



**THE
CAMOGIE
ASSOCIATION**
An Cumann Camógaíochta

TELL THEIR STORY



Tell Their Story





About the Author

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Kate Leenane: Ticking off each Camogie goal, one at a time

By Alanna Cunnane



At such a young age, Kate Leenane has already accomplished a lot when it comes to Camogie

In fact, the 11 year old (who actually duly notes that she's actually 11 and a half to be precise), has already ticked something off her list that most people would spend their whole lives dreaming of – she's played in Croke Park.

As a wheelchair user, she was a part of the Munster Wheelchair Hurling/Camogie Club, as well as her local club Shannon Rovers, and it's the latter of whom she took to the infamous pitch with last year.

Participating in Camán to Croker, a fun outing aimed at U12 Camogie teams across Ireland as part of the wider Gaelic Games Go Games Activity Days, her club were one

of 64 selected across the country to take part in a day they'll never forget.

"I joined Shannon Rovers to meet more people. I don't really play for them, I'm usually just on the sideline there, so to get to play in Croke Park was very fun to say the least," she says.

"It was a nice day, and especially on the trip home because we got Supermacs," she adds.

Having been encouraged into the sport by her dad Dónal and her mum Sharon about three years ago, she hasn't looked back since.

"It was U12s, and I'm only 11. My dad, 'Ducky', got me to go up and join the club, and while I was frightened at first I got talking to people then and felt like I could have that impact in a sense."



“It’s just like anything, it’s lovely to see people together and having fun,” dad Dónal notes.

“And with the wheelchair aspect, one of the first points Kate made when it comes to the hurling is that everybody is the same. It was the first thing Kate said and I said, ‘wow’, like that was amazing.”

Mum Sharon echoed similar thoughts.

“She’s made a lot of friends inside there, and even for us as parents, you meet other parents, have the chats and hear about different things going on so it’s good all around,” she says.

If you could bottle Kate’s confidence, we’d all be in a better place. The young player, who’s currently based in Tipperary is as determined as ever to keep playing and make plenty of friends along the way.

Without doubt, it’s infectious. It’s heartening. And it’s a joy to watch. Especially considering the drive and enthusiasm she has on show.

That was something recognised by her Munster counterparts, when she was bestowed the ‘Most Dedicated Player’ accolade at their end of year awards.

The outlet of the hurling and camogie specific club on top of Shannon Rovers is one she treasures, for a few reasons.

“It’s an easier surface to play on, it’s indoors and I find with the other hurling it’s harder to play because the ground is uneven on the pitch, that makes everything very difficult,” she says.

“There are a few different rules too. The backs aren’t allowed to go past the line, and the forwards aren’t allowed come back. The goalie can’t cross the box. If we’re playing a practice match there’s usually two backs, two forwards, a midfielder and a goalie.

The matches really are my favourite, I love attacking,” she adds.

Sometimes, the club even bring in non wheelchair users to take on the challenge of a game, the most memorable of which saw some of the Limerick hurlers, alongside manager John Kiely in action.



It's a day Leenane recalls with pride, and excitement too.

"Some days they get clubs to get in and play ours for matches, sometimes they have kids come in and sit and play in the chairs," she says.

"There was one time John Kiely was in, and the Limerick players that won the All Ireland were trying to move around in the chairs and they got beat by our seniors, it was hilarious," she describes.

On that occasion, she even got to hold the Liam McCarthy Cup, and with that, and her Croke appearance now under her belt, only a meet and greet with the O'Duffy Cup now remains to be logged for the youngster.

"And you might get another trip to Croke Park at some stage



mightn't you Kate," mum Sharon adds.

With basketball, road racing and much more on her agenda too, she'll have to see if she can look at making some time in her busy schedule to do so.

Although it might have an uphill battle ahead in rivaling the elation only a Supermacs on the journey home can bring, there's no doubt there are lots of more good days ahead for Leenane.



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