

Repeat performance required

In the first round of the Munster Senior Football Championship of 2007 a fancied Clare team under the guidance of former Kerry great Paudie O'Shea came to Fraher Field in

Dungarvan. Well, history records that the Deise put up one hell of a performance and came away with the spoils to end a championship football famine in the county. That along with a hit or miss campaign in the league gave quite optimism for the future of the big ball game in the Deise.

This coming weekend in the Allianz National League the White and Blue travel to the Banner for a league encounter which could conceivably set up another run of results for either team. Waterford have been very hit and miss over the past few years. A win over high-flying Wexford, another over a Cavan team that was equally expected to do something "special", were unfortunately, accompanied by results that are best forgotten.

I have always maintained that this particular panel of players are as good as ever represented the county in football but perhaps and not for the first time, it is a string of good results and a self-belief which will ultimately make the difference. Hot on the heels of a 2-9 to 0-8 win over Kilkenny comes a chance to put back to back wins together. Ok! I hear you say "it was only Kilkenny" last weekend. That might be so, but a win is a win and does an enormous amount for the confidence so I for one would take a win against any opposition as a step up the ladder.

What about Waterford under 21 football teams beating Kerry and yes I did say teams in the plural. Remember the Deise have been a Kerry nemesis in more than one Munster campaign at under age. I'm pretty sure the Kerry lads didn't say "ah sure it was only Waterford". They were out of the championship.

Now to Sunday next. John Kiely and his selectors will surely stick pretty close to the team that played the Cats and that will see Thomas Wall man the goal. The Bonmahon lad has been ever consistent and with Jason Seaward, Patrick Dunphy and Jason Walsh they will make life difficult for the Clare full forward line. Likewise in the half line Tony Grey and Thomas O'Gorman will command the wings with Shane Briggs in the pivotal centre back position. I will say that the Ballinacourty defender has proved himself a real man marker in recent years.

Midfield will see Kill clubman Mick Aherne paired with "footballer of the year" Gary Hurney although Andy Hubbard or Maurice O'Gorman could well be employed in the sector to give the selectors the opportunity of playing Gary up front, a position he revels in. With forwards of the calibre of Dermot Casey, Liam O'Lionnain, Carl O'Keeffe, Patrick Hurney, Wayne Hennessy and Stradbally clubmates Stephen Cunningham and Ger Power all vying for a starting position it will give the selectors a few options. Lets hope that the lads get the right result and it may well set them up for the following five games starting with the visit of London.

WIT ON COURSE

Fitzgibbon Cup winners in 2006 Waterford Institute of Technology showed in Ballygunner last week why they now carry the favourites tag into the semi-final on Friday 29th February as they easily disposed of Dublin Institute of Technology on a 3-15 to 1-7 scoreline.

This was all one could have expected from the home team as they literally tore their opponents apart in the opening half with a devastating display of hurling. Two goals by Kilkenny's Eoin Reid gave the Waterford side a comfortable 2-9 to 0-4 lead and in all truth, this gave the Dublin outfit a mountain to climb in the second half.

With John Dalton commanding the full back line and Waterford county players Kevin Moran and Shane O'Sullivan together with upcoming Tipperary star Ray Moloughney (personal tally of 8 points) all contributing handsomely. A goal from TJ Reid midway through the second half saw out the victory. It's now on to meet UCC on their home patch in the semi-final and what a cracker that should be with Waterford team members Richie Foley and Jamie Nagle in their squad.

The Cork team were I must say were equally impressive in their quarter final where they saw off the challenge of teacher training outfit St. Pats on a 3-16 to 1-5 scoreline. No mean feat by the Cork representatives considering Pats had Kilkenny Seniors James "Cha" Fitzpatrick and Richie Hogan on their starting fifteen.