

**BLACKROCK NATIONAL  
HURLING CLUB**

**STANDING ON THE  
SHOULDERS OF  
GIANTS**



**FERGAL RYAN**

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# FERGAL RYAN



3

COUNTY  
CHAMPIONSHIPS

1

INTER COUNTY  
ALL-IRELAND  
CHAMPIONSHIP

2

INTER COUNTY  
MUNSTER  
CHAMPIONSHIPS

1

NATIONAL  
LEAGUE

1

ALL STAR  
AWARD



# OUT IN FRONT

They say that the best form of defense is to attack and any budding corner back would do well to take a leaf out of Fergal Ryan's book in this regard. Fergal's style of taking risks and attacking every ball that came into his defensive zone was a joy to watch. Some of the country's best corner forwards were rendered redundant by Fergal's ability to get to the ball first, keep control and clear ball from the danger area.

Fergal was part of Blackrock's last golden generation and was a key part of what was an inter county standard six man defense at club level. His performances were rewarded with a regular spot in the red and white of Cork and when Cork brought the All-Ireland back in 1999, Fergal was installed at corner back in the All-Star team.

Blackrock's county win in 1999 meant that he was awarded with the Cork captaincy in 2000 and had the prestigious honour of lifting the Munster Cup in Thurles.

As Blackrock's fortunes waned after the 2002 championship win, Fergal's presence and commitment helped keep the ship afloat and his love of playing saw him continue into his forties at Junior level where he lined out alongside his son Jamie. Fergal continues to give back to the club and is still working to bring glory home as manager of the senior team which would be yet another great moment in Fergal's already outstanding legacy.

## **What are your first memories of hurling for Blackrock?**

My earliest memories are enjoying the freedom that hurling gave me. I was able to head off with my hurl (as Joe Young says) and ball and meet with my buddies or just puck myself.

My earliest memories from Blackrock would be Pat Roche, Arthur Boyleton, Paddy Moylan, Robert Dooley, Ger Dineen and Denis Murphy. Rochie was great. He had a great way about him and he wasn't as cranky as people think he is (sorry Pat). There used to be a rush to pile into his car as he always had some fags in the middle compartment and you could take a few of them while he was out of the car organising things. I also remember Paddy Moylan's hurling training. Holding the hurley in one hand above our heads. Paddy then telling us to Whip Whip Whip to strengthen our wrists. We would then change to the other hand. At the time all you wanted was to have the ball in your hand playing a game but when you look back now, some of the stuff we did then seemed boring but, it was exactly the right thing to do. You have to have as much of the basics in place if you really want to become a great, rounded player.

## **What was your favourite position to play and why?**

I loved anywhere in the halfback line. I liked facing the ball I think. I suppose you were involved in a lot of the play then as puckouts normally landed in the halfback line from the opposition team (The funny thing is when Trevor Barry was in goal for us his puckouts landed in our halfback line also!).

## **Besides your immediate family, who had the biggest influence on your hurling career and how?**

That's a tough one to answer as there have been so many coaches that I have learnt different things from. I have learnt loads of stuff that I have used in my own coaching style and also learnt some stuff that I said I would never do if I was a coach. I believe that you should always look for the best from your players in training and have any discussions, good or bad, on the training pitch as the day of a match is for playing with clear heads. I know that doesn't really answer your question but if I really look at it I suppose a player needs to learn from the people around them but ultimately needs to take responsibility for their own career. I always wanted to get better and all the coaches had a major part to play in me getting better for sure. I had always hated being beaten both as an individual and also as a team so this was the driving factor for me to get better. If I relied on just getting better by going training twice or three times a week then I don't think I would have achieved what I did as a hurler.

## **What is the best advice you have been given in your hurling career?**

Never give up or drop your head. Attitude is what makes a player and ability is what gives him the tools to be better.

## **What do you think was your greatest attribute as a player?**

Attitude I'd like to think. I know I was one of the jokers on the team but when it came to training and playing I believe I had a great attitude.



# THE TEAM

Fergal Ryan

## How do you think your teammates would have described you as a teammate?

I would think as the guy who always tried to bring fun to it but when things were serious on the pitch I was always able to fulfil my role.

## Who was the best teammate you ever had and what made him so special?

This is a really hard one to answer. I really respect all my teammates over the years and there were a lot of characters in that team of the late nineties into the early years of 2000. There are obviously some whom I spent a lot more time with as they also played intercounty like the Brownes & Wayne Sherlock.

## Which characteristics do you most value in a teammate?

Honesty and attitude.

## What do you think made the teams you were part of so successful?

I think that was down to the attitude and talent in those teams. We had past Cork senior intercounty players, present Cork senior players and underage Cork players which was a great blend of experience & youth and this developed into a great team. You could argue that we could & should have achieved more than we did but I was certainly happy being part of the successes we had.

## Out of all your achievements, which one stands out as the most significant and why?

The county final of '99. The reason for this was that I had played 11 years senior without success so it had been a long wait. There is something very special about winning with your club and teammates which is hard to describe.



*"There is something very special about winning with your club & teammates which is hard to describe."*



**What three words would you associate with Blackrock National Hurling Club?**

Family, Friendship, Fun.

**What are the characteristics you would always want to see in a Blackrock team?**

Honesty, Fairness, Courageousness.

**How would you like to be remembered in Blackrock National Hurling Club?**

Just as someone who gave back to the club in some way close to what I got out of it.

**What does Blackrock National Hurling Club mean to you?**

Blackrock has played a major part in my life so far and, after family and work, it is where most of my time is spent. It's a club that I am emotionally attached to and I'm more than happy to play my part in helping the club in this phase of my life in whatever way I can. A bit of success along the way always helps.

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