

GAA WEXFORD ROW RUMBLES ON



BAKER . . . outspoken

It's Ollie over for dual star

By EAMON DONOGHUE

OLLIE BAKER says the day of the dual star is over.

He also claims that the GAA are more than happy to have it that way.

According to the former Clare All-Star and double All-Ireland hurling winner, it is not managers who are doing away with dual status for players, it is the GAA.

Baker insists having it that way makes life easier for the Association's big-wigs when it comes to organising their fixtures.

He said: "The days of the dual star are over — end of story."

Difficulty

"The GAA and the fixtures committee don't want players playing both codes as it causes difficulty for their schedule."

All-Ireland hurling boss Davy Fitzgerald has come under pressure to allow his dual players dual to feature in Division 4 of the NFL next year.

Six of his hurlers also featured this year with the county's senior football champions Cratloe.

Baker — now in charge of Dublin outfit Kilmacud Crokes — has nothing but sympathy for his former Clare team-mate.

Baker said: "It's not managers who are against it, but managers are being blamed all the same."

"The GAA are effectively telling you when they schedule a football match and a hurling match at the same time at different venues, that you can't do it any more."

"The era of the dual star is over."

Not what the docs ordered

ULSTER bigwigs have failed to resolve the Dr McKenna Cup player tug-of-war, even after they brought in Joe Kernan as mediator.

Eighteen players were named on panels submitted by managers of county and third-level teams.

Just one — Fermanagh's Richard O'Callaghan — has been released by his county and will now play for St Mary's University.

University of Jordans-town have lost 10 players from their panel of 26.

● BELFAST'S Case-meat Park is to be transformed into a 38,000 all-seater stadium. Work will begin next year and is due to be completed for the 2016 Ulster Championship.

EDDIE READY FOR A FIGHT

Walsh calls for hearing

AXED Wexford minor hurling boss Eddie Walsh has called for a Croke Park investigation into his sacking.

Walsh was given his marching orders by Wexford County Board Chairman Diarmuid Devereux for allegedly breaking a training ban on county minor teams.

The Faythe Harriers man says he wants the truth out and wants a neutral investigation set up to clear his name.

He told SunSport: "I want Dermot Devereux to do the honourable thing and let Croke Park investigate this."

"Let whoever is wrong be wrong, and whoever is right be right."

"My reputation is on the line here. I've nothing to hide and that's why I'm happy to ask for an investigation. What I want is for the truth to come out about what actually happened."

Dates

Shortly after Walsh was appointed in early September, he was told he would not be able to hold collective training sessions until January.

He says he accepted this but was then told in late November by the Wexford Coiste na nOg chairman, Bobby Goff, that he now had permission to go ahead and begin sessions.

Walsh said: "Bobby Goff asked me would I meet him in Wexford Park."

"He told me that he wanted to get the minors up and going."

"I told him that was a change because I'd previously been told we couldn't get going until January."

"He just said 'I want to get it up and going' and asked me to give him two dates."

"So I said 'Friday night and Sunday morning'. I'd have a meeting with the players on the Friday night and start the training on the Sunday"

By JOHN HARRINGTON

morning. So we had that training on Sunday morning, December 8 — and the players were coming out and bubbling with enthusiasm about it."

Goff's version of events, as told to SunSport, is different.

He admits he gave Walsh permission to begin drilling players, but only those that were not part of the Wexford Combined Colleges team — who were already training twice a week.

Goff also gave Walsh the OK to hold what he believed would be a once-off 'get to know you' session with the entire group on Sunday, December 8.

Walsh then arranged training sessions for the following Tuesday and Friday, which Goff says he was unaware of.

According to Goff, Walsh had exceeded his authority and broken the rules by arranging those Tuesday and Friday sessions and had put the players under unbearable pressure.

Goff said: "The combined colleges players told him they already trained on a Wednesday and a Saturday."

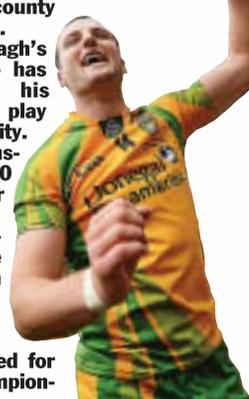
"He told them that it was their prerogative to train with the combined colleges but that if they didn't also train with the county minors that they wouldn't be part of the panel."

"There was a lot of pressure then put on Diarmuid Devereux and me from parents that their sons were doing Christmas exams, preparing for their Leaving, training with their colleges and now expected to train twice a week with the county minors as well."

"We had one parent of a player who was also on last year's minor team who said she was going to stop her son from playing hurling because of this carry-on."

The Wexford County Board plan to have a new boss in place by January.

Tweet @JHarrington79 ROW . . . Eddie Walsh and Wexford chairman Devereux (right)



MURPHY LAYS DOWN THE LAW

DONEGAL ace Michael Murphy has already made THREE New Year's resolutions.

His 2014 to-do list involves helping the Tír Chonaill men get promoted back to Division 1 of the NFL, regaining their Ulster SFC crown and winning a **SECOND** All-Ireland title in **THREE** years.

And the 24-year-old skipper has no intentions of letting his resolve slip. It would represent a major turnaround in fortunes for the 2012 All-Ireland SFC winners.

By JOHN HARRINGTON

There is no disguising the fact that 2013 was a major disappointment for them.

From their 2012 pedestal, they surrendered the Anglo-Celt Cup, Sam and dropped out of the top tier of the NFL after winning just two of their seven games.

But Murphy (*left*) is bullish about his team's chances next year.

The Glenswilly ace told SunSport: "The task for 2014 is to get back to Division 1 in the league,

win another Ulster title and to try and bring Sam back to Donegal."

"Remember, Dublin won two All-Irelands in three years, so there's no reason why we can't do that ourselves in 2014."

"We had too many players out injured and that made life difficult for us this year."

"I think we still can improve and develop as footballers but from now on, we just have to take it one step at a time."

The first step starts with the McKenna Cup. And it is already

clear Donegal are taking the competition more seriously.

In January, manager Jim McGuinness fielded a team of Under-21s in the McKenna Cup.

But for 2014, he has named an experienced 26-man squad who were all part of his Championship panel this year.

DONEGAL MCKENNA CUP PANEL: P Durcan, M Boyle, F McGlynn, D Walsh, E McGee, N McGee, K Lacey, A Thompson, L Thompson, L McLoone, A McFadden, T McKinley, R Kavanagh, N Gallagher, G McFadden, C Bonner, M Murphy, M Smyth, D Molloy, O MacNiallais, D O'Connor, S McLaughlin, M O'Reilly, H McFadden, E Doherty, C McFadden.