

Minor Football Under 18

The Minor panel was a small group of players this year mostly made up of the U17 squad.

The minor championship started for Donaghmore Ashbourne on 30th August 2017 with an away game versus Wolfe Tones in Kilmainham. It was a forgettable night for the Ashbourne lads as Wolfe Tones lived up to their favourites tag and outplayed Don/Ash in the first half to build a commanding lead. A better performance in the second half still wasn't enough to catch the 'Tones who won comfortably 6:15 to 2:03.

The second game of the Championship was against St Colmcilles on 13th September 2017 in Ashbourne. A better performance was needed from the young team and they duly stepped up but the concession of goals in the game kept St Colmcilles at arm's length for the majority of the game. The final score loss 6:08 to 1:10 was not a reflection on the effort put in on the night. Best on the night Luke Wilson, Joe Mc Gee, Ciaran O Sullivan.

I would like to thank my management team of Tony Wall, Caoimhin O Toole, Conor O Dwyer and Tom Dreaper.

Under 17 Football

The under 17 squad was made up of over 25 players training was constant on Tuesday's and Thursday's and some Sunday morning over the year. While the under 16 competition was played the older under 17 team were gradually building up to their season, training with the Junior team during June/ July and putting in some fine performances in their early games of the Division 2 Championship. On July 1st a nine man team was entered into a Meath 7 a side competition with Ashbourne winning the Shield final after 7 games, the players were Josh Watters, Joe McGee, Liam Byrne, Adam Brady, Simon Purcell, Luke Barrett, Mikey Farrell, Darragh O Sullivan and Matt Crumlish. Best on the day everybody was here

A first round win against Simonstown away paved the way for a roller coaster season. Best on the night Darragh O Sullivan, Ethan Tormey, Killian Hogan, Simon Wilson.

A win against Na Fianna with arguably their best football of the year. The team came of age against strong opposition which boasted some fine Meath minor county players. Best on the night Joe Mc Gee, Chris Twomey, Michael Farrell and Josh Watters.

A ding dong battle against St Vincent's/ Curragha away led to the first loss of the campaign at the end of the game it was a pleasure to watch both teams openly congratulating each other on a very sporting. Most of these lads play school football together.

A hard fought win over Walterstown qualified the team for the semi-final with one group game to play. Best on the night were Cormac McGahan, Ryan Power, Adam Brady.

The last group game was a loss against Kilbride was used to get playing time for all players on the panel.

Results

11/08/17	Simonstown	3-8	: 2-13	Donaghmore/Ashbourne
18/08/17	Donaghmore/Ashbourne	6-17	: 1-11	Na Fianna
23/08/17	St. Vincent's/Curragha	1-22	: 4-9	Donaghmore/Ashbourne
29/09/17	Donaghmore/Ashbourne	4-17	: 6-8	Walterstown
14/10/17	Kilbride	6-18	: 2-9	Donaghmore/Ashbourne

The Semi Final was played on 18th October in Ashbourne and in an entertaining game both sides gave their all with the Navan lads winning out on a score line of 4:14 to 1:07. Don/Ash were a bit unlucky to concede two goals in over the head of their keeper but battled on and still managed to

hit the post twice and crossbar once but it was not their day. Best on the night David Carr, Dillion O Brien, Carl Cassidy, Karl Nulty.

This group of young men have been a pleasure to work with over the last 18 months with an U16 championship win last year, 7 a side shield win and one game away from another final this year. There are many more good days to come for this group.

I would like to thank my excellent management team of Conor O Dwyer, Mark Power, Mark Byrne, Leon Tormey and all the parents of the players for their help and support over the period.

U12 Football

The under 12 had a strong finish to the year and entered 2 teams in the u13 autumn league. Both teams did well in the pool games and made the semi-finals. The division 7 team lost the semi-finals by a point to the eventual division winner's st Colmchilles. The Division 8 team lost also to the st Colmchilles under 13 b side. Colmchilles were able to exploit their age advantage in the second half to win comfortably. The overall league was a success as all players got to play full games on a regular basis regardless of ability. Squad numbers have remained strong during the year with 26-28 active players. We are looking forward to participating in feile in 2018.

U13 Football

The Donaghmore/Asbhourne U13 Football team started the year early in 2017. We had entered into the Leinster U13 Cross County league and in order to prepare for this league we arranged a challenge match against our near neighbours from across the border, St. Margaret's in Co. Dublin. This game was played in the middle of January. The Leinster U13 Cross County League involved the lads playing against teams of a similar standard from Kildare, Longford, Westmeath as well as our close neighbours Dunshaughlin. There is a full review of each of the games in this league at the end of this document but in summary - The lads acquitted themselves very well and won all of their group games. They played Balyna (Kildare), Coralstown/Kinnegad (Westmeath), Dunshaughlin (Meath) and Clonbroney/WolfeTones (Longford). They got to play in a finals day at the GAA Centre of Excellence in Abbottstown where they met a very strong Sarsfields (Kildare) side. Unfortunately – this game was played in the early morning of Sunday March 26th, the day directly after most of the lads had made their Confirmation. But for fatigue and us missing a couple of lads on the day, we could have had a better run in this final but this is not to take anything away from what was for us a very successful and rewarding league for us. The lads all played in locations that they would not normally play in and against teams that they would not normally play.

Soon after this league ended in March – the local Meath U14 Spring league started. We entered our U13 team into this league (albeit at a lower division); We took a conscious decision to keep our U13 team intact and not to attempt to merge with our U14 team. Our traditional rivals at this level (Ratoath and St. Colmcille's) both merged their U13 and U14 teams together and entered 3 teams (A, B, C) into this league. Our first game in this competition was against Duleek/Bellewstown away on April 13th. This was a fantastic game, we were down by 7 or 8 points at half time but staged a brilliant 2nd half recovery to win the game by a few points. We followed up this game the following Monday with a game (and win) against St. Colmcille's. We also had a big win against Simonstown and Dunboyne shortly afterwards. We eventually reached the semi-final of this league and played Dunboyne on a lovely Summer's evening in the Ashbourne Community School pitch. This game was arguably the performance of the year for this team. They played spectacular football (for their age) and ran out easy winners in the end. This brought us to a final against Duleek/Bellewstown (who we fancied we should beat given that we had already defeated them earlier in the league). It was not to be however (despite a couple of parents travelling to the

west coast of Mayo to bring a couple of our team home from the Gaeltacht for the match). But it was a cracking match for the neutral observer. We hosted the game at home in Ashbourne on Pitch 1. However – things were not to go well for us on the night – we were well behind in the game at one stage and managed and get things back to 3 points late in the 2nd half – but that was a close as we got and Duleek/Bellewstown ran out deserving winners on the night. Keeping in mind that this was actually an U14 league – and none of our lads were older than 13 (all having been born in 2004) – it was still a great achievement to get to this stage.

So by now – we are in June – a lot of football played (the first game being in January), 2 competitions entered and 2 finals played in.

Next up for us – was the U14 Summer league – this is a small league run during July by the County Board. We had entered into the Reserve League of this tournament – only to discover that there would be no Reserve league this year so our only option was to play in Division 4 against stronger U14 teams. True to our commitment to always play games if we can we choose to enter. First up in this league was Ballinabrackey (away) in early July. We lost narrowly but the lads were getting a lesson in playing tougher football – Some of these Ballinabrackey guys would be playing up to U16 football on a regular basis. Next up was Castletown (at home) and a good win for us. We also played Simonstown (at home) and Wolf Tones (away). In all after 4 games, we won 2 and lost 2. In truth we were a little bit out of our depth in this league especially as it was summer time and we would have a lot of our lads away on holidays but it was football and we were learning. We want to acknowledge support of our U12 colleagues during this time who provided players to help us make the numbers for some of these games.

In August then – we had our first taste of proper knockout football – as we were entered into the U14 Championship. We were taken a bit by surprise as we had not requested to be entered into this tournament. We were automatically entered by Co. Board as we had entered into the U14 Summer league. Round 1 of this competition was against Kilmainhamwood. This game was on Sunday evening the day after we had played St. Colmcille's in the 1st round of the U13 Autumn League. We lost by 2 points to a team who were clearly a much bigger, stronger side than us and given that none of our guys were older than 13 years and some still only 12 – it was a fantastic achievement. Following this loss we then faced Slane/St. Marys in the Shield Semi-Final. We had played these guys earlier in the summer in a Challenge match and had run out easy winners then so once again we fancied our chances going into this game. However – on this night given there was more at stake, Slane upped their game and maybe that we were a bit complacent – we ended up losing. A truly disappointing result and I am sure not one that would be repeated if we played again. Slane/St. Mary's eventually won this Shield competition beating St. Michaels by 2 points in the final in recent weeks.

One point of frustration in this game is that Slane/St. Marys turned up to the game that evening with only 12 players for what should be a 15 a side game. While I sympathize with teams struggling to get numbers for games during the summer – I think more of an effort should be made beforehand to ensure that they had the requisite number of players. On a couple of occasions during the summer we received the help of some of our U12s to ensure we had the numbers. Many thanks to our colleagues for their support in this regard.

Our final tournament of the year was the U13 Autumn league – the 1st game of which was against St. Colmcille's where we lost by 2 points. We also played Ratoath soon afterwards and also lost this game. However – we followed this up with solid wins against Simonstown, Skryne and Walterstown. We now had 2 group games left to play Duleek/Bellewstown and Senchalstown. We travelled to Duleek to play them first on a Friday evening – and given our earlier encounters with them in the spring league – we knew it would be close and it was. Duleek/Bellewstown won the game by 2 points 3-13 to 1-17. We are going to have a lot more close games with these guys over the years to come. We then played Senchalstown in the final group game – a match we needed to win to guarantee our 4th place finish and a spot in the semi-final. The win was achieved and we were scheduled to play against St. Colmcilles (who finished top of the group). This semi-final was played in a wind-swept Seafield in Laytown on Nov 4th. St. Colmcilles ran out strong winners in the end but to be fair to our lads they continued to fight to the end but it was just not to be.

Conclusions

So now at the end of a long year for these U13 lads – I am thinking of ways of measuring success which does not involve silverware and medals and there are a lot to be fair...

- Amount of football played: The first games of the year were played in January and the last games in November - there was approximately 30 games played over the course of the year; that is more than 1 game every 2 weeks. There was a very short break in the summer at the end of the Spring league and before the Summer league started where we did not train (this was for about 2 weeks) so all told it was close to 10 months of non-stop football – Definitely value for money.

Where did we finish? Apart from the U14 Summer league and Cup where we played against much bigger/stronger teams – we finished in at least the semi-final spot for each competition. This team is a very strong team and are clearly Division 1 when they hit their stride. Unfortunately though (at the moment) – Ratoath, St. Colmcilles and Duleek/Bellewstown have the measure of us in our age group. The gap is closing though but we are not there yet. There is a lot of respect due to those 3 clubs for what they have achieved with their respective groups of players.

In the years to come I suspect that these 4 clubs will continue to develop healthy rivalry and hopefully will push each other on to greater things.

Playing group – we started off the year with 22 registered players – 2 dropped out during the year but we acquired 4 so overall we grew the squad. 3 more guys trained a few times towards the end of the year and I expect that they will come back in the New Year. So all told a total of 26 guys represented us in matches at U13 level throughout the year and a total of 29 different guys trained with us throughout the year.

Looking towards 2018

Next year will be an exciting time for this team and the club as a whole as we are hoping to be one of the host clubs for Féile 2018. This is a great opportunity for the club to show off our fantastic facilities and hospitality. It is also a great opportunity for our lads to play in one of the most prestigious underage football competitions in the country. We look forward to the support of both the incoming Juvenile and Club executive committees as we have a chance to showcase the club on a National Stage. Féile Peile na N'Óg is scheduled for last weekend in June (June 29th – July 1st). This is an important time for these young men also as they continue their own growth and development into adolescence, it is important they continue to find sanctuary, friendship and purpose in their local GAA club.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to one of our mentors (Nick Connolly) – we will have a new shirt sponsor in the New Year. SAPRO Solutions Ltd, an Irish based IT consultancy company will provide the shirt sponsorship for us starting in 2018. Many thanks to our previous sponsor – the Barbershop in Garden City. As usual, we are indebted to our sponsors and we request that they are supported by the club members whenever possible.

I also want to show massive appreciation for the support shown by Caoimhín Ó'Tuathail as Cathaoirleach throughout the whole year. He fielded several calls from a frustrated mentor over the year and always provided loyal support and guidance. Also to Caroline Butler as Secretary who keeps in the information flowing to/from the County Board in a timely and uncomplaining manner. Also in this vein I need to give a special word of thanks for the support throughout the year for the allocation of pitches and resources to Jackie Lynch. These 3 people are a great asset to the club and I have total respect for the patience and work ethic that they demonstrated throughout the year.

Overall – I would say the U13 Football team (while having no silverware to show for it) have had a really successful year and well done to all of the mentors that have been involved throughout the whole year – it is a massive commitment and the club are very lucky to have men of the calibre of

Michael Doherty, Eddie Mather, John O'Hara and Nick Connolly involved in their teams and in the club in general. Good luck to them all in the year ahead.....

Finally – I want to acknowledge and say thanks to all of the parents, family members, supporters of the team throughout the year. This support involved everything from providing lifts to games to making sandwiches and providing refreshments for visiting teams throughout the year as well as travelling to Mayo and back to bring some of the team home for a game. Of course – we cannot forget also the help provided in terms of putting up the goal posts, nets and flags. It is very reassuring to know that we put the call out in the WhatsApp group and Help will always come.

Donaghmore/Ashbourne U13 Mentors 2017

Michael Doherty ,Noel Martyn ,Eddie Mather ,John O'Hara ,Nick Connolly

U13 Cross County League Review

Donaghmore/Ashbourne U13 GFC entered into the Leinster cross county league in January of 2017. They were entered into a group with Division 1 teams from Longford, Westmeath and Kildare, as well as Meath itself.

Prior to the league starting, we first played a challenge match against St. Margarets of Dublin. This was a very hard fought encounter in St. Margarets on a cold Saturday in January (21st). With 2 minutes left to play the referee shouted that there Donaghmore/Ashbourne were 1 point down. The lads scrambled and I am sure that the roar that went up with the equalizing point could be heard back home in Ashbourne.....Friendly match indeed?

The full panel of players that took part in the cross county league were as follows: Milo Connolly, Thomas Cooney, Alex Devine, Sam Flynn, Tomás Gaughan, Eric Gough, Leo Hendrick (Captain), Josh Lancaster, Daniel Martyn, Ben Mather, Josh McLoughlin, Callum Morrin, Conor Nulty, Tom O'Hara, Alex Purcell, Sean Ronan, Dylan Smyth, Cael Sullivan, Rhys Thomas, Sean Tyrell, Alex Ward and Paul Wilson

Match 1 Vs Ballyna (at Home) - Jan 28th

Donaghmore/Ashbourne 9 – 05

Ballyna 6 – 05

A match notable for many reasons – not least of which was that one of our players scored a total of 6 goals on that day as well as the fact that the referee on the day was David Gough (one of best and most senior referee in the country).

Match 2 Vs Coralstown/Kinnegad (away) – Feb 4th 2017

Donaghmore/Ashbourne 4 – 5

Coralstown/Kinnegad 4 – 4

A very exciting game, as evidenced by the score but also by the fact that the Westmeath boys were camped in our half for the last 15 minutes of the game – but we held out due to a massive defensive effort.

Match 3 Vs Dunshaughlin (Home) - 11th Feb

Donaghmore/Ashbourne 8 – 3

Dunshaughlin 3 – 4

A cold, miserable day in Ashbourne (weather wise) – the lads all huddled into the dugout at half time trying to stop shivering. We were down a few points at half time but we rallied in the 2nd half to close out the win.

Match 4 Vs Clonbroney/Wolfe Tones (Away) Feb 25th

Donaghmore/Ashbourne 5 – 9

Clonbroney/Wolfe Tones 1 – 2

The Clonbroney/Wolfe Tones team had beaten Dunshaughlin by a decent margin in an earlier round so we reckoned that we might have a stiff test in this case. However, the lads saved some of their best football for last and even though we were missing a few key players on the day it was the first game of the league that we actually lead at half time and we ran out comfortable winners.

And Finally

A very enjoyable league for us overall and while I appreciate that winning certainly helps the enjoyment factor we also played some very good football. Everybody in the squad contributed in their own way and while we won't always win – we will always give it our best.

U15 FOOTBALL YEAR REPORT

Brief summary for this age group is as follows. This bunch of lads effectively were left with no manager and the team fell apart with lads drifting away to other sports.

Frank Donovan and I put our names forward to try and resurrect the team and commenced with a parent meeting to see who was interested in coming back, introducing ourselves and setting out a plan. Starting point was a list of 22 approx. names that were involved at some stage or other over the previous 3 years.

Every parent was contacted on the list 10 expressions of interest in getting back returned. The remaining 12 were either gone to other sports, not doing anything or moved out of the area. First training session saw 8 lads show up. Following sessions saw between 8-10. Although a starting point it was decided after 4 weeks that interest would wain due to low numbers and players were integrated into U16 set up as no 15 competition available till August. This worked well under guidance of 16s management.

U15 combined with U14 for autumn competition and this proved to work very well. First training session 15 attended. Second session was 21. Training numbers average 18-20 on most nights. On paper combined numbers were 29. A really good team spirit and happy faces. Team competed in Div 3 as we did not want lads to get demoralised. In all played 9 games over 12 week period with training regular culminating in a semi-final game which we lost to a physically superior St Oliver's and to highlight it was a 1 point game with 3-4 minutes left but inexperience and concentration saw 2 soft goals in the dying seconds. The one positive from autumn games was the improvement very quickly and the highlight being playing Seneschalstown who competed Div. 2 semi-final, a game in which we were competitive and was close to the end.

Special thanks to Cathal Cullen and U14 team for which there would have been no U15. It also benefited U14 to play at the higher level and all players can claim to have played 6 games over the short period. Overall a positive start and a step forward in keeping lads playing football and developing them.

Going forward Faolan Smith will be holding strength and conditioning programs in New Year. U16 competition starts end March. This needs to be coordinated between the 2018 management teams U15/U16/U17 as to where player go and train.

U16 Football

Congratulations to our u 16 boys team this year on reaching two Div 1 finals this year. Unfortunately we were beaten in both finals but the character of team held through, we did not give up and battled till the final whistle.

At the moment we are doing a fitness class twice a week for the lads which they are funding themselves and the take up has been excellent. Thanks to Leon for setting that up for the team.

We are looking forward to the 2018 season as this will be the first Minor season at the u17 age group. The lads are very excited and looking forward to next season and will strive to bring home some silverware.

We would like to thank Jackie on the desk for all of her help throughout the year with the pitches. We would also like to thank the managers of the teams around us in their help and support and cooperation with players.

We would like to thank the grounds people also for the excellent work to keep the pitches playable. Lastly we would like to thank all the parents for their support and understanding throughout the year.

Thanks to Conor for all his organising and paperwork and Stephen for all the training sessions and both for their mentoring.

U16 Mentors

Mark, Leon, Conor, Brian, Stephen.

U12 Hurling

Our u12 hurlers got their year off to a busy start which began with playing in the Leinster League. It was a great experience for the lads playing teams from different counties. It was after this finished we started our league which finished with a 3 team play-off to see who went on to the semi-final, we were narrowly beaten in the play-off by Gael Colmcille/Kilskyre. This meant we then entered the shield competition which we went on to win by defeating Longwood in Dunganny and retain the Shield won the previous year. We then entered the summer league which was only 3 games where we competed well considering some lads were away on holidays while these games were played. We were also invited into Fingallians summer tournament where we had a great day playing teams from Dublin, Waterford and Wexford. After this the team split into u11 and 13 where our u11s played Go games for the remainder of the season. Panel consisted of Oisín Daly, Michael o Sullivan, Joedev Puchoen, Darragh Finn, Jack Keenan, Aidan Mackey, Robert o Farrell, Fionnan Hogan, Callum Thomas, Patrick Moran, Derry o Sullivan, Davin Jones, Jack Doran, Scott Moss, Cillian Paget, Eoin Byrne, Tom Ryan, Conor Lawless, Darragh McCabe, Tom o Riordan and Darragh Meagher.

Mentors for this team were Brian Thomas and James Ryan.

U 13 Hurling

Our U13 hurlers had a good year qualifying for the semi-final of the championship losing out to Kells/Kilskyre. We topped our group with victories over Boardsmill, St Colmcilles, Wolfe Tones and Na Fianna. We had some great performances in this competition and are already looking forward to feile next year.

U14 hurling

Our U14 hurlers had a mixed year. We were delighted to qualify for the final of the Meath Feile competition only just losing out to a strong Clann na Gael team. We had victories over Dunboyne Dunderry and Na Fianna on our way to the final. We had injuries to some key players during the year which greatly hampered our progress in the u14 championship. These players look forward to a much more competitive 2018.

U 16 Hurling

The year started for our hurlers with a great buzz around training due to an increased squad size resulting from some new players and a few players returning to hurling after taking a brake for a year or so.

Round 1 of the league was a tough opening home game v Kiltale. What resulted was a hard fought game, which we should really have won, the end result was a draw with a score line of 2-10 to Donaghmore Ashbourne 3-07 Kiltale.

Next up was a local derby away to Ratoath, our lads were now hurling well and won easily 6-06 to 3-03.

The team travelled to Dunderry for round 3, down a few players, we didn't get going on the day and were beaten 7-10 to 4-11.

After the results were crunched, Dunderry were through to the Final while Donaghmore Ashbourne got a home draw against Kiltale for a 2nd Place Playoff, with the losing team meeting Ratoath in a Shield Final.

In an evening when our hurlers really stood up to mark, the moors displayed a brilliant display of skills to beat Kiltale 3-17 to 1-05. A huge turnaround from the drawn result earlier in the year.

The Final v Dunderry was set for the 14th of May at 10 am in Dunganny. Again Donaghmore Ashbourne dug deep in a tough hard skilful game of hurling.

Down 1-7 after ten minutes, the Moors held their nerve and through hard work and great skill they worked their way back into the game, 2-9 to 3-1 at the interval to Dunderry. That never say die work rate continued in the second half and it payed off with Donaghmore Ashbourne leading by a point 5-5 to 2-13 with seconds to go in normal time. Dunderry were awarded a penalty (one of four in total for them in the game), they took their point - drawn game 2-14 to 5-5 - EXTRA TIME. Donaghmore hit early with a goal and scored 1-4 to Dunderry's 0-1 in the first half of extra time. Dunderry hit the net twice to our one point. Final score and a historic win for Donaghmore Ashbourne 6-10 to Dunderry's 4-15.

Minor Hurling

Donaghmore/Ashbourne minor hurling team have qualified for the Shield Championship final to be played in Dunganny on Sunday next v Drumree/Killmessan at 1.30pm.

The team performed very well against a good Kiltale side in the quarter final and were unlucky to lose 3-12 to 2-10. The next opponents up were Dunderry in the shield semi-final, This was a close game throughout but goals either side of half-time proved decisive and gave the Donaghmore/Ashbourne team the win with a score -line of Donaghmore 3-14 Dunderry 2-1 1. They now await Drumree/Killmessan in the final.

Donaghmore/Ashbourne were well represented on the Winning Meath All Ireland Minor B final team with three representatives Conor o Farrell, Sean Hogan and Alex Power o Rourke.

The 2017 squad have been one of the most successful underage hurling teams in Ashbourne with wins in U/14,15 and 16 competitions. They have always shown the right qualities and hopefully will come through in the very near future and play Adult hurling with the club.

High Kings and Development Squads

Donaghmore Ashbourne Hurlers who represented their club Playing for Meath in 2017

All-Ireland B All-Ireland Champions - Sean Hogan, Conor O' Farrell and Alex Power O' Rourke.

U16 Hurling - Colm Cox and Darragh O Sullivan played for Meath in the Celtic Challenge completed well and were beaten in the All-Ireland Simi Final.

U15 Hurling –Kevin Cully on Meath Development Squad.

U14 Hurling - Sean O' Sullivan, JackMeagher, and Darragh Gleeson.

U13 Hurling - Cael Sullivan, Alan Lipiki, Ben Mather, Thomas Gaughan and Rhys Thomas.

U12 Hurling - Jack Keenan, Michael O Sullivan, Fionnan Hogan and Oisin Daly