



FOOTBALL
ALL-IRELAND SENIOR
CHAMPIONSHIP



ARD mhACHA Vs DÚN NA nGALL

ROUND 2

**Páirc Naomh Tighearnach
Meitheamh 12 2022**



**WHERE WE
ALL BELONG**

€5 Clár Oifigiúil
LUACH

ARD STIÚRTHÓIR

Paul & Pádraic

OFFICIAL
SPONSORS



COMMUNITY INCLUDES **EVERYONE**

At SuperValu we believe that Community Includes Everyone. We are proud to sponsor the GAA Football All-Ireland Championship and support the GAA at every level across every community. Every Ethnicity, Sexuality, Gender and Ability has something to bring, because real people always bring more to the game.



SuperValu

To advertise your Support, Services and Products in Official GAA Match Programmes contact Lynn at 01 2887247 lynn@dbapublishing.ie

Produced by DBA Publications Ltd. on behalf of the GAA



DBA Publications Limited,
56 Carysfort Avenue,
Blackrock, Co. Dublin.
Tel (01) 288 7247
Fac (01) 288 3583
Email info@dbapublishing.ie

Advertising & commercial
[Lynn Fletcher \[lynn@dbapublishing.ie\]\(mailto:lynn@dbapublishing.ie\)](mailto:Lynn.Fletcher@dbapublishing.ie)



Printing
Anglo Printers



Photography
Sportsfile

Copyright © 2022 GAA

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other digital, electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher and the Copyright holder. For permission requests, write in the first instance to the publisher at;

DBA Publications Limited,
56 Carysfort Avenue,
Blackrock, County Dublin.

Ordering Information

Quantity sales. Special discounts are available on quantity purchases by Clubs, County Boards, businesses and others. For details, contact the publisher at the address above.

www.dbapublications.ie

FOLLOW US

[Facebook.com/dbapublications](https://www.facebook.com/dbapublications)



[@DBAPublications](https://www.instagram.com/dbapublications)



[dbapublications](https://www.youtube.com/dbapublications)



St Tiernach's Park, Clones

4.00pm

In the event of a draw, extra-time and Winner on the Day will be played



ARMAGH v DONEGAL

AN RÉITEOIR:

Brendan Cawley (Cill Dara)

LINESMEN:

Paddy Neilan (Ros Comáin) (STANDBY REF), Martin McNally (Muineachán)

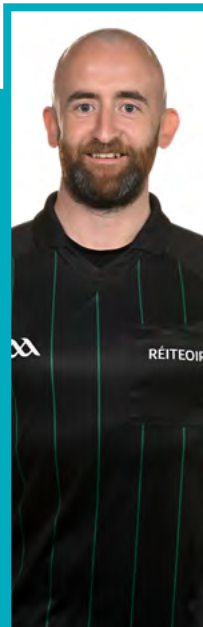
SIDELINE OFFICIAL:

Seán Laverty (Aontroim)

UMPIRES: Dave Coady, Johnny Farrell, Lee Moore, Eoghan Fitzpatrick

AN RÉITEOIR:

Brendan Cawley (Kildare)



From the Sarsfields club, Cawley hasn't been on assignment at St Tiernach's Park since March 2019 when Monaghan hosted Cavan in the Allianz League. The Lily White official was on duty last weekend for the Clare v Meath qualifier at Ennis, while other championship assignments this season were at Mullingar (Westmeath v Longford) and at Páirc Uí Rinn for the Cork-Kerry Munster semi-final. Among three league outings in 2022 was Donegal's match against Tyrone at Ballybofey but Armagh haven't featured on his itinerary since January 2018 when they faced Sligo in the league at the Athletic Grounds.

Who'll
make the
cover in
2022?



AWARD WINNING IMAGES
sportsfile
OFFICIAL GAA PHOTOGRAPHERS

www.sportsfile.com

Patterson House
14 South Circular Road
Portobello
Dublin 8
D08 T3FK



ARMAGH v DONEGAL



PLAYED: 28
Armagh wins: 15
Donegal wins: 10
Draws: 3

1927	Armagh	1-5	0-4	Donegal
1928	Armagh	1-8	1-4	Donegal
1940	Donegal	0-6	0-5	Armagh
1949	Armagh	0-14	1-4	Donegal
1967	Donegal	2-13	1-8	Armagh
1968	Donegal	2-10	1-3	Armagh
1981	Armagh	2-15	0-13	Donegal
1982	Armagh	1-11	0-13	Donegal
1983	Donegal	1-10	0-7	Armagh
1984	Armagh	1-10	0-12	Donegal
1987	Armagh	1-8	0-6	Donegal
1988	Armagh	2-10	0-8	Donegal
1993	Donegal	0-15	1-12	Armagh
Replay	Donegal	2-16	1-7	Armagh
1999	Armagh	1-12	2-9	Donegal
Replay	Armagh	2-11	0-12	Donegal
2002	Armagh	1-14	1-10	Donegal
2003	Armagh	2-10	1-9	Donegal
2004	Armagh	3-15	0-11	Donegal
2005	Armagh	0-12	0-12	Donegal
Replay	Armagh	3-11	1-10	Donegal
2006	Armagh	1-9	0-9	Donegal
2007	Donegal	1-9	1-8	Armagh
2010	Armagh	2-14	0-11	Donegal
2014	Donegal	1-12	1-11	Armagh
2015	Donegal	2-11	0-8	Armagh
2020	Donegal	1-22	0-13	Armagh
2022	Donegal	1-16	0-12	Armagh



Hugh McFadden of Donegal in action against Rian O'Neill of Armagh during the 2022 Ulster GAA Football Senior Championship Quarter-Final

TEAM SPIRIT ALONE WON'T WIN MATCHES, BUT IT'S A GOOD START

"I don't know how to put this but I'm kind of a big deal. People know me. I'm very important." – RON BURGUNDY, ANCHORMAN

BY DAVID COUGHLAN

WITH 62 MINUTES PLAYED OF THE 2021 ALL-IRELAND SEMI-FINAL, MAYO WERE STARING DOWN THE BARREL AGAIN.

Five points behind with time running out against a Dublin team going for seven-in-a-row, the situation looked bleak when Rob Hennelly's free from just inside his own half drifted away from the posts.

Then, as the ball fell short of the end line, Diarmuid O'Connor appeared from nowhere with an outstretched leg to keep it in play. Kevin McLoughlin retrieved the ball and slotted it between the posts.

It became the defining moment of the game as Mayo reeled in the Dubs in normal time, before finally overcoming them in extra-time.

For some it was an example of Mayo's team spirit — that unquantifiable alchemy that has pulled

them out of so many tight corners. For others it was just a moment of individual bloody-mindedness — one of the many thousands that happen on any given Sunday.

Steve Archibald had a remarkable career playing for Aberdeen, Tottenham, Barcelona and Hibs and even managed one game for the now defunct Home Farm Everton in Dublin's northside.

He's a popular after-dinner speaker with many tales about his times playing for Alex Ferguson and Terry Venables, but his most famous quote relates to the magic of the collective.

"Team spirit is an illusion glimpsed in the aftermath of victory," Archibald famously said.

It's a cynical view, one that suggests it's really every man or woman for themselves and it may even be true in many cases. But in a team game there can

only ever be success with cohesion and collaboration.

In the aftermath of the recent Ulster final, Rory Gallagher was asked how Derry had turned around their fortunes to win a first provincial title since 1998.

"We just focused an awful lot on (having) a really good spirit. I don't believe you can build tactics unless you build a togetherness," said Gallagher.

Eamon Dunphy's diary of his final season at Millwall reveals many unspoken truths about the dressingroom, most tellingly on the subject of sitting on the bench where he is almost willing those on the field to fail in order to reclaim his place.

But he also writes at length about the importance of working together, describing two midfielders passing the ball to each other as a "form of expression". And



Diarmuid O'Connor of Mayo keeps the ball in play in the build up to a Mayo point during the 2021 GAA Football All-Ireland Senior Championship semi-final

he identifies Millwall's crumbling united front as being the reason behind their struggles in the 1973-74 season. It really hits home when he sees the spirit displayed by an ordinary Middlesbrough against Millwall. Something that was lacking in his side.

"They were together," wrote Dunphy. "There was no doubt of that. Everyone was trying. They knew they could make a mistake without the ball ending in the back of the net, without someone shouting 'Get in the bath.' That is what football is all about."

Ger Brennan was a guest on Philly McMahon's *Irish Independent* podcast recently and he spoke about this dichotomy of individual

versus collective.

"While we are sportspeople, and even within team sports we're incredibly selfish and individualistic in some ways, in order to achieve within a team environment, there has to be that inclusiveness there. That sense of comradeship," said Brennan.

"While everyone doesn't have to be best buddies off the field, as soon as you go into the dressingroom or go onto the field, you have to have that bit of love, bit of faith in the guy who's knocking the head off you in training. That when it comes to playing proper opposition, that he'll be there for you."

The final round of the football Qualifiers is a good testing ground for

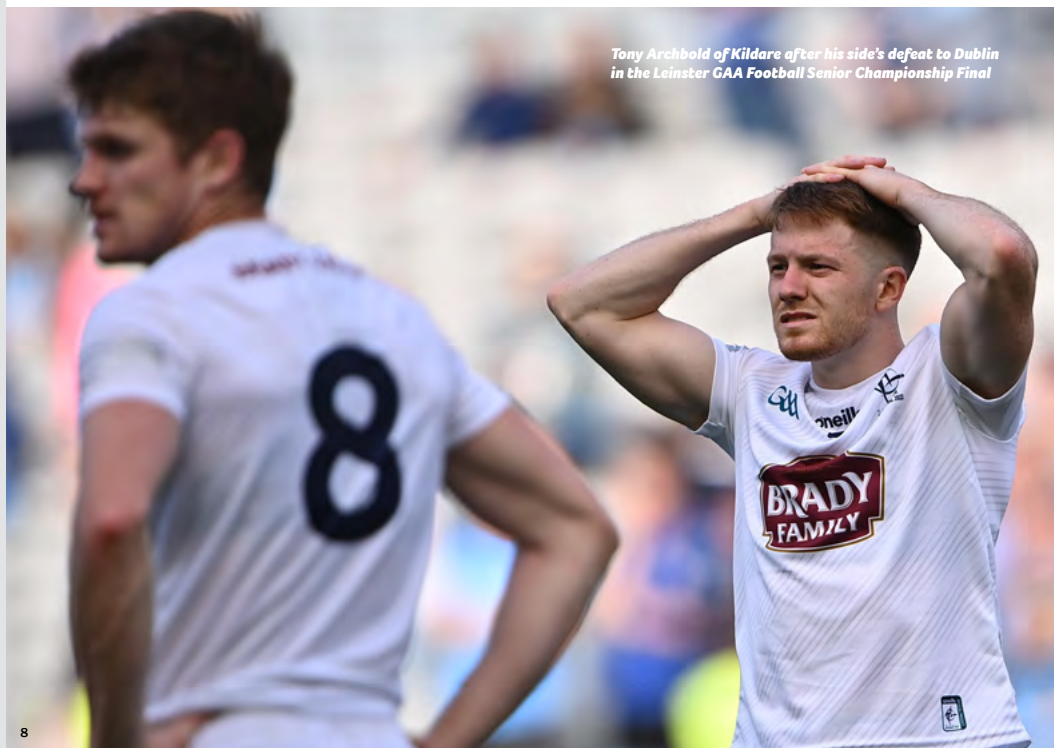
team spirit. For testing the collective over the individual.

Teams coming here on the back of a provincial final defeat face a serious challenge in lifting morale and going the extra mile for each other again.

This round has been a graveyard for losing provincial finalists in the past and Roscommon, Donegal, Limerick and, in particular, Kildare all face stiff tests.

In the 19 seasons of the Qualifiers (2001 to 2019), the beaten Leinster finalists lost 14 times in the final round and the Lilywhites weren't handed an easy draw this time against James Horan's Mayo.

Donegal are the exception here, getting through more often than not, but



Tony Archbold of Kildare after his side's defeat to Dublin in the Leinster GAA Football Senior Championship Final

Roscommon and Limerick have struggled when in this situation in the past.

So how do you foster good team spirit, especially when it's waning?

Brennan, a self-confessed prankster, spoke about the importance of humour within a county dressingroom as a way of releasing pressure and building bonds.

And when Dublin got rid of the Ron Burgundys, the more selfish players who thought they were kinda a big deal, the team spirit improved and success followed.

At some point since Dunphy's playing days, the idea of 'team culture' became more prominent than 'team spirit'.

Arsene Wenger's Arsenal,

Barcelona under Pep Guardiola, the All Blacks, Pat Gilroy and Jim Gavin's Dublin teams — they were all teams built on a specific, if undefined, team culture.

A process, a philosophy, a way of doing things that strengthened the unit first and foremost.

A shared sense of responsibility and respect and a willingness to chase a lost cause, stick out a leg and keep your team in the Championship, no matter what the odds.

Team culture, team spirit; they are one and the same, one leads to the other and as Archibald noted, they're always easier to see in the reflection of success.

This will be the 20th

running of the football Qualifiers and this may be the final round with a new system in place for next season.

If any of this season's losing provincial finalists are going to advance this weekend, they will need individual brilliance as part of a cohesive unit, they will need collective responsibility, cooperation, collaboration, they will need that illusory, intangible, hard-to-define bit of magic that holds a squad together...

Team spirit alone won't win matches, the most content bunch in the world still need to put the ball over the bar. But it's a good start.

And one outstretched leg could make all the difference.

The Donegal team before the Ulster GAA Football Senior Championship Final against Derry



A HIGHER STANDARD?



BY PAUL FITZPATRICK

THE RECENT FURORE OVER THE HANDSHAKE, PART ONE AND TWO, BETWEEN BRIAN CODY AND HENRY SHEFFLIN HAS GENERATED COUNTLESS COLUMN INCHES AND HOURS OF AIRTIME – AND WITH NEITHER MAN HAVING COMMENTED PUBLICLY ON IT IN ANY DEPTH, THE FANS HAVE BEEN LEFT GUESSING AS TO WHAT, IF ANYTHING, IS BEHIND IT ALL.

There is no doubt, though, that it is one of the off-field storylines of the summer – two former colleagues, both absolute sporting A-Listers, now in opposing camps and seemingly embroiled in a cold war of sorts.

Not that hurling needs such pantomime stuff in order to capture hearts and minds. At the top level, it is now so insanely competitive – all 11 teams in the

Munster and Leinster Senior Championships dropped points along the way in the recent group stage – and the standard of skills are so high – witness Tony Kelly’s astonishing late point in the Munster final last weekend as proof – that the game sells itself.

Football, however, has been going through something of an identity crisis. Tactically, football has gone through a number of evolutions in the last 20 years. Defensive systems were in vogue at one point but their day seemed to have passed, with rule changes such as the introduction of the attacking mark playing a part in that.

However, the recent Ulster final between Derry and Donegal, featuring lots of lateral play, prompted

more talk of how the game is enduring an existential crisis of sorts.

Of course, there are dull games in both codes but the question must be asked, as spectacles, are football and hurling held to different standards?

The mood music around hurling tends to be more upbeat; pundits generally extol the virtues of the games whereas in football, every drab encounter seems to be greeted as proof that the game itself is in need of fundamental change.

Whether that is correct or not is a debate for another day but the disparity in how the games are discussed and dissected is further proof of a subtle divergence between the codes.

For the longest time in the GAA, hurling and football

were inextricably linked but as the years have gone on, they have veered off to the point where, while part of the same family, they are arguably more like close cousins than siblings.

For one thing, dual players at inter-county level are now extremely rare. Dublin hurling captain Eoghan O'Donnell recently linked up with the county's footballers and may yet get his hands on a Celtic Cross but a modern-day player replicating Teddy McCarthy's unique achievement in winning football and hurling senior All-Ireland medals in the same year is now unthinkable.

While top-class hurling has tended to be confined to fewer counties, it has often been quicker to innovate.

Hurling, for example, was first to take the gigantic leap that was moving away from the "one strike and you're out" system which had pertained for over a century. The momentous decision to open the back door was taken at Congress in 1996 and immediately proved successful; four years later, football followed suit with the All-Ireland qualifiers.

In 2005, hurling again pioneered major structural change when the tiered championships were reorganised, with the Christy Ring and Nicky Rackard Cups inaugurated – and more tiers were to follow, to the point where there are now five.

Football followed up with the Tommy Murphy Cup and

after it was shelved, it took 14 years before the current tier two Tailteann Cup began.

The codes branched off in other areas. For decades, scorelines in both tended to be similar; hurling was higher-scoring but there wasn't a vast difference. As recently as 1999, Cork defeated Kilkenny by 0-13 to 0-12 in the All-Ireland final – in the football final that year, Meath beat Cork by 1-11 to 1-8.

There is now a gulf in terms of scores in matches as hurling has become free-wheeling; the last three All-Ireland winners, for example, have tallied 3-25, 0-30 and 3-32 while in football, the deciders have been won by sides racking up 1-18, 2-14 and 2-14.

There has also been a change in recent years in terms of where inter-county hurling and football teams draw their managers from.

It is interesting to note that of the four Senior Football Championship matches over the weekend, seven of the eight teams are guided by homegrown managers – Colm Collins (Clare), James Horan (Mayo), Glenn Ryan (Kildare), John Cleary (Cork), Billy Lee (Limerick), Kieran McGeeney (Armagh) and Declan Bonner (Donegal) – with Roscommon bainisteoir Anthony Cunningham, from Galway, the exception.

Waiting in the All-Ireland quarter-finals are Cunningham's home county, who are managed by one of their own greatest players

in Padraic Joyce, Jack O'Connor's Kerry, Dessie Farrell-managed Dublin and Derry, who, under the watch of Fermanagh native Rory Gallagher, are the outlier there.

That is not unusual when it comes to the race for Sam Maguire. Of the 32 counties who started out (leaving New York aside), only nine are managed by 'outside' managers. In hurling, the trend is different, with just 11 counties in the five tiers utilising the services of a manager drawn from their own clubs.

And while hurling is certainly enjoying "a moment", the necessary introduction of helmets and face guards has impacted on public recognition of hurlers, while the leading Gaelic footballers are now instantly recognisable for even casual sports fans.

Some of that, though, goes back to tradition; football just has more penetration, historically, in a larger geographical area, which is why the big ball game has tended to take top billing of the four GAA codes.

That situation is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future but as the games have evolved into separate products entirely, football, rightly or wrongly, finds itself in hurling's shadow at present. History tells us, though, that fashions can change quickly and savvy consumers will decide themselves if they are being entertained.

LAST HURRAH FOR THE SECOND CHANCE CLUB

BY ARTHUR SULLIVAN

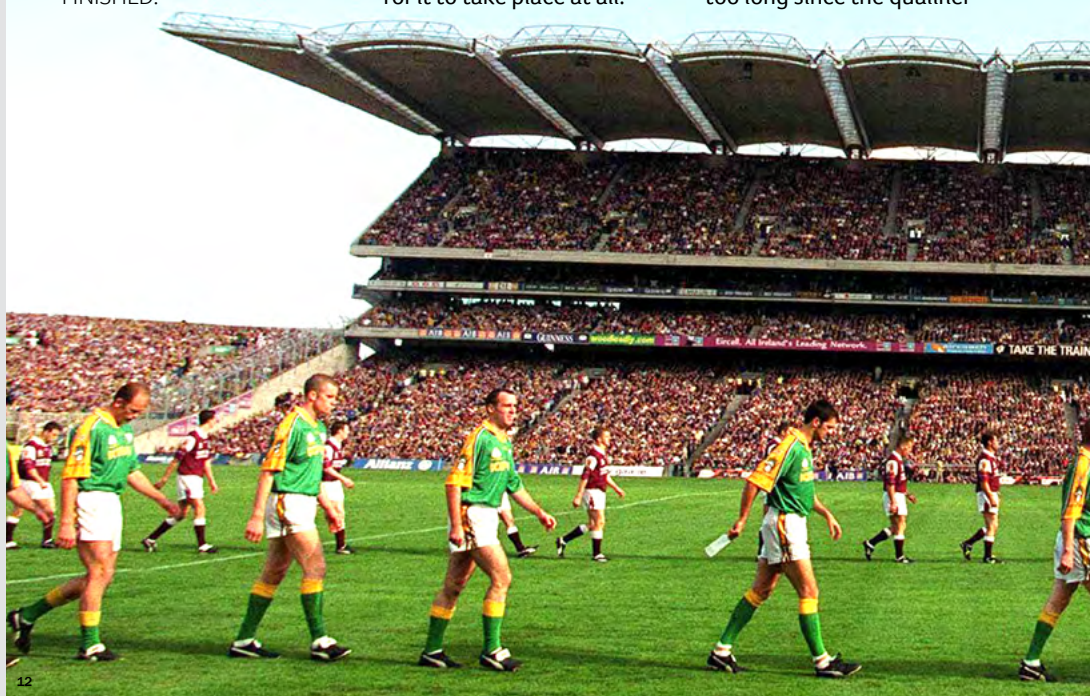
THE ALL-IRELAND SENIOR FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP WILL CHANGE DRAMATICALLY NEXT SEASON, WITH THE HISTORIC SHIFT TO A NEW 16-TEAM ROUND-ROBIN FORMAT DUE TO KICK IN ONCE THE PROVINCIAL CHAMPIONSHIPS ARE FINISHED.

The shake-up means that this summer we bid adieu to what has been a staple of the competition for the best part of 20 years - the qualifiers.

The pandemic meant that in 2020 and 2021 there was no backdoor, the championship pared back to its original format in order for it to take place at all.

But that brief reversion to the old system was an enforced anomaly. From next year on, teams could theoretically lose as many as three championship games and still end up as All-Ireland champions.

It's the end of an era. Yet for many it won't seem too long since the qualifier



system itself was the brave new world, the dramatic departure from the norm.

It was in Dublin's Citywest Hotel on October 14, 2000, when the GAA Congress "took a wrecking ball to a football championship which has stood proud and tall for over 100 years," according to Martin Breheny's report in the *Irish Independent*.

By then, the swelling of enthusiasm for a prolonging of the summer for counties beaten in their provinces was so great that change was inevitable. The levees had to break sometime.

Yet there were those who wanted nothing to do with it. Séamus Aldridge from Kildare compared counties keen on change to children keen on sugar. "If you ask children whether they want two plates of jelly or one,

they'll always opt for two," he said.

"If you win, you go on and if you lose, you're out. That's what the championship should be about," said Galway delegate Jack Mahon. "I hope we're not doing something here which will seriously damage such a great competition."

It's remarkable that a proposal considered so radical by some as recently as 20 years ago could so soon be widely considered unacceptably antiquated.

So, after two decades of existence, how will the qualifiers be remembered?

This is the 20th season since its debut in 2001. In that time, 449 qualifier games have been played, including replays. When we add in All-Ireland quarter-final games which wouldn't have taken place without

the system change, it means the decision made in the Citywest 22 years ago has given us well over 500 more championship games than there would otherwise have been.

There have been tweaks to the format during that time. In 2007 and 2008, the Tommy Murphy Cup meant there were three rounds rather than four. Then from 2014 to 2017, an "A and B" system was introduced, with two separate sides in each qualifier draw. And in 2022, for one year only, the qualifiers have had just two rounds, with most of the teams beaten before the provincial final stage entering the Tailteann Cup. Largely though, it has been a familiar format, more embraced by some counties than others.

It justified its existence



Meath and Galway teams parade before the 2001 GAA Football All-Ireland Senior Championship final

Diarmuid Connolly, Dublin, in action against Tomás Ó Sé, Kerry, in the 2009 GAA Football All-Ireland Senior Championship Quarter-Final



from its first year. In 2001, Galway were beaten in the Connacht semi-final by Roscommon. Yet at the end of the season they won the All-Ireland final against Meath with such verve and style that there was barely a mention of their earlier provincial loss in the aftermath.

Winning All-Irelands from the qualifiers became a marker of greatness in itself. Mickey Harte's Tyrone did it twice. In 2005, they avenged a provincial final defeat to their great rivals Armagh

before beating them in the All-Ireland semi-final in what is remembered as one of the greatest games of all time. They beat Kerry in the final, just as they would three years later in 2008. That season, they had to win six games after defeat to get to the All-Ireland final.

Kerry also managed it, with their 2009 run through the qualifiers becoming the stuff of myth and legend. Against Longford, Sligo and Antrim, they faced the real prospect of humiliation. They somehow found a way

through the games, but amid rumours of a fractured, rancorous camp, they were widely tipped to be routed in the All-Ireland quarter-final by Dublin. Their subsequent destruction of the Sky Blues set them up for one of their sweetest ever All-Ireland wins.

"As a team goes on in the championship, confidence grows," Tomás Ó Sé remembered of that run a few years back. "It's amazing. Some years we got beat early, but you have to react the right way in the

*Michael Shields, Cork, in action against
Brendan Coulter, Down, in the 2010 GAA
Football All-Ireland Senior Championship Final*



qualifiers. We've always done it, and Tyrone are the same."

In 2010, Cork also won the All-Ireland from the qualifiers – the last team to do so. In many respects, that season was the format's high watermark. All four All-Ireland semi-finalists had been beaten in their provincial championships – Cork, Dublin, Kildare and Down. Both semi-finals went down to the absolute wire, as did the final, making it the most open championship in recent memory.

Since then, success in the

provincial championships has become the definitive predictor of All-Ireland success. Dublin, Donegal, Kerry and Tyrone have won their All-Irelands since 2010 with provincial titles already banked. That bodes well for those who believe those competitions must survive any further championship changes.

It's fitting that the qualifier era ends this weekend with four games pitting losing provincial finalists against teams with qualifier wins already under

their belts. That round has consistently proved to be the most intriguing of all over the last two decades. It has been notably treacherous for those coming in off the back of provincial-final defeats. In fact, out of 76 qualifier games in that category, just 37% have been won by the beaten finalist over the years. The GAA's equivalent of Becher's Brook may yet claim a few more victims before its day is done.

So farewell then, qualifiers. The second chance club has left its mark.

ARMAGH: QUALIFIER RECORD

Won 24, Lost 11 (1 Draw)

2001	Armagh	1-13	2-4	Down
	Armagh	2-12	0-10	Monaghan
	Galway	0-13	0-12	Armagh
2003	Armagh	2-21	0-8	Waterford
	Armagh	0-15	0-12	Antrim
	Armagh	0-15	0-11	Dublin
	Armagh	4-10	0-11	Limerick
2007	Derry	0-10	0-9	Armagh
2009	Monaghan	0-13	0-12	Armagh
2010	Armagh	2-14	0-11	Donegal
	Armagh	0-11	0-7	Fermanagh
	Dublin	0-14	0-11	Armagh
2011	Armagh	0-19	2-13	Wicklow
Replay	Armagh	2-9	0-10	Wicklow
	Tyrone	2-13	0-13	Armagh
2012	Roscommon	1-11	1-9	Armagh
2013	Armagh	2-21	0-2	Wicklow
	Armagh	8-13	0-10	Leitrim
	Galway	1-11	0-9	Armagh
2014	Armagh	0-13	0-10	Tyrone
	Armagh	1-17	1-12	Roscommon
	Armagh	0-18	0-13	Meath
2015	Armagh	2-17	2-7	Wicklow
	Galway	1-12	0-12	Armagh
2016	Laois	1-11	1-10	Armagh*
2017	Armagh	0-20	0-11	Fermanagh
	Armagh	1-12	1-7	Westmeath
	Armagh	1-17	1-15	Tipperary
	Armagh	1-17	0-17	Kildare
2018	Armagh	3-16	1-11	Westmeath
	Armagh	1-19	1-13	Sligo
	Armagh	2-16	1-15	Clare
	Roscommon	2-22	1-19	Armagh
2019	Armagh	2-17	1-12	Monaghan
	Mayo	2-13	1-15	Armagh
2022	Armagh	1-16	1-10	Tyrone

*Laois 1-11 Armagh 0-10 declared void



Jarly Og Burns



A photograph of Stefan Campbell, a Gaelic footballer, in an orange Armagh jersey. He is holding a white Gaelic football with both hands. The jersey features the 'McKiv' logo, the number '11', and the 'simplyfruit naturally' logo. The background is a blurred crowd of spectators.

STEFAN CAMPBELL

Armagh



During last Sunday's Armagh-Tyrone game, there was a photograph taken of Stefan Campbell after he scored his second point of the game. Campbell has his fist tightly clenched in celebration. The relief and satisfaction of redemption was smeared all across his face because he knew that the All-Ireland champions had been beaten. When Campbell did an RTÉ live TV interview afterwards to receive his man-of-the-match award, he was clearly proud of such an achievement. But his happiness, delight and relief at such an important win was also apparent. With pandemonium raging all around him as Armagh supporters flooded the field in celebration, Campbell outlined how the win had been even more important in the context of the disappointment around the county after Armagh's Ulster quarter-final defeat to Donegal. Now aged 30 and one of the most experienced players on the Armagh squad, the Clan na Gael clubman had become Armagh's most reliable scoring forward for several seasons before being dropped during the 2017 championship. Campbell decided to take a sabbatical in 2018. He was playing soccer with Lurgan Celtic before going to the USA that summer. Shortly afterwards, Campbell opened up to his parents about his gambling problems before gaining huge support for going public on his struggles. When he returned to the Armagh squad at the outset of 2019, he trained harder than ever. Campbell had a much clearer focus and was hitting numbers in training that he never hit before. Campbell also spent more hours than ever before on his kicking game before and after training. His game also changed in that he was becoming a more rounded player, as opposed to being an out-and-out finisher in the full-forward line. He showed that last Sunday in an outstanding individual performance. And Campbell will be hoping to show it even more today, especially going up against Donegal again.



2 **SÉAMUS Ó MUIREADZÁIN**
JAMES MORGAN
Raonaithe Na Croise

5 **ÁRÓN MAC AODHA**
AARON MCKAY
Dromainn Tí

8 **STÍOPHÁN Ó SFREADÁIN**
STEPHEN SHERIDAN
Peadar O'Doirnín Foirceal

10 **RUAIRÍ Ó SREUDZÁIN**
RORY GRUGAN
Na Cloigthishe Baile Mhic an Aba

13 **AODHAN NUNSEANN (J.C.)**
AIDAN NUGENT
Naomh Pádraig Coilleach Eanach

1 **ÉADÁN Ó RAIFEARCAIGH**
ETHAN RAFFERTY
An Ghráinseach

3 **AODHÁN MAC FEARCHAIR**
AIDAN FORKER
An Machaire

6 **SHÉANÓIR MAC ADA**
GREG McCABE
Sheáin Uí Néill Camloch

9 **DEIRCHEARC MAC RAGHALLAIGH**
BEN CREALEY
An Machaire

11 **STEFAN MAC CACHMHAOIL**
STEFAN CAMPBELL
An Lorgáin Clan na Gael

14 **RIAN Ó NÉILL (J.C.)**
RIAN O'NEILL
Raonaithe Na Croise

4 **CONCHÚR Ó NÍELL**
CONOR O'NEILL
Naomh Moinna Cill Sleibhe

7 **SÉARLY ÓS MAC CONBOIRNE**
JARLY ÓG BURNS
Beal Atha an Airgid

12 **JEMAR MAC CACHAIL**
JEMAR HALL
Peadar O'Doirnín Foirceal

15 **IASÁN Ó DUFGAIGH**
JASON DUFFY
Naomh Pádraig Coilleach Eanach

ARD mhacha

ROGHNÓIRÍ - Kieran McGeeney (Bainisteoir), Ciarán McKeever, Kieran Donaghy

FIR IONAIÐ

16 **BLAINE Ó HADHA**
BLAINE HUGHES
Naomh Pádraig Carraig Chropain

17 **MARCAS Ó SHAIL**
MARK SHIELDS
An Chrois Bhán

18 **NIALL Ó ROCHLÁIN**
NIALL ROWLAND
Na Gormacha Baile Mhic Cholla

19 **CIARÁN Ó HUIGÍN**
CIARÁN HIGGINS
An Machaire

20 **CONNAIRE Ó MHAICÍN**
CONNAIRE MACKIN
Sheáin Uí Néill Camloch

21 **EÓIN MAC CONCHOILLE**
EÓIN WOODS
Naomh Pádraig Carraig Chropain

22 **CONCHÚBHAR TORBÓID**
CONOR TURBITT
Clann Éireann

23 **ROSS MAC UÍLÍN**
ROSS McQUILLAN
Naomh Pádraig Coilleach Eanach

24 **ANDREW MURNIN**
Naomh Pól

25 **JUSTIN KIERAN**
An Ghráinseach

26 **CIAN MAC CONMHAOIL**
CIAN McCONVILLE
Raonaithe Na Croise





OFFICIAL SPONSORS



2 **CAOLAN WARD**
Naomh Adhamhnáin

5 **RYAN McHUGH**
Chill Chartha

8 **CAOLAN MCGONAGLE**
Bun Cranncha

10 **CIARÁN THOMPSON**
Naomh Conaill

13 **PATRICK McBREARTY**
Chill Chartha

1 **SHAUN PATTON**
Naomh Adhamhnáin

3 **BRENDAN McCOLE**
Naomh Naillle

6 **EOGHAN BÁN GALLAGHER**
Na Cealla Beaga

9 **JASON McGEE**
Cloich Ceann Fhaola

11 **NIALL O'DONNELL**
Naomh Adhamhnáin

14 **MICHAEL MURPHY**
Glenn tSuif

4 **STEPHEN McMENAMIN**
Aodh Rua, Cúl na gCurridín

7 **ODHRAN McFADDEN FERRY**
Gaoth Dobhair

12 **MICHAEL LANGAN**
Naomh Mícheál

15 **SHANE O'DONNELL**
Naomh Adhamhnáin

Óúin na nGall

ROGHNÓIRÍ - Declan Bonner (Bainisteoir), Stephen Rochford, Pádraig Ó Cathmhaóil

FIR IONAIÐ

16. **MICHAEL LYNCH**
Gaoth Dobhair

17. **PEADER MOGAN**
Naomh Naillle

18. **HUGH McFADDEN**
Na Cealla Beaga

19. **CONOR O'DONNELL**
Carn Domhnach

20. **PAUL BRENNAN**
Realt Na mara, Bún Dobhráin

21. **NEIL McGEE**
Gaoth Dobhair

22. **JEIAC McKELVEY**
Naomh Conaill

23. **DAIRE Ó BAOILL**
Gaoth Dobhair

24. **AARON DOHERTY**
Naomh Columba

25. **JAMIE BRENNAN**
Realt Na Mara, Bún Dobhráin

26. **CAOLAN McCOLGAN**
Naomh Pádraig, Uisce Caoin



OFFICIAL SPONSORS



MICHAEL MURPHY

Donegal

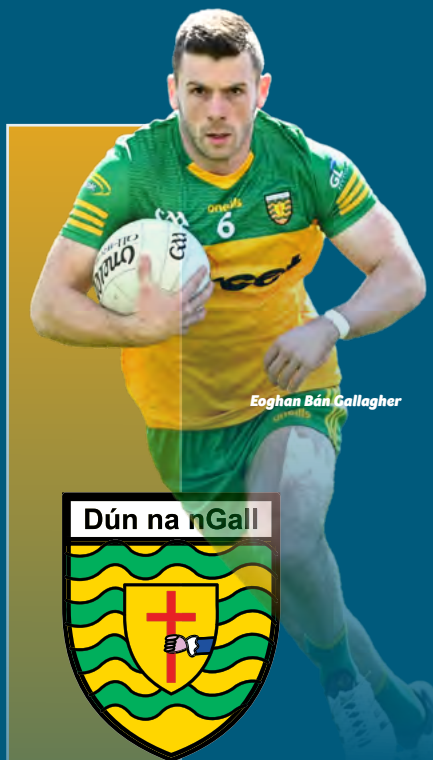


In one of his recent *Irish Times* columns, Jim McGuinness wrote how Michael Murphy has been the best player in Ireland for over a decade. McGuinness also outlined his disagreement with the prevailing view that Murphy is in the autumn of his career. "I don't agree," wrote McGuinness. "To be honest, I think the best of Michael Murphy may be about to come." In a discussion on Murphy during the RTÉ TV analysis of the Ulster final, Colm O'Rourke disagreed with McGuinness's views, saying that some of the Dublin players were the best of the last decade, and better than Murphy. It was a radical leap for McGuinness to state that Murphy can be any better than he was at the peak of his career, but much of that debate has always centred on where to play Murphy, and how best to utilise him, especially when it is so hard for Murphy to get around the pitch like he could in the earlier part of his career. Yet Murphy's status at this stage is about more than just what he does on the pitch. He is the best player Donegal have ever produced. He is also probably the longest serving captain in the history of championship hurling and football, having been Donegal captain now for over a decade, during which he led Donegal to one All-Ireland and five Ulster titles. Dublin's Stephen Cluxton is by far the most successful captain in history but he still didn't hold the armband for as long as Murphy. The highlights of Murphy's career would make for a long and spectacular reel of clips but McGuinness has always felt that the most important aspect of Murphy's influence on the Donegal group for over 15 years is in the training environment. In Donegal, they have always spoken about the ferocious focus and consistency and appetite for learning Murphy brings to every Donegal training session. Standards create culture. And Murphy has been the standard bearer now for 15 years.

DONEGAL: QUALIFIER RECORD


Won 20, Lost 7

2001	Donegal	0-15	1-6	Fermanagh
	Kildare	1-17	1-16	Donegal
2002	Donegal	1-13	0-14	Meath
2003	Donegal	1-17	1-11	Longford
	Donegal	0-16	0-11	Sligo
	Donegal	2-19	0-15	Tipperary
	Donegal	3-15	2-10	Down
2004	Fermanagh	1-10	0-12	Donegal
2005	Donegal	0-16	0-12	Wicklow
	Cavan	1-11	1-10	Donegal
2006	Donegal	0-11	0-8	Fermanagh
2007	Donegal	1-16	1-14	Leitrim
	Donegal	1-13	1-8	Westmeath
	Monaghan	2-12	1-7	Donegal
2008	Donegal	3-11	1-9	Roscommon
	Monaghan	0-16	0-15	Donegal
2009	Donegal	2-13	1-6	Carlow
	Donegal	0-13	1-7	Clare
	Donegal	2-13	0-18	Derry
	Donegal	0-14	0-13	Galway
2010	Armagh	2-14	0-11	Donegal
2013	Donegal	0-14	0-8	Laois
2015	Donegal	3-12	0-11	Galway
2016	Donegal	0-21	1-15	Cork
2017	Donegal	0-12	0-7	Longford
	Donegal	1-15	1-14	Meath
	Galway	4-17	0-14	Donegal



Eoghan Bán Gallagher





ARMAGH GOALKEEPER ETHAN RAFFERTY HAS BEEN THE TALK OF THE TOWN ALL WEEK. TWO EXCELLENT POINTS AGAINST TYRONE LAST SUNDAY. THE FIRST GOALKEEPER TO SCORE TWO POINTS FROM PLAY IN THE CHAMPIONSHIP.

A quality forward and midfielder for Armagh for almost a decade, Rafferty only started playing in goal this year. The main reason for the conversion was because he did his cruciate last year and Kieran McGeeney spotted the potential in the move.

It still took some convincing. "There was a right bit of debating," said Rafferty after last Sunday's match. "It was a tough enough decision. I got back

after the cruciate in seven months. I was delighted with how I was doing on the rehab and recovery. But it was hard getting back in and Kieran had come to me and said, 'Maybe give this a go and see what it's like'. I was to-ing and fro-ing but I'm happy enough to give it a go."

Last Sunday confirmed McGeeney's hunch, but the manager has been down this road before. A few weeks before Armagh played Cavan in the 2014 Ulster championship, McGeeney recalled Paul Courtney to the squad. Courtney grew up as an outfield player, but he was such a good kicker of the ball that he played in goal for his club Ballyhegan in

Armagh goalkeeper Ethan Rafferty kicks a point against Tyrone in the GAA Football All-Ireland Senior Championship Round 1 match at the Athletic Grounds in Armagh

EVOLUTION AND REVOLUTION WRAPPED UP IN NUMBER ONE

BY CHRISTY O'CONNOR

2016; Armagh manager Kieran McGeeney in discussion with goalkeeper Paul Courtney



the senior championship at just 16.

A year later, Courtney was the Armagh minor 'keeper in 2003. By the following season, he had graduated to full-back on the minor team. Courtney was midfield on the Armagh U21 team which won the 2007 Ulster title. He spent a handful of years on the senior panel afterwards until a back injury forced him off the squad. When Courtney finally got the recall, he was 30. And McGeeney wanted him to play as a goalkeeper.

Courtney was reluctant until McGeeney told him that he'd spend most of his time playing like an outfield player. That day against Cavan, Courtney did. At one stage, Courtney was on the Cavan '45 looking for

the final pass of a move he initiated. The goalkeeper didn't even wear gloves.

McGeeney and the coach, Aidan O'Rourke wanted Courtney to be heavily involved in the game as a playmaker. The tactic makes perfect sense now but, back then, the public weren't ready to accept it. The whole episode was deemed a laughing matter amongst the sceptics, but hindsight has shown it was a move far ahead of its time.

The 2020 All-Star 'keeper Raymond Galligan began his inter-county career with Cavan as a forward. The current All-Star keeper, Niall Morgan, has graduated to a full-time midfielder for Edendork. The Kerry 'keeper Shane Ryan also plays outfield for his club. So does

Conor Gleeson, the Galway 'keeper. The list goes on.

The evolution of the goalkeeper has accelerated in tandem with the evolution of the game. Morgan has kicked points from play for Tyrone. In their opening league game against Tyrone in January, Rory Beggan scored his first point from play for Monaghan.

Stephen Cluxton has been at the heart of the modern trend but that was more around kickouts and long-range frees. Roscommon's Shane Curran was the original maverick before Laois' Graham Brody became the modern face of the more 'adventurous' goalkeeper in the last decade.

Curran was a pioneering mind with the personality to be different, to try



Roscommon goalkeeper Shane Curran under pressure from Kerry's Colm Cooper near the Croke Park sideline in the 2003 GAA Football All-Ireland Senior Championship Quarter-Final

something different. Back then, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the full impact and application of an attacking keeper in football was largely uncharted. But the modern game has increasingly facilitated those expeditions.

There is always risk involved with such a strategy. That was obvious last Sunday when Tyrone forced a turnover with Rafferty out the field and it took desperate Armagh goal-line defending from Conor Mackin to prevent a green flag being raised on the counter-attack.

The day before Kerry played Monaghan in the league in February, Éamonn Fitzmaurice predicted in his *Irish Examiner* column that teams would start targeting roaming goalkeepers, especially Beggan. In Iniskeen the following day, Seán

O'Shea nipped in to pilfer a ball that Darren Hughes had placed in Beggan's path 80 metres from his own goal. The rapid counter-attack ended with a David Clifford goal.

It wasn't the first time that had happened in the league. In Round 2, Derry turned over the ball late on against Offaly and goalkeeper Paddy Dunican was out of position. Just after Shane McGuigan crossed the 65-metre line, with Dunican and the Offaly defence scrambling back, Derry manager Rory Gallagher could be heard roaring from the sideline, 'Goal, Goal.' McGuigan chipped the ball into an empty net.

Dunican was marking space but Derry had clearly studied the footage from Offaly's opening game

against Clare when Dunican came forward at one stage to contest one of Stephen Ryan's kickouts.

That step in the evolution of the modern 'keeper was first evident in last year's Ulster final when Morgan and Beggan pressed each other's kickout high up the field and contested them in the air.

It was novel, but that tactic certainly wasn't new in the Ulster championship. Throughout last summer, Seán McNally, Raymond Galligan, Blaine Hughes, Odhrán Lynch, Shaun Patton, along with Beggan and Morgan, operated at various stages to try and fill that pocket of space on the opposition kickouts.

Becoming more active and more engaged on the opposition kickout is another level again but modern

Tyrone goalkeeper Niall Morgan, centre, is outfield contesting for possession against Armagh during this year's Allianz Football League Division 1



coaching and analysis has become so advanced and detailed that innovative minds have already begun coaching around that tactic, and exploiting the risk it entails.

Tyrone first did as much last July because when Beggan advanced on Morgan's long kickout, the Tyrone 'keeper twice drove the ball straight down on top of Beggan. On both occasions, Tyrone won the break, one of which required Beggan to make a brilliant recovery in stealing the ball from Mattie Donnelly as he raced towards the Hill 16 goal.

The risk will always exist but balancing it with reward is deemed worth the gamble in how managers and coaches now view the position. Finding that right

balance is the key in any trade-off, but the increasing evolution of the position has added further dimensions to how a 'keeper can affect the flow of games and contribute in open play.

Goalkeepers are continually displaying the massive contributions they can make right across the board now from the position. In the Cavan-Down Tailteann Cup game a few weeks back, Cavan goalkeeper Raymond Galligan was flawless from dead balls, landing 0-7 (three 45s, four frees) from seven attempts, while the team captain saved a penalty – twice – from Barry O'Hagan.

Where is all this leading to? If the evolution continues at such pace, the 'keeper of the future will be a dead-ball specialist, fast, athletic, comfortable in possession

and under dropping balls in heavy traffic, one of the team's best passers, a competent playmaker in building the play from defence and an excellent shot-stopper.

That will also have implications for how teams train and prepare. As well as the goalkeeper needing the athleticism of a half back, certain defenders will be required to be quasi goalkeepers.

The continually changing narrative around a goalkeeper's role has also transformed the whole culture and perception around the position. In many county underage development squads, some of the best outfield players, especially kickers, are already being earmarked as future goalkeepers.

That's real evolution.

THINK YOU CAN DO BETTER?

PUT YOUR
WHISTLE
WHERE YOUR
MOUTH IS



Check out
www.gaa.ie/referee
for more information



WHERE WE ALL BELONG

BECOME A GAA REFEREE

2022 SENIOR FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP SCOREBOARD

CONNACHT

Sligo **1-16 0-15** New York
 Leitrim **3-12 2-11** London
 Galway **1-14 0-16** Mayo
 Roscommon **0-23 0-11** Sligo
 Galway **4-20 0-9** Leitrim
GALWAY 2-19 2-16 ROSCOMMON

LEINSTER

Louth **5-10 0-10** Carlow
 Wicklow **5-15 4-12** Laois
 Wexford **1-15 1-12** Offaly
 Dublin **1-24 0-4** Wexford
 Westmeath **3-13 0-14** Longford
 Meath **4-13 1-12** Wicklow
 Kildare **2-22 0-12** Louth
 Kildare **1-21 2-15** Westmeath
 Dublin **1-27 1-14** Meath
DUBLIN 5-17 1-15 KILDARE

MUNSTER

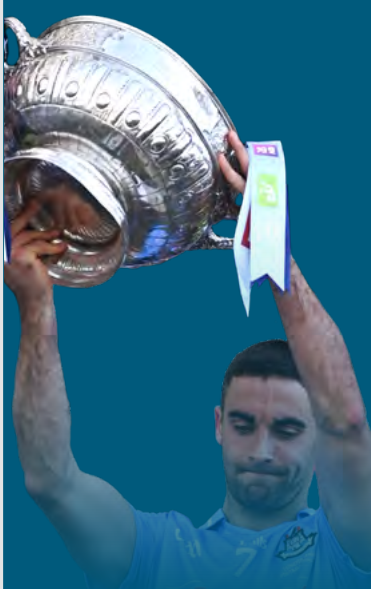
Tipperary **2-13 1-8** Waterford
 Limerick* **2-16 1-19** Clare
 Kerry **0-23 0-11** Cork
 Limerick **2-10 0-10** Tipperary
KERRY 1-28 0-8 LIMERICK
**won on penalties*

ULSTER

Tyrone **2-17 2-10** Fermanagh
 Cavan **1-20 0-10** Antrim
 Donegal **1-16 0-12** Armagh
 Monaghan **0-23 2-7** Down
 Derry **1-18 0-10** Tyrone
 Donegal **2-16 0-16** Cavan
 Derry **3-12 0-17** Monaghan
DERRY 1-16 1-14 DONEGAL

ALL-IRELAND QUALIFIERS

Cork **2-12 2-8** Louth
 Mayo **1-13 0-12** Monaghan
 Clare **1-11 1-9** Meath
 Armagh **1-16 1-10** Tyrone



QUALIFIED SUCCESS

BY DONAL KEENAN

IN ITS VARIOUS FORMS SINCE THE INTRODUCTION OF A QUALIFIER SERIES TO THE ALL-IRELAND FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP IN 2001, THE “BACK DOOR” HAS PRODUCED MANY SUCCESSES.

The most obvious are the championships won by Kerry, Galway and Tyrone after they suffered provincial setbacks. But there have been other successes that have provided their own big splashes of colour and romance over two lively decades.

WESTMEATH (2001)

Three years before the magician known as Paidí Ó Sé weaved his spell over Westmeath, the county enjoyed the first championship of qualifiers like no other. Despite a first-round loss in Leinster to Meath two of their players,

Ger Heavin and Joe Fallon, would be amongst the top three scorers in the entire competition, just behind Galway’s Pádraic Joyce. They first accounted for Wexford, after a replay, then Limerick and Louth before facing Mayo in Dr. Hyde Park. “This was arguably Westmeath’s greatest ever senior championship triumph,” trumpeted the *Westmeath Examiner* after a 1-14 to 0-16 victory, with Damien Gavin’s fisted point the difference. They lost, to Meath again, in the quarter-final.

FERMANAGH (2004)

They still await their first Ulster senior title but Fermanagh followers will never forget the summer of 2004. It had an inauspicious start. They lost to Tyrone and their scheduled first-

round qualifier against Tipperary was not played when Tipperary withdrew. They then hosted Meath in Enniskillen. At the end of extra time Colm Bradley sent a sideline kick over the bar to snatch victory. They followed up with wins against Cork and Donegal and capped an incredible season when they beat Armagh to reach the All-Ireland semi-final, where they lost to Mayo.

LAOIS (2006)

It is largely overlooked in the romance between Laois footballers and the Kerry maestro Mick O’Dwyer that the championship of 2006 provided them with some spectacular moments. A heavy defeat in Leinster to Dublin steered them into the Qualifiers and a meeting with reigning All-Ireland champions Tyrone.



Matty Forde, Wexford, shoots to score a goal past Armagh goalkeeper Paul Hearty and full-back Francis Bellew, in the 2008 GAA Football All-Ireland Senior Championship Quarter-Final

With Joe Higgins and Tom Kelly leading a magnificent defence, they carved out a 0-9 to 0-6 win in O'Moore Park. They then beat Meath and Offaly before the odyssey ended in the quarter-finals against Mayo.

WEXFORD (2008)

Wexford's dream of Leinster glory was well and truly shattered in the provincial final when Dublin beat them by a whopping 23 points. But they regrouped and enjoyed one of their finest championships of the modern era. They joined the qualifiers in round three and had a comfortable win over Down. The quarter-final

draw pitted them against a highly rated Armagh team. Star forward Matty Forde was battling a hamstring injury but still kicked 1-5 of their total of 1-14 to help them to a comfortable five-point win. Their season ended at the semi-final stage against Tyrone.

KILDARE (2010)

This journey had the slowest start. Beaten by Louth in the province, Kildare were handed a home draw against Antrim in the first round of the qualifiers on the last day of June. After extra-time Kildare had survived, but only just. They met again in Belfast and Kildare got

their act together. They went on to beat Leitrim, Derry and Monaghan to qualify for an All-Ireland quarter-final meeting with old rivals Meath. Minutes into that game Dermot Earley's knee buckled. Meath led by six points. Then Johnny Doyle got motoring. He kicked eight points, five from play, as Kildare romped to a 2-17 to 1-12 win. They lost to Down by two points in the semi-final.

LIMERICK (2011)

Sometimes sport is cruel. That would be Limerick's fate in the 2011 championship but it is one from which they emerged with considerable



John Doyle, Kildare, in action against Gary O'Brien, Meath, in the 2010 GAA Football All-Ireland Senior Championship Quarter-Final



Eoghan O'Connor, Limerick, celebrates after scoring a goal to level the game in the final moments of the 2011 GAA Football All-Ireland Senior Championship Qualifier Round 4

credit and earns them the right to be placed in this roll of honour. They got a bye into the Munster semi-final but there they met Kerry and could not hold back the tide. They enjoyed comfortable successes against Offaly and Waterford before meeting Wexford in round 4, played in Portlaoise. In a classic, Wexford led by three points in injury time. Limerick sub Eoghan O'Connor smuggled a late goal to level the game. Ian Ryan sent a late free high towards the posts, the umpires disagreed on its trajectory, the referee Derek Fahy held a consultation with them and then awarded the

winning point, 1-18 to 1-17. Limerick's reward? Another game with Kerry.

CAVAN (2013)

“So near but yet so far as young Cavan side come up short” was the headline in the *Anglo Celt* newspaper after Cavan suffered an agonising one-point defeat to Monaghan in the Ulster semi-final of 2013. A seven-point win against Fermanagh proved some consolation and they were presented with a trip to Celtic Park in Derry for the next round. On a sun-drenched, energy-sapping day the game went to extra time after Damien

O'Reilly scored a very late equalising point. In a tense period of extra-time it was Cian Mackey's goal that sealed the deal for Cavan who went on to beat London before losing to Kerry in the quarter-final.

FERMANAGH (2015)

A 10-point defeat to Monaghan in the Ulster semi-final was a major blow for Fermanagh but they resurected their season with some style. A comfortable 13-point win against Antrim brought them into round three of the qualifiers and a tricky assignment against Roscommon at home in



Seán Quigley, Fermanagh, celebrates after scoring his side's winning point in the 2015 GAA Football All-Ireland Senior Championship Round 3A against Roscommon



Cian Mackey, Cavan, right, being congratulated by Kevin Tierney after scoring a last minute goal in the 2013 GAA Football All-Ireland Senior Championship, Round 3 against Derry

Enniskillen. Roscommon, the favourites, were five points up with five minutes left on the clock and seemingly coasting to victory. But Fermanagh produced an astonishing burst of scoring, six points without reply including the winner by Seán Quigley to win by 1-14 to 0-16. They then beat Westmeath before losing to Dublin.

TIPPERARY (2016)

No one really believed Tipperary would beat Galway when they were paired together in the All-Ireland quarter-final. However, giving what the

Tipperary Star described as “a masterclass”, Tipp enjoyed a comfortable 3-13 to 1-10 victory to reach the All-Ireland semi-final for the first time in 81 years. Michael Quinlivan was the star of the show scoring 1-4. Tipp had lost the Munster final to Kerry but got back on track with an exciting one-point win over Derry, a game described in the *Irish Examiner* as “the best of the championship so far”. The run ended against Mayo.

MONAGHAN (2018)

Defeat to Fermanagh in the Ulster semi-final was not how Monaghan

had planned their championship campaign. And new qualifier structures promised to make further progress more difficult than usual. They beat Waterford, Leitrim and Laois before the serious stuff started. Grouped with Kerry, Galway and Kildare they won two and drew with Kerry when they might have won. David Clifford did what we have now become accustomed to seeing, scoring an equalising goal from a seemingly impossible position. Their season ended with the narrowest loss in the All-Ireland semi-final against Tyrone.



Conor Sweeney of Tipperary celebrates scoring his side's second goal against Galway in the 2016 GAA Football All-Ireland Senior Championship Quarter-Final



Down substitutes celebrate at the final whistle of the 1991 All-Ireland Football Final

BY CHRISTY O'CONNOR

THINKING BIG AGAIN

AT THE OUTSET OF LAST YEAR'S CHAMPIONSHIP, IT HAD BEEN EXACTLY 30 YEARS SINCE DOWN BROKE THROUGH TO WIN THE 1991 ALL-IRELAND AND IGNITE THE MODERN ULSTER REVOLUTION, WITH THE PROVINCE SECURING FOUR SUCCESSIVE ALL-IRELANDS.

The sparks from that explosion carried into the following decade with Armagh and Tyrone also catching fire to win maiden All-Irelands.

The nine All-Irelands

Ulster teams won in 21 years between 1991-2012 was one more than just two counties from the province - Cavan and Down - had gathered over the previous 104 years.

Yet after going nine years without an All-Ireland, the manic search was on again for another Sam Maguire. Yet it was difficult to tell when that famine would actually end, especially while Dublin still looked like an unstoppable force and Kerry were coming strong again.

Where could that breakthrough actually come

from? There were four Ulster teams in Division 1 last year, with all four retaining their status for 2022. Yet the province's medium to long-term All-Ireland prospects still didn't look as positive as they were at the outset of the last decade. Donegal had been realistic All-Ireland contenders for years, but they have consistently come up short in the big games against the top teams.

"Not having beaten one of those big teams hurts us



The Tyrone squad celebrate winning the Sam Maguire Cup in last year's All-Ireland final

a lot," said Donegal's Ryan McHugh in March 2021. "It's something we need to rectify ASAP. There's no point talking about winning All-Irelands unless you can beat the top teams. We believe we can, but we have to consistently prove it. Ulster is always huge for us but it's the All-Ireland you set out for at the start of every year."

Tyrone had similar goals, but they had also been stalled by a similar plight; Tyrone hadn't beaten Dublin, Kerry or Mayo in

the championship since 2008. "My ambition every year is to win an All-Ireland with Tyrone," said Niall Morgan before last year's championship. "We have the weapons, but we have to start beating Dublin, Mayo and Kerry again. We need to be winning All-Irelands again. But if we think we can, so should other Ulster teams."

Tyrone emphatically answered those questions last year when beating Kerry and Mayo en route to a first All-Ireland title

for 13 years. Yet now that Tyrone are gone from the championship, can another Ulster team step up again and win an All-Ireland? After today, the number of Ulster contenders will be down to just two sides, with the winners of Armagh–Donegal joining Derry in the last eight.

The journey back to the top is still a long and arduous one for both Armagh and Donegal, and Derry. But Tyrone proved last year that Ulster teams have every right to believe that they can win All-Irelands again.

STADIUM REGULATIONS

Supporters are asked to respect the fact that they are entering and leaving the stadium through residential areas

- All persons entering this ground are admitted only subject to the following Ground Regulations and to the Rules and Regulations of the Gaelic Athletic Association. Entry to the ground shall be deemed to constitute unqualified acceptance of all these Rules and Regulations.
- Fireworks, smoke canisters, bottles, glass, cans, flags, banners, poles and other similar articles or canisters including anything which could or might be used as a weapon, are not permitted within the ground and any person in possession of such an article or container may be refused entry or ejected from the ground.
- Spectators are not permitted to bring alcohol into the ground/area.
- The climbing of walls, stands or other buildings in the ground is forbidden.
- Excessive noise such as that from the use of radio sets and behaviour likely to cause confusion or nuisance of any kind including foul or abusive language is not permitted in any part of the ground.
- Under no circumstances is it permitted to throw any object onto the pitch.
- Unauthorised persons are not permitted to enter onto the field of play and may be ejected from the ground.
- In general, The Ground Management reserves the right of admission.
- The Ground Management reserves the right to refuse admission or to eject any person who refuses to be searched by a member of An Garda Síochána.
- Any person who remains in a gangway may be ejected.
- The GAA event promoters reserves the right for its servants or agents to remove from the ground any person who does not comply with the ground regulations or whose presence on the ground could reasonably be construed as constituting a source of danger, nuisance or annoyance to other spectators.
- Smoking is forbidden in enclosed areas of stadium.
- Security Cameras are in operation throughout the stadium.

EVEN WHEN
THE CROWD
IS SMALL,
THE SUPPORT
IS HUGE.

TOUGH
CAN'T QUIT.



#THETOUGHEST



A close-up photograph of a hand holding a gold medal. The medal is ornate, featuring a central harp and intricate scrollwork. The background is a soft-focus green field.

eir

“ That one day is
what you live for.
Winning the whole thing
is what you dream of. ”

Brendan Lowry, All-Ireland winner, 1982.

eir, Proud Sponsor of the GAA Football
All-Ireland Senior Championship

eir, Ireland's No.1 Broadband Provider

GAA
FOOTBALL
ALL-IRELAND SENIOR
CHAMPIONSHIP

eir
PROUD SPONSOR