

Only One Survivor Of First Three Finals.

Pat Buskin's death last week has reduced the survivors of the first three finals to a solitary one—the Cappamore man, Pat Mulcahy, now resident in Dublin. All the other members of both Commercial's football selections and the Kilfinane "pick" of 1897 have passed to their reward¹.

Pat Buskin was the lone Croom man on the Kilfinane All-Ireland side, and it will be appreciated how good he had to be to gain a place on that side—the only team of the 14 to capture an All-Ireland crown that did not include a representative of any city club. It was a five-club selection, with nine from the sponsoring team: Kilfinane, a quartette from Cappamore two each from Caherline and Ballingarry, and Pat Buskin.

When the games were re-organised following the "Parnell split," Croom was one of the first teams to move into the picture, but the game reputed to have forcibly put the claims of the West Limerick men before the Kilfinane "spotters" was the Granagh Medal Tournament final, played on March 21, 1898, and in which Croom beat Ballingarry, 3-3 to nil.

Pat Buskin played in the first Munster Championship game, which was against Clare and took place at Greenpark Racecourse, Limerick, on June 19, 1898. The Limerick lads won narrowly enough, 2-5 to 2-3 but it is of interest that the Shannonside team that day did not include any of the Cappamore players.

The next match, which did not take place until September 25 in Tipperary, was against the redoubtable Blackrock (Cork) combination and, contrary to general opinion, Kilfinane ran out easy winners on the score of 4-9 to 1-6. The Limerick lads were stronger, more athletic, possessed of greater dash, and played with great combination.

Pat Buskin, who played full-back on the Kilfinane selection, was a small man on a team of veritable giants. He was sturdily built, however, and had a knack all of his own for dodging and puzzling play. He could leap high into the air for a ball, which he usually met "on the draw," clearing well from the danger zone before reaching terra firma again. He was adept at this type of play, which was highly spectacular, and very sure in his stroke, rarely missing, no matter how closely tackled.

There is a story told concerning this game with Blackrock, which illustrates his prowess in this respect. A pair of Cork forwards, both powerful men, decided they were not going to let Pat get away with his "fancy stuff." The small-built Limerick lad looked easy prey and they conspired to "sandwich" him when the next opportunity offered.

The opening duly came, and the two brawny Corkonions charged as arranged. Pat looked oblivious of the looming danger as he jumped into the sky for his ball but his well-known knack for dodging trouble came to the rescue. Anyway, he side-stepped the charging pair in some mysterious way and when he returned to the ground after clearing the leather it was with difficulty he avoided the sprawling figures of the Leeside pair, who had collided full-force with each other and were carried unconscious from the pitch.

That was the Munster Final, and the Limerick lads later beat Kilkenny at Tipperary in their first appearance in an All-Ireland Senior Hurling Final, winning a great tussle, 3-4 to 2-4.

Pat Buskin later played in the two great games with Blackrock at Mallow for the Munster Final of the Croke Cup competition, a pair of unforgettable hurling meetings, the first a draw (0-4 each), the re-play resulting in a narrow Kilfinane win, 1-7 to 1-6.

Limerick again met Kilkenny in the All-Ireland Final for the Dr Croke Cup. This was played at Thurles on July 9, 1899, and the large attendance included the grand patron of the G.A.A., Most

Rev. Dr. Croke who was introduced to each member of the opposing teams before delivering a most interesting address to them. Limerick won this game, 3-8 to 1-4.

Pat Buskin, in common with many more of that great team, did not wear the Limerick jersey again, but he continued to adorn hurling for many further years as a member of the Croom Club, crowning a great career when he helped his club win their first Co. Senior Hurling Final when they dethroned the holders (Caherline) in the 1908 decider, played at the Markets Field on February 29, 1909.

And now, in the fullness of years, Pat has passed away to the Great Beyond to meet again the lads with whom he oft lined-up in the exciting days when the G.A.A. was young. ¹ James Nash, Commercial's d1968