

11,Ashville,
Athy, Co.Kildare.
12th Sept., 2024

Dear Sir,

I need information!

Near the end of the famous 1956 All-Ireland senior hurling final in Croke Park when Wexford beat Cork by 2-14 to 2-8, the Wexford goalie Art Foley made a great save from Cork's Christy Ring. Wexford at the time were leading by two points with three minutes to go. I have in front of me Martin Codd's excellent book "The Way I Saw It – Nicky Rackard leads Wexford to hurling glory". On pages 231-232 Art Foley's letter from America, where he lived for forty years or more, to Martin Codd, is photo-copied. Ring grabbed a clearance from the Cork backline and soloed down and then across the field leaving Jim Morrissey and Billy Rackard in his wake. On the 21- yard line Ring let fly for what he thought was the winning goal. Ring was going for his ninth All-Ireland medal, a record at the time. (Many people wondered why he didn't go maybe ten yards further in before shooting but he didn't.) In the last three lines on page 231 of the book Art wrote, and I quote, "Everybody in Croke Park talked about the catch I made, I did not catch the ball, I blocked the ball with my hurley, the ball went straight up in the air, I glanced outfield and spotted Hartnett (Josie) and Murphy (Gerry, a sub) thundering in like Sherman Tanks. I said O God I'm dead. I decided to block the ball out, if I had caught it I would have been buried in the goal, ball and all. (This was allowed back in those days) I spotted Jim Morrissey out to my left and blocked the ball in his direction. As I got rid of the ball, I was buried in the left corner of the net. I was lying there with the two of them on top of me when the ball struck the outside of the net, for a moment my heart stopped, I thought they scored until I saw John Keane the umpire signal wide.

Well, I was talking to the late Jim English a few years ago. He was right- half back and captain of Wexford that September day in 1956. Jim told me Art's memory must have been playing tricks on him!. Jim was adamant that Art did catch the ball!. So there you have it, will we ever know for sure? I very much regret not asking Jim for more details, where he was on the pitch at that moment etc.

Is there anyone in Wexford or in Cork or indeed from anywhere who was at that famous final in Croke Park on 23rd September, 1956 who really saw what happened or even heard what really happened from a reliable source? It would be great to hear from someone, or better still from a number of people, whether Art Foley actually caught the ball or not. As time moves on, there will be fewer and fewer people alive who were at that final ~~70~~⁶⁸ years ago or even heard about it.

It wasn't as great a save as most people thought. A Cork forward (possibly Paddy Barry) got in Ring's way slightly so he was not able to get his full power in the shot and he was shooting from a good distance out around the 21-yard line.

Yours in Sport,

Loftus Warren.

I am originally from Killedmond, Borris, Co. Carlow, a member of Mount Leinster Rangers GAA and Camogie Club.