

No. 123—TONY HERBERT of Ahane

By SEAMUS O'CEALLAIGH

THE participation of Limerick C.B.S. once again in a Dr. Harty Cup Final makes it proper that this week we feature the captain of a team that made the last great bid to bring the much coveted trophy to Shannonside.

When Limerick won the Dean Ryan Cup for the first time in 1937 Tony Herbert was a member of the team, which he captained the following year, when they again won the honours in this grade.

Hopes were high that latter season that Dr. Harty Cup laurels would also be won but Limerick met with a surprise reverse at Rathluirc on March 6th, 1938, when Doon C.B.S. beat them, 2-8 to 2-7.

Two Limerick men, however, impressed sufficiently that day to be picked to play for Munster against Leinster in the All-Ireland Colleges Final at Nowlan Park on March 27th. They were Tony Herbert and M. O'Connell—colleagues on the Southern line-out, including H. Gouldsboro (Tipperary), Vin Easton (Waterford), D. Buckley and Jack Lynch (Cork). But Leinster beat them, 3-7 to 2-5.

GOT ALL-IRELAND COLLEGES MEDAL.

However, Tony helped Munster again the following year and got an All-Ireland Colleges medal—an honour he shared on that occasion with Dr. Dick Stokes.

In 1940, Tony played with Munster for the third successive season, but this time defeat was once more their portion—but only after extra time. That same season, he had the unique distinction of figuring as a reserve on the Munster Colleges football team.

In 1939, Limerick made what was their most unlucky bid ever for the elusive Dr. Harty Cup. When Tony Herbert led his boys on to the pitch at Rath Luirc on March 30th, to play North Monastery in the semi-final, hopes were strong indeed that the ill luck which had dogged Limerick since 1932 would at last be broken. It was a thrilling game, with the sides level and time fast ticking away. Limerick were defending magnificently and holding some desperate Leaside raids, but a free in the last second of play gave North Monastery one of their sweetest victories. It is interesting to note that one of Limerick's best players that day was the late Paddy Mackev of Castleconnell, Solus De leis.

FIRST OF THREE SUCCESSIVE TUSSELES.

This was the first of three successive tussles between Cork and Limerick for the highest honours in Munster Schools hurling. In 1940 the pair qualified for the final—Limerick beating the holders, Thurles, at Tipperary, 3-3 to 2-2, and North Monastery overcoming Middleton C.B.S., on a re-play.

The second great World War was just getting into its stride at the time, and the final took place at Mitchelstown on Saturday, 18th May, 1940, the Cork lads winning 6-3 to 4-2.

Tony Herbert again captained Limerick, who lined out: C. O'Connell (goal), G. Frost, J. O'Connell, D. Hartigan, K. O'Donoghue, M. Culhane, D. Brennan, Owen O'Brien and T. Herbert, M. Murphy, M. McInerney, A. O'Rourke, K. Cunneen, J. Hayes, J. Hoyne.

North Monastery "skipper" was Mick Cody, who won three All-Ireland minor hurling titles with Cork and later wore the Rebel County senior jersey with distinction. Limerick folk will remember him better as Rev. Bro. Cody of St. Mary's C.B.S., and now in Galway.

Other members of that North Monastery team included Paddy Grace of good Kilkenny stock; Tadhg O'Sullivan of Aughabuloge; D. J. Buckley, Con Murphy, Mick Kinniffick and Dan Coughlan.

Although Tony was not with them twelve months later when Limerick again lined out in what proved their last Dr. Harty Cup final for many years, it is well to complete the record by telling that they qualified at the expense of Rathluirc C.B.S., but lost the final at Buttevant on Wednesday, May 8th, when North Monastery won, 4-3 to 1-3.

THE LIMERICK PLAYERS.

The Limerick players in that final line out:

J. O'Shea (goal), Bob Frost, Paddy O'Donoghue, Matt O'Connell, Mick McInerney, Kevin O'Donoghue, Donal Brennan, Paddy McCarthy, Art O'Rourke, Sean Hayes, J. Crowe, Jimmy O'Neill, Sean McInerney, Kevin Cunneen, M. O'Halloran.

Born in the great hurling stronghold of Ahane thirty three years ago, it was kind for Tony to prove adept on Gaelic fields, for his father and uncles all played for Castleconnell and Limerick, whilst an uncle on the maternal side, Paddy Kenneally of Laune Rangers F.C., Kerry, won two All-Ireland senior football medals with the "Kingdom" and figured in the three great games with Louth for the Croke Memorial in 1913.

Educated at Limerick C.B.S. and now a Dublin Corporation official, Tony, in addition to the appearances already mentioned in Dean Ryan, Harty Cup and Inter-provincial Colleges competitions: captained two O'Mara Cup and two Dr. Keane Cup teams to success.

With his native parish Club, Ahane, he won nine Senior County Championship titles—five in hurling and four in football.

Tony played with the Limerick minor team that lost to Cork hurlers, afterwards All-Ireland champions, in the 1937 Munster final. In 1938 he played for Limerick minors in both codes, but again Cork proved their masters.

OIREACHTAS FINAL OF 1939.

Whilst still a schoolboy he was selected to play for Limerick in the Oireachtas final of 1939 against Kilkenny, then All-Ireland champions, the Shannonsiders winning after a great struggle. The following year he helped Limerick to victory in the Munster and All-Ireland Championship, his other successes in the green and white including Thomond Feis and numerous tournament trophies.

Shortly after his 1940 All-Ireland triumph with Limerick, Tony went to reside in the Metropolis, where as a member of the Faughs Club he has helped in the winning of four Dublin Senior Hurling Championships, three Senior Hurling Leagues and three Boland Cup competitions, besides many tournaments.

In the Liffeside jersey, which he has worn since 1944, he won the Leinster titles of 1948 and 1952, getting his second Oireachtas medal when Dublin won that competition in 1948.

A member of the Leinster team in the Railway Cup ties for the four years from 1947 to 1950, he figured in three finals against Munster, playing on each occasion as opponent to his brother Sean.

HIS MOST MEMORABLE GAME

Tony rates the All-Ireland final of 1940 his most memorable game. He came on as a sub. that day just after half time, when Paddy Clohosey retired, and was no sooner on the field when he beat Paddy Phelan for a ball to place Dick Stokes for the goal which

put Limerick in the lead for the first time. He played right half forward on that occasion.

He considers Jack Lynch (Cork), Jimmy Kelly (Kilkenny), Christy Moylan (Waterford) and Bob Rackard (Wexford) the best players he met during his long hurling career, which is by no means finished yet.

Asked to name his most embarrassing moment, Tony said: "Some half dozen year ago I was playing with Dublin against Limerick in Croke Park in a tournament final, and on the Shannonside team were both Sean and Mick. Dublin were leading by one point in the closing seconds of the game. And I was called upon to take a touch puck, and thinking it was a Dublin man who was in front of me, I naturally pucked the ball to him. To my amazement it was none other than Toddy O'Brien, who coolly caught the sliotar and sent it lobbing into the Dublin net, and then the whistle, with Limerick victors by two points. Nothing would persuade my team mates and supporters but I did it purposely to let Limerick win. How embarrassing it was for me!"

LIVES FOR HURLING!

Tony, who simply lives for hurling, is keenly interested in the juvenile and minor hurlers of Crumlin parish, where he now lives. He spends all his spare time training with them in the C.B.S. Grounds in Crumlin. He coached and trained the 1952 Dublin team that won the Leinster Championship, and had seven boys from his parish club on the side. They were afterwards beaten by Tipperary in the All-Ireland final—a result they reversed last September, when one of the greatest teams ever to win the minor title lined out in the Metropolitan colours. Bulking largely on the side were members of Tony's Club, St. Columba's, one of the youngest in Dublin and catering exclusively for hurling. Last year they won the Liffeside Minor Championship, also the "Under Twelve," juvenile, junior and intermediate honours, for all of which Tony can claim a goodly share of the credit.