

LEINSTER SHC 2018

THIS IS GOING TO BE

EPIC



LEINSTER



HURLING: THE NEW FORMAT

The race for the 2018 Bob O’Keeffe Cup will be fought out between: **Galway (holders), Kilkenny, Wexford, Dublin and Offaly.**

They will each play each other on a **Round-Robin League** basis with **two home** and **two away** games each.

The **top two teams** at the end of the round robin phase will then contest the **Leinster Final** at Croke Park, with the provincial winners advancing to the All-Ireland semi-finals and the beaten finalists advancing to the All-Ireland quarter finals.

The **third-placed team** in each province will compete in the **Preliminary All-Ireland Quarter-Finals**, where they’ll play **away from home** against the **finalists** of the newly created **Tier Two Championship**, the Joe McDonagh Cup.

The **Joe McDonagh Cup**, named in honour of the former GAA President and All-Ireland winning Galway hurler, is made up of six teams – **Carlow, Laois, Meath, Westmeath, Kerry, and Antrim** – and will also be played on a **Round-Robin** basis.

If the **winner** of the Joe McDonagh Cup is a **non-Munster team**, they’ll be **promoted** to the Leinster Championship and Liam MacCarthy Cup for 2019 where they’ll replace the bottom team in this year’s Leinster Championship.

If the winner is a **Munster team** (i.e. Kerry), they must win a play-off with the bottom team in the Munster Championship in order to gain promotion to the Munster Championship and Liam MacCarthy Cup for the 2019 season.

The **sixth-placed team** after the round-robin phase of the Joe McDonagh Cup will be **relegated** to the Christy Ring Cup. In order to reduce the number of teams in the Joe McDonagh Cup to five for the 2019 campaign, the team that finishes 5th this year will play off against the Christy Ring Cup winners, with the winners of the play-off competing in the Joe McDonagh cup in 2019, and the loser in the Christy Ring Cup in 2019.

Where only two teams finish on the same amount of points they’ll be separated by the outcome of their meeting on the head-to-head rule. If that match ended in a draw or if three or more teams finish level on points, then they’ll be separated by the following means in this order: (1) scoring difference; (2) highest total score for; (3) highest total goals for; (4) a play-off.

LEINSTER SENIOR HURLING CHAMPIONSHIP 2018 ROUND ROBIN FIXTURES

Rd 1 • OFFALY v GALWAY • Bord na Móna O’Connor Park • 12th May • 7.00pm

Rd 1 • DUBLIN v KILKENNY • Parnell Park • 13th May • 2.00pm

Rd 2 • WEXFORD v DUBLIN • Innovate Wexford Park • 20th May • 3.00pm

Rd 2 • KILKENNY v OFFALY • Nowlan Park • 20th May • 3.00pm

Rd 3 • OFFALY v WEXFORD • Bord na Móna O’Connor Park • 26th May • 7.00pm

Rd 3 • GALWAY v KILKENNY • Pearse Stadium, Galway • 27th May • 4.00pm

Rd 4 • WEXFORD v GALWAY • Innovate Wexford Park • 2nd June • 5.00pm

Rd 4 • DUBLIN v OFFALY • Parnell Park • 3rd June • 3.00pm

Rd 5 • KILKENNY v WEXFORD • Nowlan Park • 9th June • 7.00pm

Rd 5 • GALWAY v DUBLIN • Pearse Stadium, Galway • 9th June • 7.00pm



FÁILTE ÓN CATHAOIRLEACH

Dia daoibh agus fáilte

A warm welcome to you all to what promises to be one of the most exciting GAA Championship summers in many years.

We saw a new record set in the Leinster senior hurling championship in 2017 when a fantastic crowd of more than 60,000 attended the Galway-Wexford final in Croke Park last July. Micheal Donoghue’s men captured the Bob O’Keeffe Cup for the second time in their short history competing in Leinster and as we know it was part of the push ultimately towards a memorable All-Ireland glory. Their attempt to defend the crown is just one of the attractions we have this year as we look ahead to the new hurling format.

With five teams and games coming thick and fast in the round robin format it’s fair to say that anything can happen and that excitement levels will be near fever pitch. Every match matters as the prize of finishing in the top two and making a Leinster final is still the desired route. Avoiding the prospect of being caught at the other end will motivated teams too.

Galway are the reigning champions, but the Kilkenny Cats are very much back on the prowl and are Allianz League Champions while we have seen enough in Wexford to know they continue to be a team on the rise. Pat Gilroy in Dublin and Kevin Martin in Offaly had fluctuating form in the league but ultimately they were gearing up to be ready for this hotbed of hurling activity and they are well capable of having a big say in how this drama unfolds.

More big competitive matches and a home and away element will help us in on our ongoing promotional efforts. This format is part of a three year trial and it deserves at the least to be given a chance.

Anything that gives us more games involving the best teams in such a great sport is something worthy of consideration. But we are mindful too of the fact that so many Leinster counties are vying for the chance to make the step up to the Liam MacCarthy grade by progressing through the Joe McDonagh cup and we will continue to work to support these counties just as much as the top tier.

It’s new and unique and it is something to savour.

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Ar aghaidh linn le chéile.

Seamus Ó Bolghuidhir
Cathaoirleach
Comhairle Laighean



WE'VE OUR VERY OWN WORLD CUP OF HURLING

Everyone I know and meet is excited by the prospect of the hurling summer ahead of us. And now that it is finally here on our doorstep we can rub our hands with expectation.

It's new and it's different and it might take a bit of getting used to for some people, but in a summer when there will be a World Cup in soccer bombarding us with lots of games – we will have our very own World Cup of sorts in hurling with no shortage of great games of our own on every week to look forward to.

When you look at soccer and rugby and how these professional sports are so heavily promoted, I think the GAA was right to try out this new format.

We need games, we need to see the top players in big matches and that's what we have to look forward to.

I'd have loved it in my time with Wexford.

I know the Wexford teams that competed between 1992 and 1998 were powerful teams with some great hurlers and were capable of going up against anyone. We won our All-Ireland in 1996 and we won back to back Leinster titles in 1996 and '97, but in those days it was one slip and you are gone and it was very frustrating to lose one game and be gone for the whole year under the straight knockout format.

It started to change in 1997 with a second chance for beaten Munster and Leinster finalists but it has really evolved since then.

That straight knockout format doesn't promote the game as much as it can be marketed now where we see the top players in action several times a year and have plenty of big battles to savour.

The buzz is back in Wexford and it is great to see so many kids back out in Wexford colours and with hurls in hand.

I'm seeing plenty of the older guard out and about too and talking hurling and talking about going to matches again.

Of course, the form of the Wexford team of the last 18 months has helped this. Liam Dunne did great work in charge but Davy Fitzgerald has managed to move them up to a new level.

They put in a massive effort in training to secure their Division 1A league status and reaching the semi-final was great - although it remains to be seen how they recover from the defeat to Kilkenny.

I think Wexford are in a good place.

A few months ago it looked like we were really on top of Kilkenny but they blew us out of our own back garden and that may yet be a blessing in disguise to Davy Fitzgerald because it means it refocuses the minds and proves that Kilkenny have not gone away.

LARRY O'GORMAN COLUMN

Looking at club matches, I think Dee O'Keeffe and Rory O'Connor can be huge players for Wexford this year.

I think if we get more out of Conor MacDonald it will be vital for our chances and I have great faith in Paudie Foley and Kevin Foley to have a great championship. All of this eases the burden of expectancy on Lee Chin who doesn't have to be the go-to man every day.

The first match of the four games against Dublin will be crucial. It's at home and Wexford need to be on their game as Dublin have been a real thorn in our side and we haven't beaten them since 2008.

I would be fearful of Dublin in that Pat Gilroy and Anthony Cunningham is a great management team and the fact that the Cuala boys are back with Dublin and are coming into the set up as All-Ireland champions again will help confidence.

In my own time we had a great rapport with the Offaly lads because we both saw ourselves as underdogs trying to take on the big guns in Kilkenny. Offaly, like Dublin, will be looking to take a big scalp and I've great respect for Kevin Martin and I fully expect Offaly to be a tough prospect for everyone.

Galway are in a nice position in that they are coming in under the radar having exited the league quietly and with no one talking about them. But the big issue for them will be not so much hurling as it will be mental to see if they still have the hunger and desire to go to the lengths they did last year to win the Liam MacCarthy.

Joe Canning and David Burke and these lads will have it, but it needs more than just one or two and Galway will need to repeat the massive effort of last year and we won't know until they are in a battle if they are able.

Kilkenny are my favourites for Leinster because they are the form team.

You have to hand it to Brian Cody – he really is a top class manager and you could compare him to Alex Ferguson or any top manager in any sport.

Kilkenny always have good hurlers, but its the type of player that Cody is able to unearth, the caliber of person they are with the work ethic and desire that has been the key to Kilkenny's success.

I've often heard stories of how, even when Kilkenny were at the peak of their power in winning All-Irelands, that Brian Cody was at minor matches and juvenile hurling matches in Kilkenny and keeping an eye on the talent emerging.

He proved in the league semi-final and final that he has a group of players who will play for him.

With the games coming so thick and fast it will be very hard to say how it unfolds. What we do know is that there will be no shortage of big hurling games and there will be no complaints about it.



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LEINSTER SHC ROLL OF HONOUR

Kilkenny	71	1888, '93, '95, '97, '98, 1900, '03-05, '07, '09, '11-13, '16, '22-23, '25-26, '31-33, '35-37, '39-40, '43, '45-47, '50, '53, '57-59, '63-64, '66-67, '69, '71-75, '78-79, '82-83, '86-87, '91-93, 98-2003, 05-11, 14-16
Dublin	24	1889, '92, '94, '96, 1902, '06, '08, '17, '19-21, '24, '27-28, '30, '34, '38, '41-42, '44, '48, '52, '61, 2013
Wexford	20	1890, '91, '99, 1901, '10, '18, '51, '54-56, '60, '62, '65, '68, '70, '76-77, '96-97, 2004.
Offaly	9	1980-81, '84-85, '88-90, '94-95
Laois	3	1914, '15, '49
Galway	2	2012, 2017

While Kilkenny hold the record for the greatest number of Leinster Senior Hurling titles 71 – they also hold the record for the greatest number of final defeats, 29 in all and have contested 100 of the 129 finals played to-date.

Second in the Roll of Honour, Dublin have contested 59 deciders, winning 24, while losing 35. Their longest period without a title was from 1961 to 2013.

Wexford's golden era was from 1951 to 1977 when they won 11 of their 20 titles, they have also been beaten finalists on 32 occasions, suffering defeat in all 8 finals they contested between 1978 and 1994.

Offaly joined the Roll of Honour 1980, having previously only contested five finals. However, in the period 1980 to 1995 they won 9 of the 13 finals they played in. In all Offaly have contested 23 finals, winning 9 and losing 14.

Laois have just 3 Leinster Senior titles to their credit and it is 69 years since they last won the title. They are the only title holders not to be competing for the Bob O'Keefe Cup in 2018. Laois have also lost 12 finals. Their last final appearance being in 1985.

Galway's entry into the Leinster Senior Hurling Championship in 2009, has seen them win the title twice. The current holders were also beaten finalists on four occasions.

Westmeath are the only other county to have contested a Leinster Senior Hurling Final, suffering defeat to Kilkenny on a 5-3 to 2-4 scoreline in the 1937 decider.

ROUND-ROBIN TEAMS PREVIOUS CHAMPIONSHIP MEETINGS

Galway v Kilkenny

Meetings: 42	Kilkenny: 31	Galway: 9	Draws: 2
Last Kilkenny win:	2016 - Kilkenny 1-26 Galway 0-22		
Last Galway win:	2012 - Galway 2-21 Kilkenny 2-11		

Offaly v Kilkenny

Meetings: 45	Kilkenny: 37	Offaly: 7	Draws: 1
Last Kilkenny win:	2014 - Kilkenny 5-32 Offaly 1-18		
Last Offaly win:	1998 - Offaly 2-16 Kilkenny 1-13		

Wexford v Kilkenny

Meetings: 77	Kilkenny: 52	Wexford: 22	Draws: 3
Last Kilkenny win:	2015 - Kilkenny 5-25 Wexford 0-16		
Last Wexford win:	2017 - Wexford 1-20 Kilkenny 3-11		

Dublin v Kilkenny

Meetings: 85	Kilkenny: 58	Dublin: 19	Draws: 8
Last Kilkenny win:	2016 - Kilkenny 1-25 Dublin 0-16		
Last Dublin win:	2013 - Dublin 1-16 Kilkenny 0-16		

Galway v Offaly

Meetings: 12	Galway: 7	Offaly: 4	Draws: 1
Last Galway win:	2017 - Galway 0-33 Offaly 1-11		
Last Offaly win:	1994 - Offaly 2-13 Galway 1-10		

Galway v Wexford

Meetings: 10	Galway: 3	Wexford: 6	Draws: 1
Last Galway win:	2017 - Galway 0-29 Wexford 1-17		
Last Wexford win:	1996 - Wexford 2-13 Galway 3-7		

Galway v Dublin

Meetings: 8	Galway: 2	Dublin: 5	Draws: 1
Last Galway win:	2017 - Galway 2-28 Dublin 1-17		
Last Dublin win:	2013 - Dublin 2-25 Galway 2-13		

Wexford v Offaly

Meetings: 35	Wexford: 20	Offaly: 15	Draws: 0
Last Wexford win:	2016 - Wexford 1-21 Offaly 1-13		
Last Offaly win:	2012 - Offaly 2-12 Wexford 1-13		

Wexford v Dublin

Meetings: 45	Wexford: 22	Dublin: 19	Draws: 4
Last Wexford win:	2008 - Wexford 2-15 Dublin 1-15		
Last Dublin win:	2016 - Dublin 2-19 Wexford 0-12		

Dublin v Offaly

Meetings: 34	Dublin: 21	Offaly: 13	Draws: 0
Last Dublin win:	2011 - Dublin 2-21 Offaly 1-20		
Last Offaly win:	2007 - Offaly 2-25 Dublin 2-13		

THE BOB O'KEEFFE CUP

The Liam MacCarthy and Sam Maguire cups are the pinnacle of achievement in the GAA, but the greatest GAA cup of them all was the original Bob O'Keefe Cup for the Leinster senior hurling championship.

A massive, ornate trophy, it was first presented to Kilkenny as the winners of the 1950 Leinster senior hurling championship when they defeated Wexford 3-11 to 2-11.

The cup is named in honour of former player, referee and administrator Bob O'Keefe who was a Kilkenny native but who was a key man on the first and so far only Laois team to win the All-Ireland SHC in 1915.

Born in in 1881 and Originally from Mooncoin, O'Keefe was a teacher who spread the Gaelic games gospel on his teaching travels which took him to Dunboyne in Meath before settling in Kilkenny in Laois and with whom he won several county championships and led to his selection on the team that would win the All-Ireland for the O'Moore County in 1915.

His playing career over, he moved to administration and was Leinster Chairman in 1924 and later GAA President in 1935.

Hurling aside he was a great all round sportsman and also excelled at cycling and athletics and was a two-time All-Ireland Poc Fada champion. He was the referee at the 1923 Leinster final between Kilkenny and Dublin.

According to legend the cup was originally used in the farming community but was secured by Leinster GAA after Bob's passing in 1949 at the age of 68.

The figure of a hurler in his stocking feet was added to the top of the original lid to reflect the fact that Bob was fond of playing without boots!

The last captain to receive the original Bob O'Keefe was Wexford's John O'Connor in 2004.

The cup was decommissioned and resides in the GAA Museum in Croke Park. Former Leinster chairman Sheamus Howlin secured a new cup for the Leinster SHC which was first presented in 2005 and Kilkenny winning captain Peter Barry.

Though not as ornate as its predecessor, it is still a fine trophy with its own unique history as a cup for steeple chase horse racing and is the sought after prize of our Leinster hurling thoroughbreds.



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THE FANTASTIC 4

EPIC VALUE TICKET OFFERS

1 FAMILY TICKET



Family Tickets (Group Stages) are available for Stand & Terrace Stand (Where Available): Adults €20 • Children €5
Terrace (Where Available): Adults €15 • Children €5
You are permitted to purchase 2 childrens ticket with every 1 Adult Ticket purchased
(Prices for Leinster Hurling Final will be announced later)

2 STUDENTS



**Purchase Full Price Ticket
Receive Cash Rebate BEFORE Entry**
(I.D. Required - Croke Park Cusack & Davin Stands Only)

3 O.A.P.s



**Purchase Full Price Ticket
Receive Cash Rebate BEFORE Entry**
(I.D. Required - Croke Park Cusack & Davin Stands Only)

4 GROUP PASSES



**Provided for groups of Children U-16
1 adult free with every 10 children**
(any additional adults pay full price for their tickets)
Cost per Child: €5
(Croke Park or Venues where Group Passes are for the Stand)
Venues where Group Passes are for Terrace €3 per child



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www.leinstergaa.ie