

The Deise Club Hurling Scene in 2013



On the Club scene here in Waterford, things were almost as exciting as they were on the inter-county front, with predictions made at the start of the campaign long discarded by the time Tom Cunningham presented the News & Star Cup to Passage.

For many, the 2013 County Senior Hurling Championship was to be a two horse race between Ballygunner and De La Salle, the best two sides in the county over the past four or five years by some distance.

It was expected that they would not have it all their own way however. Last years beaten finalist's Dungarvan and semi finalists Fourmilewater were expected to push them all the way. Lismore and Mount Sion were also regarded as certainties to reach the last eight of the championship, with the likes of Ballyduff Upper, Passage and Abbeyside expected to push hardest for the last two places on offer in the quarter finals.

There are no certainties however in life, and to expect something can often leave you disappointed and those certainties and expectations when it came to the 2013 county senior hurling championship were to prove, wrong.

Again split into two groups of six and played off as a league before the knockout stages of the championship kicked in, in Group One De La Salle as expected topped group one, but in the eyes of some surprisingly and maybe in the eyes of some controversially they did not end the campaign with maximum points from their five games.

The 2012 County Intermediate Champions An Rinn, finished as expected bottom of the pile in Group one. A few years back, the County Secretary purposed that an Intermediate Premier Championship is set up in Waterford as what happens in Cork, or a Senior B championship similar to that in Clare be introduced. The idea was dismissed.

The idea was a good one, and maybe one that is worth revisiting. Over the years, clubs like An Rinn (Twice), Dunhill and Clonea have all come up from Intermediate and have gone back down just as quick. Roanmore, Dungarvan and Ballysaggart may have bucked the trend, but this is the exception rather than the norm. Roanmore even it could be said have struggled since they have come up and had a number of escapes, but so far they have held their own.

In between however, there was plenty of shocks. Fourmilewater finished second. Ballyduff Upper finished third. An improvement on twelve months earlier when they were in a relegation play off.

The last place however was a surprise. All year Lismore struggled. They never reached the heights they could. They went into their last game against An Rinn knowing that they had to win, but even then they knew that it might not be enough.

Win they did, putting seven goals past An Rinn, but it was to no avail as neighbours Tallow who also went into their last game against De La Salle needing to win to knock out their neighbours of the championship.

The city side on the day were short several players. They called players up from their Junior team rather than break up their intermediate team which was going well to fill the voids. Tallow took advantage of the fact De La Salle were understrength to win 2-10 to 0-13 to claim the final place in group one for the quarter finals.

Group two was equally as close.

Roanmore as expected finished bottom of the group, but retained their senior status for another year by beating An Rinn in a relegation play off.

Mount Sion and Passage advanced to the knockout stages of the championship before the last round of league games were played. The other three sides, Abbeyside, Ballygunner and Dungarvan were having a great tussle between them.

Abbeyside beat Ballygunner in the league section of the competition and the Gunners then went on to beat Dungarvan in one of the games of the year.

What was happening was meaning that with the last round of games due to be played, two of the three would advance to the quarter finals. The question on everybody's lips was which two.

The final round of games threw up two massive local derbies.

The county board had a bumper day. At Walsh Park those passing through the gates parted with €4,105. At Fraher Field patrons parted with €5,130. Throw in those that had purchased season passes and those that had other various passes means that two big attendances were to be found at both venues.

At Walsh Park, Ballygunner went into the game having to win. They had never lost to Passage in a championship game, and they kept that stat alive with a comprehensive 2-17 to 1-9 victory. In Fraher Field, Dungarvan also had to win. A draw would have done Abbeyside.

The Village Men went into the game reaching their peak. They were playing some good hurling and in an exciting finish at Fraher Field every score was greeted with a greater cheer than the last. In the end, it was the Abbeyside supporters that were most vocal, winning 2-11 to 0-16. Abbeyside and Ballygunner had reached the knockout stages of the competition. Last years beaten finalists were out.

The quarter finals pitted De La Salle against Ballygunner, the two sides most expected to remain involved in October. The

game was tight. Very tight. It went to extra time where Ballygunner finished the stronger of the two sides to advance.

The other three quarter finals were played at Fraher Field. Mount Sion proved too strong for Tallow. In the first half Ballyduff Upper looked far stronger than Passage but a goal before half time turned the game and Passage came storming back to win, and in what was a disappointing game, Abbeyside proved too strong for Fourmilewater.

The semi finals saw teams that had previously met meet again. Ballygunner this time around proved too strong for Abbeyside while Passage for the second time accounted for Mount Sion.

The final was a memorable one. Ballygunner with seven minutes to go were seven points up. Fans were leaving the ground. But Passage came storming back.

The goals began to hit the Ballygunner net. Passage deservedly drew level, and deep in stoppage time they hit a third goal in the game to win a first ever senior title on a 3-16 to 3-13 score line. It was real fairy tale stuff.

In Intermediate, Ardmore are county champions. They beat Clashmore in a terrific Western Final thanks to some late scores from Seamus Prendergast. In the county Final they beat Dunhill far more convincingly than the 0-23 to 2-13 score line suggests.

In Junior, Ballysaggart are the talk of the county. After coming through the western championship they beat a fancied Tramore side in the county final on a 1-18 to 1-9 score and then went on to beat opposition from Cork, Tipperary and Limerick to become Munster Champions.

In the 'Attached' Junior Championships, Erin's Own won the intermediate final beating Abbeyside while Ballygunner proved too strong for Lismore in the senior final.

De La Salle and Brickeys are the under 21 champions after wins over Saint Carthage's and Tramore in the county finals, while there was minor championships, there was wins for De La Salle (Div1), Erin's Own (Div2), Cois Bhríde (Div3) and Ballyduff Upper (Div4) following respective wins over Dungarvan, Clonea, Fourmilewater and Ballyduff Lower.