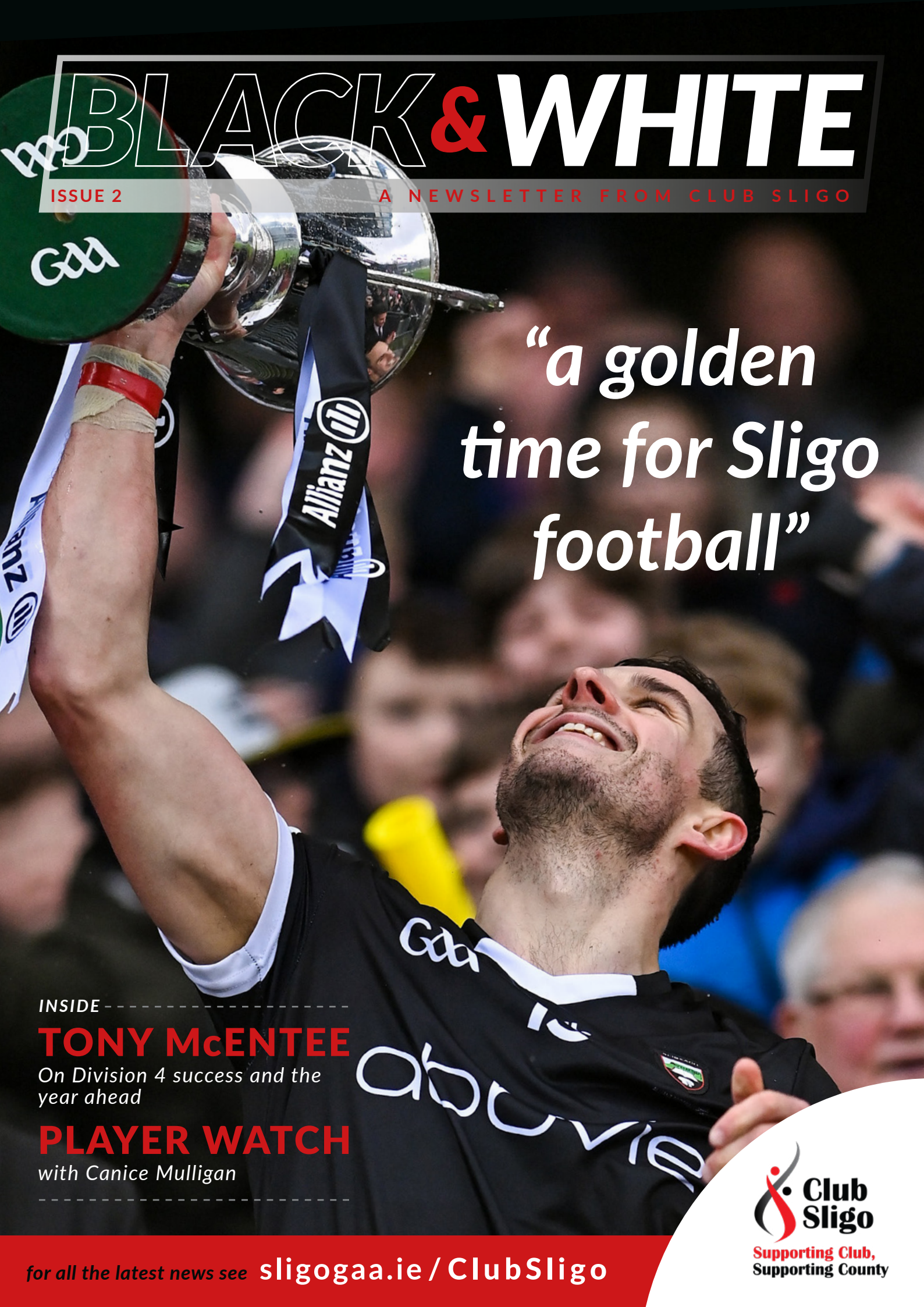


# BLACK & WHITE

ISSUE 2 A NEWSLETTER FROM CLUB SLIGO



“a golden time for Sligo football”

INSIDE -----

## TONY McENTEE

On Division 4 success and the year ahead

## PLAYER WATCH

with Canice Mulligan

for all the latest news see [sligogaa.ie/ClubSligo](http://sligogaa.ie/ClubSligo)



# MEMBERSHIP 2024



## Platinum Membership (€1500 per year)

- Entitlement to purchase two All-Ireland football and hurling final tickets.
- Invitation for two people to attend post match meal with team and team management.
- Six entries each month to "Club Sligo" draw.
- Official Sligo GAA 2023 jersey and O'Neills jacket.
- Annual car sticker.
- 2 Free Passes for Sligo Senior Championship Final
- Photo publicity and media/social media promotion.
- Name listed in home National League and County Final match programmes.

## Standard Membership (€240 per year)

- Entry into 12 monthly "Club Sligo" draws per year.
- Official Sligo GAA O'Neills 2023 jersey or O'Neills jacket (New membership only).
- Annual car sticker.
- Free pass to Sligo Senior Club Championship Final.
- Invitation to meet-and-greet night in Centre of Excellence prior to the Football and Hurling Championships.
- Bonus members draw for two All Ireland Football and two All Ireland Hurling Final tickets.

# MEET THE COACHES

## Pat Kilcoyne *Tubbercurry*

Games Development Coordinator

### What do you love most about your role?

Coaching in national schools, secondary schools and development panels and coaching coaches.

### What do you want to bring to the role over the next few years?

Keep doing what I have been doing. Keep encouraging all kids, youths and adults.

### Favourite Sligo GAA moment?

Seeing the U20s winning in Tuam v Galway to win Connacht two years in a row.



## Darragh Cox *Calry/St Joseph's*

Hurling Games Development Officer

### What do you love most about your role?

Working with enthusiastic and positive coaches and providing children with opportunities they may not otherwise get.

### What do you want to bring to the role over the next few years?

Increase the numbers of coaches willing to promote Hurling and Camogie in clubs.

### Favourite Sligo GAA moment?

Winning the Lory Meagher Cup in Croke Park in 2018.

# MEMBER DRAW RESULTS



Mark Cawley from Kevinsfort Heath was the winner of our August draw. Here he is being presented with his cheque by Sligo GAA Treasurer Cormac Kearns.

## JULY

Prize.	Ticket No.	Name	Address
€500	1147	Niall Judge	New York
€100	196	Paraic O'Grady	Drumcliffe
€100	316	Padraig Owens	Dublin
€100	1037	Ronan Higgins & Brendan McHugh	
€100	1118	Luke Kilcoyne & Terry McCann	
€100	1271	Brian Mullins Insurance Brokers	Sligo

## AUGUST

Prize.	Ticket No.	Name	Address
€500	45	Mark Cawley	Kevinsfort Heath
€100	1257	Vincent Hannon & Associates	Sligo
€100	1091	Gerry McGwyne	New York
€100	475	Olivia Flannery	Cornageeha
€100	1190	Richard Brennan Syndicate	Bunninadden
€100	1199	Rouse Project Developments	Enniscrone

## SEPTEMBER

Prize.	Ticket No.	Name	Address
€500	294	Mary Kilgannon	Dromore West
€100	207	Eamon Molloy	Gurteen
€100	229	Finian & Mary Dodd	Geevagh
€100	90	Ray Gallagher	Tourlestrane
€100	493	John Lavin	Ballymote
€100	1122	Michael Jacob	Enniscrone

# FUTURE LEADERS

Transition year students are currently being introduced to coaching by Sligo GAA. We are running a six-week Future Leaders coaching programme in a number of schools - including St Attracta's, Summerhill College, Coláiste Iascaigh, Coola Post Primary and the Ursuline College. The programme helps get young coaches on the coaching ladder and is part of a Gaelic Games programme in secondary schools.



# My Club Sligo

**NAME:** Michelle McMorrow

**CLUB:** Shamrock Gaels

**CLUB SLIGO MEMBER:** 3 years



## WHY DID YOU BECOME A MEMBER?

*I have always been a Sligo and a GAA supporter and I was very happy to join Club Sligo to try and support the county in some way. Myself and my family go to all Sligo games and my son has been involved with Sligo at underage level. Joining Club Sligo was my way of supporting all the work that goes on with development at underage level.*

## FAVOURITE CLUB/COUNTY GAA MOMENT?

*We have had a few over the years but it has to be beating Roscommon in the U17 Connacht Championship in 2021.*

It is your support of Club Sligo that allows us to develop both players and infrastructure across the county. **This is Your Club Sligo.**

To renew your membership:

go to [sligogaa.ie](http://sligogaa.ie)

email [administrator.sligo@gaa.ie](mailto:administrator.sligo@gaa.ie)

call 071 9168750

# TIME TO PUSH ON AND MOVE FORWARD

*We speak to **Tony McEntee** as he prepares for a positive season ahead with the Sligo senior team.*

**S**ligo senior football manager Tony McEntee has noticed a new positivity and buzz around Sligo football – across all age groups in the county. He believes the senior team’s impressive run in the Tailteann Cup in 2022 has added to the overall excitement about Sligo football.

Although they ultimately lost out in a close semi-final against Cavan, Tony believes the performance over the campaign provided the team with a huge boost – which subsequently led to winning nine games in a row in the 2023 Div 4 NFL.

“We went from ringing players to invite them into the panel, to getting phone calls from players asking if they could get involved,” Tony tells *Black & White*.

He also sees this positivity mirrored in all age groups and grades across the county.

“The U20s’ success, the schools’ success, the work that is going into the underage. There’s a huge amount going really well that I know my own county would be envious of. It is very much a golden time for Sligo. The GAA is performing really well within the county. So, it’s the right time to push on and develop it more. If this isn’t the time for the public to get behind Sligo football, then when is?”

Tony believes this positivity will see more new faces join the Sligo senior panel this year. Some 67 players were involved in the panel since he took charge in 2021 (during a disruptive year due to Covid) with 22 of those he inherited no longer involved.

**“we were much more comfortable playing Division 4 this year because we were faster, fitter and stronger”**

“I know there are more players out there. There’s more youth coming through, and I believe there’s still some established players that want to be involved though haven’t yet made that commitment. That opportunity remains open for everybody. I want every player that can help Sligo be successful, to be involved in the panel.”

Tony is quick to credit the Centre of Excellence in Scarden as a key contributor to Sligo football’s current rich vein of form across the age groups.

“The Centres of Excellence act

like a nebula, like Orion’s Nebula, a centre for stars to develop or for people to grow, places where people flourish and develop and move forward. The real value with the COEs is the sense of identity. It’s a place you can call your own.”

Tony praises those running the Centre of Excellence day-to-day, saying they and the centre itself, are “invaluable to the development of underage and to senior football over time”. Progression onto senior football from underage is a subject that Tony is passionate about.

“We need to look at the pathway for these players to develop through to senior. There’s an onus on us all to look at how we continue to develop them so that they do become the mainstay of Sligo football. The focus (and S&C is crucial here) is on trying to develop players through the underage ranks into seniors that will be strong enough, fit enough, robust enough, and durable enough for senior football,” he says.

However, he does warn that club and underage success doesn’t necessarily mean you will make a senior county team. And even if you are succeeding at U20s, it does not guarantee that you be successful at county senior level.

“It puts you in a good position to develop and bring yourself forward to the senior team when you are properly developed. But there is still

a difference between a 20-year-old competing with a 27-year-old.”

As Tony gets set to embark on his fourth year in charge of the Sligo senior footballers, he is clear on the challenge ahead of the team in Division 3 of the National League and the importance of continuing the S&C work that helped them to win Division 4.

“The athletes our players come up against are stronger, fitter, faster, and more mobile as the grades go up. But the changes in our stats have been massive; we covered 20 per cent more distance in the league compared to previous years. We had high-speed running of around 35 per cent more than we had in previous

years, and I felt that we were much more comfortable playing Division 4 because we were faster, fitter and stronger,” he says.

“S&C is absolutely essential to the future success of any and all county teams and, in Sligo’s case, it is mainly down to one man — Sean Boyle. The work he has done is phenomenal and it is essential that this is continued, as we need to see similar improvements across all of the measurables if success in Division 3 is to be achieved.”

As Division 3 beckons, Tony is confident that Sligo is ready to capture the momentum; to push on and move forward.

## It was GAELIC or nothing in Crossmaglen

Growing up in Crossmaglen in the 1980s, Tony and his three brothers were in no way torn about which sport to choose.

“Back then there was very little else in Crossmaglen bar a football field. There was no other sport of any description. It was either Gaelic or nothing,” says Tony. “But the coaches in the town, especially Tim Gregory who has been coaching for over 40 years in the club, were very good at getting kids involved in the GAA and keeping them involved as adults.”

Tony and his twin brother John had highly-successful careers from underage right up to winning the Sam Maguire with Armagh in 2002.

The twins’ careers mirrored each other from when they started playing to when they stopped. They quit intercounty football at age 29, having added a National League win to their All-Ireland triumph, and stood down from duties with Crossmaglen Rangers in 2009 with 13 county championships, six Ulster titles and four All-Irelands in the bag.

Their retirement from playing happened to coincide with a change of management at Crossmaglen and Tony, alongside Gareth O’Neill, managed the senior team for three years — winning two club All-Irelands in the process.

Tony has been involved in coaching or managing clubs or county teams ever since, and he remains involved in underage football in Crossmaglen, as the lead juvenile coach, where he lives with his wife and four children.

## BACKROOM TEAM

**Joe Keane** : Head Coach

**Noel McGuire** : Selector

**Paul Durcan** : Goalkeeping Coach

**Kevin McLoughlin** : Forwards Coach

**Sean Boyle** : S&C

**Dr Elaine Kenny** : Doctor

**Mark Evans** : Nutrition

**Alan Dunne & Kelly Ann Henry** : Physio

**Aidan ‘Scoop’ Carty** : Kitman

**Declan Rouse** : Team Liaison

**Eamonn McMunn** : Logistics

## STATS AS A PLAYER

### Crossmaglen Rangers

13 x Armagh SFC • 6 x Ulster  
4 x All-Ireland SCFC

### Armagh

1 x All Ireland • 1 x National League

## STATS AS A MANAGER

### Crossmaglen Rangers *with Gareth O’Neil*

3 x Armagh SFC • 3 x Ulster SCFC  
2 x All-Ireland SCFC

### St Brigid’s (Dublin)

2013 & 2014

### Sligo

1 x Football League Division 4

## STATS AS A SELECTOR

### MAYO

Runner up in two All-Ireland finals



Tony in the black and amber of Crossmaglen in 2008

# DEVELOPMENT SQUADS *INSIGHT*

## OUR VISION

*Provider of Top Class SUPPORT and COACHING as a key enabler in the development of all players.*

## OUR MISSION

*Coaching Excellence and Player Centric Support to facilitate the development of players to fulfill their potential. At every level, relentlessly.*

## PROGRAMME

- Skills Acquisition
- Athletic Development
- Master your Craft
- Tactical Awareness
- Lifestyle and Nutrition
- Leadership & Performance
- Analysis & Feedback

## GOALS/OBJECTIVES

- Development of individual players to achieve their full potential and ambition to play at the highest level.
- Nurture a desire and ambition to represent their Club and County at the highest level.
- Create an enjoyable fun environment.
- Support the development of people to achieve personal growth.
- Continuously learn, upskill and develop as a coach and assist other coaches in their development.
- Instil a belief and consolidate a winning mentality.
- Facilitate the fulfilment of the goals and potential of each squad to be the best it can.
- Cherish the sense of pride in who we are and where we are from in terms of our family, club, county and our jersey.



### RESPECT

Give respect to all, treat everybody equally and expect same in return.

### INTEGRITY

Be totally honest in our approach and communication to all and always do the right thing.

### HARDWORKING

Work hard within a committed, dedicated, planned and organised set up and structure.

### ENJOYMENT

Nurture an enjoyable, fun and challenging environment for all to participate in with a smile on their faces.

### AMBITION

Setting targets that are challenging and require courage and resilience to push the boundaries of our capabilities.

# BACK TO SCHOOL FOR SLIGO GAA COACHES

Sligo GAA staff are delighted to get back coaching and are based in primary schools dotted around the county. Staff are also supporting teachers with coaching teams in second-level schools around Sligo.



CULFADDA N.S.



DRIMINA N.S.



SOOEY N.S.



ST. TERESA'S N.S. BALLINTOGHER



Player Watch

**NAME:** *Canice Mulligan*

**POSITION:** *Midfield*

**CLUB:** *St Patrick's GAA* **AGE:** 20

Long before his feats on the Gaelic football pitch and gifts as a speech-maker propelled him into Sligo GAA folklore, Sligo's U20 Connacht title-winning captain Canice Mulligan probably considered himself more of a soccer player.

"I played Gaelic football with my club, St Patrick's GAA, from when I was five or six but I didn't play with the county until I was under-16 because I was playing a lot of soccer and had ambitions to play for Sligo Rovers," he says. "Unfortunately, I fractured my hip during a trial match for Sligo Rovers U15s so I didn't get into the system. Still, I wanted to play sport at a high level so I turned my focus to Gaelic football."

Canice received both his formal and Gaelic footballing education at Summerhill College, where he credits Sligo GAA Development Officer and schools coach Liam Óg Gormley with advancing his game.

"Liam Óg knew that I was capable of being good and, through the connection with Summerhill and Sligo, has brought me along and coached me all the way up. Keelan Waters was involved with the Sligo minor team alongside Liam Óg in my first year and had a great influence on me as well," says Canice, who is now studying Commerce and Accounting at the University of Galway.

The last year was a memorable one for Canice, with the high of U20 Connacht final and All-Ireland semi-final success followed by heartbreak in the national decider. Indeed, his victory speech and reference to Sligo as the 'big dogs' of Connacht in the aftermath of that provincial final marked something of a cultural moment for the Yeats County.

"It just came out but I don't regret it. It wasn't premeditated. I didn't know I was going to say those exact words, just that I wanted to say something to mark the journey we were on," he adds.

**Sporting Idol:** Brian Fenton or Stephen Cluxton. "I try to model the way I play on Fenton but I admire the way Cluxton carries himself."

**Iconic sporting moment:** Messi winning the World Cup.

# FOCUS ON

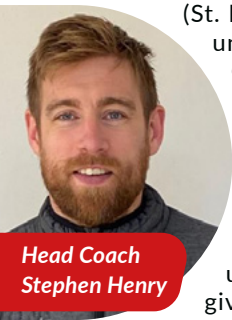
## U17 DEVELOPMENT SQUAD



**T**hey say it takes a village to raise a child, but it also takes a small army to train each of our underage development squads.

Head Coach and Manager of our 2024 U17 Squad is Stephen Henry from Tourlestrane but he stresses that he doesn't do it all on his own.

His full backroom team includes on-field coaches Adrian McPartland (Coolera/Strandhill) and Damian Eames (St. Mary's) with Gary O'Hehir (St. Mary's) working on S&C under Sean Boyle, Eamon Cawley (Castleconnor) on statistics and video analysis and Gary Gilligan (Coolera/Strandhill) on logistics and gear.



Head Coach  
Stephen Henry

"It takes all six of us working together to give the players the best experience they can possibly have. We put a lot of care and effort into planning each session to help each player be the best they can be," Stephen tells *Black & White*. "It's not just about turning up on a Saturday morning. We meet at the start of the year and map out what we are going to do and try to achieve across the next year."

During 2023, the U16s (next year's U17s) achieved a lot with five national Manning Cup days, culminating in August's Shield Final. They also had three blitz days at the Connacht GAA Centre of Excellence playing against Mayo, Galway, Leitrim, Roscommon, Clare, New York and London.

When the squad met for the first time this year - on March 16th - there was 48 in the U16 squad. At their last training session - on September 16th - 34 made the final panel.

"It's hard to have to reduce the squad or leave players on the bench some days. But we try to show them that this is just a snapshot in time and encourage them to enjoy the game and play it as long as they can," says Stephen whose day job is with the Gaelic Players Association (GPA).

"It's a great time to be a Sligo

underage footballer with so many role models to look up to. This group of lads are looking at the senior team and the U20s and thinking they can follow in their footsteps. We want to instil this mindset in them; getting that belief in themselves and the county and what they can achieve."

This group of lads will be back in action as U17s in the Ulster League at the end of February.

But there is always an open door for others to join.

"We love seeing players returning or discovering new players. We are watching at club and schools games to see who is performing well and might be a good addition to the squad."

Each player is treated as an individual with Gary creating personal programmes, taking into account the player's fitness, injuries and what they need to improve.

Even when they are injured, the players attend training; either working with Gary on S&C in the gym or, if they are unable to train at all, watching from the dug outs, strengthening bonds.

"We have to remember they are coming together as a group socially as well. These lads have strong friendships; they spend a lot of time with each other. Those times when they are sitting in the dug outs together, they get to chat on a different level and this can deepen

their friendships," says Stephen.

"We also sometimes ask them for feedback during breaks. While this can be daunting, it's good for them to learn how to deliver - and receive - feedback to and from their peers. It gives them a different perspective when watching and keeps them engaged."

With the dedication of the coaches, it's easy to forget that all these people are voluntary and are giving up their time for the love of the game and the development of Sligo football.

And they are always looking for more coaches to join the ranks at Scarden.

"It's a great place to be," says Stephen. "Many may feel like they are too much of a novice - or even too experienced - to be here. That's not the case; everyone is welcome. I am doing this a long time and am still learning so much every day. You get way more back than you have to give."

### A special word of thanks

Stephen has a special mention for the parents, grandparents, guardians, relatives and friends of the players. "A lot of what they do for the players is unseen. They are driving them to training and waiting for them to finish every single Saturday and on match days. We wouldn't be able to do what we do without them and we are very grateful."



Members of the U17 Management Team, L-R, Gary Gilligan, Gary O'Hehir, Eamon Cawley and Adrian McPartland. (Damian Eames inset)



# NEXT ISSUE



**Stephen Sheil** has just been appointed the new manager of Sligo hurling team, succeeding Padraig Mannion who was in the role for three years. In the next edition, we speak to the former Carlow hurler on his ambitions for Sligo hurling.