

# PRIDE IN THE JERSEY BACK HOME IN DERRY

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Matthew's  
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# 2

**FEW clubs who entered this competition illustrated the sense of community that the GAA provides better than St Matthews in County Derry.**

A small club at the foot of a mountain that can trace its roots back to 1926, St Matthews exists in the shadow of larger high profile clubs like Dungiven and Glenullin.

"Our club is all our community has," says club member and footballer Colm Feeney. "It's one small village."

"Within a two-minute walk you have the primary school, the GAA club and the Chapel and we always say you start off in the school then come to the GAA club and you want to stay there as long as you can because you don't want to end up in the Chapel," he jokes.

Numbers are tight for this intermediate club but they have broken down barriers to swell their ranks and have reached a hand across the community to invite new people to get involved and play for the club.

"We are one of the few clubs to have Protestant playing members and nothing is made of it.

"It's more important to us to get playing numbers," says club chairman Terry McGilligan.

They were the first club in Ulster to install a state-of-the-art Prunty pitch and when it required an upgrade recently they held a charity boxing night to fund it.

## ULSTER WINNERS: ST MATTHEWS, DRUMSURN, DERRY



**COMMUNITY:** St Matthew's, Drumsurn in Co Derry and (inset) the chairman of St Matthew's Terry McGilligan (left) and club member Colm Feeney who nominated St Matthew's for the Spirit of Club Award

On the field, the club supplied Richard Ferris to the All-Ireland winning Derry squad of 1993 and were represented on successful Derry minor squads of the last decade by Ciaran Mullan and Colm Feeney.

### Spurs

What spurs them on for 2011 is the fact that three years ago they beat Coleraine in a league match — but since then Coleraine kicked on, went senior and caused a sensation by landing the senior county crown.

Nationally, Croke Park is pushing

GAA clubs to push integration with ladies football and camogie into one unit. Here again, Matthews have been ahead of their time.

This club has a core group of volunteers willing to invest heavily in young players.

"Our youth are the most important part of our club," says Colm Feeney "It keeps them away from drugs and crime and what we give them is fun, sport and respect.

"St Matthew's provides an outlet for people with problems to get away from it.

"Competing and having pride in the jersey is all we ask."