

THIS IS
“GAA STORY”
CAVAN!



LADIES
FOOTBALL

PEIL NA
mBAN

The origins of ladies' football in Cavan can be traced back to an indoor soccer tournament which took place in Oldcastle in early 1975. Ladies' teams from Mullahoran and Crosserlough entered. Afterwards their mentors, John Joe Brady and Tom Dowd, promoted the idea of ladies' football among GAA clubs in Cavan.

As there was no organised competition in Ulster both men were asked later that year to put a county team together to represent the province and play Galway in an All-Ireland semi-final in Mullingar. A team drawn mostly from Mullahoran and Crosserlough was recruited and they gave a good account of themselves before losing to a stronger Galway team. The flame had been lit and soon the game spread to other parts of Cavan.

In February 1976 representatives from GAA clubs were invited to send representatives to a meeting in The Lantern Inn in Cavan town to form a county board specifically to run ladies' football. The clubs represented were Crosserlough, Mullahoran, Lacken, Maghera, Templeport, Killinkere, and Lavey. A competition was organised and in addition to these clubs others to take part were: Drumalee, Lurgan, Ballyhaise and Laragh. Mullahoran were the inaugural winners defeating Drumalee in the final. In addition to this competition, there were many tournaments and once-off games at sports' days and festivals.

In 1976 Armagh entered the Ulster championship and Cavan beat them in a home-and-away fixture and they won the Ulster championship for the first time. The All-Ireland semi-final against Kerry was fixed for Breffni Park and, although Cavan were beaten by 3-09 to 3-03, the team played well.

1977 was Cavan's greatest year to date. They won All-Irelands at under-16 and senior level defeating Roscommon in both finals in Hyde Park. A number of players were members of both panels. Cavan qualified for further All-Ireland finals in 1981 and 1982 and although they were unsuccessful the game continued to grow.



Since the turn of the millennium more and more clubs have been established leading to a thriving ladies' football community in Cavan. In 2013 the game received a great boost when Cavan won the All-Ireland Intermediate football championship for the first time, beating Tipperary in Croke Park on a scoreline of 1-14 to 1-12.

They had lost at the same stage in the same venue to Westmeath two years earlier by a single point after a replay.

Due to an intensive concentration at underage level Cavan have had further successes, most notably at colleges' level, with Loreto College winning junior and senior All-Ireland titles in 2018. Every year there is

great interest in the adult club competitions at senior, intermediate and junior level with many of the games attracting large attendances. Cavan now have a well-respected county team which can hold its own with most other teams in the country. The future for the game in Cavan looks very promising.