

# Back be one of the oldest sports played

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Back in the city of Galway, city clubs like Liam Mellows, Castlegar, Salthill were beginning to grow and gather members. Also Tuam Stars a local football team, was found in 1888, were the most popular and successful team at this time winning the championship seven times in a row. Tuam Stars football are still highly regarded in the football community nowadays. Sport and culture at this time was now seen as a way of life.

It was just more than a sport or a game it suddenly became an identity of the Irish in the late 1800s and an addition to this 'identity' was the banning of British games by the GAA and the Irish were being to grow their own sports and culture and didn't want to be influenced by the British anymore. Eoin Kinsella often wrote about the imagery of Gaelic Games and said how these sports were now becoming "loosely associated with Catholic political agitation" and how that "support for the Irish Nationalism both cultural and political" was growing (Mullan 2012 & Kinsella). The Irish people took pride in their sports and culture and as all clubs around Ireland it was all voluntary which meant that people took things very seriously and wanted the best. The re-birth of sport and the GAA was now in full swing across Galway city and county and new clubs being founded. As the GAA was now so popular other sports had to fight back almost to gain support again. A revolution was needed for other sports like soccer, rugby, cricket and golf as these sports were now beginning to lose out to hurling and Gaelic football. Cricket was just one of the sports that managed to cross the River Shannon into Galway.

Cricket was famously played in the Clonbrock estate near Asharagh-Fohenagh and in Ballinasloe where it is believed to be one of the oldest sports played in the town. Cricket was a popular and successful sport played among

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the landlords and as there was many estates around the towns this led to many clubs being established. Rivalry among teams and estates, Earl of Cloncarty and the Clonbrack estate, was then built up and celebrations after winning the game were seemed to be “ all paid by the club”. In the 1830s a Dublin team decided to play Ballinasloe in a match on the grounds of Garbally Mansion, home of Earl of Cloncarty. The game indeed was very heated but the results of it remains unknown. Many people thought the game of cricket would grow more and more after this game but it never really did and interest levels faded over time.

1 Cricket in Galway city was seemed to be played on the grounds on the college, UCG at the time, from about 1838. The ‘ Galway Express’ reported a game being played in August 1874 in Eyre between Galway City Cricket Club and Gort which Gort won. It was the last match at this venue as building for a new Roman Catholic Cathedral commenced. Galway did go on and be represented at international level in cricket at this time , A. D. Comyn , F. G.

Kempster , Robt, Gregory and Derek Kennedy all represented Ireland in Cricket from about 1890-1925. 2 As cricket was a victim of class and politics it went downhill with the “ growth of nationalist sentiment with Irish political and social systems”.(McArdle 2015) Golf on the other hand was firstly majorly established in Renmore where a British Officer designed a nine-hole golf course in 1895. After a few years Galway Golf Club moved to Gention Hill in Barna leased by Marcus Lynch., again after a few more years it found its home in Salthill where it remains. There is reports of golf being played in Galway as early of 1572 by the Connacht Rangers but it didn't really

get popular till the 1800s. Golf was seen as a high regarded, almost posh sport where the uniform was a red blazer with a “ buff collar”.

Entry fee was £1 as well as paying an annual membership fee of £1. Many Golf courses were then beginning to be set up i. e., Glenlo Abbey and Connemara Golf Clubs. A lot of these golf courses at the time were only nine-hole courses.

Women in golfing was slow to take off and in 1898 they had 10 lady members in the Gort Hill Golf Club in Barna. 1 [https://www. cricketireland. ie/archives/articles/cricket-in-the-west-of-ireland](https://www.cricketireland.ie/archives/articles/cricket-in-the-west-of-ireland) 2 [https://www. cricketireland. ie/archives/articles/cricket-in-the-west-of-ireland](https://www.cricketireland.ie/archives/articles/cricket-in-the-west-of-ireland)