



Cumann Lúthchleas Gael Naomh Sailbheastair



St. Sylvester's G.A.A. Club

2 Church Road, Malahide Co Dublin

November 2014

ADULT HURLING 2014

Seniors

It probably goes without saying that the standout achievement on the adult hurling front this year would have to be the success of the club's first team in winning AHL3 and earning a long overdue and well-deserved promotion to AHL2 and senior league hurling for next year.

Despite having drawn the first day out against Vincents, a two point win in the second match against big rivals for the title, Naomh Barrog, augured really well for our chances this year. Two back-to-back convincing wins later only added to that feeling, before a loss to Thomas Davis in the 5th match halted our momentum a little. This however proved to be just a temporary setback and from there to the end of the league, the team didn't put a foot wrong, winning the next 5 straight matches to enter the last game against Naomh Olaf knowing that another victory would win the league for us.

So the pressure was on – and the victory banner was already bought! – but the whole team more than stood up to the weight of expectation and won fairly comfortably in the end in front of an enlarged home crowd. It was particularly pleasing to see the big amount of juvenile players supporting the team, and of course being able to see their senior team lift a trophy as champions at the end of it made it all the better.

Congratulations to the whole panel of players on this fantastic achievement, more than well deserved with the commitment they all put in to achieve this goal this year. Great credit to the management also: Leonard O'Carroll, Eamonn Clancy, Pat Keogh, Declan Morris and Ciaran Reilly

We did compete in the Senior B championship again this year and again qualified out of the group to reach the quarter final stage where unfortunately we went out to Setanta in a game we felt we should have won having been relatively well up at half time. Setanta however staged a second half point-by-point comeback and we ended up being pipped by a point for a finish.

Juniors

The junior team also went out of the championship at the quarter final stage, for the second year running, losing to the eventual champions Raheny. No more than the seniors the same weekend, we took a good lead into half time but couldn't prevent the opposition chipping away slowly but surely at the lead in the second half before overhauling us.

The juniors also competed well in AHL6 again, qualifying for the promotion play offs for a second successive year, after finishing the regular season strongly with some hard fought wins to haul ourselves into contention. Manager Gregg Hannon, Ciaran Murray, and Donal Hayes will no doubt be back again next year to try go one step further and follow the seniors lead and get promoted up a division. This team continues to fulfil a very important role in introducing young players in the club to AHL hurling – and indeed it probably should be said, in easing players back out again on the other side of their careers! – and it was great to see the new players coming on board this year, and players each year making the successful transition then on from junior to senior.

U21

The U21 hurlers are still going at the time of writing and hopefully some of the players competing with that team will stay going and continue on to play with one of the AHL teams next year. The U21s play the quarter final of their championship against Whitehall this coming Saturday (29th November @ 2.15 in Cloghran). This team, with manager Eddie McLoughney, back at the helm with the team that won a minor championship three years ago, and assisted by Ronan Kennedy and Donal Hayes, were and are always a team worth going to see as they leave every last drop on the field, as evident in the earlier round when they prevailed over Clontarf after extra time, so it would be well worth the short trip over to Cloghran to cheer them on. Best of luck to the team in any case for the remainder of the competition.

Just on U21 grade also, it was brilliant to see Kevin O'Flynn starring for the Dublin team this year, under manager Joe Fortune, who is of course very well known around these parts! Kevin has another year at this level next year and hopefully the 2015 team can go further and get out of Leinster and make a push at an All Ireland title at this grade.

Minors

Another inter county manager with firsthand knowledge of Sylvesters hurlers is Tommy Naughton, who of course coached the first team to intermediate championship two years ago, and he was back on the line with us this year when his home club, Scoil Ui Chonaill, joined up with our minor hurlers to enter a combined team in the league and championship under the name Clan Na Mara. It took a while for the combined team to gel, but they turned in some great performances as the year went on and finished the season, and their underage careers together, on a high with a victory in the last championship game.

The joint venture was a success in that it allowed us to keep this key group of players together for their final year. Many of these players have already starred for the AHL6 team and the hope would be that we see all the lads staying involved in this respect in the coming year and for some of them to be pushing their way onto the AHL2 team before too long.

Bernard Boran and Mel McIntyre have been with these players all the way up from nursery and deserve enormous credit for their hard work, dedication and commitment to the lads; not to forget either Ronan Kennedy, one of best coaches in the club, who has been with the lads for a good number of years as well. Thanks also to Tommy Naughton and Seamus Fennessy from Scoil for helping co-ordinate it all with our lads.

Fingal

A mention too of Fingal county team who qualified for the Nicky Rackard Cup final and unfortunately went down by just a point on the day. They were powered to the Croke Park by a whole plethora of Sylvesters players. Congratulations to all the lads who played with Fingal this year and on getting to the final, and hopefully they'll be back again and maybe go one step further next time out: Hilary Murray-Hession, the Morris brothers, Alan and Graham, Andrew Richardson, Killian O'Flynn, the O'Flaherty brothers, Daragh and Enda, Kevin McLoughney. So a lot of players with Fingal this year, and given our club performances, one would expect even more of our lads to get to play intercounty hurling with Fingal in coming year.

Hurling 7's

On the October bank holiday, the club ran an internal adult hurling 7's and the plan is to stage this event again in 2015, going back to the originally scheduled date around August bank holiday weekend.

Behind the scenes

Behind the scenes of any team, a lot of different people contribute in lots of different ways to keeping the teams going strongly, from Jim Wardick fixing hurls, and putting up nets, and Fergus Byrne covering medical duties on multiple teams, to all the very generous sponsors who support all the teams. It would be impossible to name them all here without forgetting someone, so a big thanks collectively to all those people, the valuable support of all of you is greatly appreciated.