The Heroic Importance of Sport

“The point should be stressed that there is no greater moral power outside religion than the Gaelic Athletic Association.”[[1]](#footnote-1). Even making allowance for the natural tendency of those involved in sports administration to exaggerate the importance of their own activity, this particular statement by one Mr McKeon, an Antrim delegate to the Annual Congress of the G.A.A. in 1931 sounds somewhat excessive almost seventy-five years later, but it was not untypical of its own era. In 1932, for instance, the president of the association, Sean Mac|Carthy stressed the “spiritual background” to the work of the G.A.A.[[2]](#footnote-2) and in the following year he largely attributed the “splendid feeling” in the country”, most tellingly demonstrated at the Eucharistic congress where the G.A.A. had supplied 3,000 stewards, to the work of the association.[[3]](#footnote-3) For his part, speaking at an Armagh G.A.A. ceilidghe in 1933 Joe Connellan boldly claimed that the G.A.A. made “ for the religious and moral uplift of the Irish people”. Judge J. O’Donnell spoke at Congress how Gaelic games had “a spiritual and cultural influence on youth”[[4]](#footnote-4). Nor were its members shy at stressing its historical as well as its moral importance: in the decades after independence a mythology of the critical role which the G.A.A. had played within political nationalism developed rapidly.[[5]](#footnote-5) At the congress of 1931, for instance, an Antrim delegate had been greeted with applause for his statement that: “we would have no Free State if it had not been for the G.A.A..”[[6]](#footnote-6) The conviction of the association’s centrality to Irish life was most authoritatively expressed in the words of arguably its most influential member in the decades after independence, Pádraig Ó Caoimh:

The G.A.A. holds a unique position and was founded to serve a great purpose in the life of the Irish nation. Centuries of oppression and ages of hardship and struggle were calculated to undermine the morale and sap the vitality of our people. It was only the invigorating intecourse which native games provided which could counteract such demoralising influences and the pursuit of our traditional pastimes remains still a salutary and an elevating resource.[[7]](#footnote-7)

Opinions of this nature reflected a widespread conviction among the leadership of the largest sports organisation in Ireland of the wider cultural importance of sport and in particular of native Irish games. What I propose to examine in this paper is first the interlocking matrix of ideas which allowed a sports body to express such a heroic conception of its own importance and second to ponder briefly the significance of the intellectual hegemony established by such ideas within the association.

I intend to concentrate largely on the period 1929-35 which marked the inauguration of Pádraig Ó Caoimh’s incumbency in the most important administrative office within the association, the secretaryship: this was a period of remarkable expansion for the G.A.A.[[8]](#footnote-8) and Ó Caoimh played a critical role in almost every dimension of this process. Among the most forgotten and least successful of the ventures which the new secretary patronised, was the creation of an Irish Ireland paper, *An Camán*, which ran between 1931 and 1934. Officially entitled *An Camán The Organ of Irish-Ireland Incorporating “An Claidheamh Soluis” agus “Fáinne an Lae”; A Review of national Affairs: Athletics, Language, Literature, Art, Industry* the bilingual paper was a joint venture in company with Conradh na Gaeilge, although the G.A.A. ended up carrying the brunt of the expense.Both the editor of the original monthly, Séamus Ó Ceallaigh, and his successor in the weekly version, Éamonn de Barra, were influential members of the G.A.A.: both indeed had been candidates for the office of General Secretary of the association. Another regular columnist to the paper, under the pen name “Vigilant”, was Séamus Upton, who in 1932 was chosen to write the official history of the association for the Golden Jubilee celebrations of 1934. Ultimately *An Camán* never succeeded in turning a profit, despite the best efforts of the association’s leadership and it was discontinued after the Central Council of the G.A.A. resolved in May 1934 to pay no further grants towards its maintenance. Although short-lived, *An Camán*, is an important resource for the study of the association at a particularly dynamic moment in its history. The G.A.A. accepted the paper as its official voice. From 1933 all announcements made by the Central Council and published over the secretary’s name in *An Camán* represented official notification of policy to all clubs and members.[[9]](#footnote-9) Thus the publication offers a raft of additional source material which provides a valuable hermeneutical context for the often sparse pickings extant in the offical records and minute books of the association during the early 1930s.

Why did sporting issues have such cultural resonance in Ireland during this period? As with much else related to late nineteenth and twentieth century nationalism a strong reactive element to popular British ideology can certainly be discerned. Just as the often voiced Irish pride in the spiritual empire of catholic missionaries acted to counterbalance and compensate for the pervasive triumphalism of contemporary British imperialism[[10]](#footnote-10), so Irish insistence on the cultural importance of sport evidently owed much to contemporary British pride in the ubiquity of British sporting disciplines. One of the most influential voices within *An Camán*,Seamus Upton, implicitly recognised this when making his perennial case against foreign games:

an English sporting Lord sometime ago in the course of his speech in praise of “British-made sport” abroad, said that their football games were like the quality of their goods, “British made and best”, and that their spread to other countries was like the influence of visits of the British fleet abroad, and kept before the countries of the world, a sign of the dignity and dominance of the good old Union Jack.[[11]](#footnote-11)

If British sport truly represented an important beach head for Anglo-Saxon culture[[12]](#footnote-12) then it clearly behoved Irish nationalists to cultivate resistance in this sphere by the patronisation of native pastimes.

Another significant parallel with contemporary British popular culture concerned the assumption of national excellence in sporting pursuits. The notion that the British and their colonial offshoots were specially sporting was sufficiently pervasive that the *Encyclopaedia Brittannica* was moved to comment that France’s victory at the Davis Cup in 1927 marked “the first time a Latin nation had beaten an Anglo-Saxon in its own speciality- in the field of sport”. [[13]](#footnote-13) Not surprisingly, Irish nationalism was prepared to dispute the toss concerning racial sporting excellence. There was widespread belief that special physical prowess was intrinsic to the Irish race. “Ireland and Greece can claim to be the pioneer nations in physical as well as in mental culture” was P.J. Devlin’ modest assertion in one issue of *An Camán*.[[14]](#footnote-14) Athletic excellence was considered as a precious inheritance of the Irish race and the G.A.A. was seen as its modern custodian. As another contribution to *An Camán* put it:

The old athletic school that perfected manhood in Eire from the days of Cormac MacARt is perpetuated in the G.A.A. and the physique of the race continues to be healthy.. We are a healthy race and that much prized asset it attributable to our love for the healthy forms of exercise which have been passed onto us through the ages. Those forms of recreation are racy of the soil. They are not the sluggish recreations of a sluggish race, but virile exercises of a muscular people.[[15]](#footnote-15)

Or Devlin on another occasion:

All Irishmen possess inherited athletic qualites to some degree. Physical fitness and an aptitude for robust outdoor sports have always been distinguishing traits among our people.[[16]](#footnote-16)

Furthermore he associated what he saw as the decline of this racial characteristic as the product of the introduction of elements “designed to repress the pursuits and displays that expressed a racial individuality.”[[17]](#footnote-17)A preoccupation with national physique was of course common place throughout Europe during the 1930s. In Ireland, the belief in a racial tradition of manly physicality was substantially flavoured by revival interest in the *Rúraíocht* and *Fiannaíocht* cycles. Of particular importance in this regard was Pádraig Pearse, “a true educationist who believed as much in physical as in mental efficiency”[[18]](#footnote-18): indeed it can be noted that the G.A.A. was a major force in keeping Scoil Éanna alive by funding scholarships. But an acute influence from Eoin MacNeill’s work on Early christian Ireland, taken up and amplied by figures such as Art Ó Briain and Aodh de Blacam can also be detected. By the early 1930s it is clear that the Irish-Ireland paradigm of two opposed civilisations contesting for dominance in the island enjoyed uncontested acceptance among the leadership of the G.A.A..As Eamonn de Barra, editor of *An Camán*,put it:

The founders of the Irish-Ireland movement”, wrote Art Ó Briain… “to whatever phase they chiefly devoted their activities recognized that in essence the struggle between Ireland and England is a contest between civilizations”. The chairman of the Irish-Ireland organisations stated recently the same truth: The fight in Ireland he said is not a fight between two nationalities, merely, but a fight between two civilisations….A civilization includeds many things, agriculture, industry, arms, athletics, education, art, science, language, literature, morals and religion- in fact almost everything national and spiritual that grows up in a landscape or grows over from that landscape into a neighbouring territory. These grew up in our landscape and in time grew over into Europe. But in time, too, they receded, and for centuries, they have remained comparatively quiescent in Ireland, overlain by another civilization, a civilization once vigorous, but at present in a process of decay. The problem therefore is to realise that the items of our civilization…fight individually and collectively, and cooperate as unlike forces in a physical war. [[19]](#footnote-19)

The intrinsic characteristics of the Gaelic civilisation which Irish-Ireland writers identified inhered partiuclarly in its christian (catholic) virile, retrospective, rural, egalitarian, ascetic, virbrant and inward-looking nature. The opposing civilisation, on the other hand, was alien, materialistic, atheistic or Protestant, urban, decadent and irreversibly in decline.

The G.A.A. leadership saw their own activities as playing vital role in restoring the native civilisation. This was particularly evident in the revival of traditional Gaelic manliness in its rural strongholds. The association took enormous pride in what it saw as its primacy in the rekindling of Irish nationality in and around the turn of the century. Father J.B Dollard’s article on the beginnings fo the G.A.A. in Kilkenny was one of the most widely quoted pieces of prose within the association, Dollard wrote:

Though still quite young at the time I still remember the great change that came over the country and the vivid and lasting impression it made on me. Until then everything was lonely and stagnant in the land and the young men in their idle hours loitered in dull fashions by the street and fence corners. In a few months how different things became. The country was soon humming with interest and activity, the ambitions of the young men were aroused; every parish had its newly formed football or hurling team, prepared to do or die for the honour of the little village.

The G.A.A. widened the horizons of the young men and made them proud of their country, giving them new interest in it. By the strict enforcement of rules on the field, it disciplined the fierce and tumultuous spitits among them. The brawls and fights so common heretofore disappeared from our midst. The young learned that skill and self-control were better and nobler than quarrelling and fighting, and the deft handling of the caman was to be more admired than to trounce a brother Irishman with fist or cudgel. [[20]](#footnote-20)

The societal benefits which Dollard identifed as accruing from participation in sports in this particular piece can of course be easily situated within a wider European, and particularly British, context. Another G.A.A. author, T.A. Quinn expressed himself in terms identical to many European contemporaries when he stressed how team games enable participants to learn how “to accept defeat and victory graciously” and “to gradually acquire the highest characteristics of manhood - courage, affection, benevolence, honour, loyalty, esprit de crops and patriotism”. Consequently he was convinced that:

The proper development and conversation of the physical, mental and moral vitality of the people of this country demand that we make full use of our natioanl games and pastimes.[[21]](#footnote-21)

But the G.A.A. did not laud itself merely for, as Padraig Ó Caoimh put it, “saving the young men of Banba from physical decrepitude” and “social gloom” but also from “the nauseous dead sea fruit of alien pursuits and pastimes”.[[22]](#footnote-22) Not all sports would serve to keep the Irish in contact with their “healthy manly past”.[[23]](#footnote-23) For a particularly obsessive minority the actual quality of exercise which Gaelic sports provided was deemed superior. T.A. Quinn for instance argued that in native games “more rapid action of mind and body are required than in the practice of any foreign games”[[24]](#footnote-24) and “England’s game, cricket, the sluggish game of a sluggish people”[[25]](#footnote-25) also came in for particularly unfavourable attention. The pervasive racialism of European interwar thought is also visible in many contributions on this subject. Cardinal MacRory, a powerful advocate of Gaelic games opined that

the national games were a manifestation of the physical capabilities of the people, and, if there was anything in the doctrine of heredity, it was evident that the games best suited for the development of the bone and muscles of the Irish youth of the present day were the games which our forefathers played.[[26]](#footnote-26)

Notions of racial individuality also fused with more positive meditations on Ireland’s sporting heritage. The difficult beauty of the game of hurling was a source of immense pride within the G.A.A.. It was axiomatic in many southern counties that hurling constituted the greatest field game in the world. The skill levels of outstanding exponents such as Lory Meagher and Timmy Ryan convinced many that at the highest level hurling was as close to being an art form as a sport. In the pages of *An Camán* P.D. Mehigan initiated a debate about whether the way the game was being played represented its most perfect form. What was remarkable about the response which he evoked was the uniform seriousness attributed to the game. Mehigan himself remarked in his final article

Hurling is as old as the race and came down to us as a national heritage [it} has racial distinction - it demands speed, courage, skill, resource, self-control, rapidity of thought, fortitude, judgement…A hurling game between skilful and earnest opponents is a game to stir the pulses, send the blood tingling through Celtic veins, rouse us to admiration, awake in us some secret force and joy of life, vivacity and movement, which gives us food for pleasant thought and healthy pride of race.[[27]](#footnote-27)

Another contributor to the debate emphasised the association’s responsibility as steward and custodian of a game

intended for the maintenance and develpment of our national characteristics and physique, and this should be the deciding factor in determining the number of players composing a team, the nature of the rules, the size of the ball, the size of the field and the duration of play.[[28]](#footnote-28)

So pervasive was this notion of of a deep racial connection between hurling and Irish identity that the editor of *An Camán* was moved to ponder the question of why hurling was so unpopular in Gaelteacht areas: but he still located his discussion within racial categories:

We must remember, too, that there is something deeply and racially significant in the predominance of Gaelic football in the Gaelteacht counteis, and in the predominance of hurling elsewhere among elements of known Milesian or Norman origin. There is something in this adhesion to the games of important racial units that should, pending historical inquiry, adjure us to give an equal balance of attention to both. This development may get an opportunity to follow instinctively the important pathways of race history.[[29]](#footnote-29)

Yet although many clearly believed that Irish sports were racially most suited to Irish people, the crux of G.A.A. opposition to foreign games remained rooted within the Irish-Ireland paradigm of opposed civilisations. As Eamonn de Barra noted:

Let us be clear on one point. Our quarrel with the foreign games cult does not so much lie with the games as with the foreignism. All games are healthy and deserve universal encouragement, but games in this country are, and have been since Poynings Law and the Statute of Kilkenny, used to make Ireland safe for Anglicization…Our forefathers fought against the Souper’s bible even though it was written in Irish…The new old Souperism of the foreign games still continues and we will not accept that either.[[30]](#footnote-30)

Or,as Padraig Ó Caoimh pointed out in 1931:

Other countries play their own games because they are national, and heads of colleges should remember that foreign games are weapons of anglicisation, as detrimental as foreign dances and newspapers. They are all conduits of a denationalising virus.[[31]](#footnote-31)

Ó Caoimh was also evidently personally convinced that attempts to persuade Irish people of the unimportance of their national games often smacked of something more sinister than a mere failure to realise the true importance of the country’s sporting heritage. In 1933 an article penned by the secretary replaced the editorial in *An Camán.* In it Ó Caoimh rehearsed his familiar conviction that “the games of a people pursued in an atmosphere of conscious nationalism are as vital to the race as is the heartbeat to the individual.”[[32]](#footnote-32)

But he also launched a scathing attack against the *bona fides* of proponents of a different view:

There have been those who in their advancing of “internationalism” and something even more sinister, have preached the doctrine that the origin and character of the sports of a people are a matter of little moment. In the past their specious arguments found much passive approval. Their appeals were always for home consumption only. Ireland was always asked to make the surrender of something in the name of a delusive amity, the furits of which she was never allowed to taste. Her language was ignored, her flag banned, her aspirations stultified in the name of a contemptible compromise between principle and expediency, between racial self-respect and shoddy gentility. Bitter experience and the march of events have proved the futility and the falseness of such a policy. That it should ever have secured toleration only proves that vigilance is the only safeguard against denationaliszation.[[33]](#footnote-33)

Arguements of this nature accurately encapsulate the touchy nationalism which animated much of the Irish-Ireland movement, whose parameters had largely been shaped in resistance to the powerful delegitimising discourse of British imperialism during the course of the previous half century. Such a process inevitably created a pool of shared values and assumptions which underpinned and defined the highlighted areas of difference between the competing ideologies. In the sporting context, the G.A.A. represented this development in an acute form since, while adopting much of the ethos and many of the organisational principles of British sport,[[34]](#footnote-34) it yet consciously fashioned a weapon of sporting resistance.

The field sports most directly in competition with the G.A.A., soccer and rugby, displayed their contamination by the values of that alien other civilisation in different ways. Soccer was not only associated with the British army and the British economic system in the eyes of many G.A.A. observers but its marriage of professionalism and sport was cordially despised. The G.A.A.’s advocacy of amateurism betrayed of course a deep influence from the Corinthian ideals of many British sports but translated into an Irish context it could be associated with a trenchant Anglophobia. Seamus Upton typified attitudes of this nature when he declared

The paid acrobats in a circus who change their masters every year at the start of the season do not call themselves sportsmen, nor their circus performances sport, and yet there is little or not difference between them and the hired football players who are not in the game for the sake of sport, but for the best fee they can obtain. There is nothing more prounounced in any nation in the world than the propensity of the Britisher for discovering and “working” the shop-side of everything in which he is interested.[[35]](#footnote-35)

Another contributor to *An Camán* noted:

The genuine spirit of real uncontaminated sport reflects itself in the moral and physical status of a people just as much as the greed and grasp of professional sport displays itself in the people who tolerate it. This was true of Greece in the days of her decline, and true of Rome, and has been and will be true of all peoples and countries who allow sport to be depraved and corrupted out of existence by bringing it into the mart of the money-changers. It is indeed an undoubted source of satisfaction to the “mere Irish” that professionalism in sport makes no appeal to them and that…Ireland still remains the proud mother of a healthy race.[[36]](#footnote-36)

Not all were so absolutely convinced that the un-Gaelic materialism of professional sport represented no active danger to the undermining of Gaelic virility. At the 1931 Congress delegate MacKeon of Antrim argued professional soccer football was the “greatest enemy we have in Ireland.” Reiterating the familiar maxim that “professional football is really only a business under the name of a sport” he warned, in a manner reminiscent of observers across Europe during the inter-war period, of its most pernicious effect:

We have recently heard how the Minister of Defence in Great Britain could not get new recruits up the C3 standard- the lowest standard during the war. The cause is the want of exercise among the population; as it were they have their sports and games by deputy. It is very serious for people who attend constantly at these sports and don’t take exercise themselves. We should…ban it in such a country as this as it will undermine the manhood of the state.[[37]](#footnote-37)

With regard to rugby, where, not surprisingly in view of their common lineage, attitudes towards professionalism mirrored aspects of the G.A.A.’s own, a particular resentment was directed towards both West Britishness and the perceived elitism of the game, particularly in schools. Egalitarianism was of course one of the typical characteristics of Gaelic culture identified within the Irish -Ireland paradigm.This especially exercised Padraig Ó Caoimh who strongly objected that students

drawn from Gaelic districts are compelled to play games other than Irish ones, because the belief is held that hese taste of swank and do not smack of the land or the brogue.[[38]](#footnote-38)

For him the G.A.A.

was essentially and vitally a democratic organisation. It was born of a revolt against exclusiveness, and should do nothing that savours of toleration for such a policy.[[39]](#footnote-39)

Thus we can distinguish a number of factors which combined to politicise the playing of sport in Ireland. Anglo-Saxon attitudes concerning the importance of sports helped trigger a nationalist reaction which meshed with contemporary European preoccupations about national physical fitness and revival ideas concerning the ancient Gaelic past which ultimately became elaborated within an Irish-Ireland paradigm of opposing civilisations. By the late 1920s the G.A.A. leadership had become firmly convinced of the central cultural relevance of sport and it emboldened them to consider their wider responsibilites to advancing the cause of Gaelic civilisation. Ó Caoimh was to be particularly instrumental in this respect. *An Camán*, which was not simply a G.A.A. paper, but an organ of Irish-Ireland in general, was one of the first symtoms of his conviction that the G.A.A. was not as other sports organisations whose only concern was “pleasure for its members and advantages to itself” [[40]](#footnote-40)75. Rather while for the G.A.A. physical culture was the immediate objective it was little more than the means to the complete end. He believed that the association must embrace more closely than ever the kindred phases of the struggle for an Irish Ireland. Because the G.A.A. was the strongest national movement it could not afford to shirk these responsibilities.[[41]](#footnote-41)

Buoyed with confidence by the association’s remarkable recent success the future seemed to beckon a still more glorious role. In 1933 the president, Seán MacCarthy, expressed this feeling of self-congratulatory optimism:

We have made a great success of the promotion of Gaelic games, and the time has now come when we have made our own organization as perfect as we can make it, so let us concentrate on other things and push the old country ahead.57[[42]](#footnote-42)

In this wider field of cultural endeavour for Gaelic revival, the association recorded no success to match the heady optimism of the early 1930s. Particularly symbolic of its failure in this regard was its inability to have Irish adopted as the working official language of the association itself. In 1930 a Meath delegate to the annual congress, Father Gilmartin, proposed: “that after the year 1932 all business in connection with the G.A.A. be conducted in the Irish language”. [[43]](#footnote-43) Then speaking in Irish, he put forward his belief in the feasability of such a motion, stressing, in particular, that two years would give members ample time to prepare. Revealingly, the minutes of the Congress give only the English translation, not only of his speech, but of the other six contributions in Irish to the debate. The motion was seconded in Irish by Rev. Brother Abbott who argued that very few in the Assocaiton “were doing anything for Irish except the Central Council and the Secretary.” (Significantly, only one delgate other than the proposers of the motion and members of the Central Council managed a contribution in Irish.) The next four speakers, all speaking in Irish, all recorded in English, oppsed the motion. Mr O’Grady of Mayo thought it “too dangerous at present.” Fr Hamilton of Clare wa sin favour of increased Irish but not oft he motion. Mr O Ruane of Mayo was blunter and probably more closely in contact with reality when he said:

The resolution could not be made effective this year, next year or in ten years’ time. He hoped the time would eventually come when it would be posssible - and they would do their best to speed up the arrival of that period - but at present, he did not believe it was possbile. The chairman also opposed the motion “while agreeing its object was worthy of support. But the motion “would cut out quite a number of men who had given life-long service to the Association”.

The Irish speakers having had their say, contributions in Engloish began arriving in. It seems probable that many delegates had been struggling to find out what their colleagues had been saying. Some of those present seemed genuinely appalled. Mr Lynch of London said “it would be impossible for them to carry on in England, if the resolution was adopted and amde apply to them.” Mr Mulholland of Cork agreed that they could not accept the motion although his argument that Congress could not decide the business of 1932 in 1930 seemed born of desperation rather than logic. Mr Brady of Leix disdained casuistry and delivered himself of the opinion that “ the resolution would mean the death-knell of the Association in Leix.” There was some further discussion after this rather devastating statementat before the resolution was watered down to a motion stating that “it was the unanimous feeling of Congress that as far as possible, the work of the Association should be done in Irish.”

Such a decision was in effect a tacit acknowledgement that a person could be a perfectly committed member of the Association without being particularly interested in learning to speak what all accepted was their native tongue. The debate about the use of Irish thus throws into particularly sharp relief the disjunction between the ideals and aspirations of much of the association’s official leadership and the practical concerns of the membership.

In the light of this disjunction it is certainly germane to question whether the uncontested stream of Irish-Ireland ideas put forward by the G.A.A. leadership were actually of real relevance to the mass of the membership. Certainly in terms of language revival then the efforts and fulminations of the association, and their subvention of joint endeavours with Conradh na Gaeilge, had remarkably little effect. Yet although tokenism marked the attitudes of the vast majority of the association’s membership towards the wider world of Gaelic revival, adherence to that tokenism was in itself not without significance. The G.A.A. brought its members into contact with a particular set of cultural attitudes and made it possible to express support for them by playing games. By introducing Irish-Ireland into the realm of sport and by emphasising the importance of sport the association provided the desire for a distinctive national identity with an easy and painless means of expression: its members could proclaim their national individuality by doing something as congenial as pucking or kicking a ball. This was hardly the glamorous role as spearhead of Gaelic revival to which figures such as Ó Caoimh aspired, but it was one more grounded in practical possibilities and one which filled an important functionwithin the evolution of Irish nationalism.

Just as, despite its mythology, the G.A.A. was in many ways more a force for the remodelling and perhaps destruction than the preservation of traditional pastimes, so too its role within the wider Irish-Ireland movement may have been closer to that of substitute than spearhead. The premises on which it trmpeted the cultural significnace of sport in general and Gaelic games in particular were arguably

1. Minutes of the Annual Congressof the G.A.A., 5 April 1931 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *An Camán*, 30 July 1932, p. 52. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Minutes of the Annual Congress of the G.A.A., 16 April 1933 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *An Ráitheachán*, September 1936, p. 34 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. In this regard see Paul Rouse, Sport and the Politics of Culture: A History of the G.A.A. Ban 1884-1971” (Unpublished M.A. thesis, *N.U.I.*, 1991), p. 22 and Mike Cronin, *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland: Gaelic Games, Soccer and Irish Identity since 1884* (Dublin, 1999), pp. 88-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Minutes of the Annual Congress of the G.A.A., 5 April 1931 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Secretary’s Report to the Annual Congress, 31 March 1929 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See Rouse, “Sport and the Politics of Culture”, p. 47 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Minutes of Central Council, 1 May 1933 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Terrence Brown, *A Social and Cultural History of Ireland* [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. *An Camán*, 7 Octoberm 1933, p. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. In this regard see Brian Stoddart, “Sport, Cultural Imperialism and Cultural Response in the British Empire” in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30, 4 (1988), pp. 649-73. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. *Encyclopaedia Brittanica*, *A New Survey of Universal Knowledge*, vol. 13 (Chicago, London, Toronto) p. 785 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. *An Camán*, 19 August 1933, p. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. *Ibid.*, 26 August 1933, p. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. *Ibid.,* 9 September 1933, p. 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. *Ibid.*, 23 July 1932, p. 91. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. *An Camán*, 7 January 1933, p. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Quoted in Pádraig Purcell, *The G.A.A. in its time* (Dublin, 1982), pp. 105-6 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. *An Camán*, 10 June 1933, p. 7 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. *An Camán,* 30 September 1933, p. 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. *An Camán*, 17 February 1934, p. 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. *An Camán*, 10 June 1933, p. 7 [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. *An Camán*, 25 June 1932, p. 28 [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. *An Camán*, 19 October 1932, p. 356. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. *An Camán*, 2 June 1934, p. 10 [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. *An Camán*, 10 March 1934, p. 11 [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. *An Camán*, 17 March 1934, p. 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. *An Camán*, 3 December 1932, p. 387 [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Secretary’ s Report to the Annual Congress, March 1931 [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. *An Camán*, 30 September 1933, p. 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. In this regard see Cronin, *Sport and Nationalism*, pp. 80, 92, 107-9 [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. *An Camán*, 3 December 1932, p. 387 [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. *An Camán*, 15 October 1931 p. 287 [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Minutes of the Annual Congress, April 1931 [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Secretary’s report to Congress, March 1929 [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Secretary’s report to Congress, March 1930 [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Secretary’s report to Congress, April 1934 [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Secretary’s report to Congress, April 1935 [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Minutes of Annual Congress, April 1933 [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. proposed by Gilmartin in 1932 (30) [↑](#footnote-ref-43)