

Galway Minors, All Ireland Champions, 1970

Now

that Alan Mulholland's Under-21 team have kick started the Galway GAA season in such spectacular fashion, we thought to show you some champions of yesteryear, the county minor team who won the All Ireland in 1970.

They

are, back row; Mickey Rooney, Cortoon ; Alfie Marren, Kilkerrin/Clonberne ; Michael Meehan, Kilkerrin/Clonberne ; Sean Higgins, Kilkerrin/Clonberne ; Stephen Cloonan, Athenry ; Michael Geraghty, Glenamaddy ; Iomar Barrett, Mountbellew ; John Kemple, Tuam Stars.

In

front are John Tobin, Tuam Stars ; Tom Connor, Killanin ; Peter Silke, Dunmore McHales ; Joe Corcoran, St. Michaels, captain ; P.J. Burke, Annaghdown ; Joe Lardner, Annaghdown and Maurice Burke, Corofin.

This

team beat Mayo in the Connacht final, Dublin in the All Ireland semi-final, and played Kerry in the final, which for 43 minutes was a boring match. Then Mick Rooney pointed to put Galway 2 points ahead. This was immediately answered by a Kerry goal, and suddenly there were two new teams on the pitch. What followed was Gaelic football at its thrilling best, suspense piling on suspense, and a last minute point to force a replay, the best possible result.

The

replay began where the drawn game had left off in spite of the bad weather conditions. "Instead, the high fielding and radar directed passes made one feel at times that here were 30 Mick O'Connell's on the field, and if the exalted standard of the first 20 minutes was not quite maintained, it came at frequent intervals for the rest of the hour, with never more than a point or two between the teams during a second half of almost unbearable tension. Galway were first into their stride, a point and a goal up after 3 minutes of quite dazzling attacking play that threatened to submerge the Kerry boys. The goal, initiated with a perfect crossfield pass by Joe Lardner to right corner forward Maurice Burke, and finished by Lardner when he moved in to take the return pass and drive from 20 yards to the net, was a work of football art. But Kerry were not to be hustled, and were ahead by two points at half-time. They went another point up on the restart, and then the Galway mentors made a shrewd switch which had a vital bearing on the result, Moving Mickey Rooney from centre forward to midfield, changing places with Peter Silke.

This ended Kerry's midfield dominance and opened up a series of Galway attacks that brought them to the front going into the final quarter, and after the lead had changed hands twice and the scores were tied at 1 – 10 each, it was Silke who had Galway's winning point in the last minute. It was a memorable match which Galway just about deserved to win, principally because of the sharper work of their forwards, who wasted far fewer chances than the Kerry boys, whose first-half supremacy, when backed by the wind, was to a great extent frittered away by a tally of nine wides. They had fifteen in all against Galway's five, and that made all the difference.

Galway had splendid defenders in Alfie Marren, John Kemple, Mike Geraghty and Joe Corcoran: Rooney took midfield honours when moved back, and their best forwards were Joe Lardner, Maurice Burke and John Tobin. The Galway scorers were Lardner (1 – 3), Tobin (0 – 3, two from frees), Rooney (0 – 2) and O'Connor, Walsh and Silke (0 – 1 each).

A number of this Galway team also featured on the 1972 under-21 Galway team who won the county's first title in that code. They again beat a Kerry team, many of whom would go on to be the backbone of the great Kerry senior team of the late 70's.

Our thanks today go to Maurice Burke for the photograph, to Michael O'Donohue and also to Mitchel Cogley whose match reports we have quoted.