

THIS IS
“GAA STORY”
CAVAN!



ALL IRELAND FINAL VICTORIES

BUANNA CLUICHÍ CEANNAIS UILE ÉIREANN

1933

CAVAN 2-5 GALWAY 1-4

On the 27 August, 1933 a record crowd of 17,111, the largest ever to attend a GAA match in the province of Ulster, came to Breffni Park to see Cavan play Kerry in the All-Ireland semi final. Kerry were unbeaten in the championship since 1928 and they were going for their fifth title in a row. It was the general expectation that they would win easily. The first half was a dogged affair and Kerry led at the break by 0-2 to 0-1. In that half the Cavan goalkeeper Willie Young made some sensational saves to keep Cavan's hopes alive. Kerry forged ahead after half time with points by Paul Russell and Miko

Doyle and soon they led by 0-4 to 0-1. Cavan responded with points by Magee, Morgan, Smallhorne and Magee again from a free to bring Cavan level. Points by Jackie Ryan for Kerry and then Magee again levelled as the closing minutes ticked away. With time almost up Vincent McGovern fisted the all-important goal to leave Cavan shock winners by 1-5 to 0-5. His goal was perhaps the most important ever scored in Breffni Park because it heralded the breakthrough for Cavan. A record crowd of 45,188 turned up to see the All-Ireland final between Cavan and Galway, the majority travelling from Cavan. This was the first occasion that a team from Ulster played a team from Connacht in the final. A lucky goal direct from a fifty in the 23rd minute by Jim Smith, who was Cavan's star on the day, was decisive. This was followed by a point by Packie Devlin and another goal by MJ Magee to leave the half time score 2-3 to 0-2 in favour of Cavan. In the second half Galway came to within a goal of Cavan but the latter pulled away to win by 2-5 to 1-4 and became the first Ulster county to win the Sam Maguire Cup.

Team: Willie Young, Willie Connolly, Patsy Lynch, Mick Dinneny, Terry Coyle, Jim Smith, Packie Phair, Hughie O'Reilly, 'Big' Tom O'Reilly, Donal Morgan, Packie Devlin, Jack Smallhorne, Vincent McGovern, Louis

Blessing, MJ [Sonny] Magee.

Subs – Tom Crowe for Patsy Lynch, Tom O'Reilly for MJ Magee, Paddy McNamee, Eugene [Sammy] Briody, Paddy Brady and Jack Rahill.

1935

CAVAN 3-6 KILDARE 2-5

Cavan were fortunate to beat Tipperary in the All-Ireland semi-final of 1935. They were saved by a last minute goal by Hughie O'Reilly who fisted the ball to the net from a Jim Smith fifty to leave the final score Cavan 1-7 Tipperary 0-8. Kildare were impressive winners over Mayo in the other semi-final. Prior to the All-Ireland final Kildare were firm favourites chiefly because of Cavan's poor display against Tipperary. A record crowd of 50,380 saw a splendid Cavan team record a surprise win. Two goals in the first half by star forward Paddy Boylan helped to put Cavan six points up at the interval and a goal by Tom O'Reilly [Mullahoran] in the second half sealed the second All-Ireland title. At one stage in the second-half Cavan led by ten points. Kildare scored 1-3 near the end to put a better look on the scoreboard but Cavan ran out worthy winners by 3-6 to 2-5.

Team: Willie Young, Willie Connolly, Jim Smith, Mick Dinneny, Terry Dolan, 'Big' Tom O'Reilly, Packie Phair, Hughie O'Reilly, Tom O'Reilly,

Donal Morgan, Packie Devlin, Jack Smallhorne, Paddy Boylan, Louis Blessing, MJ [Sonny] Magee.

Subs – Paddy McNamee, John Molloy, Vincent McGovern, Joe Mitchell, James White, Eugene Finnegan, Edward 'Ned' O'Reilly and Patsy Lynch.

1947

CAVAN 2-11 KERRY 2-7



It took two hard exciting games for Cavan to get over a young, fit and spirited Monaghan team in the first round of the Ulster championship in 1947. In the first game Cavan were fortunate to draw level with time almost up. In the replay the teams were level on six occasions over the hour before Cavan emerged narrow two point winners.

The Ulster final between Cavan and Antrim

was a thriller. Cavan dominated early on and were well ahead at half time. In the second half Antrim staged a comeback and Cavan were lucky to hold out for a four point victory.

The decision by the GAA to bring the All-Ireland final to New York was perhaps the most radical decision ever taken by the Association. This decision meant that the semi-final between Cavan and Roscommon took on a new importance.

A crowd of 60,000 saw Cavan shock favourites Roscommon and book their passage to New York. The final was played in the Polo Grounds on a rock-hard surface and under a blistering sun. Cavan were rocked early on and after ten minutes they were eight points down. Soon Cavan got into the game and goals by Stafford and Higgins changed the game and Cavan were only a point down at half-time. In a tight second-half Cavan with Peter Donohoe unerring from frees finished worthy winners by 2-11 to 2-7. Cavan, captained by John Joe O'Reilly, have the distinction of winning the only All-Ireland final ever played outside the country.

Team: Val Gannon, Willie Doonan, Brian O'Reilly, Paddy Smith, Johnny Wilson, John Joe O'Reilly [capt], Simon Deignan, Phil 'Gunner' Brady, P J Duke, Tony Tighe, Mick

Higgins, Columba McDyer, Joe Stafford,
Peter Donohoe, TP O'Reilly

Subs – Edwin Carolan, John Joe Cassidy,
Owen Roe McGovern, 'Big' Tom O'Reilly,
Eunan Tiernan, Brendan Kelly

1948

CAVAN 4-5 MAYO 4-4

Cavan had a comfortable win over Antrim in a one-sided Ulster final. The All-Ireland semi-final between Cavan and Louth was played during a gale force wind. Cavan played with the advantage in the first half and they led by 12 points at the interval.

In the second-half Louth narrowed the gap to a single point and Cavan were lucky to hold on to a narrow victory. A crowd of 74,000 packed into Croke Park on a miserable wet and windy day to see Cavan defend their All-Ireland title against Connacht champions Mayo. Cavan had the advantage of a strong wind in the opening half and they led by 3-2 to 0-0 at the break. Shortly after the break Cavan were 12 points ahead but a shoulder injury sustained by team captain John Joe O'Reilly disrupted the team's cohesion just as the Mayo fight-back began. They scored three goals and three points and with time nearly up the sides were level. Near the closing stages

Peter Donohoe pointed a free to put Cavan in front. Mayo had an opportunity to level the scores from a close-in free but the great Mick Higgins blocked down the kick much to the consternation of the Mayo players and supporters. When the final whistle went Cavan had held on for a one-point victory and they had achieved the coveted back to back All-Ireland victories.

Team – Des Benson, Willie Doonan, Brian O’Reilly, Paddy Smith, PJ Duke, John Joe O’Reilly (capt), Simon Deignan, Phil ‘Gunner’ Brady, Victor Sherlock, Tony Tighe, Mick Higgins, John Joe Cassidy, Joe Stafford, Peter Donohue, Edwin Carolan.

Subs – Owen Roe McGovern for John Joe O’Reilly, Barney Cully, TP O’Reilly, Johnny Wilson, Terry Sheridan, Paul Fitzsimons, Val Gannon, Seamus Morris.

1952

MEATH 1-7 CAVAN 2-4

CAVAN 0-9 MEATH 0-5 (REPLAY)

Cavan often had hard luck stories and close calls going against them in some of their defeats in All-Ireland semi-finals and finals but lady luck was on their side in this drawn final against near neighbours Meath. The game was played in atrocious weather conditions with torrential rain falling all morning. The teams were level at half time

Meath 0-5 Cavan 1-2 with the goal coming from Tony Tighe. Cavan went four points ahead in the second half but a goal and a point for Meath levelled the scores. Meath took the lead again with the time nearly up and they looked set for victory. Cavan were fortunate to get a draw in the last minute with a point from Edwin Carolan whose shot from an impossible angle hit the upright and fell over the bar.

In the replay Cavan were worthy winners. They were dominant at midfield with Victor Sherlock outstanding. The Meath defence fouled regularly and they were punished by the unerring free taking of Mick Higgins who scored seven of Cavan's nine points from frees as he turned in a man-of-the-match performance.

Team: Seamus Morris, James McCabe, Phil 'Gunner' Brady, Des Maguire, Tom Hardy, Liam Maguire, Brian O'Reilly, Victor Sherlock, Paul Fitzsimons, Seamus Hetherton, Mick Higgins, Paddy Carolan, John Joe Cassidy, Tony Tighe, Edwin Carolan.

Subs: Aidan Corrigan, Johnny Cusack, Brian Gallagher, Simon Deignan, Peter Donohoe, Terry Keogan, Bartle McEnroe, Vincent Clarke

Team [replay]: Seamus Morris, James McCabe, Phil 'Gunner' Brady, Des Maguire,

Paddy Carolan, Liam Maguire, Brian O'Reilly,
Victor Sherlock, Tom Hardy, Seamus
Hetherington, Mick Higgins, Edwin Carolan,
John Joe Cassidy, Tony Tighe, Johnny
Cusack

Subs: Paul Fitzsimons for John Joe Cassidy,
Simon Deignan, Bartle McEnroe, Aidan
Corrigan, Brian Gallagher, Peter Donohoe,
Terry Keogan, Vincent Clarke, John Sheridan

George Cartwright