

## Clonduff Camogie Report 2020

The Year 2020 will be remembered in the history books not for what happened on the field of play but for a global pandemic that affected lives, livelihoods, and life as we know it!

Just when we were preparing for the season to get underway, it was stopped in its tracks and remained so for just over 3mths. The end of June was welcomed with great enthusiasm as children and their parents celebrated the pitches re-opening. We can count ourselves lucky we got 3 good months of competition but all good things come to an end and Oct 16<sup>th</sup> saw the restrictions come back in terms of GAA and very little, if any, club activity has happened since. However, the club packed a lot into those 3 months and below is a summary of the activity.

### U6 team

Due to the current situation the u6s were made up of children that were both u6 and u7. With the schools being off, the p1 children did not get to come this year. We had approx. 25 girls attending and although we never got to participate in any blitzes, nonetheless they still had great fun, with the regular gymnastic routines taking place. Many thanks to Shauna Carvill for help each week and also to Eve Matthews and Hannah Wilson who also helped. The girls participated in the Parish league on 26<sup>th</sup> September but with no organised games for this age group due to COVID-19 they got some very welcome camogie.

### U8 & U10 teams

Again, there was no organised games or blitzes for this age group, so they relied on weekly training sessions taken by a panel of senior players. We would like to thank all those girls who helped out with coaching this year and hopefully will be able to call on them again when life gets back to some sort of normality. Niohmi Murray was the lead coach with the following senior players Katie McGilligan, Beth Fitzpatrick, Clare McGilligan, Molly Brown, Clara Cowan, Katie Morgan, Katie Lynch and Niamh Fitzpatrick.

Thanks also goes to Elaine McAlinden and Edel Maginn who were Covid Supervisors.

### U12 team

The U12s had a shorter season this year unfortunately due to COVID-19. Senior players Orla Gribben and Sara Louise Graffin took over the management and coaching of the team this year. A county board decision meant that we had no competitive fixtures, but the girls started training on 7<sup>th</sup> July and continued right through to the 13<sup>th</sup> October. In that time the girls had 2 challenge games against Mayobridge and Liatroim and put up brilliant performances in both. There was the Parish League on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> Sept and with 20 players who attended training throughout the year we were able to field 3 teams mixed with some of the younger u14s. Thanks to the parents who were managers on the day and contributed to a great day of fun for the girls. Thanks also to Caitlin Harper, Erin Rafferty and Ally Magee who helped out – your input and coaching was greatly appreciated. Thanks also to Nigel McPolin who was

Covid supervisor, attending training every week to ensure the safety of all the players and coaches.

### U14 Team

This bunch of girls were very excited to get out training and playing when restrictions lifted at the end of June. Unfortunately, a massive loss to this team was the cancellation of Feile, the team and management had been looking forward to Feile for a few years and were in with a great chance of winning the county title and getting to the National competition but Covid put paid to that! A league was arranged with the team topping the group with 5 wins out of 5 – against Castlewellan, Kilcoo, Dromara, Darragh Cross and Ballyholland. The Championship had us paired against Ballygalget in the first round and with only one team coming out of the group it was all to play for. After a nervous start on our home pitch, Clonduff ran out easy winners. Unfortunately, the other group remains undecided with 3 matches still remaining and all games need to be played to get a winner so a decision has been taken at the recent County Board meeting that no games will resume unless they were at final stage. This was a very disappointing end to an already disrupted year and leaves Clonduff u14s who would have undoubtedly won the final, given results to date, the real losers.

Managers of the u14s were Guinevra McGilligan, Oliver Morgan, Colin Shields and Denise Close with senior player Clare McGilligan helping out also. A big thank you to all the parents who supported the team during the year, it was a difficult one and your support was greatly appreciated.

### U16 Team

This young team completed their league campaign unbeaten with wins over An Ríocht, Ballyholland, Castlewellan and Aghaderg. They travelled to Portaferry for the first round of the Championship and although putting in a great performance were beaten by a strong Ards team; like the U14 Championship only one team went through to finals and with a final game to play, against Ballygalget, the team were up against the odds. Ballygalget had already beaten Portaferry so nothing less than a win would do but Ballygalget proved too strong and beat Clonduff convincingly. This was the end of the U16 season, but the girls continued to train with the U14s until all juvenile training was pulled in mid-October.

The team was managed by Guinevra McGilligan, Oliver Morgan, Colin Shields and Denise Close; much appreciation to the parents who supported the management and team throughout the year.

### Minor Team

The minor team entered the Championship which was to be played in October – we were listed in Section 1 with Castlewellan, Liatroim, Mayobridge and Newry/Ballyholland but unfortunately this competition never materialised due to the revised restrictions for club games.

### Junior Team

It was the intention to enter a second's team in a championship campaign, to be run in October/November when the County season was underway but like the minors this competition was pulled.

### Senior Team

Although it seems like a lifetime ago the Senior team played Gailtír on the 26<sup>th</sup> Jan 2020 in the All Ireland club semi-final in Clane in Co. Kildare – things didn't go our way that day with injuries and illness in the run up to the game and Clonduff didn't do themselves justice at all and Gailtír avenged their All Ireland defeat from 2019.

The club season did not start until July with the league being used as challenge matches in preparation for the championship. Clonduff played Ballycran in the first round of the championship, followed by An Ríocht and Liatroim and topped the group. An open draw saw us pitted against Portaferry at home in the semi-final where Clonduff just got past the finish line by a narrow 2-point margin. This was the best thing for the team as it completely re-focused them for a final against Ballygalget the following week. The final, played in Ballycran, was a tough encounter but Clonduff stamped their authority on the game from early on and never looked like losing their momentum; the fact that everyone in the county thought Ballygalget were the new champions leading up to the game gave Clonduff all the motivation they needed.

A big shout out to the management team who brought a new dimension to training in this short season. As it stands the team is due to play the winners of Eglis v Derrylaughan in the Ulster Final in January; whether this game goes ahead is completely out of the club's hands and they await further information.

Management team: Damian Farnon, Alastair McGilligan, Ross Carr, Aaron Graffin, Kieran McGourty and Guinevra McGilligan

### County teams

The U16 County team just got up and running in September with a league campaign with Ellen Shields, Katie Morgan and Aimee Morgan on the panel.

Orlaith McCusker, Tiarna Savage and Ellen Shields represented Clonduff on the Down Minor panel in 2020.

The County Seniors and Juniors had completed some league games before lockdown with the Seniors registering 2 wins against Derry and Kerry, while the Junior team had a win over Armagh and a narrow loss to Carlow. The County season resumed after the Club championship under a combined panel and once again is represented by a strong Clonduff contingent with Fionnuala Carr (Captain) Sara Louise Graffin, Paula O'Hagan, Clare

McGilligan, Cassie Fitzpatrick, Orla Gribben, Jenna Boden, Katie McGilligan, Erin Rafferty, Beth Fitzpatrick, Clara Cowan and Isabella O'Hare involved.

Down Juniors won the Ulster Intermediate title with a fine win over Armagh - players involved with the Junior team were Jenna Boden, Erin Rafferty, Katie McGilligan, Clara Cowan, Isabella O'Hare and Beth Fitzpatrick.

Good Luck to all the girls who play Laois tomorrow in Ashbourne.

### Primary Schools

With the schools off there was very little sport played however the team did get the chance to enter the indoor competition hosted in Ballyholland.

### Secondary Schools

Once again Camogie is played in all the local schools with Clonduff Players featuring heavily in all teams. Congratulations to Sacred Heart Grammar School who won the Ulster U20 Medallion Shield beating St Colm's Draperstown in a closely contested final; senior player Orlaith McCusker was a key member of the team.

Sacred Heart also won the Ulster Junior Medallion Shield, beating close rivals Our Lady's in the final, with Orlaith McCusker and Grace Clancy on the team.

### Sponsorship/Fundraising

Although lockdown was in full swing, we did run our annual Easter Hamper, hosted by Morgan Meats. The proceeds of this went towards the County Senior teams fundraising efforts and was split between St Vincent de Paul and NHS Key workers.

Duck Derby – Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September – was the main fundraiser of the year, we were blessed with a glorious day where families and supporters turned out in great numbers to Liatroim Lodge where over 1000 ducks were released. Congratulations to Carol Magee whose duck made it to the finish line first.

### Other news

- Fionnuala Carr won 2019 County Senior Player of the Year for the 2019 at the Ulster Camogie Awards.
- Karen Haughey won 2019 Intermediate Club Player of the Year at the Ulster Camogie Awards.
- The Summer coaching scheme was held on 10<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> August – a massive thank you to Orla Morgan for organising and all the coaches and parents involved.
- We had 4 new arrivals during the year and congratulations to Nicola (Baby Harry), Natasha (Baby Esmée) Orla (Baby Callie), Karen (Baby Clara) on the birth of their beautiful son and daughters. Best wishes to Ursula who is the last one standing and is due in the next few weeks.
- A very successful Parish League was held on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> Sept – again thank you to Orla Morgan for organising.

- A big thank you to Oliver Morgan, Colin Shields and Martin Savage who officiated at championship games throughout the season.
- A big thank you to Paddy Brannigan who is our nominated adult referee and also refereed many underage games throughout the season, thank you also to Alastair McGilligan who refereed at underage level also.

#### Administration

Off the field of play our hard-working committee continue to support our teams in all they do and are the backbone of everything that is good about Clonduff Camogie:

Chairperson/Secretary      Guinevra Mc Gilligan

Treasurer                      Cathy Fitzpatrick

Assistant Treasurer        Cassie Fitzpatrick

Insurance Officer            Marie Cowan

Additional committee members: Teresa Carr, Eileen Hamill, Maura Quinn, Ursula Kearney and Orla Morgan.

Outside of the club Teresa Carr is County Vice Chairperson, Eileen Hamill is a member of the County THDC and Ursula Kearney is Vice Chair of Ulster Camogie.