



Rugby fans all across Ireland watched the first virtual Energia All Ireland League Rugby Awards last Friday night to celebrate the 2019/20 season and honour the top award winners for this year.

Congratulations to.

Brian Hayes winner of the Men's Player of the Year. Brian finished the season as the joint-top try scorer in Division 1A



Jack Crowley winner of the Division 1A Rising Star Award. In his first year with Constitution, he was also in the running for Try of the Year. Playing for Ireland U20, Jack won the Man of the match Award in Ireland's victory over Scotland.

Brian Hickey winner of the Coach of the Year Award. Brian's award was well deserved as he had guided his side to victory in the Munster Senior Cup this season. Brian's coaching skills also ensured that Constitution were the only team across the five men's divisions to go through the season undefeated.



Commenting on the AIL Awards, Cork Constitution's Greg Barrett, Chairman of the IRFU Rugby Committee said:



"On behalf of the IRFU, I would like to extend a hearty congratulations to the winner of each award, and my thanks to all at home who tuned in to this unique event."

10 years on....

Firstly and most importantly, we hope all in Con are keeping well and safe.

Due to the unprecedented and difficult times that we all find ourselves in, the 10 year reunion of the double winning AIL Cup and League Senior squad of 2009-2010, which was scheduled for the Senior XV home game against Clontarf on 28 March 2020 could not go ahead.

The squad wish to extend their sincere thanks to the club for the very kind invite to attend this lunch and an enormous thank you to 2009-10 President, Pat "Crash" O'Keefe for all the work he did to organise the event.

There was a great response to the invite and everyone was looking forward to catching up with old teammates and friends. As it is important to mark and celebrate such milestones, we most definitely will organise a get-together in the near future.

We look forward to seeing you all soon for a drink, chat and a rendition from Kenny Murphy "He's got a boot"...

Best Wishes

Cork Con Senior

Squad 2009-2010

Please pass this on to anyone at all that might be suitable.

Middle-aged Male, single, non-smoker, moderate drinker would like to meet single female with view to co-habitation.

Any age, any colour, any religion.

Must reside within five kilometres of a golf course.

Upcoming Events

Annual General Meeting

June 24th 2020 8:00 PM

Temple Hill

Articles for Ezine

If you have an article you want included in the Ezine please email Pat Twomey @ cfcnews20@gmail.com

This time ten years ago I was watching Cork Constitution play St Mary's in the 2009/10 All Ireland League Final in Athlone. The following is the Irish Rugby.ie match report, I thought you might enjoy it.



Healy's Extra Special Try Does It For Cork Con

Given the quality of the respective teams, the close nature of the contest and the high stakes involved, it was always going to take something special to split Cork Constitution and St. Mary's College. And so it proved as an extra-time try from winger Cronan Healy decided Saturday's AIB League Division I final.

Cronan Healy's classy try sealed a first ever AIB League and Cup double for Cork Constitution at Dubarry Park, as St. Mary's College's dreams of All-Ireland silverware were dashed.



In the first period of extra-time, the wily winger finished off a flowing counter attack for the match-winning score, with Peter O'Mahony, captain Evan Ryan and influential out-half Jeremy Manning having roles in the build-up.

St. Mary's dominated possession and territory but were 3-0 behind at half-time, courtesy of a Manning penalty.

The Munster-contracted Manning then scrambled over for a well-taken try, but St. Mary's full-back Gavin Dunne, who kicked an earlier penalty, levelled the game at 10-10 and ensured extra-time by converting Shaun McCarthy's last-gasp score.

McCarthy's try, in the eighth minute of injury-time, looked to have been a crucial turning point. But Cork Con, with their strength and conditioning work coming to the fore, had the better of the two periods of extra-time and Healy danced through for the all-important try.

The table toppers were without the Munster-tied Scott Deasy, Tom Gleeson and Billy Holland, but Manning got clearance to play at half-back alongside Duncan Williams, who has secured a senior contract with Munster.

Hoping to end the club's ten-year wait for their second league title, St. Mary's made one change to the team that saw off Old Belvedere at the semi-final stage. Stephen Bradshaw started in place of Gareth Logan at half-back.

With the wind at their backs, Cork Con showed their intent early on when scrum half Williams tapped a kickable penalty. They flooded out to the right where full-back Darragh Lyons made a half-break, only from a subsequent knock on to take the pressure off St. Mary's.

With O'Mahony and eventual man-of-the-match Frank Cogan giving the Dubliners little time to breathe at the breakdown, St. Mary's captain Hugh Hogan was pinged for holding onto possession and Manning swept a right-sided kick through the posts for a fifth minute lead.



St. Mary's built through the phases with top try scorer Robin Copeland, Darragh Fanning and Stephen Grissing getting ball in hand. Healy was penalised for a ruck offence and while the men in blue set up an inviting lineout, the attack petered out.

They did win a penalty which Dunne stepped up to take. The Corkman's effort looked like it might have snuck inside the right-hand post – television replays certainly suggested so – but the assistant referees' flags stayed down.

Cork Con's lineout malfunctioned and they lost a series of balls as St. Mary's began to get a grip on possession, albeit without troubling the try-line.

Constitution's committed and disciplined defence was a key feature of their AIB Cup final win over Garryowen at this venue in January, and they were razor sharp again in that sector here.

Space was at a premium as Fanning and Cork Con centre Simon Zebo were quickly closed down in successive phases and conceded penalties on the deck.

A clever kick downfield by Manning, off a quick turnover, forced Dunne into conceding a lineout. Healy took it quickly and Brian Walsh's charges won a close range 22nd minute penalty which Manning pushed to the right and wide.

St. Mary's were making little headway as they continued to boss possession. They could have had a morale-boosting finish to the first half when McCarthy and Mark Sexton combined for a half-break. Referee Alain Rolland spotted hands in the ruck, but Dunne was off target with the penalty attempt.

Peter Smyth's men did draw level early in the second half, courtesy of a successful Dunne kick, and the momentum was with the Dublin side as Manning failed to convert a penalty won by some hard graft from Zebo.



In the 50th minute though, Manning snuck through for a well carved out try. The New Zealander, who kicked 18 points in Constitution's 2008 league final win, slipped out of an attempted tackle from McPhillips and scrambled over the line past the covering Fanning.

Winger Richie Lane tapped over the conversion and there was, at last, some distance between the sides at 10-3.

St. Mary's failed to panic and they tried the direct route, with skipper Hugh Hogan, Rob Sweeney and Copeland going into contact, before timely tackles from Lyons and Healy kept Fanning and Grissing out in one-on-one situations out wide.

The underdogs kept plugging away and as both sides tired, space gradually began to open up. The start of the final quarter was lit up by fiery breaks from Cogan and Ed Leamy who saw Cork Con cover 60 metres, but Copeland showed his pace as the Saints surged back.

Cork Con, with prop Stephen Archer getting through a huge amount of work in the loose, continued to soak up the pressure, yet Hogan and his team-mates got some reward when they won a penalty. Trailing 10-3, touch seemed the likely option, but they decided to ask Dunne to kick them closer on the scoreboard. Unfortunately for them and their travelling support, the full-back shot wide from a left-sided position.

Still, in a tense and drama-filled finale, there was just enough time for St. Mary's to get the try that their efforts had deserved.

McPhillips kept willing his forwards on, they made ground towards the posts but each avenue were sealed off by Constitution's gritty defence.

Their one slip-up was punished. Just when Cork Con were sucked in close to the posts, St. Mary's spun the ball to the left where out-half McCarthy linked with replacement Logan before reaching for the try-line ahead of Constitution hooker Robert Quinn.

The St. Mary's fans erupted and Dunne, steadying himself after three earlier misses, coolly slotted the conversion to send the league final into extra-time for the second successive year.

They needed try countback to separate Shannon and Clontarf twelve months ago at Thomond Park, but this particular Leinster v Munster affair did not need such a measure.

With the players understandably tiring after a strength-sapping 80 minutes, the game was there for the taking and Cork Con showed the greater hunger and will to win in extra-time.

A bustling run down the right touchline by outstanding number 8 Cogan saw him blast past Fanning and replacement hooker Gavin Hickie, only to run out of space with Quinn on his shoulder.

St. Mary's continued to play more of the rugby, with Cork Con content to defend and pick off their chances when they came. They struck the knockout blow as the first period of extra-time came to a close.

Dunne had his kick blocked down in midfield by O'Mahony and Williams, the ball was swept through the hands as Cork Con broke down the left. The excellent Evan Ryan shipped it on to Manning who passed for Healy to come in on an angle, beat Fanning's tackle and outstrip the cover to gleefully touch down behind the posts.

It was a terrific try out of nothing, but showed the danger that the Cork Con backs pose – even from the halfway line. Manning added the conversion for 17-10 lead and there was no way back for St. Mary's.

They needed a spark of brilliance or a huge collective effort from the pack to hit back with a try. It did not come and Lane almost engineered a third try in the dying minutes, collecting his own grubber kick just metres from the Saints line.



Replacement Cormac Quinn put in a try-saving tackle to deny him, but the damage had been done as Cork Con were left to celebrate their second AIB League success in three years and fourth in all (1991, 1999, 2008 and 2010).

CORK CONSTITUTION: Darragh Lyons; Richie Lane, Simon Zebo, Evan Ryan (capt), Cronan Healy; Jeremy Manning, Duncan Williams; Martin Gately, Robert Quinn, Stephen Archer, Merle O'Connell, Ian Nagle, Peter O'Mahony, Ed Leamy, Frank Cogan.

Replacements used: Brian Hayes for O'Connell (62 mins), Gareth Murray for Gately (80); Brendan Cuttriss for Nagle (7, et), Alex Ryan for Williams (14, et).

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE: Gavin Dunne; Ronan Doherty, Stephen Grissing, Mark Sexton, Darragh Fanning; Shaun McCarthy, Conor McPhillips; Jack McGrath, Richie Sweeney, Robert Sweeney, Stephen Bradshaw, Robin Copeland, Damian Hall, Paul Nash, Hugh Hogan (capt).

Replacements used: Colm McMahon for McGrath (half-time), Gareth Logan for Bradshaw (56 mins), Gavin Hickie for Richie Sweeney (71), Barry O'Flanagan for Nash (72); Cormac Quinn for McPhillips 6, et), Conor Donohue for Sexton (12, et), Stuart O'Flanagan for Doherty (14, et).

Referee: Alain Rolland (IRFU)

Letters to the Editor

Hi Pat, hope is well in Cork during lockdown, I am stuck in Stafford. I am attaching a nice piece on Mick from Bunnies, Con prop in the late 80s. If you include it in the newsletter please acknowledge John McNamara Any Craic Magazine. Best Wishes.

John McNamara

Mick O'Brien was a powerful tighthead prop in the mould of Englands Jeff Probyn.

What are your early memories of rugby?

I remember watching the Five Nations and used to kick a gold piggybank over the line in our home at the Marina bar. We moved to Crosshaven and Joe Drennan invited me Paddy Lawless and Eddie Buckley to join Crosshaven rugby club. The underage was not well developed at the time and matches tended to be sporadic. I went to Rockwell to repeat my Leaving Cert and worked my way onto the team when Father Broderick took over the coaching and shook the team up. We beat Cbc in the final and I got a Senior Schools Cup Medal on a team that included Brian McGoey and Jack Clarke.

When did you get your first Senior break?

In my Second year in Con Mick Bradley picked me up on the Well road and offered me my Senior debut away to Nifc. We played that game in Raven Hill but four of us had to leave early to play Dennehy Cup the next day. I was starting Tighthead for Con in the Junior Cup campaign of 89 and 90 but am one of the few ex Con players not to have a Junior Cup medal as we were beaten in the Semi final in both those years. I used to enjoy a bit of banter with the crowd and stepping up to take a conversion at the end of a game against Highfield in the Twenties Cup, this brought a large laugh from the crowd as the ball barely travelled a metre above the ground.

What were the highlights of your career?

Winning the schools cup was my major highlight but I only played in the First Round as I was injured. I loved rugby with a social dimension and the J3 cup winning team in Con which included captain Frank O'Connor and John O'Mahony (Peters dad) was one of my favourite teams to play on. I had to feign an injury to avoid a promotion to the J2 team. I moved to London and played with Midland Bank but followed the "have neck will travel philosophy and lined up for a couple of teams". My last season in London culminated in me captaining the London Irish Wild Geese away at Baths recreation ground. I later returned to play with Crosshaven after an injury disrupted period with Highfield Seniors.

I was well known for my elongated lineout calls including "toasted sandwiches two pounds fifty in the lodge" which was greeted with surprise by both packs. During that period I ended up playing with lads I had coached in the school but on that J3 side we promoted traditional rugby values e.g. sing songs, after match drinks and touring.

Who was your most difficult opponent and who did you enjoy playing with?

My most notable opponent was Paco Fitzgerald of Young Munster, I also had some tough battles with Terence Cramer in Con versus Dolphin Junior games. My favourite teammate in Con was Trevor Barry whose quips were legendary my favourite being "you can complain about the Guinness in Con but never the Murphys."

Have you been involved in the game since you stopped playing?

I coached exclusively in Crosshaven, schools, First XV forwards, J3 team mentioned above. I took up Golf and enjoy eventing and Radio broadcasts while working in the Pharma industry.

Letters to the editor

The following letter from Robyn Malone, granddaughter of my next door neighbour, Paula, was recently published in the Sunday Times "The Children's Times". I thought you might enjoy it.

SURPRISINGLY, I AM HAVING FUN

My name is Robyn – I am 10 years old. When they announced that schools would be closing, I was really happy. I thought I was going to be able to play all day with my friends and go to football and camogie training. Then I found out we had to do school work at home, we couldn't play with our friends, or go to training, or go to our grandparent's house. It all sounded crazy.

Oddly, I am finding it okay. Each school day we stick to the same routine: get up, go for a walk, do school work until about 11:30am and then play. We have had some fun times, like when me, my sister and our neighbours had a water fight over the fence while keeping our distance. We have thought of loads of new outside games, like treasure hunts, making trains with our go-kart and other toys, and making obstacle courses. I am looking forward to being able to go places again, hopefully soon.

Robyn Malone, 4th class,

County Cork