



## Seamus Whooley-Andalucia

### So, where are you living now and what are you up to?

So, I am now well settled in Estepona in the south of Spain (Andalucia) where I run a Golf specialist travel agency.

### When did you play for the club and which teams were you on?

I played with and was a founder member of the Éire Óg juvenile club before it merged with the then Greystones GAA club. My playing days were mid 70's to 1983 when I emigrated from Ireland for the first time and I returned and played a few games as something of a veteran in the late 90's before joining the ranks of the much-maligned Wicklow referees club!

### Did you have much or any success?

Success on the field was limited to a Junior County medal, in 1982 (I was overseas for the Intermediate Championship win). I also had stints with the County Minor and U21 teams – perhaps the pinnacle of my career! In all honesty I was more of a hanger on than a first choice player. Enthusiasm and access to a set of wheels got you a long way back then!!

In hindsight I wasn't a great footballer but was handy at preventing others from playing so I was a natural back - never welcome north of the half way line! Players who I had great respect for were Mick Hendrick and Martin Mulford – two silent giants who walked the walk! Also useful to have Ray Barry playing behind you when you slipped up in defence.

### What mentors stand out who had a big impact on you?

Mentors at the time included Des Mitchel and John Swan who gave their all to the club. A shout out to Patsy Vickers who would always had the pitch marked, netted, and flagged. And at county level we were blessed with the likes of Donal McGillycuddy, and Michael Sargent. A mention for Eddie Kelly from Kilcoole who must have knocked on my front door 100 times to try to get me to play hurling with Kilcoole. When I finally agreed the match lasted 10 minutes – me, with a point to my name and 8 stiches in my head.

Hats off to the Paddy & Peter Byrne and Damien Kelly and Gus Gorman who had the vision and energy to make it happen.

### Any funny or amusing story from your time with the club?

One of my lasting memories of the club was from the early days soon after our first church gate collection (then the main source of revenue for many voluntary organisations) and we gathered enough funds to buy a set of jerseys. My father, who at the time worked in Middle Abbey street was commissioned to do a deal with Cleary's and procure a set. The day arrived when he came home with the big brown paper wrapped set of 14 blue O'Neill jerseys with white collars and cuffs and one in reverse goalie's jersey (subs were an unheard of luxury back then). Laid out on the kitchen floor the feeling was like a childbirth when the mid-wife finally hands you your new-born and says "congratulations". The waiting was over, we were now a club and had the jerseys to prove it. Greystones sporting scene would never be the same "A terrible beauty is born".

### Have you played or been involved in Gaelic games at all since leaving the club?

I've been involved in G.A.A. clubs in Paris, Brussels, Atlanta and now in Marbella with the Costa Gaels club. G.A.A. is thriving in Spain especially in the North – Galicia where it's the indigenous population that are driving growth. Here on the Costa its more the immigrants! My kids play here, and my daughter is involved in the Brussels Camogie club where she plays alongside fellow Greystones exile Caoimhe Ní Shúilleabháin.

It's a great organisation and we Gaels are so lucky to have it. You can go almost anywhere in the world and find and club, or if none exists form one.

So if you have a team that wants some warm weather training or just a post epidemic trip to look forward to we'd be delighted to host you! <https://costagaels.com/>