

SPORT

Army Team



Sligo Wanderers Hurling Champions 1905



Girls with Camogie Sticks



Sligo Tennis Club

Football

The earliest references to football in Sligo were in the first half of the 19th century when a number of church-going people complained about the game being played in the streets on a Sunday. Later in that century employers gave their staff half-days and early closing times to facilitate their sporting activities. Sport was seen as an improver of health and fitness, and helped with the reduction in the consumption of drink.

Early football did not have any formal rules and was a very rough game. The three Irish football organisations were formed within five years- The Rugby Union of Ireland (1879); The Irish Football Association (1880) and the Gaelic Athletic Association (1884). During these years a number of transitional games were played in Sligo town with a combination of rules used in the same game.

Association Football (Soccer)

The association rules became the most popular in Sligo town with the following teams playing in those formative years- Sligo F.C.; Sligo Diocesan School F.C.; Marist Brothers F.C.; Commercials F.C.; 105th Light Infantry F.C.; 5th Battalion of the Northumberland Fusiliers F.C.; Sligo Academy F.C.; and Sligo Wanderers F.C. These early games were played at Abbeyview, Finisklin, Abbeyville, Maugheraboy, Thornhill, Cartron, Rosehill and Marymount. This long association with football in Sligo continues to the present day through the strong support of the community-owned Sligo Rover F.C..

Gaelic Football

The Gaelic football match was very much part of a sports day in the late 1800's. The first county championship was won by Sligo Emmets in 1888 and the next town team to win it was Sligo Wanderers in 1901. It would be another 43 years before the next Sligo town team, Craobh Rua, would win the championship. In 1905 Sligo Wanderers won the first hurling championship. The first gaelic pitches in the town were located at Finisklin, Mrs. Ward's Field and Thomas Hanney's Field.

Rugby Football

Among the earliest recorded games of rugby in Sligo were played by members of the Sligo Hare and Hounds Athletic Club at Mr. White's Field, Thornhill. 1890 saw the founding of Sligo Rugby Club, who were to play in the first ever Connacht Senior Cup game in 1896.

Athletics

The Sligo Hare and Hound Club promoted cross country running at the end of the 19th century, with one very good runner nicknamed (The Hare) starting first and the rest of the field attempting to catch him.

The Gaelic Athletic Association runs sports days which incorporated running, cycling, jumping and throwing.

Sailing and Rowing

"The Ladies Cup" was first sailed for on Lough Gill in 1821 and was won by Mr. Charles Martin's boat the "Phoenix". It is believed that the "Ladies Cup" is one of the oldest sailing trophies in Britain or Ireland and is still in use today.

In 1879 "The Commercial Rowing Club" struck a set of silver and white metal medals for racing.

Polo

The Sligo polo team won the Irish County Polo Cup out-right, by winning the competition in 1898, 1899 and 1900. The team was Mr. Connolly, Major O'Hara, Mr. Campbell, Mr. Fitzgerald and the score was (8-3).

Horse Racing

Bomore was the location of the week long county race meeting, which was held annually from the mid 19th century. The current Cleveragh course was established in the town in 1955.

Cricket

Sligo Cricket Club was playing in the 1850s and their home ground was at Finisklin.

Tennis

There was a grass court club at Ardaghowen in 1881 and another at Merville later.

Hunting

A subscription pack of hounds was kept in town and was financed by a number of townfolk.



Picture courtesy Mrs. L. O'Riordan, Lisnabry, Sligo. The famous County Sligo polo team pictured at Hazelwood.

Sligo Polo Team



'Ladies Cup' for Sailing

Young men with football caps

