

Malahide CC and the Oval Ball

Three rugby internationals including one Lion, one European Rugby Player of the Year and two Barbarians have played for Malahide Cricket Club. Namely Charlie Adams, Kevin Mays and Ollie Campbell.

Charlie Adams, father of the late Malahide CC Patron Norman Adams, was capped 16 times for Ireland. His first cap was in 1908 v England away at Richmond which England won 13-3. Charlie was a forward, very quick, athletic with strong upper body strength. Often due to his speed he was "first up, first down" meaning he was the first from his team to arrive at the scrum, raising up his arms for two teammates to join him in the front row and the scrum would begin. In those days the scrum did not wait for all the forwards to arrive.

The following year, 1909, he was again selected to play against the old enemy at Lansdowne Road. Ireland beaten 5-11. In the same year Charlie was on the winning team when Ireland defeated France 19-8 at Lansdowne Road. In 1911 v Scotland at Inverlieth Charlie crossed the line for his one try for Ireland. It was a key score in a close win for Ireland 10-16. In the same year the Irish Times reports that Adams put in a "brilliant" display against the French at the Mardyke in Cork.

In 1912 Adams was a member of the Irish team which suffered a mauling at the hands of the touring South Africans at Lansdowne Road, 0-38. A try was worth 3 points and a penalty 2 points. Norman recalled his father telling him that the weather was freezing and the pitch rock solid. The Saffers, who were staying in a City Centre hotel, on the morning of the match, trooped down to Elverys Sports Shop on O'Connell Street and bought suitable studs for the conditions. The Irish team who travelled to the match from all corners were not so organised. The end result a crushing defeat and some very sore bodies!

Charlie went on to win 16 caps his last being against Scotland in 1914, Ireland winning 6-0. And then the Great War intervened with internationals resuming in 1919. It is likely that Charlie would have added to his tally of caps but for the War. He was an officer in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and fought at the Battle of the Somme. He was captured by the Germans in 1917 and spent the remainder as a prisoner of war in prison camp.

After the War from 1920 Charlie was very involved in resurrecting rugby at his club Old Wesley and played on for a number of years. Charlie played up to 40 times for Leinster province. Also, he was very involved with the famous Barbarians Football Club (Rugby). He was the Irish representative on the Baa-Baas committee which was a very prestigious position from 1921-1925 circa. He was very proud of his Barbarians role and a treasured possession is a Baa-Baas tie. Charlie played 5 times for the Barbarians in front of crowds of up to 50,000. The Barbarians are comprised of 14 international players and one uncapped player. Once invited to play you became a member for life.

In terms of his cricket for Malahide CC he was the mainstay of the first team particularly between 1901-1906 along with his brother Archie. Charlie was a genuine all rounder who opened the bowling and batted early in the order. The 1901 Malahide CC team photograph shows the two opening bowlers Charlie Adams and Tom Kettle standing like sentinels at

either end of the back row, both with cricket ball in hand. The poet, patriot and MP Kettle also fought with the Fusiliers at the Battle of the Somme. Sadly Kettle died on the Western Front in 1916.

Charlie continued to play for Malahide CC when cricket resumed in the Village in 1925 after the War and played on for a number of years. He was an all round sportsman and was a three handicapper in golf.

(Lock forward) Kevin Mays was capped four times for the Irish rugby team all in the one year in 1973 including the celebrated 10-10 draw against the All Blacks at Lansdowne Road. His other three caps were v Wales, Scotland and England. Kevin played his club rugby with University College Dublin.

Barry O' Brien was Kevin's captain on the Malahide CC Under 17 team and also played together on senior teams including the 4th XI captained by John Wright which won the Minor Cup in 1963. "Kevin was awkward to face. He was very tall, had a good seam action and generated bounce" comments Barry. Kevin broke into the first eleven and played 12 Senior 1 games between 1966-1968. There is little doubt that Kevin would have played a lot more senior cricket but for the lure of the oval ball.

The third player to play cricket for Malahide CC and rugby for Ireland was Ollie Campbell. Ollie played 22 times for Ireland at fly half between 1976-1984. He scored 217 points. He was the architect-in-chief of Ireland's 1982 Triple Crown win. He was capped 7 times for the British and Irish Lions - 3 caps on the 1980 tour to South Africa and 4 on the 1983 tour to Australia. He scored 184 points for the Lions. He was European Rugby Player of the year in 1978 and 1979. Played twice for the Barbarians. The Fingal Independent referred to him as having "a right boot of silk". Ollie played his club rugby for Old Belvedere whose ground at Anglesea Road, Dublin 4 was renamed in 2019 as Ollie Campbell Park.

Growing up in Malahide near the Grand Hotel, Ollie played youth cricket for Malahide CC. He featured on senior teams and in 1974 played on the 4th XI which won the Junior Cup v Leinster CC at the Civil Service grounds in the Phoenix Park. Ollie was a good batsman and an exceptional fielder. He was also an outstanding soccer player and there are those who played with him in the local Ard Na Mara park who vouch that the silken skills which were on evidence on the rugby field were also a feature of his soccer play. "Nobody could get near him as he glided over the ground" a contemporary recalls, "I think he could have played at the highest level if he had chosen to go down the soccer route."

AB "Tony" Robertson was not capped for the Irish rugby team but he came close. In 1941, he was selected for the Rest of Ireland v Combined Universities. The stylish centre three quarter was a prolific points scorer for his club side Wanderers RFC who played at Lansdowne Road.

AB captained Malahide CC for many years including in 1953 when Malahide joined the Senior 1 ranks and in 1959 when the Club won its first senior trophy, the Leinster Senior Cup. AB Robertson was a very good all round cricketer, a seam bowler who also contributed

many invaluable runs batting mostly in the lower order. AB was an Irish cricket selector and President of the Irish Cricket Union in 1973.

Malahide Rugby Football Club was formed in 1922 playing home games on Lord Talbot de Malahide estate on the site of the present day Cricket Club. The Rugby team played in the Leinster Junior and Minor Leagues. The Rugby and the Cricket shared the same Patron Lord Talbot. The colours of both clubs are black and gold taken from the Talbot crest.

The Hughes brothers Lewis, Cyril and Ivan were key figures in both Malahide Rugby and Cricket from the 1920's onwards featuring on teams and committees. The crossover between cricket and rugby is evident in the Malahide RFC photo 1942c which features cricketers Lewis and Ivan Hughes, Frank and Gerry McSwiggan, Jackie O'Hanlon (captain) and Rory Gilmore. Also featuring in the same photo is Jack Gibney proprietor of Gibneys Pub on New Street, Malahide where the cricket team socialised after games.



Malahide RFC, having disbanded in 1944, reformed in 1978 and played on the back pitches on the grounds of Malahide Castle demesne. Malahide CC made their changing and bar facilities available during the early days of the reformed rugby club.

To this day there continues to be a rich connection between cricket and rugby in Malahide. Alun Brophy, who has the best bowling figures in the history of Leinster Senior 1 Cricket League since its foundation in 1919 (10/25 Malahide CC v Merrion CC 1991), was President of Malahide RFC 2014-2016. And David O'Halloran is a current Malahide first teamer in both cricket (all rounder) and rugby (out half).

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