
THE ALL IRELAND LEAGUE THROUGH BLUE TINTED GLASSES

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The achievement of St. Mary's College RFC in gaining a place in the top division of the new All Ireland Senior League will have been viewed perhaps with mixed emotions by its numerous supporters. There will be many who might feel justified in wondering where else the greatest rugby club in Ireland should be if not at the top. Others, less chauvinistically-minded, will feel a sense of relief, for while we did clear the final hurdle a few sods flew in the process and some of the more ancient hearts, unsure maybe of the new points system which had been introduced, must have felt an uncomfortable flutter or two. But a joint first place in the 1987 Leinster Senior League followed by an outright win in 1988 had laid a solid foundation for our ultimate prime position.

Well here, in any event, we are and whether or not the new League trophy will grace the hallowed halls of Templeville as so many other trophies have in their inaugural year (see table), we can be absolutely certain that it will not be for want of the sparkle and never-say-die spirit which opponents frequently aver makes St. Mary's a team which is never beaten until the final whistle sounds.

The road to our present status as one of the country's top nine clubs should not be measured by the achievements of the last three points-gathering seasons only, great as their contribution has been. Each of us will have his own treasured memories of moments of magic or deeds of great skill which altered not only the course of a game but of an entire season. Perhaps they are of Deano's deft drop-goal which was the only

score in the Leinster Senior League final on a grey December day in 1979. Or perhaps of Johnny Moloney's scything match-saving tackles in the same game. Are they of Steve Hennessy's prodigious drop-goal in the 1986 Senior Cup semi-final, a kick notable not only by its length but by its premeditation, coming as it did from a set scrum. Or of Johnboy Kennedy's tackle on Lansdowne's Peter Purcell which saved a seemingly certain try when St. Mary's brought the Leinster Senior Cup to Templeville in 1986.

Everyone will have their own precious recollections of past events which helped to pave the road to the club's present high position in Irish rugby, whether they be of thrilling tries, nail-biting finishes, wonderful victories or dare we admit it the occasional bitter defeat. They have all contributed immensely towards the brilliantly illuminated tapestry which is St. Mary's College RFC today. Decades of dedicated and skilful players at all levels have been instrumental in its weaving. It is fixed and held firmly in place by hard-working administrators and is lovingly and frequently dusted down by successive generations of experienced and efficient coaches, like R.O'C., team managers and selectors.

Before the curtain falls on the current season which holds all of us in a thrill of anticipation we can rest assured that skipper Ray Hernan and his team will add their own colour and design to the tapestry and in their challenge to bring the new League Cup to Templeville Road will further enhance the not inconsiderable present reputation of the boys in blue.