

ST.

COLUMBKILLE'S
FOOTBALL CLUB

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~ Established 1975 ~

In the 1970's immigration from Ireland to the U.S. was very high. Unemployment in Ireland was one of the main reasons and work was quite plentiful in the U.S. Many young men and women left Ireland just to make a better life for themselves. So too they brought their culture, their Irishness, their music their games and their pastimes. A lot of Irish settled in the Brighton area of Boston. At that time there were some Irish football and Hurling clubs in the Brighton area but there just was not enough games for everybody. As they gathered just to meet others in Irish bars and at other Irish events the longing to play football and hurling grew more and more. There existed at the time a football club called Erin's Hope but they failed to keep going and disbanded around 1974. Some of their former players along with other young Irish men were talking with an interest to forming a new football club as joining an existing would not have helped getting a game of football for everyone. Most of these young Irishmen were living in the Brighton area and after talking about this for some time they decided to form a football club. Their first meeting was held at the Cozy Bar in Brighton Center. As it was the parish of St. Columbkille, the parish name was adopted as the name of the club. So in 1975 St. Columbkille's was founded.

There existed a St. Columbkille's football club in the 1940's to 1960's era but had disbanded. The present and past clubs had no direct connection except in name and the purpose of playing Gaelic football. When the present club was founded it went into playing football at the junior level. Success did not come for quite a while but the club had contested the 1978 and 1979 Junior finals. In 1980 the breakthrough finally came and St. Columbkille's was crowned New England Junior Football Champions. A repeat performance in 1981 saw the club win the junior title again and also go on to the North American finals where they were edged out by the Detroit Wolfetones by the narrowest of margins after extra time. The defeat left a very sour taste in the mouths of some as refereeing and timekeeping saw the club robbed of the title they so much deserved on that day.

In 1983 St. Columbkille's went into the senior ranks. They found football at this to be much tougher and it took until 1986 to gain their first senior trophy. It is said today that the team of 1986 was the best club ever had. In that season the club won every trophy that was to be won in New England. First senior trophy was the Curran Cup in which the club defeated the Connemara Gaels in the final. Then the Green Cup for the senior championship in which they defeated a great Cork team. Both New England final trophies that year for the first time went on to compete in the North American finals in Philadelphia. Cork won the N.A.B. title that year and then returned to compete in the Finn Cup Final to establish who were the champions of New England. St. Columbkille's prevailed and so became the Tri-Cup Champions of New England winning the Curran, Green and Finn Cups in one season. The club also won their annual cup game in the Catskills against Leitrim of New York and also won the Shamrock Games in Worcester.

The club at this stage was enjoying some of its best times and membership started to grow. Fun times were great with outings to the Catskill Mountains in New York every year. Refreshing boat cruises on Boston Harbor, softball games between and junior and senior teams and night life at the V.F.W. Post 21 in Oak Square (now closed) had moral very high, both junior and senior teams were of the highest standards. But success was hard to come by. Football standards in New England were very high. In 1990 St. Columbkille's was very strong and went on to contest the New England Final. Shannon Blues was the victor that day but St. Columbkille's went on to win the Curran Cup. That success laid the base for a great

1991 season. A St. Patrick's weekend in Fort Lauderdale and Orlando, Florida set the club in motion for the season in which the club won the New England Championship and went on to the North American Final only to lose out to the Chicago Wolfetones in the final. But even in defeat the club was very strong and had become the biggest club in North America for registered players. It remained that way for three years. But as good times come good times go. Defeat in two junior final in 1991 and 1992 started a trend for defeat. Then came a major blow to the club with the closing of the V.F.W. Post in Oak Square, where the clubs players "hung out", the club held its meetings, its functions, annual banquets and on Sundays after games would attract everybody and anybody in Gaelic circles to have a drink and a chat about games. This closing saw the club get very spread out and the unity required fade away.

But even in the hard times the club soldiered on and has always been a great competitor in every game. In these days the Keltic Tiger as it is know or the Irish economy keeps young Irish at home and so the source for good playing members has declined. So too has the membership of the club. From being the largest club in North America to being one of the average good clubs. But St. Columbkille's football club still was able to gain some success when they won the Mawn Cup (replacement for Curran Cup) in 1998. A very port 1999 season saw the club finish last in the senior division and so get relegated to intermediate football for the 2000 season. Now the rejuvenation of the club is underway. The clubs ambition is to regain senior football status, build its membership of players again, regain its position of one of the biggest clubs in North America. But even with all it has lost the club has never lost heart and each year has produced committees dedicated to the club and its objectives. Its members and friends are the greatest Irish people anywhere in the world. Friendship and closeness is very strong and members are always willing to help each other out in times of need. Players that have come from Ireland to play for the Summer are still in contact and willing to help in getting new blood. The club also takes great pride in seeing some of these players go on to achieve success on the playing fields of Ireland by playing for their counties or in winning an all Ireland title, as many have done.

This being the 25th season, the club can look back at its history with pride and a sense of accomplishment. To be still in existence after 25 years, something must be right. To be in existence for another 25 years is a goal the club still has to score. All the people who have worked for the club over the years can feel proud of what they have done for the club and everybody should be proud and grateful of them. From founding members to present, you have helped to keep Gaelic games alive and well in New England

LONG LIVE ST. COLUMBKILLE's!





ST. COLUMBKILLE'S FOOTBALL CLUB - 1948



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1986 SENIOR CHAMPIONS

Winners of the Curran Cup and Finn Cup

Back Row (L to R): Tom McNally - Chairman (Mayo), Pat O'Donovan (Kerry), Conlath O'Floinn (Dublin), Enda Gormley (Derry), Christie Cox (Dublin), Shane O'Brien (Dublin), Mick Gallagher (Donegal), Damien McCusker (Derry), Rory Deane (Wexford), Enda Gilvarry (Mayo), Gary Talbot (Dublin), Mick Kearns (Dublin), Manus McFadden (Donegal), Mick Sweeney - Manager (Galway)

Front Row (L to R): Frank Boggins (Mayo), Martin Doherty (Dublin), Chris Sage (Dublin), Lenny Harbison (Antrim), Mick Barber (Dublin), Martin O'Neill (Galway), Frank Colleran - Captain (Mayo), Tom Gilvarry (Mayo), Martin Tully (Derry), Lenny Boyce (Cork), Noel Stack (Clare), Mick Sweeney (Mayo)