

Senior Football 2020

League Group 2

When the draw to split Division one into two groups it was widely agreed that the Pearses were in the more difficult section. Our group included five sides who had won the O'Neill Cup in the last decade including the current County and league champions (Trillick and Dromore) but we more than held our own finishing joint top with Coalisland and Dromore and only missing out on a final spot by virtue of head to head results.

First up was a local derby with Donaghmore at Father Devlin Park and a superb second half display saw the Pearses emerge comfortable winners. Wind assisted Donaghmore led 0-7 to 0-2 at the break but they were held scoreless in the second half as two penalty conversions from Liam Rafferty coupled with points from Cormac Donnelly, Ronan Nugent and Oisín McGee saw the visitors win on a 2-9 to 0-7 score line.

Next up was a meeting with defending league champions Dromore at Pearse Park but despite scoring more times than our opponents we suffered a narrow defeat. Dromore led 0-7 to 0-3 at halftime and when they struck for an early second half goal they looked to be in control. Galbally though rolled up their sleeves with points from Ronan Nugent, Liam Rafferty, Sean Murphy and Conor Donaghy closing the gap. The visitors though grabbed a goal against the run of play as time ran out on the Pearses as it finished 0-13 to 2-10.

We were at home in our next game as well when a strongly fancied Clonoe side were the visitors. The hosts led at the end of the opening quarter thanks to a Liam Rafferty goal but Clonoe turned things around to give them a slender 1-8 to 1-7 interval advantage. When the O'Rahillys moved five clear in the second half it looked as though their experience would show but that's when this Galbally side again showed what they are made of. Sean Murphy, Daniel Kerr and Sean Wylie narrowed the gap before quick thinking from Kerr picked out midfielder Enda McGarrity who sealed a dramatic 2-14 to 1-16 victory with a goal with the last kick of the game.

Things certainly weren't getting any easier as we travelled to Father Campbell Park the following Friday night to take on Coalisland. The Pearses were out of sorts in the first half and trailed 0-9 to 0-4 at the short whistle. After both sides had traded early second half points Galbally took over as they held the hosts scoreless from twenty five minutes. Daniel Kerr, Cormac Donnelly and Conor Donaghy all weighed in with scores but time ran out for us as we lost out on a 0-11 to 0-10 score line.

The next league game came a week after exiting the senior championship at the hands of Trillick and the first half display reflected that as they struggled against an under strength DerryLaughan side at the Loughshore. The second half though was much better with Ronan Nugent and Conor Donnelly getting goals while Daniel Kerr claimed a second major to go with his first half strike as it finished 4-10 to 0-7.

Next up was the visit of championship conquerors Trillick with the Reds certainly having one eye on the final which was the following week. Early goals from Oisín McGee and Liam Rafferty though set the tone for the game and points from Conor Donaghy, Mark Donnelly, Rafferty, Seamus Mulgrew as well as substitute trio Kieran Holland, Cathal Brannigan and Ronan McGeary saw the Pearses run out emphatic 2-16 to 0-8 winners.

The final game in the league took place against Omagh at Healy Park and with Clonoe having beaten Coalisland earlier in the day we went into this game thinking that a win would give us a playoff for a place in the division one final. We certainly set out as though we made business with goals from Daniel Kerr and Conor Donaghy inside four minutes. A second Donaghy goal left Galbally virtually out of sight by the interval and while Omagh closed the gap in the second half with Kerr getting another three pointer as it finished 4-9 to 1-13.

When word filtered through later that night that we were not getting a playoff and that Dromore were in the final there was a lot of disappointment within the squad of players and management. In many ways that reflected the way they had approached this shortened season. Nobody outside the group gave them a chance but they came perilously close to reaching the league final, a draw in Coalisland, when we had

chances to do so, in the end cost us dear. There is no doubt though that the players built on the double success from 2019 as they more than held their own in the top flight and the fact that they were able to give a number of younger players their senior debut while doing so certainly bodes well for the future.

Championship 2020

Galbally 0-7 Trillick 1-9

Galbally's return to Senior Championship football seen the Pearses coming up against the defending champions Trillick in Healy Park Omagh. Galbally started the brighter of the two teams with raising the white flag twice within the first 5 minutes of the game with scores from Daniel Kerr and Conor Donaghy. Galbally showed their intentions from the first whistle carrying the game to Trillick with a direct running style of play. Trillick's first score came from the boot of Lee Brennan which was a free on 5 mins. Galbally's defence where controlling things at the back with Kieran McCrory and Conor Quinn winning their individual battles.

On 9 minutes Trillick hit the only goal of the game with a slice of luck playing a large part in the goal. Trillick shot was deflected off a defender's foot landing into the arms of the Trillick attacker 3 yards out.

Galbally responded well and tagged on another 2 points before the break to leave the scores Galbally 0-4 Trillick 1-4 at the break.

The second half started with a very tight 10 mins on nip and tuck football with very little scores mainly down to both teams' defences winning their battles. Galbally once again added on 3 points with Rafferty, Kerr and Donaghy scoring before Lee Brennan pointed to keep the Trillick men ahead. Galbally had 3 goal opportunities in the second half two coming within the last 10 mins, but failed to make them count and only came away with a point for their efforts.

With Galbally pushing hard in the final few mins Trillick tagged on 3 points in injury time to claim their spot in the quarter final and win the game on a scoreline of 1-9 to 0-7.

Reserves

The Reserves set the tone for the seniors on day one with a superb display away to Parish rivals Donaghmore winning on a 2-9 to 0-5 score line. Dromore were the visitors for round two and a very gritty, never say die attitude, saw the Pearses secure a hard earned 1-8 each draw thanks to a late Aidan O'Hagan goal. Clonoe made the trip to Pearse Park in round three and like Dromore in the previous game they soon found out that Galbally's Reserve team don't accept defeat no matter how far they are behind. It looked as though they were chasing a lost cause but they stuck to the task in hand and at the end of the sixty odd minutes they were still unbeaten after another stalemate on a 2-10 each score line.

An inexperienced side then suffered their first defeat of the campaign when going down 1-11 to 1-8 away to Coalisland but they can take a lot of heart from the fact that Fianna side went on to win the Reserve league title. Disappointingly Derrylaughan didn't field in the next game and that was followed by the Trillick game not taking place as well. The last league game was away to Omagh and for the third time it finished all square, 2-11 each.

In the Reserve championship Galbally played host to a fancied Trillick side under lights and after a tough battle the Pearses emerged narrow 2-9 to 0-14 winners. That set up a quarter final date with neighbours Carrickmore, again at home, but injuries took their toll on the squad and they bowed out on a 1-9 to 0-6 score line.

All in all it was a very good campaign for the Reserves who suffered only one defeat during the league and in many ways they set the tone each day for their senior counterparts. The squad was a great blend of Youth and experienced players and there is no doubt that they will learn a lot from 2020 and can continue to make huge strides again in 2021.