




# ON THE BALL


THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE CAMOGIE ASSOCIATION  
*Winter 2019*




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Galway's Sarah Dervan after the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Senior Championship Final with Uachtarán Kathleen Woods



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Welcome: Uachtarán an Cumann Camógaíochta Kathleen Woods

# Groundbreaking Year for Camogie

*I am delighted to welcome you to the Winter edition of our On the Ball magazine in what has been a groundbreaking year for Camogie with big changes both on and off the pitch.*

**ON THE PITCH:**

Senior Championship action got underway in June and we were treated to a feast of excellent Camogie action all around the country. The trusty two of Cork and Kilkenny both topped their respective groups, while Tipperary, Limerick, Waterford and Division 1 League champions Galway entered the knockout stages.

The Quarter-Finals in Semple Stadium brought two fantastic matches as Galway were given a tough test by Waterford before finishing the game strongly to prevail, while Limerick really took the game to Tipperary before the Premier County went up another gear to advance to consecutive Semi-Final appearances.

The Semi-Finals witnessed two of the best matches we have seen at this stage for many years. In the first game, Kilkenny overcame a stubborn Tipperary side who matched the Cats throughout the opening-half, before finding the crucial goals to damage the Tipperary resolve and advance to their fourth consecutive All-Ireland Final appearance.

The shock of the Championship came in the second Semi-Final as reigning champions Cork were ousted by a single point by League champions Galway in a thrilling match that had over 4,000 spectators in the LIT Gaelic Grounds on the edge of their seats for 60+ minutes of thrilling action. It set up a repeat of the Division 1 League Final from March as Kilkenny and Galway were to go head-to-head for the Senior Championship title.

It was a Final that certainly didn't disappoint as the Tribeswomen created a special piece of history, becoming the first Galway team to hold both the Division 1 League and the Senior All-Ireland Championship titles in the same year! The match itself lived up to the hype as both teams matched each other for skill, while Galway found the crucial goals that eventually turned the game in their favour to win the All-Ireland title.

A massive congratulations to Galway on their historic year and well done to the players, the county board, management and everyone behind the scenes who made it possible. Commiserations once again goes to Kilkenny who have suffered this same heartbreak for the last three years. With the news that Ann Downey has left her role as manager, there will be new challenges ahead for everyone involved with Kilkenny Camogie and I'm sure they will be back as strong as ever when the new season gets underway. We would like to wish Ann the best of luck in her future endeavours.

We also witnessed another epic match in the Intermediate showdown as Westmeath produced one of the most amazing comeback wins to beat Galway and lift the Jack McGrath Cup for the first time. Despite being behind at half-time by seven points (1-08 to 0-4) the Lake County turned on the style to outscore their opponents and claim the honours on a scoreline of 1-11 to 1-09.

Both teams made it to the decider in impressive fashion, with both teams advancing from Group 1 with Westmeath winning five

Uachtarán Kathleen Woods addresses the players at the All-Stars Tour Jersey presentation.



of the six matches, while Galway were unbeaten with five wins and one draw. Galway beat Tipperary by 2-9 to 2-5 in the Semi-Final while Westmeath overcame Down by a single point to make the Croke Park showdown.

Huge congratulations to Westmeath for securing their Senior status with their victory in the Final, after competing in the Premier Junior grade just two seasons ago. It is a meteoric rise for this county, and it is a testament to the hard work and dedication of everyone behind the scenes, supporting the game and the players.

Commiserations to Galway who fell slightly short on the day, but they can be very proud of their efforts this year. This side went unbeaten all the way to the Final and I have no doubt this team will be back with a vengeance to put that right next Summer.

In the Premier Junior Final, Kerry turned their fortunes around from 12 months previous as they came out victorious over Limerick on a scoreline of 0-11 to 0-08. The Kingdom went through the Championship campaign unbeaten and maintained that with victory in the Final. Congratulations to all the players, team mentors and supporters that followed this team on their journey to Croke Park this year and stuck with each other through the tough defeat of last year.

Commiserations to Limerick and their management team for falling short of their opponents on the Final in September. This side has plenty of talent coming through and I believe that this county will be back to challenge for honours again next year.

#### OFF THE PITCH:

Having taken up her role in the Association in June, Sinéad McNulty was announced as the Camogie's new Ard Stiúrthóir after Paddy Boyd completed his interim role. Sinéad brings a wealth of knowledge with her into the role having completed 11 years as Head of Sport in TU Dublin City Campus. I would like to thank Paddy Body for his services to Camogie and wish him all the best in his future endeavours. I would also like to wish Sinéad the very best of luck in the role and I look forward to working closely with her on all areas within the Association.

After the success of the maiden All-Stars Tour to Madrid in 2017, the All-Stars teams of 2018 and 2019 once again jetted off on tour, this time they headed Stateside to play against each other in New York. The tour was in partnership with Liberty Insurance and we thank them for their sponsorship of Camogie and the All-Stars Tour.

Finally, almost 25,000 people made the trip to Croke Park to support our six county teams in the Finals, breaking our own record for attendance at a standalone fixture. The attendance at our big showcase has continued to improve year-on-year, and I would like to thank every one of you for your commitment and support of our games.

If this year was a good spectacle of Camogie, I cannot wait to see what the next 12 months brings.

I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and thank you all once again for your support in 2019.

# NIAMH KILKENNY

*"Previous success is not a guarantee of future success"*

By Sarah Stanley

Séan Brett of Liberty Insurance presents the Player of the Match award for the Senior Championship final to Niamh Kilkenny 8/9/2019





2019 Camogie Association/WGPA Senior Players' Player of the Year Niamh Kilkenny (Galway)

Lifting the All-Ireland Senior Championship trophy is the ultimate goal for any Camogie player. To lift it more than once is something extra special.

For some of the younger players on the Galway panel, they finally got the opportunity to call themselves an All-Ireland Senior champion. For the rest, and those lucky enough, it meant adding another medal to the one claimed during their last Championship success five years ago.

One player who has endured two winning campaigns is midfielder Niamh Kilkenny. The Pearses star was unplayable this year and completely dominated matches each time she stepped onto the turf.

Her personal performances inspired her fellow teammates around her to rally to victory in the decider in September, sparking celebrations and jubilation in the West of Ireland.

*"We were delighted to see our year's work come to fruition", said the Galway ace.*

*"Our aim on the day was to play to our maximum potential and there was a real sense of satisfaction in the manner of our victory. We knew it would be a huge task to beat Kilkenny, so we were thrilled when the final whistle went."*

The midfielder's performances in the maroon jersey this year saw her claim many personal and team accolades in what became a trophy laden season for the 30-year-old. Those trophies included the Player of the Match award in both the All-Ireland Semi-Final and Final, a feat that has been rarely achieved prior to the 2019 campaign.

Other personal accolades included an All-Stars Award and the Player's Player of the Year award. These trophies, a Division 1 League title and Senior Championship title were sensational achievements for the stalwart of the game.

When asked to sum up the pride associated with winning those personal awards, her modesty and deflection from her individual successes was offered straight up.

*"It's nice to win personal accolades but the ultimate goal is to work as part of a team and win an All-Ireland. It was the team performance and the overall work rate from every player that contributed to our success this year."*

The year couldn't have gone any better for this Galway side. Early signs indicated that it could be a successful year as they claimed the Division 1 League title but even still, many people couldn't see past another Championship decider between Cork and Kilkenny, as had been the way for the three years previous. The Tribeswomen and their management had other thoughts.

*"As a group we are very proud of our accomplishments in 2019", Kilkenny recalls.*

*"We used the League as a platform for Championship. Progressing to the latter stages of the League gave experience to our younger players and this was a key factor to our success in September."*

*"Winning the League gave us the confidence going into the Championship that we could compete with the best. A standout moment was our second-half performance in the*

*Quarter-Final against Waterford. It showed the character and resilience within the team and these are two traits that any successful team needs".*

Behind every successful team is a set of management that is determined and driven to the cause. This year, Cathal Murray took the reins for both the Senior and Intermediate panels and guided them both to the All-Ireland deciders. His achievements prove how this group of players bought into his mindset and methods right from the off.

*"Cathal and his management team brought a sense of professionalism and unity to the set-up. His open and transparent approach gave players confidence to express themselves and instilled belief in the players."*

Now that the dust has settled on that energy filled campaign, what lies ahead in her downtime for the Galway superstar?

*"It will be nice to attend events with family and friends that are often sacrificed during the summer months. I should probably start planning my upcoming wedding. May is fast approaching!"*

Galway now head into the 2020 campaign as the team to beat. They will be the reigning Champions in every competitive fixture they will take part in, so how does that pressure sit with the players?

*"We'll enjoy this year's success as they haven't come around too often in Galway. When the New Year comes around we'll refocus on 2020. Every year brings new challenges. Previous success is not a guarantee of future success. We know we will have to work twice as hard in 2020 to achieve our goals."*

If the 2020 campaign brings half the excitement that transpired in 2019, we are in for another exciting year of Camogie action. The spotlight will shine on Galway as the defending Champions so it is up to the rest of the country to diminish the spotlight and create more Camogie history.

# Camogie the Real Winner in New York

By Sarah Stanley

A fantastic trip with eye-opening experiences for players and locals alike, Camogie was the real winner when the bi-annual Camogie All-Stars Tour took place in November.

30 players represented the Association with pride in Gaelic Park, managed by two fantastic managers in Paudie Murray (Cork) and Cathal Murray (Galway) who both experienced All-Ireland glory with their Senior county teams over the last 24 months.

The man in the middle, on this occasion was our Senior Championship Final referee for 2019 Ray Kelly who was given the nod to officiate the match.

Both New York GAA and Liberty Insurance were unbelievably welcoming to the group and couldn't have been any more helpful while the attending party were Stateside.

Liberty Insurance even arranged a surprise for the tour, as social media influencer Josh Prey who has been vocally encouraging of the game of Camogie in America on his media platforms, was there to witness the All-Stars match in person and meet the players.

The initial two days were spent sightseeing and socialising with a trip of Ellis Island and the statue of Liberty taking place, whilst the group also visited the Irish Consulate and received a lovely welcome from the Consul General of Ireland, Ciarán Madden.

The day of the game was filled with some memorable experiences as on the morning of the match, the group brought their hurls to have a puck about in the famous Central Park before grabbing their gear and jumping on the bus to Gaelic Park.

With the warm-ups complete and the commencement of both the Irish and American National Anthems, it was time for the sliotar to be thrown-in.

It was a historic occasion for Camogie as the game was available to watch for people in Ireland via a live stream. This was the first time a Camogie match was live streamed from outside Ireland which is a milestone moment in the sport. Camogie continues to break down the barriers and reach wider audiences than ever before!

With 30 star-studded names lining out to play, the quality of the game was never going to be in question. A total of seven goals and 30 points was scored throughout the 60 minutes, with the 2019 team inflicting most of the damage on their opponents.

Donning yellow jerseys, the 2019 side had Cork native Amy O'Connor (Player of the Match) to thank for the majority of their side's scores as the youngster finished with a tally of 3-5. Not to forget that those three goals came against her own county goalkeeper, Aoife Murray who was the net-minder for the navy outfit, the 2018 team.

Cáit Devane was the top scorer for the 2018 team, earning herself 1-7 in the match with her scoring prowess from placed balls evident for all to see with six frees scored in the match.

In total seven different counties were represented by players, while you could say that an eighth county was represented by the Kildare whistle-blower.

The Association wanted to give something small back to New York GAA to further enhance the development of the game stateside. Niall Williams, Coach Education and Development Co-ordinator for the Camogie Association undertook two days of Coaching courses, whilst our Tour referee Ray Kelly also undertook a referee's workshop the night before the game.

There was one final touch and a lovely one at that. Young girls from local Camogie clubs in New York and the surrounding areas were invited to take part in the occasion as flag bearers for the match and play mini-games at half-time.

It truly was an occasion for everyone in New York over the course of the trip and no stone was left unturned. Whilst the 2019 team walked away with the win, the real winner over the course of the trip was the game of Camogie.

Thank you, #NYCamogieAllStars!



The 2018 and 2019 Camogie All-Stars with Social Media star Josh Pray



Meighan Farrell (2018 Team) and Niamh Mulcahy (2019 Team) in action in Gaelic Park, New York

The Liberty Insurance Camogie All-Stars at the Statue of Liberty



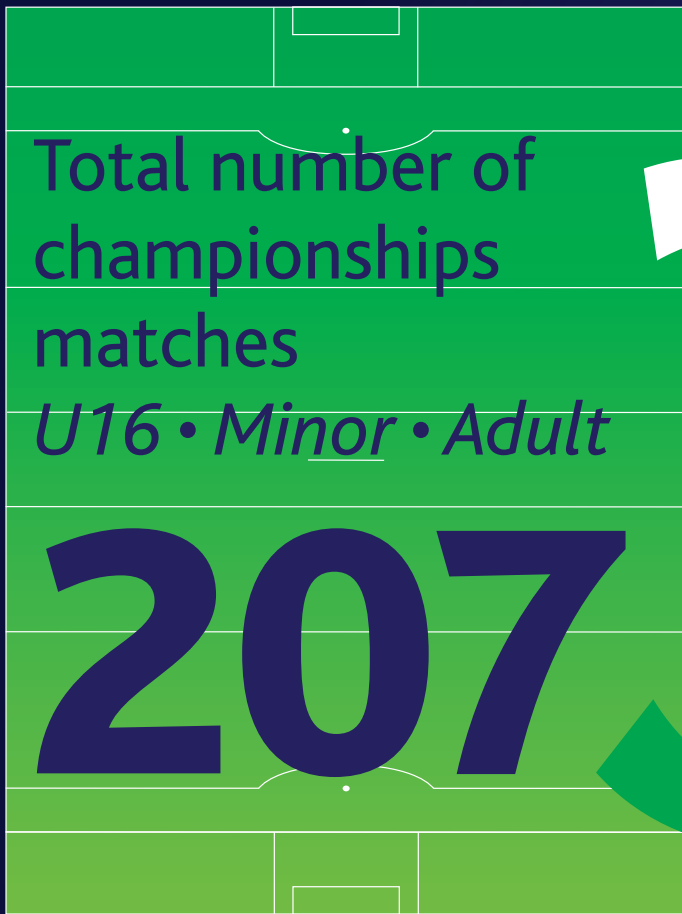
The 2018 & 2019 Camogie All-Stars Teams



# Camogie Championships 2019 Stats & Figures



\*walk-overs not included



Total number of points scored

# 4031

Total number of goals scored

# 853

## U16 Championships Stats (A•B•C)

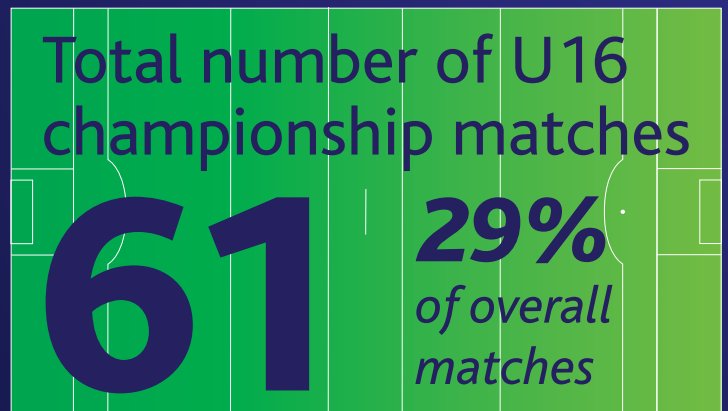
### U16 A



### U16 B



### U16 C



Total number of points scored

# 863

**21%** of overall points scored

Total number of goals scored

# 382

**45%** of overall goals scored

Did You Know ?

There were more goals scored in the U16 Championships (382) than either the Adult or Minor Championships



# Adult Championships Stats

## (Senior • Intermediate • Premier Junior)

### Senior

• 25 Group matches • 2 Quarter-finals  
• 2 Semi-finals • 1 Final • 1 Relegation play-off

Total Matches **31**

Total Goals **98**

Total Points **767**

### Intermediate

• 35 Group matches • 2 Semi-finals  
• 1 Final • 1 Relegation play-off

Total Matches **39**

Total Goals **116**

Total Points **915**

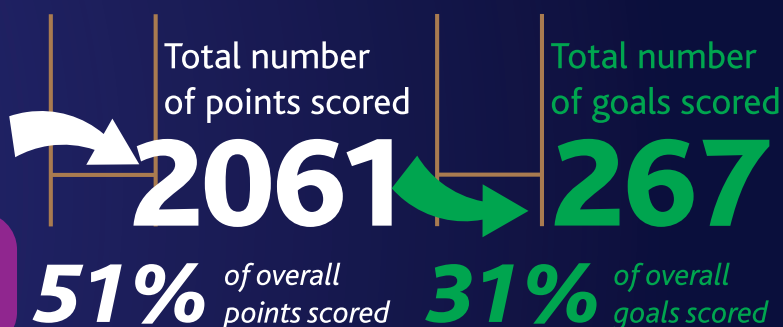
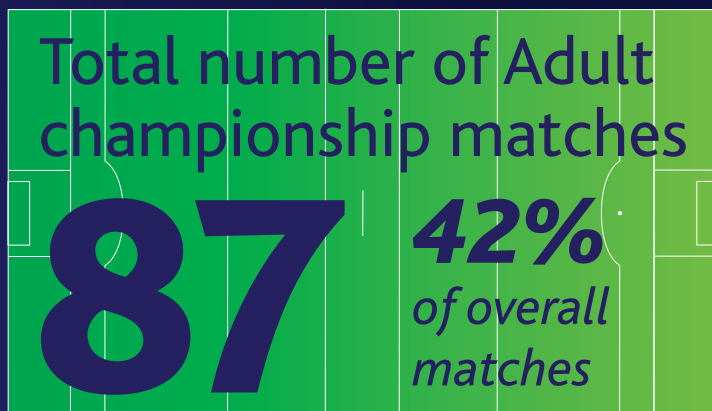
### Premier Junior

• 14 Group matches • 2 Semi-finals  
• 1 Final

Total Matches **17**

Total Goals **53**

Total Points **379**



Did You Know ? 28% of all goals scored in the adult Championships came in the group stages of the Senior competition (75)

# Minor Championships Stats (A•B•C)

### Minor A

Total Matches **23**

Total Goals **67**

Total Points **500**

### Minor B

Total Matches **27**

Total Goals **108**

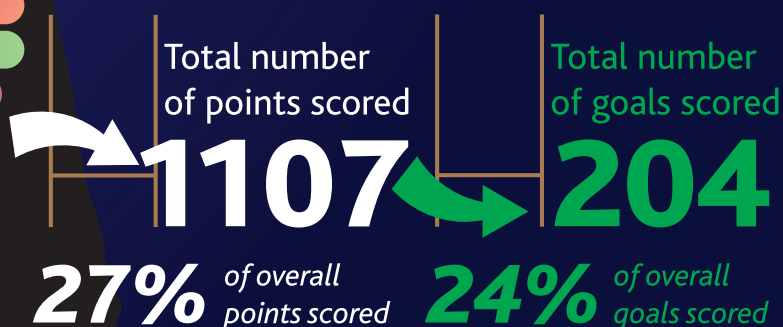
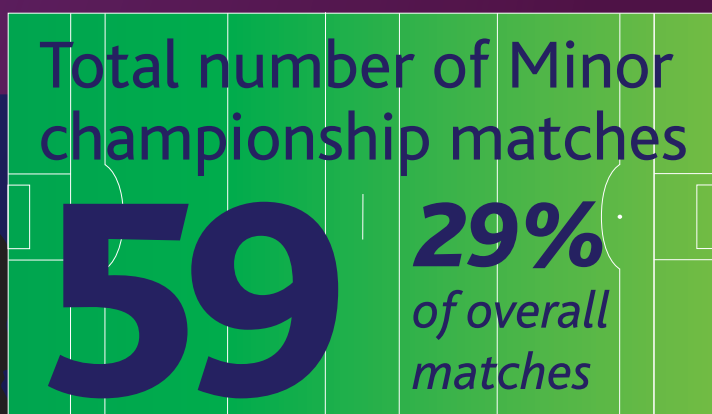
Total Points **471**

### Minor C

Total Matches **9**

Total Goals **29**

Total Points **136**



# PAMELA GREVILLE

*"Winning brings belief and belief makes winners!"*

By Sarah Stanley

Westmeath's Pamela Greville during the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Intermediate Championship Semi-Final



One can only describe the current ongoing in Westmeath Camogie as revolutionary. They are the current All-Ireland Intermediate Champions and took that mantle with a hugely impressive second-half display in the decider to overturn Galway's noticeable advantage.

As standout performers go, Pamela Greville was absolutely fantastic for the champions. She scored nine points in total and her scores came at crucial times as Galway started to wilt and the stranglehold on the game swapped hands.

When Cork whistle-blower Andrew Larkin brought a halt to proceedings, reality hit the Leinster side. For the first time in their history they would contest the Senior Championship in 2020!

*"Amazing! When that final whistle blew, the feeling of relief and joy was just immense", Greville recalls. "Being able to stay on the pitch and go around the stadium to share the moment with our family, friends and supporters was very special!"*

Special, it certainly was. Galway led that decider by seven points at half-time, and it looked for all the world that the trophy would only be going in one direction. Cue the half-time inspiration.

*"A lot of people have asked me and along with the few tactical changes, my personal experience of it was the silence in the room that had more impact than anything" Greville explains when asked what was said in the dressing room at half-time.*

*"We knew we were wasteful in the first-half and that we had more in us and thankfully we had 30 minutes to prove it! We have always believed no matter who we are playing, that if they don't have the ball, they can do nothing with it, and I think we proved that in the second-half!"*

For Raharney's full-forward, the occasion was more personal than for some of the team members, as her brother Johnny is the manager and other brother Jimmy was also involved in the management set-up.

*"With both Johnny and Jimmy involved it is hard to turn around without seeing a Greville, even though at training and games you wouldn't even think we were related!"*

*"Johnny is amazing and his attention to detail and knowledge of the game has taken Westmeath Camogie to where it is today. Thankfully, I have been blessed to be able to share some of my most memorable Camogie days with Johnny at the helm between both Club and County successes."*

Those successes she mentioned, are something extraordinary. Back in 2015 and 2016 the team were defeated in consecutive Premier Junior Semi-Finals, and after two heartbreaking years prior, 2017 saw the Leinster side win their first All-Ireland Premier Junior title.

Last year, the team retained their Intermediate status with a fourth-place finish in their group before this campaign saw them go all the way once again! In just three years, they lifted two All-Ireland titles and overcame every obstacle in their way en route.

*"Throughout the last few years we have lost out by a point on four different occasions and as hard as that was to take each time, we learned a huge amount from each loss, and it helped turn us into the team we were this year.*

*"Along with that, the belief and accountability that was instilled into each and every one of us throughout the year pushed the training and games to another level. We worked hard and no stone was left unturned when it came to match preparation."*

However, before the excitement of the Senior fixtures starts, there were a few more

trophies for the sharpshooter to collect. Her standout performances in the county jersey merited her with a Soaring Stars Award, while her peers also voted for her as the Camogie Association's/WGPA's Intermediate Players' Player of the Year.

For Greville, and for all involved in the Lake County, it was, as she described, "a special night for Westmeath Camogie" with seven Soaring Stars winners and of course, the Intermediate Players' Player of the Year.

The All-Stars Awards night brought to an end a fantastic year for this Westmeath side. Now, the attention quickly turns to what will be a highly competitive year ahead! Greville is relishing the opportunity to match up with the game's big hitters.

*"Being honest it is still a little hard to believe, I am excited for Westmeath Camogie and I am glad that I had the chance to be involved in it!"*

*"What probably excites me the most are the stories I have been hearing since we won, of the little girls around the county who never considered playing Camogie are now asking their parents to buy them hurls so they can play like the girls in Croke Park! Winning brings belief and belief makes winners!"*

It's an inspirational story, with inspirational players and a very inspiring manager! September didn't just see a team win a trophy, it saw a county rally behind each other and hopes and dreams of future players were born. The revolution continues.



2019 Camogie Association/WGPA Intermediate Players' Player of the Year Pamela Greville (Westmeath)

# PLAYER WELFARE

with *Catriona Cormican*

By *Daragh Ó Conchúir*

IN THE end, the decision paid off but had it gone the other way, had Galway lost the Liberty Insurance All-Ireland Senior Camogie Championship Final, and the ladies footballers gotten the better of Dublin in their decider, Catriona Cormican would have accepted that too.

Of course the pill would have been bitter on a personal level, having opted out with the footballers after 13 years of service that began with a losing All-Ireland Final in 2005 but how could you not but be delighted for your many friends who have soldiered long and hard to scale Everest, had they prevailed? There is no evidence of a bad bone in the Cormican body. She would have been thrilled.

The Cappataggle star had never really been given the opportunity to establish herself at Senior level before, although operating on a dual basis nonetheless as a member of the second-string Intermediate squad and winning an All-Ireland with them in 2013.

This was all the more notable given that the woman known by friends as Teeny, was in the midst of studying to be a doctor, a process that is arduous, intense and time-consuming. So she is accustomed to making big decisions, with prioritising, with managing her time.

With her promotion to the Senior Camogie ranks by Cathal Murray last year having just qualified as a doctor and facing into a year in which she would turn 31, Cormican just felt it was time for another big call.

*"I felt I just couldn't keep the two going and the job as well. The way sport is gone now you are training as a professional athlete. It is five or six days a week. You are training and you are trying to get your diet right. To be trying to do that for two teams at the highest level, I just didn't feel I could give everything to both.*

*"I am that bit older as well and a bit prone to injury. The injuries I have been getting over the*

*years are probably overload injuries, tendons and stuff. So I had to pick and I went with my heart."*

Cormican ended the season with a huge contribution in the All-Ireland Semi-Final defeat of Cork and then making the switch from attack to defence to mark Anne Dalton, the leading scorer from play in the Championship going into the decider, as a result of an injury to teammate Tara Kenny in training just before the Final.

She was outstanding in helping reduce the considerable threat of the reigning player of the year as Galway defeated Kilkenny. This was the performance of someone in a sound place mentally.

There was no conflict in her mind either about the progress of the footballers. She had expected them to get to the decider. The key to making any important decision is to remove the 'What if?' factor. Remember the situation as it pertained at the time and the reasons for picking the route you did.

*"A huge part of patient care is trying to balance everything. Unfortunately the last couple of years you are seeing an awful lot of anxiety and depression. Even in younger people; social media has a part to play in that.*

*"You see as a GP, the importance of well-being and having a balanced lifestyle and the importance of exercise and how it can be so good for the body and mind. I would be encouraging patients to get out and exercise to help clear the mind and de-stress.*

*"In those tough years training as a junior doctor, sport was a release for me but I didn't realise it at the time. It definitely helped me get through those tough jobs. You just enjoy going down to the pitch and meeting the girls. Looking back, sport was a huge part that got me through.*

*"I made my decision because I could not do it all. I was shouting the girls on against Dublin and they got so close."*

There were many challenges for Cormican in recent years but the most severe was undoubtedly when she was on placement in Newport, Co. Mayo, the last stop to Achill Island from Westport. She loved the work but the lengthy twice-weekly drive to-and-from training was testing.

*"There was often times where I would land late to training. Especially in the winter months, you are finishing later because there is a lot more sick people. You are landing into training and only doing a half-warm-up. It was tough and I wasn't able to perform to my best.*

*"You are driving for an hour-and-a-half, or two hours. Sitting in a car, bad roads. Then you are landing into training and you want to be out doing the drills and you rush a warm-up. You are prone to injury. It is about having a bit of experience and understanding you have to do a proper warm-up. If I miss part of the session you have to go with that.*

*"This year the management were so understanding about the job I had. That plays a huge part especially in our work, you are never going to get out the door when you think you will. Anything can crop up in the evenings. It was so easy, I could ring Cathal and tell him, he was so understanding. Having that is vital.*

*"It can be stressful but then you have to think back, 'Why am I doing this?' and 'Is it worth it?' I definitely felt it was. I love playing sport and it definitely wasn't something I wanted to give up. I was willing to make those sacrifices and do the driving. I knew it was temporary; eventually I was getting back to Galway and you would be closer for training."*

The increasing professionalism in the preparation of teams has helped, including the provision of hot foot after training.

*"Two or three years ago, I would have had my food ready for during the day in work and then you don't really want to be eating cold dinner after training. After training, I would pull into a petrol station and get a banana and a yogurt. It wasn't the right nutrition. I did lose a bit of weight during that period. I was back late then to Mayo and up again early for work in the morning. That definitely wouldn't be sustainable.*

*"But with the Camogie this year, we got fed after every training. The difference looking back is huge, especially for students, that didn't have to worry about food in the cupboard. It is a tough time in college. It is not cheap, trying to eat right. So that is a huge benefit to the players. I am playing 14 years and it was a first, which is unbelievable really. It was massive for me."*

In a schedule that included studying, training and playing, there wasn't much downtime. Now that she is a practising GP, little has changed although being back in Galway means less miles in the car. She doesn't watch television much, apart from The Sunday Game ("my favourite programme").

Her boyfriend, Ronan plays for Cappataggle hurlers and the fact they share lifestyle priorities is very helpful.

The two major elements of her life offer balance, the sport a passion that offsets the rigours of work in terms of mind and body but one day of neither is vital.

*"I am pretty happy with the balance I have now. With various teams you're going most of the year with maybe some time in December but I find by the time that's over, you are really looking forward to getting back.*

*"But around Christmas, it's good when everyone is home and I get more time to catch up with a lot of my friends that aren't into sport and know there is no point texting me during the year about going out! I am really happy with the way I have it now.*

*"I am very lucky that I have very understanding friends and they have been so used to me since I was 14 or 15 in school. Even one of my best friends, Adrienne, she got married in June but we had a training camp so I missed the wedding mass but I got to the dinner. You hate missing out but she is so understanding. She lives in London and she got home for the All-Ireland. Having that support is so important, you don't feel under pressure.*

*"It is very important to have the day of the weekend where I can just unwind, relax and chill. I don't think you would be able to keep going and going and going non-stop between sport and work. You would burn out and you wouldn't be any good to your teammates and your work colleagues. It is very important to have your time to unwind and de-stress. I can totally clear work and sport from my head when I'm doing that. When I'm doing sport, I'm obsessed by it but when I am outside of it, I am not thinking about it and that's good."*

It must be difficult however, not to take the tough days from work home or to the pitch, particularly when as a GP, you know many of your patients well and are exposed to so much pain and sadness. But having that other outlet is a godsend.

*"I can just recall one specific incident in the summer, I was called out to a very traumatic event. It was something I hadn't come across before. It was very challenging and upsetting and I said to myself, 'I don't think I could go training.' But then I said, 'Go training' and it was the best thing I could have done. I got to see the girls. I didn't say anything to anyone but it helped my mind getting out on the field. The sport is definitely a great help."*

Her advice is simple for any young sportsperson – established or aspiring. In truth, it applies to us all and especially those who are sedentary during the day. Given her experiences as a sportsperson playing at Senior intercounty level for what will be 15 years in 2020, doing her Leaving Cert, studying to be a doctor and now working in a busy general practice, it is worth heeding.

*"I think it is hugely important to strike a balance in any life you are in, or in any workplace you are in. Definitely exercise is hugely important no matter how busy your job is. You definitely need an outlet. As a GP, I would always promote to my patients to get out and get exercise. It clears your head and puts things in perspective. Some people let work consume them and let it take over their life. I would encourage people not to try do that. Work or study or sport is very important but it is not the be-all and end-all. Your family and being healthy in body and mind is hugely important."*

*"Young people should know that you can have a career and balance sport. To do that you have to be determined, you have to be organised and you have to plan your day, whether that's having your food ready. Sleep is very important, having at least eight hours sleep. Even just simple things like having your gear washed and dried and packed the night before."*

*"I know young people who are doing Leaving Cert and exams and that is a huge part of your life. Especially your Leaving Cert, you hear about that in National School so you feel everything has to go into that. I found having the sport made me more organised and better at studying. If I had to go training, I only had a window of two hours that I had to get something done. If I didn't have sport I would be sitting there for the evening and it might take me four or five hours to get that done. I would definitely say to young people to keep up your sport throughout the exams. And it's so good for the mind."*

*"You are trying to get people to realise you have to look after yourself. In the last few years I have realised if you don't look after yourself you won't be able to look after anyone else."*



Catriona Cormican in action against Claire Phelan (Kilkenny)

# PATRICE DIGGIN

*"You have to lose one to win one"*

By Graham Tully



Patrice Diggin in action in the Premier Junior Championship Final back in 2018.

Kerry Camogie has experienced an inspiring growth through the last number of years. After a successful Championship campaign the team in green and gold will now compete in the Intermediate Championship in 2020. There are many factors for this remarkable achievement but there is one player that particularly catches the eye.

Patrice Diggin can only be described as a pillar for the sport of Camogie in the Kingdom. As well as being a Community Sports Development Officer, she has also been a driving force for the many successes and achievements of Kerry Camogie in the last number of years. This year Diggin shone on the field and was a catalyst for Kerry's Premier Junior victory.

*"Unbelievable! It was a dream come true for all of us. We have been trying and working so hard for so long, it was great to finally bring the cup home" said Diggin when asked how it felt to get her hands on the Kay Mills Cup.*

The victory could have only been made sweeter after the bitter taste of defeat the previous year to Dublin. Diggin believes that this occurrence was a major factor on the road to victory this time around, along with the experience they had on the big stage.

*"As they say, you have to lose one to win one and that is evident in our case. The feeling in the dressing room after losing to Dublin in 2018 was a feeling none of us wanted to feel again and that drove us on. We weren't going to be left standing on the field again looking up at another team collecting the cup. Also, the experience of having played in Croke Park the year before was also a major plus."*

Diggin really did use this experience to her advantage by putting on an inspiring display in the Final, which also happened to fall on her birthday, finishing the game with 0-5 and earning the merit of the Player of the Match. Although this was bound to be the icing on the cake of an unforgettable day for the star, she could not help but acknowledge the performance of her teammates.

*"It was nice to be recognised but I think to be honest every player fought tooth and nail that day to make sure we did not come home without that cup and anyone of us could have got it. But yes, it was nice, and I suppose a birthday I will never forget."*

There is an unbreakable bond between this remarkable group of players, which is not surprising as all but one player on the panel play for the same club of Clanmaurice. Diggin believes that this closeness among the group was a factor in their success.

*"I suppose it is what we are used to at this stage and all we know so we don't even think of it that way. It just makes us closer as a unit and definitely stands to us because we are all so used to playing with each other, so I think it's a good thing. And we all had one goal this year and that was to get back to Croke Park and get up them steps."*

Diggin has an undeniable sense of community which means her job as a Community Sports Development Officer comes as no surprise. The growth of the sport of Camogie in Kerry is something that Diggin describes as "brilliant" and can only have a positive effect on the future.

*"The recognition it has got as a result of this victory is unbelievable. There are so many young players that now want to go and do what we did so it is really going to stand to the growth of the Camogie in Kerry. We have three new underage clubs this year, so I think winning this All-Ireland and the fact that it was televised is really going to make it thrive in the county."*

Along with receiving a Soaring Star Award, Diggin was recognised as the Camogie Association/WGPA Junior Players' Player of the Year. An achievement to be proud of as Diggin's abilities on the pitch are clearly recognised by both her teammates and opponents. This will make her a standout player to her Intermediate opponents in 2020 but this does not faze her as she has a lot of confidence in her fellow Kingdom representatives.

*"I suppose we know it's a big step up and training will have to step up from our end if we are to compete. But there is no doubt that the bunch of girls we have will be willing to put in the hard work next year. Anything can happen on any given day of a game so we will go out to every game believing we will have a chance to win that game. Bring it on!"*

Diggin's confidence cannot be doubted as it is true that "anything can happen", especially with this group of players. From a team competing at Premier Junior level to now being an Intermediate county, who knows how far this team could go.



Liberty Insurance  
Player of the Match  
award winner in  
the Premier Junior  
Final, Patrice Diggin  
8/9/2019



## **JANUARY**

- 25<sup>th</sup> Camogie Association's National Development Forum
- 26<sup>th</sup> AIB All-Ireland Club Championships Semi-Finals

## **FEBRUARY**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Start of the Littlewoods Ireland Camogie Leagues
- 15<sup>th</sup> Start of the All-Ireland Minor Championships  
Ashbourne Cup Finals
- 16<sup>th</sup> Ashbourne Cup Finals
- 22<sup>nd</sup> All-Ireland Post Primary Senior Schools Finals

## **MARCH**

- 1<sup>st</sup> AIB All-Ireland Club Championships Finals
- 7<sup>th</sup> All-Ireland Post Primary Junior Schools Finals
- 15<sup>th</sup> Littlewoods Ireland Camogie Leagues Division 1  
League Relegation Play-Off
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Littlewoods Ireland Camogie Leagues Division 1 Final
- 29<sup>th</sup> Littlewoods Ireland Camogie Leagues Division 2 Semi-Finals

## **APRIL**

- 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Congress
- 5<sup>th</sup> Littlewoods Ireland Camogie Leagues Division 2  
Relegation Play-Off
- 11<sup>th</sup> Littlewoods Ireland Camogie Leagues Division 2  
Relegation Play-Off  
All-Ireland Minor Championships Semi-Finals
- 19<sup>th</sup> Littlewoods Ireland Division 2 & 3 Finals