

# 1996

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

## **Dr. Mc Kenna Cup.**

1 17<sup>th</sup> March Fr. Tierney Park Donegal 0-07 Fermanagh 0-08

Winners:

## **Ulster Senior Football Championship**

2 26<sup>th</sup> May Clones Donegal 0-11 Down 1-09

Ulster Senior Championship final: Tyrone 1-09 Down 0-09

11th Aug All Ireland Semi-final: Mayo 2-13 Kerry 1-10

18th Aug All Ireland Semi-final: Meath 2-15 Tyrone 0-12

15th Sept. All Ireland final: Meath 0-12 Mayo 1-09

29th Sept. replay All Ireland final: Meath 2-09 Mayo 1-11

## **National Football League. – 1995/1996**

## **Allianz NFL Division 1A**

3	15 <sup>th</sup> Oct 1995	Cusack Park	Donegal	3-08	Clare	0-08
4	29 <sup>th</sup> Oct 1995	McCumhaill Park	Donegal	0-16	Tyrone	0-07
5	12 <sup>th</sup> Nov. 1995	O'Moore Park	Donegal	1-10	Laois	0-08
6	26 <sup>th</sup> Nov 1995	Fr. Tierney Park	Donegal	0-06	Kerry	1-11
7	4 <sup>th</sup> Feb 1996	Navan	Donegal	0-10	Meath	2-04
8	11 <sup>th</sup> Feb 1996	McCumhaill Park	Donegal	0-10	Derry	0-10
9	25 <sup>th</sup> Feb 1996	Fr. Tierney Park	Donegal	1-08	Kildare	0-11
10	31 <sup>st</sup> March 1996	Croke Park	Donegal	2-12	Wicklow	1-08
11	21 <sup>st</sup> April 1996 Semi-final	Croke Park	Donegal	0-10	Cork	0-09
12	5 <sup>th</sup> May 1996 <b>Final</b>	Croke Park	Donegal	1-09	Derry	1-16

DR. McKENNA CUP

# Donegal's absence of power highlighted by surprise defeat

Michael Daly reports from Ballyshannon  
Photos by: Conor McGonagle

**DONEGAL** ..... 0-7  
**FERMANAGH** ..... 0-8

For the second year in-a-row Donegal suffered an unexpected defeat at the hands of one of the supposedly weaker forces in Ulster when losing last Sunday at Ballyshannon to a razor keen Fermanagh side.

Last year Donegal did hurdle the Fermanagh obstacle in this competition to fall at the feet of Monaghan, also in Ballyshannon, but this year, with manager P. J. McGowan expressing the wish for an extended run of games in this competition, they proved well off key.

Even so, Donegal might have salvaged a draw such was their dominance in the second-half with players queuing up to kick the ball wide or cross field.

Although Donegal will not concern themselves unduly with this defeat, what is worrying is their consistent inability to play well in difficult wet or windy conditions.

This was evident last Sunday as it was against Kerry in particular before Christmas and the need for old-fashioned power and punch down the middle is there to be seen. Without Brian Murray, Noel Hegarty and Tony Boyle, Donegal were much the poorer for their absence.

Even so it was Fermanagh who appeared more than relieved at the final whistle as they emerged from under Donegal's thumb to celebrate a win which was eeked out when they had the considerable wind at their backs in the first half.

Leading by four points, 0-8 to 0-4 at half-time, Fermanagh contained Donegal to just three second half scores, only one of them from play.

## DEFENDING

Their captain and goalkeeper, Cormac McAdam played a huge part in their stoic defending. Twice he got his frame in front of net seeking shots from Brian Roper and Barry McGowan.

Elsewhere Donegal frittered away good and mediocre chances to amass a barely forgivable nine second half wides.

Employing Damien Conlon at centre forward for the withdrawn Tony Boyle and Damine Diver at wing back in a re-jigged defence that was minus Noel Hegarty, Donegal were pulverised in the opening quarter.

In that first 15 minutes four frees, two each from Raymond and Rory Gallagher and a point from play by Mark Gallagher underlined Fermanagh's definite attacking edge.

Fermanagh added two superb points, both from acute angles, both by Inter-Provincial panellist Shane King with John Joe Doherty looking less than comfortable. However, Doherty did improve rapidly and from possession gained Declan Bonner, returned to the Donegal fold, opened their account from a free.

## INSPIRATIONAL

An inspirational score from centre-back Malachy O'Rourke ended Fermanagh's tally while Manus Boyle from a beautiful Bonner hand-pass, Brian Roper and Damien Diver added Donegal's first half scores to see them cut the deficit to a manageable four points, 0-4 to 0-8 by half-time.

Donegal's expected dominance with the wind in the new half didn't materialise. Fermanagh were boosted by the inclusion of the tussling Paul Brewster for the injured Mark Gallagher and almost immediately Cormac McAdam made a splendid save from Brian Roper who was put clear by a clever Manus Boyle pass.

The Fermanagh defence had to cope with enormous Donegal pressure, even when reduced to 14 men after Ollie Reid got his marching orders. Reid, having pointed, was

ordered off apparently for an off the ball foul on Fermanagh defender Paul McGrady.

Donegal simply couldn't find the target, Barry McGowan convinced he had scored only to see his effort waved wide. With five minutes left and Fermanagh now down to 14 men, Tommy Callaghan sent-off for a foul having been booked in the first half, Manus Boyle scored from a 45 metre free.

He hit another in the final minute but Fermanagh held out for a rare but no doubt welcome win as they prepare for their crucial play-off with Antrim to decide division 3 status for next year.

Overall a disappointing display from Donegal, albeit a team using much of the extended panel, but Fermanagh should, and no doubt, will take great satisfaction from their win. Brian Roper was the only player from Donegal to pose a consistent threat in attack while Mark Crossan had another useful game at centre-back.

For Fermanagh a good win which was based on hunger and commitment and embellished by the skills of the Gallagher trio in attack while they had consistently impressive displays from Shane King, Colm Courtney and Cormac McAdam.

**DONEGAL:** Gary Walsh; John Joe Doherty, Matt Gallagher, Sean McEwen; Damien Diver (0-1), Mark Crossan, Barry McGowan; James Ruane, Martin Coll; Ollie Reid (0-1), Damien Conlon, Paddy Hegarty; Declan Bonner (0-1, free), Manus Boyle (0-3, two frees), Brian Roper (0-1). Subs: Eamon McMenamin for Conlon; John Ban Gallagher for Coll.

**FERMANAGH:** Cormac McAdam; Tommy Callaghan, Paddy McGuinness, Neil Cox; Paul McGrady, Malachy O'Rourke (0-1), Kieran Gallagher; Martin Greene, Colm Courtney; Rory Gallagher (0-2 frees), Colin Curran, Ciaran Donnelly; Raymond Gallagher (0-2, frees.), Mar Gallagher (0-1), Shane King (0-2). Subs: Justin Gilheaney for Cox, Paul Brewster for M. Gallagher (injd.), Fergal McCann for Curran.

**Referee:** John Scully, (Monaghan).

**DOWN ..... 1-9**  
**DONEGAL ..... 0-11**

They may have won the admiration of all who witnessed this remarkable Ulster championship preliminary round game. Yes, their bravery and resilience in response to the incredible series of events is to be admired. But the sad reality, no matter how unjust it seems, is that Donegal senior footballers are now faced with a long empty summer.

It would seem that the metaphorical Mr. Murphy has been working overtime since the National League Football Final to ensure that his maxim 'everything that can go wrong, will go wrong' became reality.

Quite frankly Mr. Murphy if your brief was to ensure at all costs that Donegal's senior championship season ended last Sunday, then you surpassed yourself.

In the build up to this game Donegal were forced to plan without their experienced midfielder, Brian Murray. 48 hours before the game they lost yet another vital player, Barry McGowan, his hamstring injury not holding up to a Friday evening late fitness check. A third huge blow was the loss of John Joe Doherty with a kidney infection.



By Michael Daly  
Sport Editor

These three defections alone put Donegal's reserves under intense pressure, but those problems were compounded by the tragic dismissal of debutant Dessie McNamara, for an off the ball incident which occurred in the first 30 seconds of the game.

21-year old McNamara was dismissed by Wexford official Brian White for striking Michael McGill after a period of jostling and tugging involving both players. White took no action against McGill.

Down to 14 men for the entire match it seemed nothing else could go wrong for Donegal when they conceded a bizarre goal with 'keeper Gary Walsh adjudged by the umpire to have stepped back over his goal-line as he fielded what was an attempt for a point by Conor Deegan.

Despite this series of horrendous setbacks, Donegal responded superbly to the challenge and their failure to at least earn a draw is all the more galling when one considers what Down offered in terms of class or craft.

Fortunately, Down are in the happy position that they can work on improving on a generally poor display; their championship continues despite this lacklustre performance. Considering their numerical advantage and the power/experience of their midfield some of their football was abysmal.

In attack they have big name players but only Mickey Linden provided a consistent threat. Aidan Farrel started very well but never maintained that good start while James McCartan faded into anonymity after an equally bright start. Their centre-half forward John Treanor and roving corner-forward Greg Blaney, did little to merit the lavish praise heaped on them from some quarters while Patrick Sloan had an uneventful afternoon.

Yet, this Down performance was good enough to see them through by one point, their best performer undoubtedly Gregory McCartan in midfield. They will know they can improve and may feel that having got over this difficult hurdle their championship hurdle can begin in earnest. Down teams of recent years have always improved as their championship season progresses, this team will need to improve, and quickly.

### MAIN PLOY

Down's main ploy was to put the ball down the right wing to Linden's corner. His duel with Mark Crossan and Paddy Hegarty's tussle with Gary Mason were two of the more engrossing sub-plots within a remarkable storyline.

Donegal replacements John Cunningham and Martin Shovlin responded superbly to their late inclusion in a defence which saw four positional changes from the published programme.

Cunningham was to have one of his best games ever for Donegal while Shovlin's uncompromising style suited the wet and slippery conditions to a tee.

Stunned by McNamara's dismissal, Donegal were fortunate that Down's shooting was well off the mark in a hectic opening quarter and they were also fortunate when 'keeper Walsh came off his line quickly to smother an Aidan Farrell goal attempt in the 9th minute.

Although uncertain as to how best to employ their extra-man, Down had the best of the exchanges and yet held only a meagre 0-2 to 0-1 lead by the 16th minute, Linden and Gregory McCartan their scorers, Manus Boyle converting a free for Donegal.

### SENSATION

Then that goal sensation. Conor Deegan's lofted effort for a point was caught by Gary Walsh but the umpire to his left immediately indicated he had caught the ball behind the line. "In order to catch the ball safely I took a step back but as far as I was concerned my right foot, my body and the ball were in front of the line," Gary Walsh told reporters after the game.

Those watching at home were in two minds, the t.v. coverage of the incident was inconclusive as UTV pictures could not indicate beyond doubt if Walsh had won the ball behind his line. Perhaps UTV might follow BBC's lead and place remote t.v. cameras in the goals for the next game(s). Indeed the UTV producers may not have been all that pleased with some of their work last Sunday, their cameras not picking up the McNamara/McGill incident and their camera work on James Ruane's goal attempt which prompted Mickey McVeigh's splendid save didn't do justice to the save.

All that, is incidental to the action, much of it error ridden in what was a poor first half.

John Treanor from a free and Gregory McCartan also from a free gave Down a six point cushion before Donegal responded with three unreplied to points from Manus Boyle (two) and Damien Diver, Diver's score coming from Boyle's quick thinking as he played a free short to him.

### HEGARTY LUCKY

Sandwiched between those Donegal scores was another ugly incident involving Paddy Hegarty and Gary Mason, Hegarty was most fortunate not to be sent off for striking Mason who was somewhat bemused to be booked along with Hegarty when he recovered from the blow.

Down finished the half with a Conor Deegan point and led by double scores, 1-5 to 0-4 having kicked nine wides to Donegal's two.

Happy to be well within range of Down, Donegal were inspired by manager McGowan's half time team-talk. Down were at least three minutes on the field before Donegal emerged to huge applause from a now largely sympathetic crowd of 15,278.

Inside seven marvellous minutes of endeavour they were just one point behind, Brian Roper beginning his best half with a score, Tony Boyle, who played very deep in the first half, pointing from close range and Noel Hegarty scoring a typical Hegarty score as he raced upfield.

Down were three clear again by the 48th minute, Gregory McCartan and D.J. Kane scoring but two wonderful points from James McHugh and a free from the hands by Tony Boyle had the crowd on the edge of their seats as Donegal drew level 0-10 to 1-7 by the 55th minute.

From there both sides had an opportunity to win or lose.

Noel Hegarty's pace and power sparked a glorious move which could have ended in glory for James Ruane. He raced forward to shoot low for the corner of the net but Mickey McVeigh's one handed save turned the ball out for a 45 which wasn't converted.

**DOWN** ..... 1-9  
**DONEGAL** ..... 0-11

Tom Humphries

THERE are two ways of looking at what transpired at Clones yesterday. One unalterable result, however.

You might admit the events of winter as serious evidence, and observe that Down, new residents in the division three neighbourhood, hung on pluckily and defeated the beaten league finalists Donegal by a point.

On the other hand you might point out that Donegal, injury-plagued, weather-beaten, deprived of a man in the first minute and sucker-punched by a soft controversial goal, ran Down, the most successful championship team of the decade, to within a point.

Significantly, the latter view was the one which prevailed in the Down dressingroom and amongst the majority of the 15,278 crowd. It is indisputable that Down were weakened yesterday by certain absences, but the performance of the 15 who took the field barely managed to be sufficient on the day.

It was Donegal who suffered all the heaviest psychological blows in the run up. The absences of Brian Murray and Declan Bonner had scarcely been absorbed when

Barry McGowan and John Joe Doherty joined them in the infirmary.

Worse was to come. The greasy weather proved itself especially unhelpful for a short-passing side. Then, in the first minute, young Dessie McNamara got himself sent off for an off-the-ball foul on Michael Magill.

After the game, sympathy flowed for McNamara, a championship debutant, from both sides. It has to be said, however, that even if you make the usual allowances for softening up and letting your man know that you are there, striking in full view of a linesman while play has been stopped for thirty seconds is an offence which merits punishment for its stupidity as much as its illegal intent.

Nevertheless Donegal made a game of it and had the chances late on to snatch one of their most glorious wins this decade.

Down looked tentative and unsure of themselves during several key periods, but that the finish was such a cliffhanger was something of a surprise to those whose minds were beginning to wander after 16 or 17

minutes. By then Michael Magill appeared to be relishing his task as free man and the Conor Deegan had just scored one of the more controversial goals which this championship will see. Deegan, loitering in space, perhaps 60 yards out, hoofed a huge kick towards the Donegal goal. Gary Walsh appeared to have caught the ball but one umpire (backed later by TV evidence) deemed Walsh to have stepped back over his line. Down were three points up and cruising.

The trend continued. Before the break the older legs in the Down attack seemed lead free. John Treanor made himself busy. Greg Blanden wandered freely. Mickey Linden scooped up an amount of good ball. By the 21st minute Down were six points ahead and the game appeared to be dying.

There was no clarion-inspired charge which marked the Donegal revival, just a

steady picking away at Down's frailties. Players like Damien Diver, Martin Shovlin and Mark Crossan worked heroically in defence. James McHugh and (in the second half) Brian Roper ferretted what they could out of a crowded middle third of the field. Slowly Donegal filed a potential escape for themselves. Manus Boyle picked off two points before half time. Damien Diver added another, and Donegal went to the break with Down still in their sights.

Crucially, Donegal came out and scored the first three points of the second period.

At midfield, where Donegal had no right to expect parity, they achieved the next best thing by overpopulating the sector for the last 50 minutes of the game. The quality of ball to Down's Linden and Farrell deteriorated. For the final 25 minutes Down never managed to get more than two points ahead.

Down reacted by dispatching Micheal Magill to mark James McHugh and allowing DJ Kane to run free. The move worked, but only because James McCartan's footballing instincts brought him back to defence for most of the second half. From there he

curbed the influence of his marker and won a huge amount of second half ball which he distributed impeccably.

Donegal clawed away admirably. Three points down again after 50 minutes, McHugh stitched in two lovely points and Tony Boyle converted a free from the hands to leave the sides level five minutes later.

At that point the game turned on an extraordinary save from Down's Michael McVeigh. Paddy Hegarty won a high ball over the head of Magill, turned and flicked it straight into the path of young James Ruane. Travelling at speed Ruane shot low and hard for the Down net but McVeigh got down brilliantly to save the shot. Down scooted up the field and scored a point through Mickey Linden.

The final 10 minutes were about who could dig the deepest. The fact of having survived this period is the most substantial crumb of comfort Down carry with them this week. When the game hung in the balance the great glamour team of the decade scrapped like tigers. Treanor and Linden were guilty of excessive caution in scoring

positions perhaps but the midfield came through by winning a series of clean balls.

Just one point was scored in those frantic final 10 minutes, John Bán Gallagher tacking on a score in the depths of injury time. Down greeted the final whistle like an All-Ireland win.

**DOWN:** M McVeigh; F Caulfield, B Burns, P Higgins; G Mason, M Magill, DJ Kane (0-1); G McCartan (0-3, two frees), C Deegan (1-1); P Sloan, J Treanor (0-2), J McCartan; M Linden (0-2), A Farrell, G Blaney. **Subs:** Gerard Deegan for P Sloan, 60 mins.

**DONEGAL:** G Walsh; J Cunningham, M Gallagher, M Crossan, D Diver (0-1), N Hegarty (0-1), M Shovlin; JB Gallagher (0-1), J Ruane; D McNamara, J McHugh (0-2), P Hegarty; B Roper (0-1), T Boyle (0-2, one free), M Boyle (0-3 one free). **Subs:** Ollie Reed for M Boyle 65 mins.

Referee: Brian White (Wexford).

**SCORING SEQUENCE** (Down First): 5 mins: M Linden point 0-1 to 0-0; 11: M Boyle free 0-1 to 0-1; 15: G McCartan free 0-2 to 0-1; 17: C Deegan goal 1-2 to 0-1; 20: J Treanor point 1-3 to 0-1; 21: G McCartan free 1-4 to 0-1; 24: M Boyle point 1-4 to 0-2; 34: M Boyle point 1-4 to 0-3; 34: D Diver point 1-4 to 0-4; 35: C Deegan point 1-5 to 0-4. **Half-time:** Down 1-5, Donegal 0-4.

38 mins: B Roper point 1-5 to 0-5; 38: T Boyle pt 1-5 to 0-6; 42: N Hegarty point 1-5 to 0-7; 46: G McCartan point 1-6 to 0-7; 49: DJ Kane point 1-7 to 0-7; 51: J McHugh point 1-7 to 0-8; 52: J McHugh point 1-7 to 0-9; 56: T Boyle free 1-7 to 0-10; 58: M Linden pt 1-8 to 0-10; 60: J Treanor free 1-9 to 0-10; 70: JB Gallagher pt 1-9 to 0-11. **Final score:** Down 1-9, Donegal 0-

# Down thwart fightback by 14-man Donegal

Ruane was criticised for not taking his point after the game, surely not a word would have been spoken had McVeigh not made the save of the championship. A goal would have killed an increasingly bedraggled looking Down off, it didn't happen and the game turned from the kickout.

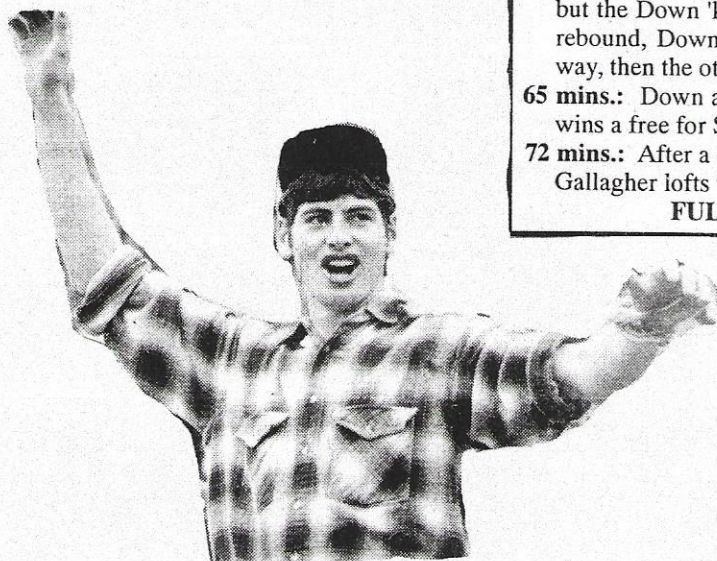
Down's response was immediate, Mickey Linden fisting over the bar and with five minutes to go Greg Blaney's experience won him a free off Martin Shovlin which Treanor converted.

While both sides missed some relatively easy frees, underfoot conditions must have been a factor but the disappointment in Manus Boyle's face as he admonished himself after one such miss, told a tale. He and Donegal knew they had to take what chances arrived their way.

Drained of energy in those final minutes they lost the ball while attacking on two occasions and an injury to Noel Hegarty stalled their momentum. John Ban Gallagher pointed two minutes into added time but from the kickout Down won critical possession and referee White signalled the end.

It was a gallant effort by an injury riddled Donegal side, the players introduced before the game, John Cunningham and Martin Shovlin did outstandingly well, Damien Diver, Mark Crossan had fine games, Noel Hegarty and Matt Gallagher worked very hard. Although Donegal lost the midfield battle, John Ban Gallagher had one of his best games, particularly good on the ball.

James McHugh, poor in the first half, won a lot of breaking ball in the second and apart from two good points, appeared a new man after the break. Tony Boyle was poor as a full forward but that was not his only role on Sunday. He often ended up back in his own defence and ran the field to make up for the absent McNamara. His ability to score was sacrificed for that hustling role. Manus Boyle missed a number of frees but yet again looked, along with McHugh, like the forward who could and would score. Brian Roper was getting better and better as the game progressed while Paddy Hegarty roved well but made little headway in terms of vital scores.



# Score by Score

- 4 mins.:** Down captain, Mickey Linden breaks free after a quick free and lofts over the bar. **0-1/0-0**
- 11 mins.:** Donegal drew level as Tony Boyle wins a free of Brian Burns and Manus Boyle converts from 30m. **0-1/0-1**
- 15 mins.:** Gregory McCartan punished a Donegal tackle by converting a free from 35m. **0-2/0-1**
- 17 mins.:** Disaster for Donegal as Gary Walsh is adjudged to have stepped back over the line as he attempts to take a Conor Deegan effort on his chest. **1-2/0-01**
- 19 mins.:** Down forwards Aiden Farrell and Mickey Linden win a scramble close to the Donegal line and Martin Shovlin fouls Linden as he breaks through. John Treanor caps his return after six years with the free. **1-3/0-1**
- 22 mins.:** John Ban Gallagher is penalised for a foot foul on James McCartan and from the 30m free in front of the posts, Gregory McCartan finds the target. **1-4/0-1**
- 23 mins.:** Martin Shovlin starts the move which also involves Noel Hegarty before Manus Boyle makes space for himself by cutting inside and fires over a magnificent point from close to 40m. **1-4/0-2**
- 35 mins.:** Again Manus Boyle is on the end of a Donegal move involving John Cunningham and James McHugh **1-4/0-3**
- 38 mins.:** In the time added on for the stoppage while Donegal lost Dessie McNamara at the start, Paddy Hegarty wins a free which Manus Boyle takes short to Damien Diver to score a beauty off his left foot. **1-4/0-4**
- 39 mins.:** Down hit back just before referee, White blows the half-time whistle, as Conor Deegan lofts a great point from outside the 45m line. **1-5/0-4**
- HALF-TIME - Donegal 0-4, Down 1-5**
- 37 mins.:** Donegal come out showing renewed spirit, especially from Martin Shovlin as he breaks two tackles to put Brian Roper in on goal and the corner-forward just fires over the bar. **1-5/0-5**
- 38 mins.:** Tony Boyle wins possession and breaks in from the left to hoist a beauty. **1-5/0-6**
- 42 mins.:** Noel Hegarty shows the way with a 50 yard run straight through the middle and finishes with a good score to leave just a point between them. **1-5/0-7**
- 44 mins.:** D. J. Kane wins the breaking ball at midfield and finds Gregory McCartan who turns inside and hits a very good point from distance. **1-6/0-7**
- 48 mins.:** D. J. Kane, now the free man in the Down team, turns inside a defender to hit the target. **1-7/0-7**
- 49 mins.:** James McHugh takes a pass and makes space to hoist a good point. **1-7/0-8**
- 52 mins.:** Paddy Hegarty, back in his own half-back line, finds McHugh again with a 50 yard pass and McHugh again finishes. **1-7/0-9**
- 54 mins.:** Donegal are on level terms as Brian Roper wins a free off Finbar Caulfield and Tony Boyle takes over the free taking duties to point from the hand. **1-7/0-10**
- 57 mins.:** After much Donegal pressure, James Ruane has a great chance, but the Down keeper, McVeigh makes a wonder save and from the rebound, Down work the ball to Mickey Linden who squirms one way, then the other and fists Down into the lead again. **1-8/0-10**
- 65 mins.:** Down again get the breaks, and old warhorse, Greg Blaney wins a free for Shorty Treanor to put them two ahead. **1-9/0-10**
- 72 mins.:** After a couple of Donegal moves breaking Down, John Ban Gallagher lofts their final score. **1-9/0-11**

**FULL-TIME - Donegal 0-11, Down 1-9**

# Magnificent start

*Michael Daly reports from  
Cusack Park*

DONEGAL ..... 3-8  
CLARE ..... 0-8

Donegal's facile victory in this their first game of the new NFL season was as important from the point of ending the bad vibes of a summer spent quarrelling as it was in terms of securing what could prove very valuable league points.

Donegal need to win to push the memories of a feuding summer into the background but they did so with an unexpected ease and a delightful style that left the 6,000 attendance in Ennis marvelling at the quality of football played by the former All-Ireland champions.

What was equally pleasing was the rivetting performances given by some of the new players, in particular Sean McEwen from the St. Eunan's club. The play by the blond-haired corner back was mature beyond belief. His sense of positioning, his ability to be first to every ball bar one and his undoubted power and pace all combined to give him a dream debut.

If McEwen's display was exhilarating the football in general was accomplished and slick. Tony Boyle revelled in his new role at centre-half forward, Eamon McMenamin, not quite a debutant, but still new to the scene, had a fine hour and did well later on at midfield.

The sub, Niall McCready, was given 19 minutes to stake a claim. He scored the game's only fisted point, he won a 20 metre free which should have been pointed and made the vital touch on for Tony Boyle to score the game's third goal.

He and a second Aodh Ruadh sub, Brian Roper, left the field beaming from ear-to-ear, both of them playing their first senior football for the green and gold.

Also used was James Ruane, another of the 21 crop. Ruane however, has seen action before at senior level and will see some more no doubt as P.J. McGowan dabbles in the mixing room to find the right formula.

Last Sunday he would have found some of his more trusted ingredients standing him in good stead. Matt Gallagher epitomised the importance of experience and timing with a masterful display at the back.

When Clare attempted to draw him outfield Gerard Kelly followed the no. 14, Odran O'Dwyer and Matt minded the house and Martin Daly (scorer of 3-1 the last time these sides met) keeping him to one point on this occasion.

## CLARE WERE POOR

Although Donegal had this game won after 20 minutes and teased and taunted Clare for much of the remainder, one could put some of Donegal's bravado down to Clare's lack of quality. Clare were poor, very poor. Part of that conclusion ignores Donegal's ability — they made them look poor — but little things underline Clare's lack of aptitude.

For example, three or four times at least in defence and in attack Donegal players lost possession or did something ridiculous. However, the Clare lads were never close enough to punish the mistake and Donegal seemed to have far too much time on the ball.

While Clare did fashion a mini-revival near the close of the first half, Donegal who led at one stage by eight points, 2-3 to 0-1 and saw the lead halved to 2-4 to 0-6 by half time, never looked seriously threatened.

The second-half housed a remarkable 15 minute spell where neither side mustered a score. Tony Boyle's goal to kill the game off with 57 minutes played had an inevitability attached to it as Clare seemed anxious just to see this game finished.

At midfield Clare won the first few clashes, Donal O'Sullivan setting up Denis Russell for Clare's opening point on two minutes. John Duffy, largely disappointing hit his only point, a free to level the sides, while James McHugh delivered a little slowly for Manus Boyle to point. An earlier more accurate pass might have put Manus in to a goal. Still, it was encouraging football and a Tony Boyle point proved the forerunner for a stunning goal.

## CLASS FINISH

The goal had its origins in a needlessly conceded free which Manus Boyle worked short. Manus was involved in a return pass from John Gildea and another fisted pass to Tony Boyle left Brian Murray on the over-lap. The Dublin-based Garda provided a class finish with his left foot, the ball blasting past Hanrahan to the top corner of the net.

Five minutes later Donegal's quality was again in evidence with Barry McGowan and Noel Hegarty both building up a move that Eamon McMenamin finished to the net despite the lunging dives of two Clare defenders.

Eight points ahead in less than 20 minutes Donegal were defending superbly as well as finishing clinically. 20-year-old McEwen made a vital interception with one hand as Ger Keane lurked inside, while Matt Gallagher played a casual back-pass to the 'keeper, Paul Callaghan.

Following a delay for treatment to Clare captain Ciaran O'Mahoney who collided accidentally with Manus Boyle, Clare were forced to bring off their captain and they also made a second change, Michael Considine coming in.

Considine was to play well and in general Clare had their best spell after the delay of four minutes to allow the unfortunate O'Mahoney to be stretchered off.

Odran O'Dwyer and Manus Boyle scored points by the 28th minute but in added time Clare struck four scores without reply and might have had a goal but for two fabulous saves from Paul Callaghan, the second quite special as he dived to divert a cheeky effort away from the top corner of his net.

McInerney, Daly, O'Sullivan and Kelly hit Clare points and having been outplayed they must have been pleased to trail only by four points, 2-4 to 0-6 at the break.

Clare narrowed the deficit to just three points soon after the re-start when Ger Keane slipped Sean McEwen's shackles for the only time in the game to point.

## BRILLIANT DEFENDING

From 45 metres Manus Boyle replied with an excellent place kick and McEwen redeemed himself with more brilliant defending in the corner. James McHugh chipped in with a point to counter one from O'Sullivan and McHugh did the spadework for an Eamon McMenamin point to put Donegal five points clear with 18 minutes left to play.

With Niall McCready in for a struggling John Duffy, the mobile Aodh Ruadh lad settled quickly to win a pointable free which wasn't hit well and easily stopped by Hanrahan in the Clare goals.

Paul Callaghan prompted momentary heart-failure when he dropped a high centre but regained the ball quickly only to be fouled. Elsewhere James Ruane replaced a tiring Brian Murray.

For 15 minutes neither side could score but Donegal amassed the bulk of their seven second-half wides in this period, before their final and decisive goal, Niall McCready getting in between two Clare defenders to nudge a high ball towards Tony Boyle.

Tony's first attempt was saved but he tapped in from the loose ball and young McCready ended the scoring and a memorable debut with a fisted point on 60 minutes.

Before this fixture Donegal would have been delighted with a win. They achieved this objective but did so with a degree of panache and style one would not have anticipated.

Considering a number of players were at John Joe Doherty's wedding and so many regulars were missing, this was an exceptional display. Adding to the need to 'exorcise a few ghosts from the summer' as one player put it, the win was a magnificent achievement and puts the spotlight back on football.

Paul Callaghan, Matt Gallagher, Sean McEwen, Noel Hegarty, John Ban Gallagher, James McHugh, Eamon McMenamin and Tony Boyle played particularly well while all the others involved did little wrong. For Clare the return to Division One may be another short visit unless they improve rapidly.

**DONEGAL:** Paul Callaghan; Gerard Kelly, Matt Gallagher, Sean McEwen; Barry McGowan, Noel Hegarty, Martin Shovlin; Brian Murray 1-0, John Ban Gallagher; Eamon McMenamin 1-1, James McHugh 0-1, John Gildea; John Duffy 0-1, free, Tony Boyle 1-1, Manus Boyle 0-3, one free. Subs: Niall McCready 0-1 for Duffy (48 mins.); James Ruane for Murray (52 mins.); Brian Roper for Gildea (57 mins).

**CLARE:** James Hanrahan; Francis McInerney, Sean Lyne, Ciaran O'Mahoney; Pauric Gallagher, J.J. Rouine, Martin Keavey; Brendan Rouine, Donal O'Sullivan 0-2; Denis Russell 0-1, Francis McInerney 0-1, 45, Gerry Kelly 0-1; Ger Keane 0-1, Odran O'Dwyer 0-1, Martin Daly 0-1. Subs: Barry Keating for O'Mahoney, injd. (23 mins.) Michael Considine for Russell (23 mins.).

**REFEREE:** Maurice O'Sullivan (Kerry).

DONEGAL ..... 0-16

TYRONE ..... 0-7

Donegal halted a recent run of home defeats last Sunday in emphatic style --- they had lost their last two games played at Ballybofey --- and they called 'halt' in glorious fashion, with yet another massive nine points to spare over Division One opposition.

Against Clare Donegal's tally included three goals, but last Sunday, before an estimated 7,000 crowd, Donegal scored an impressive 14 points from play and created several goal chances, only to be denied by goalkeeping or frantic defending.

From a Donegal viewpoint it was a great display, but the lack of a real threat from Tyrone, despite the presence of seven of the side which started the All-Ireland final, left it a one-sided affair; Donegal having opened a five point lead after ten minutes, never led by less than four points at any stage thereafter.

By the finish the result had become so obvious that many of the visiting supporters were already in their cars listening to the final few minutes on

*Michael Daly reports from  
Sean MacCumhaill Park  
Photos by Conor McGonagle*

radio as Donegal simply dressed up an already stylish hour's work.

Tyrone's long season seemed to catch up with them and the loss of one of their most effective defenders, Seamus McCallan, through injury had a devastating effect on their defensive capabilities. In his absence James McHugh had almost a free hand and scored four superb points from play. He and Tony Boyle shared the centre-forward berth, Boyle having a great match, winning the ball at will, Chris Lawn unable to stultify his incessant running.

Elsewhere Manus Boyle finished some sparkling moves and scored the game's only two frees to give him the top personal tally of the day --- six points.

John Gildea scored one memorable point and his powerful physique is important in that Donegal are now using two light men in James McHugh and Niall McCready. But those lighter players were invariably involved in the four and five-man passing

movements that had all the flamboyance of a strutting bullfighter. Time and again Donegal seemed to be 'playing' with their foe before adding the killer blow.

In defence Paul Callaghan between the posts made a further claim for a permanent place, saving a 50th minute penalty from Peter Canavan, while his kick-outs were again long and high --- if a little predictable. The six defenders will be happy, in particular the again excellent Sean McEwen and Noel Hegarty who concentrated more on curbing Peter Canavan, and did so magnificently, although Canavan looked like a man who could do with a break after a hectic few months at club and county level.

Martin Shovlin was like a debutant rather than a man celebrating his 100th competitive appearance, the appreciative crowd applauding his every touch --- one of the quiet men, he is hugely popular with the fans as the reception for him on Sunday showed. He led the side out on Sunday which was a nice gesture, Noel Hegarty continued as captain.

At midfield Donegal are working hard to find an effective partnership. When placed in the 'senior' partner role John Ban Gallagher answered the cause last Sunday with an exceptional performance that had fitness and willingness to work as its hallmark. James Ruane was surprisingly rugged for a debutant and there is no doubt he has a lot to offer.

Danny Barr, a late replacement for Tyrone, was the better of the visitors' midfielders, but again Fergal Logan played with a lethargy that seemed to hit most of the Red Hand side. Stephen Conway, initially named at midfield, played at left-half forward but Barry McGowan was far too aware for him and Conway was replaced. Tyrone's Logan was later to leave the fray early, Marty Quinn brought in, hoping to stem the Donegal tide.

Gerard Cavlan, a player who scored 1-6 against Derry, was equally subdued, Sean McEwen having a wonderful hour, adding forward running to the close marking. Against Clare McEwen was happy to merely defend, but his growing confidence was reflected in his keenness to move further forward last Sunday.

Before a superb crowd Donegal burst into a five point lead, Manus Boyle's first point an extraordinary effort. Tony Boyle cut through with such a dash that he left Chris Lawn floundering and might have had a goal but his effort was always rising. Both added two more points while James McHugh, from Gildea and Kelly, also hit a fine point.

Tyrone were little more than bystanders at this stage, they fluffed two scoring chances, Cavlan and Canavan both wide but their opening score through Brian Gormley was greeted with obvious relief, the score coming when John Ban Gallagher was blocked down.

### POSSIBLE PENALTY

Damien Gormley added a second Tyrone point but Donegal seemed to have reasonable claims for a penalty when Tony Boyle appeared to be fouled on his way to goal. However, Donegal's midfielder John Ban Gallagher kept the scoring momentum going with two long range scores.

But for the massive 6'4" frame of Tyrone's Finbar McConnell, Donegal's Manus Boyle looked certain to goal on 25 minutes, his fine effort matched by a fine save. James McHugh popped over Donegal's eight point while Brendan Mallon left his side five in arrears, 0-8 to 0-3 at half-time.

Tyrone replaced Conway with championship captain, Ciaran Corr at the break but it had little impact. Peter Canavan did well to find the unmarked Brian Gormley for an early point but Donegal replied with points from Manus Boyle (free after Paul Donnolly charged McCready) and John Gildea (a superb run down the right wing) and by the 52nd minute Boyle from another McCready won free and James McHugh (a great score) had Donegal well in control, 0-12 to 0-5 to the good.

Donegal put some stylish moves that embraced for the five passes before accurate finishing left Tyrone all but bewildered. James McHugh tapped over after Tony Boyle, Niall McCready and Manus Boyle all worked the ball to him; moments later Eamon McMenamin ended another flowing move, Noel Hegarty and the Boyles and McCready again involved.

### SUMMED UP

From a 20 metre free Gerard Cavlan summed up Tyrone's day when he fired wide while Peter Canavan scored only his first point in the 48th minute, another indication of how Tyrone struggled.

Tyrone pressed for a goal, Brendan Mallon firing wide but they got their best goal chance when Damien Gormley was fouled for a penalty. Peter Canavan's drive was easily stopped by Paul Callaghan and for the final ten minutes the game was just elementary, Donegal coasting to another nine points win, Manus Boyle boosting his final tally with two further points, Canavan scoring a late point for a poor Tyrone side.

Donegal played extremely well last Sunday, but again there were questions over the strength and attitude of the opposition. Tyrone looked remarkably jaded from their long summer. One was remarked they didn't even want to start a row! Considering the fireworks recent meetings have engendered, this game, although pleasing from Donegal's viewpoint, was short on passion, not the local derby one might anticipate. However, Donegal, with 14 scores from play looked really dominant and simply crushed their opposition last Sunday, youth and experience again the key as players make strong claims for regular places.

**DONEGAL:** Paul Callaghan; Gerard Kelly, Matt Gallagher, Sean McEwen; Barry McGowan, Noel Hegarty, Martin Shovlin; John Ban Galalgher (0-2), James Ruane; John Gildea (0-1), James McHugh (0-4), Eamon McMenamin (0-1); Niall McCready, Tony Boyle (0-2), Manus Boyle (0-6, two frees). Subs: Damian Diver for Kelly; Brian Murray for McMenamin; Ollie Reid for Gildea.

**TYRONE:** Finbar McConnell; Paul Devlin, Chris Lawn, Damien Loughran; Ronan McGarrity, Brendan Mallon, Paul Donnell; Fergal Logan, Danny Barr; Sean McLaughlin, Peter Canavan (0-2), Stephen Conway; Gerard Cavlan (0-1), Brian Gormley (0-2), Damien Gormley (0-1). Subs: Ciaran Corr for Conway; Marty Quinn for Logan.

**REFEREE:** Michael Turley (Galway)

KERRY..... 1-11  
 DONEGAL..... 0-6

# Ó Sé's travel show sizzles in Donegal

THE northern air infects this Kerry side with a peculiar capacity for winning football. Yesterday, for the second time in a month, they travelled well and served up a hammering to unsuspecting hosts.

Street angels, house devils, though: on both occasions they played at home in this campaign, they were defeated. Then, they acted like men intent on securing gainful employment in an animated Spot the Difference roadshow.

The manner of the victory pleased joint managers Páidí Ó Sé and Seamus MacGearailt no end, however. Worse if they were playing poorly everywhere. "Our best performance so far," enthused Páidí.

## SUFFOCATED DERRY

Conditions did not lend themselves to the fluid play which so suffocated Derry. Rain and wind lashed the venue. Referee Tommy McDermott, finding himself in the middle of a particularly stiff pre-match shower, let them at it four minutes before the appointed time.

Yet Páidí knew it was ideal for one purpose: ascertaining whether the men he has singled out from the flock are imbued with the requisite grimness for days like this.

Having "stood by those who stood by us" — a reference to his surprise dropping of Laune Rangers duo Tommy Byrne and Billy O'Shea — the triumph also amounted to a vindication of a controversial policy.

However, he was quick to add the rider that no grudges will be harboured after Christmas.

Kerry certainly had the wherewithal to blow the whistle

## THE BIG MATCH



### LIAM HORAN REPORTS

on Donegal's three-match unbeaten run.

Donegal hadn't met a side of Kerry's class in those three games and yesterday, when that omission was put right, some worrying limitations revealed themselves to manager PJ McGowan.

By game's end, they had completely lost their shape. Players neglected their specific roles in the hope that their free-spirited ways would coax something worthwhile out of their colleagues. Others abandoned them for the sake of abandonment itself, a less noble motivation.

True, the goal which put the game into perspective was a fluke. A Dara Ó Cinnéide sideline ball on the left wing, 11 minutes into the second half, was dropped marginally over the line by Donegal keeper Paul Callaghan.

## FRIENDLY FIRE

His mistake, scarcely excusable even with the wet ball, put Kerry on the high road at 1-7 to 0-5. Donegal had been felled by friendly fire.

It also came at the start of Donegal's most dismal period, a 15-minute scoreless spell. Not long before that, the home fans had glimpsed a brief ray of hope with the restoration of Brian

Murray to his rightful position at midfield.

Murray raked the skies twice, set up Tony Boyle for a point, and sprayed a few neat passes to his forwards.

The game was still within their grasp, up until the unannounced goal. Jack Ferriter and Bingo Driscoll had further Kerry points before John Gildea broke Donegal's duck.

It was a barely noticeable interruption in the sequence, for Driscoll and Genie Farrell pressed the umpire into service at the other end before the final whistle.

## STATISTIC SWAPPING

Things were much more even in the first half. Manus Boyle had opened the scoring with a point, inspiring an uncontrollable orgy of statistic swapping in the press box.

Boyle, playing his 100th game for his county, was doing the scoring stuff for the 47th game in a row; he has scored in 94 of the 100 games; he wears Patrick boots (well, he should, he's a top man in the factory which makes them) . . . get my drift?

By half-time, another stat had bulldozed its way to the forefront: all of Donegal's points (from Boyle, and Johns Duffy and Gildea) had come from play, while Kerry's entire tally consisted of five frees and one '45' successfully negotiated by Ó Cinnéide. Kerry 0-6, Donegal 0-3.

Murray seemed set to satisfy our eternal search for match-defining turning points when he brought his six-foot plus frame to midfield for the resumption of play. With Tony Boyle on the '40', Donegal suddenly had a more menacing way about them.

With a little less haste than that which marked its arrival, it was gone. Tony Boyle's 31st minute point aside, Donegal could not get inside the Kerry defence where Morgan Nix, Anthony Gleeson and Sean Burke were repelling all-comers.

Nix and Gleeson threw themselves at everything that moved in the goal-mouth, and with Donegal at full tilt, the Kerry forwards had room to manoeuvre. Teams hoping to beat Kerry should be put on notice that they thrive on room up front.

After the goal they got plenty of it, and they also loosened a few crucial blocks in Donegal's team-building. Of those who do not belong to the establishment, Sean McEwen and John Gildea were best. Of the rest, only Matt Gallagher, Barry McGowan, Martin Shovlin and Murray played up to scratch.

**SCORERS — Kerry:** D O Cinnéide 1-6 (1-0 sideline kick, 0-4 frees, 0-1 '45'); B Driscoll 0-2; S Geaney, J Ferriter, G Farrell 0-1 each. **Donegal:** J Gildea 0-2; M Boyle, T Boyle, J Duffy, B McGowan 0-1 each.

**KERRY —** D O'Keefe; J O'Driscoll, A Gleeson, M Nix; S Stack, S Burke, E Breen, D O Sé, S Moynihan; B Driscoll, D O Cinnéide, J Crowley; J Ferriter, G Farrell, S Geaney. **Sub:** J O'Shea for Crowley 56 mins.

**DONEGAL —** P Callaghan; G Kelly, M Gallagher, S McEwen; B McGowan, M Coll, M Shovlin; J Ban Gallagher, J Ruane; J Gildea, B Murray, E McMenamin, J Duffy, T Boyle, M Boyle. **Subs:** N McCready for Kelly 29 mins; B Ward for McMenamin h-t; P Cunningham for Duffy 51 mins.

**REF —** T McDermott (Cavan).

## CHURCH AND GENERAL NFL DIVISION ONE

Kerry..... 1-11 Donegal..... 0-6  
 Derry..... 2-7 Laois..... 0-9  
 Kildare..... 0-10 Clare..... 0-10  
 Meath..... 2-7 Tyrone..... 0-9

	P	W	D	L	Pts
Meath.....	4	4	0	0	8
Donegal.....	4	3	0	1	6
Derry.....	4	2	0	2	4
Kerry.....	4	2	0	2	4
Tyrone.....	4	2	0	2	4
Kildare.....	4	1	1	2	3
Laois.....	4	1	0	3	2
Clare.....	4	0	1	3	1

## DIVISION TWO

Dublin..... 0-13 Westmeath..... 0-7  
 Cavan..... 2-9 Armagh..... 0-11  
 Leitrim..... 0-13 Down..... 1-4  
 Cork..... 2-12 Louth..... 1-7

	P	W	D	L	Pts
Cavan.....	4	3	0	1	6
Cork.....	4	3	0	1	6
Leitrim.....	4	3	0	1	6
Armagh.....	4	2	0	2	4
Dublin.....	4	2	0	2	4
Down.....	4	1	0	3	2
Louth.....	4	1	0	3	2
Westmeath.....	4	1	0	3	2



# Donegal leave Laois with no home comforts

**DONEGAL.....1-10; LAOIS.....0-8**

**IN CONTRAST** to last season when they finished table toppers in Division 1 of the National Football League, Laois are certainly not finding their home ground — O'Moore Park, Portlaoise — a happy hunting ground this season.

Already beaten by Meath at home, they suffered a five-point defeat at the hands of Donegal on the very same pitch yesterday.

The Ulstermen's success sent the large Donegal following — they matched Laois 50-50 in the crowd of 3,000 — home in joyous mood.

Already winners over Clare and Tyrone, Donegal's five-point winning margin still came as something of a surprise.

They trailed by two points (0-6 to 0-4) at the interval and had to withstand renewed Laois pressure for the opening ten minutes of the second half.

## **THERE FOR THE TAKING**

But after Laois registered five wides in as many minutes, the visitors realised that the game was there for the taking.

John Ban Gallagher and Jimmy Ruane gradually gained control at midfield — an advantage that the entire side benefitted from.

The forwards, and more especially Manus and Tony Boyle, combined far better. As a result the deficit was wiped out in a ten-minute period and Manus Boyle levelled the scores at 0-8 each.

A further point from Tony Boyle propelled Donegal into the lead for the second time in the game and, as the Laois attack continued to squander their chances, the visitors were now in control.

The home side's only reward in the second half was two points by Mick Lawlor, one following a free by Tony Maher and the other following a 'fifty' by Damien Delaney.

Donegal were by far the better side at this stage and points from Manus Boyle and Jimmy Ruane gave them fresh encouragement.

The Laois defence was then caught napping for the only goal of the hour, Eamonn McMenamin finishing the move following some delightful forward play.

With John Joe Doherty — a late replacement for Matt Gallagher — playing superbly at full-back, there were no further Laois scores. And Manus Boyle compounded their misery when he finished with a late point.

**SCORERS — Donegal:** M Boyle 0-5; E McMenamin 1-1, J Ruane 0-2, T Boyle, J Gildea 0-1 each. **Laois:** T Maher 0-3, M Lawlor, D Delaney 0-2 each, T Bowe 0-1.

**DONEGAL —** P Callaghan; G Kelly, J.J. Doherty, S McEwan; D Diver, N Hegarty, M Showlin; JB Gallagher, J Ruane; J Gildea, B Murray, E McMenamin; N McCready, T Boyle, M Boyle. Sub: J Duffy for McCready.

**LAOIS —** E Burke; A Phelan; C Duggan, T Conroy, E Delaney, D Lalor, B Kirwan; T Maher, PJ Dempsey; D Sweeney, H Emerson, M Lawlor; T Bowe, M O'Brien, D Delaney.

**REF —** W O'Mahony (Limerick).

# Thriller in Navan as Boyle scores last second point to draw

MEATH ..... 2-4  
 DONEGAL ..... 0-10

Tony Boyle scored a vital point from a difficult free to earn Donegal a draw with what was virtually the last kick of a game that was memorable for its exciting finish, rather than the overall standard of play.

Twice in the final minutes Boyle had to steel his nerves to convert from frees which would normally be the domain of Manus Boyle (absent through injury). On both occasions the Dungloe lad proved well up to the task and apart from his crucial 63rd minute effort, he was always Donegal's most effective forward in a game that was level four times in the second half.

*Michael Daly reports from Pairc Tailteann  
 Photos from Navan by Brian McDaid*

Donegal can question whether they should ever have been in such a position as to need Boyle's reliable free-taking to earn a share of the spoils. Based on the t.v. pictures from Sunday's game shown by RTE there has to be a serious question mark over the legitimacy of Meath's first goal, by Barry Callaghan.

The evidence from the slow-motion I feel suggests that Callaghan actually threw the ball into the net, there didn't seem to be any definite striking action by him.

However, Donegal will have to accept the score and perhaps should remember they too had one memorable chance to find the net, but the final shot from Niall McCready thumped the upright with Meath's Conor Martin, for once, well beaten.

In view of Donegal's horrendous list of injuries, and the late withdrawals of Brian Murray and their captain, Noel Hegarty, they should be pleased with the end result. Perhaps they could have won, but a point in Navan is a good return.

The side on view was remarkably inexperienced, by the finish two debutants were manning the vital corner-back positions, one of them Noel McGinley just 19, while Mark Crossan was playing only his second full game for the county at centre-back, the first last week in a challenge game.

Elsewhere a 21-year-old, James Ruane, supposed to start a forward, was playing a superb game at midfield, another brace of 20-year-olds were earning their spurs against the vastly experienced Martin O'Connell and the over-rated Graham Geraghty, while my man-of-the match, Damien Diver, played the now veteran Colm Coyle off the park, Diver having an outstanding hour.

All this from a patch-work Donegal team that had to do without Manus Boyle, Barry McGowan, James McHugh, Brian Murray, Noel Hegarty (all injured) and Martin Gavigan (suspended) --- six All-Ireland medal winners few other teams could do without.

However, such has been the experimentation by P. J. McGowan that he was able to find replacements for all of them and amazingly, when Sean McEwen limped off, he had, in the best tradition of those Delia Smith cookery programmes, a defender 'he had prepared earlier' to fit in almost perfectly into his much changed defence, Glen's 19-year-old Noel McGinley.

To be honest, had Donegal lost by 20 points in these circumstances few would have been that upset, but that this cobbled together outfit (and that description doesn't do the 'team' justice I know) could play with such spirit and commitment in the second half is probably the most important thing to come out of this game. It will lift all those 'new' players.

Yet again youngsters, who were probably a little too light but made up for that absence of bulk with raw courage, have answered the call and while it wouldn't be too difficult to find fault with Donegal's overall play last Sunday, it would be feckless and mean not to salute the wonderful courage shown by this side, courage that won them a point, and in essence a moral victory.

## LOW SCORING

Although low scoring the first half held the 5,000 in attendance to close attention such was the proximity of the scoring and there were goal-mouth incidents at both ends.

On a pitch that was only frost-hardened under the stand Meath fielded without their Dunderry star, Tommy Dowd, the lanky Alan Finnegan pushed in to the full-forward berth where his height advantage probably explains Meath's monotonous penchant for the long, high and often aimless ball forward.

Donegal have all too often been chastised for their short-game, over-elaboration and what not, and the points made have some validity, but there is plenty of merit in it when compared to what Meath seemed hell-bent on doing. Surely Sean Boylan remembers how a similar tactic by Dublin against the same Donegal full-back in 1992 failed to reap any major reward? Time and again Meath ballooned the ball in high, time and time again Matt Gallagher, Sean McEwen and Mark Crossan won that ball and countered, mainly through their right wing back, Damien Diver.

With Ruane at midfield for Murray, Crossan as mentioned at no. 6 for Hegarty, Patrick Cunningham making his competitive debut at corner-back for the switched Crossan and Brian Roper in attack for Ruane, this was a side one feared would fall apart under pressure, a side that might buckle against a physical side such as Meath.

However, Meath too are experimenting, and they had a fairly obvious weakness at centre-back which should have been capitalised upon more, while their midfield played second fiddle to John Ban and Ruane.

In dry but bitterly cold conditions Donegal started smartly, fouls on Brian Roper and Tony Boyle yielding frees converted by John Duffy, both inside two minutes.

Trevor Giles replied on five minutes, again from a free while the first point from play fell to James Ruane. It was a score started by Matt Gallagher in defence, Ruane and Roper traded several short passes before the Bundoran man shot confidently from the wing.

With Damien Diver and John Ban Gallagher getting a lot of ball and Mark Crossan deputising superbly at centre-back, the visitors controlled the first-quarter.

Adrian Walsh, a Dublin rer who is not flavour of the month in Meath at the moment I would imagine, blew 27 first-half frees and the stoppages impacted on the general play, which was fairly scrappy. He took firm action against Jim McGuinness, Darren Fay and Mark Crossan who he booked, and the game was always under his control.

Leading 0-3 to 0-1, Donegal were lucky not to concede a goal on 13 minutes when Evan Kelly went clean through but Paul Callaghan was off his line quickly and smothered Kelly's shot superbly.

However, Meath did goal two minutes later, a series of high fisted passes eventually resulting in Paul Callaghan deflecting the ball off Ollie Murphy's arms towards Barry Callaghan who was credited with a goal that, on t.v. last Sunday night, looked more than a little suspect.

John Duffy levelled with a close range free, Boyle again fouled and Boyle from a quick free found Eamon McMenamin who in turn made room for John Ban Gallagher to hook a point with his left foot.

Just before the break some quick thinking by Brian Roper who hit a free very quickly to the

unmarked Niall McCready, put the Aodh Ruadh player through. McCready's shot cannoned wide off the left upright, McCready burying his head in his hands in disgust.

However, despite that miss, Donegal still led, 0-5 to 1-1 at the break.

## SECOND HALF

Level four times in a pulsating second-half, Meath looked to have it in the bag when Ollie Murphy pointed in the 62nd minute to put his side ahead by a point, but there was to be another twist, Tony Boyle fouled as he burrowed his way forward, Darren Fay's challenge affording Donegal an opportunity to level.

From closer range and a more favourable angle Boyle had already done the business in the 59th minute to level, but three minutes into added time and the Meath crowd whistling for the finish, he had to do it all again. His kick was perfect, curling to go over the bar for a magnificent score.

Earlier in the half Meath had rocked Donegal when Trevor Giles cut through a porous defence. Giles had options to right and left, his pass to Ollie Murphy was answered in kind, Murphy crashing the ball past Callaghan.

Donegal went through their most worrying phase in the minutes that followed, Mark Crossan and Niall McCready both injured. Meath, with only sub Jody Devine showing any great inventiveness, were dire in attack, Donegal were soon level again, Tony Boyle pointing a 20 metres free and Eamon McMEnamin hitting the leveller from a difficult angle.

With over ten minutes left Meath seemed to have created another goal chance but desperate defending saw three efforts turned back, Trevor Giles eventually pointing. Again Boyle replied, Damien Diver putting him in position for a shot.

## TENSION

The tension was now close to unbearable, the noise in the stand deafening Jim McGuinness struck a fine point, good enough to win most games with three minutes left. But Boyle replied from a relatively easy free.

Time was added for the stoppage due to injury to Sean McEwen. Finnegan won a loose ball and drove it forward, Murphy collected and turned in the same movement to point Meath ahead by one.

Then that moment of magic, Boyle's fourth score of the half serving to rescue Donegal and salvage no less than his side deserved, a point from this tough encounter.

Boyle was the best forward on view, Diver the best Donegal defender. Martin Shovlin had a wonderful game, so too Mark Crossan in what was easily Donegal's best line, their half-backs. The two midfielders won more than 50 per cent of the spoils, Sean McEwen and Matt Gallagher again were competent in defence.

**MEATH:** Conor Martin; Cormac Murphy, Darren Fay, Martin O'Connell; Graham Geraghty, John McDermott, Kevin Macken; Kevin Cahill, Jimmy McGuinness (0-1); Evan Kelly, Trevor Giles (0-2, one free), Colm Coyle; Ollie Murphy (1-1), Alan Finnegan, Barry Callaghan (1-0). Subs: Jody Devine (half-time) for Kelly; Cathal Sheridan (40 mins.) for Cahill.

**DONEGAL:** Paul Callaghan; Patrick Cunningham, Matt Gallagher, Sean McEwen; Damien Diver, Mark Crossan, Martin Shovlin; James Ruane (0-1), John Ban Gallagher (0-1); Eamon McMEnamin (0-1), John Gildea, Brian Roper; Niall McCready, Tony Boyle (0-4, 3 frees), John Duffy (0-3, all frees). Subs: Noel McGinley for McEwen (injd.), Paddy Hegarty for Duffy, both 44 mins.; Barry Ward for Roper (58 mins.).

**Referee:** Adrian Walsh (Dublin).

**DONEGAL** ..... 0-10  
**DERRY** ..... 0-10

Tom Humphries

IN THE mud and the drizzle at Ballybofey yesterday the football occasionally achieved the scorching intensity of summer fare. In the end, these north-westerly neighbours justly shared the league points on offer and the results from elsewhere contrived to make it a useful afternoon out for all concerned.

Brian Mullins, in using some 28 players in five league games to date, hasn't just been experimenting wildly but has been backing up a contention that for the time being at least reputations in Derry count for nothing. Yesterday only five of the team who beat Kildare a week earlier survived in the starting line-up.

The components of Mullins' Derry machine proved not quite as easily interchangeable as he had hoped. In the end, it was the burnished reputations and polished skills of Joe Brolly and Brian McGilligan which revived the Derry challenge.

Donegal, for their part, have been enjoying a productive winter under the canny managership of PJ McGowan. McGowan's task is perhaps more delicate and intricate than that facing Mullins.

Practically all of Derry's 1993 team is still in tact. The heart of the Donegal team of the year before has been ripped out. The county is home to big expectations rather than the big names at the moment.

Yet McGowan has thrived, digging up talent around the county and weathering the blizzard of injuries which have compounded the problems caused by a series of celebrity retirements.

Yesterday Donegal started out by deploying the intricate handpassing style which, when it works, makes them so exciting to watch and, when it doesn't, draws the opprobrium of short-tempered supporters. Even as the match progressed and the urgency of the circumstances forced Donegal into a more direct style, they still declined to hoof the ball from defence.

When those long balls started arriving they served principally to underline the most acute problem left facing Brian Mullins.

Paddy Downey of Bellaghy was deployed at full back yesterday. He was game for the challenge but inadequately equipped to cope with Tony Boyle in full flight. As the game wore on it was the excellent James Ruane who first spotted the potential to be derived from Boyle's superiority. Several beautifully flighted long balls from Ruane yielded scores and chances for Boyle.

Derry had started more brightly, however. John Mulholland and Danny Quinn, the Bellaghy pairing, made for a sturdy presence at midfield. Mulholland scored after just 30 seconds, and another one of this season's fresh faces, Sean Martin Lockhart, joined the attack with remarkable confidence to set Seamus Downey up for a point two minutes later.

Donegal discovered they had ample potential when they finally got motoring. Noel Hegarty at centre half back had a fine game. Ruane, operating first at centre forward and later at midfield, was alert and athletic and Boyle of course was as incisive as ever at full forward.

By the 20th minute Donegal had pulled ahead by a point. By half-time they were buzzing and went in leading by seven points to three, their superiority having been underlined by a fine score from Noel Hegarty who, having surveyed his options, plumped for an extraordinary, 50-yard point after 25 minutes.

Derry had room for manoeuvre, however. Donegal stretched their lead to five points early in the second half, but then a

series of attacks broke down as they sought to stretch their modest advantage into something truly memorable.

Ten minutes into the half Brian Mullins acted decisively, ending Noel Hegarty's rampaging influence and providing some bright creativity by introducing Joe Brolly at centre forward.

Brolly fizzed immediately, combining with Seamus Downey to create a spurned goal chance for Danny Quinn, then scoring a fine point from a difficult free taken from the hands. He added another point before he had been five minutes on the field.

A couple of years ago, with a little less meat on him and slightly less confidence about him, Brolly would have seemed an unlikely choice as centre forward. Yesterday, however, he staked a strong claim for selection as a cerebral free moving pivot of the attack. Derry's last score from play with 19 minutes left saw Brolly win the ball around midfield and place a beautiful, 30-yard pass into the path of Eamon Burns

who flicked to Karl Diamond for one of the scores of the game.

That score of Diamond's tied the sides at nine points apiece. Tony Boyle and Eamon Burns exchanged free kicks to finish the scoring with 15 minutes left to play.

But those final 15 minutes were arguably the best of the afternoon. The play throbbed with intensity and the match had the feel of hanging on a knife edge.

Yet in that white hot period both managers will have learned more about who they will be sending to the battle front come the summer

**DONEGAL:** G Walsh; M Crossan, M Gallagher, S McGinty; D Diver, N Hegarty (0-1), M Shovlin; B Murray, JB Gallagher; E McMenamin (0-1), J Gildea, J Ruane; N McCready, T Boyle (0-5, three frees), J Duffy (0-3, three frees). **Subs:** P Hegarty for Murray (43 mins), B Roper for McCready (50 mins).

**DERRY:** J Kelly; K McKeever, P Downey, S McLarnon; SM Lockhart, H Downey, K Diamond (0-1); J Mulholland (0-1), D Quinn; D Cassidy (0-2), E Burns (0-3, all frees). **Subs:** McNicholl; G McGonigle, S Downey (0-1), C McGurk. **D:** McGilligan for Mulholland, J Brolly (0-2, one free) for G McGonigle.

Referee: S Prior (Leitrim)

## Gaelic Games scoreboard

CHURCH AND GENERAL NFL				P	W	D	L	Pts
<b>DIVISION ONE</b>								
Donegal	0-10	Derry	0-10					
Kildare	0-16	Meath	1-9					
Tyrone	1-9	Clare	0-7					
Kerry	2-12	Laois	0-6					
		P	W	D	L	Pts		
Meath		6	4	1	1	9		
Donegal		6	3	2	1	8		
Derry		6	3	1	2	7		
Kerry		6	3	1	2	7		
Tyrone		6	3	1	2	7		
Kildare		6	2	1	3	5		
Laois		6	2	0	4	4		
Clare		6	0	1	5	1		
<b>DIVISION TWO</b>								
Armagh	1-9	Westmeath	2-5					
Cork	1-16	Leitrim	1-13					
Louth	0-9	Down	0-8					
Dublin	2-9	Cavan	2-7					
		P	W	D	L	Pts		
Cork		6	5	0	1	10		
Armagh		6	4	0	2	8		
Cavan		6	4	0	2	8		
Dublin		6	3	0	3	6		
Leitrim		6	3	0	3	6		
Louth		6	3	0	3	6		
Down		6	1	0	5	2		
Westmeath		6	1	0	5	2		
<b>DIVISION THREE</b>								
Monaghan	0-12	Antrim	0-7					
Roscommon	1-15	Galway	0-11					
Wexford	3-6	Fermanagh	1-8					
Mayo	0-10	Sligo	0-4					
		P	W	D	L	Pts		
Mayo		6	6	0	0	12		
Monaghan		6	5	0	1	10		
Roscommon		6	4	1	1	9		
Galway		6	2	1	3	5		
Fermanagh		6	2	0	4	4		
Sligo		6	1	1	4	3		
Wexford		6	1	1	4	3		
Antrim		6	1	0	5	2		
<b>DIVISION FOUR</b>								
Wicklow	1-7	Offaly	0-8					
Tipperary	1-10	Limerick	0-9					
Carlow	2-14	Kilkenny	2-10					
Longford	1-14	Waterford	0-6					
		P	W	D	L	Pts		
Wicklow		6	5	1	0	11		
Limerick		6	4	0	2	8		
Longford		6	4	1	1	9		
Offaly		6	3	1	2	7		
Tipperary		7	4	0	3	8		
Carlow		6	3	1	2	7		
Waterford		7	2	0	5	4		
London		6	1	0	5	2		
Kilkenny		6	0	0	6	0		
<b>AIB CLUB SH SEMI-FINALS</b>								
S'milebridge	5-11	Sarsfields	1-12					
Dunloy	2-13	Glenmore	0-7					
<b>WALSH CUP SH SEMI-FINAL</b>								
Wexford	3-9	Offaly	3-5					
<b>KEHOE CUP SH SEMI-FINAL</b>								
Wicklow	0-9	Westmeath	1-3					
<b>ASHBOURNE CUP CAMOGIE FINAL</b>								
UCC	3-3	UUJ	1-6					

# Brolly redeems Derry

**DONEGAL.....0-10**  
**DERRY.....0-10**  
A DOUR division one draw — only the second in the sides' 26-game history — leaves both Donegal and Derry still in with a chance of making the league play-offs.

If both sides qualify, there are two men who will certainly get most of the credit — Tony Boyle and Joe Brolly. Stars last weekend, they were equally effective yesterday before a 5,000 crowd at Ballybofey.

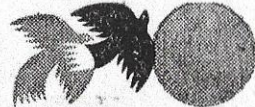
Boyle, the only serious scoring threat in Donegal's current injury stricken line up, was again a class apart, giving Derry's recalled full back Paddy Downey a roasting and scoring five points in the process.

## OFF THE BENCH

Similarly, Derry's star a week ago, Joe Brolly, took up the challenge again, but in entirely different circumstances.

He came off the bench after 41 minutes, cut a four point deficit to two within three minutes and generally got Derry's forwards in gear

A lot was made of the relegation of Brolly and Tony Scullion to the Derry bench this week. Read nothing into it. Manager Brian Mullins is trying to



Church & General  
National Leagues

## CLIONA FOLEY REPORTS

blood new talent, but he will not be happy with what he saw yesterday.

Derry looked in real trouble early in the second half when they trailed by 0-9 to 0-4, but Mullins was fortunate to be able to ask Brolly and Brian McGilligan to redeem the situation.

Admittedly, Derry did start well with John Mulholland, Seamus Downey, and Damien Cassidy on target to give them a 0-3 to 0-1 lead.

Then they seemed to run aground as Donegal's half back line, particularly Noel Hegarty and Damien Diver closed up shop and Brian Murray started to dominate midfield.

At times the host fans groaned audibly at their team's repeated overpassing, particularly when the long ball into Boyle worked best, but with himself and John Duffy on free taking form, Donegal built up an 0-7 to 0-4 lead by half-time, keeping Derry scoreless for 17 minutes.

Surprisingly, Derry did not make

any changes during the interval, and Boyle and Duffy duly increased Donegal's lead to five points within four minutes of the restart.

Then, as he has done so often in the past, in came Brolly, and despite Mullins' assertions to the contrary afterwards, his arrival seemed to turn the game.

Also important in that comeback to level it as 0-9 apiece with eight minutes left, were Dermot McNicholl's running, Henry Downey's tenacity, and Eamonn Burns' free taking.

It could have gone either way as time dwindled. Boyle put Donegal ahead with a 50 yard free, but then Colm McGurk earned the equalising free for Burns.

**SCORERS — Donegal:** T Boyle 0-5 (2 frees), J Duffy 0-3 (2 frees), N Hegarty and E McMenamin 0-1 each. **Derry:** E Burns 0-3 (frees), D Cassidy (0-2), J Brolly 0-2 (1 free), K Diamond, J Mulholland, and S Downey 0-1 each.

**DONEGAL —** G Walsh; M Crossan, M Gallagher, S McGinty; D Diver, N Hegarty, M Shovlin; B Murray, J Ban Gallagher; E McMenamin, J Gildea, J Ruane; N McCreeady, T Boyle, J Duffy. **Subs:** P Hegarty for Murray (45 mins), B Roper for McCreeady (50 mins).

**DERRY —** J Kelly; K McKeever, P Downey, S McLarnon; S Lockhart, H Downey, K Diamond; J Mulholland, D Quinn; D Cassidy, E Burns, D McNicholl; G McGonigle, S Downey, C McGurk. **Subs:** J Brolly for McGonigle (41 mins), B McGilligan for Mulholland (50 mins).

**REF —** S Prior (Leitrim).

## Gaelic Games scoreboard

### CHURCH AND GENERAL NFL

#### DIVISION ONE

Donegal.....0-10	Derry.....0-10
Kildare.....0-16	Meath.....1-9
Tyrone.....1-9	Clare.....0-7
Kerry.....2-12	Laos.....0-6

	P	W	D	L	Pts
Meath.....	6	4	1	1	9
Donegal.....	6	3	2	1	8
Derry.....	6	3	1	2	7
Kerry.....	6	3	1	2	7
Tyrone.....	6	3	1	2	7
Kildare.....	6	2	1	3	5
Laos.....	6	2	0	4	4
Clare.....	6	0	1	5	1

#### DIVISION TWO

Armagh.....1-9	Westmeath.....2-5
Cork.....1-16	Leitrim.....1-13
Louth.....0-9	Down.....0-8
Dublin.....2-9	Cavan.....2-7

	P	W	D	L	Pts
Cork.....	6	5	0	1	10
Armagh.....	6	4	0	2	8
Cavan.....	6	4	0	2	8
Dublin.....	6	3	0	3	6
Leitrim.....	6	3	0	3	6
Louth.....	6	3	0	3	6
Down.....	6	1	0	5	2
Westmeath.....	6	1	0	5	2

#### DIVISION THREE

Monaghan.....0-12	Antrim.....0-7
Roscommon.....1-15	Galway.....0-11
Wexford.....3-6	Fermanagh.....1-8
Mayo.....0-10	Sligo.....0-4

	P	W	D	L	Pts
Mayo.....	6	6	0	0	12
Monaghan.....	6	5	0	1	10
Roscommon.....	6	4	1	1	9
Galway.....	6	2	1	3	5
Fermanagh.....	6	2	0	4	4
Sligo.....	6	1	1	4	3
Wexford.....	6	1	1	4	3
Antrim.....	6	1	0	5	2

#### DIVISION FOUR

Wicklow.....1-7	Offaly.....0-8
Tipperary.....1-10	Limerick.....0-9
Carlow.....2-14	Kilkenny.....2-10
Longford.....1-14	Waterford.....0-6

	P	W	D	L	Pts
Wicklow.....	6	5	1	0	11
Limerick.....	6	4	0	2	8
Longford.....	6	4	1	1	9
Offaly.....	6	3	1	2	7
Tipperary.....	7	4	0	3	8
Carlow.....	6	3	1	2	7
Waterford.....	7	2	0	5	4
London.....	6	1	0	5	2
Kilkenny.....	6	0	0	6	0

#### AIB CLUB SH SEMI-FINALS

S'milebridge...5-11	Sarsfields.....1-12
Dunloy.....2-13	Glenmore.....0-7

#### WALSH CUP SH SEMI-FINAL

Wexford.....3-9	Offaly.....3-5
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#### KEHOE CUP SH SEMI-FINAL

Wicklow.....0-9	Westmeath.....1-3
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#### ASHBOURNE CUP CAMOGIE

FINAL	
UCC.....3-3	UUJ.....1-6

# Lilywhites

DONEGAL..... 1-8  
KILDARE..... 0-11

**A DRAMATIC** evacuation from their Sligo hotel, following a 2am bomb scare, and then a last-gasp Tony Boyle equaliser to force them into a Division 1 relegation play-off against Tyrone!

Yes, this was definitely a weekend and a day in Ballyshannon that the Kildare footballers will want to forget in a hurry.

Afterwards, their manager Dermot Earley could only shake his head in utter disgust at how his side had somehow let a winning position slip in this Church & General NFL tie.

"To have lost a four-point second half lead like that and come away with a draw from a game we deserved to win, it's very disappointing," said Earley with massive understatement.

Boyle's fifth free saved Donegal's day, clinching top spot in Division 1 and a quarter-final berth against the Division 4 winners.

But the Ulster side were far from happy with their display and there followed a long meeting behind closed doors.

Their manager PJ McGowan eventually emerged, looking relieved; but he pointed out that some of their loose passing — actually described by him as "kamikaze football" — would have to improve rapidly.

## CLIFF-HANGING DAY

It was a cliff-hanging day all round in Ballyshannon.

Heavy snow on Saturday placed the game in doubt, but miraculous spring sunshine cleared the light cover on the pitch by noon yesterday and 4,000 fans gathered with everything to play for.

It was Kildare fans who left downcast. They monitored their radios throughout to hear news from the Laois-Tyrone match, and sighed loudly when the midlanders' victory dragged Kildare back into the relegation stakes.

The Lilywhite fans were also upset by the display of Cavan referee Tommy McDermott, who certainly seemed to give Donegal the greater share of frees, particularly in the second half when sharp-shooter Boyle took full advantage.

At half-time, when Donegal led by a point, it was still anyone's

## Kildare in despair at late Boyle equaliser

### THE BIG MATCH



Cliona Foley Reports

Midfielder Niall Buckley put Kildare into an early lead but Donegal, despite hitting three wides in five minutes, then got their act together following a Brian Roper point and a penalty goal, earned and converted by Tony Boyle, after 11 minutes.

At this stage Donegal were showing promising signs, in contrast to their display against Derry two weeks ago.

### DIRECT BALL

Gone was the over-passing short game. Playing just two forwards inside and pulling Boyle out to a four-man half-forward line, they totally stretched the Kildare defence with their excellent use of the direct ball . . . so much so that the visitors had to move Sos Dowling on to Boyle after 15 minutes.

Yet some great fielding — particularly from the excellent Paul McCormack — lifted Kildare and a second Buckley free was followed by two rousing individual dashes and scores by Johnny McDonald and centre-back Glen Ryan. This left them trailing by just 0-4 to 1-2 at half-time.

With their tails up and the wind at their back, the Lilywhites restarted like a Northern gale.

Just two minutes into the half,

McDonald fed Tom Brennan and the Sarsfields wing-forward hit a rasping 25-yard drive which forced a fantastic one-handed save from Donegal keeper Garry Walsh.

Then McDonald, in typical swashbuckling style, burst through for two great individual points, putting Kildare ahead for the first time since the early minutes.

But back came Donegal and, promising young Ballyshannon player Brian Roper earned a free for Boyle to level the scores after 38 minutes.

Yet Kildare refused to budge and, in their best ten-minute spell of the day, they surged four points clear.

Buckley's only point from play, another great run and point from Ryan, one from Fergal Aspell and Buckley's third free put them in the driving seat with ten minutes left.

Long-time injury victim Martin Lynch had come off the bench at half-time and he brought their full-forward line to life, catching and laying off some great ball, particularly a quick free to Aspell who just failed to beat the goalkeeper.

In those 20 minutes, Donegal's only response to seven Kildare points was Boyle's free and a good score from midfielder James Ruane.

### DUBIOUS FREE

But then a dubious free against McDonald gave warning of what was to come.

Brian Murray led the charge from midfield, Donegal camped in Kildare's half for the remainder and saw two shots come back off the upright during a dramatic conclusion.

The arrival of another big name sub, Manus Boyle, left the fans wondering if he would share free-taking duties with his namesake, but Donegal had no need of his dead ball expertise.

Yet again Tony Boyle responded, knocking over two frees and these, along with a Barry McGowan point, left them trailing by a point with the clock ticking.

And 90 seconds into injury time, when Roper again earned the free, the deadly Dungloe player confidently knocked over the equaliser to clinch Donegal's quarter-final place.

Incidentally, Boyle's 1-5 tally yesterday gives him a 2-19 total in the current campaign.

**SCORERS — Donegal:** T Boyle; 1-5 (1 pen, 5), J Ruane, B Roper, B McGowan 0-1 each. **Kildare:** N Buckley 0-4 (3f), J McDonald 0-3, G Ryan 0-2, F Aspell, N Donlon, 0-1 each.

**DONEGAL —** G Walsh; J Cunningham, M Gallagher, M Crossan, D Diver, N Hegarty (capt), M Shovlin; J Ruane, B Murray; E McMenamin, J Ban Gallagher, P Hegarty; J Duffy, T Boyle, B Roper. **Subs:** B McGowan for McMenamin (39 mins), M Boyle for Duffy (40 mins), J Gildea for Gallagher (53 mins).

**KILDARE —** C Byrne; S O'Rourke, D Dalton, S Downing; S Aspell, G Ryan (capt), K Doyle; N Buckley, M Murray; P McCormack, J McDonald, T Brennan; E McCormack, D Fennin, N Donlon. **Subs:** M Lynch for Fennin (30 mins), J Whelan for Brennan (55 mins).

**REF —** T McDermott (Cavan).

# How they finished '95/'96

## DIVISION ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Donegal	7	3	3	1	5-68	3-59	9
Meath	7	4	1	2	9-70	3-73	9
Derry	7	4	1	2	6-62	6-64	9
Kerry	7	3	2	2	8-73	2-62	8
Tyrone	7	3	1	3	5-63	5-69	7
Kildare	7	2	2	3	1-76	5-62	6
Laois	7	3	0	4	1-59	6-63	6
Clare	7	0	2	5	2-61	7-80	2

## DIVISION TWO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cork	7	6	0	1	12-75	5-65	12
Cavan	7	5	0	2	10-62	3-71	10
Leitrim	7	4	0	3	5-82	7-61	8
Dublin	7	4	0	3	4-69	6-55	8
Armagh	7	4	0	3	5-68	10-56	8
Louth	7	3	0	4	3-62	5-65	6
Down	7	1	0	6	6-46	4-69	2
Westmeath	7	1	0	6	3-53	8-75	2

# Wicklow discover the gulf remains too wide to bridge

MIRACLES, even those of the minor variety, are a rare enough occurrence at Croke Park at the best of times. But with Lady Luck frowning on their best efforts and the added ingredient of Donegal cuteness to cope with, Wicklow never really had a chance of upsetting the odds in yesterday's Church and General National Football League quarter-final encounter at GAA headquarters.

The gulf that exists between genuine silverware contenders *a la* Donegal and a side emerging from the footballing shadows like Wicklow, who were the sole Division Four team to qualify for the knockout stages, was emphasised in no uncertain fashion to the 11,004 souls who clicked their way through the turnstiles.

As Donegal manager PJ McGowan acknowledged in the new, state-of-the-art dressing rooms after his side's comfortable win: "We were on a hiding to nothing. If we won by 15 points, people would say 'you were only playing a poor Wicklow side'. And if we won by just two or three points, they'd say 'it was a bad performance'. So, as far as I am concerned, it's just a case of mission accomplished, although in a satisfactory manner."

Donegal, it must be said, never looked like losing. However, their passage to the semi-finals was effectively secured early in the second half — a period Wicklow manager Dave Foran described as "five minutes of madness" from his players — when a highly fortu-

**DONEGAL..... 2-12**  
**WICKLOW..... 1-8**

Philip Reid

itous Declan Bonner goal from a badly-struck free put seven points between the sides, a cushion the Division One winners were never likely to throw away.

In many ways, this was yet another rung on the education ladder for Wicklow. No-one can doubt they possess heart and character, but their play was a touch naive at times and their finishing left a lot to be desired. For example, with four minutes remaining Wicklow had shot 10 wides to a miserly one from their opponents. The fact Donegal increased that tally to four by the time referee Paddy Russell signalled the end of proceedings was immaterial; their foot was well off the throttle by then.

And, yet, Wicklow did so many good things. Fergus Daly was the best midfielder on view; goalkeeper Ken Quirke, aside from his one monumental blunder in the second half which effectively finished the match as a contest when he dropped Bonner's free over the line, pulled off a string of outstanding saves, while defenders Damien McMahon and Philip McGillicuddy thwarted a number of Donegal attacks.

"We came here to do ourselves justice, and I believe we did that in stages," admitted Foran. "Their second goal was a bit of a fluke, but the bottom line is that we have to up our scoring rate if

we are to inflict damage on teams."

Donegal certainly don't have any worries about scoring, especially with a certain full-forward, called Tony Boyle simply doing no wrong these days. Boyle's free-taking — whether from the hand or the ground — was exemplary but, importantly, he also demonstrated that point-taking from play is still an important part of his armoury.

It was indicative of the route the match was to take when Manus Boyle opened the scoring with a fourth minute point from an acute angle, by which stage the Wicklowmen had already registered two wides. But Keith Byrne gave a hint of a possible upset in the 14th minute when he ran on to Barry O'Donovan's pass and neatly tucked the ball under Greg Walsh's body to give Wicklow the lead for the only time in the match (1-1 to 0-2), even if it was short-lived.

Within two minutes, Tony Boyle and Martin Shovlin had brought Donegal level. Scare over, Donegal tightened their grip on affairs and Brian Roper acted as the main predator when he fired home a well-worked goal in the 28th minute to confirm Donegal's growing ascendancy. James Ruane, Manus Boyle and Paddy Hegarty were all involved in the move which culminated in Roper slotting past Quirke.

And, although veteran attacker Kevin O'Brien (a large amount of Wicklow's play still flows through him) kept Wicklow's hopes lingering on up to half-time at least, the writing was on the wall for the

outsiders shortly after the resumption.

Unfortunately, goalkeeper Quirke — who had performed some heroics in the first half, particularly with two saves from Brian Roper — became the villain of the piece in the 40th minute and, one suspects, he hoped that the ground could have opened up to swallow him.

Bonner's left-footed free was a poor one, by his standards, and failed to rise higher than the cross bar. But Quirke, under no pressure, dropped the ball over his line and, although he sought to retrieve matters, the umpires had no doubts in raising the green flag. That somewhat lucky goal put Donegal 2-9 to 1-4 ahead, effectively scuppering any prospect of a Wicklow revival.

It is to Wicklow's credit that they outscored Donegal by four points to three over the remaining 20 minutes, but the die had already been cast and henceforth it was more a damage limitation exercise than any real threatening of Donegal's lead.

**DONEGAL** — G Walsh; JJ Doherty, V Gallagher, J Cunningham; B McGowan, M Crossan; **M Shovlin (0-1)**; **J Ruane (0-1)**, E Murray; P Hegarty, J McHugh, **D Bonner (1-4)**; **B Roper (1-0)**, **T Boyle (0-5)**, **M Boyle (0-1)**. **Subs** — J Ban Gallagher for McHugh (19 mins); E McMenamin for Hegarty (51 mins); D MacNamara for M Boyle (51 mins)

**WICKLOW** — K Quirke; S Miley, H Kenny, D McMahon; M McDonald, P McGillicuddy, B O'Donovan; **F Daly (0-1)**, R Danne; **K Byrne (1-1)**, D McGillicuddy, N Murphy; **S Cullen (0-2)**, **K O'Brien (0-3)**, F Mulligan. **Subs** — **S O'Neill (0-1)** for D McGillicuddy (38 mins); M Davis for Mulligan (42 mins); J Behan for Murphy (42 mins)

Referee — **P Russell** (Tipperary)

## NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

**QUARTER-FINALS** — Donegal 2-12, Wicklow 1-8; Derry 0-12, Cavan 0-11; Mayo 2-10, Meath 1-10; Cork 2-14, Kerry 0-18 aet.

**Division One — relegation play-off** — Kildare 2-12, Laois 0-11.

**Division Three play-off** — Antrim 3-6, Fermanagh 0-6.

**Leinster under-21 football championship** — Louth 1-8, Wexford 0-6.

## ALL-IRELAND COLLEGES

### SEMI-FINALS

**Football A** — Killorglin, Kerry 4-12 Castlebar, Mayo 1-8.

**Football B** — Claremorris, Mayo 4-16 St Michael's, Roscarbery, Cork 2-4.

**Hurling A** — Colaiste Chiarain, Kilkenny 0-18 St Mary's, Belfast 0-4.

**Hurling B** — St Colman's, Cork 1-15 Loughrea, Galway 2-7.

**Hurling B** — Enniscorthy, Wexford 1-17 Garran Tower, Antrim 0-4.

**Hurling B** — Hospital, Limerick 4-18 St Cuan's, Galway 0-1.



## CHURCH & GENERAL N.F.L. SEMI-FINAL

**DONEGAL** ..... 0-10  
**CORK** ..... 0-9

**With an injury time point from John Ban Gallagher, Donegal are back in their third National League final in four years, after disposing of the Cork challenge in Croke Park on Sunday.**

The one point victory hardly does justice to Donegal as they completely dominated the second half and but for some poor finishing would have won this contest by double scores.

As it was they just held on and when referee, Brian White, awarded Cork a free in the 60th minute, some 40 yards upfield from where the action was, for Colin Corkery to draw the sides level, it looked like both sides were set for a replay.

But despite the referee's controversial decision, Donegal were determined to prevail and when Mark Crossan won the break from the kick-out he found Noel Hegarty in space. The ball was transferred to John Ban through James Ruane and from outside the 45m line, the Killybegs man hit the target with one of the scores of the game.

It was that sort of game, full of thrills and spills and Donegal's inaccuracy in the second half left their supporters biting their nails right to the end.

The conditions didn't help much with the continuous rain making the surface treacherous. Donegal adapted much better to the conditions, Cork relying heavily on the long ball to Colin Corkery. The big full-forward looked a threat early on as he won possession cleanly and gave Matt Gallagher some anxious moments, but as the game progressed, Gallagher got to grips with the situation.

*By Michael Daly*

Apart from Corkery, and John O'Driscoll to a lesser extent, the Cork forward threat was completely overshadowed by some great Donegal defending. John Joe Doherty kept Mark O'Sullivan scoreless, while the half-back line of Martin Shovlin, Mark Crossan and Barry McGowan was flawless. Shovlin, especially, revelled in the conditions and until his retirement through injury, was having probably his best ever game in Croke Park.

At midfield, Brian Murray was majestic in the second half. His partner, James Ruane, is learning all the time and together they completely outshone a Cork midfield pairing which was regarded as one of the top pairings in the country.

Up front, again Tony Boyle and Brian Roper played the leading roles, while the Hegarty brothers worked extremely hard in trying to link between defence and attack. One piece of tireless running by Paddy Hegarty late in the second half saw him turn John O'Driscoll from the 20m line right out to midfield where he dispossessed the Corkman, a feat that must have been demoralising for the Corkmen.

But again some deficiencies were exposed in the forward sextet, and Declan Bonner's absence left a void in the free-taking from the right hand side of the field. Donegal, at one time, had Martin McHugh, Tommy Ryan, Declan Bonner and John Duffy in the forward line, all left-footer players. The balance is not quite right at the moment.

Before the start of play, the Donegal cornerbacks changed position with John Joe Doherty switching to mark dangerman, Mark O'Sullivan, but the early threat came from the Rebel county with Colin Corkery fielding a high ball and turning to hit the first point after five minutes.

Tony Boyle equalised from a '45' before Corkery found Joe Kavanagh with a lovely crossfield ball to put the Cork men in front again.

Tony Boyle had an opening after 17 minutes but in the poor conditions he did well to find Manus Boyle to level matters again, but three minutes later, John O'Driscoll won a free from which Corkery again restored the Cork lead.

Corkery threatened to put Donegal out of contention and one run along the endline saw Donegal lucky to clear their lines as Corkery's final pass across the goals was not well placed.

At this stage, Donegal were struggling around the middle of the field and Tony Boyle, despite picking up an injury, was coming deeper to help out. Five minutes from the break, Brian Roper began to get the measure of his man and from his persistence, Donegal won another '45' from which Tony Boyle again pointed.

Two minutes later, Cork again hit the front, Corkery hitting a glorious point from long range, but Donegal finished the half strongly, the Hegarty brothers and Martin Shovlin combining along the Hogan Stand side for Paddy to win a free from which Tony Boyle levelled matters, and in injury time, Matt Gallagher cut out a Corkery-bound ball. He found Noel Hegarty who in turn found Tony Boyle to hit a super score and leave Donegal ahead by 0-5 to 0-4 at the break.

### SECOND HALF

The second half was just a minute underway when Brian Roper collected the ball near the endline, cut inside and lofted a beauty to put Donegal two ahead. Five minutes later, Barry McGowan found Manus Boyle who slipped the ball to Paddy Hegarty on the run and his effort hit the crossbar on the way over.

Paul McGrath pulled a point back for Cork, before Martin Shovlin picked up a shoulder injury when he was hit late by Corkery as he cleared his lines. When he recovered he was again in the action, this time stopping John O'Driscoll at the expense of a free from which Corkery narrowed the gap to one point.

The injury forced Shovlin to leave the action with Sean McEwen coming in at half-back. But with Donegal failing to take advantage of their possession, Cork, through O'Driscoll, levelled matters by the 46th minute.

A minute later, Donegal were back in front, a foul on John Ban Gallagher being punished by Tony Boyle. Brian Murray won the kick-out and his through ball saw full-back, Mark O'Connor slip and Tony Boyle punished to the full.

The last ten minutes was frustrating from a Donegal point of view; Barry McGowan hit two wides, the first a narrow miss, while Noel Hegarty also missed, the three wides in the space of 90 seconds.

Three minutes from time, Corkery punished from a difficult free on the 45m line, while the sequence described at the start, followed, with John Ban becoming the Donegal hero.

Overall, it was a very good Donegal display. They showed a lot of coolness when things weren't going well in the opening quarter, and when it was put up to them in the final minutes, they responded.

**Donegal:** Gary Walsh; John Joe Doherty, Matt Gallagher, John Cunningham; Barry McGowan, Mark Crossan, Martin Shovlin; James Ruane, Brian Murray; John Ban Gallagher (0-1), Noel Hegarty, Paddy Hegarty (0-1); Brian Roper (0-1), Tony Boyle, (0-6, two 45s, two frees), Manus Boyle (0-1). Sub., Sean McEwen for Shovlin, inj. (40 mins.)

**Cork:** Kevin O'Dwyer; Donal O'Callaghan, Mark O'Connor, Brian Murphy; Ciaran O'Sullivan, Brian Corcoran, Padraig O'Regan; Liam Honohan, Danny Culloty; Paul McGrath (0-1), Joe Kavanagh (0-1), Don Davis; John O'Driscoll (0-1), Colin Corkery (0-6, four frees), Mark O'Sullivan. Subs., Brian Collins for P. O'Regan, inj. (half-time); Teddy McCarthy for Davis (44 mins.); Michael Moran for Culloty (50 mins.)

**Referee:** Brian White (Wexford).

Donegal Democrat 2 May 1996

## ANALYSIS OF DONEGAL IN N.F.L.

	v Clare (3-8 to 0-8)	v Tyrone (0-16 to 0-7)	v Laois (1-10 to 0-8)	v Kerry (0-6 to 0-11)	v Meath (0-10 to 2-4)	v Derry (0-10 to 0-10)	v Kildare (1-8 to 0-11)	v Wicklow (2-12 to 0-8)	v Cork (0-10 to 0-9)	TOTAL
Paul Callaghan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	
Gerard Kelly	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	—	
Matt Gallagher	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Sean McEwen	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	—	—	sub.	
Barry McGowan	✓	✓	—	0-1	—	—	sub. 0-1	✓	✓	0-2
Noel Hegarty	✓	✓	✓	—	—	0-1	✓	—	✓	0-1
Martin Shovlin	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0-1	✓	0-1
J. Ban Gallagher	✓	0-2	✓	✓	0-1	✓	✓	sub.	0-1	0-4
Brian Murray	1-0	sub.	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	1-0
E. McMenamin	1-1	0-1	1-1	✓	0-1	0-1	✓	sub.	—	2-5
James McHugh	0-1	0-4	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	0-5
John Gildea	✓	0-1	0-1	0-2	✓	✓	sub.	—	—	0-4
John Duffy	0-1	—	sub.	0-1	0-3	0-3	✓	—	—	0-8
Tony Boyle	1-1	0-2	0-1	0-1	0-4	0-5	1-5	0-5	0-6	2-30
Manus Boyle	0-3	0-6	0-5	0-1	—	—	sub.	0-1	0-1	0-17
Niall McCready	sub. 0-1	✓	✓	sub.	✓	✓	—	—	—	0-1
James Ruane	sub.	✓	0-2	✓	0-1	✓	0-1	0-1	✓	0-5
Brian Roper	sub.	—	—	—	✓	sub.	0-1	1-0	0-1	1-2
Damien Diver	—	sub.	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	—	—	
Ollie Reid	—	Sub.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
J. J. Doherty	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	
Martin Coll	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	
Barry Ward	—	—	—	sub.	sub.	—	—	—	—	
Patk. Cunningham	—	—	—	sub.	✓	—	—	—	—	
Mark Crossan	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Noel McGinley	—	—	—	—	sub.	—	—	—	—	
Paddy Hegarty	—	—	—	—	sub.	sub.	✓	✓	0-1	0-1
Gary Walsh	—	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Seamus McGinty	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—	
John Cunningham	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	✓	
Declan Bonner	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1-4	—	1-4
Dessie McNamara	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	sub.	—	

✓ denotes player played but didn't score. — denotes player didn't play.

Donegal have used 32 players in the current League campaign, scoring 7-90 and conceding 3-76.

Tony Boyle is by far the leading scorer and the only player to have scored in every game.

Martin Shovlin, John Ban Gallagher, James Ruane and Tony Boyle are the only players to have played in all nine games to date.

Matt Gallagher, Brian Murray and Eamon McMenamin played in eight games, while Paul Callaghan and Gary Walsh have each played five games, sharing the goalkeeping duties.

**CHURCH & GENERAL NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE FINAL**

# Tohill tears Donegal apart

**DONEGAL** ..... 1-09  
**DERRY** ..... 1-16

Scoring, fetching, defending, key elements for any player were evident in rich abundance from Swatragh's Anthony Tohill last Sunday at Croke Park where he proved the simple difference between victors and vanquished.

Albeit at a struggle, Donegal had the player or players to handle every other Derry player, but they simply had no answer for Tohill. Prior to 1992 Donegal were having little difficulty in beating Derry in crucial matches, since then Derry have held the upper hand and in doing so, Tohill, invariably, has been Donegal's tormentor in chief.

Before 24,000 spectators Donegal hauled themselves to within two points on two occasions in the second half, the second such occasion falling just nine minutes from full-time.

Derry somehow seemed to find another dimension when Donegal closed to that two point margin and their response saw them pull away almost effortlessly with choice points from Seamus Downey twice and Tohill three times to win deservedly by seven points.

*Michael Daly reports  
from Croke Park*

## CHANGES

Derry could have been out of sight by half-time but a dreadful blunder culminated a most fortunate goal for Donegal with Noel Hegarty deserving of praise for his ability to pounce on the Derry error.

In defence Donegal and Derry both tinkered with their positional formations. Donegal started out with John Cunningham at centre-back, Mark Crossan at left corner and Matt Gallagher at right corner, on Enda Gormley while Crossan was assigned duties on the gregarious Joe Brolly.

Suffice to say Brolly pointed from two chances, Barton made it 1-5 to 0-3 in the 19th minute.

At midfield Tohill did not win all that much clean ball in the first half as Murray fisted a good deal away from him but often as not Karl Diamond and Henry Downey read those breaks to perfection. Donegal's half-forward line were eventually dragged behind their own midfield as Diamond's appetite for attacking grew.

Oddly enough Kieran McKeever was to emerge as Derry's man-of-the match but from the evidence of two Manus Boyle points from play and two frees well won by the taker, this surely suggests that Boyle was the best Donegal attacker on view and this was the case. How his immediate marker could garner a man-of-the-match accolade is, in the circumstances, more than a

little odd surely?

However, it was only Manus Boyle who posed a serious scoring threat to Derry while Brian Roper did some useful things in setting up scores although he wasn't to score himself. James McHugh illustrated his ability to get a score when introduced, his first lay-off with the fist ending up with a fine Noel Hegarty point and he conjured up a fine personal point when he stole the ball from Brian McGilligan to leave it 1-9 to 1-11 by the 51st minute.

Prior to Sunday's game the analysts suggested that the performance of both full-forwards would play a critical role in determining the eventual outcome. Seamus Downey, who was very subdued in the semi-final by a second choice Mayo full-back, Pat Holmes, was equally quiet last Sunday until the game was effectively won by his colleagues. John Joe Doherty had done his job superbly but the final nine minutes saw Downey hit two points, eventually gaining his freedom largely due to over-lapping play by Derry half-backs Diamond and McCusker.

Donegal's Tony Boyle had little impact on the game, his lack of pace going one on one with Coleman suggesting his injury was not totally healed. And when Donegal did try to use the long ball — they varied their game a good deal from their usual short game — it was invariably a Derry defender who emerged with the ball.

## DEPTH

Derry underlined the strength of their squad prior to throw-in when they introduced Barton at centre and Eamon Burns at right half forward — Gary McGill, Dermot McNicholl, Damien Cassidy, Dermot Heany among others remaining benched due to injuries. How many other teams could sustain losses of players of this calibre and still win comfortably? In defence it was much the same, Gary Coleman deputising for the ill David O'Neill, Coleman playing his first game since defeat by Tyrone in last year's championship. That defence was without a now fit Johnny McGurk, summing up Derry's real array of talent, playing or subs.

Derry won the toss and opted to play with a skittish breeze from Railway to Canal End. The force of some early tackles indicated this was championship not league football. Referee Michael Curley couldn't keep complete control as personal duels boiled over around the field but the game settled to some pattern when Derry goaled after 12 minutes.

To then Derry had looked marginally superior, although Donegal had held a brief lead, Tony Boyle replying to a Gormley free with a 45 and Manus Boyle taking a nice point from Brian Roper's promptings.

But then that Derry goal, Fergal McCusker's long ball deflected into Tohill's path and the engineer proved fleet footed enough to squeeze the rebound from Gary Walsh's initial fine save to the net — the footwork at

the Manchester United training grounds paying dividends.

## GOAL CHANCE

Two minutes later Donegal could well have had a goal, Roper releasing to Ruane who must have had goal on his mind but had to settle for a point. Seven minutes of Derry dominance saw them pull five points clear, almost unnoticed but two minutes from the interval, Derry were punished when Jonathan Kelly slipped as he went to catch a Gary Coleman back-pass. Noel Hegarty was vigilantly following up on the back-pass and slotted the ball home under Kelly to give Donegal a new lease of life.

1-5 to 1-7 behind at the break, Manus Boyle reduced that to a point but from there to the finish Derry never led by less than two points and their final ten minute flurry, in response to Donegal's rally, ensured them of their third NFL title of the 90's, their fourth overall.

For Donegal the statistics grow grimmer, three NFL finals in four years, all of them ending in defeat, one of those, in '93 after a replay.

A year ago Donegal demonstrated their resilience when losing a league final by coming out seven days later to defeat the then defending All-Ireland champions. Oddly enough they may find defeating Down harder to rise to this time as there was a real sense of optimism in Donegal that Donegal could win against Derry. A year ago it was hoped that Donegal might beat Derry, last Sunday there was quiet expectation that it might happen.

Faced with that disappointment, Donegal will have to pick themselves up quickly. Part of the healing process is a testing challenge next Sunday against Fermanagh at the opening of the Red Hughs facilities, a time to experiment perhaps with forwards and half-backs.

Man of the match for this writer was undoubtedly Anthony Tohill, John Joe Doherty Donegal's most consistent player.

**DONEGAL:** Gary Walsh; Matt Gallagher, John Joe Doherty, Mark Crossan; Barry McGowan, John Cunningham, Martin Shovlin; Brian Murray, James Ruane 0-2, John Ban Gallagher, Noel Hegarty 1-1, Paddy Hegarty; Brian Roper, Tony Boyle 0-1, 45, Manus Boyle 0-4, (two frees). Subs: James McHugh 0-1 for J.B. Gallagher; Dessie McNamara for B. Roper.

**DERRY:** Jonathan Kelly; Kieran McKeever, Gary Coleman, Tony Scullion; Karl Diamond; Henry Downey, Fergal McCusker; Anthony Tohill 1-5, three frees, one from 45, Brian McGilligan; Eamon Burns, Damien Barton 0-1, Sean Lockhart; Joe Brolly 0-2, Seamus Downey 0-2, Enda Gormley 0-6, five frees. Subs: Dermot Dougan for Burns; Garv McGill for S. Downey.

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

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