



Secretary's Report 2019 **Tuarascáil an Runaí** **2019**

As 2019 draws to a close, we here in Mayo can look back on a year that saw us make headlines in the media both on and off the field. It was great to see Mayo capture a National title in the shape of the Division 1 League. It was our first National Senior title since 2001. It was a welcome boost not only for the players but also for our wonderful supporters both of whom have suffered in recent years. Once our County footballers were finished and everyone thought we were in for a time of rest and relaxation, Mayo GAA found ourselves front and centre of the media in relation to our involvement with the Mayo International Supporters Foundation and others who were also jumping on the bandwagon. I will deal with this topic later in my report.

I would like to sincerely thank my wife Sarah for all her support and patience throughout the year especially in the past number of months which were most difficult with the torrent of abuse that was pointed at not only me but at my fellow Officers.

FBD League

Sunday January 6th 2019 marked Mayo's first outing of the year in the FBD League and also signalled the second coming of James Horan as Manager of our Senior team. The venue was Carrick-on-Shannon and the opposition was Leitrim. The

game itself was an entertaining one with the new rules being tried out for the first time. Mayo's starting 15 was strong and during the game James Horan introduced some unfamiliar faces. Mayo appeared to be coasting to victory, 8 points up after 45 minutes, but all of a sudden we found ourselves in a dog fight. Leitrim had the bit between their teeth and with seconds remaining in the game they scored the equalising point, however dubious it was. The scene was now set for the first ever penalty shoot-out to decide a Senior inter-County fixture. Mayo won the shoot-out 4 to 1 and had escaped from Carrick by the skin of their teeth. The large crowd that was in attendance certainly enjoyed the Soccer style end to an enjoyable game. Our next outing in the competition was against our old nemeses Galway, in Tuam Stadium which attracted a crowd in excess of seven thousand. Mayo were in command right throughout this encounter and seemed to be heading for a deserved victory when they were sucker punched by a late Galway goal deep in injury time to draw the teams level. Penalties would again decide this encounter. The Ronaldo/Messi touch had deserted our penalty takers and we lost out in the shoot out on a scoreline of 4-2. Our interest in the FBD League for 2019 was finally over.

Allianz League

Mayo opened their Division 1 League campaign against Roscommon in McHale Park on a night that wasn't fit for a duck. Strong winds and heavy rain spoiled the night for the attendance in excess of ten thousand. The game itself marked the 100th cap for Jason Doherty and he duly served up a man of the match performance. Roscommon, aided by a gale force wind, led by 5 points to 1 at half time. Apart from Evan Regan's free in the third minute Mayo failed to score for the remainder of the half. The second half was a dogged affair and Mayo managed to draw level with the Rossies in the 58th minute thanks to scores from Diarmuid O'Connor, Donnie Vaughan, Jason Doherty and Paddy Durcan. Colm Boyle was black carded for a high tackle and this seemed to work in Mayo's favour as they went 5 points clear thanks mainly to a Brian Reape goal. Roscommon did manage to score a goal to reduce the deficit but Mayo held on on a score line of 1-8 to 1-7.

Round 2 of the League saw Mayo travel North to Omagh to take on Tyrone. Mayo had a number of changes from the Roscommon game. Mayo were slow to get off the

mark and did not score until the 9th minute. Once Keith Higgins rattled the net in the opening half Mayo eased into the lead and never looked back. Mayo led by 1-7 to 3 points at half time. In the second half Mayo consolidated their position and ran out easy winners on a scoreline of 2-13 to 10 points with the very impressive Fionn McDonagh scoring our second goal. In truth Tyrone were poor but that didn't take away from a very impressive performance from Mayo. We had got off to a dream start in the League winning two from two.

Round 3 of the League saw Mayo entertain Cavan under lights in McHale Park. Mayo fans were expecting for this game to be a walk in the park but it turned out anything but a walk. Cavan raced into a 4 point to 1 lead inside 10 minutes. Mayo clawed themselves back into the game and when the half time whistle sounded we were ahead by 1-7 to 7 points thanks to an Evan Regan goal. Mayo led by 5 points after 45 minutes of play and seemed to be heading for certain victory when Cavan began to stage a comeback. Cavan narrowed the margin to 3 points but two late points from Donnie Vaughan and Brian Reape restored Mayo's 5 point lead and we went on to win the game 1-13 to 11 points. Mayo were now three wins from three, the first time that had happened since the Moran/Morrisson era. Mayo were sitting pretty on top of Division 1 but had sterner tests to come in our next couple of games.

Round 4 of the League saw Mayo travel to the capital to take on the Dubs in Croke Park. Mayo fans travelled in their thousands to Croker in the hope of beating the Dubs but that hope was short lived. Dublin were in control of this game from start to finish. With our goalkeeper Robbie Hennelly ending up as our joint top scorer with 2 points it says a lot about Mayo's performance on the day. Robbie pulled off four top class saves that spared Mayo's blushes. Mayo's first half performance was very poor with the second only slightly better. Dublin ran out easy winners 1-12 to 7 points in a game where they hardly broke into a sweat. The game will be remembered for very little except perhaps Colm Boyle's accidental clash with umpire Tim O'Kane. Thankfully Tim made a full recovery from the clash. Mayo's fairytale start to the League was well and truly over and much improvement would be needed for the clash with Galway.

Round 5 of the League saw Mayo welcome our neighbours Galway to McHale Park. It was a game that both Mayo's Management and supporters hoped would end in victory for us but sadly that would not be the case. Mayo got the opening score through Jason Doherty and when Galway had two players black carded in the first half many home supporters were hoping for a much needed victory over our arch rivals. However it wasn't to be and it was Galway who scored the vital goal in the first half. Mayo squandered many chances and seemed to be hesitant and unsure in defence whereas Galway appeared to remain calm and stuck to their game plan. Galway deservedly led by 7 points at half time 1-7 to 3 points. Mayo came out fighting in the second half and with some wonderful scores from the likes of Moran, Doherty, Ruane and Darren Coen. Mayo were now in the ascendancy and the gap was down to a point by the 58th minute. Galway, however, regrouped and went on to win the game on a scoreline of 1-11 to 12 points. Mayo had now lost two games in a row and with games away to Kerry and home to Monaghan the talk among supporters was of survival in Division 1.

Round 6 of the League saw us travel to the Kingdom to take on Kerry in Tralee. Prior to the game a presentation was made to Donie Buckley, on behalf of Mayo GAA, in appreciation for all the work he had done with Mayo during his time with the County. There are two things that people will remember from this clash, the victory over Kerry and the weather. The weather on the night was absolutely atrocious and it's a credit to both sets of players that they were able to play football. Mayo more than matched everything that Kerry threw at them and were well worth their two point victory a victory that sealed with a brilliant Mattie Ruane goal 7minutes from normal time. Aidan O'Shea put in a man of the match display at midfield where he was ably assisted by his club mate Mattie Ruane. Mayo led by 7 points to 3 at half time and continued the pressure on the resumption of play. Kerry threw the kitchen sink at Mayo towards the end of the game but Mayo's defence stood strong and we went on to win by two points. It was now twenty years since Kerry beat us away from home. Our thoughts now turned towards our final game with Monaghan.

Round 7 of the League saw us welcome Monaghan to McHale Park. It was a game that we needed to win and hope that other results went our way in order for us to qualify for the League Final. Mayo's victory was set up thanks to two first half goals

from Kevin McLoughlin. Mayo led by 2-7 to 6 points at half time despite playing into a gale force wind. Monaghan came out with all guns blazing at the start of the second half with 4 quick points to bring them within striking distance of Mayo. The wind was somewhat taken out of the Monaghan sails with the dismissal of Fintan Kelly to a red card. Monaghan did manage a goal in the 48th minute but that was quickly cancelled out by a Mayo goal. The final 25 minutes of the game were most entertaining with Mayo going into an 8 point lead only for Monaghan to stage a spirited fight back. Mayo managed to compose themselves and ran out 3-15 to 1-18 winners. Mayo had qualified for the Division 1 League Final for the first time since 2012 where their opponents would be Kerry.

Sunday the 31st of March 2019, Mayo and their wonderful supporters headed to Croke Park for a Division 1 League Final showdown with Kerry. This was a game that had in all 5 goals in total and some Mayo debutants playing as if they were seasoned players. Mayo were 3 points to 1 up in the first half when Kerry struck their first goal. Mayo found it difficult to break down a packed Kerry defence. Kerry led by 2-3 to 5 points at the break and appeared in control. Mayo emerged with the bit between their teeth at the start of the second half. Two brilliant points from the impressive James Carr set the tone for Mayo. Goals from Diarmuid O'Connor, Mattie Ruane and Ciaran Treacy sealed a famous victory for Mayo. Mayo had to withstand a Kerry fightback and only a brilliant save from Robbie Hennelly saved the day for Mayo. The victory scenes that followed will be remembered for years to come as Mayo finally won a Senior National title in Croke Park for the first time since 2001. It was wonderful to see Mayo supporters leave GAA Headquarters with smiles on their faces and the odd tear in the eye. We haven't had too many occasions in recent years to savour victory and we were certainly going to enjoy this one. Mayo could look back on a League campaign that had a roller coaster start, a blip in the middle, and a very satisfactory finish. People were now turning their attention to the Championship and the much awaited trip to New York.

Championship

Mayo's opening game in the 2019 Championship was against New York. Thousands of Mayo fans made the trip to the big Apple and what an occasion it was. Anyone

who was there will not forget the trip to the Famine Memorial during Mayo Day or the Mayo supporters taking over Time Square to sing "The Green and Red of Mayo". To witness so many Mayo Supporters in Time Square on that Saturday evening is something I will never forget. Initially some New Yorker's thought it was some sort of a protest, but they quickly realised it wasn't, that it was only thousands of Mayo people in jovial mood and enjoying the "party" atmosphere. Many people enquired as to what gaelic football was but even after explaining it to numerous people I still don't think they understood. The game itself on the Sunday was marred by the constant heavy rain that fell throughout the 70 minutes and somewhat spoiled the occasion in Gaelic Park. New York put up little resistance to a rampant Mayo side that ran out winners on a scoreline of 1-22 to 4 points. Great credit must go to New York GAA, who in fairness are fighting an uphill battle to retain the fixture. Justin O'Halloran and his Management team can be duly proud of the players who would have put in a huge effort in the months leading up to the fixture. The players could relax after the match ahead of an intense training camp in Rocklands GAA Club.

Mayo's next outing in the Championship was against Roscommon in McHale Park, a venue that the Rossies hadn't beaten the home side in the Senior Championship since 1986. Mayo went into the game as huge favourites and were expected by most people to sail through and take on Galway in a Connacht Final. Roscommon, however, hadn't read the script and won the game by a single point 2-12 to 17 points. As the final whistle blew the Roscommon supporters streamed onto the pitch to congratulate their players and enjoy bragging rights over Mayo for another year. Roscommon were ahead at half time, 2-6 to 10 points, thanks to two goals from Cathal Cregg and Ultan Harney in the 6th and 12th minute respectively. Mayo got to grips with Roscommon in the second half and with 10 minutes remaining we were 1 point ahead. It was hoped that Mayo would drive on from there but unfortunately they didn't and Roscommon claimed a famous victory thanks to Fintan Cregg's late injury time winner. The game was over, Roscommon celebrated and Mayo were back on the road in the qualifiers once more.

Mayo's first outing in the qualifiers was an away trip to Newry to play Down. Mayo came out on top in this encounter but didn't have matters all their own way. Mayo led by 10 points to 1-4 at the break. Conor Loftus scored a goal after 7 minutes of the

restart and Mayo were now ahead by 6 points. In the final ten minutes Down threw everything they had at Mayo but our boys stood firm and went on to win by 1-16 to 1-11. More improvement would be needed if we were to progress in the All-Ireland series.

Mayo were handed a home fixture in McHale Park against Armagh in the next round of the qualifiers. If there were "Oscar's" given out for nail biting finishes well then Mayo would have a cabinet full of them. The game against Armagh went right down to the wire with Mayo winning by 1-15 to 2-13. Indeed Armagh had a free with the last kick of the game to draw level but thankfully the ball drifted wide. Cillian O'Connor made his long awaited return in a Mayo jersey and weighed in with two vital scores towards the end of the game to give us some breathing space entering the final moments of the game. Armagh weren't finished and two late points deep in injury time meant that only a point separated the sides. We were all glad when Maurice Deegan blew the final whistle and Mayo marched on to the next round of the qualifiers. One worrying sight during the game was Lee Keegan being helped off the field by our medical team after suffering what appeared to be a very serious ankle injury.

Next up in the qualifiers was a trip to the Gaelic Grounds in Limerick to take on our old rivals Galway. Mayo supporters travelled to Limerick in their thousands with everyone wondering what Mayo team would turn up. Mayo started with ferocious intent and were two points up in a matter of minutes. A poor kick out by the Galway goalkeeper led to James Carr scoring his first goal and Mayo were 5 points up within 6 minutes. Galway then scored two points when Mayo rattled their net for a second time. James Carr collected the ball out on the sideline near the 45 metre line. James then proceeded to dance his way through the Galway defence before unleashing an unstoppable shot into the roof of the net. It had both Mayo and Galway supporters standing to their feet applauding the brilliance of James Carr. Mayo led by 2-7 to 7 points at the break. Galway as expected came out fighting in the second half as Mayo seemed to take their foot slightly off the pedal. Galway were awarded a penalty but Liam Silke's shot was brilliantly saved by David Clarke. Mayo gathered themselves and finished the game strongly to win the game by 2-13 to 1-13. Mayo supporters, management and players breathed a collective sigh of relief at the final

whistle. A huge plus from the game was the return of Lee Keegan after his ankle injury in the Armagh game, his return was greeted by an almighty cheer from the Mayo supporters.

Mayo had qualified for the "Super 8's" in a group that included Kerry, Meath and Donegal. It would mean a trip to Killarney for Round 1, a trip to Croke to face Meath in Round 2 and a Round 3 home tie against Donegal.

Mayo travelled to Killarney for another tilt at Kerry in Round 1 of the "Super 8's". A capacity crowd squeezed into Fitzgerald Stadium, on a day when the weather reached sweltering degrees. The weather was about the only thing that was good from a Mayo perspective on the day. Kerry began the game with real intensity and Mayo just couldn't match no matter how hard they tried. Kerry were 9 points to the good at half time, a lead they would not surrender. Mayo did manage to get into the game more in the second half but this can be contributed to the fact that Kerry had eased their foot off the gas. Mayo to their credit did keep trying to the end but they were never a match for a rampant Kerry outfit who ran out comfortable winners by 1-22 to 15 points

Round 2 saw us travel to the Capital to take on Meath in Croke Park. This was not a game that many will want to remember. Granted it was Mayo's first win in the "Super 8's" but our performance left a lot to be desired. A combination of poor shot selection and poor handling meant that Mayo did not pull away from their opponents until the final quarter. Meath more than held their own against a tired looking Mayo outfit who were playing their 5th Championship game in 29 days. The teams were level on no less than 6 occasions and in fact in the 53rd minute Meath were 12 points to eleven front and an upset was clearly on the cards. The penny suddenly seemed to drop with Mayo and they put in a strong final quarter during which they scored two goals courtesy of Kevin McLoughlin and Cillian O'Connor. Mayo eventually won on a scoreline of 2-17 to 14 points. Next up was a do or die game against Donegal.

The final round of games in the "Super 8's" saw Mayo welcome Donegal to McHale Park. The game was more intriguing due to the fact that our former Manager was now a selector with Donegal. I personally was delighted that Stephen received a

good welcome from the home supporters. Many people wondered if Stephen knew too much about the Mayo players and would it influence the outcome of the game. This game was billed as a winner take all and it certainly lived up to it's billing. Over 27 thousand packed into McHale for this crunch game and the fans were not going to be disappointed. News spread around the ground that Tom Parsons was in the 26 and the roar he got when he went to warm up I'm sure could be heard from the moon. Donegal got off to a flying start and were 2 points up in a matter of minutes. Fionn McDonagh and Colm Boyle put in huge hits on Michael Murphy and Paddy McBrearty which seemed to lift Mayo and set the tone of the game. Mayo were immense for the remainder of the game with Paddy Durcan curtailing Ryan McHugh and Lee Keegan having the measure of Michael Murphy. Mayo led by 1-7 to 4 points at half time thanks to a Cillian O'Connor goal in the 28th minute. Donegal came out fighting in the second half and had reduced the score to 1-9 to 1-8 thanks to a Michael Murphy penalty which was dubious to say the least. Mayo outscored Donegal by 5 points to 2 in the closing stages and won the game on a scoreline of 1-14 to 1-10. It was a wonderful performance by Mayo and one that will live long in the memory. The only down side to the game was the serious injury to Jason Doherty. Next up for Mayo was an All-Ireland semi-final clash with the Dub's.

Saturday August the 10th would see us travel to Croke Park to take on the mighty Dub's. This was certainly a game of two halves. Mayo led, and rightly so by 2 points at half time with many Mayo supporters dreaming of this being the day that we beat the Dub's and stop their drive for 5. The dream was short lived as Dublin outscored Mayo by 3-8 to 1-2 in the second half. Mayo played their best football of the Championship in that first half and asked some serious questions of the Dublin team. Paddy Durcan put in a superb 70 minutes and curtailed Jack McCaffrey. That performance would inevitably lead to Paddy picking up his first All-star award. At the start of the second half Dublin tore into Mayo and in those first 11 minutes of the half had put an unanswered 2-6 past Mayo. No team in the Country could live with that onslaught. Mayo to their credit kept plugging away but could only manage another 1-2. The only highlight of the game was the introduction of Tom Parsons as a substitute late in the game, the cheer that greeted him raised the roof as both sets of supporters welcomed Tom back to the playing field after a near career ending injury. I would like to thank James Horan and his backroom team for all the work they have

put in during the year. Since our exit from the Championship Andy Moran, Ger Cafferkey, David Drake and Evan Regan have retired from Inter County football. I would like to thank all four of them for their services to Mayo.

What can be said about this Dublin team. Surely they are the greatest team of all time, Mayo have been very unfortunate to have come up against such a powerful unit in recent times. I wish to extend my warmest congratulations to the Dublin team and their Management on winning 5 All-Ireland titles in a row, I doubt we will see the likes of them again.

Junior Team

The Mayo Juniors started training once per week in February 2019. The approach of the Junior Management ensured there was little or no impact on club training schedules and fixtures which was to be commended. This worked well. The Junior Championship campaign kicked off on Saturday 25th May as the curtain raiser for the Mayo V Roscommon Senior Championship game. The game was a close contest but with 20minutes remaining the Mayo team edged out the young Leitrim side to come out eventual winners and set up a Connaught Final with neighbours Galway.

The Final in Pearse Stadium was almost a copy of the same fixture in 2018, where the Mayo team were slow to start and fell behind but rallied in the second half to end up losing out by a single point. I would like to thank the Junior Management team and players for their hard work during the year. As was the case in 2018 the Junior team Management instilled a sense of Club comes first ideology into the panel which is again to be applauded. It's a pity that all team Managements can't do the same with all County panels. They continued to use their own Club tops while attending training and used their own cars to attend games and training meaning there was very little cost to the Board. I want to thank Jarlath Trench and his backroom team for the work they did with the Junior's in 2019.

U-20's

The Mayo U20's had a very challenging and enjoyable year as a group in 2019. The players committed fully and put in a huge effort all year and should be commended

for this. The year allowed the further development of many young Mayo footballers and it is hoped that many of these fine young men will make their way in to the Mayo Senior squad in 2020 and in the years to come. The year ended on a disappointing note, with defeat to Galway in the Connacht Final. This defeat, however, should not overshadow the work that the players put in and the great strides that were made. The management team would like to highly commend the players for their effort and dedication and wish them every success in the future. I want to thank Mike Solan and his backroom for their efforts during the year.

Hurling

Our Senior Hurlers commenced their Division 2A League campaign with a hard fought draw against Meath. This was the first National Hurling League game to be played in the Adrian Freeman Memorial Park and how fitting it was that Cathal Freeman (Adrian's brother) would conjure up the score that would level the game. Mayo travelled to London only for the game to be called off at the last minute due to a water logged pitch, which left the Mayo Management and players very annoyed. Mayo made the long trip to Kerry for Round 3 of the League but were well beaten on a scoreline of 3-18 to 9 points. Round 4 of the League saw Mayo welcome Antrim to James Stephens Park Ballina and again were beaten by 5-18 to 13 points. Mayo were certainly finding life difficult in Division 2 A. Mayo travelled to Cusack Park in Mullingar to take on Westmeath in Round 5 of the League. This was a game in which Mayo played their best Hurling of the campaign and really put it up to the League leaders. The final score of 2-12 to 6 points certainly flattered Westmeath. Next up for Mayo was a return to Ruislip to take on London in the rearranged fixture. Mayo knew they had to win the game to retain their Division 2 A status for 2020.

In the Nicky Rackard Championship Mayo hoped to redeem themselves from their dismal League campaign. Mayo opened their account in the competition when they travelled to Omagh to take on Tyrone. Mayo went into the game as favourites and were expected to come away with a victory, however as in the League Mayo's performance did not live up to expectations and Tyrone won by 1-15 to 15 points. This defeat would leave Mayo with a mountain to climb if they wished to progress in the competition. Mayo welcomed Louth to McHale Park for Round 2. Mayo turned in

a splendid display to overcome Louth on a scoreline of 3-23 to 1-13. It was a welcome return to form for Mayo who had now put themselves right back in the mix in the competition. Mayo travelled to the Sligo Centre of Excellence in Scarden to take on Sligo in a game that Mayo knew they had to win to progress. Sligo raced into an early lead and led by 2-13 to 7 points at half time. Mayo, to their credit, came out fighting in the second half and limited Sligo to 3 points while scoring 1-12 themselves to leave both sides deadlocked on a scoreline of 2-16 to 1-19. Mayo's Hurling exploits for 2019 were at an end as Sligo qualified for the semi-final. I wish to thank Derek Walsh, his Management team and the players for all their efforts during 2019. On the Club scene Tooreen won their third County title on the trot. Everyone had expected Ballyhaunis and Tooreen to face each other in the County Final. Castlebar Mitchels upset the odds by beating Ballyhaunis in the semi-final and earned the right to take Tooreen in the final. Castlebar Manager Denis Egan deserves great credit in preparing his charges and they certainly put it up to Tooreen. Tooreen won the game by three points and would go on to capture the Connacht Intermediate title, beating Galway Champions Kinvara in the final. Well done to all involved.

County Competitions

Our Senior and Intermediate Club Championships commenced in early April. As was the case in 2018 Clubs would have to wait until the end of August to resume the Championship. Ballintubber were the reigning Champions and would fight hard to retain their title. A few shocks were in store, Ballina Stephenites overcame a fancied Breaffy team in the quarter final and Ballaghaderreen overcame Castlebar Mitchels in a thrilling semi-final. Ballintubber beat Ballina in the other semi-final to set up final with Ballaghaderreen. Ballintubber came out on top in a close final by 1-14 to 1-11. Ballintubber were beaten by Corofin in the Connacht semi-final Hollymount/Carramore were relegated to the Intermediate Championship for 2020.

The Intermediate Championship was equally as exciting as the Senior. The semi-final pairings saw Burrishoole go up against Ballyhaunis while The Neale pitted themselves against Louisburgh. The final would see Ballyhaunis do battle with The Neale, and what a battle it was right down to the wire. Sean Cosgrove was the hero for The Neale as he scored the winning point in the 73rd minute to leave them 1-12 to

1-11 ahead. This was a first ever Intermediate Championship for The Neale and the celebrations afterwards were a testament to that. The Neale qualified for the Connacht Final where they played the Galway champions Oughterard. The Galway outfit put in a strong second half display and ran out easy winners on a score of 1-16 to 11 points. Shrule/Glencorrib were relegated to the Junior ranks for 2020.

The Junior A Championship got underway in April and culminated with Castlebar Mitchels B beating a fancied Kilmaine team in the final on a score of 14 points to 11. Kilmaine would go on to represent Mayo in the Connacht Club Championship. They qualified for the final where they played the Sligo champions St Michaels. This contest proved to be one sided as Kilmaine won on a scoreline of 5-17 to 3 points. Charlestown Sarsfields B were relegated to the Junior B Championship for 2020. Eastern Gaels took the honours in the Junior B Championship beating Crossmolina Deel Rovers B on a scoreline of 3-11 to 1-10. This was Eastern Gaels first ever County title outside of the underage ranks. Parke/Keellogues/Crimlin B won the C Championship beating Burrishoole B in the final by 2-7 to 1-7.

The League competition kicked off towards the end of March. Starred rounds were still causing trouble for some Clubs. Knockmore won the Division 1 League title, Charlestown Sarsfields won Division 2, The Neale completed a League and Championship double by winning Division 3, Ardagh won Division 4, special mention must go to Ballycroy who won Division 5 thereby claiming their first ever County title in their 130 year history and Breaffy B took the Division 6 crown.

Claremorris won the County Cup beating Louisburgh by 2-15 to 2-14. Both teams received bye's in their respective semi-finals which was most disappointing.

Knockmore won the Michael Walsh Senior League with Kiltimagh taking the Intermediate Honours and Cill Chomain taking the Junior title after a penalty shoot out with Kilmeena after both teams were level at full time

Comortás Péil na Gaeltachta

Kiltane hosted this year's competition over St Patrick's weekend in March. Kiltane won the Senior Final beating their near neighbours Beal an Mhuirthead 2-11 to 1-13. Cill Chomain overcame Ballycastle in the Junior final by 3-13 to 1-7. I wish to convey my gratitude to the organising committee and Kiltane GAA Club for hosting the event.

Bord na nÓg

I will not go into too much detail in relation to Bord na nÓg as both Con and Ronan have comprehensive reports in this booklet. The completion rate in Bord na nÓg fixtures of 95% for Minor League and 89% for Minor Championship, 94% at U-16, 83% at U-15 , 90% at U-14, 93% at U-13 and 89% at U-12 is astonishing and is down to the hard work of the committee. The U-17's collected their first Connacht title and reached an All-Ireland semi-final losing out to eventual Champions Cork. The U-16's competed in both the Ted Webb Final and Shield Final

Féile

Connacht hosted the Féile Football Competition this year and again it was a wonderful success. Congratulations to all clubs who took part and also those who hosted games. It was a truly memorable weekend and the fact that the COE is available adds to the experience. Well done to our own John Hopkins (Connacht PRO) who headed up the event along with his hard working committee.

Connacht Colleges

The Connacht Colleges A Final was contested between two Mayo Schools, St Gerald's Castlebar and St Colman's Claremorris after they had defeated Rice College and St Jarlath's respectively. Considering the weather conditions both St Gerald's and St Colman's produced a thrilling game of football in the final in McHale Park with the Claremorris School winning by the narrowest of margins 15 points to 1-11. St Colman's lost to St Michael's of Enniskillen in the All-Ireland semi-final on a scoreline of 2-13 to 1-10. St Gerald's won the Senior A League, St Muredach's

College, Ballina won the Senior B League and St Joseph's of Foxford won the Senior C League.

I would like to thank all of the Clubs who have made their grounds available to schools to play their games.

Scór

The All-Ireland Senior Scór was held in the Travellers Friend Hotel in Castlebar earlier on in the year. Three Clubs from Mayo represented the County at the Senior Scór finals, Aghamore, Achill and Claremorris. Aghamore retained their Set dancing title which was a great achievement. I wish to thank all the volunteers that helped out in the T.F. for the Scór finals. Scór na bPaistí continues to flourish within the County, thanks to all the Clubs that take part. Scór is continuing to struggle in Mayo particularly in the Northern part of the County and maybe if Clubs participation in Scór was condition of the "rebate system" perhaps there would be more involvement.

Sub Committees

The CCC headed up by Seamus Tuohy, continue to organise all of the fixtures that take place within the County. It is never an easy task trying to juggle fixtures around our Senior Footballers and Hurlers. There were many late nights in McHale sorting out fixtures, referees and venues not to mention discipline issues. The League and Championship ran more or less as scheduled and this can be attributed to the hard working committee. The U-21 competition continues to stutter along and the timing and format of this competition will have to be looked at for 2020. There are proposals going before Convention in relation to the Junior Championship and I would ask delegates to consider them carefully as I believe if they are carried it will lead to a better Championship. Careful thought will also have to be given to the age grades at underage level, do we leave them as they are or change them to 13, 15 and 17 Thanks to Seamus and his Committee for all their work throughout the year. I also wish to thank the Hearings Committee under Chairman Mattie Joe Connolly and Secretary Tod O'Mahony who are always available, sometimes at very short notice, to adjudicate on matters.

Our Coaching Officer Liam Moffatt continues to do tremendous work in the area of player welfare and development. A considerable effort was carried out to attain club coaching feedback in 2019. In response to this a club to academy coaching policy was formulated and it is hoped that this will improve communication and integration between club and academy in 2020. There were outstanding numbers attending our Cúl Camps again this year, with fifty Cúl Camps taking place over the course of the summer. In 2019 there was a coach education course held with participants receiving coaching certificates. A significant amount of hurling development is occurring at many levels including academy teams, coach education, skills competitions, wheelchair hurling, summer camps and with the upcoming hurling review further opportunities may present themselves to further develop this game. Mayo GAA handball had a very successful year across singles, doubles, one wall competitions and regional and national levels. I wish to thank Liam for all the work he has put in over the last 12 months. I also wish to thank Billy McNicholas and his Coaching staff for all the work they do with Clubs and Schools around the County.

Our PRO, Paul Cunnane, continues to keep the Mayo faithful up to date with team news fixtures and upcoming events through our social media outlets. Mayo GAA T.V. continues to go from strength to strength and we are indebted to Paul and his hard working backroom team for the service they provide. In excess of 4 and a half thousand people tuned into our Championship games this year. Thanks again to Paul and his committee for a job well done.

Gerry Burke and Paddy McNicholas are our Connacht Council representatives and I thank them for their work through the year. Sean MacÉil is our Central Council delegate and he keeps us up to date with what's going on in Croke Park.

Our Development Officer Willie Kelly and his Committee have assisted Clubs around the County with their grant applications to Connacht Council and also on measures on how to improve ground safety. I thank Willie and his committee for their work throughout the year.

Vincent Neary is our Childrens Officer and he has worked with Clubs on the implementation of the Code of Practice in relation to underage players. I Thank Vincent for all his work in 2019 as a lot of his work goes unnoticed.

Our referee's coordinator Sean MacÉil does an enormous amount of work in organising referee's and sideline Officials for games. I thank Sean for all the work he does.

Bord na nÓg, under the stewardship of Chairman Con Moynihan and Secretary Ronan Kirrane, continues to go from strength to strength. I want to thank the two lads but also the committee who do trojan work in keeping the show on the road.

Our Health and Wellbeing committee continue to do some very important work throughout the County. Seamus Tuohy, Sean MacÉil and Con Moynihan head up a very hard working committee and they are to be commended for the tremendous work they do.

Finance is the one department which is the hardest to run. I want to thank our Treasurer, Kevin O'Toole, for all the work he has done to keep the County financially afloat. Kevin puts in many hours per week often late into the night to get players expenses out in time. Thank you again Kevin for a job well done.

Congress 2019

Congress, this year, was held in Wexford and was largely uneventful. It was held on the same weekend that we played Dublin in Croke Park. It still baffles me that National League games are held on Congress weekend. The weekend previous was a free weekend and would have been more suitable.

Cúl Camps

As was the case in previous years we had outstanding numbers attending our Cúl Camps in 2019. Fifty Cúl Camps took place over the course of the summer with 6,978 children involved. These camps don't just happen, there is months of preparation .done so the camps run smoothly. Each Coach is Garda Vetted. I would like to thank the Clubs that hosted Cúl Camps this year and I also wish to place on record my thanks to the Camp Coordinators and Coaches.

Stewards

Our stewards, under the watchful eye of Gerry Burke, continue to give of their time to ensure that all games in McHale Park run smoothly and without incident. I thank each and every one of them for the giving of their time. Gerry is always on the lookout for new stewards so I would encourage each Club to nominate people that would be interested in helping out, training will be provided for new recruits.

Sponsorship

Elvery's continue to be our main sponsor and I want to thank Pat Rowland and his staff for all their help. I wish to thank all our sponsors whose financial support throughout the year is invaluable to the County Board. Arivo sponsor the Senior Football Championship, Eddie Egan Jewellers sponsor our Intermediate Championship while Breaffy House Hotel sponsor our Junior Championship. Homeland sponsor our Bord na nÓg competitions and we are indebted to them for that. Smyth's Toys, and O'Neills have kindly continued to lend financial support.

Training Centre

The Training Centre at Lough Lannagh has not progressed as we would have hoped. It has been delayed for environmental issues, hope fully these will be resolved in the near future and we can get on with the business of building our Centre of Excellence. The project is very much alive contrary to recent comments by individuals.

Mayo International Supporters Foundation

As stated earlier in this report, Mayo GAA found itself in the media for all the wrong reasons. A dispute arose between the foundation and Mayo GAA. I would like at this stage to thank Tim O'Leary, Heather Blond and members of the foundation for organising the Gala Dinner in New York on the Friday night prior to the game. I would also like to thank the people who donated so generously at the auction on the night. The foundation agreed to pay for the training camp at Rocklands GAA Club and I wish to thank the members of that Club for making their facilities available to us. Tim O'Leary donated €150,000 to Mayo GAA in 2018 and this was put to use by the Board, I wish to thank Tim O'Leary for his donation. That is the only money that Mayo GAA have received for either O'Leary or the foundation. Mayo have never

asked for any other money from O'Leary or the foundation. I am not going to go over all of the articles that have appeared in the newspapers, but it is disappointing that individuals used the media to tell their side of the story a story that was not entirely correct. Any money raised on behalf of Mayo GAA must come under the umbrella of Cairde Maigheo. The correct manner to sort out the breakdown in the relationship is around a table and at the time of going to press it is hoped that both sides will enter into a mediation process so that all sides can move on.

Bereavements

I would like to express my sympathy to all those who lost loved ones during the year. We also lost people who had played for Mayo down through the years, our prayers and thoughts are with their families at this time.

Conclusion

As we approach to end of 2019 Mayo GAA can look back on a successful year. Our Senior team exceeded all expectations on winning the National League Division 1 title while also reaching the All-Ireland semi-final. Our U-17 team won a Connacht title and reached the All-Ireland semi-final beating Dublin along the way. All of our other County teams acquitted themselves well on the field of play. We can all look forward to 2020 with a degree of expectation that we will be once again challenging for major honours.

To the media, Western People, Connaught Telegraph and Mayo News I thank you most sincerely for your coverage of our games during the year. I wish to thank Mid-West Radio for their continued to broadcasting of our games throughout the year. I would also like to thank An Garda Siochana, Murray Ambulance and the Order of Malta who provide a valuable service on match days not only in McHale Park but throughout the County.

I would like to thank my fellow Officers of the Board, Chairman Mike Connolly, vice-Chairman Seamus Tuohy who also chairs the CCC, Treasurer Kevin O'Toole, and our PRO Paul Cunnane. There will be changes at Club and Divisional level again this year. To the people who are leaving Office I say a big thank you for your help and support over the past twelve months and I do hope that many of you will continue to be involved in some way with the Association.

There will also be changes with the Officers of the Board. Mike Connolly has come to the end of his five year term as Cathaoirleach and has to step down. I would like to thank Mike for his friendship but also for the tremendous work he has done on behalf of the Board over the past five years. Mike has been instrumental in changing our approach to coaching within the County. There are now many past players involved with our academy teams which all bodes well for the future. Mike has also been to the forefront with the Lough Lannagh project and hopefully we will see that development commence in the near future. Sponsorship and fundraising has always been to the forefront of Mike's thoughts and this has led to the appointment of Tom O'Reilly as our Commercial Manager. Mike has given many years of devoted service to Mayo GAA and we are indebted to him. I would also pay tribute to Mike's wife Ann and his family for allowing him to be involved with the County. I do hope that Mike continues to be involved with the GAA in some shape or form. Kevin O'Toole is stepping down as Treasurer of the Board at Convention. Kevin has done a tremendous job over the past number of years as Treasurer. Kevin has increased our sponsorship, managed to get a reduction in our repayments to Croke Park which was not an easy thing to do. During Kevin's time as Treasurer Clubs have also benefitted with rebates on Championship gates, County Board Development draw and Cúl Camps. Kevin has put in many many late nights both at home and in McHale Park keeping our finances up to date and ensuring players and mentors get paid. Kevin's expertise will be sorely missed around the County Board table. We did not always see eye to eye on matters but we always had the interests of Mayo GAA at heart. I thank Kevin for his friendship and his services to Mayo GAA. I also would like to thank Kevin's wife Cathy and his family and I'm sure they will be delighted to have him back so he can concentrate on his pride and joy which are his grandchildren. Sean MacÉil, Gerry Burke and Paddy McNicholas are our Central and Connacht Council delegates respectively they have all reached the end of their terms in office and are standing down. I would like to thank all three of them for the work they have done on our behalf. As our Cultural Officer, James Gibbons, comes to the end of his 5 year term I want to thank him for all the work he has done in promoting not only Scór but also the use of the Irish Language. The Cultural Officer role is one of the most thankless jobs on the Board and whoever succeeds James will have a huge job on their hands. Eugene Connolly is stepping down as Secretary to the Hurling Board. I would like to thank Eugene for all the work he has done on behalf of

the Hurling Board and also as a member of the CCC. To all of those who are contesting elections, I wish you all the best of luck and thank you for allowing your names to go before Convention. It's always easy for people to sit on the fence and criticise the Officers of the Board but why don't these people put their names forward for a "job" but no it's easier to sit behind a faceless account on social media using a pseudo name. People must remember that the Officers carry out their duties in a voluntary capacity and while we don't always do things right we do do our best for Mayo GAA.

I wish to thank Phil Heneghan, our groundsman who always has our main pitch in McHale Park in tip top condition. To John Prenty, the staff at the Connacht Council Office and the staff in Croke Park I wish to thank you all for the help you have given me during the year. Finally to our Administrator, Michael Cummins, I thank you for all you do for Mayo GAA, you really do go way beyond what you should be doing. You work away in the background and help both Clubs and individuals with whatever queries they might have. We here in Mayo GAA are eternally indebted to you Michael.

If I have left anybody out I sincerely apologise.

I want to wish you all a healthy and prosperous 2020 and let's hope it's a good one for Mayo GAA both on and off the field.

Mile buiochas,

Diarmúid dé Buitléir Runaí