

Basketball

GWI Trophy invitation tournament

AS PLAYERS and supporters begin to arrive from Derry, Belfast, Downpatrick, Dublin, Cork, Killarney, Tralee, Galway and Athlone for the GWI Trophy Invitation Tournament at Summerhill College, Sligo All Stars wind up their training preparations with a final session to-morrow (Friday) night confident that they can make a major play for the cup.

Weeks of organisation have gone into the staging of the event and nothing has been left undone to ensure that the tournament is a most successful one for players and spectators alike.

The top seeds are the provincial champions of the four provinces—Sligo All Stars, Blue Demons, Cork, St. Vincent's, Dublin, and Collegians, Belfast. To qualify for the semi-finals, they must first overcome stiff opposition within their respective pools and with the type of club which the tournament has attracted, nobody will have an easy passage into the last four.

INTERNATIONAL PLAYERS

The standard of games is expected to be exceptionally high and there will be a host of international players in action as well as practically all the members of the current national panel who will be anxious to impress national coach, James Hobbart, on the look-out for some new faces in the Irish squad.

Games get under way at 10.30 on Saturday morning and continue without interruption until 9.45 in the evening. Sunday's programme commences at 9 a.m. and the last of the twenty four pool games will be over by 3 p.m. The semi-finals are timed for 3.30 and 4.30 and the final will start at 7.30 with the presentation of prizes to winners, runners-up, most valuable player and free-throw competition winner at 9 p.m.

But what of Sligo's chances of an outright victory? It is a fact that they have beaten fourteen of the sixteen teams taking part and the other two they have never played. Both of these—Marian, of Dublin, and Clifden—are in their pool, so this alone should guarantee them a tough preliminary contest. They were very impressive when they defeated Claddagh Shamrocks in the college gym during the recent ladies' tournament there and in their only other game of the season so far, they coasted to a twenty-points victory over Dublin side, Corinthians.

In Pool B, the Cork clubs, Blue Demons and Neptune will renew opposition, which in the past has produced many fine and memorable games, but Annadale, from Belfast, cannot be discounted as possible semi-finalists.

Pool C is an intriguing one because St. Vincent's, of Dublin, the current National Cup champions, will not be at full strength and this opens the door for either U.S. Navy (Derry) or St. Vincent's (Killarney). And again, the Downpatrick club, Ardglass Sharks, may cause a surprise.

Collegians, of Belfast, are expected to emerge from Pool D though Corinthians will have other ideas. And if Claddagh's ace player, American, Bob Burke, turns on the heat, who knows what could happen?

It all adds up to a tremendously interesting and exciting tournament—an event not to be missed by basketball fans, thanks to the generosity of the Collooney joinery works, G.W.I. Ltd.

Anyone intending to attend the semi-finals or final would be well advised to come early, as the organisers are expecting a full house.

And for those particularly anxious to watch the Sligo boys in action, the All Stars schedule is as follows: Saturday, 10.30 a.m.—S.A.S. v. Clifden; 8.15 p.m.—S.A.S. v. Marian; Sunday 9 a.m.—S.A.S. v. Austin Stacks.

Sligo All Stars: J. McGowan (Capt.), T. O'Hara, A. Cronnelly, B. O'Hara, J. Palmer, J. Monaghan, C. Carty, T. O'Brien.

All Stars have date in Scotland

Sligo All Stars have been drawn against the Glasgow Club, Penrith, in the Great Britain and Ireland Club Championship. They must travel to Scotland this month to play the first leg and the return leg is due to be played in November.

The fixtures were made at a meeting at Teeside last week-end and the draw is as follows—Manchester University v Boromuir (Edinburgh); St. Vincents (Dublin) v Sutton (London); Llynypwia (Cardiff) v Hornets (Edinburgh); Penrith (Glasgow) v. Sligo All Stars.

The Sligo boys have some idea of their opponents' worth as two years ago, Tony O'Hara and Joe Palmer watched them play when in Glasgow for a junior international against Scotland.

They will be no easy team to beat, as they have one of the tallest centres in these islands—a seven feet pivot player who should be worth at least thirty points a game.

Big problem at the moment for Sligo is their lack of a home court as the rules specify that venues must be of international standard and because Summerhill College is not a full-size gym, All Stars will probably have to play the home fixture in Galway or Dublin.