

History makers Loughgiel King of Clubs

By Tony McGee

Loughgiel 2-12 St. Rynagh's 1-12

IMMEDIATELY referee Jimmy Rankin blew the final whistle at Casement Park, yesterday, the ground was turned into a sea of red and white. Loughgiel had won the All-Ireland club hurling championship title, to become the first team from Ulster to create this spot of history, and understandably their ecstatic supporters in the crowd of approximately 7,000 went wild with delight.

Over the loudspeakers singing farmer John Watt blasted out 'Sweet Loughgiel' and the jubilant fans sang and swayed in their brilliant sunshine, with their hurling heroes poised high in the air.

It was a marvellous occasion — a great day for Ulster hurling but above all a fantastic day for Loughgiel people. Dr. Michael Daly, who had been presented to both teams before the throw-in, watched with obvious delight from his seat in the stand. Everybody, even the huge contingent of St. Rynagh supporters who travelled north, joined in the celebrations and it took almost 15 minutes for the winning captain Niall Patterson to reach the presentation line.

In fact, appeals had to be made over the P.A. system by Andy McCallin to the fans to allow Niall up the rostrum to receive the Thomas Moore Cup from Ulster President Phil Smith. The final score of 2-12 to 1-12 hardly does the Ulster champions full justice. On this glorious day they were by far a better team and every movement of class that St. Rynagh's produced was matched and surpassed, by the Loughgiel men.

Magnificent hurling
Their ground hurling was magnificent and their determination and will-to-succeed was oozing out. They were going to create history and become All-Ireland champions and no-one was going to stop them. Hurling secretary Neilly Pat-

erson: "The lads' fighting spirit kept them in contention both in the drawn game and today. Even with us a goal in front after playing with the wind in the first half I wasn't worried. I knew the boys had the legs to stick to their task and they never stopped tackling."

"They had their eye on the cup and no way were they going to let it slip from their grasp. They knew that they should have won the first game so they weren't going to lose the replay no matter what. I'm really proud of them all."

So, too, was goalkeeper supreme and skipper Niall Patterson. "I wouldn't single out any of the lads for special mention — it was a team effort with every player giving every ounce he had," beamed the Loughgiel captain. "It hasn't really sunk in yet that we are All-Ireland champions but it's a great feeling."

"Despite what people had said we never thought that we had missed the boat by not winning in Croke Park. In fact, we reckoned that it was St. Rynagh's who had thrown away the chance because we knew we had the measure of them. We weren't going to let them come to Casement and take the trophy away."

Dream come true
"It's a dream come true — but, to be honest, when we started out in the championship last year I never imagined that we would end up All-Ireland champions. Our aim was to win the Antrim title and build on that for this year. Our ultimate success has come quicker than expected . . . it's a real bonus for us and a great day for Ulster hurling generally."

"But after the celebrations we must come down to earth again and think about defending our Antrim title. It will be a whole new ball game when that comes around and today will have to be pushed into the background."

"Still, this is a moment I'll remember with fondness for the rest of my life."

Well Niall may, for when it was a time when all of Ireland was made to sit up and take notice. Ulster hurling, at club level, is as good as anywhere in the country and these Loughgiel men have proved this. Ballycastle almost did it before but now there can be no argument.

Excellent pucks
It was evident from the throw-in that Loughgiel were not going to be pushed aside. After three minutes, Frank Kenny pointed for St. Rynagh's to open the scoring but the answer was swift and positive . . . a point from star forward Brendan Laverty.

That was a hallmark of Loughgiel's display — they answered every score of St. Rynagh's with a similar effort which was enough to break the hearts of the Offaly champs.



Loughgiel's Brendan Laverty gains possession of the ball during the second half as St. Rynagh's player comes rushing towards him.

Paddy Carey, junior, put Loughgiel in front and, although the teams were level twice before half-time, never could the Leinster men get on top.

Devery levelled the scores four points apiece and Fogarty from all of 75 metres put St. Rynagh's ahead.

The Loughgiel reply was swift. A sweeping movement down the field; Paddy Carey, junior, cut the ball into Laverty and the centre-forward knife his way past bewildered defenders before crashing a spectacular shot past Damien Martin in the St. Rynagh goal.

That left it 1-4 to 0-5 and by half-time the winners had edged it 1-7 to 0-7 ahead, helped by magnificent point from mid-field star Mick O'Connell from all of 80 metres, on the left of the field.

With the wind in their backs, St. Rynagh's tore into attack on the restart and Padraic Horan, who had been kept out in the cold by Paddy McIlhannon, pointed a free, but then missed a couple of golden opportunities and after seven minutes Aidan McCarry pointed.

The cracking pace of the first half was maintained right to the end with Loughgiel growing in stature as time wore on. St. Rynagh's closed the gap to just one point in the 42nd minute but back galloped McCarry for another point and, after Devery and Paddy Carey had exchanged similar scores, it was that man McCarry who drove home the final nail.

Ten minutes from time and St. Rynagh's were trying hard to halt the slide as they could see the silverware slipping from their grasp. They started a promising movement out of defence but in nipped Dominic McKinlay to rob a defender on the left wing. McKinlay soloed into the centre, was blocked but sure-shot McCarry picked up the loose ball and crashed it into the St. Rynagh's net . . . 2-10 to 0-11 and the trophy was heading for north Antrim.

St. Rynagh's got their goal just one minute from time, Horan slamming home a penalty, but the grit and determination of Loughgiel was not going to wilt at this stage. The All-Ireland championship was won . . . and won well on merit.



Mick O'Connell, Loughgiel Shamrocks, about to puck the ball towards the St. Rynagh's goal with an Offaly player close at hand.

It would be most unfair to single out any Loughgiel player as the star of the show but Niall Patterson brought off a few good saves early in the game to steady the side, and the goals by Brendan Laverty and Aidan McCarry had "winner" written all over them.

Not going to wilt

St. Rynagh's, whose third

defeat in the final this was, went home a disappointed lot. They had no stars on the day although Aidan Fogarty showed his Allstar class at times and Dermot Devery was dangerous up front.

But it was Loughgiel's day and history was made . . . and this was the greatest game of hurling every played at Casement Park.

Scorers for Loughgiel: A McCarry (1-3); B Laverty (1-1); S McNaughton (0-3); P Carey, jun. (0-1); P Carey, sen. (0-1); A McNaughton (0-1); M O'Connell (0-1).

St. Rynagh's scorers: P Horan (1-2); D Devery (0-3); A Fogarty (0-3); H Dolan (0-2); F Kenny (0-1); J Horan (0-1).

Loughgiel: N Patterson (capt.); M Carey, P J Mullin, S Carey; E Connolly, P McIlhannon, A McNaughton; M O'Connell, G McKinlay; A McCarry, B Laverty, D McKinlay; P Carey (sen), P Carey (jun), S McNaughton.

St. Rynagh's: D Martin; M Whelehan, J Dooley, B Keaney, T White, A Fogarty, T Connelley; A Horan, S White (capt); D Devery, P Horan, J Kirwan, J Horan, F Kenny, H Dolan.

Subs: J Cannon for Kenny; G Dolan for Kirwan.

Referee: J Rankin (Laois).

CHAMPIONS — IT'S MAGIC

LOUGHGIEL burst the elusive All-Ireland club hurling bubble at the weekend — and the bubbly was still flowing this week.

Winning the FA Cup Final was nothing as compared to the tremendous achievement of this

small Parish of 1,700 people nestling in the hills of North Antrim.

"Still celebrating?" I asked. A Loughgiel fan dressed in red and white from tip to toe replied with a smile: "Sure we're only starting."

That was the atmosphere in the Pound Bar on Monday afternoon. For many of the players it was the greatest moment of their careers — and for the fans, girlfriends, mothers and fathers it was a cause for ecstatic celebrations

which will go on for weeks and perhaps even months.

The players thanked the fans and the fans thanked the players and now and again they would hug each other as they realised: "We've done it!"

"How does it feel to be all

Ireland Champions? It's brilliant, magic. We're the first Ulster Club to bring the trophy over the border and we're proud of it," said Paddy McIlhatton, the team's centre half back.

Right half back, Eamonn Connolly was still not sure whether the victory was a dream or not.

"Everybody keeps telling me that we're the champions — but it probably won't hit me until about Thursday," he said.

"Our fans are the best in Ireland, they have followed us everywhere and without them the job would have been twice as hard.

"When you come out on the pitch and hear the cheer it lifts you about six feet off the ground. And the crowd keep cheering, carrying you with the game all the way," said one of the team's younger members, Paddy Carey, jnr.

All the players were quick to point out that the way is now open for other Antrim and Ulster teams to win the trophy.

"We've burst the bubble and shown it can be done — now it's up to the other teams and we wish them the best of luck because there's really no

feeling like lifting that cup," said Carey Junior.

On Sunday night, as the buses carrying players and supporters returned to the village, a great cheer went up and the carnival began.

"I've never seen anything like it — we might as well have won the World Cup," said Brendan McGarry, a senior player since 1963.

"Danny McMullan trained us hard, four or five nights a week through rain and shine. It was the hardest I've ever trained — but it was worth it," said Brendan with a grin.

Liam McGarry, a selector of the team and the proprietor of the Pound bar looked round the packed room and smiled.

"I think the whole village was at the match and they made themselves heard. It's probably the best day we've had in the village ever. We're all proud of the team and their achievement," he said.

But the "King" of Loughgiel for the next few weeks will be Danny McMullan, the modest coach who led the team to an historic victory.

McMullan's status in Loughgiel is akin to the legend of Bill Shankly on Merseyside.

"He's the one who got us

there but he'll probably deny it — he's that sort of man," said Brendan McGarry, and the other players nodded their heads in agreement.

As Danny sat back in a comfortable chair in his living room you could see the sense of satisfaction.

"It's flattering to receive all these compliments but it certainly feels very good," said the happy coach.

"I'm not scared to say that this Loughgiel team is the best Ulster squad ever to go to the final — they can talk about my coaching but I have told them again and again that you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink," he declared.

Danny has been inundated with calls of congratulations from GAA clubs from all over Ulster — praising the little County Antrim village for their victory.

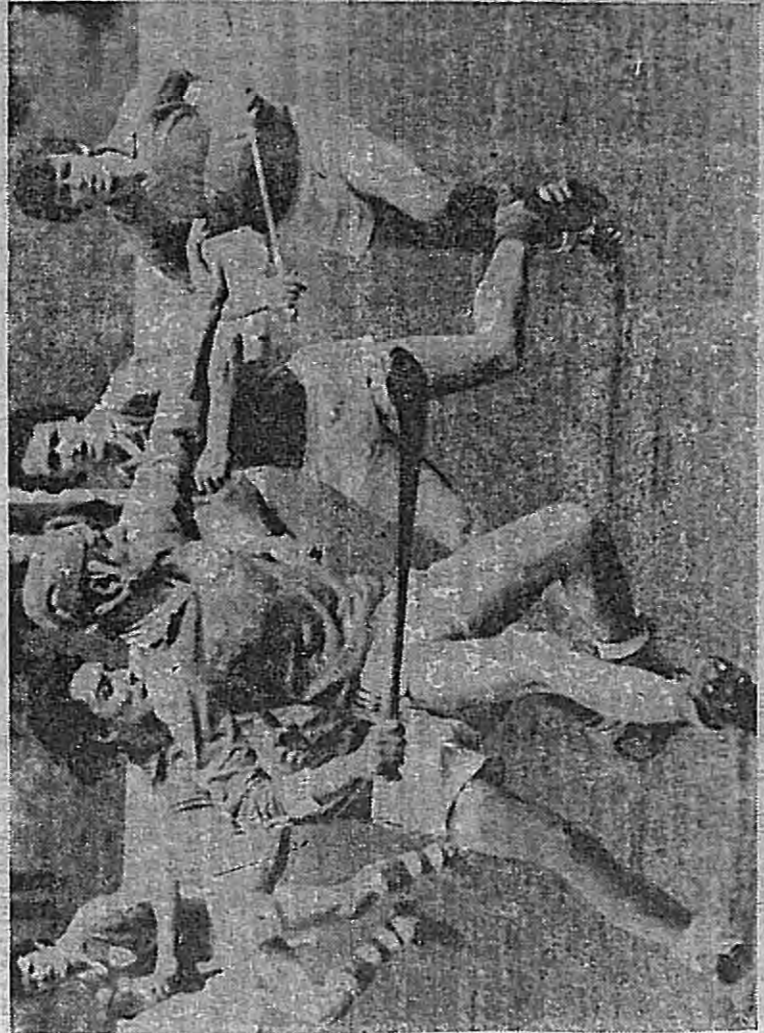
Niall Patterson, the goalkeeper captain of the team had the last word.

"We played well, we deserved to win and now I think everybody has a right to celebrate — the feeling in the village at the moment is fantastic," he said.



A view of the celebrations from behind the counter at the Pound Lounge Bar at Loughgiel.

ALL-IRELAND CLUB FINAL



●FOILED . . . as Loughiel's BRENDAN LAVERTY steps in to rob St. Rynagh's MICHAEL WHELEHAN of possession during yesterday's All-Ireland Hurling Club Championship final replay at Casement Park.

Dream Come True For Loughgiel

By VINCENT HOGAN

LOUGHGIEL 2-12

ST. RYNAGH'S 1-12

THIS is the story of a hurling dream which became reality; of a bold and determined group of men from Loughgiel in North Antrim who sought to defy supposed logic in their ambitious quest for All-Ireland glory — and succeeded.

For yesterday at Casement Park in Belfast, a new and unlikely name was added to Hurling Roll of Honour as Loughgiel Shamrocks overwhelmed St. Rynagh's of Offaly in their All-Ireland club championships final replay.

It is a result which sends the title north of the border for the first time and one that unveils a new and exciting chapter in the code's illustrious history.

Those who maintained that Ulster would never be a hurling stronghold will now have to reconsider their convictions after this encounter.

All 15 members of the victorious team might well have been folk heroes as the

final whistle was sounded. A red and white army of supporters immediately engulfed them in a sea of pride and emotion which ensured that the journey to the dressing-rooms would be a long one. Yet, when reflecting upon this momentous day in their history, Loughgiel would be justified in paying special tribute to their defenders.

Niall Patterson was suitably composed in the role of captain between the posts but his confidence was only made possible by the breathtaking application of those immediately in front of him.

The Loughgiel defence was magnificent, particularly at half back.

The winners, occasionally struggled in midfield but, with half forwards Aiden McCarry and Brendan Lavery showing a willingness to fall deep when necessary, it was not a sufficiently significant weakness to put them in danger of defeat.

Rynagh's certainly had their moments and there were times when their superior hurling skill threatened to put them in the ascendancy. Yet they failed to take their chances with the aplomb one might have expected from such, an experienced side and ultimately fell victims to two superbly timed goals from Loughgiel.

The first came in the 23rd minute after the Offaly men had worked desperately hard to establish a lead of 0-5 to 0-4.

Loughgiel full forward, Paddy Carey Jr., sent Lavery away down the right and the centre half forward brushed past three lunging tackles before rifling a brilliant shot past Damien Martin in the Rynagh's goal.

McCarry, Mick O'Connell and Aiden McNaughton all added further points for the Antrim champions while Hugh Dolan replied with a brace of points for Rynagh's to leave the half time score at 1-7 to 0-7 in Loughgiel's favour.

It seemed inevitable that the almost frenetic pace of those opening 30 minutes would be followed by a more sedate pace after the interval. But, almost incredibly, this enthralling contest continued in precisely the same manner after the resumption.

Battling with just a trifle more conviction Rynagh's looked capable of victory as they moved to within two points of their opponents with 14 minutes remaining. But then came an error of judgement from Padraig Horan which was followed soon after, by Loughgiel's second goal.

Horan's mistake came in the 47th minute when Rynagh's were awarded a free 25 yards out from goal and straight in front of the post. The Offaly full forward decided to go for a goal and his attempt was blocked and cleared superbly by McIlbratton.

Three minutes later the game was over as a contest. Dominic McKinley attacked down the left for Loughgiel but appeared to have squandered his chance as the ball trickled out of his possession.

But Rynagh's failed to clear the danger and, after a minor scramble in the goalmouth, the ball rolled across to the unmarked McCarry, who volleyed triumphantly to the net.

The chorus of victory erupted round the ground and history was in the offing. Rynagh's attacks became desperate and when Horan rifled in a last minute penalty for the Offaly men, it seemed little more than a token gesture.

Scorers: Loughgiel — A. McCarry (1-3), B. Lavery (1-1), S. McNaughton (0-3), P. Carey Jr. (0-2), M. O'Connell, A. McNaughton, P. Carey snr., (0-1 each). St. Rynagh's — P. Horan (1-2), D. Devery, A. Fogarty (0-3 each), H. Dolan (0-2), F. Kenny, J. Horan (0-1 each).

LOUGHGIEL—N. Patterson; M. Carey, P. J. Mullins, S. Carey, E. Connolly, P. McIlbratton, A. McNaughton; M. O'Connell, G. McKinley, A. McCarry, B. Lavery, D. McKinley, P. Carey snr., P. Carey Jr., S. McNaughton.

ST. RYNAGH'S—D. Martin; M. Whelehan, J. Dooley, B. Keane, T. White, A. Fogarty, T. Conneely, A. Horan, S. White, D. Devery, P. Horan, J. Kirwan, J. Horan, H. Dolan, F. Kenny, Subs.—J. C'Annon for Kenny G. Dolan for in-
Referee—J. Rankin (Laois).
Man of the Match—
BRENDAN LAVERTY (Loughgiel).



Selectors Neil Patterson, Dominic Casey and Liam McGarry, trainer Danny McMullan along with the club's guests of honour.

**SHAMROCKS
LOUGHGIEL
CELEBRATION
DINNER
AND
PRIZE
DISTRIBUTION**



Loughgiel team captain Neil Patterson cutting the special 'Shamrock' cake in the dining room of the Rialto Hotel, Ballymena, where the team celebrated their All-Ireland victory.



The Loughgiel team with their trophies at the celebration dinner.



Trophies from the players were presented to the four men who took the team to All-Ireland success, Danny McMullan, Neil Patterson, Dominic Casey and Liam McGarry.



Shamrocks, Loughgiel, the All-Ireland Club Hurling Champions.

Loughgiel hurlers do fans proud — but face a replay

ULSTER Champions, Loughgiel Shamrocks, almost achieved their dream last Sunday at Croke Park when they drew with St. Rynagh's, Offaly, in the All-Ireland Club hurling final.

This was an exciting, exhilarating contest by any standard, with Loughgiel dominating the first half, and then eventually having to come from behind right at the end of the second period of play to snatch a thoroughly deserved share of the spoils.

Everybody outside Loughgiel gave the Shamrocks much hope of success against the Leinster Kingspins, St. Rynagh's from Co. Offaly, but believe me, this was a day when Ulster hurling was put on the map, and with their share of luck at crucial stages, the Shamrocks, would now be All-Ireland champions.

SEA OF SCARVES

In the Loughgiel changing rooms before the start there was a very evident air of nervousness, but once referee Noel O'Donoghue threw in the ball, a sense of determination and 100% commitment took over, as Loughgiel dictated the opening exchanges.

With just 28 seconds gone young right corner forward Martin Coyle's gained possession, turned inside his marker, and confidently attacked over the opening point. A sea of red and white scarves and banners lit up the Hogan Stand in appreciation of that vital early score.

St. Rynagh's, sporting blue and gold jerseys, hit back in the 3rd minute when their aging 'county' star Padraig Horan equalised from a 35-yard free. But Loughgiel were not looking overawed by the big occasion and certainly proved that after 6 minutes.

Seamus McNaughton raced down the left flank, crossed, and there was the rushing Brendan Lavery to hammer the ball to the net, past ex-All-star 'keeper' Damian Martin.

All Loughgiel jumped to their feet as the cries of "Shamrocks, Shamrocks" echoed around Croke Park. The support was fanatical but controlled, and indeed they deserve credit for their well-mannered behaviour in many tense, nail-biting situations.

Slowly the Offaly champions settled but after 11 minutes a long puck upfield found James Kirwan unmarked and as he sped towards goal, Loughgiel looked in dire trouble, until a last gasp tackle by the impressive Aidan McNaughton forced the St. Rynagh's right-half forward to shoot hurriedly — and wide.

'BOOKED'

In the 13th minute Brendan Lavery was booked and undoubtedly thereafter the 1982 North Antrim Hurler of the Year was subdued, with a couple of heavy tackles later on not helping his cause.

It was all Loughgiel at this stage and a 15th minute point from an Aidan McNaughton '70' put them four points clear. Back came St. Rynagh's and following a good catch by Niall Patterson, under the crossbar,

was pushed into the upright, only for the ball to rebound into the path of Hugh Dolan, who gratefully thumped it to the net.

That goal was the final score of the half, leaving Shamrocks ahead 1-4 to 1-2 at the interval, when in actual fact, that advantage should have been at least double.

Could Loughgiel regain their composure after that shock goal by Rynagh's stamp their authority on this match? — these were the questions which only the second half would answer.

On the restart there were a number of positional switches in the Offaly men's ranks, with their two star players, Padraig Horan and Aidan Fogarty, moving into midfield.

This tactic immediately paid dividends because within two minutes of the throw-in, St. Rynagh's were ahead — Hugh Dolan took a shot from the left wing and with the ball apparently sailing over the bar, it bundled against the upright, bounced back into play and there was Aodh Horan to finish it to the net for a rather fortunate goal.

The Shamrocks were behind for the first time and now their character was going to be tested to the full. This third quarter saw the Leinstermen step up a gear, sharper to the ball, and justifying their pre-match favourites tag. Young Paddy Carey came on for Martin Coyle in the 9th minute, but hammered another nail in the Shamrocks' coffin with a point from 40 yards.

BATTLE ON

But Loughgiel were far from dead yet, and with their 2,000 fans pledging their undying support, the Shamrocks battled on and seemed to have gained a reprieve in the 11th minute when the Dublin referee Noel O'Donoghue, who incidentally had an excellent hour, awarded them a penalty.

Trailing by two points, Mick O'Connell elected to shoot for goal, but his drive was comfortably stopped on the line by Aidan Fogarty and cleared. Despite the setback, an Aidan McNaughton point from a '70' in the 12th minute left the Glensmen one point adrift and the same player should have equalised three minutes later, when he wided from 35 yards.

St. Rynagh's counter-attacked and 1982 All-star Aidan Fogarty pointed to stretch the deficit to 100 points, but when Dominic Lynchian pointed to keep the Ulster champions in touch, entering the final quarter.

At this stage the Shamrocks looked fitter than their opposition and despite being out on the right touchline win and thus create hurling history.

In the 19th minute Mick O'Connell stroked a '70', Loughgiel wide and as every Loughgiel heart missed a beat, the tension mounted. Finally Loughgiel did get back on level terms when Aidan McNaughton evaded two tackles, and pointed in the 23rd minute — a titanic finish was on the cards, with the outcome still anyone's guess.

The players seemed to be affected by the growing excitement as first Tom White drove wide from St. Rynagh's and then Mick O'Connell missed a relatively simple 40 yards free — but to be honest, was anything simple under such pressure?

CRUCIAL?

As the seconds ticked away the feeling was that the next score would be crucial and in the 25th minute the Offaly men surged forward and from way out on the right touchline Dermot Devery somehow screwed the shot over the bar.

But again the Shamrocks somehow deep into their reservoir of strength and commitment and two minutes later, the referee adjudged that 'keeper' Damian Martin fouled the ball, and awarded the Antrim men a close-in free, Paddy Carey tapped over the equaliser, but the drama was not yet complete. In the final minute Gerard McKinley was cruelly "blown up" for what appeared a harmless tackle. The free, 51 yards from goal, would be taken by Padraig Horan, the Offaly

county star who usually knocks over those "with his eyes shut".

Many Loughgiel heads were clasped between their hands, not bearing to look, but amazingly Horan's effort drifted wide of the right upright when Niall Patterson pucked out, the final whistle was sounded, and droves of ecstatic Shamrock supporters raced onto the pitch to greet their heroes.

This was not a game for weak hearts, either on or off the field, but one which those present will remember for many a day. Loughgiel hurled with fire throughout displaying a never-fading will to win, proving once and for all that Ulster and Antrim hurling is alive and well, ready to challenge and beat the best.

I honestly believe that the Shamrocks will win the replay because now they have got over that psychological barrier of knowing that they are good enough, then hopefully their admirable heart and spirit combined with their undoubted skill, should see them through.

Sunday's performance was an excellent team effort and it would be unfair to single out any one individual. The defence was tigerish and sound while the midfielders were tenacious and battled for the whole hour. The attack however, must improve. Brendan Lavery had an off-day and many of the Shamrocks moves usually revolve around him. Young Paddy Carey impressed me and I feel that if the replay is on a wide, open pitch like Croke Park, then he must be well in the running for a starting spot. Congratulations, Loughgiel. You did us proud, and with that extra bit of luck at vital times, you could now be Champions of Ireland.

Loughgiel team and scorers: Niall Patterson, Martin Carey, P. J. O'Mullan, Sean Carey, Eamon Connolly, Paddy McIlhatten, Aidan McNaughton (0-3), Mick O'Connell (0-2), Gerard McKinley, Adam McCarty (0-1), Brendan Lavery (0-0), Dominic McKinley, Martin Coyle (0-1), Brendan McCarron, Seamus McNaughton. Subs: Paddy Carey (senior), Paddy Carey (junior) (0-1).

Loughgiel live to fight again

By Liam McDowell

LOUGHGIEL 1-8, ST. RYNAGH'S 2-5.

LOUGHGIEL Shamrocks, all but written off as serious contenders for Ulster's first All-Ireland club hurling crown, knocked the form book sideways when they met and matched — St. Rynagh's in the Croke Park decider yesterday.

The game, which produced an exhilarating 60 minutes of superb hurling, ended in a draw and the stage is now set for a replay on a date yet to be agreed.

But while the draw was generally accepted as a fair result, the Offaly men almost stole a one-point win only seconds from the final whistle. An untimely trip on right corner forward James Horan brought St. Rynagh's a free — and when Padraig Horan stepped up for the 50 metres stroke, it seemed it all over for gallant Loughgiel.

But the shot drifted three feet to the wide of the upright, much to the relief of the Antrim supporters, in the 3,000 crowd, and the game ended a few seconds after the puck out.

St. Rynagh's were rated as being the more experienced side and they would also be the first to admit, that trailing by two points at half-time (1-2 to 1-4) was a fortunate state of affairs and that Loughgiel were equally unfortunate to concede their second goal.

The first Offaly goal came only a minute before the break when corner forward Hugh Dolan hammered home an off-track clearance from goal keeper/skipper Niall Patterson. The second, less than 90 seconds after the re-start, was another gift chance, this time for Aodh Horan when the ball dropped at his feet after camping off the upright.

Both gift chances gave St. Rynagh's a shaky 2-3 to 1-4 lead, but when the deficit might have been reduced to only one point a few minutes later, Loughgiel midfielder Mick O'Connell perhaps unwisely, drove a penalty shot at the three-man goalmouth defence only to see the ball caught and cleared.

Loughgiel can also feel aggrieved at another piece of misfortune when a Patterson clearance was seen to bounce off corner forward Dolan and over the end-line. But the umpire, surprisingly, signalled a '70' which Padraig Horan converted with a superb stroke.

There was a hint of fate, too, at a later stage when the usually reliable O'Connell missed twice from reasonable positions, but this was balanced when All-Ireland hero Horan screwed the last ditch attempt wide in the dying seconds.

Apart from goal scorer Brendan Lavery, who finished a glorious three man move to the net in the opening half, Loughgiel were well served by left half back Aidan McNaughton, who scored three exceptional points — one from fully 100 yards.

No luck however, for the second successive season, when St. Patrick's High School, Maghera, faced mighty St. Jarlath's in the Hogan Cup semi-final. Brefni Park, in Cavan, was the venue for the meeting, and Maghera bowed out on a one-goal losing margin (1-9 to 0-9).

Colaiste Christost Ri, as expected, won the other semi-final in Coughjordan — but they had to withstand a power packed performance from new boys St. Mary's CBS, Mullingar, before moving through on a 2-7 to 1-6 scoreline.

Goals in each half gave Loughgiel the title

Loughgiel (Antrim Cham-
pions) 2-12
St. Rynaghs (Offaly
champions) 1-12

Two goals, at identical periods in both halves of this superb all-Ireland club hurling championship final replay, were the scores which saw Shamrock's Loughgiel make history.

For the first time ever the all-Ireland crown has come North although both Cushendall and Ballycastle came close in their attempts.

There was no second best attitude with Loughgiel. It was a question of first is first and second is nowhere. This attitude Loughgiel maintained through their original game at Croke Park and throughout this excellent replay at Casement Park. Their never say die attitude proved that mountains can be moved.

Loughgiel's first goal came after 22 minutes play at a stage when the game was very evenly balanced. St. Rynaghs had just regained the lead 0-5 to 0-4 after centre-half-back Aidan Fogarty had pointed from 70 yards. The Offaly men looked like getting back into it after Loughgiel had sent them reeling in the opening 12 minutes.

Brendan Lavery was the supplier and Paddy Carey, centre-half-forward, Lavery was given the ball and he made his dash, the St. Rynaghs defence collapsed. He mburst through a well of defenders after a fine solo dash and with a deft flick of the wrist the ball was in the net.

This truly was a superb goal from a player of intense talent and now that his worth is known an all-star award cannot be too far away for this really exciting player.

Now 1-4 to 0-5 ahead, Loughgiel continued to dominate and their persistence paid off despite a couple of points from Hugh Dolan after 25 and 28 minutes.

Mick O'Connell's points from 80 yards and another long-range score from Aidan McNaughton added to Aidan McCarry points which came on the heels of Lavery's goal saw Loughgiel in a much similar position at half-time as they were in the original game. They led by a goal 1-7 to 0-7.

If there were any fears that the Shamrocks might throw it away in the second half they were soon laid to rest as the side adopted the same terrifier-like tactics. They ran at everything that moved and caught it.

Although St. Rynaghs did open with the first score of the second half, a Padraic Horan point, Aidan McCarry after another fine point.

It remained a touch and go situation for much of the second half although Loughgiel were never headed. The closest the Offaly men got was a point when James Horan pointed after ten minutes.

making a 1-8 to 0-10 scoreline. Every score the Offaly champions got, Loughgiel matched it and there is nothing so soul destroying as this.

The first signs of panic came from the Southern side when they were awarded a close in free after 17 minutes. Two behind at this stage, Padraic Horan went for a goal but Paddy McHatten, fighter supreme, was on the line to clear his effort.

This was the turning point. St. Rynaghs had given it everything they had got but Loughgiel were always able to produce better. And when, three minutes later, Loughgiel grabbed their second goal the roof on the Casement Park stand seemed like lifting.

It has been a long time since it was tested with such vociferous supporters but it stood the test.

Aiden McCarry was the scorer of this one and Dominic McKinley the creator. Collecting the ball on the left, McKinley, after 20 minutes' play, darted goalward. It looked as if he had overcooked it when he was shot at and couldn't get in a shot. He had a couple of tries as the ball lay at his feet and those of a couple of Offaly defenders but all to no avail. Still he managed to cross the ball to the unmarked McCarry.

No fumbling here as he pumped it past the helpless Damien Martin and then defiantly gave the clinched fist salute.

No wonder indeed as it put Loughgiel ahead by five points, 2-10 to 0-11. Although ten minutes still remained there was no way Loughgiel were going to throw it this time. Their policy of first-time tackling and first-time striking made me at times think they were the Southern side. They continued their hectic pace right up to the end and saw St. Rynaghs awarded a penalty in the last minute. Padraic Horan did score from the spot but it didn't matter, Loughgiel had done more than enough to win the day.

The scenes which followed this historic achievement had to be seen to be believed as the team were mobbed, literally by the thousands who had travelled from every part of the county to cheer them on.

To single out players in as frantic a game as this was really very hard to do. I should say before handing out individual plaudits that it was a team effort from beginning to end. There was not one weak link in the side and each and every individual ran himself to a standstill.

Still five players stood out for me. Goalkeeper and captain Niall Patterson was superb and if he doesn't yet fall into the category of the great Ollie Walsh he hasn't very far to go. With a man like him defending the fort defenders can feel confident.

Again the defence was magnificent but here centre-half-back Paddy McHatten for his sheer non-stop action stood out. He was literally everywhere. He cleared his lines spectacularly and surely must have been an inspiration to his colleagues.

Mick O'Connell, at midfield,

was another to perform brilliantly. Mick has had many fine games for Loughgiel but this surely must have been his best.

Brendan Lavery was in a class of his own in the centre-half-forward line and out-classed all the big names in the St. Rynaghs side. He is a player of undoubted class and his first-half goal was a vital one in bringing the all-Ireland title to Antrim.

Finally, right-half-forward Aidan McCarry had one of those games you can only dream about and emerged the top scorer with a goal and three points.

The full impact of this achievement will not be felt in Antrim for many years to come. For Loughgiel it is obviously a very personal thing, but it is something which has many more implications. It does away once and for all the myth that Antrim hurriers are second-class citizens. For years they have been trying to prove they were not, now they have done.

Having broken through this barrier, comparable, no doubt, to the sound barrier, they can go even further. Antrim hurling must now reap the benefits at county level of this magnificent success. If Loughgiel can do it then certainly Antrim can.

Another myth which was exploded in the county, I saw from every club in the county shouting their heads off for Loughgiel. They would do exactly the same if Antrim was in a similar position.

Finally, it must also explode the notion that Casement Park cannot 'house' a major game. Arrangements for this game were superb and the county chairman and his staff deserve credit but more important recognition by the powers that be that Casement Park must be the first choice for all top games in Ulster and this includes the Ulster final.

THE MEN WHO MADE HISTORY

The Loughgiel team and substitutes who made history on winning the All-Ireland title were—Niall Patterson; Martin Carey, P. J. O'Mullan, Sean Carey, Eamon Connolly, Paddy McHatten, Aidan O'Connell and Gerard O'Kinley; Aidan McCarry, Brendan Lavery, Dominic McKinley; Paddy Carey (sen.), Paddy Carey (jun.), Seamus M'Naughton, Substutes—Seamus Richmond, Brendan M'Garry, Martin Coyle, Dominic P'Mahon, Liam Lavery, Paddy O'Connell, Sean Lavery, Harry Carey, Paddy M'Intyre, Joe M'Gurk, Martin Gillen and Robbin Clark. Referee—Jimmy Rankin (Laois).

THE SCORES

FIRST HALF

3 minutes—Frank Kenny, St. Rynaghs, point.
3½ minutes—Brendan Lavery, Loughgiel, point.
5 minutes—Paddy Carey, jun., Loughgiel, point.
9 minutes—Seamus M'Naughton, Loughgiel, point.
10 minutes—Dermot Deveny, St. Rynaghs, point.
12 minutes—Seamus M'Naughton, Loughgiel, point.
14 minutes—Aiden Fogarty, St. Rynaghs, point.
17 minutes—Dermot Deveny, St. Rynaghs, point.
18 minutes—Aiden Fogarty, St. Rynaghs, point.
18 minutes—Aiden Fogarty, St. Rynaghs, point.
22 minutes—Brendan Lavery, Loughgiel, goal.
23 minutes—Aiden M'Carthy, Loughgiel, point.
25 minutes—Hugh Dolan, St. Rynaghs, point.
28 minutes—Hugh Dolan, St. Rynaghs, point.
29 minutes—Mick O'Connell, Loughgiel, point.
29 minutes—Mick O'Connell, Loughgiel, point.

point.

30 minutes—Aiden M'Naughton, Loughgiel, point.
Half-time—Loughgiel 1-7, St. Rynaghs 0-7.

SECOND HALF

1 minute—Padraic Horan, St. Rynaghs, point.
7 minutes—Aiden M'Carthy, Loughgiel, point.
8 minutes—Aiden Fogarty, St. Rynaghs, point.
10 minutes—James Horan, St. Rynaghs, point.
14 minutes—Aiden M'Carthy, Loughgiel, point.
15 minutes—Dermot Deveny, St. Rynaghs, point.
16 minutes—Paddy Carey, jun., Loughgiel, point.
20 minutes—Aiden M'Carthy, Loughgiel, goal.
23 minutes—Paddy Carey, sen., Loughgiel, point.
24 minutes—Padraic Horan, St. Rynaghs, point.
28 minutes—Seamus M'Naughton, Loughgiel, point.
29 minutes—Padraic Horan, St. Rynaghs, goal.
Final score: Loughgiel 2-12, St. Rynaghs 1-12.

PLAYED 24th APRIL 1983



The Loughgall team with their trophies at the celebration dinner.



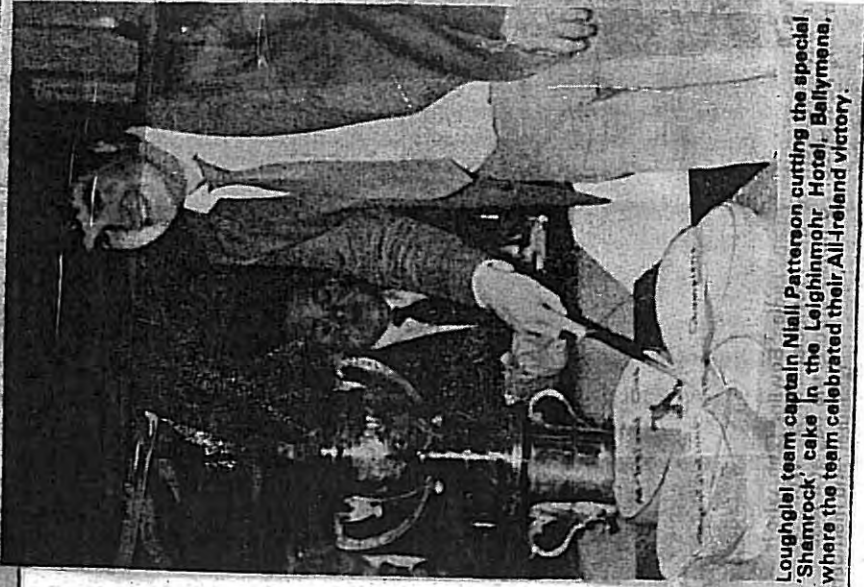
Trophies from the players were presented to the four men who took the team to All-Ireland success, Danny Mc-Mullan, Neil Patterson, Dominic Casey, and Liam McGarry.



Selectors Neil Patterson, Dominic Casey and Liam McGarry, trainer Danny McMullan along with the club's guests of honour.

SHAMROCKS LOUGHGALL CELEBRATION DINNER AND PRIZE DISTRIBUTION

May 5, 1983.



Loughgall team captain Niall Patterson cutting the special 'Shamrock' cake in the Leighlinmohr Hotel, Ballymena, where the team celebrated their All-Ireland victory.

Handwritten signature or mark.