

Connaught Telegraph - Ladies have their say

Written by John Melvin
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Mayo ladies are back. And team captain Yvonne Byrne pulled no punches in her acceptance speech after being presented with the Connaught Cup in Tuam Stadium on Sunday.

Yvonne, who was a member of the four-time All-Ireland winners, didn't hold back when it came to hitting out at those who had criticised ladies football in Mayo, the ultimate insult being their inability to take part in last year's championship.

The rest seems to have done them good, as Cora and company are back and looking as sharp as ever.

They are back in business and Yvonne was taking no prisoners with her shoot-from-the-lip speech.

"Unfortunately, the last few years we've had to battle in our own county to be at our best, to be champions and to get back to the top," stated the four-time All-Ireland medal winner.

"For those people who tried to keep us down, today is the day for these girls who kept on battling.

"This win is as sweet as any. This group of players has been damned and put down for wanting to be the best, for wanting to achieve and for being willing to work hard, but this year we've a management team that is willing to break down any barriers just to allow the players express themselves and to let the team work hard.

"For us to come to Tuam Stadium, the home of Galway football, and to pull out a win after not even competing in the competition last year is brilliant."

Keep it up girls.

Quote unquote

I eventually caught up with Henry Gavin at the weekend to interrogate him about his life as a Mayo footballer.

Henry was a member of a Mayo team that had some very good players but were unfortunate to come up against a Roscommon team who were at the height of their powers, coming within a point of Kerry in the All-Ireland final of 1983.

In fact, Henry was on the losing side on four occasions to Roscommon in the '70s.

One of the lighter moments in the interview brought the following quip from Henry when I asked him about best and worst moments playing for Mayo.

"I suppose one of the best moments was when I was taken off Pat Spillane in the semi-final of '85.

"The worst moment was being switched on Ogie Moran in the same game."

British Open betting

I see where Boylesports are paying on the first eight in the British Golf Open, which should give punters a decent chance of landing some each-way odds.

I checked out with man at the 19th hole who tells me you won't be too far wrong with the

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following.

Ernie Els 501, Paraig Harrington 33/1, Sergio Garcia 201 and a bloke called Simon Dyson at 150/1.

Come on the yellow bellies

They were named the yellow bellies for historical reasons but Wexford proved there is not a hint of the yellow in their spine following that near miss with Dublin on Sunday in the Leinster final. Gerry Shields had been flagging them all week to back them plus six points and I'm told the Wexford man didn't just jump in to back them but dived in at the very deep end.

Less informed experts were calling it as a wipe-out for Dublin but the Wexford men proved they have what it takes and but for that poxy goal they gave away it could have been a different story.

I'd still keep the Dubs on the shortlist now that they have got that bad game out of their system.

Tony phone home

An APB has been sent out for Tony 'Tipperary' Stakelum, who hasn't been seen since Sunday, while John Cunningham is another man who was celebrating Tipp's demolition job on Waterford.

Is there any point really in continuing with the hurling championship?

Oops, sorry, Galway are still waiting and, of course, Kilkenny are waiting to pounce too.

And I have noticed pep in the step of both Pat Burke and Tom 'Limerick, You're A Lady' Power recently as Limerick are sitting quietly.

It looks like it could be a memorable year for hurling, with the Cats and Tipp seemingly set for the final. Hindsight is great, of course, and the bet of the weekend was Limerick footballers to take out odds-on favourites Offaly.

Well done to Ballinrobe man Maurice Horan, who is in charge of Limerick, and we wish them well. You never know, we could meet them somewhere along the September Road.