

International Basketball was seen in Sligo

THE most notable feature of the year was that for the first time ever, international basketball was seen in Sligo, said the Secretary, Mr. Joe Palmer, in his report at the annual meeting of Sligo All Stars Basketball Club in the Imperial Hotel, Sligo.

Treasurer, Mr. Sean Fox in his balance sheet, showed that working capital during the year amounted to £570-16-7 while expenses amounted to £524-2-10, compared with £99-16-9 in 1967 and £320 in 1968. Travelling expenses in 1969 were just short of £400, double the figure for the previous year. It cost the club £89-17-9 to stage the international exhibition game during the Festival of Sligo. Sponsorship of £50 had been received from Messrs. G.W.I. Ltd., Collooney, to offset these expenses.

He added that the club only met approximately 50% of total expenditure, the members paying the rest out of their own pockets.

The meeting unanimously agreed to the amalgamation of Sligo All Stars ladies and mens clubs and the following officers were elected — Patron: Mr Tom Palmer, Editor, "Sligo Champion"; President: Mr. John McGowan; Vice-President: Miss A. Kilty; Secretary: Mr. J. Palmer; Assistant Secretary: Miss M. Begley; Treasurer: Mr. T. Mulligan. Executive Committee: Messrs. S. Fox, C. Carty, B. McHugh, G. Monaghan, Miss C. McLeod and Miss C. Monaghan.

Year of continued progress

The Secretary, in his report, stated that 1969 was a year of continued progress for the club. There were significant achievements on the playing court, though not one major prize was won, but perhaps the most notable feature of the year's work was that for the first time ever, international basketball was seen in Sligo.

"I refer to the visit during the Festival of Sligo of the Czech. Club champions, Slovan Orbis, who represented their country on a basketball promotional tour of Europe. Through the efforts of this club and with the financial assistance of Messrs. G.W.I. Ltd., Collooney, Sligo All Stars successfully staged an international basketball exhibition at the Convent of Mercy playing court. Nothing was spared to make the event the most spectacular and memorable in the sporting history of Sligo and those who attended the game were loud in their praise of the planning and organisation which went into the staging of the fixture.

Unfortunately, the turn-out was somewhat disappointing but everyone present was thrilled by the game. Our team put up a brilliant performance though beaten eventually by 75-53. Our thanks are due to Messrs. Gowna for their generous sponsorship of the event.

"1969 was memorable too due to the fact that we finished number three club in the country. Our National Cup campaign received a setback in the early stages but we recovered our position to finish on top of our pool and subsequently in the play-offs, we won two of our three games to merit fully our number three rating.

On the Championship scene, our minors finally lost what had been a virtual monopoly in this grade by losing the Connacht final to Galway in extra time. Our juveniles also lost but the seniors compensated somewhat by taking their third Connacht title in a row. Though we travelled to Killarney for the semi-final against Kerry with high hopes we went down 64-57 after a close game. And we were in no doubt on the way home that the result could have been reversed.

Policy of selectivity

"Such was our popularity as a tournament side that 1969 saw introduced a policy of selectivity as far as invitations to participate in tournaments were concerned. Our calendar was more than full. From the 1st. of January up to the first week of May, there were just four week-ends on which we were not engaged in basketball activities of one sort or another—National Cup, Championships or tournaments. And from the commencement of the new season in October, we had three week-ends free from basketball commitments, up to the end of the year. We had only six games at home during the entire year so there is no need to elaborate in detail on the mileage we covered representing our town, province and country.

"The All Stars carried the name of Sligo the length and breadth of the country and across the water to Wales when two of our players were honoured by selection on the Irish team which took part in the Four Country games at Port Talbot. And when Connacht made a brave bid for the Interprovincial crown, Sligo All Stars provided most of the players.

"In fact the first ever basketball game to be covered live by Radio was one in which Sligo were involved—the Connacht-Ulster game at Athlone. And again when radio gave live coverage of the Glen Abbey tournament in Dublin, All Stars were again in the picture. It can be confidently stated that the name of Sligo All Stars is well and truly established at national level.

Progressive, ambitious club

"At home, Sligo All Stars are recognised as a progressive and ambitious club and a body of hard-working and dedicated sportsmen. Nevertheless, we are not even self-supporting insofar as we must rely on the generosity of others to allow us facilities to practice and play. However, I feel the next few years will see a marked improvement in the matter of indoor playing facilities in Sligo and for this reason, I do not think we should be over-anxious about our failures in the past and our prospects for the future in this respect.

"Recent developments in our club must be mentioned at this stage. With the departure from active service of our President and coach, Mr. Tom O'Brien, an all-out effort must be made by each and every member to ensure that the hard work which he has put into the development of this club is maintained. One has only to consider 16, Cronnelly 11, B. O'Hara 8, and the difficulty we have experienced

in administration since our Treasurer survived similar crisis in the past. Mr. Tony O'Hara, left us, to realise how big a loss it is when prominent and hard-working members can no longer be with us.

"We are going through a difficult

period at the moment. We have survived and have always been the better for them. Team spirit must bind us closely together to ensure that Sligo All Stars continue to foster the growth of basketball in our town.

My thanks are due to my fellow officers, players and members for their co-operation during the year and a special word of gratitude must go to the management of the Imperial Hotel for providing us with accommodation for our meetings.

Sligo All Stars' greatest-ever victory

BRILLIANTLY performing Sligo All Stars recorded their greatest-ever victory when they came from behind to beat Kelliher 69-57 in the second leg of their National Cup pool game at C.Y.M.S. Hall, Tralee, last Saturday night.

Sligo, who won the home leg 71-52, gained full points from the series, including a two points bonus for a win on aggregate.

A fantastic determination and spirit, plus an unbelievably high work rate, were the factors which swung the game for the All Stars. Every man was called upon to give his most; every man did and when the chips were down, it was Sligo who faced the pressure manfully and came through.

Though Sligo were not at full strength—the most notable absentee was Brian McHugh twenty-point hero of the home tie—second string players like Anthony Cronnelly, Gerry Monaghan and Buggy O'Hara stood up to the task like veterans. It was really their victory because the game was in the balance and it was they who helped snatch victory when Kelliher seemed within reach of the prize.

Real star

But the real star of the night was Tony O'Hara. After a sparkling first half performance which saw him slam home twenty points, O'Hara was dogged throughout the second period but he refused to knuckle under to the abuse. His fighting display was infectious because the whole team rallied to his inspiration and his team-mates applauded him off the court when he was forced to retire in the last minute after playing his heart out.

All Stars settled into their usual pattern early in the game but Kelliher picked off their scores from far out to keep in touch. It was level pegging at 14-14 with seven minutes gone when Sligo began to find their inside players on attack and the Kelliher's zone had no answer to the zippy pivot play of O'Hara and Cronnelly.

The homesters called time out with five minutes left—Sligo leading 34-20—and switched to a man-to-man. Three quick baskets before Sligo could adapt and the gap was reduced to 40-30 just on half-time.

Into the lead

Kelliher toughened up the play in the second half in the hope of unsettling the Sligo stylists and they succeeded. Within five minutes of the restart, the home team had narrowed the gap to 42-40 and though All Stars struggled to stay ahead the chair-banging, feet-stomping home crowd urged on Kelliher into a one-point lead.

All Stars had a time out to survey the situation. Cronnelly, McGowan and Burns were in foul trouble and had to rest and it was left to O'Hara and Palmer to hold the fort with the help of the relatively inexperienced subs.

Kelliher were high with victory fever. They had Sligo at their mercy but were so impatient to finish them off that they were caught off guard by stalling tactics introduced by the Sligo players.

All Stars played the ball around in back court with maddening coolness; Kelliher came out of defence—the quick break and the ball was in the basket.

All Stars kept up the funeral pace and the Tralee men just crumbled as Palmer found the basket with jump shots which brought Sligo from 50-46 behind to 53-50 in front. Kelliher were still there entering the last five minutes (57-54) but All Stars had eight points in a row and from then on, they wasted time knowing they could not be caught.

Sligo were lucky not to finish the game with just four men because McGowan and Burns eventually fouled out while O'Hara had to rest and both Palmer and Cronnelly were carrying four fouls. However, Ciaran Dykes was on the bench to come to the rescue.

Three of the Kelliher squad fouled out of the game.

Sligo All Stars:— T. O'Hara 24, J. Palmer 21, A. Cronnelly 11, G. Monaghan 5, J. McGowan 4, B. O'Hara 2, R. Burns, C. Dykes.

Further enhanced reputation

All Stars further enhanced their reputation on Sunday morning when they took the highly-rated local champions, Austin Stacks, in a challenge game.

Sligo were short Tony O'Hara and Robert Burns but they showed no signs of weakness in their hard-working side.

It was a ding-dong battle throughout the first half. Sligo edged in front to lead 29-27 at the break and pulled fourteen points clear in the second period. They simply toyed with their opponents in the closing stages. The final score was 66-55.

All Stars:— Palmer 27, McGowan 11, Cronnelly 11, B. O'Hara 8, Monaghan 5, J. McGowan 4, B. O'Hara 2, R. Burns, C. Dykes.

STRANDHILL GOLF CLUB'S WINTER LEAGUE

Leading positions in the Winter League after 12 rounds are:—

DIVISION "A"					
Lee/Cosgrove	12	10	1	1	21
Gray/Duggan	12	9	2	1	20
Conlon/Gunning	12	9	2	1	20
Fleming/Conlon	12	9	2	1	20
Moody/Drudy	12	8	2	2	18
Kavanagh/Howley	12	8	1	3	17
Kilcawley/Gillien	12	7	3	2	17
DIVISION "B"					
Flynn/Horan	12	11	0	1	22
Power/Rooney	12	10	0	2	20
O'Connor/Tracey	12	9	2	1	20
Folan/Mulligan	12	7	3	2	17
Dykes/Carr	12	8	1	3	17
Waters/Carew	12	8	1	3	17

There will be no winter league games on Sunday next. A competition for golf balls will be held.

CO. SLIGO BRIDGE CLUB

Mixed Pairs Championship—1, Mrs. K. Murray and M. Burke; 2, Mrs. A. Killfeather and G. F. Middleton. 15/1/70—N/S, Mr. and Mrs. R. Hannigan. E/W, Mrs. Turner and L. Murphy

Innisfree Bridge Club

Results — Howell — 9/1/70. Winners: Miss M. Boyle and Miss