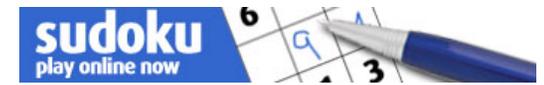


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GAA chief angry at Campbell comments

By Brendan Breen

06/10/08

THE Ulster Council of the GAA has criticised the culture, arts and leisure minister Gregory Campbell over his latest remarks about the organisation.

Writing in Saturday's News Letter Mr Campbell said that while significant steps had been made – including the abolition of Rule 21 which banned British security forces playing for the GAA – the organisation had still not

come in enough.

“The naming of trophies, naming of clubs and the naming of GAA grounds after individuals who were involved in violence... will not help improve community relations or deliver the shared future everyone wants to see,” Mr Campbell wrote.

The comments come just weeks after the minister condemned the use of GAA grounds for republican tributes.

He has previously criticised the naming of GAA grounds after republicans involved in the Troubles.

Mr Campbell was criticised last month over his less-than-enthusiastic response to Tyrone’s recent All-Ireland senior victory.

The minister provoked an angry reaction from GAA supporters and nationalist politicians when he said that Tyrone had won an “international competition” because Kerry was a team from the Republic.

Last night Ulster Council president Tom Daly branded the News Letter comments as “disconcerting and politically motivated”.

He said GAA members across the north were asking themselves how the GAA could now expect fair dealing or equality of treatment from the minister.

“The GAA in Ulster has been acknowledged for its efforts to contribute to better community relations,” Mr Daly said.

“We are a sporting and cultural organisation dedicated to promoting Gaelic games and culture with a commitment to do this in an inclusive way.

“We are committed to the giving of our voluntary time and effort and whatever resources are required in order to achieve positive change.

“The GAA has always faced up to change and is consistent with its values and objective and will continue to do so in the future.”

“The minister tends to focus the need for the GAA to change further.

“There is an old maxim about change someone else should bear in mind – it is usually the thing you think someone else should do.”

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