

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	9 th Aug 2011
Location	Seamus's home, near Kilkenny City
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Seamus Reade
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1947 Home County: Kilkenny
Education	Primary: St Canice's BS, Kilkenny City.
Family	Siblings: 4 brothers & 3 sisters Current Family if Different: Wife (Ellen) & 2 daughters
Club(s)	Talbots Inch Handball Club [Kilkenny]; O'Loughlins Handball Club [Kilkenny]
Occupation	Retired Smithwicks Brewery employee
Parents' Occupation	Builder/Handyman [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	None
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

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Date of Report	11 th June 2012
Period Covered	1928 - 2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Kilkenny, Wexford, Wicklow, Kildare, Tipperary, Clare, Dublin, Offaly, England, Great Britain, Canada, Mexico, Americas, France, Spain
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Material Culture, Education, Media, Emigration, Volunteers, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Alcohol, Violence, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Retirement, Food and Drink, Socialising, Economy/ Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Seamus discusses his lifelong passion for handball. He recalls his earliest involvement in the sport and the strength of the handballing tradition in The Butts, Kilkenny. He describes his playing career with Talbot's Inch Handball Club and mentions various members of the club, including the renowned Ducksie Walsh. Seamus also reflects on his pride in representing his county at national level and the highlight of his sporting career: winning a senior inter-club title in the 1980s. In addition, he describes the various administration and coaching roles he has held at club and county level. He discusses the many international trips he has made to world championships. Finally, he ponders his disappointment in the decline of the traditional 60 by 30 game in Ireland.</p> <p>00:00:29 Seamus describes his childhood in The Butts, St. Canice's parish. Explains the origin of the name: using butts of trees for target practice in archery.</p> <p>01:05 Description of The Butts when he was growing up in 40s and 50s. Security, front doors unlocked. The school, two handball courts and basketball courts nearby.</p> <p>02:44 Local GAA Club Dicksboro, a hurling club. No handball club in parish for years, had two open handball courts. Talbot's Inch Handball Club the nearest indoor handball club.</p> <p>03:50 Recounts his family history of handball, his father playing. Tradition of handball in The Butts. No tournaments, just playing for money. Busy courts, difficult for younger players to get a game.</p>

	<p>05:12 Mentions skilled handball families when he was growing up: the Laheys and Jordans in The Butts. Also mentions the Pratts, Cliffords, and the Delaneys, who were travellers. Betting money on games, which raised standard.</p> <p>06:23 Explains how betting on games worked. Competitive. Players's money, placed in corner of handball court. Mentions Michael "Ducksie" Walsh.</p> <p>08:41 Discussion of gear. Shoes or barefoot, no money for runners. Trousers on, shirt off. The Elephant Ball. Lads stealing ball that was hit out of the court. Describes layout of court. Discussion of style of courts and strength of players in neighbouring parishes of St. Mary's, St. Patrick's, and St. John's. Travelling around courts to watch players on Saturdays.</p> <p>11:49 Explains how handball courts were owned and maintained by Kilkenny Corporation. Strong tradition of handball in city. No expensive gear required. Several players buying ball between them. No gloves.</p> <p>13:29 Discusses lack of encouragement to play handball in school. Basketball played in school, very little hurling.</p> <p>14:51 Recalls natural tendency to play handball and basketball when he was growing up. No handball coaching. His father playing inspiring him to play. Joining Talbot's Inch indoor club as a teenager.</p> <p>16:54 Discussion of club management. Describes chairman Jimmy O'Brien. Also mentions Tommy O'Brien, no relation. Strict dress code: clean singlet, togs, socks, and runners.</p> <p>19:32 Membership of Talbot's Inch. Teams of 4 and 6. Sunday leagues around the county. Fierce competition to get on teams.</p> <p>21:06 Explains how courts were mostly open in 1950s, apart from Talbot's Inch. Travelling to open courts Kilfane, Mullinavat, Mothel, Clogh. Description of Clogh. Many spectators, free entertainment. Explains how players watched over the walls.</p> <p>25:08 Joining Talbot's Inch in the 1960s. One alley, viewing court. Lack of facilities. Lady Desart building village of Talbot's Inch. Clothing factory. Putting roof on court around 1928.</p> <p>27:36 No women playing in any court he played.</p> <p>27:57 Describes training most days. Travelling around county</p>
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	<p>for games in player's cars, or by bicycle. Training by playing. Fit from playing basketball.</p> <p>30:24 Recalls getting his first pair of runners. Thin soles. Siblings emigrating to England, his sister bringing him home Dunlop slippers, aged 14. Also pair of basketball boots.</p> <p>32:14 No nutrition advice or diets. No stretching muscles.</p> <p>33:08 Recalls early wins. Excitement of getting medal. Pride in being on team. Playing with friend Phil Reynolds. Also Seamus's brother Peadar Reade.</p> <p>35:35 Describes his objective of remaining in the alley as long as possible. Playing different players. Discusses his style, saving on running. Explains how they played left-handers. Skill of some players, yet their inability to perform in games. Mentions Seamus Clifford.</p> <p>40:13 Discussion of skills. Mentions natural skill of Paddy Reilly, Ducksie Walshe, and Seamus's brother Michael Reade.</p> <p>41:33 Reflects on pride in representing Kilkenny. His belief that some players nowadays do not put the same effort into representing their county.</p> <p>43:00 Discussion of his highlights: getting on team in Talbot's Inch, winning the county championship and representing Kilkenny. Explains how getting to represent county has changed. Recalls representing Kilkenny aged 16 in handball. Mentions Paddy Delaney. Outlines his career progress: softball. Pride in seeing name in the <i>Kilkenny People</i>. His father's pride.</p> <p>47:28 Playing senior for Kilkenny on one occasion. Played senior inter-club with teammates Ollie Harold, Paddy Reilly, and Billy Burke. Winning senior inter-club in early 1980s. Highlight of his career.</p> <p>48:35 Describes colours of club jersey.</p> <p>48:56 Discusses strength of handball in Wexford. Mentions Wexford handballers Dick Lyng, Seamus Buggy, Pat Murphy, and Quigley. Also mentions several players in Tipperary's Clonmel Club: Packie Mullins and Tommy Morrissey. Recalls the Jimmy O'Brien Tournament in Talbot's Inch. Mentions Wicklow handballer Paddy Lee. Also mentions Pat ,John, Dan, and Mick Kirby, of Clare. Describes the skill of Ducksie Walsh and Pat Kirby. Also mentions Dublin's Pat Ryan, and Kilkenny's Ollie Harold, Michael Reade, Ducksie Walshe,</p>
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	<p>Anthony Green. Also Offaly's Pat "Bat" Masterson.</p> <p>53:28 Recalls tournament in Taghmon, Wexford: Mentions Kilkenny's Joe Delaney and Christy Delaney greeted enthusiastically by spectators.</p> <p>55:42 Description of Ducksie Walsh and his trainer Tommy O'Brien. O'Brien also training Ollie Harold, Eugene Downey, John Barron, Ducksie's technique, his 38 senior All-Ireland titles. Tommy's skill. Ducksie's contribution to the club refurbishments. Mentions TD John McGuinness getting money to refurbish club. Also mentions 24 senior titles won by club's John Duggan Martin.</p> <p>59:52 Reflects on the social life surrounding handball for older players. Friends around Ireland. Travelling to Canada and America for world championships.</p> <p>01:01:48 Describes first trip to Winnipeg. Mentions meeting Wexford's Pat Lacey there. Intensity of games. Mentions a singsong involving Cavan's Patsy Hand and Greg Sheridan and Seamus's partner Paddy Reilly. Socialising and drinking.</p> <p>01:04:05 Discusses travelling to Edmonton in Canada, Chicago, and California.</p> <p>01:04:54 Reflects on strength of Irish players now. Mentions Paul Brady from Cavan winning three consecutive world championships. Previous domination of America.</p> <p>01:05:53 Compares rules in world championships to Irish version. Contribution of Irish emigrants to handball in America. Lists skill of various countries: Mexico, Canada, France. Mentions Mexico's Al Prado, nicknamed The Cat, who played in Ireland's world championship in 1970s. Discussion of Seamus's preference for 60 by 30. Compares length of season in 40 by 20 with that of 60 by 30. Describes 40 by 20 courts in Kells, Windgap, Goresbridge, O'Loughlins, Clogh. Mentions DJ Carey's skill at handball, preference for hurling.</p> <p>01:10:40 Explains how handball improves hurlers' passes. Mentions Paddy Hogan and Brian Hogan, and Christy Heffernan of Glenmore.</p> <p>01:12:33 Reflects on changes in his approach to coaching. Using both hands. Compares playing 40 by 20 with 60 by 30.</p> <p>01:15:34 Discussion of refereeing. Problems now, players more confident. Occasional verbal abuse. Recalls a fight a year ago between two players. Suspensions. Lack of violence</p>
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	<p>usually.</p> <p>01:19:20 Describes his various administration roles. His dislike of the amount of recent GAA rules. Small size of handball clubs, difficulty of filling committees from small amount of members. His involvement in administration since he was 17. Need for younger people to get involved.</p> <p>01:23:20 Challenge of finding the time for county board involvement. Amount of work involved in refurbishment and maintenance of club.</p> <p>01:25:39 Popularity of one-wall handball now, attempts to make it international. Reflects on his disappointment in the decline of original Irish 60 by 30 since 40 by 20 became international standard. Popularity of one-wall in France. Handball Association adopting one-wall. Incentives to win 40 by 20. Ducksie Walsh attracting many players to 60 by 30.</p> <p>01:30:14 Difference between Irish game and international game.</p> <p>01:31:01 Reflects on the challenge of keeping the 60 by 30 game going. Only older men playing that now.</p> <p>01:32:02 Ponders the relationship between handball and the GAA. Handball traditionally the poor relation of the GAA. Changes in recent years, administrator Chris Curran getting more support from the GAA. Handball now more prominent in GAA. Problem in GAA with people getting paid. Handballers getting paid but not for 60 by 30.</p> <p>01:35:08 Considers the media coverage of handball. Success of televised Top Ace tournament in promoting handball. Chris Curran getting 40 by 20 televised, his aims to televise 60 by 30.</p> <p>01:36:53 Challenge of balancing work and home life with his role of chairman of Kilkenny County Board, and club involvement. His love of handball. Playing twice a week now. The involvement of his wife and daughters. Reflects on his time as chairman of county board.</p> <p>01:39:26 Still competing. Leinster final soon. Health benefits.</p> <p>01:40:03 Description of handball tournament in Smithwicks brewery, where he worked. Playing handball on squash court. Basketball courts in brewery. Also playing in O'Loughlins.</p> <p>01:42:17 Coaching underprivileged children, challenge of controlling them.</p>
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	01:44:22 Reiterates his disappointment in the decline of the 60 by 30 game. Discusses 60 by 30 courts in the country, including Wicklow, Kildare. His views that the Handball Association should invest time and money in promoting 60 by 30.
Involvement in GAA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person <input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____
Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)	Playing handball age 14 – present; countless Kilkenny, and Leinster titles, at least 10 All-Irelands in 40 x 20 and 60 x 30
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	Talbots Inch Handball Club: Committee member for many years; Chairman for 14 years; Chairman of Kilkenny Handball Board for 13 years; Juvenile Handball Officer on Kilkenny County Board for many years
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 01:46:53
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: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 11th June 2012