

Down GAA Update

EXTRA TIME – Saturday 23rd May 2020



Hello again, We hope that you and your families are all keeping well and that you are all staying safe in these strange and difficult times.

This is a weekend that we would have been looking forward to, as tomorrow Sunday our Senior and Minor Footballers should have been heading to Brewster Park to do battle with Fermanagh in the Quarter Final of the Ulster Championship, the excitement of the Championship would have been building, the debates on the team selection, the nervous tension of the day, Amhran na Bhfiann, the shrill of the whistle, game on. Yes we would love to be in Brewster Park tomorrow but alas in the present circumstances it is not to be, but we live in hope and that hope is that before this year of 2020 is out We will play Fermanagh in the Ulster Championship in Minor and Senior Football, Hope Springs Eternal. Our Hurlers too would be in the throes of a Christy Ring Campaign and would be normally preparing for Round Three and a trip next weekend to Athleague to play Roscommon, our hope is too that our Hurlers get to play Christy Ring Cup before 2020 is out.

Our message to you is that we must still remain Safe and to exercise Social Distancing if we are out, Our Premises must still remain closed, our Grounds and our Walkways must also remain closed. We know that some Clubs are undertaking construction work on site but this can only be in instances where there is a project that had commenced prior to the lockdown and where the work is being undertaken by an Outside Contractor and all necessary Insurance has been approved by Croke Park.

To clarify for you also our Grounds cannot be used as a venue for an Outdoor Cinema or for any outdoor Religious Service this remains the case until at least July 20th. In regard to Club Premises being used for Lotto collection for example, this cannot happen either, the bottom line is that our premises and grounds must remain closed, the only exception being the weekly checks to protect again legionella and undertaking pitch maintenance.

SYMPATHY

John Murphy

This was a difficult week for Down GAA as we lost one of our favourite sons John Murphy, a man who gave outstanding service to Down across five decades.

Coiste Chontae an Dúin and the entire GAA community of Down were saddened to learn of the death of one of our favourite sons, John Murphy. He was an All-Ireland winner as a player in 1968 and then Peter McGraths right hand man in the management team during the successes of 1991 and 94.

We extend our deepest sympathy to John's wife Veronica, his daughters Niamh and Fiona, sons Gavin and Karl, his grandchildren and the entire Murphy and Sands family circles. We also extend our deepest and heartfelt sympathies to the Gaels of Newry Shamrocks who have lost an outstanding servant of their club.



Today the GAA world in Down is a poorer place with the loss of a man who gave outstanding service and commitment to his county on and off the field of play across five decades. John first came to prominence on the teams of Abbey CBS where he won a MacRory Cup Medal in 1964 in a victory over St Pats Cavan. It would be natural then that John would go on then to wear the red and black, and in 1966 he was midfield on the side that was beaten by Mayo in the All Ireland Final. It was to be a lesson learned in Croke Park on that day, and John was one of six members of the team who would feature two years later, on the successful senior side.

He won a National League medal in May 1968 when Down defeated Kildare, and John Murphy was now an established member of what became an outstanding forward line. In that summer of 68 brought, the Anglo-Celt Cup returned to Down, and in the Ulster Final against Cavan John scored two points and gave an outstanding performance when moved to midfield in the second half.



The All Ireland Final of 1968 was a day when John Murphy lived the boyhood dream and scored an opportunist and well taken goal eight minutes into the game to put Down firmly on their way to a third All Ireland title. It was a special day for the Murphy clan, as John's uncle, the late great TP, was then County Secretary and a member of the management team. The boy had become man, as in that final against Kerry, he finished the game playing at left-half-back and was one of the heroes of the hour.

John won Railway Cup medals with Ulster in 1970 and 71. He won another Ulster title with Down in 1971, before losing to Galway in the All Ireland semi-final. His last Ulster Final appearance was in the final of 1975, which ended in defeat to Derry.

John had a wonderful football brain and was a man of wise counsel. When Sean Smith returned to manage Down again in the mid-1980s, he took with him his former player John Murphy as his selector. Together, they guided Down to the Ulster Final of 1986 where they lost to Tyrone.

When Peter McGrath took on the role of County Senior Team Manager in the autumn of 1989, he turned to John again as a selector, once again John Murphy was to have a significant impact in that role. John had presence and status and had a great ability to relate to players personally and to get the best out of them in turn as footballers. In team management, he was never one to shy from debate whilst fully respecting the final decision. As a player and as a selector, John always served and acted in the best interests of Down football. He was loyal too to his friend and colleague Peter McGrath, and when the time came in 2002 for that great era in Down football to end, John was still there with Pete.

We in Down GAA have been privileged that John Murphy was part of our story. He was a man of integrity and a man of honour; someone who lived the dream of playing for his county, winning an All-Ireland, scoring that famous goal and then of helping to shape two Down teams to win All Irelands. He enjoyed the reunions with playing colleagues from those great days and of growing older with the boys of 91 and 94, He had his favourite seat in the stand at Pairc Esler and watched the next generations give of their best for both Down and Newry Shamrocks.

Men like John Murphy helped to make Down the proud GAA County that it is today, he was a great ambassador for Down, he was man who loved his football, he loved his County, his Club and most of all he loved his family. On behalf of the Gaels of Down we say thank you for the wonderful days that you gave us. To his wife Veronica, to his children Niamh, Fiona, Gavin and Karl, to John's grandchildren, his daughters in law, his brothers and sisters we once again offer our deepest and heartfelt sympathy on the loss of a husband, a father, a grandfather and a brother.



On Friday last at Páirc Esler the Gaels of Down got the opportunity to pay tribute to John. Players from our all Ireland winning team of 1968 along with members of 91 and 94 panels joined many other past players, in a moving tribute to John as club colleague Danny Baxenden and County Chairperson John Devaney acknowledged his contribution to both Club and County.

Teddy Rice

The Gaels of Castlewellan this week mourned the loss of a former Club President, when news broke of the death of Teddy Rice a most popular member and great Clubman. Teddy was also previously a winner of the Club Hall Of Fame award in 1998 and had been Clubman of the year in 1978, a man who made a great contribution to the Club and in particular to the construction and then running of the Social Club. To his family we extend our deepest sympathies.

Louis Mooney

Louis Mooney of Rostrevor and formerly Hilltown. Louis was the father of Ciaran a member of our Mourne Academy Under 16 Management team and was the grandfather of our referee Ciaran and our County Senior player Caolan and a brother of the late Dalsey we again extend our deepest sympathy to the entire Mooney family circle.

We ask to please let us know if anyone within your Club passes away in these times as we appreciate that it is difficult in the present circumstances for people to attend wakes and funerals and we here in Extra Time can at the very least acknowledge the passing of a loved one on behalf of Down GAA.

PR COMMITTEE INITIATIVE

The PR Committee under the chairpersonship of Paula Magee have launched an initiative for this weekend and we would encourage everyone to join in and to hang out your brightest colours on this Championship Weekend. If we can't be there in person let us be there in spirit.

RED & BLACK DAY SUNDAY 24th MAY

In acknowledgment of what would have been Down GAA's opening Championship weekend in football and hurling for 2020, we are calling all Down Gaels to don their county colours this Sunday in recognition.

We want Down Gaels to Get their jerseys, flags, hats, scarves and headbands out tomorrow and support the County as if it were the real deal.



Tomorrow Sunday 24th May would have seen our Senior and Minor Footballers travel to Enniskillen to take on Fermanagh in our opening game of the 2020 Ulster Championship, while our Hurlers would have already played two games in the Christy Ring Cup having been due to have taken on Kildare and London. Upload your County colour photos on Social Media, tag any of our Official Down GAA channels & use **#redandblack** so we can share across the province!

Facebook/Twitter/Instagram: **@OfficialDownGAA #redandblack**.
You can also email any photos to itofficer.down@gaa.ie.

We look forward to seeing your support on Sunday!

An Dún Abú



MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

As this is also Mental Health Awareness Week, we thought that the link to this video produced might be of some interest to our readers.

<https://youtu.be/fQlau0In6v0>

Please feel free to share and remember it is always good to talk.



COACHING AIDS

For our young people and for our parents trying to occupy time now spent at home we are including here a link from the Ulster Council to some Home Coaching Videos, these may help pass some time, burn up some energy and help us be ready when the call comes to return to play.

[Please Click here for Facebook link to Ulster GAA Home Coaching videos](#)



BEREAVEMENT HELP

Statement from the Southern HSC Trust.

"On Monday 18th May the Southern HSC Trust bereavement helpline is going live. This has been developed by the bereavement team; a collaborative partnership across practitioners in bereavement, social work and nursing services brought together in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

We are so aware that grief is difficult under 'normal' circumstances, but the current context brings added challenges at the time of death, limitations to our rites of mourning and when social distancing restricts our capacity to be with family and friends.

We have a team of colleagues from social work, nursing and allied health professionals with knowledge, skills and insight into grief and loss responding to calls. The helpline aims to come alongside bereaved people, to hold their grief and offer emotional support through compassion and empathy. We hope, in some small way, it will prove beneficial for some people at this time.

I have attached a flier and would be very grateful if you could promote this with your network of contacts. If you would like more information please get in touch.



The flier is a purple-bordered document with a light purple background. At the top left is the HSC logo and the text 'Southern Health and Social Care Trust' with the tagline 'Quality Care - for you, with you'. Below this are four circular icons representing different services. The main text explains the need for the helpline during the COVID-19 pandemic. A large purple box contains the title 'Bereavement Helpline'. Below this, a green box states the service hours. A white box with a purple border displays the phone number '028 375 67990'. The bottom section describes the support provided and encourages contact for those in the Southern Trust.

HSC Southern Health
and Social Care Trust
Quality Care - for you, with you

Working Together **Caring** **Supporting** **Protecting**

We know that support, connection and comfort when someone is bereaved is really important. We also know that during this COVID-19 pandemic, the restrictions around our mourning and funeral rituals can add to our sense of loss and isolation. In response to this we are offering a dedicated telephone listening service.

“Bereavement Helpline”

**This service is available from Monday—Friday,
9am—5pm**

028 375 67990

Professionals with knowledge, experience and insight into grief and loss will answer or return your call and offer a compassionate, listening ear. There may also be information we can help with or direct you to.

If you live in the Southern Trust and have been bereaved you can get in touch.

FINANCE

We just wanted to update you also in regard to Finance, we are in regular contact with officers at National and Provincial Level. The County Treasurer Diarmuid has been working to prepare projections and budgets for the remainder of the year, Down GAA like all other Counties will not be in receipt of any income from GAA bodies at National or Provincial Level for this year unless there is a return to play.

These are difficult times, the County had to prepare teams from November to March so expenses were incurred, there were outgoings and now there is no income and commercially it is not possible either to generate income.

We are working hard to manage the situation and will keep our Clubs informed at all times in regard to any developments in regard to Finance and Governance.

Thankfully for ourselves and for many of our Clubs we did have a successful Clubs Draw in 2020, the merits of the Draw cannot be underestimated, especially in times like we are experiencing now.

AN INTERESTING STORY FOR YOU OF CHAMPIONSHIP FOOTBALL

On Sunday 9th September 1934, the handwritten diary of a County Official records " the Ulster Junior Football Final was played in the Marshes Down 4-06 Donegal 3-05 over £120 Gate" - There is a story behind this entry - This was in fact a replay as Down had lost the first game in Bundoran but had won an objection at Ulster Council in regard to the composition of the Donegal team and the playing of an illegal player and a replay was ordered.

Members of the Down Team that day included Jimmy Greene (Magheraclone), Eddie Cole (Rostrevor), Paddy Fitzpatrick (Ballymartin), Tommy Franklin (Ballymartin), Hugh Lennon (Saul), George Mussen (Clonduff Captain), Dan Mussen (Clonduff), Art McClean (Kilcoo), Dan Morgan (Annaclone), Jim Burns (Rostrevor), Terry McCormack (Warrenpoint), Tom O Hare (Warrenpoint), Jimmy Doyle (Clonduff), Tom O Hare (Ballymartin) & Paddy Small (Mayobridge).

ARCHIVE

We looked back at some Championship meetings against Fermanagh and how we fared in some previous encounters.

1962 saw Down return from America and just two weeks later travelled to St Molaise's Park in Irvinestown where against a courageous Fermanagh Team they gave a power packed display of scintillating football winning by 4-10 to 1-03, the performance of Sean O Neill on that day earned rave reviews in the national and local press.

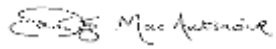
1983 Down went to Irvinestown again, this time as National League Champions and with high hopes that the summer could be long. There was though a rude awakening for Down on that cold May day. Peter McGinnity and John Rehill dominated the midfield battle on a day when nothing seemed to go right for Down. The Home support grew more vocal as the Erne men grew into the games belying their status as a Division 4 Team and at the end of the day Fermanagh were winners 0-10 to 0-08.

1984 The fixture reverse of the previous year saw Fermanagh come to Pairc an Iur and it was a determined Down who went into the game imbued with a healthy respect for their opponents. There was to be no upset this time and goals from Brendan Mason, Liam Heaney on his Championship Debut and Liam Austin saw Down winners by 3-06 to 0-08.

2009 Fermanagh and Down met in the Preliminary Round of the Ulster Championship and this time the venue was Brewster Park in Enniskillen, again it was to another day that Down fans would want to forget as the Erne Men were winners , with Down finishing with 14 men as the hosts ran out 0-13 to 0-10 winners.

2012 Peter Canavan's first match as a Championship manager ended in defeat as dominant Down swept aside Fermanagh. Fermanagh had Daryl Keenan sent-off early on and then a goal by Donal O'Hare helped Down establish a handy 1-6 to 0-3 half-time advantage. The lead was cut to just three points when Fermanagh's Damien Kelly netted after a quick free-kick move. But Down hit back with a goal by Conor Laverty and they cruised through to a semi-final clash against Monaghan.

So as you see Ulster Championship battles between Down and Fermanagh are usually tight affairs and for now on Sunday all we can do is imagine and predict our own outcome of what might have been this weekend.

 Seán Óg Mac an tSaoir

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