile an Chaisleáin Sliabh Bladhma)**
Motion withdrawn following clarification from Rules Advisory Committee.
6. To amend rule Rule 6.16, TO, 2013, to read for U21 that players must be under 21 years and over 15 years. **(Baile an Chaisleáin Sliabh Bladhma)**
Motion passed on show of hands on the proposition of M. Ní Dhubhsláinne and seconded by Seoirse O’Conraoi. An Runaí to forward to Congress.
7. All Inter-county players (hurling) shall be available to play with their Clubs for all County Board fixtures (including Inter-club League and Championship fixtures) and as in accordance with Riail 6.21 of An Treoraí Oifigiúil 2013. **(Naomh Lazerian Mainistir Laoise)**
Motion ruled out of order as it is non compliant with Riail 6.21, T.O. 2013.
8. That, similar, to Senior finals, teams in Intermediate and Junior finals are provided with a number of passes, at the discretion of an Coiste Bainistí, to acknowledge the support of local sponsors. **(Portlaoise)**
Motion taken as recommendation to Coiste Bainistí

Correspondence:

- CLG correspondence outlining new strategic plan for the Association for the period 2014 – 2017 and consultation process in place to allow officials, members, players, coaches and staff across the Association to contribute their thoughts and ideas was noted.

Uachtaráin CLG Liam O’Néil addressed Convention outlining his satisfaction with the present unity and support between Clubs and County Board. He expressed his delight in the improved performances of our Inter County hurling teams and the success of our secondary schools teams, stating it augured well for the future of the game in the County. He informed meeting of his plans for the “One Club” model involving Ladies Football, Camogie, Handball and Rounders. He concluded by thanking all the persons from the County involved on National Committees and also the Clubs of Laois for their continued support.

Any Other Business

- Children's Officer – Antóin O Dubhsláinne congratulated Seamus Laibheartaigh on his selection as Children's Officer and wished him well in the position.

An Cathaoirleach Gearoid O Caomhanaigh addressed Convention, commenting on various issues from our Inter County teams, O'Moore Park development, Centre of Excellence, Discipline, Club Championships and Finance. He concluded by thanking all for their co-operation during the year and wished everyone a peaceful Christmas and a successful 2014.



Votes of Sympathy

Votes of Sympathy were extended to the following families:

Abbeyleix	Taylor Family;
Annanough	Dunne, Gorman and Hennessy Families;
Arles Kilcruise	Noctor, Scully, Harkin and Brennan Families;
Arles Killeen	McDonald, Daly, Byrne and Finn Families;
Barrowhouse	Howe, Langton, O'Meara, Pendergast, Mulhall, Lawler and Mulhare Families;
Ballinakill	Downey Family;
Ballylinan	Behan and Brennan Families;
Ballypickas	Downey, Foyle, Carter, Gorman and Wallace Families;
Ballyroan Abbey	Carroll, McGrath, McGowan and Delaney Families;
Borris-in-Ossory/Kilcotton	Bergin, Kirwan and Finan Families;
Camross	Delaney, Scully, Maher, Tyrell, Lalor, Delaney and O'Sullivan Families;
Castletown	Mullaney, Delaney, Reddin, Hooban, Cuniffe, Kelly and Bergin Families;
Clonad	Donovan, O'Brien, Mulhare, Keyes, O'Mahony, Browne, Delaney and Whelan Families;
Clonaslee St Manmans	Troy, Hyland, O'Keefe, Maher and Conroy Families;
Clough Ballacolla	Shiel, McEvoy, Campion, Bergin, Breen, Moynan, Kirke, Pearson and Cleere Families;
Colt	Brennan, Mulhall, Scully, Hearn, Holland, Stackpool, Kavanagh, Delaney, Dowling, Butler, McDermott, Power, Kelly, Dooley, Moffitt and Donovan Families;
Courtwood	Mulhare, O'Connell, Kearney, Carroll and Nolan Families;
Crettyard	Behan, Fitzpatrick and Campbell Families;
Emo	Ryan and Strong Family;
Errill	O'Dea and Keane Families;
Kilcavan	O'Connell, Dunne and Hyland Families;
Kilcotton	Bergin Family;
Killeshin	Byrne and Phelan Families;
Kyle	Quinlan, Moore and O'Brien Families;
Mountmellick	Rochford, Payne and O'Shea Families;
O'Dempseys	Costello, Tynan, Kehoe and Whelehan Families;
Park Ratheniska	Kelly, Tyrell and Fitzpatrick Families;
Portarlington	Fallon Family;

Portlaoise Kelly, Hilliard, McEvoy, Moore, Farrell and Hanniffy Families;
 Rathdowney Doran, Phelan and Gray Families;
 Rosenallis Mahon Family;
 Shanahoe Vosdan and O'Mahony Families;
 Slieve Bloom Phelan Family;
 Spink Byrne, Downey, Campion / Miller, Carter and Brophy Families;
 St. Fintans Mountrath Hetherington, Byrne, Kiely, Doyle, Keenan, Sinnott, Duggan, Kelly,
 McCarthy, Breslin, Clancy, Moore and Tynan Families;
 St. Josephs Knowles, Crosby, Brennan, McDonald, Butler and Fleming Families;
 Stradbally Deegan and Handy Families;
 The Harps Walsh, Ally, Doran/Spencer, Fogarty and Drennan Families;
 The Heath Dunne Family;
 The Rock Healion, Gorman, Feery and White Families;
 Timahoe Quigley, Higgins and Maher Families;

Tuairisc an Runaí 2014

Once again I welcome you all to our annual Laois GAA Convention, whereby we all have the opportunity to analyse and reflect on Laois GAA affairs during the past year.

Whilst silverware continues to elude our Inter County teams, both our Senior Football and Hurling panels performed admirably, each holding their present status in their respective League Divisions, with very respectable performances in defeat to Dublin and Galway in their Leinster Championship campaigns. Certainly there is somewhat of a hurling renaissance in the County which will hopefully bear fruit in the near future. However results in underage grades in football in recent years have been worrying and while it is an area that there has been a greater concentration on and increased resources in the last couple of years, we have some way to go to reach the glory days of the late nineties.

On another front, the acquisition of the old Portlaoise GAA grounds beside O'Moore Park has been a tremendous achievement and it's development as a Centre of Excellence in future years is exciting and will be of huge benefit to our youth, our Clubs and our County.

Briefly my thoughts on the year -

County Teams

Senior Football

As usual our season commenced in the Walsh Cup with a loss to NUI Galway, followed by another loss to Carlow in the Shield Competition. In fairness the panel were in hectic preseason training for these competitions and all panellists were given game time in preparation for upcoming League.

One of the primary goals for the year was to retain our Allianz Hurling League Division 1A status and qualify for the knock-out stages. Our opening game, produced a memorable victory against Offaly in O'Connor Park and set the standard. While we were competitive in defeat to Cork, Wexford and Limerick, a further success against Antrim ensured Division 1A status was at least assured and a League

quarter-final meeting with reigning All Ireland Champions Clare in O'Moore Park. This was a tremendous occasion in the stadium and a performance to match, a game we could have and probably should have won, lacking perhaps the experience of the Champions costing us a place in the semi-final.

The new look Leinster Senior Hurling Round Robin format followed quickly from the League. While the jury is out on the benefits, merits and rationale of this competition and how we really came around to a situation where the participants in a Leinster Council Championship is now dictated by the Official Guide. Certainly the "five team" format created difficulties, taking five rounds to complete in a hectic fixture schedule, with the qualifying teams facing a gruelling schedule of five games in five weeks.

Following on from a relatively successful League campaign, victories over Westmeath, Carlow and London were completed in a workmanlike manner, resulting in the final game in the series determining who tops the table and play either Wexford or Galway. In this game we suffered a narrow defeat to Antrim, meaning we renewed last year's rivalry with Galway in a Leinster Championship Quarter final in O'Moore

Park. Similar to last year, this was again a fabulous performance, passion and pride in the Laois jersey in abundance, only to again heartbreakingly lose out in the closing minutes. Unfortunately our inexperience in failing to shut out the big teams in the closing periods of big games cost us again. In the Qualifier series, we faced a trip to Walsh Park, with Waterford being our opponents. Here we never reached the performance of



Laois Senior Football panel 2014



Laois Senior Hurling panel 2014



Laois Minor Football Panel 2014



Laois Minor Hurling Panel 2014

the Clare or Galway games and were outplayed by a more accurate home side, our championship dreams for 2014 ended.

In the coming year Division 1A is again competitive and it will again be a challenge to retain our status in this Division. The Round Robin series from herein will be confined to four teams meaning a more realistic schedule of three games, which to be honest with no realistic alternative provides an ideal preparation, on qualification of course, for a Leinster Championship encounter with the big boys. The bonus of course on qualification is a home venue for a Leinster Quarter final and a further bonus, as approved by Congress in 2014, would see a victory over any of these teams in the Leinster Championship, avoidance of the Round Robin the following year, being replaced in that by the team we beat.

I must praise our entire panel and management for their outstanding commitment and dedication to Laois hurling during the past year. Certainly progress has been made, but there is so much more to go. The performance of our Under 21 and Minor teams in recent years is encouraging and there is a players coming through the system who are well capable of performing at this level and advancing the fortunes of Laois hurling. I would stress that patience must be a virtue and while convinced we are going in the right direction, further progress will only happen with an even greater commitment and effort. Our clubs must be complimented for the manner in which they allowed their players prepare with the county, this is a requirement for any successful county team.

I wish to acknowledge Eoin Reilly's selection on the successful Leinster Railway

Cup team and Eoin Reilly and Matthew Whelan on their selection for the successful Ireland Shinty team and Joe Campion's selection on the Under 21 Ireland Shinty panel. Eoin must also be congratulated on his success in the Leinster Senior Poc Fada competition and his forward showing in third place in the All Ireland series on the Cooley peninsula, likewise his club mate Alan Kelly in the Leinster Under 16 Poc Fada competition and finishing runner up in the All Ireland series. James Keyes, from the Colt Club, success in winning the free-style hurling competition on All-Ireland Hurling final day is also worthy on mention.

I would like to extend our gratitude to Seamas Plunkett (Manager), who deserves special credit for putting all this altogether, Paul Cuddy and Damien Culleton (Selectors), Ger Cunningham and Brendan Cummins (Coaching), Pat Flanagan and Jimmy Payne (Strength and Conditioning Coaches), Dr Aoife Molloy and Dr John Paul Campion, Stephen Haslam and Enda Lyons (Physiotherapy), Liam Ahearne, Jack Harding and Brian O'Sullivan (Stats and Analysis), Aine McNamara (Performance Analysis), Pat Delaney (Kit) and John Kealy (Servicing Secretary). Unfortunately both Paul and Damien are unable to commit to these roles for 2015 due to personal reasons and I wish to thank both for their services and the huge positive influence they have had on this panel of players. At the time of penning this article, their replacements have not yet been named.

Uachtaráin Liam O'Neil at Congress 2014 included Laois as one of the counties to receive funding as part of Hurling Development Fund which is based on the intention of expanding the number of coun-

ties who can compete at a meaningful level in the Senior Hurling Championship. As a result, Laois will be able to draw on funding of €45,000 per annum or a collective fund of €225,000 over the next five years. This level of investment is subject to annual submissions reflecting key aims and objectives of our Senior Hurling Development programme for 2015 and will not come in the form of a one-off payment, but will be made by Central Council to suppliers on the basis of invoices received. It is also dependent on a minimum spend of €10,000 per annum on improving and enhancing hurling development at minor and under 21 grades. I want to acknowledge and thank Liam for ensuring our inclusion in the distribution of this funding.

BORD NA MONA WALSH CUP SH

Round 1 – 12/01/14 - Rathdowney
 NUI Galway 1-17 Laois 1-14

BORD NA MONA WALSH SHIELD S.H.

Round 1 – 17/01/14 Heywood CS
 Carlow 0-21 Laois 1-15

Allianz Hurling League Roinn 1B 2014

Round 1 - 16/02/14 - Tullamore
 Laois 1-19 Offaly 2-14
 Round 2 - 22/02/14 - O’Moore Park
 Cork 0-14. Laois 0-07
 Round 3 - 09/03/14 - O’Moore Park
 Laois 2-21 Antrim 0-21
 Round 4 - 16/03/14 - Wexford Park
 Wexford 2-21 Laois 1-18
 Round 5 - 23/03/14 - O’Moore Park
 Limerick 1-17 Laois 1-13
 Quarter Final - 30/03/14 - O’Moore Park
 Clare 2-23 Laois 2-19

LEINSTER GAA SENIOR HURLING CHAMPIONSHIP

Round Robin 2 – 04/05/14 - Mullingar
 Laois 1-15 Westmeath 1-09
 Round Robin 3 – 11/05/14 - O’Moore Park
 Laois 1-22 Carlow 0-14
 Round Robin 4 – 18/05/14 - Ruislip
 Laois 2-13 London 0-16
 Round Robin 5 – 25/05/14 - O’Moore Park
 Antrim 0-22 Laois 0-20
 Quarter Final – 01/06/14 - O’Moore Park
 Galway 1-22 Laois 0-23

ALL IRELAND SENIOR HURLING QUALIFIER

Round 1 – 28/06/14 - Walsh Park
 Waterford 2-22 Laois 1-15

Under 21 Hurling

It was agreed Senior management would integrate the preparation of this panel with the Senior panel for 2014, due basically to the large crossover of 10 players involved in both panels. Whilst there are many problems encountered with managing this grade, the biggest obstacle in preparing this panel was the Round Robin series at Senior level which as previously stated involved five games in five consecutive weeks, with our Leinster Under 21 fixture scheduled on the Wednesday evening between our final Round Robin game and Leinster Senior Championship Quarter final. I am aware we came in for some criticism in accepting this schedule, but unfortunately it was in some way our own making. Prior to fully knowing the draw for the Round Robin series we had requested, with the consent of team management, for our Under 21 game to be played on the 28 May, rather than 4 June, because a number of panellists would be involved in Leaving Cert examinations. On receipt of Round Robin draw and full

realisation of our likely fixture scenario, we backtracked. However Dublin were not accommodating to our request due to their own fixture schedule and preparation and we were forced to accept this unfortunate situation.

Whilst preparations weren't ideal, in that challenge games were limited, the team acquitted themselves quite well in Parnell Park and matched Dublin for long periods of the game, although the home side were far more potent in attack resulting in a deserved victory.

I wish to thank Seamus Plunkett (Manager), Tom Flynn and all other members of the Senior backroom team whom assisted with the preparation of this panel. This is a grade we will be competitive at in the coming years and it is imperative that we have a coherent approach to ensure all our panels reach their maximum potential. For that reason it has been agreed Senior management will again oversee Under 21 preparations and with a more favourable schedule I believe this is in the best interests of the panel and Laois hurling.

BORD GAIS ENERGY LEINSTER UNDER 21 HC

Round 1 – 28/05/14 - Parnell Park
Dublin 1-17 Laois 1-10

Minor Hurling

Our opening championship game was against Offaly in O'Connor Park, where we travelled full of hope, preparations having gone well and confidence on a high as a result of previous year's achievement in reaching a Leinster final. In a tremendous game of hurling, we out battled and outscored a determined Offaly side. This qualified us

for a home quarter final game against our old adversary Kilkenny. In this game confidence was again high, and whilst creating several opportunities, we never hurred to our potential and the eventual All Ireland champions were deserving winners.

As stated before, great progress has been made at this grade, indeed all our local championships were enlightened with displays by players from this level. I believe more can be gained in future years with the talent we have coming through in our development squads. One of the conditions for receipt of the Hurling Development fund is that a proportion must be consigned to development of the code at underage level and it is intended that this funding will be used in mentoring all our Club Coaches and developing Coaches within the County, further developing the Setanta and Development Squad programmes and exploiting the resources available in the Carlow IT for our Underage squads.

I wish to compliment this entire panel of players for their efforts and also their parents and clubs for encouraging them to commit to the Laois Hurling cause. In particular I want to thank Pat Critchley(Manager), Eamon Jackman (Selectors), Connie Conroy (Strength and Conditioning Coach), Anna Campion (Physiotherapy and Medic), David O'Brien (Statistics, Martin Cahill (Kitman) and servicing Secretary John Kealy for their tremendous work with this panel during the year. For the coming year the same management team will remain at the helm, with the exception of Eamon who is unavailable in the coming year due to personal commitments.



Laois Shopping Centre SFC Winners Portlaoise 2014



Laois Shopping Centre SHC Winners Rathdowney Errill 2014

ELECTRIC IRELAND LEINSTER MINOR HURLING CHAMPIONSHIP

Round 2 – 26/04/14 - Tullamore
Laois 0-26 Offaly 3-14
Quarter Final – 21/06/14 - O’Moore Park
Kilkenny 1-21 Laois 0-16

Senior Football

Our season commenced with the O’Byrne Cup and our new Management team used this competition to give all panellists some game time, in an effort to finalise their League panel. However defeats to Wexford and UCD, and success over Offaly seen us exit this competition.

Our Allianz Football League Division 2 campaign looked very competitive, but ruing the previous year’s missed opportunity of promotion, ambitions within the panel were set at a return to Division 1. In the opening game we faced Donegal and after a lesson in football, a more realistic ambition was to consolidate our status in this Division. In fairness, both management and panel regrouped, and successes against Louth and Galway followed, while defeats to Armagh, Meath and Monaghan were disappointing, but in fairness we were competitive in all three games. Our League campaign concluded with a victory over Down, whereby we comfortably retained our Divisional status.

In our Leinster Championship opener, we played Wicklow in Aughrim and from past experiences a difficult encounter was anticipated. However playing an entertaining brand of football, Laois easily outplayed the home side, running out convincing winners, the prize being a Croke Park

meeting with Dublin. In this game, our management must be complimented for their game plan and our players for the determination with which they executed this plan, which worked for over three quarters of the game until Dublin unleashed their bench, showing the calibre and strength of their panel with their substitutes alone outscoring us in the final quarter to run out easy winners. While defeat was disappointing, it was as competitive a game the All Ireland Champions had in their Leinster Championship campaign.

There is no doubt the quality of this Dublin side and they are worthy All Ireland contenders every year. However the fact that all their Championship games are played in Croke Park is a distinct advantage, more so now since the advent of the “Spring Series” which sees them now play a number of their Allianz Football League games also. The financial consequences were understandable in the days of the Celtic Tiger, when a Dublin game was attracting a full house with an 80,000 plus attendance. In recent years double headers involving Dublin are only attracting less than half this attendance for their opening Leinster Championship games and could easily be accommodated as a single game in a number of our Provincial County grounds. It would be interesting to see the financial projection return for a 35 - 40,000 double header attendance in Croke Park versus 15 – 20,000 attendance at two Provincial venues!! Whilst Dublin will remain favourites to win these games wherever they are played, a venue outside Croke Park would prove a fairer playing field for all and further generate an atmosphere and excitement at anyone of our Provincial venues.



Laois Shopping Centre IFC Winners Ballyfin 2014



Laois Shopping Centre IHC Winners Borris Kiltcotton 2014

Following on from the performance against Dublin, hopes were high for an extended run in the Qualifier series. First up were Fermanagh at home, where all our battling qualities were required to emerge with a narrow victory. The reward was an away trip to Wexford, where similar efforts were needed for a one point success. In Round 3, we were drawn against Tipperary in O'Moore Park, which was played as a doubleheader with the All Ireland Hurling Qualifier fixtures between Tipperary and Offaly. Our visitors went on a scoring blitz in the second quarter resulting in a half time deficit of ten points and in spite of a spirited resurgence in the second half, which seen us draw level, a number of injuries to key players and the mammoth task and energy involved in closing a ten point lead proved too much and our Championship aspirations for 2014 ended. I have to say our Qualifier campaign was disappointing and one would have expected somewhat more. However it is probably a reflection on where we are at present, probably lacking that in depth strength within our panel to compete at this level on a weekly basis. Some of the reasons were basically due to injury and emigration, but there are also cases where players do not make themselves available to the panel due to their commitment to third level exams and more just haven't or are not prepared to give the commitment now required to be an Inter County player.

For 2015, Allianz League Division 2 again looks competitive and our path to a Leinster Final continues to be daunting, however I would under no circumstances underestimate the potential within this panel and with their renewed commitment, I look forward with optimism to the coming year. I wish to compliment the entire panel for their efforts and diligent man-

ner in which they prepared for this year's Championship and League, their efforts and honesty were indeed praiseworthy. I would also like to extend our congratulations to Colm Begley and Ross Munnely on their selection on the Irish panel for the Compromise Rules series in Australia and also acknowledge John O'Loughlin's selection on the Leinster team for the Railway Cup series.

Our Management and backroom team are also deserving of our thanks – Tomás O Flatharta (Manager); Fergal Byron, Noel Garvan (Selectors); Jerome Stack (Coach and Selector); Leo Tiernan and Alan Malone (Strength and Conditioning Coach); Niall Creery and company (Statistics); David Tobin (Nutrition); Dr Sean Montague; Barry Ryan and Tom Quinn (Physiotherapist) and of course Servicing Secretary Ollie Byrne, who was ably assisted by Pat O'Sullivan. Unfortunately our outgoing Selectors Fergal and Noel will not be continuing for the coming year due to personnel commitments. I wish to thank both for their huge commitment to the County and hope sometime in the future their services can be availed of in the future. For 2015, Darren Rooney and Gerry McGill will join the team and we wish them success in their endeavours.

BORD NA MONA O BYRNE CUP S.F. 2014

- ROUND I – 05/01/14 New Ross
Wexford 2-13 Laois 0-11
- ROUND 2 - 08/01/14 - O'Moore Park
Laois 2-18 Offaly 1-15
- ROUND 3 – 12/01/14 - Portarlington
UCD 1-14 Laois 3-06



Laois Shopping Centre JFC Winners Courtwood 2014



Laois Shopping Centre JHC Winners Camross 2014

ALLIANZ FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Roinn 2 2014

- Round 1 - 02/02/14 - O'Moore Park
- Donegal 2-19 Laois 1-09
- Round 2 - 09/02/14 - Gaelic Ground Drogheda
- Laois 2-08 Louth 0-11
- Round 3 - 01/03/14 - O'Moore Park
- Laois 1-20 Galway 0-08
- Round 4 - 08/03/14 - Athletic Grounds
- Armagh 2-18 Laois 1-12
- Round 5 - 15/03/14 - O'Moore Park
- Meath 0-15 Laois 1-10
- Round 6 - 29/03/14 - Clones
- Monaghan 0-19 Laois 0-14
- Round 7 - 06/04/14 - O'Moore Park
- Laois 1-16 Down 2-10

LEINSTER GAA SENIOR FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

- Round 1 - 18/05/14 - Aughrim
- Laois 0-21 Wicklow 1-11
- Quarter Final - 08/06/14 - Croke Park
- Dublin 2-21 Laois 0-16

ALL IRELAND SENIOR FOOTBALL QUALIFIER

- Round 1A – 21/06/14 - O'Moore Park
- Laois 1-19 Fermanagh 2-15
- Round 2A – 06/07/14 - Wexford Park
- Laois 0-18 Wexford 0-17
- Round 3A -12/07/14 - O'Moore Park
- Tipperary 3-17 Laois 4-09

Under 21 Football

As already stated in previous reports to Convention, results at this grade have proved disappointing and both the previous and present management have expressed concern at the availability of players of inter county standard available to them at this grade.

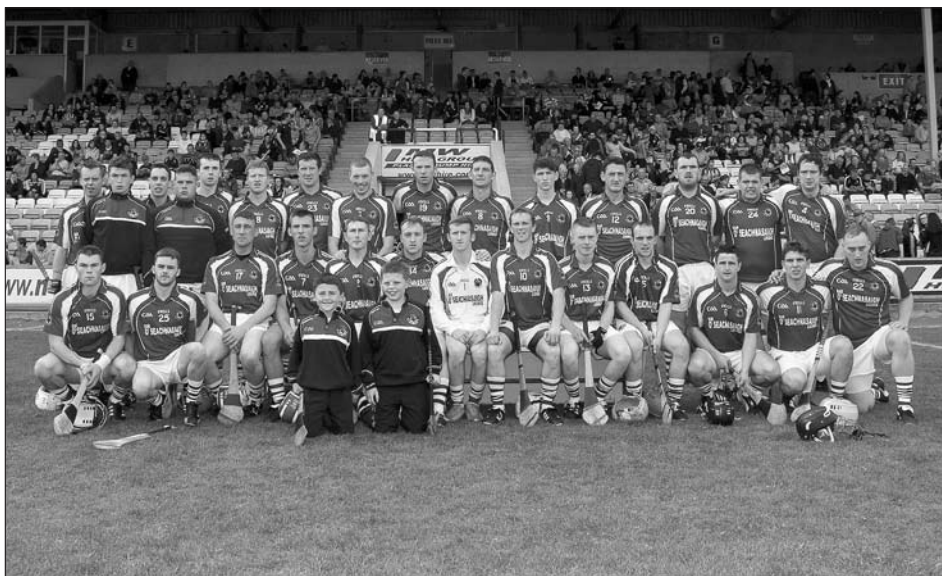
The logistical difficulties of panellists in third level colleges throughout the country and more involved with our Senior panel are some of the problems encountered in the preparation of teams at this grade. In fairness the panel that was assembled were committed to the Laois cause and prepared and trained well. A Leinster Championship victory over Wicklow was achieved in the opening round on a wintry evening in Baltinglass. This resulted in a home draw versus Longford, an epic encounter which required extra time to see the visitors successful by the narrowest of margins.

I would like to convey a special thanks to Tony Maher and Michael Lawlor (Managers), David Brennan and Michael Nolan (Selectors), Mick Lillis (Physio) and Pat Gorman (Servicing Secretary) for their endeavours with this panel for the past two years. In the coming year Derek Conroy (Manager), Francis Finn and Padraig Dunne (Selectors) will take over the managerial realm at this grade.

CADBURY'S LEINSTER GAA UNDER 21 FC

- Round 1** – 19/02/14 in Baltinglass
- Laois 0-10 Wicklow 0-09

- Quarter Final** – 05/03/14 in O'Moore Park
- Longford 1-13 Laois 1-12 - AET



Laois Shopping Centre SHC B Winners Ballinakill 2014



Laois Shopping Centre JHC B Winners The Harps

Minor Football

Similar to what I have stated at Under 21 grade, also applies here. There is no quick fix solution to improving our fortunes at these grades, other than greater work in our Club nurseries and greater emphasis and resources within our talent academies. I believe we are turning the corner, but it will take time. Whilst we are competitive with most Leinster counties in these grades, it is the big population base counties where we have difficulties competing. In this context, it is a worrying trend that our largest population base Portlaoise, with over half the juvenile population within the County, and their lack of success in underage championship football in 2014, their representation on some County underage squads is limited and number of teams competing in underage championship grades is a cause of concern for our future fortunes and should be reviewed with the Club in the coming year, along with other clubs in urban centres.

Following an encouraging Leinster Minor Football League campaign there was expectations that this panel would be competitive in championship and following victories over Carlow and Wexford, hopes increased further. In the Leinster semi-final, we travelled to Newbridge to play local rivals Kildare, where we never played to our potential on the day and were deservedly beaten by a strong and more skilful home side.

I wish to thank Laurence Phelan (Manager), Brian Dempsey, Kevin O'Grady (Selectors), Mick Kehoe (Physio and Strength and Conditioning Coach), John Dunphy (Coach) and Denis Moran (Kitman) for all their efforts and work over the past year. In the coming year the side will be managed by Mick Lillis, with

Kieran Kelly and John Strong as Selectors. At the time of writing this article, this management team are overseeing our Under 17 participation in the Leinster Development Competition and I must say the omens for our 2015 campaign look positive at this stage.

Leinster Minor Football League

Round 1 - 08/02/14

Offaly 1-13 Laois 2-04

Round 2 - 09/02/13

Laois 3-09. Westmeath 0-06

Round 3 - 13/02/13

Laois 1-11. Clare 1-04

ELECTRIC IRELAND

LEINSTER MINOR FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Round 1 – 19/04/14 in O'Moore Park

Laois 0-14 Carlow 0-05

Quarter Final – 17/05/14 in Wexford Park

Laois 2-07. Wexford 1-08

Semi Final – 05/07/14 in Newbridge

Kildare 3-11 Laois 0-05

Local Championships

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Rathdowney Errill on their success in an exciting and competitive Senior Hurling Championship, whilst our Senior Football Championship followed predictable lines with Portlaoise winning an unprecedented eight in a row, a truly remarkable achievement. While almost all our teams were competitive in their Leinster Championship exploits, indeed some very unlucky, at the time of writing, our only remaining representative in Leinster Club competition is Courtwood in Junior Football and I wish them the very best in their quest for Provincial honours. Likewise I wish to congratulate all our



Laois Shopping Centre JFC C Winners Camross Team 2014



Laois Shopping Centre JHC C Winners Borris-in-Ossory/Kilcotton

Championship and League winners at both Adult and Juvenile levels, all of whom are outlined in the Roll of Honour at the end of this report.

At the time of preparing this report all competitions have been completed other than our Under 21 Football and Hurling Championships and I would like to thank all Clubs for their great co-operation in completing the programme. I feel I must comment on the embarrassment arising from the “relegation” process in the Senior Football Championship and I think it is only fair I explain my version of events, particularly in regard to the various conspiracy theories that have done the rounds on social media. To start County Committee took the decision last January 2013 to reduce the number of teams in the Senior Championship to twelve teams over the next three years. As a result we had 15 teams participating in the Senior Football Championship and the proposal was to play it in the same format as we have been and in the same manner as we have played the Junior Football Championship for the past two years. With 15 teams, this necessitated a team receive a Bye in Round 1 and in Round 2 Losers section. This was highlighted in the CCC Minutes that adopted this proposal, our Fixture Booklet and also the Booklet produced for our Draws. Unfortunately to allow a Bye in Round 2 requires the permission of Central Council, for derogation of Rule as outlined in Rule 6.20 (c), T.O. 2014 and which in most cases is only a matter of applying. I must put my hands up and apologise to all concerned, I never made that application either this year or for the past two years for the Junior Football Championship, nor may I add was I asked if I had made such an application until the joint letter was received from both Arles Kilcruise and St Joseph’s Clubs que-

rying if our championship had been properly constituted.

I have to express my disappointment in their selfish and unsporting stance in not accepting the format of the championship as they had agreed at the outset and my initial reaction was to “fight” any likely objection, which I had been assured would be forthcoming. After all, the format had been passed by County Committee, who retain the overall authority for championship structures and two rounds had been completed without query or objection. However following consultation with the Ard Stiurthóir’s office, we were advised that our Senior Football Championship was in contravention of Rule 6.20 (c), T.O. 2014 and that any likely appeal or objection to a higher authority or DRA was likely to see it that way. In hindsight, the decision of CCC and County Committee to proceed with the championship in the manner they did was probably correct, particularly now as we see the consequences of the appeal route in other counties and where their championships are at present. As “unpalatable” as it was for everyone to see the clubs avoid the relegation process in this manner, the consequences of losing an appeal or objection would have caused serious disruption to our championship, with in all likelihood the championship being suspended pending outcome and possible counter appeal, which may have caused its own problems for having a representative for Leinster Club Championship. But the possibility of the clubs re-entering the championship proper, in the event of them having to be redrawn would have been far worse.

I can assure you lessons have been learned from the entire experience and there is a requirement now that all our championship and league formats are forensi-



Laois Shopping Centre MFC Winners Portarlington 2014



Laois Shopping Centre MHC Winners Na Fianna 2014

cally examined to ensure compliance with Association rule. Certainly an even number of teams in each football championship grade, similar to our hurling championships, would be advantageous and avoid a lot of the complications we experienced this year. When penning this report, I am not aware of our Fixture Planner's Committees recommendations on their annual review, but I would certainly be reluctant for radical change in our schedule. This Committee have also being asked conduct a full review of our Senior Football Championship. From previous reports I believe my views are well known on this matter but I await their deliberations. I believe our success in complying with our schedule is due to the fact that the present system is Player friendly and allows Clubs and Players plan to a defined Fixture Schedule, which we as a CCC can also adhere to.

While the "dual" player is nearing extinction at Inter County level, I would remind headquarters that he is very much alive in Laois and we are a dual County who operate our fixture schedule to accommodate the "dual" player and club as best as possible. The "Club Championship Calendar Year" committee presently reviewing the feasibility of this proposal should also take note and ensure the "dual" player and club is accommodated in any of their recommendations.

2014 LEINSTER CLUB RESULTS TO DATE

AIB Leinster Club Senior Football Championship

09/11/14 O'Moore Park
St Vincent's (Dublin) 3-11 . . . Portlaoise 0-10

AIB Leinster Club Intermediate Football Championship

25/10/14 O'Moore Park
Ballinlough (Meath) 0-11 . . . Ballyfin (Laois) 0-08

AIB Leinster Club Junior Football Championship

26/10/14 O'Moore Park
Courtwood (Laois) 4-02
St Marys Maudlinstown (Wexford) 0-10

09/11/14 O'Moore Park
Courtwood (Laois) 1-12 . . . Cortown (Meath) 2-08

Semi Final 23/10/14 O'Moore Park
Courtwood (Laois) v Straffan (Kildare)

AIB Leinster Club Senior Hurling Championship

02/11/14 Parnell Park
Kilmacud Crokes (Dublin) 0-23
Rathdowney Errill (Laois) 0-22

AIB Leinster Club Intermediate Hurling Championship

26/10/14 O'Moore Park
Ballinakill (Laois) 0-18
Bray Emmetts (Wicklow) 0-15

Semi Final 09/11/14 O'Moore Park
Kiltale (Meath) 1-13 . . . Ballinakill (Laois) 1-10

AIB Leinster Club Junior Hurling Championship

26/10/14 Enniscorthy
Crossabeg Ballymurn (Wexford) 2-15
Park Ratheniska (Laois) 1-05

AIB Leinster Club Special Junior Hurling Championship

02/11/14 Athlone
Kyle (Laois) 7-07 . . . Southern Gaels (Athlone) 1-04

Semi Final 16/11/14 Tubber
Clara (Offaly) 1-13 . . . Kyle (Laois) 1-07

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administrator.laois@gaa.ie for more information.

Referees and Disciplinary Issues

Our Referees, Linesmen and Umpires are essential to the success of our fixture programme and may I add, there would be no games without them. I wish to take this opportunity to thank them all for their outstanding service to the Association in the County throughout the year.

There is a worrying trend that I have noticed developing during the year and that is the lack of respect some of our Club Officials / Mentors and Players are displaying towards Referees and their Officials. On looking at our records, CCC dealt with 43 reported cases of “verbal abuse towards Match Officials”, whereby 27 of these were by Club or Match Officials and 16 by Players with penalties imposed ranging from a Match Suspension to Twenty Four Weeks Suspension. The message does not seem to be getting home and far greater suspensions and sanctions will have to be imposed in future, particularly on serial offenders.

I don't think any Club Official understands the difficulties incurred and time spent in trying to ensure there is a Referee in attendance at every Fixture we schedule, in excess of 1,500 Fixtures in 2014. Certainly this lack of respect for our Officials does not help our cause, nor does it encourage new personnel to take up refereeing. The hypocrisy of the situation is that some of the Clubs who persistently “whinge” about Referee appointments, don't even supply a Referee and I honestly believe there should be some sanction, loss of home venue for League games for example, imposed on Clubs who do not supply a Referee at present or source a suitable candidate for the coming year. So rather than continuously complain at meetings about appointments and the standard of refereeing in our Club

games, I am requesting each Club in the coming year to provide at least one Referee, who they believe to be both competent and suitable for training next January.

Our Referee Administrator Tony Maher and his committee are also deserving of our thanks, particularly in their efforts to try and improve refereeing standards and bring consistency at all levels. All of our Adult Referees completed an Inservice training course and Fitness testing, whilst our Football Referees completed a training course on the “New Rules and Black Card” prior to commencement of competitions and also a refresher course on the same before championship. Our Umpires also attended a special course dedicated to their duties.

This year saw the introduction of the “Black Card” for Infractions in Football that were considered cynical and were mainly introduced to eliminate deliberate cynical fouls. While many will argue that it was the reason for a more entertaining brand of football with far more scores. I agree cynical behaviour should be eliminated, particularly in scoring areas, but the consistency in its application must be more defined. Another “Black card” anomaly is the fact that at Inter County level a cumulative total of three ordering offs for this Infraction results in a One Match Suspension, whereas at Club level a “serial” offender with cumulative “Black Card” Infractions escapes free. This should be corrected.

This year also saw Match Suspensions replacing Time Suspensions for certain Categories of Infractions. I was in favour and an advocate of this system being introduced, as I believed it to be a far fairer application of the Rules. In this present format, I believe it is a far more lenient application

of the Rule. However in my opinion, in this present guise it is somewhat flawed in that it is competition based, for example a player who commits a Category 3 or 4 Infraction in the final league game of a competition does not serve that Match Suspension until the league competition the following year and is eligible to play championship. Similarly the Infraction maybe committed in a Division 3 League game and he is eligible to play Division 1 games. I haven't the solution, but I believe it should be reviewed whereby there is some link between all competitions.

May I take this opportunity to congratulate and pay tribute to Eddie Kinsella and his umpires on their appointment to officiate the All Ireland Senior Football Final between Donegal and Kerry and compliment them on the manner in which they carried out their duties.

Páirc Ui Mhórdha

In 2014, Pairc Ui Mhórdha hosted 23 Inter County and Inter Club games and was also used on 45 other occasions for our local Championship fixtures. As I have stated in previous reports to Convention the stadium is now our main source of revenue from rental income received from Leinster and Central Council games and also our local gate receipts.

I cannot stress the importance and the necessity to improve our organisation of big match days in the stadium. There is competition from other venues now in Leinster for all games, so the good work must continue if we wish to continue to attract high calibre games to the stadium. I wish to acknowledge the support of our local Gardai for their help on match days, our Event Controller Tom Jones, Safety Officer PJ Kelly, Chief Steward Sean Byrne

and our numerous voluntary stewards. In order to satisfy further Health and Safety legislation, all our match day personnel had to complete refresher and accredited training courses in recent weeks. I wish to compliment and thank Tom Jones, PJ Kelly and Sean Byrne whom all completed the NHSC / IT Carlow Certificate in Event Controlling during the past month and also our twenty nine Stewards who recently completed the Portobello College Accredited Stewards Training course in the last couple of weeks. If it was not for their co-operation and help, it just would not be possible to host such games.

In line with the recommendations from the Slattery audit and report on our County ground, development within the stadium continued. This year saw the upgrading of our control room with the installation of turnstile meters and cctv, whilst the crush barriers on both end terraces were also replaced. These works were nearly fully funded from grants secured from the National Health and Safety Committee over the past two years.

I am delighted to report that the ongoing saga with our generator and the ESB penalties we were incurring from use of floodlights has also been resolved during the year. The generator has been replaced and the system synchronised in a manner that when our site load exceeds 180kw, the generator automatically starts. We have also made an application to ESB for acceptance in the Demand Side Management scheme, whereby we will be making the generator available to export electricity to the National Grid if required. If accepted for this scheme, we will receive annual payment for providing this availability and it will result in significant savings on our present energy costs in the stadium. I wish

to acknowledge Mattie Walsh MW Hire and Peter Cogan's input in bringing about a satisfactory resolution to this problem.

During the Parkside development a number of years ago, the development at the back of the Main Terrace was never fully completed and is presently in contravention of a number of Health and Safety compliances. These have been highlighted in the Slattery Report and we have been warned that unless we comply with these recommendations our stadium capacity will be significantly reduced. This is a major development which includes a complete re-alignment of the back of the terrace in line with building regulations, re-opening the closed exits and stairways off the main terrace, demolishing and rebuilding existing ladies and gent's toilets at Abbeyleix end, replacing existing press box and building a machinery store. The tenders for this development closed in mid- November and works should be awarded to the successful contractor prior to Convention. We have worked closely with National Infrastructural Committee and National Finance Committee on this proposed development and part funding will be available for the project.

Finally on Pairc Ui Mhordha, I must compliment our Groundsman Colm McEvoy for the pristine condition in which he continues to keep the pitch in the stadium. Our Caretaker Willie Stackpool for ensuring the grounds are opened when required and also our TUS workers and PCE Group Scheme team led by Liam McEvoy for their continued upkeep of the stadium during the year.

Centre of Excellence

After several years of speculation, it is great to finally announce the acquisi-

tion of the old Portlaoise GAA grounds on Fr. Browne Avenue by National GAA and which is presently being transferred to Laois GAA. Whilst exact costs to the County have yet to be determined by headquarters, I can assure you that such costs will be covered by grant availability from Central and Leinster Councils for such projects. This is a monumental acquisition for the Association within the County and our Chairperson and Treasurer must be complimented for the determined manner in which they pushed headquarters to pursue the purchase of the grounds on our behalf. While it wasn't straight forward and there were many complications, I am delighted that the acquisition is now complete and I wish to take this opportunity to thank everyone who was involved in the process.

The intention is to develop the site as a Laois GAA Centre of Excellence, which will entail two phases of development and will be dependent on funding availability. The first phase will be the development of three full size pitches with all the ancillaries for winter training. In this instance Richard Hayden has been engaged to complete a full survey of the site which will result in a proposed outline of design plans, outline the costs of the development and identify any foreseen problems or issues. This survey is now available to us and a meeting is being arranged with him to progress this development, which may commence as early as next spring. The second phase will be clubhouse development, which will hopefully incorporate all the modern day requirements for the preparation of Inter County panels, dressing rooms and possibly our County Board Offices and Meeting Rooms. It is intended applications for funding and grants will be made to National Lottery, Leinster and Central

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Includes entry fee to:

- AIB GAA Club Finals on March 17th
- ALL Allianz League Matches in your code
- Laois GAA's opening Championship Fixture in your code
- All Laois GAA Championship and League Games in 2015

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Council and that consideration will also have to be made in regard to sale of assets.

Finance

In the present economic climate I suppose our finances can be described as satisfactory, particularly as we have achieved budget in most sectors. There are areas where we overran and these must be examined and scrutinised in detail. Savings must be made in other various sectors, if we are to achieve all our planned developments. Our Cisteoir Martin Byrne will outline in more detail our income and expenditure in our Financial Accounts and in his presentation to Convention.

Briefly I wish to highlight a number of our fundraising initiatives and thanks those involved for their contribution to these events –

- Club County Board Draw continues to be our primary fundraising activity and is essential to both our County and Clubs wellbeing, in 2014 Clubs benefited to the tune of €515,853, while the County profited to almost €90,000. This Draw continues for 2015 and I would again appeal for your co-operation in making this your Clubs primary fundraiser for the year;
- Our annual “Golf Classic” was arranged for Portarlinton Golf Club on June Bank Holiday and was this year sponsored by Colgan Sports and I would like to thank Aidan for his generous sponsorship. The Classic had 32 teams participating and was a wonderful success again thanks to the efforts of Liam Delaney and our Cathaoirleach Gerry Kavanagh;
- Our “Race Day” at the Punchestown Racing Festival was our inaugural step

into the corporate sector and was also a great success in selling 20 tables. Our thanks to Glanbia for their sponsorship of this event, to Anthony Delaney for his involvement in sponsorship negotiations and Kieran Leavy for his organisation of the event;

- Our “Night at the Dogs” and Buster Draw was held recently in Newbridge Greyhound Stadium and was kindly sponsored by Joe Mallon Motors. I wish to thank our Leas Cisteoir Paschal McEvoy for his organisation of this fundraiser, where he was ably assisted by Canice Sheeran, John Hyland and Liam Ramsbottom;
- “Club Laois” Membership venture continues to be disappointing for what it offers and a different marketing strategy should be reviewed for 2015;

I have often being challenged during the years as to why we don't offer concessions to patrons attending all games on one of our local championship weekends. The main reason for this is that for several years now Laois GAA offer a “Season Ticker” which allows access to all local league and championship games. This has been updated two years ago to “Club + Season Pass” which offers the aforementioned plus access to all Laois games in the Allianz League and opening Championship game in a specific code. This is available for €185 and is unbelievable value for anyone attending our Inter county or local games on a regular basis. Spread the word please because this is value!!

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to our Treasurer Martin Byrne for his continued expertise and professionalism in this area and also for his commitment and dedication to Laois GAA.

National Club Draw

The National Club Draw continues this year whereby all funds raised are retained solely by the Club. Each Club retains the proceeds of each €10 per ticket sold by their club and with an initial allocation of 400 tickets per club, which can increase to 2,000 tickets per club, meaning the opportunity is there to raise up to €20,000. All prizes are sponsored by Ard Comhairle. Tomas Moore is our County Club Liaison person for the Draw and any Clubs who haven't yet collected their tickets, may still do so from the Office. All tickets must be registered on the new online system and returned to our Liaison person before 24th. January. The Draw will take place at Congress on 27 February.

Coaching and Games Development

Coaching and Games Development and the amount of activity involved is immense. It is at the core of our association and the importance and seriousness in which Laois GAA view our Coaching and Games Development can be seen by our financial investment in this area, whether it is a prudent spend or we are achieving value for money is often a question I am posed!

During the year past our Games Manager Colm Browne's completed his three year term in this role. His administrative and managerial duties of the coaching staff have fallen to yours truly. At the moment we have three full time Games Development Administrators Ciaran Muldowney, Donal Brennan and Andrew Kavanagh and one part time Games Development Administrator James Kelly and we have a commitment from Comhairle Laighean CLG that the savings made from the non-renewal of our Games Managers contract will also be made availa-

ble for coaching and games projects within the county.

Some years ago, National targets were introduced around games development and at present our GDA's are involved in the co-ordination of Go Games programme from Under 8 to 12; Primary School coaching, mentoring and blitz days; Post Primary School coaching and mentoring; co-ordinating Easter Camps, Cul Camps, Setanta and O'Mordha Og Camps and Halloween Camps; mentoring Talent Academies; Club Mentoring; Young Whistler programmes; delivering and organising Coach Education courses – Foundation Level, Award 1 Child and Award 1 Youth / Adult and Coaching Workshops.

In our most recent meeting with Pat Daly, Director of Games Development and Research in Croke Park, the scope has now been given to counties to highlight what they feel is important and it is with this view that we intend to host a Coaching and Games forum in January to identify goals and targets of what we wish to achieve in this sector and give clear clarification to our coaches on what their role is expected to be. It is important that our volunteers working at Club level are happy that their roles are being adequately supported and their input recognised.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank Colm Browne for his many achievements and his innovative work as Games Manager during his three year term and I wish him well in whatever role he takes on next. I want to thank Laois County Council for their contribution in association with Comhairle Laighean CLG to the funding of our part time coaching staff during Liam O'Neills tenure as Uachtaráin. While this funding is officially finished next July, meetings with our local authorities have been arranged to

see if this can be continued. My thanks to our four GDA's as mentioned above for the magnitude of work they are putting in at Coaching and Games level.

Talent Academies

Development squads are the nursery for our future Inter County panels and is an area where we may place greater emphasis and further resources in future if we are to remain anyway competitive at Inter County level. This year saw some of our panels receive core strength and education as part of the physical education that is common to all sports. Additional resources and structural changes are planned for our squads in 2015. In both football and hurling, most of our panels were competitive in their Leinster and Inter Provincial tournaments. One of the worrying trends in recent years is the reluctance of former players and mentors to get involved with these panels and whilst our GDA's are to the forefront in organising most of these panels, I would like to thank those various volunteers for their endeavours with the following squads:

Under 14 Football – Sean Daly and Conal Barry;

Under 15 Football – JP Cahillane, Eoin Kearns, Eddie Kinsella and Jack Harding;

Under 16 Football – Tomas Brett, Billy Delaney and Ned Kelly;

Under 14 Hurling – Enda Lyons, Jack Nolan, Ollie Hally, Dermot McGill and JJ McHugh;

Under 15 Hurling – Andy Bergin, Tony Doran and Simon Smith;

Under 16 Hurling – Fran Dowling, Pat McKane, Brendan Peters, Declan Critchley and Jeff Phelan.

Super Games Centre Pilot Programme

The GAA together with the University of Stirling, are conducting a study on youth drop out in GAA sport. The participants of this study will be male GAA players aged 12 -16 years old from each of the 4 provinces across Ireland. The project has the support of the GAA through their National Research Committee. Heywood Community School has been selected as the rural pilot site for the project in football and our part time GDA James Kelly has additional hours as Pilot Site Leader on the project

The aim of the study is to pilot a GAA games based offering that positively impacts a player's motivation to continue participation in GAA sport. This aim will be delivered through a key participation hive called the GAA Super Game Centre. The centre will act as a location providing an opportunity to pilot the key characteristics of a recreational GAA games offering. Over an 8 month period, players will be given a key opportunity to provide feedback on the key features of a positive GAA youth games experience. This will involve testing whether a regular programme of games positively impacts a young player's intention to continue participation in GAA sport. It will also compare the effect that a GAA values education programme has on a young person's motivation to continue participation in GAA sport. It is intended that the study will help create practical guidelines for the GAA and local clubs to ensure that the needs of young players are reflected in the games experience created by coaches,

parents and local volunteers. Since it's commencement in late September, an average of 45 players, who haven't been receiving adequate and in most cases no GAA activity have attended on a weekly basis.

Heywood Community School Partnership

This partnership resulted from our GDA James Kelly's involvement as Pilot Site Lead in Heywood CS. Further to meetings with our An Cathaoirleach and school Principal Phil Bowe, negotiations ensued in developing the school facilities into a Centre of Excellence for Laois GAA Hurling. As a result of this partnership further National GAA investment in the school ensued and aligned with previous investment, the facilities now available include high performance gym, floodlit 3g pitch, grass pitch, indoor hall and ball wall. These will now be available to all Laois Hurling squads, including Development squads and will become the Centre of Excellence for training for Laois Hurling. The costs to Laois GAA will be in line with a previous agreement which operated on a minimum running cost per session. This is an exciting development for Laois hurling and I wish to compliment our Cathaoirleach Gerry Kavanagh, Phil Bowe and Seamus Fitzpatrick in Heywood CS for their co-operation in bringing this initiative to fruition.

Health and Wellbeing

In recent years the GAA has introduced a number of non-game specific programmes aimed at enhancing the lives and wellbeing of our members and the wider community we serve. These initiatives have several motivations and purposes, among which are an increasing demand from Clubs for guidance and support in matters

relating to health and well-being of their members, players and the wider communities within which they operate and also an appreciation of the need to lead by example in areas including drug and alcohol awareness, mental and physical health and well-being, suicide prevention and response, social inclusion and integration, and community engagement.

To better achieve this, Health and Wellbeing Committees have been established across the 32 counties, including Laois, where the Committee is Chaired by Dr John Paul Campion. This Committee has been tasked with helping the Association to identify and respond to the Health and Wellbeing needs of our members, through the GAA related programmes such as Alcohol and Substance Misuse Prevention (ASAP) Programme, Sport your Mind Mental Health Programme, GAA Social Initiative and the Respect Initiative. It will also involve signposting and partnering with relevant national and local agencies that can be of assistance to our members. It is recommended that each Club appoint a person to the role of "Club Health and Wellbeing Officer" which now replaces the club ASAP officer role. If Clubs or individuals want assistance or further queries on any of these initiatives within their Clubs, please feel free to contact John Paul or our Children's Officer Seamus Lahart.

Insurance Matters

The renewal premium allocation for each County is based on their 5 years claims experience on your Liability Insurance, Non GAA Associated Use of Property and Property Insurance. The renewal terms for 2015 have not yet been agreed yet at Central level with Insurers, but the Claims experience has a huge bearing on these

negotiations and in recent years this has continued to deteriorate on both Liability and Property covers. Last year €300,000 of premium increases were not passed on to Counties and were absorbed by Central Council, which is not sustainable going forward. In fairness our claims experience is not too bad, but I would appeal to Clubs to take proactive measures to control risks and manage activities at their properties or premiums will continue to increase. Our Development Officer Tom Jones and Safety Officer PJ Kelly have carried out a number of Health and Safety audits in recent years and this will continue annually as we try to be proactive in this area.

For the past three years, the National Insurance Committee has offered a reward rebate to Counties for their Clubs, whereby Counties qualify for the rebate on condition that 90% of their Clubs complete their Team Insurance Registration and payment before the 31st. March and of course providing the Club is a net contributor to the scheme. I wish to thank Clubs for their co-operation ensuring our County qualified for this rebate in 2013, resulting in a rebate of €900 for all bar four of our Clubs and in 2014, resulting in a rebate of €800 for all our Clubs. All bar two of our Clubs will qualify for this rebate if applicable in 2015. This is a significant saving for all Clubs so I would appeal for your continued co-operation to ensure our qualification for this rebate, if of course the scheme continues.

During the year each club registered under the GAA Injury Scheme has now received their own unique log on and password which will enable them to register their Club Injury Claims on-line. This is a simple and consistent approach to reporting all new Injury Scheme claims, which allows you see at a glance the current sta-

tus of each claim and also helps you keep track of all claims and their present status. Declaration Forms must still be downloaded for the Claimant, Club Secretary and County Secretary's signature and a further one for completion by Doctor or Dentist. It is my intention that all Claims will be submitted in this manner for 2015.

Media Rights and SKY TV

The breaking news this year, that Sky Sports had been awarded exclusive broadcasting rights to 14 championship games caused some furore within our Association and I must also state was used rather cynically by certain quarters to attack our Association. In coming from a family like many more that has experienced emigration, I can testify that the deal has been well received by those abroad and our past players and supporters have now the opportunity to observe and experience at least some of our championship games as if they were still within these shores. The promotion of our games abroad is also important and the fact that 427,000 people tuned into Sky for the All Ireland Hurling Final alone in Britain is a positive.

However we must remember our grass-roots too and in a time when there are several financial constraints on families whom are unable to afford the Sky subscription to follow our National games. I believe a "balance" has been struck to satisfy all parties at present and would be sceptical of any attempts to increase the number of games available to Sky in any future negotiations.

Local Media

Our games in Laois got more than their fair share of coverage during the year and for this I thank our local press and radio correspondents Damien Moran, Rory

Delaney, Greg Mulhall, Jack Nolan, Denis Croke, Pat Delaney, Conor Lennon, Alan Hartnett and the various reporters from Midlands 3. I wish to thank Alf Harvey and Denis Byrne who both do a magnificent job on photographs and enhance the work of the scribes.

Our website, www.laoisgaa.ie, and our Laois GAA Iphone App are now due an upgrade and it is an area we will be exploring in the coming months. The popularity of both is highlighted by the fact that we had 250,052 Website Visits and 578,107 Website Pageviews in the past 12 months. We have also embraced social media with 10,800 Twitter Followers and 3,786 Facebook Fans. All our website and social media work is a tribute to the tremendous work of IT Chairperson Brian Ramsbottom, who is ably assisted by Tomas Moore and long may they continue with their great work in this department.

It is also worth mention that our 2013 Senior Football Championship Final programme received the award for Comhairle Laighean County Match Programme Award last January. I want to take this opportunity to thank our Office Administrator Tomas Moore for his role in the editing and compilation of this fabulous publication. Tomas has taken responsibility for the production of all programmes during the year and his work with our Allianz League, Leinster Championship and local weekend Championship programmes is a credit to him and a wonderful promotion of our games.

Scór

It is not often in a Laois GAA County Convention report that I have the opportunity to congratulate victors in 2 All Ireland titles, firstly Molly Donnerry from the

Camross GAA Club on her success in the All Ireland Scór na nOg in Solo Singing and also Mountmellick Instrumental Group representing Mountmellick GAA Club for their success in Scór Sinsir.

It is a tribute to Jody Conway and his hardworking Scór and Cultural Committee that this has been achieved through the participation of so few of our Clubs. I would remind our Clubs that Scór is a GAA competition also that combines the colour and rivalry of our Gaelic games with the social and entertainment element of Ireland's traditional pastimes. There are willing participants in every Club in the County for all our Scór activities, so I would appeal to you as Club Officers to spread the word of these competitions.

1915 All-Ireland Senior Hurling Championship Final

The 1915 All-Ireland Final was the 28th. All Ireland Final which at that time was an inter-county hurling tournament for the top teams in Ireland. Ballygeehan representing Laois defeated Redmonds from Cork in the final on a scoreline of 6-02 to 4-01, to record Laois's first All-Ireland title. To date this is our only All Ireland Senior success and as it will be 100 years in 2015 since this famous victory, it should be commemorated in some manner. We will be liaising with Clough Ballacolla Club on the celebration, but suggestions will be welcome!!

Sponsors

I wish to extend our sincere gratitude to Mattie Walsh and his company MW Hire Group for their generous sponsorship of all our County teams. MW Hire have been part and parcel of Laois GAA now since 2010 and will continue for at least another

two years and I sincerely hope they will get the exposure they deserve and desire from our association with them.

Our new sponsor this year was The Magni Group, whose logo was emblazoned on the back of all our Inter County jerseys, just above the number. The Magni Group is an American company, who had intended to locate a new factory in the Portarlington region this year, but unfortunately this was not to be due to planning difficulties and they have since relocated to the Cork area. Fortunately however, Ted Berry and his company have agreed to honour their sponsorship with Laois GAA, for which we are very grateful and certainly look forward to our continued association with them.

Our Championships and Leagues are kindly sponsored by Laois Shopping Centre and again we are entirely appreciative of Kevin Doyle and company for their generous sponsorship.

GALA sponsor all our Juvenile Championship and Leagues and our thanks are extended to 4 Aces and all GALA stores in Laois for this sponsorship.

Our appreciation and thanks are also extended to –

- O’Neills, our new official gear sponsors for 2014 and which will continue for the coming year. My thanks to Tony Towell and Carol Carr for their co-operation and courtesy throughout the year, even at short notice;
- Lucozade Sport, our official drinks sponsor;
- Mochua Print and Design, our Awards Night sponsor;

- Colgan Sports, sponsor of our Golf Classic in Portarlington Golf Club, whilst also acknowledging Aidan’s promotion and support of “Club Laois” shop;
- Browne Jeweller’s, Scoreboard sponsorship;
- Glanbia, main sponsor of our Punchestown Race Day;
- Joe Mallon Motors, main sponsor of our Race Night in Newbridge Greyhound Stadium;
- Crown Paints, our Man of the Match Awards

and finally to all companies and persons who contributed to Laois GAA in some type of sponsorship during the past year.

I would appeal to all our GAA patrons to support our various sponsors in whatever means they can and hopefully their faith in Laois GAA will be justifiably rewarded with the success their investment deserves.

Michael Delaney Retirement as CEO of Comhairle Laignean CLG

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge Michael’s 38 years of outstanding service to Comhairle Laignean CLG on his retirement earlier this year. Michael, prior to his appointment to the post in 1976, was a primary school teacher, a hurler with Camross and Laois, and Chairperson of the Laois Hurling Board. Under his tutelage, Comhairle Laignean CLG has been to the forefront in it’s imaginative approach to the promotion and development of Gaelic games. It has often been said that Michael always saw the bigger picture and this is testament to the legacy he leaves behind him

today. In my duty with Laois, I often had to seek his wise counsel and his receptiveness, along with his advice and guidance was always forthcoming and will always be remembered. He has been a great friend to our County during those 38 years and on behalf of all Laois gael, I truly wish him a long and happy retirement.

Leinster GAA Hall of Fame

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Jack Kenna on entering the Leinster GAA Hall of Fame, which he was inducted to at this year's Leinster Football Final. Our County has produced many fine footballers and none more so than O'Dempsey's native. In 2013 he was also recognised when awarded Laois GAA Hall of Fame Award at our annual Awards Night. Jack wore the blue and white for over 12 years and was a regular on Railway Cup teams during this period, being on successful teams in 1955, 1959 and 1961. At Club level he was a founder member of the O'Dempsey's Club and their first Secretary, a position he held for 12 years. Again our congratulations.

Retirements

This year sees two of our members retire from Management –

Michael Carroll has soldiered for over 40 years in the administrative affairs of Laois GAA, having served as Hurling Board Secretary prior to his election as County Secretary from 1979 -1999 and also as representative on both Central and Leinster Councils. During this time he has accumulated a wealth of experience and knowledge, which we could do well not to lose, but as always, I am sure he will continue to be available to advise and offer shrewd judgement when required. On

behalf of Laois GAA and particularly on my own behalf, I want to thank Michael for his courtesy at all times, his concerns for our welfare and the many kindnesses on our path together and I wish both himself and Ann the very best wishes on his retirement.

Anthony Delaney was elected as our Central Council representative in 2010 and completes his five year term at annual Congress next February. During his tenure he has been a strong voice for our County on the supreme governing body of the Association and has represented his County well and always delivered a detailed account of happenings at Central Council to County Committee. He has also served on the National Rules Advisory Committee for the past three years and his advice and knowledge of the Official Guide has been welcome on many an occasion. I feel certain he has much more to offer the association and I wish him well in whatever role he takes on next.

Our Office Administrator for almost 20 years Fiona Kenna also resigned earlier in the year. I want to say special thanks for her tremendous commitment, dedication and loyalty to Laois GAA during this period and extend my best wishes and best of luck to both herself, Tommy and family in the future.

Na Mairbh

Every year sees the passing of some great GAA people and this year has been no exception. On behalf of Laois GAA I would like to extend sympathy of Laois GAA in particular to the following families that readily come to mind – Mick McEvoy and Tomas “Sammy” Byrne, Stradbally; Joe Brennan, Arles Killeen; Eoin Dooley, The Rock; Tony “Thatcher”

Coleman, Portarlinton; Jack Cummins, Clough Ballacolla; Alfie Lewis and Owen Deegan, Portlaoise; Tom Walsh, The Heath and Clonad; Ned Daly, Crettyard; Denis Wall, Castletown Slieve Bloom; Jackie Dooley, Camross and also to the families of the wider GAA community whom have been bereaved during the year by the loss of those dear to them.

Go ndeanfaidh Dia trocaire ar a nan-amacha.

Buíochas

As I conclude my review of 2014 and my observations about the state and structures of our games, I want thank all those individuals and units who have assisted Laois GAA and I during the year and who continue to keep our organisation in the County on sound footing through their hard work, co-operation, fair play and goodwill.

I wish thank my Cathaoirleach Gerry Kavanagh for his leadership and continued support, while also acknowledging the huge commitment and dedication he has given the Association in the County during the year. Similarly my Vice Chairperson Peter O'Neill continues to get through a Trojan amount of work for the Association within the County.

Likewise my fellow Executive Members, CCC, Hearings and our other sub Committees for their advice, help and cooperation during the year, each in their own right through their tireless effort and work ethic greatly contribute to the smooth running of the Association within the County.

To Tomas Moore, who has now replaced Fiona as Office Administrator, I say special thanks for his work, often I must

add above and beyond the call of duty. He has an excellent relationship with our Club Secretaries, Referees and his routinely work and handling of ticket sales greatly reduces the work of yours truly.

Thanks to our sister organisations in their promotion of our games, Ladies Football and Camogie on their tremendous achievement in again reaching the All Ireland Junior Camogie Final. Sarsfields deserve our congratulations on their success in the Leinster Senior Club Football Championship and we wish them well in their quest for National honours, whilst Camross were unlucky to lose out in their Leinster Final.

The schools of Laois both Primary and Secondary deserve our thanks for the work they do to promote our games within their jurisdictions. We have developed an excellent relationship with Cumann na mBunscol who do tremendous work in our primary schools.

Our sincerest thanks go to Micheal Reynolds and his staff in Comhairle Laighean CLG for their constant courtesy, support and accessibility. Similarly Paraic Duffy and his staff in Croke Park headquarters are also deserving of our thanks.

I wish to thank all our Club Officers, Players and Voluntary workers for their excellent co-operation and help with the promotion and playing of our games and activities.

In conclusion, I wish you all an enjoyable and successful 2015.

Le meas

Niall Mac Laitimh

Runáí CLG Laoise Nollaig 2013

2014 FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP AND LEAGUE RESULTS

Laois Shopping Centre Senior Football Championship Final

19-10-14 (Sun) in O'Moore Park
Portlaoise 2-14 Arles Killeen 0-09

Laois Shopping Centre Intermediate Football Championship Final

19-10-14 (Sun) in O'Moore Park
Ballyfin 3-09 Timahoe 0-07

Laois Shopping Centre Junior Football Championship Final

26-09-14 (Fri) in O'Moore Park
Courtwood 4-13 . . . Slieve Bloom Castletown 1-07

Laois Shopping Centre Minor Football Championship Final

13-09-2014 (Sat) in O'Moore Park
Portarlinton 1-11 . . . Stradbally Parish Gaels 1-09

Laois Shopping Centre Under 21 Football Championship Final

29-11-2014 (Sat) in O'Moore Park
St Joseph's Barrowhouse v O'Dempsey's or Sarsfields

Laois Shopping Centre Minor "B" Football Qualifier Final

28-07-2014 (Mon) in Mountmellick
O'Dempsey's 1-10 Rosenallis 2-04

Laois Shopping Centre Under 21 "B" Football Qualifier Final

18-10-2014 (Sat) in Rosenallis
O'Dempsey's 5-10 . . . Slieve Bloom Castletown Gaels 2-06

Laois Shopping Centre Junior B Football Championship Final

16-08-2014 (Sat) in Crettyard
Graiguecullen 1-14 Killeshin 1-07

Laois Shopping Centre Junior C Football Championship Final

20-08-2014 (Wed) in O'Moore Park
Camross 1-10 Spink 0-07

Kelly Cup Final

14-03-2014 (Fri) in Crettyard
St Joseph's 3-07 Arles Killeen 0-07

Laois Shopping Centre All County Football League Division 1 Final

01-08-2014 (Fri) in O'Moore Park
Portlaoise 2-13 Portarlinton 0-14

Laois Shopping Centre All County Football League Division 2 Final

15-08-2014 (Fri) in Portarlinton
The Heath 1-18 Mountmellick 0-10

Laois Shopping Centre All County Football League Division 3 Final

13-07-2014 (Sun) in Stradbally
Portlaoise 2-09 St. Josephs 0-09

Laois Shopping Centre All County Football League Division 4 Final

13-07-2014 (Sun) in Emo
Portarlinton 2-08 Timahoe 1-08

Laois Shopping Centre All County Football League Division 5 Final

04-07-2014 (Fri) in Mountmellick
The Rock 0-14 Ballyfin 0-11

Laois Shopping Centre Minor Football League Final

21-07-14 (Mon) in Crettyard
Graiguecullen 3-10 . . . Stradbally Parish Gaels 0-08

2014 HURLING CHAMPIONSHIP AND LEAGUE RESULTS

Laois Shopping Centre Senior Hurling Championship Final

28-09-14 (Sun) in O'Moore Park
Rathdowney Errill 1-20 . . . Camross 0-10

Laois Shopping Centre Senior B Hurling Championship Final

28-09-14 (Sun) in O'Moore Park
Ballinakill 0-22. . . St Fintans Mountrath 1-13

Laois Shopping Centre Intermediate Hurling Championship Final

12-10-14 (Sun) in O'Moore Park
Borris-in-Ossory/Kilcotton 0-15
Park Ratheniska 1-09

Laois Shopping Centre Junior Hurling Championship Final

18-10-14 (Sat) in O'Moore Park
Camross 1-11 Kyle 0-11

Laois Shopping Centre Minor Hurling Championship Final

28-09-14 (Sun) in O'Moore Park
Na Fianna 2-14 . . Borris-in-Ossory/Kilcotton 1-12

Laois Shopping Centre Under 21 Football Championship Final

22-11-2014 (Sat) in O'Moore Park
Borris-in-Ossory/Kilcotton v Portlaoise

Laois Shopping Centre Minor "B" Football Qualifier Final

18-08-2014 (Mon) in Abbeyleix
Camross Gaels 4-13 St Fintan's Gaels 2-16

Laois Shopping Centre Junior B Hurling Championship Final

13-08-2014 (Wed) in O'Moore Park
The Harps 2-12. . . Rathdowney Errill 1-13

Laois Shopping Centre Junior C Hurling Championship Final

11-08-2014 (Mon) in O'Moore Park
Borris-in-Ossory/Kilcotton 3-10. . . Mountmellick 0-08

Palmer Cup Final

04-05-14 (Sun) in Shanahoe
Camross 2-12 Clough Ballacolla 0-12

Laois Shopping Centre All County Hurling League Division 1 Final

17-08-2014 (Sun) in O'Moore Park
Rathdowney Errill 1-18. . . Clough Ballacolla 1-15

Laois Shopping Centre All County Hurling League Division 1A Final

06-07-2014 (Sun) in Rathdowney
The Harps 3-19. Clonad 1-11

Laois Shopping Centre All County Hurling League Division 2 Final

06-07-2014 (Sun) in Colt
Clonaslee St Manmans 3-14. . . Shanahoe 1-09

Laois Shopping Centre All County Hurling League Division 3 Final

04-07-2014 (Fri) in Fr Browne Avenue
Mountmellick 1-15 . . . Rathdowney Errill 1-13

Laois Shopping Centre All County Hurling League Division 4 Final

05-07-2014 (Sat) in Durrow
Camross 3-15 . . . St Lazerians Abbeyleix 3-10

Laois Shopping Centre All County Hurling League Division 5 Final

06-07-2014 (Sun) in Rathdowney
The Harps 0-14. . . Borris-in-Ossory/Kilcotton 1-08

Laois Shopping Centre Minor Hurling League Final

28-07-2014 (Mon) in Shanahoe
Rathdowney Errill 2-14 . . . Abbeyleix Gaels 0-08

**2014 JUVENILE FOOTBALL
CHAMPIONSHIP AND LEAGUE
RESULTS**

Under 12 Football Div (1) Cup Final

27-08-2014 (Wed) - O'Moore Park
Ballyroan/Abbey 5-08.St Pauls 0-04

Under 12 Football Div (1) Shield Final

27-08-2014 (Wed) - Fr Browne Av
St. Josephs 3-11.O Dempseys 2-04

Under 12 Football Div (2) Cup Final

27-08-2014 (Wed) in O'Moore Park
Clonaslee St Manmans 3-10 . . .Portlaoise B 0-05

Under 12 Football Div (2) Shield Final

27-08-2014 (Wed) in Fr Browne Av
Rosenallis 1-12Killeshin 2-04

Under 12 Football Div (3) Cup Final

27-08-2014 (Wed) Fr Browne Av
Park/Ratheniska 7-04Ballyfin 0-04

Under 12 Football Div (3) Shield Final

22-09-2014 (Mon) in Fr Browne Av
The Rock 1-09Ballylinan 0-06

Under 12 Football Div (4) Cup Final

27-08-2014 (Wed) in Fr Browne Av
Spink 5-10 Crettyard 1-02

Under 12 Football Div (4) Shield Final

28-08-2014 (Thurs) in Fr Browne Av
St Fintans Gaels 4-07Arles/Kilcruise 0-05

**Under 13 Football Development Cup
Final**

02-11-14 (Sat) in Fr Browne Ave
Ballyroan Abbey 4-11St Pauls 5-02

**Under 13 Football Development Shield
Final**

09-11-14 (Sun) in Fr Browne Ave
The Heath 7-05.Sarsfields 1-04

GALA Under 14 Football League Final

17-10-14 (Fri) in O'Moore Park
Portlaoise 4-05 Portarlington 1-06

**GALA Under 14 "B" Football League
Final**

02-07-2014 (Wed) in Kilcotton
Naomh Eamann 4-08. . .The Harps Gaels 2-03

Under 14 Football Féile Final

12-05-2014 (Mon) - Fr Browne Av
Portlaoise 4-06 Portarlington 4-02

Under 14 "B" Football Féile Final

06-05-2014 (Mon) in Fr Browne Av
Naomh Eaman 3-10The Harps 2-04

**GALA Under 14 Football Championship
Final**

10-09-2014 (Wed) in O'Moore Park
St Pauls 4-07. Portarlington 3-05

**GALA Under 14 "B" Football
Championship Final**

13-09-2014 (Sat) in O'Moore Park
Harps Gaels 2-09 . . Naomh Eamann 1-01

**GALA Under 14 Football Shield
Competition Final**

13-09-2014 (Sat) in Ballyroan
The Heath 4-08 . . . Ballyroan Abbey 2-08

**GALA Under 14 "B" Football Shield
Competition Final**

01-09-2014 (Mon) in Colt
Park Ratheniska 6-14 . . . St Fintans Gaels 1-06

**GALA Under 14 “B” Football Plate
Competition Final**

13-09-2014 (Sat) in Graiguecullen
Rosenallis 2-08 Graiguecullen 2-05

GALA Under 16 Football League Final

27-06-2014 (Fri) in Portlaoise
Portarlinton 2-07 . . . Ballyroan Abbey Gaels 1-05

**GALA Under 16 “B” Football League
Final**

11-07-2014 (Fri) in Timahoe
Park Ratheniska 4-13 . . . Ballylinan Gleanmor 3-10

**GALA Under 16 Football
Championship Final**

26-09-2014 (Fri) in O’Moore Park
Ballyroan Abbey 2-14 . . . St Pauls The Rock 2-06

**GALA Under 16 “B” Football
Championship Final**

26-09-2014 (Fri) in O’Moore Park
Ballylinan Glenmor 4-12 . . . O’Dempsey’s 1-08

**GALA Under 16 Football Shield
Competition Final**

26-09-2014 (Fri) in Kellyville
Killeshin Crettyard 3-11 . . . St Joseph’s Barrowhouse 2-09

**GALA Under 16 “B” Football Shield
Competition Final**

26-09-2014 (Fri) in Ballacolla
Clough Ballacolla 2-12 The Harps Gaels 2-09

**2014 JUVENILE HURLING
CHAMPIONSHIP AND LEAGUE
RESULTS**

Under 12 Hurling Division 1 Cup Final

27-09-14 (Sat) in O’Moore Park
St Lazerians Abbeyleix 7-09
Borris in Ossory/Kilcotton 1-03

**Under 12 Hurling Division 1 Shield
Final**

27-09-14 (Sat) in Fr Browne Ave
Naomh Eaman 1-08 . . . Clough/Ballacolla 0-08

Under 12 Hurling Division 2 Cup Final

27-09-14 (Sat) in O’Moore Park
Portlaoise 2 1-08 . . . St Fintan’s Mountrath 1-07

**Under 12 Hurling Division 2 Shield
Final**

27-09-14 (Sat) in Fr Browne Ave
Clonaslee St Manmans 5-13 . . . St Fintan’s Gaels 2-04

**Under 13 Hurling Development Cup
Final**

02-11-14 (Sat) in Fr Browne Ave
The Harps 2-04 . . . St Lazerians Abbeyleix 1-03

**Under 13 Hurling Development Shield
Final**

02-11-14 (Sun) in Fr Browne Ave
Camross 4-04 . . . Clough Ballacolla 2-08

**Under 13 Hurling Development Plate
Final**

02-11-14 (Sun) in Ballinakill
Rosenallis 5-07 Ballinakill 1-02

GALA Under 14 Hurling League Finals

26-07-2014 (Sat) in Kilcotton
Naomh Eamann 1-12 . . . Rathdowney Errill 0-08

**GALA Under 14 B Hurling League
Finals**

26-07-2014 (Sat) in Kilcotton
Clough Ballacolla Gaels 2-08 Clonaslee St
Manmans 0-05

Under 14 Hurling Féile Final

27-04 -2014 (Sun) in Fr Browne Av
Naomh Eaman 3-10 . . . Harps Gaels 2-03

Under 14 “B” Football Féile Final

27-04 -2014 (Sun) in Fr Browne Av
Clough Ballacolla Gaels 5-05 . . . Rosenallis 1-05

GALA Under 14 Hurling Championship Final

25-09-2014 (Thurs) in O’Moore Park
Portlaoise 6-09 . . St Lazerian’s Abbeyleix 2-03

GALA Under 14 “B” Hurling Championship Final

20-09-2014 (Sat) in O’Moore Park
Rosenallis 2-11 . . .Clough Ballacolla Gaels 2-06

GALA Under 14 Hurling Shield Competition Final

20-09-2014 (Sat) in Camross
Camross Gaels 3-06 . . .Rathdowney Errill 0-11

GALA Under 14 “B” Hurling Shield Competition Final

20-09-2014 (Sat) in Borris in Ossory
Borris-in-Ossory/Kilcotton Gaels 4-06
St Joseph’s Barrowhouse 2-02

GALA Under 16 Hurling League Finals

11-07-2014 (Fri) in Ballacolla
Abbeyleix Gaels 2-25 . . . St Fintans Gaels 0-09

GALA Under 16 “B” Hurling League Finals

13-07-2014 (Sun) in Colt
St Joseph’s Barrowhouse 3-13 . . .St Fintans Mountrath 1-10

GALA Under 16 Hurling Championship Final

11-10-14 (Sat) in O’Moore Park
Portlaoise 6-14 . . .Borris-in-Ossory–Kilcotton 1-12

GALA Under 16 “B” Hurling Championship Final

11-10-14 (Sat) in O’Moore Park
St Fintans Mountrath 4-10 Rosenallis 2-07

GALA Under 16 Hurling Shield Competition Final

04-10-14 (Sat) in Durrow
Naomh Eaman 3-14 The Harps 2-12

Laois Membership Registration Report 2014

Club	Registered 2014	Unregistered 2014	Full Members	Youth Members	Honorary Members	Social Members	Adult Players	Under 21 Players	Minor Players	Juvenile Players
Abbeyleix St Lazarians	268	0	99	139	9	21	66	21	8	127
Annanough	221	0	87	122	2	10	56	6	10	108
Arles/Kilcruise	116	28	64	52	0	0	38	5	4	47
Arles/Killeen	147	115	80	67	0	0	41	8	2	65
Ballinakill	145	0	74	71	0	0	47	12	9	61
Ballyfin	357	91	164	136	1	56	79	19	15	121
Ballylinan	247	185	90	151	0	6	41	7	11	131
Ballypickas	191	0	100	76	8	7	50	26	7	68
Ballyroan Abbey	131	138	131	0	0	0	66	20	0	0
Barrowhouse	188	34	76	101	8	3	42	6	3	43
Borris In Ossory	109	8	91	9	9	0	35	9	6	3
Borris in Ossory/Kilcotton	125	105	16	109	0	0	0	0	0	109
Camross	280	47	172	79	20	9	76	18	7	72
Castletown Slieve Bloom	339	0	201	138	0	0	65	11	12	102
Clonad	214	0	61	118	0	35	35	12	13	102
Clonaslee St Manmans	253	54	110	137	4	2	48	14	7	127
Clough-Ballacolla	231	0	91	140	0	0	59	21	13	127
Colt/St Fintan's	203	0	79	58	7	59	33	9	12	46
Courtwood	210	0	92	116	2	0	47	11	11	105
Crettyard	222	112	100	87	0	35	41	8	8	76
Emo	250	0	206	44	0	0	33	9	7	36
Errill	87	0	81	5	0	1	37	14	4	0
Graiguecullen	412	426	167	187	37	21	51	16	20	163
Kilcavan	210	55	99	103	5	3	48	7	5	93
Kilcotton	89	0	79	4	6	0	38	11	3	0
Killeshin	510	0	238	232	0	40	58	20	19	206
Kyle	80	16	60	9	0	11	26	6	1	0
Mountmellick	316	0	178	124	13	1	66	19	11	111
O'Dempseys	278	136	124	130	0	24	48	16	12	114
Park Ratheniska	310	0	124	185	1	0	67	17	19	166
Portarlinton	538	0	221	279	37	1	82	28	25	243
Portlaoise	869	0	413	455	0	1	159	64	43	314
Rathdowney	139	1	139	0	0	0	53	8	0	0
Rathdowney Errill	158	3	0	158	0	0	0	0	17	140
Rosenallis	378	0	153	224	0	1	60	25	23	199
Shanahoe	108	7	73	35	0	0	42	7	6	29
Slieve Bloom Castletown	111	0	64	46	1	0	27	8	8	
Spink	209	35	77	121	11	0	54	10	8	113
St Fintan's Mountrath	219	153	86	115	2	16	37	12	8	68
St Joseph's	327	139	132	194	0	1	47	15	16	172
Stradbally	349	115	141	197	11	0	66	8	16	180
The Harps	360	0	187	136	4	33	83	17	19	105
The Heath	305	1	177	127	0	1	75	23	14	77
The Rock	243	0	105	137	0	1	61	7	11	125
Timahoe	291	0	118	138	0	35	73	14	10	126
Trumera	61	18	41	19	0	1	27	3	0	0
TOTALS	11421	2666	5470	5317	199	435	2385	627	487	4457

Sub - Committees Reports

Coiste Na nOg Laoise Annual Report 2014

2014 was again another successful year for Coiste Na nOg Laoise. Over the course of 9 months, commencing on March 15th with the first round of the Under 16 Football League and we finished on November 9th with the U13 Football Final, we successfully ran games for all grades from U12 to U17 League and Championship in both Hurling and Football. On behalf of Coiste Na nOg Laoise I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the people who helped us and made it possible to fulfil our fixtures throughout that time.

Firstly I'd like to thank the Senior Secretary Niall Handy, from day one he accommodated, advised and helped the Juvenile Board in whatever way possible and without his support, and the support of the Laois GAA Board it would be impossible to run our underage programmes. A special thanks to Tomas Moore in the County Board Office, once again this year he was a great asset to the Juvenile Board and very accommodating to our administrative needs.

On behalf of Coiste Na nOg, I would like to extend our gratitude to all the Juvenile Clubs and in particular Club Secretaries in Laois, for their cooperation and communication throughout the year. To clubs who made their facilities available to host games, it is always duly noted that your grounds and dressing rooms were always presented to the highest standard. It is a difficult task to run such a high volume of fixtures across so many grades, and for the most part, all clubs were accommodating of each other and made the process that bit easier.

GAA Officials, Referees, Linesmen and Umpires, were as ever committed to the cause this year as with every other year, and without their dedication and commitment it would not be possible to have the smooth running of our games. I think it

is important to note, that this year more so than ever, from attendance at a variety of Juvenile games, there has been a major improvement from Juvenile Players and Management Teams in adhering to the GAA Campaign, "Give Respect Get Respect". It is always encouraging to see and I hope this trend continues in years to come.

Again this year we held our Juvenile Finals at O'Moore Park, a huge thanks needs to go to the grounds staff there and in particular Wille Stackpool and Joe Dooley. They volunteer their time to Laois GAA year in year out and are known and regarded highly by all GAA people within Laois. On behalf of Coiste Na nOg Laoise I'd like to commend them for their loyalty to Laois, and look forward to working with them for 2015.

GALA are the official sponsors to Coiste Na nOg Laoise, and we hope to have their continued support for this coming year. It wouldn't be possible to run our fixtures without them.

I'd like to congratulate all our young sporting athletes on an exceptional year and in particular to our winning finalists, and wish them all every success for the future.

Finally I'd like to thank the committee of Coiste Na nOg Laoise, specifically, our Chairperson Andrew Broderick and our Assistant Secretary Ciara Gorman. The time, effort, work load and dedication they have put in throughout the year doesn't go unnoticed and it is greatly appreciated.

Is Mise Le Meas

Danny Gorman

Secretary

Coiste Na nOg Laoise

Planning, Physical Development and Health & Safety Report 2014

It is my pleasure, as the County Development Officer, to present my annual report to County Convention.

It has been a busy year for The Planning, Physical Development and Health & Safety Committee. We dealt with – Club Development Grants, Strategic Club Planning Programme, Club Officer Training, Health & safety, Stewards & Stewards Training and Trustees.

Club Grants

2014 – During the current year, eight clubs received grant aid totalling €40,600. Additionally, Cullahill Handball Club and Heywood Community College each received a grant of €10,000

2015 – 9 clubs have applied for grant aid in 2015. These applications have been processed and submitted with appropriate recommendations

I want to thank the staff at Comhairle Laighean and in particular Michael Reynolds and Patricia Clear for their continued advice, help and support.

In the present economic climate I am acutely conscious of the limited grant aid available to clubs, G.A.A. grant aid to all counties has been drastically reduced for the current year. In January 2014, The Capital Sports Programme was opened to grant applications with allocations announced in July. A number of clubs submitted, what I considered, were worthy applications only to be disappointed. I can equate with their sense of disappointment, and frustration.

Club Strategic Development Plan

There are clubs presently in the process of developing their Club Strategic Plans, while others already have plans in place. This is a time to reflect on the structures and development of our club units as they approach their Annual General Meetings. Every club is suffering from the effects of emigration and some are in financial difficulties. The Club Development Planning process will help clubs focus on where they are presently and what is required to move forward. I would strongly urge each and every club to put a “Club Development Plan” in place during the coming months. There are still Club Development Packs available on request.

Comhairle Laighean has intimated that they will not consider future grant applications unless a Club Strategic Development Plan is in place (G.A.A. Strategic Vision and Action Plan 2009 – 2015 has reference)

Pairc Ui Mhordha

Once again we were to the forefront in hosting inter-county games. They all ran smoothly and without any major incident. This is a reflection on the organisation and management of the events and the availability of voluntary stewards. The hosting of such games is an onerous task and it is important that we maintain our high standards.

I would like to thank all the voluntary stewards, who helped and made themselves

available during the year. Without their support and dedication on a weekly basis, it would have been impossible to stage our games.

My sincere thanks to Chief Steward Sean Byrne and Safety Officer P.J. Kelly for their help during the year. Thanks also to Joe Dooley/Andrew Broderick and the gate staff, Mick Kelly and Willie Stackpool, who steward in O'Moore Park at every match. It would be remiss of me not to give a special mention to Colm McEvoy and the personnel employed on both the P.C.E. Group Scheme and Tús Programme, who continue to keep and maintain our grounds to a very high standard.

I want to record the co-operation, help and good will I receive from Gerry Kavanagh, Niall Handy, Thomas Moore and the other members of the executive, together with the representatives of An Garda Síochána, when organising and planning all major fixtures.

Health & Safety

The Safety and County Development Officers visited a number of clubs during the year. Advice on Health & Safety and other relevant issues was given.

Most clubs appointed a Club Safety Co-ordinator on receipt of the Willis Safety Statement and it is anticipated that the balance will do so during the coming year.

Training

Club Officers Training - A Club Officers training night was held in The Heritage Hotel, Portlaoise on the 27th. February last. While the attendance was disappointing, it was a worthwhile exercise.

Steward Training – It is now mandatory that stewards are trained and accredited by The Portobello Institute. Thirty stewards will undergo this training programme on the 15th. and 22nd November next.

Conclusion

I want to sincerely thank my committee of Sean Byrne, P.J. Kelly, Michael Lennon, Danny Hanlon and Rory O'Connell, club officers and fellow executive members for their courtesy, help and support during the year. To Niall, Tomas and all the staff in Parkside, it was a pleasure working and dealing with you. Thanks for everything.

Tomas Mac Seoin
Development Officer

County Hearings Committee (C.H.C.) Report 2014

The County Hearings Committee began it's work in February of this year with a number of Appeals in relation to transfers, attachment to first Clubs.

These cases proved to be complex and we endeavoured to reach considered decisions that reflected the rules & regulations of the Association and, where practicable, we published our decisions for the sake of clarity and understanding.

We also felt that it was important to set out our deliberations in a manner that would be of assistance and guidance to both appellant and respondent in future appeals.

Arising from these Appeals the Hearings Committee was required, in one instance, to defend it's position at a DRA Hearing (DRA Case 05/2014) where a definitive ruling was made by that body which will have ramifications for the way in which Appeals in respect of transfers and/or attachments to first clubs will be dealt with in the future.

We also had a requested appeal arising out of a "permission to play" (player(s) from an exclusively football club looking for permission to play hurling with a hurling club) but it should be noted that after due consideration it was agreed that a "permission to play" grant/refusal appeal does not fall within the remit of the Hearings Committee.

The Hearings Committee invited representatives from all Clubs to an 'information night' in the County Board Offices on the 10th June, (just before the Championships started), where we provided information on the workings of the Hearings Committee and partook in a Q & A session as well. We felt that this was a worthwhile exercise but would have liked more than the thirteen Clubs who attended.

Throughout the remainder of the year we had a number of requests for Hearings arising out of Matches and Referees Reports; This is a break down of the cases that came before the hearings committee in 2014:

We had requests for nineteen hearings in total, ten of which received the minimum one match suspension, one case received a two match suspension, one an eight week suspension, three cases were withdrawn, one case was referred back to the Club in question as the Hearings Committee wasn't the appropriate appeals body in that particular instance, one case was referred back to the CCC for re-hearing and finally two cases were deemed 'no case to answer' and exonerated.

I would again like to thank the Players and Officials who appeared before the Hearings Committee this year for their courteous co-operation and I would also like to acknowledge the contribution to the proceedings of the various Representatives of the C.C.C. who made their cases earnestly and the Hearings Committee would like to thank them too for their courtesy and consideration.

Finally I would like to thank the Members of the County Hearings Committee who freely gave of their time, often at short notice, to conduct the Hearings and for the manner in which they conscientiously and diligently considered each and every case. A special word of thanks to our Runaí, Willie Stackpool, who does Trojan work organising and co-ordinating the hearings and issuing the correspondence. Mile Buíchas.

Liam Stacphuil

Coiste Eisteachta CLG Laois

Coiste Iománt Report

In reflecting on my second year as ru-naí Coiste Iomáin, One could only express pride in all our hurling team's performances throughout this year. The progress this year has not brought us to Croke Park but it still needs to be recognised and be commended upon. Laois as a county are now seen as a threat and of equal to any county team in Ireland. I would like to thank most sincerely the clubs who wholehearted encouraged and supported their players at county level throughout the year in this difficult era of emigration where many clubs have been depleted. Without their co-operation and encouragement any of our county teams wouldn't have been enabled to progress so well this year.

Last November Seamus Plunkett and his management team were reinstated while also taking the Under 21 team as well. Pat Critchley and team were as reinstated as minor manager after one of the most successful years for Laois Minors in two decades. The Senior team started training in early January. They had a disappointing start to the Walsh cup been defeated by three points to NUIG and then by three points to Carlow in the Walsh Cup Shield semi-final. Seamus met with the clubs in early February, where they showed some reservations about the lack of playing time for fringe players while unanimously expressing their huge gratitude for the work Seamus and his team has given to the county team and the higher standard and higher expectation that had brought to the panel. He outlined that he had brought Pat Flanagan former fitness trainer with Kerry

footballers on board to work on the panels conditioning and that he very pleased to have someone of Pat experience on board. Next came the National League where the panel really had to step up to the division two mantle where they secured their place comfortably for next year with two wins and three loses with the highlight being, running the All-Ireland Champions very close in O Moore park, they were worthy of their upgraded status from the previous year. After a competitive first year in Division 1A the panel felt confident and prepared for the championship even though they had carried a lot of injuries in key positions. First they faced a determined Westmeath team who were out to revenge the league final defeat from the previous year and Laois had to slog out a four point victory in Cusack Park in Mullingar. Next came out near neighbours Carlow which Laois saw off easily in the second half when they pulled off with an 8 point victory, gaining confidence while at the same time feeling the exhausting brunt of the rigorous round robin schedule. The trip to London really highlighted the huge support and momentum that this panel has attracted when huge crowds of supporters travelled to support them. The sunny conditions were very in tune with the historic occasion but made it very difficult for the panel and they really had to graft out a victory against a very physical side. The finale to season was well set when Laois met Antrim, both teams on equal top position in the round robin group fighting for pole position. Both teams had qualified for the Leinster

championship but that was not evident as both sides were playing as though it was a knock out championship game and Antrim pulled away at the end to devastate the home crowd by two points. The Panel then had only a one week turn over to their all-important first round Leinster championship meeting against Galway, a team they would not fear after their awesome display against them the year previous. Many had pegged previous year maybe as a valiant but one-off performance but Laois showed that it was only an indication of how far and how serious and passionate the people of Laois really are about their hurling. This year's performance against Galway was special, something that we would only have never had dared to dream a few short years ago. This team have achieved so much and that's what made the final moments of the game so heart wrenching when victory was snatched from our laps. The previous year Laois supporters had stood up and applauded a group of dedicated and valiant group of players, this year they stood once again devastated for a bunch of hurler who had the equal of their county peers in any county in Ireland and had not received their just reward for their work-rate, discipline and professionalism. But it was a clear message to other counties to fear this team, as our day is very fast approaching if we can capitalise on and sustain the faith this team has evoked within players, clubs and supporters. With less than a month to recover after the five seriously competitive matches over the space of a month they panel faced the long arduous task of taking on the Deise in their own backyard, foreign surroundings uncharted to the men from Leinster. Both sides found it hard to find their rhythm from the start and Laois tried on

many occasions to break them down again but to no avail, Waterford capitalised and cemented their lead every time Laois found back with an attack and ran out comfortable winners over what looked like a very exhausted Laois panel. A disappointing end to a great year which saw them rattle the All-Ireland Champions in the League and secure their rightful place in the Leinster Championship.

This was the main reason for the appointment for Seamus Plunkett as the under 21 manager this year as both Senior and Under 21 management was to have a coherent and co-operative plan so we could build upon the success of our juvenile teams from previous years. After the disappointing defeat to Offaly in the final minutes of the Leinster Championship last year and with 10 senior panellists on the panel, one would have been very confident that our under 21 team would do very well but with the first round set on the Wednesday during the end of the exhausting round robin series and between Laois' two most important matches of the year, to secure survival in the Leinster Championship we needed a lot of luck and a good draw. We got neither, we played a physical, fit and fresh Dublin team in their own back garden with plenty of support and Laois struggled right through the game, fought gallantly but never got any breaks while Dublin dominated and cruised through to the next round.

After the Laois minors success last year in reaching the Leinster final, Laois were classified as a tier one county so they did not have to play in the round robin stage of the tournament instead they played Offaly who had qualified from the previ-

ous round. When Laois and Offaly met at any grade there is huge neighbourly rivalry but this year's Leinster quarter final did not disappoint. Offaly got off to a blistering start but Laois put on a dazzling performance right up to the final whistle on an impressive score-line from both teams of 3-14 to 0-26. Then they had eight week lay-over to prepare revenge on Kilkenny who had beaten Laois the pervious year in the Leinster final. With a home fixture and a fully fit squad, there was huge optimism for the team around the county and also around the country as many of the top teams had played Laois in very competitive practise matches. The team started great but were unable to match the tempo and determination of the Kilkenny attack to lose by 8 points which did not reflect the performance of the Laois attack. I would like to commend the panel on their diligence, commitment and also for the huge preparation they put right from the start of training in January . I know all these talented players will play a vital roles in their clubs and for their county in years to come. I would like to thank Pat Critchley and his backroom team of Eamonn Jackman, Tim Fahy, Ciarán Conroy, David O'Brien, Martin Cahill, Veronica McCormack and Anna Champion for their great work and dedication throughout the year. I would also like to thank the parents of the players and clubs who supported the players and enabled them to play and give such great commitment to the panel. I wish to congratulate Anna on her recent marriage and wish her and her husband Darren the best of luck for the future.

Laois were again represented on the Senior shinty international rules team

and on the panel by Eoin Reilly and Laois Captain Matthew Whelan and on the U21 team by Joe Champion (former Laois Minor Captain). Well done to both lads concerned.

Our domestic competitions were very competitive and I want congratulate all championship and league winning teams. In particular Rathdowney/Errill on winning the Senior Championship, Ballinakill on the Senior B, Borris-in-Ossory on their intermediate Championship, Camross on the Junior A and wish them all the best of luck in the Leinster Club Championship. I would also like to congratulate Na Fianna on their historic first Minor title and wish the clubs all the best for the future.

Huge thanks must go to our juvenile board and in particular to Andrew Broderick and Danny Gorman for their timeless work and dedication. These people's great work is the foundation of future County success at Senior level.

I wish to thank all the primary and secondary school on their great work and dedication to coaching and promoting hurling throughout the county. I would like congratulate Rathdowney N.S. on winning the division 1 Cumann na mBunscol title this year a great double for the club and a sign of future senior victories. Also huge congratulations to Rathdowney, Heywood and Mountrath Community school on their respective successes at provincial and national level, it can only further promoting a winning culture in the county. A special acknowledgement must go to Thep Fitzpatrick Rathdowney N.S. and Jay Buggy who represented Laois Primary schools at the half time game of

the All-Ireland Hurling semi-final along with Aoife Healy from Ballyadams N.S. All children were a credit to their schools, clubs and county. On the same day we had a historic occasion in Croke Park as the two young whistlers refereeing the exhibition were from Laois. Well done to Patrick Moore, Killanure N.S. and Olivia Carroll, Timahoe N.S. who represented the county with pride and hopefully they will be our inter-county referees for the future.

The under fourteen squad played in Division 1 of the Tony Forristal Competition in Waterford on 30th August. They played two very strong Cork and Dublin sides in the first round and second round and were unable to secure victory in either game to progress in the competition but this competition gives them excellent experience for future competition playing teams of such a high standard. Well done to the management team of Jack Nolan, Ollie Hally, Enda Lyons, Dermot McGill and JJ MChugh for their work and dedication to the team.

The under 15 squad travelled to the Michael Foley tournament in Wexford on the 30th August this year. They played Killenny South first and lost by 8 points, then played Dublin South and lost by a goal and two point and in the final round they faced Wexford South who proved too strong for the Laois lads. There was great talent on show from Laois and playing at this standard can only bring the lads standard up. Well done to the management team of Andy Bergin, Tony Doran, Simon Smith and Dermot Madden for all their work and dedication throughout the year with this squad.

The under sixteen A team travelled then Cappawhite to play in Division 1 of the Arrabawn tournament in Tipperary while the B panel travelled to a tournament in Newry. They got off to great start against Tipperary but suffered injuries in key positions were unable to close out them out but only lost by a very modest 3 points. Then they faced the mighty cats, and face them they did and played a very competitive match losing to them by 3 points as well. Then came the last and final game for qualification, they beat Cork by 5 points in a thrilling encounter but sadly lost out on qualification for a semi-final position by one point in score difference. The B panel were very competitive in Newry reaching the cup semi-final but narrowly lost out to Kildare, but we can be well proud of the performance of both squads. Well done to the management team of Fran Dowling, Delcan Critchley, Pat McKane, Declan McDonald, Brendan Peters and Jeff Phelan for the dedication and work with both squads not just this year but all the way up they have nurtured this team and brought them to the fine standard they are and I look forward to seeing their progress at minor level in the next two years.

I would like to congratulate Naomh Eamonn on winning the under fourteen hurling Feile in Laois and representing Laois so well in Ulster this year.

The hurling committee worked closely with Colm Browne, Games manager, GDAs Andrew Kavanagh and Ciarán Muldowney and on your behalf I want to thank them for their contribution to hurling and games in Laois during the year.

On your behalf I would like to thank the following clubs Clonad, Portlaoise, Rathdowney/Errill, Ballacolla, Emo, Ballinakill, Harps, Borris-in Osoory, Camross and Heywood Community School and caretaker Willie Stackpool, O'Moore Park for the use of their facilities for training, challenge games etc. It is very much appreciated.

I would like to thank all the referees throughout Laois, without whom our games could not take place, for the hard work and dedication to hurling throughout the year.

I want to thank Matt Walsh and his company for kind sponsorship to Laois G.A.A. and also to Laois Shopping Centre and Gala for sponsoring our local competitions. It is very much appreciated.

I want to thank the county executive and the hurling committee Mick Carroll, Cathlaoireach, John Kealey, Eddie Kirwan, Anthony Delaney, Pat Dowling, Danny Hanlon, Niall Rigney for your help and assistance during the year working towards the betterment of Laois Hurling. I also like to wish Pat Dowling good wishes in his recovery from illness. To Niall and Tómas for the tremendous work in the office and for all their help and assistance during the year.

I wish to thank and acknowledge the great work and support that Michael Delaney, secretary of Leinster Council GAA has always given to his home county. A player himself, referee and former secretary of the Laois Hurling Board as it was back then, Michael is a true Laois Hurling man who had always stayed loyal to his home county and I know that all associated with Laois Hurling wish him and his family the best in his retirement.

Finally, I am writing my final report from Abu Dhabi where my new club Abu Dhabi na Fianna have welcomed me with open arms and where hurling is in its infancy out here. I would sincerely like to thank my Laois GAA family who have always given such life- long friendship, support and love for the greatest game in the world. Your foundation has made my cultural tradition somewhat easier and it's with great pride I wear my Laois Jersey in Land of sun, desert and wealth and look forward to returning home next summer to seeing the Laois colours flying high in Croke Park.

In Conclusion I want to extend a sincere sympathy to any member of the association who suffered bereavement during the year.

Fiona Ní Dhubhshláine
(Runaí)

Public Relations / Marketing Committee Report

The primary role for the Public Relations/ Marketing Committee during the year entailed the following –

Production of Programmes

During the year we were very busy, with “weekend” programmes being professionally produced for all Championship games in O’Moore Park and also our home National League and Leinster Championship games.

I wish to thank all club secretaries for their help in ensuring we had our panels in time and they also adhered to the programme, on my own behalf and on behalf of the Gaels of Laois I sincerely thank you for that. It is very important that we portray a good image to all our patrons on match day.

I wish to thank both local papers for their high standard of coverage of our games and ask all clubs to ensure you submit your club notes in time so they can be included in the club notes page. To Midlands Radio 3, I also thank you for bringing reports into the homes in Laois and surrounds for our patrons who are not able to attend. To our local photographers for giving us the highs and low points in picture form to retain those moment forever, I thank you all for your support of our games.

Annual Awards Night

Our Awards night was held again this year in the Heritage Hotel, Mochua Print are our Sponsors again this year I want to thank them for their support of our

awards and the help they give with our programmes.

To all the award Recipients we extend our congratulations and thank them for their contribution to Laois GAA during the last year and wish you, your families and your clubs all the best in the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to Thank Thomas Moore for his hard work on editing the programmes. He went above and beyond his duty to ensure we got it right. Also Pat Delaney for his help and again you the clubs officers for your cooperation, this was very much appreciated.

Finally I want to thank everyone who offered support and sympathy to my family on the recent bereavements of my brother and sister in the summer, this was very much appreciated.

Again thanks to Niall and Thomas in the office for your help and Support, also to your Chairman Gerry thanks for your support and help and the executive for their help.

I wish you all a Happy and peaceful Christmas and a successful New Year.

Is mise

Brian Allen
P.R.O.

Coaching and Games Officer Report 2014

The 2014 Coaching and Games programme may appear to be concluded on the field, but the constant training and up skilling continues in the clubs and schools of Laois as our GDAs continue to deliver our programmes in earnest. I would like to acknowledge the support of all Laois clubs and my fellow executive officers in particular the support of Gerry Kavanagh and Niall Handy, But particular thanks to the administrator Tomas Moore for all his unselfish work.

2014 has been a busy and eventful year in Coaching and Games and I will deal with each area separately further on in the report, But the excellent work and attention to detail has to be complimented of the four GDAs working for Laois GAA. They have had a busy year in covering both codes and as well as looking after our main five areas of the programme that is (1) Games, (2) Camps , (3) Coach education, (4) Development squads, (5) Others and new initiatives. They have tried to have as much input into schools as was possible. They deserve great credit for their work which can go on unnoticed and sometimes coaching and Games can get negative comments particularly when Senior Teams exit the championship. I would personally like to thank Ciaran Muldowney, James Kelly, Donie Brennan and Andrew Kavanagh.

While a lot worked well this year in September I was advised that the contract for the post of Games Manager was not going to be renewed and that Colm Browne would be leaving the Laois Coaching and

Games programme. This is what Laois C & G didn't need and the work of Colm Browne cannot go unrecognised and as a proud Laois Gael that he was and continues to be he brought great structure and innovation to the whole programme and will be sorely missed and I hope the people who made this call wont regret their decision. On a personal and professional basis I would like to thank Colm for his advice and courtesy and his support to me and I will always be impressed by his passion for everything to do with Laois Gaelic games and I wish him the very best in whatever he goes on to do.

Area 1: Games.

- The concluding stages of the U-12 Go Games football competition took place on Wednesday 27th and Thursday 28th August last, with cup and shield finals in divisions one, two, three and four
- The U-12 Go Games hurling finals were played on Saturday 27th September with cup and shield finals in divisions one and two.
- Thanks to clubs who put in so much work to ensuring the completion of the Go games programme. but unless every club buys into the spirit of the Go games concept we will continue to have clubs not happy and if the win at all costs attitude could be eliminated it will lead to a far better experience for all our kids who take part of all abilities and will afford them the opportu-

nity to develop and most importantly enjoy playing our games.

- An U-15 football competition involving 4 club teams each from Laois (, Ballyroan Abbey, Portarlinton, , St Joseph's and Ballylinan Glenmore) and Kildare (Naas, Sarsfield's, Moorefield, Alymer Gaels, Carbury and Celbridge) took place on 13 dates in October and November 2014: Wed. 8 October, Thurs. 9 October, Wed. 15 October, Thurs. 16 October, Wed. 22 October, Thurs. 23 October, Wed. 29 October, Thurs. 30 October, Wed. 5 November, Thurs. 6 November, Wed. 12 November, Thurs. 13 November and Wed. 19 November. The aims of the competition are to provide additional attractive games opportunities for youth-level players, and to encourage players to choose to play Gaelic football rather than other sports in the October to November period. All games will be played under lights in Kildare GAA's facility at Hawkfield in Newbridge.

Area 2: Camps.

- The attendance at this year's Cúl Camps was 1,595, an increase of n=83 on 2013's attendance. Twenty-nine camps, 16 of which were football, 13 of which were hurling, were held in 28 clubs: Rathdowney Errill (69), Abbeyleix (76), Emo (37), Portlaoise (football - 46), Clonaslee (20), Ballyroan (85), Park Ratheniska (109), O'Dempsey's (67), St Fintan's Gaels (38), Clough Ballacolla (24), Borris Kilcotton (51), Clonad (52), Naomh Eamann (62), Rosenallis (51),

Barrowhouse (40), The Heath (29), Mountmellick (56), The Harps (64), Camross (91), Graiguecullen (55), Kilcavan (55), Stradbally (95), Ballyfin (18), Mountrath (32), Portarlinton (50), Killeslin (51), Portlaoise (hurling - 44), The Rock (55) and Ballylinan (73).

- Thanks to all the clubs who hosted the camps and the excellent grounds and facilities that our young players could enjoy. Because of the increase in numbers and in particular the people who registered on the day of the start of the camp we did run into a shortage of supply for gear bags. Again apologies to the clubs affected, but in particular to the parents and guardians who paid the subscription expecting a certain level of service. This while out of our hands was unacceptable and apologies again and we will do everything in our power to make sure it doesn't happen again while also stepping up our campaign to encourage pre booking on line and giving those people preference .
- O'Mordha Óg U-12 and U-13 football camps were held from Tuesday 5th to Friday 8th August in Fr Browne Avenue, at which there were n=75 U-12s and n=30 U-13s
- A Setanta U-10/U-13 hurling camp was held from Tuesday 5th to Thursday 7th August in Clonad; n=56 attended
- A Setanta U-11/U-12 camp was held from Tuesday 12th to Thursday 14th August in Clonad; n=70 attended.

Area 3: Coach education.

- Two of Laois' Games Development Administrators are currently conducting a GAA-themed module on the Transition Year programmes in Clonslee Vocational School and Heywood Community School. The module includes the GAA online dual (football and hurling) Foundation Award, Strength and Conditioning module, Referee education. The first step on the GAA's coaching ladder. Programmes to commence after Christmas include Colaiste Iosagain, Knockbeg, Portlaoise CBS.
- Currently been delivered are GAA Youth/Adult football (October/November 2014) and hurling (November/December 2014), and GAA Child football (January/February 2015) and hurling (February/March 2015) coaching courses. Foundation level has been delivered throughout the year and continues to be available to any club who requests it or wishes to co-host with a neighbouring club based on the fact that the minimum required is 10 people. This course has been structured to make it more achievable by the fact that most of it can be done from the comfort of your own home with a two hour practical face to face session. All clubs are strongly encouraged to make this available to their interested members as well as conforming to the legal requirements coming into force in 2015.
- The plan for 2015 is to bring fresh thinking to qualified coaches of all grades in the form of workshops which

will be delivered by people at the forefront of modern coaching in their field in conjunction with our GDAs.

Area 4: Development squads.

I would like to acknowledge the time and dedication given by the various mentors for all these age groups. Their work sometimes goes unnoticed or appreciated and can be sometimes criticised. We as a county need to support these people and encourage all our players with the ability and potential to participate and represent our county with pride. We are too quick to criticise these people from outside the fence but are very slow to come forward and help out. Almost all clubs cooperated with the concept but some don't and that is unfortunate, to withdraw players from a development tournament which had been planned a year in advance just so they can play in a game which your club brought forward is unacceptable but does still go on. Thankfully this is a rare occurrence but none the less shouldn't happen. The development squads are just that our players can learn and develop and experience what it takes and means to be part of a county team. The discipline and sacrifice that entails. While results against other counties are a gauge they should not be the measure that is used to decide whether an age group structure is working or not it is the development of the players that is more important and their application which will stand to them when they do reach those important competitive age groups.

I would like to publicly acknowledge and thank the following mentors for their time and dedication to Laois GAA.

Hurling Squads were:

U14 Mentors - Enda Lyons, Jack Nolan, JJ McHugh, Dermot McGill and Ollie Hally

U15 Mentors - Andy Bergin, Tony Doran and Simon Smith

U16 Mentors - Fran Dowling, Brendan Peters, Pat McKane, Declan Critchley, Jeff Phelan.

Football Squads were:

U13, Donie Brennan James Kelly, Liam Dollard.

U14, Donie Brennan, Sean Daly, Conal Barry.

U15, Eoin Kearns, JP Cahillane, Eddie Kinsella, Jack Harding.

U16, Tom Brett, Billy Delaney, Ned Kelly.

- On 30th August last Laois were represented in four hurling competitions at three grades: U-14, U-15 and U-16 (A and B). In the Tony Forrestal tournament in Waterford the U-14s were drawn with Cork and Dublin and were defeated by both of these teams in the group stages
- The U-15s played in the Michael Foley tournament in Wexford and lost to Dublin North, Kilkenny South and Wexford South in the group stages
- The U-16 B team travelled to Newry where they beat Sligo, lost to Carlow and were then defeated by Kildare in the shield final

- The U-16 A team were drawn with Tipperary, Kilkenny and Cork in the Tipperary Supporters' Club tournament. The games took place in Cappawhite and Laois were narrowly defeated in each of the three group games

- On 16th August last the U-15 and U-16 footballers took part in national blitzes in Ballyhaunis and Gracefield, respectively. The U-15s were beaten by Sligo in their first game and defeated two Roscommon teams in their second and third games. The U-16s also played twice, losing to Limerick A in their first game and defeating Limerick B in their second.

- Our u14 football squad concluded their year with a tournament in Stamullen Co Meath and gave a good account of them.

- The u17s are currently playing a tournament involving teams like Carlow and Wexford who they have beaten and at time of going to press had yet to play Wicklow. This allows time for the Minor management to see players in action and assess for their upcoming minor panel of 2015, I would like to thank Donie Brennan for facilitating this programme of games.

Trials continue for the Football u15 and U16 squads for next year and we wish all the teams and management the very best. Hurling trials will be scheduled for the New Year.

Area 5: Others and new initiatives.

- A new initiative this year was The Laois summer 2014 football coaching project which was devised by Laois' football games development administrators Donie Brennan and James Kelly. Its aim was to give high-quality football coaching sessions to children aged 8-11 years in Laois' football clubs during the period 23rd July to 28th August 2014. Five clubs: Stradbally, Emo, Clonaslee St Manman's, Ballyroan Abbey and Killeshin were the centres at which coaching took place. Children from each centre, and the clubs surrounding that centre, were invited to attend the sessions, which were free, lasted for an hour and for which the emphasis was on skill development. Sessions were held on the following dates: Wed. 23rd July, Wed. 30th July, Wed. 6th August, Wed. 13th August and Wed. 20th August (Clonaslee and Emo); Thurs. 24th July, Thurs. 31st July, Thurs. 7th August, Thursday 14th August, Thurs. 21st August and Thurs. 28th August (Killeshin, Ballyroan and Stradbally). Attendances varied from week to week, with maximum attendances at Clonaslee and Emo at n=24 and n=55 respectively, and n=34, n=56 and n=52 at Killeshin, Ballyroan and Stradbally, respectively.
- **Super games Centre:**
- The GAA is piloting a programme on youth participation in Gaelic games. The programme aims to explore new ways of ensuring that as many people as possible opt to 'Play to Stay with the GAA'
- Participants in the pilot programme - which is being run in a number of locations countrywide, including Laois - will be male players from 12 to 16 years of age. A particular effort is being made to target those who have dropped out of participation in Gaelic games or who may be on the point of doing so
- The programme is being delivered through an initiative called the GAA Super Games Centre (SGC) and is being led by a Pilot Site Leader plus a team of volunteers. The centre will act as a location for providing games opportunities for young players. One of Laois GAA's football Games Development Administrators, James Kelly, will be the Pilot Site Leader and the site will be Heywood Community School. This has proved to be a great success and in no small part due to the dedication and enthusiasm brought by James Kelly which now has this centre as a leading example in all the country.
- The GAA SGC pilot began in Laois on September 22nd 2014 and runs for 24 weeks. During this period, each Pilot Site Leader will run a 1-hour weekly session designed to create a positive games experience for participants.
- Other – Hurling development partnership between Laois GAA and Heywood Community School
- On Friday 19th September last Heywood Community School was officially launched as the development centre for Laois hurling. All of Laois' squads: Setanta, development (U-14/15/16), minor, U-21 and sen-

ior will carry out their preparations in Heywood, whose facilities include an all-weather floodlit pitch, a grass pitch, a newly-built gymnasium and a sports hall. The launch was carried out by Liam O'Neill, President of the GAA.

- This is a very welcome partnership that will greatly benefit our Hurling development squads and give a sound base as well as excellent facilities on a more permanent basis that what is in place up until now. Great credits to Laois County board in particular the chairman Gerry Kavanagh for his hard work in achieving and supporting this partnership.
- The football squads currently use Fr Browne Avenue for their activities while doing their age appropriate strength and conditioning close by and hopefully FR Browne Avenue may well get developed to reflect what is currently available in Heywood College. I look forward to that happening in the near future.

Thanks to the Coaching and games committee of Pat Brennan, Eddie Carroll, Niamh Campion, Tom Jones, Gerry Kavanagh, Niall Handy, Tomas Moore and the four GDAs for their contribution to the strategic plan and other initiatives.

Thanks again to all the clubs for your support and we will continue to assist you wherever we can please just come and ask.

Thanks to all the referees who officiate at our games and help out at development tournaments.

Thanks to my wife and kids for their understanding as I spend lots of time juggling different GAA jobs, but its our games and its what we love and we should all work together to support and assist wherever we can. The very best of luck and enjoyment of our games to one and all for 2015.

Yours in sport,

Pat O'Sullivan
Coaching and Games Officer.

Coiste Peil Report 2014

Full result lists are available in Secretary's report.

MINOR

I want to thank the entire panel for their efforts in our County jersey during 2014; unfortunately we fell short in our final championship match against Kildare. Lawrence Phelan Manager and his selectors Brian Dempsey and Kevin O Grady along with, John Dunphy, Mick Keogh and kit man Denis Moran deserve tremendous credit for all their efforts.

UNDER 21

Under 21 grades is a very difficult grade to manage due to the tremendous time constraints on players. College, Senior and Part time work are all pulling from the one group. I would foresee that a close link and possible joint selector with the senior management team will have to come about. I want to thank the management team of Tony Maher, Michael Lawlor, Michael Nolan and David Brennan along with Servicing Secretary Pat Gorman and Pysio Michael Lillis.

SENIOR

I would like to thank all our Senior County panellists for their dedication and commitment to play football for Laois. The time and commitment required to play Senior Inter County football is tremendous and leaves very little room for anything else.

Under new management we did well in the league adjusting to a different playing system. We maintained our Division 2 status and hopefully this year we can press on for Division 1.

In the championship going to Aughrim and playing Wicklow was a sticky hurdle in which they overcame and moved into the Leinster Semi Final against Dublin in Croke Park.

The lads put in a great performance for most of the game but in the end lost out.

We contested well in the qualifiers and faced Tipperary in the last 16 at home in O Moore Park.

We were very slow to get out of the blocks but in the last quarter played the football we were always capable of but alas it was too late and we narrowly lost out on a place in the quarter finals.

I want to thank Manager Tomas O Flatharta and his management team of Fergal Byron, Noel Garvan and Jerome Stack.

To Physios - Barry Ryan and Tom Quinn

To Strength and conditioning coaches - Leo Tiernan, Alan Malone, Nigel Pearson

To Dr Sean Montague

To Video and analysis team - Liam Delaney, Niall Creery, Alan Hartnett and Richard Dunne

I also want to thank Ollie Byrne Football secretary and, Pat O Sullivan for their commitment and work at every match and training session.

Thanks to Bosco's catering and the staff for their services.

Thanks to Colm Mc Evoy, Greg Mc Evoy, Donal Sinnott, Eoin Byrne, Eddie Kinsella, Martin Dwane and Adrian mc Donald for all their grounds and facilities work.

A special thanks to County Secretary Nial Handy and Administrator Tomas Moore whereby no task was too difficult.

I want to thank all players and mentors that helped promote Laois Football in an exemplary manner both on and off the field.

2015 the Management teams are as follows.

Minor Mgr Michael Lillis. Selectors Kieran Kelly and John Strong.

Under 21 Mgr Derek Conroy. Selectors Pauric Dunne and Francis Finn

Seniors Mgr. Tomas O Flatharta. Selectors Darren Rooney, Gerry Mc Gill and Jerome Stack

CLUB

Congratulations to all clubs that fielded in any grade, a special congratulations to all our championship and league winners.

In reference to the Senior Club Championship I want to thank the clubs who saw the bigger picture and although unpalatable voted for the re structuring of

the championship so that it could be completed unobstructed.

I am disappointed with the clubs involved that while agreeing to the structures in place decided after losing their championship games on the pitch to use a technical error to throw the Laois Senior Championship into question .

The Championship was completed successfully and I feel that hard lessons have been learnt..

It was proposed that a full review of Championship and league structures take place. This has been forwarded to Fixtures review committee under the chairmanship of Liam Delaney. I urge any club that has ideas or suggestions use this forum.

I take this opportunity to thank all our referees that officiated and without your help there would be no games. In particular I must congratulate our Inter County referees and in particular Eddie Kinsella on officiating the All Ireland Final.

I want to congratulate all our award winners for Football Players of the year and wish our county representatives on the International Rules series Ross Munnelly and Colm Begley a successful and enjoyable trip.

Finally I want to thank members of the steering committee who met when required Ollie Byrne secretary, Willie Ramsbottom, Eugene Mulholland, J.P. Cahillane, Kieran Leavy and Pat O Sullivan

Peter M O' Neill

Chairman

Football Steering Committee.

Cumann na mBunscol Laoise

Allianz 

Cumann na mBunscol

AGM

The AGM took place on Thursday, September 4th, 2014 in Laois County Board Offices. Thanks to Laois County Board for providing us with this facility.

Leagues

The football leagues began on Tuesday 9th September with a total of 54 teams taking part in the boys (9 divisions) and 45 teams in the girls (8 divisions). This was an increase in schools participating from last year. The finals were held on Wednesday 22nd and Thursday 23rd October in O' Moore Park.

The hurling leagues began on Thursday 1st April with a total of 43 teams taking part in the hurling (7 divisions) and 33 teams in the camogie (6 divisions). A new development group began in the camogie for the all-girls schools in the county. The finals were held on Thursday 29th and Friday 30th May in O' Moore Park.

Table Quiz

The table quiz took place on Wednesday 26th February in the school hall of St. Colmans NS, Stradbally. Many thanks to the teachers who helped out with collection, correction and stewarding. A special thank you to quiz-master Sean Mullaney. The Heath NS were winners on the night with Knock NS second and Arles NS third.

Mini Sevens

Football: 28 boys and 29 girls went to Stradbally on Wednesday 9th April. Many thanks to Fran Moloney and Pádraig Ashe for organising the venue, referees etc. Byran Redmond (The Heath) and Michael Doyle (Rath) were chosen to play at half-time in the All_Ireland senior Football semi-final.

Hurling: 26 boys and 22 girls went to Abbeyleix on Wednesday 9th April. John Mulhare and Michael Martin organised the venue, referees etc. Jay Buggy (The Heath N.S.), Thep Fitzpatrick (Rathdowney N.S.), Aoife Kealy (Ballyadams N.S.) were selected.

Rounders

Boys and girls and mixed rounders competitions were held in Mountmellick, Emo and The Heath. Twenty five schools entered the competition which was the largest entry in the rounders competitions to date. These were predominantly aimed at 5th class. Many thanks to Michael Dowling for all his hard work in organising and running this event.

Handball

The finals of the Laois Cumann na mBunscol handball took place on Wednesday, June 18th, in Cullohill Community Centre. Competitions were run for boys and girls in

both the 40x20 alley and in the one-wall court.

Cullohill, Ballacolla and Mayo schools all took part and it was great to see both winners and finalists from all three schools on the day. Thanks to Darach Kennedy for organising this and for presenting the medals to the winners and runners-up in all sections. Over 60 players took part on the day, with some great handball being played in both courts. Thanks to Noel Delaney and Cullohill Handball Club for all their hard work in ensuring the competitions went to schedule. The club provided all referees for the day and they did a great job.

REPRESENTATIVE GAMES

Football:

- **21st June Laois v Fermanagh SFC Portlaoise** 26 Laois Boy footballs, on the same day Kilkenny played Laois in the Leinster semifinal 26 Laois hurlers. Two Laois young whistlers were present.
- **8th June Junior Camogie Leinster Final.** 20 Laois camogie players played at half time and one Laois Young Whistler.
- **8th June Dublin v Laois in Croke Park.** 10 girls from different schools in Laois played at half time.
- **20th July Leinster SFC Final Dublin v Meath.** Two Laois Young Whistler's represented the county at the half time games.

Hurling

- **4th May Westmeath v Laois in Mullingar** none Round robin games we are not entitled to from Leinster council.
 - **25th May Laois v Antrim in Portlaoise.** Twenty boys and twenty girls from different schools in Laois played at half time in the Laois v Antrim senior hurling championship match in O'Moore Park
 - **1st June SHC Laois v Galway** double header in Portlaoise. 20 Laois, 10 Galway and 10 Wexford camogie players and 20 Laois, 10 Galway and 10 Wexford Hurlers all played at half time along with four Laois Young Whistlers.
 - **10th August All-Ireland Semi-Final.** Laois Cumann na mBunscol was represented by two Laois Young Whistlers.
 - On 23rd April, two boys football representative teams from Laois participated in an inter county schools' football tournament in Nowlan Park in Kilkenny against four other counties
 - The lift and strike tournament took place in Carlow on Thursday 12th June. The Laois team participated against five other counties.
- On 7th and 8th February, Fiona Delaney and Eoin Davey attended the National A.G.M. of Cumann na mBunscol Náisiúnta in Killenard, Co. Laois.
- On 10th April, Fiona Delaney and Eoin Davey attended the A.G.M. of Cumann na mBunscol Laighean in Newbridge.

On 20th September, Eoin Davey and Phil Ryan attended the National Cumann na mBunscol Committee meeting in Croke Park.

3rd / 4th Class Blitzes

This year saw the successful continuation of the 3rd /4th class blitzes. There was a significant increase in the number of participating schools. 16 blitzes in football, with 34 schools participating and schools were grouped geographically. Over a 1000 pupils participated in these events.

There were 12 blitzes in hurling, with 30 schools participating. This was double the number of schools who entered last year. Blitzes took place across the county.

There was also a non-competitive football blitz day organized in Fr Browne Park Portlaoise for schools that hadn't entered Cumann na mBunscol leagues on June 6th and 2 schools participated in this.

Thanks to Fiona Delaney who organized the ground hurling blitz in O' Moore Park on June 6th for 1st and 2nd class pupils. 130 children were present on the day from 9 different schools.

Young whistlers

This year saw the introduction of the young whistlers program. Schools who were interested in the program received a training day from the County Board GDA's to introduce the rules of hurling and football. As part of the 3rd/4th class blitzes schools were encouraged to use their young whistlers to referee the blitzes. We also were selected to forward two young whistlers to represent the county in Croke Park for the hurling semifinals. This was a very successful project and one which we hope to continue.

National AGM

Laois hosted the Cumann na mBunscol National AGM this year on 8th February in the Heritage Killenard. A special thank you to Fiona Delaney, Niamh Campion and to all committee members who contributed to the organisation and smooth running of the event.

Eoin Davey

Runaí Cumann na mBunscol Laoise

Children's Officer Report

The role of the children's officer for the GAA is described in detail on the GAA website. The children's officers' role is created to ensure that we are fully compliant with the Code of Behaviour for Young People in Sport. It is a role with increased responsibility for ensuring that we are offering our players of all ages a safe, caring, sporting environment that will minimise that risk to players, guests and others, the risk of being in an unsporting environment thus creating an ethos that is centred on young people.

This year we, as a county, began a comprehensive programme of ensuring that we are fully compliant with current legislation for protecting the children in our county, clubs and community. We did this by getting all our volunteers Garda Vetted, trained in Code of Behaviour in Sport for Young People and finally by ensuring that all our mentors are trained to mentor in their chosen sport. Although we still have a bit to go in these fields we are however increasing our compliance in these areas.

The incoming legislation is written and enacted to protect all our children, young adults, visitors and other members of our communities. It is essential that we, as a county, club, team and community are not found wanting in this regard. We do not

want to find ourselves in a situation that we are not compliant with legislation and be responsible for allowing our players, community to be placed at risk due to our lack of action. This legislation is not an interpretative work, it is to be complied in full.

We, as officials, in our clubs, county need to ensure that this does not occur and our members are safely cared for in our sporting community.

I wish to congratulate all teams who participated in our games this year. It is through good commitment, good sportsmanship that we were able to enjoy the season just gone. The go-games, cul-camps, mini-leagues, juvenile leagues and championships, and adult competitions were a resounding success for 2014.

To be able to say to all families that, "YOUR SON/DAUGHTER WILL BE TRAINED BY VETTED, TRAINED, QUALIFIED COACHES ONLY" should be the goal of all clubs, teams prior to the beginning of 2015 season. I think that all families would welcome this statement.

Best wishes to all clubs for the upcoming season.

Seamus Lahart

Irish Cultural Committee Report

I wish to advise that the past year was a most successful year for the Irish Cultural Committee. Laois won 2 Scor All Irelands – 1 at Scor Sinsir won by The Mountmellick Instrumental Group, and 1 at Scor na nOg by Molly Donnery for solo singing. I was delighted to be in Castlebar and present for both performances by the worthy winners, who are a credit to their County. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Scor na nOg team from Rosenallis, and the Scor Sinsir team from Colt, who took part in the All Ireland Scor Question Times.

It was a great honour to have our Uachtarán, Mr. Liam O'Neill, present at the Finals. When he congratulated our winners he expressed his very great pleasure in their achievements on both occasions.

Scor in Laois

We ran Scor Sinsir, Scor na nOg and Scor na bPaiste in Laois this year. I would like to thank all of the clubs which took part in the competitions and would encourage all Laois Clubs to promote participation in all of the above. I would like to thank the clubs who hosted our competitions – Camross and Mountmellick, I would like to thank our singers and musicians who performed in O'Moore Park throughout the year. A special thank you to Molly Donnery who sang the National Anthem in Croke Park at the Club Finals, and to the Mountmellick Instrumental Group who played at the

Football All Ireland in Croke Park. These were wonderful achievements which showcased the depth of talent in Laois to a world wide audience.

Scor Committee

The Scor Committee are a very active group working throughout the year to promote our cultural heritage attending many events during the year, the events have provided much enjoyment and entertainment for competitors and spectators alike.

It has been a privilege in 2014 to work with my fellow officers on the County Board who have given me their full support at all times. I would like to thank the Cultural Committee for their dedication and support – Pat Sullivan (Laois County Board), John Scully (Annanough), Roisin Brennan & Christine Kelly (St. Joseph's), Margaret Cullition (Rosenallis), Julie Stapleton (Mountmellick), Monica Middleton (Mountrath), Donal Deegan (The Harps), Paddy Connolly (Portlaoise), Kevin Fintan Lalor (Colt), and John Paul Nevin (Kyle). John Paul Nevin has been an excellent P.R.O. all year, and Michael Martin has been our clerical officer throughout the year and has for many years been the driving force behind Scor in Laois so to them a special thank you is due.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh go leir

Seosamh Mac Conbhuí

Ainmniúcháin (Nominations)

Cathaoirleach (Chairman):

Gerry Kavanagh (Outgoing).

Leas Cathaoirleach (Vice Chairman):

Peter O'Neill (Outgoing).

Cisteoir (Treasurer):

Martin Byrne (Outgoing).

Leas Cisteoir (Asst. Treasurer):

Paschal McEvoy (Outgoing).

Ard Comhairle (Central Council) Delegate:

Brian Allen, Evelyn Dunne, Gerry Kavanagh, Kieran Leavy, Oliver Phelan.

Comhairle Laighean (Leinster Council) Delegates (2):

Brian Allen, Evelyn Dunne, Tom Jones, Paschal McEvoy, John Parkinson.

Oifigeach Oiliúna (Coaching):

Pat O'Sullivan (Outgoing).

Oifigeach Forbartha (Development):

PJ Kelly, Kieran Leavy.

Oifigeach Cultir agus Gaeilge (Cultural and Irish):

Jody Conway (Outgoing).

Oifigeach Caidrimh Poibli (P.R.O.):

Brian Allen (Outgoing), Sean Byrne.

Congress Delegates (Chairman & Secretary plus 3 Delegates):

Brian Allen, Martin Byrne, Pat Carroll, Tom Jones, Paschal McEvoy,
Peter O'Neill, Pat O'Sullivan, John Parkinson.

Leinster Convention Delegates (5 Delegates):

Brian Allen, Martin Byrne, Tom Jones, Gerry Kavanagh, Paschal McEvoy,
Peter O'Neill, Pat O'Sullivan, John Parkinson.

Na Rúin (Motions)

1. To amend Laois GAA Bye-law No.5 (a) to read as follows (amendments in bold italic):
5. Transfers / Attachment to First Club
 - a) A Club or Independent Teams Catchment Area shall be defined as within the Parish and within the County boundary. (List of 24 parishes based on the boundary of the Roman Catholic Parish - Clonaslee, Rosenallis, Mountmellick, Emo, Portarlinton, Stradbally, Portlaoise, Ballyfin, Camross, Castletown, Mountrath, Raheen, Abbeyleix, Ballinakill, Ballyadams, Barrowhouse / Athy, Arles, Doonane, Graiguecullen / Killeshin, Durrow, Aghaboe, Rathdowney, Borris in Ossory, Kyle / Roscrea). **Exception: The Club Catchment Area for Ballypickas GAA shall include the Club's traditional hinterland / catchment area within the Ballinakill parish boundary. (Ballypickas GAA)**
2. Section 6.3 of the Official Guide 2014 should be amended as follows (amendments in bold italic):

Other Relevant Connection: A member shall be considered to have an Other Relevant Connection with a particular County, or Club (as the case may be) if:

 - (i) The member's parents were, at the time of the member's birth, permanently resident in that County **with the exception of Dublin** or the present Catchment Area of that Club, or
 - (ii) That County is the County of the First Club of either of his parents, or
 - (iii) In the case of a player whose parents were permanently resident in Co. Dublin at the time of his Birth, that Club was the First Club of either of his parents, or
 - (iv) County Bye-Laws define either generally or for specific cases that particular factors give rise to such a connection. (Mountmellick GAA);

Notes

Notes

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