
Professionals and Professionalism in Pre-Great War Irish Soccer

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THE HISTORICAL STUDY OF SPORT in Ireland before 1914 has been dominated by writings on the Gaelic Athletic Association. The Association was founded in 1884 largely as a reaction to the growing social exclusivity of the existing sporting bodies in Ireland, and in order to promote sports and games regarded as native to Ireland. However, it soon took on a role and significance that were much wider than this original remit. The involvement of members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, an underground revolutionary organization, in the Association from the very beginning augured well for its development as an arm of the wider nationalist movement. The subsequent adoption of key nationalist political figures and a Catholic bishop as the Association's original patrons, was a further sign that it would itself become a key element in both the political and cultural fabric of Ireland. The inherent Anglophobic and anti-colonial stances of the organization became manifest in a series of bans that excluded members of the British Crown forces and adherents of rival "foreign sports" from its ranks.¹ These links with wider nationalist concerns, prompted historian Richard Holt to write in 1989 that the Association represented "the most striking instance of politics shaping sport in modern history."²

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It is undoubtedly this apparently unique nature of the Gaelic Athletic Association that has ensured its extensive academic study. However, the Gaelic games such as hurling and Gaelic football that came under the auspices of the Association were not the only sports that enjoyed increases in their popularity in Victorian and Edwardian Ireland. Cricket had been played in Ireland from the late eighteenth century and was by the 1870s probably the most popular and widely played game in the country. At the end of the decade almost a hundred clubs were engaged in regular matches across Ireland.³ Irish Rugby football traces its formal roots back to 1854, and rules were formulated and published by 1868. In 1879 around eighty club secretaries were listed in a football annual published in Dublin.⁴ Irish field hockey enjoyed a common ancestry with hurling, though it was not until the 1890s that it could boast a national administration.⁵ Soccer too was played in Ireland by the 1880s, though initially on a very limited scale.⁶ It was this latter sport, however, that would eventually establish itself as the most popular participation sport for males throughout Ireland and constitute an entity around which national, regional, religious and political identities could all be formed.⁷

Given these latter developments it is perhaps surprising that comparatively little academic writing has concentrated on the early history of soccer in Ireland. One recent study of the sport in a comparatively modern context sets the scene in a few brief, and often contradictory, paragraphs. While suggesting that soccer was "the preserve of a specific sector of Irish society," it acknowledges that it was "played by a wide mix of social classes," and by both Catholics and Protestants. It further suggests that the Gaelic Athletic Association's banning of its members from playing or even watching soccer "had a huge effect on the growth of soccer," yet the ban was "essentially symbolic."⁸

The extremely limited, and apparently confused, state of the academic historiography of early Irish soccer has prompted the writing of the following paper. Space does not allow a major revision of the sport's early growth and development. Rather attempts will be made here to address particular aspects of the sport in Ireland prior to the outbreak of the Great War. Primarily this paper will examine the establishment and growth of professionalism in Irish soccer prior to 1914. In doing so it will also consider the position and status of the professional soccer player in Ireland at this time. Finally, it will offer some conclusions regarding changes over time and place in the standing of players and their employment.

Returning to the early history of the game, it is perhaps safe to say that soccer came to Ireland in 1878. In October of that year two Scottish sides played a demonstration game in Belfast, with an eye to encouraging local residents to take up the sport. Reactions were mixed. One Dublin sports paper thought the whole affair rather ridiculous and noted the way the players "butted" at the ball like so many "young goats." In Belfast itself, where the rugby game was already widely played, the press was more sympathetic. One reporter at least was convinced that soccer had a future in the city, and in the country at large. The trick was for the game to "get a start," then it would "soon commend itself to both players and onlookers."⁹ Progress was slow however. Ireland's first soccer club, Cliftonville, was formed in 1879 in Belfast. The following year the Irish Football Association (IFA) was founded in the same city to regulate and promote the game across Ireland. The Irish Cup, the first domestic competition, followed in 1881. The demand for regular competitive

games between clubs led to the formation of the Irish Football League in 1890. By this time soccer was being played on a regular basis throughout the Irish provinces of Ulster and Leinster, and occasionally teams and competitions could be heard of across the entire country.¹⁰ By 1894 there were 124 clubs across Ireland paying subscriptions to the IFA.¹¹ All these developments took place within a game that was, at least ostensibly, still played and administered wholly by amateurs. As early as 1883 the Association had made its attitude to professionalism in sport clear, by banning any man who had taken part in any professional sports event from playing in the Irish Cup competition.¹²

Professionalism was eventually legalized in Irish soccer at the annual general meeting of the IFA in 1894. In the context of the game in the United Kingdom this was a comparatively late development. Professionalism had been allowed in England since 1885, though in Scotland the making of payments to players had only become an officially accepted practice in the year previous to its legalization in Ireland.¹³ Moreover, the establishment of professionalism in Irish soccer was only achieved after something of a struggle. This was despite the fact that there was already an established, if small, community of other professional sportsmen in the country. The Irish census of 1841 had returned 161 men who made their livings primarily as "sportsmen." Forty years later a similar number were employed in "billiards, cricket and other games."¹⁴ In the field of horse racing "a small group of successful professional jockeys" had emerged in Ireland by the second decade of the nineteenth century, while simultaneously prizefighters were regularly competing for purses in excess of £100.¹⁵ In July 1867 a rackets match billed as the world championship had taken place in Belfast for a total prize of £1000. Even in the country's rural hinterland paid sportsmen, by way of the cricket professional, were established figures.¹⁶ Given this situation, perhaps equally surprising as its comparatively late introduction, was the nature of the arguments that surrounded professionalism in Irish soccer. In England the most influential arguments against professionalism had been based on "the social antipathy of men who considered professional sport ethically unacceptable."¹⁷ Put simply, the public schoolboys and leisured gentlemen who had codified, fostered and disseminated the game in England balked at the thought that men should actually be paid for playing, rather than participating in the sport simply for the joys of manly competition. Such attitudes were then bolstered by class antagonisms, as the elite recoiled from the incursions that working men were making into the world of formalized leisure.¹⁸ These arguments were always accompanied by the espoused belief that professionalization would lead to the loss of sports moral message and mission, but underlying this there was some "simple class prejudice."¹⁹ In Scotland the forces opposing professionalism in soccer saw elements of their arguments seasoned with "a touch of Calvinism," with their main thrust concentrating on professionalism's morally degrading influence.²⁰ In Ireland the debate over professionalism was primarily concerned with other, more practical considerations.

The first annual general meeting of the IFA openly to discuss the subject of professionalism was held in May of 1890. Though it had been thought that it was a "very open question whether it will pass or not," the motion to legalize professionalism was soundly defeated.²¹ The following year another motion to permit payments to be made to players was "argued at some length" but eventually dismissed.²² Instead the Association chose to crackdown on the existing situation in Ireland, where a covert system of payments and

"veiled professionalism" was widely recognized as being in existence. Although genuine expenses and payments for lost time could still be made, players could no longer be paid for maintenance work at grounds, or be employed in any capacity by the owner of a club's pitch.²³ This was probably a reaction to a number of incidents that had occurred in the intervening months, and which had resulted in a greater general awareness of the true situation with regards to the illicit paying of players.

In October 1890 the Belfast press reported the prosecution of Lizzie McKnight in the city for the theft of a £20 note. Her alleged victim was one Robert Hill, a recently discharged soldier. McKnight's counsel argued that Hill was not in fact in a position to possess such a sum, and therefore his client could not possibly be guilty. To counter this suggestion Robert Gibson, the chairman of the Linfield soccer club was called to back up Hill's story. It then became apparent that Hill, who had that year won an Irish Cup medal when his regimental team beat Belfast side Cliftonville in the final of the competition, had been given £40 by Gibson to buy himself out of the army and to provide for his subsistence until Gibson found him a job. Robert Milne, a former comrade of Hill's, was allegedly in a similar situation, and both were being paid out of the Linfield club's funds. Although Hill was later accused by the IFA of professionalism, a lack of evidence saw the case dismissed.²⁴ Two months earlier a hoax advertisement had appeared in the *Belfast Evening Telegraph*, offering work to "5 whitewashers, 2 tar spreaders and 4 handymen" at a soccer ground in the city. No experience was necessary, but potential applicants were required to "be expert players" and to give details of their "age, weight, last club and wages expected."²⁵ In December of 1890 the Linfield club then took on the elite English gentleman amateurs of the Corinthian Football Club at their Belfast ground. With perhaps less grace than might have been expected from such a genteel organization, the Corinthians first blamed their defeat on the roughness of the sea passage to Belfast and then refused to dine with the Linfield team, whom they regarded as professionals.²⁶ In February of 1891, the Clarence club of Belfast then threatened to bring a charge of professionalism against the Ulster club team to whom they had lost an Irish Cup tie.²⁷ Although the allegation was eventually dropped, it further pushed the issue of professionalism in Ireland into the spotlight. It was now clear that, in Belfast at least, all was not as it should be.

For the two months prior to the 1892 general meeting of the IFA, a debate was carried on in the pages of the *Ulster Football and Cycling News*, then Belfast's only sporting newspaper, as to the advantages and disadvantages of professionalism in soccer. In general terms correspondents argued that the legalization of professionalism was essential. The paying of players was already a common practice and needed regulation. Professional players, it was argued, would improve the standard of play in Ireland and lead to the game's wider dissemination.²⁸ The suggestion that professionals would resort to rough play was dismissed and only the possible influx of inferior but experienced professionals from Britain was seen as a possible drawback.²⁹

Yet at the IFA annual general meeting of that year the motion to allow professionalism prompted further debate. The arguments became centered on the effects that it would have on both the game and the clubs who went to make up the Association. The smaller, rural clubs were opposed to the paying of players on the grounds that the best of them would then inevitably be drawn to the larger, more affluent, urban clubs. This, they felt, would lead to a general decline in the standard of the game and in the interest it generated.

Eventually, by a large majority, the clubs voted in favor of the status quo.³⁰ Twelve months later, cowed by their previous failures, the proponents of professionalism were silent at the AGM and "as a consequence everything passed off in peace and quietness."³¹ Finally, in May of 1894, by a majority of 64 votes to 30, the delegates to the IFA voted to legalize professionalism. This was possible because of a complete realignment of the forces within the game. In contrast to their earlier position the larger clubs, including Linfield and Distillery of Belfast, now opposed the measure on the grounds that even they would be unable to meet the financial demands that were likely to be made of them. Meanwhile, those who had previously had little sympathy with the idea of professionalism suggested that the move was necessary to prevent the best Irish players being lured away to play for wages in England and Scotland. While it was inevitable that the sport would be "degraded through the anxiety of clubs to accumulate money," the demands of supporters for improved facilities and a higher standard of play, now necessitated the introduction of payments.³² The legalization of professionalism would do away with the existing system of "veiled professionalism" and the covert payments to players to which many true amateurs strongly objected. With an air of understatement one Dublin observer had reckoned that in Belfast at least "some of the proceedings are not quite in accordance with the tenets of amateur football." Another had already suggested that the "associationists" in Ireland formed "a body it would be as difficult to convict of professionalism as it would be for them to prove they are amateurs."³³ The relative importance of the support lent by convinced amateurs is shown by the facts that the eventually successful motion in 1894 was proposed by a member of the staunchly amateur Cliftonville club, and that the motion effectively passed on the votes of the Leinster Football Association delegates for whom professionalism was something of an anathema.³⁴

Even from its very introduction therefore, professionalism in Irish soccer seems to have been regarded by some simply as a necessary evil. In fact the legalization by the IFA of direct payments to players was far from the end of the story. The various regional associations that were affiliated to the IFA retained a great deal of autonomy, including the power to set the rules for the local cup and league competitions which they had established. In the case of the North West Football Association, which controlled soccer in the Londonderry area, professionalism was not sanctioned until 1902. This was despite earlier suggestions that professionalism was the essential "means to keep the players at home," and prevent the local elite migrating to Scotland, or just Belfast. Despite the action of the Leinster FA in supporting the professionalism motion in 1894, the total acceptance of professionalism in their own jurisdiction was not achieved until May 1905, following a protracted debate echoing many of the issues of a decade earlier. Professionalism had become necessary in Dublin to advance the popularity and quality of the game, to ensure the provision of a properly fitted out stadium, and to rid the game of its existing system of covert payments to players.³⁵

Despite the prolonged struggle for its establishment, professionalism was not instantly seized upon by either the players or the clubs. One observer suggested this was largely due to the players, most of whom wished to carry on receiving unofficial payments and who were reluctant to tie themselves to a particular club by signing a contract.³⁶ By the opening week of the 1894-1895 season, the first in which professionalism was recognized by the IFA, there were a mere sixteen registered professionals in Ireland. The number had

risen to more than forty within a month, but this was still a tiny proportion of those who played the game in Ireland, even at the top level. It was to be more than a year before a team outside of Belfast actually signed a professional player.³⁷

This concentration of illegal payments being made to amateurs in the years prior to 1894, the initial support for professionalization of the game, and the enrollment of the first official professionals all in the Belfast area, echoes events in England in a relatively specific way. Such developments there were initially most common in the Lancashire textile towns, such as Preston, Darwen and Blackburn, where the Factory Acts ensured workers had comparatively frequent and regular leisure time and above average disposable incomes meant that they might pay for their entertainment. Attempts to create a civic identity and to generate municipal pride in what were effectively new towns, then bound together the city fathers and the wider populace in striving for football glory. The higher social orders were happy to invest their time and money in teams that would provide the social cement of victories in local derbies, while the lower orders were happy to pay to witness them. The almost inevitable outcome of the search for victory was attempts to procure the best players by paying them, either legally or illegally.³⁸ In the case of Belfast it was simply linen rather than cotton that acted as a facilitator for leisure. It was also perhaps the neighborhood and sectional identities that became paramount over a potentially more inclusive civic one.³⁹

The effects which professionalism had on the Irish game in the short term are uncertain. Within a year the suggestion was being made that the prestige of the Charity Cup competition, whose proceeds were donated to good causes in Belfast, had been undermined by the appearance of professionals in the final. Rumors also circulated that the Linfield club, one of the first to engage professionals, was being evicted from its pitch by a landlord who was reluctant to make a profit from professional sport.⁴⁰ But at the same time there were also some positive developments within the game. The number of clubs affiliated to the IFA increased over the following decade, as did the areas in which the game was played. In 1903 the Irish national team achieved its first major success, when victories over Wales and Scotland gave them a share in the Home International championship for the first time. Popular interest in the domestic game also increased. An estimated crowd of 4,000 attended the Irish Cup final in 1889. At the same match in 1905 a crowd of 13,000 paid almost £400 to see Distillery of Belfast beat the Dublin side Shelbourne by three goals. Arguably professional soccer in Ireland attracted proportionately even larger crowds than did "the people's game" in England. Four years after the introduction of professionalism it was reckoned that "association football has obtained such a fascinating hold upon the minds of the people in Ireland that almost anything concerning the game is always interesting."⁴¹ Exactly how much of a part professionalism in Ireland played in these advances is debatable, but nevertheless changes were occurring, and professional soccer players were now at the heart of the Irish game.

During the early years of professionalism it seems that most of the men being paid to play were in fact semiprofessionals who also held down another full-time job. For example, in March of 1899 John Lewis, the professional Glentoran and Irish international goalkeeper, petitioned the IFA for the payment of 10/- (50p) to compensate him for the time he had lost in being off work traveling to an international match in Wales. Three years earlier the editor of the *Ulster Football and Cycling News* had refuted the suggestion

that Irish professionals enjoyed the same conditions as their Scottish counterparts. Instead Irish professionals still had to "work from morning to night, from Monday to Friday, and noon on a Saturday," while the wages they received barely covered their expenses.⁴² In a few cases, as with Robert Hill in 1890, players were still offered jobs by employers who held an interest in the game, and who then paid them additional money for playing soccer.⁴³ In other cases men were registered as professionals simply to tie them to a single club, but never received any payment.⁴⁴

However, the few later details that are available of the wages being paid to some players suggest that eventually full-time professionals were to be found. By 1902 one newspaper already reckoned that professional soccer in Ireland was now a "profitable occupation."⁴⁵ The previous year A. J. Hill, an English professional signed by the Linfield club, was receiving £2 a week in season, and half that amount out of season. During the 1901-1902 season Belfast Celtic, with 21 registered professionals, had a total weekly wages bill of less than £30, giving an average wage of around £1/8/- (£1.40) per player. Such a budget seems to have been fairly typical.⁴⁶ However, by May of 1905 Donald Sloan, the goalkeeper of the Distillery club, who had been offered contracts with several English clubs, was induced to stay in Belfast by being paid £3 a week, for 52 weeks of the year. Such terms were seen as unusually generous though, and almost a decade later £2/5/- (£2.25) was reckoned to be the going rate in Ireland for "a class half-back."⁴⁷ At the Linfield club some first team members were thought to be receiving £4 a week by 1914 with the rest of the squad "within measurable distance," and an offer of £6 a week had been made to one player at Belfast Celtic the previous year. More usual though were wages that "hardly ever" rose above £2 a week, with even these only being paid during the eight months of the actual season, and summer payments only being secured for the bulk of players at the end of the 1913/1914 season.⁴⁸

A player's basic wages did not represent the only form of soccer-related income available however. A system of win bonuses appears to have been in place from an early date, though the value of these is uncertain. Some players also received signing on fees from clubs. In 1911 one player received the sum of £4 for signing for the Belfast Celtic club.⁴⁹ For a very few players representative appearances meant additional payments. Although in 1895 the IFA decided that even professional players appearing for the Irish national side should receive only "an international cap and the honour," by 1903 they were to receive 10/6d (52p) for their trouble. The following year the sum rose to 2 guineas (£2.10), before being fixed at £4 in 1908.⁵⁰ The Irish League was paying players in its representative games £2 a game in 1910, though this was cut to a guinea (£1.10) in 1913.⁵¹ For even fewer players long and honorable service to a club could mean they would be awarded a benefit game, from which they would receive the proceeds of the gate. Once more precise sums are uncertain, but while in 1899 a sum of over £10 was seen as remarkable, a decade later £145 was collected for a retiring professional in Belfast, and John Darling, a long-serving Linfield player, received almost £300 in 1909.⁵²

Even from these admittedly eclectic figures it is clear that payments to professionals varied greatly both from club to club, and from player to player. Two general trends are clear though. In the first place, payments rose markedly over time. Secondly, despite these increases, payments in Ireland never managed to keep pace with those being made to

players in England and Scotland. In November 1896 it was suggested that a weekly wage of £3 was necessary to keep a player in Ireland. Such a sum was on a par with what the best players in the English Football League could expect, and comparable with payments being made to Glasgow Celtic players in Scotland.⁵³ Yet a decade later, as in the case of Donald Sloan, such terms were still seen as remarkable in Ireland. Even with regards to international appearances, prior to 1908, English players received markedly higher payments than their Irish counterparts.⁵⁴ As a direct result of this situation the best of Ireland's footballing talent continued to hemorrhage away to England and Scotland. By the spring of 1902 it was reckoned more than twenty Irish professionals had been tempted across the Irish Sea by lucrative offers of employment. Two years later the situation was seen as so acute that the IFA raised the matter of the poaching of Irish players by English clubs at the International Board, where delegates from all four British associations met to set rules for the conduct of the game. Meanwhile a member of the Irish League committee called for a maximum wage to be introduced in Ireland, as the efforts of Irish clubs to match the wages paid in Scotland and England was driving them into bankruptcy. In fact neither suggestion was acted on, and the development of the Irish game continued to be "crippled by the advent of wealthy English clubs bent on securing Irish players at any price."⁵⁵

Even when compared to their professional sporting compatriots in Ireland, Irish footballers were far from generously paid. Irish jockeys were collecting a minimum of £2 for a single ride in 1879; and while the professional at Lansdowne Tennis Club only received 30/- (£1.50) a week in 1895, there were substantial tips to supplement this. The same was true of billiard markers in the gentlemen's clubs of Ireland, who acted as coaches to the members as well as performing in the country's regular tournaments.⁵⁶

However, at least in one comparative context, professional footballers in Ireland were relatively handsomely paid. From the turn of the century, some were receiving payments that were considerably greater than those given to members of the country's unskilled labor force, and which often matched or even exceeded the wages paid to skilled men. Donald Sloan's £3 a week in 1905 was more than five times the average wage of an agricultural laborer in Ulster, three times that of a Belfast bricklayer's laborer, and more than half as much again as a riveter in the city's shipyards. Even A. J. Hill's average weekly earnings of £1/15/- (£1.75) in 1902 were equivalent to those of a Belfast police sergeant, and only marginally less than a qualified shipwright. The £4 a week that it was rumored the Linfield stars were receiving in 1914 was still four times the wage of a plasterer's laborer, and around twice the sum a compositor might expect to be paid. For the elite at least, whose wages were likely to be further enhanced with win bonuses and international appearance money, and who might eventually expect some form of gratuity from a benefit game, soccer provided a prosperous living. For others, whom one contemporary reckoned were paid anything between 5/- (25p) and £1 a game, soccer probably provided a very welcome subsidy to more regular wages from some other form of employment.⁵⁷

Details of what professional players in Ireland were required to do for their wages, besides perform on the pitch on match days, are as unclear as their exact rates of pay. In the immediate aftermath of the game's professionalization, one journalist suggested that "the best training a footballer can follow is to abstain from alcoholic beverages, eat plain wholesome food, . . . take plenty of walking exercise and a cold sponge bath." Above all they were recommended to "avoid fancy training," though in fact few local players were

reckoned to take part in any training at all beyond a couple of evenings each week.⁵⁸ Four years after those initial suggestions regarding diet, exercise and cleanliness were made, professional players were required to "walk and run daily several miles," while smoking and "drinks of an intoxicating nature" were strictly prohibited prior to important games. By 1902 it was recognized in Ireland that "coaching and training are two very different things." While the former was the responsibility of a team coach, the latter was largely for the players themselves to organize. Despite the accusation that club committees looked "upon the professional as a common slave, and would whip the best out of him," the training commitments of players were hardly arduous. The suggestions that "a brisk walk of say ten miles twice a week varied by an occasional hundred yards dash will keep any footballer in condition," and that singing practice was a potentially crucial element in fitness programs, suggest that few training regimes were truly onerous. There were other methods of maintaining an appropriate level of fitness however, and the necessity of players engaging in practices on the field meant that for some at least soccer consumed, in one way or another, most of their week. In 1913 three Scottish coaches, one of whom had experience of soccer in Ireland, outlined their training regimes. The most comprehensive consisted of a four-day program that included not only deep breathing exercises but also the practicing of shooting and heading the ball. There was also an exhortation for players to "read good literature," and a continuing firm belief in "cold sponging of the spine."⁵⁹

The actual duties performed by even the most elite players in Ireland do not therefore appear to have been overwhelming. Similarly, while the contractual obligations entered into between clubs and players must also remain something of an area of conjecture, these too seem not to have laid too great a burden upon players. In fact it was not until March 1901 that, following a number of disputes between clubs and their players, the IFA insisted that all professionals were to have written contracts. By this time the "retain and transfer system" had been in operation in England for more than a decade. Under this system clubs signed players on annual contracts, and at the end of each season offered those they wished to retain new terms. Players were not obliged to sign these new contracts, but those who declined remained registered to the club. These players were then only to be granted transfers of their registrations to other clubs on the receipt of a transfer fee from the new club. Players for whom no club was prepared to pay a fee had no option but to "retire" from professional soccer, and even players retained by their clubs had only the right to a minimal retaining wage during the close season.⁶⁰ In Ireland meanwhile, players were also generally signed only for a single season, with contracts finishing on the May 31 following their signing. However, no system of transferring registrations existed, especially between the national footballing jurisdictions. While this meant that players in Ireland had no security of tenure, they did enjoy a mobility that was denied to their English counterparts. This latter aspect of the situation was welcomed by some players at least, as it always offered the chance that they might be recruited by an English or Scottish club, who would have to pay no transfer fee for their services.⁶¹ This anomaly was largely removed, after some long negotiations, in 1914. At that year's annual general meeting of the Irish League the English-style retained system was introduced in Ireland, and the League bodies of both Ireland and England then agreed to recognize the validity of player's contracts in each other's jurisdictions.⁶²

Overall, it seems professional footballers in Ireland were perhaps in an enviable position during the years between the turn of the century and the outbreak of the Great War. Compared to many other Irish workers they were well paid; and compared to their counterparts in England they enjoyed an enviable freedom of movement. Training commitments were often minimal, and though the number of individuals who warranted such treatment was admittedly tiny, some professionals at least were held in high popular regard. The enormous crowds that professional games drew were testimony not only to the popularity of the game but also to that of individual players. Crowds were known to chant the names of individual players.⁶³ In 1900 *Ireland's Saturday Night*, Belfast's leading sports newspaper, organized a poll to discover the most popular player in Irish soccer. The response flooded the paper's office, and nearly 40,000 votes were cast.⁶⁴ In Dublin in 1906, in their first season as a professional side, Shelbourne succeeded in winning the Irish Cup. They were the first Dublin team to do so, and in celebration bonfires were lit in the Sandymount and Ringsend districts of the city. A huge crowd had already met the team at Amiens Street railway station on their return from the final in Belfast, and they paraded the trophy and the players through the city. A similar welcome, by a crowd of 6000 accompanied by a band, occurred the following year when the team again reached the Irish Cup final.⁶⁵

At the same time however, there were many for whom professional soccer players were villains rather than heroes. Perhaps the primary source of scorn was the Gaelic Athletic Association and its members. As we have already noted, the opposition of these cultural nationalists to "foreign sports" culminated in 1905 in a ban on the organization's members taking part in association football matches, or any other non-Gaelic games.⁶⁶ However, professionalism too provided a focus for hostility. In a curious echo of the sporting establishments that it had been formed to oppose, the Gaelic Athletic Association made much of its own adherence to amateurism.⁶⁷ In the introduction to his coaching manual of 1914, the Gaelic football star Dick Fitzgerald noted with satisfaction that his sport was not "the possession of the professional player," as soccer was. In fact he went so far as to suggest that the whole nature of soccer was anti-heroic. In that game, he suggested, "combination alone is the only thing commended." The result was that "there is no hero—no great individual standing out from the whole field."⁶⁸ The Irish Rugby Football Union, the governing body of Irish rugby, was hardly more sympathetic to professional soccer players. Perceiving itself as one of the great bastions of sporting amateurism, it ruled in 1913 that no professional association player was permitted to play rugby in Ireland at any level, even if he had been reinstated as an amateur by the IFA.⁶⁹ A leading Irish rugby journalist had already sought to sum up the situation regarding the three codes of football then played in Ireland. While in Rugby "you kick the ball; in Association, you kick the man if you cannot kick the ball; and in Gaelic, you kick the ball if you cannot kick the man." This put the whole situation "into a nutshell."⁷⁰

More oblique criticism of professionalism had taken place in the IFA's offices in 1898. In November of that year David Drennan, who had recently signed professional forms with the Distillery side, asked to withdraw his registration on the grounds that "his parents objected to his signing a professional form and also that the fact of him playing as a professional would injure his business prospects."⁷¹ The attitude of the press was also, in

many cases, consistently censorious both towards professionals as individuals and the entire concept of professionalism. In 1901, in an article on Ralph Leonard, an English professional playing in Belfast, *Ireland's Saturday Night* noted that the player was a teetotalter "which is more than can be said for most football professionals." Such a comment seems to echo attitudes in England, where it was thought by some that a professional was likely to be "a person beneath contempt—a vagabond, who spends the whole of his time in a public house except for an hour and a half when he is called upon to earn his wages."⁷² The following year it was suggested in one Irish newspaper that "the players of today are but degenerate descendants of the heroes of old." In another article a lament was made for the "race of footballers who, practically speaking, ceased to exist with the advent of professionalism." Even a generally sympathetic observer thought that professionals, though they did "their utmost for their employers," were not as committed to the game "as those who play solely for the love of the sport."⁷³ The debate surrounding the eventual legalization of professionalism by the Leinster Football Association led to suggestions in the press that the professional was "still looked upon as a hireling and a hooligan in some unenlightened quarters," and that professionalism itself revealed "a poverty of ideals."⁷⁴ The failure of professional sides, whether representing province or country, was often greeted with almost resigned relish by the press. The defeat of the Ulster side composed largely of professionals, by the amateurs of Leinster, prompted one Belfast newspaper to note with scorn the way the "Northern professionals . . . strut about with such an important air."⁷⁵ By 1910, although professionalism in soccer had been officially recognized for a decade and a half, the Belfast press were still being accused of "urging on our clubs to amateurism."⁷⁶ In the same year one journalist offered a forthright and unsympathetic assessment of the professional footballer in Ireland. The professional, he suggested, was fundamentally "interested in salaries, benefits, transfers and bonuses more than he is interested in the improvement of his play, the welfare of his club, or the improvement of the game."⁷⁷

Even some of those individuals who were most intimately involved in the game in Ireland were less than sympathetic to professionalism. In 1909 the "Improvement Commission," established by the IFA to enquire what measures could be taken to improve the standards of play in the country and to encourage the game's further spread, reported that "it would be in the interests of the game in Ireland if the Association did all in its power to foster amateurism."⁷⁸ The chairman of the Committee was James Wilton, who went on to become the longest-ever serving president of the IFA.

This whole dichotomy that existed with regards to professional players and professionalism in soccer in Ireland is captured in microcosm in the career of one man: William McCracken. McCracken was born and educated in Belfast, in the street adjacent to the home ground of the Distillery club. He learned to play soccer in the streets, in the Boy's Brigade, and in the ranks of various junior sides. In January 1901, at the age of 17, he signed for Distillery as a professional. By 1903 he had won three Irish caps and was generally admired both for his footballing skills, and his "modesty both on and off the football field." Later that year he was noted as being "inclined to play to the gallery" but he was not as yet suffering from "that irritating disease known as 'swelled head' brought on usually by the attentions of admirers."⁷⁹ In January 1904 though, McCracken seems to have recognized his own worth, and to the disgust of the press he refused to travel to Londonderry to play in a cup tie. Despite this aberration his success at international level

continued to win him praise. In the match against England he was "the tower of strength in defence," while against Wales he was simply "marvellous." In the final international against Scotland, in front of a 7,000 crowd in Dublin he was "head and shoulders above any back on the field."⁸⁰ Such was McCracken's popularity that he was even celebrated in verse.

Of backs we can offer a charming variety.
 Able to play in class football society;
 Still I'd advise you, without impropriety,
 William McCracken's the king of them all.⁸¹

At the end of the 1904 season however, McCracken took the perhaps inevitable step of leaving Distillery for a cross-channel club. An approach from Glasgow Rangers had already led to Distillery officials registering a complaint with the IFA, but in April 1904 McCracken finally departed for Newcastle United in the northeast of England. The farewell was a sad but fond one, and the Irish sporting press were left to regret that "there are not many McCrackens nowadays."⁸² Even at a distance McCracken continued to be admired in Ireland. In his first season at Newcastle the club won the English league championship, a feat they were to repeat twice in the next four years. McCracken was widely credited with making an enormous contribution to these victories, as well as a later Football Association Cup triumph. He also continued to make appearances for the Irish national side when his club commitments permitted, and in February 1906 he arrived back in Belfast "bent on playing" against England, despite a serious ankle injury.⁸³

The entire situation changed in 1908 however. At that year's international match against England, McCracken demanded to be paid a match fee of £10, the same amount as some of his Newcastle colleagues received for playing for England. The IFA refused, and McCracken spent the entire match in the dressing room. The press, who had been so laudatory over the last half decade, rounded on the now flawed hero. The fact that McCracken "preferred his price to his country's football honour" was seen as disgusting. His actions in taking this "unpatriotic step" and "putting his pocket before the football claims of his country" caused "great indignation" in Ireland.⁸⁴ Even the tenor of the poetry changed, and the following verse appeared under the heading "The football fiasco":

The exile once longed for the principal part
 To fight that his land may be free
 But now the thought of the patriot heart
 Is, what will the wages be?⁸⁵

At that year's annual general meeting the IFA answered the calls that McCracken be permanently excluded from the Irish side by banning him from playing soccer anywhere in Ireland for life. Their annual report recorded that they were scandalised by a man that played "for lucre not for fame." The repercussions of the incident went further however, and at that year's International Board meeting the IFA successfully introduced a motion limiting the payment to all professionals for international appearances to £4.⁸⁶ The logical end of professionalism was unacceptable to the very body that had introduced the practice. McCracken had gone from being a hero to a villain in one quite easy step: his professionalism had become more obvious than his love of the game.

The estrangement between McCracken and the IFA was a long one. In January 1910 a motion in the IFA Council for McCracken's reinstatement was rejected by 21 votes to 4, despite a comment in the press that his exclusion was "ruinous to Irish football."⁸⁷ In

November the same year McCracken wrote to the IFA requesting the removal of his suspension, but a further motion in his support again failed. Another attempt was made in 1912, with the same results. In 1914 the ritual rejection of McCracken was maintained, with the comment that his actions in 1908 were "even an insult to well-meaning professionals."⁸⁸ In December 1917 McCracken finally sent a "letter of apology" to the IFA, though it was received with little apparent grace. A fuller rapprochement followed in August 1918 when McCracken attempted, although unsuccessfully, to bring over to Ireland a team of English professionals to play in a war charities match.⁸⁹ Complete rehabilitation was not achieved until 1920 though, when McCracken gained his eleventh international cap in the game against England at the age of 37. The man widely accepted as having invented, or at least perfected, the off-side trap, and remembered at his death as "the grand old man of football," effectively served a twelve-year exile from Irish soccer for asserting his rights and status as a professional.⁹⁰

Overall, both professionals and professionalism enjoyed somewhat ambiguous statuses in pre-Great War Ireland. Professionalism was introduced almost by default. There was certainly little or no demand for it from the players. Rather professionalism was seen as a means to an end. The legalized paying of players was seen as a method of encouraging the best Irish players to remain at home, and thus of encouraging the spread of the game. Professionalism was for most, at best, a necessary evil. Time scarcely weakened the convictions of many that paying men to play soccer, while not exactly a moral affront, was effectively a mark of decadence. These attitudes were then transferred to those individuals who became paid players. While for some they became figures of intense interest, and even admiration, for others they provided dubious role models. The professional soccer player remained a figure at the edge of respectable society in Ireland. He was less well rewarded than his English counterpart and had to wait considerably longer to be socially rehabilitated. Well before the outbreak of the Great War the English professional was acquiring an air of respectability. Some were even held up as veritable paragons of domestic virtue, and social probity, in the face of contrary evidence.⁹¹ For all that however, the position in Ireland had some recompense. Not least for the average working man, the life of a soccer professional presented an opportunity for an excellent return on a minimal investment of time and effort. Very few, however, were ultimately equipped or able to benefit in such a way.



¹On the Gaelic Athletic Association in general see Marcus de Burca, *The GAA: A History of the Gaelic Athletic Association*, 2nd ed. (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1999); Pádraig Puirseal, *The GAA in Its Time* (Dublin: Purcell Press, 1982); Michael L. Mullan, "Opposition, Social Closure and Sport: The Gaelic Athletic Association in the Nineteenth Century," *Sociology of Sport Journal* 22 (1995): 268-289. On the GAA, nationalism and politics, see W. F. Mandle, *The Gaelic Athletic Association and Irish Nationalist Politics, 1884-1924* (London: Christopher Helm, 1987); idem, "The Irish Republican Brotherhood and the Beginnings of the Gaelic Athletic Association," *Irish Historical Studies* 20 (1977): 418-438; idem, "Parnell and Sport," *Studia Hibernica* 28 (1994): 103-116; P. F. McDevitt, "Muscular Catholicism: Nationalism, Masculinity and Gaelic Team Sports, 1884-1916," *Gender and History* 9 (1997): 262-284. On the ban see Brendan MacLúá, *The Steadfast Rule: A History of the GAA Ban* (Dublin: Cúchallainn, 1967) and Paul Rouse, "The Politics of Culture and Sport in Ireland: A History of the GAA Ban on Foreign Games 1884-1971. Part one: 1884-1921," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 10 (1993): 333-360.

²Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 240.

³W. P. Hone, *Cricket in Ireland* (Tralee: Kerryman, 1955), 1-107; J. T. H. Lawrence, ed., *Handbook of Cricket of Cricket in Ireland (16th number)* [Dublin: Lawrence, 1880], xii-xv.

⁴Edmund Van Esbeck, *The Story of Irish Rugby* (London: Pelham, 1986), 12-53; R. M. Peter, ed., *The Irish Football Annual* (Dublin: Irish Steam Printing, 1880), 12-16.

⁵T. S. C. Dagg, *Hockey in Ireland* (Tralee: Kerryman, 1944), 13-57.

⁶Malcolm Brodie, *History of Irish Soccer* [Glasgow: Arrell, 1964], 1-7.

⁷On these subjects in a modern context see, for example, John Sugden and Alan Bairner, *Sport, Sectarianism and Society in a Divided Ireland* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1993), 77-91; John Sugden and Scott Harvie, *Sport and Community Relations in Northern Ireland* (Coleraine: University of Ulster, 1995); Michael Holmes, "Symbols of National Identity in Sport: The Case of the Irish Football Team," *Irish Political Studies* 9 (1994): 91-98; Michael Free, "Angels with Drunken Faces? Travelling Republic of Ireland Supporters and the Construction of Irish Migrant Identity," in *Fanatics! Power, Identity and Fandom in Football*, ed. Adam Brown (London: Routledge, 1998), 219-232.

⁸Mike Cronin, *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland: Gaelic Games, Soccer and Irish Identity since 1884* (Dublin: Four Courts, 1999), 121, 125.

⁹*Irish Sportsman and Farmer*, 26 October 1878 (1st QUOTATION); *Northern Whig*, 30 October 1878 (2nd QUOTATION).

¹⁰On the early game in Ireland see also Malcolm Brodie, *100 Years of Irish Football* (Belfast: Blackstaff, 1980), 2-9; idem, ed., *The Irish Football League 1890-1990: The Official Centenary History* (Belfast: Irish League, 1990), 1-5; G. Briggs and J. Dodds, eds., *100 Years of the LFA: Leinster Football Association Yearbook* (Dublin: Leinster Football Association, 1993), 1-5; Neal Garnham, ed., *The Origins and Development of Football in Ireland, being a reprint of R. M. Peter's Irish Football Annual of 1880* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 1999), 7-9.

¹¹Cash book, 1880-1897, Papers of the Irish Football Association, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast, Northern Ireland, ref. D/4196/N/1.

¹²Minute book, 18 November 1880-22 May 1886, Papers of the Irish Football Association, The Irish Football Association, Windsor Avenue, Belfast.

¹³Dave Russell, *Football and the English: A Social History of Association Football in England 1863-1995* (Preston: Carnegie, 1997), 22-29; John Arlott, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Sports and Games* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 335.

¹⁴*Report of the Commissioners appointed to take the census of Ireland, 1841*, [cd. 504] British Parliamentary Papers 1843 XXIV, p. 440, Table VI; *Census of Ireland, 1881 Part II, General report* [cd. 3365] British Parliamentary Papers 1882 LXXVI, p. 535, Table XVIII. The initial reference to "sportsmen" may refer to those involved in hunting or blood sports.

¹⁵Fergus D'Arcy, *Horses, Lords and Racing Men: The Turf Club 1790-1990* (Curragh: Turf Club, 1991), 66; Patrick Myler, *Regency Rogue: Dan Donnelly, His Life and Legends* (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1976), 52.

¹⁶A. Steven, "The Game of Rackets in Ulster," *Ulster Folklife* 42 (1996): 106; N. D. McMillan, *One Hundred and Fifty Years of Cricket and Sport in County Carlow* (Dublin: privately published, 1984), 6-7.

¹⁷James Walvin, *The People's Game: The History of Football Revisited* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1994), 83.

¹⁸Steve Ickringill, "Amateur and Professional: Sport in Britain and America at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," in *Sport, Culture and Politics*, eds. J. C. Binfield and J. Stevenson (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1993), 30-48.

¹⁹Tony Mason, *Association Football and English Society 1863-1915* (Brighton: Harvester, 1980), 72-74.

²⁰Wray Vamplew, *Pay Up and Play the Game: Professional Sport in Britain 1875-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 193-194.

- ²¹ *Ulster Football and Cycling News*, 25 April 1890, 9 May 1890; Entry for 2 April 1890, Minute book 1888-1897, Papers of the County Antrim Football, papers in private hands.
- ²² *Northern Whig*, 4 May 1891.
- ²³ *Ulster Football and Cycling News*, 29 May 1891.
- ²⁴ *Northern Whig*, 2 October 1890; *Ulster Football and Cycling News*, 31 October 1890.
- ²⁵ *Belfast Evening Telegraph*, 14 August 1890; *Ulster Football and Cycling News*, 22 August 1890.
- ²⁶ *Pastime* 15 (31 December 1890): 462-463; *Ulster Football and Cycling News*, 2 January 1891.
- ²⁷ *Ulster Football and Cycling News*, 27 February 1891.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 4 March 1892, 18 March 1892, 1 April 1892, 8 April 1892.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 11 March 1892.
- ³⁰ *Belfast Newsletter*, 10 May 1892.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 9 May 1893.
- ³² *Ulster Football and Cycling News*, 11 May 1894 (QUOTATION); *Belfast Newsletter*, 1 May 1894.
- ³³ *Sport*, 9 September 1893; quoted in Sean Diffley, *The Men in Green Shirts: The Story of Irish Rugby* (London: Pelham, 1973), 17.
- ³⁴ *Ulster Football and Cycling News*, 4 May 1894; Brodie, *100 Years*, 3.
- ³⁵ *Ireland's Saturday Night*, 20 August 1898 (QUOTATION), 14 June 1902; *Sport*, 13 May 1905; see, for example, *Freeman's Journal*, 11 January 1904.
- ³⁶ *Scottish Referee*, 13 August 1894.
- ³⁷ *Sport*, 8 September 1894, 29 September 1894; *Ulster Football and Cycling News*, 6 September 1895.
- ³⁸ Dave Russell, "Sporadic and Curious: The Emergence of Rugby and Soccer Zones in Yorkshire and Lancashire, c1860-1914," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 5 (1988): 185-205; Mason, *Association*, 69-70.
- ³⁹ The importance of linen in Belfast may be seen from the facts that by 1912 the city had 60% of Ireland's 33,000 power looms, and by 1917 almost 90,000 people were employed in the industry in Belfast and the surrounding area. See Cormac O'Grada, *A New Economic History of Ireland 1780-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 289, 285.
- ⁴⁰ *Northern Whig*, 6 May 1895; *Belfast Newsletter*, 15 January 1895.
- ⁴¹ *Ulster Football and Cycling News*, 22 March 1889 (QUOTATION); *Irish News*, 13 March 1905; Neal Garnham, "Football and National Identity in pre-Great War Ireland," *Irish Economic and Social History* 28 (2001): 30-31; *Ireland's Saturday Night*, 3 September 1898.
- ⁴² *Ulster Football and Cycling News*, 20 November 1896.
- ⁴³ Committee book, 1898-1903, Papers of the Irish Football Association, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, ref. D/4196/A/1; *Sport*, 9 September 1893.
- ⁴⁴ *Ireland's Saturday Night*, 27 August 1898, 29 June 1901, 19 October 1901.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1 March 1902.
- ⁴⁶ Committee book, 1898-1903, Papers of the Irish Football Association, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, ref. D/4196/A/1; *Ireland's Saturday Night*, 28 June 1902; Register of professionals, 1899-1903, Papers of the Irish Football Association, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, ref. D/4196/T/2; *Ireland's Saturday Night*, 23 April 1904.
- ⁴⁷ *Sport*, 6 May 1905; *Irish News*, 4 May 1914.
- ⁴⁸ *Sport*, 3 October 1914; *Irish News*, 10 November 1913; *Ireland's Saturday Night*, 1 March 1913; *Irish News*, 20 April 1913.
- ⁴⁹ *Ulster Football and Cycling News*, 7 September 1894; Emergency committee book, 1909-43, Papers of the Irish Football Association, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, ref. D/4196/N/1.
- ⁵⁰ *Ulster Football and Cycling News*, 4 January 1895; International sub-committee minute book, 1902-8, Papers of the Irish Football Association, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast, ref. D/4196/D/1.

⁵¹Committee minute book, 1909-1913, Papers of the Irish Football League, Irish Football League, University Street, Belfast.

⁵²*Ireland's Saturday Night*, 11 March 1899, 7 May 1910, 5 June 1909.

⁵³*Ulster Football and Cycling News*, 13 November 1896; Mason, *Association Football*, 96-97; Vamplew, *Pay Up*, 243.

⁵⁴Mason, *Association Football*, 97.

⁵⁵*Inland's Saturday Night*, 10 May 1902, 11 June 1904, 13 August 1904; *Sport*, 20 August 1904.

⁵⁶D'Arcy, *Horses*, 185; Sir William Orpen, *Tales of Old Ireland and Myself* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1924), 26; C. Smith and B. Shaw, eds., *Whigs on the Green* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1996), 111.

⁵⁷For comparative wage rates see *Board of Trade Reports, Standard Time rates of wages, 1900, 1906 and 1914* [Cd 317, 3245 and 7194] British Parliamentary Papers 1900 LXXXII, 1906 CXII, and 1914 LXXX; *Statistical tables: earnings of agricultural labourers 1898 and 1905* [Cd 2376] British Parliamentary Papers 1905 XCVII; *Commission on the Royal Irish and Dublin Metropolitan Police* [Cd 7421] British Parliamentary Papers 1914 XLIV; *Board of Trade Reports, Standard time wages 1914* [Cd 7194] British Parliamentary Papers 1914 LXXX; Autobiography of John [Sean] Francis McKeown, McKeown Papers, Linen Hall Library, Belfast.

⁵⁸*Ulster Football and Cycling News*, 9 November 1894; *Ireland's Saturday Night*, 18 February 1899.

⁵⁹*Ireland's Saturday Night*, 27 August 1898, 9 August 1902; *Nomad's Weekly*, 10 October 1908, 17 April 1909; *Ideas*, 25 October 1913.

⁶⁰Brian Dabscheck, "Defensive Manchester: A History of the Professional Footballer's Association," in *Sport in History: The Making of Modern Sport History*, eds. Richard Cashman and Michael McKernan (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1980), 230-232.

⁶¹*Nomad's Weekly*, 17 April 1909.

⁶²Irish Football League management committee minute book, 1913-1923, Papers of the Irish Football League, Irish Football League, University Street, Belfast.

⁶³See, for example, Autobiography of William Greer of Belfast, Greer Papers, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, ref. T/3249/1, p. 33.

⁶⁴*Ireland's Saturday Night*, 8 December 1900; John Gray, ed., *Thomas Carnduff: Life and Writings* (Belfast: Linen Hall Library, 1994), 136.

⁶⁵[Dublin] *Evening Telegraph*, 30 April 1906, 4 February 1907.

⁶⁶MacLua, *The Steadfast Rule*; Rouse, "The Politics of Culture."

⁶⁷W.F. Mandle, "Sport as Politics: The Gaelic Athletic Association 1884-1916," in *Sport in History*, 120-123; Mike Cronin, "Fighting for Ireland, Playing for England? The Nationalist History of the GAA and the English Influence on Irish Sport," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 15 (1998): 36-56.

⁶⁸Dick Fitzgerald, *How to Play Gaelic Football* (Dublin: Independent, 1914), 14-15.

⁶⁹Letter from C. M. Ruxton, Secretary, Irish Rugby Football Union, Dublin, to the Secretary of the Northern Branch, Irish Rugby Football Union, Belfast, 8 December 1913, in Irish Rugby Football Union (Northern Branch) Minute book, 1913-1922, Papers of the Irish Rugby Football Union (Northern Branch), Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, ref. D/38671A/5.

⁷⁰J. J. MacCarthy, "International Football: Ireland," in *Football: The Rugby Union Game*, ed. Rev F. Marshall (London: Cassell and Co, 1892), 222.

⁷¹IFA committee minute book, 1898-1903, Papers of the Irish Football Association, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, ref.D/4196A/l.

⁷²*Ireland's Saturday Night*, 31 August 1901; J.J. Bentley, "Professionalism in Sport," in *Athletic News Football Annual 1896* (London: Athletic News, 1895), 13.

⁷³*Ireland's Saturday Night*, 18 January 1902, 11 January 1902, 29 November 1902.

⁷⁴*Freeman's Journal*, 11 January 1904, 13 January 1904.

⁷⁵*Irish News*, 2 January 1905.

⁷⁶*Ireland's Saturday Night*, 9 April 1910.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, 17 September 1910.

⁷⁸*Report of Improvement Commission adopted by the council, 1909* (Belfast, 1909), p.7 (Copy in Co Antrim FA Council and Senior Council Minute book 1906-1912, Papers of the County Antrim Football Association, in private hands).

⁷⁹Register of professionals, 1899-1903, Papers of the Irish Football Association, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, ref. D/4196/T/2 (1st QUOTATION); *Ireland's Saturday Night*, 24 January 1903 (2nd QUOTATION), 29 August 1903 (3rd QUOTATION).

⁸⁰*Sport*, 30 January 1904 (1st QUOTATION), 19 March 1904 (2nd QUOTATION), 26 March 1904 (3rd QUOTATION), 2 April 1904.

⁸¹*Ireland's Saturday Night*, 16 April 1904.

⁸²IFA Council minute book, 1903-1909, Papers of the Irish Football Association, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, ref. D/4196/A/2; *Ireland's Saturday Night*, 30 April 1904; *Sport*, 17 September 1904.

⁸³*Sport*, 17 February 1906.

⁸⁴*Ulster Echo*, 17 February 1908 (1st QUOTATION); *Sport*, 22 February 1908 (2nd AND 3rd QUOTATIONS).

⁸⁵*Nomad's Weekly and Belfast Critic*, 22 February 1908.

⁸⁶Annual General Meeting report dated 9 May 1908, and loose insert headed "Minutes of the International FA Board meeting 19-20 June 1908" in IFA Council minute book, 1903-1909, Papers of the Irish Football Association, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, ref. D/4196/A/2.

⁸⁷IFA Council minute book, 1909-25, Papers of the Irish Football Association, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, ref. D/4196/A/3; *Ireland's Saturday Night*, 8 January 1910.

⁸⁸*Ireland's Saturday Night*, 12 November 1910 (QUOTATION), 8 January 1910; *Sport*, 13 January 1912, 10 January 1914.

⁸⁹IFA Emergency Committee book, 1909-43, Papers of the Irish Football Association, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, ref. D/4196/N/1; IFA Rules Revision Committee book 1909-1947, Papers of the Irish Football Association, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, ref. D/4196/P/1).

⁹⁰Russell, *Football and the English*, 85; *Sunday News*, 21 January 1979.

⁹¹On players in England see Tony Mason, "'Our Stephen and Our Harold': Edwardian Footballers and Local Heroes," in *European Heroes: Myth, Identity, Sport*, eds. Richard Holt, J. A. Mangan and Pierre Lanfranchi (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 71-85 and Matthew Taylor, "Work and Play: The Professional Footballer in England c1900-1950," *The Sports Historian* 22 (2002): 32-36.