

## **The Dublin Hospitals Rugby Cup – the Oldest Trophy in World Rugby**

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The sun maybe rising in Japan with the start of the Rugby World Cup 2019, but one Dublin rugby institution continues to excite players and fans for the past 138 years.

### **Beginnings**

The Dublin Hospitals Rugby Cup was established in 1881 by a group of surgeons and physicians from Dublin hospitals. The prime motivator for the inauguration of the competition was Dr Frank Cassidy of the Richmond Hospital. A meeting of interested surgeons and physicians in hospitals associated with Trinity and the Royal College was held in Lawrence's of Grafton Street on January 19, 1881. The treasurer's report for the season 1881-1882 clearly shows that surgeons and physicians supported the venture by each contributing the princely sum of £1 towards its establishment. Among these benefactors were Dr Henry Stokes, Mr Osborne, and William Thornley Stoker (brother of Bram, author of Dracula). Medical students of the day contributed between two and five guineas per hospital. In total, 57 pounds, 11 shillings, and eight pence were collected to endow the competition. The Hospitals Cup was bought for £50 in Waterhouse's of Dame Street in 1881. It is a solid silver hunting cup made by the distinguished silversmith John Storr in 1812. Its current value is estimated at €80,000. Recently, a Dublin silversmith restored the trophy, and volunteered that it was one of the finest sports trophy in the country. The elected officers for the first year (1882) were Dr Cassidy as President and Dr W Law from Baggot Street Hospital as Honorary Secretary. The inaugural competition was a great success, and was won by the Meath Hospital, who beat Sir Patrick Dun's in the final at Lansdowne Road by five points to three.

Apart from 1916-1917 and 1945-1946, the competition has run without interruption since 1882. Sir Patrick Dun's, winners on 17 occasions, dominated the early years, but St Vincent's Hospital has been the dominant team overall, with 37 victories, the most recent victory taking place on December 21st 2018.

Fears that the closure of many great medical institutions would see the demise of this historic competition have been laid to rest. Since Morgan Crowe of St Vincent's Hospital took over organization of the competition, it has gone from strength to strength. The final now occupies a pivotal place in the rugby and medical calendars, and is held under floodlights on the last Friday before Christmas, in its traditional home of Old Belvedere's ground on Anglesea Road. Currently, four teams representing five Dublin hospitals contest the Hospitals Cup: the Mater, St Vincent's, The Federated Hospitals (Tallaght combined with St James's), Beaumont and the school of Veterinary Medicine.

All rugby playing medical students and doctors crave the honour and glory of a Hospitals Cup medal. A win in the final is also highly prized by the hospitals, and photographs of winning teams form part of hospital boardroom memorabilia.

## From hospital to international

Many medical students have gone on to play for Ireland. Distinguished international players include Terence Millin, Morgan Crowe, Paul Murray and Jamie Clinch. Crowe and Clinch formed a formidable half back combination in the United Dublin Hospitals Rugby Union Team of 1929. More recently, an RCSI medical student, Karl Mullen, captained winning Triple Crown teams in 1947 and 1948, and also captained the British and Irish Lions team that toured New Zealand in 1950. He proudly donned the jersey of Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital in the late 40s and early 50s. Bill Mulcahy and Barry Bresnihan both played for the Lions in the 50s and 60s, respectively, and played many times for Ireland. Others who achieved international caps include Jack Maloney, Don Hingerty, Gerry Tormey, John Murray, Aidan Brady, Frank Byrne, Al Moroney, Hubie O'Connor, Paddy Johns, and Niall Hogan. Jon Raphael subbed for England on at least 40 occasions, and was unfortunate to come up against John Pullin as a rival for the position of hooker. Emmett Byrne and Mihai Vioreanu were the last internationals to take part in the hospitals cup when they lined up for Beaumont and the Mater, respectively, in the 2007 final.

## Winners

1992 St. Vincent's Hospital	1993 St. Vincent's Hospital
1994 Beaumont Hospital	1995 St. Vincent's Hospital
1996 Mater Hospital	1997 St. Vincent's Hospital
1998 Mater Hospital	1999 St. Vincent's Hospital
2000 Mater Hospital	2001 Mater Hospital
2002 Mater Hospital	2003 Mater Hospital
2004 Mater Hospital	2005 Mater Hospital
2006 Mater Hospital	2007 Beaumont Hospital
2008 Beaumont Hospital	2009 St. Vincent's Hospital
2010 St. Vincent's Hospital	2011 St. Vincent's Hospital
2012 St. Vincent's Hospital	2013 St. Vincent's Hospital
2014 St. Vincent's Hospital	2015 Mater Hospital
2016 Mater Hospital	2017 Beaumont Hospital
2018 St. Vincent's Hospital	

## Hall of Fame

A recent innovation has been the creation of a Hall of Fame award. The award is given to an individual in recognition of their outstanding contribution to Dublin hospitals rugby. Winners since the inception of the award are:

1994 Karl Mullen	2001 Frank O'Driscoll
1995 Jack Moloney	2002 Gary McShane
1996 Joe McKenna	2003 Jonathan Raphael
1997 Hubie O'Connor	2004 Michael Butler
1998 Al Moroney	2005 Malachy Coughlan
1999 Brian Keogh	2006 Donal Peter Sheehan
2000 John Craig	2001 Frank O'Driscoll
2002 Gary McShane	2003 Jon Raphael
2004 Michael Bulter	2005 Malachy Coughlan
2006 Donal Peter Sheehan	2007 Paddy Johns
2008 Tom Feighery	2009 Brian O'Connell
2010 Bill Mulcahy	2011 Jim McShane
2012 Billy Twomey	2013 Geoff Lavery
2014 Arthur Tanner	2015 Daragh Coakley
2016 Jimmy Gardiner	2017 Michael Farrell
2018 David Hickey	

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