

ARE CHAMPIONS FOR THIRD TIME

SLIIGO Convent of Mercy won the All-Ireland Secondary Schools' Junior Basketball Championship for the third year in a row when they beat St. Joseph's Convent, Kilkenny, by 43 points to 36 in a closely contested final played at St. Patrick's Training College, Drumcondra, Dublin, last Sunday.

Sligo were the more accomplished side in every respect but they were given a really tough fight for the trophy by a hard-working, determined Kilkenny team and it was not until the final quarter that the champions clinched their victory.

Kilkenny had two baskets in the opening minute to get them off the ground in fine style and they swapped scores with Sligo twice in the next six minutes to keep their lead.

The defending champions began to show their true form and they picked up the points with clever team play to equalise and take the lead for the first time with thirteen minutes gone. Kilkenny levelled again but Sligo pulled back in front and had five points in hand with two minutes remaining. St. Joseph's replied with two baskets in the last minute to leave the half-time score 19—18 in Sligo's favour.

The Mercy girls notched up three quick scores early in the second half to give them what appeared to be a comfortable lead but Kilkenny showed their fighting form to reduce the gap to a single point within eight minutes and for the next four minutes, it was neck and neck and score for score as Sligo fought off a very strong Kilkenny challenge.

The Mercy team was battling to defend a record at this stage but a tactical move by coach, Mr. Tom O'Brien, swung the day because Maura Maloney, who came off the subs.' bench at the decisive moment scored four vital baskets to put Sligo in the clear for once and for all.

Convent of Mercy: H. Forde (20), M. Maloney (10), U. Mannion (7), T. Tynan (4), S. O'Connor (2), C. Verdon, M. Conlon, M. O'Doherty, B. Begley, M. Kivlehan.

All Stars face tough task

SLIIGO All Stars get their first ever opportunity of upsetting Irish basketball kingpins St. Vincent's, Dublin, when the sides meet in a special international tournament in Dublin next week-end and according to reports, the fixture is a major talking point among fans of the sport in the capital.

Sligo have got the task of a *David* in the tournament because not only must they face the best of Ireland, but will also meet the new British Champions, Liverpool Police, as well as old rivals, U.S. Navy, Derry.

The tournament is organised by St. Vincent's and is their second big promotion this year. A few months ago, they treated basketball followers to a Glen Abbey final between Aldershot Warriors and Loughborough All Stars, a game which will long be remembered, and it is their hope that this tournament will provide entertainment of a similar high standard.

The competition brings together some of the best teams in these islands because also taking part are Scottish and Great Britain Champions, Boroughmuir, from Edinburgh who are reckoned to be the finest fast-breaking team around.

The huge pity, however, is that All Stars will not be at full strength for their engagements, though with a "weak" seven-man panel last time out, they ran Aldershot Warriors to within a point of defeat. They have had to return to training for the fixture and have not had sufficient shooting practice to get the deadly accuracy for which they are noted. Still, they have yet to have a bad tournament in Dublin and they will be all out to beat St. Vincent's in particular.

Fixtures: Saturday, 11.30 a.m. v. St. Vincent's; 4.30 p.m., v. U.S. Navy; Sunday at 2.30 p.m., v. Liverpool Police.

Venue—O'Connell Schools Gym, North Circular Road.

SUMMERHILL COLLEGE WIN PLAY-OFF

Summerhill College Senior team defeated Mohill (34—20) in a play-off in the Connacht Basketball League at the Mercy Convent Court, Sligo, on Saturday last.

The early stages of the game were dull and slow with both sides missing valuable scoring opportunities.

The College team played with greater spirit and accuracy in the second half. Mohill pressed hard throughout but were unable to take some vital points.

Anthony Cronnelly and Martin Forde, the big men of the College side were impressive, while Tony O'Connell gave a star performance for Mohill.