

Reflection on Club Highlights on the eve of the celebration banquet

Dan Harrington /Desmond League/Half Moon

Dan Harrington was the man who founded the club in 1965. Too many to be named carried the baton from him over the past 50 years, with the heart of the club being all who have been and continue to be associated with the name of Killarney Athletic today.

Dan entered the team in the Desmond League (West Limerick) along with Tralee Dynamos and Listowel as there was no Kerry League.

The club's home pitch was on a section of a field known as the 'Half Moon'. Dan got the permission of John McShain RIP the American business man who owned the ground at the time to select an area of the field to be used as a soccer pitch. Previously the land would have been part of the Lord Kenmare's estate. All of the land is now under the control of the State and managed by the National Parks & Wildlife. The club continue to have the use a pitch in the Knockreer field.

Kerry District League/Oscar Traynor Team

The club was a founding member of the Kerry District League when it was formed in 1972 with a number of members from the Harrington era to the fore. Donagh Gleeson and Joe Grant in particular played a big part in the entry of Killarney Athletic into Kerry league. Brian Gilhooley RIP also made a significant contribution to the club at the time through his involvement with the Franciscan Youth Club with many of those players in the team from the start of the KDL. The club has also been well represented in the management committee of the league throughout its history.

The club has always taken great pride in its many players who have been selected to represent Kerry in the Oscar Traynor Cup.

Kerry School Boys/Girls League and Kennedy Cup Teams

From the foundation of the club in 1965 the promotion of the game for young people has always been to the fore, and the club is proud to have been part of the Kerry School Boys/Girls League when it was formed in the 1980s. The club has also been well represented in the management committee of the league with many club people serving as officers of the league.

Having players selected for the Kerry Kennedy Cup team has always been considered an honour for the club and the club has provided many managers to the team throughout its history.

Áras Phádraig Pitch and Franciscan Friars

The contribution the 'Áras pitch' has made to the life of the club could never be understated. From the late '60s to the late '90s the 'Áras' was an iconic soccer field for young and old alike in the heart of the town.

The very positive contribution the Franciscan Friars have made to the local community and youth of Killarney is well demonstrated by the support they have given to the club in allowing the use of the pitch as a soccer ground. Fr. Vivian Molloy RIP was the best known friar who facilitated and supported the club but there were also many more like him in their community.

7 A-Side – Men's/Ladies' and Underage

As it enters its 40th year of competition in 2016 the 7-a-side has arguably been the biggest promoter of soccer in Kerry in its time. Many clubs from the area formed through their first involvement competing in the 7-a-side.

The 'Áras' pitch and the 7-a-side was where the majority of young players first played the game and formed in teams with their friends in an organised soccer event.

The 7-a-side of course has been more than just a club highlight; it grew from an early stage into a community event attracting teams and supporters with a lesser interest in soccer to partake annually. The coverage and support of the local media contributed in no small way to its growth and popularity. And the generosity of local sponsors has also made the tournament a blue riband event and a major fundraiser for club's facility development.

Home Ground in Woodlawn

Works to improve the Knockreer pitch surface commenced in 1990 which meant that the club had to find an alternative venue to play the home matches. Tom Lyne of the then Vintage Bar in New St. came to the aid of the club by providing land he owned on the banks of the river Flesk to be used as a pitch. The club rented the ground for two seasons before purchasing the land in 1993. The club developed the ground over the following 15 years which included the completion of a dressing room facility in 2002 and the completion of two full size pitches in 2007.

Former minister John O'Donoghue and FAI boss John Delaney deserve recognition for their financial support of the projects at the time.

FAI Soccer Clinic

The club organised the 1st ever FAI Soccer Clinic in Kerry in 1992, again the 'Áras' pitch was the venue. Irish Internationals Paul McGrath and Mick McCarthy visited the ground at the time to add their support of the event, while the lesser known Alan McLoughlin coached on the camp that year. Alan was to become Ireland's hero in 1993 when his equalising goal against Northern Ireland in a hostile Windsor Park secured the Republic's place in the U.S.

World Cup finals in 1994. The club continued to run the camps for a number of years thereafter.

Coaching Talent

Twenty years after the KDL was formed soccer had eventually risen from the ashes and recognised as a respected sport in Kerry. Schoolboy football in particular was very popular all over the county and it was clear that there was plenty of talent in the clubs. Nurturing the talent through quality coaching was an essential requirement for players to reach their full potential. To this end the club organised and ran FAI coaching courses and the benefits were enormous as the all-round soccer ability of the players improved.

FAI Schools Soccer

The club was again 1st to organise and run the Primary Schools 7-a-side and skills competition in the county in 1994. The events further promoted the game in the primary schools while showcasing the talent that existed even in the smallest of rural schools in the county.

Internationally Capped & Professional Players

The club are most proud to have produced six internationally capped players with two of those signing professional contracts.

Michael Moloney became the first capped Schoolboy International player from Kerry in 1990.

Bryan Murphy was the first club player to play in the League of Ireland and also played for the Irish Universities in the World Games in 1995.

Diarmuid O'Carroll was capped for the Irish under 15s and signed for Glasgow Celtic in 2003.

Brendan Moloney was capped at underage level and signed for Nottingham Forest in 2005.

Michael 'Smiler' Moloney was capped on numerous occasions for Irish under 15 & 16 teams in 2003/04.

Ronan Murphy was also honoured with Irish Schoolboy International caps and was part of the Nottingham Forest academy for a year in 2010.

What a history! Thanks to all who made it possible over the past 50 years and we're looking forward to a bright future.

