

2<sup>nd</sup> April 2012

Both our senior ladies teams completed their North Munster league campaign last week.

Our Scholars were the first team in action as they travelled to Shannon to play the host club. This game was a game of contrasting styles with Scholars relying on an outside game while Shannon were using their height advantage to score inside. The game was a competitive affair throughout with Shannon holding a slender 22-21 interval lead. The first few minutes of the third quarter swung this game in Shannon's favour. Scholars failed to score in these minutes as Shannon opened up a 13 point lead. Scholars, despite their best efforts were unable to bridge this gap as Shannon held out for a 47-39 win.

Best for Scholars on the night were Niamh Barton, Ciara Meaney and Niamh Ni Cheilleachair.

Our Senior Saints fared much better in their game against Foynes. The Saints were boosted by the addition of U18 players Orlaith Woods, Laura Sheahan and Aoife O'Connell for this game. Saints opened up an early 12 point lead and were never seriously troubled thereafter as they ran out comfortable winners on a scoreline of 47-13.

Best for Saints on the night were Emily Kavanagh, Nuala o' Flaherty and Orlaith Woods.

Our U16 Saints travelled to Ennistymon to face Clare Cascaders in the semi finals of the North Munster Cup. The girls were not at the races offensively in the first half as they found scores hard to come by. However they worked tirelessly in defence which kept them in the game. The girls improved significantly in the second half and were much the better of the two sides. However their poor return in the first half was always going to be the telling point as they fell to a 27-17 defeat in a tight low scoring affair.

Top scorers for Saints were Jane Clohessy 6 and Jessica O' Brien 5.

Next week there will be a report on how our U18 girls fared in the North Munster Cup Final. The U18 girls will also be back in Cork League action when they face Carraig Na BhFear in Cork.

Also the club have a number of players in action for the North Munster U14, U16 and U18 teams that compete in the annual Southern Regional Tournament to be held on Easter Monday.

10<sup>th</sup> April 2012

St Colms U18 girls completed the North Munster league and cup double when they comfortably accounted for Celtics 49-32 in the inaugural cup final. The girls went into the game minus Ciara O' Halloran who was away on international duty. The girls were nowhere near their best in the final but were never seriously troubled. They always held the upperhand winning all 4 quarters for a comfortable win. The girls were led in the scoring stakes by MVP Orlaith Woods with good support from Niamh Hannan and Laura Sheahan.

The win caps a remarkable 6 year period in which the girls have never lost a North Munster game and in the process have won two U14 League titles, two U16 league titles, two under 18 league titles and now a cup win.

The girls probably had one eye on their top of the table clash with Carraig na BhFear in the Cork League a few days later. The girls were missing both Caoimhe Gleeson and Ciara O' Halloran for this game, but the other girls stepped up big time in a great team performance. The girls got off to a flyer and opened up a 7 point lead before the home team got their first points. The girls were well on top in the first quarter and led 15-6. Carraig na BhFear had the better of proceedings in the second quarter and tied up the game 24 apiece at the interval.

However the second half was all one way traffic. Our girls simply moved up the gears and blew their opponents off the court with a terrific performance. They moved 7 point clear at the end of the third quarter before a devastating fourth quarter performance sealed a great 58-36 win.

Orlaith Woods and Niamh Hannan combined for 43 points with other good performances by Emma O' Rourke and Aoife O' Connell.

Next weekend our U16 Girls are in All Ireland Club action when they meet Brunell and Tyrone Towers in their pool games. Our U13 girls travel to Listowel for the annual Easter Basketball festival.

16<sup>th</sup> April 2012

Our U16 girls certainly took centre stage last weekend, when they won the All Ireland U16 B Club championship. The girls had a narrow win over Galway league winners Corrib in the semi final before comfortably accounting for Castleblaney in the final.

The draw for the championship meant that the two stronger teams would meet in the semi final. The semi final did not disappoint as this game went right down to the wire. The girls started brightly and opened up a 24-16 interval lead. The girls maintained an 8 to 10 point lead going into the fourth quarter, but suffered a blow when Ciara O' Halloran was fouled out. Corrib came storming back and narrowed the gap to 2 points. With only a few seconds to go, Corrib had 2 free throws to level the game. However both were missed and Colms just about prevailed to win out 36-34 after a titanic struggle.

The girls faced up to Castlebaney the following morning in the final. Both sides started very nervously resulting in mistakes by both sides. Eventually the game settled down with Colms leading 10-8 after the first quarter. The girls stepped up a gear in the second quarter both in offense and defence winning the quarter 14-6 and suddenly there was a bit of daylight between the two teams. Castlebaney came out strong at the start of the second half, but Colms weathered this mini revival and took control again towards the end of the third quarter to stretch their lead out to 34-21.

It was apparent at the end of the third quarter, that Castleblaney had given their all and there was nothing left in the tank after 2 days of competitive fare. Our girls greater fitness levels really came to the fore in the last quarter, as they ruthlessly put Castleblaney to the sword easing to a 56-28 win.

Caoimhe Gleeson who has had a marvellous season deservedly picked up the MVP award after a game high 24 points performance. Ciara O' Halloran, Lynsey Purcell and Chloe Dineen were other stand out performers over the two days, with good contributions by the other players in the squad, namely Megan Greene, Becky Cleary, Ciara Stapleton, Grace Kavanagh, Aileen O' Connor and Aoife Keegan. Special word goes to the two coaches Ray Slattery and Emily Kavanagh, who had the girls well prepared and focused for the weekend and the great support the team received over the two days.

Our U13 girls travelled to Listowel for the annual Easter Festival. The team suffered a blow on the eve of the tournament with both Chloe Tobin and Katie Golden ruled out. Nevertheless this young squad acquitted themselves well winning 3 of their pool games to set up a quarter final appearance against Donoughmore from Cork. The inexperience in our young players was evident in the first quarter as they allowed their Cork opponents open up a commanding 16-2 lead. To their credit, the girls settled right into this game and slowly began clawing back the deficit. In the end, their fight back was not enough and they fell to a 23-17 defeat.

This was great experience for the girls with most of the squad eligible for the next two years. Players to shine were Laura O' Shea, Lauren Walsh, Emma Cunningham and Muireann Scanlon.

Next week our U18 girls travel to Cork for a very difficult league game against Brunell, who are unbeaten in all competitions this season.

23<sup>rd</sup> April 2012

A big thank you to Glen Cruisers Newport Basketball club who hosted 3 mini tournaments last weekend at U12, U14 and U16. This was a great opportunity for some of our younger players to get valuable tournament experience. Our U11 girls took part in the U12 tournament losing out to the host club and beating Morning Star in their 2 games. Best for Colms were Zara Haugh, Shiofra Gleeson and Emma McDonnell.

Our U14 girls went into the tournament minus a number of frontline players due to the GAA Feile and a first year schools tournament held on the same day. Nevertheless the younger players on the panel played extremely well. They pipped Newport by a single basket in their first game. The second game with Celtics was close with the sides level at the interval. However a knee injury forced Laura O' Shea out of the game which greatly reduced Colms scoring threat. Celtics went on to comfortably win the game.

Best for Colms were Laura O' Shea, Ruth Butler, Muireaan Scanlon and Naomi Keogh.

Our U16 girls comfortably defeated Newport in their first game. They trailed Morning star by 8 points in their second game before rallying in the second half to steal it at the death by a basket. Best for Colms were Sarah Murray and Eimear Dollard.

Our U18 girls travelled to Cork last week to play Brunell in the Cork League. This was always going to be a big ask for the girls against a team undefeated in all competitions this season and the reigning U18 National Cup champions. They also went into the game with top scorer Orlaith Woods nursing an ankle injury which curtailed her court time. Nevertheless the girls were competitive before losing out on a scoreline of 37-53. Top scorers for Colms were Orlaith Woods 11, Niamh Hannan 8, Ciara O' Halloran and Caoimhe Gleeson 6 each.

Next week the girls will host Glanmire and are away to Skibereen in the Cork league.

30<sup>th</sup> April 2012

Our U18 girls hosted Glanmire last week in an important encounter with the winners almost guaranteed runners up spot in the Cork League.

Our girls started brightly with Lynsey Purcell and Orlaith Woods to the fore and opened up a first quarter lead of 18-12. In truth this lead was scant reward for the girls' dominance in the first quarter as they squandered numerous easy scoring chances. Glanmire came more into the game in the second quarter helped by our girls inability to convert their dominance into scores. Our girls scored a paltry 6 points in this quarter and went into the interval with a slender 24-23 lead.

Orlaith Woods picked up two early personal fouls at the start of the third quarter resulting in her sitting out the remainder of the quarter. Lorna Boland came off the bench and made an immediate impact scoring 4 points, as nothing separated the teams 33 apiece going into the final quarter.

It was very worrying how Colms were squandering one scoring opportunity after another. This allowed Glanmire always stay in the game and when it came to the crucial final stretch of the game, it was the visitors who took advantage for a deserved win on a scoreline of 47-44.

This was a game that our girls certainly left behind. They could and should have won this game comfortably but in the end too many easy misses proved costly. A return of 8 from 27 free throws in the game tells it's own story.

Top scorers for Colms on a disappointing night were Orlaith Woods 14, Ciara O' Halloran 10 and Niamh Hannan 9.

Next up for the girls is an away game against Skibereen. The result of this game will decide the girls' opponents in the top 4 playoffs.