

**The 1998 North American County Board Convention convened at 9:30 AM on November 7 1998 in the Philadelphia Marriot West, West Conshohocken, Pennsylvania.**

Chairman Paddy Rooney opened the convention by welcoming everyone to the Philadelphia area and asked John Heigher to read the invocation. Brendan Lotty then took the microphone to welcome the delegates to Philadelphia. Questions were raised about suspended players being present and speaking at the meeting, but the Chairman ruled that, as a courtesy, suspended players would be permitted to be present but would not be permitted to speak.

The minutes of the 1997 Convention were discussed. Geoff Butler questioned the allotment of All-Ireland tickets and stated that new clubs should not get any tickets. During discussion, it was explained that although the number of NACB clubs has increased, Croke Park has not increased the allotment of NACB tickets for many years. Divisional allotments depend upon the number of clubs in that Division.

The issue of refunds owed to Chicago from the Playoffs in San Francisco was discussed and a check was handed over by the Western Division Chairman.

Joe Quirke questioned the status of action on Motion 23 passed in 1997, relating to Transfers becoming effective immediately upon signing. It was stated that a deviation from the Official Guide (O.G.) rule had been requested from the GAA Management Committee in Croke Park but that, to date, no response had been received. It was agreed that the matter should be pursued.

Joe Quirke also questioned the status of O.G. Rule Books. It was explained that the GAA O.G. was not reprinted in 1998 and that Croke Park could not provide any copies except for a small number that the NACB Secretary had already received.

A correction was made to the Pre-Playoff meeting minutes to clarify that the Central Division did not offer to provide a second Senior team in the Senior Football Playoffs.

There was much criticism of the \$6,000 given to the San Francisco U-14 team for their trip to Ireland in 1998. Questions were raised as to who had the power to allot money like this, to make the decision, etc. The Chairman explained that the O.G. and NACB By-Laws gave the NACB, as a County Committee, the authority to make any such decision, and that this particular decision had actually been made by the Divisional representatives at the Pre-Playoff meeting in May.

A motion was made to accept the minutes as presented, proposed by Matt Tomassichio, and seconded Sean Lyons. Motion carried.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT.**

The Secretary's report was reviewed. A question was raised regarding the issue of Sanctions versus Transfers in 1998. It was explained that no Transfers were granted by Croke Park in 1998.

Questions were raised by Mossey O'Connor regarding the make-up of the committee which suspended individuals as a result of an illegal player being used during the International Competition in Dublin in September. The Chairman explained how Croke Park had requested an investigation, how the committee was established, the resulting suspensions, the appeal hearings, and how the suspensions were reduced. Cyril Hackett referred to how the appeal of his own suspension was handled, but the Chairman explained that his hearing was not a normal appeal. Seamus Gallagher, John McDaid, Joe Quirke, Andrew Healy, Phil Smith, Tom Farrelly, Celia Lynn, and others spoke about the process followed. Some claimed that the Secretary and Chairman should also have been suspended. The Chairman explained that that was still possible as Croke Park had still not concluded its investigation.

The Secretary was asked to explain what happened in Dublin. He explained how the team manager and selectors, unknown to him, used an illegal player under an assumed name in two games. He stated that the team manager gave him (the Secretary) the wrong name for the player. He explained how the opposing team discovered the illegal player and the subsequent reaction of the GAA authorities in charge in Dublin.

John McDevitt, who chaired the initial hearing committee, explained the process they followed. Sean Gannon spoke of the integrity of the members of the hearing committee. Mike O'Connor told how the GAA President reacted to what had happened and how disappointed he was. Joe Quirke declared that everybody knew that 90% of clubs do the same as these people were charged with.

Tom Dolan suggested that the suspensions be lifted. Paul McCarty proposed, seconded by Tom Regan, that standing orders be suspended to deal with this issue. A total of 139 voting cards were distributed to delegates. Motion carried without opposition.

Joe Quirke proposed, and Tom Dolan seconded, that all suspensions arising from the International Competition be reduced to time served. Motion carried without opposition.

Motion to accept the Secretary's Report was proposed by Tom Purvis, seconded by Tom Regan. Motion carried without opposition.

**TREASURER'S REPORT.**

The Treasurer's report was reviewed. Questions were asked and answered regarding expenses listed for the GAA President, for MVP awards, regarding the allotment of All-Ireland tickets, regarding reimbursement of team mileage for the 1998 Playoffs, regarding the Omagh Fund, and correcting the Sean Treacy Club's name.

Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report was proposed by Mike Feeny, seconded by Pat Lyons. Motion carried without opposition.

**REGISTRAR'S REPORT**

The Registrar's report was reviewed and amended so that the Young Ireland's club name was added. Motion to accept was proposed by Mike Flanagan, seconded by Pat Lyons. Motion carried without opposition.

**PUBLIC RELATIONS REPORT**

The Public Relations Report was reviewed with a motion to accept proposed by Jim Carmody, seconded by Val Kirwin. Motion carried without opposition.

**YOUTH OFFICER'S REPORT**

The Youth Officer's Report was reviewed with a motion to accept proposed by Jim Carmody, seconded Pat Lyons. Motion carried without opposition.

**OTHER OLD BUSINESS**

Joe Quirke raised the issue of 1998 Home Base players versus the issue of Sanctions and Transfers. The Chairman explained the problem arising from the rule change in 1998, that no Transfers were granted in 1998, that all new players in 1998 were Sanction players, and that Transfers from Ireland would only be granted to players who were at least nine months in the US.

Mike Moriarty offered congratulations to the Under-14 team from San Francisco which represented the NACB at Féile na nÓg in Donegal in 1998. John McDevitt and Connie Kelly raised the issue of gate admission refunds from the Playoffs. The issue of the suspension of NACB players by the New York GAA was discussed.

At 12:40 PM, it was agreed to adjourn for Lunch.

The meeting reconvened at 1:30 PM.

The status and policy regarding the provision of All-Ireland tickets and flights for the NACB Players of the Year was explained by the Chairman.

The issue of some winning teams from the Central Division not being able to attend the 1998 Playoff Banquet was discussed. Andrew Healy explained how the Central Division's allotment of tickets were sold on the Sunday, that despite issues regarding the clubs having already paid the Division and the Division mailing a check to the wrong address, etc., there had been a final agreement on Friday evening that the tickets would be paid by the Central Division no later than Saturday morning and that promise was not kept. There was discussion of the problems created when tickets are not paid two weeks in advance as required by NACB By-Laws.

There was discussion regarding the refund of gate admission charges and of Hotel Deposits which had not been refunded. Andrew Healy offered to help where possible.

There being no other Old Business, the Chairman made brief remarks regarding the good year which had just concluded and of his hopes for the future as we started the new millennium.

At this point, because of the press of time, he introduced Albert Fallon, Chairman of the GAA National Coaching and Games Development Committee in Croke Park who said he was honored to have been invited to address the convention and spoke about the contributions to the GAA of the Gaels abroad. Then Helen O'Rourke, Rúnaí, Ladies Gaelic Football Association, Dublin, spoke about how far the game of Ladies Gaelic Football has

progressed in Ireland and how well the game is doing in the NACB area.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS.**

John Heigher was elected Election Chairperson and he appointed John Keane to act as Election Secretary. The Chair also appointed Anne Marie Joyce, Brendan Lotty, and later Albert Fallon and Helen O'Rourke to act as ballot tellers.

A recount of the number of delegates showed that a total of 146 voting cards had by this point of the meeting been distributed to delegates.

Geoff Butler questioned whether all officer nominees had actually been nominated by a club. It was explained that past practice considered all outgoing officers automatically re-nominated. The Secretary stated that one officer did not specifically get nominated by a club in 1998, probably because the NACB letter of notification, per the Chairman, declared that all outgoing officers are automatically re-nominated. Geoff stated that the rules did not specify any automatic re-nomination, and asked that in future we strictly adhere to the rules regarding nominations.

**1999 OFFICERS ELECTED AND VOTE TOTALS**

Chairman:	<u>Paddy Rooney</u>	(86)	
	Joe Lydon	(60)	
Vice Chairman:	<u>Chris Knightly</u>	(80)	
	Connie Kelly	(64)	
Secretary:	<u>Celia Lynn</u>	(66)	(88)
	John Keane	(50)	(58)
	Mike Moriarty	(28)	
Treasurer:	<u>Mike O'Connor</u>	(129)	
	Mike Flanigan	(14)	
Registrar:	<u>Sean Gannon</u>	(107)	
	Bertie Penney	(39)	
Public Relations:	<u>Eamonn Kelly</u>	(Unopposed)	
Youth Officer:	<u>John O'Flynn</u>	(76)	
	Joe Begley	(70)	
Honorary President:	<u>Martin Keane</u>	(Unopposed)	

The Elections Chair congratulated those elected, thanked the tellers and requested support for the Board in 1999.

Conclusion of convention minutes, Part 1.

Le fíor-mheas,

Seán Ó Catháin  
Rúnaí, 1998