

# 1995

**Team Manager: P.J. McGowan**

## Dr. Mc Kenna Cup.

1	12 <sup>th</sup> March		Brewester Park	Fermanagh	0-12	Donegal	1-10
2	9 <sup>th</sup> April		Fr. Tierney Park	Donegal	0-08	Monaghan	1-13

**Winners:** Monaghan

## Ulster Senior Football Championship

3	21 <sup>st</sup> May	Prem. round	Clones	Donegal	1-12	Down	0-09
4	18 <sup>th</sup> June		MacCumhaill Park	Donegal	0-08	Monaghan	1-14

Ulster Senior Championship final: Tyrone 2-13 Cavan 0-10

All Ireland Senior Championship Semi-final: Tyrone 1-13 Galway 0-13

All Ireland Senior Championship Semi-final: Dublin 1-12 Cork 0-12

All Ireland Senior Championship final: Dublin 1-12 Tyrone 0-12

## National Football League. – 1994/1995 Allianz NFL Division 1A

5	14 <sup>th</sup> Oct 1994	1	Newry	Down	0-07	Donegal	0-08
6	28 <sup>th</sup> Oct 1994	2	MacCumhaill Park	Donegal	0-15	Derry	2-06
7	13 <sup>th</sup> Nov 1994	3	Croke Park	Dublin	1-08	Donegal	0-12
8	27 <sup>th</sup> Nov 1994	4	MacCumhaill Park	Donegal	1-08	Kildare	1-11
9	19 <sup>th</sup> Feb 1995	5		Laois	0-10	Donegal	0-08
10	5 <sup>th</sup> March	6	Navan	Meath	0-11	Donegal	0-13
11	19 <sup>th</sup> March	7		Kerry	0-14	Donegal	0-10

### Table 19<sup>th</sup> March 1995 – after 7 games

Laois	10
Derry	9
Donegal	8
Kerry	8
Kildare	8
Meath	6
Dublin	5
Down	2

12	26 <sup>th</sup> March	playoff	Tuam	Kerry	1-10	Donegal	1-08
13	2 <sup>nd</sup> April	playoff	Clones	Donegal	1-16	Kildare	0-11
14	16 <sup>th</sup> April	Qtr-final	Tuam	Donegal	2-11	Clare	3-07
15	30 <sup>th</sup> April	Semi-final	Croke Park	Donegal	1-14	Laois	2-08
	30 <sup>th</sup> April	Semi-final	Croke Park	Derry	1-08	Tyrone	2-03
16	14 <sup>th</sup> May	<b>Final</b>	Croke Park	Derry	0-12	Donegal	0-08

## SPORT 11



SF

DR. McKENNA CUP:

# One point win for Donegal

Fermanagh.....0-12  
Donegal.....1-10

Two largely experimented teams proved difficult to separate during this exciting game at Brewster Park before a better than expected attendance of 800.

Although the first half left plenty to desire the final 30 minutes was very close, Fermanagh closing a two point deficit from the first half to lead by two points with 12 minutes played in the second.

*Michael Daly reports from Enniskillen  
Photos by Conor McGonagle*

Donegal fielded a very different side to Sunday week's game in Meath. Gerard Kelly was easily the most impressive of the 'new' players, having a superb first half and a good second. Seanie Boyle also did well. Charles O'Donnell joined midfield instead of Mark McShane who was absent due to a bereavement.

Both Donegal midfielders did much better in the first half but Fermanagh's second-half rally was largely built from midfield where Fergal McCann outshone Railway Cup choice midfielder, Paul Brewster.

Up front Damien Conlon was included but the plan to start Eamon McMenamin and Tommy Ryan was shelved, Ryan out with 'flu and McMenamin used as a sub.

Fermanagh also played with an experimental side, some players unavailable (Mark Gallagher for example) due to Sigerson Cup duties and others rested.

Donegal deserved to be further than two ahead at the break having attacked constantly while their defence were rarely troubled with Eugene McMenamin and John Joe Doherty very comfortable.

The first Donegal chance created could have finished in the net but both John Duffy (off the bar/angle) and Damien Conlon (blocked down) were denied. Midfielder Charles O'Donnell scored a fine point to open their account but Fermanagh corner back Tommy Callaghan replied with

an adventurous sortie from defence before pointing.

John Duffy, causing many problems hit two in a row, his second ending an all Ballyshannon build up with Conlon and O'Donnell involved. Martin Greene did well to point after a Brian Carty knock-down but Donegal added another, a quickly placed Tony Boyle side-line funding Manus Boyle who did well to finish with a score.

## BRILLIANT SCORES

Donegal finished two brilliant scores in the next two minutes. The first involved the three Boyles, Tony winning the long ball, passing to Seanie who gave to Manus who took a point rather than risking a goal attempt. Seconds later Gerard Kelly's vision and passing set up a score, his long ball placing John Duffy in space on the right. Manus Boyle finished with a fine point.

Fermanagh ended the half well with Paul Greene pointing two times, both scores well finished by the Derrygonnelly man. It gave Fermanagh a flattering score-line; Donegal really should have been further ahead than 0-6 to 0-4.

## CONDITIONS

Although without rain, conditions were draining on Sunday, the pitch very heavy. However, Donegal's tendency to play very tight allowed Fermanagh close quarter contact and a few players took very heavy punishment - Manus Boyle the victim of a very dangerous shove over the side-line from Paul Brewster. Boyle did well to avoid crashing into the dug-out and was rightly annoyed with Brewster.

Charles O'Donnell also took some very hefty closed fist abuse but showed a cool head in very testing circumstances. Overall though, Donegal tended to bunch too much and the failure of Tony Boyle to get very far away from a close marking fullback Paddy McGuinness tended to reduce clear-cut options. Fermanagh's main failure - more apparent in the latter stages - was their failure to stop Donegal building attacks from defence, easier said than done.

However, Fermanagh created plenty of problems early in the second half with four early points. From a Brewster 45 Paul Callaghan made a fine save after the ball had been dropped. However, Paul Greene, Colm Courtney had their side level by the 7th minute. Three minutes later Brian Carty scored the lead point and sub Mark Lunny scored the game's first free after a dubious free against John Joe Doherty.

## DONEGAL GOAL

Donegal's goal was well constructed but had an element (large) of luck to it. It came from a Charles O'Donnell high ball which was well retrieved by John Duffy who flicked it across the goal. Jim McGuinness dived to fist to the net but his effort hit the post. Fermanagh 'keeper Cormac McAdam, attempting to cover the danger knocked the rebound to his own net.

The final 13 minutes saw Fermanagh draw level on four occasions but each time Donegal were good enough to add another and ultimately the winning point.

Brian Carty levelled from a 40 metre free from the hands but from a Jim McGuinness won free, Manus Boyle pointed. Immediately Fergal McCann replied. Donegal then had a goal chance but Jim McGuinness hit the post.

Declan Bonner won another free, a tricky one at that but Manus Boyle converted it to put Donegal one ahead 1-8 to 0-10 with six minutes left.

## SUPERB POINT

From a '45 Fermanagh's Brewster pointed to inspire Fermanagh. However, Donegal deserve great credit, Tony Boyle making a superb run before releasing to point scorer Eamon McMenamin. Yet again Fermanagh replied, Carty finding Paul Greene who levelled with a superb point.

Donegal won the game with a memorable point. The ball was worked through seven players, starting in defence and ending with Manus Boyle beating two defenders before scoring the winner.

In the final seconds Declan Bonner had a chance to consolidate that lead but McAdam made a fine save to deny

him.

Fermanagh may have come closer than expected but to Donegal's credit they showed tremendous resolve to come up with vital scores, none more so than Manus Boyle's winner. Again at midfield Donegal lacked a player who could win the ball conclusively and consistently. In attack John Duffy continues to be the creative influence, Declan Bonner had another good game but ran out of puff. Tony Boyle was too well guarded but remains a brilliant target man.

In defence there is a steady flow of good markers, Kelly and Boyle very impressive, Crossan, McMenamin, Cunningham and Doherty very good on Sunday.

Paddy McGuinness impressed this writer; the Devenish player kept very close to Boyle all afternoon, Raymie Curran, Fergal McCann, the Greene brothers Paul and Martin, Brian Carty, Mark Lunny and the excellent ball user Bart O'Brien also did well.

**Fermanagh:** Cormac McAdam, Tommy Callaghan (0-1), Paddy McGuinness, Pearse Collins, Raymond Curran, Tony Collins, Kieran Gallagher, Paul Brewster (0-1, '45), Fergal McCann (0-1), Colm Courtney (0-1), Paul Greene (0-4), Martin Greene (0-1), Paul Coyle, Brian Carty (0-2, one free), Gary Smyth. Subs: Mark Lunny (0-1, free) (25minutes) for Smyth; Bart O'Brien (28 mins) for Curran (injd).

**Donegal:** Paul Callaghan, John Cunningham, John Joe Doherty, Gerard Kelly, Seanie Boyle, Eugene McMenamin, Mark Crossan, John Ban Gallagher, Charles O'Donnell (0-1), Damien Conlon, Declan Bonner, Jim McGuinness (1-0), John Duffy (0-2), Tony Boyle, Manus Boyle (0-6, two frees. Sub: Eamon McMenamin (50 mins, 0-1), for Conlon.

**Referee:** Gerry McClorey (Antrim).

**Statistics:** Amazingly, only five of the 23 scores came from frees; Donegal had only six wides, Fermanagh had six also; Donegal were awarded 29 frees, 12 in the first half, Fermanagh 19, ten in the first half; Although several players were spoken to, none were booked.

## DR. McKENNA CUP



The Donegal team who defeated Fermanagh in last Sunday's Dr. McKenna Cup clash at Enniskillen. Back, l. to r., Tony Boyle, Jim McGuinness, John Joe Doherty, Gerard Kelly, John Ban Gallagher, Paul Callaghan, Declan Bonner, Charles O'Donnell. Front, l. to r., Manus Boyle, Seanie Boyle, Mark Crossan, Damien Conlon, John Cunningham, Eugene McMenamín and John Duffy.



Colm Courtney avoids a Mark Crossan tackle. The linesman, who had a number of close calls to make on Sunday, is Donegal assistant secretary, Edward Molloy.

Fermanagh.....0-12  
Donegal.....1-10

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*Michael Daly reports from Enniskillen  
Photos by Conor McGonagle*

# SUPERB SMYTH BEATS LETHARGIC DONEGAL

**DONEGAL** ..... 0-8  
**MONAGHAN** ..... 1-13

**MONAGHAN** qualified for the final of the Dr. McKenna Cup with a richly deserved win over lethargic Donegal at Fr. Tierney Park, Ballyshannon, on Sunday.

**Eight superb second-half points from Under-21 star, Declan Smyth, including five in the space of ten minutes after the resumption, paved the way for Monaghan's success.**

A poor crowd of around 700 watched an experimental Donegal side lose their way completely in the second period against Division Four champions, Monaghan, who recorded twelve wides during a woeful display of finishing in the first half-hour.

P.J. McGowan, the Donegal manager, used the fixture to try out some of his fringe players out, the absence of seven regulars, Gary Walsh, Matt Gallagher, Barry McGowan, Mark Crossan,

Brian Murray, John Duffy and Manus Boyle, was blatantly obvious from early on.

After a mediocre first-half, during which the sides were level on two occasions, Monaghan, keener and

sharper, raced into a 0-8 to 0-4 lead by the 37th minute. They completely dominated the game in the second-half and, that purple patch during the third quarter wrapped the game up as a contest.

From a Donegal point of view, this was a fixture they might want to quickly forget. Apart from the superb work-rate of James McHugh, Mark McShane, and the return to inter-county action of Martin Gavigan, there wasn't much to write home about.

For Monaghan, who entertain Laois in the quarter-finals of the National League at headquarters on Sunday, this was the perfect tonic and should help their confidence in Croke Park.

Six wides inside the opening ten minutes was Monaghan's return for their territorial advantage early on and, remarkably, after eighteen minutes the sides were level at 0-2 apiece.

Ian Larmer's second point and, another by the same player after a bad mistake by Noel Hegarty, put Monaghan 0-4 to 0-2 ahead by the 22nd minute.

Larmer, who looked Monaghan's most lively forward in the first-half, should have done much better when he found himself clean through on goals with just Paul Callaghan to beat in the 23rd minute but, his weak effort was cleared off the goal-line by J.J. Doherty.

Minutes later, Declan Smyth also blasted wide with the goal at his mercy, after intelligent play by Ray McCarron.

Donegal's expected comeback, with the assistance of the wind, never materialised in the second-half and, they were able to add just four points, two from free-kicks.

Donegal's problems in the first-half stemmed from problems around centre-field, coupled with over-elaboration up front. Smyth led the way for Monaghan in the early stages of the second-half with five superb points and, another from full-forward

Kieran Lavelle, had them 0-10 to 0-4 in front by the 40th minute.

Substitute, Joe Coyle, should have done better when he pounced on an error by Donegal netminder, Paul Callaghan, but the Monaghan forward's effort was cleared off the goal-line by the experienced Martin Shovlin.

Two more points from the gifted Smyth stretched the Monaghan lead to eight points, before Donegal replied with two in a row from Tommy Ryan and Tony Boyle.

A terrific pass by Smyth put full-forward Lavelle through in the 47th minute but, he failed to find the target from close range. Smyth's eighth point in the 51st minute stretched the Monaghan lead to seven points, 0-13 to 0-6, and incredibly twenty-five minutes elapsed before the visitors recorded the first wide of the second-half.

After a free by Declan Bonner, Monaghan got a deserved goal via corner-forward Gregory Flanagan, who was first to react after a shot from Smyth rebounded off the post. Eamon McMenamin got a late consolation point but, it was a case of too little too late.

For Monaghan, Martin Slowey, John Conlon and Gerard McGurk were excellent in defence, while

Frank McEneaney and Padraig McShane more than held their own at midfield. Up front, 'Man of the Match' Smyth and Lavelle, along with the crafty Ray McCarron impressed.

From a Donegal point of view, it looked as if too many had thoughts on Sunday's league quarter-final against Clare in Castlebar.

Scorers: — **Monaghan:** D. Smyth, 0-8 (0-3 frees), G. Flanagan, 1-0, I. Larmer, 0-3 (0-1 free), K. Lavelle, 0-2. **Donegal:** E. McMenamin, 0-3 (0-1 free); J.B. Gallagher, T. Ryan, D. Conlon; D. Bonner, T. Boyle, 0-1 each.

**MONAGHAN:** — J. O'Connor, E. Murphy, D. King, N. Marron; Martin Slowey, G. McGurk, J. Conlon; P. McShane and F. McEneaney; D. Smyth, Michael Slowey, I. Larmer, R. McCarron, K. Lavelle, G. Flanagan.

Subs: — C. Moen for King, J. Coyle for Larmer, C. McCaul for Coyle (injured).

**DONEGAL:** — P. Callaghan; D. Diver, J.J. Doherty, J. Cunningham; S. Boyle, N. Hegarty, M. Shovlin; E. McMenamin and M. McShane; J. McHugh; J.B. Gallagher, P. Hegarty, T. Ryan, T. Boyle, D. Conlon.

Subs: — M. Gavigan for S. Boyle; D. Bonner for Ryan; C. O'Donnell for Gallagher.

Referee: J. Curran (Tyrone).

**DONEGAL** ..... 1-12  
**DOWN** ..... 0-9

*Michael Daly reports*

*Photos by Conor McGonagle*

The first round of the Ulster Championship has still to be played and already the defending Ulster and All-Ireland champions are out of the competition.

This was the story coming from Clones last Sunday evening and with it news that Down's conquerors, Donegal, are once again a team to be feared.

Clearly reputations and titles count for little and this was so in the soft rain falling as a crowd of some 26,000 marvelled at the footballing ability of two excellent sides.

Ulster, the graveyard for champions, saw Down buried in a welter of Donegal passion. The intensity of every challenge had a manic quality. Demons seemed to live in the eyes of the Donegal players. Haunted by the fear of losing everything inside eight days, Donegal thrashed and danced for 70 minutes, Down simply had no response, their season finished before it started, a humiliating end in a way, relegated to Division Two and now out of the Championship.

A year on the merry-go-round of celebrations and dinner invitations circuit has clearly dulled Down's instinct for battle. They had no heart for this.

Donegal by contrast were charging down every half-chance for a breaking ball. Their hunger was encapsulated in the thin, rakish frame of an elegant Paddy Hegarty. Lean, hard, athletic, inventive, incisive his game and his frame stood for everything that was right about this Donegal display.

### FAT AND LANGUID

Down appeared fat, almost languid, on the honey of success. Donegal, wounded badly, both physically and mentally by last week's League final defeat, had a job to do. Their plans were clinical, their ploys simple and effective.

Much of the winning and losing of this game revolved around the castration of Down's feeding link. Greg Blaney is the conduit for so much of what is creative. He generally starts the move, people like Linden and McCartan do the finishing.

But Blaney was neutralised by Noel Hegarty. As good as Keith Barr when Keith Barr was good going forward, Hegarty was better than a Tony Scullion covering. Blaney ended up marking Hegarty, the ball supply to Linden and McCartan was sporadic, hurried and hopeful, there was little pattern because there was nothing to make a pattern with. Noel Hegarty had the ball.

If he hadn't then Martin Gavigan had it or was breaking it down to Martin Shovlin, Mark Crossan and James McHugh. Then there was Brian Murray, one of many players needing to restore pride. He went two handed for the ball, he won the ball. Midfield was definitely, advantage Donegal.

Up front, modern medicine ensured Tony Boyle's presence and it mattered. Although he scored but one point, it was a marvel. He came out, slid onto the ball and got away from his man in the one movement; forward play at close to its best.

Down were sluggish, yet they could have had an early James McCartan goal, the timber and Gary Walsh denying the burly full-forward. Little things

started to go wrong. The right side of their defence was ripped asunder by Manus Boyle in the opening minutes, Micheal Magill losing three individual contests in-a-row.

### ELUSIVE McHUGH

Barry Breen lumbered after the whippet-like Hegarty, D. J. Kane found himself chasing the elusive James McHugh while Brian Burns was tormented by the agile Tony Boyle.

Fifteen minutes from the finish, Down were a well beaten team. Their discipline had looked suspect as the hefty challenges rained down. Gary Mason was sent off for a blatant punch on John Joe Doherty, who is now nursing a broken nose. But, some time before that 45th minute bust up, Donegal had gained the edge.

However, it took Donegal a worrying seven minutes to firm home their obvious advantage from that sending-off, Paddy Hegarty's energy and close control slitting a gap between two defenders before he pointed. A crucial score.

After 35 intriguing minutes it was delicately poised, Donegal nosing in front 0-7 to 0-6. It was an apt scoreline, reflecting vividly the closeness of the game.

Both sides hit the bar in the first few minutes. Manus Boyle drove a free low, Neil Collins lost the flight of the ball but managed to escort it onto his bar. On seven minutes, the sides were level at a point apiece from Ross Carr and Manus scores, Down created their one real defence splitting move. Ross Carr opened the move, Aidan Farrell's flicked ball sent McCartan through but the bar and Gary Walsh combined to deny him.

Down stuck to their published line-out, Donegal didn't. Noel Hegarty went centre-back, Martin Gavigan to midfield and Mark McShane to right-half forward.

The tactical switches worked superbly. Gavigan and Murray were too powerful for Deegan and McCartan.

Down again led 0-3 to 0-2, Gregory McCartan pointing their first from play in reply to a super Tony Boyle point. Manus again levelled, again pointing from play; Mickey Linden stole half a yard of space from Barry McGowan to hit his only point.

Donegal looked quite happy. In defence, their audacity included a soccer back-pass to Gary Walsh. James McHugh came onto a four-man move for their fourth point on 22 minutes, the heavy rain that made conditions slippery before the minor match, returned to complicate the equation.

Donegal hearts stopped as Tony Boyle's damaged leg was tested by a Brian Burns trip but Boyle resumed, Burns was booked. After a two minute delay to treat Boyle, John Duffy showed admirable nerve to hit the free.

### DONEGAL LEAD

Donegal took the lead for the first time four minutes from the break, Barry Breen hauling down Paddy Hegarty and Manus Boyle pointing the free. Down responded with a cleverly worked short free from Carr, Aidan Farrell pointing.

Donegal went in ahead thanks to a Brian Murray point, John Duffy picking him out well with a fisted pass.

The half ended with four players involved in a nasty exchange that eventually sucked in several more players from both sides. Monaghan official, Pat McEaney, blew for half-time to end the incident and booked Martin Shovlin and James McCartan just before he started the second half.

Down failed to make any real impression in the early stages of the second half, even with a modestly strengthening breeze. Donegal looked impressive in their build-up play but three wides in four minutes looked potentially fatal.

A score did finally arrive on 40 minutes, Manus Boyle's finish quite enterprising. By contrast, Down looked and played dishevelled football, underlined when a Blaney through ball ambled harmlessly wide.

Aiden Farrell and James McCartan made a switch but there was little to counter Donegal's dominance, the Hegarty brothers combining with Paddy firing over a fine point to give Donegal a three point lead.

### CONTROVERSIAL INCIDENT

What could have proved a turning point in this game in Down's favour, a goal from a 13m free which was disallowed, will long be discussed. Gregory McCartan was fouled and took the free instantly to hit the net but the Monaghan official insisted that the free be taken again. Correct by rule, wrong in spirit of interpretation, this was a significant factor. Down pointed the re-taken free and added another from Gregory McCartan to narrow the gap to a point yet again.

From here to the finish Down reinforced their own demise, Mason sent-off for a blow to Doherty who recovered to play as the extra-man.

Donegal played the advantage perfectly, moving the ball patiently from player to player, Paddy Hegarty hitting a memorable point after he dummied two players. In his first full championship start this was the dream debut one could wish for.

Ross Carr attempted to rescue Down with an ambitious free from close to the sideline, like an earlier effort, it sailed narrowly wide. Donegal's Martin Gavigan extended the lead to three points, Mark McShane setting him up.

Donegal cleared a Down counter to finish with a superb point, Noel Hegarty, Paddy Hegarty and Manus involved.

Down lost further time when Declan Bonner was swiped down but they came again with Gary Walsh effecting a marvellous save from James McCartan, Gregory McCartan pointing the rebound.

### GOAL

With Down well beaten, Donegal drove home their advantage with a late goal, Noel Hegarty sweeping a hopeful ball from his tired legs to the centre. It drifted onto the bar/upright and rebounded to Manus Boyle who calmly palmed the ball away from Neil Collins and into the net.

Ciaran McCabe went through to find the net at the other end but was hauled back for overcarrying. It was that sort of day for Down; for Donegal hard graft and ample scoring chances brought the victory that will restore their pride and set them up for a fascinating championship.

There are all sorts of possibilities, a meeting with Monaghan is the next assignment, possibly a meeting with Cavan thereafter. The alternative to a summer without the championship, something only Down have now to contemplate. Rather them than Donegal.

**Donegal:** Gary Walsh; John Joe Doherty, Matt Gallagher, Barry McGowan; Mark Crossan, Noel Hegarty, Martin Shovlin; Martin Gavigan (0-1), Brian Murray (0-1); Mark McShane, James McHugh (0-1), Paddy Hegarty (0-2); John Duffy (0-1, free), Tony Boyle (0-1), Manus Boyle (1-5, one free). Subs., Declan Bonner (60 mins.) for Duffy; John Gildea (66 mins.) for J. J. Doherty.

**Down:** Neil Collins; Micheal Magill, Brian Burns, Paul Higgins; Eamonn Burns, Barry Breen, D. J. Kane; Gregory McCartan (0-3), Conor Deegan; Ross Carr (0-3, frees), Greg Blaney, Aidan Farrell (0-1); Mickey Linden (0-1), James McCartan, Gary Mason (0-1). Subs., Ciaran McCabe (65 mins.) for Farrell; Gerard Colgan for Deegan.

**Referee:** Pat McEaney (Monaghan).



Tense moments . . . Donegal team boss P. J. McGowan on bended knee with mentors Seamus Gallagher, Michael Lafferty, trainer Patsy McGonaale mentor Tom Comack and county treasurer Sean McGinley equally engrossed.

DONEGAL ..... 1-12  
DOWN ..... 0-9



*Michael Daly reports*

*Photos by Conor McGonagle*

The first round of the Ulster Championship has still to be played and already the defending Ulster and All-Ireland champions are out of the competition.

This was the story coming from Clones last Sunday evening and with it news that Down's conquerors, Donegal, are once again a team to be feared.

Clearly reputations and titles count for little and this was so in the soft rain falling as a crowd of some 26,000 marvelled at the footballing ability of two excellent sides.

Sunday 21 May 1995

**NO AMOUNT** of praise would be superfluous in acknowledging Donegal's contribution to football in the 90s.

Whether it was League or Championship, the approach was always positive and this attitude contributed to yesterday's excellent win over All Ireland champions Down.

It was Donegal's seventh competitive match in nine weeks but they never complained and managed to put on a top-class display in toppling the champions in a game that was often tough and hard.

# Too tough for Down



## LEAGUE DEFEAT HELPED DONEGAL

- "The defeat in the League final laid the foundations for this success" - PJ McGowan (Donegal manager).
- "The older players had not forgotten the defeat we suffered to Down in the 1991 Ulster final. This was our revenge" - Martin Gavigan (Donegal).
- "The goals looked awfully small, but I decided my best option was to palm the ball and thankfully it found the net" - Manus Boyle (Donegal).
- "The goal which we so badly needed never really looked like coming" - Peter McGrath (Down manager).
- "Donegal are experts at using the extra man. We never left the blocks" - James McCartan (Down)

### Power

Even though Down scored first the game was not too long in progress before a few significant features began to emerge.

For a start there was little evidence of the fluency and power which characterised the Down forward unit's play last year.

This time round famous names such as Mickey Linden, James McCartan and Greg Blaney failed to make headway against a very

efficient Donegal defence.

That defence had key players in John Joe Doherty, Barry McGowan and Noel Hegarty.

Hegarty's work rate was phenomenal as he assumed the role of attacking defender in addition to keeping a close watch on Down's main play planner of '94, Greg Blaney.

The story was different at the other end of the field with the Down defence

looking unsure at times and unable to contain the clever play of Paddy Hegarty, Manus and Tony Boyle.

Still, both sides found it difficult to register scores during the first half but Donegal were assuming more and more confidence as half time approached.

### Row

Referee Pat McEneaney wisely blew the half time whistle just as he had succeeded in quenching a nasty row which had developed among a large number of players.

There was an air of praiseworthy arrogance in the manner in Donegal headed for the dressing room, carrying a one point lead with them.

They resumed with the same confidence and enjoyed a near monopoly of possession during the opening five minutes of the second half.

They should have turned this superiority into scores and must be faulted for some atrocious shooting for a while.

This more than anything was the reason that Down stayed in touch and Donegal's lead was only a mere

point when Down's Gary Mason was sent off in the 14th minute.

He was guilty of an off the ball foul on John Joe Doherty right in front of a linesman who brought the incident to the notice of the referee.

It could be said that Down's challenge petered out after this.

At one stage Donegal led by four points but the tension and excitement did not diminish because the possibility of a saving Down goal was still there.

### ROY CURTIS

# Donegal too good for the champions

**DONEGAL** boss PJ McGowan masterminded the downfall of All Ireland champions Down yesterday — then insisted: "We won't let this victory go to our heads."

A superb Donegal performance left Down bankrupt as the Bank of Ireland Championship opened in spectacular fashion.

Down simply had no answer to an inspired Donegal side who ran out 1-12 to 0-9 winners after a tremendous struggle.

McGowan was thrilled with the biggest success of his management career.

But he said: "We are keeping our feet firmly on the ground.

"This was a great result, but it was only a preliminary round.

"We have won nothing yet.

"Playing in the League final last week helped us a lot.

"While we lost that game, it laid the foundations for today's win.

"We had 15 men in the right frame of mind, while Martin Gavigan gave us an extra edge in midfield."

Down's agony was compounded when Gary Mason was sent off midway through the second half.

"That was the crucial moment. No team can exploit an extra man as well as Donegal," Down manager Pete McGrath said.

"We didn't have the right pattern or cohesion and missed scores we would normally get."

McGrath urged his players not to rush into any decisions about their futures.

## ULSTER SFC Preliminary Round Sunday, May 21

**DONEGAL**.....1-12 **DOWN**.....0-9  
**DONEGAL:** G Walsh 8; JJ Doherty 8, M Gallagher 7, B McGowan 8; M Crossan 7, N Hegarty 9, M Shovlin 7; M Gavigan (0-1) 9, B Murray (0-1) 7; M McShane 8, J McHugh (0-1) 7, P Hegarty (0-2) 9; J Duffy (0-1) 5, T Boyle (0-1) 7, M Boyle (1-5) 9. **Sub:** D Bonner for Duffy 61 mins.  
**Points:** M Boyle 7, 19, 32, 41, 63; P Hegarty 44, 59; T Boyle 17; J McHugh 22; J Duffy 30; B Murray 34; M Gavigan 62. **Goals:** M Boyle 66. **Booked:** M Gavigan, M Shovlin. **Sent-off:** None.

**DOWN:** N Collins 7; M Magill 5, B Burns 5, P Higgins 6; E Burns 5, B Breen 5, DJ Kane 8; G McCartan (0-3) 8, C Deegan 8; R Carr (0-3) 7, G Blaney 6, A Farrell (0-1) 6; M Linden (0-1) 6, J McCartan 7, G Mason (0-1) 0. **Subs:** C Burns for Deegan 64 mins, C McCabe for Farrell 66 mins.  
**Points:** R Carr 6, 10, 48; G McCartan 17, 50, 65; M Linden 21; G Mason 23; A Farrell 33. **Goals:** None. **Booked:** B Burns, J McCartan. **Sent-off:** G Mason.

**Referee:** P McEneaney (Monaghan). **Attendance:** 26,000. **Weather:** Showery. **Ground Conditions:** Good but slightly slippery.

ULSTER SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIP

# A shock defeat

DONEGAL ..... 0-8  
MONAGHAN ..... 1-14

By Michael Daly

With the exception of the opening ten minutes Donegal struggled to contain a youthful Monaghan team who carved out one of the shocks of the season, and did so in emphatic style at MacCumhaill Park, Ballybofey, last Sunday where the majority of the crowd in an attendance of 12,000 watched in almost silent amazement as Donegal crumbled before their eyes.

Confined to scoring just two points in the early stages of the second half, Donegal's anticipated revival never materialised. Monaghan, boosted by a superbly saved penalty in the first minute, took further heart from a peculiar goal that entered the net off the body of goalkeeper Gary Walsh.

The visitors are the first team to win the Championship at MacCumhaill Park since 1987 when Armagh inflicted defeat. Monaghan not only won in Donegal's backyard but they did so with astonishing ease, their victory margin of nine points more than a double scores win.

When one considers these facts and the youthful blend used by Monaghan — their half-back line was all new and five players were making their championship debut — their win is all the more remarkable.

One must also add that they won easily against a Donegal side who will play in League Division One while they will contest Division Three this year. There is the further consideration that defies explanation. Donegal, four weeks ago, were good enough to defeat the defending All-Ireland champions having just lost a National League final a week earlier to Derry.

## DEJECTION

Adding all these imponderables together it is easy to understand the celebrations by the Monaghan fans and players at the final whistle, easy also to appreciate the dejection now felt in Donegal footballing circles since Sunday last.

However, what is particularly difficult to come to terms with this week is the way in which Donegal played this game. Although there had been ample warning about complacency from the team manager, Donegal's attitude, their lack of drive and the ease with which Monaghan eventually won this game poses many questions.

As the game wore on Donegal were found to be in trouble in virtually every position. From frees all of the place-kickers had a relatively poor return. In midfield, after a brief flurry, Donegal were struggling with Declan Loughman used well as a

third midfielder rather than full-forward.

Monaghan's lack of experience rarely told. Their untried half-backline were raiding in packs and defending competently. Their forwards found plenty of room to create scores and they had much more success from their full-forward than Donegal who hit little quality ball to their expected dangerman, Tony Boyle.

In the opening 30 seconds Donegal won a penalty when James McHugh was upended by full-back King. However, from the kick Declan Bonner's low drive was brilliantly saved. Bonner hit the ball hard and low, but too near the diving O'Connor. From the '45' Manus Boyle failed to convert.

However, it was a promising start and Monaghan looked uncomfortable.

In the early stages Donegal led twice by a point, Manus Boyle ending a fine move and Martin Gavigan replying confidently to a Declan Smyth free.

## GOAL

Donegal lost their advantage from frees twice in the next few minutes, losing two hop-ball contests and Monaghan struck for a strange goal, the ball flighted in by Loughman going over Gary Walsh, rebounding off the post before going into the net off the 'keeper's body.

Two excellently pointed Smyth frees gave Monaghan the confidence they needed and their younger players, half-backs Joe Coyle and John Conlon, aided by the roving Peter Duffy and the speedy Stephen McGinnity caused a lot of problems.

Brian Murray stemmed the growing gulf with a neat point but a Peter Duffy point from an acute angle emphasised the now oozing Monaghan confidence. Half-back John Conlon typified his side's ability to get forward when he took a Loughman pass before pointing assuredly. This left Monaghan five points ahead with 19 minutes played.

Manus Boyle added his first pointed free from 35 metres but a foul on Declan Smyth saw the same player hit a glorious point from his hands from close to 50 metres out. Play was held up for an injury to Martin Gavigan but Monaghan again took the initiative when play resumed, Duffy, Murphy and McShane combining for the latter to score.

Although Monaghan seemed to tire in the final stages of a 40 minute first half (due to stoppages) Donegal made little real impression, Noel Hegarty pointing after a good run. Donegal brought in John Duffy for Mark McShane but failed to add further to their first half total, 0-6 to Monaghan's 1-7.

The second half saw Monaghan score after five minutes. Declan Smyth again found the range from an angled free while Manus Boyle replied, also from a free. Boyle added his fourth score in the 12th minute of the second half, but Donegal were to fail to score from that moment.

They introduced John Gildea for Declan Bonner in an attempt to spur their attack, an attack in which

Manus Boyle was now playing at centre forward. Reasonable claims for a penalty after a foul on Brian Murray fell on deaf ears and while Donegal won copious frees 60/70 metres out from the Monaghan goal, frees from close range were rarely awarded.

When they were, Donegal couldn't make them count and the loss of confidence was underlined when a pointable free was kicked short and cleared by Monaghan.

In attack Tony Boyle was finding David King a worthy opponent in the air, the Aughnamullen no. 3 winning good ball in the air but another aspect of his game, the personal foul, apart from a booking, went unpunished.

In an attempt to make an impression Boyle moved further outfield but Monaghan were sensing victory, McGinnity hitting a fine score to push his side four points clear.

## POST

While playing poorly and unable to match Monaghan's workrate, Donegal can count themselves unlucky at times. Paddy Hegarty went agonisingly close when he fisted a John Duffy mishit effort onto the post.

With centre forward Michael Slowe, midfielders McShane and McEneaney prominent, Monaghan went on to win easily in the final 12 minutes, Duffy adding his third point after a great run.

Still Donegal couldn't get the break. Barry McGowan blasted a shot into a crowded goalmouth, the rebound cleared from James McHugh's boot for a '45' which was hit wide, Donegal's tenth and final wide of a frustrating afternoon.

Pauric McShane robbed Donegal who were attacking to hit a point and Declan Smyth tapped over from 40 metres for his second point from play in the 70th minute.

At the final whistle the Monaghan supporters and team illustrated the importance of their win with prolonged on pitch celebrations. For Donegal the final whistle must have been greeted with a certain relief, many, many of their supporters having left the ground long before it sounded.

**DONEGAL:** Gary Walsh, John Joe Doherty, Matt Gallagher, Barry McGowan, Mark Crossan, Noel Hegarty (0-1), Martin Shovlin, Martin Gavigan (0-1), Brian Murray (0-1), Mark McShane, James McHugh, Paddy Hegarty, Declan Bonner (0-1, frees), Tony Boyle, Manus Boyle (0-4, two frees). Subs. John Duffy (35 mins.) for McShane; John Gildea (47 mins.) for Bonner.

**MONAGHAN:** John O'Connor, Edwin Murphy, David King, Noel Marron, Martin Slowe, Joe Coyle, John Colhoun (0-1), Pauric McShane (0-2), Frank McEneaney, Declan Loughman (1-0), Michael Slowe, Gregory Flanagan, Stephen McGinnity (0-2), Peter Duffy (0-3), Declan Smyth (0-6, 4 frees). Sub. Ray McCarron (66 mins.) for Flanagan.

**Referee:** Jim Curran (Tyrone).



# A magnificent start for Donegal

DOWN ..... 0-7  
DONEGAL ..... 0-8

Donegal made a magnificent start to the new season with this very valuable victory against newly crowned All-Ireland champions, Down, at the Marshes, Newry, before 4,500 spectators.

*Michael Daly reports  
from Newry*

Once Donegal got over the pleasantries of forming a guard-of-honour to usher the new champions onto the field, one knew there would be some serious business attended to.

And so it was, the full-backs, Matt Gallagher, Eugene McMenamin and John Joe Doherty (who all played very well) hitting hard and hassling superbly; the midfielders Murray and McShane winning that sector and the forwards looking very lively.

Declan Bonner had his best game in an age, John Duffy was magnificent when it really mattered.

But new rule changes and an unhelpful cross-field wind stymied some of Donegal's best first-half play. Add to that the intervention of a Down defender to deny a Paddy Hegarty goal and a narrow wide from goal-seeking John Duffy and you can appreciate the frustration Donegal must have felt at half-time when they led by only two points, having been by far the superior team.

In the second half, Down did improve a great deal, particularly in the first 15 minutes of the half and scored four nice points without a reply coming from Donegal.

Having trailed by two, 0-2 to 0-4, at the break, Down appeared to be in a much stronger position by the 41st minute, leading 0-6 to 0-4.

But Donegal's desire to do well never was as obvious as they fought their way back into contention. Declan Bonner, once more going where it hurts to win a free, fired over a vital score from the free.

## IMPORTANT SWITCHES

Manager, P. J. McGowan, then made the first of two very significant switches. The first one, the moving of John Duffy from corner to left-half forward was a familiar one, having seen Aodh Ruadh do likewise for much of the championship. However, equally important was the switch between John Gildea and Tony Boyle.

Boyle had been deprived of quality ball for much of the game. In part one can blame the astute marking by Brian Burns but one must also question the reluctance of colleagues to hit him with the long ball.

Moving him with 15 minutes left made a difference. The teamwork in the half-forward line improved and the player to benefit most was substitute, Eamon McMenamin, who replaced Paddy Hegarty. However, McMenamin couldn't avail of the chances that arose through his good positioning sense and the fine ball given to him.

## PHYSICAL POWER

With ten minutes left Donegal were playing with a great deal of physical power. Full-back, Eugene McMenamin, having a solid game, made a big catch; Martin Shovlin, rejuvenated now, made a litany of brave interceptions, often at the risk of sustaining serious injury.

John Cunningham and Mark Crossan were rebutting Down with sheer power football while Mark McShane, good for most of the match, seemed to hit a great patch of real industry when it was needed most.

With all these players battling bravely, Donegal then needed someone to finish. Brian Murray fly-kicked the ball through a crowd of players to find John Duffy. Duffy burst past two markers and screwed a rasping left-foot drive over from 30 metres. It was a beautiful point, using the outside of the boot to perfection.

With the sides now level, 0-6 each, we had the curse of the new

rules befalling Donegal for a third time in the match, young McMenamin caught out. Still Donegal kept coming and Briar Murray came through the middle to put John Gildea in with a chance which was blocked out for a '45'.

Manus Boyle's kick, one of several low ones by him, was snapped up by Duffy who turned and pointed with his right boot.

With three minutes to play John Gildea, playing much better since switched inside, came through two tackles but was eventually fouled. Despite Down protests the free stood and Manus Boyle converted the free.

## STUPID RULE

Down replied in less than a minute. Greg Blaney scored the point when he received a second consecutive fisted pass. However, it was no surprise that the referee missed this foul. The speed of the move from one end of the field to the other, the excitement of the game at that stage and the complete unnatural nature of this stupid rule, would be enough to confuse anyone — I missed the foul sitting watching the game; how could a ref be blamed for not seeing it?

In the end this score was academic as Down failed to add to it to salvage a point. The game ended with Martin Shovlin yet again the recipient of some heavy challenges which prompted a very brief flare-up.

It was a superb victory for Donegal but it was hardly a good game. The new rules, in particular, the consecutive fisted pass one (I have no difficulties with the others apart from feeling scoreboard operators will find the kick-out one confusing), the cross-field wind and the impact that All-Ireland celebrations had on Down, combined to take the sheen off what might have been a classic.

The first half, in particular, was very dull. Apart from John Duffy's narrow miss and Paddy Hegarty's great run and shot, the other events of note included a marvellous score from Brian Murray. Donegal had been leading 0-2 to 0-1, points coming from a Bonner free and a Manus score from play. Murray came through for the score of the day which he hit from just 45 metres, like Duffy, using the outside of the boot. Elsewhere in the half Declan Bonner pointed another free in the 27th minute while Down's scores came in the 12th and 14th minutes, Farrell and Gregory McCartan, from a free, scoring.

Down, with only eight of their All-Ireland winning side, missed some pointable frees and lost lively corner-forward, Gerard Deegan, with a suspected broken collarbone, early in the first half after a bone-crunching shoulder from John Joe Doherty.

Classic or not, Donegal have given themselves a powerful boost by winning away from home. For the players, new and old, this will be a boon to their confidence. The experienced players were impressive. In attack John Duffy had a fabulous game, while midfield won that sector for all but ten minutes in the second half. All in all, a good performance and a great start for Donegal's new manager, P. J. McGowan.

**Down:** Neil Collins; Barry Hynes, Brian Burns, Paul Higgins; John Kelly, Shane McMahon, D. J. Kane; Gregory McCartan (0-1, free), Rory Sharvin; Ross Carr (0-1, '45'), Greg Blaney (0-1), Gary Baillie (0-1); Ciaran McCabe (0-1), Aidan Farrell (0-2), Gerard Deegan. Subs., Gregory Deegan for G. Deegan; Gavin Murdock for Baillie; Paul McCartan for Gregory Deegan.

**Donegal:** Gary Walsh; Matt Gallagher, Eugene McMenamin, John Joe Doherty; Mark Crossan, John Cunningham, Martin Shovlin; Mark McShane, Brian Murray (0-1); Declan Bonner (0-3, two frees, one '45'), John Gildea, Paddy Hegarty; John Duffy (0-2), Tony Boyle, Manus Boyle (0-2, one free). Subs., Eamonn McMenamin for Hegarty; Jim McGuinness for Gildea.

**Referee:** Tommy McDermott (Cavan).

# Erratic Donegal fail to demolish Derry

**DONEGAL** ..... 0-15  
**DERRY** ..... 2-6

Pat Roche

DERRY'S uncertainties off the field were matched by gross inconsistencies on it at Ballybofey on Sunday. A three points defeat by a wasteful Donegal in the National Football League Division One tie tended to flatter the visitors and made their supporters among the 6,000 crowd wonder what the future really holds.

Apart from Derry's admirable spirit it was so apparent that all of those disrupted training nights over the past few weeks have come home to roost, leaving team manager Micky Moran with a team that reeks of insecurity.

By rights they should have been beaten out of sight and that they escaped such a fate must be put down to Donegals erratic shooting. The two Boyles, Manus and Tony were very much at fault with three successive simple shots before half time.

Remarkably Derry went close to somehow contriving a draw

after Joe Broily came alive in the closing stages with two brilliant points and a goalmouth lob that was narrowly knocked wide of Paul Callaghan's right post. This late flurry more than anything else may have prompted Moran to say, "We are getting there."

Two snap Derry goals, one in each half by Dermot Dougan, and Eugene Heaney, revealed weaknesses in the Donegal defence but

were curiously inadequate to drive Derry on to a winning effort. The Donegal defence never fully reacted the sterling influence of Matt Gallagher, later selected as man of the match, in trying conditions.

Mark McShane, the Donegal midfielder, was a close contend-

er for the same award. His uncanny anticipation, positional sense and his clever use of the ball contrasted with anything Anthony Tohill or his successive partners had to offer.

If not having the assistance of the long term injured Brian McGilligan was the real reason

for Tohill's ineffective display then, any problems for Derry in the future are likely to derive from the central area.

Like his colleagues Tohill has saved real embarrassment by Donegal's nine wides and a second half goal chance of gilt-edged quality, squandered by John Duffy, who was otherwise one of the successes in the new-look Donegal squad.

For all that, Derry led for most of the first half and were only a point adrift at the interval.

**DONEGAL** — P Callaghan; M Gallagher, Eugene McMenamin, J J Doherty, M Crossan, J Cunningham, M Shovlin, **M McShane (0-1)**, B Murray, Eamonn McMenamin, **J Gildea (0-3)**, **D Bonner (0-2)**; **J Duffy (0-3)**, **T Boyle (0-2)**, **M Boyle (0-2)**, three from frees. Subs — J McGuinness for Eamonn McMenamin (39 mins), P Hegarty for T Boyle (55 mins).

**DERRY** — S Heaney, S McGuckian, T Scullion, K McKeever, D McLarnon, D Cassidy, G McGill; **A Tohill (0-1)**, D Heaney, **E Burns (0-1)**, from a free, **E Heaney (1-0)**, R Rocks; **J Broily (0-2)**, **D Dougan (1-1)**, **G McGonigle (0-1)**. Subs — C Raftery for Rocks (half-time), D McNicholl for McGonigle (half-time), P Conway for Burns (49 mins).

Referee — **P Casserly** (Westmeath).

## CHURCH AND GENERAL NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE DIVISION ONE

Meath	1-12	Kildare	0-7		
Donegal	0-15	Derry	2-6		
Laois	2-14	Down	0-11		
Kerry	1-12	Dublin	1-11		
Donegal	2	2	0	0	4
Meath	2	2	0	0	4
Kerry	2	2	0	0	4
Laois	2	2	0	0	4
Derry	2	0	0	2	0
Down	2	0	0	2	0
Dublin	2	0	0	2	0
Kildare	2	0	0	2	0

### DIVISION TWO

Louth	1-8	Mayo	1-4
Clare	1-9	Leitrim	0-4
Tyrone	1-8	Cork	0-10
Galway	0-10	Armagh	0-8

	P	W	D	L	Pts
Clare	2	2	0	0	4
Louth	2	2	0	0	4
Armagh	2	1	0	1	2
Galway	2	1	0	1	2
Leitrim	2	1	0	1	2
Tyrone	2	1	0	1	2
Cork	2	0	0	2	0
Mayo	2	0	0	2	0

### DIVISION THREE

Roscommon	1-13	Longford	1-8
Cavan	1-6	Wexford	1-5
Westmeath	2-7	Antrim	0-7
Fermanagh	2-9	Tipperary	1-6

### DIVISION THREE

	P	W	D	L	Pts
Cavan	2	2	0	0	4
Fermanagh	2	2	0	0	4
Roscommon	2	2	0	0	4
Westmeath	2	2	0	0	4
Longford	2	0	0	2	0
Tipperary	2	0	0	2	0
Wexford	2	0	0	2	0
Antrim	2	0	0	2	0

### DIVISION FOUR

Sligo	2-13	London	0-8
Limerick	0-11	Waterford	0-8
Wicklow	0-14	Offaly	0-9
Monaghan	3-11	Carlow	1-7

	P	W	D	L	Pts
Sligo	2	2	0	0	4
Monaghan	2	2	0	0	4
Wicklow	2	2	0	0	4
Limerick	1	1	0	0	2
Waterford	2	1	0	1	2
London	2	0	0	2	0
Offaly	2	0	0	2	0
Carlow	2	0	0	2	0
Kilkenny	1	0	0	1	0

## NATIONAL HURLING LEAGUE DIVISION TWO

Kerry	1-10	Dublin	1-8
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	P	W	D	L	Pts
Down	2	2	0	0	4
Wexford	2	2	0	0	4
Dublin	2	1	0	1	2
Kerry	2	1	0	1	2
Offaly	2	1	0	1	2
Waterford	2	1	0	1	2
Carlow	2	0	0	2	0
Meath	2	0	0	2	0

CHURCH &amp; GENERAL NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE, ROUND 2:

# Second win for stylish Donegal

DONEGAL ..... 0-15  
DERRY ..... 2-6

Five of Donegal's six forwards hit scores, both Donegal midfielders came out on top; one, Brian Murray, having a quite exceptional game; all six defenders impressed; one, Matt Gallagher, was truly amazing. New 'keeper, Paul Callaghan, could do nothing with either of the well struck goals.

That describes the individual displays but collectively Donegal gave a heart-warming performance over all; again there is room for improvement, but in general this display, ending in a fully merited three point victory, fans the flames of optimism.

Derry put most of their behind the scenes problems behind them to contribute in a marvellous way to some top of the bill second half football. The whistle blowing faded as the football flowed from both sides in a five minute passage either side of the 45th minute mark. These five minutes were simply superb entertainment for the wet and cold 6,000 spectators at MacCumhaill Park, Ballybofey.

Although the very stray passing — most of it to Derry's Tony Scullion — gives rise to some well founded concerns, the general opinion from Sunday is that Donegal's new boss, P. J. McGowan, is getting an awful lot of honest effort from his players. The shooting, the build-up moves did have plenty of flaws, particularly in the first half, but part of this can be put down to terribly difficult conditions and it is

*Michael Daly reports  
from MacCumhaill Park*

comforting to add that the stray passing and shooting was largely eradicated in the second half.

Having adverted to the general opinion, my personal opinion, is that Donegal, with the care that is so typical already of P. J. McGowan's tenure, can think realistically about League glory and, more importantly, returning to Championship success.

However, I would not be at all surprised should Donegal test out more new players in coming games, an intention expressed by the new manager. Doing so may be at the expense of league results but I think it must be agreed that the side is good but can be better, and will have to be, come May 13th, 1995.

Apart from the brilliance of Matt Gallagher and Brian Murray, Declan Bonner's rehabilitation is complete with a second workmanlike performance which included a spectacular point from the left wing; John Duffy produced one cross-field pass for John Gildea to put Donegal ahead just before half-time that earned many plaudits from the attendance, while Mark McShane added panache and controlled passing to his Newry performance.

Both teams contributed greatly to an exciting game but referee, Casserly, seemed out of tune with other referees as regards the sliding tackle when opponents were attempting the pick-up. The Westmeath official seemed to be completely at odds with other referees' interpretation and in the

difficult conditions, it was fortunate that it didn't lead to the odd bust-up.

Once again the home record is enhanced — it's now 22 wins out of 23 in Division One — and the attendance on Sunday seemed to be one of the biggest ever in Ballybofey, a reflection on the renewed interest in Donegal's fortunes.

It took Donegal only 18 seconds to get off the mark, Mark McShane and Manus Boyle setting up John Gildea. Derry hit back inside two minutes with Derek Dougan getting the equaliser. Donegal were back in front in the 4th minute, Shovlin and Matt creating the opening for John Duffy to point.

Derry hit the front in the 8th minute, Declan Cassidy and Geoffrey McGonigle making the opening and when Eugene McMenamin slipped on the difficult surface, Derek Dougan was in the clear to take the pass and fire low into the corner. A minute later Mark McShane was caught in possession and Anthony Tohill was through to point.

Donegal's efforts to get back on the scoreboard were thwarted by bad shooting, double handpassing and three missed frees from normally 'easy' positions — two from Manus and one from Declan Bonner. They did get a point in the 19th minute, the two McMenamins and Brian Murray setting up Mark McShane to point.

The 'hefty' Geoffrey McGonigle, who was withdrawn from the ring at half-time, scored a spectacular point in the 22nd minute, after dummying three times in a cross-field run. McGonigle had an eventful 30 minutes action. He got involved with several Donegal

defenders and eventually was booked for a tackle on Matt Gallagher.

Five minutes from the break, Manus Boyle eventually found the target from a 13 metre free to reduce the margin to 0-4 to 1-3, and inside the last three minutes of the half, Donegal added three points to take the lead through Tony Boyle, John Duffy and Gildea's aforementioned point, set up by Duffy's crossfield pass.

Half-time: Donegal 0-7, Derry 1-3.

Derry put Dermot McNicholl and Colm Rafferty in for the second half but inside 80 seconds, John Duffy had extended the Donegal lead, taking a great pass from Mark McShane and firing just over the crossbar from close range.

Matt Gallagher made a couple of great interceptions before Manus Boyle made a superb run and pointed under pressure and a minute later John Gildea opened up a four point gap.

Eamon Burns made his only real contribution to Derry's cause with a 30m free in the 37th minute before being substituted ten minutes later.

Manus had another free on target, this time from 40m after a foul on McShane, before Brian Murray and McGuinness (just on for Eamon McMenamin) set up Declan Bonner for the point of the game in the 12th minute to put the home side 0-12 to 1-4 ahead.

Derry hit back in the 14th minute, Gary McGill's high ball fielded well by Dermot Heaney to turn and blast to the bottom corner and leave just two points in it — 0-12 to 2-4.

Sensing the danger, Donegal hit

back from the kick-out, Murray and McShane combining for Tony Boyle to point, and in the 48th minute, Manus Boyle won a free to point and open the gap to four.

Five minutes from the end Manus and Declan Bonner combined for the latter to hit Donegal's final point. Before the end, Joe Brolly came to life with two points, one a free from the hands to leave a goal between them and a minute into injury time, Brolly, using his experience, lofted in a high ball which Eugene Heaney got a fist to but, thankfully, it went wide of the post.

**Donegal:** Paul Callaghan; John Joe Doherty, Eugene McMenamin, Matt Gallagher; Mark Crossan, John Cunningham, Martin Shovlin; Mark McShane (0-1), Brian Murray; Eamonn McMenamin, John Gildea (0-2), Declan Bonner (0-2, one free); John Duffy (0-3), Tony Boyle (0-2), Manus Boyle (0-5, three frees). Subs., Jim McGuinness for Eamonn McMenamin (41 mins.); Paddy Hegarty for T. Boyle (59 mins.)

**Derry:** Seamus Heaney; Sean McGuckian, Tony Scullion, Kieran McKeever; Damien McLarnon, Declan Cassidy, Gary McGill; Dermot Heaney (1-0), Anthony Tohill (0-1); Eamonn Burns (0-1, free), Eugene Heaney, Ronan Rocks; Joe Brolly (0-2, one free), Dermot Dougan (1-1), Geoffrey McGonigle (0-1). Subs., Dermot McNicholl for Rocks; Colm Rafferty for McGonigle (half-time); Paul Conway for E. Burns (48 mins.)

**Referee:** Pat Casserly (Westmeath).

# Donegal deserve late, win

DONEGAL'S circuitous route to victory, which had stretched the patience of their supporters in the 9,277 attendance to the limit in this National Football League Division One Division One match at Croke Park yesterday, ended joyously almost two minutes into injury time with Tony Boyle kicking the winning point. The score would have been irrelevant had the dominant Ulster men converted even a fraction of their scoring chances in what proved an absorbing encounter.

The sodden pitch, driving wind and second half rain contrived many bizarre moments. If the winning point was the direct result of a Dublin mistake it was fully deserved by a Donegal side that played with overwhelming authority in the second half.

Dublin could hardly get the ball beyond midfield in the second half and had only one second half wide as the Donegal-dominated pattern emerged clearly. With Donegal having inadvertently tried to kick themselves out of contention, it was perhaps time for Dublin to make a major error.

This came with 90 seconds injury time already played when Vinnie Murphy, a second half substitute, sliced a free from

DONEGAL .....	0-12
DUBLIN .....	1-8

Pat Roche

his hands diagonally across the pitch and into the waiting hands of Manus Boyle who had moved back to buttress the Donegal cover.

The Killybegs forward sent a 60 yards pass to Tony Boyle who snatched the chance of possession from the advancing Mick Pender, turned and banged over the winning score. "I really thought it was going to be a 'keeper's ball, but thankfully I went for it," said Boyle.

To make any excuses for Dublin in the light of the persistency and superior work rate that allowed Donegal to monopolise the second half exchanges so convincingly would be to give a distorted version of the match. Had Donegal lost or even forced to draw a great injustice would have been perpetrated.

Donegal's concerted activity was in evidence from an early stage yesterday, even though an untypical mistake by Matt Gallagher presented Jason Sherlock with a great goal chance which he squandered.

Still, Manus Boyle's lead point off a free was all that Donegal had to show for their more constructive moves. John Duffy was wide twice with free shots when Pender looked vulnerable.

Dessie Farrell and Jason Sherlock had put Dublin ahead with points before Dublin, with wind advantage, were given a real confidence boost by Sherlock's disputed goal. Charlie Redmond seemed to miskick an attempt for a point from 16 yards, Gary Walsh fumbled on his line but somehow the ball was ushered into the net as he tried to clear.

The neatest piece of work for Dublin was applied by Redmond when he spotted Bealin and placed the midfielder for their sixth first half point. Tony Boyle and Manus Boyle were both denied goals and Dublin survived to lead by 1-6 to 0-4 at the interval.

Paul Curran put in a determined run early in the second half and stretched Dublin's lead to six points, 1-7 to 0-4, after 36 minutes. Donegal rallied, however, and the Dublin defenders were often at sixes and sevens. Pender had to come to the rescue with a double save from John Duffy and then Tony Boyle, before the unmarked Manus Boyle settled for a tap over point.

Dublin, and especially Jack Sheedy and Paul Bealin, were too busy attempting to stop the fluent flow of attacks towards their own posts to set up their own attacks. The second half scoring famine for Dublin meant that they managed only two second half points, Dessie Farrell off a free inside the last five minutes.

That Farrell point gave Dublin the welcome prospect of getting out with a draw which they would not have deserved. By the same token, some would say that Donegal didn't deserve much more considering the flow of wides that came from the boots of Manus Boyle Declan Bonner, Tony Boyle and John Duffy prior to that Farrell equaliser. But justice was done when Murphy erred and Tony Boyle pointed that all-important winner.

**DONEGAL** — G Walsh; M Crossan, R McMenamin, M Gallagher, S Boyle; J J Doherty, M Shovlin; M McShane, B Murray, J Duffy (0-2), J Gillea, D Bonner (0-2, from frees); L Gavigan, T Boyle (0-3), M Boyle (0-5, one from a penalty, one from a free). Subs — J Ruane for McShane (22 mins), J McGuinness for Gavigan (42 mins).

**DUBLIN** — M Pender; P Moran, L Walsh, R Leahy; P Curran (0-1), K Barr, I Robertson; P Bealin (0-1), J Sheedy; S Keogh (0-1), B Stynes, S Cahill; C Redmond (0-1, from a free), D Farrell (0-3, from frees), J Sherlock (1-1). Subs — J O'Callaghan for Leahy (10 mins), M Leahy for Keogh (26 mins), V Murphy for Robertson (1-1).

Referee — P McEnaney (Monaghan).

# Kildare shuffle their ne

THERE was much to be learned on a lovely, still afternoon for football at Ballybofey yesterday. Two sides, who by common consent are a little way off the pace in their respective provinces, are using the league as a winter testing laboratory. Early results are promising, but gamblers looking for long odds would do well to bide their time.

These are interesting times in Donegal and Kildare. Both counties face into a championship next year without the guidance of managers who had the air of legend about them. McEniff and O'Dwyer are gone. Several heavyweight playing personnel have disappeared as well, most notably in Donegal where McHugh, Molloy and Reid are the most noted of names on the list of the departed.

And yet, and yet. Fresh ideas and fresh enthusiasm are great regenerating forces. PJ McGowan and Dermot Earley are finding their feet. McGowan, from whom expectations are probably higher, appears to have more talent with which to create a winning team. Yesterday, he fielded a fine sprightly side and left out athletes like Barry

McGowan, Jimmy McGuinness, and Martin Gavigan. Kildare, though, have taken some giant steps. Yesterday saw them take their second league win in succession. Well deserved it was, too.

Kildare and Donegal served up an appetising game of football yesterday, one of those matches which provide the pleasure of winter football. Both teams bubbled with promise and enthusiasm. Both sides are celebrated addicts of the currently outlawed handpassing habit, but there were no withdrawal symptoms yesterday. Everyone got on with the direct game.

If a transfer market existed in GAA, Kildare would have used some of their supporters' club funds long ago to buy back Shea Fahy and Larry Tompkins from Cork and to invest heavily in forwards. Meanwhile, however, the lilywhites must content themselves with trawling the county for scoring forwards.

On yesterday's evidence, Paul McCormack might make a good championship forward. Niall Buckley, having been shunted around various positions, appears to be settling as an effective full forward. Two down, four to go.

DONEGAL.....	1-8
KILDARE.....	1-11

Tom Humphries

Anthony Bracken had a brief run at corner forward yesterday, but never got the possession his enthusiasm entitled him to. It would have been interesting to have seen a little more of him.

Early on Donegal looked like they were going to provide their visitors with a tutorial on forward play. While Kildare spent the first seven or eight minutes huffing and puffing in the opposition half, running in three wides and running up cul de sacs, Donegal nipped down field twice and scored a couple of splendid points.

Donegal's achievement in winning their first three league games under the new rules and without the old faces has been considerable. An example of their new enterprise came on 12 minutes, just after a Declan Bonner free had given Donegal a three points to

# ew deck to better effect

one lead. From the kick-out, Mark McShane scooped up possession and launched a lovely, looping pass in behind Kildare's full back line. John Duffy ghosted across from the right and would have had a goal had Christy Byrne not conjured up a fine save.

While Donegal often looked capable of producing moments like that, they repeatedly came to sorrow when they took on the spine of the Kildare defence. Davy Dalton and Glen Ryan submitted almost flawless performances yesterday. Their tenacity was matched for once in the full forward line by Buckley and McCormack. The latter nicked two fine points in the space of a minute midway through the first half (taking receipt of long balls from Glen Ryan on each occasion) to haul Kildare back to level terms.

That grittiness in dragging the game back each time it looked like slipping away will have given Dermot Earley immense pleasure yesterday. By the 26th minute, when Anthony Rainbow, slightly filled out from the bantam proportions he once wore, scored a fine point, Kildare were leading by two points.

Then, Donegal flashed the gimlet once again, a sharp four pass movement — involv-

ing Shovlin, Gildea, Duffy and Tony Boyle — resulting in the last named winning a penalty which Declan Bonner converted.

Kildare might have been tempted to fold the tents at that juncture. Instead, they mustered two points and went into their tea leading by a point and having sent a firm message of intent to their rivals.

Whatever sharp words slipped from PJ McGowan's tongue at half-time, they had the desired effect. Briefly, Donegal buzzed early on. Manus Boyle and Declan Bonner had points, and in the crowd of 5,000, Donegal hands rubbed in anticipation.

But still Kildare scrapped and scrambled. Buckley converted another free and then a lovely move yielded them a penalty of their own. A kicked pass from Buckley reached McCormack, who looked like plundering a goal before goalkeeper Gary Walsh smothered him with the sort of bear hug only lost friends and desperate defenders understand. Buckley slapped the penalty home, added another point from play a minute later, and Kildare never looked back.

Late on, Donegal pressed hard but the virtual abolition of the handpass suddenly seemed to nag at them. Long kicks ceased to

find forwards and fell instead into the clutches of the snappish Kildare full back line. Midfield, which had been a scrap all day long, failed to provide direction for either side. Kildare funnelled players back and looked dangerous on the break, with just McCormack left up front.

The final whistle put an end to a long and unproductive siege on the Kildare goal. There was some surprise at the lack of injury-time played. Truth be told, Donegal were so short of ideas by then, so frustrated, that they might have played to dusk without overhauling Kildare.

Dermot Earley and PJ McGowan will gird themselves for sterner battles after Christmas. Both men have reason for confidence.

**DONEGAL:** G Walsh, M Crossan, E McMenamin, M Gallagher, S Boyle, JJ Doherty, M Shovlin, M McShane 0-2, B Murray, D Bonner 1-2 (one pen and two frees), J Gildea, M Boyle 0-3 (two frees), J Duffy, T Boyle 0-1, P Hegarty. Subs: J McGuinness for D Bonner (47 mins); B McGowan for J Gildea (65 mins).

**KILDARE:** C Byrne, S Dowling, D Dalton, P McConnon, B Fahy, G Ryan, A Rainbow 0-1, M Lynch, J Whelan, D Kerrigan 0-1, N Donlon 0-1, T Brennan, P McCormack 0-2, N Buckley 1-5 (goal from penalty four points from frees), A Bracken. Subs: J McDonald for Bracken (27 mins), D O'Connell for T Brennan (65 mins). Referee: T McDermott (Cavan)

# Laois keep calm and defy Donegal's frantic fourteen

A DISALLOWED goal for Laois was only a small part of an eventful first 40 minutes of this division one tie at Portlaoise yesterday. There was also a squandered Donegal penalty, a brawl involving a dozen players, a less serious altercation in the stand, and marching orders for Donegal forward John Gildea.

More drama followed as a determined 14-man Donegal laid siege on the Laois goalmouth in an despairing effort to salvage a result. However, their bombardment finished in a catalogue of missed opportunities, while highlighting Laois' stubborn defence.

Donegal never managed to lead at any stage, yet their 14 players took control of the closing 10 minutes. Colm Browne, the Laois manager, insisted that he had a plan to take advantage of the extra man, but then admitted that it did not work. "It seemed to upset us more than it did them," said Browne.

The bottom line for Browne was that his team has completed a hat-trick in beating the three Ds — Down, Derry and Donegal — in the current campaign.

Donegal were four points down — 0-6 to 0-10 — when Gildea was given his marching orders by Galway referee Mick Curley, who dismissed the player on the advice of a linesman after he was involved in an incident with Leo Turley.

Before leaving the pitch, Gildea, who seemingly felt he had been a victim of an exaggerated dive, went over to have a word with Turley. A general brawl developed and when this cooled off it was noticed that Damien Delaney, the Laois full-forward,

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LAOIS .....	0-10
DONEGAL .....	0-8

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Pat Roche

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was doubled up on the ground 40 yards away. After consulting with an umpire, the referee took no further action.

These incidents were isolated and the match was generally a sporting contested. For three-quarters of the match, Donegal showed that they had not wintered quite as well as Laois. Barry McGowan compounded their problems when, after coming in on the end of a Brian Murray-Jim McGuinness move, he cracked the ball off the crossbar when all alone and at close range.

On the other hand, Laois' otherwise effective midfielder, Tony Maher did even worse when shooting wide having been sent clear by a clever Michael Lawlor pass early in the second half. Maher, and his midfield partner PJ Dempsey, were way ahead on merit marks for most of the first half from their immediate opponents, John Ban Gallagher and Brian Murray.

Hugh Emerson enriched the Laois attack with an impressive work-rate and Michael Lawlor's moves down the left flank were significant, while Damien Delaney displayed great accuracy to take six points, four off frees. Leo Turley's front-running to collect the short ball also contributed to Laois's commanding first-quarter, wind-assisted

display which yielded a 0-6 to 0-1 lead.

The downside for Laois was Tom Bowes disallowed goal. Referee Curley was alert in spotting the consecutive hand-pass — Turley to Lawlor to Bowe — which had sent the corner forward clear for a tap-in wide of Gary Walsh. By the same token, the Galway official allowed quite a number of consecutive hand-passes during the course of the game.

Earlier, Donegal were awarded a penalty when still scoreless. Tony Boyle was crash-tackled when sent clear by Jim McGuinness, but Manus Boyle tried to place the spot-kick into the left corner and Emmet Burke tipped it away for a 45.

Donegal seemed capable of avoiding defeat when trailing by 0-4 to 0-7 at half-time. They might well have done so had they steadied up in the closing minutes, but McGuinness had a goal-bound effort blocked and the same fate became Declan Bonner, who had come on as a substitute. Tony Boyle sent hopelessly wide and had another effort turned away for a 45. Bonner saw his well-taken 45 nervously fumbled under the crossbar by Emmet Burke before a panic clearance was made.

**LAOIS:** E Burke; A Phelan, M Dempsey, T Conroy, A Lacey, D Lalor, G Doyle, T Maher (0-2); PJ Dempsey, T Dunne, H Emerson, M Lawlor (0-1); T Bowe, D Delaney (0-6, four frees), L Turley (0-1) Subs: M Turley for Dunne (47 mins); Michael Dempsey for Bowe (30 mins).

**DONEGAL:** G Walsh; JJ Doherty, E McMenamin, M Gallagher, M Crossan, J Cunningham, M Shovlin; J Ban Gallagher, B Murray (0-1), B McGowan, J Gildea (0-1), J McGuinness, J Duffy (0-2, frees), T Boyle, M Boyle (0-3, one free) Subs: D Bonner (0-1) for McGowan (44 mins).

Referee: M Curley (Galway)

**DONEGAL G.A.A. DONEGAL G.A.A. DONEGAL****SECOND LEAGUE DEFEAT FOR DONEGAL**

**LAOIS ..... 0-10**  
**DONEGAL ..... 0-8**

**IT WAS** a game we lost, rather than Laois winning. Just one of the comments made by Donegal team manager, P.J. McGowan, after his side's two points defeat by Laois at O'Moore Park, Portlaoise, on Sunday.

Home wins for Meath, Kildare, Derry and Laois now means that six teams in Division One have six points from five games. One point from their two remaining games, against Meath (away on March 5th) and Kerry (home on March 19th) would ensure Donegal retain premier league status.

Dublin or Down will definitely be relegated, although mathematically it is possible for any one of the eight teams to make the drop. P.J. McGowan felt his side, on the balance of possession and chances created, should have won last Sunday.

"It was a game we lost rather than Laois winning. We hit the crossbar twice, missed a penalty, a 14 and 21 metre free, as well as several other good chances from frees. We were camped in their half for the last ten minutes, but we didn't convert our chances," McGowan said. Asked had the sending off of John Gildea any bearing on the final outcome, McGowan said: "I didn't see the incident myself, but from what I have been told, and speaking to players afterwards, he was very unlucky to have been sent off. It was really down to the linesman. What may have happened if he was on in the last ten minutes is conjecture really," McGowan said.

McGowan said he needed one point from the two remaining games to ensure Division One status, but was

also looking for a big improvement. "We missed too many chances, our ball handling was wayward, and our passing let us down at times. These are things which we will have to improve on.

"They were also a lot more eager in the opening quarter, and took a 0-6 to 0-1 lead in that time. They looked a lot sharper, but we finished the game the stronger team, so it wasn't a lack of fitness on our part. Without being over critical of the referee, I thought he was really poor overall. A number of key decisions were questionable," McGowan said.

"We still have a lot of work to do in the final two games," he added. Fourteen-man Donegal laid siege on the Laois goalmouth in the final ten minutes, and after the game the Laois boss, Colm Browne, admitted his side erred after the sending off of John Gildea.

"We had a plan to take advantage of the extra man but it didn't work. It seemed to upset us more than it did them," Browne said.

Donegal were behind 0-10 to 0-6 when Gildea was given his marching orders by Galway referee Mick Curley, who dismissed the young Glenties man after advice from a linesman. Gildea's dismissal followed his involvement in an off the ball incident with Laois' Leo Turley.

Before he left the pitch, Gildea, who felt he was the victim of a poor decision, went over to have a word with Turley. A brawl developed between a number of players from both sides, and then 40 yards away Damien Delaney was doubled up on the ground. After speaking with an umpire Curley took no action.

These incidents apart, the match was an entertaining affair, played on a near perfect pitch considering all the rain.

Against a Donegal side who never hit top form, Laois were never behind, and were three points to the good before the visitors laid their first siege on the Laois goal.

Donegal's first chance fell to Manus Boyle, but his penalty strike, after Tony Boyle was dragged down, was brilliantly saved by Laois netminder, Emmet Burke.

John Gildea opened Donegal's scoring when he fisted over a "45" shortly afterwards, but Laois hit back and scored five points without reply to go into a 0-6 to 0-1 lead by the end of the first quarter.

Laois also had a disallowed goal when referee Curley spotted a second hand-pass following a move involving Leo Turley, Michael Lawlor, and finally Tom Bowes, who finished to the net.

At half-time the home side led 0-7 to 0-4. Tony Maher and P.J. Dempsey enjoyed the better of things at midfield in the opening half, while Hugh Emerson impressed up front along with Damien Delaney, while Leo Turley also contributed to the home team's dominance in the first quarter in particular.

Barry McGowan and Jim McGuinness both rattled the crossbar for Donegal in the course of the game. In the dying minutes McGuinness had a goal-bound shot blocked, and Declan Bonner, who had come on as a sub, done likewise. Tony Boyle and Bonner both came close in the final minutes, but Laois held out for a victory.

**Donegal:** — G. Walsh, J.J. Doherty, E. McMenamin, M. Gallagher, M. Crossan, J. Cunningham, M. Shovlin, J. "Ban" Gallagher, B. Murray (0-1); B. McGowan, J. Gildea (0-1); J. McGuinness; J. Duffy (0-2, frees), T. Boyle, and M. Boyle (0-3, one free).

Subs used: D. Bonner (0-1) for McGowan (44 mins.).

**Laois:** — E. Burke, A. Phelan, M. Dempsey, T. Conroy, A. Lacey, D. Lalor, G. Boyle, T. Maher (0-2), P.J. Dempsey, T. Dunne, H. Emerson, M. Lawlor (0-1); T. Bowes; D. Delaney (0-6, four frees), and L. Turley (0-1).

Subs: M. Turley for Dunne (47 mins.) and M. Dempsey for Bowes (60 mins.).

Referee: — Mick Curley (Galway).

# SPORT

## NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE, ROUND 6:

MEATH ..... 0-11  
 DONEGAL ..... 0-13

Donegal and Meath conjured up a game of classic football in the most unlikely of circumstances at Pairc Tailteann, Navan, with Donegal's grit, spirit, commitment and individual class ensuring them of a deserved two point victory and an easy eight point platform from where they can decide their strategy for the final game of the ordinary series of this year's NFL.

*Report by Michael Daly*

*Photos by Conor McGonagle*

Yet again, Donegal proved lethal when apparently on the ropes. A steady stream of unanswered questions flowed from recent defeats by other Leinster sides, but these were in some ways answered by this memorable display with the forwards playing some wonderful scoring football, their work rate matched by their creativity and their finishing, from frees and play, well improved on recent outings.

Meath enjoyed the better of the exchanges in the opening minutes. Tommy Dowd, anticipated as the danger-man, was joined by the experienced Colm O'Rourke in attack and initially they took their markers on a merry-go-round but solid defending saw the Donegal defence swallow up these two, Meath's only consistent attackers, while Jody Devine looked dangerous but didn't get involved on a regular basis.

Playing with the benefit of a diagonal gusting wind, Donegal had brilliant performances from John Duffy and Tony Boyle whilst Declan Bonner had a very effective afternoon at centre-forward. Manus Boyle excelled from frees, scoring four of his five points from the dead ball.

At midfield Donegal never seemed very comfortable, John Ban Gallagher struggling somewhat with the general pace and Brian Murray forced, again, to fist most of the ball he contested with Meath's Alan Browne and Alan Finnegan.

Recovering from a terrible start — they trailed 0-4 to 0-2 by the tenth minute — Donegal played wonderful football in the second quarter, their sharpness from frees, their willingness to use the direct ball a sharp contrast to the ponderous play by Meath.

Tommy Dowd scored two of those early points, late inclusion Colm O'Rourke (in for 'flu victim, Colm Brady) got one and Alan Browne landed a fine 30 metre free against the wind. In reply Manus Boyle pointed an early free after Tony Boyle was fouled; Declan Bonner scored a close-in free from the right and took a clever quick free on 11 minutes to release Tony Boyle for a score from play.

### BLATANT MISS

Tommy Dowd's confidence evaporated with a bad miss in that 11th minute. Put through unmarked by Evan Kelly, he should have had a point at the least but his hurried shot went terribly wide, much to relief of his marker, Matt Gallagher.

Brian Murray exuded confidence with a lovely chip lift and his pass wound up with Manus Boyle taking a heavy challenge for a free which the Killybegs man duly pointed to level the sides at 0-4 each by the 13th minute.

Paddy Hegarty made his first tangible contribution soon afterwards, moving in nicely to collect a Murray knock down before freeing up John Duffy for a wonderful point. Donegal's confidence grew but both sides continued to play fine, flowing football, which was richly entertaining for the 5,000 spectators.

Donegal put a beautiful passing move together, Cunningham, Diver, Tony Boyle, Barry McGowan (picking up a wonderful position) and finally Manus Boyle winning a free but the taker, Declan Bonner, missed the opportunity to cap a fine move with his side's first wide. Bonner added another wide from a similar free. Meath's Trevor Giles pointed a harsh free on John Cunningham who appeared to be going for the ball when he was blown; the sides were level again 0-5 each with nine minutes to half-time.

### FOOTBALL ELEGANCE

Donegal exuded football grace and confidence, their elegance personified by Duffy's neat footwork and Tony Boyle's bravery to win the ball. Manus Boyle begun the charge ahead with a sweetly lofted point after Duffy had taunted Brady into a foul with his deft footwork bemusing the Navan clubman.

John Cunningham (who completely outshone Colm Coyle) made an heroic diving block to turn a Meath attack around and from the regained possession Duffy was again fouled but found Tony Boyle with a quick free and the Dungloe man stroked a beautiful score.

### GOAL CHANCE

Paddy Hegarty ended up on the end of a possible goaling chance, Tony Boyle's quick free putting him clear and he fired over a snappy point that might have dipped below the bar on another day. Meath, too, had their chances. Jody Devine saw his shot bobble dangerously away from the grasp of Gary Walsh and Colm O'Rourke underlined his awareness of space and timing with a crisp delivery that sent Evan Kelly clear for a point.

From a sideline free, Barry McGowan — much happier in defence — picked out Killybegs colleague, Manus Boyle, who thumped the ball nonchalantly over the bar from an acute angle. Mark McShane became the sixth Donegal forward to score in the 30th minute when he won a breaking ball at midfield and turned to lash it over from 55 metres. Half-time: Donegal 0-10, Meath 0-6.

Against the wind Donegal's defence were to be severely tested. Damien Diver, the U-21, who replaced Martin Shovlin, who had 'flu, put in a storming second half. Mark Crossan had a brilliant game, jostling Meath out of possession and position and winning back one ball that most other players would have given up as a lost cause. Both corner-backs picked up nasty knocks but battled on while Matt Gallagher, delayed in his return for the second half, recovered from an early setback to eventually subdue the Dunderry flyer, Tommy Dowd.

Dowd pointed after 15 seconds but Donegal hit a vital pointed free in reply from Manus Boyle and worked tremendously hard for their next point, a six-man move ending with one of the points 'of the season' from Tony Boyle, who sidestepped a lost Martin O'Connell before pointing. Shortly afterwards O'Connell and McManus were switched in an attempt to curb the Dungloe threat.

It had little real effect as all the forwards were working their hearts out now and Meath were uncertain, O'Rourke and Dowd their only real options and both of them becoming less effective as Donegal's marking improved throughout the game.

Damien Diver was harshly judged after seven minutes, Alan Browne pointing another dubious free. Moments later John Joe Doherty cut out a very promising Meath attack and from it set up a Donegal effort which owed more to Meath clumsiness than Donegal panache when John Duffy wound up winning a '45' from fumbling 'keeper, Conor Martin.

Colm O'Rourke found the Donegal cover too intense in the 40th minute and was forced out wide and into a pass which Tommy Dowd fired wide. Jody Devine followed this up with an excellent score from 45 metres after a superb run from midfield.

Graham Geraghty epitomised Meath's lack of ideas up front; winning the ball in defence he saw an acre of space open before him and he duly filled that space with a magnificent solo run but wasted his final ball, eventually the ball dribbling wide.

### CRUCIAL POINT

By contrast Donegal hit a crucial point to lift a 15 minute scoring famine. Declan Bonner converted a free from 30 metres against the wind moments after he recovered from a heavy foul to stretch Donegal's lead out to four yet again, 0-13 to 0-9.



Colm O'Rourke punished a Donegal error (double hand-pass) when he gained possession and fired over a 40 metre score. Alan Browne added his third free two minutes from time but Meath missed two late chances, Tommy Dowd shooting wide and Browne, after a Diver foul on Devine, missing a relatively easy effort from the 20 metre line.

This, then, was a famous win. In 1990 Donegal lost all three meetings to Meath but this win at Navan comes at a perfect time. Donegal's confidence should be renewed although there are still problems with stronger driving players still needed. Thankfully, however, there is no shortage of commitment and effort. Allied to the undoubted class of Boyle, Bonner, Duffy and Boyle the free taker, Donegal have cause for optimism. Kerry, however, lost on Sunday and will come hungry to Ballyshannon in two weeks time. What a game that should be! If it's half as good as this one the supporters will have few complaints . . .

**Donegal:** Gary Walsh; Barry McGowan, Matt Gallagher, J. J. Doherty; Mark Crossan, John Cunningham, Damien Diver; John Ban Gallagher, Brian Murray; Mark McShane (0-1), Declan Bonner (0-2, frees), Paddy Hegarty (0-1); John Duffy (0-1), Tony Boyle (0-3), Manus Boyle (0-5, four frees).

**Meath:** Conor Martin; Enda McManus, Martin O'Connell, John Brady; Graham Geraghty, Darren Fay, Cormac Murphy; Alan Finnegan, Alan Browne (0-3, frees); Evan Kelly (0-1), Colm Coyle, Jody Devine (0-1); Colm O'Rourke (0-2), Tommy Dowd (0-3), Trevor Giles (0-1, free). Subs., Brian Stafford (45 mins.) for Kelly; Stephen O'Rourke (55 mins.) for Finnegan.

**Referee:** Tommy McDermott (Cavan).

● **Statistics:** Donegal were awarded 18 first half and 16 second half frees (34 total); Meath were awarded nine first half and 15 second half frees (24 total); Donegal kicked three first half and no second half wides; Meath also kicked three first half wides and eight second half wides, 11 in total. No players were booked in a very tough but sporting game that in difficult, cold conditions was really a perfect advertisement for the game. Donegal scored seven points from play, Meath scored seven points from play also.

## DIVISION 1 RESULTS & TABLE

Kerry 0-8, Laois 1-9; Derry 0-10, Kildare 0-9; Meath 0-11, Donegal 0-13; Down 0-1, Dublin 1-7.

TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Laois	6	4	0	2	5-65	2-57	8
Donegal	6	4	0	2	1-64	4-63	8
Derry	6	4	0	2	4-54	4-62	8
Kildare	6	3	0	3	3-52	3-57	6
Meath	6	3	0	3	1-56	0-51	6
Kerry	6	3	0	3	5-60	4-6	6
Dublin	6	2	0	4	3-46	3-51	4
Down	6	1	0	5	2-50	4-57	2

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Kildare	6	3	0	3	3-52	3-57	6
Meath	6	3	0	3	1-56	0-51	6
Kerry	6	3	0	3	5-60	4-6	6
Dublin	6	2	0	4	3-46	3-51	4
Down	6	1	0	5	2-50	4-57	2

# No Lyons in the Lion's Den

Our heading in last week's *Democrat* had Donegal heading for the lion's den, but they found that the animal's roar was easily enough curbed once they had settled down.

The absence of the once-great Meath lion, Summerhill full-back, Mick Lyons, has left the visit to the Royal county a less intimidating experience.

Putting the Donegal victory down to Lyons' absence would be unfair to the Donegal lads, who gave their best performance since the visit to Croke Park away before Christmas.

*By Peter Campbell*

Indeed, in many ways, there were a lot of similarities with the brilliance of Duffy and Tony Boyle in leading the line giving the platform from which many of the other Donegal players matched.

The first quarter was a very anxious one among the huge Donegal support in the stand in Navan. Tommy Dowd and Colm O'Rourke seemed to have a telepathic path to each other, while Barry McGowan took time to adjust at corner-back. However, once Matt and John Joe got to grips with the Meath threat, McGowan also settled and began overlapping and putting young Giles of Meath on the back foot.

It was noticeable that all the young stars of Meath never really threatened once they were put under pressure.

### BEST FULL-FORWARD IN IRELAND

"Who's the best full-forward in Ireland now", roared the Donegal fans, as Tony Boyle took triple All-Star winner, Martin O'Connell, to the proverbial cleaners. I smiled when I read Cliona Foley's report in the *Irish Independent* on Monday saying that O'Connell was moved to mark Manus Boyle, when it was obvious even to Meath supporters that his move was a direct result of Boyle scoring his third point early in the second half.

I wondered did we unintentionally 'gee up' Tony when our preview last week spoke in glowing terms about Tommy Dowd being the best full-forward in Ireland. Even the manager, P. J. McGowan, seemed in agreement. After

Sunday's display, neutrals would have to agree that Boyle was superior.

While Dowd also looked a class player, his marker, Matt Gallagher, had a superb game after the first quarter. His only lapse of concentration in that period came at the half-time break, when he only made it back in time for the throw-in. His late entry allowed Dowd time to point after just 15 seconds, but that was to be the only real contribution that Gallagher allowed the Derry man in the second half.

### DIVER'S DEBUT

While it was nice to see Noel Hegarty toggled out for the pre-match kick-about, the most positive thing from the game as regards the future of Donegal football was the way debut boy, Damien Diver, fitted into the scene.

Having impressed since his minor days, this year's U-21 captain took the chance afforded by the absence of Martin Shovlin with both hands. Navan is not a venue you would normally blood new talent, but Diver took the knocks and had a great second half against the elements.

Damien's promotion might be a hint to the management that quite a few more of the U-21 squad, which I watched recently against Monaghan, are good enough to be members of the present panel — I would put a case for Martin Coll and Donal Buggy in particular.

While it was a very committed and classy performance from Donegal, there were still a few areas where improvement will be needed before the Championship clash with Down on May 21st.

The midfield pairing in the first half came off second best, but there was a vast improvement in the second half. Against a forward line such as Down possess, control of midfield would make it much easier for the defence to cope with the speed of Linden and McCartan. It is assumed that the Mournemen will pose a greater threat than their one-point-from-a-penalty performance on Sunday last against Dublin.

### THIRD AWAY WIN

Apart from 1992/'93 when Donegal won all their seven League games, four away from home, this present campaign must rank as one of the best ever with three away wins against top class opposition.

Their away victories in the year after the All-Ireland triumph came against Carlow, Cavan, Tipperary and Longford, but during this campaign they have travelled to Down, Dublin and Meath and come back with six points, and but for a sub-standard performance, would probably have beaten Laois away also.

At the start of the campaign, with a new-look team and new team manager, few Donegal supporters would have wagered much on the county staying in Division One, but that fear was unfounded and the county can look forward to four home Division 1 games next year.

### QUARTER-FINAL TIE

The final game of the league section, at home to Kerry, in Ballyshannon, on March 19th, sets up a host of exciting prospects.

Victory for Donegal will ensure one of the top three spots, depending on how Laois and Derry perform. At the moment our calculations make Laois ahead on scoring averages, with Donegal and Derry tied for second spot. With the Division 1 winners meeting the winners of Div. 4, and runners-up meeting the winners of Div. 3, possible opponents for Donegal in the quarter-final could be neighbours, Sligo (who head Division 4) or a real glamour tie against Martin McHugh's Cavan.

A quarter-final tie against Cavan could create a real bonus for organisers and sponsors, Church and General, for the interest it would generate — Clones would be the obvious place and it would surely set a record for quarter-final attendance.

### 11 AWAY WINS OUT OF 24

With 24 games played in Division One to date, the statistic of 11 away wins is the most interesting analysis to be made.

In the opening round, three of the results were wins away from home, while last Sunday all four away teams returned victorious.

Donegal's record away from home prior to this campaign was very poor, but they have set the trend with three away wins, while Dublin, Derry and Laois have managed two each.

# Donegal now forced into a play off

**DONEGAL ..... 0-10**  
**KERRY ..... 0-14**

IF we play like that against Down, we can forget it, was the reaction of Donegal team manager, P. J. McGowan, after his sluggish side lost their final league game against Kerry at Ballyshannon on Sunday.

Four magnificent second half points from Billy O'Shea gave visitors Kerry a surprise but thoroughly deserved win at Fr. Tierney Park. Kerry needed this victory badly to avoid relegation problems and results from other games now mean they are in a three way play off with Donegal and Kildare for a quarter-final spot.

The Donegal squad were hit by a flu virus during the week and team captain, John Cunningham and Paddy Hegarty were both late withdrawals from the side.

Donegal playing with the aid of the breeze in the first half led 0-5 to 0-2 after 20 minutes as Tony Boyle threatened to expose serious loopholes in the Kerry full-back line.

At half time the home side led 0-7 to 0-4 but the fact that they didn't register a score for 23 minutes speaks for itself.

Recent criticism of Kerry's score taking power were put to rest by the fact that of the 14 points they scored, twelve

were from play. In contrast, Donegal relied too heavily on free-takers, Declan Bonner and Manus Boyle scoring six points between them.

Only two other forwards, John Duffy and Mark McShane got on the scoreboard.

"It's hard to put the finger on what exactly was the problem but certainly in the second half we didn't get enough of the ball around midfield and the half forward line" P. J. McGowan said afterwards.

"We paid the price for that. The preparations were hit by the flu which hampered the squad but we are not offering that as an excuse. We didn't want to be in a play-off situation. If we had won today we could have been looking forward to a quarter-final but we must now pay the consequences for our errors today" he said.

"It's a possibility the heavy training we have started in preparation for championship may have been a factor but if we play like that against Down we can forget about it," McGowan said.

In the end Kerry's youthful exuberance proved too much for a sluggish Donegal side. Three points in the space of 90 seconds at the start of the resumption had Kerry on level terms and this was the foundation stone upon which this Munster success was laid.

Donegal's midfield collapsed in the second half and allowed Liam Flaherty almost complete dominance in this vital sector for that half hour. The introduction of experienced Noel Hegarty for

the final quarter, in his first inter-county outing since last year's championship defeat failed to improve the home side's territorial demise.

The central figures in the Kerry revival were Flaherty, Seamus Moynihan and Billy O'Shea who had been anonymous in the first half but struck four beautiful points in the second. Kerry's other heroes included Eamon Breen, Morgan Nix and Sean Burke. O'Shea should have done better in the opening 30 seconds when he was put clean through by Moynihan but blasted over when the goal was at his mercy.

Manus Boyle from a free and Brian Murray restored Donegal's lead (0-9 to 0-7) but another opportunist score from O'Shea hauled Kerry back to within the minimum. When Declan Bonner slotted over a point in the 37th minute it was to prove Donegal's final point of the game.

O'Shea and Flaherty pulled Kerry back on level terms and inspirational half back, Moynihan put them in front. Points from O'Connell, and Gene Farrell put Kerry further in front but fittingly it was their star forward on the day, Billy O'Shea who completed the second half rout with his fourth point with four minutes to play.

Few Donegal players can hold their heads high after this display. Anthony Molloy has not been replaced at centre field while someone has yet to adequately replace the gifted Martin McLough in the half forward line.

Teams and scorers:

**SCORERS — Kerry:** B. O'Shea 0-4, L. O'Flaherty 0-4, D. O. Cinnéide 0-3; (0-2 frees); S. Moynihan 0-2, G. Farrell 0-1. **Donegal:** M. Boyle 0-4, (all frees), B. Murray, 0-2, D. Bonner 0-2 (both frees), M. McShane, J. Duffy 0-1 each.

**KERRY —** P. O'Brien, A. Breen, A. Gleeson, M. Nix, S. Moynihan, S. Burke, M. Hassett, L. O'Flaherty, D. O. Se, J. Crowley, C. Murphy, D. O. Cinnéide; B. O'Shea, C. Kennedy, B. O'Driscoll. **Sub:** G. Farrell for Kennedy.

**DONEGAL —** G. Walsh, B. McGowan, M. Gallagher, M. Crossan, D. Diver, J.J. Doherty, M. Shovlin, B. Murray J.B. Gallagher, M. McShane, D. Bonner, J. McGuinness, J. Duffy, T. Boyle, M. Boyle. **Subs:** N. Hegarty for McGuinness, J. Ruane for J. B. Gallagher.

**Ref:** — P. McEneaney (Monaghan).

## N.F.L. RESULTS AND TABLES

### Division 1

Dublin 1-9, Derry 1-9;	Kildare 2-9, Down 0-6;
Kerry 0-14, Donegal 0-10;	Laois 1-12, Meath 0-7.
P W D L Pts	
Laois	7 5 0 2 10
Derry	7 4 1 2 9
Donegal	7 4 0 3 8
Kerry	7 4 0 3 8
Kildare	7 4 0 3 8
Meath	7 3 0 4 6
Dublin	7 2 1 4 5
Down	7 1 0 6 2

### Division 2

Cork 2-6, Louth 0-8;	Clare 2-10, Galway 2-2;
Tyrone 3-11, Mayo 1-5;	Armagh 3-9, Leitrim 0-10.
P W D L Pts	
Clare	7 5 1 1 11
Louth	7 5 0 2 10
Tyrone	7 5 0 2 10
Cork	7 3 2 2 8
Leitrim	7 3 1 3 7
Armagh	7 2 2 3 6
Galway	7 1 1 5 3
Mayo	7 0 1 6 1

### Division 3

Westmeath 0-11, Roscommon 0-8; Cavan 0-12, Fermanagh 0-6; Wexford 2-8, Tipperary 2-4; Antrim 1-10, Longford 0-7.

P W D L Pts				
Cavan	7	6	0	112
Westmeath	7	5	1	111
Roscommon	7	5	0	210
Wexford	7	3	1	37
Antrim	7	3	0	46
Fermanagh	6	3	0	46
Longford	7	1	2	44
Tipperary	7	0	0	70

### Division 4

Monaghan 1-9, Wicklow 1-7; Sligo 0-7, Carlow 0-7; Offaly 1-9, Kilkenny 1-2; Limerick 0-10, London 1-7.

P W D L Pts				
Monaghan	8	7	0	114
Sligo	8	6	1	113
Wicklow	7	5	0	210
Offaly	8	5	0	310
Carlow	8	4	1	39
Waterford	8	3	0	56
Kilkenny	8	1	1	63
Limerick	7	1	1	53
London	8	0	2	62

**DONEGAL ..... 1-8**  
**KERRY ..... 1-10**

Considering this was a marked improvement on their display in Ballyshannon, Donegal will be doubly disappointed not to have made it through to the quarter-finals proper, a feat that seemed likely when Tommy Ryan popped up to score a good goal and John Duffy added a point with Kerry looking a beaten team.

Before 4,500 spectators at windswept Tuam, Donegal ran themselves into the ground in the second half to haul back a four point half-time gap, largely created through a well-taken Kerry goal by Billy O'Shea which came after a period of sustained Donegal pressure.

*Michael Daly reports from Tuam Stadium*  
*Photos by Conor McGonagle*

That Kerry goal summed up their happy knack of getting vital scores from the few opportunities they created. Apart from their goal, the free-taking exploits of Dara O'Cinneide, who finished their top scorer with five points, was crucial.

In stark contrast Donegal threw away numerous scoring chances, their wide tally of eight in the first half suggesting they could have won this game rather easily. However, those chances were spurned and Donegal also relied heavily on the place kickers, Manus Boyle and Declan Bonner, who scored all four first half points from frees.

Minus the 'flu victim, Tony Boyle, the rearranged attack featured Manus Boyle at full-forward and Tommy Ryan in the left corner while James

McHugh returned to the intercounty scene in the second half, his first involvement since last June.

Gerard Kelly came in at corner-back, Eamon McMenamin started at left-half forward and Damien Diver, after his Under-21 exertions, was rested with John Cunningham in the centre and Mark Crossan and Barry McGowan either side of him in the half-back line. At midfield the improvement from last week was apparent. In part, the absence of Liam O'Flaherty may have been a factor but both Brian Murray and Mark McShane worked well together. Kerry were also without full-back, Anthony Gleeson.

Kerry wheeled into an early two point lead through John Crowley and Dara O'Cinneide points but Donegal were level by the 10th minute, Manus Boyle pointing two frees in a difficult cross-field wind.

Both teams employed the direct, long ball approach, Donegal sending a lot of ball to John Duffy who won practically every contest with Morgan Nix yet found his route to goal often well cut off by the same player or a stream of resolute Kerry defenders.

After 15 minutes Kerry were again two points clear, O'Cinneide pointing a '45' and a free but the final quarter saw Donegal dominate everywhere but the scoreboard. Declan Bonner pointed from a free but again Kerry replied with an excellent score from Dara O'Sé who brushed off a solid Brian Murray shoulder before going on to point.

Donegal demonstrated their ability to get in behind the Kerry cover twice in two minutes, 9th and 10th, Tommy Ryan denied by the alert Kerry 'keeper, O'Brien and the post saving Kerry when Tommy Ryan shot through a crowd of players — moments earlier he had received the ball from Noel Hegarty who appeared to have been fouled for a penalty.

Nine minutes later, hard-luck again was the case,

although Peter O'Brien did well to stop a Declan Bonner drive which he pushed around the post. From the '45' Manus Boyle pointed to narrow the gap to one point and further Donegal scores from the huge pressure they exerted seemed inevitable.

However, wides rather than scores followed and it was Kerry who darted forward, Cormac Kennedy's hopeful ball going over the Donegal defence to find Billy O'Shea, who slammed his chance past a diving Gary Walsh.

With eight wides from scoring positions and a ninth that was really a stray pass, Donegal certainly had the chances to build a good lead by the break but against the run of play they found themselves four points adrift, 0-5 to 1-5. Apart from their wides too many Donegal attempts at points dropped harmlessly into the hands of waiting Kerry defenders but there was still good reason for optimism and the inclusion of the experienced James McHugh fuelled confidence.

For McHugh it was a frustrating 30 minutes. Time and again he appeared to be fouled but in common with a number of Donegal players he found it all but impossible to get the free which should have been blown. Kerry were awarded 19 second half frees, Donegal 11, in itself an interesting statistic considering Donegal did most of the attacking.

Both sides managed only two points in the third quarter, Noel Hegarty from play and Declan Bonner from a free pinning back Kerry points from Billy O'Shea and Dara O'Sé. Donegal narrowed the gap to three points, 0-7 to 1-7 when Morgan Nix was booked for a foul on James McHugh, Manus Boyle converting the free from 40 metres.

Seconds later Donegal fired home a brilliant goal, Brian Murray and John Duffy involved in the build up, Duffy skirting the sideline and endline before lobbing a precise pass to Tommy Ryan who rattled the top of the net with a powerful drive.

Duffy burst out again to win a ball about 40 metres from goal and turning his man he shot accurately to give his side the lead for the first time, the 48th minute.

Kerry drew level again three minutes later, O'Cinneide pointing another free. With three minutes left Kerry won a dubious '45' that saw the umpire wave wide and the referee award the kick which O'Cinneide duly pointed. Although Genie Farrell added another point, it was the '45' that finally broke Donegal's resolve.

Overall, Donegal showed a lot of character, particularly to come back from the setback of the Kerry goal and one can't but feel the recent tough games will be a big benefit when they meet Kildare in Clones next Sunday, part of a double bill involving Tyrone and Louth.

Gary Walsh made two vital stops, Matt Gallagher and John Joe Doherty were impressive, so too John Cunningham who had a very sound match while Barry McGowan had one of his better days. Midfield was won, thanks to Brian Murray's battling and Mark McShane's endless running. Up front the legacy of missed chances will haunt several players but in general the forwards did try very hard, if unsuccessfully, to find the target.

**Donegal:** Gary Walsh; Gerard Kelly, Matt Gallagher, John Joe Doherty; Mark Crossan, John Cunningham, Barry McGowan; Mark McShane, Brian Murray; Declan Bonner (0-2), Noel Hegarty (0-1), Eamon McMenamin; John Duffy (0-1), Manus Boyle (0-4, three frees, '45'), Tommy Ryan (1-0). Subs., James McHugh (half-time) for McMenamin; Ollie Reid (49 mins.) for Bonner.

**Kerry:** Peter O'Brien; Eamon Breen, Sean Burke, Morgan Nix; Kieran Scanlon, Seamus Moynihan, Michael Hassett; Conor Kearney, Dara O'Sé (0-2); John Crowley (0-1), Connie Murphy, Dara O'Cinneide (0-5, three frees, two '45s'); Billy O'Shea (1-1), Cormac Kennedy, Bingo O'Driscoll. Subs., Genie Farrell (0-1) for Murphy (36 mins.); Conor O'Donnell (51 mins.) for Scanlon.

**Referee:** Pat Casserly (Westmeath).



*The Donegal team, pictured prior to Sunday's defeat by Kerry in Tuam.*

**DONEGAL DEMOCRAT, 30th MARCH, 1995**

**NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE PLAY-OFF**

# Kingdom

## Kerry down Donegal to reach quarter-final

**KERRY** ..... 1-10  
**DONEGAL** ..... 1-8

**KERRY** confirmed their new found superiority over Donegal with this thoroughly deserved play-off win in a highly entertaining game at Tuam Stadium, yesterday, but it was a much closer contest than the previous week's encounter at Ballyshannon.

After Donegal wiped out a four-point deficit midway through the second half, the verdict could have gone either way, but Kerry finished the stronger and late points by ace marksman Dara O'Conneide (two frees) and substitute Jean Farrell (from play) clinched a quarter-final date with the winners of next Sunday's Louth-Tyrone play-off.

Donegal, who confess that they would prefer to be training for their big Ulster championship date with Down in eight weeks time, played with a lot of commitment and heart and they contributed handsomely to a fine match that drew a 2,000 crowd.

Kerry led by 1-5 to 0-4 at half-time after the lively Billy O'Shea raced through for a smashing goal to finish off a move started by Kieran Scanlon in the half backline.

Billy O'Shea and Dara O'Se for Kerry and Noel Heggarty and Declan Bonner for Donegal swapped points on the restart, but after a Manus Boyle free cut the deficit to three points, Donegal upped the tempo and Tommy Ryan blasted a spectacular equalising goal

from 15 yards, followed by a John Duffy point from play for the lead.

Dara O'Conneide kicked Kerry level and then edged them in front again, and they were certainly going the best at the final whistle.

**KERRY:** P O'Brien, E Breen, S Burke, M Nix, K Scanlon, S Moynihan, M Hassett, C Kearney, D O'Se (0-2), J Crowley (0-1), C Murphy, D O'Conneide (0-5), D O'Shea (1-1), C Kennedy, B Driscoll. Sabs: G Farrell (0-1) for Murphy; C O'Donnell for Scanlon.

**DONEGAL:** G Walsh, G Kelly, M Gallagher, JJ Doherty, M Crossan, J Cunningham, B McGowan, M McShane, B Murray, D Bonner (0-2), N Hegarty (0-1), E McMenamin, G Duffy (0-1), T Ryan (1-0), M Boyle (0-5). Sabs: J McHugh for McMenamin; O Reid for Bonner.

### GAA

#### RESULTS

**Ulster U-21 Championship:** Donegal 1-9, Down 1-6.

**Ulster Minor League:** Donegal 2-10, Monaghan 0-8.

**National Football League, play-off:** Donegal 1-8, Kerry 1-10.

**N.H.L. Div. 4:** Fermanagh 5-22, Donegal 0-5.

**Ladies National League:** Dublin 1-11, Donegal 1-5.

## Declan Bonner's 100 games

Declan Bonner played his 100th senior competitive game for Donegal against Kerry at Tuam on Sunday last (the milestone wasn't recorded on account of statistician, Fr. Seán Ó Gallchóir's illness).

Declan has played 70 games in the National League, 21 Championship games and 9 McKenna Cup games for Donegal. He made his debut on October 9, 1983 in Mullingar against Westmeath in Division 3 of the N.F.L. Donegal won 0-12 to 1-5. He made his Championship debut in 1987 when Armagh played Donegal in Ballybofey.

Declan has won most of the game's major honours including All-Ireland S.F.C., Ulster S.F.C. and Railway Cup medals. He has been a most faithful servant of Na Rossa and has, of course, played soccer for Finn Harps, Ardara, etc. He has remained one of the most popular GAA figures in the county down the years.

It is expected that Declan's distinction in playing 100 times for Donegal will be honoured by the County Board/Donegal Parian China in the customary fashion.

## McGowan

"I certainly was far more disappointed coming out of Ballyshannon than coming out of Tuam. I thought the team played well and the basic reason we lost was that we didn't put away the chances we created," said Donegal manager, P. J. McGowan, speaking about Donegal's defeat in Tuam on Sunday last.

Said P. J.: "Kerry made more of their scoring opportunities than we did. We squandered a lot of chances for points that normally would be converted. We also had a couple of goal chances, something we didn't create in Ballyshannon the previous week."

However, the Donegal manager felt that Donegal could have won: "Overall we might have won 60 per cent of the ball but there were a few things that turned the game Kerry's way. We got caught for a couple of handpass situations in good attacking positions and from other opportunities we had kicks blocked down and didn't really make the best use of the possession we won at midfield after we scored the goal.

"We allowed Kerry back in for an equaliser and from then on it was whichever side got their nose in front that would be hard to beat," said P.J.

McGowan felt that if they had had the same urgency a week earlier they would not have had to make the journey to Tuam: "Had we played in Ballyshannon like we did in Tuam I think we would be in the quarter-finals already but Kerry also upped their performance too and were a much better side

than the team that played in Ballyshannon."

P. J. felt that the extra games would be a benefit to the team in their preparations for the championship if they can avoid injury: "If we can avoid injury and avoid getting players sent off these extra games may be of use to us but time will tell. The fact that next Sunday's game is in Clones where we play Down in the Championship is bound to count for something and the fact that they are competitive games adds to our training programme as well," said the Raphoe schoolteacher.

**DONEGAL** ..... 1-16  
**KILDARE** ..... 0-11

**Spectators at Clones, some 14,000 of them, might have been forgiven for thinking after five minutes that Donegal were going to suffer one of their most embarrassing defeats ever, but football, in any code, can be a very funny old game and from a first half that wasn't far short of desperate, Donegal were transformed, eventually winning by an amazing eight point margin.**

*Michael Daly reports from Clones  
 Photos by Brian McDaid*

Kildare played so well in that first half that seasoned observers of the Leinster game were shortening the odds on a Lilywhite Leinster title. However, as Donegal blossomed in the second half, the Lilywhite withered, to be replaced by a side who dithered and dallied while Donegal turned in a sparkling display of accurate point-taking.

Donegal demonstrated a common trait, their slowness to get started but the danger here was that the game would be all but lost before they shook off their lethargy. That this didn't happen was principally due to a crucial goal scored late in the first half by Brian Murray.

It was the antithesis to everything Donegal had done before. There had been only three derisory points from Donegal until that 28th minute goal, all of them from frees. But, from a side-line Kildare seemed more entitled to have been awarded the goal was fashioned.

Manus Boyle chipped short, James McHugh flicked for Paddy Hegarty, there was a deft flick, McHugh was away and found the overlapping Murray who booted firmly enough to put the ball past a half save from Christy Byrne.

As in Tuam, John Duffy followed the goal with an almost immediate point, Kildare were shook badly, having dominated for so long.

With every good reason to anticipate warm words and tea at half-time because of their expert finishing, their expected six point wind assisted lead had been shattered, so too their confidence as the second half play was to illustrate so clearly.

Without regular forward Niall Buckley and then to lose the injured Martin Lynch, the Kildare attack was blunt, hoping to create rather than creating to give hope.

Spike Nolan's muscular frame may have carried shards of confidence on the softer going of November, but the Sarsfield's clubman left little impact on the fast drying sods of Clones. He made no difference, as it happened a penalty miss by another sub, Paul Mc Loughlin, made all the difference.

It was another sub, John Ban Gallagher, introduced after 20 minutes for a struggling John Cunningham, who was having an impact. He pointed after James McHugh tidied up another midfield spillage. Noel Hegarty, chunky from shoulder to hip and with the legs of a whippet, stymied the hitherto unstoppable Johnny Mc Donald.

Johnny had whipped over five first half points, two of them wonder scores from play, but the new Glencolmille handcuffs proved a more exact fit, Johnny twirled in circles, the radar that found the target unerringly in the first half now closed down for the afternoon.

In fact, were there a radar it appeared to be working in one goals only and Donegal kicked nine unreplied to second half points - ten in all if one adds Duffy's score before the break.

It was hard to accept the transformation in the fortunes of both teams, Kildare clearly couldn't handle the juxtaposition and succumbed rather tamely in the end.

Bad passing and Donegal pressure on defenders saw

simple scoring opportunities handed on a plate to Donegal but there were a series of excellently worked and excited scores.

### LEVELLING POINT

From Brian Murray's break down, Mark Crossan won and fed the ball to Duffy for the levelling point after five minutes. Briefly Kildare responded, John Donlon's rasping drive palmed out for a '45 by John Joe Doherty.

The poorly struck '45 was won by Johnny Mc Donald but as he won the ball he was pushed and Galway referee Mick Curley blew for a penalty. Sub Paul Mc Loughlin looked as comfortable as a turkey in December and not surprisingly drove the ball well over the bar.

Effectively a 'miss' the point was of little value and Donegal underlined this and their growing confidence when Manus Boyle pointed a 13 metre free after Anthony Rainbow took a dozen steps.

Donegal took the lead for the first time on 45 minutes, Noel Hegarty, winning the break around midfield and going forward before passing to John Ban Gallagher who hit a marvellous score from 35/40 metres.

Mark Mc Shane, Manus Boyle and James Mc Hugh added on points, Mc Hugh playing behind his midfielders in a sweeping role and doing excellent work to get up front for his score.

Midfielders Brian Murray and Mark Mc Shane, after he cleverly robbed the sub defender Tom Brennan added points and it was Mc Shane's pressure on keeper Byrne that yielded another scoring opportunity when his poor clearance was gladly taken by John Duffy who pointed.

Manus Boyle from John Duffy added another point, Kildare's best effort for a score coming from a 20 metre free which Mc Donald blasted low but Matt Galagher did well to block and clear the drive.

### TOP SCORER

Manus Boyle, Donegal's top scorer in the league, hit their final point, Paul Mc Cormack hit Kildare's only score from play in the second half in added time.

This was a tremendous second half display and again the forwards have responded to their critics with a display of excellent score-taking. However, the Jekyll & Hyde nature of Donegal performances, good one week, bad the next, took a new twist in this display, poor in one half, superb in the other.

Apart from individual scoring tallies it is heartening to see the side scoring a goal again on Sunday, something that hadn't been happening - this is only their third goal in nine league games this season.

Noel Hegarty steadied the defence when played at centre back, Brian Murray and Mark Mc Shane were in real trouble for 25 minutes but improved dramatically, Paddy Hegarty was the most impressive alternative to Tony Boyle in terms of movement although he lacks his power while James McHugh, for his reading of the breaks and John Duffy for creativity were particularly impressive.

**Donegal:** Gary Walsh; Gerard Kelly, Matt Gallagher, John Joe Doherty, Mark Crossan, John Cunningham, Barry Mc Gowan, Mark McShane 0-2, Brian Murray 1-1, James McHugh, Noel Hegarty, Tommy Ryan, John Duffy 0-5, two frees, Paddy Hegarty, Manus Boyle 0-5, three frees; Subs: John Ban Gallagher 0-2 (20 mins) for Cunningham, Seanie Boyle (58 mins) for Ryan.

**Kildare:** Christy Byrne, Brian Fahy, Davy Dalton, Seamus Dowling, Pat Cahill, Glen Ryan, Anthony Rainbow, Denis O'Connell 0-2, John Whelan 0-1, Declan Kerrigan 0-1, Johnny Mc Donald 0-5, 3 frees, Noel Donlon 0-1, Paul Mc Cormack 0-1, Martin Lynch, David Fennin; Subs: Brian Nolan (half-time) for Fennin, Tom Brennan (48 mins) for Whelan, Paul McLoughlin (23 mins) for Lynch (inj.)

**Referee:** Michael Curley (Galway).

**\*Attendance:** 14,000; **Statistics:** Donegal had one first half and three second half wides. Kildare had five first half and four second half wides. Donegal were awarded 13 first half and eleven second half frees, Kildare were awarded 11 first half and nine second half frees.

Davy Dalton and Paddy Hegarty were booked, no players were sent off.

# Donegal expose shallow Kildare

**DONEGAL** ..... 1-10  
**KILDARE**..... 0-11

**KILDARE'S** championship odds lengthened considerably in sunny Clones yesterday despite the insistence of manager Dermot Earley that this defeat won't affect their summer campaign.

Not only were Kildare well beaten in a Division One play-off, they were exposed once again as a team whose resolve extends no deeper than empty promises that things will be different next time. They rarely are.

It wasn't that Donegal had to be anywhere near their best to qualify for next Sunday week's league quarter final against Clare. Indeed for 25 minutes, Donegal were woefully one-paced and looked altogether like a side whose love affair with the league was fast cooling.

Kildare, in contrast, were sharp and incisive, piling forward in great numbers and delighting their fans in the 14,000 crowd with some superb scores.

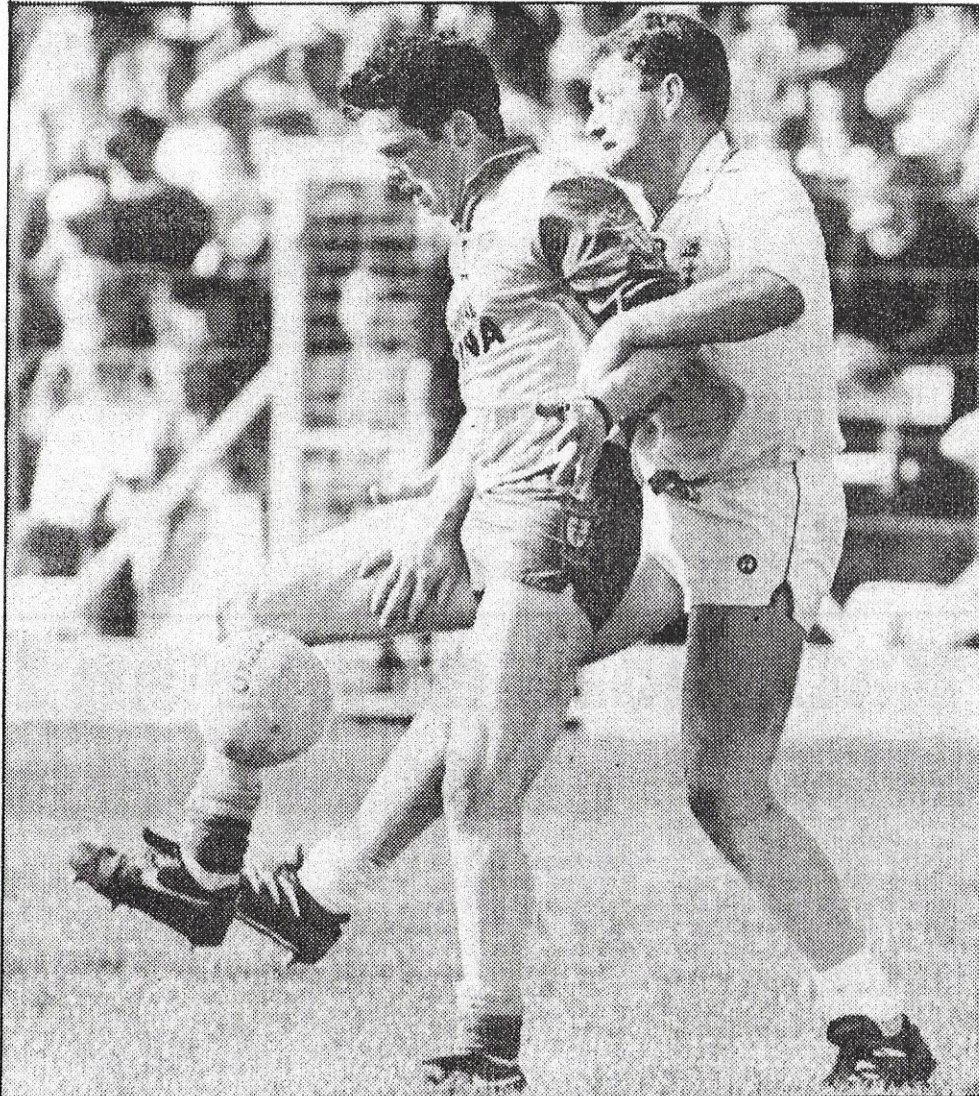
They were five points up in seven minutes and had six points to spare after 25 minutes. Denis O'Connell and John Whelan had launched much of the good work from midfield while Johnny McDonald, Noel Donlon and Martin Lynch were thriving in attack. Suddenly, and inexplicably, it all changed. Full forward

Lynch went off with an ankle injury and as Donegal regrouped they discovered Kildare's weak spot with remarkable speed.

Donegal midfielder Brian Murray scored a fine goal two minutes from half-time after great work by James McHugh, a pre-match replacement for 'flu victim Tony Boyle. John Duffy added a point, handing the initiative very much to Donegal, although they trailed 0-9 to 1-4 at half-time.

The wind had proved of no great significance in the Louth-Tyrone game but as Kildare's spirit evaporated there were times in the second half when it looked as if Donegal had a gale behind them.

The sides were level seven minutes into the second half and then came the really decisive break. Kildare were awarded a 40th-minute penalty but substitute Paul McLoughlin drove it over the bar when they badly needed a goal. It was the sign of weakness which Donegal wanted and they exploited it ruthlessly, scoring ten unanswered



● **HOLD ON . . .** Donegal's Gerard Kelly is grabbed by Kildare's David Fennin in the Church & General National Football League play-off in Clones yesterday.

# DONEGAL ON

**ROY CURTIS:**

**Donegal 2-11 Clare 3-7**

**DONEGAL, the star prospectors of 1992, are on the brink of striking gold once more.**

Yesterday in Castlebar the Ulster giants showed they are slowly but surely rediscovering the Midas touch

A powerful second half display saw PJ McGowan's side edge out Clare to move within two hours of claiming the Church and General League title.

Not even a hat-trick of goals from Clare's outstanding Martin Daly could save the Division Two champions from an agonising defeat.

Once again it was Donegal's lethal All-Ireland winning strike-force of Tony and Manus Boyle who bagged the crucial scores and booked their semi-final place.

The unrelated Boyles grabbed 2-6 between them as Donegal produced their second late, late show in a fortnight.

Top scorer Manus later revealed the burning desire which has enabled them to climb back up the cliff face towards football's summit.

"We badly miss being involved at the key times of the season. We want to get back to that level," admits the Donegal hot shot.

"When you receive the headlines and high profile which Donegal did in 1992, you don't want to go back to being an also ran."

That desire has certainly

been evident in the past 14 days as the green and gold warriors twice survived testing battles.

Two weeks ago, Donegal looked dead and buried as Kildare raced into a nine point lead.

But a remarkable 14 point turnaround clinched the northern side's quarter-final place.

Yesterday they again made their supporters sweat.

Clare were a goal up within 50 seconds, in command for the first half, five points up and seemingly cruising entering the final 20 minutes.

Then, in the manner of champions, Donegal suddenly stepped up several

# BOYLE!

## Golden boys shine again

gears.

Brian Murray took over at midfield, the supply line to dangerman Daly was cut off, James McHugh ripped open Clare's defence and the two Boyles and John Duffy provided the killer scores.

### Collapse

Clare, in contrast, suffered a mini-collapse. Full-back Brendan Rouine found Tony Boyle too hot to handle, while Tom Morrissey - who had fought a brave one man battle at midfield - ran out of steam.

Not even the Herculean efforts of the superb Francis McInerney could save Clare.

Daly completed his hat-trick from the penalty spot

in injury time, but it was too late.

A one point loss was a brave performance from another side bidding to capture the glory days of 1992. But Clare were in no mood to accept patronising back-slapping.

Daly summed up the mood: "We came up here today to win. We were sure we could take them."

"We wanted at least another game in the league. We don't play in the championship - against either Cork or Waterford - until June 28. That's a long time without a match," he sighed.

Donegal arrived in Castlebar as the lowest scoring of the eight quarter-finalists,

but it was in defence where their early problems lay.

Young corner-back Gerard Kelly was tormented by Daly, who scored 2-1,

Donegal switched JJ Doherty on to Daly, substituted Kelly and introduced Martin Gavigan at centre-back. The switches made a huge difference.

Clare started the second half brightly, but then unanswered points from Duffy, Manus Boyle twice, McHugh and John Cunningham levelled the scores.

Donegal were now on a roll. A great solo score by Duffy on 54 minutes put them ahead for the first time. Tony Boyle was then rewarded for all his work with the best - and crucial - score of the game with just a minute to go.

Not even Daly's last gasp penalty could save Clare.



**DONEGAL** ..... 2-11  
**CLARE** ..... 3-7

A purple patch that saw Donegal register 1-6 without a reply from Clare proved the corner-stone to this one point Donegal win in the most dramatic of circumstances at McHale Park, Castlebar on Sunday, before a disappointingly small attendance of 3,500.

*Report by Michael Daly  
 Photos by Conor McGonagle*

Few players finish a game with three goals in their 'pocket' and still find themselves in the losers' dressing-room, but this was the case for Clare corner-forward, Martin Daly, who hit two in the first half — one after 58 seconds — and a penalty in the final minute, to conclude a game that pivoted to and eventually away from the Bannermen.

Indeed it was the day when corner-forwards played significant roles in the destination of victory. Daly's 3-1 final tally was impressive but Manus Boyle's 1-6, was crucial to Donegal with his free-taking a vital ingredient of their first and early second-half survival when scores from play were a rarity.

Playing against the stiff breeze, Donegal were stunned by the simplicity of a Clare goal. Tony Boyle lost possession when his kick forward was easily blocked down and veteran Noel Roche pumped the ball forward for John Leahy to flick on to the unmarked Daly for a simple goal.

A terrible start for Donegal, however, they composed themselves well to find the net inside six minutes, Mark McShane and Paddy Hegarty creating the chance which Manus Boyle coolly slid past 'keeper Hanrahan.

Clare forged ahead with a pointed free from the hands by Daly and a fine Colm Clancy point, the big full-forward causing problems for Matt Gallagher. In the central positions Clare were far superior at this stage, Tom Morrissey superb at midfield, Francis McInerney thrashing through from centre-forward and Clancy and Daly making life hell for Gallagher and the inexperienced Kelly.

Both Tony Boyle and John Duffy were finding the Clare marking very tight but some vigilant refereeing by Brian White saw John Duffy win a pointable free off Frankie Griffin, and Declan Bonner tapped over from 23 metres.

Clare were finding their way through the Donegal defence and a second goal looked possible but John Leahy threw the ball over his head to end a promising move. A minute later, the 23rd, Clare did goal, but it was poor covering rather than ingenious attacking flair that yielded the score, Morrissey's long ball hopping over Kelly and Daly again finding himself one against one with Gary Walsh who he beat with his shot.

Manus Boyle pointed to leave Donegal three points behind; on the line Donegal boss P. J. McGowan made a number of switches, moving John Joe Doherty to cover the troublesome Daly and then opting to include Martin Gavigan at centre-back with Noel Hegarty going back to the corner to control the wily Daly.

Clare continued to dominate down the middle but James McHugh began to make important interceptions from the breaking-ball and eventually the defence began to look more comfortable with some poor Clare finishing (they had eight first half wides) taking the pressure off.

**CLARE FORGE AHEAD**

The opening minutes of the second-half saw Clare play some fine football against the breeze to forge further ahead. After nine minutes they had extended their three point half-time advantage out to five points, 2-7 to 1-5, and it was difficult to see where Donegal would find the scores to haul this game back.

But they defied all the speculation about their lack of interest in this competition with a spell of superb football that spanned from 40th to 55th minutes, effectively winning the game with some irresistible football.

Their flowering coincided with the re-emergence of Tony Boyle and John Duffy. Brian Murray and Mark

McShane created the change when they began to outfield and out-wit the Clare men and under the breaking ball Noel Hegarty, James McHugh and John Cunningham made sharp and intelligent contributions while Martin Shovlin added an absent bite to the tackling — Clare could find no way past midfield and if they did Gallagher and Doherty were there first to send the ball forward yet again.

John Duffy, Manus Boyle (two), James McHugh and John Cunningham points had Donegal level by the 49th minute. Indeed a goal was denied when Brian Murray's flick to Manus Boyle gave him a chance to blast to the net but Hanrahan made a superb save to deflect the ball out for a '45. However, the entire complexion of the game had changed, Clare collapsed as wave after wave of green and gold attacks over-ran them.

Seven minutes from time John Duffy lofted over the lead point and Donegal held this fragile advantage for five minutes in which the passion and spirit from both sides was remarkable to witness. Clare attacked but double-handpassed, Francis McInerney drove forward to hit the upright and Denis Russell drove the rebound badly wide.

The game was balanced on knife-point. Notions that Donegal might not want to win seemed ridiculous to contemplate as one watched the steely determination of every tackle.

**WONDERFUL GOAL**

A typical James McHugh fetch deep in his own half — this from the smallest player on the field and nominal centre-forward — began a glorious move that culminated in a wonderful and crucial goal. McHugh drove the ball 50 metres forward and to the right. Paddy Hegarty rose

to flick a clever lay-off into the path of Mark McShane. McShane kept the ball on the ground and crossed 'soccer style' to the waiting Tony Boyle who cracked home a clinical finish to the corner of the net.

It was a vital score as the next few seconds would confirm, Clare attacking immediately and Francis McInerney driving into the large 'square' where three defenders appeared to have him covered. He turned and met the crunching shoulder of Martin Gavigan — a penalty resulted, Gavigan's colleagues furious with the concession of the spot-kick.

Martin Daly took just two steps back before flinging his foot at the ball and his drive went deep into the corner of the net to leave Clare just a point adrift with the game now in added time.

Clare found no way through for another score, Donegal winning vital ball at midfield and ending the game on the attack.

It wasn't a classic game but it was certainly interesting with Donegal's football mid-way through the second-half marvellous to watch. However, some of their early defending left doubts but what is certain is that the notion Donegal don't want to win this competition is just that — a notion, and a wild one at that.

**DONEGAL:** Gary Walsh; Gerard Kelly, Matt Gallagher, John Joe Doherty; John Cunningham (0-1), Noel Hegarty, Martin Shovlin; Mark McShane, Brian Murray; James McHugh (0-1), Declan Bonner (0-1, free), Paddy Hegarty; John Duffy (0-2), Tony Boyle (1-0), Manus Boyle (1-6, five frees). Sub: Martin Gavigan (27 min.) for Kelly.

**CLARE:** James Hanrahan; Frankie Griffin, Brendan Rouine, Seamus Clancy; Aidan Daly, Michael Galvin, John Enright; Tom Morrissey, Michael Hynes; Denis Russell (0-1, free), Francis McInerney (0-2, one free), Noel Roche; John Leahy, Colm Clancy (0-3), Martin Daly (3-1, pen, free). Subs: Donal O'Sullivan (48 mins.) for Hynes; Martin Keavy (51 mins.) for C. Clancy.

Referee: Brian White (Wexford).

**MATCH FACTS**

DONEGAL		Gls.	Pts.	Wides	Frees	'45s
1st	Half	1	3	4	14	0
2nd	Half	1	8	5	11	0
		2	11	9	25	0
CLARE		Gls.	Pts.	Wides	Frees	'45s
1st	Half	2	3	8	13	1
2nd	Half	1	4	1	9	0
		3	7	9	22	1

**NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE QUARTER-FINAL**

Donegal Democrat  
 20 April 1995

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# Tentative Laois let their big chance slip

**DONEGAL** ..... 1-14  
**LAOIS** ..... 2-8

A GAME which combined to provide a mixture of the good, the bad and the mediocre, finally showed some semblance of life in the second half, as Donegal dug deeply to earn a place in the May 7 National League final, following a somewhat insipid semi-final at Croke Park yesterday.

A mild breeze into the Railway goal, an ideal sun-filled day, and a crowd of 28,417 should have been the stage for a thriller between two of the leading teams in the League.

Yet, in that opening half, both were guilty of forced and unforced errors. Indeed, Laois were extremely poor in the opening ten to twelve minutes. They did come back strongly into the game just before half time and scores were level four times in all and three times in the final thirty minutes.

Thankfully, a measure of second-half good football, and close scoring combined to provide for the absence of any major degree of intensity or drama in the opening half.

Undoubtedly, Donegal deserved this success. Indeed Laois had chances to win the game when they led twice in the second half, but each time, the powerful Donegal team refused to concede, refused to yield and it was this utterly determined attitude which was the major contributory factor to their success.

Now they are into their first League final since they lost to Dublin in 1992 and they will take on Derry, a team they beat in the early stages of the League, but a

REPORT BY:

**Peadar O'Brien**



team to whom they lost when they last met at major competition level in the Ulster final in 1993.

This latest success was also a tribute to their long-serving players.

Defenders like James McHugh, John Joe Doherty, Noel Hegarty, Martin Gavigan, and Martin Shovlin, in the second half turned in powerful performances. Brian Murray and Mark McShane matched them for spirit and determination, and, up front, James McHugh and Manus Boyle revived memories of their glorious All Ireland win in 1992.

And corner forward, John Duffy, turned in a superb performance also as he hit home four points of which one came from a free.

And, although he was at fault for Damien Delaney's goal just after half time, Donegal full back, Matt Gallagher, stuck gamely on the Laois full forward and allowed him just this one goal from play.

The Laois problem was

obvious. They were nervous and tentative at the start as they fell three points and then five points behind.

There were times when their defence looked wide open and centre half, Denis Lalor, got a torrid time from McHugh, but, as Michael Lawlor was held, much of the attack threat came from the so-elegant Leo Turley — who scored one magnificent point — Delaney and Tom Bowe.

Then midfielders, Tony Maher and P J Dempsey were forced to struggle against Murray and McShane, but Michael Dempsey did make a major difference when he came on at half time.

So, too, however, did the switch of Donegal corner back, Joe Hegarty to right half forward, and the introduction of Barry McGowan instead of John Ban Gallagher just before half time.

One must praise Laois for their first-half fight-back which left the scores 1-7 to 1-6 at half time. Those final ten minutes before half time and the opening fifteen minutes of the second half saw Laois at their best.

They took the lead for the first time in the game when Gallagher mis-timed his jump and Delaney cut inside, under the Hogan Stand and then shot low past Gary Walsh to the Railway goal.

They led again thirteen minutes after the restart when Turley scored a superb point on the run from all of fifty-five yards, but, each time, Donegal had the courage and commitment to come back.

**DONEGAL:** G Walsh; J J Doherty, M Gallagher, N Hegarty (0-1); J Cunningham, M Gavigan, M Shovlin; M McShane, B Murray (0-1); J B Gallagher, J McHugh (1-3), T Ryan; J Duffy (0-5), P Hegarty, M Boyle (0-4). Subs: B McGowan for J B Gallagher (28 mins.); D Bonner for Ryan (46 mins.).

**LAOIS:** E Burke; A Phelan, Martin Dempsey, T Conroy; E Delaney, D Lalor, G Doyle (0-1); T Maher, P J Dempsey; T Bowe (1-0), T Dunne, M Lawlor (0-1); M O'Brien, D Delaney (1-3), L Turley (0-3). Subs: Michael Dempsey for P J Dempsey (half time); M Turley for Dunne (52 mins.).  
**Referee:** P Russell (Tipperary).

## FIRST HALF

**2 mins** John Duffy opens the scoring for Donegal with a free from under the Cusack Stand. Donegal 0-1, Laois 0-0.

**3** Mark McShane receives a tremendous pass from Duffy and feeds Brian Murray who scores. Donegal 0-2, Laois 0-0.

**4** Duffy continues to trouble the Laois defence, beating his opponent and extending the Ulster side's advantage. Donegal 0-3, Laois 0-0.

**5** Leo Turley gets Laois on the scoreboard with a point from play. Donegal 0-3, Laois 0-1.

**7** Manus Boyle points a free after Laois are penalised for two successive hand-passes. Donegal 0-4, Laois 0-1.

**12** Damien Delaney points a free after a foul on Turley. Donegal 0-4, Laois 0-2.

**14** James McHugh makes a strong run through the middle of the Laois defence and scores a good point. Donegal 0-5, Laois 0-2.

**16** Michael Lawlor scores from play following Turley's excellent block on Donegal keeper Gary Walsh. Donegal 0-5, Laois 0-3.

**18** A defensive mix up between Denis Lalor and Adrian Phelan lets McHugh in for a soft goal. Donegal 1-5, Laois 0-3.

**20** Delaney points from a free after being pulled down by Tommy Ryan on the edge of the square. Donegal 1-5, Laois 0-4.

**21** Turley beat Walsh in the air and fisted a point from Mark O'Brien's long, high ball. Donegal 1-5, Laois 0-5.

**22** Turley is again the provider, this time for overlapping wing back George Doyle. Donegal 1-5, Laois 0-6.

**24** Tom Bowe received a pass from Tony Maher, swivels and, after a good run, claims the first Laois goal.

**26** McHugh again capitalises on confusion in the Laois defence to point. Duffy is the provider. Donegal 1-6, Laois 1-6.

**28** A great piece of individual skill from Manus Boyle is finished with a rare point with his weaker left foot.

**HALF TIME: Donegal 1-7, Laois 1-6**

## SECOND HALF

**33 mins** A mistake by Lawlor enables Noel Hegarty to gallop into Laois territory and score. Donegal 1-8, Laois 1-6.

**36** Donegal defender Matt Gallagher gambles in trying to intercept a long Tony Dunne ball. It backfires as he misses the ball and Delaney has a free run on goal.

**42** Manus Boyle levels the scores from a free awarded for a foul on Duffy by Tom Conroy. Donegal 1-9, Laois 2-6.

**43** The excellent Turley takes a pass at speed and restores the lead with a point from 50 yards.

**44** Boyle scores a free after a foul on himself. Donegal 1-10, Laois 2-7.

**48** Duffy shoots Donegal ahead from a free. Donegal 1-11, Laois 2-7.

**50** A well struck "45" from Delaney levels the scores again. It proves to be the last score of the match for Laois.

**51** Boyle, Hegarty and McHugh link well, with the latter scoring. Donegal 1-12, Laois 2-8.

**55** Lawlor is controversially penalised for lifting the ball from the ground. John Cunningham frees Duffy to score.

**56** Duffy completes the scoring with his third free after a challenge by Turley on Hegarty.

**FULL TIME: Donegal 1-14, Laois 2-8.**

# Derry negotiate the first hurdle of double agenda

CONSIDERING the injuries suffered by an influential forward on either side — Donegal's Tony Boyle damaging a calf muscle and Derry's Joe Broily sustaining a suspected wrist fracture — it might be overstating the case to say that everyone was a winner in yesterday's Church & General National Football League final at Croke Park, before a crowd of 28,392.

But Derry took the title and will no doubt be pleased to have done so. And Donegal can take comfort from the popular theory that their chances of beating Down in next week's Ulster championship opener are substantially enhanced by losing seven days in advance.

Behind these bland suppositions lie more complicated details, but by the end of the match, no-one was looking particularly jubilant or especially downcast. It's unlikely that either team (it's easy to forget that Derry's championship starts only a week after Donegal's, when they travel to Armagh) was in such a dishevelled state of preparation that yesterday was going to make much of a difference to their summer plans. Nonetheless, conventional wisdom may have this much going for it: Donegal will presumably now find it easier to focus on next Sunday's match in Clones than would have been the case had they won.

A bad defeat or a dazzling victory would have re-ordered the odds on either team, but in the absence of such notable conclusions, both sides approach the coming weeks much as we would have expected.

Derry won because they were more efficient for most of the match and because Donegal's early promise fizzled out after the first quarter, only briefly reviving during the second half, by which stage they had lost Tony Boyle. In fact, they had lost him earlier than the 32nd minute when he

DERRY .....	0-12
DONEGAL .....	0-8
Seán Moran	

was replaced by Declan Bonner; his input had declined from the moment in the 16th minute when he received the debilitating bang in a collision with Anthony Tohill.

Three years ago in the Ulster final, Tohill and Tony Boyle were also involved in an incident which saw Boyle taken off with a knee injury but on that occasion, Donegal rallied and Tohill became rather quiet. Neither of these things happened yesterday — Manus Boyle kicked the free and Donegal moved into the 0-4 to 0-2 lead that was to represent the high point of their afternoon, whereas Tohill was every bit as influential as his top-scoring status suggests.

Derry can have mixed feelings about the match. In the first half, they were under a fair bit of pressure but held out and confounded those, the *IT* included, who unfavourably compared their ability to turn possession into scores with Donegal's. From the moment Tohill thundered through the middle in the opening minute and hoisted an enormous point from out the field, Derry were very alive to the importance of such chances as came their way.

What will disappoint them is that their normally tight defence looked very vulnerable in the opening 15 minutes when Donegal attacked on full throttle. Whether running at the Derry defence from the middle or bringing their full forward line into the match with more direct deliveries, Donegal made life very uncomfortable for their neighbours.

Tony Boyle was giving Tony Scullion a hard time, John Duffy was flying on Gary Coleman, who early on, looked to be in nearly as much difficulty as when he encountered Mickey Linden a year

ago in Celtic Park. Still, Coleman learns quite fast and as Donegal's tempo slackened, Duffy's impact waned and when he moved into full forward, after Tony Boyle's departure, the Derry corner back had held him scoreless and even found time to get up the pitch for an injury-time point at the end of the first half.

Donegal's principal failing was an incapacity to cobble together scores even roughly commensurate with the quality and quantity of possession. This manifested itself in an ominous resurrection of such bad old habits as aimlessly drifting around the 40 and looking for some teammate on whom to offload a pass, however inappropriate or unhelpful it was.

These inadequacies were all very well when the team was surging forward and picking off points in the opening quarter but as chances became more sparse, it began to dawn on observers that more could have been done with the period of ascendancy. Even Manus Boyle's equalising point at 0-2 to 0-2 in the 11th minute was taken at the price of ignoring Tony Boyle, well placed inside the Derry defence.

By contrast, nearly every Derry venture into Donegal's patch produced prodigious points. Tohill's pair were supplemented by two equally splendid scores by Eamonn Burns. A free from Enda Gormley and Coleman's point sent Derry in at the interval, leading by 0-6 to 0-4.

Tohill and McGilligan were beginning to turn the screw on Brian Murray and Mark McShane, who was enduring one of those wretched afternoons when nothing goes right. His athleticism held Tohill in check for a while but during the second half, he was twice ignored by Noel Hegarty who scored well-taken points instead of releasing to McShane on the edge of the square.

Shortly after half-time, Manus Boyle cut the gap to 0-5 to 0-6 but

events then began to turn against Donegal. Bonner came on for Tony Boyle before Dermot Heaney and Tohill, twice from frees, stretched Derry's lead. Boyle at this stage missed a scoreable free and Donegal's decline was painfully obvious.

Briefly, though, they resisted burial. Noel Hegarty (scarred at this stage by a comic first-half interlude which had seen referee, Paddy Russell, stiff him with an accidental blow of the elbow) delivered his two points on either side of a fine effort by Bonner wide on the right. In fairness to Hegarty, it should be said that the two successful kicks which ignored the unmarked McShane were at a stage of the match when

Donegal could have built their bridge with points rather than goals.

With their advantage down to a point, Derry regained control and in the final five minutes Tohill, Burns and Seamus Downey extended the winning margin.

That second half, however, illustrated Derry's old problems. They had taken a sizeable portion of possession but were still within range until the closing flurry. Seamus Downey was impressive, although not as direct as has recently been the case. He gave Matt Gallagher a hard afternoon when moving out to the ball but wasn't brought into play closer to goal as much as might have benefited Derry.

The winners have the usual formidable look about them, particularly given that they were performing well within themselves. But the usual problems remain. At the back they're a bit vulnerable to being run at and up front, they need the sort of economy and long-range panache demonstrated by Tohill and Burns in the first half.

Donegal won't be too cut up about the defeat. The run through the League has been as good a preparation for the championship as a team could want. Such difficulties as arise from a protracted League run generally don't manifest themselves until later in the summer and Donegal's horizons don't extend beyond next Sunday.

PJ McGowan will worry that Tony Boyle's injury clears up in time because although the team can cope with his absence, they aren't as formidable without him. He will also want quicker release of the ball into the full forwards. All three showed at times yesterday that they can create panic if picked out accurately.

Other plus points include the combative form of the defence. Gallagher did well on an in-form full forward and in front of him, Martin Gavigan looked in fine fettle. His strength and judgement were unimpaired by the lay-off of nearly two years from which he's only recently returned.

The retirements of Martin McHugh and Anthony Molloy, how-

ever, is casting a bit of a shadow. There were times when the team looked purposeless playing the ball forward from the middle. Still, McGowan knows he can get more from the available personnel and furthermore that if he doesn't in six days, that it's going to be a long, tedious summer.

**DERRY** — D McCusker; K McKeever, T Scullion (capt), G Coleman (0-1); J McGurk, H Downey, F McCusker; A Tohill (0-5, three frees), B McGilligan; E Burns (0-3); D Barton, D Heaney (0-1); J Broily, S Downey (0-1), E Gormley (0-1, a free). Subs: D Bateson for Broily (40 mins)

**DONEGAL** — G Walsh; JJ Doherty, M Gallagher (capt), B McGowan; M Crossan, M Gavigan, M Shovlin; M McShane, B Murray (0-1); P Hegarty, N Hegarty (0-2); J McHugh; J Duffy (0-1, a free), T Boyle, M Boyle (0-3, two frees). Subs: D Bonner (0-1) for T Boyle (32 mins)

Referee — P Russell (Tipperary)

# No time to lick wounds

THE depth of a team's disappointment can usually be gauged by their willingness to trade banter with journalists in the aftermath. Donegal were quite chatty yesterday. Their disappointment was leavened by relief at having a clear target to take aim at finally. The league final is dead. Down is waiting next Sunday. An obstacle is out of their way, even if they have stumbled over it.

Manus Boyle dallied at the corner. "I don't think next Sunday came into it. We approached the game today in order to get the best out of it. A lot of the time they were on top in the middle of the park. I thought Anthony Tohill was really exceptional today. The first minute of the game he showed what attitude he had with that point and after that there was no turning back. We lost a few scores in the first half and paid for it. The loss of Tony Boyle was a big factor, but the best team won. You can't say more than that."

Manus missed a handy free late in the game, flustered into rushing while trying to keep the tempo of the game going. Had the crowd provided some distraction? "I was trying not to waste time. It was a bad kick. We were trying to keep the game going. The crowd are the crowd. They play their money into see us. They can do what they want."

Martin Shovlin, who missed the 1992 All-Ireland final through injury, seemed a little

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## DONEGAL REACTION

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Tom Humphries

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more disappointed than most. "It was one of our worst performances in the league to date. Unless there is an improvement of 100 per cent, we have no chance against Down. The atmosphere in the team didn't seem to be right, even in the dressing-room beforehand. Maybe we were thinking too much of next Sunday. But when your in the national final you should concentrate on that game and forget about what comes next."

Martin McHugh exchanged jerseys and a few quiet words with Henry Downey. The difficulties of adapting to a new ball game were still perplexing the prodigal brother who recently returned to the Donegal fold.

"The new rules were a bigger problem for us than the games on two Sundays. The rules were a disaster. Both teams appealed for a change of rules for the final and they said no. I don't think it was asking too much. Derry deserved to win. If we had got ahead in the second half, we might have won, but we didn't deserve to win it."

PJ McGowan, whose task over the next few days is perhaps less tricky than it might

have seemed last week, was worried about muscles rather than minds. "We have no serious injuries apart from Tony Boyle, who I am not sure about yet. Tony has done something to his lower calf muscle. It will be a day or two before we know his prospects for next Sunday."

"Basically, we have no time to muck about and think about today. We have to focus immediately. Today is gone. History."

"Physically we lost the exchanges today. They were stronger. When we lost Tony we lost a force up front, but we came back to within a point. If we got level we could have won maybe, but the game lost its momentum just then and Derry finished quite strong. They have a good tight marking defence, they spoiled us quite well. A number of our fellas wouldn't be happy with the way they played today. We didn't penetrate. We failed to take a few scoring chances. The restriction on handpasses stops the flow. We have to get back to playing the way we play best."

Last words to Martin Gavigan. "We'll just have to lift the head and get on with the work now. A lot of performances were below par today. That performance won't do for the championship. That performance won't scare Down one little bit. We are all disappointed. That's our second league final. We've lost them both. Back to the drawingboard."

Summed up the mood.