

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	11 th May 2011
Location	Hospital Handball Alley, Co. Limerick
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Paul Herr
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1973 Home County: Limerick
Education	Primary: De La Salle School, Hospital, Co. Limerick Secondary: Presentation De La Salle School, Hospital, Co. Limerick Third Level: Limerick Institute of Technology
Family	Siblings: 1 brother Current Family if Different: Wife (Audrey)
Club(s)	Hospital Handball Club [Limerick]; Hospital-Herbertstown GAA [Limerick]
Occupation	Account Manager
Parents' Occupation	Purchasing Manager [Father]; Librarian [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	None
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Munster Rugby

Date of Report	15 th June 2012
Period Covered	1920s-2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Limerick, Kilkenny, Mexico, Canada, Americas, Spain, Italy, Europe, England, Great Britain
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Coaching, Celebrations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Education, Religion, Media, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Club History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Socialising
Interview Summary	<p>Paul discusses his handball career and the strong tradition of handball in Hospital, Co. Limerick. He outlines the history of the building of the handball alley in the club. He describes the successes of the club, the rise and fall of handball in the area, and the performances of various clubs in Limerick. In addition, Paul reflects on his own national titles and the highlight of his playing career – winning a senior inter-club title in 2001. He also discusses his current involvement in coaching juveniles and the success of the new management structure in handball. Finally, he explains how Chris Curran has raised the profile of the sport in the media, and he ponders the role of women in the club.</p> <p>00:27 Discusses growing up in Hospital, Co. Limerick, playing handball. Tradition of handball in Hospital, his father and uncle playing.</p> <p>01:14 Explains how handball was played at gable end of house until 1925, when three-wall handball alley was built by volunteers. Mentions Sullivans and Mitchells on committee, William Duane donating land. Strength of handballing tradition in area. Differences between one, two, or three-wall alleys. Discusses improvements to alley in 1980s, spurred on by Tom Quish, world champion from Hospital. Strength of juveniles in club. Mentions past involvement of Mike Donovan in the club, current involvement of his son Seamus Donovan. Also Seamus's brother Paddy Donovan, involved in Laois handball.</p> <p>04:00 Describes the Danny O'Sullivan Memorial Tournament every year, after the man who started handball in Hospital. Mentions Duxie Walsh, Walter O'Connor, Kenneth Kane, Eoin</p>

	<p>Kennedy, Tony Healy.</p> <p>04:32 Mentions the families heavily involved in local handball: Mitchells, Sullivans, Donovans, Quishes. Success of Tom and John Quish.</p> <p>05:25 Recounts stories of handball from father and uncles. Temporary decline of the sport, its resurgence. Story about Quish brothers playing Kirbys from Clare. Local rivalries, betting on games. Boys stealing handballs.</p> <p>07:14 Explains how handball operated separately from GAA. Handballers often playing hurling and football too. Recalls busloads of supporters going to Croke Park in the 1980s to cheer on the Quish brothers, celebrations with bonfires. Mentions Kieran Davern, Tom Quish's nephew. Also mentions the success of Eamon O'Neill of Hospital and Duxie Walsh Kilkenny. Paul recalls winning an All-Ireland title with Eamon O'Neill.</p> <p>09:10 Mentions Brother Cyril, principle of De La Salle school, conducting arm-swinging drills with students. Popularity of handball among local children. Strength of juvenile team.</p> <p>10:17 Description of competition at county level. Trials in club, in 1980s, fierce competition to get on team. Winning first county title with Mervyn Fraser in 1981. Outlines his successes since then. Significance of Hospital handball in Ireland.</p> <p>11:43 Discusses being coached by Tom Quish. Quish's skill as a player and coach. Mentions Paul Galvin, Eamon O'Neill, Niall Fraser, Kieran Lyons and himself, winning national titles.</p> <p>12:50 Outlines history of handball in Limerick, 19 clubs in 1980s. Mentions rivals McGarrys of Limerick, Shamrock and St Munchins clubs. Decline of handball in city in last 20 years, its resurgence. Croke Park's new initiative to encourage the sport among children. Mentions various players and administrators in Limerick clubs, describes their strength: CJ Fitzpatrick, Pat Murphy, Tom O'Brien of Broadford; Johnny Hartnett, his son Jim Hartnett of Ballingarry; mentions Duxie Walsh playing Eddie Corbett; Jack Dillon, Tomas Donegan, John Fraser of Galbally. Pdraig "Podge" O'Carroll and his brother Seamus O'Carroll of Cappagh. Also mentions Eamon Davern of Hospital and Paul Hedderman of Hospital. Also Pa and Aengus Frawley, Gerry O'Sullivan of Bohermore; City Shamrocks Munchens: Richard O'Connell, Pat and Tom McGarry, Mullins, Bennis of Shamrock and St. Munchins.</p>
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	<p>17:36 Outlines the rise of Hospital, with Broadford and Cappagh also improving. Mentions Limerick's most successful female handballer, Bernie Hennessy of Hospital. 16 senior All-Ireland titles.</p> <p>19:01 High standards of fitness nowadays. Describes high fitness levels of such people as Seamus O'Carroll, Duxie Walsh, Paul Brady, Eoin Kennedy, Tony Healy. Outlines change from 60 by 30 to 40 by 30. More strength now. Explains differences in training.</p> <p>20:22 Credits Tony Healy with starting the drive toward professional attitude to handball. Different application of skills.</p> <p>21:05 Hunger for the game, willingness to train.</p> <p>21:53 Outlines his own career, multiple national titles. Winning first All-Ireland title aged 10. Also played on Féile na Gael team. Mentions Seamus Buggy. Describes success of club. Junior handball and softball. Mentions Eamon O'Neill. Highlight: winning senior inter-club in 2001 with Paul Hedderman, Eamon O'Neill, and Kerry Hennessy.</p> <p>23:29 His current role training juveniles. Playing with Eoin Kennedy in Danny O'Sullivan tournament, Paul's shoulder injury. Significance of Quishes in Hospital and other clubs. Tom Quish secretary of club aged 16, his contribution. Bazaar, games of darts to raise funds for roof.</p> <p>25:50 Reflects on the importance of people in club. Aims to build a 40 by 20 club, and refurbish it. Poker classics, seeking sponsorship to modernise club.</p> <p>26:28 Recalls his intense practice at the height of his career: playing at lunchtime in school, after homework, rushing to handball alley. Practising skills.</p> <p>27:33 Travelling to play handball. Mentions playing the McEllistroms in the 80s. Players travelling to America, Italy, Spain. Discusses the possibility of one-ball handball reaching Olympics. Success when he was young. Mentions Robbie McCarthy.</p> <p>29:05 Describes playing football too. Playing handball in college. DJ Carey playing in Croke Park the weekend they went.</p> <p>29:43 Describes the intensity of playing handball. Senior Doubles in 60 by 30 court, best game to watch. Mentions the power of Tom Sheridan, Walter O'Connor, Quishes, Duxie Walsh, Eoin Kennedy, Eddie Corbett. Recounts Eddie</p>
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	<p>Corbett's supreme efforts to win All-Ireland title.</p> <p>31:02 Describes closeness of handball community. Fewer players than hurling or football.</p> <p>31:47 Ponders the significance of America in handball. Names Eamon O'Neill as the best juvenile ever in club, winning U.S. Nationals in the 1980s. Celebrations with bonfires and parties. World championship in Ireland in 1984. Quishes playing Jamie Paradays. Mentions Duxie Walsh and Peter McAuley going to America, Tony Healy's success in America. Paul Brady winning 3 world titles. Duxie Walsh in his 40s still one of top players in Ireland.</p> <p>34:21 Discussion about professional handball in America, success of some Irish players there. Provides examples of some countries in which handball is played: Mexico, Canada, Australia, Japan. Similar sports: Pelota in Basque region, Eton Fives in England. One-ball played everywhere. Popularity of one-ball handball in New York. Handball manager Chris Curran successfully using one-ball to unite handballers.</p> <p>35:55 Recalls Top Ace on television when he was growing up, decline of handball then. TG4 showing several episodes of handball. Success of new management structure in handball. Reasons handball is a minority sport. Increase in popularity since recession, equipment not expensive. Importance of getting children to look up to handball heroes. Mentions Dominic Lynch of Kerry, Gavin Buggy of Wexford. Mentions Hospital's Jack O'Brien and Killian Real playing juvenile. Importance of fun.</p> <p>38:33 Describes coaching juveniles with Paul Hedderman, Pat Quish, and Paudi Quish. Duties include organising tournaments, jerseys, photos, sandwiches. Eoin Kennedy and Duxie Walshe coming to talk to juveniles. Danny O'Sullivan tournament, oldest-running tournament in country. Mentions player Tom Sheridan.</p> <p>40:34 Explains how Chris Curran has boosted the profile of handball in the media. Paul playing Ciaran Curran. Niamh Egan, handball PR. Renamed GAA Handball. Attending National Handball Congress, DJ Carey and GAA president Christy Cooney present.</p> <p>41:55 Relationship between GAA and handball. Close ties with hurlers.</p> <p>42:25 Reflects on the impact of handball success on rest of</p>
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	<p>life: meeting friends, travelling, boosting confidence. Mentions Mike Russell and his son Eoin. Tradition of handball in families. His wish that the skill and fitness of handballers be appreciated more.</p> <p>44:38 Emigrants playing handball in America and Canada, community around world. Backbone of handball worldwide is Irish.</p> <p>46:00 Considers the impact of handball club in Hospital. Affiliation of virtually all families to handball club. Danny O'Sullivan's son travelling from England every year for tournament. Playing various Munster counties. Aim to beat rivals Kilkenny.</p> <p>47:34 Discusses women's handball. Bernie Hennessy's success. Girls' handball, different approach to game now. Growth of women's handball. All-Ireland finals in Cappagh, Maria Daly playing Ashley Prenderville.</p> <p>48:41 Success breeding success in the club. Winning All-Ireland title every year since 1981. Mentions such winners as John Paul O'Connor, Bernie Hennessy, Paudi Quish. Low membership of handball clubs.</p> <p>50:00 Describes his highlight: winning intermediate doubles with Eamon O'Neill in Croke Park in front of friends and family. Playing before Eoin Kennedy and Duxie Walshe. Celebrations.</p> <p>50:53 Physical toll of handball. Injuries to his knees, shoulders, biceps. His lack of training. Challenge of running on concrete, lack of breaks. Playing all year, no recovery time.</p> <p>52:30 Reflects on what handball means to him: friendship, sense of belonging, teaches discipline, fun.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p>✓ Supporter ✓ Player ✓ Manager ✓ Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p>✓ Chairperson ✓ Committee Member <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer ✓ Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____</p>

REFERENCE NO. LK/1/11

Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)	Played football from underage up to U21 with Hospital-Herbertstown GAA. Won Limerick Senior Football Championship in 1985, 87, 89, 91 & 93. Played handball from Age 8 – Age 35. Won 40 Limerick County titles; 20 Munster titles; 10 All-Ireland titles.
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	Has held several roles on the Hospital Handball club committee including chairman, secretary and treasurer
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 0:53:00
Language	English

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 15th June 2012