

MARIE HOYE – 1960 - 2006 - CLANN EIREANN LEGEND



It is with tremendous pride that Clann Eireann host its third annual seven a side ladies tournament in memory of the late, great, Marie Hoyer. Marie is fondly remembered both within Clann Eireann ladies football circles and in the wider Armagh ladies football family as a true legend, a unique person who passes but once in a lifetime.

Marie was the driving force behind the establishment of what was to become one of the most successful ladies football clubs in the county and further afield. Clann Eireann was one of the first clubs in Armagh to embrace ladies football and indeed Marie herself was one of the first players to wear a club shirt. Attempts to establish and maintain successful teams can prove difficult and things can fall apart through lack of commitment, interest or resources. This was never a possibility with Marie at the helm. She drove forward with unsurpassed determination, passion and dedication, taking a team from infancy through to an All-Ireland final. She did this despite her long battle with cancer which finally took her from those who loved her, on 28 June 2006, after an eleven year battle.

Marie travelled far and wide to tournaments taking teams to Dublin, Manchester and Florida in the pursuit of ladies football. She had a very special love of sevens competitions and it is for this reason we decided that a sevens tournament would be the most appropriate and fitting tribute to Marie. We took our time in coming to this decision. Given her legendary attention to detail, nothing other than a well thought out and organised tournament would honour her memory.

Marie's influence was also clearly visible at county level when Armagh Ladies defeated Sligo in the All-Ireland Final in the autumn of 2005. Six of her club mates wore the orange jersey that day and never did Marie more clearly demonstrate her courage than on that glorious occasion. Having just completed a course of treatment, she defied her body's weakness to join her girls in celebration on the Croke Park turf. To these girls, winning the All Ireland was special, but nothing when set beside Marie's determination to share their moment.

Marie is best remembered in Armagh circles for volunteering her entire Clann Eireann team and their 'orange and white' jerseys at a time when Armagh did not even have a team or jerseys. At the time of her death, the Ladies County Board described Marie as 'simply irreplaceable, a one-off and an inspiration to all'. The BBC also recognised the quality of Marie's work and commitment when she was named as their 'Sports personality of the Year Unsung Hero' for 2004.

Marie's roles within the Clann Eireann club are too numerous to mention; secretary, team manager, player, youth worker to name but a few. Her versatility was astonishing, her standards high; she was a master of all trades. All of the roles were filled with passion and the pursuit of perfection. The hundreds of boys and girls who came through the doors of Clann Eireann Youth Club knew that they were much more to Marie than a number on a register – they were treated like her own children and shown love, affection and good discipline. It was for this reason Marie was described by her club as a 'mother' to all of its children.

Marie's legacy lives on in the continued success of the Clann Eireann Ladies teams, both at senior and at underage level. Our senior ladies continue to be inspired by Marie and each and every player proudly wears their club jersey with Marie's initials lovingly stitched just below the collar. Within this proud and close club, three of Marie's daughters also wear this shirt and line out for the club in which they were partially raised and where their mother was affectionately known 'Mrs Clann Eireann'.