

Waterford Ladies Football History 1991

Officers:

Chairman:	Michael Ryan	(Ballymacarbry)
Vice-Chairman:	Jimmy McGrath	(Na Deise)
Secretary:	Eleanor Hickey	(Sliabh Gcua)
Treasurer:	Paddy O'Donnell	(Na Deise)
Registrar:	June Whyte	(Killrossanty)
PRO:	Michael Ryan	(Ballymacarbry)
Committee:	Ger Mooney	(Kill)

In 1991, 10 clubs affiliated, Ballymacarbry, Na Deise, Kill Old Parish, Ardmore, Dunhill, Stradbally, Clonea-Power, Killrossanty and St Pats.

Waterford's first senior league fixture was on the 7 April and resulted in a 5-8 to 2-6 victory over Kerry at the Mill Field, Ballymacarbry. The format for the Under 16 club championship was that Ballymacarbry, Kill and Na Deise were seeded whilst Old Parish, Stradbally, Clonea-Power and St Pats played off a league competition to give them a chance to improve.

The Under 14 semi finals saw Na Deise defeat Kill 2-3 to 0-7 and Ballymacarbry overcame Killrossanty 2-5 to 0-7. Na Deise defeated Ballymacarbry in the Under 16 A final on a 1-3 to 0-4 score line. On April 20, Wexford defeated Waterford 1-6 to 3-2 at Ballymacarbry but 2 weeks later, Waterford recovered to defeat Laois 2-10 to 2-3 and on the 19 May, followed this up with a 5-18 to 0-1 drubbing of Cork. They then beat Leitrim easily in Leitrim on the 25 May before suffering a shock 4-7 to 2-5 defeat at the hands of Westmeath in Rochfortbridge on the 2 June. Next on the list was a 7-11 to 1-4 victory over a very weak Wicklow team.

10 players, Ann Dunford, Regina Byrne, Catriona Casey, June Whyte, Bernie Ryan, Marie Crotty, Geraldine O'Ryan, Fiona Crotty, Patricia Butler and Aine Wall were members of the inter-provincial squad and Munster qualified for the final where they defeated Leinster to claim the provinces 10th title.

Ballymacarbry narrowly defeated Na Deise in the Under 14 final. Michael Ryan, Ger Mooney and Jimmy McGrath were elected as Under 16 and minor selectors and Waterford won a thriller 4-6 to 4-5 against Clare in Cappamore in the Under 16 championship on the 3 July. They hammered Kerry 3-22 to 1-1 in the minor and drew with Cork 0-7 to 1-4 in the junior championship in Ardfinnan. Next was the Munster under 16 final in Glanworth. Waterford won easily against Kerry 6-13 to 2-2 and 4 days later the seniors strolled to a 7-23 to 1-1 victory over Dublin in the league.

The Munster minor final was a cliff hanger, a 3-10 to 5-2 victory over Clare at Cappamore, the first minor title won by the county. Cork proved no match in the senior semi-final going under 6-15 to 0-1 in Glanworth. The Under 14 team lost to Kerry 6-8 to 5-7 in Glanworth which mean a first round exit from the championship.

The juniors lost the replay to a very good Cork team. The Munster senior final brought a clash of Waterford and Kerry at Listowel on the 11 August. The grass was a shade on the long side and a very confident Waterford took the field. By the 17th minute, Kerry led 2-3 to 0-2 and Waterford were in trouble. Then Aine Wall's shot came back off the cross bar and Catriona Casey drove the rebound to the net. Aine then shot 1-2 in a 3 minute spell and Waterford had turned a 7 point deficit into a 1 point lead 2-4 to 2-3 at the interval. In the third quarter, Waterford played some dazzling football as June Whyte, Marie Crotty, Aine Wall and Bernie Ryan pointed. Kerry midfielder, Catherine Liston replied but this was quickly cancelled out by Aine Wall.

Patricia Butler produced a great Waterford save but Eileen Dardis pointed the rebound. Kerry were awarded a penalty, Marie Crotty took over in goal, a ploy often used to put pressure on opposing penalty takers. Marina Barry drove the spot kick over the bar. Within seconds Crotty was down at the other end pointing a free and from the kick-out referee Johnny Hayes (Clare) blew the full time whistle to end Kerry's 10 year unbeaten run and see Waterford win the elusive Munster title.

The scenes afterwards will never be forgotten after the heart break of the 4 previous years. Marie Crotty summed it up in an interview after the game as she remarked, "for the last 4 years we came to play Kerry, today we came to win". For the record the history making Waterford team was: Patricia Butler, Regina Byrne, Martina O'Ryan, Cleona Walsh, Sinead Walsh, Ann Fitzpatrick, Ann Dunford, Bernie Ryan (0-1), Marie Crotty (0-3), Noirin Walsh, June Whyte (0-1), Catriona Casey (1-0), Fiona Crotty, Aine Wall (1-5), Geraldine O'Ryan (0-1). Sub: Olivia Condon.

Three days later the Under 16 team travelled to Wexford Park for the semi-final and won a great game 5-11 to 5-7 and the following Saturday were off to O'Moore Park for the minor semi-final. Laois backboned by Sue Ramsbottom and Mary Casey stood in the way but Waterford prevailed 3-13 to 3-4.

The following day it was back on the bus again and off to Enniscorthy for a league semi final and an easy 4-7 to 0-4 win over Wexford. On the 25 August Leitrim were visitors to the Fraher Field for the All Ireland senior semi final but were no match, Waterford winning 7-15 to 1-2 and Aine Wall scoring 4-5.

The league final was a repeat of the Munster final, a clash with Kerry at Tullamore. Waterford lined out without Bernie Ryan, June Whyte and Ann Fitzpatrick but still drew a thriller 2-12 each with Mary Jo Curran scoring the equaliser deep in injury time and Fiona Crotty scored 2-3 for Waterford.

The games were still coming thick and fast and the minor final was played in Ennis on the 14 September against Roscommon. The westerners proved no match, Waterford led 4-2 to 1-2 at half time and won the cup 6-17 to 1-3. Team: Deirdre Wall (Ballymacarbry), Regina Byrne (Ballymacarbry), Martina O'Ryan (Ballymacarbry), Ruth Ahearn (Kill), Michelle Walsh (Ballymacarbry), Honor Lonergan (Na Deise), Cleona Walsh (Ballymacarbry), Noirin Walsh (0-1 Ballymacarbry), Olivia

Condon (0-2 Na Deise), Jenny Coffey (2-1 Kill), Geraldine O’Ryan (0-5 Ballymacarbry), Julie Torpey (0-4 Kill), Fiona Crotty (4-3 Ballymacarbry), Rose Fitzgerald (0-1 Kill), Claire Ryan (Ballymacarbry), Rose Fitzgerald (0-1 Kill), Claire Ryan (Ballymacarbry), Subs: Alison Morrissey (Kill), Marcella Foran (Na Deise), Ann Hearne (Kill), Roseanne Ryan (Na Deise), Paula Nugent (St Pats), Lorena Mooney (Kill), Mary Walsh (Na Deise).

The following week the same counties met in the Under 16 final, again at Ennis. The result was the same but the game was much closer at 4-4 to 2-1 win for Waterford. On the 29 September Waterford and Kerry replayed in Fraher Field, the league final, the final part of a triple header the other 2 games being the Waterford senior football championship semi-finals.

At the end of 60 cracking minutes the teams were level and Kerry eventually won in extra time 3-8 to 2-10. Aine Wall scored 1-5, June Whyte 1-4 and substitute Olivia Condon scored the other point as 4 Waterford forwards failed to score. They also picked up injuries namely Regina Byrne and Ann Fitzpatrick with the All Ireland senior final looming.

In the junior county final, Dunhill defeated St Pats 3-6 to 1-3.

The 13th October brought a date with destiny, the All Ireland senior final against Laois who had lost their 3 previous final appearances in 1985, 1988 and 1990 at the hands of Kerry. Waterford had a problem, their physio was unable to travel and a frantic series of phone call on Saturday morning led to making contact with Billy Kelly (Moincoin) who was virtually kidnapped for the weekend. Waterford travelled to the capital on Saturday afternoon and the team bus came upon a bad crash near Moone in Co Kildare and this had a sobering effect on everybody. Hardly a word was spoken between there and Dublin. On Sunday morning after a fitness test, Regina Byrne and Ann Fitzpatrick were passed fit to play and Waterford headed for Croke Park. In the curtain raiser Clare defeated London in the junior final and then it was Waterford’s turn in their first senior final appearance. 7 players, Patricia Butler, Ann Fitzpatrick, Bernie Ryan and Ann Dunford had all play in the 1986 junior final so Croke Park held no great fear for them and Jim Bannon, a native of Modeligo tapped on the dressing room door, it was the signal that a fit eager and confident Waterford team had been waiting for.

Sue Ramsbottom opened the scoring with a Laois point, this was quickly cancelled by Aine Wall. Virtually from the kick-out, Bernie Ryan and Geraldine O’Ryan put Aine Wall in for a goal, her first of 3. Sue Ramsbottom goaled for Laois, then Marie Crotty pointed another free before Waterford split open the Laois defence again, this time Geraldine O’Ryan shooting to the net.

Crotty pointed another free before Noirin Walsh after a solo run passed to Catriona Casey whose left footed drive crept inside the post. Another Aine Wall goal gave Waterford a 4-3 to 1-3 interval lead. Laois, to their credit began the second half well. Sue Ramsbottom pointed twice then Margaret Brennan goaled to reduce the lead to

4 points. Cleona Walsh took the ball out of the Waterford defence and set up Aine Wall and she crashed home her third and Waterford's 5th goal. She then pointed and Fiona Crotty tacked on another before Aine Wall had another goal disallowed as the referee brought back play for a free, which Marie Crotty pointed. Sue Ramsbottom shot 1-1 and then Marie Crotty wrapped it up with a superb point from a difficult right wing free before climbing the stops of the Hogan Stand to become the first Waterford player to collect the Brendan Martin Cup as All Ireland senior winners.

Aine Wall was the star of the game but she got good help in a great team effort and a 5 year voyage had been completed. The homecoming on the Monday night to Dungarvan and Ballymacarbry will long live in the memory and was to be repeated 5 more times in the 90s.

That historic team was: Patricia Butler (Ballymacarbry), Regina Byrne (Ballymacarbry), Martina O'Ryan (Ballymacarbry), Cleona Walsh (Ballymacarbry), Sinead Walsh (Ballymacarbry), Ann Fitzpatrick (Ballymacarbry), Ann Dunford (Ballymacarbry), Bernie Ryan (Ballymacarbry), Marie Crotty (0-4 cap Ballymacarbry), Noirin Walsh (Ballymacarbry), Geraldine O'Ryan (1-0 Ballymacarbry), Catriona Casey (1-0 Ballymacarbry), Fiona Crotty (0-1 Ballymacarbry), Aine Wall (3-3 Ballymacarbry), June Whyte (Killrossanty). Subs: Olivia Condon (Na Deise), Michelle Walsh (Ballymacarbry), Honor Loneragan (Na Deise), Colette Whyte (Killrossanty), Julie Torpey (Kill), Claire Ryan Ballymacarbry), Lorena Mooney (Kill), Dolores Tyrrell (Ballymacarbry), Deirdre Wall (Ballymacarbry),

Mascots:	Michelle Ryan, Louise Ryan.
Physio:	Billy Kelly
Manager/Trainer/Coach:	Michael Ryan
Assistant Coach:	Brigid Grant

The President of Ireland, Mary Robinson sent a telegram of congratulations. But there was no rest for the majority of the panel as the Ballymacarbry girls resumed training on the Wednesday night to prepare for a Munster club semi-final the following Sunday, a trip to Beaufort to play the home team. Ballymacarbry showed no ill effects, winning 7-15 to 1-4 despite the best efforts of Mary Jo and Phil Curran.

Waterford hosted the All Stars at Dungarvan and lined out without 4 members of the All Ireland winning team and couldn't cope being well beaten 4-13 to 1-10. Ballymacarbry won the Munster club title easily against Newmarket on Fergus and followed this up with a 5-8 to 1-0 win over Hollymount in the All Ireland semi final.

Kill defeated na Deise 2-10 to 3-3 to complete a minor intermediate double and Ballymacarbry travelled to Dr Cullen Park, Carlow to play Rochfortbridge in a repeat of the 1989 All Ireland club semi final. The easy win in the 1990 semi final wasn't repeated and there were many anxious moments before the Waterford champions won by the skin of their teeth, 0-9 to 1-4, thanks to some great points from Aine Wall and Geraldine O'Ryan.

Ballymacarbry: Patricia Butler, Regina Byrne, Martina O’Ryan, Dolores Tyrrell, Sinead Walsh, Ann Fitzpatrick, Ann Dunford, Bernie Ryan 0-1, Marie Crotty 0-2, Noirin Walsh, Geraldine O’Ryan 0-3, Cleona Walsh, Fiona Crotty 0-2, Catriona Casey 0-1, Aine Wall 0-2. Subs: Michelle Walsh, Mari O’Ryan, Deirdre Wall, Claire Ryan, Catriona O’Gorman.

After the game, Dolores Tyrrell (Capt in 1987) announced her retirement, this was her 4th All Ireland club medal. Fiona Crotty set a record that may never be beaten; in 1991 she played in 4 All Ireland winning teams, Under 16, minor, senior and senior club.

Michael Ryan won the Park Hotel sports star of the month award for his role as managing Waterford Ladies to win the All Ireland senior title, it was the first of three such awards. Other Ladies Football personalities to receive Park Hotel awards in subsequent years were Bernie Ryan Ballymacarbry, Marie Crotty Ballymacarbry, Aine Wall Ballymacarbry, Catriona Casey Ballymacarbry and Mary O Rourke Clashmore

Honours:

Waterford Senior Munster & All Ireland Champions

Waterford Minor Munster & All Ireland

Waterford U16 Munster & All Ireland champions

Waterford Division 1 National league Champions

Ballymacarbry Munster & All Ireland senior club champions

All Stars: Ann Dunford Ballymacarbry, (left full back), Ann Fitzpatrick Ballymacarbry, (left half back), Martina O Ryan Ballymacarbry, (full back), Marie Crotty Ballymacarbry, (mid field), Aine Wall Ballymacarbry, (full forward)

Fiona Crotty created a record by playing on four All Ireland winning teams, u16, minor, senior & club