



November Update:

November was a busy month of organisation at the club. Our pitches in Rossleighan carried 31 games of football in a month that saw its fair share of terrible wet weather, even so we had to accommodate 14 games at The Leisure Centre.

Juggling the timetable and pitch allocation when the weather is poor, and our pitches are soft is often the most difficult job of the week. The main aim is to provide football for as many teams as possible.

Our stalwart groundskeepers deserve an honourable shout out – Emelyn O'Reilly and Joe Delaney for keeping the pitches in the good condition, working week in week out to ensure we can get the best use of Rossleighan Park when other clubs are calling games off.

Andrei and Joe also keep an eye on the divots – the small things count and the work they do on replacing divots each makes a huge difference and help with pitch recovery...

Condolences.

The club would like to pay respect to some important figures that helped the club over the years. Tom Scully, Liam McEvoy and Pat Rogers.

Both Tom and Liam were integral to the success of the club in the early days and were part of the first committee. Pat was a player with the club for many years. All of these gentlemen invested huge time and effort into our club, and we would like to pass our extended sympathies onto their families and friends and acknowledge the work that they did for the club.

Facilities

You should notice a distinct lack of a large puddle outside the dressing rooms. New drains, and shores have been installed to ensure run off of any excess water from the club house, in doing so we have fixed the problem. A new surface was also laid in the area.

Fund Raising Committee

In October the club **generated €5,000** that goes directly into the Development fund.

Lotto continues to go from strength to strength – every Euro generated for Lotto goes into the Development fund for the Full-Size Floodlit Astro. So, all support each team gives is huge.



November Fundraising Initiatives.

Church Gate

November saw the Church Gate Collection which generated €1,270.00.

Huge thanks to all who braved the elements to stand on the gate for us – players, coaches, volunteers' friends and family – coordinated by Christina Malone from the Fund-Raising Committee.

LPS

Last Person Standing generated €2,160 with 25% of the total raised going to the winner. €540.00 will be won by one lucky player. The club made €1,620 from the fundraising competition that will go towards the development fund.

There will be a special St Stephen's Day competition with a guaranteed €1,000 prize fund. Details announced soon. Thanks goes to Ken Peacham, Fergus O'Sullivan and Aine O'Sullivan for all the hard work on keeping the administration going well in the background and for encouraging so many players to take part.

Halloween Camps

Portlaoise AFC Academy camp for u6/u7 & u8 players and Shots and Stoppers camp for u9 – u14 players were a great success during the Halloween school break!

We had a great turnout particularly given the predicted wet weather and managed to find space for everyone to play! The shots and stoppers camp is all shooting and goalkeeping games and is our most enjoyed camp of all! Great feedback from everyone, coaches, players and parents afterwards!

Thanks to coaches and helpers from the club – Gavin Molloy, Leah Nolan, David Samuel, Conall Rowney, William O'Shea, Daniel Sukhanov, Aaron Keane, Ben O'Connor, Alex Danne, Keeva O'Reilly, Gael Zandu, and to Maria and Saoirse Keane for helping with registrations on the first day!

3 great days of goals, saves and footie games. Well done all!





THANKS!

Thanks to Ronan Corr for stepping up to be our "Club ref" for u10 / u11 games most Saturdays. This has made a big difference to our coaches not having to try and referee as well as coach!

Thanks to Pat Horan for putting in the hours to figure out the solution to our drain problem, along with help from Richard McSweeney and Des Kileen.

Thanks to all parents of our teams competing in SFAI Cup, who have provided food and teas/coffees for players and parents of other clubs visiting Rossleighan Park.

Thanks to Piotr Dziewonski for continually helping keep our nets on the goal posts in good order – there are many small jobs that need to be done to ensure everything is in tip top shape for the games each week.

And on a similar note, massive thank you to Paddy Carroll for his weekly assistance in putting up the goals and ensuring they are properly pegged in, along with a few other housekeeping tasks to keep us on track. We appreciate every minute Paddy, thank you!

Our Social Media work is done by Vicki Sirvatus and Kim Keogh – since forming the Social Media group we have done some great work and it's down to these two women. Thanks also to Aengus Burke who coordintates all of the match reports and sends to the guys.

The reports are getting more frequent, and the page is getting busier. It is great to see.

Coaches & Volunteer Christmas Evening

On Sunday 17th December, PAFC will host a night in PEIGS for all coaches and volunteers.



TEAM FOCUS:

Portlaoise Athletic U10

Introducing one of Portlaoise AFC's new crop of Under 10 squads. The "Athletic" are a fantastic bunch of boys. They've bonded well over the last few months and are now navigating the highs and lows of team Soccer together.

The team is being managed by Kim Keogh, Mark McManus and Paul Williamson. The three coaches have a variety of experience in coaching a wide variety of activities and are enjoying applying what they know to this new U10 group. The coaches are committed to giving every boy a chance to improve as a player and to learn about the game of Soccer. They see a successful season as one where the boys can't wait to come to training each night, and whether win lose or draw they learn something about the game that will stand to them in the future.

The team were delighted to receive sponsorship from Allan Daly's company Procraft carpentry and renovations for new Jerseys. The boys have loved the new kits from O'Neills and performances have matched the new threads ever since. The team recently hosted an Appreciation night for Allan which was really well attended. The boys and parents got to enjoy some Pizza and treats.

The Season so far. The boys have enjoyed some great moments so far this year. They have won games against Killeigh, Rosenalis, Edenderry and T&S. In all the victories there have been key contributions from all the players. They have really bought into the team ethos and constantly encourage and support each other. Along with the victories, there have been some close losses. They have learned the hard way a few times that it is difficult to close out a game, losing a few last-minute goals. Each defeat has highlighted different areas where they can improve and to their credit, the boys have worked really hard in training to get better each week.

Player Profiles:

Rares Bordianu: Rares has stepped forward as the main goalkeeper in the group. He is brave, consistent and has the perfect laid-back temperament you need to succeed in goals. Rares has stepped into defence and midfield at times and has shown great ability in adapting to numerous roles.

Daniel Keogh: Daniel brings a positive character and energy to training and matches each week. He always has a smile on his face and we think he would stay training all night if he wasn't dragged off the pitch. Daniel has great technical ability and has played well in a variety of positions but usually defence and midfield.

Lukas McManus: Lukas is one of the most improved players from the start of the year. He brings great physicality and energy and a keen interest in improving each week. He listens to instructions, supports his teammates and can always be relied upon. Lukas is one of the most dependable defenders on the team.



Sean Daly: Sean arrived at the start of the year showing excellent technical ability. He can shoot with both feet, dribble and cover every blade of grass on the pitch. Sean has continued to improve in these areas and is also improving his awareness and tactical understanding of the game. Sean loves scoring goals, but the most encouraging thing we've seen so far this year is how he responds when things don't quite go his way.

Luca Graham-Dressayre : Luca is another player who continues to improve. He is strong, committed and willing to learn each week. Luca enjoys a joke, loves getting to know his teammates and can always be counted on. Luca has played mostly as a left-sided defender although he has covered all positions in our matches so far.

Daniel Thompson: Daniel is probably the chief joker in the team. He is always up for a laugh and brings a great energy each week. Daniel has played in a variety of positions, is tough in the tackle and has a good eye for a pass.

Callum Williamson: Callum brings great pace and energy to the team. He likes to bomb up and down the left side of the field whether it be from defence or midfield. Callum loves training each week and hates if he ever has to miss a match. Callum gets on great with his teammates and can always be counted on for a joke.

Frankie McGill: Frankie has shown great technical ability and an excellent knowledge of the game. He makes great decisions on the pitch whether that be in midfield or attack. Frankie has come up with some big goals for the team including a double in a recent away win to Rosenalis.

Caue Melo: Caue brings a bit of Brazilian flair to the team. He loves a turn or a trick. Caue works really hard off the ball and can be relied upon to play his position. Caue has played in every position this season, even in goals!

Oscar Popis: Oscar is probably the most consistent performer on the team. He does what is asked every week, usually shoring up the centre of defence. Oscar shows really good technical ability and has the pace to get out of tricky situations. Oscar really seems to have grown in confidence this year and is more vocal on the pitch now than before.

Dylan Kinsella: Dylan has consistently performed at a high level this year. He has excellent skills and is developing a good understanding of the game. Dylan shows great determination, and you can see every match means so much to him. Dylan is very adaptable, being comfortable playing in any position on the pitch.

Dylan Delaney: Dylan seems to have modelled his play style on the AC Milan and Italy legend Filippo Inzaghi. Right place, right time, goal. Dylan popped up with some key goals early in the year and has continued to be a great team player. Nothing sums this up more than him volunteering to go in for the 2 nd half for the away win in Rosenalis.



Jacob O'Brien: Jacob balances good technical ability with a great desire to win. Jacob works hard in whatever position he is asked and can be relied upon to put the team first. Jacob has played in defence, midfield and attack and always gives 100% for the team.

Zayd Khan: Zayd has made an excellent start to the season. He is one of the best dribblers on the team, constantly darting left and right in training. Zayd is one of the youngest players on the team, but you wouldn't know it. He puts himself about versus bigger players and usually comes out on top. Zayd has had success in midfield and in attack, notching a few goals and always supporting his teammates.

Cillian Rourke: Cillian is one of the most popular lads on the team. He is thoughtful, kind and one hell of a player. Cillian works really hard in any position, be it defence, midfield or attack. He can be counted on to stop the other team attacking and has come up with some key goals at the other end himself.

We are sure there are some fantastic things to come from all these players for a long time to come in the green of Portlaoise!





Portlaoise Rovers U14s boys for 2023/2024 season, a squad of 18 players, participating in the Blue League.

Rovers is a diverse team of young football enthusiasts, with many of the team being together from the U10s. This year, three players, Jack Flanagan, John Fitzpatrick and Conor Prendergast, moved onto the A team, Portlaoise AFC. Another three moved on to play Basketball, as happens when lads reach an age and focus on one sport instead of many. This made room for new additions and creating a new and exciting team. Last season was not the best for us, and even though we had a tough year, the lads never let their heads drop and continued fighting right up to the end. A new season has seen a new team with additional players joining us, taking our numbers in the squad to 18. Like any new team, we have had a few issues settling down and gelling.

The season's first game was at home, as we hosted Mullingar Ath Cubs, a game we started strong and took the lead early on. Due to the inexperience of the new team, once Mullingar put the pressure on the lads, they found it hard to maintain a lead, and we lost the game 4-2. Due to the weather, we have had three league games cancelled. The lads were very disappointed as all they wanted to do was play football and progress within the league.

The guys' passion for the game and their team is a testament to them. With every loss, they have regrouped and trained harder. The banter during training is excellent. There are some strong characters on the team with prominent personalities, and they encourage each other to do better all the time. We recently came up against a physical side in Grange. Having beat them 8-3 at home, we were expecting a challenging game when we went to their home ground, and they did not disappoint. We all agreed to play in poor conditions and have travelled far away.

The encouragement from the lads on the pitch was fantastic to see. They kept calm when faced with frayed tempers on the pitch and stayed composed when the opposition did not. They continued to play fantastic football, and we left with a victory, 4-1.

To see how much the guys have learned since the start of the season is impressive. Considering that 6 of the lads had no 11 a-side experience and 3 of those had never trained before, they have had to learn on their feet and fast. From not understanding the terminology of football lingo to learning all about formations, they had a lot to catch up on. The original guys on the team were very patient and extremely helpful to all the new members, allowing them to become the best version of themselves.

This team still has a lot to work on, but with their work ethic, they will make significant headway and be a team to watch. With only two wins out of six games in the league, we hope we can continue to win games and climb the table. We are sitting seventh at the minute with three games in hand on six points. Leading the table is St Francis on 17 points. Our next game sees us hosting Gallen United in Rossleighn with a 12:30 kick-off.



Bring on the rest of the season!!!

Squad: Ben Lynch, Odhran Mahony, Thomas Brennan, Dominik Gozyla, James Meade, Darragh Roe, Henry Buckley, Evan Murphy, Adam Cadwell, Jamal Makumbi, Patrick Kelly, Krystian Kaczmarek, Mateusz Dziewonski, Marcin Shimmelpfenner, Ianis Asavei, Blessings Mtawali, Callum Horohan, Luke Conroy

Coaches: Caren Flanagan, Derek Meade, Piotr Dziewonski



Thanks for reading, and for your support.

Portlaoise AFC.