



**KILLARNEY
ATHLETIC A.F.C.**

Preview of “The Harrington Era 1965-1969”, a personal account of the foundation of the club by Dan Harrington.

As a lead-in to our first article (next week) that recalls the foundation of Killarney Athletic Soccer Club 50 years ago this year, let's have a brief look at Dan Harrington the man who founded and formed the Club in the ‘Harrington Era’ 1965 to 1969.

These were the years he spent posted in Killarney after joining the Garda as a 19 year old. He moved to England with his late wife Monica in 1969 to join the West Yorkshire police force where he has lived since. But the impact he made by his youthful spirit and love of soccer and community was enormously significant to the existence of an organised soccer club in Killarney in the 60's.

One must remember that promoting and playing soccer was a ‘forbidden sport’ in Ireland at the time. The ‘infamous rule ban’ by the GAA on the playing of ‘foreign games’ also existed and of course the GAA was (and still is) in the heart of the schools and community, particularly in Kerry. But Dan's loves of sport and his willingness to share his interest with the youth of Killarney ensured a very positive influence and effect for all involved.

Soccer was being played in car parks and available patches of ground by various groups of youngsters in Killarney at the time but not in any organised fashion other than placing a couple of jumpers down to act as goals. The game went on until fellows got too tired to continue or were told to move on. But the arrival and impact of the 19 year old who hailed from Turner Cross in Cork City was to change all of that.

Dan Harrington has been described as the catalyst who brought all the soccer groups around town together at the time to form Killarney's first ever organised soccer team, but Dan's contribution was much more than that and his autobiographical account from that era bears this true.

The 50th anniversary history celebration of the club of course is not all about the foundation of the club back then but also very much about the people, teams and events that have happened within the club in 6 different decades since . We hope by our articles and photos to rekindle many old and some recent memories for people who may have had some link or association with the club and invite all who wish to contribute to contact Mike at 0872727173 or Toirdealbhach at 0876447603 also 50years@killarneyathletic.com