

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Eddie Nangle
Date of Interview	16 th Dec 2011
Location	Interviewee's Home near Enniscorthy
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Damien Fitzhenry
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1974 Home County: Wexford
Education	Primary: Killealy NS, Co. Wexford Secondary: FCJ, Bunclody
Family	Siblings: Nine brother, five sisters
Club(s)	Duffry Rovers GAA [Wexford]
Occupation	Horse training & hurling coach
Parents' Occupation	Co. Council Machinery Foreman [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
Religion	N/A
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

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Date of Report	16 th Dec 2011
Period Covered	1986 – 2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Wexford, Offaly, Kilkenny, Limerick, Carlow, Cork, Armagh, Argentina, USA, Americas, Thailand, Asia, Spain, Europe
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Celebrations, Emigration, Involvement in GAA abroad, Role of Teachers, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, GAA Abroad, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Sacrifices, Professionalism, Relationships, Economy/ Economics
Interview Summary	<p>00:00:30 Born July 1974 in Wexford. Mentions that interview takes place in a house on the site of the old family homestead in Curraduff, Killealy, Co. Wexford.</p> <p>00:01:18 Family background: parents' occupations. Mentions that he is the youngest of 15 children, with 9 brothers and 5 sisters.</p> <p>00:02:16 Talks generally about growing up as the youngest and to the intensity of the games played among the siblings in the field adjacent to the house.</p> <p>00:02:35 Describes the GAA as the 'life' of the household growing up and the lack of involvement of any of the children in other recreational pursuits.</p> <p>00:03:20 Beginning to play in school and with the club, aged 8 or 9.</p> <p>00:03:44 Discusses father's sporting involvement – how his job precluded participation and how, later, he and his mother would follow their children's sporting involvement.</p> <p>00:04:50 Mentions that knee injury, sustained in a football club game, has ended his playing career.</p> <p>00:05:30 Impact of GAA on the organisation of family life. Talks about absence of family holidays and how, later, as an adult, GAA involvement cut across holiday plans.</p> <p>00:07:25 Discusses the weekly routine of training and games, the absence of 'free' time as a player and the change that has come with retirement.</p> <p>00:08:20 Discusses early involvement in hurling at home, in school and with club. Refers to Rackard League, to attendance at primary school in Killealy and then progressing to SCJ in Bunclody. Mentions that hurling atmosphere in</p>

	<p>school and the influence of Rory Kinsella, PE teacher and later a selector on Wexford's All-Ireland winning team in 1996.</p> <p>00:10:05 Recalls the record school teams he played on.</p> <p>00:11:30 Discusses the history of Duffry Rovers GAA club, its catchment area and the equal priority given to hurling and football.</p> <p>00:13:03 Discusses his fondness for both hurling and Gaelic football and the sense of abandon when playing football with club after returning from inter-county hurling.</p> <p>00:13:38 Recalls his successes with school and club – winning the Nicky Rackard League for football in primary school, winning Under 16 premier hurling title for club and then Minor Premier title.</p> <p>00:15:05 Winning 7 senior titles in a row and the identification of club with football.</p> <p>00:15:35 Importance of the club's place within the community and the impact of recession on the numbers of young children and adults involved.</p> <p>00:17:05 Reflects on the input of families who have moved from other areas into Killealy over previous decade. Makes general comments on the difficulty of integrating newcomers to GAA clubs in rural communities.</p> <p>00:18:20 Discusses the impact of emigration on club teams in Wexford, including Duffry Rovers and Bunclody.</p> <p>00:19:15 Reflects on the success of the Duffry Rovers club – comments on the mix of players; influence of Englishman and trainer, Bob Brakewell. Discusses the progressive training methods of Brakewell.</p> <p>00:22:12 Discusses the playing facilities available in the Duffry Rovers club – pitches, dressing-rooms and indoor playing arena. Mentions that most of the work was done by volunteers to keep costs down. Refers to all the teams that use the indoor facility – club and county, from Wexford and beyond.</p> <p>00:24:05 Admiration for brothers – Seamus who played senior football for Wexford and Martin, who played for Wexford senior hurlers. Mentions also Louie Rafter and James O'Connor who played football and hurling for county and the influence of watching them play.</p> <p>00:25:02 Discusses involvement with underage county teams and positions played.</p>
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	<p>00:27:00 Tells story about starting of senior hurling club career, aged 15.</p> <p>00:28:12 Playing alongside brothers.</p> <p>00:28:44 Positions played in football with club.</p> <p>00:29:10 Returns to discussing club and county players he has admired. Mentions footballer Pat Spollen, originally from Offaly, and hurler Pat O'Leary.</p> <p>00:30:55 Refers to attitudes towards a county player when playing club games.</p> <p>00:31:52 Discusses his reputation as a penalty taker and how it came about.</p> <p>00:33:10 Recalls a National league quarter final in 2001 when, as goalkeeper, he finished top scorer for team.</p> <p>00:34:20 Enjoyment of taking penalties and lack of nerves.</p> <p>00:35:55 Discusses handling pressure situations in big games and advice from sports psychologist in 1996. Talks about the mental approach to the game.</p> <p>00:38:27 Recollections of 1993: the beginning of his senior inter-county career; the 3 game league final V Cork; Leinster final and replay.</p> <p>00:41:35 Recollections of 1996 All-Ireland year. Discusses the campaign, the games played, the influence of Liam Griffin.</p> <p>00:45:15 Discusses the homecoming after the All-Ireland final, 1996.</p> <p>00:46:40 Relaxation of players prior to 1996 All-Ireland final and the qualities of Liam Griffin and other members of Wexford's management team.</p> <p>00:48:40 Discusses winning All-Stars in 1997 and 2004. Attitude to individual awards.</p> <p>00:50:40 Emergence of the Gaelic Players Association (GPA) and winning GPA goalkeeper of year in 2007. Mentions that award came with €2,000 from Opel and buying runners for all his team-mates with it.</p> <p>00:52:10 Discusses travelling overseas with GAA teams. Mentions some of the places visited. Mentions hurling links with Argentina and visiting Thailand in the wake of the Tsunami.</p> <p>00:56:35 Discusses the priority he gave to hurling and how</p>
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	<p>life organised around it.</p> <p>00:58:47 Recalls an incident of ambush marketing with Paddy Power that he was involved with and contacts with GPA.</p> <p>01:01:23 Discusses the issue of pay for play and his opposition to professionalism.</p> <p>01:02:52 Retirement and fond memories from his playing career.</p> <p>01:04:15 Highlights of playing career: 1996 All-Ireland final and staying grounded in its aftermath.</p> <p>01:06:10 Lowpoints of playing career: injuries and missed opportunities.</p> <p>01:07:00 Talks about the Kilkenny teams of the 2000s as the greatest of all time.</p> <p>01:07:57 Talks about 7 in a row Duffry Rovers football team and the Crossmaglen footballers.</p> <p>01:08:46 Anticipates his future involvement in the GAA.</p>
Involvement in GAA	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):</p> <p>_____</p>
Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)	<p>One All-Irl S.H. Title ('96) One GPA All-Star</p> <p>Three Leinster SH titles (96,97,04) Three Co SF. (91 92 94)</p> <p>Two All-Stars ('96 & '08) One Co. M.H. ('91)</p>
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	N/A
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 01:09:45
Language	English

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To be filled in by Interviewer:

I hereby assign the copyright of the content of the above to the GAA Oral History Project on the understanding that the content will not be used in a derogatory manner. I understand that I am giving the GAA Oral History Project the right to use and make available to the public the content of this interview.

Signed: Eddie Nangle

Date: 16th Dec 2011