Gaelic Games

Price of Allianz League tickets rises again

GORDON MANNING

The GAA has increased ticket prices for the 2024 Allianz League season – with top flight matches rising from€18 to€20.

It is the second consecutive year where ticket prices have increased, there was a jump from €15 to€18 for 2023 – which amounts to a 33.3 per cent increase in two seasons.

The price for the GAA season ticket for football will remain unchanged at €150, but the first championship match will no longer be included as part of the package. The season ticket for Liam MacCarthy hurling counties will cost €140 but will also not include entry to matches at the outset of the championship.

However, a new league only bundle has been introduced and does include significant bells and whistles savings, which appears to be an attempt to facilitate a longer term defined split for league and championship season ticket models.

The options in relation to Allianz League packages for Division One and Two football includes €100 for seven matches and €65 for four matches. Given the price for one match is €20, the bundle for seven games represents a saving of €40. Divisions Three and Four in football are to be priced at €60 for seven matches and €40 for four matches.

33.3%

Increase in cost of a single league ticket in two seasons

A Division One hurling package will cost €75 for fives matches and €50 for three matches. The five-match option represents a €25 saving.

Still, the overall increase in ticket prices is likely to frustrate supporters. Early bird options for the topflight divisions as recently as 2018 cost only €12.

Cashless venues

The GAA's policy of not selling tickets at venues on match days will also continue in 2024, meaning all tickets must be purchased in advance on gaa.ie/tickets or in selected SuperValu and Centra stores.

"Divisions 1 and 2 of the Allianz Football League and Division 1 of the Allianz Hurling League will be priced at 20 per match and student/OAP tickets will be €15," stated the GAA in outlining their ticket prices for the 2024 leagues.

"Divisions 3 and 4 in football matches will be€ 12 with student/OAP tickets at€ 10. Entry to Allianz Division 2 and 3 Hurling matches will cost€ 10 with student/OAP tickets€ 8.

"Juveniles under 16 will be free of charge for Allianz Leagues fixtures, except for reserved seating fixtures and selected fixtures where capacity is a concern."

The GAA's change of policy as regards ticket pricing strategy in recent years has included a cashless model. Tickets for this year's Allianz League Division One and Two finals will cost €30, while the Division Three and Four double header will be €25.

Munster Club SFC

■ Clockwise from main: Damien Cahalane is hoisted on the shoulders of supporters at the end of Sunday's Munster Club SFC final; Damien Cahalane with Larry Tompkins and Niall Cahalane in the dressing room after the game; the same trio following Castlehaven's 1997 Munster final win.
PHOTOGRAPHS: JAMES CROMBIE/INPHO; CASTLEHAVEN X ACCOUNT

Tompkins tips his hat to Cahalane clan and champions Castlehaven

Gordon Manning

Three brothers featured in dramatic final win but Damien's heroics proved to be a personal vindication

After the storm, Larry Tompkins and Niall Cahalane had found safe haven among the Castlehaven faithful gathered on the pitch at Limerick's Gaelic Grounds last Sunday when Batt Maguire approached, wildly enthusiastic. The photograph, it was time to rewind the years.

In December 1997, Tompkins captained Castlehaven to a Munster club football final victory over Fethard. Cahalane was unable to play in that decider due to suspension, but moments after the final whistle he sat next to Tompkins in the Castlehaven dressingroom for a celebratory photograph. Alongside the duo in the pic that day was one of Niall's young sons, Damien, with his hands clasped around the cup.

Last Sunday at the Gaelic Grounds, Maguire – a club stalwart in Castlehaven – made sure to gather the trio again to recreate that image. Castlehaven GAA club later posted the two images online, side by side. It's a framer.

Poignancy

"A lot of people have picked up on it," said Tompkins yesterday afternoon.

"I guess there's a poignancy to it. In 1997 when we last won the Munster final, Niall couldn't play because he was suspended and Damien, as you can see from the photo, was only a young boy at that time.

"But I remember that photograph in '97, it was taken straight after the match inside the dressingroom. In fairness to Batt he suggested we do it again and dragged us inside to the dressingroom to relive the memories. It's a nice photo to have."

Tompkins was Cork senior football manager at the time of the 1997 provincial club final, and while approaching the end of his playing days he still delivered a huge display for Castlehaven that day, top-scoring with eight points.

But if Tompkins was the game-changer back then, on Sunday Damien Cahalane was the difference maker.

Despite the driving wind and rain, it was one of those days Cahalane will forever recall as golden – and Tompkins was delighted to see him star on one of the biggest days in the club's history.

"I said it to Damien in the dressingroom afterwards, over the years he has taken an incredible amount of criticism, he's taken a battering with some of the stuff that was said on social media and all that," said Tompkins.

"Nasty stuff, that he shouldn't be on the Cork hurling team, that he's not good enough and all that. He took a lambasting for a long time but he kept going. And it's just brilliant for him that he's got a moment like this, because he deserves it.

"He's a hell of a guy, a hell of a committed guy, and I've no doubt if he wasn't so committed and involved as a prominent figure in the Cork hurling team then he certainly would have been a very prominent figure on the Cork football team over the last 10 years. He's a colossus.

"He plays hurling with the Barrs and obviously senior intercounty with Cork, so hurling has been the main game for him really.

> **It's just brilliant for him that he's got a moment like this, because he deserves it . . . He's a hell of a guy, a hell of a committed guy**

"And he probably never really got the run of games in football, but the way it went this year with the Barrs unfortunately losing a county semi-final, it allowed him then to be able to concentrate on football totally. It's amazing how well he has performed, he was a man apart on Sunday, he was the dominant figure throughout. He's a massive leader in that squad."

Proud day

Damien's two brothers – Conor and Jack – also played significant roles in Sunday's win over Kerry side Dingle on what was a proud day for the already decorated Cahalane clan. Indeed, Tompkins feels Sunday's achievement will have meant as much to his old club and county colleague, Niall, as anything that has gone before.

"We had a great moment on the field afterwards, it's special to have a son involved in a game like that and to be triumphant with your club. But to have three outstanding players, three sons, you can only imagine the pride that brings," adds Tompkins.

"We all enjoy playing and there is no substitute to playing, but I'm sure Sunday was a massive highlight to compare with everything he has achieved, to watch his three sons collect a Munster title with the club, his beloved club."

The Cork and Munster champions now progress to an All-Ireland club semi-final in January against Roscommon and Connacht winners St Brigid's.

With Kilmacud Crokes and Glen meeting in the other semi-final, both Castlehaven and Brigid's will feel the draw has provided them with the more favourable pathway towards a Croke Park final.

"Castlehaven are a special outfit and I'm always saying it, they are very passionate," added Tompkins.

"I know we see it in loads of clubs throughout the country, but I just feel Castlehaven have something special, for a small area they have a huge heart and massive togetherness.

Some amazing people involved, and I've no doubt some of them who are no longer with us were looking down on Sunday night proud of what the club had achieved in winning Munster again."

News

Tyrone's revenue from live streaming hit by pirate operators

FRANCIS MOONEY

Organised crime gangs are behind a pirating operation that has greatly reduced revenue from Tyrone GAA's live streaming service.

Subscriptions from viewers of live club championship games had dropped dramatically this year due to the interception of streams through the illegal use of firesticks and apps.

Tyrone GAA's information and technology officer Gerard Bradley claims the county has been particularly targeted by those individuals and organisations behind the offences.

"The reduction in subscriptions has been clearly identified as being almost entirely due to the activities of organised criminal gangs, with local providers who use modified firesticks and apps to pirate live streams," Bradley will tell to' night's county convention. The live stream of this year's championship attracted 15,500 subscriptions from almost 7,000 customers. These figures show a significant reduction on the 2022 figures.

"While Tyrone has been particularly targeted by this criminal activity, all other units, including the GAA at central level and other sports, are also victims. The attendance at matches continued to exceed the number of live stream tickets sold."

Tyrone TV led the way once again during 2023 as the only county to live stream every single club championship match. A total of 50 games were covered at senior, intermediate and junior level.

Sports Briefs

Cricket

Spinner Bashir handed shock England call-up for India tour

Rookie spinner Shoaib Bashir has been handed a shock call-up for England's new year Test tour of India, just six months after making his first-class debut for Somerset.

The 20-year-old off-spinner has made just six senior red-ball appearances, taking 10 wickets at an average of 67, but earned a spot on a recent England Lions training camp in the UAE and impressed enough to be fast-tracked into the main squad. Bashir is one of three uncapped players in a 16-strong group with Lancashire's left-arm spinner Tom Hartley and Surrey quick Gus Atkinson.

England's selection panel, headed by director of cricket Rob Key, made a similar call this time last year when they drafted teenager Rehan Ahmed for the tour of Pakistan. Fresh from an encouraging ODI series in the Caribbean, leg-spinner Ahmed returns to the Test squad as part of a slow-bowling group led by Jack Leach.

England begin the first of five games against India in Hyderabad on January 25th following a training week in the UAE. Ben Stokes is hoping to be fit to lead the side but is currently in rehabilitation having undergone knee surgery.

ENGLAND SQUAD (for Test tour of India): B Stokes (c), R Ahmed, J Anderson, G Atkinson, J Bairstow (wkt), S Bashir, H Brook, Z Crawley, B Duckett, B Foakes (wkt), T Hartley, J Leach, O Pope, O Robinson, J Root, M Wood.

Snooker

O'Sullivan accused of 'disrespect' after withdrawal

Ronnie O'Sullivan has been accused of "disrespect" by the player whose dreams of facing the world number one were dashed at the Scottish Open in Edinburgh yesterday.

The seven-time world champion withdrew from the event citing medical reasons just hours before he was scheduled to face 19-year-old Liam Graham in a first round match.

Graham criticised the timing of O'Sullivan's decision, telling the Daily Record: "It's disrespectful, it's not right. A lot of people took time off work to come and watch today and it's disappointing.

"It's not surprising given the things he does. I didn't have much prior warning – I think he pulled out very late."

■ Ronnie O'Sullivan: withdrew from Scottish Open yesterday

O'Sullivan has now withdrawn from five of eight ranking tournaments this season.

It comes amid a time of tension between the player and World Snooker Tour chiefs over his desire to have the freedom to play in lucrative exhibitions in China.

Rugby

Twickenham to host Women's RWC final

Twickenham will host the 2025 Women's Rugby World Cup final while the opening game will be staged at Sunderland's Stadium of Light, World Rugby and the RFU said yesterday.

The 82,000 capacity Twickenham Stadium set a world attendance record for a women's international in April when 58,498 spectators turned out to see England win their 19th Women's Six Nations Championship title by beating France.

Organisers hope the World Cup finale in London on September 27th will break that record.

Soccer

Greece orders clubs to play without fans for two months

Greece must play all its top soccer league matches without fans for the next two months following the severe injuring of a police officer in violence during a volleyball match in Athens last week, its government said yesterday.

All Super League 1 matches will be played behind closed doors until February12th, 2024, a government spokesman said.

The volleyball match was between local teams Olympiacos and Panathinaikos who are both owned by the soccer sides of the same name.

The spokesman said the measure might also apply to some European fixtures at home and could be extended beyond February 12th, if top league soccer teams fail by that date to take action, such as installing cameras and systems of electronic identification for their fans at the stadiums.

The announcement followed the critical injuring of a 31-year-old police officer by a flare in violent clashes that broke out on Thursday, during a volleyball match hosted by Olympiacos in Piraeus.

In Greece, fights between fans and clubs are frequent on and off the pitch before or after a game and the government has been trying to reform soccer.

More than 400 people had been detained over Thursday's incident.

CLASSIFIED EXTRA

Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)
Notice of Direct Planning Application to An Bord Pleanála in Respect of a Strategic Infrastructure Development Located in County Mayo.

In accordance with Section 37E of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) Glenora Wind Farm (DAC), gives notice of its intention to make an application to An Bord Pleanála (the Board) for a ten-year planning permission for the following Proposed Development in the townlands of Glenora, Altderg, Keerglen, Ballykinlettragh, Ballycastle, Ballyglass, Killeena, Glencullin and Lugnalettin, Co. Mayo.

The proposed development will constitute of the following:
(i) The construction of 22 no. wind turbines and all associated hard-standing areas with the following parameters:
a. A total blade tip height of 180m,
b. Hub height of 99m, and
c. Rotor diameter of 162m;
(ii) 1 no. permanent Meteorological Anemometry Masts with a height of 99 m and associated hardstanding area;
(iii) Upgrade of existing tracks and roads, provision of new permanent site access roads and upgrade of 1 no. existing site entrance including the provision of 1 no. security cabin with automatic traffic barriers;
(iv) Temporary widening of sections of public road in the townland of Ballyglass;
(v) The provision of a new temporary roadway in the townland of Ballyglass to facilitate the delivery of turbine components and other abnormal loads;
(vi) 1 no. wind farm operation and maintenance control building in the townland of Glenora;
(vii) 3 no. borrow pits;
(viii) 13 no. permanent peat placement areas;
(ix) 5 no. temporary construction compounds with temporary site offices and staff facilities;
(x) Permanent recreation and amenity works, including marked trails, seating areas, amenity car park, and associated amenity signage;
(xi) Site drainage;
(xii) Site signage;
(xiii) Ancillary forestry felling to facilitate construction and operation of the proposed development;
(xiv) All works associated with the habitat enhancement and biodiversity management within the proposed wind farm site;
(xv) All associated site development works and ancillary infrastructure.

This application is seeking a 10-year planning permission and 35-year operational life of the Proposed Development from the date of commissioning of the entire Proposed Development.

An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) have been prepared in respect of the proposed development and accompany the planning application. The planning application, EIAR and NIS may be inspected free of charge or purchased on payment of a specified fee (which shall not exceed the reasonable cost of making such a copy) during public opening hours for a period of seven weeks commencing on the 2nd January 2024 at the following locations:
• The Offices of An Bord Pleanála, 64 Marlborough Street, Dublin 1, D01 V902 (9:15am – 5:30pm, Monday – Friday)
• The Offices of Mayo County Council, The Mall, Castlebar, County Mayo, F23 WF90 (9:30am – 4:30pm, Monday – Friday)

The application may also be viewed/downloaded on the following website:
https://www.glenorawfplanning.com/

Submissions or Observations may be made only to An Bord Pleanála 64 Marlborough Street, Dublin 1 or via the Board's website https://www.pleanala.ie/en-ie/observations during the above-mentioned period of seven weeks relating to:
(i) The implications of the proposed development for proper planning and sustainable development, and
(ii) The likely effects on the environment of the proposed development, and
(iii) The likely effects of the proposed development on a European site, if carried out.
Any submissions/observations must be accompanied by a fee of €50 (except for certain prescribed bodies) and must be received by the Board not later than 20th February 2024. The provisions of section 251 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, relating to the holiday period between the 24th December and 1st January, both days inclusive, have been taken into account in the calculation of the public consultation period.
Such submissions/observations must also include the following information:
• The name of the person making the submission or observation, the name of the person acting on his or her behalf, if any, and the address to which any correspondence relating the application should be sent,
• The subject matter of the submission or observation, and
• The reasons, considerations and arguments on which the submission or observation is based in full
(Article 217 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, refers)
Any submissions or observations which do not comply with the above requirements cannot be considered by the Board. The Board may at its absolute discretion hold an oral hearing on the application (refer to 'A Guide to Public Participation in Strategic Infrastructure Development' at www.pleanala.ie)
The Board may in respect of an application for permission decide to:
a) (i) grant the permission, or
(ii) make such modifications to the proposed development as it specifies in its decision and grant permission in respect of the proposed development as so modified, or
(iii) grant permission in respect of part of the proposed development (with or without specified modifications of the foregoing kind), and any of the above decisions may be subject to or without conditions, or
b) Refuse to grant the permission

Any enquiries relating to the application process should be directed to the Strategic Infrastructure Development Section of An Bord Pleanála (Tel. 01-8588100).

A person may question the validity of any such decision of the Board by way of an application for judicial review, under Order 84 of the Rules of the Superior Courts (S.I. No. 15 of 1986, as amended by S.I. No. 691 of 2011), in accordance with Section 50 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended. Practical Information on the review mechanism can be accessed on the Board's website (www.pleanala.ie) under the following heading: Legal Notices – Judicial Review Notice. This information is also available on the Citizens Information Service website www.citizensinformation.ie